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EIGHT YEARS
IN
BRITISH GUIANA;

BEING THE
JOURNAL OF A RESIDENCE IN THAT PROVINCE,
FROM 1840 TO 1848, INCLUSIVE.
WITH
ANECDOTES AND INCIDENTS ILLUSTRATING THE SOCIAL CONDITION
OF ITS INHABITANTS;
AND THE
OPINIONS OF THE WRITER ON THE STATE AND PROSPECTS OF OUR
SUGAR COLONIES GENERALLY.

BY BARTON PREMIUM,
A PLANTER OF THE PROVINCE.
EDITED BY HIS FRIEND.

— Quis talia fando
Temperet a lachrymis. VIRGIL.

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PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

As the following pages contain within themselves evidence that they were not designed for publication, it is necessary to explain some circumstances which led to their being laid before the public. The writer felt deeply the situation he was placed in, and became soon firmly of opinion that the policy adopted towards our sugar colonies would end in their ruin. He felt also that, notwithstanding his apprehensions, he had not resolution to withdraw in time from the vortex which a West India estate has been since 1838, into which all the wealth possessed by the proprietor, apart from itself, must be drawn. It will be seen from the journal, that this singular state of mind occurs to himself occasionally, and that a twinge of remorse comes across him when he reflects on the folly of continuing year after year to lay out a large sum in addition to his crop, in order to keep his estate in cultivation, until it became too late to effect a sale. The same strange feeling prevailed extensively, and still prevails among planters.

Under all the feelings originating in this state of mind, and arising out of his position, he felt relief in committing to paper every thought, incident, and conversation which occurred to him, or in which he was interested, but without the slightest notion of showing the journal to any but the mem-

bers of his own family, and not even to them while he was in life. What changed his intention must now be stated.

When Mr. Premium came home from Guiana, worn out with sickness and with care, he was morbidly anxious to join his family in Italy; and, hurrying on to that country, he left his baggage under the care of that friend who is now his Editor, and, in opening the different packages to get them through the Custom-house, the manuscript was observed.

This friend, using the privilege of one, examined the paper, and finding what it was, and considering that information regarding the West Indies is sought after at present, he believed it should be published, not because of any merit it possessed, but as a faithful record of the opinions of one who had been, during a long life, connected with these colonies, and who had resided there, taking a personal interest in everything during eight of the most eventful years in their history.

The Editor, it may be remarked, has also been a colonist, and has been obliged to watch, with painful interest, the cruel effect of those measures which the imperial government have deemed it wise to inflict on the colonies. He felt that everything which could throw light on the operation of them should be made known, and, under this impression, wrote in the strongest terms to Mr. Premium, requesting permission to give his journal publicity; and the Editor thinks he cannot do better than state Mr. P.'s arguments against his proposal, and his own in favour of it.

His first letter was written in considerable alarm at the Editor's suggestion; and he began by stating that the journal consisted of entries of all sorts, which could not possibly be of interest to any one out of his own family—that he had made them in the belief that they would be seen by no person in

his lifetime, and that they were, in every respect, unfit for publication; and, regretting extremely his carelessness in allowing it to fall into the Editor's hands, he requested him earnestly to think no more of it.

In his next letter, he dwelt on the asperity which characterised his remarks on the members of government, whether imperial or local, and the anti-colonial party in general, which, although the natural emanation of that mood of mind which prevails in the West Indies, is neither consonant with his own taste, nor in accordance with those feelings which he would like to entertain for his fellow-men.

In replying to his objections, the Editor reminded him that any passages might be expunged which he particularly pointed out, but that, in his opinion, it would be better to make little alteration, in order that the journal might be as nearly as possible a transcript of what passed in his mind and in the minds of his neighbours while they were undergoing the operation of imperial legislation. It was hinted also that the lighter incidents and anecdotes he alluded to might be amusing to some readers, mentioning the case of Sir Francis Head's "crow, with its handful of feathers and lump of carrion," and that to some those little passages he condemned might be the feathers, and the serious portion the carrion.

With regard to the more important subject—of the apparent bitterness with which those in power were descanted on—it was said that the observations in the journal applied exclusively to the political character of those functionaries, and that, in treating of them, it was desirable that the public of the mother country should perceive in what manner some, at least, of the colonists felt under the treatment they were receiving.

The Governor, an estimable man, in the opinion of Mr.

Premium, as a private individual, is a different person under the domination of the colonial office, and forced to adapt his conduct to that of his superiors; for he becomes the mere instrument of a party, without authority to exercise his own judgment. Many of the observations also in the journal apply to a period now gone by—such as those on the press, which were drawn from him by the manner in which one newspaper, now extinct, treated of all subjects which came under its notice.

After much correspondence, Mr. Premium's consent was obtained, and the Editor proceeded to arrange the MS., and to correct it according to the directions of the writer. But there was considerable difference of opinion in carrying this into effect also; and, in short, the Editor took upon himself the responsibility of giving to the world many passages which the writer of them would have withheld; others were arranged so as to give them an aspect more suitable to the general reader. The real names of parties, who form the principal characters in the journal, are also suppressed, for obvious reasons; but there is not an anecdote, incident, or occurrence, detailed in it, which is not positively matter-of-fact, even to the sad catastrophe which happened in the family of Mr. Premium's principal friend.

In fact, although some alterations—such as must take place in a manuscript written with no view to the press—have been made, care has been taken to preserve the journal essentially in its original state. Many dates have been left out in order to keep from it everything like extraneous or unnecessary matter, and to preserve a sort of continuous form to the narrative of proceedings.

With regard to the opinions of the writer on the West India question in general, it is believed little need be said.

They are those of the great body of unfortunate colonists who seem to have been sacrificed at two different epochs to popular excitement, raised by the same great party. On the first occasion, they were doomed to a slow but almost certain process of destruction, by the crude and precipitate Act which emancipated their slaves; and, on the next, they were further oppressed by another Act of Parliament which insured, and more speedily effected their ruin, by subjecting them to competition with slave-importing planters.

Men need not wonder if British planters feel acutely, and express bitterly the reflections which arise in their minds, on contemplating the severe manner in which they have been dealt with from first to last; and in which regard has been had neither to their mental sufferings nor their pecuniary affairs. They have not been deemed worthy of consideration, except in so far as they were considered useful to the mother country; and now, when the party is in power which believes colonies to be burdens generally, they have experienced the treatment which such opinions may be expected to originate, and which too clearly point out the future fate of those once flourishing settlements, in the hands of political economists.

Mr. Premium's observations on the conduct of the anti-colonists towards the colonies may appear to be harsh, but they are also based on correct observation and just deduction. Nothing in political annals can be more striking than the fury of zeal manifested by this party, from 1823 to 1833, in favour of the slaves, as contrasted with the same eagerness of agitation with which it has advocated the cause of the Brazilian slave-holder, and the illicit and barbarous trade in African slaves—for the admission of slave-grown sugar comprehends both these interests; and, latterly, the earnestness with which the same party seeks to abolish the means, by

treaty and blockade, which are used successfully to check, if not to suppress the horrible traffic, forms a feature in public and political conduct which must strike the observing and disinterested stranger with astonishment and dismay.

The plan for civilizing Africa, suggested by Mr. Hume, is recommended in the journal as the only human means which can be devised, in the existing state of affairs, for suppressing this trade. It is obvious indeed that, unless the slaves should be emancipated throughout the Brazilian empire, no measure of coercion can be available in preventing the deportation of people from Africa to the coasts of that country. A glance at the map will satisfy any one on this head.

That permission to purchase slaves on the African coast, for the purpose of manumitting and bringing them to the West Indies, affords the only chance that can possibly remain to the British planter of competing successfully with his rivals, is also certain.

It is represented as a heinous crime to redeem human beings from slavery, by the same men who, twenty years ago, were incessant in their representations, orally and literally, of the miseries arising out of the right which one man had to the "blood, bones, and sinews" of another. Yet, no such wretchedness ever existed among the slaves of the West Indies as prevails now among the bondsmen of African savages.

This, any thinking person will require no arguments to convince him of. It is certain that ransoming those unfortunates is better than allowing them to continue slaves, even if transferred to civilized masters. And, in the impossibility of suppressing the slave-trade, the question is reduced to this compass. For, so long as we do not put an end to it, so long will the native dealers carry their slaves to the coast,

where, if they do not find a purchaser, they will either be butchered or returned as slaves to savage and merciless masters, unless the agents of freedom are permitted to step in and rescue them from both sorts of slavery, and the risk of being massacred, and thus eventually destroy the trade entirely.

NOVEMBER, 1849.



EIGHT YEARS
IN
BRITISH GUIANA.

1st JANUARY, 1840.

THE events of the past year have impressed me so deeply with a sense of approaching calamity, that I think it necessary to write down the thoughts, feelings, and occurrences which each consecutive month may give rise to, in order that my life may be as a beacon and a guide to my sons, and perhaps even their sons, in after life. It is my desire, therefore, that this journal, on which human eye save mine, while I live, shall not rest, may be read carefully and attentively by my descendants when I am gone, that it may serve to guide them in the hard game of life which the unhappy colonists are obliged to play with an all-powerful and a harsh adversary. For the benefit also of those of my family, who, at a more remote period, peruse these sheets, I shall here set down the particular events of my preceding years.

I am a native of British Guiana. My father, an industrious planter of the Colony, left me an estate there which yielded a clear revenue of £4,000 per annum. I had been educated in England, and soon after returning to my father, he died, leaving me absolute master of his wealth, as my mother had been removed some years before, and I had no brother nor sister. I soon returned to Europe, and, after a few years' travel, married the daughter of a rich London merchant; I then settled in one of the maritime counties, living happily, and enjoying the society of men like myself, of good education and independent fortune. Continuing thus in

the enjoyment of the advantages with which fortune had blest me for many years, I had a son and two daughters born to me ; the former was destined to reside on our estate in the Colony, and to take charge of it in course of time.

Thus we stood in the year 1838, when an astounding intimation from the Cabinet to the different settlements, announced the desire of our country, that the system of apprenticeship, guaranteed to the planter as part of the price of those slaves he had purchased from the mother country, through her merchants, should terminate. Those, like myself, who were intimately versed in colonial affairs, apprehended the worst consequences from this abrupt departure from what was considered a settled course.

The Negroes required, instead of less, much longer time than was comprehended in the term of apprenticeship, to enable them to acquire the habit of thinking and acting for themselves, as they had been hitherto machines guided by the superior minds of others, rather than rational creatures; children in mind, with the thews and sinews, and the violent passions of tropical men, what was not to be apprehended from them when the controlling power was withdrawn. Such were the fears which naturally invaded us, aware as we were, that government had taken no decided steps to supply the deficiency of labour by immigration, for we did not apprehend violence from them. We had already experienced the fact, that extensive destruction was unlikely to occur in a conflict between Europeans and Negroes, owing to the cause I have just stated—the moral power of the former, and the want of capacity in the latter to form combinations, and organize any general scheme of aggression against the Whites. Our knowledge of them, however, induced us to apprehend that they would seek rather the gratification of their passions, than the quiet pursuits of

industry, when left to themselves; and alas! the result seems, in so far as it is yet realized, to warrant those apprehensions.

My mind had been tossed on a sea of trouble for more than a year after we learned that a planter in our legislature had been the means of at once throwing the Negroes on our hands. When I found myself, at the end of one short year after the first of August, 1838, with only half my former annual revenue, I perceived the time had arrived for exertion, when every colonial proprietor must be up and doing with his shoulder at the wheel, and immediately began those preparations, which I had long beheld in prospective, for a voyage to, and a residence of some years in British Guiana. From frequently speaking of its probability, my family were prepared for the change, and readily gave in to all my plans. I was now in my fiftieth year; my wife, two years younger; my eldest girl nineteen, and her sister seventeen; my boy, who had now been two years in the Colony, about twenty-one.

Sailing from the Thames in October, 1839, we reached Georgetown upon the 20th November, and were received on my estate by that exuberance of hilarity which I had witnessed on former occasions, and which seemed to be not at all abated. They screamed, danced, and shouted as the carriage drove up with the family, forming a dingy lane along the avenue or approach to the mansion-house. Some lines in my friend Chapman's pretty poem of Barbadoes, describe well the joyous excitement which novelty gives rise to among those rude children of nature. My family, none of whom had been in the West Indies before, seemed to be struck with wonder at what they saw—the half-clad forms, and widely expanded mouths, revealing rows of pearly teeth beyond the common dimensions of European grinders, in contrast with an ebony complexion, and the singularly wild gestures and

uncouth cries and exclamations of the group, constituted a scene which both startled and pleased the women. "Aha! Massa," cried David, an old driver, as he shook my hand, "all free now, neber mind, work all the same, man most work, no work no eat," and those commonplace observations I found they all had in abundance—they had acquired the words, but the meaning, like the vows of Homer's unlucky heroes, was lost in empty air; at least, if they felt its force, they did not perceive the necessity for acting on it.

My estate stands near a river, commanding the full view of a splendid stream, which in Europe would be the mightiest of waters, bearing on its quiet bosom innumerable corials, batteaux, canoes, and every variety of small craft, which the increasing wealth of the labouring class enables them readily to acquire; and it is a rare thing, even thus early in the career of freedom, to see a negro on foot, unless he is going a very short distance. Occasionally a square-rigged vessel will come gaily along the tranquil waters, as if rejoicing in the waveless peace of our inland sea, on its course to some large plantation, there to receive a considerable portion of its cargo; and many Colony schooners, of ten to twenty tons burthen, are crossing continually to and fro between the shipping and the different estates, they being the carriers of produce generally from the latter to the former. The house is large and commodious, with a gallery surrounding it, and all those variations of structure resorted to in the tropics to promote the circulation of air. A considerable space around it has been planted with those flowering shrubs, and beautiful, though gaudy flowers, which spring up so luxuriantly on the South American continent. And amidst them, the gaudy plumed birds of the country sport in great numbers, and glistening lizards of every variety are seen on the ground and the palm trees which grow also near the house,

mixed with the sculpture-like cabbage palm ; a little farther off, fruit trees of every variety form an extensive orchard, in which the peach-like mango, the yellow orange, and the delicious grape-fruit shine conspicuous; the approach is lined on each side by a regular row of cabbage trees, equal in age and size, which, throwing their branch-like leaves over the road, afford a partial shelter to the passing equestrian or gig traveller, from the glare of a noontide sun. On ascending to the porch, my wife and daughters lifted up their hands with delight, and some time elapsed ere they could withdraw their eyes from the new and lovely objects which attracted them, as they all said they felt they were in another world—in fairy land. “In a new world certainly,” my dears, was my reply, “but whether it is as good as it is fair, you have yet to try.”

In the meantime, the frequent tap on the far-off drum came booming along the breeze from our negro village, giving note of what was to come ; and scarcely had our dinner been hastily finished, for wonder and excitement took away appetite, when the hubbub, which at a little distance was like the murmuring of the sea, ceased altogether, and nothing was heard but the aforesaid tap, until we found that all the empty space in front of our house was occupied by the negroes, ready to celebrate the glad occasion of our arrival, after their own fashion, by banjar and drum ; and, in a short time, the mirth, with the usual assistance of a tubful of punch, grew fast and furious, to the great amusement, and sometimes alarm of the ladies. The sable performers beat the ground with their long heels—the toe is not fantastic with them,—and when one man chaunted a line of rude verse suitable to the cause of their merriment, the rest repeated it in full chorus to a tune of their own, till it swelled loud and high, far and wide, over the din of the well-beaten drum. Gradually the bacchanals, advancing onward as the fes-

tivity ripened, invaded the house itself, and with such a multitude of sooty Terpsichoreans, the beams and boards creaked and groaned, I feared even unto dissolution; but there was no remedy. From time immemorial such saturnalia had been endured; and it was only after hours of continual exertion that a sort of slackness appeared, which gave me and the manager, then with me, an opportunity of representing the fatigues of the family, and how much better it would be to finish the dancing in their own village, which reasoning being enforced by another pailful of rum and other ingredients for punch, that would last until they were all tired, we got them off after many strange congés, and sundry skips and yells on the green, caused by their over-boiling happiness. "Children! children!" muttered I to myself, as I turned from the scene, "are these the sons of steady and continuous industry? No, no; there is too much of the sun in the fiery fluid that circulates within—too much of the African rover of the woods, to labour if he can live without it—too little of the European mind, to know the advantages of a settled occupation." Such were the reflections which saddened me as I retired.

Next day, while my wife and daughters were engaged in exploring the wonders which this new province in the kingdom of Flora contained, in as far as the shade afforded by the trees permitted, I was fully occupied with my manager in an anxious inquiry into the internal economy of my plantation. I write this journal under a foreboding that all things here shall pass away, and the place of their fathers be no more known by my grandchildren. Therefore, I give a short sketch of the Fortune as it is in 1840. It is about one mile wide, by one and three-quarters deep—the façade, or width, extending along the bank of the river and parallel with it, the depth running from the latter back towards the bush or primeval forest. In the centre is a large canal, which goes

from front to back for about a mile; and from this, navigable trenches, fifteen feet wide, diverge at right angles into the fields on each side, their number and length corresponding to the extent of the cultivation. By means of punts on these canals, the canes are brought from the fields to the mill and sugar-house, which stand at about a quarter of a mile from the mansion, at the extremity of the large canal. Besides those trenches for navigation, there is another series for drainage; each field being intersected by small drains at the distance of thirty-six feet from each other, which are from two to two-and-a-half feet deep, and of the same width. These empty their waters into a larger one of four feet, which again conveys them into the main drain or great aqueduct, which carries off to the river the waters of half the cultivated lands. They are called sideline trenches, and run close to the dam or boundary extending from the river unto the bush. As all the estates lie parallel to each other, the boundary here is a dam consisting of the earth thrown out of these large draining trenches on each side; the trench on the next plantation lying on the other side of the dam. At the embouchure of those sideline trenches, a sluice or koker, proportioned to the body of water evacuated, is erected, and regularly opened at low water, and shut when the tide rises high enough to demand it.

The land extends to fully a thousand acres, one half of which is in cane cultivation. Two years before this period, the banana or plantain had covered about one hundred acres more, and had been kept in a most luxuriant state of culture for the benefit of the negroes, as the law required; but now that the latter were free agents, and the scarcity of working people was rendering it difficult to keep up the necessary extent of canes for the crop of the estate, the manager had been obliged to abandon fully two-thirds of it, telling the labourers that they must now do like the Whites, and buy their provisions,

or raise them on the grounds allotted to families on the plantations for themselves. They thought this a great hardship, for they fully expected to continue in the enjoyment of every advantage they had in former times, and to have their wages in addition. Some of the leading men among them actually complained to the stipendiary magistrate of this injurious treatment, as they believed it to be; and he, being one of those who served the anti-colonial party rather than the government, deemed it necessary to hold a solemn inquiry into the facts on the estate, but finding that they were indisputable, the decision of the manager he was obliged to confirm, as he could discover no hitch whereupon he might hang some token of his zeal in the cause of the party he belonged to. The behaviour of that man in this instance gave rise to many heartburnings among the people, and to many complaints from the Negroes against the representative of the estate afterwards; whereas, if he had simply told them how the law stood, and that the proprietor was not bound to find food for them after the first of August, 1838, and if he had not proceeded to the estate to hold a sort of trial of the manager, everything would have gone on smoothly; but poor blackie, being delighted to find that he had a sort of power over the Massa (for the manager was also my attorney or agent), would have brought him to a similar account every Saturday, if the patience of the functionary had not at last given way, and his love of ease got the better of his party spirit.

The crop for a long time had been on an average 500 hds., with the usual proportion of rum and molasses. But the year 1839, for the first time during fifty years, had seen a diminution of that number by one half, and the cause of this sad falling off it was now my anxious desire to ascertain accurately, or rather, I should say, to discover if any, saving the want of labour, really did exist. The manager, Mr. Brown, was a man of good education, who had been long on the property, and was consequently

well acquainted with the capabilities of the land, and also with the character, general and specific, of the people. He said that of two great evils arising out of emancipation, he scarcely knew which was the worst, but they both arose from the same cause, the absence of a controlling power over the Negroes, who were like infants whom the law takes care of, unable by their own judgment to regulate their actions properly. They could not bring themselves to work continuously, and when they were in the field, no threat nor punishment in the power of any one to inflict, could induce them to execute their task with that nice attention which tropical agriculture, and especially the culture of the cane, requires; and it appears doubtful to him, whether the mere abstraction of their former quota of labour, or the slovenly scratching work now obtained, operated most injuriously for the planter. They both have a direct tendency to diminish the production of the land, and in that way had jointly resulted in a general loss of crop for the bygone year, of fully one moiety. On the Fortune, nearly one half of the former population had gone away. In fact, on almost every estate, there was a general upheaving of society, the ties by which it was kept together in other days having been broken asunder, and a restless desire for change, in hopes of still further improving their condition, taking possession of the labouring population. Many a planter relied on former attachment, fostered by kind treatment; but a child remembers not such associations, and can the Negro, with his puerile mental development, be actuated by them? On ignorance of this fact with many, and wilful neglect of it among others, the resolution to emancipate them without sufficient preparation, and, subsequently, the sudden termination of the period of apprenticeship as fixed by the act, are owing, and out of it all the evils which the sugar Colonies now suffer, and are doomed to undergo hereafter, must emanate.

A system which shuts the ear of the ruler against the voice of practice, as opposed to that of theory or imagination, cannot work well, especially in the Colonies, which are so distant from the seat of government, and from whence the sound is but feeble, as compared with the turbulent agitation and loud outcry which the partizans of the opposing faction are able to raise, and which indeed overaw the ministerial party. The time has arrived when the struggle of classes to promote the interests of their order, is to trouble the nation and influence the parliament. It is thus the welfare of those settlements which have fostered the immense manufacturing power in Britain, until it has become dangerous politically to the state, is overshadowed and utterly lost sight of by the colossal interest they engendered; and if such base tergiversation is possible, as anything may be in this age, judging from the aspect of the times, we may even anticipate that before many years elapse, free trade will make such progress as to force all other considerations to give way to it; and the question of slavery, hitherto regarded as one of morals, and to which commercial and all other national interests must give place, shall be forced into the shade, and a demand made, that restrictions on the foreign and illicit slave trade shall cease, as incompatible with that unlimited scope which mercantile enterprise in every form and in every quarter demands. The doctrine sought to be established seems to be that wherever cloth or iron, or any article which has undergone manipulation in Great Britain, can be sold, whatever may be the commodity received in exchange, every thing that clogs in the least, or interferes with the transaction, must be removed. But I need not look forward; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.

After an anxious and harassing morning, spent partly in the fields, I returned in the afternoon to my family, more care-worn and dejected than ever. It was some

relief to find them in good spirits, and I resolved at all times to conceal, as much as possible, the anguish which the state of affairs might occasion me, and which I had no doubt now, would be my portion. Still, however, I trusted that something might occur to assist us in our efforts; and, like my fellow sufferers, I yet, with a sort of despairing look, turned my eye to the mother country. "Now, Barton," said my wife as I entered, "clear those moody brows; I and the girls are so delighted with the place! the gay sunshine! the blooming flowers in December! the lovely birds, and the joyous face of every thing about us, from the aspect of nature, to the dark visage of the Negro, that we are determined neither care nor sorrow shall reach us." "Ah, so! my lively dame," replied I; "and what say you, young ones?" "Oh! papa, we have been so happy to-day, George has shown us every thing about the place, and really it looks like a paradise." "And where is Master George?" enquired I, "for he hath not been at his work to-day." "How could he," cried my wife, "I hope he asked leave, nevertheless; did you George?" "Certainly," replied he, "I could not think of it otherwise." "Right, my boy; discipline among Whites as well as Blacks, is essential to the success of a sugar settlement." In the bosom of my family, I now, as on former occasions, found solace and consolation for every affliction. My son George is well acquainted with the principal persons in the neighbourhood, and he entertained us with an account of them, preparatory to the intercourse which must now take place. He is a tall handsome lad, though embrowned by the toil of an overseer's employment, and, I flatter myself, possessed of considerable talents; but he, unlike me, looks on the bright side of the picture, and has confident expectations that good times are in store for us.

My wife, born and educated in London, has those pre-delictions which are peculiar to people who belong to a

large city, and she never, even in the gay neighbourhood where we resided in England, was perfectly reconciled to a continued absence from that centre of all attractions, the grand metropolis. The parks, the theatres, and the opera, were to her the summit of human felicity, and other gaieties, lacking their presence, were only to be endured, not enjoyed. It was a proof of her naturally kind disposition, and her fondness of her family, that she gave up so cheerfully those cherished likings in favour of us whose partialities took an opposite direction, and we often told her that we believed she really cared as little for London as we did, especially when, on the annual monthly sojourn there, she manifested always much earnestness to return to her rural home. Certainly, however that may be, no family was ever happier or more in unison than ours. It would be difficult to tell whether parents or children loved each other best. Yet a removal to a distant Colony for the first time, with one at my wife's age, and with her associations fixed for many years, so different from the ideas she was to acquire in her new abode, altogether constituted a change which gave me anxiety of a different nature from that arising out of the general condition of my class. Not that she was singular in her position. Many ladies of the province had returned to their husbands' estates under even more disheartening circumstances, for it was well known that a majority of my fellow planters were involved in debt; over those I had a great advantage, for having never spent my income, I had some thousands of pounds at my credit in England, besides a considerable sum in one of the Colonial banks.

My two girls were lady-like and handsome; the eldest, Grace, of rather a grave and meditative disposition, but yet exceedingly pleasing in her manners; Jane, the youngest, lively and full of glee—both all that I could wish in disposition. Thus was I situated with my flock around me at the eventful era in the West Indies, of a commencing

struggle for the means of supporting existence; that such it is, every thing indicates, and therefore I put the expression down in this record of my opinions.

Looking abroad, I can see nothing to enliven the prospect. The parliament and people of England are determined to treat us like step-children, and to carry out their intentions, have sent a governor who is wedded to them in every way—a whig in principle, and an obedient servant in all respects to his master, the colonial minister. Really, we cannot expect anything else; governors are generally poor men, with nothing but their claims on powerful friends by which to obtain a livelihood, and if they set themselves up in opposition to their employers, ranged on the side of the Colony they govern, they cannot expect to continue in the good graces of those on whom they depend. In each settlement two parties exist, which are regularly pitted against each other, as much as buyer and seller in any commercial transaction. The official men are continually stickling for the rights of the parent country, and making demands which the interests of the Colony require of her representatives to resist. Thus, it is perfectly understood they are opposed to each other, and, in general, harmony and good humour prevail among both parties; but, when not a fraction of property, but the whole of it, is at stake, men need not wonder that angry expressions occasionally emanate from colonial members, on hearing proposals containing, perhaps, the germ of a new and destructive ordinance to be imposed by the privy council. Yet it has been the fashion for the press to assume, that the wrangling in the local legislature is invariably the result of bigoted obstinacy, and narrow-minded prejudice, on the part of those who protect the colonists in their rights and privileges, and are bound, by the very nature of their office as representatives, to do so. Doubtless, the gentlemen of the colonial office are often really surprised to find that some scheme, which

they imagined to be a specimen of surpassing skill in legislative science, has been pronounced impracticable or pernicious by the men experienced in such matters as it relates to, and to whom it is submitted in the local assembly; their wrath is excited accordingly, and directed, not, (as it should be, like the Scorpion's sting,) against themselves, but showered in thundering despatches on the refractory colonists, and those documents, when published, are descanted on by the press generally in a very unfriendly spirit to the planters.

In short, it does seem to be impossible to instruct the inhabitants of the mother country in the habits and customs of the people, to say nothing of the most judicious policy and mode of government to be instituted among their offspring abroad. I have often heard it said by enquiring friends, that they can find no books to inform them on West Indian affairs. Now, the fact is, books are not wanting, but the interest to make them amusing—the sauce, as it were, to the meat, is not widely diffused among our countrymen, and so long as the European population of the Colonies is but a tiny fragment, projected periodically from the great mass at home, this must continue to be the case. It is this too, which, becoming more powerful in its operation as new Colonies are planted, and fresh drains made on our adventurous youth, diverting them to another hemisphere, has the effect of weakening, from year to year, our influence in the imperial parliament, because this must depend much on the number of relatives which the members have either resident or interested in the Colonies; within the last six or eight years, symptoms have shown themselves of diminishing emigration from Great Britain to the West Indies. That those signs will become more decided, if we continue to retrograde, while Australia advances steadily on the career of improvement (only checked now, it is believed, for a short period), and other settlements are

forming in the same region, which promise to eclipse the elder one.

British Guiana, formerly three separate Colonies, is now one, they being united under a single governor. It is a captured, and afterwards ceded territory. Its laws and local regulations, were secured to it by the articles of capitulation; but the Queen in council (as in all such cases) has the power of imposing any orders that are deemed proper, subject to the revision of Parliament. The constitution, in so far as the Colony is interested, is representative. The legislature consists of the Court of Policy, containing five official members, viz., the governor, chief justice, attorney-general, collector of customs, and government secretary; and five colonial members, chosen from the body of the planters, by a college of electors (or kiezers as they are styled in the original Dutch), who, when a vacancy occurs in the Court of Policy, send in two names to that body, one of which the members are obliged to select as that of the new member. This college consists of seven, who are elected by the votes of all the inhabitants who pay above five pounds sterling per annum indirect taxes. The lower legislative body is called the College of Financial Representatives; they are six in number, and, as their designation implies, are confined in their duties to the care of the financial concerns of the Colony. They meet every year in conjunction with the Court of Policy, constituting thus the Combined Assembly, but, separately, they have no power to legislate, and it is only in regard to money matters that they are joined for this purpose with the higher court. The latter has the initiative in all bills, and in framing the estimate, but each item is discussed separately by the combined assembly, and passed or rejected, and in the same manner the ordinance imposing taxes for the year is debated and passed.

It was not to be expected that British Guiana, in this

age of reform, should be without its patriots, and it has been our misfortune to be troubled with a few of them, the principal being the editor of a rabid and radical Chronicle, and his chief abettors certain missionaries of the London Society and voluntaries among the dissenting clergymen. In scanning, with the keen eye of the demagogue, the constitution of our legislative courts, they discovered what they imagined to be a tangible evil in the college of electors; and, indeed, one would almost fancy that the sagacity of our Dutch predecessors had devised, in this institution, a check in some future day on the designs, either of radicals like the parties I speak of, or of individuals who, by their influence with the emancipated tax-payers, would be able to control any election. This body stands as a shield between popular excitement, however caused, and the colonial constitution. Abolish it, and the multitude of hucksters, small shop-keepers, carters, &c., belonging to the Negro population who are voters, would thrust such men into the legislature as might render its sittings a mockery. Those who desire to have the Court of Policy elected directly by the votes of the tax-payers, seek to break down a barrier between them and power. Some good and well-disposed persons, unquestionably, have taken up the cry, misled by the plausible word, Reform, which, by some process of reasoning peculiar to them, they readily induce themselves to believe must be beneficial, although they cannot distinctly perceive how it is to come about. Our legislature, as it stands, possesses a majority in favour of colonial interests in the Combined Assembly, which is of vast importance, if the imperial government continue to respect it. But certainly, many years ago, the colonial minister, feeling the curb imposed on him by this state of affairs, did declare formally, that the Financial Representatives had no authority, except to impose taxes in conjunction with the Court of Policy, the latter announcing the amount of revenue necessary for public business, and the former having no-

thing to do but consider and decide how it was to be raised. Should this doctrine be established, the crown would tax the Colony as it thought proper, the Court of Policy, by the casting vote of the governor, who is president ex-officio, being entirely at the disposal of the home government; but the colonists have steadily and manfully resisted this infringement on their privileges, and hitherto the matter has been allowed to rest on the old understanding.

In this manner do affairs, public and private, stand on my return to the Colony, after an absence of ten years, at which distance of time my last periodical visit had been made. The change in the general aspect of the country and the people, does not strike one at first. On Sundays, the alteration in the dress of the Negroes is especially remarked; for on week days they prefer the former state of semi-nudity, as more natural to them. In fact, many of them, like the Highlanders, find the confinement of tight nether garments insupportable, save on Sundays or holidays, when vanity gets the better of aversion. The Creoles are wonderfully improved in their taste for dress, and on those days have really a smart easy air, as if they had worn buckra clothes of the first fashion always. But the African has less judgment, and the most ludicrous exhibitions are to be seen on the highway, while they are crowding to church. My wife was both shocked and amused by them on Sunday. For instance, one man appeared with nothing but a hat, and the fig leaf of modern savage life, a lap; another had the latter, and nothing else saving a new swallow-tailed coat, and gloves, all the rest was "birth-day suit." The ladies had invariably, whatever their dress might be, perhaps merely an apology for a short petticoat, umbrellas over their heads to shelter them from the sun, under which they had been probably working the whole week. But in reality, they are as much for ornament as use, and in

imitation of the White ladies and their parasols. These are extreme cases, however, and like "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto.*" In general, the Creole women look remarkably well in those showy dresses which they are now enabled to purchase, and to which they are attracted by their unchastened taste. White garments always improve the appearance of a black individual, provided the features are good, and the general symmetry of figure is pleasing. While the Africans are often found to be ill-shaped and ugly, the Creoles of both sexes are more frequently observed to possess agreeable countenances and handsome persons, than to be disagreeable in either.

I fear, from the short experience I have had of their manners and customs, that they are not improved by emancipation. Indeed, the command of money which they enjoy, places them under many temptations to which they have been hitherto unaccustomed. Like all people in their stage of civilization, they have a great fondness for ardent spirits, and an enormous quantity is consumed throughout this province, especially during the "big holiday," as they call the Christmas festivities, when drinking, fighting, and rioting are indulged in to an extent known perhaps nowhere in Europe out of Ireland. This I have witnessed within the last few days. During the former times, it was customary to allow great license to the slaves on a holiday; a case of drunkenness was always overlooked, or if it required attention for the sake of the man himself, the party was safely locked up in hospital until he should recover the use of his senses. Now the scene is altered, if I may judge from what I have already observed, as the roads and grounds are literally strewed with sleeping men, who have thrown themselves down as they were overcome by the potent liquor, wherever that might be. The necessity of every planter urging him to conciliate the labourers, in order to draw them towards him, the enforcement of any salutary regu-

lation is out of the question, unless the stipendiary or the police take it into their own hands, and they seldom trouble themselves until they are complained to, which few managers or proprietors will venture on at the present period. The feet in our body politic, fairly threaten to change places with the head, and to regulate the proceedings of the social machine. The man will be master, and the master will be just what the man chooses to make him.

My family have not enjoyed the view from the porch so much within the last week; and, indeed, they rarely venture to look beyond the gallery since Christmas. The scenes they saw on that day changed altogether the joyous feeling which the delicious climate, with its balmy air and sweet flowers, had excited. My girls droop and look languid, although our neighbours, who are pleasing lively people, have been very attentive; our intercourse having been so frequent as to occasion already a sort of intimacy among them. It is an amusing study to enquire into the opinions, thoughts, and expectations of the proprietary body at this eventful epoch; and, I need scarcely say, that they all vary as much as could possibly be expected; but among the thinking and calculating, fear preponderates over hope. With the ignorant and the youthful, sanguine expectations are indulged as to the future prospects of the sugar settlements. "You will see," say they, "the price of sugar rise so high that the expenditure we now consider exorbitant will be little felt, because whatever our revenue may be from a very high rate of prices, our expences will not increase, and if we get forty pounds for one cask of sugar, and a corresponding rate for rum and molasses, we shall be better off than when we had much better crops, more abundant labour, and a lower rate of expenditure." Then one of the more thinking class of planters will interpose with, "And shall this continue? will the people of England not begin to

imagine that they are paying too dear for the whistle (of freedom)? John Bull likes cheap charity; it is very well to emancipate slaves when we are to obtain great glory for so doing, by paying only two fifths of their value; it is a good bargain; but when we are to buy our sugar fifty per cent. dearer than the French, John will say, "This is nonsense, we are not to pay too dear for the name of philanthropy either, it is not worth it, e'en turn to the right about and cut the concern." "O," then will cry our sanguine politicians, "such a thing is absurd, impossible; the national credit is at stake; it would be as bad as taking the sponge to the national debt, or adopting any other of the crude radical schemes of the day." I really think so too. I cannot imagine such a breach of good faith, and such a cruel destruction of property as would ensue upon it. Gloomy as the prospect is which the deprivation of labour has opened up to us, I cannot believe or imagine that the most infatuated cabinet would render it altogether hopeless, by opening the ports of Great Britain to the sugar of slave-importing countries. To anticipate such calamitous legislation is to slander tacitly the capacity as well as the integrity of a parliament representing the first empire of the world. Yet those who really, if such there be, look forward to this catastrophe, are not altogether without grounds for apprehension, when we regard the reckless course recommended by the manufacturing or free trade party, which, if adopted, would sweep off every existing interest for the benefit, as they fancy, of the weavers or spinners, but which would destroy them as certainly as the Colonies. Surely, however, there is yet some good sense left to the nation; and, powerful as that party is, I cannot think its adherents will gain their ends.

"Papa," said my youngest child to me, one morning lately, in answer to a question, "it is wonderful how much the most striking feature in the general aspect of

this country is kept out of sight, by those who write on it, as well as other warm climates in which the masses are not civilized." "You mean the scanty wardrobe of the people. Why, my dear, I dare say the ladies in general are shocked, as you have been, by this deficiency; but it is wonderful how time and custom reconcile us to such peculiarities." "Oh!" said the poor girl covering her face, "I shall never be able to endure it. It has disgusted me with the place entirely." "Pooh! child. See how other young women of refinement endure it; how perfectly unconscious they appear in the presence of our half-clad blackies, and even take a lesson from *them*. Trust me, twelve months hence a naked arm will not affect you so much." "And then," said mamma, "instead of the nice, smiling, good-humoured Negroes we have seen in England, to find that they are here not only half-savage, but proud and insolent! Just yesterday I heard one who must have been a stranger, enquire if that buckra woman was the old man's wife—meaning you, of course—and if the old woman" ("meaning you, of course," interposed I, with a laugh,) "was to remain on the estate."

"Well," replied I, "it is not very polite, I must allow; but in your own England, it will be granted, the peasant is nearly as boorish as the poor labourer here, if he has not the same opinion of his own consequence, for it is on that particular that the whole absurd demeanour of poor spoiled blackie rests. The country lout of England surpasses him in native surliness of deportment, which we, with a self-complacency peculiar to ourselves, style independence, as if it was necessary to be rude to maintain the dignity of human nature;—but you find the servants civil enough?" "Yes, certainly," replied my wife, "they are very different from the gang, as you call it, generally." "And that is," answered I, with the air of one who had gained a victory, "a proof that farther intercourse with the Whites will amend the apparent upsetting incivility

of them all. They have been accustomed to regard freedom and slavery as the natural distinction between man and man; and they think, as freemen, they are entitled to the same consideration as the Whites, which, as slaves, they could not aspire to. They understand little of the gradations of society among Europeans, and it is only of late years that any of them, in this comparatively new Colony, could understand why a freeman should labour with his hands; manual work of almost every description having been performed by slaves, it was natural to connect it with a state of slavery; and, indeed, they say now that a servant is a slave for a certain period, in the same manner that they were formerly bondsmen for life; and it cannot be denied that a hired servant is pretty much in that position." "My dear father," said my eldest girl, "you surprise me; what is there about an English servant that is slavish?" "Nay," replied I, "if you take that as a test, what is there, or what has there been for many years about blackie, to realize the idea which people in England have of a slave; they picture such a captive as Sterne's, for instance, and they raise a wail over him as if he was a reality. The Negro, for many years before his emancipation, after he was humanized, in fact, or in other words, partly reclaimed from his African wildness, has been very nearly in the same situation as a labourer, excepting the strong fact, that the fee simple of service had been bought, not only for his own life, but that of his posterity. I do not deny that this destroys all analogy between the parties, but what I mean to say is, that the slave was as well protected, and in the same way, in his rights, as the servant is in his; his food, clothing, lodging, and garden grounds were all fixed by law, and officers appointed, who were independent of the planters, to see that the provisions in their favour were strictly carried out; injurious treatment of a slave by any in authority over him, was severely punished; and, in fact, to such length did this go at last,

that it was universally remarked to be much safer to get into a quarrel with a white than a black man." "Oh, my dear," said my spouse, "I am well versed in that already; but nobody believes what you say, so you may as well keep quiet on the subject,—who imagines that a slave has any rights!" "Why," observed George, "when one believes that a man has a right, as they say the slave-owner has, to the blood, bones, and sinews of another, it is very natural for one to fancy that the man should dispose of those said ingredients in the slave's composition as he might think best; for instance, he might keep him, as the cattle are kept in Abyssinia, for the supply of his own table, if he liked such dainties, to be devoured as the said blood and flesh might be required; or, if he chose to dispose of the said component parts in another way for his amusement, he might get as much pleasant flogging out of the blood, bones, and sinews, day by day, as would keep him in that variety of enjoyment for at least several days; or if he selected another method, roasting for example—" "Child, child! cease this absurdity—" "Nay, father! this is exactly the sort of reasoning by which the anti-slavery people at home lead the ignorant population to believe the almost universal practice of the Whites here to be, that of wanton cruelty towards the Blacks." "Come, come!" cried I, "there is not a more zealous advocate of the ill-used planter than you are, but you must not treat the subject in this manner.

"Tell me, girls, for it is some time since I asked the question, how the society of the Colony advances in your good graces." "Why," replied my youngest and most lively damsel, "if we do not exactly relish the sable portion of the populace, I think we are agreed in being delighted with the agreeable manners of the more light complexioned." "Is it even so, and without any exceptional cases?" "Nay, not so neither," replied Mrs. Premium, "there are a few sombre or morose characters whom we

profess not to understand; but Mr. Ridley, and the Wellingshams, whom we have seen most frequently, are in fact such as those whose company we chiefly enjoyed in England—pleasant, warm hearted, hospitable country gentlemen and their families.” “Very true,” said I, “that is exactly what they are in every respect; and although one of them at least has the evils of the times bearing hard upon him, he has too much courtesy to show it among those friends who are better off. Now, Jane, give me a sketch of the Wellingshams, father and son, and I shall tell you frankly if you are near the mark in your characteristics.” “Why, father,” said she, holding down her head, with a sly look, “I am not sure that I shall be on safe ground.” “Nay, nay,” cried Mrs. Premium, glancing at Grace, and smiling, “no insinuations.” “Aha!” thought I, “here hath been something beyond sugar planting. How natural it is for women to speculate on matrimony!” “Now, what are you thinking of, papa?” cried Grace, slightly colouring. “I know by that look there is something passing in your mind.” “Nothing, child, save a passing reflection on the tendency in womankind to speak and ruminare on the effect their charms have on the lords of the creation. Here have you been but a few weeks, and already is it thought probable that you are making havoc among the young noblesse of our Colony.” “Some nonsense of Jane’s; nothing else, I assure you, papa.” “I should really think so,” said I gravely. “Truly it can be nothing else, although you are so intelligent-looking, all of you.” The truth is, my good dame is a little too much bent on seeing her daughters well settled, as she calls it, in the world; and her brain, I may say, is in a state of fermentation when a good-looking young man with a handsome fortune comes across her. I have always remarked that this disposition comes naturally to the sex; and that when it manifests itself at an early stage of the daughter’s life, it is alto-

gether incontrollable. My girls were amused by this quality in mamma, which they were acute enough to perceive very soon, but I feared that they might acquire a little taste for it also, and *that*, I think, of all other female follies of the minor kind, the most disagreeable in a young woman, and therefore have always repressed any appearance of it by a grave or morose look, or by derision. Having been so much occupied with business, I paid little attention to visitors, and was frequently absent when they came; I had thus been ignorant of the circumstance, so important in my wife's eyes, that young Charles Wellingham, the heir to a large estate, had twice sat down in a window *tete-a-tete* with Grace. My youngest knew well the style in which I wished to curb this propensity of her mother, and met me freely with a corresponding sly raillery, not always understood by mamma. "And so," continued I gravely, "this gentleman has actually conversed with Grace alone,—and pray what did they talk about?" "O, many things of course, but I believe longest upon the electric eel which George brought yesterday, and which Mr. Wellingham described most minutely; and also the lake in Essequibo where it was obtained." "Ah! well, and did Grace get a shock from the fish or did Charles, or were both electrified?" "O fie!" said my wife in a low tone, and rather aside to me, "so indelicate to her!" "Egad! the affair has advanced rapidly since it is already a mystery," said I, again glancing at Grace, whose head was averted, but I could see from sundry quiverings of her hair, that she was suppressing a strong impulse to risibility. "I am quite shocked, Mr. Premium! Grace, dear, fetch the eau-de-cologne from my room; now do let the girl alone (after she had gone); one would imagine that you had forgotten altogether that there were such things as tender feelings in the world." "Nay, my love, that is impossible," quoth I, "unless I should altogether forget you, which is not in nature,—but

you speak of tender feelings,—I rather think you mean *tinder* ones, for if they are so easily kindled they must be of some similar combustible material.” “Just keep yourself quiet, for the love of decorum.” “Rather, my dear wife, keep you that in remembrance,” replied I, more gravely, “and for decorum’s sake, do not fancy every man who speaks without a witness to your daughter to be in love with her; ‘let not thy wish,’ as old Will hath it, ‘so often be father to that thought.’” Here my spouse, as on former occasions, showed her resentment of my injurious speech, by silently taking up a book and beginning to read, and soon after leaving the room, while a slight twinkle from Jane’s eye told me how well she understood and enjoyed the scene.

“But you have not given me the character—flung me the picture, as Sir Walter hath it—of our two friends,” continued I, “so go on.” “Well then, to begin,” said Jane, “I like them both very much. The old gentleman, with his spare form, dark countenance, and lively manners, I should imagine a good specimen of the planter who had long resided on his own estate; while the son, not long from college, and ardent in the pursuit of whatever he undertakes, is a combination of the impetuous child of the sun and the sombre Englishman, the latter part of his character appearing in the praiseworthy manner in which he keeps down his fiery disposition to suit the laborious occupation imposed on him by the position he now occupies; those traits I have partly observed, partly learned from others. I tell you this at once, papa, to save you the trouble of criticising my critique.” “Fairly done,” replied I, “and tolerably correct; a little more shading, perhaps, in the latter figure would make a more truthful picture; I fear me the youth’s passions are at times somewhat overpowering. His father, always a mild, quiet man, has, since the advent of our bad times, had to struggle with debt left to him by his predecessor, which

makes his large property inconvenient to him, by inducing people, wise mammas and others, to believe him richer than he is." "Would it not be well, papa, to let that fact be known in some quarters, it may save much care and anxiety, you know." "Ah! you sly one—I believe you are right, however, and on second thoughts it can't be secret long; these times are likely soon to lay open every man's affairs, as well as if they were posted up in printed papers on the pillars of the court-house." "I do hope you are too distrustful," replied my young one, "for every man seems to be lively and cheerful around us." "Climate, my dear; the effect of sunshine, which produces a sort of excitement similar to intoxication. Have you not heard that Frenchmen are never unhappy from anything, so long as the sky is unclouded. And why do so many people hang themselves in England, but because they have no sun to cheer them—at least to speak of; no, no, the people of the Antilles see no things 'that cast their shadows before;' they are so dazzled by their blazing luminary—" "And what are you, my friend," replied my spouse, who had now entered, "truly you offer a contradiction in yourself to your own words; at home, remarkable for cheerfulness—here, already christened the Croaker of the Colony." "Say you so; then my wise neighbours begin to feel the force of my remarks. Well! as Croaker says, 'God grant we be all as well this day three years.'"

1st MARCH, 1840.

I AM gradually settling down into a regular planter, being every day in the field to see that all hands are about their business; not as distrusting Mr. Brown, who is an excellent fellow, and indefatigable in his attention, but to satisfy myself, by ocular observation, of the causes which have led to such an extraordinary falling off in the crops. I am already convinced that unless some change takes place in the population, either by an immense accession

to it, or by some miracle like that wrought by the wand of the magician in the tale of Valentine and Orson, which endowed a savage with reason by a single gyration in the air, there can be no chance of getting continuous labour from the people. Throughout the last month, I have been every morning in the fields, and although the gang numbers in the aggregate more than 500, and should have from 120 to 150 at work with cutlass, shovel, or hoe every day, we have not had an average of one-third of that number. Nothing can be more striking, as contrasted with the same occasion in England, than the "turn-outs." The bell rings at half-past six; about half an hour afterward they will be seen moving about their cottage doors, preparing hot water and sugar (or coffee), and boiling their breakfasts, consisting chiefly of plantains with a piece of salt pork or fish. The former they take before going out, the latter they carry with them in a tin saucepan, and eat occasionally during the very leisurely performance of their specified task, which is generally over before one. I have seldom seen more than two-thirds of those who went to work for the day, in the fields before eight. The young and strong easily get through their allotted work in four hours, and if they are much in want of money, they will do three tasks in one day. A man did so many last month; he was about to be married, and wanted funds for the customary festivities.

I was amused yesterday by a Scotch overseer who had been some short time in the Colony before 1838. He found fault with a young fellow engaged in digging a drain, saying "that he did not make it deep enough." "Hey! obusha!" said the negro, looking impudently in his face, "you tink tha' work no straining." "It's no straining a bit, if ye were not lazy," quoth Saunders, snatching the shovel from his hand, and beginning to dig like one who knew what he was about. "Kay!" said blackie, scratching his head, and looking on with indignant

surprise; then muttering, "bye um bye, sun sha' burn you fo dish here." But the untiring buckra persevered for half an hour, during which he made more progress than the other in the two hours in which he had been scraping at the trench that morning; then throwing down the implement, he told the man he would engage, for a reasonable hire, to do as much as two of the strongest men on the estate, and never look over his *shooter* after it. "Just see him noo," cried he in wrath, as the negro resumed his shovel, "he grips it as if it *brunt* his fingers." When I say that they perform their tasks according to the tariff fixed by law, I mean that they go through with them, but they are always inadequately done, and left in the most slovenly condition; if the people blamed for so doing, they look for another employer who will treat them with more indulgence.

My neighbour Ridley, of the Mount, as his plantation is rather inaptly denominated, *quasi lucus a non lucendo*, for there is not even a hillock in the cultivated parts of the province, has been much with me lately. He is one of those men who have fought their way up from the lowest step on the planting ladder to the highest, in the face of many difficulties, and is, as may be imagined, a person of great energy, shrewd, sensible, and well versed in colonial affairs, although he has not had the advantage of a first-rate education. He and I agree in our general views of West Indian matters, but he is sanguine as to the prices which we are to obtain for produce, and very lately was exulting over the prices current, which anticipate a state of the market to fulfil his predictions; "and," said he, "it is full time that this should take place, for the great evil is pressing more closely on me every day. I have already abandoned one-third of my cultivation, and I shall be obliged forthwith to give up some more fields; yesterday, I had only 40 at work, instead of 80 or 100, my usual gang in former days. So it is not difficult to

divine the upshot; I must be contented with half crops, and unless we get double prices, how can we get on with double expenditure." "I admit the truth of your assertion," replied I, "but I cannot perceive how, because it is necessary to our success, that we are, as a matter of course, to have unprecedented prices." "Why, where is the article to come from?" enquired my friend hastily; "if the quantity produced is less by one half than in preceding years, it must rise excessively." "You forget altogether now, what we have often discussed." "Pooh, pooh!" cried he, "my dear Mr. Premium, you are not seriously expecting that the people who have been so much agitated, and for many years, on the subject of slavery, are to turn round all at once and encourage the system they have been so strenuously condemning; I have always thought you were joking, as you do so often on other subjects, when you enter on that topic." "Well, my friend," said I, "we shall not anticipate worse calamities than those we are already afflicted with—sufficient for the day is the evil thereof. The question of immigration seems to be now entered upon with energy, although only in the Colonies; the imperial government continuing in the same inert state regarding it, and we may hope to have an addition to our number of labourers." "Only, I fear, to the numbers," replied Mr. Ridley; "I am decided in my opinion that the only suitable labourers for us are Africans—Europeans have been tried, and they have failed. Those of the same blood whom they now propose to bring from Madeira and the Azores may stand the climate better, but I have doubts on that point, from what I have seen of those who are already here." "And the Coolies of India," said I, "have not fully answered expectation." "Better, however, than the Portuguese from Madeira, but neither of these races has the robust form of the Negroes." "It is wonderful what men are driven to by the pressure of circumstances; a friend of mine imported thirty Irishmen

from Connaught last year, and he told me a few weeks ago, with a look of dismay, that he would pay any one handsomely who would take them off his hands. 'What!' said I, 'Donnybrook?' 'Ay,' answered he, 'as regularly every evening as their grog, and they never miss that; such a set of wild ruffians never appeared in these regions before; they are enough to scare the Indians from the settlement altogether, and they are accounted but savages inferior even to Africans.'" "God help us all," said Mr. Ridley with a sigh, "it is well with you who are rich, even if your estate is utterly destroyed, but what are those to do who have still some balance of purchase money unpaid, when they are barely able to clear their way, and totally unable to pay a shilling of interest. The prospect is darkening in regard to labour; the total want of subordination naturally arising out of a deficiency, is becoming a concomitant as bad as the monster evil that creates it." "That," I said, "naturally follows; when a labourer becomes so valuable that you are under the necessity of conciliating him, how is it possible that anything like subordination can exist?" "True, certainly," replied Mr. Ridley, "but there is a wanton disregard to rule among them now, which shows the child out of school, or, if you will, the dog out of the chain—they manifest a degree of exultation in being able to set at defiance the regulations of the estate. Two days ago, a fellow stood up in my cane field, stretched himself out, called aloud that all might hear, 'dis ha work no good, me da go fish, O!' and straightway shouldering his shovel, marched off; a few of the rest gazed at him for a short space, and one by one followed him. When the bulk of the gang saw what was going on, each man followed the example of the leader, just like a flock of sheep after the first who takes the leap, and in half an hour there was not one left in the field." "That is a singular feature in their character," said I; "if one of them

quits his work from any cause whatever connected with the labour in hand, they are all sure to go; they seem to think it degrading to remain if one refuses to continue at the task: a stranger would imagine they were all going to fish, whereas not one but the ringleader would think of it, and perhaps not even he."

"Did you hear, neighbour, what our wise governor said the other day?" enquired Ridley. "In replying to the urgent anxiety of the colonial members of the Court, to impress on him the true condition of the Colony, he became impatient, and, glancing over his spectacles at the last speaker, exclaimed, in his own style—'You assert ruin; I assert prosperity.'" "Well," I answered, "and they were doubtless struck by the force, if not by the elegance of this pithy expression." "O, doubtless," quoth Ridley; "and he then explained to them that he had the best authority for saying so. There was not a merchant in Water Street who would not tell them trade was better than before emancipation. 'Yes, truly,' responded Mr. Briar, with a sardonic grin, '*they* have reason to speak of prosperity. All the money drawn from our pockets to pay enormous wages, increases and keeps up their sales in the meantime. That is only a proof of the extent of the evil that presses on the agricultural interest.' This was a poser to his Excellency, who looked first to his planting member, and then to his government Secretary—in vain. Honour to staunch old Briar!" continued Mr. Ridley enthusiastically; "there is no gammon about him." "We want a few more like him and his old friend. They have both a correct knowledge of the true interests of the Province, to say nothing of their talents, which are known to be great. It is wonderful how pertinaciously ignorant the official or government party persist in being of the internal condition of the Colony." "They are misled," replied Ridley, "first, by their own desire to obtain intelligence favourable to the success of

emancipation, which prompts them to apply to wrong persons; and, secondly, by two or three planters whose minds have a singular bias, derived probably from their whig politics, especially him who is called the governor's member in the court, and who is, on other points, a shrewd, clever man, and an excellent member. The press, too, is shamefully ignorant of what is called the colonial question, to say nothing of the condition of labour on the estates, and misleads the people at home." "That I do not wonder at, when we consider the high wages paid to all sorts of handicraftsmen. The marvel is, how a press can be supported here at all; not that the conductors of newspapers are unable to pay agents who would report to them regularly the state of the interior. It is the want of such persons which places the editors at the mercy of any planter, known to be such, who volunteers information, the correctness of which they have no means of ascertaining; but they open their columns to all discussions which correspondents choose to enter into. I speak of the respectable portion of the press, not of that really rabid and blackguard journal, which, to the disgrace of the planters, professes to support them, and it is said they keep up: the manner in which this paper mentions the governor, whom it generally styles 'grand-mamma,' would sink it in almost any country of Europe. It is not by such defenders or base auxiliaries that we must assert the justice of our cause." "That may be," said Ridley, with a grin; "he makes the dogs feel though, and there are some who require a smart blow to produce that effect upon them."

George, who is remarkably assiduous in his own department, instead of occupying a room in the manager's house, has, since our arrival, at his mother's request, taken up his quarters in the mansion-house. I am thus put in possession, every morning, of any particulars which Mr. Brown deems of too little importance to have a place in the daily

report of the gangs, which he sends over about nine (the hour of breakfast) on each day. He has thus kept his mother and sisters amused by any incidents occurring among the people, or in the fields. One day he was fortunate enough to catch a young tiger-cat in the cane piece, which he brought home. It was about the size of a kitten two months old, and hitherto it seems to take very well with the change in its style of living; its house, instead of the fields, being a large wooden cage made of lath; but it is often out about the kitchen and pantry, and it is fed upon cows' milk. Another morning he came home with a wood-ants' nest, an article universally used here to feed young ducklings withal; and George, in his zeal to show how the process is gone through, got a cutlass, and, taking up the nest, which was a large blackish incrustation, containing myriads of young ants as well as old ones, round the branch of a low tree or shrub, which he had cut off in such a manner, as to leave a piece sufficiently long attached to the nest, to insert in the ground, and keep the former a couple of feet from it. This he fixed in a pond in the poultry yard, near the edge, and giving it a cut, out fell a shower of ants, which the ducklings, who were swimming below in eager expectation, greedily gobbled up. We were all ranged round the spot, I enjoying the gratified curiosity of the rest, for there was nothing of novelty in the scene to me, when George called out that there were salem-penter's eggs in the nest, and proceeded to dig out carefully two or three of these soft, dark-coloured, reptile productions; then laying them on the ground, he cast a sly look at me, and gently opened one with the point of his cutlass; a general scream attested the success of his legerdemain, for a young salem-penter instantly issued forth, and, to their utter astonishment, ran in among the ladies' feet.

A sort of instinct teaches the animal that there must be a suitable temperature there for maturing its offspring;

and its eggs are often found in the substance of these nests, in which they are most likely deposited, after a hole has been opened for the purpose, by the reptile.

1st JULY, 1840.

WE have just got the accounts, by a running vessel, of a most extraordinary rise in the price of sugar, which has had a corresponding effect on the Colonial market in Georgetown; the article, which, before this arrival, fetched no more than four stivers, now readily selling at seven. From what I have already observed, I am sure this intelligence will produce great excitement, similar to that which occurs in a man who is unexpectedly raised from despair to happiness; my nearest neighbours have done nothing since, but ride round and congratulate each other over and over again. I met my friend Ridley a couple of hours after he got the news, and he galloped up to me with a broad grin on his bronzed visage: "Well, neighbour," exclaimed he, while yet twenty paces off, "You cry ruin; I assert prosperity! Egad! our ruler is likely to be right for once, I think to his own surprise." He then grasped my hand with a true West India clasp, and burst into a laugh that lasted five minutes—"Sugar at forty pounds! think of that. We shall do yet; depend on it, we shall do yet." It was not in my nature to throw cold water on such a singular reaction, either literally or metaphorically, though the former seemed to be indicated, as the doctors say; and I warmly congratulated him, myself, and the whole planting world, on this most blessed occasion. While we were going on towards my house, our meeting having occurred on that part of the road which crosses my estate, Charles Wellingham came up also on horseback, bound on the same errand of congratulation; his face was flushed, and his whole appearance showed that he was agitated by some powerful emotion. He rode up to me

without speaking, and to my great surprise burst into tears. "Why, Charles!" cried I, "has anything happened—anything amiss." "Nothing, my dear sir," after a pause to recover his composure; "I shall explain by-and-by. I came to tell the good news, or if you have heard already of the great rise—" "O yes, I have." "Then to wish you joy of it, for myself and my father." "And how does your father comport himself under it?" enquired I; "I hope with more equanimity than some folks." "O, you know he is always steady and composed, and he inclines to think that it will eventually do no good—that is, he says so; but I can see, and it rejoices me exceedingly, that he is in excellent spirits now. Is that George yonder?" said he, checking himself, and cantering off to the house without farther parley. "Ay, ay, neighbour," said Ridley, "that chap has more in his head than sugar." "Poh! Ridley; a hot-headed, thoughtless lad." "He is all that, but a clever fellow and a good one also; a great favourite of mine is Charlie." We discussed, as we walked, the merits of the extraordinary news in all its bearings; and we were perfectly agreed as to the effect it would produce on the drooping spirits of the proprietary body, but we differed widely on other subjects. "It will lead to mischievous competition for labour," said I. "But the government must, and will give us immigrants, to have more sugar thrown into the market." "They will just do what the weavers of cotton and broadcloth will let them, and I do distrust them grievously." "You are wrong, wrong decidedly," answered Ridley, rather sharply; "but we shall not, on this joyous day, begin with our old argumentation; here we are at the house, and a glass of sangaree will suit me better than a dry debate."

We entered, and found Charles the centre of an eager circle of listeners, including my good dame, who had not paid quite so much attention to young Wellingham after the hint she got from Jane, but now she appeared to

enter into all his feelings, which indeed apparently had reference only to sugar and molasses; but they were so sincere, and evidently so deep-seated, that their ardent expression carried conviction to the minds of all, and universal gladness prevailed in the hall, which burst out on our approach. "Joy, joy!" was echoed on all sides, and a general shaking of hands immediately ensued. I always sympathise with people, whether in adversity or prosperity, and in the course of a few minutes, I was fairly carried away by the torrent of overflowing happiness, and joining the rest in everything. After much mirth and laughter, which seemed to increase, the longer it continued, I exclaimed joyfully, "Why not muster all together, and make a day of it!" "Surely! excellent!" instantly responded the unceremonious visitors; and in a few minutes Charles set off for his father, and Ridley for his wife; I sent for the clergyman, the doctor, and a few other neighbours; and about four o'clock, we had assembled, a sample of the gay and happy people who might be found, at that hour, in every planter's house of the wide-spread "Indian Isles."

Our dinner passed off in the same mirthful style; but I have observed that men generally are more disposed to disputation when their minds are relieved from an oppressive load in a sudden and unexpected manner—this was the case in the present instance. The older men of the party knew each others' sentiments, and though anxious to enter on speculative anticipations, feared that we might become too warm for the harmony of the meeting; but the doctor was a young man fond of arguing, and possessed of that disposition which many have, to humble those who seem to be unduly exalted. This young philosopher entered into a hot dispute with Charles Wellingham as to the duration of our good prices, and it may be well imagined that, as the parties waxed warm, they took in the whole range of the West India question. Charles,

being easily excited, was soon rather too keen for calm argument, but there is a concentrated earnestness about him, as I said before, which carries his auditors along with him, and he seemed to obtain the victory in the opinion of the listeners. This led to an observation from the clergyman, and that to one from Ridley, and in a few minutes the confusion of Agramant's camp prevailed, and I, the Don Quixote of the day, was called on to keep order. The ladies had been gone for some time, and I knew it was impossible to stem the flood long pent up, so we plunged at once into the middle of affairs, each talking to his next neighbour, and giving full utterance to his secret thoughts—for the good wine by this time was doing its work—and amid the din of conflicting tongues, was at times heard an appeal to the chair, which passed unheeded. The two professional men caught the excitement of the planters, and entered keenly into the debate, but they were both opposed to all the rest in it.

After this had continued for half an hour, the effervescence began to subside, and a forcible exclamation from Charles Wellingham arrested the attention of all, and fixed it on the parties who began the dispute. We were now inclined to admit that only one should speak at a time. "Nay," cried Charles, raising his voice, "if you maintain the doctrine that we are not entitled to free immigration from all parts of the world, I will concede to you the disputed point, because I cannot argue against a supposition so unjust." "Upon what grounds do you claim such a right." "Rather say upon what grounds you should deprive us of the common privilege of nations, to receive into their territory what people they think proper." "You are all, at this moment, under the influence of a bugbear; or rather you were, before to-day, living in constant dread of losing your estates from want of labourers, and the imperial government wisely interferes to prevent you from injuring yourselves and others, by importing

unsuitable people, under this unreasonable apprehension.” “Yes,” said Charles sarcastically, “you have now stated the question; the imperial government, despising our remonstrances, and trusting to the reports of such governors as we are blessed with, believes that it knows better the state of the planter’s affairs than he does himself, and not only tells us so, but acts accordingly; it is like saying to a starving beggar, ‘You are quite wrong, my good friend—you have plenty to eat. Mr. So-and-So, your good neighbour, tells me so. Take my word for it, you are in good health and flourishing circumstances;’ although the bloodless cheeks—like our diminished crops—testify in favour of the injured party.” “I think you will admit that the privy council understands the business of legislation better than the inexperienced men who constitute our Combined Assembly.” “Inexperienced! you are certainly unfortunate in the selection of that word, unless you mean to apply it simply to the construction or composition of an ordinance, and in so far I agree with you; ministers might put it into better language, but that has little or nothing to do with the bearing of the ordinance on the subject to which it relates—it is the mere gilding of the pill, doctor, and affects not its substance—do not mistake the manner for the matter.” “Upon that principle, there would be no necessity for choosing men of talent to fill our courts; mere practical men would be best.” “Unquestionably they are; and of them is the elective portion of our legislative assemblies constituted. But I see what you mean to infer, which is, that if mere experience is to establish the law, the Negroes themselves would be as good legislators as their masters. You might as well say that a child is as able to reason, and to arrive at a correct conclusion, as a man. The Negroes are children in intellect. Our colonial members, although not highly, are yet well educated; and, from long practice in the Court, have acquired a knowledge of its forms, and of the business brought before it, which would shame the bulk

of the House of Commons, who do not possess, in regard to the mode of conducting their business, so much information." "But I am not disposed yet to concede the principal point, that the planters themselves are the best judges of what the Colony requires. You must grant me patience. It is said that the class of planters is paramount in the province, and that others are overlooked in consequence of this state of affairs, which, indeed, has become identified with the law, because a man must be a proprietor before he is eligible to the Court of Policy." "When that law was enacted by our Dutch predecessors, there were few men of suitable station or intelligence, excepting among the planters. The word, by-the-by, used in the ordinance is colonist (from colonus, husbandman); and the Dutch seem to have taken it for granted, that every man, fit for that Court, would possess land. But if you look around you even now, saving professional men, who have no time for it, whom will you find to place there save planters? The merchants are, generally speaking, proprietors; the same observation applies to all who hold a respectable position in society, who have been long enough here to understand the wants and the evils of the Colony." "Do you not admit that bad consequences may accrue from indiscriminate immigration?" "Unquestionably. But I insist, that in regard to it, we cannot know precisely how to act, unless from experience. The government, by refusing to sanction our ordinance last year, has literally said to the inhabitants of all parts of the world, excepting a few inconsiderable places, 'You shall not enter the British territory in the West Indies.' Suppose the government of the different European nations should retaliate, and forbid British subjects from entering any foreign country whatever, would the whole nation not be furious at the injustice of the measure." "I grant that it appears to infringe on that liberty which is recognised by all nations, of free and unrestricted entrance and exit, subject only to such fiscal

regulations as each may deem necessary. But we are in a peculiar position. Our population differs widely from that of any European country; and a wise legislature must consider what effects may be produced by introducing a race that will not amalgamate with our masses." "A very nice and delicate cabinet it must be, to draw such fine distinctions. Once more I say, let all people have access to this, as to every other place; and if it turns out, that the climate or the labour is unsuitable, we can easily stop the tide of immigration; but, in God's name! when the preservation of thousands of families from starvation is the question, don't let fine spun theories be indulged in—let us have practical proof—real illustration of the evils now apprehended, and no more, before we give up the only means of keeping our estates in existence."

"Well said, Charles," quoth Ridley, "that is exactly the point. Doctor, I think he has done you." "Hush!" said I, for we had all been listening attentively, the serious and loud tone of the speakers having kept us quiet, "do not excite them more, they are warm enough already;" and to give them time to cool, I went on—"Doctor, there is a great deal in what you say, when taken in connection with the prevailing sentiments in England, which, though the result of defective information, and wrong conclusions, must still be considered here in relation to that question; and, with our old enemies opposed to us, the once called anti-slavery party, but now more appropriately styled the anti-colonial faction, having for its basis the proud cotton lords of Lancashire, we stand a poor chance of vindicating our rectitude of purpose; there is no assertion too strong for the credulity of the people of England regarding the Whites of the West Indies." "Too true, indeed," replied Mr. Wellingham; "I verily believe, if Mr. Scoble should tell them that we dine on Negro steak every day, they would believe it. But, in regard to the question which has given rise to this lengthened

discussion between our young friends, I must say that Charles' opinions are mine, and, I think, those of the planting body in general; at the same time, the doctor is right in bringing forward the ideas of other parties, and in so doing, is most friendly to us. It is not unknown to you that we have, among ourselves, enemies to the Colony, as bitter as any to be found within the British seas." "Aye!" said Ridley, "thanks to that same Scoble, who contrived, on his visit here, to sow the seeds of distrust between the labourers and their employers, and to form a new cabal of which he was the nucleus, to create discord everywhere; a strange thing for a man to earn his bread by telling baseless tales of other people—a new trade in these times of novelty." "True!" said Wellingham; "still you must extend, even to him, the benefit of the effect produced by general opinion. Scoble came here, fully impressed with the belief that we were all that the anti-colonial party represented us to be; and, heated with zeal—for he is a violent partizan, that cannot be doubted—entered on his business as if the acknowledged and engaged agent of the Negroes; then, departing abruptly, he left us as ignorant as when he came, having mixed little with the Whites, and knowing nothing at all about the opinions of the Blacks. He is entirely for his party, the object of which is to get rid of Colonies, because they interfere with that great trade which men's excited imaginations picture to them as the effects of an unrestricted intercourse between all foreign countries and Great Britain. A thing, by the way, just as likely to occur as the fulfilment of Johanna Southcote's prophecies, or any other equally improbable predictions." "I am not so sure of that, Wellingham," said I; "other nations may not give in to it, but our country has an increasing, and already powerful party, who support that doctrine; and it would not surprise me to see it carried into law, even in my lifetime, and so as to embrace every

branch of trade." "I think with you, that some striking enactments may be made relating to great importations; but when these are carried into effect, and when ministers begin to devise new schemes on the same principle, affecting the interests of those who are calculating only on ruining their neighbours, not themselves; when every great branch which gives employment to native industry, is attacked one after another; and when commercial nations, instead of reciprocating, are disposed, as they will be, to encourage more than ever, their own trade, seeing our rich country opened to them most unexpectedly, then will the eyes of theorists be unsealed, and not till then."

"Well now, my friends, our merry meeting, as I expected, has turned out to be something of a political one—the very nature of it, in fact, and our exuberance of happiness, has brought on this result; but I see you are all passing the wine, so we will join the ladies, if you please, and take our coffee there." Just as I finished this address, I observed Ridley very busy with a demonstration for the edification of the clergyman, who sat next to him, and we paused until it was over; he had placed a mango so as to support a pineapple at the top, the other end resting on the table.

"Now, Reverend," said he, "here is my illustration: let this little mango represent the Colonies; the more large and important pine, our glorious mother-country. You perceive how gracefully the latter reclines on the former, but I withdraw the mango, and lo! the stately pine topples over, fallen from its high estate. That will be the state of your mighty England, credit me, it will." "Well, Mr. Ridley," said the other, good-humouredly, "let us hope they will continue to rest on each other. I profess not to understand your great question, and when I engage in your discussions, it is to promote them." We then rose and went to the drawing-room. The ladies were enjoying some music, not being so deeply and abstractedly interested in the sugar trade. There were two or

three who sang well; and my girls were generally reputed excellent as songstresses. When we joined them, the hilarity of the evening seemed to revive after being supplanted for a time by grave and somewhat angry conversation. I observed that young Wellingham went directly up to Grace, and that they were soon engaged in a *tete-a-tete* conversation. Ridley had "harped my fear aright" in the hint he threw out, and my exhilaration was a little damped when I perceived that she really appeared to prefer his conversation to that of any other person; for, putting his position of a man depending altogether on West India property out of the question, there were circumstances in his case that implied other dangers to the happiness of his wife. With the best disposition and the kindest heart, Charles was notoriously headstrong and rash in all his actions; and it was with surprise his neighbours discovered that he was able to keep his natural propensities so much under command, as to undertake and go through with the drudgery of a plantation; for his father, under the necessity of economising, had made him manager, after he had been some two or three years with an experienced planter as overseer. It was his great attachment to this only remaining parent, and, indeed, only near relative, for they were alone in the world, that enabled him to chain down his more volatile nature, and I augured that in time, such a good son must prove an excellent member of society; yet I feared that he might, before years had tamed him, get into some trouble from this natural disposition, and therefore wished to discourage his attentions to my daughter. I walked up to them and inquired of her if "she had sung yet?" She replied "that she had, but was ready to sing again if I wished it." "Do so, my dear," said I; "amuse our friends." "I shall sing some verses that papa gave me lately," I could hear her say; "they are not very good, but perhaps, as the production of some friend, he likes them. So saying, she selected the following:—

THE fair ship rode on the tropic seas,
 Bending her course to a southern land,
 When seemed a voice in the rustling breeze
 To fall on mine ear in accents bland.

“O maiden young, thou dost travel far
 From the home of thy childhood’s glee,
 Where the feeble sun, like a northern star,
 Looks coldly aslant on hill and lea.

“And Fancy now, by her magic power,
 Doth people for thee each well-known scene
 With the groups of old, to cheer this hour,
 Though the wat’ry waste rolls wide between.

“Thine eye doth rest on the sparkling waves—
 Thy thought is fixed on the woodland free,
 With its green bank, which a brooklet laves,
 Under the shade of a large oak tree.

“For there wert thou oft, a joyous child,
 In the merry band of elfins fair,
 Who a mother’s graver mood beguiled,
 With their laughter loud and frolics rare.

“But thine eye hath changed; a moisture lies
 Thick on the sable fringe of its lid,
 As the wandering thought, like lightning flies,
 Where the germ of thy future is hid.

“To that gay land, which the blazing day
 With a halo of gladness surrounds;
 Where the pulse beats high, and Youth doth say,
 ‘Those surely are Pleasure’s enchanted grounds.’

“O maiden, beware, the thorn of care
 Is ever beneath the rose of joy.”
 Then died that voice in the calm sea air,
 And left me so, to my musings high.

After stopping, she continued at the instrument, probably expecting that Charles, who stood immediately behind, would address a few words to her, but he was standing, with his arms folded, in a deep study. She turned round after a little—"What!" exclaimed she, in surprise, "why, Mr. Wellingham, *you* seem to be in "musing high;" is it the song that has changed your mood so thoroughly and so suddenly?" "O!" cried he impatiently, "confound these debates, they will come across me even when your voice is sounding in my ears: but pray, tell me how long it is since you acquired those verses!" "A few weeks, perhaps; I scarcely recollect. Why?" "Nothing; except a sort of curiosity I have to know how old they are." "Really it is impossible to tell precisely; I can ask papa, he may know. I am sure it is not more than a month since he requested me to sing them first." "Nay, don't trouble yourself," replied Charles, turning over the music, "do let us have something else." Sitting a little apart, and pretending to read a paper, while the rest were fully occupied, I observed all their motions. "Aha!" thought I, "you are sensible, my fine fellow, that this is not to my mind." Mrs. Ridley was a native of that singular little island which sends, throughout the West India archipelago, a race peculiar to itself, and remarkable for industry wherever they go. She was a "Badian bawn," as she said of herself, and the daughter of a small planter, who emigrated to this continent, and in a year or two acquired the management of a plantation, in which he contrived to feather his nest tolerably well, leaving, at his death, a pretty fortune to his only child. She was not of the upper class of society in that island. Those who belong to it are remarkable for the elegance of their manners, and their high, chivalrous bearing on all occasions. "I think," said she to my wife, "they get on very well." "Who is it you are speaking of, Mrs. Ridley?" "Who! my dear ma'am, who can it be but the

two who are a-courting there?" "Heavens," my wife muttered, for I was then by her side, "what a Vandal!" "You are merry, Mrs. Ridley, as we all are this gay evening; but don't let any one hear you, lest it be thought you are serious." "What! an't it true then? how strange! well I never doubted it since I first saw them together." "My dear Mrs. Ridley," replied my spouse, in great distress, "do not say so; it is nothing but two young people amusing themselves; I assure you there is nothing of the sort going on." Mrs. Ridley was very much surprised, and, being a matter-of-fact person, totally unused to a conventional state of society, soon afterwards took an opportunity of crossing the room, and saying to Charles, very much to his discomposure, "So you an't a-courting after all, only at your make-believes, to make us all fools, you wicked one." Though pretty well accustomed to the lady, this was more than he ever reckoned upon, and he fairly broke down in an attempt to laugh it off. "Madam," said he, at last, "what *can* you mean—is it part of a play you are acting?" "Oh you queer one! Don't mind what he says, Miss Grace." "Really, Mrs. Ridley," replied Grace, turning round from the piano, with a flushed countenance, "you and Mr. Wellingham seem to have some strange jest between you, and as I do not understand it, I shall leave you to enjoy it." "Well," said the lady, "if that don't beat cock-fighting! just when I was a-going to do her a sarvice. Did you ever!" "No, madam, never, by heaven!" cried Charles, flinging away in ungovernable rage. Grace, like a young fawn startled by some unexpected incident, hastily withdrew and sat down beside her mother, turning a look, as if half angry and half afraid, towards the lady who had thus so effectually interrupted the *tete-a-tete* she was engaged in. Giving her time to recover composure, her mother inquired what she had been talking about with Mrs. Ridley. "O don't ask me; she is a most singular person; hardly fit for decent

society," said the poor girl, in a tone between laughing and crying. "She *is* odd, my dear. Did you observe how angry Charles Wellingham looked on quitting her? She has a strange way of saying whatever comes into her head, no matter what it is; it would seem as if she had no control over her tongue whatever." "It is exactly so; and that would be nothing, if she did not fancy such absurd things!" Mrs. Premium was puzzled to guess what had happened to discompose her child, for she did not imagine that the worthy Mrs. Ridley would carry her matter-of-fact system so far as she had done.

Although that lady could not understand what had occasioned it, she yet perceived that her friends fled from her like quicksilver, and the Barbadian pride, which is always, like Norval's, "excessive," taking the alarm, she stalked across to her husband, with starched mein, and erect carriage, to signify her opinion, (as she muttered to herself,) that it was high time to quit a company which did not value them, as they should be estimated, at more than sixpence in the pound. Just then Ridley himself came up to me, remarking that I seemed unusually abstracted, "ruminating on the future, doubtless," said he. You are a thinking man; I am a working one; and though I differ from you often, let me tell you, I have more confidence in your opinions than my own." This was exactly like my worthy friend—a frank, kind-hearted Northumbrian, from the dingy neighbourhood of Newcastle. His wife tried him sorely, sometimes, but he always laughed, with great good humour, at her peculiarities, and thus contrived to take off the most striking absurdities about them. "I wish to speak to you Mr. R.," said that lady. "Ah, well! what is it now? Something wrong, eh!" I turned away, and sought out Jane for a purpose I had in view. Mr. Ridley was listening, with a comical expression of countenance, to his wife's grievances in detail, which she re-

counted in a lofty style of indignation. While she was in the middle of her harangue, Jane walked up, hanging on my arm, and, stopping as we got near them, spoke, loud enough for the lady to hear, in the following strain: "Really, papa, that Charles Wellingham is a strange creature; I think his head is not right, he has been so absolutely rude to everybody this evening; Grace complains of him sadly, and I saw him look at least very angry at Mrs. Ridley and some others. What can he mean?" "Nothing at all, my dear; he is excited by the sugar discussion in the other room, that is all, and he has not been thinking of either Grace or Mrs. Ridley." "Very likely. I think it must be so; and, perhaps, a little more wine than usual, you know." There was a gradual sinking of the listening lady's voice as we talked on, and it died away gently. I glanced at her husband, and saw him accomplish a wink to his wife with a strange grimace, as much as to say, "you hear that; you are not the only one, so be quiet." I then took a short turn with my daughter, and coming up to them, discovered that every trace of pride and anger had vanished; and she immediately sat down, with Jane beside her, to talk of other matters. Thus I was relieved in my mind, for nothing gives me a more unpleasant feeling than the occurrence of any misunderstanding in my house. We spent the evening in the same joyous manner as the day, and parted like true West Indians, under a firm belief that we had many more such happy occasions before us. There is much wisdom in the philosophy of Epicurus, if it be tempered by the exercise of a proper discretion. In my opinion, we ought to seek innocent happiness when and where we can find it, without always fancying that its enjoyment brings misfortune nearer to us.

1st OCTOBER, 1840.

WELLINGHAM has just left me. We had both augured rightly in regard to the effect of high prices; and Ridley frankly admits that he has been wrong as to the competition among planters, and the exertions which the imperial government would instantly make to increase our stock of labourers. The managers of estates are eagerly over-bidding each other in the labour market, and there is danger of the public business of the province being interrupted, because ministers will not grant an immigration ordinance, and our Combined Assembly, in consequence, will not grant the supplies necessary for supporting the expenses of government, including our very heavy civil list. These are both the result, the inevitable and natural result, of the cruel policy adopted towards us. The present cabinet is driven entirely by the *vis a tergo*, and those who push strongest are sure to carry it along with them. The anti-colonial faction, otherwise the free trade party, could not accomplish what they aim at, the separation of our Colonies from the mother-country, if not their absolute destruction, without keeping, at its present amount, the diminished supply of labour; and they, being the paramount party of the day, easily contrive, under the ridiculous plea of protecting the Negro in his exclusive right to labour (these are the advocates in every other quarter for the abolition of monopoly!), to gull the people, and thus force the Colonial Minister to stand by with his arms folded, while the sugar planters are gradually sinking from decay into actual ruin. I speak without reference to the present year, which is unquestionably one of great prosperity; but will those people who can ruin us by withholding the requisite supply of labour, permit us to prosper by prices which are really a burthen on the people of England, but which, with our enormous wages to labourers, are necessary to our very existence? I do not mean to say that the planters have not a real

contract with the parent country: unquestionably they have; and the introduction of slave-grown sugar would be a breach of faith, as flagrant as any that ever was committed. But are the actions of our enemies *just, now*, to us? Wherefore, then, if they are not, should we rely on their justice for the future, or expect them to permit Government to protect us in the markets?

Wellingham contends that the good sense of our country, if the question is ever brought before it, will know how to decide between free immigration into our Colonies and low-priced produce, and the latter, with a revival of the foreign slave trade under all its horrors; for that is really the proper way to put the case. We could supply the market with the article at a moderate rate, if we had unlimited access to labour; unless we get this, the slave-dealer must provide England with sugar. The state of our Colony at this moment, must strike any reflecting mind with dismay. The planters, disposed to put faith in the parent-country, and perhaps, by the influence of climate to be sanguine, are rejoicing at the prospect just opened to them, of prices which will, in spite of the enormous cost of cultivation, afford a good revenue from their estates, as if this good fortune was to have no end; and in consequence, the value of plantations has risen at least thirty per cent. since the first of July. The great mercantile houses in Britain have caught the excitement, and are encouraging speculation, some of them lending money on mortgage, as in the olden time, and others buying plantations for themselves; and, as a necessary consequence, all the old proprietors, having abundance of waste land on their estates, are straining every nerve to extend their cane cultivation; but as this cannot be done without additional hands, an eager competition is the consequence, and also a rise in the previously unreasonable rate of wages. I have had difficulty in keeping my good Mr. Brown in check, though on the spot; and he grumblingly tells me, that

our working list is getting smaller every day—a certain sign that my neighbours are giving more than he does. I feel the difficulty of choosing a decided line of conduct in a case like this, for I see plainly the present state of affairs cannot continue; but, on the other hand, if I adhere to former rates and tasks, my estate must suffer severely, even in its now diminished fields—for it was found necessary about the middle of this year, to abandon several of the most distant. I believe I shall have to give in to the prevailing system, with my eyes open to the evils of it. On a sugar estate within the tropics, a few months of neglect will destroy every variety of cultivation, from the extremely rapid growth of noxious weeds. It would risk not only the whole crop to continue with half the present number of people, but the ratooning afterwards, and consequently the very existence of my cultivation. Still, it is a terrible thing to plunge into an increase of the present ruinous contingent expenses of a property, with one's eyes fully open to its evils. The crop, in so far as it has been reaped, promises no increase on that of 1839; but the price is nearly double, so, in place of a loss, I am sure of some profit this year.

A new propensity of the Negroes begins to be strongly developed; they are making purchases of land to a considerable extent throughout the province. The policy of selling it to them, is called in question, but it is absurd to suppose that it can be prevented. Will a man who is in distress wait to ascertain whether it is for the interest of the Colony, before he parts with his waste land? And any new local regulation prohibiting him, would be no less impolitic than tyrannical. The greatest efforts have been making, since the year 1833, to find substitutes for manual labour. The plough, above all other means, has been tried most perseveringly, I may say on nearly every plantation; but in no one instance has it been found to suit so well as to supersede the shovel and hoe. Our soil (being a stiff clay) causes the operation to be

exceedingly severe on cattle; and the small drains, which are at a distance of only thirty-seven feet from each other, and two feet deep by two wide, impede the proceedings very materially. It is surprising how many horses, mules, and oxen have been sacrificed in the endeavour to establish this mode of tillage permanently. One of my neighbours lost sixteen oxen in ploughing about twenty acres, and after all, some hands were obliged to go over it with the shovel. In order to get through their work, those who used the plough were under the necessity of giving the cattle enormous quantities of oats, in itself an extremely expensive contingent, and to spell (or relieve) them in the middle of the day; so that one set, varying from three to six, was employed no more than four hours at a time. This, rendering so many indispensable, made the general expense as high as that of manual labour, taking the mortality into consideration, and it was not nearly so effectual.

In fact, cane culture is more like garden cultivation than any other. The drills or cane holes run across the beds or space between every two drains. They are from two to two-and-a-half feet wide, and from one to two feet deep, according to the soil. The earth taken out of them by the shovel, is deposited on a bank of the same width as the hole (the space between every two holes being so called), and is used, in weeding, to earth up the young plants after the weeds are removed, the bank on one side being taken for that purpose, and on the other as a place on which to deposit the weeds. In these holes the cane tops are planted either in a double or single row, very much in the same way as potatoes are planted in England, and in about a fortnight the sprouts appear. In six weeks, they require a first weeding and earthing or moulding, and in general they need one more moulding and weeding, and two weedings without the moulding, before they are considered to be beyond the planter's care. In the last weeding, the process of stripping

or trashing is gone through, which consists in detaching the dead leaves from the canes, to allow a free circulation of air. From this brief sketch, it is evident that the greatest care is necessary in performing every operation connected with the culture of this plant. If the drains are obstructed in any way, or if they are not cleaned or dug out regularly, the canes will not grow. If the latter are not properly planted, and if the weeding and moulding be not carefully performed, the crop will be very indifferent. Again, if the stripping be done by reckless persons, they will break down canes, and be as destructive as so many cows turned into the field. Indeed, one has only to comprehend the nature of the work that is essential to the proper growth of the cane, to understand how much the planters suffer by the existing disorganization of their labouring population.

My manager, who enters most zealously into everything, is fretting at the state of affairs, and looking thin. George, having now charge of the books, is less in the field, but I am every day there, and we have a very effective staff, consisting of two other overseers besides George, and a Yorkshire engineer, or rather blacksmith, for that was the original vocation in which he was engaged by the manager, but having a turn for the other department, which is akin to his own, he was soon able to take charge of the steam engine for crushing canes, which has been for many years an appendage of every sugar estate in this province.

I have here set down the routine of a field during the first year, or rather the first crop. The canes, at twelve or sixteen months old, according to locality and seasons, are cut and ground off by the engine and mill. Then the field being cleared of every obstruction to the sprouting of the cane stumps, by removing leaves and grass left upon them, and depositing the latter on a bank, where they are soon converted, by decomposition, into manure, it will be found, at the end of six weeks, that *supplies* are

required from stumps being dead, as they will be occasionally, and cane tops are inserted in such blank spaces as are then discovered; after which, the routine is exactly the same as in the first crop, and it will be similar in every succeeding one, until it is deemed proper to re-hole the land, that is, to dig fresh cane holes. They are generally renewed when the bank has become level with the hole.

But our great anxiety for diminishing the requisite labour, has latterly brought into practice a system of shovel ploughing the cane rows or holes, so as to loosen and turn up the earth for the more free admission of air and water; and from what I can gather concerning it, the opinion gains ground that it will ultimately supersede holing entirely, especially in our river districts, where the soil is not so deep as on the coast, and where, consequently, they cannot get a virgin soil by going deeper, fit for the support of vegetation; the subsoil, generally, being a hard clay called mora, on which nothing thrives but the stately tree bearing that name. This shovel ploughing is generally practised on estates in those districts, and the time for doing it is when supplying is required, although some planters believe it to be more advantageous when the canes are about three months old, and others begin with it as soon as the field is relieved. While upon the subject of land, I may here record my conviction that the scheme which has been lately much discussed, of settling a Colony in the interior, would not succeed, because of the very inferior quality of our soil beyond the bounds of the alluvial deposit, which does not extend farther than a few miles from the sea. This may be readily imagined, as the land could only be overflowed for a limited distance either by it or the different rivers; hence we find that estates, almost from their first settlement, have been confined to their immediate neighbourhood. It is true that, at an early period of colonization,

the Dutch began high up the rivers, but they speedily came nearer to the sea, and within range of the tides, which they secured themselves from by the dams I have already mentioned. The depth of this deposit is very great near the sea, as the colonists have lately ascertained in boring for artesian wells; it is supposed to vary from seventy to two hundred feet or more. High up the rivers, according to the report of wood-cutters and postholders, the land is of very inferior quality. Under such a disadvantage, and with a locality so near the equinoctian line as the 7th degree of latitude, who would think of coming here, when the immense unpeopled wilds of New Zealand and Australia, with a fine climate, are open to him, to say nothing of Canada and the United States, with their kindred population?

I have now another source of anxiety besides the general one, my daughter Grace manifesting a decided partiality for the company of Charles Wellingham. In fact, from the naturally innocent frankness of her disposition, she has made no attempt to conceal it. A few days after the *gaudeamus* party, as I may call it, Charles met me on the road, and in some little confusion explained the cause of his emotion on that day when we congratulated each other in presence of Mr. Ridley, and he had been so strangely affected. I feared he was about to enter on another subject, and put on a very grave look; but, with that frankness peculiar to him, and which makes him so engaging, he told me that his father had been threatened by the merchant who holds a mortgage on his estate, with foreclosure, and this sudden rise in the price of produce had induced him to suspend proceedings—the same mail bringing both pieces of news. I was struck at once by his honest candour, for he was perfectly aware that I perceived the mutual attachment between him and Grace, and he knew also, from my reputation for prudence, that the state of his father's affairs would be considered a for-

midable obstacle, seeing that he was dependent on him. Partly from pleased surprise, and partly from a feeling of relief in finding that he did not enter on the dreaded topic, I shook him warmly by the hand, and expressed a hope that something would occur to enable my worthy friend, his father, to get the mortgagee pacified. "Nothing but payment of the money can do that," said he with a gentle sigh; "but I am sanguine now we shall succeed; we have a larger gang, and this year we shall certainly make a third more than last crop, which, with the great prices of the day, will enable him to pay considerably." "I sincerely hope it may be so, my dear Charles, both for your sake and his." "You are very kind, Mr. Premium; I must not think of myself at all until he is easy, so your wishes, having reference to him alone, will be everything to me. I am a thoughtless fellow—such is my character, and I am conscious that I have earned it—but no man has better intentions, Mr. Premium; of that you may rest assured." "And I am sure of it, my boy; so let us have no more of this very grave conversation so unlike you, and, I may say, me too." My wife and I begin to talk rather frequently on this subject, for she has adopted the belief that her daughter is more fond of retiring into corners, and of being even without her lively sister's society, than she had ever been before, and she even blames herself for encouraging Charles' attentions at first. But still the match-making mother peeps out. She was inquiring just this day what could be the amount of Charles' salary as manager for his father? "Poh!" said I, pettishly, "what has that to do with it? You do not imagine that from two hundred to three hundred a-year would suit your daughter for an income." "Certainly not, my dear; but then really one hardly knows what to do or say." "Just keep quiet, and let matters take their course. Grace knows my sentiments, and she has sense enough to act for herself;

matters are not so far advanced yet. But of this I wish every person among us to be aware, it is the defect in Charles' character, his want of steadiness, and his impetuous temper, that I object to, rather than his want of fortune, although I do not see how we could get over *that* circumstance either."

Mrs. Premium sighed deeply, and shook her head; "Grace," said she at length, very sorrowfully, "has keen and deep-seated feelings, and a mind also that is able to control them, but I can perceive that her person suffers in the struggle—she does not look so well as she did six months ago." We have had many such conferences; and, being generally correct in my prophetic apprehensions, I begin to perceive that, although they say "forewarned is forearmed," I am very likely to be drawn into an approval of this match. I make light of the affair with my wife, but it gives me very great uneasiness. I think there is a natural reluctance in every father, who feels as he should do, to part with his child, even when he is convinced that she is likely to be happier away from him. It is a different feeling altogether from that which prevails when a son embarks on the sea of life; he is fit to fight his own battles; but a girl is entirely at the mercy of her husband in everything that relates to the enjoyment of life in connection with the visible world.

A few days ago, my foreman, David, who is a very sensible negro, but like all of human kind, attached to the interests of "his order," came to me to "hab (as he said) a leetle conversation." It is wonderful how fond they have become already of speaking like the buckras, and how sharp they are in picking up phrases, although they do mispronounce the words very "ingeniously." "Well, David, I am glad to see you; it is long since you called to inquire for the family. Sit down and take a glass of sangaree." I was then in a little office I had established for myself in a corner of the gallery, for purposes like the

present. David was willing enough to do so, his failings having a "lean" that way, so the liquor was ordered. "And how are you getting on to-day; a good field list?" "No, massa, berry bad; da he (for that reason) I come speak to you. Dem all say the plantations round about give more wage, and dey can't stand it no longer, dat is the trut; I sorry, but can't help." "And what do you advise, then, my good friend?" "Massa must give five bit for the task, like other ghentlemen. No so; them sha' go away. I try best keep dem, but what use? Money every ting. Sweet word won't buy pork or grog." "So, then, you think I must raise the wages one-fourth on account of the rise in the price of sugar. Am I to understand that they will consent to work for the old rate if sugar comes down to what it was last year, which, by-the-by, is a great deal more than any of us can afford." "Can't say dat; Negro no hab sense like buckra to onertand ting, but dem say governor tink the price too small—tink so last year too." "Did he say so to any one?" "Yes; his butler tell the people dem, he eerie gubna say so at his dinner-table." "So, 'whisper it not, lest the birds of the air do carry it,' here," thought I, "is an instance of the mischief done by want of common prudence in a ruler; it shows also how the Negroes are alive to everything affecting them. And are you sure that our neighbours have all given in to this increase of wages?" "Every one. Massa Charles (Wellingham) de very first." "Ha! indeed; that agrees with what he said the other day in speaking of his working gang, and very like Charles, too." "Clebba ghentleman, Mass Charle," continued David, "he know nigga fashion; make plenty sugar dis time." "And pays them well, doubtless," said I. "Yes, sir; give five bit and plenty rum too, and leetle bit plantain sometimes." "And has he many more hands?" "Double twice, massa," quoth David, earnestly; "dat is the way for do. Massa, let me do so, I sha' soon

bring plenty shovel men; if massa no do um, other people take all the hands—story done (all is over),” with a significant gesture, indicating a complete vacuum. “And so, you are of opinion that the people who have lived on the estate so long, most of them all their days in fact, will remove because they can get, for a month or two, higher wages in other places.” “Every one of them, massa, ceptin myself; me sha’ live and die here, me born here, fadder born here, whafor me sha’ go away?—neber!” “Why, David, you are fully as well off as you would be anywhere else; you have a capital house, with three good rooms, besides kitchen, offices, and garden, and eighteen dollars a month of salary.” “Dat true; but Tumpy hab twenty though, and better house too.” “And who, pray, is Tumpy?” “The foreman at Mr. Wellingham’s.” “What! Charles again! I do fear me this sanguine nature of his is pushing matters too far,” said I to myself. “Are you acquainted with Mr. Ridley’s people at the Mount, David?” “O yes, bery well.” And here he made that expressive sound with his breath, which it is impossible to commit to writing, like *heh! heh!* pronounced very short, and which implies surprise and displeasure united. “Tha buckra! *heh! heh!*” “Ay! how does he get on with his people.” “Can’t say, massa; him fashion differ from ebery one.” “Has he raised his wages.” “Yes, he raise um,” replied my foreman, with a broad grin, “but he raise de work too. O tha buckra! matty no dey! the people dem call he de debble Scotchman.” “Why?” “Because he work so strong; he self stan’ whole day in the field, never left um, and no trust no one, obshia nor foreman; then whole gang go up say, must get more price. He say, “berly well, certain; but ’pose you get more price, you no see, me must get more work; that stand in reason.” “And are they working on these new conditions.” “Dem still work so, but they will go away. Dis time the people can’t be made fool;

dem get savee too much.” “David, you are a sensible fellow, now; and can think a little, what do you believe the present state of things will end in? You must not mind what the governor says, or any of those gentlemen who belong to him; they live in town, and do not understand anything about plantations.” David looked at first very wise, as if in reply to the compliment, and then puzzled; at last he uttered this oracular response:—“If the price um pay for making sugar more an de price um sell for, de proprietor dem muss top work.” “Quite clear, David; but the wages cause the cost to be so high of making the article. Do you think the people, by-and-by, when sugar falls in the market, will work for smaller wages?” David shook his head, “Not so long dey can get ground to work for demselves. Massa, look here; nigger no like work, it is not his fashion: gib plenty money, he do um; gib little bit, he rather work his own land.” “But supposing he has no land of his own.” “Massa know better; he see bery well too much in a country all round about, and plenty plantation massa want to sell um now; the nigger buy plenty aready.” “Do you think they have much money among them?” “Some hab deal; by-and-by, massa will see many nigger buy ground. Massa have too much waste land at the north side line, better make money; sell him, so get hands to settle there work on plantation.” “Not a bad idea, David, and I have already thought of it; but we must consider it longer before I agree to it.” “Strangers want me to ask massa if he go sell um.” “Well, you may say that I shall do so by-and-by, if I get a very good price, and if they agree to work on the estate at the current rate of wages.” “O yes, dem shall all do that at first; better no bind dem, dough, only make trouble.” I had discovered previously, that to get at David’s real sentiments, it was necessary to flatter him a little, which, elevating him in his own opinion, put him in the position of a confidential friend;

and as he was really a sensible man, thoroughly acquainted with the habit of thought and the customs of his countrymen, I found my interest in arriving at his secret opinions. This last remark coincided perfectly with what was passing in my mind. In coming to the determination to part with this piece of land in lots to the labourers, I at first intended to bind them to work with me; but, reflecting on the disposition Negroes have to regard every obligation in the light of a burden to be thrown off, I began to imagine that the very tie itself might be the cause of their going to other estates for work, while, if they were left unfettered, they would naturally, it being nearest to them, give it the preference. As for enforcing any such agreement, it would be impracticable entirely, without a cost of time and trouble in frequenting courts, which would be far more than commensurate with the advantages arising from it. I got a vast deal of information from David about this time, regarding the fever of excitement that prevailed; but, in order to do justice to my brother planters, it is necessary to explain, that the greater number only aimed at retrieving their lost ground, by bringing again into cultivation those fields which the inadequate return yearly had forced them to abandon, because they had not wherewithal to pay labourers sufficient to keep them up; all of course owing to the generally diminished amount of labour, and consequently enhanced value of it. After a few more conferences with David, and the proposing purchasers of land, and finding that the reluctance which was felt by our proprietary body to the measure, as tending to encourage a sort of disconnection from the estates, of the labouring class, was fast vanishing before the urgent demands for money, and confined now to those (a very small minority) who had no spare land, I proceeded immediately to have it surveyed.

It extended to one hundred acres, and being divided

into lots of one acre, of half an acre, and a quarter of an acre, I calculated that, in eighteen months, the whole would be sold, such being then the rage among the Negroes for acquiring an independent property, on which each might sit down under his own fig tree (literally almost), for I observed that the first thing done on the lot by the purchaser, is the planting of a few fruit trees, the cocoa nut being generally preferred. The drains are then dug, and plantains and ground provisions planted while the cottage is in course of erection. They generally pay only about a half of the purchase money on getting possession, and in a year the balance should be forthcoming; but there are some who cannot come to a final settlement within the year. The price is two hundred dollars per acre, or at that rate. They do not get a title, or transport as it is called, until everything is paid; so the proprietor incurs little risk in giving indulgence, although he must lose interest, that being a concomitant in money transactions, neither understood nor recognised by Blackie. The simplicity in the legal process here of giving an absolute title to real property, has often struck me as admirable, when contrasted with the complicated and expensive measures necessary to that purpose in the mother country. The transport (or transfer) is advertised thrice (three weeks) in the *Gazette*, with the names of the parties who give away and who receive the property. Any creditor of the former may stop proceedings by giving notice, in the form required by law, at the Registrar's Office, and the matter comes before the Court of Justice at its first sitting, where it is decided whether the objection is valid or otherwise. If no objection stands on the books of the Registrar after a third advertisement, the transport is passed by a judge, who scans it carefully to see that the deed is perfect in regard to legal form, as well as substantially correct. The name of the new proprietor is then recorded

in connection with his acquisition. The same form is observed in regard to mortgages. In either case, the expense amounts to only a few pounds for the largest estate in the Colony, or the heaviest mortgage.

Mr. Brown came to me the day after the conversation I held with David, which has been related, and, with a face "wan with care," tried once more to impress on me the propriety of keeping up in the race of competition with our neighbours. "If we do not," said he, "we must abandon more cultivation." "Well, Mr. Brown," cried I, for the twentieth time, "can you give me any better assurance than when we last talked on this subject, that the rise in wages which you recommend so earnestly, will be the last." "I cannot, sir, nor can any man; but the question is now simply, whether it is best, when prices are unprecedentedly good, to allow the estate to fall so far back as to threaten next year's crop with almost certain destruction, rather than raise wages to the rate now current throughout the Colony." "Which amounts merely to this, Mr. Brown, stated even in the strong manner you have just done, that, because other planters are carried away by their sanguine disposition, I must be so also; it appears to me a most injudicious step on their part, and I am very reluctant, very loth to give in to it, indeed." "You are unquestionably better able to judge than I am, sir, of the chance we have of long enjoying the present prices; but you are aware that opinions are divided, even among those who are best able to understand the question." "I see your inference, Mr. Brown; but the strongest argument you can urge is undoubtedly the folly of our neighbours, and the consequent risk, from their abstraction of our people, that we lose a crop I shall decide soon; in the meantime, I have not made up my mind." Even if he is a man of comprehensive understanding, the manager of an estate is still subject to

those influences which affect mankind in general, and the most prominent among these is self-interest. There is much zeal for the proprietors among managers; and the reason is to be found in the fact that, by acting on it, they are enhancing their own reputation; but the manager's character is to be raised by increasing the crops, without reference either to prices or contingent expenses, for no one inquires whether an estate is managed economically or otherwise—the actions of the planter are measured by the size of his crops and the condition of his fields. We cannot wonder then that they should be more particular in regard to what, in every sense, especially concerns themselves, and that they should always incline to pay such wages as would give them an advantage, even over their neighbours, in regard to labourers. We cannot expect them to identify themselves with the proprietors, and sink their own interest entirely in that of their employers. It is not in human nature, for their character is at stake.

One feature in the new state of existence is beginning to give us great annoyance here. Scarcely a night passes without some boisterous quarrel, which disturbs the whole plantation, and rouses us from sleep, the mansion-house being only about a couple of hundred yards from the Negro village. There is seldom any mischief done, for the heroes have all the scolding propensities which we observe in those of the *Iliad*, before engaging in battle; but the parallel holds good no farther, inasmuch as Homer's men proceeded to work in earnest, while ours' content themselves with the war of tongues throughout. It would be a very amusing sight, no doubt, for one whose fortune did not depend on the people, to watch closely their demeanour on such occasions. They are exceedingly sensitive in regard to themselves, but they cannot feel so acutely for their neighbours. It is not to be looked for. The ladies, in general, are the fire-brands among

them; *ex uno disce omnes*. One day I was standing on the path leading from our village to the field, where they were going to work, when a man came along limping as if his foot had picked up some thorn or similar annoyance. A woman whom he passed, tickled by his uncouth gesture, cried out, "Hey! Quaco, you da go dance in a field, da new *catreel* disha, eh?" Quaco laughed with the laughter, and passed on; but there was one behind who could not brook this insult on her husband's dignity. She came straight up to the other lady, calmly deposited the basket which held whatever articles she took to the cane field with her, and then her hoe, on the ground, and forthwith opened fire, setting her arms a-kimbo, with—"You laugh my man, eh—you laugh my man, eh, mamma—eh, mamma?" "Kay, sissie, me no laugh bad—da good laugh me laugh" (meaning that she was joking). "You is a vile nigga mamma, no bit of lady bout you; dat is what you is." The other had hitherto been cool, but she now sprang to her feet, and assumed the same belligerent attitude as her opponent. "You say me no lady, you saucy, good-for-notting Congo dat you is." "Me Congo!" exclaimed the first then, in a very shrill tone, as if this had been the climax of impudence; "me Congo! da *liard* you is. You know bery well me dooble Creole; you is Ebbo, dough! nasty Ebbo, wha savee, eat dem mattie." Their voices rose to a crying pitch, as one pungent recriminating remark followed another, till the quarrel ripened, and they formed a nucleus for their friends and relatives as they passed to work, who, instead of keeping aloof as sensible persons would on similar occasions, all took part in the strife of scolding, and it was an hour afterwards when the mass of them appeared in the field, while the principals did not come at all. Thus it is; a silly, childish dispute is every day involving perhaps a hundred people in a wordy squabble that annoys us for two or three days.

Proprietors and managers, to say nothing of overseers and foremen, have long left off interfering in them, finding that their influence was as nothing to the inflamed passions of a rude people. If they actually proceed to blows, which happens sometimes when they are drunk, then the stricken party next day sets out to collect evidence, and to calculate the value of his assault, in the way of damages. Several have been to me after such an affair, to tell particulars and inquire how much I thought the beating they had got "was wort" (worth); and, generally, unless there was something bad in the case, I appraised the property at a low figure, to discourage this absurd sort of speculation. It grieves me to say, that I am now persuaded there is also a change for the worse in their morals, in the face of our immense church establishment, and the schools which are so liberally scattered over the province. The orgies which they hold at night, and which the high wages they receive enable them to keep up in a manner suitable to the inclinations of a semi-civilized population, are both frequent and licentious in the extreme. I have had ocular proof of what I now record; for, resolving to try every means to put down such meetings as Mr. Brown represented them to be, and which his authority had been altogether unable to suppress, I marched deliberately into one of them to ascertain whether mine would be more effectual. They had been dancing for nearly the whole night, and it was about three in the morning when I surprised them, in a large building, consisting of three cottages thrown into one by removing the partitions, a liberty they had taken without leave some time before, and which we found it convenient to wink at from fear of disgusting them with the place; there they were, overcome by spirits and fatigue, lying along the floor indiscriminately, men and women. I tried to rouse them; but if I succeeded, the party turned sullenly from me, and instantly relapsed into his lethargic

state of repose. The women, perhaps ashamed of their condition, could not be prevailed on, by any means, to lift their faces from the floor. As I gazed on this disgusting scene, which was illuminated by an expiring lamp, I began to be aware, from certain unmistakeable sounds, that my presence had caused as much anger as surprise. At last, a tall fellow whom I did not know, and who was evidently from another plantation, started up with—"Cha! massa nigga! buckra here! wha use for he here, eh!" looking impudently in my face; at the same moment, a voice whispered behind me—"Massa better go." I took the hint immediately, recollecting some tales of irreverent, not to say dangerous, treatment which proprietors had met with when they intruded on similar meetings, and with the same laudable intentions.

JANUARY, 1841.

WE have now been more than a year in this, to most of us, new country, and have become colonized; all of us having had what is called the seasoning fever, which in our cases was mild, being rather of the intermitten than the remittent form, as the doctor said. My wife has been for some months very earnest with me regarding our eldest daughter, whose health, she insists, is suffering from anxiety and uncertainty. She is indeed paler, but so is her sister; all European women become so in warm climates. It is not difficult to see that Charles has, without absolutely declaring himself, let them all understand the state of his affections, and my poor wife's brain has been in a state of excitement since she perceived that her daughter was inclined to reciprocate, if she got a little encouragement. With some, marriage is a singular triumph for mother as well as daughter. My wife is a mother of that description; but I knew my girl would marry no one, except the object of her affections, even to ensure her mother's triumph. Pondering on the matter

long and anxiously, I at last came to the resolution of opening my mind fully to Charles when he made his proposals, which nothing but suspicion of me and my strict principles, kept him from making some time ago. His father never threw out a hint regarding it, of course, although his son's attentions were the subject of conversation throughout the Colony.

As George kept his books with great exactness, he is able to tell me (within a trifle) the result of last year's proceedings. The crop was 210 hds. of sugar and 18,000 gallons of strong rum, including the molasses, which had all been distilled; nearly three-fourths of it were made since the prices rose so considerably, and consequently the gross revenue was very high in proportion to the quantity of produce. It amounted to within a little of £10,000. The labour account came to 12,500 dollars, or about £2,700. The other current expenses, such as coal, casks, &c., wear and tear of buildings, with salaries to the Whites, amounted to fully 8,000 dollars more—the total was nearly 21,000. Altogether the expenditure in raising that crop reached to £4,500. The nett income of my estate then, for 1840, was fully £5,500. A better return than I got for many years previously, from 500 hds. and rum in proportion, notwithstanding the vast increase in the expense of producing. No man can be surprised if the planters in general, who, for the last two years, have been sinking money, should be exceedingly elevated on finding that a balance of nearly the same amount which had been previously on the wrong, was now on the right side of the account. Those who had looked forward in despair of improving their affairs without the help of the imperial government, begin now to pray inwardly that the latter will let them alone, for they know by experience that it is more likely to give in to clamour against them, than petitions in their favour.

It cannot be denied, that for those who have faith in the justice of the mother country, the prospect is now very inviting, and that the general opinion inclines to this belief, the continued demand for, and rise in the value of estates, sufficiently indicate. I am one of those who felt uneasy from the very commencement of this altogether novel (at least of late years) state of the market; and I am not sorry now that there are some appearances of a decline, not likely to be considerable, but sufficient to operate as a damper on the speculative excitement which prevails. There is probably another reason why the crop of last year has turned out so well. I was formerly in the practice of shipping all the sugar to my respectable friends in London, Omnium, Dibs, and Rhino, but having been advised to try the Georgetown market, I did so, and finding it decidedly better than any in Great Britain, I continued to sell the produce there, from June 1840. By doing this, the planter has the advantage of obtaining the highest rate which merchants will give in order to get their vessels loaded, and generally there are some who, from want of interest to obtain freight, are fain to speculate in produce; in fact, there are respectable firms who do it regularly. The loss by leakage on the voyage is also saved; and, in short, the gross benefit is estimated at from thirty to fifty shillings per cask. By far the majority of planters are unable to avail themselves of the local market, they being bound, by mortgage, to consign their produce to British houses, and in their ships.

A sort of delusion prevails in the mother country regarding those debts of the planters. The idea of improvidence and extravagance being generally associated with that of a West Indian, debt is invariably regarded, among those who are unacquainted with the colonies, as the results of those failings in him. Now, there *are* extravagant persons in the West Indies, who get into diffi-

culties from their own folly; but in far the greater number of cases, the debt is contracted when the estate is bought, which is always done here in the way of speculation, not of investment, as in England. A man has £5,000, and he wishes to buy a property worth £20,000 perhaps. He applies to a mercantile house, and obtains a loan equal to the sum he possesses. He has thus on hand £10,000, and it is paid to the seller of the estate. For the remaining £10,000, he gives a first mortgage to the same party, and comes under contract to pay it by instalments; and to the merchants, he grants a second mortgage for their £5,000 on the same estate, and becomes bound to pay them off in a space of time calculated to commence in its instalments when the seller is paid off; and he is held bound by the same contract, to ship all his sugar in their ships, and to consign it to their house in Great Britain. I should say that this mode of purchasing plantations obtained till within the last few years, when the system of cash transactions, made necessary by the impaired credit, under existing circumstances, of every colonist, was introduced. According to the old custom, it was calculated that a purchase thus made, should clear itself in from seven to ten years; and in many instances not more than a fourth of the price was paid down, so well was it understood that the estate should pay the instalments by its crops, as they became due. All those who had bought property about the time when the slaves were emancipated, are thus, at the present moment, with unliquidated instalments, varying in number and amount with the terms of the arrangement under which they are due. My friend Wellingham is oppressed by a mortgage left on his property by an uncle who bequeathed it to him, and also by several annuities to more distant relatives, so that he has found great difficulty, up to last year, in paying the interest of the former, and the full

amount of the latter; while the mortgagee for nine years, contented with interest alone, had threatened in June last to foreclose on an over-due instalment. To him, therefore, and many more, this sudden rise in the market has been the means of averting positive ruin in the meantime. As to public matters, the greatest excitement has prevailed, and the governor of Trinidad, Sir Henry Macleod, is here at present to allay the ferment, and reconcile the differences between the Executive and the Colony in its representatives. The former refused an immigration ordinance; and the latter, impelled by absolute necessity, avowed that without more labourers they could not venture to levy such an amount of taxes as was required for the purposes of the government, because they could not see that the inhabitants were able to pay them, and they refused to furnish the supplies under the circumstances. The Colonial Minister, finding himself in a dilemma, got out of it by sending Sir Henry as governor *pro tempore et re nata*, to make an arrangement with the Colonial Representatives, which was effected in a few days, one party granting a civil list and the necessary funds, the other guaranteeing an immigration ordinance, with provisions, though not satisfactory to the planters, yet such as they saw they could only obtain at that time. It was amusing to observe the demeanour of our ruler in abeyance in the meantime. He was literally like a bear sucking his paws; and I am sure would have been highly pleased if Mr. Briar and his brethren had gone off in a hurricane to the antipodes. It is scarcely possible for the governor of a Colony, under the Whigs, to be popular: however keenly he may feel for the suffering people, he must conform, in practice, to the rules laid down by his master; if he remonstrates, then the latter will say, "This fellow has been bitten by the rattlesnake, we must look for another." By this phrase, it seems the Whigs mean that he has acquired a knowledge of the true

interests of the Colony, which, requiring a different line of policy, is not the sort of information they wish to have, and therefore they insinuate that he has become too intimate with the planters, and is adopting their prejudices. The family of the present governor, although he is not liked, are justly appreciated throughout the settlement, and most deservedly, for the ladies are not only very agreeable in their manners, but highly accomplished, and in every way fitted to adorn their position in the province. The governor, personally, would be more popular, did he not consider political opposition as directed towards himself, rather than his office. A man who cannot draw a well-defined line of distinction between the two, must always be thinking himself ill-used, when the offending person has not perhaps even thought of him as connected with the question in dispute. Our worthy representative of the Colonial Minister (to call him the King's is rather hyperbolic), cannot conceal the dislike he entertains for the colonial members of our Combined Assembly in general, which he signifies by a peculiar and expressive grunt, when their names are mentioned in his presence. This has its disadvantages; for instead of being surrounded at his table by the aristocracy, such as it is, of the Colony, he has none there save the gentlemen who hold subordinate offices under him, with occasionally a professional man, and the officers of the garrison, who are not the people in whose conversation anything is to occur likely to throw light on the condition of the settlement, either by anecdote or matter-of-fact contained in the news of the day. Most of those who are familiar with the inmates of government-house, in fact, knowing the bias of the executive, adapt their discourse to the taste and feelings of its head, as polite people generally do. Thus, all information to be gleaned casually and without premeditation, of those who are best able to give it, and which is the most effectual in convincing, is shut

out from him. Remonstrances and petitions are received, under existing circumstances, as attempts of one class to obtain unjust and unfair advantages over another; and the idea of protecting the Negroes, who are really the masters on plantations, absurd as it is, still prevails with our official men, so as to be paramount over every other consideration. There is, in short, a wide space between the latter and the planters, and in this slough, as it may be called, of distrust and disbelief, every statement of facts is doomed to be lost.

JULY, 1841.

THE change in the aspect of the market already noticed, has turned out more serious in its extent and probable permanence, than was then anticipated; and the alarming nature of the late debate in parliament, has produced a sudden reaction on the unfortunate planters, who are all beginning now to perceive that they are in the position of the frogs in the fable, and that their destruction, if not sport to the people of England, is considered a matter of very trivial consequence in the mother country. In this melancholy triumph of my anticipations over those of my neighbours, I can perceive that the forebodings which led me, a man of fortune almost independent of the colonies, to exile myself, will be ultimately realized; and yet, although I have that impression on my mind, I cannot bring myself to sell the estate and return to England. In fact, the time has gone over for that, because, although an estate was sold at a high figure in May, I doubt if a good price could now, after the lapse of only two months, be obtained for any plantation. Such is the absolute change that has at once occurred in the opinions of all men here, only eleven or twelve months after their hopes had been elevated in the same proportion, but on very different grounds.

The latter position was like a castle in the air, as it really was, resting on the extraordinary excitement consequent on a sudden transition from despair to hope. The former is like a fearful pit, which, in whatever way the planter turns, threatens to swallow him up. The debate reveals the state of feeling that prevails among the popular representatives, who must be understood as giving utterance to the sentiments of their constituents, and they are unequivocally in favour of the admission of slave-grown sugar.

Thanks to Sir Robert and the Conservative party, we are safe in the meantime; but what security have we for the future? Our countrymen collectively, with a great deal of talk regarding justice and generosity, seldom illustrate their claims to those qualities by any striking instance of either. The compensation, so called, given to the planters, they glory in representing as an act of generosity; while, in point of fact, it was a selfish spoliation of one particular class, to raise the reputation of the country for philanthropy. Little calculation is necessary to prove that. In terms of the Emancipation Act, appraisers were appointed by government to adjust the apportionment of the £20,000,000; and they were expressly directed by the act to take the average rates at which sales had been effected in the colonies during eight preceding years, from books in which such sales were recorded. This being done by them, it was found that the slaveholders got, in their respective shares of the compensation fund, just eight shillings and fourpence sterling in the pound of the real market value of their property, so fairly ascertained; and, notwithstanding their strong remonstrances, they could not make ministers nor parliament, to say nothing of the people, understand that property of a much higher value than that of the slaves who cultivated it, was to be endangered by the act. And does not the proof of what I have said regarding the British

nation laying claim to a character which really does not belong to it, find confirmation doubly strong in the fact, that after wresting from us three-fifths of one species of property, and in all probability rendering all other property in the West Indies worthless by the same deed, it is now apparently resolved that measures shall be adopted which will consummate and ensure the ruin of the planters, because by them sugar may be obtained a very trifle cheaper! Is there philanthropy or justice in this manner of proceeding? I say it is now resolved, because the character of the debate is in itself a demonstration that a great change has taken place in public opinion in regard to our question, and that of slavery. John Bull has got rid of the stigma by sacrificing us, and as, in his shortsightedness, he cannot see that he will be blamed for selfishness and inconsistency, he chuckles at the idea of getting the article as cheap as his neighbour, while he can hold up his head and say — “Thanks to the munificence of Great Britain, there is not a slave in her dominions.”

It is to be hoped that some time must elapse, breathing time for the miserable colonists, before this act of national tergiversation can be carried into effect; and, in the meantime, that we may be enabled to get labour imported sufficient to supply the loss of it, which has been caused by emancipation; as an earnest of this, we are already reaping the fruit of our new ordinance, in large arrivals of Portuguese from Madeira, the Colony paying the cost of their conveyance. They are chiefly located on the coast, until it is ascertained that they are fitted to stand the climate, the fact being doubtful still, from the different results, as detailed by those who had them on their estates, when only a few had been imported.

The price of sugar in the colonial market of Georgetown is nearly at the current rate of the first half of 1840, from the unexpectedly large quantities that have come in from the East Indies. Yet it was to be anticipated that a

stimulus would be given there to the manufacture of sugar by British machinery, on the equalization of the duties, and the general expectation among those who were acquainted with the subject, of greatly deficient crops in the West Indies. Foreign colonies are also extending their cultivation of the article, in the belief that Britain must be reduced to the necessity of being supplied by them. My two neighbours are quite chop-fallen. Ridley has been ill from extreme depression caused by the news; while Wellingham has the most desponding, cheerless look that can be well imagined.

In the month of March, his son, encouraged by the aspect of the times, made proposals in form for my daughter; and I, in conformity with the plan I had long before resolved to adopt on this occasion, frankly, and without reserve, told him the state of my mind regarding him. He received it with perfect good temper, and the most engaging submission, declaring that he was well aware of those infirmities in his nature, but as his dispositions were good, he hoped to correct them in time. He then told me that he acted with the full sanction of his father, who proposed that they should live together as heretofore; and, "in order to make me perfectly independent, he would raise my salary as manager to two thousand dollars, which, he thought, with other considerations, might do well enough." "Well, Charles," said I, "as I have been candid with you on one side of the question, it is right I should be so also on the other; I have stated the principal objections; I like you and your father, and if you promise to keep yourself under command, and do nothing of consequence without the advice of your seniors, I shall not oppose your views—your success of course must depend altogether on Grace." His eye brightened at this, and I could perceive he was sure of his object. From that day, my poor wife, who has, it may be whispered, less mind than either of her daughters,

was in a flutter of excitement, which, to keep the house quiet, I was obliged to allay, by getting the affair arranged as speedily as was consistent with propriety. They were married early in April, and they seem now to be as happy as people so situated generally are. But now, when the prospects of the planters have been blasted as suddenly as they were excited, I begin to repent me of the facility with which I gave in to my wife's remonstrances—the Wellingshams' solicitations—and, not the least, poor Grace's looks; but, after all, it may only end in want of fortune. He is young, strong, and possessed of talents which, if properly applied, will always enable him to support a small establishment like his present one. I have given her, during my life, an annuity, which, joined to Charles's salary, makes them comfortable.

Old Wellingham is one of those characters who are lively in company from making an exertion to be so, but who generally shun gay society. My family often express a wish to see more of a man who is so agreeable; but I know he is frequently days and weeks when his words are few, and his eye averted from the world. Ridley is very different. I cannot say of him that he takes "Fortune's buffets and her smiles alike;" but he enjoys the latter to the full extent, and he meets the former with a stern composure, like that of a brave man in presence of an enemy whom he has to encounter. Such is he now. I met him two days ago, and he came up with a sad smile. "Well, neighbour, I do fear—in fact, I always felt, as it were, that you would be partly right in regard to prices, the rise being so sudden; but who would think that the question of introducing the sugar produced by slave labour into the British market would be entertained by even a minority in a British parliament." "My friend," said I, "self-interest being the governing motive in the actions of all men, you should have dipped deeper into human nature before you made up your mind to rely so much on justice

predominating over it." "But," said he impatiently, "the nation, if it sanctions at any future time such a flagrant crime, deserves to be accounted infamous throughout all countries in the civilized world." "Well," answered I, "what of that? Will the manufacturers of England hug themselves less eagerly on carrying their measures, because the character of the nation may suffer? Bodies of men, Ridley, will do things that individuals would shrink from with loathing and abhorrence. There is, perhaps, not one of these Manchester men—not even Bright himself, or Cobden—who would singly reduce to misery and starvation his next door neighbour, to promote his own views; but, collectively, you see they do not hesitate to immolate a large body of their countrymen." "And that," said Ridley, "just amounts to this, that they can halloo each other on to any mischief which they, individually, would not dare to think of. Very like the difference between the man who will not venture to destroy another when he is alone, but, aided by two or three more like himself, will attack and overpower him anywhere: just different shades of guilt." "We are becoming too severe," said I; "but, to return to my original position, the workings of self-interest in a party so strong as the manufacturing is in England, must ultimately prove dangerous to the state: it is an *imperium in imperio*—a power capable of ruling the rulers of the land." "Aye," replied my friend bitterly; "John Bull will find in time that this cuckoo will prove too large for his nest." "They have long desired to open the ports of the world to their goods, at any injury they may inflict on what may be called the bulwarks of our constitution; and now, drunk with prosperity, they aim at rivalling in rank and power, as well as wealth, the hereditary legislators of the land; but, finding that public opinion is too firmly established in favour of the latter, their next object will be to pull them down to the level of themselves."

We had many such conversations. Wellingham, since the bad accounts arrived, has rather kept out of my way, but he pretends, although it is with a sunken eye and desponding visage, that things are not yet so desperate—that West Indians are always in the clouds or in the mud, never preserving a happy equilibrium, and that the majority in our favour is still overwhelming in parliament. His son, sanguine ever, redoubles his assiduity and attention. Ridley says, except himself, he does not know a manager who works so hard; indeed, his wife complains that he over-fatigues himself in the field. The impression which has been made on the public mind, may be explained by what I have described as existing in my own immediate circle. Merchants, who are like the mimosæ, extremely sensible of the slightest touch (from adverse times), begin to shake their heads and look ominous to those who are either their debtors already or wish to become such. One thing is universally talked of, a reduction of wages to a suitable rate. The planters, paralyzed by this suddenly re-opened prospect of a gulph likely to devour them, loudly exclaim that they cannot now afford even the rates fixed by the tariff of 1838, to say nothing of the rise which the high prices of last year enabled them to give; and the Negroes, on the other hand, not being able to understand how wages should depend on the price of sugar, but fancying that the buckra country is full of money, are, with the suspicion that naturally belongs to their class, inclined to believe that the Whites wish to take advantage of them. Unhappily, the head of our executive, who ought to set them right in that respect, is too much disposed, whether from ignorance or necessity is of no consequence, to take the same view of such questions.

Mr. Brown, not having been able to keep pace with his more ardent neighbours, on account of the restraint imposed on him by me, complains that the crop has suffered

much from want of labourers, to which I reply philosophically, that I can better afford to have a bad year than most of my neighbours, and as some must suffer loss, seeing that there is not a sufficient number of labourers for the whole, it is better it should fall on me; to this he only answers by a singular stare, as if to ascertain whether I could be in earnest. Although many left him for higher wages, they have since manifested an inclination to return, if he would meet them half-way, by giving half the amount of the rise in addition to the old rate; but he has remained firm, in order, if it be possible, to keep them to habits of a more settled nature. Negroes are like children, as I have often said, in their fickleness, and, in fact, generally; but in one thing they show a sort of cat-like steadfastness. I mean in attachment to what has been long their home. There can be no doubt, however, that the propensity they now indulge in to a great extent, of roving from place to place, and remaining but a short time in one, will ultimately eradicate the feeling of partiality for their original locality; and this propensity, being a sort of restlessness consequent on, and arising out of their altered condition, is too strong to be checked by any other consideration whatever. It is really an astonishing sight for one just from Europe, to witness the cool indifference with which a request is received regarding the performance of any particular sort of work. The greatest aversion is also shown by the people here to do anything alone, so that on all occasions it is necessary to send two for any job, even if it cannot occupy more than a few minutes. They are always ready, too, with an excuse for it. The best way to illustrate anything is to state a fact in point. The following occurred to myself. An old carpenter was desired by me to take a hammer and a couple of nails, and fasten a board that had got loose on the railing of a bridge. "Massa tell mangea (manager)?"

“No, it is not necessary for such a trifle; go directly.”
 “Who me sha’ take, sa?” “Why, what do you mean? you can’t want anybody to help you to drive a nail?”
 The old man, after staring a little, came close up to me, and inserting the point of a fore-finger among the wool of his head, in order to give force to the illustration, “Massa savee catch l—se with one finger?” inquired he.

But as I said already, a man who has been accustomed to see the poorer class begging for work as a favour, is here amazed by the unnatural necessity that exists for actually begging people to work for wages far above the value of their labour. What can such a state of affairs end in, but ruin to all depending on these labourers? Unless, indeed, the subject of immigration is taken up by government, as a question in which the nation is interested. It is true, we have gained something by the ordinance; but we would have both Asia and Africa opened to us, as well as the islands in the Atlantic and the countries of Europe. From the experience we have hitherto had, I fear the worst from the powerful confederacy against us. The Aborigines Protection Society has now taken on itself the care of all people on the face of the earth, I suppose, under this very comprehensive designation; and a strange thing it is, that a number of gentlemen, most of them seldom out of London, should be seized with the inclination to rule mankind in this manner, especially that portion of it which knows just as little about the patronising society, as the latter knows of them. It is an easy thing for those men, over their wine, to sit in judgment on their fellowmen—to damn the West India planter—save the New Zealand cannibal—and hug themselves in the belief that they are acquiring reputation for themselves by such omnipotent deeds. But while the world laughs at them, there is still an exceptional portion of the political population, who find their account in leaguings with, and cajoling those their simpler brethren; and they are our

deadly foes, the anti-colonial faction of Britain, powerful already, and yearly adding to their dangerous influence.

The Negroes, now in a position to exact their own terms from the unhappy proprietors, are fully aware of the advantages they possess. This they show in their contemptuous treatment of the Madeira people who come here. A few of my folks had gone to a part of the coast where some of these yellow buckras are located, and had fallen in with them at work in the fields. "Well, Trim," asked I of one on his return, "you saw the Portuguese; what do you think of them? can they work well?" "Yes me see dem; massa, for true dem buckra?" "Certainly they are buckras; why do you ask?" "Case, me tink say, dem bucks (Indians); such nasty, good-for-notting buckra, me neber see; sailor self ghentlemen ober dem; dem must be de bucks of the White contree." "Ah! Trim, you don't like them; you think they will bring down wages, eh?" "Dem shan't," replied Trim, with energy; "before dem sha' bodder we, we sha' fight them, so send um back, good-for-notting buckra trow-away (castaway buckras); dem begga, too, Negro gie um bittal (victuals)." This last vituperation alluded to a singular feature in the character of the Portuguese, who are not only exceedingly industrious, but so fond of money that they are unwilling to spend any portion of their wages, and actually beg so long as they can obtain something by it. It is evident that they excite the jealousy of their black compatriots; and this may be by their diligence, for it is said that they are so anxious to acquire riches, that they work too zealously under the burning sun, which they ought to avoid, selecting the mornings and afternoons for their tasks, as they have been earnestly advised to do. But I only speak of them from hearsay: if they can stand the climate, they will prove a blessing to us. I have heard of some cases of malignant fever among them, and it is said the medical men apprehend

a great deal of sickness from their habits, which are filthy in the extreme, and the hard work, which they will not be dissuaded from.

We have obtained, besides those inhabitants of Madeira, a host of people from the West India Islands, tempted by the wages and the free passage in conjunction. A large proportion of those are but indifferent subjects, who perhaps avail themselves of the terms to get a ramble in the land of mud, as our Colony is denominated by the islanders. They are chiefly Barbadians, and some are said to be good men, while others are the very refuse of that place. We have an agent there, and in other places where there is a likelihood of obtaining people; and it is suspected that those officers are not so particular as they should be in their selection. But, in truth, they have a difficult part to play, and a battle to fight with almost every man of any note in the places where they are recruiting. Labour is scarce in every part of the British West Indies, even Barbadoes, where the population is extremely dense, and the wages not one-third of ours. Still, sugar requiring many hands, and only a certain proportion, as with us, being constantly at work, the planters and others in want of servants, look with bitter jealousy on their abduction by our agent. In the meantime, while measures are anxiously pressed forward by the planters to increase the supply of manual labour, no means are spared to diminish the necessity for it by mechanical improvement. Perhaps the most successful of the hundreds which have been suggested, are those which convey the canes from the punt to the mill—cane carriers, each a chain of paddles fastened together by links and rods, revolving round a wheel at one end, and a drum at the other, and resting on a strong wooden frame. It is worked by the steam-engine. The canes, being thrown on it from the punt, are drawn up by its revolution to the mill, in such manner that they fall in exactly

between the crushing rollers. It saves the labour of several persons, the canes having been previously carried on the peoples' heads to the mill. After they are crushed, another improvement, equally valuable, comes into play for the removal of the megass or crushed canes, consisting of a truck railway, with a gradual ascent, till it reaches midway between the eve and the top of the logé or barn, where the megass is deposited. On this frame, trucks loaded with the latter (into which it drops from the mill), are pulled up by means of a strong rope through a pulley between two posts at the upper extremity of the railway, where is a platform to receive the truck on attaining its proper elevation; and from this platform, a horizontal railway goes the whole length of the logé, along which the truck is pushed by two men, until it reaches the spot where it is to be emptied, which is done by opening its sides (they being on hinges for the purpose), and allowing the megass to fall down. It is also wrought by the engine.

Various schemes have been tried to lighten the labour of carrying the dried megass or fuel to the fires under the sugar boilers or coppers as they are called, but they have invariably been defeated by the obstinate adherence of the Negroes to old practices, there being no possibility of doing this by the ordinary steam-engine of an estate. Tram-railways were made, and trucks placed on them; but the Negroes preferred the original mode of carrying it on their heads in enormous bundles, although they could convey twice as much in the other way in a given time. It was long ere they could be prevailed on to use wheel-barrows for any purpose, such being the inveterate force of habit, and everything with them going, by a sort of impulsive instinct, above their heads. It is said that a proprietor imported a dozen wheel-barrows some years ago, and selecting a few of the most intelligent of his people, showed them how they were to be used. After

a great many “cha! cha’s!” and “heh! heh’s!” they began to trundle them as if actually in fear; but massa had no sooner turned his back, than they all stood still, and one fellow fairly lifted the barrow on to his head, exclaiming loudly upon massa for bringing that “new something to bodder a’ we.” Wheel-barrows are now in general use, however, and the desire of being like the Whites is gradually overcoming prejudices in general. Some very strong and pernicious feelings of this sort still linger among them; and of these, perhaps the most absurd and dangerous is their belief in the superstition of Obi. The influence of opinion—that which they observe to obtain among the Whites—has certainly had some effect in diminishing their faith in the power of those who practice it; but, if it has done this, it has also taken away part of the fear with which they regard such characters. This is observed to be the case among the Creoles, who are disposed to believe that every African is an Obi man, especially if he is very old and very ugly, and they do not scruple, on the slightest occasion, to beat him unmercifully, if they think it can be done with impunity. I have an African of this description, and already he has been twice beaten in that manner, although I could not perceive that he had done anything to offend the young scoundrels who attacked him. The first, I took to task for the offence, and demanded why he had dared to maltreat a man old enough to be his grandfather. He shook his head, “Da man no good.” “Why is he not good?” “He savee kill people.” “Did he wish to kill *you*?” “Massa, tha’ tory no good for talk; da man no ha’ God, he ha’ debbil.” “And do you think he has power to raise the devil on you?” “Heh! no good for talk.” “If you thought he had that power, you would not dare to strike him; you do it because you wish to show your matties you are not afraid of Obi; now you shall pay Goliah four dollars for that beating, or go before the magistrate.” He paid

the money. The next, I sent to the stipendiary, and he was fined in six dollars.

They have a sort of ill-defined idea, that the Obi man has power by his art, to destroy some persons who are not Christians; and they think it very grand to beat him, as it shows they are like buckras, and not afraid of him. But no Negro, whether Creole or African, likes to speak on the subject of Obi. There is a latent fear of something lingering in their minds in connection with that villainous, and, at one period, cruel superstition, which shows that the light of civilization is yet contending with aboriginal and cimmerician darkness in their minds. I say this of the Creoles. The Africans still believe in Obi with pristine faith, although some of them have an idea that the Christian religion, under certain circumstances, will prove too strong for it.

JANUARY, 1842.

THE downward tendency in prices, was arrested about the middle of the bygone year, when they were still a shade higher than in 1839. The feeling of distrust and despondency, which was great in proportion to the magnitude of the evil, and the sudden manner of its approach, has been partly removed by the usual effect of time. But there is a prevailing sense of the impossibility of doing anything under existing prices of labour; and the proprietary body, unanimous on this point, agreed to have a general meeting in Georgetown, to fix a new tariff, with a code of regulations suitable to the exigencies of the case. This meeting has just taken place, and the particulars having been arranged, it was settled that district meetings should also be held; which, adopting the rates of wages and the regulations agreed on, should alter them to suit any peculiarities that might exist in each locality, it being impossible that they could apply in the same manner to all places.

Whilst this is going on, the Blackies preserve an ominous silence, and David tells me they will not give in to the regulations; and, strange to say, although he is a sensible man, I cannot make him understand the urgency of the necessity for a measure of this sort. "You see, David, if the sugar I make sells for no more than twenty thousand dollars, and if I pay more than that in expenses, I won't continue to make it." "Certain." "Well, sugar will not rise—the price is higher now than it was before the great first of August, so we must not look to that, then the only thing left us is to reduce expenses." "Certain; but wages no all." "The other expenses of an estate are all as much reduced as possible, (even the salaries of the Whites,) many of them depend on the cost of articles in Europe, such as coals and staves." "All true, massa." "Then you see that we cannot help this reduction—it is forced on us by absolute necessity." "Massa remember I told him before time, if White people don't gib good money, Negro won't work?" "I remember it quite well." "Da so he stand (so it is), Nigga," said he, energetically, "will not work in dis here country for lectle money; I don't care who know it, me say so." I knew he was perfectly in earnest by his aspect. "Then, David, you must allow, nevertheless, that we are obliged to do it, you see that." "No, Massa, me don't see dat; me tell you true. The king or queen, wha they call um? before he make new law for Nigga, must know bery well he can't work without good money; if sugar no bring good price, let the queen give the plantation massa dem money to pay the people; da he do um, da he take um from plantation make he free." I thought for a minute on this strange proposal. "And do the Negroes really talk in that way, David?" "Every one talk so: they no have story wid sugar; if de queen hab power take away slaves, queen have power to pay a' we proper." Here, thought I, may rulers learn a lesson in practical wisdom, from "babes and sucklings" in intellect.

The plain meaning and tendency of David's reasoning, which he gives as that of his countrymen generally, is this, that a government, before it undertakes a great measure, affecting the interests of so many people as the Emancipation Act does, must surely have calculated the cost of its operation in every way, and resolved that this shall be paid by the country generally, without allowing the unfortunates who are operated on, to bear the whole expense. It is an excellent commentary, considering the quarter it comes from, on the measures of government for the last eight or ten years. It may perhaps remind the reader of the Sierra Leone anecdote regarding a poor boy whose leg a charitable surgeon took off for nothing, to save the individual's life, and whose mother brought him, as soon as the stump was well, and laid him down at the surgeon's door, saying—"After massa cut off poor boy foot, me come see what massa give for support him." But David's remark goes farther than that. He has faith in the wisdom of the king (this word comprehends ministers, parliament, and every ruling power), and he thinks he is prepared with money to carry out honestly, and without loss to anybody here, the purposes of the Act.

The Negroes invariably look on the White people collectively, as having only one interest; hence their coolness towards Scoble and others who manifested what they consider a very suspicious leaning towards them, when they should naturally be all for those of their own colour. They also are of one mind as to the lawfulness of slavery; and they would consider the taking away of slaves from a man, exactly in the same light as forcibly depriving him of his estate in land, unless the most ample compensation should be made. They are accordingly mystified entirely as to the proceedings of the imperial government; for the intelligent of them know perfectly well that the proprietors only got about two-fifths of the value of their bond-

men. Slavery being the lot of the many in Africa, they are disposed, by tradition or experience, to regard it as the natural state of society, and the proper position of the labourer, exactly for the same reason that the Englishman looks on freedom as his birth-right, because it was the inheritance of his fathers. I have never heard a Negro say that it was otherwise than unjust to emancipate them without paying their price; but some, having been imbued with the Radical doctrine, insist that we were paid enough for property that was unproductive. David, however, is not one of those. He knows what the article would have fetched in the market, and no sophistry can persuade him that it was not worth the market price. He himself, as he proudly told me, was appraised in 1832 at 4,500 guilders of our currency, or about £360 sterling. He was known to be a good man and a good driver. But to resume the conversation—"You think, then, David, that the king (queen you mean—it is a lady) must have informed herself on every point connected with this question, and that she will not let the work stop without giving what money is required to pay what you call proper wages." "Yes, massa, de queen and her council hab too much wisdom to do big thing like that in such loose fashion, dat would be worse than Congo Nigger." "Then you think that all this fright among the proprietors, and their meetings, are just for nothing—no good reason?" "Yes, da so dem say, dem say buckra want to fool them—put plenty money in dem pocket." "Now, David, you can't believe that; do you not think it possible that the planters are not supported by the queen as they expected?" "Perhaps (doubtingly) may be so, massa." I knew perfectly, by the tone in which he spoke, that he did not agree with me. I was aware also that reasoning with him was entirely out of the question, until something should occur to stagger him in what is at present a point that he pins his faith to. After a short pause, he went

on—"Dem say governor no 'gree with the plantation massa; he no think wage too much." "Ay! do the Negroes fancy that to be the case." "Massa no hear some go to his office? dem say, so he tell them." "I can't believe that, David; he could not do anything so far wrong, and so contrary to facts." "So dem say; me no know." And thus our conversation terminated. I was really alarmed by the last piece of news, having generally found my foreman correct as to what was reported.

1st FEBRUARY, 1842.

THE greatest consternation now prevails over the Colony, in consequence of the cessation from labour which has occurred on the universal adoption of the rate of wages, with the rules and regulations, by the proprietary body. It has been produced, as much by the very singular conduct of the executive, as by those measures which were forced on the luckless planters by grievous necessity. The Negroes flocked to the government office, where they were talked to, either by the governor or one of his chief officers, in that sort of undecided manner, which, with a rude people naturally suspicious, is almost sure to mislead. Instead of being told plainly, that the planters had each a right to frame what regulations and rate of wages he thought proper for his estate, and to consult with his fellows as to what was most proper, which is all we did—the Negroes were informed that the matter would be considered, and so forth. We soon learned that it had been considered in a manner we little expected—that a copy of what we had agreed upon as our new code of plantation wages and regulations, had been formally submitted to H. M. Attorney-General, to ascertain whether the document was not illegal; in other words, whether means could not be found to force us to

abandon those changes we deemed essential to our preservation from ruin. It is proper to say, that the governor objected to the rules, not to the alteration in the wages. It would be thought a most tyrannical thing in England, if the lord-lieutenant of a county would interpose his authority between a master-manufacturer and his workmen, in regard to the establishment of regular hours for labour, so as to have all hands employed at once—the occupation of cottages belonging to the former, or anything, in fact, which was purely matter of bargain between the two parties. We have been accustomed to arbitrary measures from our governors, and this did not startle us so much in itself, as being an indication of the gubernatorial feeling, but as a sort of corollary to all the proceedings of the executive hitherto, and an explanation of them. It looked, in fact, when taken in connection with the apathy of the government in regard to immigration, as an evidence that ministers desired to keep up the high rate of wages for the benefit of their proteges, the Negroes. It is not surprising that the planters should entertain such opinions, knowing that the opposition of the guardian Anti-slavery Society to immigration into the sugar colonies, is ostensibly based on the belief that a reduction of wages will ensue upon it; and being aware also of the immense power which this body, in connection with the cotton aristocracy, now has in the councils of the nation. The thinking portion of them feel that they are under the feet of this powerful confederacy, and that every danger is to be apprehended from the grasping, one-sided, self-aggrandizing ideas which have got absolute possession of its members. A strike was to be feared, and it was fully anticipated by the proprietors; but one so fostered and encouraged, cannot fail to affect them deeply, when they take into consideration its probable consequences, and its duration under such circumstances; for how can they calculate on the resumption of labour at the

necessary reduction, if the people believe the governor, and consequently that omnipotent power, according to their belief, the queen, to be against any alteration that would reduce wages.

I have heard the governor and his satellites argue, in a conversational way, that the Negroes required very high wages, and, in fact, could not exist without them, owing to the high price of food. He judged of the latter by his own experience, and by the same very singular mode of analogy adduced by the anti-slavery folks when they speak of the hardships of the Negro's case. It is not long since one of them, in telling a sad tale of a free African who had been entrapped by a villainous ship captain into slavery in the West Indies, asked triumphantly at the close of his story—"How would an English gentleman like to be seized on his own estate, amidst all his enjoyments, and flung, mangled and fettered, into the hold of a ship, and forced to toil all his days in a foreign land." The tale was bad enough, without the absurd attempt at comparison where none could be. No beings can be more unlike than the wild, naked savage, following the impulse of his passions, and scarcely endowed with reason, and the highly-refined and intellectual gentleman; but one requires to see both in their proper state. The strange fashion adopted by travellers, of giving high-sounding titles to the headmen of savage tribes, misleads the people of England. Judging from what they see and hear of kings and princes nearer home, they cannot imagine any who bear those attributes to be so widely different from them; consequently, any dark-complexioned man brought from Asia, Africa, or America, is an object of veneration with them, if he has one of those grand designations, although he can scarcely bear the clothes rendered indispensable by the climate, and regards with a keen, hungry look, the children he passes on the streets.

But this does not concern our governor. The articles his butler buys in the market, cost him considerably more than they would in London; but no labourer is expected to live like a gentleman. Indeed, the state of society here is now such as to produce that extraordinary condition of the lower classes, and it is just what we suffer from; but the inference from the governor's observation is, that he cannot get food at a lower rate. Let us see how the case stands. The food which the Negro enjoys more than any other in his natural state, is the fruit of the musa or plantain tree, with some seasoning, such as salt fish or pork, with pepper, &c. The allowance fixed under the sanction of the protector of slaves in former times, and confirmed by the privy council, was, per week, three pounds of salt fish (cod), or four pounds of herrings or mackerel, and two bunches of plantains, weighing, at least, thirty-five pounds each, for full-grown people, or rather for all who were above twelve years old; and half those quantities for children under that age. Now, take the case of a man with a wife and three children. He will require for them ten and a-half pounds of salt fish, and seven and a-half bunches of plantains. The price of fish is at this moment at about twopence per pound, and that of plantains at one shilling and sixpence per bunch; the aggregate cost of a week's food will therefore be thirteen shillings. The wages of the two, for only twelve tasks a-week, will amount, at one shilling and eightpence each, to twenty shillings. But this cannot be accounted more than half of the benefit the labourer derives from his connection with the proprietor. He has a cottage worth four dollars, or sixteen shillings, a-month (four shillings a-week), and as much garden ground as he chooses. The latter advantage, in fact, renders the expense of plantains unnecessary, for he can raise either them, or ground provisions, perfectly sufficient for his family, by a few minutes' work on each day. It is quite true that if the

Negro must drink Madeira and champaign, and eat of the most delicate viands, this pay will not suffice; but any one may see, by the above calculation, that he can afford a great many things which the poor, shivering, hard-worked peasant of Europe knows only by name. Yet the worst of this superfluity is the effect it has on the morals of the people.

Those who, in accordance with what I have just said, are disposed to judge the Africans by a European standard, would do well, in thinking on their present state, to fancy the case of so many school-boys, with more pocket-money than they can dispose of without injury to themselves. This is an evil that all parents and guardians are anxious to avoid, by limiting the amount to the lowest sum compatible with the due supply of those articles which are necessary to the healthy, moral, and physical enjoyment of the youths.

But he has still other advantages. On many estates, the same privileges are continued which the slaves enjoyed; a medical man being provided for them, and nurses in sickness; a certain allowance of rum had been daily given to each, until the legislature very properly put an end to it lately, by imposing a tax on the consumption of the article within the Colony, and limiting the sale to houses licensed for the purpose; a salutary measure, as a check on drunkenness, and a principal source of revenue, legitimately derived, to the Colony. It has been alleged that the taxes press severely on the labouring population; but, I presume, no person who is unprejudiced, will say that two shillings per gallon on rum is a high impost, especially when the object of its imposition is the benefit of the Negroes themselves. They still get the liquor at a rate too low to prevent them from drinking more than is good for them. It has been called by some of the official people, the poor man's beer of this province, and they urged that as an objection to the tax, but the effect of the

two on mankind is very different. It is a strange argument to bring forward, as it suggests immediately the burthens upon what is *bona fide* the poor man's beer in England, and who has nothing to spare from his wages wherewith to pay for it. The price at the licensed liquor store is only one shilling per bottle, duty included, of proof spirit. Allowing grog to be one of their necessaries, there is just another upon which a tax is paid, which is salt fish, and it amounts to about one farthing per pound, being comprehended in the twopence mentioned as the price of it. A man thus pays on fish three shillings and threepence per annum more than he would if it was untaxed. There is also a slight duty on the requisite articles of clothing, (two and a-half per cent., *ad valorem*,) which, in our climate, are few for labouring people. On gay and fine garments, it is just, if they can buy them, that they should pay a corresponding rate. In short, with the advantage of better wages for four hours' work than Englishmen get for twelve, they have their food at a cheaper rate, and pay no taxes except what we have specified on necessaries, while the Englishman pays duty on his malt, sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate—the two first, and one of the three last of which are considered by him as indispensable, and which, excepting malt (or rum), the Negro gets free of any burthen whatever. They are too lightly taxed, when we consider that the public expenditure has been so enormously increased by the operation of the Emancipation Act in their favour, for hospitals, police, jails, and penal settlements, together with teachers, clergymen, paid magistrates, and a host of other officers, who were all either created expressly for their behoof, or rendered essential by the measures adopted for their benefit; and when reference is made to the value of labour, as contrasted with the cost of the articles required by the labourers. But the unhappy planters do not wish to curtail their enjoyments, if the mother country shall continue to think them innocent; they only wish to have

such prices for their produce, as will enable them to support the expense of cultivation, and give them wherewithal to provide food and clothing for their own families.

The crop of last year has, in accordance with Mr. Brown's predictions, fallen considerably behind that of 1840, having been only 155 hds., with 13,000 gallons of rum, and the expenses being increased, the loss on the year has been about £1,500. Some of my neighbours have been more unfortunate, the largest amount sunk in the district, in one estate, being £5,000; an enormous sum, and a loss truly startling, when we consider that it may be of frequent occurrence, so long as the cultivation is kept up.

Wellingham has had a better return, which, with the profits of 1840, has put his mortgagee into good humour, and the whole family, including the young wife, seem to be in excellent spirits. Ridley, however, has fallen back a little, though not to the same extent as I have suffered. He literally puts his shoulder to the wheel; and now that I know him better, I can perceive that he is labouring under great anxiety, which he masks under a hearty, bluff manner. He is one of those who direct their attention chiefly to the quality of the work performed, and to the enforcement of the strictest economy in the routine of the estate; and he finds it necessary, in order to satisfy himself that his views are properly carried out, to be in the field while the gangs are there, because he has found that the overseers are useless in keeping the labourers to the honest and faithful discharge of their duty, their authority, commands, and remonstrances being alike disregarded. As manager of his own property, he finds that he has infinitely more weight with the people than another person would have who was not at the same time proprietor.

Negroes have a sort of hereditary respect for the lords of the soil; and, while they would openly deride an over-

seer, and quietly offer a passive resistance to the directions of a manager who did not suit their tastes, they would yield obedience readily, so far as they will do so now, to the dictates of the plantation massa. But while they act thus, they are by no means insensible to the absurdity of any solecism in plantership, which an inexperienced proprietor would be guilty of; and it is a singular fact that, although they will ruin an estate by the careless performance of their tasks from day to day, they do not like to work under an unskilful planter. On an estate near this is a young manager, preferred to the charge on account of his relationship to the proprietor, whose actions have lately been severely criticised by his neighbours. About a fortnight ago, some twenty or twenty-five men, with their shovels on shoulder, came to me, in absence of Mr. Brown, to offer themselves for hire. I entered into conversation with them in the usual way, asked their terms, and so forth, and, finally, whence they came. I learned that they were from the plantation I have just alluded to, and I then said that although willing to take all the good hands who offered themselves, I did not like to deprive a near neighbour of his ablest shovelmen. "Why do you leave him?" There was a dead silence for half a minute; and, no older man inclining to speak, a little bustling youngster of about twenty came forward—"Massa," said he, "no use for tell lie, tha' ryoung (young) mangea no ha' sense, he da play h—l yander." Then they all opened like a pack of hounds. "He mad." "He let in salt water for kill cane." "He boil sugar berrout (without) lime," were the phrases, among twenty others, most distinctly heard. "But," said I, "if you do the work well in the field, what is it to you if he spoils the cultivation? you have nothing to do with that." "Massa," said the same youth, "we no want estate to hab *cracter*?" "Indeed," was my reply; "I should think it is what you care very little about; it is

notorious that all of you now do the plantation work very badly; if you wish your own to have a good character, why don't you do it as well as in the old time?" "O dat is oder ting." "Why?" He would not answer, but I could do it for him. Individually, they like to indulge their indolence by doing their tasks in the easiest, and, consequently, the worst manner; but they are all proud, and each would like to see his comrade doing the work properly, although he will not, because he wishes, in speaking to a friend on a neighbouring estate, to be able to crow over him, and to tell that his cultivation looks better, and his crops are larger than those of his neighbour. It has often struck me that the Negro is the proudest of mankind, and the most sensitive in regard to aggression on his self-esteem.

It may be imagined that this feeling might be turned to good account, by proper management on the part of the resident proprietors. It has been found, however, by Ridley, and I suppose all the rest who are in immediate charge of their own estates, that they can only control the disposition, so as to make it advantageous, when they are in the field and literally standing over the labourers, which is absolutely impossible at all times, because there are always two gangs on every plantation, and frequently three or four; but if there was no more than one, an individual would find it almost impracticable to watch every turn of the hoe or shovel made by thirty or forty people at a time. The overseers on those estates where they are least attended to by the Negroes, can do no more than make a memorandum in the morning of the position occupied in the field by each person, and, in the afternoon, he is enabled by it to take down the manner in which the labour of each has been performed, and the amount of it. If the manager believes, from what he knows of his people, that the bad work may be made better, he directs those who are reported as malperformers, to go over it again

next day, otherwise wages will be stopped. From what has already been said, it will be understood that the frequent repetition of this order will go far to depopulate an estate.

It is true, that if the planters could be unanimous, and if they all possessed the requisite firmness to hold out sufficiently long, this evil might be amended; but when one considers the state of trembling anxiety in which men are whose means of existence are at stake, and also, the effect which a single person of weaker nerves than the rest would produce among people so constituted, by departing from the line which they had all agreed to follow, one will not be surprised that the planters cannot maintain a discipline of the nature required. I fear, in the present attempt to lower wages, we shall experience the impossibility of adhering to our own rules; it is already whispered that some planters, alarmed by the governor's proceedings, have postponed the introduction of the reduced rate on their estates.

I am interrupted by my friend Wellingham. He tells me that last mail brought him a letter from the house which holds his mortgage, couched in the most friendly terms, and intimating that so long as his crops continue to be as good as the last, they will be as indulgent as they possibly can; and "Charles," continued he, "is quite sanguine as to our future returns." "I do not doubt it," replied I; "Charles is generally so. But pray, what do your merchants say to the expenses of last year?" "Why," said he, with a sigh, "they do say that they were very great; but they have hopes of, in fact, they inculcate forcibly, the necessity for retrenchment." "Of course; but can they tell you how it is to be done? any abatement hinted at in freights and commissions?" "Nay; that we can hardly expect during such times; besides, it would only be a drop out of the bucket." "But by those drops the bucket is filled." "Unless we can reduce

wages, all other reductions will not avail us." "True; but if the merchants do not relax a little in their demands, how can we expect the labourers to give in to our schemes; if mortgagees claim their bond, without reference to the difficulties of mortgagers, it is with a bad grace that those same persons, as planters, insist on a reduction of wages." "I believe people generally think that it is in vain to continue the growth and manufacture of sugar in the present state of the labour market, even if all other expenses were brought down to one half of their current amount." "Indeed, it is doubtful if that would turn the balance in their favour; still, on principle, everything that lessens cost must be tried. There is much privation endured by many proprietors in order to carry out their plans of economy. I heard yesterday of one who had been accustomed to keep a carriage and pair, and who sold them lately, and has nothing but an improved sort of canoe to travel in now, while his wife must stay at home, or go to town, or anywhere else she may wish to go to, in the schooner of the estate." "I pray God," said Wellingham, mournfully, "that the mere loss of comforts may be all that the bulk of our body may have to endure; but if we are not borne out in our hopes of better times, those hopes that we must entertain, or embrace destitution at once, what is to become of us all?"

"You are aware," said I, "that I have had this ever present to mind since the year 1838; and I am now so sensible of the danger we are in, that I have resolved while I can yet do so with honour, to settle the few thousand pounds that remain in my banker's hands on my wife and children, leaving still a considerable sum with my merchants to give the estate a fair chance of better times, by carrying it out, if we are doomed to get out of our present precarious position." "Ah! Premium," replied my friend, with a look of deep despondency,

“when one in my situation beholds one in your’s, and one who, besides, is both prudent and energetic, thus seeing nothing but disaster in prospect, what may I not expect?” “Forgive me, Wellingham,” said I, “we are brothers, and like brothers we should speak openly to each other; yet pardon me if I speak plainly to you. I fear that Charles is, even now, indulging in his naturally sanguine and hopeful disposition, to an extent far beyond what present appearances warrant; and although I say it not, I may believe that this state of feeling will affect his mode of management. In short, Wellingham, I fear Charles may imagine that in raising large crops, he is doing everything, so long as the mortgagee is satisfied.” “But, my dear friend,” was his answer, “is not that a great deal? The planters, as a body, are straining every nerve to keep up their estates, even at a great loss, until the coming of a brighter day; the mortgagee is a sort of embodiment of the existing evils, for they bring him prominently forward, who, but for them, would be in the background.” “What you say is perfectly correct; at the same time, you must allow that the mortgagee will consider it to be unbusinesslike to continue this state of affairs long, and you know he is a planter as well as yourself, and will readily perceive at what cost you are consigning so much sugar to his friends in England.” He was deeply distressed. “My dear Premium, what shall I say? God knows all this and more has occurred to me often.” “I know it; I know you to be thoughtful and considerative, but I perceive also, that you are driven by despair to drown reflection, and to put off the evil day by any means in your power. This is the first time I have spoken to you in such a manner; take it as a proof of my esteem, and believe me when I say, that I would not have done it had I not been sure that you would derive benefit from it.” “But how, my friend?” cried he wildly; “I think, as God shall judge me, that I shall have

no time from my merchants if the crops fall off." "Do you think, if a certain portion of the mortgage was paid, that the holders of it would give you any considerable time?" "I know they would; for twelve thousand dollars they would not ask me a question about it for two years—these were their own words." "Then I shall give it to you," said I quietly. Poor Wellingham stared at me as if he did not understand what I said, while his face became pale, and his whole frame was shaken by a visible tremor. "What did you say, Premium?" "I said, my dear Wellingham, that I would stretch out a hand to assist in dragging you out of the mire," replied I, with a smile, "on condition that your manager shall not practise any expensive means to force large crops hereafter."

He grasped my hand, shook it warmly, then turned round and left me abruptly. "Strange," thought I, "that a man of such well-known benevolence should be surprised by a good action from another."

But Wellingham speedily returned, and in the warmth of his gratitude, poured out his whole soul to me. It was a painful picture he placed before my eyes by his vivid representations of the horrors (arising from importunate creditors, and want of money for any purpose) constantly present to him, and operating on a disposition remarkably sensitive and deeply thoughtful. He went away an altered man, and left me musing on the many hundred scenes of misery and woe, such as he had described, then occurring in the British Colonies. "Alas!" thought I, "what have the great ones of the earth to answer for! and what an inconsistent thing is the wisdom of man! one day, enacting a law to make the stealing of a handkerchief punishable by death; another day, consigning thousands to want, to starvation, by depriving them of their property, also by act of parliament!"

I had soon to hold a very confidential conversation with the son, as well as the father, who, hurried on by

his impetuous disposition, arrived in about an hour, accompanied by his wife. The latter, after Charles had expressed, with his usual warmth, all he felt and all he hoped from my friendly efforts in their favour, began to speak in a manner which surprised me. She had always been disposed to look beyond the surface of things more than women usually do; and I perceived now that since she had linked her fate with that of a deeply-involved planter, she had devoted herself to the study of the planter's business, and of what is called the West Indian question generally, with the view of guiding and assisting her husband in his arduous pursuits, rightly judging that the influence she possessed over him, might be exerted to keep in check that impatience and thoughtlessness which formed the only blemish on his otherwise excellent character.

“My dear father,” said she, after Charles had opened his mind fully and frankly, and with tears in her eyes, “you are always thinking more of others than yourself; and I know it was the apprehended diminution of my mother's enjoyments which brought you out here; but I wish to point out to you that you may carry your anxiety on that head too far, which you will unquestionably do, if you incur the risk of losing health, as well as property, in the severe struggle we are all engaged in.”

“I have judged deliberately,” replied I; “but I am aware the world will say exactly what you hint at, and probably ascribe to me, besides, the weakness of avarice or ambition.” “Then could you not go with mamma and Jane, settle yourselves in our dear old home, and leave George to represent you here?” “And do you, my girl, desire this?” “God knows it would cost me many a severe pang; but when I reflect on the advantages you would all derive from it, I am not so selfish as to desire to keep you here.” “You have thought over our case, and you believe I can do no good by remaining.” “Like all

others with whom I have conversed, excepting the over-sanguine (glancing at her husband), I do not abandon hope; yet I have little confidence in the justice of the mother country, which alone can save us." "You have nearly expressed my feelings and opinions. I continue to hope, almost against my deliberate judgment; if the calamity implied by the total relinquishment of hope was less dreadful, I imagine we would not cling to it so pertinaciously; but we are now like men on a wreck—to give up all, even the most remote expectation of being saved, is to let go our hold and embrace destruction; therefore we grasp it to the last. It is true that by retiring now, I might live in England, but not in our former abode, my love; that we must give up all right to soon, and it would be in a very humble manner, comparatively, that we could now reside there. In short, the change would be so great, and would so affect your mother, that, actuated also by the same feelings as my unfortunate fellow-sufferers, I dare not attempt it. They have more comforts in the meantime, and let the worst come that we apprehend, they shall not be in want."

"But, my dear sir," said Charles, "you might sell the Fortune, and realize something considerable in addition to your funds in England." "Well, Charles, you have stated another difficulty which I find it extremely hard to overcome. This estate was valued in 1832, by sworn appraisers, at £105,000. I got £25,000 of compensation; how much of the balance could I obtain by a sale?" "Why, perhaps £20,000." "Perhaps £20,000! more likely £10,000, instead of £80,000. Here again the faint hope that remains occurs to me, and whispers—'Don't be so foolish as make the sacrifice, it would be monstrous;' and really, as I said before, although calm reflection points it out to me as the safest course, I cannot bring myself to adopt it."

But if the family be ruined," said Grace, "and—"

“That cannot be, dear, for I am going to adopt measures immediately to secure my family in something—” “But, dearest father,” said she earnestly, “recollect that it would not save *you* from the operation of the law if you were ruined.” “Nay, my girl, let it take its course; I am no bankrupt now, but a rich man, therefore any measures I take to secure my family against the schemes of a reckless government, are not only justifiable, but perfectly honourable.” “But,” faltered she, “a jail!” “The bankrupt laws will save me from that. Now, my children, you are thinking more of me than yourselves.” “And so we ought,” cried Charles, warmly. “Well, well,” cried I, cheerfully, “I hope, as I said, I still hope for better times; so do not let us make ourselves wretched while there is yet no cause.”

1st JULY, 1842.

THE strike among the labourers continued till the end of March, when, dispirited and worn out by the opposition they met with from their people, countenanced, if not wilfully, at least effectually, by the executive, the planters gave way, and one after another resumed their labourers at the old rate of wages. When one remembers the destructive effect of time on tropical cultivation untended by the hand of man, the dreadful anxiety with which a planter beholds his cane fields, week after week, assuming more and more the appearance of so many patches of ground in a state of nature, will be at once understood. If the weeds get fairly above the canes and destroy them, which they must do if the latter are unweeded for some months, the loss of one crop at least will ensue, and, at the same time, the planter must be subjected to a great outlay in replanting the several fields; and how, in such times, could the impoverished sufferers accomplish this, most of them with capital and credit already exhausted?

I have never in England seen so much energy displayed in bearing up against severe distress, or such indefatigable ingenuity and industry in meeting difficulties as they occur. It is wonderful how they do not sink under their intolerable burthens; but faith, and hope based on it, keep them up. Their faith (I speak of the mass of proprietors here and in the mother country), is yet unshaken, and they expect good out of the evidence given before the Distress Committee of the House of Commons, although they perceive that the anti-colonial faction are openly deriding it, and declaring it to be monstrously over-charged. And such is the prevailing ignorance in England of what is going on in the colonies, that they will succeed in nullifying all that has been said. In this province there are two hundred and twenty sugar estates; of these, it is not expected that more than twenty will this year make any clear revenue. They are, in point of soil, superior to the rest. In fact, for the same expense of labour, they will give twice as much sugar as many of the remaining two hundred, and a considerably larger proportion than all of them. Those fertile plantations, also, are generally the largest, which naturally arises out of the good quality of the soil, that having been the inducement to proprietors to purchase more slaves and extend cultivation. The expenses are always comparatively less on large than small estates, for obvious reasons. The wear and tear of buildings are less in proportion than on smaller properties; so are the salaries to Whites, also, and several other items of expenditure. The large plantations on the coast, therefore, with their rich land, are those which are successful in the struggle with adverse times.

The governor was openly charged in court, by Mr. Briar, with thwarting the constitutional endeavours of the planters to save themselves from ruin; and his excellency, getting angry, said to his clever government secretary,

that the Honble. member was personal; but the other very sagely shook his head, thereby recommending quietness. There is not a planter in the Colony who would refuse to back Mr. Briar in his assertion, in so far, at least, as information obtained from the people interested would warrant them in doing so, for the Negroes did not hesitate to say that the governor supported them in resisting the measures of the proprietors.

The mortality having been very great during the last twelve months among the Portuguese, the Court of Policy has, with as much wisdom as humanity, stopped the bounty on the importation of people from Madeira. This, of course, puts an end to the hopes of the planters, at present, from that quarter. Indeed, many have arrived at the conclusion, which, in fact, forced itself on them, that those people are unsuited to the labours of the field, both from constitution and habit. But some other country must be found where the sugar-growers can look for labourers to supply the existing deficiency. Their enemies have succeeded in closing almost every place against them. The conduct of the anti-colonial confederacy in regard to immigration, throws the most violent proceeding of any other party into the shade. It avows, as strongly as the plainest language can do, that they are actuated by hostility to the planters, not by any interest they feel in the Negroes of the West Indies. If the latter was their motive, would they favour, as it is known they do, the Liverpool people in their efforts to introduce slave-grown sugar? And again, if they keep out immigrants from our colonies, do they not indirectly injure the Negroes they pretend to protect, by bringing on a state of affairs which will render the introduction of sugar from Cuba and Brazil indispensable.

In short, everything shows that the destruction of our colonies is the object at which they aim, because, this being effected, they imagine they will have unrestricted

intercourse with foreign countries, and an immensely increased demand for manufactured goods. Policy, short-sighted as wicked! It is grasping the shadow, and dropping the substance. By the time the colonies are ruined, the manufacturers of foreign nations will stand prominently forward in competition with those of Britain; they will drive them out of the continental markets by the advantage they derive from cheaper labour, and the men of Manchester will then find that, in destroying us, they have lopped off a limb from their own body. Shut out by other nations, the colonial market lost, and the demand at home greatly diminished by the effect of their suicidal policy, they will begin to feel the evils they have brought on others.

An incident occurred a few days ago, that gave us all some amusement. We were just sitting down to breakfast with a preacher of the Missionary Society, who had stepped in after visiting some of my people, when George, arriving as usual, from the field, informed us, with a grave, anxious face, that "Toby was in a trench, and had been there all night." "Dear me," cried my wife; "poor thing; I am so sorry!" "Poor, poor, Toby!" said Jane. "Have they taken him out?" I enquired. "They are about it now. He is very much exhausted, and I think must die. They are trying to get some warm porter down his throat." After a few more observations of a similar sort, Toby was forgotten; and, in due time, the minister departed. I shall relate, just as it occurred, a conversation which I had two days after, with the stipendiary magistrate of the district. "Pray," asked he, "did an accident occur at Fortune the other day?" "No; not at Fortune." "I was told a man had been drowned in a trench." "No such thing happened there, I assure you." He looked much surprised, and proceeded to tell me that the missionary in question had informed him, saying at the same time, that as the family seemed to

treat the matter with great indifference, it was probable they would not think it necessary to hold an inquest. The truth flashed on me at once. "Inquest!" cried I, "inquest on an ox! But, my dear sir, Toby is not dead; this worthy, humane preacher was no sooner gone, than the whole family were round the patient, and they succeeded in restoring him." I laughed heartily; but the magistrate shook his head. I knew what he meant to signify by the motion; but being determined to incur the censure of no man willingly, and to walk the path of life without jostling any one, even a political teacher of the Word, I would not speak any longer on the subject.

This Toby is an old ox, nearly blind, that has been on the estate for twenty years, and is an object of care and attention with us all. He comes every day to the kitchen door for an allowance of plantains, and while there, is caressed by all who see him, even the Negroes. He is the only animal I ever saw them fond of, excepting their dogs, and they have a high opinion of his sagacity, which they declare by saying, "Toby no stan' like cow, Toby people." By which they mean, that he is more like a man than a cow.

We had last week a marooning party into the bush behind my cane-fields, consisting of the Wellingshams and Riddleys, with two other families, besides ourselves. It was to be a hunting party, the ladies merely being on the ground, and under shade, to witness what part of the sport chance might throw in the way, and to assist at the luncheon afterwards. They had been provided with rods, however, and a couple of boys to bait their hooks, if they should choose the amusement of angling, the trenches being all full of fish. Indeed, the country is remarkably prolific in that article, for if a pond be dug anywhere, and filled by water from the clouds, it will, ere many weeks pass, be alive with fish. Mustering immediately after coffee, we reached our destination in carriages, the roads

and bridges freely admitting that accommodation, about 7 o'clock A.M.; and the ladies being lodged under the umbrageous foliage of a large tree, near a canal, the ground around which had been previously cleared of all rubbish and long grass, and furnished with tables, chairs, and everything that could be required, we set about the business of the day. On such occasions, dogs of all sorts, from the fox-hound and harrier to the small Indian cur-like animal, which generally, maugre its appearance, has a good nose, are brought into use. It will be understood that although the word hunting is used generally to describe the sport as practised here, it is more properly shooting. Yagers go with the dogs into the places that are to be searched for game (abandoned fields, which had been once in cultivation, are usually selected), while the sportsmen, with their guns, are stationed at the different "coigns of vantage" on the outside; and when a dog gives tongue, being on the alert, they follow in the direction of the sound, the beast, whatever it may be, always going straight away from the pursuers, and it often happens that it comes within shot of two or more of the party, who have approached the place which the baying of the dogs indicate as that most likely to be chosen by the animal to issue from.

Many minutes had not elapsed, after the dogs were laid on, when the deep-toned voice of an English foxhound reminded me of scenes in another land; but presently, a noise arose that would have horrified the antique lovers of the chase, being a compound of the most villanous sounds that ever offended ear; the baying of a noble hound, blending with the yelp of terriers, the sort of half-howl half-bark of the Indian dogs, and a regular bow-wow from various curs of low degree. The clamour approached my quarter, and Ridley, who was nearest, moving rapidly towards me, seemed to believe that the game, whatever it was (for there is no possibility of seeing it until it reaches

the cleared ground, the shrubs and high grass being so dense), would break covert near me. I stood still with my piece cocked, until a gallant red deer bounded on to the dam, and without pausing a moment, sprang across it. He was no sooner out of the line of Ridley and myself, for he was between us, than we both fired; and, springing first into the air, the animal fell down dead. A shout of triumph announced our success.

In the course of a few hours, we had four acouries (they look like a cross between the hare and rabbit), two labbas, and the deer. There was another deer put up, which Charles and George followed in the direction of the river, after having fired at it, for this animal always takes to water when it is hard pressed. The young men, following close on the dogs, came to the water edge just in time to see it nearly half across; nevertheless, having some hands with them as eager as themselves, they jumped into a batteau they found not far off, and continued the chase. There is much excitement, and some little danger, in a water-hunt after deer. The creature swims rapidly, and turns sharply round to evade its pursuers, throwing them out frequently to a great distance. Negroes generally have spears, made of bayonets or cutlasses, fastened to the ends of long poles, on those excursions, which, when the animal takes the water, are very useful, for they launch them with great effect, although, in the excitement of the moment, the thrower is very apt to capsize the unstable, keel-less batteau—an occurrence by no means uncommon. They do not like to take guns in such a chase, probably being afraid that accidents may arise from the hurry and eagerness of the party. The sportsmen, in this instance, were doomed to be disappointed; for the deer, being a powerful and a wily one, turned immediately on seeing the pursuers, and made for the land, which, after two or three dodges, he succeeded in reaching; and where, after deliberately shaking himself, and giving his

head a toss, he cantered off leisurely as one who knew his position. The dogs followed on the scent, but he escaped them.

We were merry that day under the greenwood tree. The cares of the world were for a while forgotten, the words "sugar" and "labour" being as strictly prohibited as if a three-guinea duty had been imposed on them. The young men pelted each other with oranges, until they began to feel they were rather too hard; and the old ones, meantime, stuck fast to the well-cooled Madeira, my wife and the other dames looking on, and joining in the joke and laugh with the rest, until Ridley, who is a powerful whistler, struck up a sort of imitation quadrille, that set the young ones to dancing. Such pic-nics are highly relished here. The extraordinary influence of a bright sky, contrasted with the deep green of the tree leaves, and reflected from beautiful flowers, which hang in gigantic festoons from parasites on the loftiest branches, together with the splendid plumage of the birds, twittering gaily from spray to spray, tending to heighten the enjoyment of every one. My friend Ridley, being an excellent marooner, promoted the mirth of the party in a thousand ways, and always when the hilarity began to flag, started something new. Observing that George was less vivacious than the rest, he slapped him on the shoulder, and uplifting his voice, burst into song.

We had a hearty laugh at his extemporaneous productions, and I remarked to Mrs. Ridley that her husband was coming out in a new character, that of song-maker. "There ain't nothing," said that lady, "that he ain't up to, if you only try him. Why, the other day he played on the banjar like any African Negro; and when he was some years younger, before the bad times, he could dance all their dances." "Oh! for shame, my dear! don't expose your husband." "Ain't it true?" enquired she, with great gravity, for that good person never laughs, and

seldom smiles, not because she is sad or morose, but simply because she enjoys anything without thinking it either necessary or proper to make the fact visible. I should have mentioned before that, besides our neighbours, we had Mr. Brown the manager at this party; and the foreman, being a great hunter, was also permitted to find a substitute for the day, and to assist in the sport. He and the rest of the sable sportsmen were regaling themselves a little apart from the buckras, and I could perceive they were much amused by Mr. Ridley's remarks, especially when the banjar came to be spoken about, and his general prowess as a mimic of the Negroes. There was a sort of whispering among them, and then David rose and came forward, laughing heartily, with a banjar in his hand, which he presented, without saying a word, to the "Mount massa." We all saw that his skill on that instrument—not quite so well known to ears polite, as the fiddle of Paganini—was fully appreciated among those who loved it best; and no White person can enjoy a burlesque or caricature of the Blacks with more zest than the latter themselves, if it is a White who is the performer. He acquitted himself on this occasion so much to the delight of the Negroes, that they actually rolled on the ground in the ecstasy of their laughter. His production was a sort of song, quite in their style, detailing the adventures and mishaps of two lovers who were both "fooled" by a coquettish damsel, the whole being narrated in their dialect.

1st OCTOBER, 1842.

EVENTS are progressing in regular succession since the turn of last year. Property is evidently feeling the change in public opinion, if we may judge from the sales; but certainly it is not yet very decided. It is a blessing which I think the climate confers on the inhabitants of

the tropics, that hope is ever entertained by them even under the most grievous misfortune. But for it, men could not exist under the accumulated evils that are heaped on them in the colonies; where, over and above the ills that flesh is heir to in all parts of the world, they have to endure a torture similar to that suffered by the mouse in the paws of the cat, the object of both powers apparently being to try how much the victim can bear before it sinks. The simile cannot be carried out, indeed, because we are not yet destroyed, as the mouse generally is, by a *coup de grace*. But the sad fact is present to the mind of every colonist, that his adopted country is only considered by the dominant party of the state, in the light of a something to be used in promoting the interests of the mother country, when that is possible. And when the unhappy Colony humbly represents how the parent can assist the child, and begs that it may be done, its application is regarded as a saucy piece of impudence, and the reply is—"It will be injurious to the interests of England." The Colony rejoins—"But it will save us from ruin;" and the answer again is, probably—"It will raise the price of one commodity half a-farthing per pound," accompanied by a stare at our presumption, as much as to say—"What is your ruin to us? are we, each of us, to pay sixpence a year to save you from it? What though we settled you under those privileges and immunities? Pshaw! we know better now; we repudiate them." When the Yankies raise their tariff against the men of Manchester, the cry is still—"Cut them off from the West India trade, and that will bring them to their senses." The question is not deemed worthy of consideration, whether the inhabitants of the West Indies would not be ruined by such measures, although that, in all probability, would ensue.

In fact, neither the people of Britain generally, nor their representatives in parliament particularly, can under-

stand the sufferings of colonists, because they are not brought before them by a force which must make an impression. The *vis a tergo* is the rule of action, not the necessity of a case; and so long as this continues to be, justice will quail before self-interest, as she does now.

It is the general opinion, that the Negroes are gradually becoming more insolent as they feel their importance. It is the usual way in which human nature manifests itself under such circumstances; and it would be strange indeed if they did not become sensible of their consequence, cajoled and flattered as they are, in order to get the paltry modicum of labour which they will condescend to bestow. But an instance of pride and insolence which occurred lately, will better illustrate the style of their behaviour. One day, the old man who, though innocent, had been twice beaten as an Obi man since my return, came with another, and a third complaint, of a similar attack; but this time, the aggressor was a stranger who had only been a few days on the estate. I had him brought before me, and proceeded to question him in the usual manner. As the dialogue is extraordinary, I shall record it verbatim. "Did you strike this old man?" "I did." "And why?" "It was my pleasure." "Then, sir, for that brutal act, it is my pleasure that you leave this estate immediately; and you may depend on it, you shall hear from the magistrate wherever you go." "My goodness! is this the way to speak to a gentleman. By Gad! you're a fine fellow truly!" "I thought you were a labourer, not a gentleman," said I, taking off my hat, and bowing to the dignitary; "but since you are such, take yourself off at once, here is no place for you." "Well! damme, this impudence beats cock-fighting. I is a gentleman as good as you, dough you have a dirty plantation. I shan't go." He was a Barbadian, and spoke tolerable English. I found that the fellow understood the law better than I, when he positively refused to quit the place. The case

was represented to the magistrate, and his assault and determination to stay where he was, both tried at once. He was fined for the first, but the worthy magistrate found he could not be turned off, as he was the guest of a woman who had a house on the estate; and thus was I forced to keep a rascal who annoys the whole population, his woman excepted, because the law, in its zeal for the black people, did not provide for any contingency whose remedy would infringe on their right to have the entire and free use of their houses. In Britain, tenants of houses are not allowed to receive and to harbour bad subjects. The magistrate said it was a hard case, but until some months elapsed he could not interfere. We shall get rid of him in three or four, I should think; within that time he may be as insolent as he pleases.

Nothing, after all, is to come of the Report of our Distress Committee. Why do ministers grant those committees, and put the country to a great expense, if the evidence taken by them is to be disregarded? The existence of distress, unprecedentedly severe, has been proved completely and clearly; yet we are to have no measure of relief, not even a relaxation in the immigration prohibition. It is true, the Exeter Hall Association have put forward their opinion, that the assertions of honourable and upright gentlemen, of high standing in the community, are to be disregarded, because their representation of our case is "too high-coloured;" that is to say, it does not accord with the declaration of John Scoble, and it does not suit the views of the party to admit its truthfulness. It has ever thus been with the unhappy planters. When a rich man is seen to roll past in his chariot, who has an estate among us, our considerate countrymen say to each other, "Talk of West India distress, indeed! look at that!" as if they had not, in their own country, for one man with a carriage, a hundred in a state of semi-starvation; as if one case was a type of the whole, when, in

fact, the individual is most likely a man to whom the plantation is a mere bagatelle in comparison with his landed wealth in England.

We have always been judged by the exceptional case. How would John Bull look if we expressed our belief that he and all his family were murderers to a man, because every newspaper has an account of a murder in it? Yet this would only be fair retaliation.

A great number of Portuguese had been imported last year, but, in consequence of their habits, serious sickness broke out among them, which, it is said, the medical men of the districts where they were located all predicted. Instead of applying the necessary amount of their wages to the purchase of wholesome provisions, they picked up food where it could be found; and, in many cases, the principal article of diet was the wild Tanya root, an edible remarkable for its pernicious effects on the bowels. A great many contracted dysenteric affections from its use, and died in consequence. But the want of proper nourishment, in conjunction with the hard work which high wages excited them to, induced a bloodless state of the system, revealed by pale lips and wan complexions, which predisposed to a low nervous fever, resembling typhus, that carried off more of them than all other diseases put together. Robertson tells me it was necessary to treat it differently from any other form of fever known in the colony, wine and stimulants being frequently required almost from the beginning.

Although they are now pretty diffusely scattered over the province, I have not had any of them, being desirous of avoiding the painful and onerous charge of superintending the acclimatation of such people. It is said they are enraged in Madeira at our legislature for withdrawing the bounty, they having no dread of the climate, and being too poor to pay for their passage. The same dreadful difficulty, of course, still continues in providing, on each

morning, for the necessary work of the day. In fact, it is evidently on the increase, a state of affairs which is the necessary result of circumstances. While there is scarcely any addition to the population, there are several fresh causes in operation to keep the labourers from the field; the principal of these being the purchase of land by a very considerable portion of them, who, in their new position, will not work even so continuously as they have hitherto done since 1838. Several families from the Fortune are now located on lands bought from me. The whole hundred acres have been disposed of, chiefly to people from the coast districts, but they are not yet fairly settled, and, consequently, are occupied with their houses and grounds. We have not found many of them, up to this time, on our field list.

The Portuguese begin to discover that they are better adapted to other occupations than those of husbandry. They are gradually settling into the town, in the several capacities of huckster, carter, and porter; a few are seen perambulating the rural districts as pedlars. Being all rigid Catholics, they are interfered with in their zealous exertions to acquire riches, by the number of Saints' Days, which are strictly observed by them. I meet them on the road occasionally, and, if the weather is fine, frequently with guitars in their hands, which they touch as they move along. In passing their little shops in town, one is very often assailed by the sound of this instrument, accompanied by the voice of the performer, which to my ears is far from being pleasant. They sing with a sort of whine, resembling the howl of a dog between anger and surprise. In speaking, the same peculiarity adheres to their voices, and the Negroes are perfect in their mimicry of it. I frequently overhear a conversation carried on between two of the latter in a most extraordinary dialect of the Portuguese, wherein the whine is brought very prominently and successfully out.

1st JANUARY, 1843.

THE same disheartening state of affairs, generally, and an increasing downward tendency in my own case. George, poor fellow! this morning presented his annual report on the year's accounts, with an anxious, down-cast look, as if doubting its effect upon me. The crop shows no improvement on that of the preceding year, and the prices having been considerably lower, a larger deficiency is the result. Crop—152 hds. of sugar, and 12,000 gallons of rum. Loss on it, £1935. "Well, my boy," said I, not without a deep sigh, "I was partly prepared for this; the reality, nevertheless, is frightful. I need not attempt to say otherwise." "I have seen," said George, "within the last fortnight, the proprietors or representatives of the eight nearest plantations, and there is not one of them who will have a clear revenue from crop 1842; at the same time some have lost less than we have." He named all the parties specified by him. The highest figure in this black list of loss was £3000, the lowest about £250, the latter being that of Ridley. He is known throughout the district to be exceedingly particular regarding all outlay, but my neighbours tell me that Brown has the same character, and this entirely accords with my own opinion of the way in which the estate is conducted; but it is again alleged that I give more allowances and indulgences to the gang than other proprietors; yet, when I sum up those, they amount to a mere trifle. In ruminating on this subject, we are invariably thrown back on the glaring fact, that three-fifths of the direct outlay is paid in labourers' wages, besides the expense we are put to for houses to lodge them, doctors, (I continue the medical man,) and little things without number, which are not at all under our control in the present state of the labour market.

Taking this appalling fact into consideration, and sup-

posing the estate to be properly managed, the next thing that stands forward most prominently in reckoning up the circumstances for or against the proprietor, is the soil; if it is poor, it requires twice as much working, and will yield, after all, less than rich land. Here is a dreadful drawback in these times, which is already operating banefully, because the loss on such soils, the expenses being infinitely larger than the value of the crop, causes the rapid abandonment of field after field, until but a small proportion of the original cultivation remains. There is a considerable extent of inferior land in the Fortune, among the abandoned fields; but those which are kept up are in general productive. "And what says Charles?" inquired I of George. "He is hopeful that, as his loss is not very great, only £500, his mortgagee will not grumble, especially as every thing looks well on the estate." "Yes, he is always hopeful; and, after all, it is well for him, since it does not lead to acts of folly, either on his part or his father's. Many a poor soul, George, is utterly overwhelmed from wanting that holder-up of the wretched." "And dying," said he, "if tales be true. There is poor old Blauk, a few years ago worth hundreds of thousands, creeping about like the shadow of his former self; and I could name more." "And so could I; but why should we dwell on them? pass a few years, my boy, and the instances of men who have anything will, I fear, be those which are quoted. It is a comfort to have you to talk to, and I can speak to you now as freely as if you were of my own age." "I am indeed glad, father," replied he, with a more cheerful look, "to see that you preserve your equanimity throughout. After all, we are well off, so have a better chance to keep our ground till the good times arrive."

It is still thus with him. He never doubts that the times will mend; he is only afraid the change may be distant. "Well! well! be of good heart. I hope you

observe my caution, and take care how you let your mother know any particulars." "You may be quite easy on that head, for she does not inquire into any thing; but Jane, I fear, has some apprehensions, although she is too discreet to ask questions. I am not sure that Grace does not let her into her secrets." "And if she does; it is a proof that she may be in possession of them with safety. Grace has, indeed, risen in my esteem since her marriage; she is a noble woman, George," said I, enthusiastically. "The devotion with which she, a girl accustomed to look on the amusements as the occupations of life, has made herself fully acquainted with her husband's affairs, and counsels, assists, and comforts him, laboriously undertaking all parts of his duty which it is possible for her to discharge, altogether declare her to be an extraordinary character." "Charles, I fancy, begins to be less sanguine as to their ultimate escape from difficulties, for he had yesterday a long conversation with young Benston regarding Australia, and, being present, I thought he listened with more earnestness than usual to his details." "Benston has some brothers there, has he not?" "Three; and, until lately, they all did well; but the accumulation of capital, he says, in the shape of stock, has affected their markets so much, that they have been doing nothing for the last two years. Many of our overseers are already turning their eyes to Canada or the United States; and I am sure in a short time we shall suffer from another evil—the want of white superintendents for the estates." "That is another necessary and inevitable consequence of our condition; for no young men will now come here, and, in the course of nature, many of those employed will be taken off, so that, even without emigration to other places, our present number of white agriculturists will be diminished from year to year."

Here Mr. Brown came in with his customary wishes and salutations on the arrival of a new year; and I could

perceive that his eye quailed and his countenance fell, as the former lighted on the paper in my hand. "Many thanks to you, Mr. Brown," said I, "for your good wishes, which I am quite sure are perfectly sincere. I am sure, also, that the state of affairs exhibited in this black scroll is in no degree owing to want of care, skill, or attention, on your part." At these words the good fellow's visage lightened up, and he began eagerly to give his explanation. "You will perceive, Sir, that the bad work done in the early part of 1841, after the routine of plantation work was resumed by the people, has affected those fields considerably which were first cut, the return from them being much below that of the rest for the year; and the yielding throughout is worse in 1842 than in any one year since I came to the estate." "Which, I fear, Mr. Brown, proceeds from the work being more inefficiently done." "I cannot say that there is any improvement, indeed, in their way of doing the tasks, although I did, as you know, attempt by vigorous measures to force them to do justice to the fields; every task not properly finished, I did not pay for during one whole month, and at the end of that month (October) two-thirds of my gang went away. Absolute necessity forced me to relax in this rigid exaction of honest performance, and they all returned." "The loss on this crop is more here than elsewhere; can you account for that?"

He paused for a moment, as if about, unwillingly, to communicate an unwelcome piece of information, but at last he said, "I do begin to fear that the lands of Fortune are now approaching that state which will render them more unsuitable for cultivation under the present state of labour." "Do you think that they are exhausted?" "They are now in that condition which, were labour abundant, would show no sign of being worn out, but, under our system of bad work, and little of it, I am afraid the relative return will be smaller." "How much has it been

last year?" "Here is an account of the yielding of the different fields, for the last 15 years, extracted from our journal, and compared by myself. The average, previously to 1838, was $1\frac{1}{2}$ hds. per acre; from '38 to '40, $1\frac{1}{4}$; and from '40 to '42, inclusive, barely 1 hd. The last year's yielding, by itself, does not give more than three quarters of a hd." "That is a very serious affair," said I; "yet, after all, it is nothing but what any one may see at once to be a necessary result;—were we in Barbadoes, now, manuring would be a sufficient remedy for this evil.—What do you think of it, Mr. Brown?" He shook his head. "According to every calculation I have made, and the practical knowledge derived from experience by our neighbours, the cost of collecting and preparing manure, and of laying it in the ground, would exceed the profit to be derived from it. Had we labour at the Barbadoes rate, it would be downright stupidity and folly to neglect it." "And we have no new soil now impoldered upon which to fall back. The expense of a polder would be greater, probably, than manuring for a year or two." "If you will allow me, Sir," said Mr. Brown, "I shall try what we can do with one small field. We have a quantity of cane ashes on hand, and there is always a lot of dung from the cattle. We shall manage four or five acres without much expense." "By all means," said I, "try it; try everything that can increase our chance of getting over this fearful crisis without absolute ruin; it is our duty." "Exactly my opinion, Sir," said Mr. Brown; "and it seems to be the general one; for the shifts and schemes are innumerable and endless which one sees among the estates to keep up cultivation, and to work the ground better." During the "good times," as they are now called, manuring the land here was never practised, because, when fields showed signs of exhaustion, they were thrown out of cultivation, and their places supplied by ground taken in from the virgin soil of the estate; and

this is still done where there is spare land impoldered, (or dammed and inclosed,) and requiring only to be cleared, turned up, and planted. But I sold all my land that was in that state to the Negroes, believing that I had more than I could find hands to cultivate. I do not repent of having done so, for, according to our prospects and expectations, I have got a great deal more by selling, than I can ever obtain by cultivating it. It is a singular fact, and at first view appears unaccountable, that the Barbadoes planters, with a soil so much worn out that it requires to be renewed almost every year, keep their ground better than we do, with land that needs no manuring to yield good crops.

It is the low rate of wages which enables them to hold out so well, coupled with the high comparative prices which their sugar commands in the market, the latter advantage being invariably the concomitant of a poor and long cultivated soil. How their wages are but one-third of ours is not so easily explained. It can only be owing (for no other satisfactory cause has been assigned) to the extremely dense population of the Island; yet, it is very surprising that the *amor patriæ* should be so strong among the Barbadian Negroes, as to keep them at home on sixpence a-day, when, by sailing 500 miles, they could get twentypence, and all the advantages, besides, enjoyed by the labourers here. Nevertheless, such seems to be the case, for very few of them have settled permanently here since the year 1838, though many have come. They have, in this cheap labour, an immense advantage, which enables them to make the most of their sterile soil. In regard to manuring, as it is a practice which has long obtained in the Islands, they have not to begin, as we have, in this dreadful transition state, and to drill the people to it under adverse circumstances. The Barbadian planters procure manure from England, in addition to what they collect on the estates in a thousand ways. Here, intelli-

gent men have assured me, that between the real cost of the labour, and the difficulty in getting the people to lay the manure properly on the ground, if it increased the return 30 per cent., and they obtained the whole in the megass yard, without being at any expense in collecting or buying it, the process would not pay; and there are many who have tried it on a small scale, certainly, but with a result sufficient to satisfy them. This is one of the branches of agriculture which the wiseacres of England condemn us for neglecting, judging, as the rule is in that country, of everything by the practice there, without admitting local or peculiar circumstances to have any effect.

David assures me that we shall have more labourers next year, in consequence of the landholders having got up their cottages, and having finished the planting of their grounds; but, he says, I must pay a bit, or 4d., in addition to the common rate for the task, because these people have no houses from me. It appears to be a practice lately introduced, and forced on us by the scarcity of labour, like other exactions; yet it has the appearance, rather than the reality, of justice; for we have no shadow of control over those settlers; and their labour is less valuable from the uncertainty we are in regarding its continuance when we have it, or when it will be at our disposal when we have it not. While they are domiciled on a plantation they have generally some provisions in their grounds, which they do not like to leave abruptly, when they are not ready for raising. We have thus a slender hold, which assists a little in keeping them to their work, and, probably, wanting it, matters might become worse.

The village, as it really is, which has been thus erected by a body of freeholders, if I may so call those who have no tenure at all, is well enough, if the cottages are taken separately; but they afford, on the aggregate, a good illustration of the Negro character. Every one wishes to be considered as the planner and builder of his own edifice,

and to be not at all indebted to his neighbour, either for suggestion or design. They have a sort of jealousy in all such matters that often goes a ludicrous length. The villages built by themselves are invariably, in consequence of this feeling, without any uniformity, and scarcely in lines so as to constitute streets, one being ten feet in front of the line, another twenty behind; again, one will be of two storeys; those on each side of it only one; while the exterior is of every shape and form which the ingenuity of man can devise so as to be habitable. But considerable care is generally evinced to have the little plot of ground in front neat and clean, with a fruit tree here and there within its area, and a footpath in the centre leading to the public road. I strove hard to keep them right in the formation of the town on this property, and my suggestions and remonstrances were endured at first quietly, but afterwards, they generally asked, like a certain worthy Duke, if they could not do what they liked with their own, and in a very sulky, dissatisfied way. In my opinion there is as large a proportion of self-conceit in the "mental development" of the Negro, as in that of the most decided coxcomb of Bond Street; their constant jars and squabbles almost always arising out of offended vanity.

I am constrained to record here again my conviction that these people have not been improved in morals either by the zealous efforts of a very effective body of clergymen which we have planted among them, or by the efforts of local teachers—schoolmasters and missionaries—who are numerous in every district. It has been customary for the organs of the anti-colonial party in England to brand the more enlightened colonists with the epithets, "debauched," and "corrupters" of their dependents; those persons always assuming that the more removed from civilization mankind is, the purer it will be. This is one of the theories of the day, just as plausible, and in every

respect as hollow and foundationless, as others, which being acted upon, hurry the empire on to its downfall. Would it not be well for these uniform defamers of the White inhabitants of the West Indies to consider what the habits of the masses were before those who are thus unsparingly abused for corrupting them came among them at all? They cannot be ignorant of the fact, that the natives of Africa, without exception, impose no restraint on the intercourse of sexes, and the number of concubines kept by individuals is to the extent of the means possessed by them. That they have brought this custom with them to the West Indies, and that the young white men from Europe have too frequently adopted it, I should think cannot be disputed. But those unfriendly observers throw the blame entirely on the latter, and choose to overlook the fact that they are the corrupted, not the corrupters. I am very much inclined to the belief that men are pure in their lives in proportion to the stage of civilization in which they are to be found, at least up to a certain point. Vices are to be detected, among the semi-savage, at which the enlightened man will shudder, and which the theorists of Exeter Hall would not believe, even if they saw. Since the days of Prince Lee Boo, people who look into books for knowledge of human nature, form their ideas of rude nations from that extraordinary character, and readily adopt the belief that the innocence and purity of primeval times are to be found in every place where the inhabitants go naked, and do in almost all respects nearly as the inferior animals do, when running wild, and without the pale of civilization. In many instances, such as that of the native Australians, they have certainly the same unconsciousness of doing wrong, when committing what we consider an atrocity, which wild creatures have on a similar occasion. This may be innocence and purity; if it be, the tiger possesses store of those qualities.

But I am often led away from the point. I wish to state here why I think the people are more wicked than they were ten years ago, notwithstanding the pains taken to improve them, and owing to the great command which they have of money. More than twenty years ago, the evangelical party in England, scandalized beyond measure at the state of concubinage which prevailed among our black population, inculcated in every way the necessity for marrying them without delay, and the different clergymen were spurred on to bring about this desirable event as often and as speedily as possible. These worthy men, finding that they might subject themselves to the charge of remissness in the discharge of their duties, and some of them, actuated, it may be, by the same ideas in regard to the moral effect of matrimony, proceeded to exhort their flocks to enter into the state, both privately and from the pulpit; and the Negroes observing that they were likely to be looked on more favourably by their pastors, and that the ceremony was sufficiently short and easily gone through, were soon induced to be married in considerable numbers. It is said that several applications were made to clergymen to undo the knot, soon after it was tied, and that the parties, finding this to be impracticable, speedily disseminated the extraordinary information among the rest, which led to some falling off in the monthly lists of marriages.

Many of them declared at this period that "Marry no for Nigga 't all, da buckra fashion;" and seemed to have a rooted aversion to it. The custom of the Whites, however, and the example which their increasing self-esteem, since the era of emancipation, has led them to adopt, have gradually established marriage on the same footing as among ourselves—an institution which all think they should experience once in their lives. They go through the ceremony, but, I grieve to say, that in too many cases it is an idle form, in every sense of the word. They have

generally been on the most intimate footing before—perhaps living together—and it happens too often that they disagree, and, without requiring the sanction of the law, separate, and take new mates, according to the old African habit. My wife has just been shocked by such a case in our own household. The housemaid and butler, both young, were married eighteen months ago; we gave them a marriage dinner, and some presents. They continued in our service, occupying rooms in the offices which were built for our servants, but, in the course of six months, they began to fight, and the noise and tumult in their quarter became so frequent that, after repeated admonitions, I warned them off, and, finally, they went away—he, to town, to live with another woman; and she, to reside with a settler in the new village here.

Unhappily, this is not the only instance that has occurred among our domestics within the short space of four years. Our cook, a woman of about forty, six months ago, without any violent quarrel, deserted her husband, a man with only one leg, and went to live with the engineer of the estate—the black one, I mean, a youth of twenty; while his lawful wife, a girl of his own age, by whom he had two children, went to a neighbouring estate to reside with a mere lad of about sixteen, who had been working a short time here. The cook and her helpmate had been joined together for at least a dozen years. From these occurrences in the limited sphere of my establishment, an idea may be formed of the extent to which such enormities prevail over the province. There is little doubt that when the tie becomes in the slightest degree irksome, no sense of impropriety, or feeling of religious awe, for the commands of the Most High, will prevent them from separating. In many cases I have heard of, the separation has been made with cordial good humour on both sides. In general, the children, if there are any,

go with the mother; in fact, she usually bears the chief burthen of their maintenance when the pair live together; and I am of opinion that the wife is the more meritorious of the two, in nine cases out of ten; the husband being commonly a tyrant, and forcing the wife, *more majorum*, to be his slave in the house. He contributes just what he chooses to the funds required for supporting his family, while she must supply whatever is deficient, or brave his wrath, which is vented usually in blows; and he squanders his gains among companions, or other women, in drinking and debauchery.

As I am on the moral character of those people, I may as well record another trait which has lately been brought out. On many estates the planters have discontinued the practice of paying the doctor to attend their labourers, and the latter, instead of making arrangements with the medical man to secure his attendance, with that reliance on the Whites which has hitherto been part of their nature, for habit is hardly a strong enough word to express some of their peculiarities, throw the blame on their masters, when a coroner's inquest finds that the person has died without medical attendance—an old law wisely and humanely requiring that an inquest (or similar investigation) shall be held on every one who dies without being seen while ill by a practitioner. And such is their indifference to the fate of each other, that too many have seen their nearest relatives expire, without being at the expense of paying for a single visit to them. They will call in a practitioner for themselves, when alarmed, but for those depending on them—their aged and infirm relatives—they will not be at the expense, although death must inevitably ensue. Even with their children's lives they dally in the same inhuman manner, so that it is not going too far when I say many are annually lost in consequence of this apathy, in conjunction with disinclination to part with money for a

purpose that does not promote their pleasures or their views in any manner. The medical men try to induce them to enter into agreements with them, at the usual rate of one guilder each (or 1s. 4d.) per mensem for adults, and half for children, for medicine and attendance; but if they succeed in getting the arrangement effected, it seldom lasts more than six months, the Negroes generally failing to pay the stipulated sum after the first quarter.

So much accustomed have they been to look to the Whites for everything in sickness, that they thought the refusal to pay the doctor a great hardship, and, in some instances, complaints were lodged with the magistrates against their employers. They still get wine and articles of nourishment gratis from the great house (or mansion-house), where is a resident proprietor, which is not at all a politic custom. They have abundance of funds, and to spare; it is time, therefore, they should acquire habits of self-dependence. Some medical practitioners in the neighbourhood of the larger villages which have lately sprung up from the sale of land, have represented strongly to the governor the mortality which has occurred from want of attendance, during the prevalence of epidemic diseases. I heard of one village which had lost eighteen children from hooping-cough, not one of whom was visited by a doctor. Those gentlemen urged on his excellency the necessity for some sanitary enactment, to make it imperative on people to employ the usual means for the preservation of life; and quoted instances to show that the governments of all nations recognised the necessity for arbitrary laws when public health was endangered, believing that in such cases people could not be safely left to themselves. Our own quarantine laws and local regulations during the existence of cholera will occur to any one as parallel instances. But his excellency, according to established usage, could not perceive how the legislative or the executive could, in the existing state of affairs,

so far interfere with the liberty of the subject, as to meddle with his domestic arrangements, and recommended what he had been especially, and in strong language, told had failed—remonstrances and recommendations. Doubtless he thinks and believes that the planters and doctors have never taken any trouble in the matter.

The jealousy which the executive manifests on all occasions concerning transactions between White and Black, shows the feeling still cherished by the party in power on both sides of the Atlantic. After the evidence which has been laid before the country, clearly demonstrating that the latter are the dominant class within the colony, one would imagine that old stories of planter oppression and cruelty would no longer be credited. Still, however, it is the policy of our anti-colonial faction to sow the seed of distrust between the government and the planters, by keeping up this delusion; and, knowing that in all local arrangements regarding labour, the fact is too notorious, that the Negro has it his own way, they seize on any new ordinance that applies more immediately to the Black population, and denounce it as tyrannical and unjust. Thus, government, by deferring to this party, is shackled in its power to do good, even to those persons whom the faction pretend to take especially under their protection. Such has been the case with our vagrant laws, and every regulation devised for the purpose of restricting labourers in their propensity to wander about the province, and trespass wherever they have a mind so to do.

The planters, of course, desired, by keeping them more at home, to effect a wholesome improvement in their idle habits, and gradually induce in them something like a disposition to continuous labour. Such attempts have been either thwarted entirely, or frustrated, by the manner in which the measures recommended have been frittered down and limited. Yet the government seem anxious to have some scheme submitted to them which

would assist in inducing regular habits of industry, although they will not permit of such stringent measures as are in force in the mother country, in regard to vagrants. Various plans have been spoken of, such as a tax on idleness, or a fine on those who do not work a certain number of days in each week; which would either be evaded by doing the required labour nominally, not really, or enforced at the cost of much trouble and extra expense on the estates. But this would be more arbitrary than any hitherto proposed, and would have little chance to find favour with our friends behind the curtain. In short, to any reflecting mind, the impossibility of obtaining continuous labour, where the demand so far exceeds the supply, must instantly present itself. Nothing but a species of coercion, either based on competition, or a position in the eye of the law which enables the planter to exact it, can ensure for the latter the attainment of this object, which is essential to his prosperity. No one in any country works for hire willingly. The disinclination to bodily exertion is still greater in tropical than in temperate regions. When a man, therefore, can earn in a couple of days the necessary funds for a week, what inducement has he, except the indulgence of his licentious passions, to toil for the remaining four days. We find that some, who are hoarding up money for a particular purpose, will continue their labour from week to week, until they have amassed the required sum. We find others, who are young men, engaged in the pursuit of pleasure, to whom money is necessary, and who spend it as fast as they get it; that is to say, if they appear industrious for one week, they are occupied throughout the next in getting rid of their earnings. It is thus that nothing can be thought of (except positive coercion) in the absence of that competition which alone, by its healthy operation, can so adapt the supply to the demand, as to impose on the labourer the necessity for habitual and

regular industry, that he may supply his legitimate wants. In this alone, also, will be found the remedy for the increasing licentiousness of our labouring population. What, I would ask any one, could be expected of a people for whom others thought and acted previously, when suddenly, and without preparation, set free from the wholesome restraint which had hitherto been imposed on them by the plantation regulations, and who had never done anything without the guidance and counsel of their masters—and especially when, in addition to the removal of restraint, they found themselves possessed of funds which they never dreamed of having the disposal of? The very natural effect of this rapid transition was to unsettle their minds, and derange the fixed habits they formerly enjoyed; and, of course, under the circumstances (having it in their power, by keeping up the price of labour, to perpetuate this state of affairs), what was at first a temporary excitement, has now become their settled course of life.

I almost tremble when I write it, but this being partly a record of thoughts as well as actions, it must go down. It seems to me extremely doubtful if the present population of this splendid province, as it has been called, can ever recover from the state of disorganization into which it has been thrown by the measures of government. I fear that to re-establish a prosperous state of our agriculture, it will be necessary to import a new population, adequate to our wants, and sufficient to cultivate the land at a rate of wages which the proprietors can afford to pay. Doubtless this would operate beneficially, in a moral sense, on the present inhabitants, by rendering the acquisition of the means for debauchery more difficult. But I doubt if they will ever be brought to work hereafter for wages that shall enable the proprietors to keep up their cultivation without an accession equal to themselves. When I say this, I may avow at the same time, that since I left England my opinions have undergone little change; but matters are certainly fully worse than I expected. My hopes were

then slender of a successful issue; and although I am borne along by the tide of hope which keeps up my brethren, when I am among them, I never sit down to write in this Journal without feeling in full force the gloomy nature of my forebodings. I wonder if any of my friends have the same feelings of faith and hope in the mother country during the day, and of distrust and fear when alone and in the watches of the night. I think it must be so, for among us there is a necessity to appear confident, in order to prevent creditors from becoming alarmed; thus an artificial state of feeling is produced. That there is immense suffering from deprivation among the mass of planters is easily observed; but the question is, whether this is felt to be permanent or temporary. The truth may lie between, or rather hope is entertained by one class, but with the other moiety (and the more thinking), I imagine doubt and despair predominate.

I may mention a remark, made not long ago by an old ship captain who has traded for many years to the Colony. "Well, Captain Fallin," inquired a friend, "what do you think of us now? do *you* perceive any change?" "Change! by the L—d," cried the jolly sailor; "ay! I feel it. Why, few planters buy anything at all from me now." "Yes! yes! but I mean in appearance." "I tell you what it is," replied the Captain, his ruddy, bronzed visage distended by a grin, "there is now a marked difference between two classes in the Colony. Blest if I can't tell a man who is on the civil list, when I meet him on the street, tho' I never saw him before! There are now those who have something, and those who have nothing, with a vengeance!" It is probable that the worthy mariner saw more in the individual aspects of the community, than one who is constantly in it is able to discover; and certainly the gentlemen whose pensions are secured by the civil list ordinance, have a cause for appearing with pleasant and cheerful countenances, which few not so favoured have.

It is surprising, also, how little those persons who do not feel the pressure of the times understand of that which is going on among those who do. Many of them enter so trivially into what they have no direct interest in, that they hear of distress with the most perfect indifference, believing it to be nothing but a temporary embarrassment, such as we feel periodically from low prices. Hence the surprise, and even ridicule, which a plain and forcible statement of facts meets with too often from the official section of the legislature.

The state of the press is another misfortune. The unprincipled editor, who conducted the newspaper I already alluded to, with almost unexampled effrontery, went over to the official party, after he had bespattered them as much as he could, if, indeed, the abuse of such a person be not, in one sense, praise; and probably the individual felt that gentlemen would be of this opinion when he so boldly ventured to laud the acts of government beyond all reasonable bounds, after he had gone so far on the other side. The non-official section came in of course then for his unfounded and vulgar denunciations. No person, on either side, ever thought that it was necessary to reply to him. Most probably, all felt that, by doing so, they would place themselves on the same footing. It may be asked how a newspaper, which is avowedly inimical to that interest (the agricultural) on the prosperity of which all others depend, can find numerous supporters in the Colony. The fact may be strange, but it is nevertheless a fact, and a baneful one, because these newspapers are received in England as the organs of public opinion here. Thus men, not well versed (and who is at home?) in colonial affairs, taking their ideas from what they read as having come directly from the Colony, have the worst opinion of the planters as a body of agriculturists.

That those newspapers are the organs of a party, which

may be in connection with the powerful faction that is our destiny, and that their supporters are the Radicals of the settlement, who wish to pull down what they call the Planters' Legislature, is generally known, and the question naturally occurs to any man of ordinary mind, in what class can so many men blind to their own interests be found? The answer is, chiefly among those who have no connexion with estates, and who are dissenters from the two established churches of Great Britain, and voluntaries. They, unhappily, are too often opposed to lawful rule and right supremacy, and they are headed by their clergymen on all occasions. I believe the Wesleyan Methodists and the Plymouth Brethren have always eschewed politics, and conducted themselves so as to command the respect of the community. They are the only exceptions I am aware of.

We have seen frequently, also, that the jealousy of retail mercantile men, who are not either proprietors or mortgagees, has been excited by the radical press against the planters generally. Now, it is really wonderful that so many shrewd persons suffer themselves to be led away, either by these newspaper mis-statements, or their own political notions. Surely no sophistry can induce them to believe that their very commercial existence does not depend on the preservation of the estates. All the money which flows to them arises from the proprietors. All the goods which are bought in their stores are purchased by the planters or their dependents; the latter being a numerous body. What would be the consequence (if the plantations were abandoned) to those merchants? They would lose at once the great body of labourers as customers—the planters themselves—the tradesmen and professional men employed by them. And who would remain? Why, the gentlemen on the civil list, including some of the clergy.

And where would the taxes come from to support this

list? When the planters are ruined the Colony is annihilated. In fact, they are the Colony, and all other classes are accessories, because they owe their origin and their existence to the settlement of the planters. It is easy to trace the career of a place like this. A few enterprising Dutchmen, after exploring the coast and the rivers, effected a settlement. They dammed and planted their little territory, which extended as they grew in numbers, and then they threw off their primitive simplicity. Every man, at first, was his own tailor, shoemaker, carpenter, cooper, &c., besides his own merchant. But with increase of planters, came all those classes and denominations of men which the division of labour had created in Europe; and, in the progress of years, confining themselves to their own department, the proprietors of the soil gave employment to the many people who flocked to the settlement for exercise of their trades and callings, until the latter rose into such consequence that they overshadowed their original creators, and now they are disposed to look down upon, and to kick away the ladder by which they mounted to their present height. If they succeed, they will be in the position of the Irishman who placed himself astride on the bough of a tree, with his face to the trunk, to sever the former with a saw, and, of course, came to the ground by his success. It is difficult to comprehend how so many men, who are highly intelligent, should be so far misled by pernicious party doctrines and dogmata.

But a stranger here who devotes himself to the study of our internal economy, must be astounded by the mistaken views of some, and the singular ignorance of others, concerning what is coming daily within their observation. No cit, in the pristine days of London, could be more innocent of knowledge, regarding the rural districts of England, than the Georgetown Cockney concerning what is passing in the plantations of the Colony, unless,

as I said before, he is connected with an estate. This will account for the strange extracts from letters which appear occasionally in the English newspapers, and also for a great deal of singular matter from the local press, the best conducted of which have no means of testing the accuracy of the statements which they receive from correspondents. And so long as the people of Great Britain are disposed to look on communications coming directly from the spot, in this manner, as more accurate and authentic than those which are made to the Parliament, or Government, by the planters, or their representatives, such erroneous accounts, whether they emanate from party spirit, or are the effusions of men ignorant of their subject, and boldly advancing assertions at variance with truth, will be highly injurious.

The statements which are advanced in Parliament, and the articles in British periodicals, which evince so much lamentable ignorance of our true condition, may be traced to the sources just mentioned. Of all people, we should be unanimous in putting forward just and faithful pictures of the state we are in, because, unfortunately, we have more enemies than friends in England, and, consequently, the averments against us obtain a wider circulation, and are more generally believed than statements in our favour. So long as party spirit perverts the mind and misleads us, so long as agents of our implacable opponents are fostered among us, and so long as men who know nothing will write letters to be inserted in the journals of the mother country, we cannot hope that the inhabitants of the latter will arrive at a just conclusion regarding us. A Parliamentary blue book, containing evidence of our wretched state, has, in its very aspect, something so forbidding, that no man who is not under the necessity, will devote himself to the reading of it, unless, indeed, he is one of us. While it is so difficult to vindicate ourselves from the aspersions of those who

aim at our destruction, it is surely our duty to guard against permitting slanderous assertions, whether emanating from thoughtless ignorance, party spirit, or malignity, to go abroad, as from the colonists themselves.

If we look back into the proceedings of former times, we shall find that we have been often accused on grounds furnished by ourselves, in the manner I have just mentioned; and there is too much reason to believe that such communications have in a great measure tended to induce that indifference to our welfare, and that apathy in regard to our appeals to the Queen or the Parliament, which we have had to struggle against for many years. The unlimited licence of the press (valuable as it may be in other places) operates perniciously here, both publicly and privately. A defamed individual can only obtain redress in the courts of law, in an action for damages against men who cannot even call the types their own with which they disseminate their mischievous calumnies. I say mischievous, only inasmuch as they operate at home in the way I have stated; but here, the editors of such journals being known, are perfectly innocuous. So little are their lucubrations attended to, that I have seen a member of the court enter a room where a number of gentlemen were seated, and draw a copy of *The Guiana Times* from his pocket, out of which he read, amidst the most noisy mirth, a slanderous article on himself, in which he was branded with epithets that would cause the nymphs of Billingsgate to hide their diminished heads. No person in the Colony has any other notion regarding those colonial followers of the metropolitan Sunday press, than "that their tongue is no scandal;" and if they did as little harm in England, I should not have recorded here my sense of their peculiar style of animadversion. *The Royal Gazette* is the only newspaper which has been uniformly conducted with strict attention to decorum, and a careful avoidance of personalities. As for the gentle-

men who, in their epistolary correspondence, heedlessly, and with singular want of forethought, put into the hands of their enemies the stick which is to break their own heads, they must be allowed also to take their course. There are no means of staying them.

JULY, 1843.

THE Colony seems to be now sunk in an apathetic state, probably resulting from the sad experience it has had of the utter hopelessness of all attempts to improve its condition. Men become habituated to hardship, as they do to everything else; indeed, it is not wonderful if all colonists should believe with Shylock, that "suffering is the badge of their tribe." Certain it is, that the feverish anxiety which, for years after 1838, prevailed about the time when the packet was expected, has now much subsided. She is not likely to bring good news, and she can scarcely bring any intelligence that will add to the distress that exists among the planters. Wages, from causes which are but too obvious, show a decided tendency to rise in the meantime. Notwithstanding the arrival of a few stray people occasionally from the West India Islands, the labour of the Colony is diminishing, from natural causes, and the annual withdrawal of many people from field work. The deaths are not balanced by the number of youths and maidens who step into the places of men and women so removed, nor do the importations supply the deficiency.

This is felt, rather than observed, on the estates, in the increasing difficulty the managers meet with in keeping up their gangs.

It is astonishing how many strong people of the labouring classes are idle, and how they pass their time. Some of them find their enjoyment in "sitting down," as they call it, which means sleeping on benches in front of their

cottages, or lying along and chatting for hours together. Women are fond of amusing each other by telling stories, which resemble our nursery tales in their simplicity. They call them "Nancy 'tories," but why, does not seem to be easily understood. They generally relate to some very trifling affair. A considerable number of the men are constantly engaged in fishing and shooting, by which they make a livelihood. The rivers abound with fish, which, when caught, are speedily disposed of to the people on estates at good prices. Shooting or hunting (for they are synonymous here) occupies many idle, dissipated, Negroes, who wander through the cultivated fields, each with three or four dogs at his heels, and, as may be readily understood, do much injury, in following their game through the crops.

Some resident proprietors keep a huntsman each, for the supply of their houses, and from the abundance everywhere of deer, labbas, and acouries, the man generally contrives to provide enough for his master and himself; for it seems to be a rule as well understood as the vulgar one, according to which the cook helps himself, that the huntsman shall sell for his own benefit a portion of the spoil, although he is paid the salary of a domestic. I tried this method of procuring food, but my sportsman, on the third day, having brought me a remarkably fine pair of wild ducks, and having been rewarded by an extra glass of brandy, had scarcely departed, when an old watchman appeared with a complaint against the yackman (a corruption of the Dutch word, I believe). "And what has he done, Captain?" "Massa, tha' man no good—he dam' rascal, for true," said Captain, wrathfully. "Well, but what has he done?" A Negro has always a wonderfully circuitous way of telling a tale. "Massa, he no tief my plantain," (he was watchman at the remains of the plantain walk) —"me can't tell lie—he no tief my fowl—he no lick me—me can't tell lie." "Well, but what did he do?" "Tha'

man go all about want make massa fool, make he tink he get plenty wild meat, but he too lazy for search um, so he soot (shoot) my duck, and take him home in a massa." "Oho! and where did he find them?" "In a trench; me in a plan' walk, he no see me, me see he bery well." The culprit was tried, condemned on the clearest evidence, and discharged. I never kept a yackman again. There was, not long ago, considerable alarm excited in this quarter by the unusually great number of tigers which had been seen, or had manifested their dangerous propinquity, by carrying off many pigs, and killing a cow. Those jaguars, or tigers as they are called here, are in reality leopards, being spotted, not striped; but they are, nevertheless, frequently of very formidable size; and we had the good fortune to catch one of that description, in a pit dug for the purpose, deep and narrow enough to prevent the animal from jumping out after he had got in, with a live pig at the bottom to entice him to take the downward leap. He was found in the morning, safely lodged, and with the pig half devoured beside him. The upward, sulky, glare of his dull, deadly, looking eye, as he beheld his captors, affected the latter with anything but a pleasant feeling. A large strong cage was quickly prepared, so strengthened by innumerable bars and cross pieces as to resist his attempts on it, and into this he was forced after the hole on one side had been gradually sloped by digging, to admit of his ascent into the opening of the cage, so placed as to cover the mouth of the hole. Two steady, trusty, persons stood ready with loaded muskets, in case he should, by any accident, escape, and get among the crowd, which was very considerable. After a little he scrambled up into his den, growling deeply, and betraying no sign of fear, but something like a desire to be in the middle of the black mob, that beheld him with no silent manifestation of triumph.

So soon as the Negroes were assured that he was well

secured, and could not possibly get out, they drew near, and almost all of them addressed him separately, in a short, pithy speech, expressive of their belief that his plundering days were over, and their pigs safe from *him*, at any rate. They then raised him up, and placed him in his domicile on a cart, in which he was conveyed to a shed near my house, the whole cavalcade following in the train of the spoliator, and exulting over him. The beast became evidently excited at last, from the restless manner in which he moved about his den and regarded the crowd, uttering a low, startling growl occasionally. The next day he took his food well enough, but did not seem to become more reconciled to his change of living. In a few days he appeared unwell, and one morning was found stretched out quite dead in his cage. I was not very sorry for the loss, for I found that he was an expensive *pet*, from the quantity of fresh meat he required every day. It was my intention, had he got through the transition state safely, to give him to a friend in Georgetown, who could have abundance of garbage from the slaughterhouse on which to feed him; as it was, we flayed him, stuffed his skin, and placed it in my entrance-hall. When measured, he was found to be nearly eight feet long, from point of nose to tip of tail—I think he only wanted an inch; and he was very strongly made.

Indeed, the strength of their forelegs is astonishing. On a neighbouring estate, lately, a tiger made an attempt on a pig pen, placed within the square of the Negro village (contrary to all rule, and the anxious wish of the proprietor, but an evil he was obliged to put up with), and so strongly stockaded that he could not accomplish an entrance, although he paced deliberately round, looking for a proper place. The night was not so far advanced but some of the people were still moving about, and the prowler was observed. The hubbub which ensued both irritated and alarmed the brute, and, finding he could not

gain his object, he struck one of his paws through an opening in the palisades, hitting a large boar on the forehead so forcibly that the part was literally battered in, and scampered off. They are frequently shot at night, but very seldom in the day, being then hidden in the interior, among the primeval woods or distant savannahs.

I remember an incident which occurred on one of my former visits to the Colony, and which I may set down here also. It was reported to one of my neighbours that a tiger had killed a cow and her calf behind his estate, and that the animal had been seen retiring into a little detached patch of bush at daybreak. That gentleman convened a few friends, who were sportsmen, to search this spot, and until they all arrived, a watch was set on the place to see whether he remained; so that when we entered the little piece of bush, we were sure of finding him; but, after a tedious and anxious search, we failed to unharbour the game. We had given up all hopes of seeing him, and begun to shoot parrots and bush fowls, when, suddenly, one of the party started out from beneath a tree, with a strange mixture of fear and surprise on his countenance; and, following the direction of his eyes with our own, we saw the tiger lying along a bough, within six or eight feet of the ground, and watching us, in that sort of crouching, eager manner which the cat exhibits under similar circumstances, his tail wagging all the time, and creating a rustling among the leaves, which first arrested our companion's attention. Drawing back, until we all came from the different stations near to this spot, we proceeded to put each a couple of pistol bullets above the small shot with which our pieces were loaded, and then, cautiously approaching until within fifteen or twenty paces, we fired at once upon the brute, and brought him to the ground, after which he was soon despatched. He was only about six feet and a half long.

Although they do not seem to fear the face of man, I have not heard of a well-authenticated instance of attack made by one on an individual. There are stories current of people killed by them, and the Negroes have all that fear of "*tiga*" which it is said the Hindoos have of the royal beast of Bengal. But I believe they will not venture on a man unless severely pressed by hunger, or rendered desperate by position. The Blacks say they will not touch the Bucks or Indians, because they are neither men nor brutes. Doubtless this proceeds from the sovereign contempt which the former entertain for those aborigines, and which they have taken every opportunity of showing. It was a common saying of the Negroes, during slavery, when the question of emancipation was continually agitating the Colony, "that Buckra free, good; but Buck free, wha' da! cha! better be plantation slave, forty times!" In fact, they do not comprehend how the Indians can be styled "free people," because their ideas of freedom have been taken from the appearance of those whom they have seen in that condition, and who, generally speaking, belong to the better classes of Whites. Naked Bucks, they consider inferior to themselves, and even a shade lower in status than they were as slaves, because of their physical debility, and unfitness to endure fatigue. There are instances, however, where they have amalgamated and intermarried (so to speak) with each other. These have occurred, chiefly, in the neighbourhood of Posts on the rivers, the holders of which are stationed there to keep up our friendly communications with the natives, and, consequently, often have many settled around them. The gangs of woodcutters, too, are forced by their situation into continual juxtaposition with them.

1st JANUARY, 1844.

ANOTHER year has passed, and brought "no healing on its wing." The crop of the Fortune seems to be nearly stationary in its annual amount, without any considerable rise or fall, and the prices of tropical produce have not undergone any very perceptible alteration. George has again brought up his balance-sheet, and the loss on the year is £1540. At this period, which, over the Christian world in general, is one of festivity and enjoyment, I am doomed to feel all the horrors of my situation; for, although I may know from the books previously, how the balance is to stand at this time, I cannot muster resolution to look frequently at them, so as to understand what the exact sum of my misfortune is likely to be, until this month comes, and along with it the necessity for knowing the worst. "On the whole," said George, "we are all in this quarter nearly as we were last year, in regard to losses; there is not one who has a net revenue." "There is more misery than we can perceive," said I. "The stern necessity for preserv-
 ✓ ing whatever remains of credit, prevents many a poor, broken-hearted man from unburthening his mind to a friend, as in former times, when our Colony was remarkable for the frank, easy manner in which planters spoke of their affairs, debts included." "I have heard many," replied he, "make the same observation; no one speaks now as before (my information is obtained under a solemn obligation to secrecy, in regard to all but you), and even the most common operation of the field is now concealed." "You say Wellingham is pretty nearly as in 1843?" "His crop was fully better, but the loss nearly the same." "They seem to keep up their spirits; yet Grace, I think, often looks sadly on her little boy; she is inclined, naturally, to be thoughtful, and, of course, the state of affairs, which should cause any one to think, has a more visible operation on her." "But Charles, I am sure,

answers your expectation, or, rather, has shown to you that your fears of him were groundless." "Yes, indeed, he has. Marriage has improved him much. I do not know a more steady, industrious person. A good-hearted man, George, who is thoughtless and impetuous, will be generally improved by a sensible wife, whom he loves. It is the selfish, improvident man, who is also heartless, upon whom the helpmate has no hold; he believes every one who gainsays him to be his enemy, and, like a spoiled child, insists on doing what he has a mind to, without regard to consequences, and their effect on others. But we have yet to see how Charles will brook the loss of his estate, provided the times do not improve, and the mortgagee insists on foreclosing. "I fear the result of such proceeding on the father more than on the son." "And so would most people; but these occurrences are common now, and use, perhaps, will lessen the effect." "He is a singular man, the elder Wellingham." "He is, George; an imaginative person, with deep feelings, such, they say, poets are—although, I should think, he has none of the fire, and less of the irritability which are characteristics also of genius." "I doubt that," said George; "my opinion is that our greatest poets had neither the strange sort of fire which consumes the possessor, nor the eccentricities which are so remarkable in second-rate versifiers; look at Scott, Milton, Shakspeare." "Well! well! we are not going to discuss the merits of the British poets. The fact is indubitable, that Mr. Wellingham takes fanciful views of occurrences, and gives to facts a colouring which can only emanate from an exuberant imagination; he scarcely ever sees things as other people do, and I am in doubt whether he does not adapt his conversation to suit my ideas of the present state of the Colony, rather from good nature and deference to me, than a settled conviction in accordance with my opinions." "He certainly seldom thinks with other people, but in this in-

stance, for that very reason, he is more likely to chime in with you, for you are aware that your notions on colonial affairs are thought to be extreme, and your gloominess greater than there is warrant for." "So I am given to understand; they style me the male Cassandra of our Troy." "Yes, and you would have been nominated long ago to the Court of Policy, if the Kiezers did not believe that your despairing speeches and observations would have an injurious tendency." "Ah! you did not tell me that before. Then my doctrines have done me good service, for, trust me, to sit in that Court and combat incessantly the decrees of fate, in the shape of Downing Street despatches, must be pretty much like the horrible and ineffectual struggle which a certain aged Countess (innocent, yet condemned by the foulest tyrant that ever disgraced a throne—our Harry VIII.) made, hopelessly, to the last against her legal murderer—the public executioner." "Do you call the Colonial Minister these fine names?" inquired George, with a smile. "Figuratively, and afar off, as you see. There are political murderers as well as physical destroyers; it may be a question which of the two offend most seriously against the eternal and immutable dogmata of justice; the malice prepense may exist with the former as well as the latter; and, certainly, when men in power suffer those who are under their charge to be destroyed by measures emanating from them, after proof has been adduced that this must inevitably happen, what can any one say but that they are actuated by foregone conclusions, which involve the probability of that contingency? And does not the whole of the evidence given before the late Committee of the House of Commons, tend to show, clearly and forcibly, that, without a large accession of suitable labourers to the existing population, the cultivation of exportable produce must be abandoned, and our Colony destroyed?" "They will never agree to consider a colony as an integral part of the empire, and in

that consists the whole evil; we are worse off than if we were a weak foreign nation; because the necessity for preserving the balance of power would compel our potent neighbours to interfere in our favour; as it is, we are considered by the latter to be a fragment of Great Britain, and, as such, not to be meddled with more than Yorkshire or Scotland. We have thus all the disadvantages of a colonial dependency, without the benefits that should accompany them." "Saving only one—the command of the British market, without which we could not exist at the present moment." "That is rendered, indeed, essential to our existence; but by whom? The very people who prove such harsh protectors, in general; they forced a system on us which we foretold would be ruinous, and raise the price of sugar to them considerably." "And a large, and still increasing party are now crying out about the difference between sugar in England and on the Continent. At a meeting near Liverpool, lately, a farmer inveighed against the iniquity of prohibiting foreign sugar, and told the meeting that, but for the duty on it, he would manure his land with the article. Doubtless, he had been told by some of our friends of the relative prices in Cuba and in Jamaica, and, relying on having it at ten pounds a ton, he found it would be as cheap as guano."

"Have you looked over the lists of the estate that I gave you?" "I have; and I find that there has been, indeed, a greater number than on any preceding year since my return; but the aggregate of labour obtained is not increased, according to this other document, and, of course, the presumption is, from the longer list of names without a corresponding addition to the work done in the fields, that the people have been more unsettled, and running, even more than formerly, from one place to another; the Barbadians did not remain long." "No; Brown found that they were doing their tasks infamously, much worse even than our own gang, and allowed them to go away."

“Wellingham had about forty excellent people from that island; they differ very much it would appear.” “I heard of a proprietor to leeward, who imported upwards of a hundred, at a great expense, and, in consequence of the want of a contract, they set off to another planter, and engaged themselves to him immediately.” “Well! our rulers will say it is not their fault; the man knew that contracts entered into out of the Colony were not valid, and he should not have incurred the risk.” “Pretty much like telling a man who narrowly escapes drowning, and catches a severe cold by the ducking, that if he had drowned quietly, he would have escaped the other. Men who are driven to despair must brave risks and incur danger, to avoid the certain destruction that awaits them; it is too much for the Colonial Minister to expect that we are to succumb to his extinguishing measures, without an effort to save ourselves.” “It is difficult to tell what they expect; one would imagine, sometimes, that they regard us as the ancient Spaniards did the American aborigines—as an inferior race of men, who have not only no right to the privileges and immunities which are enjoyed by our countrymen of Europe, but are incapable of feeling the injuries inflicted on us.” “Poor Brown seems to have lost heart altogether. He speaks frequently now of Australia; and he told me the other day, that if he would make up his mind to abandon this sinking ship, and begin the world in another hemisphere, there are a half dozen more of the best managers among us ready to go with him. Brown is looked up to by his class, and they have confidence in his knowledge of the world.” “I cannot be so absurd as to blame him; every man must do the best he can for himself; but I should feel his loss to be a serious additional evil to us.” “He cannot bring his mind to it. There is something so extraordinary in our position, so uncommon in the circumstances of a whole community going headlong to ruin,

that one always inclines to believe it cannot last, and that the consummation, after all, will not take place." "Brown has a little money; advise him to have it safely lodged in England, George; he speaks more unreservedly to you, but you may say I recommend the funds to him, as the safest investment—unless it be a mortgage on land—which would give him little interest." "He has shares in the local bank; they are at a discount, and thus he is already in for a considerable loss, but the sooner he sells out, before they fall lower, the better." "Decidedly; who knows how soon a mob-driven government may devise another scheme, in favour of Manchester, at our expense? We are by no means certain that the present evils, intolerable as they are, may be the last that our rulers are to inflict on us." "I shall tell him what you say, and I have no doubt that he will act on your suggestions; your opinions go far in this quarter." "Aye! aye! George, I am the richest of our unhappy order in this small district, and money always gives weight to the opinions of its possessor, wonderfully enhancing the value of them. Pass a few years, and they will 'sometimes think,' as Sir Andrew Aguecheek did of himself, that 'I possess no more wit than other men.'"

An ugly accident happened in the field two days ago. A man was bitten by a snake of the labari kind, while crossing an abandoned patch near to that in which the gang was at work. The poor fellow saw the reptile, and was immediately aware that he had been wounded. At first, the pain was trifling, and he walked easily through a trench, into the cane field, among the people, to whom he told his mishap. They have all a wholesome dread of snakes, and a man was instantly despatched for the doctor, who, by good luck, having been on the next estate, was here very soon. I went with him to see the patient, and I shall not soon forget the appearance of the poor man. The limb was much swollen, from the foot

upwards; two slight marks, like scratches, being visible above the ankle. His eyes were suffused; and there was evidently a great determination, as it is called, to the head, for, while we were there, his nose began to bleed. He complained much of the pain along the leg and thigh. Dr. Robertson proceeded instantly to excise the parts immediately adjoining the wounds, with the marked portion itself; after which he prescribed frequent doses of hartshorn, in water. He then walked into my house, there to remain till the crisis was over, visiting the man every fifteen or twenty minutes. Nothing can exceed the attention of medical men, generally, in this Colony; but, I grieve to say, they are very badly supported by the black nurses, who usually show much indifference regarding those under their care. The doctor had great apprehensions in this case. The labari is one of our worst snakes, scarcely second to the rattlesnake or bushmaster, both of which are as venomous as any that are known.

This is now the third day since the accident occurred, and the swelling, which yesterday was really frightful to behold, has evidently decreased a little. He has no bleeding at the nose now, but his eyes have still that reddish tinge, and his features seem to be partially swelled. I think there is a slight wandering, too, in his answers to questions, probably the effect of fever, which has been severe. The wound looks well, the doctor says, but he is afraid of mortification, now that danger of immediate death is over. The snakes of the Colony are of many varieties, and, fortunately, by far the greater number are harmless, especially those which are frequently seen near houses. The labari, it is true, is sometimes found in megass logés, and even in outhouses, but not often; while the rattlesnake always shuns the haunts of man. Some time ago, a large one was taken out of a trench, behind this estate, dead, and brought home by the watchman as a curiosity, from its size; it was the

largest I ever saw, being about six feet long, and of enormous thickness. The head of this reptile is especially ugly, being large and flat, and protruding over the eyes. The Negroes believe that it can bite with its tail, or shak shak, as they call the rattle, which is just a prolongation of the vertebræ of the back, with very little cartilage, loose and dry, so that when agitated by the motion of the tail it produces a sound very like (like, and yet so different!) the song of the grasshopper, so much sung and admired by the ancient classic poets.

The individual reptile in question, when thrown out from the batteau in which Captain brought it, was soon surrounded by a group, and they all avoided the tail. When I saw this, I told one of them to cut off and give the appendage to me. A sort of shudder ran through them, and, to complete their wonder and fear, I coolly took out my knife, and stooped to cut off the rattle. "Massa! you known tha' snake? da shak shak snake; he can sham dead, heh! heh! Massa Nigga!" were the expressions I heard around me as I detached the "alarum," for such it is; the animal shaking its tail, when agitated, by a sort of instinct, probably designed by nature for the protection of the unwary intruder on the dangerous creature. The Negroes all exclaimed against my rashness, for they had an impression among them that it was not dead, only "making believe."

From the circumstance of those fell monsters keeping generally afar from man, accidents of the sort I have just mentioned are of rare occurrence. In fact, I do not at this moment recollect of another as having happened in this district. Depredations are frequently committed among the ducks of the estates, by a variety of the boa, peculiar to this part of America, called the camoeny, a snake that takes his prey, generally, in the water, under which he lurks, with his head up, so as to observe without being observed; and when any aquatic fowl is discovered,

he steals upon and seizes it. They are of immense size, it is said, in some localities. The largest I have seen was twenty feet long. It had just swallowed a muscovy duck, which it seized in the middle of a numerous flock, raising such a noise as brought one to the spot, who saw the snake, and gave the alarm. He was shot by repeated fusillades, but not before he had gotten the duck into his gullet. The Negroes are not afraid of them, and they eat them with great gusto.

This one was no sooner floating on the water, without much motion, than the man who owned the prey jumped in and attacked him with a knife, ripping up his throat and stomach, where he found his property, only half way down, and whence he speedily extracted it. In fact, the protuberance caused by the bird was visible from the bank of the trench. Notwithstanding its great length, this reptile was not thicker than a stout man's leg at the calf. They are darker than the boas of the East, but beautifully marked, also, with a variety of colours; black, white, and brown predominating. Indeed, I would say, from what I have seen, that the venomous snakes are the most revolting in appearance. The blood snake is understood to be of this description, and it resembles, strongly, an enormous earth-worm, being just of that colour, and usually from four to six feet long. There is another sort, of a deep grass green hue, and of similar length; while the coral snake, from eighteen inches to three feet, glides along among the flowers and shrubs, near a house, in the gay colours of scarlet, black, and white, which characterise the substance from which it takes its name. The whip snake is the most familiar with man, being generally found near houses. It is so named, from the resemblance it bears to the thong of a whip, and is perfectly innocuous.

Some years ago, when in the Colony, and visiting a bachelor friend, who lived in a retired situation, I was one day reclining on a sofa, and reading, the house being perfectly still, and no person nearer than the kitchen,

when a snake of this variety moved so silently into the room, that he was in the middle of it before I was aware of his presence. He seemed to look for some things, as if he knew they should be there, insects probably, for I observed him to pick up a spider. At last he espied me, and, raising his head, in an instant was coiled up, instinctively, for defence, but immediately afterwards, when I got on my feet, he retreated with great expedition below the sideboard, and contrived to ensconce himself so between it and the wall, that it was only after detaching it the servants were able to dislodge him. I would not permit them to kill him, and they were both sulky and surprised, when he glided rapidly down the outer steps, and on to the lawn, without being assailed by every sort of offensive weapon that might come to hand. This one was about five feet long. Lizards abound about dwellings of all sorts in the Colony, and move along, frequently, with great confidence in presence of the inmates.

In fact, but for the number of reptiles of various sorts, the insect tribes of tropical regions would soon become too numerous to be compatible with the contemporaneous existence of man; but, unfortunately, we do not appreciate, as we ought, the wise distribution which an all-knowing and all-seeing Providence has made, of different creatures to preserve the balance of life, in its many varieties. There is nothing more wisely ordered in the world than the manner in which it is arranged that life shall prey upon life, and one class of animals depend on another, inferior in strength, for the means of supporting existence. A species of small ant, which literally covers the ground, may be called the tiny scavenger of this country, as they pick up everything from the earth's surface, of animal substance, which the collective strength of their myriads can carry off. They are devoured by a larger variety of their own species, besides other insects and small birds; and the larger ants themselves constitute a considerable portion of the food of all sorts of fowls and

reptiles. I have said animal substances, but, in fact, nothing can lie on any part of a surface, that enters into the composition of the numerous articles which contribute to the support of our frame, if the small red ants are able to remove it, either wholly or by piecemeal; and as these little creatures are not allowed to lie on the earth, but must lay down their lives to preserve in existence others which are a degree above them in the scale of creation, it follows, that a great deal of matter, which would be noxious to life, as productive of disease, is thus prevented from rotting on the ground. We see the same rule observed in insects and reptiles of a larger size, each variety preying on that which is below it in the scale; and, ascending higher in the gradation of the animal kingdom, we have beasts and birds of prey to prevent the inordinate increase of living creatures; while vultures and ravens are provided to take off those from polluting the air which have been doomed to a natural death; and thus is the balance insured.

The manner in which the carrion crow winds his game, throws completely into shade the powers of the dog. He may be seen afar off, a very speck, seemingly on the edge of a cloud, but bearing steadily on against the wind; gradually he follows up the scent, until he finds himself in the neighbourhood of the object; then, commencing a series of gyrations, which bring him nearer and nearer to the ground, he at last sweeps along over the trees, wheeling in graceful circles near the spot, until he perceives the dead animal. In the course of an hour, scores will be congregated round the place, all drawn to it in the same manner. Our laws protect those birds, and most properly, by imposing severe penalties on the destroyers of them; hence their fearless manner in the presence of those who intrude on them, when they scarcely give themselves the trouble to go out of the way. It is the only variety of the vulture, in so far as I have heard, that

is ever seen within the cultivated parts of the settlement; in the bush, are those of the tribe which are to be found in other parts of this continent, among the rest, one that is called "King of the Vultures."

JULY, 1844.

RUMOURS are afloat among our friends in England, that government have in contemplation a scheme of immigration from those places where labourers can be obtained, into the West Indies, not limited, as at present, to particular localities, the people of which are found to be useless here. The force of circumstances should have brought this about long ago, had there not been a power behind the scenes strong enough to balance the claims of reason and of justice. Probably the cotton lords will begin to apprehend that the state of the sugar colonies, rendered unmistakable by the crops now steadily remaining at about half of those obtained in better times, must tell ultimately on the demand for their goods. That they should have such fears is very probable, they being so remarkably shrewd, and tenderly alive to their own interests.

It is impossible almost that such men can fail to perceive that the planters, in the aggregate, are now supporting their estates by the capital possessed by them independently of their West Indian properties, or by the little credit they enjoy. With half crops, and double expenditure in producing them, it cannot be otherwise; and it is just probable that our opponents begin to perceive that their policy is reacting on themselves, for all the outlay on estates eventually goes into the pockets of tradesmen and manufacturers in England, excepting only the value of some articles of provision and timber from America. The clothing of the population, salt meat, butter, &c., and almost every item consumed as imported food (excepting salt fish), besides iron and copper in

every form used by the plantations in machinery and its wear and tear, boiling-coppers, stills, &c.—all those come from the mother country. If the supplies are chiefly from our own country, it follows that as the work prospers which gives rise to the demand, so must the latter increase, and *vice versa*.

I have shown that if the estates cease to work, the current which furnished the requisite supply of money, is cut off at the fountain, and there will soon thereafter be no person to buy a single article produced by the men of Manchester and Birmingham, because there can be no export trade, and those political economists will admit that, without it, there can be no importation of goods. Probably they begin to find that in sacrificing us to Brazil, they but part with the substance while grasping the shadow. But this matter-of-fact way of reasoning is almost too much to expect from them. Although they be plodding men of business, they seem to be as wild on this subject as the ardent and imaginative George Canning, when he waved his hand in the House, and proclaimed that he had “called a new world into existence,” in allusion to the treaties he had made with the thinly-peopled, and distracted Republics of South America, which might be called a world, with reference to their population, on the same principle that an inlet may be called a sea. This newly-discovered field for mercantile operations, led to results which showed that the statesman and the manufacturer were alike ignorant of the wants and resources of the few thousand people, so pompously designated by the former, and should serve as a beacon to prevent the latter from again deluging places with their productions, where they cannot possibly be consumed.

The Liverpool merchants trading to Brazil, if they succeed in getting the reciprocity treaty between that empire and Great Britain, which they have exerted themselves to procure, will most likely fall into that error

along with their neighbours. If the day should arrive (but Heaven avert it) when slave-grown sugar is admitted on equal terms with our own, and the manufactures of England are received into Brazil on conditions equally favourable, we must imagine that the quantity of goods sent to that country would be, in accordance with the statements put forth by the free-traders, enormous.

Notwithstanding the fact, which a reference to our export tables at the custom-house should convince them of, they persist in believing that this trade, even now, is more valuable than the West India, and nothing prevents it from reaching a very extraordinary height, but the exclusion of the produce of Brazil. They would still have to compete with the cheaper labour of the continent of Europe, and the lower freight (rather important items in the expense of manufacturing goods, and the cost of transporting them to the market), even if they were admitted into Brazilian ports on the terms of the most favoured nation. There seems to be something like infatuation in those men who desire to see their country forego all the advantages she possesses over every other nation in her colonies, which constitute an almost ample field in themselves for the legitimate operations of commerce, and which they would part with for the uncertain chance of more extended transactions with peoples with whom the common incidents of life may set us at variance; and, in event of a general war, our country, so essentially manufacturing and commercial, must be financially ruined, wanting her colonies. Whereas, did she foster the latter, and keep within bounds the inordinate ambition of Manchester, by refraining from injuring other interests to promote those of that town, trade and manufactures would be kept permanently in a healthy and prosperous state. Verily, if at this time Great Britain destroys her colonial empire for the benefit of the manufacturer and the foreigner, she will realize the fable of the dog and shadow, and she will cut

off her limbs, and leave the helpless trunk to struggle in competition with those who are strengthened by her maiming, and who will not abate one jot of their own peculiar advantages, out of love, gratitude, or compassion to her.

Still the colonial routine goes on; men, apparently wearied of appealing to the justice of our imperial government, quietly await the accomplishment of their destiny without clamouring for relief. Nevertheless, the individual energy of the planters is as active as ever, few months passing without some new invention to diminish the necessity for manual labour; which, alas! turns out as fallacious as its hundred predecessors. I fear it will be found impracticable to work the land here otherwise than by the hand, unless some new mode of culture, comprehending a different method of planting the cane, should be introduced, and all attempts to do so having hitherto failed, the case seems hopeless.

Thorough draining, according to the method in use at home, has been spoken of; but who can afford twenty pounds an acre for that purpose, which would be the expense, according to the lowest calculation? And, after all, it is doubtful if the water would penetrate with sufficient celerity through our stiff soils, baked as they are in the sun. Doubtless, if once established, the advantage would be immense, both from its direct operation on the soil, and its facilitating the use of the plough, by doing away with open drains. The difficulty would be in breaking and pulverising the ground sufficiently at first, to open up a passage for water to the bottom of the drain; but if this was once effected, the earth would most likely remain in an open state, permitting freely the passage of air and water, with a wide spreading of roots. There are some, however, who think that the power of the sun is so great on the stiff clay soils here, that very frequent turning up would be required to keep them permeable to

fluids; and, as the canes take at least twelve months to attain to maturity, long before they reached that stage, they would suffer from rain lodging on the surface of the ground. *Non nostrum tantas componere lites.* It is not likely to be tried. The day is gone past for expensive experiments. There is an existing sample of the extent to which the Colony did go in that way some years ago, in the canal excavator, a machine for digging and cleaning trenches, which, had it succeeded, would have been an immense acquisition; but as it is (a failure), it has cost the Colony £7,000 at different times, and engaged the attention of the best engineers, without the slightest prospect *now* of success.

I have mentioned that my friend Wellingham arranged with his mortgagee, and obtained a letter guaranteeing him from being molested for two years. The time has expired, and it is not difficult to observe that, notwithstanding all their efforts they cannot keep up their spirits. Charles has been, according to the uniform account of his wife, constantly in the field, to secure as much as he could a proper discharge of duty to the proprietor from his overpaid labourers. His father, always a shy, retiring, character, has become more so than ever, and, Grace tells me, shuns the society even of his best friends. "Is there any thing in particular that distresses him—any importunity from his creditors?" I inquired of her. "No, I am sure there is not," replied she, "but the lapse of two years without any amendment in our position, and, consequently, the more hopeless nature of our prospects, affect him deeply." "Are you sure that he has had no communication on the subject of his mortgage lately?" "Quite sure; but he has little confidence in the continuance of this unmolested condition." "I fear he is right, my girl. These are not times for creditors to be merciful," said I, sorrowfully, "but you are prepared for the worst. There is nothing that can come unexpectedly to

you." "It is true, my father," said she calmly, "Charles and I could manage, I believe, anywhere; but, I confess, when I think of others, I am sometimes overcome." At that instant her eldest boy entered, uttering a joyful cry on seeing grandpapa, and running straight up to us. She seized him, and sobbed convulsively as she held him to her breast. I turned aside, under a bitter emotion that was new to me, for this was the first time that she had been overpowered so suddenly and completely in my presence. "Oh!" cried she, "but for these little ones (she has two now) and their grandfather, how well could we bear up against the calamities of the times, and even the parting with you and the rest." "Calm yourself, my child," taking her hand and trying, rather awkwardly, I fear, to appear cheerful, "there is still hope." "Say not so, my dearest father, you do not feel that there is, and trust me, even you have not thought more deeply on this subject than I have. There can be no hope for unfortunates in debt, under such awful circumstances."

She said this with composure, and with the air of one perfectly assured of the uncontrovertible nature of the fact she had stated. "My dear," continued I, "whilst I have anything, you cannot imagine you shall be destitute." "Say not that either, my father," replied she gravely; "you have duties to others besides me, and neither Charles nor I will suffer you to sacrifice more on our account in this hopeless struggle." "But let us not anticipate matters; sufficient for the day, you know," said I, feeling that I could not stand this scene much longer, and getting on my feet. "Where is papa, Johnnie?" said I to the child, by way of introducing something else. He replied that papa was still in the field, and would not be home for one good hour. He is just beginning to speak intelligibly. "Tell him when he comes in that he must not stand so much in the sun. Will you?" "Any one will tell him that in vain, as you know already. I see

how it is with you, but believe me, it is not thus I am often; we are stout-hearted, and not disposed to succumb under the evils of an adverse world, believe me, my father," said she, with a smile. "Keep yourselves so, my darling, and it will be worth to you untold riches; how many, in this vale of tears, are lost from want of equanimity, and from drawing, at the outset of life, a too flattering picture of their future career! Those sanguine dispositions suffer most severely by disappointment." "And you fear Charles rather than me. You see how well I know you, and can interpret your thoughts. But his feelings and his ideas are so good, and his judgment so sound that—" "If he only gives the latter fair-play," interrupted I playfully, to assist in getting her out of her present mood, "he has a chance of doing some good." "Especially when he has a ready counsellor in me," responded she, with rather a sad smile, and added more gravely—"It is indeed so. Charles is naturally impetuous in all his actions; but so long as he holds me in the same estimation as at present, and submits to my remonstrances, his ardent disposition is in his favour." On my way home I reflected on what had passed, and felt convinced that she was right in all she said, and especially in the last observation.

They have resolved on going to Australia when the anticipated catastrophe occurs; but they scarcely venture to speak on the subject with Mr. Wellingham, although it is understood that he shall accompany them. A strangely constituted thing is woman! tender, weak, easily agitated in affairs of trivial import, but when the welfare and happiness of those she loves are at stake, what, to her's, is the boasted fortitude of man! and here is a striking illustration of the fact. Wellingham has been struggling for years with impending misfortune, and instead of soaring above when it approaches the acme,

he seems to be sinking under it; while his daughter-in-law, a young woman reared in the lap of luxury, with every wish gratified and every whim indulged, until after she has linked her fate with that of the man to whom she had given her affections, she finds that she must inevitably be overtaken by calamity; then from the hidden stores of her mind are drawn forth those singular qualities which otherwise might have lain for ever dormant, and she stands forward the prop and support of the family in whose fortunes she has involved her own, cheering her husband and his father in their heartless, because hopeless, occupation—voluntarily depriving herself of every superfluous article that her sister, even yet, considers absolutely necessary, and devoting herself to diminish expenditure in each department of the household. It is even said, but she conceals it, that she makes dresses for the gay labourers of the estate, at the ordinary price, and with the proceeds contrives to clothe herself and her children.

Let any lady who is accustomed to have a carriage and servants at command, with that indescribable appendage, half servant, half confidant, a lady's maid, imagine such a change, and she will shudder at it; yet put her to the proof, in nine cases out of ten, if she deserves the name of woman, she will endeavour to act as my daughter does. Success will not always follow the effort, for such strength of mind is not common to either sex, although in my opinion that, as well as good intention, is much more general among womankind than the world believes. I am proud of my child, but her case often overwhelms me with affliction, which I am obliged to conceal from my poor wife, whose mind is of a very different order from her daughter's; and I fancy my youngest knows that I do not wish to discuss the state of affairs, either here or at Wellingham's. She is a lively, light-hearted creature, and I dare say the future does not give her much uncesi-

ness. It was only the other day that my wife began to think "Grace was becoming too domesticated; we must try to prevent her from shutting herself up with her children like an ordinary dowdy wife; she is really above that sort of thing, and should not give way to it."

I see less now of Mr. Ridley. Whether he feels the iron hand of adversity to be more heavy than heretofore, I know not; but he seldom comes to the Fortune, and my visits to the Mount are rare, because he is not often to be found within the house. When I saw him last he was in his usual spirits, and manifesting that peculiar caustic disposition towards the powers that be, which he delights in." "Well, neighbour, Scott speaks of a son of "utter darkness;" I presume our ruler, however opposite it may be to his general cognomen, should be dignified with that appellation, for he seems as much in the dark as ever regarding the unhappy subjects of his absolute rule." "Anything new lately to provoke your ire against him?" "Nothing in particular, except his uniform opposition to every thing that is likely to benefit the planter; the immigration loan, for instance." "He objects to that as unfair, because the import duties being the most productive of our sources of revenue, and the mass of the population our chief consumers, the expense of bringing people to compete with themselves will fall on the labourers. This seems to be the view which the Colonial Minister takes of it."

"Doubtless; 'like master like man,'" said Ridley. "The idea is still uppermost that we are oppressing those people, by whom we are, in reality, grievously oppressed. Can there be a more striking illustration of the manner in which our remonstrances—our evidence before Parliamentary Committees—the falling off in our crops—and the universally known fact that we are progressing rapidly in the career of ruin—are received, when they directly contradict the assertions of our enemies. The anti-colo-

nial party object to immigration, because it would injure the present population; the evangelical section declaring that a flood of barbarism so imported would throw back the people into their former condition of savages; and the rest roundly asserting that it would reduce the rate of wages, thus avowing their feeling of unquenchable hostility to the hapless planters, who, they know, cannot maintain themselves if condemned permanently to the present monstrous expenditure." "Not only do they so think and act, I verily believe, in perfect consciousness of the calamitous effects of their policy on the Whites of the colonies, but in utter ignorance of the baneful evils resulting from it now to the happiness of those whom they profess to support and protect. I do not think they are aware of the moral disorganization which has prevailed within the last few years among the West India Negroes, because I have not seen it stated either in Parliament or elsewhere—yet the fact is undeniable." "It may not be worse, for ought I know, than the profligacy that exists in the cities of England, which is extensive enough; but yet many of the good old ladies, who think they are upholding a well-behaved and moral population, would be considerably shocked by some disclosures I could make to them."

"Nay, Ridley, you are slandering our country. Unkind, oppressive, she may be, but she is still our country, and, to do her justice, she has none, saving among her most abandoned, so lost to propriety as our demoralized people generally." "And what is it owing to, but the want of proper restraint?" "Undoubtedly; the want of restraint on grown up children, and the means we contribute, in high wages easily earned, to the fostering of their vicious passions and propensities by their gratification. I have not learned that this fact is known in England; but it should be sent abroad universally, that one of the chief evils of the present destructive system is its effect on the customs and

habits of the labouring classes. A few years ago the conduct of these people was much more correct than at present, I would say up to the year 1838, because they were under some salutary control; now, they care not for the laws of God, nor those of man, in the intercourse of the sexes. And crime is becoming, every year, more prevalent. Murder, which was formerly of rare occurrence, is now committed frequently, and, in nine cases out of ten, in consequence of quarrels concerning women." ABC

"A very shocking one happened lately, when a wife conspired with two gallants to destroy her husband; still, that is a crime by no means uncommon in England."

"Nevertheless, what I said is incontrovertible. Until within a recent period, there was not a trial for murder in our province above once, perhaps, in ten years; now, I am sure, we have one every year, and other atrocious offences against the laws, especially outrages on defenceless females, and female children, are alarmingly frequent. It is no palliation to say there are persons as bad in Great Britain, when the question is, whether the people we speak of have not been brought to their present condition by the ameliorating measures of the imperial government, whose intention certainly it was not to reduce them to the state of the vilest in the mother country?" "They are no worse than when they came here, they, or their parents." "Worse! my friend! that is not the question; we condemned the clergy, twenty years ago, for joining men and women together in matrimony, who understood nothing regarding it, except that it was the buckra fashion according to which a man took a wife, with a little more ceremony than themselves, but nothing else, for they could not be made to understand the solemn and indissoluble nature of the tie. There were some with intelligence sufficient to comprehend the nature of its obligations, but a small minority. The representations of the planters were exclaimed against as intolerable tyranny, and the good people at home,

judging, as they always do, by what they see around themselves, decided that marriage would improve the Negroes, as it did the young men of their acquaintance, and the clergymen were stimulated to marry them all as fast as they possibly could. Well might they ask, at sight of the candidates for admission into the holy state, with the melancholy Jacques, 'is there another flood toward that so many strange couples move hither!' Few of them were bound long ere the cord was dreadfully stretched, if not virtually broken; but, after all, they had got over the worst stage in their transition to good behaviour, and the marriages solemnized during the apprenticeship were much more generally productive of union and concord between the parties than those which were entered into ten or twelve years previously; in fact, until they had money for all purposes, without reason to manage it properly, and time enough besides for any amusement, this improvement continued; now, as you say, they are fast approaching to the pristine custom of their African wilds."

"I believe," replied Mr. Ridley, "that their propensities are yet those of a semi-civilized people; it is an old saying that we should not expect to find an old head on young shoulders." "True! but that is exactly what has been assumed in legislating for our population; laws and institutions adapted to an advanced stage of civilization, are those which have been prematurely imposed on it. In point of fact, the children of England are just as able to understand and keep our laws." "I must say the clergy of all sorts are zealous and active; no blame can be attached to them." "Certainly not; but when they see 'the silken path of dalliance' open to them on one hand, and the rough and thorny one of uprightness on the other, is it to be wondered at if such people prefer the former, there being no compelling power strong enough to keep them on the latter, and the selection being with them." "It is of a piece with the rest. Everything con-

nected with us seems now to suffer under the extraordinary policy the government have adopted towards the colonies, which is to raise up one class at the expense of another." "And without being sufficiently acquainted with that which they want to favour. Now, Ridley, you have lived from boyhood here, and no man knows the people better,—tell me frankly—we are alone—have you any hopes of the future?" He stared for a moment, like one who had suddenly presented to him a frightful figure, which he feared to look on, yet was obliged to contemplate. "My dear friend," said he at last, with a sigh, "I am afraid to answer your question, it is one that I tremble to answer, even to myself, yet it will force itself on us all, and I doubt if nine-tenths of the planters are not precisely thinking with us at this moment, though not aloud, as we are. I have no hope for the future, Mr. Premium!" said he, with a solemnity which was striking in one of his generally cheerful humour; "have you any hopes of returning prosperity?" "Scarcely now," was my reply; "I believe it is still within the power of legislation to save us, but it must be by almost colonising the province. The present body of labourers have been allowed their own way too long to constitute hereafter a regularly industrious people. But will any attempt be made? it is therein lurks the evil. I despair of the disposition to legislate effectually, fully as much as in the effect of any measure likely to be brought forward, judging from what we have experienced." "It is a sad world," said Ridley, with a manner entirely changed, and in a sunk voice. "I may bless God now that I have no children, how often have I regretted it before! but, at my age, to begin the world anew, is indeed a hardship which, until within the last twelve months, I did not believe should ever fall to my lot. There are only too many of us, however, and when a misfortune is general, individuals, they say, feel it less. I never lost heart till a few months ago, and really thought that your

forebodings were constitutional, and there are still many sanguine persons who talk of former bad times being followed by good ones, and such common-place methods of consolation as are peculiar to those who cannot think." "Not that alone, my friend, but, believe me, many a clever man among us practises a sort of self-deception, being afraid to look steadily at the prospect his own ruminations would present to him. And when such a man meets with another of similar opinions, they talk each other into better spirits, and their wishes are fathers to many a strange thought." "It is too true; my own circle of acquaintances can furnish examples of such character. Even the majority of planters are still eagerly grasping at each new invention, although experience might have lessened their faith in all such; the rooms of the Agricultural Society are filled with plans and models." "Yes, many greedy projectors have preyed on us in our distress; the most absurd schemes have been grasped at, as drowning people catch at straws; yet our enemies coolly assert that we are averse to improvement!" "Let them inquire into the number tried within the last ten years; it has been the custom to calumniate the planter in every way, and, among other assertions advanced, to insist that the mode of culture and manufacture were so rude as to disgrace civilized people. If they saw our cane-fields, they might be satisfied; with regard to the manufacture of sugar, it is very singular that, although scores of new methods have been tried, at enormous expense, there is yet little comparative improvement. I believe the soil has more to do with the quality of sugar than is generally admitted, and that a process like refining is required to do away with the peculiarity. But there cannot be a more beautiful specimen of skilful cultivation than a cane-field here, when the work has been properly performed, at the right time—as they were seen, in fact, in former times. I cannot perceive how they are to alter the mode without the plough, and, I fear, *it will*

never do here." "I cannot see how it would work where so many open drains are indispensable." "And, under draining being out of the question every way."

"I have not inquired for some time whether your gang has improved in any measure; in fact, the question is idle." "It is indeed. I have been constantly with them, as you know; but what is to be expected from the most attentive and diligent manager, with all the overseers he can afford to keep, when every two labourers require a superintendent to themselves; they are altogether incorrigible, and I find that standing over them, except while it lasts (and, as I said, we can't have a man for each), does no good whatever, for the moment after you have left one to go to another, the former resumes his old course with increased zest; it is an evil that nothing but competition can remove." "I hear exactly the same account from all quarters. What a blessing now is a soil of the first quality! On the Courabana coast the large estates are still making a tolerable return, though not much more than a tithe of their former incomes; land that will give two hhds. per acre, under the present tillage, must be the richest, almost, in the world, yet, it is said, there is such." "I met the proprietor of one of those estates when I was last in town, and he assured me that he had his rum clear, the crop of sugar, nearly 700 hds., paying the whole expenditure—a very handsome revenue!" "Assuredly it is, and I suppose there may be nearly a score of such plantations in our province out of the 200 that we possess." "About that number. I do not believe there is a small estate now with a net revenue; I mean by 'small,' under 200 hhds." "It is barely possible."

From that day, my friend Ridley had to me an altered appearance, but he did not shun confidential conversation as before, excepting, nevertheless, concerning his own affairs. It is whispered in Georgetown that he has already been forced to apply to the banks. He was always a

man high in character, both as a planter and an individual, but it was understood that his estate constituted his sole fortune, excepting, perhaps, a small sum deposited somewhere, which, it is evident, is now exhausted. George tells me that the Negroes observed for some time that he was altered,—not so brisk in the field, and quieter every way; but, added George, “they will say the same of every proprietor now, for they are all under the same baneful influence, with few exceptions.” It is quite clear that, however well every man wishes to keep up appearances, the state of affairs produces its never-failing effect of depreciating property—estates which have been sold during the current year having fetched prices fully 50 per cent. below those of 1840. One estate which was sold in 1839 (the Thomas) for £20,000, has been again sold this year for £8000. All the sales, in fact, and there are several, manifest nearly the same falling off in value, thus silently declaring the operation of our new system to be surely and progressively destructive of property. Individual planters, to preserve their credit, the only means left to them of maintaining estates, are obliged to be silent and reserved, but each man feels his position the more acutely; and those who are creditors, not having the same reason to be extremely discreet, let hints drop occasionally which give our small community to understand how quietly and insensibly the wealth of the Colony is dwindling away. I speak here, of course, of those who constitute the community of Georgetown, for, in the rural district, among the sufferers themselves, every man has his “silent sorrow,” and, by means of it, he guesses at the condition of his neighbours.

There can be no sign more unequivocal than the result of public sales as to the opinion prevailing among the monied men, who are chiefly merchants; nevertheless, the strange ignorance, which I have already mentioned as existing among certain descriptions of people, does some-

times, though rarely, manifest itself in the purchase of a plantation, which is thought a vast acquisition, for the first month or so, until the luckless purchaser discovers that it would be dear as a present, supposing he was bound to keep it up. Some rash speculators of this sort have suffered rapidly and severely, even to ruin, already, tempted by the apparently low prices of plantations. They cannot understand, it would seem, that an estate now requires a considerable floating capital to work it, by paying wages, and other current expenses.

The merchants, whose accounts were formerly settled once a year, have been compelled to shorten credits, and present them every three months. Thus, unless a man has the command of money, he cannot get on smoothly, for on no estate are the canes ready for cutting in such regular succession, as to keep the proprietor in cash, even supposing the value of the crop to be equal in amount to the expenses. A man may thus say now, with great propriety, that he would not accept of many estates as gifts, on condition that they should be cultivated under any circumstances. Such a condition of plantations, each worth, in former times, half a plumb, it is not easy to comprehend, without a little practical demonstration; and several have paid dearly for the experience. One man bought an estate for £5000, formerly valued at £30,000—thought he had a wonderful bargain—and in two years was brought to a suspension of payments.

1st JANUARY, 1845.

THERE is so little of novelty, and so much of sameness in the circumstances of the Colony and of myself, that the task of recording them becomes necessarily irksome, especially when there is nothing in the prospect particularly inviting, save the probability of immigration from India. Doubtless, were we assured that this would take place,

our spirits would be raised; but while only reports are circulated by newspapers, we have nothing to rely on but the fact of our loan being allowed, which certainly implies an intention on the part of our colonial government to grant a gracious permission for its expenditure. Meantime, the routine of plantation duty goes on in the same hopeless, profitless manner. This month, the year's loss is ascertained to be nearly that of 1843. I do not learn that there is any considerable difference in the crops of my neighbours. Things move on in the same steady downward course. In order to avoid reiteration of particular losses, and cases of special distress, I shall set down an incident, illustrating the habits of our Aborigines, which occurred lately, but which we only heard of to-day. I find that this discussive sort of writing, when I sit down to my Journal oppressed with care, has the effect of relieving me.

Some families of Indians, forming a small tribe, at no great distance from us, have been in the practice of calling here on their periodical visits to Georgetown, with parrots, hammocks, and toys of various sorts which they take to market, and which, as being of their manufacture, meet with a ready sale. One of those families consisted of a man, his wife, and two children, and one of the latter was a remarkably fine boy of seven or eight years old, with more of fire and intelligence in his countenance than belongs generally to the Indians of this continent. He thus became a favourite with us all, and the party never took leave without some substantial gifts, in which Willie, as we had christened him, shared beyond his legitimate claims. After a longer absence than usual, the tribe called one day, and this interesting child was immediately missed from the group. The father, on being questioned regarding him, merely shook his head, while the mother turned away, and also remained silent. We were struck with concern, for we perceived that the boy had died in

some sudden and unexpected manner. No inquiries, however, could elicit further information; and it was only this morning, after a lapse of some weeks, that we learned the fate of the poor boy from the postholder whose residence is in their neighbourhood. The story he told, and which he said he had learned from other Indians of the district, was this. An uncle of the child had quarrelled with a man belonging to a separate tribe of the same great clan; and, in pursuance of the cowardly custom prevalent among them, shot him from behind a tree, with an arrow dipped in woorali poison. His death, of course, was instantaneous; and the murderer fled. The eldest son of the sufferer looked round for a victim, and in doing so, had proper regard to his own immediate safety, fighting being their abhorrence in general; and his eye one evening fell on this boy, the nephew of him who had killed his father, standing with his little sister on the river bank. He struck him to the ground with a blow of his club, and then threw him into the stream, from whence he never came back. The other little one would have shared the same fate, had a noise behind not startled the man, who fled from the spot forthwith. They must have blood for blood—"death for a deadly deed." In this respect, they are like the nations of Europe in their ruder state, our Saxon ancestors among the rest; but the feud is managed differently, for the latter went openly to battle to vindicate their injuries and avenge immolated relatives; while the former, equally impressed with the absolute necessity of having a victim sacrificed, never think of another method than private assassination.

JULY, 1845.

LOOKING back into this Journal, I find I have, unaccountably, taken no notice of Peel's scheme of sugar duties, and the admission of foreign free-labour produce at re-

duced rates into Britain. The fact is, this measure produced no great impression on the planters; for if they were to be benefited by a reduction of imports and increased consumption, this was to be balanced by importations from Java and other places to supply the increased demand. No visible effect has yet been perceived from the operation of this act, and it has been little regarded. Men groaning beneath the weight of many *stones*, do not feel the addition of a few *pounds*. Evils, which would have been felt formerly as severe, are now, under the predominance of a single crushing one, passed by unheeded. The rumours regarding immigration from India, are now more and more feasible, so that they are generally believed, and men are speculating variously, according to temperament, experience, and the information they possess, on the fitness of the Coolies for the operations of our plantations. Turn out as they may, they afford a chance of increasing the supply of labour, and therefore come within the range of those legitimate expedients, few as they are, which the instinct of self-preservation prompts us to try.

JANUARY, 1846.

GEORGE has presented his annual abstract of accounts, and there are still the same fearful figures staring conspicuously against me. There is some singularity in the little variety that exists in the yearly drain on my capital, as it varies only a few hundred pounds, never exceeding £2000, or going below £1500. It is evident that the field operations, and the weather, as well as prices, continue without considerable alteration. I have not benefited much by the village of small proprietors on my estate; the very idea, probably, of its being expected that they would prefer this place, as nearest, causes them to go farther. Still, there are some who work regularly. It

is to be remarked that those who have bought land were previously among the most industrious, but, it may be, because they had that object in view. Some of them continue to be so, others work by starts, like the bulk of our labourers.

Those who are to be depended on as tolerably steady (but a small proportion, it must be allowed), have usually something in view, for which money is necessary, beyond the mere demands caused by dissipated habits, and when they have acquired this, the natural disposition too frequently manifests itself. There are very few who work industriously for several years—who have, in fact, been continuously and regularly at work since 1838. Any addition my field list has received from the village, has been balanced by those who have left the estate, many of my cottages being empty. David says they have removed to go nearer Georgetown.

Things move on in their downward progress. Nothing thrives but the Negro population, and they will ultimately, I think, be “lords of all.” The landed property already acquired by them is considerable, although they have not got so far as to purchase entire plantations, except to be divided into lots among themselves, yet they have begun to rent estates or fields. They have not succeeded, hitherto, in these undertakings, although they have met with every encouragement from the proprietors, who would be rejoiced to discover that their energies could be called forth in this manner. The same besetting evils adhere to them—want of forethought and steadiness, and the inclination to provide only for the passing day. Thus, they cannot look forward to the lapse of a whole year, before they can reap the fruits of their labour in the sugar crop. They say they will die before the time arrives, and so work for nothing. They have no consideration for heirs and successors.

There is little doubt now that the imperial government

have become alarmed by our condition, and that extensive operations, in immigration from India, will take place next year, under their auspices. Opinions are still divided regarding the Coolies, but, if they do not cost too much in bringing, they must be an acquisition; everything will hinge on the expense of passage, in relation to their physical power. The immigration loan of £500,000, secured on the colonial revenues, having been permitted by government, the ordinance has been passed by our Court of Policy. Ships have been taken up in England for Calcutta, and in March we may expect the first batch of these new people. Another method is to be adopted also with the natives of Madeira, which has been suggested by the urgent demand for labourers; with this, however, the authorities have nothing to do. The planters, rendered desperate, resolved to try them again, and have imported them at their own expense, or are about to do so, on the understanding that they shall enter into contracts when they reach the Colony. In this manner they hope to evade the law of contract, though at considerable risk; but those who have arrived (who are not many) have readily entered into written agreements, not only to remain for a certain fixed period, but until they have paid the money advanced for their passage. A great many are expected on those conditions during the current year, and hopes are entertained that in this second trial they will agree better with the climate. Wellingham is still going on, his mortgagee keeping off, it is believed, like all the rest, on account of the low price of landed property.

JULY, 1846.

THE tide of immigration has now set in. God prosper it! for it is our only remaining chance, of which every one is aware, and the Governor is harassed by importunate demands for Coolies. Determined to leave no stone

unturned, I have embarked deeply in this species of speculation. Besides one hundred Indians, who are now located on the *Fortune*, I expect fifty Portuguese from Madeira in a month. To accommodate these strangers, I have been under the necessity of building a new range of cottages, of suitable dimensions, and the cost has dipped deep into my remaining funds. The law, very properly, requires that those dwellings shall be inspected by the stipendiary magistrate, before the people enter them, and that a certificate of their ample accommodation, and also of the proper drainage, and other local circumstances, implying a salubrious locality, shall be granted by that functionary before the Governor awards the immigrants to the estate. And no planter can obtain them unless he employs regularly a medical attendant, properly qualified, by diploma, and there is an hospital, with the proper nurses and attendants kept up for them. I was fortunate in getting mine, scarcely any of my neighbours having yet been so lucky. Mr. Brown has been brisker since, but he is sadly busied by the Coolies. They have all sirdars, who are generally interpreters. One of our sirdars seems to be a man of some education; he writes well, and speaks several Oriental languages, and also English. He was (he says) a sort of teacher at Calcutta. Brown suspects him to be a great rogue, why, does not appear. It is evident that he has great influence with them all. They have only been here a few weeks, and have scarcely settled to their work. Indeed, they seem too fond of parading about in their long, flowing, white or party-coloured garments.

In their general appearance, they offer a contrast to the Negroes, the latter being stoutly formed, while they are rather slender, and evidently inferior in muscular strength. They are very polite in their manners, the salaam with the hand to the head, in oriental fashion,

being always ready. In a few months, we shall be able to speak of their qualities as labourers.

The Colony is now on the *qui vive*. The planters breathe more freely; and hope, for years a stranger among us, is again illuminating the bronzed faces of our broken-hearted agriculturists. Truly, the effect is somewhat ludicrous, for every one is anxious to believe that our prospects are improving, while, at the same time, experience tells all, that they are to have no faith in aught which comes from the colonial office. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,*" quotes a thinking and cautious man. "Oh!" cries another, "this is what we have always wanted—copious immigration." "Ay!" says a third, "but it is rather too far to the east; count the cost ere you begin to 'flee and rub the elbow.'" It ends generally, however, in the way that may be expected when self-interest is at stake, with an elevation of spirits, in consequence of expressions arising out of the wish that it may be so. It is wonderful how easily most men are gulled by themselves. The fact is notorious, that if a man tells a fabulous tale, three or four times, he inclines to believe it, although he was the fabricator, simply because he has been induced, in order to give it more interest, to represent it as true. How much more easy is it, then, for those who are hurrying on to ruin, to teach themselves that any new measure is to save them, although their calm judgment repudiates the belief.

Mr. Brown is one of those who have the most extraordinary expectations from our fresh importations, and he spares no labour or expense to make them comfortable in their new country. In this he is cheerfully backed by me, and also in a frequent inspection of their houses and in providing articles essential to their comfort, the cost of which is great, and will never be repaid, except in the general effect on the Colony. Brown had tried every feasible improvement, both in culture and manufacture,

without effect, the quality of the sugar being like the quantity, very little improved by them. In the last experiment of manuring, he had been so far fortunate as to obtain an addition to the crop, which, after paying the expense of carrying the article out, and scattering it on the field, gave an increased return of about six dollars per acre (25s.), which decided him on using all the dung and ashes, together with rotten megass, which could be obtained by simply lifting them from where they lay, and depositing them on the cane roots. The small return will show that the additional crop would not pay for making composts, or buying manure.

Mr. Ridley has contrived to get credit for twenty or thirty Portuguese, who are to be brought to him by the same ship that brings mine. It is, in fact, a mercantile speculation. The merchant makes arrangements with planters, before he despatches his vessel to Madeira, so that when the latter arrives here, her passengers are taken off immediately, and indentured to their respective estates, the merchant being reimbursed the whole expenses by the proprietor who gets the people.

SEPTEMBER, 1846.

WE have now, indeed, received the *coup de grace*. The sugar-duty bill of July last will remain on the pages of British history as a blot indelibly stamped, which the brightest deeds of former and of after times may gild, but never efface. Posterity will read of the zeal with which a whole nation, actuated by the noblest and most philanthropic motives, prosecuted the emancipation of our slaves, even at the risk of injuring, to a ruinous extent, the unfortunate holders of such property, bought under the national guarantee; every consideration seeming to be overlooked, in the two years preceding 1833, but the attainment of that great object; clergymen preaching

from the pulpit with eyes swimming in tears—field preachers ranting in by-ways, until their excited imaginations revelled in scenes of cruelty and bloodshed, the description of which carried their audiences beyond the bounds of reason; in short, since the days of Peter the Hermit, and the crusades against heathenism, never was such enthusiasm displayed in any cause. Posterity, perusing all this in the enduring volume of the historian, will turn over a very few leaves, and while yet glowing with the noble and patriotic ardour which a perusal of the glorious example set by our country to the world has excited, shall read, that Great Britain resolved to encourage slavery, and the African slave-trade, because by so doing she will get sugar cheaper by three-farthings per pound! for that is the amount, according to the most accurate calculation, which will be saved by the consumer after the article has passed through the hands of broker, wholesale grocer, and retail grocer, who must all have their profits, and with whom the lion's share of the advantage will remain—and so reading, a blush, the burning blush of shame, shall supplant the glow of patriotism on the cheeks of our children's children. What is to be done now? The frightful anticipation is realized. Our enemies have done their worst—why, what *can* we do? “They have tied us to the stake;” and, “bear-like, we must fight it out” or perish. The question is still the same—shall we yet bear up against this mountainous burthen, so atrociously heaped on to destroy us? or shall we, indeed, end our career of hopeless exertion, by withdrawing from the wasted, destruction-doomed fields of our inheritance? Alas! the fact seems glaring—the truth clear as the sun at noon; but who, among our hundreds, can so wind up resolution as to leave those possessions, in better times the source of wealth and of happiness, while aught is left, and fling, as it were, all that remains to him of worldly goods, to the demons of our wilderness, the jaguar and the ser-

pent for a habitation? not one! The struggle will be continued till, one by one, our destiny be accomplished, and the creditor, himself perhaps to run the same course, has seized on the last farthing.

It is said that the worm will turn when trodden on. Let not nations wonder at rebellion, when the most patient drudges of humanity, worn out by long suffering, and goaded to madness by wanton cruelty, rush to arms. I never felt before so moved by indignation—never before believed that a great empire, calling itself the champion and supporter of freedom and of the weak, could thus trample under foot the rights of both, adding, at the same time, to those monstrous injuries, a scornful disregard of the feelings, as well as the almost suppliant-like remonstrances of the colonists. I defy the most laborious and indefatigable searcher for precedents, to find, in the history of the world, a case of more cruel oppression, or any rebellion which was based on better grounds. What was the taxation of America to this? the seizure of a fraction of property, in comparison with the confiscation of the whole! But I am not trying to stir any one to mutiny. Our bitter and powerful enemies know as well as we do, that such would indeed be absurd; and the ministers who carry their tyrannical and devastating policy into effect, are also fully aware of our utter helplessness; were it otherwise, our treatment would be far different. Men may learn from our fate, what the weak have to expect under the prevalence of the democratic principle, and the administration of a mob-ruled government.

My fellow-sufferers are so elated by the prospect of getting labour, that they seem to overlook this new calamity. This is natural. For many years, the want of it has been before their eyes as their greatest evil, and the chance of its being removed, obscures or throws into the shade a misfortune of equal magnitude.

“My choler being overblown,” like the good Duke Humphrey’s, by a “walk round the quadrangle,” I am enabled to resume my pen for the purpose of committing to paper my opinions on the position in which the sugar colonies are placed by this new act of aggression, I trust dispassionately, but it is almost impossible to think deeply under such circumstances, without becoming much excited. To expect coolness from a planter in our sad situation, is like looking for smiles and a cheerful aspect in one at whose head the pistol of the robber is held, while his pockets are undergoing the process of evacuation.

The first feeling by which we are actuated, after the stunning effect of such intelligence has subsided, is that of surprise. We cannot imagine upon what grounds the wisdom of parliament has deliberately adopted a course which must destroy the colonies. We lose sight for the moment, and in presence of the fearful reality, of those apprehensions we entertained previously, and which arose out of the dangerously increasing power of our enemies. We had contemplated the movements of the party with dread, but it was a terror akin to that which men have of death, and we flattered ourselves that the time was yet distant when we should be forced to succumb to their power.

I speak now of those who, like myself, see the measure in its progressive consequences. There are many among us so unthinking and so irrational, as to believe, notwithstanding all experience, that with copious immigration, such as we have, we may do anything. Thus forced to ponder over the subject, we are led to inquire whether anything but the pressure from without could exist to induce ministers to propose, and parliament to enact a law, which, in the present condition of settlements struggling with evils originating in the recent manumission of their slaves, so great as to threaten utter annihilation, must

necessarily consummate what the great energy of the colonists alone had hitherto prevented. One of two positions must be assigned to the parliament and the government: 1st, They are forced to it by the irresistible influence of the Anti-colonial or Free-trade party, and they believe in the wisdom of indiscriminately applying the doctrines of this faction to every part of the empire, without regard to peculiar circumstances; or, 2nd, They believe the sugar settlements to be in a state of unprecedented prosperity, and able to do what they could not when in possession of their slaves, from everything being cheaper to the foreigner—compete with the latter in the market of Britain.

Although the world will believe that the power of our opponents, irrespective of aught else, has been sufficient to carry out their purposes, I am of opinion that many in the legislature were predisposed to think our situation improved by the Emancipation Act; and that, in reality, with free labourers, we are better able to cope with the Cuba planter than we were before. Any man, who like me heard Mr. Buxton, in 1833, reply to Mr. Godson, when the latter proposed to keep out slave produce from the British markets, must think in the same way. Mr. Buxton said that he would oppose the motion which was brought forward, on the ground (he supposed) that the British grower of such produce (cotton, for instance) as entered into competition with the foreign article in England, would be placed in a disadvantageous position. But he thought otherwise—he believed that the British planter was now, when his slaves were to be free, much better able to compete with every rival in the markets of the world. The cheers from all parts of the house, as this declaration was made, sounded in the ears of many thinking West Indians as ominous; but in the pressing existence of real evils, we lose sight sometimes of those which are only in the distance, and merely apprehended.

It is true that thirteen years have passed over our heads since that period, and that experience, in the meantime, should have opened the eyes of many, especially those who were engaged in legislating for the colonies. The facts disclosed by the evidence taken before the Distress Committee of the House of Commons, and the despatches of governors, if laid before them, furnished proofs as strong as the most sceptical could require. But who, unless compelled by some powerful motive, will study attentively the dull and dry details of a blue book? and how are we to know that those despatches which contain a true statement of the internal affairs of each Colony, are carefully and faithfully laid before parliament? Since the era of the Reform Bill, which virtually shut the House of Commons against our colonial proprietors, we are almost totally unrepresented in it. We have, indeed, a very few men who exert themselves there, but several of them are, like other West Indians in these times, hampered by the state of their private affairs, and obliged to cast a sheep's eye to the loaves and fishes which are at the disposal of government.

Men so placed are not likely to stand boldly up and demand that certain documents shall be laid on the table of the House. The Reform Bill, by throwing over our boroughs to the popular party, has closed the only avenue by which the voice of our colonies can reach the ears of the people's representatives, and, as a natural consequence, the feeling of indifference to colonial interests is becoming more and more manifest every succeeding year among Members of Parliament.

In the absence of all inclination to sift the arguments on both sides of the question, the abstract theory that a slave cannot compete in any way with a free man, so captivating in itself to the Englishman, remains uncontroverted. The minds of our countrymen dwell with exulting complacency on the elevating power of that condition which

it is their glory to believe they enjoy beyond all other nations, and they point to it as the means of raising their country to its high pitch of renown. Slavery being the opposite state of society, they regard as invariably producing a corresponding effect in lowering the energy, both moral and physical, and in destroying the capabilities, generally, of our race, irrespective of every contingent circumstance. The ennobling quality of the one is represented by Nelson sweeping the seas of our enemies; the debasing nature of the other, by men in chains, tortured and bleeding, to glut the avarice of their cruel masters.

That this disposition, so to view the question, has been artfully taken advantage of by our political antagonists, cannot be denied. Hence the miserable objects exhibited on pictures on the streets, imploring the pity of their fellow-men, and exclaiming, "Am I not a man and a brother!" with hundreds of others, all directed towards the attainment of the same object. Our countrymen believe that slaves become virtually and *bona fide* the property of their purchasers, and that they may be disposed of in any manner, which does not destroy life, to the advantage of their masters.

Thus, our opponents brought prominently forward the vested right of the owner in the blood, bones, and sinews of their unhappy slaves, leading the more ignorant to believe that the planters could cut and carve on them as they pleased, so that they stopped short of murder. The fact was carefully concealed that for many years previous to the Act of Emancipation, the extent of punishment to which the master could go was limited to that which is permitted by the Levitical law—forty stripes, lacking one. Beyond that they could not go, without incurring a very heavy penalty. Criminals, by sentence of courts of law, and magistrates, were, of course, often much more severely scourged. It has also been the practice to confound the

condition of slavery in the abstract with that of those people who, in the present day, are slaves, and to ascribe to their position those moral evils which belong to the countries from whence they were drawn, and where they prevail alike among bond and free. They are the evils, in fact, of savage life, and are weeds which nothing but the hand of civilization can eradicate. Man, in the wilds of Africa, is found in a condition resembling that of the inferior animals, which intercourse with Europeans, instead of aggravating, improves. The same may be said of his physical wants and requirements, which any reflecting person will observe must be better attended to by a thinking taskmaster, for his own sake, than by a mindless barbarian who acts only on the impulse of the moment.

I should have prefaced the last remark by observing that the fact is carefully kept back from our countrymen that the bulk of the African population is in a state of slavery, and that those who are brought to the West Indies, are not stolen, but bought. In some cases they are prisoners taken in war, and of those, perhaps one in twenty may be free men, if any but the chiefs can really be styled so, in that benighted land. It is certain that our agents on that coast cannot obtain labourers from even the Kroemen, who are supposed to be among the few free people to be found there, without a *dash*, or present, to the head man, which can be regarded as nothing else than compensation for loss.

Thus, ignorant of the real condition of the Negroes in their own country, and skilfully managed by our enemies, the ideas of our countrymen regarding slavery, as it existed in the British West Indies, became abstract notions of a social state which never had existence there. Chivalrous and sentimental "Oroonokos," heroic and "quivered chiefs of Congo!" dragged from their peaceful and simply beautiful and elegant homes, by some brutal dealer, and kept to hard labour by the lash of remorseless tyrants,

were the subjects on which their imagination dwelt, and the real nature of the change undergone by the objects of their anxious consideration was never truly presented to them in its proper colours, until their ideas had been so deeply rooted, that matter of fact statements made to undeceive them were looked upon as mere *ex parte* declarations of the interested planters. Indeed, it became much easier for the anti-slavery party to keep up the delusion, than for the wretched colonists to impress on the public mind a correct representation of the Negro's real condition, from the time he left his own savage land, until that when the question of his emancipation came to be so earnestly agitated.

The anti-slavery agitators rung the changes with great success, on innocent and helpless creatures, living in affluence, or even in princely splendour, seized by slave-hunters, and carried off to the West Indies. The general opinion became firmly established that the labouring population of our sugar colonies were all people who had been reduced to slavery by the planters and their accessories—the slave-dealers. Our countrymen, still referring to and relying on, the statements of our opponents, were convinced that the circumstances under which the Negroes were obtained being such as to crush them altogether, physically and morally, their spirit was broken, and their bodily strength impaired in a corresponding degree. From this to the next stage in this train of reasoning, was but a step. It was soon believed, that by setting the slaves free, there would be a sudden reaction, like that which takes place when a dog is roused from his kennel, unchained, and led forth to enjoy the freedom of his limbs—the Negroes would be restored to their pristine strength and spirits, and the labour they would then perform would at least double that which they were fit for, as miserable, broken-hearted slaves. That this opinion did, and does prevail in the mother country, is proved by the debate in

parliament to which I have just alluded—by the derision with which the representatives of West Indians were met in 1833, when they urged their claims to compensation for landed property, which the emancipation of the slaves would depreciate fearfully, or render altogether useless. And I think the readiness with which the dogmata of free-trade, notwithstanding the opinion of its own apostle, Mr. Deacon Hume, have been applied to the planters, must be ascribed partly to the prevalence of this belief, though mainly to the indomitable power, now become paramount, of the anti-colonial faction.

But if the country, and its representatives in parliament who were not connected with the ministry, remained in this state of ignorance and apathy while the destructive operation of the Emancipation Act was going on before their eyes, it is not possible that ministers themselves could be afflicted with the same mental darkness; if they even disregarded the report of the Distress Committee, and if the governors failed to impress on their minds the real condition of the colonies, there were documents containing statistics which could not fail to reveal the true state of affairs. Such are the reports which those officers are obliged to give in annually, and in which the affairs of each Colony must necessarily be detailed. There are besides, the ordinances or enactments of our local legislatures, which must all be laid before the Queen in Council for approval, and in those relating to taxation, the expenditure of each Colony, and the crops, together with other items on which taxes are imposed, must of necessity be brought under observation.

One hour's perusal of such papers would give an insight into the condition of this settlement which would deter men who were not acting on a foregone conclusion, or driven to a certain line of policy by the madness of party, from prosecuting their desolating career. A very few words are necessary to explain what I mean by this broad assertion.

While the crops have diminished to one-half of their former annual amount, since the era of freedom (1838,) the expenses of the Colony, since the passing of the Act, have been increased five-fold. The means of supporting expenditure having been removed to the extent of 50 per cent., this expenditure has, nevertheless, continued to increase gradually on the unhappy colonists, and altogether from the operation of the Emancipation Act.

The Custom-house returns will show that I am correct in regard to the quantities of produce made since 1838, and before that period. The Tax Ordinances of the Combined Assembly, and the blue books containing the Governors' reports will testify to my correctness, when I say that the current expenses of this province have risen, since 1831, from £40,000, to fully £200,000, per annum. In looking over those documents, the reader will find ample proof that the increase has arisen out of the Act of Emancipation.

The principal heads under which it occurs are—immigration, with its concomitants of extensive hospitals for the reception of those strangers, which are kept up at an enormous annual cost—teachers and catechists for their benefit, and that of the emancipated classes, there being more than sixty clergymen, and a host of schoolmasters, for a population of 120,000—a civil list, amounting to a great deal more than that of former years—last of all, a numerous, well-disciplined, and highly paid police force, together with new jails and penal settlements, rendered indispensable by the disorganized state of society, and the rapid increase of crime. Lord Stanley, when Colonial Minister, with that candour which belongs to his character, administered a salutary rebuke to our local ruler, when he ventured to speak of the prosperity of the Colony. "It may be true," said his Lordship, "that the labouring classes are in a prosperous state, but it is evident from the great reduction in the quantity of produce exported, that

the Colony generally is not enjoying prosperity." I do not pretend to recollect the exact words, but that is the substance of Lord Stanley's remark on the subject.

It had been then, and is still, the practice of official men, whether principals in Downing Street, or underlings in the colonies, to represent the success of the Emancipation Act as complete, and, doubtless, the Governor of Demerara was surprised to find that his Chief was disgusted with, and repudiated the meanness and chicanery of the rule which he found established on taking charge of the colonies.

Since Lord Stanley's time, up to the latest period, it will be found that misrepresentation of our condition, to the parliament and the country, has been systematically observed. This implies either total ignorance of facts, or a desire to conceal them. We have shown it to be almost impossible that the former could exist. But mystification is doubtless necessary when men are determined to carry through ruinous measures, and to make blind the world as to their effect. The anti-colonial and free-trade parties are now identical, and to the great power of the two conjoined may be ascribed the rapid progress of these doctrines; but when Sir Robert Peel became a convert to them, thoughtful people saw at once that they had obtained mastery over the public mind. The straw does not more surely indicate the wind's course than the conduct of that sagacious statesman the strength of popular opinion on any great question. Resolved to be carried along with it, he has, on all occasions, trimmed his sail to the breeze of popularity, and either wavered, as it was undecided, or wheeled fairly round, when it was unequivocally against him. The Roman thumb turned down did not more surely proclaim to the prostrate combatants of the arena the death that was decreed them, than did Peel's averted face, in July last, announce their certain downfall to the hapless colonists; and not so much from

the influence of the man, great though it be, as the proof it furnished of the extent to which the minds of our countrymen were tainted by free-trade notions, and their accompaniments, the doctrines of the anti-colonists, which were prevalent before the economists became so successful in disseminating their poison.

In 1844, when he brought forward his free sugar scheme, he declared that the British planter "could bear a little more competition;" these are his own words, with the evidence of the Distress Committee before him, and a knowledge of our case, generally allowed to be greater than that possessed by other statesmen of the day. They should have been as the writing on the wall to us; but, in the simplicity of our hearts, we could not imagine such base and heartless tergiversation to be possible, for he had only a short time before turned out the Whigs on the very question which he now warmly compliments the same party on bringing forward, and which he supports with all his weight, and all his eloquence.

How is it possible that the colonies, too feeble before to contend with the faction of their enemies, can now make head against them, thus "forced by those who should be ours," and the leader of the band of apostates among the most talented men of his time! It has been a task like the punishment of Sisyphus to carry on the cultivation of our colonies for the last eight years. It has not only been labour in vain, because of measures finally accomplished and carried into effect, but because of the determination to lend us no assistance in any way, either in labour from proper quarters, or by other means. We have been like men bound hand and foot and thrown into a stream, while our countrymen stand quietly on the bank and allow us to sink. But now, not contented with setting us adrift in that helpless condition, they come to the resolution of throwing a weight on us, to ensure our going to the bottom—the very men to whom we turned our

imploring and confiding eyes assisting to impose the load that is to destroy us.

I commenced with the intention of trying to discover the motives by which the nation and the government were actuated in bringing forward this measure, which fills our cup of bitterness to the brim, and I have no doubt that the two to which I have alluded, are jointly those that have produced the calamitous result. The power of that faction which has persecuted us through a series of years, and which has so wrought upon the sensibilities of our countrymen as to induce a belief that we are entitled to no commiseration, even if we were in a state of distress; but as it is, with wretched beings enfeebled by slavery converted into free men, and full of that energy which freedom bestows, we are fit to meet the world in competition, although, as heretofore, we are so blind to our own interest as not to perceive it. And ministers having, like most of their party, adopted the free-trade policy, take advantage of those feelings and opinions to carry into practice their new and destructive doctrines, without regard to consequences, deliberately sacrificing the former slave colonies on the altar of this idol for the sake of consistency, and of showing that nothing shall be an obstacle or obstruction to the general application of their system to every interest throughout the empire.

The country being thus impressed with false ideas regarding us, and the party in power adopting the doctrines of free-trade, the leaders of that party (the ministry, to wit) were forced also either to administer the government in consonance with them, or to resign their places. They would not permit the interests of the colonists to stand between them and power; and, whatever their sentiments might be in private, they resolved to take advantage of the national ignorance and apathy, and sweep from their path at once, this, the only stumblingblock in the way of

their new political creed. If ministers are cruel in adopting this policy, the empire at large is not less so in permitting it. In fact, the latter is almost exclusively culpable; for if the people had only shown that they desired the colonies to have justice, neither Whigs nor Peelites would have ventured to abandon them.

There needs no inquiry into the probable consequence of this final measure. The "*delenda est Carthago*" of the stern old stoic, spoke not more forcibly the opinions of the man, than does the very nature of this act point out the sure and unavoidable effect of it. Men struggling to keep their places on the edge of a precipice, require but a slight push to throw them over. They have here one sufficient to precipitate them into the gulf of ruin, were they safely removed, and far apart from it. Had they even their full supply of labour, as in former times of slavery, they could scarcely compete with men who buy their labourers fresh from the coast of Africa, and at a price which hardly amounts to one year's hire of a man in this province.

Those slaves are treated in Cuba, in some respects, rather in accordance with the treatment they have been accustomed to, than the practice of Europeans generally towards their bondsmen, but there is more of systematic arrangement in order to procure from them the utmost amount of work which their physical powers are capable of rendering. There is no regard to comfort, for they have no houses they can call their own, the whole population being driven into a baracoon at night, like cattle into their pen, and taken out again in the morning to work. But in one important item, they find it their interest to be lavish; that is, in the supply of food, which, being equal to the appetite of the slaves, enables the latter to perform a task lengthened out considerably beyond what their strength would otherwise be equal to. They are usually from sixteen to eighteen hours at work in re-

turn for this ample nourishment, while ours are only four hours engaged for a hire, two months of which are equal to the whole annual cost of a Cuban slave. The planters of that island have thus four times the work for a sixth of the cost. This is the advantage possessed by them over us, excluding the interest on the slave's price, which, the latter being so low, does not amount to much, and is far more than balanced by the power which the Cuban possesses over his labourer, which enables him to apply his labour when and where it is most required; whereas, we are glad to get it at all, and in any way, even so as to please the labourer himself.

The planter of Cuba, and (more especially) of Brazil, can rely also on having as many slaves as he may require. Much has been said about the manner in which they are obtained on the African coast; but the fact seems to be simply, that the bulk of the population there being slaves, the native dealer, very frequently a chief or ruler, buys them from all quarters to supply the European trader; and certain it is, that when he has a number collected, if he is disappointed in finding a vessel when he takes them to the coast, he kills them to save the expense of their maintenance until the arrival, which may be precarious, of a ship. We may understand from this fact, of how little value human life and slave property are in those barbarous regions. Some assert that parents who are free, sell their children into slavery when in want of money.

It has been broadly declared by the Anti-slavery Society, that barbarian immigrants are fit for nothing but to corrupt the present virtuous population. I imagine this will be a difficult task. And as to the capabilities of those rude people, we have learned from the best of all teachers, experience, that they are infinitely more steady and regular in their habits than their more enlightened kindred. The sums amassed by those who have already returned to their own country, after being only a very

short space here, attest the truth of what I have said. It may be, that the high rate of wages induces them to labour so assiduously. Our rivals in Cuba and Brazil will bring it out, knowing that it *is* in them, at little cost and to our confusion. However that may be, I fear it will be found that our only chance of preservation rests on them. The expense of bringing people from India, and returning them, will amount to the price of a second-rate slave in Cuba or Brazil, and be in itself a sufficient bar to successful competition, by their means, with the slave-owner, even if they should prove equally effective as labourers; a question which is, to say the least, doubtful, but, in the opinion of our planters generally, the powers of the Bozal Negro are far superior to those of the Hindu. Indeed, a glance at their physical conformation when in juxtaposition, shows how strikingly nature has made the one superior to the other in animal power. The difference in the development of their intellectual faculties may be in favour of the Indian, in so far as mere quickness of apprehension and general intelligence go, but in their reasoning faculties and habits of thinking, they are nearly on a par.

Competition is out of the question between British planters with Hindus at the present cost of importation and deportation, and current rate of wages, and the Cuban or Brazilian with African slaves, bought at four hundred dollars each for first-rate ones, and maintained at twenty-five dollars a year. The very idea is absurd; and it becomes more so when we set seriously about refuting the Exeter Hall arguments based on the debilitating influence of slavery.

In doing this, it is only necessary to state that the Negroes, instead of being free people, in the full enjoyment of all those blessings which civilization bestows, are not only slaves in their own country, but slaves to savages not a whit superior to themselves in their moral nature,

who have absolute power over them in life and limb—bones and sinews—(in the language of the anti-slavery party) to use them up in the way most suitable to their brutal tastes, and their ferocious passions. Those slaves have at least a better chance of being regarded as human beings after being transferred to Europeans, although they be Brazilian or Cuban planters, and who know that injury to them, in their physical parts, is a corresponding loss to themselves. But the slaves thus brought to Cuba, instead of being those thinking, sensitive persons the people of England believe them to be, are, in reality, not far removed from the brute creation, and so far from being crushed and prostrated by the change in their position, are truly improved in everything which their exclusively animal nature holds essential to the enjoyment of life. They have more food, some attention paid to their health, and the assurance that their lives will run their natural course.

With the most complete control over the actions of men in this condition, secured to them by law, the Brazilian and Cuban sugar-growers can laugh at the feeble and despairing attempts of the British planter to compete with him in the market of the world, by the help of people from India, who are at liberty to work as they choose, and for whose services, during five years, a bonus, in the shape of free passage-money, is paid, equal in amount to the price of a slave, and who are to have, besides, wages at an exorbitant rate, and all those expensive comforts, in houses and land, enjoyed by the present population of this province. It is on this that the question of competition, between Brazil and Cuba, and the British West Indies, rests, and until it can be proved that the latter enjoys advantages of another sort than labour, of which the others are not possessed, it must appear to the unprejudiced observer a case of competition between men who do their work by means of unpaid labourers, and

men who do theirs by means of people who are paid far more than the value of their work.

Much has been said of our fertile soil, as giving us an advantage over our rivals; but this is altogether founded in error; the soil of Cuba is equal to that of Guiana. The principal means, it would appear, however, on which the ministry rely to balance the advantages possessed by the slave-holder, are improvement in cultivation and manufacture. Neither Sir Robert Peel nor Lord Grey can perceive or admit that the utmost exertions have been made, since the year 1833, in all the colonies, to improve every department of plantership, with success occasionally, but generally with disappointment, arising out of the extraordinary effort necessary to a beneficial result. The most signally successful schemes only can avail them in their distressed condition, wherein they have to contend with such formidable difficulties; and the expense of conducting experiments has been latterly too much for men who require all their funds to keep their plantations in cultivation. Indeed, our colonists have only been too easily induced to try improvements before they were properly tested, in their anxiety, like drowning men, to grasp at straws.

But what an idle and silly thing it is to offer improvements to one competitor, as so many advantages over another! Surely the members of our cabinet cannot be ignorant that any improvement introduced into a British settlement would find its way in a couple of months to Cuba and Brazil; and that the former, under the stimulus of American capital and American enterprise, is more eager in the search after, and more able to adopt any new plan that has a likelihood of proving beneficial, than almost any country in the tropics. In this very particular, recommended so forcibly by Peel, our rivals have a decided advantage over us. It would be better for us, if, henceforth, no improvements could be made, because we have neither funds nor credit to undertake them, while

the planters of Cuba and Brazil, in the height of their good fortune, and possessing the confidence of the monied interest, can not only carry them into effect, but push them to any length which affords the slightest chance of increasing their crops or improving their produce.

The only hope that remains to the British colonists seems to rest on an importation of suitable labourers to such an extent as will create healthy competition among themselves, and reduce wages to that daily allowance which is sufficient for a comfortable subsistence, but inadequate to the present inordinate demand for the means of supporting a vicious and licentious career. The moralist may say that it is wicked to bring a rude and ignorant people among such a demoralized population as I have represented ours to be. But they would prove of mutual benefit to each other. The new labourers, by their competition, would cut off from the present race that superfluous supply of cash which is now their bane. And the latter, with their habits of semi-civilization, would operate beneficially in humanizing the wilder Africans (supposing they are to come here).

For it would be idle to build a hypothesis on our present position supported by Coolies alone. The Hindus would require to surpass, as much as they are suspected to fall short of the Negro, ere we could compete with the slave-holder under the vast expenditure requisite to obtain them. The plan of keeping up our estates by their means, with prices guaranteed above a certain rate by the monopoly of the British market, becomes quite a different affair when we are exposed to competition under such overwhelming circumstances as I have detailed.

Coolies might have enabled us to supply the home consumption, and with advantage to ourselves; but it is impossible that with them we can make sugar and sell it at as low a rate as the produce of Cuba will be made and sold in England. It is doubtful if the Indian maker of

sugar on the European system, will be able to keep his ground against the slave cultivator. In fact, we may say experience is against the probability, for if he could, the sugar of India would long ago have been more abundant in the markets of the continent, which were open to it as well as that of any other country; and if that be the case, if it turns out that the East India planter, with labourers at twopence per day, cannot support the competition, how are we to keep it up at twenty-pence to the same people, and thirty guineas of passage-money for five years' service, or six pounds a year in addition to the wages?

We are thus driven to the conclusion that the importation we were so anxious to establish, which government granted apparently with reluctance, and for which a loan was raised on the guarantee of the colonial revenue, will be rendered utterly abortive, and the £500,000, if so expended, just so much money thrown away, by the Sugar Duty Act of July last. By it we are thrown back to the position we have occupied since 1838, in regard to labour, while we are plunged into despair by being deprived of our market; and it must be apparent to every one, that Africa is the only part of the world which by its position—so near to the West Indies, and its people so well adapted to our wants—affords a reasonable chance of carrying us through in this arduous struggle.

How the many thousands which are required can be obtained there, is a question which it is difficult to answer; for, according to the best information, we must rely on the efforts of our cruisers as heretofore to supply us, the number of those who have the power of removing being comparatively small. It is true that the increase of the illicit slave-trade will in itself multiply in its own ratio the number of captured slaves. And to what a humiliating condition are our great nation and its colonies reduced, when they are brought to the necessity of trusting to this detestable traffic, to suppress which the national honour

is pledged, for the means of keeping our sugar plantations in existence! We give a spur to it sufficient almost to create such an enormity by act of parliament, and we send a fleet to seize the ships engaged in it, with the intention of bringing to our colonies the cargoes found on board of them. And unless we can discover more free people in the Negro countries, the fact is undeniable, that the people thus rescued from the slavers are those on whom we must place our chief dependence in our competition with the owners of the unfortunates who do not fall into the hands of our men of war.

I have been accustomed to look on Hume's plan of buying the slaves of Africa for the purpose of freeing and bringing them to our colonies, as unwarrantable, on account of its being a sort of departure from our policy in regard to the slave-trade. But it is evident that we are now in a strangely anomalous position in relation to it, and it appears doubtful whether it would not be better, both morally and politically, to purchase the people from those who would otherwise sell them to the illicit traders, than to allow the latter to get possession of them. But before I record my opinions on this very important subject, I must give it more consideration, and shall therefore postpone my observations to a future period.

I have already repeatedly remarked that the singular policy adopted towards us will have an operation varied in the rapidity of its development, according to the circumstances of individual estates. The quality of the soil is the principal among these, and after it will rank the purse of the proprietor. It is not difficult to understand why the man who has money within his reach has advantages over him who has none; and if one plantation can make 300 hhds. of sugar from an annual outlay in labour of 12,000 dollars, while another will only have a crop of 150 hhds. from the same aggregate amount of wages, we can easily perceive that the struggle to keep themselves

up will be more successful with the former than the latter. Thus, the process of destruction throughout the Colony will be gradual, as it has hitherto been, but it will advance more rapidly now, with two agents instead of one to accelerate its progress; and it is probable that, in two or three years, few estates will be in existence save those which can produce crops at the smallest comparative expense.

It has been surmised that if only the best plantations were cultivated by the same population, the return would be better. There is one consideration which would operate powerfully against that result. The working people of the province are now becoming rapidly tied, as it were, to particular localities, either by the purchase of land for themselves, or for their near relatives, the latter binding them as closely, almost, as if they were themselves freeholders; and these small properties being scattered over the width and breadth of the land, it would be impossible to get their owners and their families moved about to suit the labour required on the few rich estates kept in cultivation. This of itself is almost a sufficient damper to the hopes of the larger proprietors, based on the ruin of their less favoured fellow planters, and, in connection with other circumstances, will be found to be altogether destructive of them. Many have been abandoned since 1838, yet we find that the demand for labour is on the increase. Various causes are continually withdrawing people from agricultural work, and the fact seems to be established, that nothing, saving a well sustained stream of good immigrants of the right sort, can maintain any but a trifling extent of cultivation throughout the Colony.

The distress so prevalent among this class of proprietors, must now, of necessity, extend by degrees to all classes of the community, but, more especially, the considerable body of poor coloured people who depend on them; and the question will soon arise, and stand forward

for discussion, of how the enormous colonial expenditure is to be supported. The government party reluctantly agreed to import duties, having regard to the interests of their proteges, the agricultural labourers, and especially to the application of funds so raised to immigration purposes. But no tax could be fairer than one which falls upon all alike. It was objected to on the ground that the Negroes, as poor people, should be exempted from imposts of every description, and it was contended that the burthens imposed for, or arising out of colonial improvements, were legitimately laid on landed property.

This singular doctrine, which was grounded on established practice, having for its basis the long recognised principle that the planter is always the proper object of taxation, would not suffice in these times. Men who are ruined to advance the interests of the labourers, cannot perceive why the latter are to bear no part in the cost of their own advancement, and to assist in paying for a police to protect them (from themselves), for poors'-houses and stipendiary magistrates, who are, in some sort, their protectors, and various other expensive establishments for their benefit. Yet, if they were unable to afford this trifle of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., *ad valorem*, on articles imported for their use, the colonists would not think of laying it on them in common with themselves; but the fact being notorious that they are better off in their position than the other classes, there was no reason for exempting them.

The time is likely soon to arrive, however, which will bring this matter before the official section of the Combined Assembly, and it will be seen whether they will agree to forego a considerable portion of their salaries, as fixed by the civil list ordinance, in order that the import duties may be remitted, as pressing too heavily on the impoverished inhabitants of all descriptions. Let us hope that when this trying hour arrives, as come it must, Mr. Briar and his friends shall have no occasion to apply the

“*Tu Quoque*” to his political opponents, and to tell them that they, who were so anxious some years ago to make food and clothing cheap to the labourers, when they expected to get the means of doing so from the planters, cannot now object to measures having the effect of reducing partially their own allowances, when directed towards the attainment of the same great object—the cheapening of necessaries to the poor—at a time, too, when almost all the inhabitants but themselves came under that denomination.

And the colonial minister cannot surely insist on the adherence of the Colony to a civil list ordinance, granted when the legislature fully believed and trusted in the faith of the mother country, to preserve for the planters that advantage in the British market, upon the consideration of which alone such a civil list could be granted or continued. The Act of July last is an infringement of the understanding that existed between the local legislature and the imperial government, when a civil list was conceded by one and immigration by the other. There was no stipulation, indeed; but the very nature of such an arrangement implies that there should be no alteration of the circumstances, caused by one or other of the parties, which could impair the power of either party to keep faith with the other. If a man is bound to render a certain amount of labour to another, and that other forcibly and arbitrarily, by his superior strength, ties up the hands of the first, he (the first) cannot be held liable to perform the work agreed on, either in law or justice. If he had been shackled by a third party, the case would be different.

The silent and imperceptible manner in which depreciation creeps over the property of the Colony, is not the least startling among the many strange characteristics of the period. Men jog on, directing their energies so as to combat the evils that are daily before their eyes, without adverting to collateral circumstances, until they are sud-

denly and disagreeably reminded of certain liabilities, which, had their estates returned their value, would not have been thought of. The creditor, however, belongs to a class who watch the state of the plantation market, and he is fully aware that a debt of £3,000, which would be quite secure as against a property worth £20,000, is by no means in the same position when the property has fallen to £4,000, with the prospect of coming still lower, and becomes anxious to realize. In colonies, it is necessary for men to assist each other in the way of cautionry, and many securities, who thought their liabilities such as would never affect them, are hastily and legally called on to pay their friend's debt. Many will not believe in the change of value which property has undergone, until it is brought home to them in one or other of those ways, and they are, as it were, at once aroused to a sense of their true position, and painfully convinced that instead of being rich, they are become poor men. It would seem that although they all calculated on losses arising out of the evils we suffer under, they do not look forward to depreciation as the natural consequence of such a state of affairs, and are surprised to find that their wealth has crumbled away from them, and literally dwindled to nothing in their grasp.

We must now look forward to a rapid extension of the sight which meets our eyes everywhere—fields formerly beautiful in the deep green luxuriance of the cane, covered with sour grass, and buildings mouldering in decay, the greenness of the cane piece being transplanted to them, which previously sent forth volumes of smoke, betokening the continued manufacture of sugar, and where now “the desert serpent dwells alone.”

The most angry disputes occur every pay-day, which, from being monthly, have gradually increased in frequency, until at length they have become weekly. The

work done on each day being carefully measured and examined by both foreman and overseer before it is entered in the labour-book, it very rarely occurs that an error is discovered in the entry; but the labourer, from keeping no written account of his tasks, is too often led astray by the treachery of his memory, and he has neither fear nor delicacy to prevent him from taxing the Whites of the estate with cheating or robbing him; and in consequence, the paying of them is sometimes a scene of violent abuse on one part, and patient endurance on the other, while the magistrate is ultimately, in too many instances, called in to settle the disagreement.

I have been struck with the wonderful tenacity and clearness of David's memory on such occasions, for he will go over the week's tasks of almost every labourer if it is necessary, telling not only what sort of work he was engaged in, but the value of it according to the tariff, before the book is appealed to, and I have never seen that he was wrong. He does not scruple to tell those greedy and clamorous claimants that *they* are the robbers; and truly, judging from analogy, and ascribing to the mass of them the same advantages of memory, one is tempted to conclude that their claims are made in a perfect consciousness of their being wrong, especially when they are always on the right side for themselves. It must be allowed, however, that the majority are both obtuse and confused in intellect, and are far from possessing heads like David's; and in their desire to make the amount as large as possible, they contrive to jumble the work so in their non-logical minds, that a satisfactory conclusion is arrived at, and a larger figure impressed on their sensorium than they are entitled to. They submit to the severe reprimands, couched in the most emphatic language of the Negro vocabulary, which the foreman pours out with vast volubility on those occasions, with a degree of patience that contrasts strangely with the

fierce defiance, both of speech and look, which a hasty word from an overseer is sure to call forth.

They both fear and respect David, while they glory in being insolent to the White man, probably because they think it grand, and it pleases their vanity to act thus; but, at the same time, they are aware that an overseer would lose his place, and be amenable to the law besides, if he raised a hand to them; whereas, the foreman, being one of themselves, can keep up his authority, and repress insolence without fear of consequences. They know that he has much in his power, and they are aware that, being a strong man, he can apply the *argumentum ad hominem* in a very summary and forcible manner, while a blow from him is quite a different thing in the eye of the magistrate from one inflicted by an overseer. Nothing can be more striking than their bearing towards these two parties. As the views of the latter are generally the same, the foreman sometimes fancies that abuse levelled at the overseer is meant for him, and proceeds to retort on the quarrelsome subject; when the latter, the instant he perceives the mistake, will assure him with the greatest coolness that what he said was applied to the "obisha—heh! Buddy (brother) how you can tink me sha' talk so to you?" By the way, the Negroes are much more polite to each other than the labouring classes of England. They always style one another "brother or sister," "uncle or auntie," and sometimes "tatta" (daddy), according to age. This must have arisen out of their extreme sensibility and wonderful quickness in making a quarrel out of any disrespectful word spoken to them.

The following sketch of last Saturday's scene, may serve as a tolerable sample of a pay-day, though rather more noisy than usual. The manager sits down at a table with the field overseer and his labour-book on one side, and the principal foreman on the other. The labour-book is so ruled that there is a small compartment under each

day of the week for each labourer, in which the work done is inserted, and the names are set down, so that every one has his portion of those compartments on one line, distinctly annexed to him. The overseer calls each name, and the aggregate weekly amount, and the manager, with a bag of dollars before him, proceeds to count out the sum.

The first dozen take their money quietly. Then it comes to Dick Andrews' turn, whose name is called in connection with "two dollars," but he will not take the coin. "Obusha, how you make um no more two dollars, eh?" The overseer reads the entries of each day. He is absent one day, and he did not finish his task on another. "Massa Nigga! me no de a field Torsday. Buddy," applying to some one near, "you no see me?" but meeting with no response, and getting angry, he addresses himself to the foreman, although with marked hesitation. "Da me you speak? da me you ax?" inquires David, sharply, "da me for watch you?" "Buddy, wha' me sha' do? Buckra go sheat poor fellow, and no one for help me; do, buddy." "You want me tell you where you dey, Thursday? You tief fowl (steal fowl) on Wellingham (Wellingham's estate) tha' Thursday work da'," cries David, looking fiercely at the other. A general titter testifies to the correctness of the statement, and the abashed claimant, who doubtless thought his doings unknown, slinks away. He had actually been caught in the fact, as it turned out afterwards.

The business goes on smoothly again, till "John Thomson, one dollar," is called out. "Wha' you say, Obusha, one dolla' for sich man like me? Mangea, da so you go let white man cheat a' we? Massa Negga!—sich rabbery me nebba see!" The book is read to him, without carrying conviction to his mind,—the money is tendered and refused—and although he has been little more than two days at work, he insists that he was pre-

sent throughout the week. David tells him distinctly all he did, but in vain, and while the dispute is still going on, a woman steps in, desiring the manager to stop John's wages, because "he owes her, and wont pay." The manager, on such occasions, attempts generally to effect an amicable adjustment of the "difficulty," but it often happens that the creditor "repudiates" the debt entirely. It is so with John Thomson, and the quarrel rises to such a pitch that both are ordered out of the house, and David says, "no use fight any more with that man, he too bad; every Saturday he make 'ruction." "I think so too, we must give him warning," responds the manager. The pair return, under pretence of having settled their difference, but they are no sooner before the manager again than a violent outbreak occurs, and the foreman takes the man by the shoulder, and ejects him. "Stop, Mamma," (the accent is always on the first syllable when this word is applied to a Negro woman) and David brings forward two men who prove the debt, and the dollar is handed to her.

John Thomson is called in, and told that he is to remain no longer than the end of the month. This is of course received with perfect indifference. It is necessary to select the worst and most useless subjects for such examples. Good ones must be tolerated—men who work tolerably well, though they are insolent; but this fellow was not in the field more than two days a week, on an average. About a dozen altercations, such as I have described, occurred on Saturday, and as many, more or less violent, may be calculated on almost every pay-day. It is but fair to say that the better portion of the people, and they constitute the majority, conduct themselves with propriety and decorum; but even the best of them, on occasions, incline to find fault with the sum due to them, although they will not be outrageous.

It is the custom to select the foremen of estates, who

are of good character, to act as vestry-men, and the appointment has an excellent effect, for it stimulates them to hold themselves up as patterns to those who are under them. They are all proud of being thought pious, but, unhappily, religion with them is one thing, and morality another. The Negroes remind me sometimes of the Italian brigands, who invoke their saints to assist them in committing a murder, (although they do not carry the blasphemous and monstrous doctrine so far,) for they have the same indistinct idea that it is only necessary to bend before the heavenly powers, in adoration, to accomplish their salvation, and that good deeds are not essential to the attainment of that great object.

They are all anxious to learn to read and write also, and the progress which the children make is quite rapid enough to confute the American notion that they are an inferior race. What I say, however, relates only to quickness of understanding, and the power of memory. The fact remains to be proved whether they, in their present condition, or rather in their existing stage of civilization, can have the reasoning faculties so developed by education as to make them appear equal to White men, who receive that advantage. I doubt it; and I fear that some generations must yet pass ere the original darkness clears away entirely from their minds. As it is now with us, the young Negroes are soon able to read "indifferently well," but I am not aware that they get beyond that. I fear they have barely justice done them, however, for their parents frequently take them away from school in order that they may work, and that they (the parents) may draw their wages—much of the light work on estates being done by boys and girls, from ten to fifteen years old.

JANUARY, 1847.

THE balance against the estate is larger even than usual this year, which might have been expected from the great outlay on Coolies and Portuguese. I fear this grand experiment of Hindu immigration would not succeed, even if the sugar duty was unaltered. Brown, who has devoted himself to these people in every way, begins to think that they will cost much more than they are worth. He already declares that, according to a calculation he has made, the difference between the labour obtained from a Negro, even in his disorganized state, is as three to one, compared with that of a Coolie. If three Coolies then are required to do the work of one Negro, and if they cost each seventy-five dollars to import, and the same to return them to India, it is impossible that their importation can benefit the Colony. The Portuguese were doing fully as well as we expected, until sickness began to appear among them, and it is astonishing how rapidly and how banefully they were prostrated. The disease is almost invariably a peculiar modification of what the doctors call the idiopathic fever of the country, assuming a form peculiar to the Portuguese from their habits of body and their manner of living. It is necessary to give them large quantities of wine and nourishing food after the first or second day, for there is a tendency to sink immediately, and they need constant and unremitting attention, which, to enforce, I requested Brown to appoint an overseer, when the malady was most prevalent, to attend to the hospital exclusively, and the doctor was there every day. This continued three months, and, in fact, is only becoming unnecessary now. Throughout that time, out of fifty-two we had never fewer than twenty ill, and six died. I believe the sickness has been more severe here than with Ridley, from what cause it is difficult to explain, the localities being both considered salubrious.

We were indefatigable in superintending the preparation of food for them, and, indeed, an extra cook was introduced into our kitchen, besides those who were in the hospital, to prepare articles for the sick; and I myself was twice every day there to see if the overseer was doing his duty. George frequently acted as hospital superintendent, and I am sure was as attentive and sympathising as any man could be. Indeed, but for the great attention that was paid to them, I think one half would have died. I have been painfully convinced of their penurious disposition by several occurrences. It is quite evident that they come here to make money, and it is with reluctance they encounter anything that, even for the most necessary purpose, interferes with their long-cherished expectations.

Throughout the province, hope revived is rousing to extraordinary exertion, nothing being heard of but people going to this estate, and others to that in great numbers, as landed from the East India ships, or brought by our own traders from Madeira, to be exchanged for a return cargo of sugar. There is only the uncertainty that hangs over them in regard to their qualifications as field labourers; and, as usual, in such cases, there is a wide difference of opinion among planters, some insisting that they work as well as the Negroes, but the majority declaring that the labour obtained from them is much less than that which is got from the former. The Coolies not only do less while they are in the field, but they are even more irregular than the others in their attendance there. Sheer love of ease, and frivolity of disposition, seem to be at the bottom of this; for, in so far as I have seen, they are by no means so much given to the use of ardent spirits as the Negroes, and their passions altogether are less violent, and more under control. Yet some of them are as debauched as any class of people; generally, however, they are temperate. The Negroes are not so in anything that is comprehended in eating and drinking.

The quantity they devour occasionally of their favourite foo foo, or salt fish and plantains, brayed in a mortar into a solid mass, is truly enormous, and surpasses the belief of the uninitiated. The Hindu, on the contrary, with his rice and fresh peppers, is contented, although the portion be moderate. Probably this difference, acting on their physical conformation, may account for the variation in the degree of energy with which they respectively seek to attain their objects.

Wellingham has begun to creep more out of his shell, doubtless expecting that he will swim with the flood that is to carry us all into the ocean of prosperity. He called here yesterday, and, with a timid sort of doubtful air, as if afraid yet anxious to hear my opinion on what was going on, began to speak of the immigrants. I told him that Brown's ardour was considerably cooled, and his hopes by no means so sanguine as they were six months ago; and I could perceive that his countenance fell, while he observed with a deep sigh, "it is what others have told me also, and what some of the oldest planters predicted. Africa, after all, will be our only refuge." "And that wide field, the wisdom of our government has shut against us for the very reason that Mr. Hume would open it—the heathen barbarity of its people, and their condition of slavery; the former, the faction of our enemies exclaim against as likely to be too powerful for the improved manners of our present population, and the rest of the Whigs say it would tend to promote the African slave-trade." "So they say; yet how they induce themselves to believe these absurdities, is wonderful, if true. It is almost impossible that we should ever get so many as to out-number the population of the West Indies, and unless that took place, it is equally impossible that they would pull down the latter to their own level; as for slavery, why, a slave cannot exist here! he is free the instant he touches the soil; witness all those who have fled from

Surinam to Berbice, and from the French to our islands, where their former masters ceased to have property in, and tried in vain to recover them."

"All true; our colonies are now like the British islands in that respect, and on the same footing; but they say it will encourage the slave-trade. Hume's plan is to buy slaves in Africa and manumit them, then to bind them as apprentices for five years in the West Indies, after which they are to return to their own country. And, say they, the native chiefs will make war on each other to obtain slaves for us." "Why, what do they now if they would do so then? is it not notorious that the trade is still carried on, and, instead of being brought from slavery to freedom, the unfortunates are doomed to undergo a dreadful voyage, and after all, to endure, if they survive, a condition scarcely better than that which was their lot in their own country." "Very true, indeed—there is no doubt also that since the year 1838, the foreign slave-trade has increased, and as the Spaniards and Brazilians, who watch us narrowly, perceive that we are not getting over the Emancipation Act, they will engage more deeply in the odious traffic." "Still, wherever we turn ourselves, however we exert ourselves, we are kept steadily in a sinking state by our enemies in England." "They will agree to such immigration as this, after long importunity; and, without doubt, the government have faith in the Coolies, they expect they shall benefit us, and are glad that the faction have graciously permitted them to sanction their deportation." "Well! the question will come to be, whether they are to permit the slaves of Africa to be freed, or suffer them to continue slaves in christian lands, after risking their lives in crossing the sea." "That seems at present to be the prospect; but we must still exert ourselves to make the most of our Coolies and Portuguese; it may be we are premature in our conclusions." "Would to God it may be so; but it seems to me that the fabled

tortures of Tantalus were nothing to those we are doomed to, for our hopes are not only raised to be dashed in a few months again, but we endure that continual gnawing of moral misery, to which bodily suffering is almost pleasure."

I could not fail to observe that Mr. Wellingham, during this conversation, avoided altogether the question of competition inflicted on us by the bill of July last. In fact he, like others, considers that everything hangs on the success of our new immigration scheme, and if it succeeds we shall be able to compete with the whole world. I doubt very much if, under the most favourable circumstances, free-labour can compete with slave-labour. But, after the first impression died away, this most extraordinary measure of government has not produced the effect on me which a full consciousness of its destructive tendency might on others, because I was becoming more and more fixedly of opinion, that the British West India planters would be ruined as a body, by the effect of the Emancipation Act, unconnected as it was with any efficient provisions for the supply of that labour which it withdrew. Such being the case, our ruin was a question of time, unless government saved us by a proper supply of labour. This new infliction expedites the progress of our downward career, and neutralizes the measure of immigration we had, with great exertions, obtained. It is certain that we have among ourselves some free-traders belonging to the mercantile classes. Indeed, I doubt if there are many men of those classes who are not dazzled by the specious promises of this beautiful theory, which would free them from the trammels of custom-houses, and permit their ships to traverse from place to place with as little interruption from human institutions as that "chartered libertine," the wind.

I can easily fancy that men whose business is commerce, and who have no other powerful and counteracting

motive, should indulge in golden visions, arising out of this unrestricted intercourse of mankind. When the imagination is excited, men do not pause to consider whether this state of affairs is practicable; but surely reflection would convince them that free-trade, literally and *bona fide*, is not in the nature of things, and that, to bring it about, not only the political and financial condition of all nations must be assimilated, but the ideas and mode of thinking among men must also be nearly the same—a state of society which has never existed since the creation. The direct effect of it must be, if it really can be carried on, as our political economists insist, without reciprocity, to reduce all nations to the same level. Great Britain, being the highest in the scale of commercial nations, has little to gain by this levelling doctrine; on the contrary, she has everything to lose. Her artisans and labourers, of all sorts, forming the basis upon which the prosperity of a country invariably rests, must of necessity be brought into direct competition with the labourers and artizans of other nations, in all of whom the rate of wages and the price of food are fifty per cent. lower. Now, with our national debt, it is certain that the price of most articles consumed by the people of England cannot be much reduced, while it is equally clear, that the rate of wages must be brought to a level with the average on the Continent. On this fact rest the whole of the evils that must spring from the measures of 1844 and 1846. Tradesmen must be ruined by competition generally, as the unfortunate silk weavers, particularly, and some other branches, have been already.

The operatives of Lancashire, and the peasantry of the richest counties of Britain, being reduced to the condition of the serfs on the Continent, in regard to wages, will not be able to purchase the means of supporting nature. What comes next?—we must ask Messrs. Bright and Cobden, the apostles of free-trade and low wages, for

whose benefit, and those whose interests are linked with theirs, such measures have been thrust upon the good sense of the nation. Mr. Bright is a man *per se*, a quaker, and a pugnacious one, according to Mr. Berkeley. There are few men who would so unblushingly stand forward on every public opportunity to advocate doctrines which are specially calculated to advance his own interests. He wants low wages—he will obtain his object. The next thing is to keep the rate so permanently in order that the millowners may be able to bear down the continental manufacturers, and annihilate them, thus gaining the command of the European markets; and to do this, the labourers of England must be kept at starvation point, therefore, immigration would stand in his way; and, lo! Mr. Bright opposes stoutly immigration schemes, to save the miserable people from their wretched state.

It is impossible that the country can submit for any length of time to the intolerable tyranny which the selfish policy of this party would impose on it. But the view is as narrow as it is selfish, which the political economists take of the effects of free-trade, even on themselves. If they cannot realize their ambitious dreams without thus affecting the condition of their operatives, is it at all probable that the latter will remain contented, in the position they assign to them? Unquestionably they will not, so long as they have the power of remonstrating; and, failing that, of resorting to the *ultima ratio*, or seeking in thousands the wilds of Australia or North America. The whole aim and object of free-trade is to induce a state of affairs to avert this, and to suit the men of Manchester and the holders of stock or shares. Cheapness is the cry, to enable the poor working spinner to live on the pittance of wages competition will allow, and to enhance the fortunes of the millowners, who are neither connected with the landed aristocracy of Britain or the colonies. The latter are necessarily doomed, irrespective

of national credit or national honour, because they cannot raise sugar so cheaply as the slave-holders of Brazil; who, besides, will take much more cloth and iron, now that we admit their produce; and, here again, their shortsightedness comes in their way, for they cannot see that Brazil and Cuba can only be advanced on the ruins of our own sugar settlements, and they will lose more than they gain. It is wonderful how that same "tickling commodity," that self-worshipping and self-aggrandizing principle, blinds us to the evils of our own endeavours to advance ourselves. But the liabilities of our country stand sadly in their way—taxes must be imposed to meet the interest of the debt.

It is singular that they bring forward no scheme regarding it. Could they but shift the burden on the land, in the shape of a land-tax, what would not be gained to the party? And to this matters must come, if their views are carried out, unless the already-sacrificed landholders can get it modified into a thirty per cent. income-tax, on the same principle as existing now. But this will never suit the middle classes, and all their policy will fall to the ground, unless they can saddle some particular class with the interest of the national debt, and reduce the public expenditure to the same comparative amount as that of other countries—thus removing the necessity for duties on imports. The people cannot see these schemes, which are framed to benefit one class exclusively, and remain always blind to the tendency of them to destroy the substance of the rest. As my friend Wellingham said once, when we were discussing this subject, "I fear the nation will only be roused to oppose the economists when a great many interests have been ruined, and it is clearly perceived that they must all go in detail."

Even the merchants, who think themselves secure in the unmingled advantages that will accrue to them from free-trade, on account of the impregnability of the navi-

gation laws, had better not be too confident. They are the most prominent promoters of the new-fangled doctrines after the manufacturers; we shall see if they remain true to their principles, when the sacrificed colonies demand, as assuredly they will, the abrogation of these laws, which have hitherto been regarded as the foundation of Great Britain's maritime supremacy. They cannot, surely, in so far imitate the Bright and Cobden party, as to advocate those principles only which have a direct operation in enhancing the value of their property; and they surely will not repudiate them when it is found that they shall have the same effect on that of others, when applied to them. We shall see when the time comes. Meanwhile, the colonies are too much occupied with the visionary advantages of immigration, to attend to the fearful calamity that has just been decreed them. The experience of the planters has hitherto declared unequivocally in favour of African labourers—the few that our cruisers have rescued from the felon gripe of the slaver, and brought to our shores, having surpassed not only all other varieties of imported field-people, but the native inhabitants of their own blood themselves, in regular and continuous industry, although they still fall short of the enduring, toil-defying power of the European working-man in his own country.

The number of people whom we have drawn here since the year 1835 is enough to stagger our faith in indiscriminate importation. More than forty thousand have been added since that period to our population, and the crops are still fifty per cent. less than they were previously to the passing of the Emancipation Act; yet wages evince a decided tendency to rise—signs that too truly indicate the inadequacy of our additional workmen. Still, the Coolies had only been tried on a small scale, and on a few estates, when the clamour was raised against the Gladstone slave-trade, as the faction too successfully styled the

emigration from India, and it was stopped, until lately revived again under the care of the imperial government. Thus, still, like drowning men catching at straws, we jump eagerly to seize the proffered advantage, and I, with all my forebodings, and little hope of anything, am carried along by the side of popular feeling—I should say, was so carried, for I confess I am astonished at the indifference which everywhere prevails regarding this fatal Sugar Duty Act.

I have conversed with many of our leading men, and members of the legislature, on the subject, and they agree with me, that if government does not save us by immigration, we are certainly doomed; and some even fancy that in the very “nettle” of this danger they perceive the flower “safety.” Notwithstanding the experience they have had of imperial legislation, they say ministers would not counsel such an insane act, if they had not some measure in store for us, perhaps unlimited African immigration, which will enable us to support the competition; others, deeply inoculated with free-trade principles, are sure we shall not suffer so much as I imagine, and a few maintain, boldly and ignorantly, that we possess advantages in our rich soil to counterbalance a host of evils. Such are the opinions of various parties in our little state—the last two being those of the non-agriculturists and liberal gentry of Georgetown. There are two or three, whom I could name, who see the measure in its proper light, and say nothing about it, because, what would it avail them? They have no opportunity of remonstrating, and nothing will be attended to now until the effect of the Act appears, in the fall of prices; and even then can we expect to get our feeble wail listened to, amidst the tumultuous roar of Cobden’s successful followers? As well might we expect the flood to hear the last cry of the wretch whom it devours. Alas! while writing in my lonely room, and committing to this silent depository my

thoughts and feelings, the latter will get the mastery, and I must give vent to them in strong and impassioned language. It is at such times that a man, full of his subject, and having every concomitant circumstance standing forth in bold relief in his excited imagination, is apt to curse—curse bitterly—the authors of his misery, and to fling from him, in wrath, the record of his woes and of his country's cruelty.

Let any man, gifted with ordinary powers of fancy, suppose himself for a few minutes to be in the position of the sugar planters; let him think on the series of persecutions they have suffered, from the year 1823, the era of Canning's resolutions, to 1833, when the Emancipation Act was forced on them, contrary to their most earnest remonstrances and their most impressive warnings. The struggle they have since maintained to keep up their estates, under the hope that their enemies in England would relent, and permit them to get proper labourers in the room of those who were abstracted from them, and only to find out at last that, instead of having their miseries properly considered, and the energy appreciated with which they have borne up against almost intolerable oppression, they were abused by the Whig press as indolent, and bigotted to old forms of agriculture; and Whig ministers, acting in conformity, have exposed them, by an act of parliament hastily passed, to certain ruin.

The whole seems as if the anti-colonial faction, displeased by the slow and gradual progress of decay under the Emancipation Act, had resolved on another that would be more speedy in its operation. We look in vain throughout the period I have specified for a single measure, devised by government, for our relief; on the contrary, minor ones against us, such as the abolition of contracts between master and labourer, were imposed; and, previously to the year 1845, the planters, in the teeth of

grievous impediments, were obliged to import, at their own expense, and at the risk of losing their money from want of written agreements, more than half of the people I have mentioned, from such places as the government would permit them to be brought. Since that year, certainly, there is some appearance of a desire to promote immigration, very probably in the extravagant expectation that it will enable us to support competition with slave-holding and slave-importing planters, which they purposed even then to expose us to. And who, I ask, could think and write coolly under such circumstances? It is not in our nature. If the man be even placed in our position by the force of imagination only, he will recoil with mingled feelings of fear and anger from the picture presented to him. Rebellion in all ages would have been the result of such insufferable wrongs, if there was the slightest prospect of throwing off the yoke; but the powers that be rely no less on the weakness, than the known loyalty of the West Indians. If the latter had been willing and able to alarm the government by an affair such as the Canadian one even, ministers would not have dared to trample on and destroy them. But this vein must not be indulged in; I must pause till "the heat be passed;" and, luckily, I hear my friend Ridley's voice in the gallery.

I resume my pen to record our conversation. It seemed that he came expressly to find some relief in talking, although with one who, in his opinion, sees things in the worst light; but since that day when he so frankly declared his own sentiments, he does not shrink from mine as he did. Nevertheless, people desire to be comforted or cheered, although by words that are but wind, and thus few like to converse freely with me, who have no reserve on the subject of our condition. "Fine weather," said he; "those showers will tell on the young canes; singular, that though cursed by man, we are

supremely blessed by Providence; the oldest inhabitants say that they do not recollect such a series of good years in regard to weather during their lives, as that which has followed the year 1838." "It is remarkable. I think we have only had one rather severe dry season in all that time—truly, my friend, a watchful Providence is required when man is so reckless. Well, what do you hear now?" "The opinion gains ground that we shall have African immigration to any extent, subject to some limitations as to localities." "Ay; those limitations are just the point on which the whole must hinge. We have been allowed to do things before under limitations; but can you trace the report to any authority?" "No, none whatever except the conjectures of some recently arrived passengers." "I am glad of it, for the people here should not assist in deluding themselves—it is enough that others practise delusions on them—they cannot obtain so many people as they either expect or desire from Africa without buying them. Look at the report of our own agent at Sierra Leone—a clever, intelligent fellow, who devoted himself to the business for which he was sent, and who is now here. We cannot get free people, in a country where the bulk of the population are slaves, either readily or abundantly. The Kroo coast seems to be the only locality which affords a reasonable prospect of them, and the whole of its inhabitants would not redeem the West Indies, if transplanted there." "There are free people in Africa, it seems, but so scattered, that it is extremely difficult and expensive to collect them.

"How do your Indians get on?" "Why, just as before. Brown is kept in hot water by their childish frivolity, and the little work they do in the fields, after he has succeeded in enticing them to it—the fact is, they get as much by one day's work as will purchase rice and pepper for a week, and why should they work?" "They have rollicking fellows at Success, who drink and carry on

as well as the Negroes, and pretty much like them." "And how do they get on?" "They probably do more than yours. The calculation there is, that one Negro does as much as three—here Brown says one African does as much as four Coolies." "So he has said latterly; in fact, our Hindus don't improve."

"My Portuguese," said he, "are useless as field people, two-thirds of them being now in the hospital—they cannot stand the field work." "I begin to be assured of that also; for, even here, the fondness of money is becoming insufficient to keep them at it. They are availing themselves of every saint's day that turns up, to be idle." "A rascally set they are! We cannot get them to attend to their sick relatives, and, if they die, they are left by them to be buried, as strangers may think proper; but a thing occurred the other day which I would scarcely have believed if any person had told me.

"A woman had a child very ill with a dropsical affection, that the doctor could not reduce except by tapping, which was done; but the disease returned, as it generally does; and when the woman observed it, she remarked that the boy was going to die, and very coolly took him out, laid him on the road, and deserted him. The black sick nurse found the poor thing lying there, and took it to the unnatural mother, but she ordered her off, and the nurse brought it forthwith to me. From what I knew of them, I feared that the mother would destroy it, and directed the nurse to keep it at her own house carefully out of her reach. It was a boy of about four years old, and in a couple of weeks he was better (apparently because he was away from his parent), and going about the door, where the jade espied him, and, seeing that he was nearly recovered, did not hesitate to demand him with the coolest effrontery. But I cannot allow of his restoration until we see farther." "They have little natural affection. I have heard of worse instances than this of

yours; nevertheless, they are an acquisition in their way; they force some Negroes to the fields, who would otherwise be porters, carters, and jobbers of all sorts, about town; and they will do well enough at the buildings of our estates." "They make capital sugar boilers; I have two in my copper wall, who are the best on the estate. But we can get plenty for in-door labour—even Germans will do for that." "Ay! it is the blazing sun that makes the difficulty, and there is no one but he who seems to have been designed by nature for the tropical agriculturist—the African Negro that will cultivate our fields properly." "But what security have we that they would not follow the same course as our present inefficient Negroes, if they were here for any length of time?" "We have no way of avoiding that, except bringing them in such numbers as will keep wages at a rate sufficient for a comfortable subsistence, but not for the purposes of indolence and debauchery." "Well, well! it is not difficult to foresee the termination of it all. I think I am steeled to stand the worst. How are the Wellinghams?" "Why, as usual, they do not seem much more than generally anxious." "You have not heard the report, then!" "What is it, in God's name?" "Nay, nothing specially relating to them. It is said, in fact, that the house he is mortgaged to, along with other planters, has sent instructions to their agent here to foreclose all who owe more than one instalment." "My friend," said I, after a pause, during which I felt a choking sensation in my throat, "it is what we have looked for. Mortgagees must act as men usually do in their position. I wonder they have kept off so long." "And what will they gain now?" "Why, the estates of their debtors, and, along with them, the chance that remains, if there is any, of returning prosperity and former prices of plantations. In fact, they keep up the latter now; and it is no more than fair that they should have the chance, such as it is, of benefiting by better times." "Is nothing due to the

people who have struggled so long and anxiously to preserve them?" "A large sum, the value of the property, minus the compensation money, is due to Wellingham by the British government; but, assuredly, the mortgagees are not bound to have any consideration for him. Yet, they have been considerate, and even liberal." "Few men can reason so coolly, under the circumstances, Mr. Premium; but it must be allowed that you are right." "It is too frequently the case that creditors are estimated by their conduct, without any reference to circumstances—why, they must act in this manner unless the debtor's interests are to be preferred to their own; and if you look at the value of property now, as compared with what it was when these mortgages were passed, you will find that the holders of them must lose immensely, even by obtaining the estates." "There is no doubt that our property has been taken from us in an insensible, imperceptible manner, by the gradual depreciation which has crept on us; and a most singular state of affairs it is that makes a man who yet has no debt, and seven years ago was worth £40,000, to be considered worth no more than a few thousand dollars now." "Yet such is the case." "I see you are going—I shall go with you as far as Wellingham's.

I found the family, for the first time during many months, in the forenoon, all at home. They looked grave, and it was evident had been discussing some very interesting question. I was not kept in suspense; for my daughter whispered, while she took my hand, "We have just heard the report; we are quite resigned." She looked very pale, but quite calm. Charles had that sort of appearance which a man has under an infliction which he wishes the world to believe he despises, while, at the same time, he feels it bitterly, and his father was wo-begone and wretched in his aspect. "Well," said the latter, "you come to tell us the news, I suppose; our destiny is

soon to be accomplished. Johnson has just informed us, on the best authority—that of our mortgagee’s agent—“God’s will be done!” “Really, after all, my friends,” said I, as firmly as I could, “this is no great misfortune, if you consider the matter properly. The Scotch have a proverb which declares that it is better to have a calamity realized than always impending over us—“Better a finger off than aye wagging,” is the original. And it was never better applied than in this case. You cannot suffer more than you have endured for the last three years.” “Quite true,” cried Charles, almost sternly, “that is exactly what I am always saying.” “Come, then, the worst of it is parting with near and dear relatives—an unpleasant circumstance, certainly, but which young people, especially in this age of transmigration, are almost universally doomed to.” “Yes, indeed,” said Grace, cheerily, “and this family is not parted, it is only I who shall be separated from my family—a change that by marriage I was doomed to undergo already.” Her voice faltered a little, and that alone betrayed to others the inward emotion that was gnawing at her heart, and, as I could perceive, struggling with her natural strength of mind. “Ah!” said Wellingham, quite overcome, “this spot has witnessed the happiest days of my life; and here my angel wife left me for a better world; here, too, my only child first saw the light; and thus to leave it, an outcast and a beggar!” “My dear Wellingham, this is not like your usual philosophical manner of receiving the buffets of a rascally world; look round you, and see how many men, as high in position, and as happy in every relation of life, are now, or will be soon, exactly as you are. It is consoling to know that your misfortunes are not of your own creating. I, who am following in your footsteps, who cannot be more than a year or two behind you, feel that comfort from this circumstance which a virtuous and upright man ought to derive from a clear conscience under the

severest calamity. You shall be with your son, that is your principal consolation, and you have the means of establishing yourselves in another and more fortunate land." "Thanks to you for that, my dearest father," said Grace, now also weeping; "I am sure you have much diminished your now scanty store for this purpose." "And what if I have; are you not one of us? are we not, Wellingham, one family? What would you think of settling with my wife, whose health, as you know, is not so good now, in some sweet, retired cottage in Old England—Charles might take a farm." "No! by Heaven!" burst in the latter, with a savage and fierce ejaculation, "I sit not down a denizen of that country which has reduced us all to starvation." "Charles, dear Charles," whispered his wife soothingly; and in a moment his better nature got the mastery. "Forgive me, fathers, for truly I know not what I do." Thus saying, he abruptly left the room.

"Poor fellow," said Wellingham, "he has been blaming himself incessantly within the last twelve months, since our fate became certain, for linking one he holds dearer than himself with his wretched fortunes, and to-day, I think, he is nearly distracted." "He does me wrong in that," replied my daughter, "for I entered on the duties of a wife, as my father knows, with a full knowledge of the evils we were likely to encounter, and a determination to assist in combating them; but it is in vain to suggest those things to him now." "And you have been to him and me, my child, the solace and comfort of our lives; as God shall judge me, Premium," cried he energetically, "I do not believe I should have been here now, had we wanted your ministering angel of a daughter." "Then," said I, with tears, for the first time during the painful interview, in my eyes, "then has she fulfilled her high mission, and I glory in my child; it is the dark hour of suffering, not the bright sunshine day of prosperi-

ty, that proves what we are. But why should Charles be so sensitive? he was, like every man in the Colony, at the time of his marriage, sanguine in regard to the future; he did not anticipate times like these, and it is little else than folly, or morbid sensibility, thus to allow the faults of the imperial government to rest on his head, as acts of his own. I feared the temper and rather volatile nature of your son, when the marriage took place; he has fully, by his subsequent conduct, removed those fears, and established himself in my confidence and good opinion, and surely he is aware that it is so." "I know not," replied his wife, "but he is one of those who seek for applause within themselves entirely. Not that he does not highly appreciate the good opinion of you both; but still his mind is so constituted that he is unhappy unless he can try his conduct by it, and acquit himself." "Therein doth he not defer, as he ought, to the experience of others. Come, Charles!" continued I, as he returned, apparently composed, "sit down and let us discuss, quietly and temperately, the subject of the day." "I beg your pardon, all of you; but at times, I confess, I find it difficult to comport myself with unvarying and unruffled composure; now I can do it, however, and permit me to say, Mr. Premium, that I feel a great reluctance to settling in England. I am a Creole, as you know; this is my native country, and if my Grace and I find that it is no longer a place for us, I would implore her to let our future tent be pitched in a foreign land." "And that land is Australia—so it was formerly arranged. This proposal of mine is made because of Mrs. Premium's state of health, which has only lately become indifferent." He did not speak, and I could perceive that his wife's eyes were suffused with tears. It was not difficult to guess at what was passing in her mind. "Charles has lately," said Wellingham, "taken a dislike to all countries under the sway of our British Ministers, and his ideas regarding Australia have

undergone an entire change." "Indeed! He has not stated that to me; and I was regarding Australia as the last resource." "But, Charles, this is but an unmanly, not to say childish feeling, which must soon go off." He shook his head. "Rely not on that, Sir; victims of oppression, with passions like mine, are not soon reconciled to the destroyer." "Why, this is the language of insane rebellion," said Wellingham; "for God's sake, Charles, keep yourself under control, and teach yourself to speak and act with moderation." "I am calm, you see, and disposed to speak quietly; still, it is my wish to give free utterance to my sentiments, where I may with prudence, and, in so doing, perhaps find relief from the pent-up fire that almost consumes me." Observing that his eye flashed and his nostril dilated, as he spoke, I was in doubt whether he could stand the ordeal that he wished to subject himself to, but I felt, after all, it was better the workings of his mind should have free vent, and advised him to conceal nothing that he either felt or desired. "I have only to say that my father misunderstands me altogether, if he thinks such absurdity as resistance to the power that overwhelms us ever entered into my calculations. I merely meant to avow that my dislike to England, as a residence, has taken deep root within the last year, and, if forced to live there, I believe I should deem every man I met a foe." "I really did not think as I spoke, Charles. I wished to see you command yourself, and converse like a reasonable person. Rebellion! Alas! it would indeed be a tempest in a teapot! even if every colony, from Canada to Guiana inclusive, engaged in it." "Never for a moment, I am sure, has the thought of it been entertained through the wide spread settlements—yet much has been said, in language more violent than you ever heard me use, against those who have reduced us to beggary." "If such are your feelings towards all places above which the British flag waves, where would

you choose a residence?" inquired I. "Therein I am willing, and so is my wife, to be guided by your wisdom and experience," looking at his father and me; "but the kindred states of America seem to offer the most pleasant, as well as the most profitable prospects, for one who, like me, is young, strong, and not unwilling to exert himself." "Their manners and customs, Charles," said his father, "are not those we have been accustomed to, and I scarcely think we would find the people so agreeable as you imagine." "But, Charles," said I, "it strikes me that your conduct now is at variance with your general behaviour. You are the least of a selfish person it has been my lot to meet with; would you desire to drag your father, and perhaps your wife, to a country they would not prefer?" I saw Grace watch him, in great anxiety. It was evident that she would select her native land, if the choice was with her.

"I am sure my father has no partiality for the old country; but, I confess, I have felt many a pang, from reflecting that poor Grace might do violence to her feelings, in order to indulge me. Yet what can I do, Mr. Premium? I distrust myself. I feel that I would be always embroiled with the hard-hearted inhabitants, who would regard the feelings of a ruined planter as little as his fortune which they destroyed." "You must learn, my son, to do like others who live in the world. No man meets no one in life, except those he likes." "True; but few men either can submit to be first knocked down, as we have been, and then abused, as we are likely to be." "Keep aloof from such wretches; they are not fit for society; only control yourself for the moment that chance throws you together, and avoid them like pestilence afterwards." He shook his head. "It is easy for you to talk, and it would be easy for me, also, to appear convinced by your arguments, but I have that within me which is incompatible with a residence in England—I

feel it." "But you can get the better of it. We shall say no more at present; you have yet many months to think of departure, even if you are sequestered to-morrow; perhaps something will be struck out, meanwhile. But come all over to the Fortune and spend the day there; everything must be known now, and I trust to see you cheerful yet, even in the midst of all our dismal prospects."

I had been preparing my wife, for months, to hear unfavourable accounts from England. In fact, it was not difficult; for although I had used every precaution to keep unpleasant information from her, regarding the planters in general, and ourselves in particular, in a place where the very atmosphere seems to be impregnated with tidings of calamity, all my endeavours, excepting in so far as the Fortune was concerned, proved unavailing. Although a woman who meddled with no business beyond her own sphere, she was yet acutely sensible of any thing affecting the interests of her family; and sundry casual remarks about the Wellingshams, dropped from visitors in speaking of the planters in our district, first aroused her attention, and on talking anxiously with Jane, the latter, by degrees, let her know all that she had learned; so, without vexing me, they spoke to each other on the subject, and thus became gradually prepared for the worst that could happen—and the first portion of which I had now to announce. Sitting down with my wife, in her own room, I began to remind her of former private conversations about bad news, which we might expect from home, and she, who was intently regarding me, heaving a deep sigh, exclaimed, "It is come now then. Jane saw it in your faces the moment the carriage drove up. God's will be done! and let us be thankful that we are all spared in everything but this world's goods." "I am rejoiced, beyond measure, my dear, to see you receive the intelligence so composedly—if, indeed,

you know what it is." "Perfectly. You have not been able to blind us as your good nature prompted. Wellingham's estate is to go under execution." "Even so," said I, much surprised, and no less pleased. "Since you behave with so much fortitude and resignation, half of my uneasiness about it is gone. Wealth is not happiness. I feel for old Wellingham, rather than the young ones. Charles can earn a livelihood, and his wife can suit herself to any state of society." "Oh! Barton, do you remember how proud I was in England of that girl's superior appearance; beautiful in person, and elegant in manners, how few were her equals! Now, she is thrown from the sphere she was born to adorn, and destined to be one of the drudges of creation; it is yet hard to bear." "It is so, my love; but persons whose opinions are worth regarding, will think more highly of our girl now, than when surrounded by admirers in a crowded drawing-room. I do; and I can safely declare, that I have had more gratification in beholding her amidst domestic distress—I mean as a woman, apart from her own sufferings—than at any time in our gayest days. She is the model of a good wife; and if you only heard how Wellingham speaks of her!"

"Thank God, Jane has declined all proposals in this unhappy land; she is yet left to me." There was no contending against this display of disappointed female pride. Glad was I to allow her to run on in her own strain, until she had exhausted her bitterness and vain repinings. At last I told her that I saw no prospect of any proprietor in the Colony getting out of the dreadful state we were all in, except by total ruin, unless, indeed, they have funds independent of their estates, and they have resolution to stop short in laying out, to uphold the latter, and e'en let them go. "You see, my dear, the advantage of a little caution. That £5000 I settled on you, and which is now safe in England, will, come what

may, keep you from want." I said this to make sure that she had the prospect fully before her of our future destiny." "I care not for myself, Barton; God knows, I can live on little, if I am put to it (she had never tried yet, good woman); it is for the girls I feel." And in this she was, doubtless, perfectly sincere. "But, oh! how thankful we should be that our lives are spared, in a climate where death is so common. Look at the case of those miserable Hutchesons, ruined also, and two-thirds of the family carried off about the very time their estate was sold by execution." "We are, indeed, blest, in comparison with them, and many others. How many families, formerly rich, are on this day without a home! But now, my dear, go down and speak with Grace; she went with Jane into her room; and speak freely whatever you think; have no reservation or concealment—only do not hint at her unfortunate marriage, it might have happened had she been united to any one. Of this you may be sure, she has a good husband, and by no means repents of her choice, even under present afflictions." "I shall be severely tried, but you may trust me in regard to reproaching her; how could you imagine"— "Nay, nay, don't misunderstand me; how can *you* imagine I could mean such a thing? You reproach yourself incessantly about her marriage, and I feared you might do so now; pray, avoid it, for she is even proud of Charles, and, after all, barring his strange temper, he is a fine, talented fellow." "Well, now that I understand you, I shall set about this painful interview with great circumspection—painful it must be, for she has always concealed from me everything which I heard even from strangers, doubtless from the kindest motives." "Oh! doubtless."

We were that day a sorrowful, yet united family; but the gravest of the party were, unquestionably, Wellingham and Mrs. Premium. The former seemed to be unable to withdraw his mind from the contemplation of his

misfortunes, and the latter yearned to weep alone with her daughter. I fear there had been more of this on their first meeting than I expected, for Jane told me that Grace had great difficulty, after repeated bursts of sorrow, in bringing her mother to a state of composure. She had forgotten altogether my cautions, and loudly blamed herself for destroying her daughter's prospects in life, until the latter, stung by her remarks, firmly and emphatically told her that she did not repent, for a moment, of what she had done, and were it to do again, she would marry Charles. Indeed, she said it had all been predicted, every thing that is to happen, by her father, as of probable occurrence, and she, being guided by her affections instead of ambition, did not hesitate as to her choice. This had the effect, and the good lady, beginning to recover from the grief which the first sight of her child occasioned, recollected the purport of our conversation, and matters went on better. Jane told me that Grace, on this occasion, she was sure, cared for nothing but Charles. She was anxious about him, for his manner was disturbed, and his whole demeanour altered; he looked, in fact, like one at war with mankind. If he recovered his usual state of mind, she would think what is to happen—nothing; indeed, it is only what they all expected, and wherefore be overcome by it?

In the evening, forming a family circle without a single person with whom it was necessary to be guarded, the conversation became soon interesting; for every one's mind being occupied in the same manner, we desired to find relief in talking over the engrossing topic. "And now, Charles," said I, "you have had time to reflect on all that was said this forenoon. What do you say to trying England? I say trying; your father agrees to it, and your wife desires it. Speak not, Grace; you did not tell me so, nevertheless I know it." "And so do I," replied Charles; "and I have suspected it since I first began to

feel as I do now." "If I have ever led you to believe that I had another wish than yours in this matter, it has been unwillingly," said Grace, very gravely; "but since it has been observed that I would prefer England to America, it does not in the least alter what has been my intention—to do exactly that which will tend to promote your happiness, without regard to my feelings." "My dear Grace," said Charles, "can you imagine me so selfish as to permit such a course? I must say again, it is because I have not faith in myself that I wish to avoid collisions with those who have wrought our ruin. I am quite aware that what I say may appear silly, and very like boyish impatience; and if, after fully disclosing my feelings and sentiments as I have now done, it is thought advisable, and most likely to promote the general happiness of the family, I am willing to do whatever you choose."

"I expected this," was my answer. "I knew you would see the folly of repudiating your country; for, after all, she is your country, and contains millions who sympathise with, and would save the unhappy planters. Think of that. They are not all of the Manchester school. And if you meet with one of the latter description, surely, unless he is rude to you, you can restrain your dislike of him, and behave like a gentleman." "Really Charles," said Grace, with a smile, "you are like a quarrelsome schoolboy in this matter; but now that you have put yourself into the hands of our seniors, all will go right. I confess I am happy now." Charles came round to her—"And is it possible that your happiness was involved in this question, and yet you would sacrifice it to humour my caprice, if it is such? Oh! how silly you have often made me feel! how miserably below her who is my guide! and never more so than in this instance." So saying, he kissed her hand affectionately, and yet respectfully, at which we all smiled for the first time that

day with anything like glee; and old Wellingham regarded them both with a beaming look of warm approval.

“Charles,” said he, faintly smiling, “tell us frankly what has given rise to this suddenly increased hatred of England.” “Surely,” replied Charles, quickly, “it is not necessary to ask that. All feel as I do, but few so intensely—so engrossingly; and on that, I believe, lies the whole difference. But I will relate to you an anecdote, which, perhaps—I will not say positively—first induced me to think that the atmosphere of Britain, though cold enough, in all conscience, might be too hot for me. While there, I was either at school or college, and I left it very young—as ignorant, in fact, of men and manners as a youth could be. So I cannot speak of the people from experience. But, a few months ago, I met Donald Campbell at a dinner party in town—you know he only returned about that time, after an absence of a year—and he was relating, as all our visitors of Europe do, the singular things he had met with. Among other stories, he had one of an incident at an ordinary, or *table d’hôte*, in Liverpool, at which all were very agreeable, until, in the course of conversation, it came out that Campbell was a West India planter, when a surly man, who had scarcely spoken before, said abruptly, ‘Planter, eh! hope you treat the blacks better—can you make them slaves yet?—flog them well, eh?’ Campbell, you are aware, is very good-natured; so he laughed at this as a capital joke, and told him the flogging was all over—‘Worse luck ours.’ ‘Worse luck yours! eh? By G—d! if you had your deserts, you would all be flogged to death. Pay twenty millions, eh! and you are ruined! Sarve you right.’ And he struck his fist on the table, looking round for the approbation of the company. ‘Surely, sir, you are joking,’ said Campbell, very quietly. ‘No, sir, I never joke. My opinion is that every planter must be a

rascal—take it as you like.’ ‘Shame! shame!’ cried one or two, while Campbell rose coolly enough, and struck the brute to the floor. ‘Gentlemen,’ said he, then, to the rest—‘a few years ago, I was a man of good fortune—I am now on the brink of ruin, by the agitation of such men as that,’ casting a look of scorn on the humbled anti-colonist—‘that is my apology for this rude behaviour.’ They were candid enough to say he was right, and his opponent got a hint to move off, not without a card from Campbell, however, but nothing more came of it. Now, such a thing as that would, I fear, bring me into a scrape that would make you all wretched.”

“But, don’t you see the feeling was against that brutal fellow?” said Wellingham. “Well, well, I am schooled good manners be my speed.” We were all much better now, and even rather cheerful. “You should kiss your wife’s hand again, Charlie,” said George—“‘the rod,’ you know.” “‘They prate of scars who never felt a wound,’—but this is no time for jesting, George,” said Charles, more gravely; “we must settle our future proceedings even now. Do you not think so, father?” “The sooner the better; for we do not know how soon the provost-marshal—that gentleman, who has had the misfortune to become grey, and be obliged to use spectacles at sixty, which is believed to be his time of life, may be among us with his myrmidons. You are aware that he has opposed the projected reform in his office, on the plea that it would very unjustly diminish his emoluments, after he had been made prematurely old, at the above age, by our climate. Thus the underlings of government still seek to batten in our impoverished Colony!” “I heard of the absurdity,” said I; “it is of a piece with the rest. This man, a subaltern officer in the army, has enjoyed a place worth £2,000 per annum for a length of time, and when it is found the business of the office can be done at an immensely inferior cost, he coolly objects his own

paltry interest to the necessary improvement." "Well," said Grace, "but I think we must let him alone lest it be said we are rancorous from our present position; 'the man must do his miserable duty,' as your favourite hath it, papa."

"It is even so, child," replied I. "But with regard to your proposition, Charles, I think we would be premature till you ascertain when the mortgagee means to proceed. The season for going to Europe is still three months off. If he puts you under sequestration sooner, why, you can all come here—there is room enough." "What you say is perfectly just," said Wellingham, though it did not strike me at first. I fear I am like Charles—a little impatient under the circumstances." "Barton, Barton," said my poor wife, who had kept wonderfully silent, "are you going to send me off in this manner, without even consulting me?" "My dear," said I, "the doctor told you a trip to a cold climate will soon be essential to you, and I thought we had discussed the matter then." "True enough, but you always insinuated that you were to go also; and I shall not go without you—that's flat." "We shall see, three or four months after this; there is really no necessity for making hasty arrangements." We then entered into a rather lengthy discussion on the state of the Colony generally, and that especially of our own acquaintances and neighbours, each communicating what particulars he had learned at different times since the fatal news arrived of the new Sugar Duty Act; and nothing can be more deplorable than the aspect of affairs; at the same time, it is quite evident that the great body of the planters remain steadfast in their belief in the powers of indiscriminate immigration, from those unsuitable sources permitted by the imperial government. Throughout the afternoon, however, the behaviour of the elder Wellingham was constrained, and far from being easy. It was not difficult to

perceive that he had received a blow too severe for his sensitive nature, and efforts were required to induce his friends to believe that he had got over the worst. Charles still preserved, though somewhat modified, the dogged, sullen look which he had the whole day; while his wife, with an even flow of cheerful conversation, or of consecutive observation rather, which was wonderful, strove to make us all as comfortable as possible; and she did succeed partially with all, though her mother could scarcely do anything but watch her, with a tearful eye, all the time they were with us.

Jane, however, ably seconded her sister; and they gradually led us all out of this miserable country to the merry days of childhood in their fatherland; and after talking over old stories for a little—"And why not revive those days? We are poor, but we shall be happy, happy as the rustic people around us," cried Jane; "we ought to rejoice that we shall be so much better off than many of our wretched acquaintances; it is a sin to repine—is it not, papa?" "It is, my dear. Under our circumstances, you are right to be as cheerful as you can—or under any circumstances; for it is not only against the Divine command to give way to despair, but it betrays a weakness in our nature, based on a selfish principle—for there are few so stricken by misfortune as not to be less severely hit than others." "All things should be judged by comparison, suffering like the rest; and ours is nothing to that of twenty I could name in a breath," said Grace. "Oh! my dear child," cried her mother, "how can you?" "Dear mamma, just listen, while I show you how happy we are to be:—We shall have a nice farm, with a pretty cottage and a large oak tree, near a brook, exactly like that we had in other days; and the children shall play under the tree, as we did in days of yore; and you shall behold them as you did us; and you will be so happy." Mamma smiled through her tears at this. "And Jane

shall sing that song which papa wrote when he came here, about the two countries and their inhabitants." "I shall sing it now," cried Jane, getting up, excited by her sister's enthusiasm, and looking at me for approval. "Truly, my dear," said I, "I think the music may do good," glancing at Wellingham, who seemed at times quite abstracted. Jane ran to the piano, and, speedily arranging her music, sang one of those effusions—half comic, half serious—that I wrote in better days for their amusement, and meant to warn them against the gay life which they had been told the West Indians generally led.

MARCH, 1847.

A PAMPHLET has just appeared, written by "a planter," which has caused a great sensation throughout the province. In it the writer points out the effects of the Emancipation Act on the crops of this Colony, which have been diminished by one half; and, as the consequence of such a falling off, a fearful depreciation of property, which he clearly proves by quoting the sales of the same estates, at different periods, during slavery and freedom; winding up the whole by stating all the sales which have occurred since the year 1838; from which it appears, that up to 1840-1, the prices continued to be good; but, after that year of high-priced sugar, there was a gradual decline in the value of estates, until, in 1846, they were reduced to one-fifth of the prices obtained in 1840. He then shows the utter impossibility of competition with Cuba and Brazil, to which we are exposed, under such adverse circumstances; exposed, in fact, at a time when nothing but a remedial measure, in the shape of additional labour, could save us from ruin, even under the protection we enjoyed, as the consequence of emancipation. The mad policy of our

government cannot fail to strike every one, on perusing this unpretending pamphlet. It is difficult to account for the excitement it has caused here, for the truths stated are exactly those which came under the observation of every man; perhaps with many it merely gave utterance to their own hidden and secret thoughts; while, with others, not given to thinking, it placed their case so strongly before them as to arouse attention and create alarm. The anti-colonial gentry among us are furious at the author, a very quiet, unassuming character, who keeps aloof as much as he can from public affairs, and denounce his production as tending to cause unnecessary alarm.

One Radical paper declares it to be downright nonsense, for the Colony is just on the "turn," and commencing a career of unprecedented prosperity, under the auspices of free-trade. Really, the madness of party is the most singular of all varieties of the disorder. One could scarcely fancy that it would go so far, in the teeth of facts staring every one in the face. But while the majority of the colonists unite in praising this production, they seem to overlook the object of the author, which, as he explains in his preface, is to draw attention to what he considers the only means by which the Colony can be saved from complete ruin; and these are, the removal of all restrictions in bringing people from Africa, and permitting British subjects to purchase slaves there, for the purpose of emancipating and bringing them to the West Indies.

He proposes, in fact, the adoption of a plan similar to that recommended by Mr. Hume, by which the West Indies may be preserved, and the cause of humanity and of civilization signally advanced. He also declares, unequivocally, that without this measure it will be impossible, in his opinion, to continue the cultivation of sugar in the British settlements.

I have already said that I hesitated as to the propriety of adopting a scheme like Mr. Hume's, on account of its being a departure from the line of policy and the position we had taken up in regard to the slave-trade, and might give foreign nations reason to say that we were evading our treaties, and acting with insincerity towards them. The beneficial effect of it on the Negroes I never doubted, though that is exactly what is called in question by the anti-colonists. There can be no doubt either that the ruin of the sugar colonies can be prevented only by such a measure. It may be doubtful if even it shall succeed. The fact is, that if it *shall* not, nothing else *can*.

In order to give a clear and distinct record in these pages of my ideas on this important topic, it is necessary to take a view of the present state of the African population, in regard to the slave-trade. The newspapers are already teeming with accounts of the impetus given to it by the Sugar Duty Act of last year, and preparations are making by parties interested in Cuba and Brazil, for carrying it on with a vigour commensurate with the grand object to be attained—of doubling their crops, under the enhanced prices of produce, and thus quadrupling the revenues of their estates. It is impossible to doubt that these statements are correct; for, if the planters and merchants of those countries found it to be of so much advantage to them, when sugar was at a low price, how great must be their inducement now, when the British government has actually placed riches within their reach.

It cannot be doubted that the coast of Africa will swarm with slavers, and that the slave-buying in the interior will be increased in the same proportion. I do not doubt also that we shall have the men of Manchester exclaiming against the blockade, as being of no use, because the trade is evidently increasing under it. This is in their usual style of sophistry.

The efficacy of the blockade must be judged by the

number of captures, and not by the number who escape; for the increase in the latter is to be ascribed entirely to our famous Act of 1846;—where there are ten vessels for one which existed before, those which get clear off with their cargoes must increase in the same ratio; and, provided the stimulus continues to exist, it will be found absolutely impossible to put down the traffic, when we consider the extent of coast, and the relative position of it and Brazil, between which the distance is so short, and, in both cases, the length to be blockaded some thousands of miles. The absolute suppression of the trade by ships of war, between Africa and Brazil, will at once appear to any person, on observing these particulars, impracticable.

But no rational man will imply, from that unfortunate circumstance, that the doctrines of free-trade should be applied to this abomination, and the fleets withdrawn. We might as well say to a surgeon, that, if he cannot cure his patient radically, he should allow the disease to destroy him at once; or to a felon, that, because we cannot put an end to the commission of the crime for which he is convicted, we resolve to let him go unpunished. But what care the cotton lords of Manchester? doubtless those mischievous men-of-war interfere with the sale of broad cloth and trumpery, which are usually exchanged for slaves, and thus their operations are thwarted. I firmly believe that we shall have them, hereafter, endeavouring not only to remove the blockade, but the treaties under which it exists. Such persons, with Cobden and Bright at their head abroad, and Milner Gibson as their representative in the cabinet, will raise the cry of humanity to cloak their proceedings, while their actions clearly show that no class of men can be more resolved to advance their own interests, irrespective of every other consideration.

If it is allowed, as I think it must be, that however

much the traffic may be crippled and impeded by the activity of cruisers on the coast of Africa, it must, as a necessary consequence of access being permitted to the English sugar market, continue to such extent as to take off many thousands annually to Cuba and Brazil, but especially to the latter country, unless means are devised to strike at the root of the evil in its very stronghold. And it does appear to me, that a measure such as that recommended by Mr. Hume, carried on under the superintendence of the governments of France and Great Britain, would be most likely to effect that purpose. France, in consequence of what is now going on within herself among the friends of emancipation, will soon be in the same position as our own country in regard to her colonies, for the latter will be forced to emancipate their slaves, and, consequently, the same deficiency in the accustomed labour, will impose on her the necessity for effectual measures to supply what it wanted. The two nations must either adopt some scheme to give the planters hands to cultivate their estates, or come to the resolution of allowing their sugar establishments to perish. And whether we regard this plan as one calculated to benefit the West Indies, or to promote the cause of humanity and the civilization of mankind, it will be deserving of attention.

In considering it, with reference to the latter, we must never lose sight of the fact that the purchase of the African slaves by the persons whom the two governments appoint for that purpose, would be followed by their manumission on the spot; and that those men, thus redeemed from slavery for ever, would inevitably fall into the hands of the illicit slave-dealer, and be dragged, at the hazard of their lives, and through shocking hardships, to unmitigated bondage, or be butchered on the coast, unless they were thus to fall under the merciful protection of lawful authority. The opponents of the scheme dwell

with a sort of horror on it, because it is actually renewing the slave-trade, and purchasing human blood, bones, and sinews. In all ages, the act of setting a captive free has been accounted holy; and breaking asunder the chains of the slave has been esteemed a deed of singular beneficence and magnanimity, when accomplished, as it would be in this case, at the cost of individuals. In the chivalrous times of Europe, men devoted themselves to the redemption of their countrymen, enslaved by the heathen, as an atonement for crimes. It is natural for us to revolt, at first, from the purchase; but let any man put it to himself, whether, if he had a brother who was a slave, he would not consider it a good deed to pay down his price, and knock off his fetters.

Would any man pause at the threshold of the captive's dungeon, the two being so connected, to inquire whether he was not about to infringe on a grand principle, by buying a man? It is almost absurd to suppose that any such person exists among those who are worthy of being called men. On the contrary, the wretch who would hesitate for a moment, under such circumstances, would be regarded as an outcast from society—and most deservedly. If the principle is morally and religiously right, it applies equally, and with as much force, to the case of the poor, friendless Negro, as that of him who is brother to the noblest minister in our cabinet. The slavery they endure in Africa is of the most cruel and degrading description—their lives being at the disposal of their lords, themselves savages, and accustomed, both by habit and disposition, to look on their slaves in the light of cattle, and, as unworthy of feeling or commiseration, to be slaughtered with as little remorse. That this is matter of fact can be ascertained by reference to any traveller who has visited the head-men (kings, forsooth!) of any of their tribes.

Let us place in juxtaposition the condition of a Negro,

after he has been sold to one of those illicit dealers, and that of another who has been taken up by our government, and redeemed to be manumitted. The wretched slave, being transferred to the vessel, is forced to squeeze himself into a space which his body occupies entirely, and in which he lies exactly like a herring in a barrel, with the thermometer at blood heat, and the atmosphere impregnated, to a pestilential degree, with exhalations from hundreds of bodies so packed. The constant and excessive perspiration creates an immoderate thirst, which all the water the ship is able to carry can only irritate, not allay—and this of itself is a species of torture almost intolerable. Throughout the voyage, even if it is favourable, no alleviation can take place in his distressing situation. The poor wretch may die in his place, and lie days before his body is removed. I believe this occurs on almost every passage. But, if the weather is boisterous, the incessant jostling, caused by the rolling and pitching of the vessel, aggravates, to a state of perfect agony, the miseries of his former condition. Many of them die under the consequences of a gale of wind. If he is attacked by sickness, he has scarcely a chance of recovery, as one may imagine, under the circumstances, and dysentery is a prevailing disease among them, owing to the bad quality of the food (generally a mess of inferior rice, perhaps half boiled) with which it is customary to supply them.

In short, it is computed that a third or fourth of their numbers at embarkation, will be lost on the voyage, in ordinary cases; and the fact is too well ascertained, that the ruffians in charge of them have, on sundry occasions, thrown them overboard when the ship was chased by our cruisers. Let us next behold him with his fellows, meagre, sickly looking, and dejected, in the baracoons, at Brazil or Cuba, waiting for purchasers. He is handled like a cow in the same position, and at length is taken off by a

planter to his estate, where, we have it from undoubted evidence, he is forced to work sixteen out of every twenty-four hours, and, in place of a comfortable cottage in which to repose for the few miserable hours he is allowed to sleep, he is driven with the rest into a sort of stockyard, with an open shed, where, like any other cattle, they are locked up for the time of rest permitted to them—no separate houses being granted to particular families. This promiscuous huddling together of them, like inferior animals, is universally practised—in Cuba, at least. The poor creature has no hope of alleviation—no relief to look forward to—except in death.

Now, let us see the other picture.—There is a man, manacled and tied to his comrade, with a dogged, sullen look, as if expecting, yet not caring for some dreadful doom. He is handed over to the white man, who tells him he is free as the wind of heaven, but, as the price of his freedom, he must work for five years in the West Indies, during which he will be paid for his labour at a rate much higher than he could form any idea of; that he should be allowed to choose his master at the end of every month, if he desired it; and the law would protect him in every right and privilege which all men enjoy there; then, at the end of the five years, he might return to his own country, rich in money, but richer still in the civilization he has acquired, and in being admitted a member of the Church of Christ. He falls prostrate, overcome by his good fortune, and, on rising, his aspect has undergone a wonderful transmutation—hope is there now, and the joy of unexpected happiness. He is taken to a vessel fitted up with the most scrupulous attention to the comfort and the health of its inmates, and bound by the Passengers' Act to carry no more passengers than three for every five tons of her burthen. There is a medical man, with a suitable number of nurses, to attend him in illness. His food is carefully provided; and to

the cooking and distribution the utmost attention is paid by the officers of the ship. The Negro feels at once that he has entered on a new state of existence, compared with which his life in the African wilderness was as darkness to light. This continues with him.

On landing, he is hired by a planter, who places him in a substantial cottage, with as much garden ground as he chooses—furnishes him with what articles he requires on the instant, besides his working implements, and tells him that he shall be supplied regularly with provisions, until he has learned the manner in which his countrymen buy their own food; and, finally, that he shall be paid as his comrades are paid, at the rate of twenty-pence for a task easily done in four hours. Behold him on the afternoon of his first working day. He is sitting at the cottage door—his work being over—and he is tuning his banjar with an expression of inward satisfaction and contentment which the sun of Africa never beheld on the visage of a slave.

In a desert lone, mischance had rooted him;
 Transplanted now to this soft vale,
 Like the green thorn of May his fortune flowers!

To be the property of any man is the hardest lot assigned by Providence to a human being. But to belong to a savage, in a country where neither law nor justice is permitted to interfere between the two, is to be consigned, by cruel destiny, to the very acme of earthly misery. We find, accordingly, that the degraded creatures, when first brought into communication with Europeans, are exactly such as a long, hereditary course of suffering and subjection would make them. Scarcely resembling, either physically or morally, the enlightened inhabitants of a civilized country, they strike the latter with astonishment. And it is a fact well known in the

West Indies, that the poor wretches, on coming to the colonies in former times, rejoiced exceedingly on finding that, when they committed a transgression which required correction, they were flogged, and not beheaded. I have often been told by Africans—"Buckra country good—no cut head—floggee no more;" which phrases express exactly the same sentiment.

It is from this condition, then, that it is proposed to rescue them; and the proposal is regarded with horror by the Manchester school, whose goods now form the medium of exchange between the Brazilian dealer and the native slave-owner. They are shocked, in the first place, at the idea of simply purchasing men and women, whatever may be the motive; and, in the next place, because the African chiefs will have, from the opening of this new market for their slaves, an additional inducement to engage in wars for the purpose of acquiring them. But, does it not appear, on the first view of the case, that if a powerful king should drive the whole of a neighbouring tribe before him to the coast—a tribe who were the slaves of a rival chief—to be there sold to the Europeans, and emancipated instantly afterwards, the tribe in question particularly, and the cause of humanity generally, would gain immeasurable advantages? But they say again, battles must be fought, and many people slain, before one nation could obtain possession of the slaves of another. It is doubtful if such wars are undertaken; but they are not likely to be bloody when the object is to take captives; and we have the authority of travellers for the fact, that the slaughter occurs when the captors have been disappointed of a market on reaching the coast, where it is the custom to put their prisoners to death, to save the cost of maintaining them until a slaver arrives, that being generally higher in amount, even for a few weeks' maintenance, than the few yards of paltry Manchester cloth, or the Birmingham musket given as the price, would suffice

to repay. But the melancholy fact is too well known, that the inducement already exists which an extended market affords. And the question really to decide upon is, whether it is better to allow the captives taken in those wars (if such there be) to be carried as slaves to Brazil and Cuba, or brought, as free people, to the colonies of France and Great Britain? For, if we consider the advantages which the commissioners of those two countries would possess over the illicit trader, there can be no doubt that, in a short time, they would obtain possession of the market, and drive the latter altogether out of it. Instead of bringing their slaves for sale by stealth to the coast, and concealing them there, the chiefs would fetch them openly, receive their price, and see them manumitted immediately.

Treaties might be entered into with them, by which they would be bound to produce their slaves at periods specified, when vessels would be prepared to receive them, and the certainty of getting them disposed of, without the delay now attending their transfer, and the consequent expense, would be sufficient to secure to the emancipators a monopoly of the trade, and, together with the operations of the fleet, which can by no means be dispensed with for a time, in a short space to put down altogether the present barbarous and destructive system. The number taken off from the coast of Africa, as free labourers, would certainly not exceed that which must be carried away by the slavers under the stimulus of the new Sugar Duty Act, which, it is computed, will average from 60,000 to 100,000 a-year. It may be doubted, indeed, if the agents of lawful authority would take so many as those of the brutal traders; nevertheless, it is unquestionably in their power to get whatever proportion may be judged proper, by the means which I have just mentioned, and by giving a price as high as that which is customary with the latter. Now, if this be the

case, as it seems indubitably to be, what becomes of the argument that we would create wars by the new demand for slaves?

I cannot perceive that any measure, except the restoration of his former protection to the British sugar cultivator, would be so successful in uprooting the dreadful enormity which stands forward at this moment—the foulest blot, under all the circumstances, on the honour of Great Britain. We have entered into solemn treaties with foreign states for the suppression of it, and, like the thief who hoodwinks his victim by a fair show of honesty and candour, while he is meditating how to rob him, we offer a premium to the brutal smugglers engaged in the horrible traffic, in order that sugar may be three farthings per pound cheaper to the English consumer, and we seize as many as we can of those who are bought by the illicit dealers, and do with them precisely what we might do without subjecting them to the risk of a murderous voyage, and a perpetuation of their enslaved condition.

I am interrupted by the rapid galloping of a horse into the court, and by exclamations of grief and surprise.—I sit down, after an interval of two days, to record the dreadful incident which has overwhelmed us all. The horseman proved to be a messenger from my eldest daughter, who despatched him, scarcely knowing what she did, to summon me in haste to her house. The man told, in the same breath, that his old master was no more—he having been found dead in his bed-room, a few minutes before he came away. It is impossible to describe the effect this shocking intelligence had on my family. It was some time ere I could bring them sufficiently near a state of composure to permit of my leaving them for a still more painful scene. I found Grace in a frame of mind that did surprise me, although I knew the power she possessed over herself on such emergencies. She required it all, for her husband was frantic. He had thrown

himself on his father's body, and, but for her, on the first impulse of his excited feelings, it is hard to tell what might have happened. I found Robertson with her, and speaking in a soothing strain, while Charles lay on the floor, his body occasionally agitated, as if by some convulsive movement—but he spoke not a word. I tried to rouse him to self-command, but he merely raised his head, and cast on me a scowl, in which grief, despair, and even anger were strangely blended. "Oh! Charles! my husband!" cried his wife, "will you not speak to me—me?" and she, as if giving way also to the emotion with which she had hitherto struggled so successfully, lay down beside him. Suddenly, the victim of woe, putting his arm round her, burst into a passion of tears, and the doctor whispering that he would be better now, we withdrew together.

Robertson then, in answer to my anxious inquiries, told me that Mr. Wellingham had never consulted him about any illness, and he had learned from Mrs. Charles and the servants that he appeared, particularly within the last ten days, in very low spirits, but there was nothing else about him to indicate sickness. I could not fail to perceive that there was unusual embarrassment about the doctor, as he talked in this manner. "In God's name, then," said I, "what is it?" "This; which I found in the room," replied Robertson, after surveying me keenly to see, I suppose, whether I was composed enough, and he drew from his pocket a vial, labelled, "Prussic Acid—Poison." I felt a faintness upon me, like a blight, at this unexpected intelligence, and sank into a chair; a draught of cold water, promptly administered, revived me instantly. "Do they know it?" asked I, eagerly. "No." "Thank God for that." "Just my opinion," said the doctor; "in fact, I would have kept it from you, for no other person has seen this fatal proof of the unhappy deed; your daughter was too much occupied with her husband,

and none of the servants can read. But there is another evidence, and only one. I found this on the table." So saying, he handed to me a note, sealed, and addressed to me. Instantly opening it, I read the few following words:—"My Dear Premium,—I am one of many victims to the times. I cannot bear up against my evil fortune. You or Robertson will be first here, and no one before you come will be in a fit state to examine into this room. I rely on your discretion. Farewell, my dear old friend; may God bless and preserve my children, forgive me, and permit us all to meet in a better world. C. W."

Tears fell fast from my eyes as they dwelt on this fatal scroll. "Alas! poor Wellingham! your sensitive nature was all too frail for the mighty burthen fate had imposed on you; and your son, stronger, yet so much the creature of impulse, what is to become of him, for he regarded his father as part of his own being!" "True," said Robertson, who entered into my feelings, and sympathized with them; "it will be dreadful at first, but we have nothing to fear; his mind is strong, and the firm behaviour of his wife will gradually bring him round."

It appeared that the court had, two days previously, issued its "*Fiat Executio*" against him, and the myrmidons of the law must, of necessity, be within a day or two in possession of his estate. No one had told me of it, for, in fact, it was a matter of course, and just as certain of occurrence as any other event. I thought Wellingham resigned, and perfectly prepared. But his old servant told me he spent many a solitary hour at his wife's grave, and his opinion is, that parting with that spot troubled him more than anything else. We agreed that the cause of death should be concealed, and that the secret, known only to us two, should be inviolably kept. I had no doubt of Robertson's discretion; and it was a relief to me to think that I had it in my power to save those who were dear to me the misery of knowing it. While we were

still speaking together, a servant mentioned that Mr. Ridley was in the drawing-room. We went down and found him, with mingled concern and consternation on his honest countenance. He had galloped over on the impulse of the moment, to learn the truth. "It is, indeed, a sad and sorrowful event," said I; "but God's will be done!" "So sudden; what has it been—a fit?" "Just so," said the doctor, readily; "something of that sort." After making many kind inquiries for the family, and offering to look after the estate in the meantime, the warm-hearted fellow left us.

For some days I made that house my principal place of residence, and had the satisfaction of seeing Charles gradually regain his self-possession, under the skilful and assiduous guidance of my daughter. The estate was put under sequestration two days after the funeral, and Ridley relieved from the charge of the cultivation, which he had entered on with zeal and alacrity, although he had much to do at home. My own affairs demand my most anxious attention. The crop of this year promises indifferently, and the sugar market already evinces a tendency downwards. It is evident that I shall soon be among the majority of planters, and burthened with a plantation which cannot pay its expenses; while the funds I possessed elsewhere are exhausted. I may be thankful that my mind is of a different stamp from poor Wellingham's; but I cannot help feeling as if I were an altered man, and, truly, the change from wealth to poverty must produce a revolution in a man's moral condition. It is scarcely possible that one can possess the same ideas, the same feelings, or the same habits, when circumstances operate so powerfully on his external and physical relations. Whatever it may be—whether my health is beginning to fail under the load of anxiety with which it has long been oppressed, or a gloom is settling on me from contemplating the past and the future in conjunction, and producing that change

on the man which I have just been speaking of, I know not, but things are appearing to me under a new aspect. My family must go to England, for my wife is far from being well, and it is desirable that she and the Wellingshams should be removed, in a month or two—but I really cannot move—it is just the crisis. One year will decide whether it is possible to do anything in this unhappy place, and it is right that I should make the trial, although I am satisfied already that, under the immediate influence of free-trade and of Manchester, little short of a miracle will prove adequate to the vast change that must occur—first in the minds, and afterwards in the measures of those on whose fiat rests the destiny of our colonies.

Three weeks have now elapsed since Wellingham's unhappy death, and his son is again fit for the active duties of life, although shockingly altered in appearance, and grave and moody in manner. I am almost daily throwing out hints and insinuations to lead them all gradually into the belief that I must remain another year in the Colony, in order that justice may be done to my affairs, and every remaining chance allowed them. Ridley has just been with me. He has been fortunate enough to meet with a man who has faith in the mother country, and in our powers of competition, and who has actually offered him four thousand pounds for his estate. "It was sold for £50,000, twenty years ago," said he, "the land and buildings being valued at half of that sum. I am, therefore, offered less than a sixth of their cost before the passing of the Emancipation Act; and for the other half (the value of the slaves) about £10,000 were paid; so that, if I accept this sum, the loss on the property, inflicted by the British government, will be £36,000." "Be wise in time, my friend," said I; "would I had taken what I could get some years ago! You are losing yearly; put a stop to such losses, and keep what you have." "It is my own opinion," replied Ridley, with tears in his eyes;

“but, Mr. Premium, the hardship is great, after so much exertion, and so much dreadful anxiety, to begin the world again!”

“It is too true, my dear Ridley, and I can only say that we are all alike; the demon of destruction seems to have taken possession of our rulers.” “Rather,” said he, with glistening eyes, “the fanaticism of theory, and the spirit of party. I was lately reading ‘Humphrey Clinker,’ and there I met with the description of a prime minister’s levee, which struck me forcibly. I mean the scene where Mr. Bramble, while waiting in the ante-room, perceives the Turkish ambassador enter with his dragoman, whose arrival being announced, the minister, then in the hands of his barber, rushes, with the cloth under his chin and his face covered with soap suds, to embrace the amazed Turk, and then returns to finish his toilet. The ambassador, wiping off the soap, addresses a few words to the dragoman, turning up his eyes at the same time, and Mr. Bramble, being curious to know what he said, makes inquiry, and learns that he had exclaimed piously, ‘Holy Mahomet! no wonder this nation prospers, when it is governed by a council of idiots!’ The only difference between that council and the present seems to be, that their measures are not alike successful.” “Yes; truly our present cabinet should stand high in the estimation of a true Mussulman—who believes that fatuous persons act under the inspiration of Heaven.” “I cannot think, after all,” replied my friend, “that ministers really believe in those monstrous theories which are propounded to them by the anti-colonial faction, and imposed by that power, which in all ages has overcome right.” “You mean, of course, the power from behind, which, unseen, pushes them and the nation to destruction.” “I mean the strongest party, which gives law to government, for, latterly, this has been invariably the case in every great question.” “Ever since the passing of the Reform

Bill, which established the predominance of the democratic principle, and, consequently, of the manufacturing interest, in the decisions of parliament. In former times, we had members of parliament; we have now delegates sent there, not to express their own opinions, deliberately and maturely considered before being adopted, which, as educated men, they are able to do, but to state the sentiments on the government of nations taken up by ignorant men, who are neither able nor willing to weigh deliberately the arguments for and against a measure, and who bawl for what they are told, by demagogues more knowing than themselves, is for their own advantage."

We had a long conversation, which ended as all conferences here do now—with a feeling of animosity against her Majesty's advisers; which, though certainly finding vent in such observations as I have just recorded, is, by the reciprocation of opinion, more excited in the main. Surely no one can wonder at such a state of feeling among men who see their fortunes, in most instances created by themselves, swept away by no act of their own, but by the deeds of others, from their grasp. Poor Ridley seems dreadfully crest-fallen. I imagine his destination will be Cuba, from some incidental remarks that dropt from him. I believe he will take the paltry sum offered for his once fine estate, and withdraw for ever from British rule.

1st JULY, 1847.

THE clouds are lowering more and more gloomily on our political atmosphere. Prices of produce show already decidedly the influence of Cuba on our market. A feeling of despondency has taken possession of the most sanguine, and those who laughed at the fears of others are now really alarmed. Although few in number, they are, among the planters, those proprietors whose estates, from

the advantages of singularly rich soil and other local causes, have, even up to this time, given a clear revenue to them; and among other classes, those who can see that their prosperity depends on that of the agricultural interest.

My family, with great reluctance, have agreed to proceed to England without me, and they are to sail about the middle of this month. Charles is again himself, but I rely chiefly on his wife to keep him in a state of equanimity under the distressing circumstances. I have not disguised from them my anticipations of complete ruin in this Colony; and they will go with an understanding that the small sum I have set apart will constitute their whole fortune. Whether the southern parts of Europe may not better suit both it and my wife's constitution, may be a question for consideration; but they will be some time at home after their arrival, unless the doctors order it otherwise.

George remains with me, and I suspect he will have to take immediate charge of the plantation, for Brown, like a good soldier in action, who sees his comrades deserting their posts, and is yet reluctant to join them, has begun to look fixedly to other lands; but still a lingering desire to continue the hopeless struggle is at issue with his cooler judgment. I shall have soon to part with my old friend Ridley, also, who has sold his estate, and with the full consent of his wife, who would not leave the tropics for the world, is going to try his fortune once more as a planter among the Spaniards of Cuba, driven, as he says, by the British people, to be again a slaveholder. I shall feel his loss at the time acutely. But, when misfortune overtakes one, the deprivation of wonted associates ranks among the petty evils of life—the great and absorbing one of losing fortune and station throwing all such into the shade.

I have had a number of Portuguese as well as Indian

Coolies for months on the estate, and my experience tends to confirm all that I learned from others, and have set down regarding both classes of people. As men to compete with the robust natives of Africa in tropical labour, they stand nearly in the same position, with regard to their competitors, as boys of twelve years to men in the agricultural operations of Europe. Their physical inferiority is evident to the Negroes themselves. If the Hindu is better able to stand the rays of the sun, he is not stronger (if so strong) as the man of Madeira. Our urgent necessity has taught us fearfully to be cautious in bringing all sorts of people, or rather any sort, save Africans, to our shores. We have, after great labour, and overcoming much opposition, been permitted by government to raise a loan to the extent of £500,000, for the purpose of importing Coolies from India, and returning them, after five years' service, at the current rate of wages in the Colony. The expense of bringing them is seventy-five dollars, and of returning them, the same; in all 150 dollars, or £16 each passage; altogether, £32 for one Hindu. It is computed by those who have had most experience of them here, that, taking into account their frequent absence from the field, and the work they do while they are there, three of them will be required to perform, in one year, the tasks which one Negro, even in his present disorganized state, does on the average. We are thus paying, in as far as regards the cost of importing and exporting those people, as much as should bring us three effective men, while, in reality, we have only one; and we are under the necessity of finding houses for ninety when accommodation for thirty should be sufficient, with everything in the same proportion.

And these are the labourers with whom we propose to compete with native Africans, bought at four hundred dollars a-head, and kept at the rate of twenty-five dollars (the cost of maintaining them) per annum, while

they are wrought sixteen hours a-day. We will give the anti-colonial party the full benefit of the interest on slave property, on which they dwell so much, and still the cost of the slave will not reach 50 dollars per annum; whereas our Coolies cost us fully more in the expense of bringing and sending them away (which, spread over five years, amounts to 30 dollars per annum, without interest on the money advanced), and, in house rent, at the low rate of two dollars a-month—the twenty-pence for every day he works being the additional cost of the Coolie over that of the Negro. But when we consider that one slave, well fed, will, in sixteen hours, do as much as the Hindu in six days of continuous labour, we can discern the hopeless nature of the present struggle at once. What an idle thing it is to exclaim against the immorality of the Spaniards, and their cruelty, when our own country is the sole cause at present of their overworking and killing their slaves. If they do so, is it not to the people and parliament of Great Britain that this great fact is owing? Is it not to them the planter of that island is indebted for the high price he now gets for his sugar, as compared with what he received formerly, and which makes it profitable for him to use up and expend Negroes bought—thanks to the increased slave-trade!—at three or four hundred dollars a-head? The term “free-trade” was never so much misapplied as to this shameful encouragement of the slave-trade. It is like settling a fight between an armed and an unarmed man, and giving it the name of a free, just, and equitable settlement. The Cuban or Brazilian planter is triply armed—the British sugar-grower naked and defenceless. A Spaniard cased in mail, and trampling on a miserable American, would be a fit emblem of their relative position.

The men of Cuba, among whom are mingled a great many shrewd, calculating Yankees, have been trying every method for years back to make the business of

sugar-making pay, with even no better market than those of the European continent; and, in their eager search after new plans of economising labour, they have discovered that it is cheaper to buy slaves, with the coast of Africa open to them, than to be at the expense of rearing children. Hence the small proportion of women in their gangs. Another fact, established by their experience, is one which it will be difficult to make our matter-of-fact countrymen, who judge of all things by what they see around them, comprehend. They have found out that a man, whose mental faculties are obscured or undeveloped, is in the position of an inferior animal in regard to his physical powers. It is a well known fact that a horse, to a certain extent, will give increased labour for increased food. The planter of Cuba obtains the same result from feeding largely the Bozal Negro. The latter is incapable of looking forward into futurity; the present is all that his limited faculties permit him to contemplate. If he has the prospect of getting an enormous dinner or supper—eating being almost his principal enjoyment—he is morally supported throughout his arduous task as well as better fitted, by ample nourishment for it, physically. He has none of that wear and tear of mind which preys on the body, and which, in civilized man, arises from deep thought and the exercise of reasoning powers, not possessed by the other, to say nothing of those sensibilities, arising out of an artificial state of society, that are totally unknown to denizens of the wilderness.

One of the most popular theories in Britain is, that a slave can never compete with a free man, and it has its origin in that disposition of Englishmen which I have just mentioned. They imagine either that free Negroes work like Whites in Europe, or they take the case of a man, such as they see in their own country, employed in agriculture, forced off by people of a different race, and compelled to labour, fettered, and in constant terror of

the whip, and of death itself—the case of one reduced from compensated to uncompensated labour—from a home of happiness and comfort to a place of filth, misery, and human degradation, the very aspect of which is enough to break the spirit and paralyze the strength of the unhappy individual. It is always assumed that the slaveholder reduced them to the condition of slaves, and upon this the theory rests. The spirit of the man being crushed and broken, by the change in his condition, his physical powers are diminished accordingly, and it implies that the person previously occupied another and a better position, before he came into the possession of White men.

Now, when the fact is known that the condition of the slave in Cuba is better than that of the same person in Africa, we might fancy that the theory, like other dogmata founded on imagination, would topple down from its baseless elevation. But this, it seems to be impossible for our countrymen to understand. An idea once implanted in their sensorium is difficult of removal. John Bull asks himself, “Could I work as hard if I were a slave?” and, with a shake of his head, gravely answers “No.” If it is told him, “That is an unfair way of putting the case—you are a man well off, and happy in every relation of life, and a rational person apt to ponder over your situation, and to sink under misfortune, from dwelling on it, if it should overtake you. But in this case there is no misfortune—at least the position of the party is not made worse—and he cannot, like you, afflict himself by comparing his present with his past situation. Feed him well, and you get plenty of work from him. The case of a horse taken from a wretched carter, who starved him, to a farmer’s stable, where he is better fed, is more in point. The one thinks just about as much as the other.” “What!” John Bull will exclaim in wrath, “speak of a man as if he was a horse; it may easily be seen what you are,” and again shaking his head, he will stride off as if the matter had been settled in the most satisfactory manner.

The people of England at this moment, and in the teeth of the most deplorable facts to the contrary, cling to this idle and pernicious theory, and if it was not so firmly rooted in the minds of all classes, the destructive doctrines of Cobden, Bright, & Co., in regard to the sugar colonies, would not have come into practical operation. In fact, it is a state of slavery (which those theorists believe to have such debilitating influence on the human frame), that renders the struggle so unequal at present between the British and foreign planter, even independently of the African trade. I have recorded here the difficulties we encounter in obtaining four or five hours' labour per diem at high wages. The planter of Cuba can at all times command it on the lowest terms. While the cane-fields here are destroyed by the rank weeds of the tropics, those of that island are kept beautifully clean; while our canes often spoil at the mill from want of hands to grind them off and conduct the manufacture of sugar, the process there is gone through with uniformity and undeviating propriety. The absolute control which the slaveholder possesses over the actions of his labourers, gives him an advantage over the cultivator by free labour, which, in fact, renders it doubtful if, even under the most abundant supply of the latter sort, the competition could be successfully carried on in our colonies. It is an advantage so great, as to take precedence of all others enjoyed by the Cuban or Brazilian, even the cheapness of labour itself; and it is just the want of it which, in free countries, is found to be the greatest drawback. In the densely-populated plains of Hindostan this is the case. Nevertheless, in order to give the two systems a fair trial, as against each other, the importations of labourers should be freed from all restrictions, and those imported who are most likely to maintain the struggle against their kindred in slavery; and this brings me back to the subject of African emigration to the West Indies.

From the observations I have already made on this topic, it will be seen that I believe the cause of philanthropy would gain more even than the British sugar planters, by the adoption of a scheme like that of Mr. Hume's. The effect would be to bring those poor, degraded outcasts of creation from the brutal darkness in which they are plunged, into the light of Christianity, and within the pale of law and civilization—to throw the strong shield of British protection around those who, in their own fell land, are at the mercy of ruthless and easily-infuriated savages, and without an earthly power to save them.

If this fact is doubted, let the writings of all the travellers who have visited those benighted regions be consulted—from Mungo Park down to M'Leod, Rankine, and the latest writers on the subject in general. The customs of the chiefs seem to resemble, in some respects, the funeral games of the ancients, inasmuch as they consist of ceremonies in honour of deceased relatives, at which men are sacrificed to the manes of the departed, so that they may serve them in the other world. On these occasions they have dances, during which, if an individual makes a false step, so that he loses his footing and falls to the ground, he is instantly withdrawn from the circle and beheaded, the accident being considered an evil omen. It would appear that a certain number, in proportion to the rank of the chief, must be immolated immediately after the death of a near connection, and to them it is customary to give messages to the dead before they are despatched. One of those authors relates the story of a king, whose mother had died, and who had sacrificed a respectable number of victims, each having a special message to the deceased; but, after sending off the last, he suddenly recollected some words that he should have given him to convey to her, and, calling an attendant, he delivered the *postscript* to him. The poor

fellow, not being prepared for the honour, was seized with fear, and declared "that he did not know the way." "I will show you the way," cried the dignitary, furious at anything like opposition, and, so saying, he unsheathed his sabre and struck off the victim's head at a blow. Is it to be considered a crime, even in Manchester, to rescue people from being, in life and limb, at the mercy of men like this brutal savage? Is the mere fact of paying a sum of money to deliver the wretches from such cruel bondage a crime of so deep a dye? We have seen the mist of fanaticism bewilder many good men; and we can understand how an excited and disordered imagination may mingle fiction with truth, in such a way that, by their obscured faculties, the one is not easily separated from the other.

But here is nothing to mystify the plainest and most matter-of-fact understanding;—the question simply is—whether it is meritorious, or the contrary, to withdraw the most wretched people on earth from the cruel oppression they endure, and to place them among the happiest peasantry of the known world? I am much better satisfied as to the good effect which this scheme would have on the tribes of Africa, than the planters of the West Indies, unless the operation of the plan be accompanied by some measure of protection, for a time, to the latter against the slave-dealing foreigners. In fact, there is reason to apprehend that, before the good effects can have time to manifest themselves the cultivation of the West Indies will disappear altogether, if the unequal competition is forced on them still. At this moment, estates are chiefly kept up by creditors, who know that a return to prosperity is the only manner in which their outlay can be recovered. Therefore, they risk more, in hopes that the good sense of the nation will again vindicate itself, and cast off the pernicious, new-fangled doctrines of the day. But when they give up hopes of this blessed con-

summation, then must the estates be abandoned, from want of funds to carry them on. Let us see what would be the probable and progressive effect of an importation so extensive.

The first step would be to enter into treaties with the chiefs who at present supply the Cuban and Brazilian slavers with cargoes, on such a basis as would render it advantageous for them to adhere to them. This, and the establishment of agents in suitable localities, would ensure a constant supply; while an emigration scheme, to suit the circumstances, and under the superintendence of the governments of France and England, would have to be constructed immediately, in accordance with which the Africans would be removed in comfort to the Colony, whether French or English, for which they are designed. Contracts with such rude people are out of the question, at least, until they have been for some time in the West Indies. They will understand that they are to remain where they are placed, for a certain term of years. The particulars of an agreement they cannot comprehend; but it certainly would be desirable, and of great importance to the planters, if they were bound to remain at least one year on an estate, after they have acquired intelligence enough to understand the nature and obligations of the arrangement. It would tend to confirm them in settled habits; and the nature of our cultivation is such that we should be assured of the number of workmen we are to have for a year, in order to know what extent of cultivation we should keep up for that length of time. But, supposing all those preliminaries to be arranged to the satisfaction of the authorities appointed by the imperial government to superintend the allocation of the immigrants, we shall follow them to the plantations, where they are to mingle with the settled inhabitants.

It must be expected that the people imported under this system would be different from the captured Negroes

whom we get occasionally now. The latter, from having been detained at Sierra Leone, or some other port, for adjudication, perhaps a length of time, have, from mixing with Europeans, got rid of much characteristic wildness and ferocity of appearance, which, if they were brought directly and without impediment, they would possess, and which in fact distinguished them in a marked manner from the Creoles in former times. If they come in a few weeks from Africa, they will not only have the indigenous aspect of the rude natives there, but be unable to speak any christian language; and, as the number of Africans in the West Indies is now very limited, it may happen that considerable batches may be located on estates, where none but themselves can converse in their native tongue. The Creoles would disdain, if they could, to "talk country" to them, as they style the different Guinea dialects. This, by limiting their intercourse, would be a favour of the planter, whose object would be to keep them from acquiring the idle, spendthrift habits of the old inhabitants; and, for this reason, the more rapidly they are imported, and the more they are kept apart from the latter, the better would it be, until their numbers and their more industrious habits should preponderate over their more civilized compatriots, with their idle and reckless propensities. It is evident, if they arrive in small parties, as they have hitherto, that they will be absorbed into the mass of idleness and profligacy which now exists in the colonies.

To preserve to them that disposition to labour industriously for money, which the native African, in so far as we have proved him, possesses, they should come in such numbers as to admit of their being settled on estates in considerable detachments, so as to form a small community among themselves, accessible to the Whites through an interpreter; and, among the latter, the clergyman will be our best and most effectual agent in

humanizing and keeping them right. As they acquire the English language, they will mix with other descriptions of labourers; but still, if they are in sufficient numbers, they will prefer the society of those who are *bona fide* countrymen to that of Creoles. The difficulty will be, probably, in gradually reducing their wages to the sum which will enable the planter to compete with his slave-holding rival. It will be impossible to begin with that amount; and they cannot be made to understand the effect of competition in reducing allowances. In fact, the same difficulty would be experienced in settling wages by fixed rule, that we encountered in 1842; and labour must just, like other marketable commodities, conform itself in value to demand and supply.

Thus, some time must elapse ere the latter is sufficient to satisfy the former, so as to reduce the rate of wages to something like the amount which might afford a chance of competition with slave-growing countries. During that time, and until it is ascertained that labour sufficient to bring wages to the rates current in Barbadoes, of 6d. to 9d. per diem, is imported, it is to be feared the chance, which might otherwise be given to the colonies by the measure, would be lost, unless some protection should be allowed them. Every year this is becoming more necessary, and it is probable that the first of free importation would be the most trying in the fearful crisis. What number of steady labourers might be necessary to keep up the crops of British Guiana at their former amount, may be pretty nearly guessed at by referring to the population lists of 1830, and preceding years. The number of the working classes of all ages then, including children and invalids, may be stated, in round numbers, at 100,000, of whom 25,000 might be able-bodied labourers. This is not one year's anticipated importation into Brazil of smuggled slaves, who are all strong persons. But say that the importation in families, which is the method that

we would adopt, would require the same gross number of 100,000 (setting aside altogether the labour to be procured from our present workmen; and, supposing that the latter would not work for the low wages implied by this scheme), there can be no doubt that, if other circumstances suited, they might be obtained in no extended space of time.

The importation, in point of fact, should be so large as to prove sufficient for the land which is impoldered or dammed and enclosed against the rivers and the sea. Much has been said about the impracticability of adapting our population to the land, the latter being in such abundance; but this important fact is overlooked, that the expense of impoldering is so great as to limit the extent of available surface to what is already impoldered. No estate, even in times when labour was at command, could be settled, that is, impoldered—trenches of every description dug, fields cleared and planted, and buildings with machinery erected, under a cost varying from £15,000 to £30,000 or £40,000, or even more. And a mighty change indeed must come over the state of West India affairs ere any one would think of incurring this large expenditure for the purpose of creating property, now subjected to such sudden and ruinous depreciation. The limits of cultivation are, therefore, confined—first, by the number of estates; and, secondly, by the extent of impoldered land belonging to them.

It is true, in existing plantations, the virgin soil within the dams is not exhausted. There is yet a considerable breadth on many of them; but the most fertile may be said to be now in cultivation. On the coast, some, by the terms of their original grant from the Crown, have right to what is called “a double” or even “triple depth”—that is, they can have, by applying for them, crown lands behind their estates and in bush, to the extent of 750 or even 1,500 roods in length, by the breadth of the plantation itself; or, in other words, a

continuation of the latter to those extents. And the only expense (which is still very great) required in taking in ground according to this right, is that of impoldering, trenching, clearing, and planting. But most of the coast plantations are already on their second depth, and the distance from the buildings is found to be inconveniently great; so that, without erecting new works, there is little chance of considerable addition to the cultivation in that way.

We can thus with us make an approach to ascertaining what number of effective labourers will be required to accomplish that which has so long been a desideratum in the West Indies—the adaptation of supply to demand in the labour market. If we take into consideration the number of cotton and coffee estates, now irretrievably abandoned, which employed a considerable proportion of our slave population, and make allowance for improvement in the industrial habits of our present working classes, we shall find the requisite acquisition not so very formidable as might, at the first glance, be imagined. It would be absurd to set down any precise figures to decide the number, for the most minute calculation on the best data must still be contingent on circumstances which we can neither control nor foresee. But the fact is indisputable, that the vast tracts of fertile ground so much talked of by the anti-colonial party as available, are literally closed to the planters, no less from lack of capital than the impossibility of gaining, by bringing them into cultivation, as much as if they belonged to the empire of Brazil; and thus a working population, equal in collective strength to the former slave one, is all that is required.

The system recommended, which implies a residence of no more than five years of the immigrants in the Colony, may be in favour of the planters, inasmuch as the place of those who had become indifferent to labour, from

having amassed what to them would be wealth, must be occupied by fresh hands, eager to follow in the same track. It is to be remembered, that the wages of the labourer, if he is industrious, form a very inconsiderable item in the list of advantages. He has many ways of acquiring money, such as cultivating what extent of ground he chooses during three-fifths of the day; raising stock, of all descriptions, on the fruits of labour so bestowed, namely, pigs, poultry, and, in some localities, cattle; and when they have a little capital, there is a savings-bank to receive it on good interest.

The Negro, after five years of industry under those circumstances, would be in a condition to return to his native country in every respect a new being, and, in the eyes of his savage kindred, a man to hold high place among the loftiest of the tribe. But, in order that they may retain the habits and ideas of civilized life, in so far as they have acquired the latter, it is obvious that they should settle together in numbers sufficient to keep up those habits, and to spread among their countrymen the knowledge and the civilization they have acquired. For this purpose, it might be necessary to establish, in those countries whence the slaves are chiefly obtained, forts with small garrisons, around which the returned emigrants might settle, and from which, as from a centre, the light of religion and of European manners might spread among the rude sons of the wilderness. By training them to arms, they would become able to defend themselves against the attacks of neighbouring chiefs, over whom their superior intelligence would give them decided advantages. It must be borne in mind that, in all barbarous countries (look back six hundred years to our own), warfare is the usual state of society—strangers and enemies are synonymous terms. It is only, after the diffusion of knowledge and the dawn of civilization, that hospitality begins to be thought a virtue. Distrust is the

instinct of wild people, to preserve them from those who, like themselves, are occupied entirely by strife and bloodshed, and who have no sense of honour, and no feelings of compunction or pity. The system thus established would promote trade and commerce no less than the cause of humanity. The towns which might arise round those forts would become marts for the exchange of European for African commodities, and the advantages arising from it to all parties would be the best guarantee of its endurance and ultimate success, either as regarding the extinction of the illicit slave-trade, or the civilization of the African tribes. The planters, willing to make any sacrifice to save the small remnant of their property, would readily take on themselves so much of the expense as should justly be charged to them; but it is probable that the government would have to advance the whole of it in the meantime, both cash and credit having departed from our unfortunate class. It is well known that the price (or ransom rather) is a mere bagatelle. The passage would be the most expensive part of the whole business, and its cost can be easily and readily ascertained.

I am at this moment decidedly of opinion that no measure less comprehensive than that which I have just sketched can save the British sugar colonies from ruin; and that even the restoration of our former protective duties, unaccompanied by some such scheme, would prove inadequate. Such being my sentiments, it is difficult to tell why I linger here. Those more deeply versed in the workings of the human mind must explain the mystery. Certain it is, I cannot bring myself to give up everything, and it may be that, unconsciously, hope exists within me, in spite of absolute conviction, the result of long and anxious consideration.

My family have gone from me, and I am left, almost alone, to struggle with the calamities of the day, and the

sad imaginings connected with them. Ridley, too, has gone to Barbadoes, whence he will proceed to St. Thomas', and thence to Cuba. I am depressed and dispirited, but George is full of energy, and, apparently, at least, sanguine as to the future. Brown is still wavering, but it is not difficult to perceive that he will speedily withdraw from the losing business he is now engaged in, and begin a fresh career in a more favoured land; but whether one of the Australian colonies, New Zealand, or Ceylon, is yet to be considered and decided on.

On looking over what I have written in this Diary on the subject of African immigration, I perceive that I have not dwelt long on the advantages which the scheme possesses as the most powerful means of suppressing the African slave-trade. In fact, it appears to me to be the only method by which it can be stopped; and I do not know that more may be said, because the difficulty of suppressing it entirely by armed vessels has been almost universally recognised; indeed, it is generally believed to be impracticable. The question then will simply be, whether it is better to ransom those unfortunates, or allow them to live and die in a state of slavery, as I have said already. The men of peace, who rely on the influence of opinion, will think that slavery must soon cease all over the world. This is the way in which Englishmen reason, and have reasoned since the slave-trade became illegal.

But the miraculous establishment of this new state of society throughout the known world, is not a whit more likely to occur because they think it shall or should do so; and the advocates of war in other cases, are not likely to recommend hostilities, by way of enforcing treaties in this instance, in punishing the guilty depredators as pirates. Without some strong measure, therefore, the trade must continue, and go on increasing until the planters of Cuba and Brazil have a monopoly of sugar-growing. For what

country can stand against them under such advantageous circumstances? The belief that any one can, as I have already said, is based on one of the wildest hallucinations that ever possessed the mind of man, and is disproved by the very facts of the ruin of our colonies, and the continuance of the African slave-trade—I mean, the fancied superiority of free over slave-labour.

I have derived no comfort from my immigrants. Nearly all the Portuguese have left me—in fact, only a few sugar-boilers remain; and the Coolies are also much diminished in number. They are a quiet, frivolous race, like harmless children. They had little, with two exceptions, of the devotion to caste which characterizes the natives of the East; indeed, they were most likely people of no cast originally, and the greater number were Christians. The sirdar, whom I mentioned as a superior character, occasionally preached to them in one of their own tongues, as a Christian teacher. It was whispered that this man had been of high caste, but, for some reason that remained undivulged, he had lost it. He certainly had great sway over his countrymen, and they looked up to him with reverence. His wife, also, had an appearance much above that of her compatriots, from whom she secluded herself generally. I often noticed the taste with which this couple had adorned their cottage and garden with all the flowers they could procure and transplant, and the singular degree of harmony and retirement that reigned around, which was caused by their living apart from almost every one. I am particular in my remarks about them, for the poor fellow was taken suddenly ill and died, and his wife, after attempting to destroy herself, fell gradually into a state of mind bordering on fatuity, and was thus frequently seen wandering about the fields accompanied by a pet deer, either singing or speaking to her departed husband. After the lapse of a few weeks, she was missed one morning, and, in a short time, found

lying under a palm in a small grove, which had been a favourite resort of both in leisure hours. The circumstances by which her death was attended, and the fate generally of those hapless strangers, in my present melancholy mood made a deep impression on me, and excited feelings which found vent in some lines, descriptive of her condition and her end.

“O Sadi! my lost one! I still see you here,
Each flower that I gaze on 's the face of my dear;
Each tree that we loved, has thy form in its shade;
On paths where we roved, thy foot-print has staid.

“All things that we cherished are still to be seen;
Alone you have perished, and gone from the scene.
The humming-bird comes to our rose-bower still,
And mournfully roams, while he sings through his bill!

“The fawn you did rear, now has lost all his pride,
And droops his fine ear as he walks by my side;
Then stamps he and snorts, as he still did of yore,
When, to join in his sports, you were wiled to the door.

“O Sadi! your lone one is weak, weak and low,
My head is so strange grown—I cannot tell how!
The man who is skilful, talks wisely in vain,
He tells them I'm wilful, that grief turns my brain.

“The soft wind blowing, wafts a note from the dove
Where palm-trees are growing—the call of my love!—
To rest then I yield me, still dreaming of you,
The palmetto will shield me from fast-falling dew.”

The mourner was found, at the dawn of next day;
But her rest was too sound, and cold where she lay!
The deer thought she slept, and, his chin on her knee,
True watch there he kept, 'neath the shady palm-tree.

She had passed to the land where Sadi was gone,
 For her heart might not stand in this world alone;
 And Peris of Ind, at the place of their sleep,
 Are heard in the wind, oft to wail near and weep.

JANUARY, 1848.

MY wife and family have removed on account of her health to Italy, the climate of England having been found too severe for her weakened frame. Charles and his wife are likely to remain in that delightful country, for one of my old friends has offered to establish him there as partner in a branch of his house, for which he considers Charles's talent for business generally will soon qualify him; and, in the meantime, another of the house will be joined with him. I am most grateful for this attention, which is the disinterested act of an old familiar friend. There is no change in the condition of the Colony. Lord George Bentinck, having given notice of a motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the state of the Sugar Colonies, has again revived the drooping spirits of the planters, and evidence is to be collected, and persons appointed to go home to lay it before the Committee, which it is not doubted will be appointed. In all other respects, we are the same—gradually losing more and more of our property; for me, the past year has been the worst I have yet encountered, and doubtless it must be the same with others, when prices have been, for six months at least, nearly on a level with those of foreign countries—the expected and inevitable result of free-trade. My crop has been about the same as that of the six preceding years, or rather about the average of them, and the loss is fully £3,000 upon it.

31st MARCH, 1848.

It is represented by those connected with our Colony, who are watching the proceedings of Lord George Bentinck's committee, that a remarkably strong case has been made out in only one month's sitting. The witnesses from all our possessions tell the same tale of deep distress. Surely we are justified in entertaining some degree of hope under such circumstances. But, God help us! our struggle with the faction is like that we are engaged in with the slave-owner—altogether unequal and unfair. It is the combat of giant and dwarf, in both cases.

I am now worn out by care and sickness. Anxiety is a powerful assistant to climate in bringing on and keeping up disease. Intermittent fever has laid its grasp on me, and obstinately retains its hold. I must leave this scene of want and woe. I have not spirit to enter more of my now utterly hopeless observations in this sad repository of my thoughts and deeds. In a few months I hope to be on the pleasant shores of the Mediterranean sea; and, in three weeks, I shall bid a sorrowful adieu to the magnificent Province of Guiana.

END OF THE JOURNAL.



CONCLUDING REMARKS,

BY THE EDITOR.

AND with a sad heart does your friend say farewell to you, old Barton Premium! May the fair scenes and soft breezes of Italy be as balm to your wounded spirit and your shattered frame, for a better man never withered under the blight of colonial misrule.

It is singular how accurately his forebodings in the journal have been fulfilled, although some of them were evidently thrown off in the bitterness of a heart fretted to a degree of morbid sensibility by harsh usage. The report of Lord George Bentinck's committee, with all the evidence taken by it, and constituting, perhaps, the strongest case ever laid before parliament, has been almost utterly disregarded by the ministry, who, indeed, were candid enough, when the appointment of the committee took place, to declare, in the person of Lord John Russell, that the line of policy to be followed by them being already marked out, they would not depart from it. We have also heard the colonial minister declare in his place, that the measures adopted by government, in regard to the colonies, have hitherto been wise and beneficial, notwithstanding the unanimous testimony of scores of witnesses, given before two committees of the House of

Commons, at different times—a space of many years intervening between the periods of their sittings—during which the distress continued steadfastly to increase, and also, notwithstanding the respectful and forcible representations of the planters themselves.

We have heard Mr. Milner Gibson, the member for Manchester, propose to cancel the treaty with Brazil for suppressing the slave-trade—a fact which, I am sure, Mr. Premium never really anticipated, although, in a moment of bitter excitement, he has said that such would happen. And, to crown the whole, even now, while these sheets, bearing testimony to the ruinous effect of slave competition, are passing through the press, the newspapers are teeming with rumours regarding the future proceedings of government, founded on the report of the slave-trade committee, which, if correct, clearly show that the sugar colonies are finally and irretrievably consigned, whatever the consequences may be, to the infliction of free-trade practice, in every department wherein they are assailable, even to the extent of free-trade in men.

Let no one say that such rumours are wild and improbable. Nothing could appear to be more so at that time than the admission of slave sugar to the markets of Britain; yet it was carried triumphantly by the same party. The removal of restrictions on the cultivation of that article, which they were determined to have in large quantities, was a natural consequence, and one to be looked for when the relative position of the two parties, the injurer and the injured, continued to be the same, only changed by the increased strength of the former and the more marked weakness of the latter.

We might have anticipated that the men who, in 1846, laughed at consistency and former professions of philanthropy as obstacles to the prosecution of their designs, would be ready in 1848 to persevere in the new

line of policy, opposed as it is to all their former words and actions, and to go even a step farther in assisting these new customers with the means of bringing more produce to market to exchange for their manufactured goods.

Their first measure was only an indirect (though decided) encouragement to the slave-trade; their next, it seems, is to be as direct and straightforward as possible, and, in fact, nothing less, if rumour speaks truth, than the removal of the fleets stationed there to suppress it.

The monstrous doctrine, whatever may be the intentions of government, is freely advocated by the free-trade press and the adherents of government generally; and it would seem that this great step in the advance of Manchester doctrines is to follow next after the abrogation of the Navigation Laws, so that we may soon see commercial and manufacturing Quakers aiding and abetting the ruffians of all nations in carrying on free-trade in slaves. It is almost absurd to combat the arguments of those who support this most extraordinary proposition.

Great Britain assumed to herself a sort of authority in the matter of the African slave-trade, which, although emanating from excessive zeal in the cause, disgusted foreign nations with her. She insisted on searching all vessels on the African coast, and prosecuted her plans with so much zeal as to excite the national jealousy of more than one country, which, in fact, led to the adoption of the present system at a recent period.

What will ministers say to the French Republic when the question of withdrawing the two squadrons comes to be arranged? Will they frankly say that the same party, which has for fifty years pretended to advocate the rights of the Negro, from philanthropic motives alone, has now taken a different view of the question, and is determined to class the slave-trade among those great items in the category of the political economists, which are to be

freed from all restriction whatever? What else can be said? If the fleets cannot suppress the trade, no man can deny that they obstruct it. Their presence is a restriction at least as great as those protecting duties against which the party wage incessant and unrelenting war, and, doubtless, appears to them exactly in the same light.

Their manifesto appears in the shape of a "Report" from the Anti-Slavery Society, in which the withdrawal is earnestly recommended, amidst the usual quantity of verbiage and sophistry with which all their opinions are promulgated.

Foreign nations cannot fail to perceive at once the striking inconsistency and the vast power of the anti-colonists. They cannot fail to observe that the same men who formerly plagued the world with their ranting and outrageous philanthropy, are now to trouble our nation with principles opposite to those which they formerly professed, and which their immensely increased strength enables them to avow, not only with unblushing effrontery, but with the most absolute confidence in the success of their endeavours to carry them into practice. Foreigners must perceive that pure motives of philanthropy have never prompted the actions of those men; and that, from the first, their proceedings have been studied and arranged, solely with a view to their own interests; and that our great empire has been drawn in, by enlisting the best feelings of our nature in their cause, to carry out the measures of this party in the first place; and now, when it has waxed so strong, we should not wonder if the mask is more loosely worn, and power relied on to bear it through in the second, and scarcely disguised attempt to destroy our colonies.

It should not be said, perhaps, that the anti-colonists desire the ruin of our sugar settlements, and perhaps such is not their wish or anticipation. They may think that it is possible for them to keep their position, while

their grand object, the advancement of foreign colonies, is also attained. But men who must have acquired some knowledge of the relative condition of the two, can scarcely believe such a state of affairs to be possible. What puzzles reflecting people, who are altogether free from prejudice, is the undeviating hostility they have shown to the miserable planters, even when they were prostrated by their power, and at their mercy. The best of them, the Buxtons, Lushingtons, &c., stopped when emancipation was effected, and, like rational men and true philanthropists, supported the planters, as well as the former slaves, in all attempts to procure ameliorating measures. But they were soon obliged to leave their former friends in disgust, and to withdraw from the association. It is well known that the latter passed a resolution binding itself to support, by every means, the admission of slave-grown sugar into Britain. A deputation, consisting of Mr. Scoble and two others, had been previously sent to Lord Brougham to procure his co-operation in this most extraordinary movement, but that sharp peer received them with indignation and surprise, and in the correspondence which followed, he told them he did not believe before that "three sane men could be found in the society, to bring forward such a proposition." This was the first glaring departure from their former policy, in so far as regards the welfare of the Negroes. But since the passing of the Emancipation Act, scarcely a measure has been proposed for the planters' benefit, which they have not opposed with all their power. Free immigration—ordinances framed to ensure social order, and to promote habits of industry—and, in short, everything that could be beneficial to the agricultural interest, met with their fierce and unqualified hostility. The arguments adduced by them in support of this last great attack on both planters and Africans, are, as might be expected, singular. It is said that the fleet has forced the

slave-traders to enter into more extensive combinations. Why, if this is an objection to it, it is one that applies to its efficacy, and proves it. One might as well say that a police force is injurious, because it causes thieves to be more cautious and cunning. But although it be true that the trade has been shockingly increased since the squadrons of France and England were joined to suppress it, no unprejudiced person will say that it arises from the mere existence of this fact. Is it in human nature that a direct obstacle would induce men who formerly kept aloof, to engage in the business?—that because a formidable fleet scoured the African seas, hundreds should risk their fortunes, merely to have the pleasure of cheating and evading those ships of war? We are called on to believe this by the free-traders, who keep back, while on the topic, although it is brought forward afterwards, the real cause of those combinations of men, and which every one foresaw would have the effect—the Sugar Duty Act of 1846 (and anticipated rise in the price of sugar by Brazilians and Cubans), which, instead of loss and mishap, the prospect offered to them by the ships of France and England, holds out the most tempting promises of prospective wealth. The immediate effect of this act is well described by Dr. Cliff in his evidence before the Sugar and Coffee Committee. The price of slaves rose at once (he says) in Brazil, and a great impetus was given to the slave-trade. In one year after it was passed, seventy thousand slaves were imported from Africa into the Brazilian empire, whereas only a very few thousands had been imported in any one year previously. This gentleman was a planter of that country, and one who had formerly been engaged in the slave-trade, and was thus well qualified to speak on the subject. The free-traders and their witnesses bring forward tables to show that the number of people illicitly carried off from Africa, has been regulated invariably by

the price of sugar—a fact which we have always asserted—and yet, in the face of it, they open our markets to the sugar of the slave-owners. It is wonderful that in making this acknowledgment, they do not perceive how awkwardly they are situated. It is exactly what the colonists have always declared to be the case; and on this fact rests the charge of inconsistency and want of philanthropic feeling against the Anti-Slavery Society in particular, and political economists in general. It was the higher price obtained in England than on the Continent which gave the spur, as we foretold it would, to the slavers, and has covered the seas with their vessels.

It is to be doubted whether the efficacy rather than the inefficiency of the fleet is not the cause of hostility to it. We must judge of this by the number of captures, not by the number of those who escape; for if we estimate the extent of the trade by the latter, we must believe that it is increasing rapidly, and that the ships are not doing their duty, if we at the same time are led to believe that no more are taken than before 1846. We must, as in former times, be guided in our judgment, by the proportion which the captures bear to the number of vessels engaged in the trade. Admiral Hotham, the witness whom they especially delight to quote, estimates the ships in the slave-trade taken by our cruisers at thirty per cent. of the entire number engaged in it. We must give all the weight in this instance to the evidence of the admiral which has been attached to it in general, and we think it will be held to be conclusive; no man will believe that a heavy blow, and a great discouragement is not given to any trade, when a third of the capital employed in it is lost every year. The other naval officer whose testimony is brought prominently forward is Captain Watson, who confirms the admiral in regard to the proportion of captures, by tables, but who unhesitatingly declares against the removal of the fleet. This officer inveighs with great

earnestness against the description of vessels sent to the African coast, which he describes as the worst fitted up in the British navy. He speaks from experience, and so many strange things have come to light, that it would scarcely excite surprise if this fact should be traced also to Manchester influence.

It is too probable, judging from antecedents, that the nation will submit, in this instance also, to the domination of the free-traders and anti-colonists. It is to be feared that the same indifference which prevailed when it was observed that the hostility of the party to the West Indies did not cease with slavery there, and that the object aimed at was to raise up foreign colonies and countries into great consumers of our manufactures, even if our own colonies should be annihilated in these efforts to obtain their ends—that this indifference will be manifested now, is to be feared, especially when the question of economy is so forcibly dwelt on, the sum of £600,000 being annually spent in keeping up our share of the fleet. It is but lately that a question of economy would be tolerated, when brought forward in opposition to the rights of humanity. It affords another instance of the glaring inconsistency of anti-colonial animosity. The sum of one hundred and fifty millions has been destroyed (I think we may now say, utterly) in the West Indies to promote the cause of humanity; and this comparatively insignificant amount of six hundred thousand is, I may venture to say, scarcely more than is annually lost now and expended by the luckless capitalists connected with the West Indies, in the vain hope that the estates with which they are connected may yet be preserved as profitable investments. Can a country, can a party, then, say conscientiously that economy renders free-trade in men necessary, forcing us to disregard both the rights of humanity and of our deeply-injured colonies? Taken in connection with Mr. Milner Gibson's motion for repeal-

ing the treaty with Brazil for suppressing the slave-trade, and with the steady and never-failing opposition of the party to our colonies, the proposal to withdraw the blockading fleet must be regarded as having no foundation in the inefficacy of the latter, or in the cost of supporting it.

We cannot imagine that a party professing such principles as are necessarily opposed to the interests of the West Indies, will sanction any plan, such as that which is advocated by my truly benevolent friend in his journal. An attempt is made to delude the West Indians into the belief that emigration from Africa will be promoted by withdrawing the fleet. But there can be no doubt that the latter does not, in the slightest degree, impede the deportation of free people. The fact is admitted by one of themselves, the late Secretary at Sierra Leone, who says that the emigration of free people from that coast cannot take place to any considerable extent, because those who are free are averse to it. We have it from other competent authorities, that those who are not slaves in Africa do not belong to the classes (with some exceptions) who labour in the fields—they are chiefs, in fact.

The withdrawal of the fleet, therefore, must be regarded in every way as a measure calculated to destroy the last glimmer of hope which still remains to the planters. It may be a question, whether it will not be beneficial as putting an end to the present ineffectual struggle, which this hope prompts them to maintain, and its profitless expenditure of money.

While those proceedings are going on, so strongly indicative of colonial destruction, we have proof from other quarters that foreign slave-owners are bearing down all attempts at competition with them. The East Indian papers are all declaring that the firm of Arbuthnot & Co., the most energetic and zealous cultivators of sugar in

India, on the West India plan, and by means of Hindu labourers, are about to desist from their hopeless exertions, in utter despair of supplying the article at so cheap a rate as the men of Cuba and Brazil, and after giving it a fair trial of three years' duration. From the same quarter, we find that the attempt to raise cotton there, in opposition to the slave-holders of North America, is announced to be a failure. All things conspire to show that the struggle between free and slave labour terminates generally in favour of the latter, even under the most favourable circumstances to the former.

In order more fully to show his unrelenting spirit, the colonial minister is actually doing what is merely glanced at in the journal—not predicted—in regard to maintaining the present enormous expenditure of British Guiana. Finding that the colonists were enabled to make a stand against him behind the rampart of their constitution, he has instructed the governor to have a bill prepared which c virtually breaks down this obstacle to his views, by admitting to the franchise a large body of voters, who, it is understood, will support the views of the imperial government as opposed to those of the planters. This is of a piece with the rest.

Earl Grey takes on himself to assume that the enormous annual outlay entailed on the Colony by the measures of government, are a proof of prosperity; that the yearly increase of expenditure forced on the hapless colonists, and drawn from their constantly diminishing resources, arises from increase of means and substance, while, in too many instances, it comes from the capital of those who are scarcely able to procure the necessaries of life. What can be expected from a minister who has declared the policy of government for the last ten years, in regard to the colonies, to be "wise and beneficial?"

Thus, the loyalty and ready obedience of the colonists to the mother country are turned against them, and used

by their political opponents as an instrument in oppressing them. They should have protested against the many schemes for the benefit of the labouring classes, which have raised this expenditure to £220,000 per annum, when they were brought forward, without a guarantee that the property of the colonists should not be impaired and rendered unproductive. They are now at the mercy of those who seem to have assumed for their motto the famous saying mentioned in the journal (*mutato nomine*). "Delenda est Carthago," seems to be ever present to their minds, and always the rule which prompts their actions.

There are too many cases among the wretched colonists which are the counter-parts of my friend's; and he has expressed himself to me in the strongest terms, since his return to Europe, against the strange hallucination which prevails among the planters, and the influence of which he succumbed to while among them—I mean that of entertaining a hope that they will yet be able to compete with their rivals of Brazil and Cuba, either through the agency of African labourers, or some other which the wisdom of parliament, or the justice of the great body of their countrymen, will concede to them at the eleventh hour.

The delusion is perfectly natural, because a case like theirs is not to be met with in the annals of Great Britain, unless it be that of the Darien expedition. But they are not exactly parallel either. There is no national jealousy aroused by the West Indians, nor is there any cause of hostility to them; but they are merely overwhelmed by an opposing interest, which, although falsely, thinks it is to gain by their loss, and which has proved immeasurably stronger than they throughout the arduous struggle.

Mr. Premium was a man who, as he himself declares, possessed an ample fortune, independently of his West

India estate, and if he had been able to combat the delusion, and dispose of it immediately after the full emancipation of his slaves, at any price, he would have been still a rich man. But, although a person of sound judgment, he was carried on, from year to year, to lay out money, under a hope, of whose existence he did not seem to be aware—for he always professed to have the gloomiest anticipations—until everything went from him, and he left the unhappy Colony to his still ardent and energetic son, who is bearing up against insurmountable hardships and debts, which are increasing yearly, and now he cannot get rid of his estate.

It has been computed that the annual amount drawn from men situated like Premium on his arrival in the Colony in 1840, and from mortgagees under this delusive hope, continues to be still nearly half a million sterling for the whole of the sugar settlements.

It is wonderful, indeed, that faith in the future should remain so firm and immutable after the sad experience of so many years. There is doubtless much of that sort of calculation on which Sir Robert Peel relied, when he told them that the slaves of the West Indies would soon assert their freedom, and then the British planter would be restored to his former position of equality in circumstances with his neighbour. “Mercy on us,” says the old baronet in the play, “a happy man when his brother’s throat is cut!” But the moralist need not start at this doctrine; it is neither new nor based on probability. We have had the same prediction any time since the abolition (by law) of the African slave-trade, when it suited a man to make it. A Negro insurrection has never succeeded, except in St. Domingo, and there success was owing to the war of colours that prevailed in the island. The Blacks are not able to arrange a systematic rising, and to mature it so as to ensure a successful result. They have neither discretion to keep the secret, nor mental

powers to contrive and combine a plot which would comprehend the majority of their numbers, and enable them to rise as one body and to overpower the Whites.

It is a pity Sir Robert, in his benevolent desire to comfort the colonists on his desertion of them, could not hit on something more satisfactory, and it is a proof that he felt there was nothing else to be said. Indeed, they were probably fully aware of the fact when he left them. Colonists have not to learn that rats, whether creeping things or talking statesmen, are apt to leave a sinking ship, and they are deeply sensible of his instinctive faculty in foreseeing danger.

It is difficult to refrain from expressing an opinion on what Mr. Premium has emphatically termed the only means of saving the planters, although these remarks have extended too far already. It is certain that many West Indians shrunk from recommending this measure to Lord George Bentinck's Committee on account of the odium in which it was held among the people of this country, and even some of their own body.

But he has put it in the proper light. As it is indisputable that the mass of the people in Africa are in a state of dark and hopeless slavery, the term Ransom is better applied to the transaction which removes them as free men to a free country, than that of Purchase. At the time Mr. Premium made the entry in his journal which contains his opinions on this subject, the proceedings of the two committees which have since sat, or were then sitting, were of course unknown to him. Much has come to light since he settled in Italy, and it is known to his Editor that he is more and more confirmed in his views since the evidence taken by the Slave Committee has been from time to time published.

If it is admitted that slavery exists in Africa to such an extent as to extend to nineteen-twentieths of the population, as is confidently asserted, surely the difference of

opinion which has existed should not continue. Any man can picture to himself what the misery and sufferings of a human being must be when *bona fide* a chattel in possession of a savage, whom the merest accident may rouse to a pitch of fury—whom inebriety may tempt to torture for amusement—and who can, without check or control, so deal with his abject property as any prompting emanating from those moods may suggest.

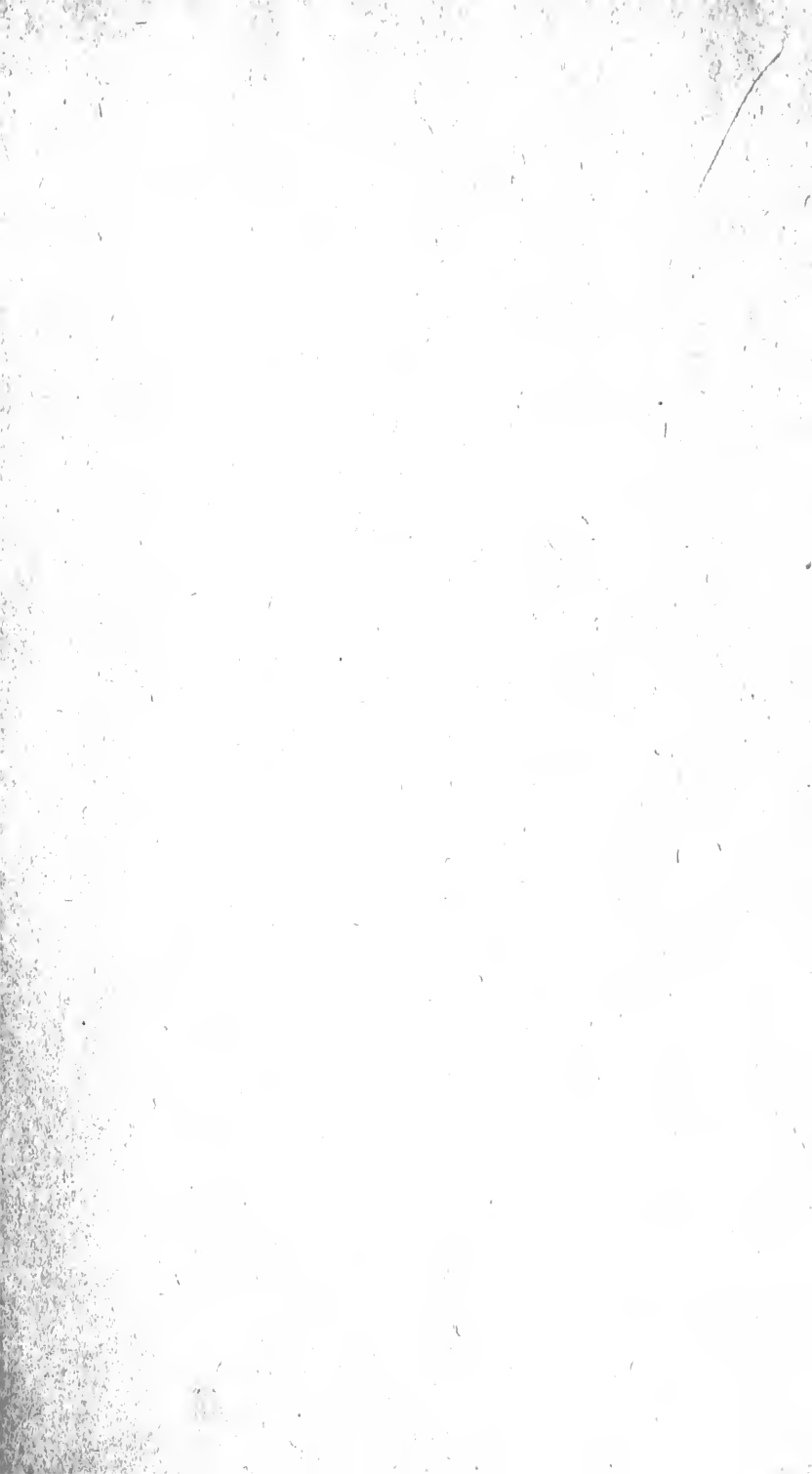
But the strongest reason is unquestionably that stated in the journal, although what has now been said seems quite enough to excite the sympathies of all humane people. Yet when, along with it, we become aware that a great trade is now carried on in the interior of Africa to provide a sufficient number to supply the demand on the coast, created by the ships of Cuba and Brazil, we are naturally led to believe that a measure which would meet the poor wretches there, and convert their prospect of a dreadful voyage and a perpetuity of slavery, into one of freedom and happiness, would be more agreeable to our feelings than anything else.

That they would derive incalculable benefit, whether bought on his own land from their barbarous masters, or on the sea coast, cannot be doubted. That a system of redemption from slavery would have any other effect than taking off the gangs of those who now regularly supply the slavers, there is not the slightest reason to believe. It is a chimera with which the imagination of our countrymen is affrighted by designing men, and which a little inquiry would soon dispel. This being the case, the question is, simply as Mr. Premium says—whether it is for the advantage of the African to allow him to go as a slave to Cuba or Brazil, supposing he has escaped death by massacre to save expenses, or to take him, as a free man, to the West India colonies, there to remain no more than five years, unless he chooses to fix his residence for a longer period among the well-paid people of

those settlements? There can be little doubt on which side the advantages preponderate.

It is as clear also that it would prove the most effectual means of entirely suppressing the cruel and detestable traffic in slaves. It would be completely in the power of the two great nations, who are now engaged in keeping it in check, to control and command the cargoes sent for sale to the coast. There would be no concealment nor difficulty of any sort in making the necessary arrangements with the dealers, and the facilities afforded in consequence, together with the risk incurred from the hostile fleets continually watching them, would soon drive the smugglers from the coast of Africa. Unfortunately, this is a question which is more likely to be settled in accordance with feelings biassed by wrong information, than a cool and dispassionate judgment, based on true knowledge of circumstances.

THE END.



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