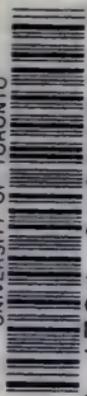


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G. W. GROSVENOR.

SCARCE,

edition. 1813

Sugar Making in
Barbados etc



George W. Gosburn

Nov. 1873

Cent.



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UNDER A TROPICAL SKY.

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EDINBURGH AND LONDON

UNDER A TROPICAL SKY

A JOURNAL OF FIRST IMPRESSIONS

OF THE WEST INDIES

BY

JOHN AMPHLETT

“ Yet waft me from the harbour mouth,
Wild Wind! I seek a warmer sky.”

—*Tennyson.*

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, LOW, & SEARLE

CROWN BUILDINGS, 183 FLEET STREET

1873

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO MY WIFE,

WHOSE INABILITY TO SHARE MY PLEASURES

WAS

MY CONSTANT REGRET.



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UNDER A TROPICAL SKY.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE OUT.

 N Tuesday, the 17th of December 1872, the Royal Mail steamship *Tasmanian*, after goodbyes had been said, and all the mail-bags had been put on board, was ignominiously pulled round by the little steam-tug tender, and steamed off down Southampton Water, right into a dark bank of leaden clouds, behind which the sun had now sunk. It was the fifty-ninth time that her bows had pointed across the wide Atlantic towards the West Indies. It was my first voyage in an ocean-going steamer, and consequently all was new to me on board. As the tender steamed back to Southampton, handkerchiefs were waved, until at last the increasing distance prevented even those white flags of friendship from being seen, and we had indeed said goodbye to old England, and all that it contained near and dear to us. The first thing to be done is to describe the ship and the mode of life of those on board.

The *Tasmanian* is a bark-rigged ship, 366 feet long and 39 feet wide : tons register, 1600 ; actual tonnage, 2956. The engine-power is nominally 600 horses, actually 3000. On board of her are about 90 passengers, first and second class. To feed these passengers and the crew, are on board 1 milking cow, 3 oxen, lots of sheep and many pigs ; 500 chickens, besides geese, turkeys, and ducks innumerable. Besides the officers and engineers, and stokers and seamen to work the ship, there are, to look after the creature-comfort of those on board, a chief steward and a multitude of under-stewards ; a chief baker and under-bakers ; a chief cook and under-cooks ; and a confectioner to look after the pastry : and there is as well a butcher and his assistant, and a carpenter and his mate. The meal-times on board were—breakfast at nine, luncheon at half-past twelve, dinner at five, and tea at half-past seven ; but sandwiches were to be procured from half-past eight to half-past nine. Meals came rather too closely together, since after eating a good breakfast at nine, and luncheon about three hours afterwards, it was not to be expected that a man could approach the dinner-table at five o'clock with a very extraordinary appetite, although, indeed, the sea air and the fresh breeze did make one more ready than might have been expected to appear at the table. Cooking was remarkably good, and we had a great variety of food provided for us—far more, indeed, than could have been expected under the circumstances.

My berth was in a cabin in the lower fore-saloon. "Lower Victoria Square" we christened it before we had been long at sea. It was a long way from the saloon ; but it was close to the engines, and therefore in the steadiest part of the ship. The only objection to it was that it was just underneath the shoot whence they discharged the ashes and cinders into the sea ; and as they performed that operation every four hours, night and day, it was apt to become annoying. They made a great noise over it, and the sound of the ashes running down the shoot was like nothing so much as a heavy shower of walking-sticks and marbles on the roof of one's cabin. The noises on board for the first few days are disquieting, to say the least of it : one soon gets accustomed to them, however ; but after dark the shouts of the sailors, the whistling of the boatswain, the grinding of the engines, with every now and then the bang of a cabin door which has been left ajar, or the thud of a heavy wave against the side of the ship, make up a total of sounds the meaning of which is quite uncertain to the unaccustomed traveller, and which, for all you know to the contrary, may betoken great disaster.

The time on board ship is marked by bells : eight bells is eight o'clock morning and evening. Beginning at eight o'clock in the morning, half-past eight is marked by one bell, and then one bell is added every half hour until the total is eight bells again, which of course occurs at noon ; beginning

again with one bell at half-past twelve, and increasing as before, eight bells occurs at four o'clock in the afternoon. However, this order of things is broken by the occurrence of two short watches called dog-watches, and the bells run thus : half-past four one bell, then one is added till four bells, which occurs at six ; at half-past, one bell again, until half past-seven is three bells, and then eight o'clock is eight. So it goes on regularly till the dog-watches come round the next afternoon. The dog-watches are introduced for the reason that the ship's company is divided into six watches, and if there were not some method of breaking the routine, some of the unfortunate sailors would always have the night-duty. Why the two shortened watches are dog-watches is said to be because they are curtailed.

The *Tasmanian* was not far outside the Needles when she began to fall in with bad weather ; however, the wind and sea did not reach their highest pitch of disquietude until Saturday morning, when there was really a terrific sea running. This lasted through the night. On Sunday morning the gale moderated. Life-lines were stretched across the ship from side to side of the quarterdeck for the sailors to hold on by, for no one could stir without holding on to something ; and those poor unfortunate passengers, myself amongst the number, who were possessed of fore-and-aft berths, had, I believe, to hold on, even in their sleep, to prevent themselves rolling out on to the floor

of the cabin. The waves washed over the ship, or, to use a nautical expression, she was shipping water over all, and the only place secure from the chance of a wetting was the top of the companion-stairs, which, consequently, was always crowded with restless and inquiring passengers. "Fiddles," as the frames of wood are called which are used to keep plates and knives and forks on the unsteady table, were to be seen at every meal; and it required a certain amount of dexterity to take a bottle or glass from the swinging tray over the table, or to replace it again.

However, a gale of wind must have an end; and on Monday the 23d the sea was quieting down, and one could move about the ship with some degree of steadiness, though a heavy swell caused one's footsteps to be rather uncertain. But hour by hour the sea went down, and the barometer, the object of everybody's most careful attention during the bad weather, went up, and the thermometer went up, and people began to come up on deck, and congratulate themselves that at last they had weathered the storm, and that the sun was shining. The folding-chairs, with one of which every old traveller provides himself, but of the comfort of which I was unaware, and therefore chairless, were placed about the quarterdeck, and the game of "bull" was commenced by the more enterprising of the male passengers. This game is, in my opinion, one of the feeblest games I know. A board is divided into twelve squares,

in two of which a large B is painted, while the rest are numbered from 10 to 100; little disks of iron covered with leather are thrown from a distance, and the number on which it rests is scored to the thrower: liners don't count, while a B cancels the whole previous gain of that turn. May I ask why 10 to 100, and not 1 to 10? Is it for the same reason that the counter of that delectable game "bezique" is so full of ciphers? The game, of course, is to gain as many as the players agree upon. Some brought chess up on the deck, though yellow-backed novels occupied the attention of the majority.

On Tuesday a flying fish came on board—a very large one, said they who knew something about those cold-blooded animals. It was about twelve inches in length, silvery white, something like a whiting, and with very large eyes. Its wing-fins were nearly as long as its body, and slightly sickle-shaped. From this time till the end of the voyage, a greater or less number of flying fish were to be observed every day; and I cannot help thinking that they really do fly, and flap their wings, and even change their course in their passage through the air. They look more like a flight of large dragon-flies speeding over the surface of the water than birds.

Wednesday was Christmas Day, though the temperature was anything but Christmas heat. We had lost just two hours of time. The saloon was decorated with holly and mistletoe

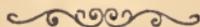
in quite a homelike style; and when dinner-time came, roast-beef and plum-pudding formed the staple dishes of the meal. We had prayers in the morning, and the ship's company was mustered to attend in the saloon. In the evening the piano in the fore-saloon was in great request, and songs and music, volunteered by the company, pleasantly passed the time. How we enjoyed the "Wee, wee Dog," and the "Mer-ma-id," old and well-known though they might be! and what hearty laughter arose at each reiteration of "I was very thankful," the refrain of a song of the assistant-purser's on the topics of the day!

The sunrises and sunsets were most beautiful. There was very little twilight, and from the time the first tinge of light showed in the eastern sky, until the sun sprang up in all its glory, a succession of the most lovely tints passed over the face of the heavens. Glorious orange, pearly grey, russet brown, and rosy red, and the most delicate shadings and interminglings of blues and greens, followed each other in rapid succession, until at last a fringe of fire upon the overhanging clouds betokened the sun's approach. The sky, though clear overhead, had nearly always a fringe of clouds round the horizon; and these clouds added greatly to the glory of the sunrise, as their depths were searched out and explored by the pencils of sunlight, causing the most vivid contrasts of leaden grey and burnished gold. Perhaps there were more delicate shades of

colour to be observed at sunset, but they lacked the rapid rush and onslaught of the rising sun.

Time passed quickly. On the 31st of December we were three hundred miles from Barbadoes, two days behind time on account of the bad weather we had encountered. The sea was quite calm, and there was no motion in the ship except a lazy roll from side to side, which really was not unpleasant, though probably it would have been very upsetting to any one who just now came on board. But we, the passengers, were quite seasoned to rolls and shakes and quivers; and if the motion had any effect upon us at all, perhaps it was just to put the edge on our appetites, and make us more ready for our dinners. And still more quickly passed the last day. On Wednesday, New Year's Day, about eleven o'clock, a faint haze appeared in the distance, hardly distinguishable whether mist or land. By degrees it grew plainer and plainer, and land it was—a most welcome sight indeed. We soon got near enough to plainly distinguish the brighter green of the cane-fields, and the various large houses. At this distance the island slightly reminded me of the Sussex Downs around Brighton; for there were no hedges to be seen, very few trees, and the island had the undulating appearance pertaining to the South Downs. We coasted round the south end of the island, passing a point of land on which stood a tall lighthouse, painted in alternate broad rings of black and white; and then going close enough in shore to

distinguish palms by the seaside, and the strips of white sand, and the low range of cliffs in places. In front of us we could see ships at anchor, and the houses on the shore began to be more frequent, and more trees and shrubs surrounded them as we approached Carlisle Bay. Turning sharply round Needham's Point, we were in the roadstead, and at three o'clock the anchor was let go. Directly, a crowd of boats, each pulled by four lusty negroes, surrounded us, the boatmen calling out, and shouting, and pushing, and causing a scene of dire confusion in their anxiety to secure a fare to shore. But until the harbour-master had been on board, and had satisfied himself from the doctor's papers that there was no infectious illness on the ship, no one was allowed to land. He being satisfied, there was a great rush on board, and directly I found myself shaking hands with an old college friend, the offer of whose hospitality had caused my visit to the West Indies. After getting my luggage into one of the boats, a row of a quarter of an hour brought us inside the Mole Head, and by the landing-steps; and then, with a mixed feeling of excitement, expectation, and withal relief, I first set foot on tropical ground.



CHAPTER II.

BARBADOES—BRIDGETOWN—DRIVE TO W——

—MODE OF LIFE IN BARBADOES.

HE first sensation that I was cognisant of when I stepped on shore at Bridgetown, the chief town of the island, was a feeling of distance from home. When on board I had not realised it ; but once on shore, it suddenly burst upon me that I was nearly four thousand miles from England, and it seemed to me immeasurable. But this was only for a moment ; for the crowds of black faces on the quay, and the noise they caused, roused me to see the necessity of getting my goods on to my friend's cart, and escaping from the commotion as quickly as possible. And then the four-mile drive from Bridgetown to W——, where my friend lived, totally dispelled every feeling but interest. I could think of nothing but the black faces, and the negro huts, and the strange trees, and the gorgeous flowers, and the bright green sugar-cane—things which met my gaze on every side.

Bridgetown is an irregularly-built town : the streets are rather narrow, and for the most part unprovided with pave-

ments ; and, indeed, where they do have such luxuries, provision has only been made for one foot-passenger at a time. High Street, Broad Street, and Swan Street are the chief business parts of the town ; and in them are situated all the principal stores, where the Barbadians boast that anything can be obtained. The following tale is told to exemplify this fact : One man bet another that he could ask for something he could not procure there, and then asked for a pair of skates. The other fellow, not discouraged, set to work to find skates ; and his perseverance was rewarded by discovering among the rubbish of a second-hand dealer an old rusty pair of the articles in question, and thus he won his bet and proved the extraordinary resources of the town.

The storekeepers dispense with shop windows, and it requires a lengthened stare inside the store to discover what is sold there ; for they are not very lavish in painting either their own names or the names of their trades over their stores. Advertisements are scarce. With the exception of the placard of a travelling circus or peripatetic theatrical company, scarcely any bills adorn the walls ; and the few there are, are about the productions of a firm of American chemists, and set before you the advantages of " Florida Water " and " Sugar-coated Pills." These two articles, I find, are extensively advertised throughout the whole of the West Indies. The houses in Bridgetown are chiefly built of stone, and roofed

with shingle, and usually three stories in height. Trafalgar Square is an open space Barbadians are proud of, though it seemed to me nothing remarkable. In this square stands a bronze statue of Nelson in full uniform, and a large fountain overgrown with green moss, and seeming rather uncared for. On one side of the square rise the new public buildings, as yet incomplete, built of very white stone, and Norman, tropically adapted, in architecture ; while towards the opposite side, behind Nelson's image, a fine evergreen tree affords a welcome shade to the crowds of negroes generally collected under its branches. Behind this tree the space is bounded by the Carenage, an estuary or backwater of the sea, which forms the harbour of the town. This estuary is spanned by a white stone bridge, one end of which swings for the purpose of letting boats of moderate burden pass. At present the water above the bridge is filled with banks of mud, covered with mangrove-trees, amongst whose roots, at low tide, quantities of red-clawed scavenger-crabs are to be seen crawling ; but it is one of the schemes now in progress to clear it out and make it available as harbour-room.

The best hotel in the town is Hoad's Albion Hotel, clean but rather small. The host certainly does not stint his visitors as to their food, but is, like everybody in the West Indies, very independent ; for I heard of him refusing to provide a dinner for some passengers from one of the Transatlantic

steamers, even though they offered liberal payment for it. But one of the institutions of the place, and indeed of all West Indian towns, is the ice-establishment—in other words, a drinking-saloon. Here all kinds of cooling drinks are to be obtained ; and a dining-room is attached, where very good dinners and breakfasts may be procured. It is clean and well conducted, though to get to the liquor-bar one has to pass through or close to a provision-store, odorous of salted fish and other slightly ill-savoured articles of commerce.

There are plenty of public vehicles in the streets, though most of them are in a very dilapidated condition both as to horse and carriage. Light-hooded phaetons to carry two form the greatest number.

Some little distance to the south-east of the town is situated St Ann's Garrison. The buildings are placed around the Savannah, as a large flat extent of grass, containing at a rough estimate about a hundred acres, is called. Round the edge of this field, a little distance from the barrack-buildings, runs a carriage-road, bordered for nearly its whole length on each side by trees of various kinds. The Savannah serves both as the Bridgetown race-course and as the cricket-ground. Here also every Monday afternoon from five till seven o'clock plays the Garrison band, and it is the correct thing for the *elite* of Bridgetown and its neighbourhood to go and hear it. Now going to the band does not mean walking about in its vicinity .

and chatting to your various friends ; but, on the contrary, it means driving in your carriage as near the band as you like, and then patiently sitting there until the band pleases to play "God save the Queen." However, it is very pleasant and lazy to sit still and listen to a military band, while the sun drops down in the west, and the cool breeze of evening plays gently round ; and while the moon rapidly increases her brightness, and sails calmly amongst the light trade-wind-driven clouds overhead.

The road between the Garrison and the town is bordered with pleasant villas, unlike most of the other houses in the island by possessing boundary walls, drive-gates, and well-kept shrubberies, with here and there some gay flowers about the houses. There are very few gardens, from an English point of view, in the island—that is, with grass-plots and beds ; the flowers seem put down anywhere on the bare earth, and left to take care of themselves.

In the outskirts of Bridgetown there is a continuous row of wooden houses on each side of the various roads ; some in good repair, some otherwise. They are never more than one story in height, and are usually supported on a row of rough stones, which raise the floor a few inches from the surface of the ground. In size the huts are perhaps twenty feet by ten, though of course they vary considerably. Their roofs are shingle, and they have no glass in the windows, which are merely square apertures, closed either by jalousies, or trap-

door-like shutters with hinges at the top, and which when propped open form effectual sunshades. The roads are all good, very white, but rather narrow; and I never saw a footpath by the side of a highroad throughout the island.

The streets of Bridgetown are always well filled with people. Every shady place is taken possession of by negro women selling cakes, or fruits, or sweets, which they carry in square trays on their heads. Negro women carry everything on their heads, from a bottle of medicine to a basket of manure for the cane-fields. The consequence is, that they have an erect and rather stately carriage, very different from the slouching walk of the English peasant woman. Everybody one meets of the lower class is a negro; and as Barbadoes is very thickly populated, a great many people are always on the roads, especially near the town, to which the negro women carry fruits and vegetables from their little patches of garden-ground. Negro women wear a kerchief round their heads, tied at the back, so as to form a kind of turban; this is generally white, but frequently yellow or some other bright colour. Their dresses are of print, long enough to touch the ground if let down; but they usually tie a string tightly round the hips, through which they pull the dress, thus holding it up as far as the knee. Men and women universally go barefoot. The women walk very upright, and take very long steps; so that a peculiar swaying motion is imparted to the body, which, though not far removed

from a species of waddle, is not altogether ungraceful. A young negro or coloured woman does not look unpicturesque when dressed in the characteristic costume which I have described ; but when the black girl is rich enough to afford the ordinary European costume of crinoline, silk jacket, and hat and flowers, she looks anything but delightful.

The currency in Barbadoes is English, but all prices and wages are calculated in dollars and cents. The bank-notes of the Colonial Bank are for five dollars—that is, £1, 0s. 10d., instead of a sovereign—and yet an American dollar or half-dollar will not be taken in payment at a shop. This double currency is very confusing at first, as it requires quite a mental sum to find out that \$1.80 is in plain English 7s. 6d.

The drive from Bridgetown to W—— was of course interesting. I was not prepared to see so many windmills scattered over the face of the land. Windmills form one of the chief characteristics of the island, and meet one's eye at every turn. Wind is nearly without exception the only power used in Barbadoes to grind sugar-cane, and each estate, however small, has its windmill. Few of the flowers and plants could I recognise ; but I was much struck by the gorgeousness of the *Poinsettia pulcherrima*, which forms large bushes one blaze of scarlet, and by the rampant way in which the *Bougainvillea*, called there "Fleurette," grows and flowers. Soon after leaving the town we came to cane-fields.

I must own that I was disappointed in my first sight of sugar-cane ; I expected something like a jungle of canes, some fifteen or twenty feet high, instead of the highly-cultivated fields which met my view. From each plant or stool, as it is called, spring five or six canes, some ten feet long and perhaps an inch and a half in diameter. These stalks are yellowish green, and bend down with their own weight, though propped up by the neighbouring canes ; and from them spring out the long, broad, flag-like leaves, of a bright fresh green colour near the top of the cane, where they grow thickly, but generally withered and sere nearer the root. Seen from above, a cane-field appears nothing but a level waving expanse of yellow-green verdure, which gets monotonous with long acquaintance. When in blossom, the seed-stalks rise high above the level of the canes ; and wave their silvery plumes most gracefully in the breeze. These seed-stalks are called "arrows." Roads are very good and level, being cut through hills sometimes to the depth of fifteen or twenty feet ; while ravines and gullies, sometimes of great depth, are bridged over by solidly-built causeways.

The dazzling white of the coral-rock, of which the roads are made, is very distressing to the eyes—so everybody says, though I did not find it so in any especial degree. However, since everybody thinks the glare so bad, all sorts of shifts are made to mitigate its intensity. Some men wear large movable brims to their hats, the under sides of which are lined

with green ; others wear large spectacles of various arrangements of wire gauze and green glass ; while others, again, go about with white linen or muslin masks, with either a pair of holes to see through, or else ending abruptly just under the eyes, with a loose flap to cover the nose. These contrivances may be useful, but they certainly are not ornamental, and give a hideous look to the wearer, while, of course, they completely disguise a man's personal appearance.

There are no hedges or fences in Barbadoes. The south end of the island is gently undulating, of a coral formation, but the north part is volcanic. There are very few trees to be seen, with the exception of those close to the houses. The bearded fig, a large spreading tree with bold evergreen foliage, is one of the principal trees to be observed about the houses near the town, and from it the name of the island is said to be derived. It is so called because of the long masses of fibres it sends down from its branches to the ground, which there taking root, afford a firm support to the widespreading branches, and give a peculiar and characteristic look to the tree. Palms are scarce in the island. There are a few groves of cocoanut-palms by the sea-shore ; but they look anything but flourishing, for they have been attacked by a very disfiguring and fatal disease of late years. Cabbage-palms flourish well in places, but remind one very much of the plume of a hearse stuck on the top of a scaffold pole. Their stem is perhaps

sixty or eighty feet high, and two feet in diameter at the bottom, and bare from top to bottom. On the top of this tall pole, which thins gradually but not regularly as it ascends, waves feebly in the wind a crown of leaves, looking sadly too small for and out of proportion to its lengthy stem, but which no doubt would appear sufficiently large if brought down from its lofty elevation to the level of the eye. Sometimes the crown of leaves gets blown off by an extra-violent gust of wind, and then the tall pole is left, a melancholy memorial of some tropical storm. Mahogany-trees seem to be the commonest kind of timber. Groves of them of greater or less extent are frequently to be met with. The foliage is dark green; the leaves are not unlike ash-leaves, only they are broader and rounder in outline. Their fruit is a round brown capsule about the size of an orange, and in shape like a pear upside down, and filled inside with a number of chestnut-coloured seeds, like the keys of an ash-tree, and beautifully packed and fitted into each other. Yams are dwarf trailing plants, and are cultivated each on a little hillock, which they soon cover with their dark green heart-shaped leaves. Between these hillocks is frequently planted Indian corn, each plant grown singly, looking sad and stiff in its solitary position, and certainly not graceful. The sweet potato is a kind of convolvulus, with dingy lilac flowers, which trails all over the ground, and completely covers the field in which it grows. Eddoes are frequently planted

with it, but their large heart-shaped leaves soon get torn by the wind. Plantains and bananas—for they are different species of the same plant—are generally planted a couple of yards from the edge of the cane-field, among the canes, to protect them from the prevailing winds. But for all that, their large flat and handsome leaves soon get torn and disfigured, and the tattered shreds blow flag-like from the main rib of the leaf. Barbadoes fields are very clear from weeds, and the weeding is done by women who are called “farmers.” The universal implement of labour is the hoe; and not a spade, fork, or shovel is to be seen, and mortar even is mixed with a hoe.

Negro huts are scattered along the sides of the roads all over Barbadoes; in fact, they are as thick all over the island as plums in a pudding. It is said that it is not possible to raise your voice in any part of it without being heard by some neighbouring house. These huts are dotted about without the slightest regard for regularity—sometimes a number of them in a kind of promiscuous heap, sometimes one or two by themselves. They frequently have little patches of land or gardens attached to them, but often are set down on the bare face of a piece of stony or waste ground. Sometimes an almond or a gooseberry tree grows close to them, but apparently more by accident than design. Some of the huts are kept nicer than others; and many have a pig, or a sheep, or a goat tethered

beside them, or in rarer cases even a cow or a donkey. Chickens and turkeys abound amongst the huts. Sheep have no wool, but a kind of coarse hair, and are of as various colours as our cows—black, brown, chestnut, and piebald occurring nearly as commonly as white. Cows are much smaller than the average size in England. Oxen and mules are the beasts of burden, horses being kept solely for riding and driving.

The first thing that struck me on entering a West Indian house was the extreme want of privacy in their mode of life ; in fact, this is carried so far that one does not even shut one's bedroom door at night. The reason is of course that everybody wants to create a draught—a thing as much sought after here as it is avoided at home—and so windows and doors are all left open. There is seldom a hall, but the verandah generally opens directly into the living-rooms ; and everybody walks directly into the drawing-room when they come in from riding or driving. In the rooms there are never carpets nor curtains. On the beds are no blankets—the only covering for a body at night is a single sheet, not even a counterpane ; and all the time windows and doors are open, and there is a great draught, but no one thinks of taking cold. One good thing the wind does is to blow away the mosquitoes, since for some reason—either because they think there are none, or because they are seasoned to them—they have no mosquito-nets ; but I know there are mosquitoes.

Soup is always provided for dinner, generally vegetable of some kind. They have two very delightful kinds of fish—namely, flying fish and dolphin. In no other island but Barbadoes is the flying fish eaten, wherein they do not exhibit wisdom, for the fish, fried after the bones have been taken out, is most delicious. Dolphin is very firm and delicate. The best vegetable they possess is without doubt yam; it is like the finest potato and butter—a very king in comparison to potato. Sweet potatoes, eddoes, plantains, and ochras are other vegetables, and potatoes are imported from America. The two chief meals are breakfast, which is more substantial than an English breakfast, and at which vegetables are served, and dinner. A cup of coffee and a piece of bread or toast is invariably brought to you about seven every morning; but luncheon seldom consists of more than some fruit, or a biscuit, or perhaps a little bread and cheese.

In fruits the West Indies are remarkably rich; but yet in most instances they seem to lack character, and there is a great deal to eat for a very little flavour. From this verdict must be excepted the pine, and the various members of the orange tribe. The taste for some of the fruits—such as golden apples, or sugar apples, or sour sops—must take a good deal of acquiring, though they seem to be enjoyable if they happen to fall in with one's liking.

The pronunciation of English in Barbadoes is rather broad

and drawling, and they have some peculiar uses of certain words that sound strange to a new-comer's ear. One is the use of the adverb "too" to denote a very strong "very." For instance, "This fruit is too sweet," accenting the "too" rather strongly, means that it is very good. The verb "to carry" is used in quite a different sense from ours. "I'll carry him to town," or "Carry him out of doors," means "go with him," or "accompany him." Again, the adjective "good" is used adverbially in the sense of "nicely" or "properly;" for example, "Show it to me good," or "You can't do it good." Many other words are used with different meanings from those we give them, but the ear soon gets accustomed to the strange mode of using them.



CHAPTER III.

*BOILING SPRING—TURNER'S HALL WOOD—BREAKFAST
PARTY—COLE'S CAVE.*

HE first expedition I made to any of the places of interest in Barbadoes was to the Boiling Spring, a place which directly belies its name, for I found that it was not a spring, neither did it boil. We were to breakfast at Ape's Hill, an estate some four miles from the spring, and perhaps fifteen from W——. The road was not new to me as far as Bridgetown, through which we passed. Soon after leaving the town a storm of rain came on, a thing very much to be dreaded, and with reason, for no one knows how heavily it will rain, and a heavy tropical squall will find out the weak places in any protective measures. The rain comes down so fast and heavily that the drops break up into mist when they hit the ground, and fly over the surface like steam. Everybody seems frightened of rain, and avoids it as sedulously as we should do. a draught ; and with cause, for an umbrella is of very little use. So we turned for shelter into

Bank Hall ; but a tropical rain seldom lasts long, and we were soon on our way again. We changed horses at Waterford, three miles from Georgetown. After leaving Waterford the country gradually changed its character ; and instead of gently undulating ground, clothed with bright green fields of waving sugar-cane, jagged and abrupt rocks rose here and there, and long rows of grey cliffs. These rocks all bear evidence on the face of them that they are of coralline formation, and that at some time or other they have been worn and wasted by the sea. In places, too, the road would cross a deep gully or ravine leading up from the sea, in the bottom of which would grow wild palms and other trees. And here let me say that no one who has not walked along and explored one of these gullies can have any idea of a great beauty of Barbadoes, which does not lie on the surface. Between upright walls of coral rock, reminding one strongly of Cheddar Cliffs, hollowed out into a thousand fantastic shapes, covered with green plants where the slightest clinging hold is afforded, the ravine winds along, here adorned with a stately silk-cotton tree, there fringed with clumps of Spanish needle or wild palms, and everywhere the home of countless shrubs. The bottom of the gully is in places an expanse of green close-growing turf ; in places covered with boulders of rock, over, under, or round which the explorer has to make his way. Detached corals strew the ground ; and amongst the boulders a cloak of greenery

springs up, covering their bareness, and beautiful exceedingly. Sometimes the perpendicular cliffs on either side give way to sloping banks, which are either green expanses of grass, broken at intervals by a jutting rock, or thickets of shrubs amongst which blossom lovely flowers, and where a darting humming bird is frequently to be seen.

Through a cutting in one of the ranges of coral rock, up rather a steep hill, the road ran for some distance, the sides of the cutting being covered with lycopodium, while frequent tufts of silver fern peeped out from the crevices of the rock. Here we passed a cabbage-palm, its stem covered from top to bottom with a parasite, with little green leaves like a diminutive hart's tongue fern, which greatly adorned the stiffness of its supporter. Arrived at Ape's Hill, we found breakfast awaiting us, which we thoroughly enjoyed, incited thereto by the appetites which a long drive in the fresh morning air had given us. Breakfast over, the carriage came to the door again, and a lovely drive of three miles took us as far as a carriage could go. The road was never laid out by an engineer; for it turned and wound and twisted, and went up hill and went down again, without any regard for the convenience of beasts of burden. We were now in a totally different country to any I had yet seen. Great rocks rose on each side of us, covered with cactuses and lycopodiums and trailing plants; while down in the hollows under the shadow of these cliffs lay still pools of water, on which

large lily-leaves lazily floated, surrounded by waving trees ; whilst over all crowds of gorgeous dragon-flies sported in the sunny air. By the roadside ran a little trickling rill, the first running water I had seen in the island. Up a steep hill we went : a sudden turn to the right, and a glorious view burst upon us. It could scarcely be believed that we were in the same land. Jagged hills of every shade of red and brown, with sharp edges, and bare of foliage, lay all around us ; at our feet lay a valley, cultivated here and there in patches wherever sufficient soil could be found on the face of the rock. At the further end of this valley, about two miles away, was a white fringe of breakers upon a strip of yellow sand, and beyond them the deep blue sea stretched away until it met the sky.

Half a mile further we found horses awaiting us, and mounting, we descended a steep hill, towards Turner's Hall Wood, one of the very few patches of virgin forest now left in the island, and which lay on the side of a steep hill on the opposite side of the valley. Grand butterflies were sailing about in all directions, and many times was I tempted to jump off my horse and spread my net in pursuit of them ; but I deferred this pleasure till later in the day. About a mile of awkward road led us to the bottom of the valley, through which ran a little brook, which, just where the road crossed it, formed a tiny cascade over a ledge of rock. Crossing this brook we dismounted, for the road now became impassible even to a

horse. It was merely a track amongst the trees, the roots of which crossed it in every direction, forming in some places perfect steps. A group of tall palms stood up in the valley, looking very grand against the other foliage; for their tall bare stems were hidden by trees, and their waving crowns only could be seen. Inside the wood was a dense mass of vegetation. On all sides grew young palms, covered, I found to my cost, with sharp prickles; while tall sandbox-trees, with their trunks studded from top to bottom with strong thorns and locust-trees and mahogany-trees, rose up on every side, and a dense undergrowth of shrubs filled in the spaces between their trunks. The ground was covered with a species of maiden-hair fern, while various kinds of grasses waved in the gentle breeze that found its way through the wood. Up in the branches grew large clumps of parasites, looking like green tufts of hart's tongue fern; and great creepers climbed to the tops of the tallest trees, and from thence let down long thin roots to the ground. - Every now and then, up in the fork of some tree, could be seen the brown nests of a colony of wood-ants, the covered galleries from which reached down to the ground and were carried along the tallest branches. Bright emerald-green lizards glanced about in the patches of sunshine which found their way through the thick foliage overhead.

After about half a mile of the steep rough path through the wood, we came to the gully in which is the Boiling Spring, and

climbing down its rocky side, we soon came to the spring itself. It is a round cavity about three feet in diameter, near the bed of the stream with water from which it is filled, the surface of which cavity is in perpetual commotion. No water rises in the spring, and the commotion is caused by gas, which escapes from the sides of the cavity and rises through the water. But the great wonder had yet to come. A negro girl appeared with an old sauce-pan and a petroleum-can with its bottom knocked out, and baling out about half the water with her sauce-pan, she placed the can in the middle of the hole. She struck a match, applied it to the spout, and it immediately burst up into a bright blaze. A servant produced some eggs from a basket, and in a trice the eggs were boiled and eaten to the accompaniment of a bottle of beer, which was very acceptable after our walk to the spring. The flame was extinguished by merely taking away the can, and then the spring began to fill, and when we left it was boiling away as merrily as ever.

After leaving the spring we resumed our ramble through the wood, and after some more steep climbing we emerged on the top of the hill on which the wood is situated, and another glorious view met our gaze. A valley lay many hundred feet below us, and the more gently-rising slope of the opposite hill was covered with various estates, each with its windmill and boiling-house ; while to our left, a couple of miles away, was the blue sea, into which the opposite hill jutted forth as a

rugged promontory. Half way down, between the top of the hill we were on and the valley below, are situated some wells, to the top of which rises a kind of liquid tar, which has lately become an article of export to England, and a very profitable one too. By the roadside, as we approached the wood, we had seen many wells and springs with their surface covered with oily tar, and in some few places it exuded black from the rock itself.

We returned through the wood, and as we approached the carriage I gave way to the wish to possess myself of some of the butterflies which abounded there ; so I chased butterflies till I was nearly melted, and was rewarded by capturing some fine specimens, which, however, were fated to give me but little joy; for the next morning I found that the tiny black ants, with which all houses swarm, had discovered my insects, and had walked off with their bodies and the greater part of their wings. In my ignorance I had not provided against their attacks.

We arrived at W—— in perfect safety after our interesting expedition. The part of the island in which Turner's Hall Wood is situated is called Scotland, and is, from its appearance, volcanic, without the tar-wells and the boiling spring to prove it so.

The morning after my excursion to the north of the island, I went to breakfast at Clapham, about two miles from W——. Before breakfast it is usual for the gentlemen of the party to

ride round and inspect the estate, and form their opinions of the crop and the produce it will yield. Since sugar-cane is the only crop grown, they are concerned with that alone; and after inspection each guest puts down his opinion of the yield on a piece of paper, and the average of the opinions being struck, it is considered a very fair criterion of the yield which may be expected. Cane in a very good year produces about three hogsheads of sugar per acre; but it is so much affected by drought or unfavourable weather, that in a bad year it will not produce a third of that quantity; and on the same estate, even in a fine season, some fields may be very bad, while others are just as good. A little after eight the company had all arrived, and horses being brought to the door, those who cared to, mounted and started off on their ride round. After inspecting the various cane-fields, which, as they were rather scattered, took about an hour and a half to do, we returned to the house, and found a very substantial breakfast awaiting us, consisting of mutton, ducks, chickens, guinea-fowls, fricasseed rabbits, and various other meats; while the centre of the table was taken up by an immense heap of "corn-jug," a compound of finely-minced beef, corn, peas, and rice, boiled or stewed together. Many kinds of vegetables were on the table, and cakes also of various sorts.

Immense appetites did the guests bring to the table, and things disappeared with astonishing rapidity. Conversation

had not much chance at first, but after a short time the buzz of voices began to be heard. The talk was chiefly about sugar, about rain, and about mules and their prices. Every estate keeps a rain-gauge, and the comparison of the various amounts of rain which have lately fallen is a fruitful source of words ; while mules being in universal request, and varying in price as many or few ships come laden with them to the island, are also a generally interesting topic. Breakfast at last finished, cards were produced, and after a rubber or two, the guests departed.

Cole's Cave is one of the natural curiosities of Barbadoes, and one morning my friend and I started off to explore it. It is in St Thomas's parish, nearly in the centre of the island, and upon an estate called Walke's Spring. The country in that part of Barbadoes, though from a distance it appears level or very gently undulating, is seamed and riven by deep gullies, and at the end of one of these gullies is situated the cave. The entrance to it, in the side of a hill, is down a steep funnel-shaped cavity, to the sides of which, abounding in ferns and creeping plants, cling one or two tall trees. This ends in a spacious cavern, lit from above by another opening into the light of day, besides the one by which we entered. Opposite to the entrance, close to the ground, is a roughly circular hole some three feet in diameter, the entrance to the cave itself. There is a tradition, that one Good Friday a man in a fit of

daring tried to ride a horse down the steep approach to the cave, an exploit he paid for with his life, for he and his horse were dashed to pieces at the bottom, and their blood sprinkled on the rocky walls. And to this day, every Good Friday, the blood may be seen, fresh and red, round the mouth of the cavern.

After penetrating a few yards in a stooping position, the entrance expands, and twenty yards more brings you to a deliciously cool stream of running water, which bursts out of the left wall of the cavern, and flows murmuring away under your feet into the darkness in front. Crossing the stream from side to side, stumbling and scrambling over the stones with which the floor of the cave is strewed, about three hundred yards is accomplished, when the cave narrows to a little hole some three feet square, the bottom of which is covered with water to the depth of a foot. I was about to pull off my shoes and socks for the purpose of exploring still further, when I was stopped from doing so by my negro guide, who vehemently urged me to desist; whether because there really was nothing beyond, or because there was some superstition attached to the place, I could not quite make out. My guide was a character in a way: he was singularly chary of imparting information as to the cave, and to all my questions and observations, whether positive or negative, he promptly answered "Yes, sir." I noticed this peculiarity, and asked him if he had been

far beyond this, and then asked him the searching question if he had been fifty miles further, and on his answering as usual "Yes," I came to the conclusion that he was not to be depended upon.

The roof of the cave in some places was eaten away into the resemblance of a gigantic honeycomb, while in others it was adorned with quantities of stalactites, though they did not reach any size. Returning from the barrier stream, which part of the cave is called the "Long Pond," to the right another gallery opened out, into which we turned. The stalactites here were much larger and more diverse in form than in the other gallery, though they were by no means large. Through holes in the floor the murmur of running water ascended, and in one place a strong gust of wind entered through a crevice in the rock. The floor was covered with a thick coating of mud, bearing the marks of water which had flowed in an opposite direction to that in which we were progressing—that is, towards the gallery we had just left—proving that the cave formed the natural drainage for a large part of the country, and that there was an opening into the air at the end of the gallery we were now traversing. On either side were to be seen dark openings tempting exploration, but which the guide said had been as yet unvisited. Our way was at last stopped by a pool of water similar to that in the first cave, so I turned back, and emerged into the light of day after exactly an hour's stay in

the interior of the cavern. There is evidently great room for further explorations inside, though whether they would be recompensed by the discoveries to be made of course I cannot tell.

There is another cavern, called Harrison's, some two or three miles from Cole's Cave, which some people affirm to be the better worth visiting of the two, and I am sorry that I had no opportunity of seeing for myself which was to be preferred.

The water in Cole's Cave is used by the neighbouring cottages, and I met inside a party of boys carrying it up in cans on the top of their heads, and lighting their way with torches made of bundles of cane-trash. It is said that the cave reaches as far as Bridgetown, and that the running water finds its way into the Carenage near the town.



CHAPTER IV.

*CIRCUS—CHURCH—CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS—GOVERNMENT
HOUSE—BALL—BLACK HATS—DRIVE TO L——.*



DAY or two after I arrived at Barbadoes, I went into Bridgetown to see a circus that announced itself with the far-spreading title of "The Great North and South American and London Circus." Just arrived from England as I was, when inside the tent I could hardly believe myself out of that country; for the place was so badly lit up, that the fact that nearly every spectator was black was not very noticeable. The riding was nothing remarkable, and the dresses were tawdry and gaudy: the ladies in one scene rode in yellow calico habits, decorated with immense bows of green stuff. Towards the end of the performance the negroes outside grew envious and inquiring, and began to tear down the hoarding that surrounded the tent, and soon had made a hole big enough to creep through. One by one they crept in; but there was a strong force of policemen inside, who collared them as fast as

they got in, and walked them off to jail by the door, which happened to be at the opposite side of the tent. Therefore, as those outside did not know the fate of those who got inside, they kept coming in, and the policemen kept walking them out, for the rest of the performance.

The Sunday after my arrival, January 5th, I went to church. It was outside and inside just like an English church, only the windows were much larger, and were open to let the refreshing breeze enter. It happened to be a rainy day, and as a shower came on, there was a general rush to shut the windows, without any regard to the noise that was made, or the interruption that was caused to the service; and as soon as the rain was over, the windows were opened again directly with an equal disregard of noise. The Christmas decorations were up, and were very pretty, consisting of palm-leaves, and texts and vandykes of the leaves of the Spanish needle, a kind of yucca. I thought it did not look so well as a nice holly-and ivy-decorated church, though palm-branches form a very graceful adornment. In the same church the next Sunday I was nearly melted, for there was very little wind; but I was rewarded by hearing as the sermon a review, historical, political, agricultural, moral, and religious, of the past year, and a prospect, also qualified by the same adjectives, of the year to come, from which review and prospect I derived much information and not a little internal amusement.

There is a very good garden at Government House, and a very nice conservatory, which I was asked to look at ; and I went, for the moment forgetting that I was in the tropics, and that glass would not be wanted ; so I expected glass and flues, but it was merely a large square place, boarded to keep out the wind, but otherwise open to the air. A fountain was in the middle, and a mango-tree at one end, on which were planted and hung about all sorts of orchids and parasites. There is a very fine collection of ferns, and very fine specimens of *Adiantum Farleyense*. There was a collection of beautiful-leaved plants, and at one end of the conservatory were three arches covered with creepers, underneath which was arranged a collection of begonias in full blossom. Round the fountain grew fine specimens of *Cyperus alternifolius*, while every vacant space was filled with ferns, and the inside of the protecting fence was hung with orchids in cocoanuts. It was very pretty, and the specimens were fine-growing plants—not stunted, as our greenhouse flowers so often are.

In the garden at Government House were the first walks and grass-plots that I had seen. There was a bed covered with *Plumbago capensis*, which looked very well. There were many kinds of young palms growing up, and roses seemed to flower better there than in other places in the island.

While I was in the island the English fleet visited Barba-

does, and in its honour a grand ball was given at a house called Erdiston. The decorations were not untasteful, and consisted of pink and white calico looped up in various ways, and plentifully adorned with anchors cut out of silver paper. The rooms were rather small and very much crowded, so that there was hardly space to stir, and of course dancing was a work of great labour. The band of the regiment played, and played very well. The supper was a perfect scramble; a rather small room with a rather small door was allotted for it, and therefore there were frequent dead-locks between those who had supped and those who were anxious to do so. In consequence, before the time that our party scrambled into the room, the supper was dreadfully messed and pulled about; and there was not much left on the table but the carcasses of poultry, for all meats and sweets had nearly disappeared. Champagne, however, was abundant, but not so glasses to drink it out of; but the satisfaction was not very great even when the glass had been procured, and filled and emptied; for it was rather poor stuff, and smacked strongly of the British goose-berry.

There is one thing in Barbadoes I quarrel with immensely—that is, the way the tall black hat is worshipped. That institution, so ugly, so uncomfortable even in cold England, is twice as ugly, three times as uncomfortable, in tropical Barbadoes, where blackness is a sun-and-heat-attracting colour to be

sedulously avoided, and tightness a heat-giving quality to be as sedulously shunned. O little Grundy-ridden island of Barbadoes ! you, so small that everybody is either related to, or an intimate of, everybody else, do you say that a black hat is a token of respectability ? Surely you know who is respectable without that mark of Grundyitish slavery. O black hat ! the blackest blot on fair Barbadoes, would that I could drown you in yon blue sea, and so wash away that stain of Grundyism for ever !

The Barbadian ladies do not seem to have much taste for flowers. While the most beautiful flowers grow all over the island, I saw many bouquets at the ball composed of English chrysanthemums and spindly rosebuds. In few of the houses in which I have been have there been natural flowers about the house, but what requirement there was for floral decoration was satisfied in many cases by a vase of artificial or paper flowers. A vase of paper flowers inside, and lovely jasmines and ipomœas, and the treasures of our greenhouses, outside, is a rather surprising sight to an Englishman.

Having had an invitation to stay a few days at L——, in the parish of St Lucy, in the extreme north of the island, on the 14th of January I drove there. From Bridgetown it is about twenty miles away. The road runs close by the sea for the greater part of the distance. In the outskirts of Bridgetown are situated some very pretty villas, and around them, in the

spaces of ground which serve for gardens, grow some very handsome flowers and trees. I have already referred to the Bougainvillea and Poinsettia, both of which grow commonly. Barbadoes pride or flower-fence (*Cesalpinia*) is very handsome; it is a straggling bush, with acacia-like leaves, and bears a loose pea-shaped blossom, with a bunch of very long and numerous stamens. Most beautiful ipomœas and convolvuluses abound, of every shade of blue from bright turquoise to deep indigo and purple; while the rich crimson *Ipomœa Horsfallii*, and the tiny scarlet-blossomed and delicate-leaved *I. Quamoclit*, were frequently to be seen. The flowering trees which made the greatest show were the acordia and the various jasmines, while for magnificence of foliage the bread-fruit surpasses everything. It is a tall-growing tree, with very large dark green and glossy leaves very much cut and divided, while up amongst the branches hang the lighter green balls, which are its fruit. Then there is the ebony, not the ebony of commerce, with large yellow-brown pods hanging in quantities amongst its leaves, so light that they stir with the gentlest breeze, and rattle against the branches and among themselves; and so the tree has gained the local name of "women's tongues," because of the incessant noise it makes. The "flamboyant" is a low tree which covers itself with scarlet blossoms at the commencement of the rainy season, but which, when I saw it, was bearing its long sickle-shaped pods at the ends of its somewhat gauntly-

growing branches. Its pod is frequently two feet long, two inches in breadth, and half an inch thick.

By the side of the road for some distance from Bridgetown runs a telegraph wire, supported on the usual stiff and ugly posts; it is part of the wire to St Lucia, and which, touching at all the islands, connects them with America, and so with England. The road, when sometimes running just above the sea on some low cliff, or when sometimes separated from the sea by a strip of land covered with manchineel-bushes, is very interesting. Manchineel is one of the very few plants not to be meddled with in Barbadoes. It grows as low bush-like trees, with yellowish evergreen foliage, strikingly in style and shape of leaf like an inoffensive pear-tree, but so full of acrid and venomous juice that even a bruised leaf will raise a troublesome blister should it touch the hand.

We passed through two collections of houses dignified with the name of towns—namely, Holetown and Speight's Town, locally called "Spikes." The former place is nothing more than a rather larger collection of wooden huts than usual, and perhaps the huts themselves are rather more like houses than usual, and seemed less likely to blow down at the first gust of wind. The generality of huts are a standing monument to the fact that hurricanes are not usual occurrences in Barbadoes, nor even violent winds; for I am sure even a commonplace English storm would make a clean sweep of

the rickety old things. Speight's Town is certainly more like a town than Holetown, for we drove through a continuous though irregular street for about half a mile. The houses are built of stone or brick, and not wood, and there are some very decent shops and stores to be seen. Close to the town there are two jetties stretching out into the sea, and some few ships were anchored there.

Patches of Guinea corn were to be frequently seen by the roadside ; next to sugar-cane it is the most frequent crop, and a very striking one. It is a tall-growing grass, perhaps twelve or fifteen feet high, with a thin stem and scattered leaves ; bearing at the top a large head, formed of a bunch of little grains, each on their own stalk. Along the edges of the cane-fields are planted pigeon peas, or bonavists, or sorrel-plants. Pigeon peas grow on low bushes ; the blossoms are small and yellow, and the peas themselves are brownish when boiled, and rather tough, but not unlike our peas in flavour. The bonavist is another vegetable of the pea tribe ; it is in appearance like a dwarf French bean ; the pods, however, are not eaten, only the seeds ; they are the shape of French beans, only smaller and flatter, and very tender and well flavoured ; they make capital soup. Sorrel is a plant of the mallow tribe, with very red stems and leaf-stalks, from the fruit of which a very pleasant and refreshing drink is made.

There is not a very great quantity of birds to be met with.

The commonest bird is called the "blackbird," and he is to be seen on every piece of freshly-cultivated ground. He is about the size of a starling, jetty black, with a long tail, and evidently first cousin on one side to a magpie, and on the other to a jackdaw. They are generally in small flocks. There is also a brown bird, called a dove, rather common, which makes a low dove-like cooing that always sounds distant, however near it may be. A little bird, very much like a sparrow, no handsomer certainly in dress, hops about; and a yellow bird, the size and look of a tomtit, haunts the borders of the cane-fields. Humming birds frequently flit across the road, but fly so swiftly that they are hardly distinguished before they are gone; and it is only when they come and rifle a flower of its honey close to you, that you can have any idea of their brilliant colouring.

There is no running water in Barbadoes except in the north-east part of the island, and very few pools of standing water; but by those, there are generally to be seen negro women washing. This is done by laying the clothes on one stone and beating them with another. Starch is freely used by the washer-women of the island, but chiefly where an Englishman could dispense with it. Every part of a shirt is starched, and pocket-handkerchiefs come home as stiff as cardboard. If they would put more starch in a shirt-front, and less elsewhere, it would greatly conduce to the comfort of the wearer.

With the exception of the interest it derives from being so close to the sea, the road is rather tame. But for one short spell of one hundred yards, about a mile and a half to the north of Speight's Town, it runs through a cutting of coral rock some fifty feet deep, the sides of which seem actually to overhang, and are literally clothed with trees, clinging to every available spot, nearly meeting overhead, and darkening the road. But we were soon out of this romantic cutting, and the road became more uninteresting still, since it left the sea-shore and struck inland. It became hilly too; and in one place it wound in curves up the side of a hill, so that it could be seen below us for some distance.

For the last few miles it was dark, and we finished our drive to the accompaniments of the shrill chirp of the crickets and the croaking of the frogs. The crickets keep up an incessant noise from dusk to sunrise; while the frogs, or "crapauds," as they are called, spend the dark hours in reiterating their peculiar note, which is not unmusical, reminding one of water poured slowly out of a bottle, or the syllables, "gog-log-log," spoken no quicker than ordinary talk.

CHAPTER V.

*ST NICHOLAS ABBEY—FARLEY HILL—SPOUT—ST JOHN'S
CHURCH—CODRINGTON COLLEGE—THE CRANE.*

THE morning after my arrival at L——, I was “carried,” to use a Barbadian expression, to a bathing-place some four miles away, and if any place could tempt a man to bathe, it would. It was a small wooden house situated in a little bay between two bold promontories, and in front of it stretched a shelf of rocks, over which the waves dashed furiously. A basin some fifty feet square has been dug out behind two or three of the largest rocks, and over part of this basin the bathing-house is built. The basin is about four feet deep at low tide, and about six at high water ; for that is all the variance between high and low water at Barbadoes. The sea is as clear as crystal, and the most delightful blue in colour ; the sand so white and velvety, and the water so buoyant and warm. Little fishes abound, about the size of a minnow, striped with a lovely turquoise blue ; while larger fishes, green, yellow, and black, swim about in the clear water. Out on the distant

rock barriers and promontories the waves break incessantly into large snowy-white masses of foam, while from these breakers drifts continually before the wind a fine mist, dimming the outline of the distant cliffs and covering one's hands and face with briny spray. In the coral rock close at hand are imbedded recent shells; and in one place I saw a gigantic conch-shell gradually turning, I suppose, into a fossil.

An excursion I took from L—— to Cherry-Tree Hill, one of the best points of view in the island, is worth describing. A drive of a few miles brought us to St Nicholas Abbey. The drive was, like most drives in Barbadoes, through nothing but waving fields of sugar-canes, which I must say get rather monotonous when one sees nothing but canes, or fields prepared for canes, or fields of young canes, on every side and in every direction; while the only tree of any size that occurs about these cane-fields to break the monotony is the tall, gaunt, and somewhat sorrowful-looking cabbage-palm. St Nicholas Abbey is an old stone-built English-looking house, and is all the more English looking because it possesses those appendages, so rare in Barbadoes—I think I may even say unique—chimney-stacks. The house had a garden in front of it in English fashion, and was fenced in; there were quantities of trees round it, chiefly mahogany.

Leaving St Nicholas Abbey, we drove to Cherry-Tree Hill. The road climbs up a steep hill, and is bordered on each side

by a row of mahogany-trees, close behind which on either side rise up steep cliffs of grey coral rock. When the top is reached there bursts upon you a splendid view of the country described in a former chapter, and called Scotland. Jagged, sharp, and rugged hills, clustered together in great disorder, lay below us, of all shades of red and yellow and brown ; while in the valleys, or wherever earth could be found, waved fields of green cane, looking graceful and beautiful because of their association with such rugged rocky scenery.

Then we drove on to Farley Hill, a very fine house, the finest in Barbadoes. That most graceful fern *Adiantum Farleyense* was raised here. The fernery is in a valley shaded by evergreen and tamarind trees, and is full of the most lovely ferns. I heard the history of *Farleyense* : it seems to be undecided whether it is a species, or a variety, or a hybrid ; and there seem to be some forcible arguments against each of these views, though of course one must be the right one. Against its being a distinct species it is said that it has never been found wild, but comes up amongst *Adiantum* seedlings in Farley Hill fernery, and in one other only in the island. Against the view that it is a variety is urged the fact that about one in ten of these seedlings is always a *Farleyense*, which never varies in its form ; nor do the other seedlings vary from each other, as they most probably would do if it were only a sport. While, of course, against its being a hybrid, it is asked

how ferns which bear no flowers, and on whose spores no bees or flies ever rest, can get hybridised with one another. My informant, nevertheless, imagined it to be a hybrid between *Adiantum tenerum* and *A. macrophyllum*, though if it is so, it seems strange that it should not occur in many other ferneries where there are specimens of those two species. After discussing the ferns we walked through the grounds, and up a path bordered with graceful bamboos, which led to a spot commanding a fine view, much the same in character as that to be seen from Cherry-Tree Hill.

From Farley Hill we drove by a circuitous route back to L——, my host wishing to show me as much of the country as possible. On the way we passed a curious cutting in a perpendicular face of rock, some distance above the level of the road, and said to have been made by the Caribs, the primeval natives of the island. It is a cavity about four feet wide and eight feet high, and the top seems to be a perfect semicircle; how far into the cliff it penetrates I could not see. That it could have been made by uncivilised Caribs appears to me doubtful. We called also at the Chapel of All Saints, where there are some beautiful painted glass windows and many old monuments. In almost all the churches of the island are old monuments, bearing coats-of-arms and well-known English names, and in many instances the date of the seventeenth century.

The next morning I went to see a natural curiosity called the Spout. I had hoped while I was in this part of the island to visit a celebrated cave in the cliff at the extreme northern point, but which is very difficult and dangerous to reach except in certain conditions of wind and sea, which did not occur during my stay. It is called the Animal-Flower Cave, on account of the variety and beauty of the sea-anemones which inhabit some large natural basins in the floor of the cave. So I was fain to be satisfied with hearing of its beauties. The Spout, however, is very curious. The face of the country for half a mile from the edge of the cliff, here perhaps fifty feet high, is a stony waste without any vegetation but a creeping saltwort or a straggling cactus here and there. The cliff is broken into several ledges, and the whole coast is very rugged, while rocks of all sizes stand solitarily amongst the waves. Both rocks and cliff, however, preserve a certain squareness of outline; in consequence their tops are flat, and over these rocks break the waves, which run off their tops and ledges in most beautiful cascades, which last generally until the next wave comes, for they follow each other in somewhat quick succession. The Spout is a hole in one of the flat ledges of the cliff, and from this hole, a rough circular opening perhaps two feet in diameter, rises in stormy weather a column of spray fifty feet high; and though when I saw it, it rose only twenty feet at the outside, still it was a magnificent sight. I discovered that

the Spout was not the wave that was forced through the hole by its own rush, for the wave itself never appeared through the hole; but it was caused by the water, which by the breaking of one wave over the ledge was left there, running in a volume down the Spout-hole; for before the water could all run away the next wave came, and filling up the mouth of the cavern in the face of the cliff connected with the hole, the compressed air turned back the water running down the hole, and forced it up into the air in the finest imaginable spray. Thanks to the prevailing wind, we were enabled to get quite close to the Spout on the windward side of it. There seemed to be many little holes in the rock communicating with the main cavern, for on listening closely, the air could be heard hissing and humming through the crevices when a wave struck the face of the cliff. Some distance from the Spout grew some very fine clumps of prickly pear of two kinds—one tall and columnar, like an elongated cucumber; the other, the common sort, a collection of large fleshy green lobes covered with immense prickles.

After my return from L—— to W——, I went to visit St John's Church and Codrington College. The drive was through characteristic Barbadian scenery, through cane-fields, and cuttings in the coral rock, which are met with on every road—here passing a grove of mahogany-trees, and there a group of cabbage-palms, while nearly every rising ground was crowned by a windmill. From St John's Church a lovely view is ob-

tained, in which the sea forms the prominent feature. The church is situated on the brow of a hill at least 600 feet above the sea, and which slopes down steeply but gradually to the shore, which is not much more than half a mile away as the crow flies. By the shore, the ground, being rather more level, is covered with canes; while higher up, as it slants more steeply, negro huts, with their patches of gardens placed in the crevices of the rock, are to be observed. A large expanse of ocean can be seen, as one is so high above it, and it is the most delightful blue in colour. Through the cane, here and there by the sea, peeps out in the distance the white road, and solitary cocoanut-palms stand down by the water's edge. There is a lovely orange-orchard attached to the Rectory of St John's. In it there are quantities of trees as big as a full-grown apple or pear tree, covered with their fruit—oranges, shaddocks, and grape fruit, which hang down in every direction from their branches, a most tempting sight.

After going over the church we drove along the top of the cliff to Society Chapel, whence we walked to Codrington College, which is situated on the level ground below. The carriage-road to the College from St John's Church is very circuitous; but there is a shorter way down the face of the cliff, quite impassable, however, for a carriage. Codrington College is a kind of finishing school where boys have an advanced course of study, but where, of course, they do not grant degrees. It is a large

collegiate-looking building, situated some three hundred yards from the road, between which and it is a level expanse of turf, broken towards the College by a large square pool of water. Through the middle of this plot of grass runs the approach to the College, bordered on each side by a closely-planted row of cabbage-palms ; a row of which trees runs all round the grassy expanse, and single specimens are scattered about near the building. To the right and left of the College are shrubberies, and single trees of teak, mahogany, and whitewood show themselves in various directions.

Under the guidance of my friend I went to a small building in one corner of the grounds, in which we found a delightful fresh-water bath, perhaps ten yards wide and twenty long. Procuring some towels from one of the students, without more ado in we went and splashed about to our heart's content for a quarter of an hour. The temperature of the water was delightful, and the only drawback to its being the nicest dip I had had for some time was, that we had a long and steep hill to climb under the burning sun before we could get back to our carriage. The bath was decorated with various mottoes, of which water was the subject : the one that met the gaze on entering was very good—

“ Emblem of life, which, still, as we survey,
Seems motionless, yet ever glides away.”

There are two or three springs of water in the neighbourhood

of the College, one of which supplies the bath with an ever-running stream, while another is conducted along the sea-shore all round the south end of the island as far as Bridgetown, and affords that town a constant supply of the purest water.

After our bath we called upon the Principal of the College, and then climbed the steep path and regained with great satisfaction the carriage.

Another part of the island that I visited was the south-east corner, where is situated a watering-place called the Crane. Here is the district in which aloes are grown, from which the celebrated drug Barbadoes aloes is extracted. There are large fields of them, like dwarf thick-leaved yuccas, not rising more than a foot from the ground, and of a reddish-grey-green colour. Some of the fields were in blossom, and their peculiar but not unpleasant odour filled the air: the blossom is a tall spike bearing from the top some way down the stem a quantity of yellow tubes—in fact exactly like *Tritoma uvaria*, only smaller, and yellow instead of red. Cotton, too, is grown there; but it is a very ragged and uninteresting plant, very much like a vegetable called “ochra.” There are also some large flat fields of sour grass, looking more like English meadows than anything I had yet seen, though the grass appeared to be very coarse and wiry.

At the farthest eastward point of this district is a large square castellated building, called Lord’s Castle or Long Bay Castle,

erected evidently, as they say, regardless of expense. The chief story is raised some distance from the ground, and is approached on each of the four sides by a wide flight of steps composed of chequers of white and black marble. I did not go inside, but was told that the stucco cornices were well worth seeing. The building is situated on a bare and bleak promontory, and overlooking, between it and the sea, a grove of coconut-palms ; but still for all the beautiful foliage of those trees it looks very desolate. It is a long distance from any other gentleman's residence, and in consequence both of its grandeur and solitariness no one lives there.

From the Castle we drove to the Crane, which consisted chiefly of scattered and unpretending houses, with a thick sprinkling of negro huts, and stopped to visit a place called the "Horse," a half-natural, and half-artificial curiosity. The edge of the cliff is approached, and in front is seen a flight of steps apparently leading down to the sea ; on descending them, however, they suddenly turn to the right and lead through a cleft in the coral rock, bordered by high and rugged cliffs, down to a cavern-like opening at the level of the sea, though solid rock is interposed between you and the ocean. At the bottom of this cavern are three natural basins of water, two of which are connected with the sea, and fill and partly empty with the rise and fall of every wave, while the third is constantly full of fresh water. It is a grand place, with its rugged

rocks ; the dim light just struggling in through the top of the ravine ; the ever filling and emptying cavities ; and last, not least in inspiring awe, the never-ceasing thump of the waves on the other side of the rocky barrier. We stayed there some time, for it was cool and pleasant, while the sun outside was hot and glaring.

Many were the breakfast parties I went to, and many were the cane-fields I inspected, during my stay in Barbadoes, and the hospitality I met with was unbounded. Every one seemed to have entered into a conspiracy to promote my comfort and happiness, and it was with a feeling of regret that I saw the day appointed for my departure from such kind friends rapidly approach.



CHAPTER VI.

*NEGROES—ESTATES—LEAVE BARBADOES—TOBAGO—FIRST
SIGHT OF DEMERARA—HOTEL-HUNTING.*

HE peasantry of Barbadoes is nearly entirely black, though there are some few poor whites. They are civil, industrious, and contented ; and since the island is so thickly inhabited, they are obliged to work ; for though they generally own their own huts, and get a good deal out of the little patches of land attached to them, still it is not sufficient to keep them without working. They have the credit of being in a measure immoral, but since the females very largely outnumber the males, it is so accounted for. They are, as a rule, very honest, and no great crimes prevail amongst them. Offences against the person, as assaults and suchlike, are rare. The greatest temptation placed in their way, and one to which they seem not unfrequently to fall victims, is the facility for stealing sugar-cane from the cane-fields, which are totally unprotected except by watchmen, who of course cannot be in many places at one time. The negro is very fond of cane, and practically

lives upon it during the crop-time—that is, while sugar is being made. The punishment for a first offence of stealing cane is three months' imprisonment; on a second conviction, six months, which term is also the punishment for all after offences of the same nature. Fowl-stealing is not very prevalent, though one sometimes hears of it; but for that also there is great facility because of the quantity of poultry kept at the various estates. Children abound, and the boys run about clothed in nothing till they are eight or ten, but the girls are invariably decently dressed.

The negroes are very religious on Sundays, and flock to church and chapel dressed in the most wondrous manner; but they do not carry their religion with them every day in the week, nor does it penetrate very deep. A negro one day, after hearing a powerful and uprousing sermon, announced to his friends that he was quite ready to die that night. One of his friends then, while the negro in question was going to bed by the light of a candle, approached his front door and knocked three times in a most sepulchral manner. "Who dere?" asked the negro. No answer, but three more knocks. "Who dere?" again he shouted. In a deep bass voice his friend answered, "I am Michael, the angel of death." "What you want here?" parleyed the negro inside. "I am come for the soul of Thomas Jones." A scuffle inside, and "O Lor'! O Lor'!" in a smothered voice. Out went the candle, and care-

fully peeping through the window of the hut, he said, "You come for Tom Jones, eh? Well, him just gone out;" and off he bolted as fast as he could through the back door. Another tale, much to the same purpose, is the following: A nigger hut had a pumpkin-vine growing over the roof, and a fellow once climbed up to steal the pumpkins, when, to his horror, the vine gave way, and he was let through the roof, and came down between the owner and his wife, who were in bed. At his wit's end for an answer to the indignant complaint and question of the disturbed sleeper, "Who dere?" his disturber answered, "I am de debil himself, come to take you away." Away went the man and his wife, one one way, another another, leaving the thief in possession of the house and his stolen pumpkins, which had fallen through with him, and with which he decamped in peace.

There are some coloured families who are wealthy in Barbadoes, but the line of demarcation between coloured people and whites is strongly drawn and firmly maintained. People in England consider that the word "creole" implies an admixture of coloured blood in the person so addressed. But it is not so: it is an adjective implying born in the colony, and is not only applied to people, but also to animals, as creole beef and creole mutton; and I have even heard of creole soda-water, in opposition to soda-water imported from England. All the white people, therefore, are white creoles, and the black

people are black creoles, only in respect to the colony they are born in; and not to the rest of the islands.

Both whites and blacks, however, agree in one respect, and that is intense admiration for their native island, which I think they have some cause for. A ludicrous story is told of a negro who was cook of a sailing-vessel between England and Barbadoes. During the voyage he dressed in the quietest manner, and was all that a cook should be; but just before he landed it was observed that he was got up in the finest style—black coat, white waistcoat, gold chain, tall hat, and showy gloves. He was asked what was the matter. “Oh,” said he, “Barbadoes is such a pomposity fine nation, I must dress well to go on shore.”

To a superficial observer the two great wants of Barbadoes, to increase immensely its productive powers, are manure and water. There is no running water in the island except in Scotland, and though there is generally plenty of rain, still that is not like a perpetual stream. Every inch of land that can be cultivated is under cane, so that only the rocky and scrubby land that will produce nothing is left to graze the cattle upon. Now, without good feeding and plenty of litter cattle will not produce manure, and except in crop-time there is no litter; so that even the scrubby bushes which grow upon the rocks are cut down and thrown into the cattle-pen, and it may be imagined that branches of trees will not make first-

rate stuff for fields. So the consequence is, that great quantities of guano are used, and cane is so stimulated that the ratoons, as the second crop from the same plant is called, are comparatively useless. Yet with all these disadvantages, sugar-cane is a very paying crop in Barbadoes; and land fetches a high price, from £80 to £100 per acre, and with good management will return quite ten or twelve per cent. upon the purchase-money.

Many estates belong to absentee proprietors, who draw their money, and live in England or elsewhere. The estate is then put into the hands of an attorney, who manages it, and frequently has many estates on his hands at the same time. An attorney corresponds to a land agent, but he is responsible for the cropping and cultivation of an estate, as well as exercising the ordinary duties of a land agent. He is paid by a percentage on the money produced by the crop. Under the attorney are managers, selected and placed on the various estates by himself, and who live in the estate houses. In consequence, these houses are very frequently sadly out of repair; for since the owner does not live in the house, he does not much mind what condition it is in. The salary of a manager is about £200 a year, but he has many perquisites; horses are found him, and their food and stabling, and other privileges really double or treble that sum.

At last the 30th of January came, on which day I was to

start from Barbadoes to Demerara. There is a very perfect system of signals all over Barbadoes, and some signal-station or other is visible from every part of the island; and by means of flags one can always tell what ships are coming in, and from what direction, so that there is no fear of missing the steamer if a good watch is kept for the signal "steamer to windward;" for as the intercolonial boats await at Barbadoes the arrival of the Transatlantic steamer, the signal for her arrival is the signal for the departure of the other boats.

But the incoming steamer, the *Moselle*, had encountered bad weather during her voyage; so my luggage had been packed up, and a constant watch had been kept from a neighbouring hill on the signal-station for two days, before the looked-for flag was hoisted. However, on the morning of Saturday, the 1st of February, the signal was flying; so I said goodbye to my kind friends, and hastened down to Bridgetown, and went on board the *Corsica*, the steamer going to Demerara.

The *Corsica* was not an edifying boat to travel in; she had high wooden bulwarks—so high, in fact, that you could see nothing but sky when you were sitting down—and the deck and saloon gave you a feeling of oppressiveness. Her steering apparatus was of the shakiest: it kept up a continual lively quiver, and the man at the wheel had to hold on like grim death to keep it at all steady. Moreover, there was on board the circus company, with nine horses and mules, which animals by no

means contributed a small share to the savoury and odoriferous scents on board.

We started from Barbadoes about three o'clock. Next morning as soon as it was light I looked through my port-hole, and saw that we were running by the side of land, so I went up on deck and found that it was the island of Tobago. I don't quite know why it was, but the idea of seeing Tobago was quite a shock to my ideas of propriety. Having heard in the days of infancy, and ever since, of the Old Man of Tobago, who lived on rice, gruel, and sago, I had learned to look upon the place as somewhat mythical, and should as soon have expected to see the veritable bean-stalk up which Jack climbed, as the residence of that celebrated old man.

Tobago, from the vessel, seemed mountainous—all hills and valleys—apparently too hilly to be cultivated, and scattered over with trees and cocoa-palms. But my powers of observation were not of the clearest, for two reasons—firstly, the unsteadiness of the vessel; secondly, on account of rain, which descended in frequent showers. At last we turned round a point of land, and soon found ourselves off Scarborough, the chief town of the island. From the steamer this town seemed merely a collection of houses placed upon the side of a hill, and bowered in trees. To the right a hill rose more precipitously, on the top of which was placed a fort, a white low building, with a few houses near it.

Inland one could see distant hills, all appearing well wooded, and bringing to remembrance the country around Dunkeld. Cocoa-palms abounded near the sea-shore, and further inland ; but we were too far away to distinguish clearly the various kinds of foliage. Some men came off from the shore with humming-bird and other skins for sale.

It did not take long to transact our business at Tobago, and soon we turned our head to sea and steamed off. Some forty hours afterwards, on waking in the middle of the night, I found that the *Corsica* had anchored at the mouth of the Demerara river, waiting for morning and the tide. So, first thing in the morning I went on deck, and found that the beautiful blue of the water had merged into a pea-soup colour ; while far in the distance lay the shore, looking as flat and uninteresting as can be imagined, with tall chimneys sticking up in all directions, some of them smoking in a way that would not discredit an English factory. About seven o'clock we once more started, and in about an hour we dropped anchor in the Demerara river, off Georgetown. Since the site of Georgetown is so flat, no good view is obtained on approaching it from the river. Nothing is to be seen but low wooden buildings and warehouses, over which in the distance can be seen the towers of churches and the tops of the higher houses, amongst which tower up tall cabbage and cocoanut palms.

As soon as the *Corsica* was safe at her moorings, she was

surrounded by a host of boats clamouring for passengers ; so selecting a clean-looking one, I had my luggage carried down ; and confiding in the old proverb, first come first served, as far as hotel accommodation is concerned, I made the best and quickest way I could to Beckwith's Hotel, the best establishment of that kind in Georgetown. But although I was the first passenger who arrived there, I did not get served, for the place was full, so I had to seek other lodgings. I then went to Baine's Hotel (which during my stay in Georgetown was rechristened the Tavistock) ; but that also was full, having been secured for the circus company. There was only one hotel then left, the Phœnix, and thither I wended my way. It was full also, and I was beginning to despair, when a gentleman with whom I had crossed the Atlantic in the *Tasmanian* happened to hear my voice, and coming out of his room, kindly allowed me to rig up a shakedown in the corner of his room for two or three days, until I could be taken in at Beckwith's. So I had my goods brought to the Phœnix, and after having breakfast and a rest in the middle of the day, in the afternoon sallied forth to explore the town.

CHAPTER VII.

DEMERARA.

THE first impression that Georgetown gives you, on exploring, is its resemblance to a large garden rather than a town. The streets are very wide, so wide that the beaten track runs down the middle, and leaves a broad grass-plot on each side of it. Either on each side the road, or down the middle of some, runs a dyke or canal, which seemed sometimes to be of a pestilential character. All the houses are separate, and each one stands on its little plot of ground, which is usually filled with flowering trees and shrubs and palms, and thus giving a very pretty effect, though the perfect flatness of the ground prevents much being seen at one glance. The chief street of the city is Water Street, which runs parallel to the river for some distance ; and as in it the houses approach more closely to each other, it wears in a greater measure than other parts of the town the appearance of an ordinary street. The other streets of importance run parallel with this, inter-

sected at regular intervals by cross streets, for the town is laid out in regular squares.

The town is lighted with gas, although oil-lamps had been abolished only a few weeks before I arrived there.

The houses are nearly entirely constructed of wood, roofed with slates or shingle. Slates are ordered to be used by law in the more populous parts of the town.

The houses are raised from the ground on pillars, to protect the inhabitants from the damp rising from the marshy soil on which they are built. Before each runs a balcony or gallery, and the windows are shaded with jalousies or venetian blinds. In most instances the offices for the servants and kitchens are placed in separate buildings; and each house is surrounded by trees and shrubs, and enclosed from the street by wooden palings. White enters largely into the decoration of the outside of the houses, and forms a pleasing contrast to the green of the abundant foliage.

The macadam of the streets is carefully made and preserved, but soon gets very uneven and bumpy, on account of the marshy clay which forms the subsoil. As I said, wide strips of grass run between the centre roadway and the trenches on each side, which form the chief drainage of the town. These trenches are flushed at high water, and as the tide retires it carries away with it all offensive matter. Sometimes, however, the trenches get so choked up with mud or other refuse that

the water in them stagnates, and gives a filthy and pestilential look to those parts of the town in which this accident occurs.

There is no drinking-water except the rain, which is carefully collected from the roofs of the houses and stored in large wooden tubs. It is a satisfaction to know that one's drinking-water is not drawn from, and has no connection with, the long muddy trenches ; though what dead cats and dogs a careful exploration of these tubs would reveal, imagination only can depict.

Negroes seem in Georgetown to be of a higher class than at Barbadoes. One sees more of them dressed in ordinary European costume. Coolies and coolie women abound in the streets. The men are slightly built, but sinewy, and with rather a sly look about them. The women are all small, but many of them are very good-looking ; they frequently carry about with them a great weight of silver in armlets and necklaces and rings. Some wear rings all round their ears, not only in the lobe. Most of them wear a nose-ring, either through the middle cartilage of the nose, or through one side or the other ; and if they are not wearing the ring, they insert a small wooden or silver stopper in the ring-place. They frequently wear rings on their toes. Their commonest ornaments are silver coins hung side by side to a chain, and of these they then form necklaces and bands for their arms. They carry their children on their hips, and the usual clothing for young children is simply a piece of

string tied round their waist. The men wear as clothing only a loose short shirt with short sleeves, and a strip of cloth tied round the waist, and looped and twisted up in a manner that leaves the whole leg bare. The women wear short dresses and a loose jacket over them, sometimes of bright colours, with very short or no sleeves ; and over all is frequently thrown a light scarf, which sometimes covers the back of the head also. They generally have long and beautiful hair, sometimes left flowing down the back ; and the parting of the hair of some of them, according to their caste, is coloured red with anatto. The especial weapon of the coolies is a light pole, some eight feet long, made of hackia-wood, and called a hackia-stick ; they frequently carry them with them into the town, and they look as if, when used with skill, they would form very murderous weapons indeed.

Sometimes in the streets of Georgetown may be seen the natives of the country. Buck Indians they are called, while the two sexes are distinguished by the names of Bucks and Buckhines. I saw a man and two women walking down Water Street one day ; they were copper-coloured and plump, clothed in nakedness, with the exception only of a little ornamental piece of cloth, perhaps a foot square, tied round their waists with a narrow blue string. Their brown naked bodies looked very strange to my unaccustomed eyes, as they walked sedately along the street among a crowd of more

decently-dressed people, who seemed, however, to regard them as quite a matter of course.

There are a good many Chinese in Georgetown and on the plantations in the colony, most melancholy-looking always, and nearly always dressed in blue. Portuguese, originally immigrants from Madeira, are very flourishing in the colony: they have gradually monopolised the liquor and the small shop-keeping trades; and there is hardly a village, however small, in the interior, without its Portuguese shop.

The shops in Water Street are very good: they have large plate-glass windows, well stocked with merchandise; and the streets have pavements on each side, so that the shops can be well seen. In some parts of the town the Chinese congregate and set up shops for their own people. The fronts of these shops are adorned with strips of red paper covered with characters, looking hopelessly entangled to an uninitiated stranger, but no doubt of great importance to the person who has stuck them up.

There are plenty of carriages for hire in the streets, but they are the most sorry contrivances to be seen in any town. Not that the carriages in themselves are so bad, though of course they are rickety and dirty; but the horses carry enough wretchedness to suffice both for themselves and the carriages. One day I hired one of these conveyances to take me to call at a house about two miles out of the town. After

a very slow trot for the first mile, the deplorable animal in the shafts reduced his pace to a walk, beyond which the liberal allowance of whip made use of by the driver could not make him move; and last of all he stood stockstill and absolutely refused to budge, so I had to get out of the carriage and walk some distance while the wretched creature rested.

After I had been in Georgetown three days, I managed to secure a room at Beckwith's Hotel, to which I moved myself and all my belongings. The hotel was very clean and nice while I was there in every respect but one, and that was, that things provided for our meals, though good in quality, were extremely limited in quantity; and what is more, the attendance was of so indifferent a character that this little took an extremely long time to be disposed of, and dinner therefore was a tedious performance. My bedroom was a small room with three windows, one of which only had glass in it, while the other two were filled with jalousies, which, however, shut up close at night. Once or twice during the first night I spent there I was awaked by a sound as of the pattering of heavy rain; but upon listening closer I found that it was the sound of innumerable footsteps between my ceiling and the roof, and I immediately put them down to rats; but on inquiry, I found the noise was caused by a colony of bats which had taken up their abode there.

Another noise that continues all night in Georgetown,

besides crickets and grasshoppers and crapauds, to which one soon gets accustomed, is the crowing of the domestic cock, which useful biped abounds there. Cocks in Demerara crow all night, and loudly too; they keep up a continual roar, in front, behind, to the right, to the left—big ones, little ones, and middle-sized ones, all crowing one against another, and waking the echoes of the night with their harsh noise.

One night, in a house about twenty yards from my bedroom window, there was a dignity ball going on—that is, a ball exclusively of coloured people. When I went to bed, soon after ten o'clock, they were dancing most furiously to the strains of a band consisting of a trombone, a flute, and a cornet. Two or three times in the night I was aroused by the noise they made; and in the morning about six, when I got up, the band was still playing away, though they had got rather wild. The flute continued on its way pretty steadily; but the cornet only chimed in with a flourish every now and then, while the trombone was reduced to scattering a few bass notes here and there, without any regard for time or tune.

There is a bird common in the town which has a song exactly like an English blackbird. In the early morning, before the sun gets its full power, and shines with a paler light, more like our summer sun, it requires but a little dreaminess and a stretch of imagination to fancy one's self back in England, listening to our English song-birds. Swallows and swifts, very much in

appearance like our summer visitors in England, abound in Georgetown; but the commonest bird of all amongst the houses, and which is to be heard in every tree, is called the "Qu'est-ce-qu'il-dit," from its note, which is a very perfect imitation of those words rapidly spoken. At night there is a continual burr and buzz of grasshoppers and crickets; and besides the big crapauds they have in Barbadoes, there is another kind which abounds in the dykes, and which I heard called the Demerara nightingale. Its note, which it continues through the night, is something like a subdued and short whistle repeated at quickly-recurring intervals; and as different individuals seem to have slightly different notes, the effect is not unpleasing, though monotonous. The first night I was in Georgetown, while sitting out in the verandah after it was dark, I was much puzzled by seeing every one that passed, as I thought, throw away the end of a cigar; but a little observation told me that what I saw was not the falling ends of cigars, but the flicker of fireflies by the roadside. Afterwards I saw them in thousands flitting about over a large grassy meadow, and all I could compare them to was a shower of very diminutive shooting stars.

Most beautiful flowers grow in the gardens by the various houses, the commonest plant, and I think the showiest, being the oleander, which grows everywhere, and bears its handsome pink flowers in profusion. In many of the streets in which

there is a central canal, the sides of the water are thickly planted with oleander-bushes, and they look extremely well when in blossom. The Bougainvillea is common, and also a creeper called *petræa*, which bears a long dark blue raceme of star-like flowers. The Botanical Gardens are not very well kept; there are one or two good things there, but grass and weeds are far too common, and disfigure greatly the beds, while the walks in many places are badly kept. On certain days in the week the band from the garrison plays there, and at such times it is a fashionable resort of the Georgetown inhabitants.

There is a very good public library and museum. Attached to the building is a tall tower, upon which the signals for ships and steamers are made, and from which a very fine and comprehensive view of the town and surrounding country is to be seen. Some of the specimens in the museum are very interesting, but they are not nearly all named. There is not a good collection of butterflies, nor are they arranged nor named, but there are some very fine individual specimens. Some very interesting sketches of the interior of the colony decorate the walls, and there are some handsome cases of stuffed birds. The library and reading-room is a large airy room, with a very fair collection of books, all got together within the last few years, for the whole library was burnt to the ground a short time ago.

In the town are two clubs, the British Guiana Club and the

Georgetown Club. My name was kindly put down at both, and so I became an honorary member of them. The British Guiana Club is on the model of an English one, where you can dine or breakfast, as in England; but the other seems to be more of an institution for billiards, cards, liquor, and smoking, mingled with edifying conversation. Of the former an honorary member has the same privileges as an ordinary member, with the exception of not being permitted to sleep in the bedrooms attached to the club; while in the latter an honorary member may not order his own drinks, or at least may not pay for them: an honorary member is supposed to be a person that should be provided with liquor to any amount by his hosts, the members of the club, without being called upon to pay for it himself. Both clubs are exceedingly well supplied with books, papers, and periodicals, both American and English.

The great drink of Demerara is the swizzle. It is a species of cocktail made of Angostura bitters and gin or brandy, and frothed up by rapidly turning round in the glass, between the palms of the hand, a stick called a swizzle-stick, consisting of a long stem with four or five short prongs sticking out from it at the bottom. It is a creamy concoction, and cool withal, for plenty of ice is inserted (ice was only a cent a pound when I was in Georgetown), but at the same time insinuating exceedingly. People drink this, and in plenty, at all hours of the day, but more especially before breakfast (and) before dinner. The

servants in Demerara are nearly all Barbadians ; they have quite driven the creole blacks from that division of labour.

Georgetown is well supplied with churches and chapels. The Cathedral is a plain church with a square tower. St Philip's Church is the high church of the town, and a prettier church inside I have seldom seen : it is lined throughout with stained wood, and the arches are of light ironwork, and very tastefully decorated ; and there are some very elegant painted windows in the chancel and in the body of the church. The service was full choral, and the choir sang well. They were chiefly coloured men, and I fancied that their voices had a more reedy quality than the voices of whites, but I suppose that it was only fancy. The church, when I was there, was well filled ; and the toilets of some of the ladies were really pretty, and would have held their own amongst any assemblage of ladies in England.

In the currency of British Guiana there is, besides dollars and cents, a new element of confusion in the shape of guilders and pieces of their fractional parts, the remains of the former Dutch occupation of the colony. The price of goods is, as usual in the West Indies, given in dollars and cents, and to pay with you have besides English money, guilders, half guilders, and quarter guilders. A guilder is 1s. 4d., and just like a shilling, only the edges are either milled diagonally or not at all ; while the half guilder, value 8d., resembles a sixpence

in every respect. The consequence is, that unless you look at every coin in particular as you pay it away, you are very liable to give a guilder for a shilling, and so quietly dispose of fourpence. A fourpenny-piece is called a "bit ;" and the price of little articles is reckoned in "bits," the negroes saying "three bits" in preference to a shilling, and a "bit and a half" in preference to sixpence. ✓

British Guiana has a very bad character for unhealthiness. I was not in the colony long enough to find out for myself the truth of these statements, but I should fancy it is very much exaggerated. I was surprised to find the heat so little oppressive and the climate so agreeable. The length of the days never varies more than forty minutes during the whole year. I have no doubt that epidemics, when they arise, are more virulent in the colony than in a more temperate region, but the usual health seems to be good. In Mr Dalton's "History of British Guiana" there are some statistics of health given, which go very far to prove that Demerara is not the hotbed of fevers and epidemics that is usually imagined, but, on the contrary, taking the average of years, an exceptionally healthy place.

CHAPTER VIII.

UP THE ESSEQUIBO.

T seven o'clock on Saturday morning, the 8th of February, the little steamer *Eliza*, not much bigger than a penny-boat on the Thames, cast off her moorings at the Steamboat Stelling, as they call the jetty from which the steamers start at Georgetown, and turned her head to sea. She was bound for the penal settlement on the Massaruni river, some eighty miles from Georgetown, and perhaps fifty or fifty-five miles from the mouth of the Essequibo. She had on board seven persons—the commissioner visiting the settlement, and his private secretary; two Georgetown officials going out for a holiday; and three strangers and tourists, wishful to see all that there was to see, of whom I was one.

About three hours' steaming took us across the muddy yellow water between the Demerara river and the mouth of the Essequibo, and saw us calling at one of the numerous

islands with which that river is studded, called Leguan Island, upon which are many flourishing sugar estates. The mouth of the Essequibo is twenty miles across, and is broken up into four channels by three large islands, all cultivated to a greater or less extent, of which, however, the centre one, Waakenaam, is the largest. These islands range from ten to fifteen miles in length; and there is one a little higher, Hog Island, much longer, though from its narrowness its area is not so large. There are supposed to be 365 of these islands in the course of the Essequibo.

In steaming from Georgetown to Leguan Island, the boat was obliged, though she only drew five feet of water, to put out so far to sea that land was nearly out of sight, on account of the shallowness of the water, and the numerous sandbanks, that extend in some instances many miles to sea. At some distance from the land the shore of this colony is characterised by a low irregular outline of thick bush, which, however, on nearer approach, resolves itself into groups of tall palms, clumps of bright green trees, and a low fringe of mangroves, while peering up amongst the foliage may be seen the tall chimneys of the various sugar manufactories. The houses and villages that may be behind this bush are entirely hidden; but to its rear extends the belt of land which in an unbroken level constitutes the cultivated part of British Guiana.

Having called at Leguan Island, we steamed away up the

Essequibo, which soon began to contract in its great width. As we neared one side we could more clearly mark the immense variety both of colour and foliage which went to make up the luxuriant forest which lined the banks of the river. Soon after leaving Leguan we passed on our right Fort Island, the seat of government when the colony of Essequibo was a Dutch possession. As we steamed close by its verdant banks, there could be seen among the trees the remains of masonry walls and embankments, which seemed in many places to be as firm now as when they were first built.

The water of the river now began to get clearer, though it retained a deep yellow colour. We kept near to the right bank, so that we had the whole width of the river on one side of us—a vast lake-like expanse, with island opening out behind island, all covered with green forest, till in the distance could be seen the opposite bank of the river some four miles away. It would be impossible to describe all the various trees of which the forest that fringed every shore and island was composed, but to my European eye the palms were the most striking objects. The Eta palm reared its tall head of fan-like leaves far above the neighbouring vegetation, and in company with the cabbage-palm and graceful cocoanuts formed lovely groups in the forest. As we ascended the river the vegetation grew more luxuriant, and appeared as a very wall of foliage starting up from the water's edge. The Trolley

palm was frequently to be seen, whose long leaves are universally used as thatch for the huts of the dwellers on the river-side. The Cocorete palm waved its somewhat stiff and funereal leaves in the breeze, while other species reared their graceful heads on the slenderest of stems between the various trees of the forest. Close to the edge of the water grew magnificent ferns, and from the very highest branches long lithe creepers hung down, and bathed their foliage in the river.

Here and there amongst the forest could be seen the Troolie-covered huts of the Boveanders and negroes; and in some neighbouring creek, which ran up amongst the trees near their habitations, could be seen the bateaus belonging to these people, small keelless boats propelled by spoon-shaped paddles. Boveanders constitute the chief population of the river-banks, and have an admixture of Indian blood in their composition.

Past miles and miles of this beauteous vegetation, past innumerable beauteous islands, past lovely creeks running up into the forest, and fringed with a green wall of verdure, we held on our way, with the bright sun overhead throwing into fine relief the various foliages of the forest. The air was alive with butterflies. At last, but all too soon, we came to the junction of the Essequibo with the Massaruni; and leaving the Essequibo on our left, and a large island, by name Kaow Island, on our right, we turned into the Massaruni, here nearly a mile

wide, and saw the penal settlement in front of us. On Kaow Island is the Leper Asylum. Leprosy is a disease only too common amongst the back and coloured population, and when attacked they are conveyed to this residence. They are said to display great apathy and indifference under the dreadful affliction.

We arrived at the penal settlement about three o'clock. It is situated on a rocky promontory jutting out into the river, and is surrounded on all sides by the impenetrable tropical forest, except where the water washes the foot of the height on which it is built. It is a lovely place, so lovely that even an enforced residence there must lose some of its punishment.

We took up our abode in a house provided for the use of the visiting commissioner and his friends, and having inspected our sleeping-apartments, Mr T——, B——, and myself took the steamer's boat and two negroes to row over to Callicoon, a wood-cutting village on the opposite side of the river.

Just before we started we had seen a bateau set off for the other side of the river, loaded with plantains which the steamer had brought up from Georgetown. Before we had gone many yards, a shout from the shore we had left directed our attention to the bateau, and on looking in its direction we saw the two men who had been paddling it struggling in the water. One man quickly got astride the overturned bateau, but the other kept struggling, and every now and

then disappeared entirely. We thought he was drowning, and rowing up to him as quickly as possible, we arrived while he was still on the surface. As we reached him, however, he ceased from his exertions, and tranquilly floating, told us not to mind about him, as he was all right, but to go to the other fellow, as he could not swim, and without more ado he recommenced his gymnastics. What was our amusement to discover that the struggles of the supposed-to-be-drowning man were caused by his frantic efforts to save his plantains, which being very nearly the same weight as water, sank very slowly, and as fast as one of his branches disappeared under the water, he dived down to it and fetched it up again! A boat from Callicoon having now come up, we continued on our way, much relieved to find that a human life was not in danger. The man having placed all the plantains that he had saved on board the Callicoon boat, showed his skill by swimming to shore, about a quarter of a mile distant.

Callicoon is a collection of huts and houses covered with the universal Troolie thatch, where a colony of wood-cutters abides. They have cleared the rocky bank of the river of trees enough to allow them to perch their houses in the open spaces; but the branches of those trees that remain throw a shade over the little village, and nearly entirely hide it from the opposite shore. Mr T—— had some official business with a Portuguese who keeps the village store. In all these little

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villages and settlements are to be found the shops of Portuguese traders, who seem to monopolise the small shop-keeping of the colony, and always appear flourishing.

Mr T——'s business concluded, we re-entered our boat and crossed the river again to the settlement. Dinner-time soon arrived, and then, after a cigar, the whole party went early to bed. In the stillness of the night the squeak of the bats, the noises of the insects, mingled with the croaking of the various frogs that abound by the water's edge, were very audible. Grasshoppers and crickets kept up a continual song, while a beetle, called, from the likeness of its noise to the whirr of a grindstone, the razor-grinder, was heard above all sounds by its shrillness. Sleep, however, soon brought unconsciousness, and the noisy silence of the tropical night passed away unnoticed.

The next morning, Sunday, I was up early, and before breakfast sallied forth to look more closely at the surroundings of the penal settlement. The view from the settlement down the Massaruni to its junction with the Essequibo is exceedingly fine. The vast expanse of water seems to be a calm and peaceful lake, dotted with islands; while the larger one, Kaow Island, is seen in the distance, in the centre of the picture, situated in the very confluence of the two rivers. An avenue of mango-trees leads down a steepish hill from the commissioner's house to the river. Mango-trees have most densely-leaved

branches, and as the branches grow very closely together, the head of a mango-tree is absolutely impervious to light.

On a prettily-rising eminence at the back of the chief buildings is placed the cemetery. It is shrouded in flowering trees and shrubs, and abundant flowers are growing amongst the graves. There are one or two very good monuments, though some few of them are rather ruinous. It seems very fairly kept.

There are a good many dwellings around the settlement, where the various officials live who are connected with the establishment. Luxuriant trees surround them, and they are mostly prettily situated on the side of the hill, on the summit of which stand the prison buildings. A long walk extends back some distance into the bush, and on the banks of this brightly-coloured lizards glide about, while butterflies of gorgeous hues and other insects fill the air, and flutter over the surrounding flowers.

After breakfast, while the commissioner was engaged with his secretary on the business of his visit, the other five of the party, borrowing one of the large boats belonging to the settlement, and manning her with the steamer's men and two from a neighbouring house, six in all, set out for Barracarra, some distance up the river on the opposite bank, where a little stream meanders through the forest, falling over the granite rock in gentle cascades on its way to the sea.

We landed on a beach of white and glistening sand, and

directly came upon a deserted village, whose huts and houses were falling to pieces through neglect. Three goats fled away, startled at our approach. Passing these houses, we set off along a faintly-marked track into the forest. Gorgeous butterflies floated by, and sported under the shade of the foliage, some of which I was fortunate enough to transfer to my collecting-box. Ferns abounded, but I had no facility at hand for collecting them. A climbing fern festooned the branches of the trees for twenty feet above the ground with its feathery and luxuriant sprays, while the path in the more shady places was carpeted with lycopodiums of various kinds. After walking about half a mile, we found ourselves at the rocky bed of the stream. I would I could worthily describe the scene.

In front the little stream descended from shelf to shelf of the granite rock, forming in its descent deep pools of amber-coloured water, bordered with arum-like plants, and fringed with graceful and feathery ferns. Tiny lycopodiums covered the faces of the granite boulders, and changed their ruggedness into green velvet. A short distance above a tree had fallen across the stream, and in its fall and death had given a resting-place to parasites innumerable; and on every side arose the trunks of monarchs of the forest, in whose forks perched orchids, and from whose branches depended giant creepers reaching to the ground. The trees met overhead, keeping out the glare of the tropical sun, and affording an atmosphere of

refreshing coolness. In the more open spaces of the forest around towered up tall palms, and the sombre Cocorete added to the variety of the foliage with its erect and feathered leaves. The murmur of the insects, the trickle of the water, and the rustle of the leaves in the eastern wind made a music well fitted to the scene.

We walked up by the side of the streamlet a short distance, thoroughly enjoying the beauty of the scenery; and then, since the forest became denser and the path less defined, we returned to the boat.

The boat's head was now turned towards Cartabo, a large estate belonging to Mr T——, and situated upon the point of land formed by the junction of the Cayuni and the Massaruni rivers, some six miles above the settlement. We passed on our way the little island of Kykoveral, now overgrown with trees, but at one time, when it belonged to the Dutch, the site of a strong fort and garrison. We did not land there; but from it is to be obtained a very fine view of the two rivers in whose confluence it is situated, and also of the penal settlement down the Massaruni. We pushed on for Cartabo; and arriving there, we anchored our boat to the stump of a tree and went into the house.

Mr T—— then produced a hammer and chisel, and proceeded to open a large deal box which stood in the corner of one of the rooms, and when the lid came off, what an

assemblage of dainties was there! A wild confusion and a mixed heap of all that could be required to soften the hardships of, or add luxury to, a man's existence in a tropical forest! Potted meats, preserved fish of various descriptions, condensed milk, essence of coffee, jams, beer, soda-water, and a host of other condiments and things too numerous to be specified, lay mixed together in this wonderful box. With such a store before us there was no danger of starving; so selecting what we thought we should like, Mr T—— sent them down to the boat.

After discussing some brandy and soda water, which also came out of this wondrous box, our next anxiety was to secure some cocoanuts, which grew at the top of a tree some fifty feet high, in front of the house. One of Mr T——'s men produced a long bamboo pole, and with that tried to knock them down; but the bamboo was only long enough to reach them, and its bending nature prevented him from hitting them with force enough; and, moreover, in the middle of his efforts, the bamboo broke in two with a loud crash.

With the offer of a shilling before him, one of the men from the steamer proceeded to climb the tree most nimbly, and very soon a perfect rain of cocoanuts was falling on the ground. I tasted some milk fresh from the tree, and it was a very different thing from cocoanut-milk in England. The unripe fruit, which they call "jelly cocoanuts," because the white part

is as yet of the consistence of jelly, is very delicate in flavour. Securing and tasting the cocoanuts took some time ; but when the man had reached the ground in safety, and the scattered fruit had been collected, we started off to explore again the forest, with the idea of reaching a hill some distance at the back of the house, from which a fine view of the river and the settlement was to be obtained.

Our path lay for a hundred yards or so along the brink of the river, while on the other side of us grew some fine clumps of bamboos. Soon striking off into the forest, we followed a beaten track, two men going before us with cutlasses to clear out of the way any branches or trees that might have fallen across the track, or if occasion needed, to cut a new path through the forest.

Through the forest we went, which here was very dense, and which seemed to be a collection of tree trunks and stems of various sizes, decorated here and there with an orchid or parasite, and supporting some eighty or a hundred feet above our heads a canopy of leaves ; while on the ground, chiefly covered with sticks and fallen wood, peeped out a graceful fern or green lycopodium.

Continuing thus for a mile or so up a gentle ascent, we came out upon a comparatively cleared place, from which a lovely view of the wooded banks of the river was obtained. Here were butterflies and insects of every description, and

grasshoppers in the bushes kept up an incessant song. A handsome creeper climbed over the lower bushes, and bore at regular distances dull scarlet flowers the size and shape of a tulip. The sides of the open space were fringed with razor-grass, which festooned itself about the bushes, and hung out in places long arms to catch the unwary. It cuts sharply, and grows in such quantities, that a good look-out must be kept if it is to be avoided.

Having seen as much of the view as we cared for, we again turned into the forest, now passing through open glades and spaces surrounded by trees, but upon which, strange to say, no bushes of any size, but only various grasses and low scrub, grow. The soil seemed to be composed of nearly pure sand, which may in a measure account for the bareness. We passed many fine orchids, but very few were in flower, and those the more insignificant ones; but a magnificent root of *Cattleya superba* was pointed out to me. Vanilla-plants grew up the trees by the sides of these glades: I saw one magnificent plant, the stem of which must have been one hundred feet long. It climbed up the trunk of a tall tree for more than forty feet, then along one of the branches, from the end of which it dropped until it reached the ground again. Vanilla has a single unbranched stem, perhaps a quarter of an inch in diameter, with equidistant alternate leaves, light yellow-green in colour and waxy in texture, and the plant runs up the trunk

of a tree like a spray of ivy. There was a pod on the plant ready to gather, which I at once transferred to my pocket.

We continued through the forest for a mile or more, fresh beauties and objects of interest meeting our eyes at every step, until at last we emerged into a clear space or open field planted with cassava. Cassava is the staff of life with the Indians; the uncooked root is poisonous, being strongly impregnated with prussic acid. The root is prepared as follows: it is first grated by means of a board stuck full of sharp stones, and the pulp is then placed in a long elastic wicker-work tube, called a "matape," about three inches in diameter when expanded. This tube is filled full of the grated cassava, and the juice is extracted by suspending it to a beam or bough of a tree, and attaching a heavy weight to the other end of the matape, by which means it is pulled out to its original size, and the poisonous juice falls into a calabash placed underneath. The root, after being thus squeezed, is dried in the sun, and grated and sifted, and made into thin flat cakes, called cassava bread; and it is very good, crisp, and of a delicate flavour, like etherealised oatcake. Tapioca is the farina of the cassava, and is a well-known diet for invalids; while the expressed juice not only becomes innoxious when well boiled, but under the name of "cassireep," forms the principal ingredient in the celebrated pepper-pot of the West Indies, and is also used as the foundation of Worcestershire and other sauces.

An intoxicating liquor called "paiwori" is made from cassava bread by fermentation, which fermentation is increased by the women chewing large lumps of the bread ; and it is said that the resulting liquid is not unlike malt liquor in appearance and taste.

Indians clear open spaces in the forest by cutting a quantity of trees three-quarters through, and then they fell one tree in the direction of the half-cut ones. The forest is so bound together by creepers and bush ropes that the one tree involves in its fall all those already cut, and the forest disappears as if by magic.

Through the forest, in various directions, are to be observed the tracks of the Cushi ants. I did not see any of the ants themselves, but their tracks are as well beaten as sheep-walks. They march in large armies along these tracks, the moving mass sometimes extending a mile in length, and when on the march they destroy anything that takes their fancy. I was shown one large clearing which had to be abandoned because of the attacks of this ant, which allowed nothing to grow, but bit off the vegetation as soon as it appeared above the ground. A party of ants once entered Mr T——'s house at Cartabo, and carried off in one night every grain of a sack of rice. Their nests are conical hillocks constructed of earth, decayed wood, and withered leaves, and are frequently to be met with in the interior of the forest.

Reluctantly were we obliged to retrace our steps, since it was now getting late, and we had a long row before us. We took the boat close to the forest on the river-side as we rowed down, and saw the foliage to great advantage. Here and there a deep dark creek ran up into the forest under the shade of the trees, tempting exploration. The Indians sometimes poison these creeks with a substance called hyari, for the purpose of catching fish. It is a plant of the leguminous order, and the root contains a gummy milky juice, which is a powerful narcotic. It is prepared by the Indians by being beaten with sticks until it is reduced to a coarse pulp. They then mix it up with water till it becomes of a milky consistence. They stretch a net across the mouth of the creek at high water, for at that time the fish go up the creeks to feed. When the hyari is put into the water the fish become intoxicated, and come to the surface of the water. They are then shot with bows and arrows, though sometimes the Indians get so excited with their pursuit that they dash in bodily amongst the stupefied fish. The rivers and seas of British Guiana are said to abound with the most delicious fish, and yet a fresh fish is never seen on the table, while salt-fish, often of a very inferior description, is invariably present at breakfast-time.

The mora-tree is a large tall-growing tree, the inside of which decays when it becomes old, and fills with a very inflammable species of fungus. They are sometimes purposely

set fire to, when the hollow trunk draws like a chimney, and flames come out at the end of every branch, and last of all the tree collapses with a tremendous crash.

We arrived at the settlement after a most interesting and pleasant day. The next morning, after an early breakfast, we started back to Georgetown at seven o'clock. The morning was wet and stormy, and we heartily congratulated ourselves that the day before had been so propitious for our ramble. The steamer *Eliza* reached Georgetown in safety about two o'clock, after a most pleasant trip up the Essequibo.

CHAPTER IX.

AT DE KINDEREN.



HAD had an invitation to spend Sunday at a plantation called De Kinderen, so at half-past nine on Saturday, February 15th, Mr T——, who was to be my companion, and myself, set out to drive to our destination.

~~De Kinderen is on the west coast, and the river Demerara and a drive of fifteen miles lay between us and it ; however, we safely landed ourselves, our carriage, and our horse on the other side of the river, and having called on Mr M——, at Vreed-en-Hoop, we set out on our drive.~~

The road is very good ; the macadamised portion is made of the clay of the country burnt, and therefore, when fresh put on, as it was in many places, it is of the colour and quality of brick-ends. It is bounded on each side for its whole length by deep dykes, and as every dyke, when originally laid out, was laid out at right angles to some other dyke, it follows that there are no curves in the road, but frequent corners, and frequent

bridges also, which are mostly of wood, though iron is sometimes used.

The road does not run inland, but along the seaward edge of the estates, between them and the sea, from which it is separated by a coppice-like growth of mangrove and courida bushes, varying in width from a few yards to several hundred.

These belts of trees, though at last monotonous, were pretty and interesting: sometimes this woodland grew on both sides the road, and in such places perhaps the dykes would be fringed with ferns and covered with water-lilies. Courida is not unlike our broad-leaved upright-growing willow, and, like it, also favours damp and marshy places. It is a most valuable plant here. The land is so flat, and so nearly the level of the sea, that if it were not protected by these tracts of land, covered with scrub, and bound together by the interlaced roots of innumerable couridas and mangroves, it would frequently be overwhelmed by the waves. In fact, in many places, as it is, they are obliged to build large embankments, sometimes two or three deep, to keep the sea from breaking into the estates.

There were some beautiful birds fluttering about; one glossy black fellow with a scarlet breast I especially noticed. Bright plumages, blue and yellow, were frequent; and one long-legged fellow, with cinnamon-coloured wings and a beautiful red-brown body, was common on the marshy bits of ground.

There are many villages along the road, and, of course, since every estate employs five hundred labourers or more, there is a village on every estate ; but there are some places where persons have bought plots of land and erected their own houses, and in consequence these villages are larger and more important than the estate villages. The two chief ones we passed through at the beginning of the journey were Blankenburg and Fellowship.

All the estates were originally laid out on the same plan. Each estate depends entirely upon its water communications. They were surrounded by four dams or embankments : two at the sides, extending from front to back ; one in front, to exclude the sea ; and one behind, to keep out the "bush-water"—that is, the collected rain of the interior. Estates at present are only in one depth round the seashore and up the river-sides, therefore there is a lot of land behind, which sometime or other will be cultivated, and it is called the second depth. Of course, if the estates joined each other in the first depth, there would be no water communication with the second depth without going through another estate ; so between every other estate a broader dam was left, called in Demerara and Essequibo the "Company's Path," but in Berbice the "Ketting," and in the middle of this path a canal was dug. Four trenches were dug out : two inside the side lines, reaching from front to rear ; one at the back ; and one in front, behind the front

dam, in which one or more sluices, or "kokers," as they were termed by the Dutch, were placed to allow the drained water to escape at ebb-tide. Two strong brick pillars were constructed at the sides of the trench, at the top of which revolves by means of spokes a large wooden axle, and draws up or lets down a heavy wooden door, through which the water is easily let out at ebb-tide, while it effectually excludes the outside water. In the middle of the estate a raised dam was made, called the "middle walk;" and on each side of it, two deep canals, called "navigation trenches," were dug, reaching from front to back. From these canals smaller canals branched off at right angles, and the estates were again divided and sub-divided by canals, all at right angles to each other, into fields of about five acres each. The navigation canals were supplied with fresh water, as salt water was supposed to be injurious to the canes.

A drive of nine miles through country such as I have described, along a road fringed on one side by scrub, and on the other by the cane-fields of some estate, passing here and there through collections of cottages and groves of cocoa palms, brought us to Cornelia Ida, belonging to Mr S——, where we called. The names of the estates in the colony having been drawn from many languages, are very extraordinary to an English ear, more especially as the French names have an English pronunciation given to them. Met-en-meer-zorg, Vreed-

en-Hoop, De Kinderen, Cornelia Ida, Better-fur-wagting, Vive la Force, Mes Délices, Sans Souci, Malgré Tout, Mon Bijou, Beehive, Diamond, Good Intent, Golden Grove, Hope-and-Enterprise, and many others, drawn from every possible source, are to be found in British Guiana.

At Cornelia Ida they were making sugar, so I went over the manufactory and saw the whole process. The canes are cut, and put into punts and brought along the various canals to the side of the manufactory, and then placed on an endless band some eight feet wide, and conveyed to the mill. They are then crushed between gigantic rollers driven by a large engine, and the juice flows away to a reservoir, the dirtiest-looking stuff imaginable; while the refuse of the cane, called "magass," is received on another endless band, and hoisted up to a platform on which is a little tramway, where it is received into trucks and wheeled away underneath a large shed. The liquor is then pumped up into receivers, in which lime is added to it to correct its acidity; and thence it goes to the coppers, where it is boiled to a certain density. The scum that rises to the top is skimmed off, and runs into tanks, whence it is taken, with all the rubbish and molasses and refuse that arises during the manufacture, to the rum-still, and turned into that delectable spirit. The liquor having been boiled to a certain density in the coppers, is put into a reservoir, and drawn from thence by suction into the vacuum pan, a contrivance which crystallises

the sugar in a more even and regular manner than it can be done in any other way. The liquid that goes into the vacuum pan is thick and of an amber colour ; from the pan it falls into receivers, and is now like thick treacle, in which the sugar crystals are plainly discernible. Then it is taken in large trays to the centrifugals, which are most clever contrivances, something like a bandbox with wire-gauze sides, revolving rapidly in an iron cylinder. The quickness of their action is astonishing. As you look into the machine you see the brown treacly-looking stuff getting whiter and whiter, until at last, when the machine is stopped, there is nothing in it but the finest and whitest sugar, ready for tea and coffee, all the molasses having flown away through the gauze, to be collected and again put through the sugar-making process, to make what is called molasses sugar, darker brown in colour. It takes only five minutes in the centrifugal to turn it from a brown mass into the whitest sugar.

A large extent of machinery is required for the processes I have just described. Five or six engines are required to work the machines and pumps. And besides all this machinery, the estates are so distant from civilisation that the proprietors are obliged to keep duplicates of the most important parts of the machines in case of accident, and sometimes a thousand pounds or more are thus lying idle. The proprietor of course has to have people of every trade about him—carpenters, smiths,

coopers, and various other trades—so that any little job may be done at once with as little delay as possible to the working of the machinery. ✓

The sugar trade involves a very large capital; for besides all the expenses of machinery, the wages on a large estate—and nearly all the estates in British Guiana are large—are about £500 per week; and besides wages there are other current expenses.

After leaving Mr S——'s, we passed through another largish village, called Stuartsville, and in the trench by the side of the road, in front of a large house, there was a great quantity of *Victoria regia*—in fact, the dyke was full of it. It was not in flower, and I was told that when once it was introduced into a trench it could hardly be exterminated. Of course the dykes and canals are a very important part of the colony, as they serve the place of roads on an estate, and everything is conveyed along them in barges or punts—in fact, the koker or sluice is the very mainspring of an estate, so it is important that no spreading weed should get into the dykes; yet, nevertheless, in some places they are choked up with lilies and water plants, and great labour is expended in keeping them clean.

We now drew near De Kinderen, our destination. The estate is more park-like and open than the generality, and there is quite a respectable quantity of grass-land before the house,

studded with trees. We were received with the greatest cordiality by Mr Tr——, the owner.

The verandah of the house was full of various articles—cages, boxes, and suchlike—while in one corner was an immense pile of cocoanuts, in another a heap of shaddocks. In one place was a large square box full of water, and in it a large eel. I was asked to touch it, to feel how soft it was, said my betrayer, and I all unsuspectingly did so, when a sharp twinge ran all up my arm: it was an electric eel. It gives rather a pleasant shock if not troubled much, but when it is angry they are very violent. These eels are common in the creeks of the country.

One servant at De Kinderen was a very nice-looking young coolie woman, the wife of the cook of the establishment, and mother of a very pretty little black-eyed and black-skinned baby, some fourteen months old, that crawled about everywhere over the house, and seemed to be a general favourite, going by the name of the “Little Coolie Man.” The mother was loaded with silver armlets and bracelets; round her neck hung also a row of half-crowns strung on to a silver chain. The child also had silver armlets and anklets upon him. The coolie language is generally Hindustani, and they understand very little English, so that one’s talk to them must be of the very simplest description.

Having had some luncheon after our long drive, Mr Tr——

took me and introduced me to his menagerie. He has lots of monkeys and animals of various descriptions, while everywhere in the yard in which these animals are kept turtles and tortoises are crawling about. It was amusing to see a turtle crawling slowly and steadily across the yard, looking neither to the right hand nor the left, while a fine peacock, evidently for some reason offended with it, tried to strike terror into it with his outspread tail. Some of the monkeys were very fine animals: he had one spider monkey with a very small body and head, and immensely long arms, legs, and tail. These monkeys are chained to some posts which support a roof, and their chains are long enough to allow them to sit on the roof if they so please, and it seems to be a favourite place with them. The spider monkey's delight was to swing by either his hands or his tail from the edge of the roof, and let the rest of his body and limbs hang perfectly limp and loose. I have seen him for a quarter of an hour changing from hand to hand and then to his tail, looking most ludicrous as he hung down.

Mr Tr—— had many birds also—gold, silver, and common pheasants, and doves of various descriptions. One of the most handsome birds he had, which seemed perfectly domesticated and ran about with the poultry and guinea-fowls, was the currie-currie, a bright light scarlet bird with long legs and a long beak, and a body about as large as a duck. They seemed very fond

of flying about, and looked very pretty as they spread their scarlet-and-pink wings and rose from the ground.

When we came in from inspecting the animals, we found waiting on the steps a coolie man and his wife who could not agree, and had come to the manager (the person who manages the estate, be he owner or not, is called the manager) to settle their grievance. Mr Tr—— told me it was a fair sample of the many little difficulties a manager has to contend with ; and if he makes the slightest error in his judgment, it is immediately held up as an example of coolie oppression. In this case the man's wife had taken a fancy to another man, and would not come to live with her husband ; so he came to beg for a separate house for her, where he would fight the other man on neutral ground. She was, like many of the coolie women, very good-looking, and loaded with silver and coins, and with a nice-looking little baby in her arms ; for coolie children, as a rule, are really nice-looking in spite of the darkness of their skins. So Mr Tr—— said she should have another house, and they went away. Afterwards he said he would not give a snap of his fingers for her life ; for if her husband caught the other fellow in her new house, he would be certain to chop her to pieces, the universal way the coolies have of disposing of troublesome wives, and the man would then be hanged. He thought the woman was to blame, and would take steps to try to get her removed to another estate, away from both her husband and

his rival ; for he had no wish to be deprived of her husband's services by his execution.

After this we had dinner, and then I was introduced to the luxuries of a hammock, two of which were slung across the drawing-room, and its insidious comfort and a good dinner sent me fast asleep till bedtime.

On Sunday morning, after breakfast, I went with Mr Tr—— his rounds, and first of all we visited the estate hospital. Every manager is bound by law to provide an hospital, with beds in proportion to the number of labourers employed, together with medical attendance and nurses. In the hospital at De Kinderen there were sixteen patients, chiefly cases of intermittent fever : one man had died the night before of inflammation of the lungs. The hospital was a large airy building with comfortable beds, and apparently fitted up with every comfort that persons in their station of life could require. All the cases, with their symptoms and treatment, are entered in a book in the most particular manner, and the entire arrangements of the hospital seemed to my superficial observation everything that could be desired.

We then walked through the village. Every one we met saluted us with "Morning, massa," as we went by. We entered some of the houses, and saw them cooking their meals. Their little cooking-places are small raised semicircles of mud placed on the floor of the cottage near one of the walls, in which

they light a tiny fire of sticks, and cook their food in a little pan over it.

The houses appeared to be very clean and comfortable ; they contain each from five to seven bedrooms, with one or two general rooms, and from four to six families live in each house.

After passing through the estate houses where the coolies, Chinese, and negroes live, we came to the African village, where those who have been captured in slaving-vessels live. Every one in the African village had been born in Africa, and kidnapped thence when young. These people prefer building their own huts to living in the estate houses, so they have a portion of the estate set out for their accommodation. Their huts are low buildings roofed with Trootie palm, and the walls are made of the dried tops of the sugar-cane, which are woven together with sticks. They seemed a very contented lot of people. Mr Tr—— addressed a knot of men standing round the door of one of the huts, and told them that I was a gentleman who had come to inquire into their grievances, and to take them back to Africa if they chose to go ; but with one voice they said they had no grievances, but stated their intention of staying where they were. If these were a fair specimen of such people, I could not see the discontented African of the Negrophilists ; nor did they think it any hardship not to have been sent back to Africa when captured in the slave-ship. I,

for my part, could not see how they could have been better off than they were then.

As we were returning through another part of the coolie village, a woman in a great state of undress came out and told a tale of woe to Mr Tr——, not a word of which could I understand, though it was supposed to be English. She had on a tiny piece of linen looped round her waist in the mysterious manner that coolies wear it, and a tiny shawl thrown over her shoulders that covered only her back. They do not seem to care much whether they are naked or not. The end of the tale was that Mr Tr—— gave her a dollar to buy clothes with, for she had by some means lost the few she wore at any time.

In all the trenches about De Kinderen grows a species of lily, which bears, I think, the loveliest flowers I ever saw. Imagine a spike of rhododendron flowers of the most delicate pale pink lilac, the spike six or eight inches high. In the centre of the top petal the lilac fades into bright lemon yellow, and in the middle of the yellow is a bright patch of the purest celestial blue. It gives quite a lilac tint to the trenches in which it grows. A negro who was passing got me a handful of the flowers from the water; but in my journey through the village they attracted the notice of a coolie child in his mother's arms, and as he seemed to have set his heart upon them, I gave them to him, and he went off holding them at arm's-length, and apparently as proud of them as he could be.

All the children came up and shook hands with us as we went along, and seemed well to know where to find Mr Tr——'s eyeglass, through which they nearly all of them looked, though I doubt if their powers of vision were thereby materially assisted.

The cottages of the Chinese were decidedly the neatest. Their beds were made of a kind of cane-work made by themselves ; they are always hung with curtains, and seem to be very clean ; while they decorate their rooms with looking-glasses, little pictures, and suchlike things, in a way that the people of other nations do not think of doing.

One can hardly help thinking of the coolie system without deciding that it is slavery in a mild shape, until one sees for himself the position of affairs. I must own that I was prejudiced against the system when I went to Demerara, but during my stay there my opinions were in a very great degree modified ; and I do not think that it is only the manager who sins against the coolie, but that more frequently than is allowed by philanthropists, the coolie is in the wrong. Coolies are entirely hedged round by regulations of law : they have certain tasks which are appointed by law ; and they receive a certain pay for their work, also regulated by law ; and this pay is so liberal that I was told a coolie can do his day's task and earn his wages in three hours if he so please. They have comfortable cottages found them, and they have an hospital to

go to in case of illness, and the best medical attendance and nursing is found them for nothing; and all this is secured to them by law. And besides they have other privileges. If they save money enough to buy a cow, and many of them do, they have food and shelter provided for it by the manager. They can go into the interior when they like, and cut from the forest there as much wood as it pleases them; they can get a net and catch any quantity of fish they may require out of the creeks and trenches; and they can keep any amount of poultry.

Coolies are very fond of rum, and their chief drink is rum-and-water; and rum of a very inferior description too, for they buy it from shops kept by Portuguese, as the managers are restrained from giving it to them by law. I was told by the manager of one of the largest estates in the colony, that nearly every coolie gets drunk when he receives his money on a Saturday, and remains drunk all Saturday, and lies about the roadsides on Sunday, in the heat and glare of the sun, either drunk or incapable. I myself one Saturday, when calling at an estate some distance from Georgetown, found a coolie man lying dead drunk in the middle of the drive to the manager's house, so that I had to turn aside the carriage to avoid him; and he had not moved an inch when I returned after a long call at the house. The consequence is, that on Monday the estate hospital is nearly full.

Coolies are very treacherous ; they can never be quite tamed nor entirely trusted. The Chinese are bloodthirsty ; they will commit any murder without the slightest compunction, but deliver themselves up to the authorities directly afterwards. The negroes are revengeful. These, I was told, are the chief characteristics of the three races of men employed upon the sugar estates of British Guiana.

Not long ago, on the appointment of a new manager to the "Farm Estate," of whom the coolies had heard bad reports, they broke out, and marched in a body towards Georgetown. On their way they came to the bridge over the Mahaica creek, which is a swing bridge. The magistrate of the district opened the bridge, and by this means they were stopped in their march until assistance arrived from Georgetown. Had these coolies arrived at Plantation Spring Hall, where the coolies were notoriously disaffected, serious complications would have been the result. At Spring Hall the riot which occurred at Devonshire Castle last autumn was known before it was known to the authorities at Georgetown, although Spring Hall is many miles further from Devonshire Castle than the town, which must be traversed to reach it. Coolies must be governed by compressive, not aggressive measures.

I went off after butterflies on Sunday afternoon, but for some reason or other, I was not very successful in my pursuit. I very much admired, however, the flowers that grew wild,

which were very pretty; creeping over everything was *Thunbergia alata*, both orange and buff, dark-eyed and plain. Ipecacuanha is another very common and showy plant. There was a very pretty little garden at De Kinderen, full of the most handsome plants and shrubs, interspersed with orange and grape fruit and lime trees. I was shown the anatto tree, and was much surprised to find, on securing a pod, that the red seeds will mark one's hand like red chalk if wetted.

Some of the neighbouring planters, with a clergyman and a doctor, came to dine with us on Sunday evening, and after a good dinner and one or two cigars, the company left and we went to bed.

The next morning was very wet and showery, and after breakfast I went into the manufactory to see the process of making rum. There is very little to see except the outside of the still, and the rum running into large reservoirs. I was immensely astonished to find that rum was white when it ran from the still, and that the colouring is only burnt sugar, more or less of which is added according to the market the rum is to go to, for many people think that the darker the rum the stronger the spirit.

About two o'clock the weather cleared, and after a most enjoyable visit at De Kinderen we started back to Georgetown. We were delayed on our way for some time by a mule with a load of wood far too heavy for it being unable to get it over

a bridge. The negro who was driving did nothing but shout and make a noise, without ever thinking of putting his shoulder to the wheel himself. However, our patience being exhausted, Mr Tr—— and I went, and, by pushing the spokes of the wheel, soon got the thing over the impediment.

We reached the ferry just too late for one boat and an hour too soon for the next, so we again paid a visit to Vreed-en-Hoop, where we waited till the time was up. We got back to Georgetown soon after six.

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CHAPTER X.

VISIT TO NEW AMSTERDAM—LEAVE BRITISH GUIANA.

HAD secured three places in the mail-waggon which runs between Mahaica and the ferry at New Amsterdam, and which is only able to accommodate five passengers, for myself and two fellow-tourists ; so on Wednesday morning, February the 19th, we started off. Everything movable starts from Georgetown at seven in the morning. The train starts for Mahaica, and the steamers start for their various destinations at that hour.

British Guiana is divided into three counties, named after the three rivers that flow through the country—Essequibo, Berbice, and Demerara. Georgetown is the capital of Demerara and the colony, Essequibo has no large town in it, and the capital of Berbice is New Amsterdam, to which place our journey was directed. New Amsterdam is seventy-five miles from Georgetown, and the journey is performed partly by rail and partly in the mail-waggon, and, of course, as the accom-

modation in the latter is limited, seats must be engaged beforehand. The journey takes from seven in the morning until four in the afternoon, and as there is comparatively nothing to eat on the way, it becomes necessary to lay in a stock of provisions, so we took some sandwiches and hard-boiled eggs and bottles of beer with us.

At a quarter to seven a cab, which had been engaged to take us to the station, came to the door, when to our horror we discovered that even with a squeeze it would only hold two beside the driver, and as it was too late to think of catching the train by walking to it, we turned the driver off his seat and drove ourselves to the station, the coachman running behind and mildly expostulating the whole way as well as he could, whilst under the necessity of keeping up with the carriage. We caught the train, but only by a few minutes.

The stations are merely sheds. The carriages are on the American system, with doors at each end, but in the first class the seats are along each side of the carriage; there are seats on the top of the carriages, but they were very disagreeable and smoky, as we were going dead against the wind. The pace they go at is pretty fair, but the line is very shaky. There are no fences on either side of the line, and the consequence is, that all kinds of animals stray upon it, and the driver is continually blowing a most terrific whistle to frighten them off, for if he kills any he is fined for it by the company,

who have to pay the value to the owner. I don't think the people have yet found out the dodge of putting their old and worthless animals to be annihilated by the train and charged for as prime beasts.

Besides the ordinary stations, some eight or ten in number, on telling the engine-driver, the train will stop anywhere on the line for persons to descend, so that there are generally more stoppages than are set down in the time-bills. However, at half-past eight we arrived in safety at Mahaica, as far as the train goes, about five-and-twenty miles from Georgetown.

We found the other two places in the mail-waggon occupied by a lady and gentleman, evidently newly married, for, undeterred by the presence of strangers, a gentle spooning went on all the way. No doubt it was very nice, but it looked a little foolish, and was rather amusing.

The first stage reached is another De Kinderen, nine miles from Mahaica, where there is a large cattle farm belonging to the proprietor of Beckwith's Hotel; then comes Mahaicony, six miles further on. At Mahaicony there is a large police-station on the left hand side of the road, where I believe refreshments are to be procured, though, as we were well provided, we did not go to explore what provision there was for hungry travellers. Opposite to the police-station are two Portuguese shops, where we replenished our stock of bottled

beer, as we were beginning to think that it was an extra thirsty journey, and we had only provided for very moderate wants. At Mahaicony there is a wide creek, crossed by a wooden bridge. The next station is Abarri, seven miles away, where there is another large creek, the boundary between the counties of Demerara and Berbice, then Brahn, ten miles, Fort Wellington, six miles, Number Six or Belle Air, six miles, and then the Ferry, seven miles distant.

The drive at first was interesting, but towards the end of the journey became monotonous, and I believe we should all have gone to sleep had it not been for the eccentricities of our driver, a most ridiculous specimen of the negro, in fact, no "Bones" could have been more amusing. His name was pronounced Pilot, and we imagined it was because he piloted the coach so well on its journey, but he indignantly scouted the idea, and said his name was Purlett, which assemblage of letters I imagine he thought spelled polite. His flow of words was astonishing, but he evidently did not know the meaning of half the words he used, for he used them in every kind of sense, and if he could not think of a word long enough to please him, he thought nothing of inventing one. He kept up a continual chatter for the last three quarters of the journey, after, I fancy, a slight modicum of liquor at the first two or three stages. When asked a question, he would use as many words as possible to answer, so many, in fact, that he

nearly always lost himself in the labyrinth of speech, and only came to a stop when he discovered that he really did not know what he was talking about. And yet he was equal to the occasion, for then, after a pause, he would join on a sentence or two, the purport of which always was that the driver should be remembered at the end of the journey; in fact, most of his speeches seemed designed to impress that object on our minds.

The road at first ran through Mahaica village, and then crossed Mahaica creek over a wooden swing bridge, roofed in at the top. After crossing this creek we continued along through immense tracts of flat land, upon which large herds of cattle were grazing. Here and there upon these plains could be seen a black group of carrion crows, indicating that there some animal was lying dead, while bones and skeletons were to be observed in every direction. After crossing the Mahaicony creek, the road enters the bush, and is a mere track in the forest. On each side of us grew palms and tall trees, and in some places the sides of the road were covered with scrub, so that there was only just space for the carriage, which was scraped by the branches as it passed. Our Pilot grew quite eloquent about the facilities the scrub gave to the "enemy" for stopping Her Majesty's Mail, but when asked for a definition of "enemy," he was rather puzzled, and at last decisively said that everybody except himself and his passengers were

“enemies.” The road has never been macadamised, so it is very rough in places.

We passed some very fine specimens of the silk-cotton tree, with stems as straight as a line for three-quarters of the height of the whole tree, which must in some instances be over a hundred feet. One of the finest trees occupies the distinguished position of exactly half-way between Georgetown and New Amsterdam. Their stem throws out towards the ground large thin buttresses, which increase greatly the apparent diameter of the trunk at its base. The negroes regard this tree with the greatest reverence, and hold it to be the direst misfortune to have anything to do with the cutting down or destruction of these trees; in fact, they will have nothing to do with them on any consideration. I was told by my informant, who was not a negro, that he knew of many instances where the destruction of a silk-cotton tree, either accidentally or by premeditation, had been accompanied by ill-luck. The silk-cotton tree in the old slave times used to be invariably planted in the yard belonging to an estate, and used usually to be the tree to which the negro was tied when about to receive corporeal punishment, and perhaps this fact has something to do with the superstition.

A great feature in some parts of the road is the number of cotton bushes. In the time of the American war many of the proprietors began to grow cotton, but they started too late in

the day; and besides, the cotton of the country requires some little time to come to perfection,—so that other places, which began growing after this colony, got to market before they could; and when the end of the war came, the labour of the colony was too dear and too lazy to compete with other countries, so the cotton-fields were abandoned,—and now cotton is flourishing in great abundance in many places by the roadside.

Here and there an open place was reached in the bush, where two or three cottages were situated, and at one part of the journey the country opened out into an expanse of flat marshy land, which continued for some miles, and over which, in groups, were scattered collections of wretched huts, in which live, or I should rather say exist, lots of negroes, I should think rapidly retrograding into barbarism. These huts are raised upon wooden pillars, and are made of some kind of grass, I fancy chiefly the tops of sugar-cane, woven together with sticks, and are roofed with palm leaves. They are built at all angles to each other, and in all directions over the surface of the ground, and no decent road leads to any of them. In some places slight wooden frames show where a house was to have been erected, in others the hut has been partially constructed, but abandoned by its owner, and left to fall down or to be appropriated by some one else. All this country is intersected by canals as regularly as the more cultivated parts, and at one time must have been covered with various crops.

Naked children run about amongst these huts, and pigs and ducks wallow in the trenches. They have no attempts at gardens, and only a few wild plantains or ochras grow about the muddy plots surrounding the houses.

Our Pilot, when passing one of these houses rather better than its neighbours, pulled up, and inquired after some ducks that he had apparently ordered. They were not ready, so with a flourish of his whip, and an indignant tone in his voice, he said, "Send them on then, and the gentleman will doubtless recompense you according to their numbers and proportions." No bad way, though a rather roundabout one, of saying, that it depended upon their size and quality what he got for them.

At various intervals appeared well-built schoolhouses, and at Fort Wellington, a stage a mile or so on the Berbice side of a larger and better-looking town than usual, called Hoptown, there is a large church of some pretensions.

After passing Fort Wellington, we again entered the bush, and the road was no better than an ordinary ride in a wood in England. A mile or two on this side of the ferry across the Berbice river is a large African village, literally embowered in cocoa-nut trees, and the neatness of the houses and gardens of these freed slaves contrasted most favourably with the miserable dwellings of the free creole negroes which we had just passed through.

At last, to our great delight, in spite of the linguistical vagaries of our coachman, we caught sight of the Berbice river. It is rather larger than the Demerara, but is not so convenient for navigation, since its mouth is divided into two channels by a large island called Crab Island. The water is of the usual complexion of river and sea in this part of the world, a muddy pea-soup colour. We went to the hotel formerly kept by Mr Paris Brittain, which was said by Anthony Trollope to be the best hotel in the whole of the West Indies. It is now kept by a Mrs Hicks, and certainly is better than Beckwith's; not that the rooms are [better, but the dinners and breakfasts are better than at the hotel at Georgetown, and the style of the whole place superior.

New Amsterdam is a miniature of Georgetown; there are the same level roads, the same gardens, the same trenches along the roadside, the same trees, and the same wooden houses. When I say wooden houses, it must not be imagined that they are merely magnified huts, but on the other hand they are houses which, though plainly built, have some pretensions to architectural elegance. The churches, of wood also, are very good looking, and at a little distance could not be distinguished, either in shape or size, or spire or tower, from an ordinary English church.

The next morning we went, under the guidance of Mr W——, who very kindly acted as our cicerone in New Amster-

dam, through the market-place, then to the town-hall, and up a tall tower which formed part of that building, from whence, in consequence of its flatness, a fine view of the town and surrounding country is obtained. After we had seen the town-hall, Mr W—— procured for us a carriage to go a drive, and accompanied us upon our expedition. We first went to Plantation Providence, three miles from the town. The chief thing at Providence is the garden. On each side the walk up to the house from the gate is a broad patch of *Thubergia*, both white and yellow, trailing over the ground, and intended, I was told, to represent buttercups and daisies; not a bad imitation some distance off, but the individual flowers are too numerous and too large. Growing on the various trees in the garden were many lovely orchids in flower, and a plant of *Oncidium altissimum* had a spike of flowers, I am afraid to say how long, propped up against the verandah. One beautiful plant was hanging from the underside of a large branch; its leaves were like thick rushes, sticking out on all sides, while the blossoms, yellowish-green and white, hung down amongst the leaves, looking altogether like a most delicate miniature chandelier.

After staying sometime at Providence, and lounging about amongst the flowers in the shady and beautiful garden, we went on two or three miles to see the machinery at Plantation Everton. We called on the manager, and he took us over

the manufactory ; he was making rum, but not sugar. Not far from Everton the road comes out upon the bank of the river Berbice, about the middle of a long gentle curve, and a magnificent view of the river is to be obtained both up and down. There is much more variety and picturesqueness about the roads near New Amsterdam than there is about Georgetown ; in one place the road actually makes a long curve, instead of the everlasting angles in other places.

After dinner, while I was playing billiards at the reading-room, a friend came in to say that a gentleman had in a neighbouring house a large butterfly that I might have if I liked, so I immediately went, and found a beautiful specimen of a Morpho, ignominiously fastened to a cork. He was at least five inches across his wings ; a few drops of chloroform, however, quickly killed him. I had some most exciting chases after the butterflies in the course of the day, and secured some nice specimens, though my eagerness frequently defeated my purpose, and besides, eagerness in such a pursuit is rather warm work in British Guiana.

We started back for Georgetown in a steamer the next morning at eight o'clock, so we had to rise early to catch the boat. There was a great mixture of races on board. In the front part of the vessel were from seventy to eighty coolies, Chinese and Negroes, lying about the deck in all sorts of dress and undress, while there were about twenty passengers

in the cabin. We went on very nicely till we got well out to sea, when we came to some dreadful things called rollers, which made the little vessel roll and pitch and toss in the most outrageous style. We shipped seas, and one especially large one came in a body all over the poor unfortunate steerage passengers, and drenched them to the skin, and besides this they were all so sick. However, these rollers did not last long, and we soon got into comparatively quiet water, but before we reached Georgetown we came to some more, luckily, however, of a milder description than the former ones, but still rather unsteady. I congratulated myself many times that the sea had lost its baleful influence over me, and that I was able to smoke my pipe and eat my meals in spite of all the tossings.

We arrived at Georgetown about four o'clock quite safely, and I think much to the joy of most of the passengers, for a livelier passage on board a little steamer I had never seen.

One night I went to see the circus again, which had been giving its performances all the time I was in the town. It was a very superior performance to the one by the same circus that I had seen in Barbadoes. Instead of being lighted with tallow candles, which rained grease all over the underlying ground, it was lit up with ship's lanterns. The Governor was there, and all the *élite* of Georgetown, and the ladies were in evening dress. The audience was enormous; I should,

at a guess, say there were at least three thousand people present. The band of the 2d West India Regiment, then stationed in Demerara, played the music, and the colonel and the officers were present also. So altogether it was a very grand affair. ✓

Wednesday, the 26th of February, soon came now, and I had to say goodbye to all my kind friends. The steamer *Arno* was to start for Barbadoes at half-past four on that day, so about four o'clock, after many parting "swizzles" and heartfelt good wishes, I went on board. We soon started, and having discharged our pilot at the Lightship, went ahead in good earnest for Tobago. ✍

CHAPTER XI.

FROM BRITISH GUIANA TO JAMAICA.

THE *Arno* proved to be a most delightful ship, so comfortable and very clean, in that respect far superior to the *Corsica*. She had one defect, however. She quivered most shockingly, in a manner most disturbing to those not accustomed to ships and their motions. She was a paddle ship, and I fancy her engines were too powerful for her size.

On Friday morning early we anchored off Scarborough, and hearing from the captain that he would not start before noon, two passengers and myself went on shore. When we got out of the boat a small boy accosted us, and told us that he would take us "there," but where "there" was we had no idea, but thinking that at all events we should see something, we entrusted ourselves to his guidance. This "there" turned out to be the house of one of the chief storekeepers in the town of

Scarborough ; but as we approached the house, we did not know whether it was a hotel or a boarding-house, nor why we had been led there,—and this last point is still a mystery.

The walk from the landing stage was very pretty. The road was cut in the side of a hill, so that upon our right hand was a steep bank, and on our left a narrow level space, sufficient for a hut here and there, while behind them the ground sloped down again to a little rippling brook which ran at the bottom of the ravine, one side of which we were ascending. The road was shaded by trees of all kinds, through whose branches shone the early morning sun, and from whence proceeded the song and twitter of birds, reminding one of England. In the steep bank to the right, and forming part of it, we passed some old brick buildings with solid casements, apparently part of an old fort ; then across an old brick bridge, nearly a ruin too, we climbed the opposite side of the ravine. From the bridge was a pretty peep ; the hills on each side narrowed until a turn in the ravine shut out further view. At a bend, in the road we came upon a group of negro women drawing water from a roadside well, situated under a nearly overhanging rock, which was covered with creepers and shrubs, whose breeze-stirred leaves were flecked with gold by the morning sun just peeping amongst their branches. They were chattering, laughing, and romping as they awaited their turn to secure the wished-for fluid ; but they stopped when they

saw us, and seemed quite surprised to see three strangers plodding up the hill.

Cottages, or rather huts, were scattered about amongst the trees, and upon a bank, some six feet above the road, were to be seen two solid masonry pillars, capped with worked stone, evidently the entrance to some ancient house now destroyed, leaving no vestige behind to tell of its former greatness except the entrance to its drive.

Although the house we went to was no hotel, and although we could not give any very good account of our reason for going there, yet we had pity taken on us, and had something to drink. We were recommended to walk up to the fort, so we started off up the steep hill to that place. It was a hot and tiring walk, but when we got there we were well repaid by the fine view of the island we had. In front of us was the blue sea, while behind us to the right and left stretched range after range of hills, one rising behind another, involuntarily reminding us of Scotland. We rested ourselves on the top of the hill, and then started back for the town. We inquired for a carriage to drive us into the interior for an hour or two, but we found the number of carriages on the island to be very limited. I heard that there was only one, and that a private one. Then we wanted some breakfast, but as there is no hotel in the island, there was no mode of procuring breakfast, so we decided to leave the town and go back to the ship to get something to eat.

Scarborough, the chief town of Tobago, is not much more than a collection of wooden houses, some more dilapidated than others, but all looking more or less rickety, clustered round an open square some height above the sea. This square slopes gently from the north, that is, towards the sea, and at the higher end is situated a building of some pretension, which, I presume, contains the public offices, but it also, like the rest of the island, seems rather out of repair. Amongst the wretched wooden houses that comprise the present town, the ruins of substantial brick and mortar masonry everywhere meet the eye, and appear to prove that at some time the town has been a more flourishing, or at least, a better cared-for place. In fact, I think that two of the greatest characteristics of the present town are these old ruins, which crop up in every direction, and beggars, who seem to abound also, for solicitations for alms come very frequently. Perhaps a white stranger appears upon the scene so seldom that he immediately causes an epidemic of begging, which probably subsides when the white stranger takes his departure, for the very good reason that there is nothing left to beg.

On Saturday morning, at eight o'clock, we anchored in Carlisle Bay; at Barbadoes again, and I went to breakfast with some of the other passengers at Hoad's Albion Hotel. We had a very good breakfast there; I saw more on the table, I verily believe, for breakfast than I had seen for a week at Beck-

with's for breakfast and dinner too. I was invited to stay at W—— until the steamer *Nile* came in from England, in which I was going to Jamaica. She was due on Sunday, and about eleven o'clock the blue and white chequer flag was hoisted at the Highgate signal-station, betokening a "steamer to windward." So I took my things on board soon after she had anchored, and then came on shore again until she finally started, which was not until about half-past nine.

The *Nile* is a larger ship than the *Tasmanian*, but she does not look nearly so imposing, because she has only two masts and one funnel, while the *Tasmanian* has three masts and two funnels. She is a very comfortable ship, and I was glad to have the chance of taking the five days' voyage from Barbadoes to Jamaica in her, as, all being well, she would be the ship I should return to England in on the 30th of March.

I saw the constellation of the Southern Cross one night when I was on board the *Nile*, but I was not struck with its beauty. It is not a cross, but an irregular diamond, and one of the stars is much less than the other three. I think Orion or the Great Bear far surpass it in magnificence.

On Monday morning we were running along the west side of Martinique, with St Lucia behind us, and Dominica faintly showing in the distance, and for the greater part of the day we saw distant islands, capped with clouds, but they were only just distinguishable. On Tuesday, about two o'clock, we arrived

at St Thomas, and I immediately went on shore. As we enter the harbour there is a white rock to be seen in the distance, so like a ship in full sail, that it is called the "sail rock."

The harbour of St Thomas is a long bay, evidently at one time the crater of a volcano, running up to the town, where it widens out, surrounded by hills on every side. The name of the town is Charlotte-Amelia, but it is usually called after the name of the island, St Thomas; it is very picturesque, being situated on three hills at the northern end of the harbour, which trends nearly due north and south. The houses seen from the sea remind one of the houses to be found in toy boxes, their roofs are so red, and their windows so black, and their walls so gaily coloured with all tints from yellow to white. The hills, which rise up steeply behind the town, are sparsely covered with shrubs and trees, and scattered over the bases of those which surround the harbour are detached houses. The harbour is full of shipping, and the colour of the water is a deep green, while outside it is a most beautiful blue.

There is one chief street in the town of fair width, and kept very clean, which runs parallel with the harbour; the houses however, are irregular, but the stores seem well filled and well kept. Towards the middle of the length of the street, it is broken by a square surrounded with trees, under which sit quantities of negro women, either resting themselves, or displaying wares and fruits for sale.

The best hotel in the town is the Hotel du Commerce, situated close to the wharf, where the small boats land their passengers, towards the east end of the town. It seems to be a very fair hotel, quite up to the West Indian average, though, like all establishments of that kind in those parts, they have the objectionable practice of putting all the eatables on the table at the same time, and that time five minutes before the bell is rung, so that everything gets cold before it is attacked. There is a very good and clean ice establishment, otherwise liquor bar, but there are some billiard-tables in it which are deplorable.

One's ears are greeted with a great variety of tongues in the course of one's walk along the chief street, English, Spanish, and French being apparently talked by every native with complete indifference, while, since St Thomas is the chief harbour in the West Indies, sailors and people of all nationalities are met with.

We started from St Thomas about five on Tuesday. We caught sight of Porto Rico on Wednesday, and on Thursday afternoon we stopped at Jacmel, in Hayti. We had skirted St Domingo for some time before we reached that town. Tall hills rose up from the sea and lost their summits in the clouds; their sides were broken up by gullies and ravines, and terminated in a row of long white cliffs, which glistened brightly in the rays of the sun.

The town of Jacmel is situated on rising ground at the end of a long bay ; there is a valley behind it, and then another low range of hills, behind which tower up the mountains with cloud-capped summits. To the left of the town there is lower ground stretching among the hills, and a grove of cocoa-nuts fringes the shore. The town is not large ; in the centre, on the ridge of the hill, is the cathedral, apparently a pretty fair building, though at the distance I was away not much detail could be seen. The steamer did not anchor, and I did not go on shore, though one or two of the passengers did. A few ships were lying off the town, and in several places I saw the Haytian flag flying, which, described heraldically, is "per fesse dark blue and red."

High hills, sparsely covered with vegetation and intersected with valleys, rise all around from the bay in which the steamer is. In places on the hills curls of smoke arise as of charcoal burning, but I was told that it was not so, as the negroes of Hayti are too lazy to do anything so useful, but they were merely clearing the ground for planting canes or yam, or some other vegetable.

When those who had gone on shore returned, they said that the town was swarming with pigs and tattered negroes ; and one gentleman compared the pigs to rainbows on stilts, such was the curve of their backs and the length of their legs, and it was said that unless a pig had legs at least two feet six

inches long, he could not get about the loose stones and sand which compose their streets.

We stopped at Jacmel only for an hour and a half, and after a little bit of a toss in the night, we caught sight of Jamaica about nine o'clock on the morning of Friday the 8th of March, and steamed along its southern shore. The hills were covered with clouds, the remains of the storm that had raged the previous night; but these clouds, by letting the sunshine through their intervening spaces, lit up with patches of brightness the lower-lying lands. Bold hills, covered with green verdure, rose from the sea, their sides channeled in every direction with gullies, and their summits hidden in the clouds.

After steaming along the island for three hours or more, we caught sight of Kingston, which, though visible from the sea, has in front of it a long low tongue of land, which forms, by the sea enclosed, Kingston Harbour. This strip of low land is called the Palisades, and here is situated the cemetery, where so many victims of the yellow fever lie buried that the name has passed into a proverb. The harbour is approached only by a narrow channel round one end of the bank, so that when Kingston is first seen, though apparently near, it is really some distance off.

Kingston is situated on a large flat plain, rising very gradually from the sea to the glorious Jamaica hills at the back, with

all their lovely deep valleys, so beautifully blue, and distant ridges towering one above another, until the ever-present fleecy clouds receive their summits in their white embrace.

We had the general in command of the troops of the West India station on board, so we were saluted by the batteries at Port Royal, where we stopped to deliver the letters for the ships which were there. Port Royal is a military station, situated at the extremity of the low bank I have before alluded to.

On arriving at the wharf at Kingston, to which the steamer was made fast, so that people can do there what they can do nowhere else in the West Indies, with the exception of St Lucia, that is, walk on shore, a scene of the utmost confusion ensued. Negroes rushed on board in great numbers to seek for employment in carrying things on shore, much to the disgust of the foreman of the porters, a very black negro himself, who, if he saw an unauthorised negro there, thought nothing of knocking him down, and then kicking him off the ship. The frantic behaviour of this foreman was very amusing, though it added greatly to the confusion, for his proceedings were equally summary, whether the culprit had loaded himself with luggage or not. On the wharf were large piles of coal ready to be taken to the ship, and by these heaps stood men and women with baskets, in every stage of blackness and tatters, waiting for the signal to commence coaling the ship.

At last I succeeded in getting my things on shore, and the

custom-house officer, disbelieving my assurance that I had nothing contraband whatsoever in my luggage, was disobliging enough to make me open my portmanteau, in which, however, he found nothing but a fine collection of dirty clothes; this seemed to satisfy him, and he let the rest of my things pass untouched.

I then went to Blundell Hall, the best hotel in the place, where I succeeded in getting a room. As it was yet early, I sallied forth, and, hiring a carriage, set off to explore the town.

CHAPTER XII.

KINGSTON AND ITS ENVIRONS.

IRST, as to the carriages of the locality. They are square trays, supported upon four wheels, and drawn by deplorable-looking horses ; on this tray are two seats, both of the same pattern, each wide enough to hold two persons, and on the front seat sits the driver ; over these seats is supported a flat canopy, and on the back of the seat is written the name of the carriage, which, after the manner of boats at a watering place, are christened with all manner of names drawn from the pages of romance, or indicative of the speed, comforts, or advantages to be obtained by hiring the carriage in question. They are called omnibuses.

The chief street of Kingston is Commercial Street, which runs parallel to the sea for some distance. It is rather narrow, and the pavement for foot passengers, raised some distance above the level of the road, runs under an irregular colonnade, which supports the upper storey of the houses, usually projecting far beyond the ground floor. Most of the shops are distinguished by signs, long narrow boards variously

painted, which project out from the second floor, half across the street, and give a view down it a somewhat peculiar appearance.

The town is laid out with streets at right angles to each other, four wide streets forming a square of buildings, which is again intersected at right angles by narrower lanes ; all the streets and lanes are carefully named at the corners with white letters on blue enamelled iron. Except in Commercial Street, the houses in the streets are very irregular, large and small, good and bad, repaired and unrepaired being promiscuously mixed up. There is generally a few feet of space between each house, from which peep out acacias or palm or other trees, which greatly add to the picturesqueness of the effect produced by the irregularity of the architecture.

After driving about several streets, the driver took me to the camp, as the barracks near the town are called, and the race-course. I was immediately struck by the plant the hedges and fences are formed of, a tall-growing and very prickly cactus, like a gigantic and much elongated cucumber, with its branches shooting up as straight beside the parent stem as if they were tied to it. Each stem is about four or five inches in diameter, and as prickly as a hedgehog, and since they grow very thickly on the ground, and some ten or twelve feet high if they are allowed, you may imagine that they make a very impenetrable fence.

The camp covers a surface of some three hundred acres ; the barracks consist of two long lines of buildings two stories high. Attached to them is an excellent hospital, and also a splendid bath. The whole is surrounded by a high wall.

The outlying streets reminded me more of the suburbs of an English town than anything I had seen in the West Indies. Perhaps the red bricks and white mortar of which they were composed, and the high walls which were frequently to be met with built of the same materials, gave an English look to a place in the eyes of a man who, for the last four weeks, had seen nothing but wooden houses. The flowers about the houses were much the same as those in the rest of the West Indies, but there was a pretty crimson purple *Bougainvillea* rather common, darker than any I had seen either in Demerara or an English greenhouse.

The race-course is a flat piece of land, which looks as hard as a stone, but my driver told me that it was sandy, and was even too soft when broken up for the races. It is more than a mile round. There is no permanent grand stand, but one is erected every race-time, and the reason I heard for that was, that the people were such thieves that a fixed stand would very soon be carried away piecemeal if left unprotected. In the outskirts of the town are many patches of dry sandy wastes, covered with low mimosa-like scrub, amongst which grows every kind of cactus and prickly pear, in-

cluding the elongated cucumbers of which the fences are formed.

There are a good many street cries to be heard in Kingston, but as to what they mean I have no conception. I was told one meant "ice-creams," but it was more like the note of a corncrake than anything else. All the cries were very harsh and nasal, and to my unaccustomed ear seemed to have a very strong likeness to each other.

Blundell Hall is, I was told, the best hotel in Kingston; if so, the others must be bad. Like nearly all the houses in that town it is built of bricks and mortar, but unlike the generality it is whitewashed. The front door opens directly into the public room, which serves both for sitting and eating; but the sitting part of the business is usually carried on in the wooden jalousie-enclosed balcony before the front door, and which is approached by eight or ten steps from the street. A door opposite the front door leads out of the general room into a long narrow passage, at one end of which a flight of stairs leads to the upper part of the house. Through this passage is another balcony looking out into a square yard, in which grow two or three cocoa-nut and tamarind trees. The yard is surrounded by buildings, to the right by stables, to the left with bedrooms on the first floor, but with what underneath I never knew, while opposite the house was the scullery and other domestic offices. Ducks and poultry inhabited the yard,

and amongst these domesticated animals were generally to be seen two or three carrion crows, which abounded there, walking solemnly about, and seeking what they might devour. Carrion crows, or Turkey buzzards, are very useful as scavengers, and their lives are most stringently protected by law.

My bedroom was No. 6 of the range on the left side of the yard, and was of a good size. The bed was very large, and surrounded with mosquito curtains, which, on trial, confirmed my suspicions that they were useless on account of their tattered condition. They were, I think, composed more of holes than of netting, and in the morning, after my first trial of them, I discovered at least a dozen fat and well-fed mosquitoes hanging on inside the curtains, and lazily and contentedly waving their hind legs in the air.

Mosquitoes, if my bedroom was a type of all bedrooms in Kingston, abounded. At whatever time I entered it, they could be seen and heard, humming a hum of joy at seeing a victim approach. I felt the nuisance of their noise more than their bite, for that one gets accustomed to, but to hear their envious hum, now far, now near, now perhaps apparently within your very ear, is very disquieting.

I allowed a mosquito to settle on my hand one day, and philosophically examined him, while he plunged his dreaded proboscis into my flesh. He was exactly the shape of a

common gnat, and his body was grey, while his legs were striped alternately with broad bars of black and narrow bars of white. His proboscis or beak was brown, and about three-quarters as long as his body, and his head was adorned with two short and straight antennæ. As he settled, he searched about with his long proboscis until he found a spot suitable for his operations, and then he set to work. His antennæ waved with exultation as he buried his beak deeper and deeper, and when finally he had settled himself comfortably, he hoisted his hind legs in the air, and while he proceeded with the work he was too occupied even to wave his antennæ. His proboscis was now buried nearly its whole depth in my hand, perhaps about an eighth of an inch, but its insertion had not been attended with the slightest pain or irritation. He was now motionless, but a closer inspection revealed a slight sucking movement in his proboscis, and his body began visibly to distend. He was about two minutes satiating his appetite; but I was on murderous thoughts intent, and had no idea of letting him escape, though I wished to see how long the operation continued before I sent him out of the world. In about two minutes, as I said, his body was fully distended, and he had assumed quite a crimson hue, and he began to fidget about, without, however, withdrawing his proboscis from my hand. Now, thought I, the time has arrived for sacrifice, and I raised my other hand to immolate the little wretch. But as quick

as thought, so that it seemed all one movement, before I could bring my hand down on him he had finished his meal, spread his wings, and sprung off into the air and was gone, so escaping his intended punishment. In about half an hour, the place from which he had drawn his meal began to irritate me, but it soon passed away, leaving only a little red spot.

Our hostess at Blundell Hall was, like all West Indian hotel-keepers, a very independent lady of colour. I heard that on the Friday the *Nile* came in, there were so many applications for rooms at her establishment that she got quite vexed, and at last refused everybody, although she had one or two rooms vacant, "because" she said, "she was quite tired of giving out clean linen," which, I suppose, was required to furnish a room for a new comer.

The great want of the West Indies generally is good hotel accommodation. I believe that if nice comfortable hotels were supplied, and good waiters and servants procured to attend to them, instead of the lazy and independent negroes, the West Indies would be well frequented as a health resort during the winter months; but the fact is, that there is simply no decent hotel accommodation, such as a delicate and refined lady would feel at home in. At St Pierre, in Martinique, I hear the best hotel in that part of the world is to be found, but I did not visit it, and that also has some grievous defects. I believe the absence of accommodation is to be accounted for

in a great measure by the laziness of the negro servants, who will do no more work than they like, however much their masters may wish it.

One of the most popular drives with the inhabitants of Kingston is the Rock Fort road, which runs in an easterly direction, and leads to Morant Bay. After getting clear of the scattered houses in the outskirts of the town, it passes for a mile or more through a perfect wood of cactuses and prickly pears, some of which quite reach the dignity of trees, interspersed with scattered acacia bushes. To the left rises steeply a hill called "Commodore Mountain," towards the summit of which, nestling amongst the trees, and approached by a steep and winding path, is situated a house, the former residence of some commodore, who, I suppose, gave the name of his rank to the hill on which he dwelt. On the right the sea is approached, which ripples gently on a shingly beach, on which, at intervals, shrubby trees find a scanty nourishment for their roots. At the foot of Commodore Mountain, at the side of the road, is an extensive limestone quarry, worked by convict labour. Just past this quarry the road runs through a stone-built fortress, on which a few cannons are mounted, and which would apparently effectually bar any approach to Kingston from that direction. Past the fort, the sea is again approached, and in about a mile the regular turning place is reached. The sun beats down very fiercely from the mountain

on the left, and causes the drive to be anything but a cool one ; it is, however, a flat and good road, and that I suppose outweighs its sultriness in the minds of the Kingston people.

I drove to a sugar plantation called Constant Spring, some four or five miles from Kingston. The road lay between villas standing back from the road, sometimes in grounds of five or ten acres or more, which are quite park-like. These residences are called "Pens," I fancy applying to lesser estates the term which properly belongs to large cattle farms. The tall cactus played a conspicuous part in forming their fences. After passing many of these residences we came to wilder land, not cultivated, but still with the trees thinly scattered enough to allow you to see their different foliages to great advantage. *Vinca rosea*, or "Old Maid," as it is called in Barbadoes, formed pink masses in various places along the roadside.

A very striking tree is called by a name that sounds like "Negumbite," but if that is the proper name, or whether spelled right, I can't say. It does not grow to any great size, and has a round outline with gloomy green leaves ; about March, however, it is entirely covered with azure blue flowers, so much so that at the distance you can hardly tell whether its leaves are not blue also. My driver told me that it was a very powerful medicine, and was frequently used "for pain," which was rather vague, as he specified neither the quality nor the locality of the pain it was to cure.

Another handsome tree was a kind of fig, which begins its existence as a climber up some larger tree ; by degrees it sends down to the ground stem after stem, until at last it has completely encircled its support, and throws out a wide-spreading head of dark green leaves, and becomes a large and handsome forest tree. A few spindly and wretched-looking branches, with light green leaves, showing above the dark green of the fig, was all that remained of the tree that had assisted it to assume its great proportions.

The whole way to Constant Spring the blue hills of Jamaica were in front of me. They have a blue tint at a very little distance off, so blue that a painting of them in their natural tint would scarcely be believed in ; and then the colour deepens gloriously in the ravines and gullies that plough up their sides.

By the buildings at Constant Spring there is a large open space like a village green, through which a little purling stream of water runs ; but I did not find out if the name of the estate was taken from an unfailing supply of water, or a never-ending spring-time, which might be supposed to be the case in so lovely an island.

As I was driving up to the plantation, I had noticed the clouds gathering ominously upon the hills, but my Jehu pretended to be weatherwise, and said the storm would not come down into the plain. He was wrong, however, and before

we got back to the town the squall overtook us. The water came down in streams, not drops. The omnibuses have curtains of oil-cloth attached to their canopies, which, under such circumstances, are let down on the windward side or all round if necessary, and which, though they keep out the rain, keep out also the light, with the exception of a few straggling rays that enter through the hole the reins are put through, and through which the driver peeps to guide his horse aright. One of these curtains became unbuttoned at one corner while it was raining so heavily, and I was obliged to put my hand and arm outside to button it again, but although I was not more than fifteen seconds in doing so, my coat sleeve was wet through to the skin in that short space of time. It ran down the sides of the road like little rivers, and the heat of the ground and the roofs of the houses caused quite a steam to rise as the rain fell upon them. Luckily these storms or squalls do not last long, and the only inconvenience that arose from it was my wet arm.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE BOGWALK—DRIVE TO THE GARDENS—WALK ON THE NEWCASTLE ROAD.

S my time in Jamaica was limited, I had to be very hurried in my excursions, and was obliged to leave unseen many beauties of the island. On Saturday, the 8th of March, I started for the Bogwalk. The train left Kingston for Spanish Town at ten o'clock, and at that time I took my place in a first-class carriage, discovering, when I took my ticket, that return tickets are not issued. The carriages are made on the same plan as ours in England, but the first-class have no stuffed seats, and are composed merely of plain boards. The travelling is decidedly shaky, but a fair speed is kept up; the carriages, however, were not well coupled up, and a good deal of bumping and thumping was the result.

About forty minutes takes you to Spanish Town. For the first few miles the railway runs through the low sandy scrub, covered with the acacia bushes that I have before mentioned; after awhile this scrub grows higher, and trees begin to be mingled with the mimosas and cactuses. To the right, in the

distance, tower up the blue hills, while to the left, here and there, can be obtained glimpses of the sea. After crossing one or two little rivers the railway enters a large tract of marshy ground, covered with bright green mangroves, under whose branches deep dark still creeks of water stretch away into the shade. At last, however, this marshy ground gives way to large flat fields of long green grass, dotted with large trees, as thickly as an English orchard. These fields are hedged in, and the railway also, with a plant called pinguin (*Bromelia*), a plant looking like a cross between a pine apple and an aloe, with long thin yellowish-green leaves standing out stiffly on every side, edged with a formidable array of large prickles. The leaves, when the plants get well established, turn brilliant crimson just at the end, while the very tip of the leaf is golden yellow. It bears a bunch of yellow date-like fruit, elevated from the centre of the plant on a short thick stem.

There is only one station between Spanish Town and Kingston, and close by it is a spirit shop, which, I suppose, serves as the refreshment-room, for all the time the train stopped for the process of taking in water, which was apparently a tedious one, it was surrounded by a group of negroes, chattering away at the top of their voices, thinking, perhaps, that it was not the engine only that wanted a fresh supply of liquid on so hot a day.

The railway banks in some places were golden with a bright

yellow flower, like a rock rose in blossom, with finely-divided leaves and a stem creeping along the ground. The branches of the trees were nearly everywhere bearded with a grey hair-like moss, which grew in tufts along the branches; I found out afterwards that it was a flowering plant.

The station is some distance out of Spanish Town, so I engaged a little negro boy to show me the way to the town, and also to take me to a livery stable, where I might engage a carriage for my projected drive. I don't think I have ever beheld a town more generally out of repair than Spanish Town. I don't think there is a decent house in the whole place. The houses are for the most part brick, but there are also many wooden huts. The streets are narrow and out of repair, and the shops look most disreputable.

I went to have a cooling drink at a liquor shop, that looked more respectable than the rest, while my carriage was being prepared, and waited by no means patiently for it. The liquor shop was distinguished by a sign, showing two most extraordinary lions standing on their hind legs and pawing frantically at each other.

When the carriage arrived, it was in no better repair than the rest of the town. It was an old tumble-down buggy, and the horse attached to it was a most wretched-looking little animal, whose harness consisted in a great measure of string, and I felt great compunction in trusting to it for a long drive.

However, the driver assured me that I should find it all that could be required, so I got in and started off.

The road, which is good and hard, runs for two or three miles on a perfect level, and is fenced on both sides with the universal pinguin hedge, with sometimes a wide grassy strip between the macadamised part and the fence. The land on each side did not seem much cultivated; here and there a field dotted with trees, and in which cattle were grazing, was to be observed, but for the greater part of this flat section of the road it was bordered by a wood composed chiefly of acacia and logwood trees, in some places covered with long grey beards of moss, in others adorned by parasites and creeping plants, the most frequent of which was a convolvulus called "wild slip," which ran to the tops of the trees, and covered them with festoons of purple-lilac flowers.

Wooden huts were scattered amongst the trees, and here and there a liquor shop was surrounded by negroes, resting and refreshing themselves, for it was market day, and I met crowds of negro men and women going into Spanish Town with their burdens of fruit and vegetables on their heads.

It was a glorious day, and the tropical sun covered everything with its own brightness. In the distance rose a range of low hills, covered to their tops with trees, and showing that something beautiful was in front, but, as I found, not telling of half the scenery that was at hand, for after two or three sud-

den curves to the right and the left, we found ourselves high up above a river which ran and murmured some hundred feet below us on our right hand, and down to which the ground sloped precipitously.

‘ In the valley below a new dam is being constructed to irrigate 10,000 acres ; it is being built by the Government, and is to cost £80,000.

Then we turned suddenly away from the river, and passing between some high banks covered with verdure, we came out again near the river and about the same distance above it ; and now the real beauties of the drive began. Down below on our right rushed the river, fringed with towering bamboos, waving gracefully in the gentle breeze, while the opposite bank rose steeply, covered with all the variety and luxuriance of tropical vegetation. On our left, too, rose a steep bank, into which the road was cut, and in whose interstices and crannies abounded the most lovely and graceful ferns, while languid Heliconias and other insects fluttered lazily in the shade. The branches of the trees above overspread the road, and a light breeze which blew down the valley took away the heat of the noonday sun. The road sloped gradually down to the water’s edge, and close to the massive remains of an old Spanish fortress, now shrouded with verdure, crossed the river on a rough wooden bridge on brick piers, destitute of any parapet.

We now continued up the gorge, with the river on our left some forty or fifty yards wide. The Bogwalk river, though so calm and peaceful when I saw it, is liable to sudden fits of anger, and rising some twenty feet above the road, sweeps away everything in its wrath. Passengers along the road have to use the utmost speed of horse or foot to escape the sudden rush of the torrent. The hills rose up nearly perpendicular on each side some four hundred feet, sloping only sufficiently to afford a foothold for the trees, and in some places absolutely precipitous. The river wound in and out amongst the hills, affording fresh peeps of beauty at every turn. Let me try to describe a reach of the river.

Steep cliffs rise up on either side, and apparently meet in front, so that they seem to afford no outlet for the road nor inlet for the river. They are clothed with greens of various shades and leaves of various shapes to the very summit, while by the road grow luxuriant ferns, chiefly maidenhair. Between the road and the river rise at intervals rugged rocks, covered with creepers and mossed over with lycopodiums, while by the river edge wave giant tufts of bamboo and quivering patches of wild cane and tall reed-like grass, the river all the while foaming and murmuring over its rocky course. Just across the river, a hundred yards ahead, the opposite bank of the river ends in an overhanging precipice, a hundred feet high, from the summit of which long lithe creepers drop down and

bathe their leaves in the water, under whose shade flourish lovely green tufts of ferns and moss. And over all the summer sun shines down, powerless, however, to destroy the refreshing stillness of the gorge. Yet, with all this beauty, the wandering breeze kept now and again waving down to their destination in the running stream yellow faded leaves.

Bright-hued butterflies glanced here and there, and a rustle among the verdure told of the startled lizard, seeking security amongst the crannies of the rocks from the intruder presumptuous enough to disturb it in its lovely home. But there was a great lack of birds ; perhaps a lazy carrion crow would float down the gorge, with its ashen grey wings extended, the feathers at the end of them so wide apart that they seemed to form a spectral hand, and perhaps a humming bird would dart by so quickly that it was gone almost before it was seen—but other birds there were none.

Everywhere in the sunshine *Thunbergia alata* covered the bushes by the roadside with its buff flowers, and in the shady places orchids flourished, sometimes forming immense tufts of harts-tongue-like foliage.

I had dawdled along the way so much catching butterflies and picking ferns, that my watch warned me that it was time to return, and I was obliged to do so, though I had not reached the end of the gorge ; but I was in a perfect shiver of delight at the beauty of what I had seen. My wretched

horse and rickety carriage brought me back to the railway station at Spanish Town, and I returned to Kingston well pleased with my excursion.

I was told at Kingston that even the Bogwalk is nothing to be compared in beauty to the north side of the island, the district called St Ann's. There the Roaring River falls in fairy-like cascades over rocks and boulders, fringed with overhanging trees, seeming more like the scenery in a pantomime than solid earth. I was sorry that I could not see these beauties, but the Bogwalk is quite enough to satisfy a moderate appetite for the loveliness of nature

My expedition, by which I intended to reach Newcastle, was a very unlucky one, for I never succeeded in reaching Newcastle at all. I had ordered my carriage at nine, and at nine it arrived at the door of the hotel. Now these omnibus things have no locking apparatus, and require a very wide circle to turn in, and my driver, being, I suppose, in a great hurry to get off, turned round too sharply, and the consequence was that we were nearly upset, and some crews were broken, and getting the affair mended delayed us nearly an hour. At last, however, he arrived with the renovated carriage.

The first few miles of our journey was through the usual sandy scrub, covered with acacias and cactuses, one kind of which was gay with large lemon-yellow blossoms, just like an evening primrose. In some of the trees by the roadside grows

a bush that in colour, appearance, and shape is exactly like mistletoe, but I did not get near to any to see what kind of plant it was. After a few miles we began to get amongst rising ground. On our right was a low hill covered with stunted scrub, and separated from the road by a wide and shallow dry gully, that bore evidence of being a roaring torrent in the rainy season. Amongst the bushes on the hill crop out great patches of rock, whose grey tint forms a good contrast to the various greens that surround it. A limestone quarry is being worked at the foot of the hill, and round it are picturesquely scattered a few thatched and whitewashed cottages.

The road had quite an English appearance, for on each side of the macadamised part is a strip of waste covered with low shrubs and gay in many places with wild flowers; while in the hedgerows, here formed of a stiff-growing yucca-like plant, and not of the nearly universal pinguin, grow some tall tamarind and mango trees. In front of us all the time were the blue hills, looking more lovely as we approached them.

We now turned sharply to the right, and skirted the hills at the distance of about a mile.

The road here is perfectly straight for over a mile, and is called Hope Lane, "because," said my driver, "everybody hopes to get to the end of it as fast as they can." It is nearly level, but there is a little down-hill; I could not, however,

convince my Jehu of this ; he maintained that it was up-hill all the way from Kingston, and do all I could, I could not get him to own that we were going down-hill ; and all he would admit was that it was a "hill," without any qualifying adjective, either "up" or "down."

At last we came to the end of this long stretch, and, turning sharply to the left, came out high on the one side of a gently sloping valley, winding away amongst the hills in front of us, and on the sides of which were scattered cottages and bright green fields of sugar-cane. Birds were singing in the bushes around with a song very like an English thrush. After a little time the valley rapidly narrowed, and running down one side of it we reached the bed of the stream. The rocks which bounded the road on the left hand were green with fern, and shaded by the trees which grew above. We reached the stream which foamed along in its narrow bed, in places fringed with waving green bamboos, which clothed also the lower part of the opposite bank, and in places trickling slowly through a wide and stony gully, which bore testimony that at times the little brook was a foaming torrent. Great aloes sent up their lofty flower spikes in all directions, perching themselves on jutting points of rock and in picturesque nooks ; on either side of the valley were situated pretty cottages, while the hills rose up on either side for many hundred feet.

We crossed a small tributary stream, and ran under the

rocks on the left hand side of the road, which in some places assumed an absolutely precipitous character, and every crack and cranny of which was filled with the verdure of ferns and lycopodiums. A gentle ascent now brought us to Gordontown, or "Gardens," as it is usually called, which is merely a collection of huts, amongst which are scattered a few soldiers' tents, grouped round one or two central liquor shops. The road ends here, ten miles from Kingston, and the rest of the journey to Newcastle, five miles, has to be performed on horseback.

I then went to the office and inquired for a horse, and, to my great dismay, I was told they were all engaged. The troop-ship *Orontes* had come in the night before, and every available animal was engaged upon Her Majesty's service, bringing down the baggage of the 29th Regiment and taking up the goods of the 98th, who were going to take their place at Newcastle. Here was bad luck ; but, having come so far, I did not like to be beaten, and started off to walk up the hill.

The path follows the bank of the stream, which comes down a narrow and shady ravine in a succession of cascades. About a mile of woodland and picturesque walking brought me to a stone bridge over the stream, just before which a little trickling stream poured in a tiny cascade over a precipice on the other side of the river, though it could hardly be seen for the

luxuriance of the vegetation, which nearly hid it, as though envious of its beauty. The path then continues, steeply and stonily, by the stream until another bridge, but this a wooden one, is reached. The river just beyond the bridge makes a pretty cascade of some forty feet; in fact, the river is nothing but a succession of cascades, some small, mere rushes of water over an opposing boulder, some larger, where the water falls over some ridge of rock perhaps twenty feet high. In the rocks by the side of the path gold fern abounds. On some of the taller trees a long grey moss is to be seen, like gigantic beards, eight or ten feet long, waving in the wind. One fern that was rather common by the higher part of the road, was in looks and scent exactly like our *Lastrea oreopteris*; but I am not botanist enough to know if it really was our English fern.

The path crosses the stream for the third time on another wooden bridge, and reaches a collection of cottages, and winds in and out amongst gigantic boulders. After a little while I came to a place where the road divided, and I had to choose between two paths; unluckily there was no one near to ask which was the right one; but knowing that Newcastle was up-hill, I chose the upper one, leaving the other one on my left, which seemed to lead down a valley rather than up a hill. I passed a little stream of water and quenched my thirst, for walking up a steep path, covered with loose and

angular stones that slipped with one at every step, and with a tropical noonday sun glaring down upon me whenever I was out of the shade of the trees, was not a particularly cool operation. I had met many people soon after I started carrying goods down the hill, the barefooted negroes stepping along as firmly upon the angular stones as if they were traversing the finest turf.

On I went, the road getting worse and worse ; cottages were scattered about here and there on the side of the hill, while in the distance appeared one or two good houses. At last, after toiling up a particularly steep part of the path, I turned a shoulder of the hill and saw Newcastle in front of me, perhaps three quarters of a mile away as the crow flies, but apparently twice as far by the road, which had to go round the head of the valley that lay between Newcastle and myself. I met here a man coming down, and I asked him how far it was up there ; he said it was more than a mile, so here, thought I, I have done enough, and will turn back, comforting myself with the idea that it is a great thing to know when to turn back.

Walking down was nearly as bad as walking up. The steepness of the path cramped one's feet, and the giving way of the loose stones made it additionally difficult. There was, however, a cool breeze blowing up the valley, which was very refreshing. The view was not very extensive when I was at

the highest point of my walks. The hills all round are glorious ; but the scene was entirely shut in with them, except straight in front where the sea could be seen, and through a gorge to the right, where a pretty but limited view of distant lowland could be seen.

I got down again quite safely, though very nearly tired. I then found out the mistake I had made. I should have taken the lower path when the road divided, which leads more easily and directly to Newcastle. The road I had taken leads to a place called Clifton. Newcastle, as I saw it, was a large collection of white houses with black roofs, situated on a sloping ridge, two thousand feet above the sea. The Fern-walk is the great thing to see at Newcastle, but although I had missed my aim, and had not seen it, still I had had a pleasant and lovely walk in the heart of tropical hills, a thing one doesn't get every day of one's life.

The next day, in the evening, I went on board the steamer *Tagus* and slept there, as she was to start the next morning early. On Wednesday morning, therefore, we cast off from the wharf at Kingston, and for many hours the blue hills of Jamaica were fading away in the distance.

CHAPTER XIV.

JAMAICA TO BARBADOES.



E arrived at St Thomas at nine o'clock on Saturday morning, during the prevalence of what is called a "norther," that is a mixture of wind and rain and cold, reminding one more of an English November than the tropics. I did not, therefore, go on shore, as the day was so dreary. A bank of clouds was resting half way down the hills at the back of the town, and frequent gusts of wind drove the drizzling rain the whole length of the deck of the ship under the awning, forcing everybody to seek shelter below.

After dark, the town looked very well when the lamps were lit. The three little hills upon which the town is situated formed three pyramids of illumination, joined together by the lights in the houses along the edge of the water. The town is lighted with gas.

The next day I went on board the *Arno*, for, to my delight, she was the steamer going down the islands. The

ship, soon after I went on board, went alongside the *Tasmanian*, which had just come in from England, and as soon as there was a gangway between the two ships I went on board the *Tasmanian*, to my great surprise meeting an old college friend on the quarterdeck.

I was much amused, just before I went back to the *Arno*, at the position of a man who had evidently imbibed more liquor than was compatible with steadiness of brain or body. It was about eleven o'clock at night, and what ship he belonged to none of the officers of either steamer knew. He had come off to the *Tasmanian* in a shore boat, and as it was certain that he had no right there, they sent him across the gangway to the *Arno*, and it being equally certain that he did not belong to her, he was not allowed to go on board her either. The *Tasmanian* having once got him off, would not let him on again, so he had the whole length of the gangway to himself, and no more. However, he seemed very merry over it, and at last, I believe, he was sent on shore.

The next day the *Arno* started about eleven o'clock in the morning. The norther was still blowing; and so the day passed—heavy rain showers, heavy squalls, and heavy sea; and this lasted until it was dark.

At half-past three in the morning of the 18th of March we anchored at Basseterre, the chief town of St Christopher, or St Kitts, as it is colloquially called. The clouds had

partially cleared away, and the moon peeped out at intervals, and lit up the town and the neighbouring cane-fields, which stretched up the gentle slopes of a hill side, and could be distinguished by their tint, lighter than that of the surrounding land. The features of the town I could not distinguish. I could only see a collection of houses close down to the water's edge, gleaming white in the moonlight.

A flock of boats soon came off from the shore, and the task of transferring the goods from the *Arno* to them soon commenced, and I, having seen all there was to see, again went below. After breakfast, St Kitts and Nevis were behind us, which latter island is only separated from St Kitts by a narrow channel, while to our right, or to starboard, to use a nautical term, we were passing a round rock called Redondo, while some distance beyond it was the island of Montserrat, with the tops of its mountains shrouded in clouds. Antigua was ahead of us. The weather was much finer, but still squalls of rain were to be seen in various directions, though overhead the sky was clear.

At half-past twelve we stopped at Antigua, in the middle of a storm of rain, in a little bay called English Harbour, surrounded by hills, and twelve miles away from the chief town of the island, St Johns. Jutting out into the bay is a little rocky promontory, on which is situated a flagstaff, surrounded by a low wall with a cottage inside it, and approached from the

sea by a flight of steps cut into the rock. Round this promontory the water curves sharply, forming, as it were, a bay within a bay. At the end of the little bay are some buildings belonging to a dockyard, and coloured a bright yellow.

The promontories are formed of grey sandstone, with layers of stratification which are nearly horizontal, and worn by the sea into all kinds of fantastic holes and caverns. The hills on the sides of the bay are covered with low scrub, amongst which grow quantities of aloes, sending their tall flowering stalks far above the surrounding vegetation, while at the level of the sea the hills terminate in a fine sandy beach, which some passengers who went on shore said was literally covered with shells. The outline of the island, as seen from the sea, is very irregular, but the hills do not seem to reach any great height.

The mountains of the West India Islands seem to consist of a collection of pyramids. It is as if a large central pyramid was supported by buttresses in the shape of pyramids, while all the irregularities of the mountain side take a triangular shape. It is, doubtless, owing to the volcanic action which produced the greater part of them that they have this characteristic. The mountains in Antigua are made up of these peculiar little pyramidal hills.

At two o'clock we again started, and Guadaloupe was reached just as the sun was setting, but it was quite dark

before we stopped at Basseterre, the chief town of the island. Nothing could be seen but the lights of the town, which is brilliantly lighted with gas. At eight we were off again, and at two we reached Roseau, the chief town of Dominica; here, although the moon was shining, we could see nothing but white houses down by the sea, and hear a gentle surf lapping upon the shore. We stopped only about an hour.

At seven o'clock on Wednesday morning we made fast to a buoy at St Pierre, in Martinique. During my passage in the *Nile* from Barbadoes to St Thomas, we passed St Pierre without stopping, and at a distance of two or three miles, so that the outline of the island could be better seen. On each side of St Pierre, which is situated at the entrance to a valley, rises a high mountain, that to the right appearing from the sea not unlike Ben Nevis in shape. St Pierre is a very neat town, prettily placed between some steep cliffs and the sea, but continuing past the end of these cliffs along the seashore, and extending into the valley behind. On the top of one of these cliffs, occupying an elevated position amongst the green shrubs, is a white marble statue of the Empress Josephine, who was a native of Martinique. Many ships were in the harbour, and a few at a greater distance away had the yellow flag of quarantine flying at the foremast.

The mountain to the north of the town, or to the left as we look at it from the sea, has a conical shape, from the highest

peak of which slope down to the sea long mountainous ridges, like the ribs of some giant animal, composed of the usual volcanic pyramids. To the south of the town the spurs of the mountain come down to the sea, where they end as abruptly and with apparently as smooth a face as if they had been sawn off with a stonemason's saw. They are of grey sandstone, striped with darker reds and browns. Between the cliffs run up from the sea most lovely valleys, with their sides covered with sugar-cane, and here and there a house or a cottage or a boiling-house peeping out, while the entrances on the sea-shore are fringed with groves of waving cocoa-nuts. The slopes of the hills are cultivated in patches, but sometimes the cane-fields run up to the very summits.

We steamed away from St Pierre at half-past eight, and at about nine were off the large bay in which Port of France is situated. The mountains here sink down, but past the bay is a mountainous promontory, although the hills are not nearly so high as in the north of the island. Just beyond this promontory is the Diamond Rock, which played an important part in the wars with France at the end of the last century. Kingsley, in his "At Last," gives a very interesting account of the proceedings connected with it.

We arrived at St Lucia about one, and making fast to the wharf, I went on shore, and immediately started off to walk to the Maund, up a hill some two miles away. The walk up

was a rather steep pull, winding round the hills at the back of the town, and shaded by trees and shrubs. Cottages and houses were situated on either side of the road the whole of the way. At the top of the hill are some barrack buildings now evidently disused, but part of which I hear is to be turned into a house for the governor.

A cemetery is situated on the brow of a hill, rather lower than that on which the other buildings are. From the outer edge of it the view is lovely. At one's feet lies a lovely and fertile valley, through which winds, with serpentine course, a tiny river; an arm of the sea enclosed with gently sloping cultivated hills comes up to meet the stream, and breaks in gentle ripples on the shore. Beyond the valley rise rough, ragged hills, clothed only with forest, save here and there where a patch of brighter green betokens the sugar-cane; beyond, and yet beyond, rise the crests of hills, and in the distance a jagged chain of mountain peaks stands out against the sky; to the right extends the boundless sea, while to the left the view is shut in by a spur of the hill on which I am, over which, in the distance, mountains show their tops.

The cemetery itself is in ruins, though there are some graves of comparatively recent date. Mostly built of brick or stone, they are in all stages of decay; some a mere shapeless heap of stones, while amongst them grow sandbox trees, and wild guava lends its green to adorn in some measure the

ravages of time. Some of the tombs are of white marble and quite architectural, but a neglected appearance clings to all.

The view looking over the town of Castries, or to the north, is very fine. Down by a long bay, formed by a jutting hill joined by a strip of low land to the rest of the island, is situated this town, looking much larger and more imposing from the height on which I stand than it really is. To the right of the town the ground is broken up by a lot of little hills, amongst which are seen green patches of cultivation. The shore stretches away beyond the town, broken up into irregular bays and promontories, while hazy and dim in the far distance can be discerned the outline of Martinique.

The town of Castries is very poor ; the streets are laid out at right angles to each other, and were evidently never intended for carriages, as they are unevenly paved with very large flat-topped boulders, and in most cases slope down rather steeply to a central gutter.

The steamer stopped opposite the end of Bridge Street, which seems to be the chief street in the town. To the left of Bridge Street, some hundred yards away from the wharf, is a large open place or square, surrounded by tall trees, chiefly mango, sandbox, and tamarind, while between them are planted oleanders. In the centre of the square, which in itself looks desolate and bare, because grass grows only in patches, and when it does grow is stunted and parched, is a desolate-looking

fountain, in the shape of an urn raised high upon a square pedestal, from which a slender trickle of water is always flowing. Under the shade of the trees are iron seats, so that the town is not altogether without some attempts at comfort.

Bridge Street, I suppose, is so called, because at the end of it is a wooden bridge over a little brook, not by any means of pure water, which comes down from the hills, and doubtless gathers its impurity in the outskirts of the town. The road to the Maund starts over this bridge, and soon, after passing it, a very creditable but rather age-stricken piece of masonry is to be seen on the left, in the shape of a plain round arched doorway with a round arched niche on each side; it serves now as an entrance to a yard or garden, in which is situated a rather respectable house. Passing this, the road begins to ascend in winding zigzags up the hill, and soon crosses another stream, which showed in its rocky bed dark pools of stagnant soapsuds and filth instead of pure water. I saw no shops or stores of any respectability in the town, nor did I see a carriage, nor indeed any road on which a carriage could run.

The *Arno* was coaled at Castries. This is done by a gang of negroes, men and women, who carry the coal upon their heads in baskets from a heap on shore, and throw it down on board ship near the coal holes. The negroes are in every degree of rags and every shade of blackness, both of coal-dust and blood, but they seem very merry during their operations,

in spite of the immense weight of coals they carry on their heads.

At St Lucia the passengers for Trinidad, St Vincent, and Grenada change steamers, and we found the *Tyne* awaiting us there to take them to their destination.

On the side of the *Arno* furthest from the wharf was a boat-load of naked negro boys, perhaps ten or a dozen of them, who with loud voice testified their readiness to dive into the water for any white coin we pleased to throw them. We were much amused at their antics. They seemed to aim at getting their hands under the coin, which sinks very slowly through the water, though some coins were veritably brought up from the bottom. One or two of them far excelled the others in their swimming and diving powers, and, as far as I could see, secured the lion's share of the profits.

We left St Lucia at five o'clock, the Trinidad steamer having departed an hour before, and steamed out into a nasty sea, which soon began to exert its influence over the unseasoned passengers.

The first thing on Thursday morning, after a good night's rest, in spite of the moaning of the sea-stricken, and the screams of a refractory baby, I saw Barbadoes once more out of my cabin port. It did not take long to reach Bridgetown, and at half-past eight we anchored in Carlisle Bay. On shore I met my friend, and I again went to W—— for the few days before my steamer left for England.

CHAPTER XV.

LAST LOOK AT BARBADOES—THE VOYAGE HOME— CONCLUSION.

T was crop time in Barbadoes now ; sugar-making was going on all over the island, but in a style very different to Demerara. There are, with a few exceptions, no steam engines, no vacuum pans, no centrifugals, and no magnificent manufactory for the reception of these machines. The process is very simple, and as it is a very paying one, I don't see the necessity of introducing more complicated appliances into the island.

The cane is brought to the mill-door by ox-carts, and placed in the mill by women, and from thence the juice runs into the boiling-house by gravitation, where it is boiled down as in Demerara, but on a much smaller scale. The coppers in which it is boiled are called "taches." From the last tache it is placed in large square boxes called "coolers," and when cold is put into hogsheads, and placed on a frame, through

which the molasses drains away into an underground cistern, leaving the sugar crystals in the hogshead. This is muscovado or brown sugar.

By a process called "oscillating," a finer crystal is formed. "Oscillators" are things like paddle-wheels, which are turned slowly round in the syrup while it is cooling.

For firing, both in Barbadoes and Demerara, the refuse of the cane, called "magass," is used, and sometimes coal also. I heard of a negro boy being told to get a couple of hogsheads of coal from Speight's Town and light the fire under the taches with it. After the coal had been procured, the stoker sent to the manager to say, that do all he could he could not make this coal light. So the manager sent back to tell him to break it smaller, and put more magass to it. However, it was of no use, and at last the manager went to see what he could do, and found that his stoker had been industriously striving to set on fire some broken drain-pipes, which had come up by mistake from the town, and which the negro did not know from coal.

The great fault in the process of sugar-making, as carried on in Barbadoes, is the variableness of the wind power used to grind the canes; if there is not sufficient wind, of course the mill will not work; if there is too much, the mill goes so quickly that it cannot be fed fast enough, and the sails fly round with such speed that there is the danger of the mill

throwing off a "point," as the sails are called, and in consequence, when the wind rises, it has to be turned away from the force of the blast. On a squally day, a gang of negroes seem to do little else but pull the mill to and from the force of the wind.

Barbadoes looked very different on my second visit from what it did when I first arrived. Instead of waving fields of cane, I found brown fields of trash where the canes had been cut. The roads were very dusty, and a coating of dust rested on everything for yards on either side. The sun was far more powerful, and the glaring white of the roads and coral rocks was much more remarkable. In a month or six weeks the cane harvest would be over, and brown fields would soon form the pervading feature of the island. The trash from the cut canes is placed all over the fields in which the young canes are growing to form some little protection from the sun; the young canes were then some eighteen inches high, but it would be July or August before they covered the ground.

On Sunday the 30th March the *Nile* came in, and I had to say goodbye to all my kind W—— friends. I drove down to Bridgetown about eleven, and then found that the steamer would not start till five. However, my friend P—— and myself went on board at once, and the time passed all too quickly; and at last it was time for him to go, and I said goodbye to the last of my West Indian friends. Soon the *Nile* got under

weigh, and in about half an hour we were in sight of W——. I borrowed a telescope from one of the officers, and could plainly see my W—— friends standing in the verandah, watching the ship go by. It was too far away to distinguish anything with the naked eye. Soon all got indistinct even with the telescope, and then, taking one last look, I went below, and saw Barbadoes no more.

We had the most lovely weather for the first week of our voyage, and in a very few days the wind began to get quite cold. On Tuesday the 8th of April, about mid-day, it began to get cloudy, and a fresh breeze sprang up, which continued with rain for the rest of the day. This was a very exciting day in the annals of our voyage. After breakfast the turtles on board were transferred to the hold from the sheep pens, where they had been quietly reposing on their backs, so closely packed that they looked like gigantic scales on some gigantic fish. The transfer was done in a very summary manner. They were carried to the hatchway, and there a noose of rope was made fast by a pulley to one of their flappers, and they were lowered down to their destination, waving their limbs and heads aimlessly in the air as they descended.

Then at twelve o'clock we came in sight of St Michael's, one of the Azores, famed for its oranges; and at one o'clock we were about three miles away from the island, but it had become so misty that no good view could be obtained. I

could see, however, that high cliffs faced the sea, lower towards the middle of the visible shore of the island, where there were situated a few white houses and a white church. Separated from the land some fantastically-shaped rocks stood out in the sea. What could be seen of the island was highly cultivated, the land sloping up gradually and divided into fields of bright green verdure, amongst which, towards the edge of the cliffs, were dotted white houses. No trees were visible, but darker lines, either gullies or strips of woodland, ran down to the edge of the rocks from the higher land, which was hidden in the driving mist.

We were soon past the island and out again into the open sea ; it was very cold in the wind, and greatcoats and rugs came out as if by magic. However, the wind and rain lasted only until the middle of the next day, when the weather cleared up, and by nightfall the *Nile* was again as steady as a house. Soon after this we began to fall in with ships, and various gaily-coloured and mysterious flags were hoisted by way of signals ; the weather was glorious, with hardly a cloud in the sky or a ripple on the sea. On Saturday the 12th of April, we caught sight of the Lizard, and about half-past five fired our gun for the tender in Plymouth Sound.

The luggage took sometime to transfer from the steamer to the tender, and there were innumerable quantities of mail-bags to be sent on shore, so that it was after seven before the

tender left the ship and steered for Plymouth, while the *Nile* turned her head towards Cherbourg.

About half an hour brought the little steamer to shore, and we were soon once more on the shores of old England.

And now, if I were asked which I liked best of the three places I made any stay at, Barbadoes, Demerara, or Jamaica, I should answer that I had no fair standard of comparison. In Barbadoes I was staying with a family, and therefore saw a great deal of society ; in Demerara I was staying at a hotel, and my acquaintance was limited to bachelors, chiefly barristers and officials of Bridgetown ; while in Jamaica I was the unprotected traveller, without introduction, and not staying long enough to become acquainted with anybody. In Barbadoes, however, the society seems to be more after the fashion of English society. Families have been located there in many instances for more than two hundred years, and their representatives are as much attached to the soil as the representatives of county families in England, and in many cases they are the descendants, through junior branches, of some of the best families in England, and their estates are called after the ancestral domain.

In Demerara it is otherwise. Though there are many descendants of the old Dutch families left, still they have become in later times Englishmen rather than Demerarans. They have probably been sent to England to be educated,

they pay frequent visits to England themselves, perhaps marry English wives, and in turn send their children to England to commence the same routine. Therefore, the society in Demerara is more transitional, and it seems as if no one would stay there if they could return to England without sacrificing their pecuniary interests. About Jamaica I cannot speak.

My reason for taking the tour was to escape the winter months in England, and at the same time to see if a thorough change of climate would enable me to get rid of a tiresome cough that had worried me for a couple of years. In this I am glad to say I was successful, and I see no reason why the West Indies should not become as favourite a health resort during our cold winter as the south of France or the north of Africa. The climate is lovely, the journey thither is easy, the ships of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company are in every respect first-rate, and, with introductions, there is plenty of society; the only drawback is the want of good hotel accommodation. There are hotels, but they are certainly not up to the requirements of the fastidious; but on the other hand it only requires more visitors to bring about the establishment of better hotels. Living is cheap, provisions are good and abundant, and every European comfort and luxury is to be obtained in the principal towns. At every hotel in the West Indies the charge for board and lodging is two

dollars, or 8s. 4d. a day, and meals are generally abundant and fairly cooked and served. Lastly, in my opinion, persons seeking a change from our frost and snow at home might do much worse than spend their winter months "under a tropical sky."

THE END.

Crown Buildings, 188, Fleet Street,
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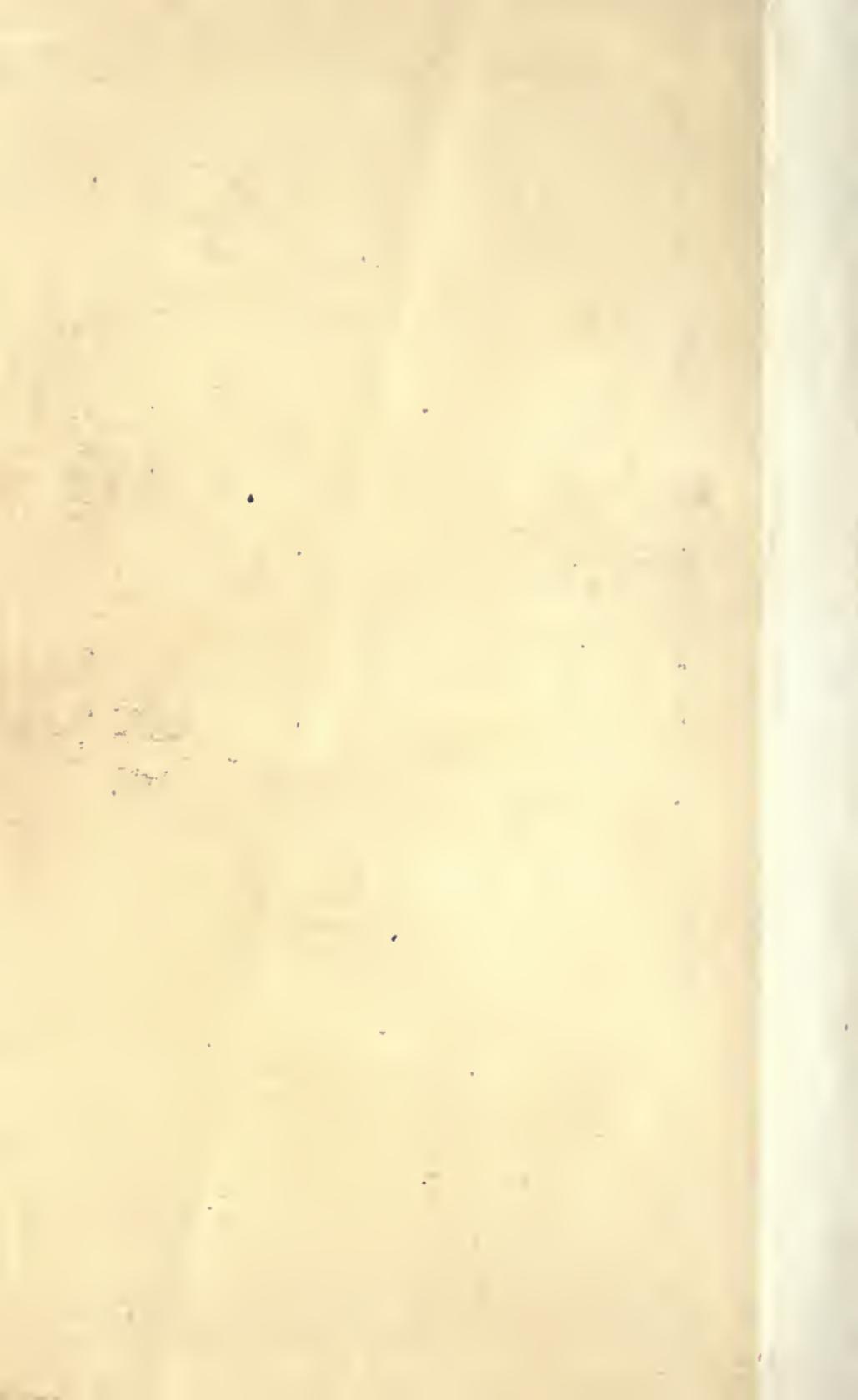
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