

**Notes on the West Indies: written during the expedition under ... Sir Ralph Abercromby: including observations relative to the creoles and slaves of the western colonies and the Indians of South America: interspersed with remarks upon the seasoning, or yellow fever of hot climates / By George Pinckard.**

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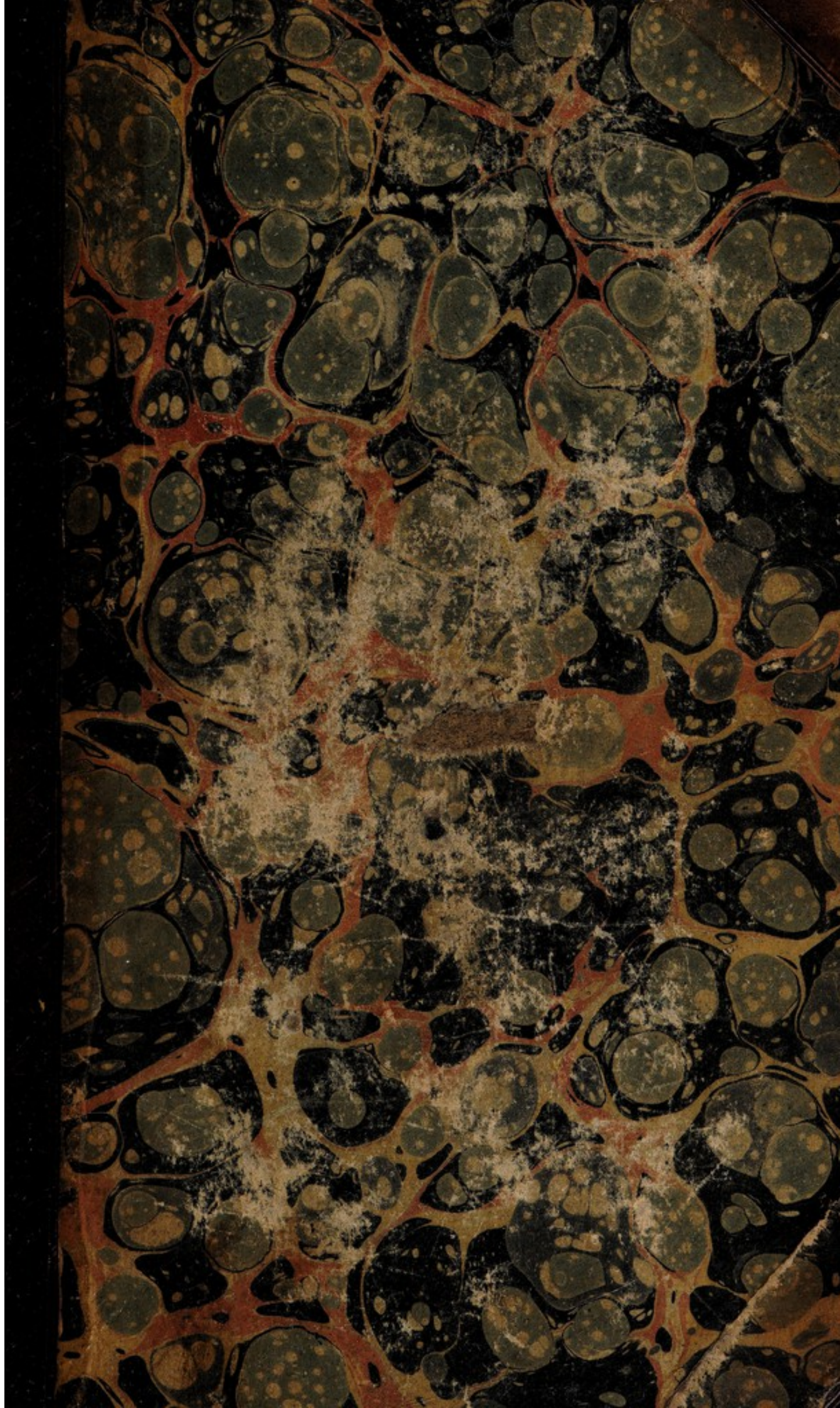
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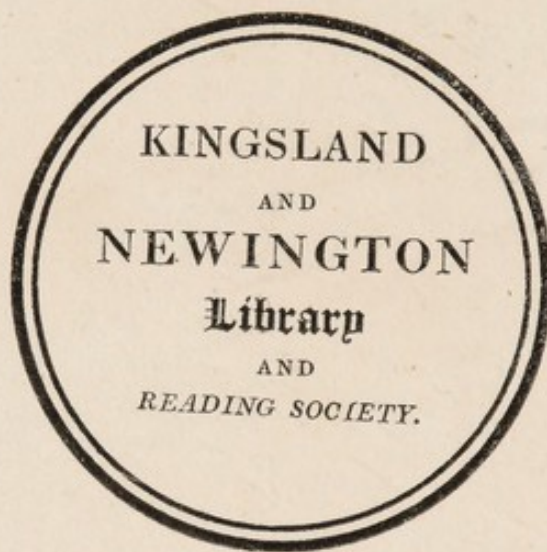




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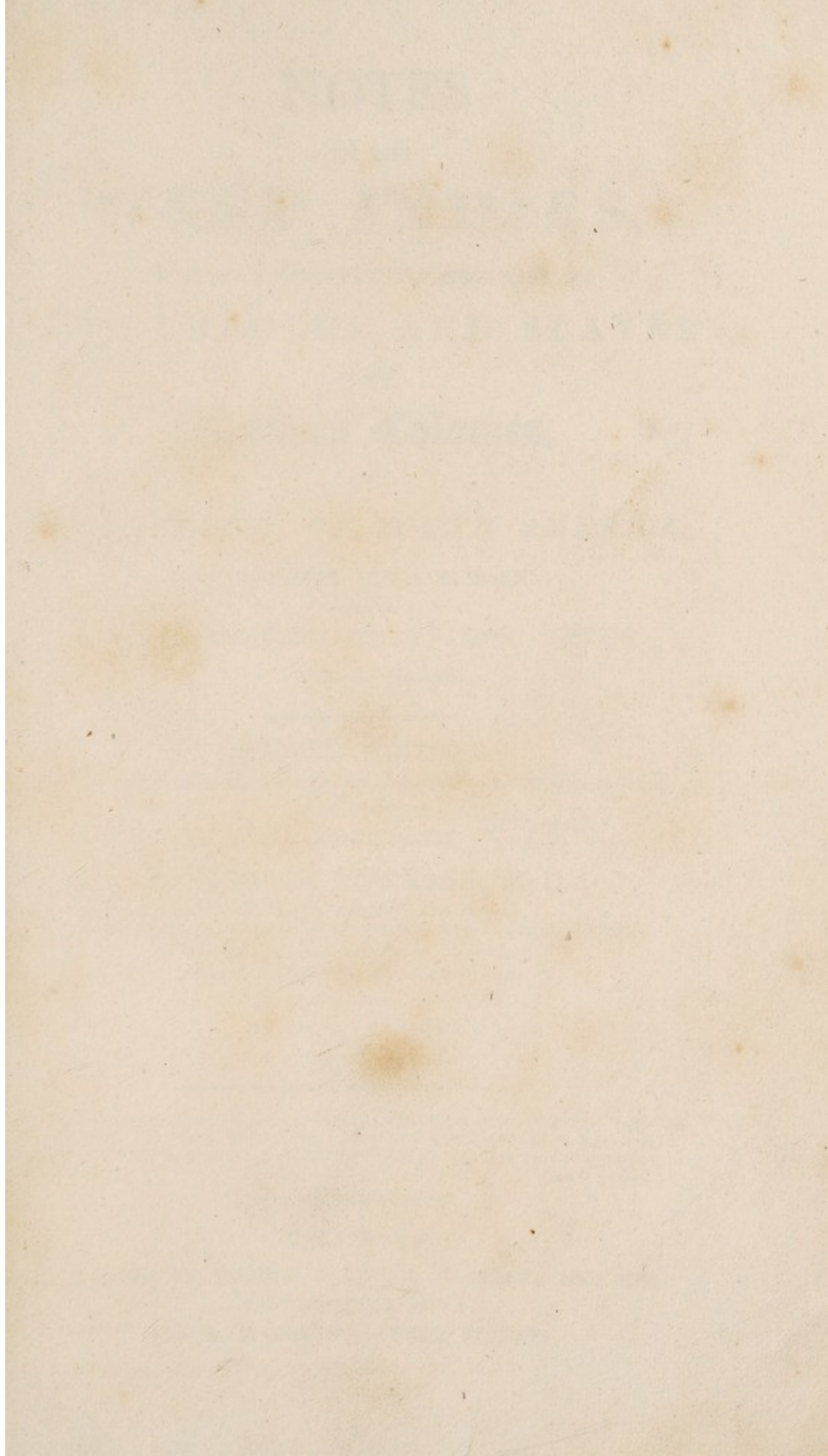
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NOTES  
ON THE  
WEST INDIES,  
INCLUDING OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO  
THE CREOLES AND SLAVES  
OF THE  
Western Colonies,  
AND  
THE INDIANS OF SOUTH AMERICA;  
INTERSPERSED WITH REMARKS  
UPON  
THE SEASONING OR YELLOW FEVER  
OF HOT CLIMATES.

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SECOND EDITION,  
*With additional Letters from Martinique, Jamaica, and  
St. Domingo.*

---

BY GEORGE PINCKARD, M. D.  
Of the Royal College of Physicians,  
Deputy Inspector General of Hospitals to His Majesty's Forces,  
Physician to the Bloomsbury Dispensary,  
The London Female Penitentiary, &c.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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It is a strange thing, that in sea voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries; but in land traualle, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it, as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation.

LORD VERULAM.

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AND L. B. SEELEY, FLEET STREET.

1816.

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NOTES  
OF THE  
WEST INDIES,  
INCLUDING OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO  
THE CROCODILES AND SLAVES  
OF THE  
West India Colonies,  
THE INDIANS OF SOUTH AMERICA,  
INTERMIXED WITH REMARKS  
ON THE  
THE SEASONING OF YELLOW FEVER  
OF NORTH AMERICA.



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## PREFACE.

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FROM the entreaties of a Friend the following "Notes" were written for his private eye:— from the solicitations of other friends they are now offered to the eye of the Public. The former were tender persuasions, and, in obeying them, the author had much and sincere gratification: he wishes he could feel as well assured that he is pursuing the path of wisdom, by yielding to the latter. But he is sensible that what may be amusing, or may be deemed even valuable, in the closet of friendship, may be very unfit to meet the less-prejudiced judgment of the world; and he is not without many apprehensions, lest a flattering partiality—a partiality which often deals praise, where no merit is due, should have induced him to present to the Public, that which ought never to have escaped beyond the limits of private perusal.



Conscious how little his "Notes" are calculated to withstand the scrutinizing severity of criticism, he may observe that, at no time, during the period of writing them, had he a thought that they were destined to appear at the bar of the Public. To fulfil the wishes of one, whose sentiments and opinions were dear to him, was a grateful task: it was congenial to his feelings, and, regardless of studied rules, he performed it with all the freedom of familiar intercourse. He devoted to his friend, daily, the few last minutes before retiring to his pillow; whence it happened that his remarks were, often, traced with a drowsy pen, or hurried over with a wearied and reluctant arm: but, from adopting this habit, the busy occupation of the day suffered no interruption; all the occurrences were noted, whilst they were strongly alive in the memory; and those who have known the privation of a long and perilous absence from their home, and the objects of their esteem, will comprehend the many happy associations, which were, thus, brought to sweeten the hours of repose.



At the time of the author's arrival in the West Indies, every thing, in the tropical regions, was new to him. He was desirous of obtaining information, and without waiting to digest his remarks into a systematic train ; to stamp them with the importance of method ; or to improve them by more mature observation, he endeavoured to convey, to his friend, a correct representation of the feelings impressed upon his mind, by the novel scenes around him, before habit and familiarity had weakened their effect.

He fears that the frequent repetitions, necessary to this mode of communication, will be found to be more tedious, and, in some instances, even more multiplied than a " thrice told tale ;" but he saw no way of avoiding them, without altering the whole plan of the work, and depriving it of the only merit, which he feels it has any title to claim, viz. that of giving the occurrences, precisely as they passed before the eye. He was not engaged in a deliberate voyage of discovery ; nor did the busy and anxious duties of his appointment allow him time for pursuits of minute investigation. The



utmost he could hope was to catch events as they passed, and faithfully note them from the impression of the fleeting moment. If it should be objected to him that the remarks are not always of high importance, he would observe that it is not from great occurrences, alone, that a correct judgment is formed of men and things: it is more from the daily, common round, than from the great and blazoned events, that a just knowledge is acquired of the characters of individuals:—perhaps, also, of empires, nations, and colonies.



# ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

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IN presenting the former edition of the following "Notes" to the Public, the author explained that they were collected, from fleeting events, during a series of professional duties, which offered only short intervals of leisure and repose, and that they were originally intended only for the gratification of a private circle. He expressed, likewise, his apprehensions respecting their being submitted to general scrutiny, and the severity of criticism. He has now the satisfaction of remarking, that the public reception of the first impression has been more encouraging than he had allowed himself to expect. For several years past the book has been out of print, and, during this period, multiplied applications have been made, requesting the author to prepare a new edition.

In complying with these entreaties, he has been anxiously desirous of rendering the



present pages more worthy of general attention: and with this view, he has availed himself of such candid and manly criticisms, as appeared to have arisen from a fair and liberal examination of the work.

Not only have those parts of the former edition, which were deemed irrelevant, been removed, and others, which appeared diffuse, condensed, but a considerable proportion of new matter, respecting the Islands of Martinique, Jamaica, and St. Domingo, as well as upon the subject of slavery in general, has been introduced. In order to accomplish this object, without increasing the bulk of the volumes, the author has found it necessary to have frequent recourse to abridgment, and even to the omission of whole pages, where the subject was of minor importance.

These extensive alterations and additions have been made with as much care as the various avocations of the author allowed him to bestow: still, he cannot but regret that the imperious duties of a professional life have not only considerably delayed the appearance of the present edition; but have prevented that minute and attentive revision which he wished it to receive.

BLOOMSBURY SQUARE,

*April, 1816.*



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ERRATUM.

Page 22, line 1, for Colbert, read, Cohorn.  
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# NOTES,

&c.

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## LETTER I.

Southampton, Oct. 3, 1795.

THE happiness we enjoy by corresponding with those whom we esteem, when separated from them, beyond the reach of personal intercourse, ranks amongst the highest blessings of civilized life. It is to navigation and the art of writing, those powerful engines which have established a freedom of intercourse throughout the wide extent of the globe, that we are indebted for the enjoyment of communicating with far-distant friends, and thereby rendering our separation less intolerable.

But you will too soon discover how much you have sacrificed your judgment to your feelings, in so strenuously requiring frequent communications, from me, during my absence from England. In the correspondence which your kindness has exacted, you will have to encounter



a task, while all the advantages of amusement and instruction will be mine. Still, as you have brought it upon yourself, you must be content to see me your debtor, assured of my regret that the benefit, to be derived, cannot be reciprocal. Did I even possess all the glowing and happy talents necessary to descriptive narration, the busy employment of my time, and the unsettled state of my mind, amidst the perpetual hurry and uncertainty of military movements, must prevent me from observing, and still more from relating what may pass before me, with accuracy; and from being unable to mature my remarks by the recurrent eye of a continued residence, they will necessarily be superficial and undigested.

You can only expect the perusal of hasty notes, hastily collected, by an observer whose time must be devoted to the duties of his appointment; and whose movements and pauses must be regulated by those exigencies of the army which more imperiously demand his attention.

But it were needless to enter into a detail of the allowances you will have to make. You already know them: hence, as apologies are irksome to you, I forego all further comment, and, meeting you as you desire, proceed to my subject.

The adventures of a stage-coach are some-



times amusing, but it happened that my journey, hither, was peculiarly devoid of incident, being, merely, a dark nocturnal ride, without any thing to divert, or to interest.

Amidst the stillness of night we rolled swiftly on, without impediment or delay, always finding horses in readiness at the place of change. Even the great business of eating and drinking was more than commonly disregarded. No social hour of supper was observed: nor were our conductors troubled with those frequent calls of thirst, which are, commonly, so vexatious and annoying to the passengers. To reach the end of the journey seemed alike the object of all.

We arrived at an early hour, and after taking the refreshment of a cold ablution, and a plentiful breakfast, I proceeded, without delay, to head quarters, to pay my respects to the commander in chief. It happened that the inspector-general of hospitals was with Sir Ralph Abercromby, at the time: I, therefore, reported my appointment to both; and put myself under command.

From the quarters of the commander in chief, I accompanied the inspector-general to visit the sick. This afforded me an early opportunity of viewing the military hospital, and I have great pleasure in remarking to you that



it does much credit to the doctor's\* judgment and industry. Placed in the direction of the medical department, his exertions have demonstrated how essential it is to commit that important appointment to an officer whose experience qualifies him for all the various duties it demands. From a well-devised arrangement, forwarded by a zealous and laudable industry, he has caused a large old building, late a sugar-house, to be converted into a commodious, and well-aired hospital; where the sick are comfortably placed, duly attended, and conveniently, as well as liberally accommodated.

The clock tells me it is midnight. Adieu!

\* Sir J. McNamara Hayes.



## LETTER II.

Southampton, Oct. 5.

IF you were a stranger to Southampton, I might offer you many full pages upon its delightful situation, and the many charms of its environs; for it cannot be disputed that this town and neighbourhood afford more of pleasing scenery, convenience, and accommodation, than most other parts of England.

As you know my habit of visiting what are called *the lions* of a place, as soon as possible after my arrival, you will conclude that I have not neglected the encampment near Southampton. I have made it a visit of very attentive inspection, and much do I wish it were possible for words to convey, to you, the host of feelings that rushed into my mind upon the occasion: I scarcely knew which was predominant. Viewing the soldiers, in full contemplation of the strict order, the manly deportment, and the elevated enthusiasm of their character, my mind traversed, in hasty review, all the perils and hardships, the glory and honors, which attach to a military life. I felt a sense of pride and gratification on seeing



so fine a body of men ready to join in our expedition. My imagination placed all the inviting forms of success before them. I observed them in battle, on the opposite side of the Atlantic; felt honored in their bravery; hailed them victorious, and, crowned with the laurels they had won, saw them return in safety, to their home, and their friends.

Yet the bright picture was not without its shades: restless fancy went on to busy herself in gloomy comparisons, in painful contrasts, and afflicting reverses! Viewing the brilliancy, the order, and the comfort of a domestic camp, in the peaceful fields of England, she called up ideas of a confused and tumultuous encampment upon the enemy's soil, threatened by the approach of a daring foe, routed by bloodthirsty cohorts, or stormed by a horde of merciless brigands! And, still worse than these, were painted the fatal ills of climate: yellow-fever opened her devouring jaws, and, in deadly disease, exposed a contrast, yet more afflictive, than all the perils of battle.

Although, in my mind, the more happy face of the picture maintained its impression, I am sorry to believe that the general sensation of the country is in sympathy with the opposite. A degree of horror seems to have overspread the nation, from the late destructive effects of the seasoning fever, or, what the multitude denomi-



nates, the West India plague; insomuch that a sense of terror attaches to the very name of the West Indies; many considering it synonymous with the grave. Perhaps, it were not too much to say, that all, who have friends in the expedition, apprehend more from disease than the sword.

Such discouraging sentiments, I am sorry to find, have not been concealed from the troops. The fearful farewell of desponding friends is every day, and hour, either heedlessly, or artfully brought to their ears. People walking about the camp, attending at a review, or a parade, or merely upon seeing parties of soldiers in the streets, are heard to exclaim, "Ah, poor fellows! you are going to your last home! What a pity that such brave men should go to that West India grave!—to that hateful climate to be killed by the plague! Poor fellows, good by, farewell! we shall never see you back again!" With such-like accents are the soldiers incessantly saluted; and the hopeless predictions are loudly echoed, by the designing, whose turbulent spirits would be gratified in exciting discontent among the troops.

But, strongly as I would condemn every attempt, and every incaution, which might create even the feeblest ray of terror in the breasts of the soldiers, yet I cannot but be sensible, that it is a service of imminent danger:



and, while I look at these men, in high admiration of their intrepid character, the recollection of the general sensation, which prevails respecting them, steals upon me, and causes a silent pang, in the consciousness that a great majority of them will never return. Still I hope that every soldier is governed by the same individual feelings as myself, and that each is fully impressed with the belief that it will be his lot to escape.

It is the duty of military men to serve wheresoever their country requires; hence the attempts to inspire them with a dread of climate are not less cruel, than mischievous: designed to injure the country, they operate by distressing the feelings of the individual, whose noble mind knows no fear of death from any other cause; but, if he fall, falls without a murmur, glorying in having devoted himself to his country, and calmly resigning himself to the fate of war.

It does not appear that the expedition is so, immediately, upon the eve of sailing as is generally imagined. The whole of the troops are not yet assembled, nor are the transports in readiness.

From some information, which has reached us, it appears not unlikely that we may find our names upon the St. Domingo staff, instead of the staff of the Leeward Islands; in which case we may have to make a journey to Cork, to join



the expedition about to sail from Ireland. This would be a disappointment to me, beyond the mere inconvenience of again moving my person and my baggage, for, in the Leeward Island division, I have acquaintances, whom I had hoped to find my comrades on service; while, with the St. Domingo staff, there are very few persons to whom I am known.

In my present pursuit I feel the necessity of viewing occurrences in their best light; but I shall make it my duty to remove whatever difficulties may occur, by subduing them. As if the evils of the world were not enough severe, we, too commonly, attach ourselves to the unhappy face of events, brood over fancied sorrows, and, eagerly, multiply our disappointments:

“ Yet some there are, of men I think the worst,  
 Poor imps! unhappy if they can't be curs'd,  
 For ever brooding over mis'ry's eggs”

\* \* \* \* \*

This gloomy tendency of disposition forms a remarkable characteristic between the people of England and those of France: while an Englishman, in afflictive contemplation, dwells on misfortune, even to suicide, a Frenchman, however adverse the affairs of the moment, always finds wherewithal to attach his better hopes!



From this facility of yielding to events, it has been said that the French people know how to *play the game of happiness* better than the English. It may be so. But still it is possible that the principle, to which I allude, may be carried to excess. Where it is the effect of a patient and manly fortitude, and employed to support us against injury, misfortune, and disappointment, it is amiable and virtuous, and may be dignified with the title of philosophy. But it is sometimes the effect of frivolity, or depravity—is connected with vice and dissipation, and highly unworthy. When proceeding from this source, it supersedes all the finer feelings and sentiments of the mind. It destroys the natural affections, and, weakening the attachment which ought to exist, between man and man, tends to make mere egotists of us all. It not only renders us insensible to our own misfortunes, and the common ills of life, but makes us callous to the sufferings of others, and shuts the heart against those feelings of sympathy and compassion, which, being founded in humanity, are among the highest adornments of our nature.

The plodding pursuits, and sober attachments of the English, possess not sufficient *goût* for the appetite of a Frenchman, whose life may be said to constitute one system—one continued series of intrigue. In all his occu-



pations he requires the high seasoning of variety. Whatever the substance of his pursuit, intrigue is always the condiment. Without a spice of intrigue the board were insipid, however sumptuous. A Frenchman troubles not himself with the affections; but is a dupe to his passions. His attachments wear away with the moment, and are not thought of beyond the period of being convenient to his purpose. He is often disappointed, but never dismayed. All regret, for the past, he buries in some new scheme or adventure. If one project fails, he, instantly, flies to another, exclaiming, "Ah, Diable! cela ne me conviens pas. Il y faut un autre projet." If he succeed not to-day, he has always a new plan for the morrow. If discomfited in the scheme of the morning, he feels certain of success in the *nouveau projet* of the evening. Something new, something not of plain or ready attainment, something possessing a real or a fancied intricacy is always imagined, or attempted. No matter how vast, or how frivolous the object—whether a revolution of the state, or a game of loto! It diverts his attention, dissipates the moment, shields him from the sadness of disappointment, and shuts the door against ennui. From the conduct usually pursued, it would seem to be a leading feature, in the character of a Frenchman, not to attach himself seriously, or permanently to any thing;



but to avail himself of all passing circumstances, yielding to each, or causing each to yield to his purpose. In this way he travels the great journey of life with less of care and sorrow than the more sedate of other nations; sombre reflection offering no impediment to a path, which, at every step, bears his loved motto, "Vive la bagatelle!"

I am aware that you will plead very broad exceptions to this, as a general character, and I most readily admit them; for, notwithstanding that the reverse is too common, I have seen Frenchmen, under misfortune, whose patient submission, instead of bearing the marks of levity and frivolity, has exhibited all the manly firmness of true dignity and philosophy.

But I am wandering from my subject—abruptly, therefore, Good night!



## LETTER III.

Portsmouth, Oct. 23.

SINCE writing to you my last letter we have received orders to repair on board the *Ulysses*, and proceed to Cork to join the St. Domingo division of the expedition, under the command of General Whyte.

Dr. Master and myself had our baggage put on board this ship in the river Thames, and we are waiting in the daily expectation of her arrival at Spithead.

Portsmouth verifies, to our experience, all that we had heard of its unpleasantness, and vulgar immorality. The great objects, which call forth the attention of strangers, are the dock-yard, the Haslar hospital, and the fine walk upon the ramparts. All these we have visited, likewise South-Sea castle, and the Forton and Porchester prisons : nor have we neglected that new modern messenger the telegraph, by which intelligence can be conveyed, from this place to the Admiralty, at Charing-cross, in the short period of ten minutes.

Having thus exhausted all the novelty of the town and its environs, it only remains to us



to lapse into the dull round of the place. It is said that in days of peace, long grass grows upon the streets. In time of war they are more trodden; but, even then, the busy activity of the place occurs only at intervals, such as when a fleet comes in, or is about to sail: at which periods the town becomes all crowd and hurry, for a few days, and then suddenly reverts to a languid intermission of dulness and inactivity.

In respect to streets, houses, markets, and traffic, Portsmouth is not unlike other country towns, but Portsmouth-point, Portsea-common, and some other parts of the town have peculiarities which seem to sanction the celebrity the place has acquired. In some quarters, Portsmouth is not only filthy and crowded, but crowded with a class of low and abandoned beings, who seem to have declared open war against every habit of decency and decorum. The riotous, drunken, and immoral scenes of this place exceed, perhaps, all others. Commonly gross obscenity and intoxication preserve enough of diffidence to seek the concealment of night, and, assuming a kind of decency, strive to hide themselves from the public eye: but, here, hordes of profligate females are seen reeling in drunkenness, or plying upon the streets with shocking immodesty in open day. These daughters of Cypria are not only of manners peculiar, but likewise of such peculiar figure



and apparel, that it were difficult, in any other part of England, to find a correct resemblance of them.

To form to yourself an idea of these *tender ornaments* of the fair-sex, imagine a being of more than Amazonian stature, having a crimson countenance, emblazoned with all the effrontery of Cyprian confidence, and broad Bacchanalian folly; give to her bold visage the warlike features of two wounded cheeks, a tumid nose, scarred and battered brows, and a pair of blackened eyes, with deeply reddened balls; then add to her sides a pair of brawny arms, fit to encounter a Colossus, and set her upon two ancles like the fixed supporters of a gate: by way of apparel, put upon her a loose flying cap, a man's black hat, a torn neckerchief, stone rings on her fingers, and a dirty white, or tawdry flowered gown, with short apron, and a pink petticoat: thus, will you have something very like the figure of "*Sweet Poll* of Portsmouth."

My visit to the dock-yard was of a nature highly gratifying. I contemplated this vast depôt of stores; this great workshop of our navy, as the emblem of our nation's glory. I regarded each spot with all the enthusiastic veneration of a Briton, proud of his country's greatness, and of the splendid and heroic achievements of its defenders.



The Tigre, ship of war, lately taken from the French, by Lord Bridport, being in dock, we had the opportunity of going on board, to witness the injuries she had sustained from the thunderbolts of Britain. Her shattered condition bespoke, in strong expression, the terrible effects of a close-fought action at sea. Yet we were told that all she had suffered was trivial, compared to what is seen, in many vessels, after a battle. If so, it is equally matter of surprise that such vessels should be kept afloat, as that any should ever have been constructed capable of withstanding the destructive batteries now brought against them.

While examining the many wounds of the Tigre, my mind called up, in vivid association, the late noble retreat made by our gallant admiral Cornwallis, which I have always thought did him singular credit. Conducted as it was, it had all the merit of a great victory, and I well remember that, at the first moment of perusing the dispatches concerning it, I was impressed with a high sense of that officer's judgment, and his valour, and felt that I should ever retain the highest respect for his professional talents. To have defended an inferior fleet, against such unequal force, and to have brought every ship safe into port, argues a degree of intrepid deliberation, of address, and of steady valour, which can only be found in a



great commander. To have brought in the fast-sailing vessels of the squadron would have been meritorious: but to have dropped astern, with these, and caused them to bear the blows, in protection of the slower vessels, whilst they made the best of the wind; and, thus, to have saved the whole, was doubly honorable. It was great and bold, and worthy the brother of our brave and long-esteemed Marquis, whose high and well-appreciated talents are so universally acknowledged, and so increased in splendour, by the humanity and benevolence of his nature. That two such distinguished commanders, in the different branches of our service, should be found in the same family, is no less honorable to themselves than gratifying to their country. Of such men England has just cause to be proud.

My visit to Haslar hospital was in keeping with that to the dock-yard. Connected with our country's greatness, it called up a similar train of ideas, and I felt it an honor to England that so noble an institution should offer, to our brave tars, the comforts required in sickness. Too much cannot be done for our navy, nor can the provision for our sick and wounded defenders be too liberal: they merit all their country can bestow. It has long been said, and with great correctness, that British sailors are



not only a bold, but a peculiar race of beings. The fact is striking, and although it were extremely difficult to describe their extraordinary character, yet may it be given in one short sentence, for—*they are a race of heroes!* Of fear they know only the name. Nothing so delights them as to be led into close combat; and, rather than be vanquished, they would submit to die at their guns. That such men should be liberally accommodated in their sufferings, must be congenial to the warmest wishes of every Briton; and to know that they are so, is consolatory to the feelings of all who are sensible of their value. It is due to their courage and bravery, and is demanded from their country's gratitude.

The Haslar is, admirably, calculated for this important purpose. The establishment is liberal and splendid, and well worthy its object. In providing so amply for her brave and suffering defenders, England consults her best interests, whilst she proves herself to be mindful of the high duties of humanity.

The hospital, like many others of this island, might, from the grandeur of the edifice, be mistaken for a palace. It is built in an open airy situation near the sea, at a short distance from Gosport. The sick are brought in boats, from the ships at Spithead, and, conveniently, received on shore at a landing-place at the hos-



pital. This great building, fitted for the accommodation of two thousand patients, together with houses for officers and the medical attendants, a chapel, a laboratory, a variety of offices, and thirty-eight acres of good pasture land, belonging to the institution, is enclosed within a high brick wall, with iron gates, and a porter's lodge at the entrance, which no stranger is permitted to pass, without the leave of one of the resident lieutenants; or the porter first announcing his name to some officer of the establishment.

Much to the credit of the country, this noble asylum offers apartments, likewise, for sick and wounded officers, where those who from convenience, or necessity, wish to avail themselves of the benefit of the institution, may find every aid and comfort their situation demands.

Nothing necessary to the establishment has been omitted. It is a distinct building, separated from all others, and, from possessing every essential within itself, is as complete as it is liberal, and does honor to the reign of George II. who has the merit of being its founder.

The establishment consists of a governor, (usually an old navy captain) three lieutenants, three physicians, three surgeons, two visiting



apothecaries, a chaplain, an agent, a steward, and a dispenser, with assistants and servants in proportion to the number of sick. The hospital accommodates one thousand eight hundred patients, conveniently, but it sometimes happens that it receives as many as two thousand. This important establishment was founded in the year 1746, but was ten years before it was completed, the patients not being admitted until the year 1756. The expenditure, as may be expected, from the nature of the institution, differs very widely in different years, varying from 10,000*l.* to upwards of 30,000*l.* per annum.

But great and liberal as the relief is which is held out, to the sick, we are not to contemplate this splendid institution, in the limited view of a mere asylum for those who are, immediately, suffering. Its object is far more extensive: it may be said to be the depôt—the great and general receptacle of maritime sickness, and the best guardian of our navy; for it not only offers a home to the sick, but holds out the means of keeping disease and infection from our fleets. Every ship lying in harbour, or upon going out to sea, has the privilege of sending any of the sailors who may chance to be ill, to the Haslar; a regulation founded in wisdom, and fraught with great and manifold advantages; for, not only are the sick more



speedily recovered, but, by this excellent arrangement, every ship is made free from disease, and contagion is prevented; or, if it should already exist, is kept from spreading through the vessel, or extending its direful effects to the fleet. Hence, from the extensive accommodation of this admirable institution, and from the strict rules of cleanliness and ventilation, which are now observed on board the ships, all apprehension is removed of great and general sickness in the navy.

I mentioned the ramparts as another object of our attention. These form an agreeable relief to the general heaviness of the town, by affording a lively and extensive view of the environs, including the sea, the Isle of Wight, and the Southampton river, with the fleets at Spithead and St. Helens.

The fortifications of Portsmouth have been, lately, extended to the part called Portsea, by which they have assumed a more formidable aspect; and although they are, even yet, more calculated to guard against a surprise, than to withstand the regular attack of a besieging army, still, from its fosses, its bastions, and its angles, this place wears more the appearance of a regularly fortified town, than any other of our island. But, happily for England, she has been fortified by a greater master



than Vauban, Colbert, or any other engineer of modern or ancient celebrity. The trident of *old Neptune* has dug a deep fosse around her, which Britons, of the present day, know how to guard, as their best defence.



## LETTER IV.

Portsmouth, October 31.

STILL at Portsmouth, and the Ulysses not yet come round from the Thames!

Some troops were embarked on the 27th inst. from this place. The weather was rough and unfavorable. Such indeed has it, constantly, been, since our arrival—always stormy, and, at times, tempestuous. From this state of the weather we have had the opportunity of seeing this great maritime port to much advantage; a degree of grandeur being added to the scenery, which, in a more tranquil season, would not have existed. The general movement and activity have been, necessarily, increased; we have heard the deep roaring of the billows, and have listened to the howling of the wind, and the beating of the storm among the shipping; the troubled waves have dashed, in heavy seas, upon the land, or broken with violence, against the rampart-walls; boats and ships have been set adrift, others have been forced from their anchors and cast on shore; and that degree of the grand and terrific, necessary to the sublime, has strongly prevailed.

You expected probably, that my next letter



would be addressed to you from Cork, and will be surprised to find that I am yet remaining here; but this is among the numberless uncertainties of my present calling.

On the 29th instant it blew a perfect hurricane; like what we read of as, sometimes, happening in other regions, but unlike all that we are accustomed to witness in England.

The houses were shaken, to a dangerous degree, by the excessive force of the tempest. The loud ocean rolled, and broke, in tremendous mountains, on the shore. Many of the ships were driven from their anchors; some were dismasted; others cast away; and boats, set loose by the storm, were swallowed up by the troubled waters, and afterwards returned, by the expelling throes of the sea, upon dry land.

The hollow sound of the wind, and the heavy beatings of the hail and rain, through the thick forest of shipping lying in the harbour, together with the frightful dashings of the sea, and the violent motion of the vessels, upon its restless surface, all combined to render the scene greatly awful; but too high a degree of the terrific was intermixed with it, for the spectator to regard its grandeur and sublimity in quiet contemplation. To convey any just idea of it would require the pen of a Milton, or a Shakespeare.

Great and general alarm prevailed, espe-



cially among the lower orders of people; in whose minds a fearful association was excited, which carried them, infinitely, beyond the probable injuries to be expected. They ran into the remotest corners of their houses, fearing that some dreadful visitation of the Almighty was upon them, and that He, in his wrath, was about to punish their sins, by the destruction of the town, and its wicked inhabitants. Nothing was heard but the howlings of the tempest. In all other respects a dreary stillness reigned. No living thing was seen upon the streets; and all around seemed hushed in the silent pause of consternation.

When the violence of the storm had a little abated, and the rays of light began to issue through the broken clouds, the trembling multitude ventured forth, and, assembling in groups at the door-ways, relieved their apprehensions by relating them to each other, in the restored comfort of mutual intercourse. At this moment I could not but remark the striking effect of the social principle, that great and leading feature of our nature. If these people had remained alone, shut up in their hiding-places, their sense of alarm would have probably continued much longer; but they derived manifest relief from communicating with each other; and the very act of relating their fears insensibly dispelled them.



The injuries done were less than might have been expected. Some of the ships and boats necessarily suffered; a few houses were unroofed; and, amidst the devastation, the windmill, at Gosport, was blown to the ground. It was, at first, said that many lives were lost; but, happily, we do not find this report confirmed.



## LETTER V.

Portsmouth, Nov. 8, 1795.

OUT of evil, it is said, sometimes springeth good: and I feel assured that you will agree with me, in considering the adage verified, when I tell you, that the repeated delays to which we have been subjected have proved the means of completing our party, by converting our harmonious trio into a still more social quartette: a circumstance which has happened from our having the company of Dr. Cleghorn, who is now arrived, at this place, on his way to join the St. Domingo hospital staff. He is a pleasant, well-informed man, brother to the professor of anatomy in the University of Dublin, and nephew to the celebrated author on the diseases of Minorca. His society is a great acquisition to us, and we are much gratified in having such an agreeable addition to our party. We now look, more anxiously than ever, to the arrival of the Ulysses, in the hope of being allowed to establish a friendly mess for the voyage.

With our newly-arrived comrade we have repeated our visits to the dock-yard, the Haslar hospital, and the Forton prison.



At the prison we met with a striking example of the great vicissitudes to which persons are liable, who are exposed to the hazardous chances of war. Observing among the prisoners, an officer who had lost his right arm, we were led to ask some questions respecting him, when we learned that he was the very lieutenant who took possession of our ship of war the *Alexander*, at the time she fell into the hands of the French; and that he had, afterwards, been taken in one of the ships captured by Lord Bridport's fleet, and had lost his arm in the action. Thus the man, who, but a short time ago, rejoiced in victory, is now humbled by defeat, and has the sad mortification of being confined a prisoner, with the loss of a most important limb, and the melancholy prospect of being a cripple throughout the remainder of his life.



## LETTER VI.

Spithead, Nov. 12.

GREETINGS from the Ulysses! Our suspense is, at length, relieved. The day after I last wrote to you, our long-looked-for Ulysses arrived, with a fleet from the Downs, and yesterday, Doctors Henderson, Master, Cleghorn, and myself, took our births on board, finding Master's and my baggage stowed in safety.

We left Portsmouth amidst a great scene of hurry and confusion, in consequence of a report having prevailed, on the arrival of the fleet from the Downs, that every ship, belonging to the expedition, was to sail, without further delay; those of the Leeward Island division for Barbadoes, and those of the St. Domingo division for Cork. The transports, with troops from Southampton, happening to drop down the river at the same time, to rendezvous at the Motherbank and Spithead, seemed to confirm the report; and suddenly, all was converted into extreme hurry and activity. Multitudes, both from the newly arrived ships, and from those which had been long waiting, thronged on shore to purchase provisions and stores, to complete their stock for the voyage.



Many, who had passed their hours of suspense in the town, had also their marketings to make; and hence the demand becoming, suddenly, greater than the supply, it introduced all the confusion of a general scramble. Each seized upon whatever provisions he could find, asking no questions, but paying any money that was demanded.

Not aware of the tumultuous pressure of such a moment, and considering ours to be only a short passage, we had, purposely, delayed purchasing our meat, bread, and other fresh provisions, until we should be certain that the ship, in which we were to make the voyage, was arrived. But, should we proceed to sea, immediately, and the voyage be at all protracted, we shall be reduced, by this neglect, to salt food, and the ship's allowance; for, we were unable to obtain what we wished, and were compelled to repair on board with a very deficient supply.

All the butchers' and bakers' shops were quickly emptied. Not a loaf, nor a bit of meat, not even a carrot, or a cabbage remained, and many went empty away. Neither porters nor servants were required; every one who was successful enough to put his hand upon any provisions, gladly became the bearer of his own load. To shew you the extremity to which we were reduced, I may tell you that our party stopped



a man, upon the street, who was carrying home a large gible pie, hot from the oven, which we tempted him to let us take on board, by offering for the pie and the dish, more than double their value; or whatever money he might demand.

To an unconcerned spectator it must have been a most ludicrous and diverting scene, and such as might have afforded full scope to the all-animating pencil of Hogarth. We were too intimately associated in what was passing, to view it only with an eye of amusement. Still I could not but remark the oddity of the assemblage, and the varied expression of countenance, as actuated by hope, joy, disappointment, hurry, and anxiety. Military and naval officers, passengers, servants, soldiers, sailors, boys, women, and negroes, all crowded together upon the streets, formed one heterogeneous mass—one great and motley group, of which every part was in busy motion; each person feeling the apprehension of being left behind.

From the multitudes of anxious heavy-laden individuals who were seen running with their burdens down to the boats, and scrambling to embark, it might have appeared to a stranger, that the inhabitants of Portsmouth were making one great effort to carry off all the provisions, stores, and furniture of the town, before evacuating it to the possession of an enemy.



One hurried off with legs and shoulders of mutton, another with half a sheep, a third with a huge piece of beef, and others with different joints of veal or pork. Here was a man running with a cheese, there one with a sugar-loaf. Others were scampering away loaded with rice, or papers of groceries. Some ran off with bags of bread, some with baskets of greens, potatoes, carrots, turnips, and the like. Many were seen bending under heavy bundles of clothes,, wet from the wash; others loaded with camp-stools, deal boxes, sea-coffers, pewter utensils, and various other kinds of stores; and, amidst the throng, ourselves with the smoking gible pie, and such other provisions as we had been able to procure. Every one was upon the alert. Necessity made all industrious, and, without any idle or scrupulous objections, each was glad to minister to his own wants.

Such was the state in which we left Portsmouth, after a residence of three weeks, during which time we had regarded it as a dull inanimate place; but the change was sudden, and will be only transient: the hurry and tumult will vanish with the sailing of the fleet, and the town will relapse into its tranquil sameness, until the recurrence of a similar occasion.

Let me return with you to the *Ulysses*, and tell you, that upon reaching the ship, we had so anxiously looked for, we were received as



people unknown and unregarded, conducted into a large ward-room, strewed with various kinds of lumber, and there left, as in a wilderness. No births had been prepared, nor any kind of arrangement made for us. Not a cot was slung; nor any sleeping-place allotted. The ward-room was open to all, and was to serve for the whole of the passengers. We were turned in loose, with six or eight other persons, and soon found ourselves to be, only, individuals of the general herd; the whole flock being left, at large, like sheep in a common fold.

The vessel is commanded by an officer of the navy, and it was no part of his duty to prepare accommodations for passengers whom he neither knew nor expected. She is one of the old forty-four gun frigates, and carries some of her guns as an armed transport. If our ship had been a common transport, or a merchantman, we might have felt enough at home to have demanded all we required, but, from not having been passengers before on board a ship of war, Cleghorn, Master, and myself were quite at a loss how to proceed. Fortunately Henderson is more *au fait* to these subjects, and from understanding the necessary etiquette, kindly took upon himself the task of meliorating our condition. Having applied, with all due ceremony, to the Governor of our ocean-castle, he soon succeeded in bringing one of the lieutenants to our aid; who,



very obligingly, gave immediate directions for bettering our situation, and it was gratifying, beyond all the advantages of personal convenience, to observe with what promptitude his orders were put in execution. The packages, and other incommoding lumber, were quickly removed; and a canvass partition was put up to divide the ward-room into two separate apartments; allotting to us that on the starboard side. Four cots were slung, in a row, over the cannon, and inclosed with another canvass running parallel with the former, throughout the whole length of the ward-room. This formed a general sleeping birth for our mess, allowing to each his appropriate dressing-room between the several guns; and, thus, we were speedily furnished with five distinct apartments, viz. a long narrow dining-room, and, as we were assured, four *excellent* bed-rooms.

We were both amused and gratified in observing the expertness of the ship's carpenters, and all the men employed upon this occasion; and it afforded us great pleasure to remark how prompt and obedient they were in executing the commands of their officers. On board a transport, or a merchantman, several days would have been expended, in preparing what was here completed in a single hour.

As we are only fresh-water sailors, it was hinted, for our information, that the aft, or



sternmost cot, being the upper birth on the star-board side, was deemed the place of honor, and hence appropriated to the use of the captain, when the officers sleep in the ward-room. My ambition did not lead me to contend for this sickening post of honor, therefore, in obedience to my poor nauseated stomach, I begged permission to take the lowest cot of the four, and am accordingly indulged with the birth nearest the centre of the ship, where I lie with my three comrades, in a row, behind me. In balance for this accommodation I find that at each movement of the ship, or the cot, my feet are struck against the bulk-head at the bottom of the ward-room; I am bumped upon the huge cannon standing under me; or have Dr. Cleghorn's feet roughly presented to my head.



## LETTER VII.

H. M. S. Ulysses, Nov. 15.

THE long-expected day is at length arrived: the signal of departure being given, all the ships of the Leeward Island division weighed anchor this morning, and put to sea under a most favorable breeze. The Ulysses being left to wait the sailing of the convoy for Cork, we remained spectators, and had every opportunity of enjoying the splendid and animating scene. The day was fine, and the wind steady. On passing round, or, to use the sailors' term, doubling the point of the Isle of Wight, all the ships appeared to fall into regular succession, forming a line of seemingly endless extent, each elevating her sails, into view, over the territory of the island, as if they were contending which should be longest seen.

It was a pleasing spectacle to every beholder, and those who felt as Englishmen ought, derived, from it, sensations peculiarly grateful. To witness such a fleet steering from our little island, into the broad ocean, to fight our battles in a far distant country, conveyed ideas of greatness and power, which were calculated to raise



a just ambition in every British bosom. The ships of war and transports exceeded two hundred sail. The immense ship, the Commerce de Marseilles, captured at Toulon, is at the head of the convoy, with the admiral, the commander in chief of the army, and nearly a thousand troops on board. It is, currently, reported here that the whole of these, together with the Cork division, are to rendezvous at Barbadoes, and, making that the grand depôt, proceed, from thence, to the attack of various colonies.

For a long time past this vast armament has been expected in the West Indies, and during many tedious weeks has England, almost daily, looked for its departure; but to prepare, and set afloat such a fleet, and such an army, is an undertaking far more difficult than those superficial observers, who are ignorant of the service, are willing to imagine. If it meet with fair winds, and proceed without disaster, or unforeseen delay, it may yet arrive at a good season, and in time, perhaps, to effect all its intended operations.

We were, yesterday, regaled with the loud treat of hearing the ship's cannon fired, whilst we were on board. Every thing was cleared away, as if preparing for action: all the doors and windows were set open, and every precaution used, to prevent injury or accident. We remained in the ward-room during the time of



firing the guns in that part of the ship, and endeavoured to be strictly attentive to the effect. It was not unlike a violent stroke of electricity: and, for a moment, we felt stunned with the shock. The jarring concussion conveyed the sensation of the whole ship having shivered asunder, or suddenly burst into atoms; and it seemed a subject of surprize that the ears of the sailors should, ever, become capable of supporting the successive and violent explosions of a hostile engagement. Notwithstanding the precaution of letting down the windows, those of the quarter gallery were shattered to pieces.

As we are to wait for other ships, we may now find an opportunity of adding to the scanty stock of provisions, which we procured amidst the general scramble of embarkation: we hope, also, that our vessel will have time to take in a fresh supply of water; for we have, hitherto, suffered, very severely, from not having any on board but what has been putrid and offensive; and coming to this directly from the shore, has rendered it far worse than if we had been, gradually, compelled to submit to it, after being a long time at sea. To myself, in particular, this is a weighty misfortune, as I have not the common resource of flying to wine and beer, as a relief. We have taken to our aid, both purifiers and filtering stones; and, we are further assured of having our present sufferings com-



pensated upon the passage; for the Thames water, now so offensive, will soon restore itself, and, becoming settled and depurated, will be clear and sweet as we can desire.

With regard to our eating, likewise, 'tis well we are not of the Epicurean school. The many disagreeable smells, and the heaving motion of the ship, have much impaired our appetites; and, if we were over-dainty, we must, literally, starve; for our governor of the galley happens to be fit only to cook for the stomachs of Neptune's hardiest sons.

As soon as the other vessels shall be ready, the Ulysses, we are told, is to proceed with them to Cowes harbour, to join the St. Domingo division. It is probable, therefore, that my next letter may be addressed to you from Ireland.



## LETTER VIII.

Spithead, Nov. 19.

WHEN, in my last, I mentioned to you the splendid sight we had witnessed, in the departure of an important division of our great expedition, I did not anticipate the painful reverse of, thus soon, communicating the unhappy tidings of its return. Pleased as we were at the sailing of this grand fleet, only a few days since; now, we should rejoice, still more, could we see every ship again safe in harbour.

Yesterday we experienced a most tremendous gale, which, from its disastrous effects among the shipping at Spithead, led to very painful apprehensions concerning the fleet which had so lately gone to sea. The wind having shifted to an unfavorable point, and blowing with great violence, it was manifest that the convoy could not proceed; and too evident, that many of the ships must be damaged or lost; and I am sorry to add that we are, already, witnessing the melancholy confirmation of our fears; for the fleet not having cleared the channel, was unable to weather the storm, and, during the whole of this day, different ships have been dropping in at St. Helens, in a sadly dis-



abled state, bringing still worse tidings of those left behind. A storm so violent and destructive has seldom been known in this climate; indeed, many who had been in the West Indies, remarked, that it was scarcely inferior to a tropical hurricane. Even the admiral's ship was in extreme peril, and, with great difficulty, was supported through the gale. She is now brought back in a much injured condition, being very leaky, and having a considerable depth of water in the hold. So alarming was her situation, during the tempest, that if the boisterous elements had raged only a little longer, she would have, probably, gone to the bottom, with the general, the admiral, and nearly two thousand souls on board.

Multitudes are known to be lost; but the full extent of this sad disaster cannot yet be ascertained, for crippled ships still continue to arrive: it is hoped therefore that some may appear which report leads us not to expect. Among those most despaired of is the Stanley, with some hundreds of troops on board. Of this ship not the slightest intelligence can be learned, from any one yet returned. She is supposed to have gone to the bottom, and all hands to have perished! What a sad and melancholy change! This vast fleet, which had cost so much time, and toil in its equipment; and which, so lately, spread its sails under the fairest prospects,



is already defeated, disabled, and brought to ruin! What a striking proof of the weakness of human foresight; and of the uncertainty of all our wisest calculations!

Signals of distress were heard on all quarters. Pieces of masts, cordage, and planks floated by the sides of the Ulysses: all was hurry and alarm around us. Many vessels lying near to us were injured; some, driven from their anchors, drifted on board other ships, or were cast on shore, and, being wrecked, remained, before our eyes, fearful examples of the greater evils to be apprehended from the storm.

Such was the perilous insecurity even of the Ulysses, that although, to use the sea-term, we had *struck our top-masts, and made all snug*, it was deemed expedient to prepare the guns, for the purpose of firing signals of distress.

I was excessively ill; and from the deep rolling, heavy tossings, and the many troubled motions of the ship, was quite unable to support myself upon my legs. Staggering and stumbling I crawled out of the ward-room to the middle of the half-deck, to seek a more central part of the vessel; and, there, clinging to some firm hold, remained, sick and comfortless, to wear out a most distressful day. Afflicted with head-ach, a nauseated stomach, and enfeebled limbs, my contemplations were not of the most consolatory nature. I saw all the evils



that were to befall our fleet under their most gloomy colours. I beheld the convoy dispersed; ships struggling in the gale; my fellow-creatures sinking; and the whole expedition discomfited: the mind sympathizing with the sickened frame, all was pictured as one grand scene of destruction.

In the midst of our danger, I could not but notice the strange remarks, and quaint jokes which passed among the sailors, who were, variously, actuated by feelings of indolence, anxiety, or indifference. One of them being called upon deck, and desired to go aloft, to do something that was expedient at the top of the mast, idly crawled up, from below, muttering, "I'd rather be drowned in the sea, dammee, than at the mast head!" another, observing a passenger in a severe fit of vomiting, exclaimed, "Dammee, he's only sick for want o'grog;" and a third, as if responsive to the other, called out, "Stiff breeze, Jack. He'll be worse yet! Steward! why don't you give the gentleman some fat pork - - - - - to settle his stomach?"

About five o'clock in the evening the storm began to abate; when torrents of rain lessened the wind, and brought the sailors a respite from the harassing, and perilous duties of the day.

We were on shore this morning at Portsmouth, and, from the ramparts, saw the ships



of the returning fleet assembled in forest crowd at St. Helens. From thence, also, we had a more ample demonstration of the effects which the storm had produced immediately around us; and I am sorry to tell you that we find the injury more extensive than we at first imagined.

We have had a pleasant ramble, since I last wrote to you, to the Isle of Wight, in search of eggs, poultry, and pigs to add to our sea store.

It is, again, rumoured that we are to avail ourselves of the first hour of a fair wind to proceed to Cork, without waiting for any other vessel; and we are all of accord in wishing that this may prove correct, for our present state of suspense is growing sadly wearisome and vexatious.



## LETTER IX.

H. M. S. Ulysses, Nov. 30.

THE uncertainty of the law has established itself into an adage: but I begin to suspect that, proverbial as it is, it must yield to the greater incertitude of military service. In my last letter I mentioned to you that we were to proceed to Cove the moment the wind was fair, and, in this idea, we had written to our friends desiring them not to address us, again, at Spithead; but to send their letters to Ireland, that they might meet us at Cork. Now, we find that our destination is again changed, and within the few last days, it has been so rapidly altered and confirmed, fixed, reversed, and varied, that we are totally at a loss on what assurance to depend.

At present it is reported that three forty-four gun ships, viz. the Ulysses, the Experiment, and the Charon, are to take in the troops, which were in such extreme peril, during the gale, on board the vast and unwieldy Commerce de Marseilles, and to run out with them, as speedily as possible, to the West Indies.

Consistent with this arrangement, vessels came alongside the Ulysses early on the morning of the 26th instant, for the purpose of re-



moving the St. Domingo stores; and the hospital packages, which were stowed in this ship, are now distributed into two or three vessels; which is an improvement, gained by the change, for should either of these ships chance to be lost, captured, or delayed, still a proportion of the stores may safely arrive in the others. Further advantages may also derive from the distribution, as an assortment will be more conveniently at hand for any case of emergency; such as immediate or unexpected service, detachments, or supplying particular islands or colonies.

It were difficult to acknowledge similar advantages from the separation of our happy and social mess, although we are, likewise, obliged to divide our stores, and mess-apparatus, being now instructed to make the voyage in different ships. This is matter of high regret to us all, and the more so, as we had been long enough together to become well acquainted, and happy in each other's society, besides having jointly provided ourselves for the voyage.

We have received orders to repair, two of us to the George and Bridget, and two to the Lord Sheffield: Dr. Master and myself feel ourselves fortunate in being appointed to the latter, for we had visited the George and Bridget, and had not acquired any predilection in her favor. The Lord Sheffield we have not yet seen, but



her captain tells us that she is a fast-sailing ship, and fitted up in a superior style, with her cabin "neat, light, and lively as a drawing-room." We do not give implicit confidence to the report of one so strongly interested in speaking her fair: but the probabilities are much in her favor, she being a West India trader, and, no doubt, better fitted for passengers, and better adapted, in all respects, for a tropical climate. The *George and Bridget* is a large Baltic timber ship, and, of course, has not had the same occasion either for conveying or accommodating passengers.

We have met with many of the officers at Portsmouth who were out, in the fleet, during the late destructive gale. Their accounts are afflicting beyond all the suggestions even of fearful anticipation. Deducting in due allowance for the augmented terrors of young and fresh-water sailors, still the whole scene, and its result have been most painfully disastrous; for, melancholy to repeat! multitudes of souls have perished; and six or seven vessels have not been heard of since the storm.



## LETTER X.

Mother-bank, Dec. 3, 1795.

MY late letter to you, from Portsmouth, had nearly been a last address. In my passage from thence to the Lord Sheffield, at the Mother-bank, I was exposed to such imminent peril as to have had scarcely a hope of escape. The necessary arrangements being made for occupying our new births, I left Portsmouth in a small four-oared boat, belonging to the Lord Sheffield, accompanied by Mr. Jaffray (the master of the ship) and Mr. McLean, of the hospital department. On our way to the Mother-bank, we were suddenly overtaken by a violent, and, situated as we were, most perilous storm. The sky blackened; the tearing winds roared; and the tumid sea, gathering into frightful mountains, rushed before the wind in boisterous loudness, threatening us with instant destruction. Tossed from wave to wave, and dashed and rolled about, amidst the broken mountains of water, every moment seemed likely to be our last: for any one of the heavy seas might have upset our little bark, or have broken over us, and sent us to the bottom. Begirt with multitudes of rugged and liquid hills, rupturing on all quar-



ters, and rolling and tumbling one over another towards her, so small a boat seemed to have no chance of maintaining herself upon the rude and ever changing surface. From the deep swelling of the sea, together with the constant agitation and breaking of the waves, the sailors could not take sufficient depth to pull steadily with their oars; nor could the boat be made to obey the helm. At one moment we were raised, as it were, on a pinnacle—at the next ingulfed in deep shade between two roaring surges, towering high above us, and seeming to say, “Ye shall never rise again.” Yet, quickly, we were lifted upon a new-formed summit, and as suddenly dashed again into the vale of still more rugged billows, each contending in hasty strife, which should be the messenger of our fate.

The captain, with a countenance strongly expressive of anxiety, begged of us *not to speak*, lest we should divert his attention from the helm: upon the management of which our safety very much depended. Sitting at his elbow, in profound silence, as he desired, I watched his features as the barometer of my hopes and fears, and you will believe that I felt not quite at ease, upon observing him betray manifest symptoms of alarm. To move was even worse than to speak, and might be instant destruction to us all; hence it only remained to



us to sit in solemn stillness, and meet our destiny.

To reach the Lord Sheffield was absolutely impossible; for the wind was contrary, and the tide in concert with the storm, to prevent it: and to return to Portsmouth was, scarcely, less difficult, or less perilous, from the inability of our little boat to resist the enormous following waves, impelled by the joint force of the gale and the tide.

In this critical dilemma it was decided that we should steer for the nearest ship there was any hope of our being able to *fetch*; and the captain, encouraging the sailors to continue at their oars, and bear away to leeward, directed the helm accordingly. In this attempt we struggled on, often washed with the heavy sprays, and as frequently almost upset by the tearing gusts of wind. But perseverance, together with great dexterity in the management of the boat, at length, succeeded in bringing us alongside the Diana frigate, where we were kindly received, and even cherished as friends rescued from the devouring deep.

Having witnessed the danger to which we had been exposed, the officers, in the most liberal manner, welcomed us on board, and refusing to hear a word of apology, insisted upon our not attempting to depart until every appearance of the gale should have subsided. In-



deed they gave orders that our boat should be hoisted on board, and desired that we would think only of making ourselves comfortable for the night. In this they were imperative, nor will you imagine that our obedience was reluctant.

The Diana was under the command of Lieutenant Davy, in the absence of Captain Faulkener. This gentleman gave directions for our receiving every accommodation the ship could afford, and tendered his services in a manner that made it grateful to accept the kindness bestowed. Every individual seemed to emulate the commanding officer in friendly attentions towards our party, insomuch that we had cause to rejoice in the peril which had driven us among them.

As soon as we were made dry, and enabled to feel a little like ourselves, we were invited to the dinner-table of the mess. It was spread with plenty, and we partook with Mr. Davy, and the whole party of officers, who vied with each other in kind hospitality towards the rescued strangers. Good humour prevailed; the conversation was agreeable; and the bottle passed freely until evening, when a party was formed to a rubber at whist, and, at night, we were conducted to some of the best births of the ship.

We were pleased to hear every person, with



whom we conversed, speak of lieutenant Davy in the highest terms of praise. He was entitled to our best wishes, and we owed him much respect and gratitude : we were exceedingly happy, therefore, to learn that he had equally the esteem of his captain, his mess-mates, and the sailors. As a companion, he is amiable and engaging. His address is easy ; his manners are accomplished ; and, independent of his great kindness to us, in the hour of peril, his general conduct, and the handsome report of his brother officers, could not but call forth our regard.

We passed the night in rest and comfort. In the morning the weather was settled and fine ; therefore, after taking breakfast, our boat was lowered down, and we made the best of our way to the Lord Sheffield, reluctantly quitting the hospitable party, with whom misfortune had brought us acquainted.

Without further interruption we reached the Mother-bank, and I have now the pleasure to address you, in safety, from the Lord Sheffield, a very fine West India ship, and as superior to the gloomy George and Bridget, as her captain had represented. She is thoroughly clean, has a general air of neatness, and seems likely to verify the commander's report of her sailing. She is conveniently adapted for passengers, and is expressly calculated for the West Indies, having awnings, scuttles, port-holes and all the neces-



sary accommodations for the climate. The cabin is commodious, and is fitted up with mahogany wainscot, pier glasses, chairs, sofa, &c. due regard being paid to taste and ornament.

We have several guns on board, and wear the appearance of being well armed; but the ship is not sufficiently manned to defend herself against a regular attack, and this is what we have most to lament in our change from the Ulysses, for in other respects our situation is improved.



## LETTER XI.

Lord Sheffield, Dec. 8.

AGAIN I have been unsettled, and moving about from place to place, making my home sometimes on board, sometimes on shore. On examining my baggage, soon after I joined the Lord Sheffield, I perceived that one of my boxes was missing; and it has cost me a long, and a very sickly round, to recover it. In following the Ulysses, which had changed her birth, we were brought into an open and heavy-swellling sea, the motion of which made me very unwell, and led me to contemplate the probable sufferings I shall have to support upon the long voyage we are about to undertake.

Capt. Jaffray never having been on board a ship of such immense bulk, availed himself of my necessities, and took the command of the boat, upon this excursion, in order to look at the vast Commerce de Marseilles. I wish it were practicable to convey to you, in words, the sense of grandeur with which the mind is inspired on first approaching such an enormous floating battery; or to paint to you the sensations excited by rowing, in a small boat, close below her stern, and her sides; but it were



quite impossible for the pen to describe how diminutive we felt, or how immense and wonderful she appeared. To express it by the image of the gnat and the camel, it were necessary to suppose the former the minutest of its race, and the latter hugely overgrown. Looking up from our little skiff, the sight was truly awful; the figure of the ship was forgotten; the hull appeared a mountain, the masts lofty obelisks erected upon it; and the tremendous batteries, projecting from her sides, conveyed the idea of a stupendous rock hanging over us, fortified with many tiers of cannon.

We returned, yesterday, to the Lord Sheffield, and you will be glad to know that we were accompanied by doctor Cleghorn, who, in consequence of a new arrangement, is permitted to join our mess; so that we have again the prospect of crossing the Atlantic pleasantly *en quartette*.

To-day a signal has been made for the fleet to unmoor; and, in consequence of this, the Lord Sheffield has dropped down from the Mother-bank to the eastern part of Spithead. Should the wind continue at the point from which it now blows, we may be to-morrow on our passage.



## LETTER XII.

Lord Sheffield, at sea, Dec, 31.

At length we are at sea! the convoy sailed from Spithead and St. Helens, the day after I sent my last letter, and I now lift my pen to you upon the bosom of the wide Atlantic. From the time of the ever-memorable attempt of the fleet to proceed upon the voyage, in the month of November, the adverse winds, which had driven it back, in so shattered and disastrous a condition, detained it, in harbour, until the 9th instant; when it again put to sea under a serene sky, and propitious breezes; but, notwithstanding these favorable appearances, we have, since, had a most perilous succession of storms, one having, scarcely, subsided before it has been followed by another; and I have now so lost my confidence in the weather, that, although I am sitting in tolerable quietness to write to you, at this moment, I dare scarcely hope to finish my letter before I shall be tossed from my chair by a renewal of the gale.

This is the last day of the old year, and, whichever way I look, my eye surveys only an unbounded ocean. When we may again see



land, it were difficult to conjecture, but my pen shall prepare for you some *notes* of our proceedings, occasionally, when the sea will permit me to guide it; and I will send them by any vessel we may chance to meet on the passage, or by the earliest packet, after we reach the West Indies.

On the first morning of our being at sea, the weather was clear and mild, and the whole fleet, consisting of nearly three hundred vessels, of various magnitude, was assembled in compact form, occupying a certain circle of the ocean's surface, and gliding smoothly on its passage. It formed one of the grandest spectacles ever beheld. Never shall I forget climbing up the shrouds, as high as the main top, to enjoy it in all its perfection. The sun shone; the sea was smooth and undisturbed; the air serene. All sails were set, and the vessels being near to each other, the white canvass seemed spread, in crowded continuation, throughout the wide space covered by the fleet. Looking down upon the multitude of ships, it created the idea of an entire nation moving upon the waters. It was an emblem of Britain's glory. We appeared to command the whole empire of the main; and the prospect, being calculated to excite flattering hopes of victory and success, could not fail to be viewed, by every Briton, with delight. But, alas! how



delusive were these auspicious dawnings! We had advanced very little on our passage, before a dire reverse succeeded. The sun was now obscured; a thick fog overspread the ocean; and all the fleet was shut from our sight. Clouds gathered around; and the heavens scowled in terrific blackness. At length burst forth a roaring storm! the waters broke into huge billows; and the ships, struggling against the wild and furious waves, were, at one moment, tossed on a pinnacle, and, the next, plunged into a gloomy deep, surrounded by disordered mountains. In an instant they were again amidst the clouds, and again as suddenly sunk in the dark valley of liquid hills: thus, alternately, threatening us with the danger of being hurled from a summit, or swallowed up in a frightful gulf of the unfathomable ocean. Nor had we, barely, to encounter the common dangers of the sea, but, from being amidst a crowded fleet, were, every instant, liable to the additional peril of running aboard some neighbouring ship, and being dashed in pieces, or driven suddenly to the bottom: to this we were likewise exposed by the darkness of night, or by a heavy fog. The terror of these critical moments is necessarily augmented by the lively apprehensions of those who are but little accustomed to the sea: nor is this wonder-



ful, for, where every motion, and every sound is calculated to excite alarm, he must be more than a philosopher, he must be a sailor, who can regard even the less imminent perils with unconcern.

During a storm, the deep rollings of the ship, her deeper lurches, the thundering concussion of heavy seas against her sides, the hollow dreary sound of the wind howling in her sails and rigging, the hurry and clamour of the ship's company, and the dismal creakings of the masts, bulkheads, and other parts of the vessel, all conspire to create tumult and confusion, and to keep alive the most trembling apprehensions. At one moment the ship is upset, the next you feel her strike upon a rock: suddenly she is shattered to atoms; or, foundering, sinks to the bottom; and, while you are absorbed in these sensations, a sea, or heavy spray breaks over the deck, a threatening wave beats in the quarter gallery, or a rolling mountain dashes the stern windows into the cabin. The water now pouring upon you from every opening, your fears are confirmed, and you feel that the vessel is positively sinking. Quickly, the accident is repaired, and, in the moment of despair you are greeted with tidings of safety.

Often, in the midst of alarming appearances, and manifold disquietudes, you are visited by the carpenter, with the "dead-lights,"



who, fixing them in the stern windows, nails you up in darkness, as in a coffin, and with as much *sang froid* as men of his calling screw up the bodies of those who are actually dead: replying, at the same time, to your anxious and fearful inquiries regarding the necessity for that step being taken, that it is "*only to keep the spray from breaking the windows!*" But I am fatiguing you with a detail of what every one knows; and most who have been at sea, have felt: let me, therefore, return to our voyage.

What shall I say to you of our armada—our unfortunate fleet! Ere this can meet your hand, you will have had many, alas! too many melancholy proofs of the disasters which have befallen it. Did ever the seas: did the heavens ever fight so cruelly against an expedition! were ever the elements so decidedly hostile to the great and flattering efforts of man!

After the violence of the first gale, most of our scattered fleet, owing to the attention and exertions of Admiral Christian and his officers, was again assembled, and we felicitated ourselves in the hope of proceeding to our place of destination without further interruption: but the turbulent mountains of a disordered sea were scarcely reduced to a more tranquil surface, before the storm was renewed with additional violence. Quickly we were



more scattered than before. Many of the ships, unable to resist this second shock, were, now, much injured, and obliged to put back into port. Some, we suppose, again joined the admiral, and others wholly lost the convoy. We were among the latter, but, when the weather cleared, we fell in with a small division of the fleet, with which we sailed in company, for several days. Further repetitions of the storm again separated us, and we were tossed about, seeing no more than three, sometimes but two, and often only a single ship, until, at length, we found ourselves quite alone upon the broad ocean.

Previous to our final separation we witnessed a scene of a most melancholy nature; having observed a neighbouring ship in the utmost danger of being lost, without possessing the power of affording her any relief. She hoisted a flag, and fired guns of distress; but the gale was so strong, and the sea running so frightfully high, that it was impossible to give her assistance. We stood towards her, and anxiously kept her in view, in the hope of administering aid, if she should be supported upon the surface until the weather became moderate. Unhappily the tempest continued increasing rather than diminishing in violence. We looked fearfully on the ship, expecting every instant to see her go to the bottom. She repeated signals of distress. We heard them, and



saw them, but were unable to obey them. It was a most awful crisis. We regarded her with dismal forebodings, examining her, both with the eye and the telescope, again and again. Her masts were standing; her sails entire; and the rigging, apparently, perfect; but these circumstances, which to landsmen would have seemed favorable, we discovered to be the very reverse; for, hence it was that our best sailors formed the fatal conclusion that her situation was hopeless, and that she must have sprung a leak!

We watched the heavens, and the waters in painful solicitude, but saw no relaxation of the storm. Tremendous mountains at one moment concealed the wretched ship from our view: at another we appeared to be enveloped, together, in the same frightful gulf. You will conceive our sensations upon feeling that, in one instant more, this deep pit of the ocean might be the grave of every soul on board. Signals, denoting the extreme of danger, were repeated: the sea rolled in terrific disorder: we bent our eyes in vain towards the vessel, deploring her threatened fate, and our own inability to prevent it! Night came on. We lost her in darkness, and—beheld her no more!

Heaven grant that she may be in safety! But we all fear she cannot have withstood the



violence of the gale, which continued until morning, and throughout the whole of the following day, with unremitted fury. Our anxiety was also much augmented, from having seen masts, spars, and other pieces of wreck, float by the side of our ship, when the storm abated. Until now I had regarded the sailing in company with a fleet as a kind of social protection; but henceforth I shall feel no desire to move in crowded society on the ocean. Being alone, we are exposed to the risk of falling into the hands of the enemy; but, compared to our late suffering, even the vilest of French prisons loses its horrors; for, what can be so truly afflicting as to see a number of our fellow-creatures plunged into the deepest distress, and to feel withheld from tendering them relief! Our solitary situation must prevent a repetition of such a scene: it also removes the peril of our being injured or destroyed, by other ships; of which we had much dread, while we were amidst the fleet.

It is not only during a storm that there is danger of one ship running foul of another: it is equally, perhaps more likely to happen when the wind abates, particularly if this occur suddenly, for then the ship, not being supported by the resistance of the gale, gives way to the heavy seas, and, from disobeying the helm, is liable to be driven aboard other vessels. Often, at this moment, as well as during the storm, the



ships appear to have no weight, nor depth of purchase in the water, but they toss and roll about at the mercy of the waves, like empty barrels floating upon the surface.

At the period of separating from the fleet we knew not our place of destination: it became expedient therefore to open the sealed instructions; from which we discovered that Carlisle Bay, in Barbadoes, was fixed as the general rendezvous of the fleet. Here, therefore, all our attractions lie, and to this port we are endeavouring to steer; but adverse winds and violent tempests perpetually oppose our progress. It is now more than three weeks from the date of our departure, and we are yet beating about much nearer to you than you imagine, having, hitherto, advanced, on our passage, only twelve degrees of longitude, and three of latitude. But in whatever latitude or longitude, amidst whatever storms or dangers, I am always

Yours.



## LETTER XIII.

At sea, Jan. 24, 1796.

I HAD hoped not to resume my pen upon the face of the restless Atlantic; but that, long ere this, I might have addressed you from the island of Barbadoes; unhappily however, nearly four more tedious weeks have been consumed, in struggling against the united violence of merciless winds, and a relentless ocean. The *new year* set in, with mildness, and we began to sail pleasantly on our passage. The breeze was fair; the sea smooth and tranquil; the sun shone with genial warmth; the ship advanced in steady motion; and our cares were dissipated in the hope that all our disasters were buried in the grave of the *old-year*. But, alas! our flattering prospect had not the duration of a day.

Before the next morning the storm was renewed, and from that moment gale has succeeded to gale, and storm to storm, defeating all our happiest calculations; even the best established prognostics have deceived us; clouds separating, a change of wind, heavy rain, and the like, are no longer any indication of an abating tempest. At one time, under the clear-



est azure sky, and the brightest sun, the dry wind tears in keenest violence, as if rushing, from the parched clouds to devour all the fluids of the ocean : at another, loaded with moisture, it bursts into sudden gusts and squalls, heaving the ship, almost out of the sea, and leaving her as it were suspended in the air ; and, as if the fates had resolved to torment us, whenever the wind, and the heavy waves have a little subsided, and we have looked for steady sailing on our passage, a breeze has sprung up, from the most unfavorable point, and though moderate, for a moment, has quickly increased, again, to a storm. Seven long weeks have passed, and with difficulty can it be said that we have had an interval of one diurnal round, free from the perils of raging winds, or of the huge and troubled mountains thereby engendered!

Did I not feel that I am steering *from* my friends, the cruel perplexities of this tormenting voyage would lead me into a vow, perhaps somewhat rash, never again to intrust my body to so fickle a guardian as the sea. But, not all the perils of which she is mistress, nor any thing short of death, can deter me from again hazarding my person in order to return amidst those I love. Novelty has many charms ; and it is pleasing to regard society under its various forms, in every country and every clime ; but, even in this, the great enjoyment centres



in the endearing hope of being, some day, stationary amongst our friends; for to associate with those of similar minds, whose dispositions, whose interests and pursuits are congenial with our own, is the highest boon of civilized life: beyond this, the world has nothing to offer.

I still look forward to the happy termination of our passage; and feel that the present sufferings will arm me against a multitude of future alarms. I can almost fancy that a good ship is imperishable on the open sea; and could you know all that ours has borne, you would be inclined to countenance the opinion. She has amply proved herself to be what the sailors term "*a good sea boat*;" and, from the events of our voyage, you will feel the force of the technical expression that "*she can live in all weathers*." The shocks and beatings she has withstood, are almost incredible. Her topmasts, yards, and different parts of the rigging have been carried away—her sails split—the quarter boards stove in: things have been washed overboard from the deck—seas have broken over her—sprays dashed in the cabin windows—and various other accidents have befallen her: yet all have been repaired, and she still rides triumphant!

During the severity of a storm I have often remarked how differently the scene has affect-



ed the minds of those accustomed, and those who are unaccustomed to the sea. The sailor patiently observes the gale, lowers the yards and topmasts, furls or reefs his sails, makes all snug, and thanks the tempest for a holiday: heedless of the perils which surround him; he extends himself in his hammock, or reclines his head on a plank or a locker, and, sinking into the arms of Morpheus, regards the howlings of the storm as his peaceful lullaby. The landsman, on the contrary, is restless and impatient; listens in terror to the wind; and shrinks in agitation at every sound: the dangers that are, he magnifies, and his mind is tortured in the creation of others, which do not exist. Each moment, to him, breeds new alarm. He asks a thousand questions, dictated by a thousand fears. He goes upon deck—looks round with affrighted eyes—his feet are unable to support his trembling body—he clings to the companion door-way, and, thence, ventures to cast a look at the ocean and its waves. His head grows giddy—nausea seizes him, and he again descends to the cabin in extreme anxiety. He fixes himself in the leeward corner—places his elbows on his knees—his head on his hands, and, concealing his eyes, bewails his wretched fate! Suddenly he again seeks the deck—multiplies all the perils of the moment—torments the captain and sailors with new questions, all expressive of his terror—fas-



tens again to the companion door-way—gazes at the masts and sails—observes the yards dip into the ocean—feels the yieldings of the ship—imagines she is upset—fancies the masts are falling overboard, and, in each rolling wave, beholds a devouring sea. Destruction occupies his mind! He returns below—impatiently seats himself—seeks relief in a book—is unable to read—throws away the volume—again takes it up, and again throws it down: nausea returns, and he is seized with dizziness and retching. His bodily feelings now augment the disquietude of his mind, and, at length, as a remedy for both, he prostrates himself in his birth; but is still wretched and comfortless—all rest is denied him—sickness and anxiety remain—and he lies rolling, in fear and anguish, to wear out the fury of the storm!

—Strong as this contrast may appear, I have often seen it, fully, verified. During a gale we sometimes feel amazement at observing the carpenter and his mates working, quietly, in the tops; and the sailors hanging about the yards and rigging, in seeming unconcern—tossed by each rolling sea from side to side, far beyond the limits of the ship, and, not unfrequently, while seated at the end of the yard, dipped and drenched in the foaming billows! The indifference of seafaring men to the dangers around them is exemplified in every



part of their conduct, and, even, in their common expressions. Many times when we have felt the most vivid apprehensions from the fierceness of the tempest and the roughness of the ocean, and have, tremblingly, sought relief, by an appeal to the captain or mate, we have met only a look of unconcern, or, at most, the laconic reply "*It blows fresh.*" From their quaint and technical terms it is difficult for any one, unaccustomed to the sea, to know precisely what they mean to convey. Their degrees of comparison are peculiar to themselves, and, at first, not easily to be comprehended: taking the term fresh as the positive, they say it blows *fresh*—it blows *strong*—it blows *hard*: and again, to denote the severest possible gale, they assume hard as the positive—add an oath to form the comparative, and augment that oath to constitute the superlative: thus, it blows *hard*; it blows *d——hard*; it blows *d——hard, by ——*. Previous to this extremity we are commonly furnished with an omen, by the captain coming below, to change his long coat for a short round jacket; from which we always prognosticate unfavorably; it being a precaution which denotes busy, and perhaps, perilous employment.

Our steward is a very old sailor, tough as the ropes of the ship, and callous to every alarm; being the person more immediately about us, it most frequently falls to his lot to be teased with



questions regarding the weather, the wind, and the sea; and the steady apathy of his feelings, together with his excessive *sang froid* and unconcern, have been subjects of remark—sometimes, indeed, of vexation to us; for his utter insensibility to the circumstances calling forth our cares and alarms, has, occasionally, provoked us. During one of our perilous storms, the wind having shifted to a point somewhat less unfavorable, although still blowing a terrific gale, the usual question was asked—“Well, steward! how is the weather?”—“*Squally, squally, gentlemen—the wind’s coming about—be fine weather soon.*” According to the feelings of this old tar, the severest tempests that we have suffered, were only squalls, for, in the midst of the most tremendous gales, his reply has always been, “*Squally, a little squally, gentlemen.*”—“Are we making any way, steward?”—“*Oh yes, fine wind, quite free, going large, make six or seven knots.*”—“But surely we have too much of this good wind, steward?”—“*Oh, no! fine wind as can blow, gentlemen—but a little squally—rather squally.*”

Our dinner ceremony is often rendered a humorous scene: at this hour the cabin being the general rendezvous of the party, we meet—crawl, trembling, towards the table, and tie ourselves in the chairs. A tray is set before us, with



deep holes cut in it for the dishes, plates, and glasses; the table and chairs are lashed to the deck; yet one or other frequently gives way, and upsets half the things in the cabin! Presently enters the steward with soup, followed by his little slave with potatoes; and the servants with such other covers as there may chance to be. But scarcely are the things upon table, and the servants stationed, clinging to the backs of our chairs, before a sudden lurch of the ship tumbles all into disorder. Away go steward, servants, and little Mungo, to the lee corner of the cabin: the soup salutes the lap of one of us; another receives a leg of pork; a third is presented with a piece of mutton or beef; a couple of chickens or ducks fly to another; the pudding jumps nearly into the mouth of the next; and the potatoes are tossed in all directions, about the deck of the cabin. One seizes his plate; another stops his knife and fork; some cling to the table, thinking only of saving their persons; this secures the bottle; the next, half fallen, holds up his glass in one hand, and fixes himself fast to his chair with the other. Plates, dishes, knives, forks, and glasses clatter together in all the discord of the moment. Every thing is in confusion. The ship now becomes steady for a moment; the scattered parts of the dinner are collected; and those who have escaped sick-



ness, again attempt to eat. Some, foreseeing all these accidents, fix themselves in a corner upon the cabin-deck, and take the plate between their knees, fancying themselves in security: but, quickly, they are tumbled, in ridiculous postures, sprawling, with outstretched limbs, to the other side of the cabin. One cries out with sore bruises; another from being wetted with the sprays: this calls for help; that relieves his stomach from sickness: some abuse the helmsman; others the ship; and others the sea; while all join in a chorus of imprecations upon the wind.

With pleasure I feel myself able to inform you that we have indications of having passed the Azores. The temperature of the atmosphere is become very genial to our feelings, and, amidst our tossings and buffetings, we seem to have brought all-inspiring May close upon the heels of Christmas. A considerable quantity of sea-weed appears floating upon the water, and this, the sailors observe, is never seen to the north of the Western Isles, it being supposed to proceed from the gulf of Mexico, and not to be carried beyond these islands. We are steering more to the south than our direct course; but we are glad to make *Southing* at the expense of a little *Westing*, in the hope of beating out of the latitude of the tormenting gales,



which have, almost incessantly, beset us: but I forget that I am tiring you with uninteresting details, and that my letter is growing as tedious as the voyage.

Adieu.



## LETTER XIV.

Carlisle Bay, Feb. 13, 1796.

AFTER all our perils and dangers we are, again, safe at anchor, with terra firma in view! What a delightful element is the solid earth! During nine long weeks have we been wandering, upon the fickle waters, without obtaining even the most distant sight of land: but of this enough! Let me not recal, to your mind, scenes that we are endeavouring to forget. Throughout the last fortnight the tumults of a boisterous ocean have been assuaged. For two or three days, after writing my last notes, we were nearly becalmed, and the foaming Atlantic became smooth and tranquil as the fish-pond of a pleasure-ground. This placid interval was occupied in making preparations for fair sailing; the top-gallant masts were got up—the royals and steering sails made ready—fishing-lines were thrown into the still sea—and an awning prepared for the quarter-deck; all of which imply steady breezes, warm regions, and pleasant sailing. On the 25th of January we were in latitude  $27^{\circ} 49'$ , the thermometer at  $69^{\circ}$ . The morning was mild; the sea still and smooth, as a lake: all nature seemed hushed in silence,



and no wind could be felt. We rose early, and enjoyed a steady walk on the, now, quiet deck. The sun, protruding from the bosom of a tranquil ocean, softly stole above the horizon, swelled into globular form, mildly assumed refulgent brightness, and spread his cheering rays around. From excess of motion we had lapsed into perfect rest. We hailed the change with admiration; yet wished enough of wind to carry us on our voyage. The timoneer left the helm; and the ship remained immoveable upon the water. Two strange vessels were observed to be in sight—a brig and a schooner. The former was directly in our wake. Viewing this, amidst the universal stillness which prevailed, we remarked, with surprise, that she was moving, towards us, with full sails. At this moment the sky darkened; the thermometer fell to 64; a gentle rippling spread over the still surface of the water; and, almost imperceptibly, brought us - - - - a favorable breeze! It was from the north-east; and so soft and steady, that scarcely did we feel the vessel in motion, before we were advancing at the rate of five knots an hour! What we had so long and anxiously sought, was now arrived, and we most cordially welcomed - - - - - *the trade wind!* The sailors announced it in loud greetings: need I say that we partook in their liveliest joy? Never was a happier moment! All sense of our long suffer-



ings vanished, and we were quite in raptures on this glad event. Indeed we had cause to think ourselves fortunate on being received by the favoring *Trades* in their very earliest latitude. This was a most grateful period of our passage, and, together with the weather we have since experienced, has, in some degree, compensated former evils. The temperature grew cooler than it had been during the few days of calm. The breeze freshened, and all hands were busily occupied in setting every possible sail, to obtain the full benefit of this great and constant trader's friend. Quickly new canvass stretched from every point of the masts and yards, and the ship, winged with five additional sails, widely spread her expanded pinions to catch the breeze. What a change! transported, at once, from the perils of severe tempest, to the finest, smoothest sailing! Sickness, and all other uneasy feelings were banished; we exercised, freely, upon the deck; and advanced on our passage, almost without perceiving the vessel move! So rapid, indeed, was our progress, that the ship seemed to feel no resistance, in her easy course through the water!

As soon as we entered *the trades*, our *ports* and *scuttles* were beat open, and we had a free circulation of air, through the cabin, night and day. The windows were likewise opened; and, as we sailed before the wind, the Venetian



blinds admitted the breeze, whilst they excluded the rays of the sun. By these means we were kept pleasantly cool, below; and when upon deck we were protected by a canvass awning, under which we had a shaded walk, ventilated by a free current of air. Having several bathing tubs on board, we had, likewise, the comfort, the luxury I might say, of plunging into seawater every morning; and, in order not to meet these burning regions, with all the rigid fibre, and strong vascular action of Europe, I have adopted the plan of using a very abstemious diet, and have submitted to a short preparatory course of medicine. My comrades smile at the precaution, but, *although doctors may disagree*, I shall hope, on some future day, to exhibit, to you, the good effects of this early discipline.

Many days previous to our arrival in Carlisle Bay, the increase of temperature had brought out upon our skins that troublesome eruption called *prickly heat*. Our bodies were covered with it, and the irritation and itching it occasioned were intolerable. Our companion, Dr. Cleghorn, being an early sufferer from it, demanded of those who had been accustomed to the West Indies, how long his skin was to be thus tormented? So long, good doctor, as you remain in health, was the reply! Upon which, with additional rubbing and scratching, the doctor jocosely, although somewhat impatiently



exclaimed, in the accent of his country, "Faith, captain, and would you carry us into never-ceasing torment? 'Bout ship, and tack for England immediately."

On the morning of the 10th instant the boatswain descried the highest points of Barbadoes, when *land! land!* was instantly echoed throughout the ship, to the great joy of all on board; and to the boatswain's profit, who, being the first to sound the glad tidings, became entitled to the customary fee of a bottle of rum. It required the eye of a sailor to distinguish the all-delighting terra firma, amidst the clouds: the passengers looked, and looked in vain! a nearer approach of several leagues, was necessary, to render it visible to the eye of a landsman, and when we, at length, discerned it, the earth appeared, only, as the more fixed of the clouds, forming a dark streak a little above the horizon. This streak became, gradually, more and more distinct, till, breaking as we advanced, it assumed the rugged form of mountains; and, at length, the appearance of land. Soon we discovered it to be the northern point of the island of Barbadoes: but Carlisle Bay is to the south: we had, therefore, to coast round nearly half the extent of the island, before we could reach the harbour. This delay afforded us a good opportunity of viewing the country. We stood near in, and could observe, distinctly,



the objects on shore. I took my seat upon deck, and with an anxious eye, aided by the telescope, minutely, examined every thing we passed. The mind, ever active, generally forms to itself some image of the things we hear spoken of, before any opportunity occurs of seeing them. Often the picture is very incorrect and extravagant; but, upon the present occasion, I discovered that my imagination had painted a tolerably accurate copy of the West Indies, from the descriptions which I had heard and read.

Our coasting view of the island was not the most favorable: for a nakedness, which Barbadoes does not possess, appeared to prevail: nor did the general verdure equal our expectations: houses, huts, windmills, and sugar-works, although plentifully distributed, did not present the scenery, or the air of richness and comfort which we had expected. There seemed to be a want of inclosures, and a deficiency of trees and hedges. The buildings looked bare and exposed, and there was a deficiency of that protecting shade, for the cattle, which our feelings had deemed requisite in such a climate. The houses being without chimnies, and devoid of ornament, conveyed the idea of barns: nor could we associate them in the picture of wealth and abundance which had been called up in our minds. We wished that the numerous wind-



mills, houses, and other buildings we saw, had been more protected by the deep-shading foliage of the tropical vegetation. If a variety of trees had been interspersed, or the branching silk-cotton, or stately mountain-cabbage had contributed its shelter, the appearance of comfort would have been preserved, and the picturesque effect rendered more striking. The land is considerably varied, being hilly and unequal; and, from the general view in sailing along the coast, it appears to rise into two or three distinct tables, which elevate themselves abruptly, one above another.

We made the entrance of the harbour, just as the sun was sinking into his watery bed, for the night; and it was in debate whether we could *fetch in* before it grew dark, when it was suddenly decided against us, by the wind shifting and coming round *directly a-head*. This we learned was the land-breeze. In these regions the trade-wind blows from the sea, during the day; but this commonly subsides, as the sun goes down, and a contrary breeze sets in, from the land, which continues throughout the night.

Being prevented from coming to anchor, we stood off and on, at the harbour's mouth, until daylight, when we discovered that we had no cause of regret in this additional delay; for all the beauties of Carlisle Bay were, now, exhibited to us, not only under the still light of



the morning, but brightened by the golden rays of the rising sun. If we had gone in at night, we must have lost a most enchanting prospect; and the loss would have been irreparable, for, after the eye had been accustomed to the rich foliage, the houses, the towns, the fields, and all the peculiarity of tropical scenery, the impression which we now felt could never have been excited. The mind was, at this moment, in a state to enjoy them: the novelty was great, and every object striking. We had been long at sea, and the eye sought, eagerly, the shore. Land was anxiously desired: the view of it opened to us very favorably; and, from the various circumstances conspiring to its improvement, the prospect was rendered more delightful than it could have been at any other period.

The harbour is a fine open bay, the whole of which, with its varied shores, was before us: many ships were riding at anchor, and a multitude of boats and small vessels were sailing and rowing to and fro. The two points of land, at the entrance, serve as a defence, while they augment the beauty of the harbour. On one of them appears a formidable battery, together with an extensive barrack for troops: on the other is a fine grove of mountain-cabbage, and coco-nut trees. Through the shipping at the bottom of the bay, are seen numbers of neat cottages; among which are interspersed various



tropical trees, affording the protecting shelter of their umbrageous summits. On the south-west shore stands Bridge-town, the capital of the island; and on the north-east, upon high ground, is a new and handsome quadrangle of stone barracks, with the military hospital and other buildings of St. Anne's Hill. Nor is the prospect confined to these limits; for, in addition to the water, the shipping, and the numerous other objects, immediately before the eye, the land in the back-ground is seen above the houses, the trees, and the topmasts of the ships, rising to a great distance, clothed in all the richness of its tropical apparel. Verdant fields of sugar, of coffee, and of cotton; fine groves, dark with luxuriant foliage; country villas; clusters of negro-huts, windmills, and sugar-works, all present themselves to diversify and enliven the picture. Such was the scene which appeared before us as we sailed into Carlisle Bay. You, whose idol is nature, in all her forms, will feel a friendship for the evening land-breeze which so happily lengthened a voyage, before too long.

Adieu.



## LETTER XV.

Barbadoes, Feb.

PREVIOUS to our coming into harbour, from our late voyage, the ship's company was busily occupied for several days, in cleaning, painting, and adorning the vessel; according to a prevailing custom of dressing the West India ships in a new jacket, during the steady sailing of *running down the trades*, in order that they may appear clean, and in the best condition, while remaining in the harbours of the islands. In this the sailors have a degree of pride, which excites a general spirit of emulation; every captain wishing to render his vessel the object of admiration and attraction. In consequence of this custom the West India harbours become like drawing-rooms of fine-dressed merchantmen. Here, each ship exhibits her best apparel, and vying with the others, holds out her lures to catch the eye of every beholder. The decoration is universal. From head to stern, not a plank, a mast, a yard, nor scarcely a rope escapes; each receives a full dress coat of paint, or is made new with a black varnish of tar. The more prominent parts of our ship being completed, the progress of cleaning



and ornamenting was extended to such minutiae as to become ridiculous. A decorating mania seemed to have seized the whole crew, and every one was up to his elbows in grease, tar, and oil. Not an iron ring, a bolt, or a nail was neglected—not even the cannon-balls escaped—and, that nothing should be omitted, the inner surface of the water-buckets, regardless of health, were dressed with their poisonous coating. Never was idle excess rendered more conspicuous. Not an inch, nor an atom, but appeared in Lord Sheffield's livery; black and yellow prevailed from the highest point of the masts, down to the very water's edge. Nothing can convey to you a stronger idea of the fine steady sailing, in a trade-wind, than to know that the outer part of the ship is painted at sea, by men hanging in ropes, at her sides, whilst she is proceeding with full canvass, on her passage.

The ship's company have another, and yet stronger pride, which respects the swiftness of their vessel: like every man's horse, every sailor's ship is *the best in the world*; every captain commands the quickest vessel of the fleet! *He* would cease to merit the honor of a jacket, who could be brought to acknowledge, however true it might be, that his ship was a sluggish sailer: for, however manifest this shall appear, an excuse is never wanting. She is in bad trim—she



is too much by the stern—too much by the head—is too deep—too light—the breeze is not from her quarter—she sails best upon a wind—before the wind—she makes best way in a gale—in a light breeze: so that be the weather, and the attendant circumstances whatever they may, here is a *side-wind* for each of them; and a son of the ocean is always expert enough to appropriate them in favor of his vessel, so as to guard her, at every point, against the imputation of being a dull sailer. Our ship was found not to advance in proportion to the breeze; it was, therefore, deemed expedient to give her a new main-top-gallant mast; and this was put up, in the night-time, with as much secrecy as if the failure of the expedition had hung upon its disclosure. We, afterwards, discovered that it was done, in the dark, not to conceal it from the passengers, only, but from the ship's company of a vessel, which happened, then, to be sailing near us; and with which the Lord Sheffield was, secretly, vying in her progress.

A day or two after we had entered into the latitude of the trade-wind, we had to cross the tropic; which was an occasion of great mirth and festivity. The usual ceremonies were performed—the usual honors paid to old Neptune, and all was holiday. The great deity of the ocean, accompanied by his queen, ascended



from the deep, in order to welcome us to his tropical abode, and to witness *the baptism* of all his children who had not, before, done homage at his font. This is a ceremony which is, commonly, thought to be ludicrous: but, in the way it is conducted by the rough tars, it becomes a very dirty and severe process. It is extended to every person on board, who has not been already within the tropics, varying only in its mode of application, and in its severities.

The old sailors are careful to discover, in the course of the passage, which of their messmates have not undergone the discipline of this tropical baptism; and on this day, all who are marked for the ceremony, are led upon deck, one by one, blindfolded. In this state the young sailor is made to seat himself upon a small narrow plank, laid across a large tub of salt water, or upon the edge of the tub itself, and, in this perilous situation, they administer to him a long and ridiculous oath: then offer him a glass of gin, by way of cordial, which he is compelled to drink, and finds it to be only a glass of salt water. They, then, smear his face with a nasty compound of grease, tar, and stinking oil, taking care in the operation, to force some of it into his mouth. The next step is to shave this off, and the razor employed, for the purpose, is commonly a piece of an old iron



hoop, beat full of notches. The filth being in part scraped from his chin, with this rough instrument, the baptismal process is completed by the plank, upon which he is seated, being suddenly withdrawn, and the young initiated plunged head and ears into the tub of water; where he is made to lie kicking and sprawling for a considerable time; after which he is permitted to rise from his briny birth; when his eyes are unveiled, he washes his countenance, and issues forth a privileged son of old Neptune—*free* to range in the tropical seas. If he contend, or offer any resistance, he is treated with three or four dippings, instead of one; he finds it best, therefore, not to be refractory, and smothers his wrath in the secret pleasure of witnessing a similar process imposed upon the rest of his messmates. Every one, whether sailor or landsman, is called upon to undergo this christening ceremony!

As passengers we were honored with a visit from father Neptune and his spouse, to welcome us to their tropical dwelling, and to announce the propriety and necessity of the baptismal vow: but we compromised the discipline of dipping and shaving, by offering the tribute of a few gallons of rum! Nevertheless, we were taught that it would be prudent to remain, quietly, in the cabin, during this briny christening of the sailors.



The servants were led by curiosity to visit the deck, hoping to witness the ceremony without becoming, themselves, the objects of it: but they were speedily presented with a complete washing of sea-water, and obliged to beat a hasty retreat, in order to escape the shaving: one of them, who was a great coxcomb in his dress, grew sadly enraged, and felt highly indignant that the sailors should dare to wet and spoil his clothes: in his anger he ran down below to arm himself with a sword, then returning upon deck, declared that he would run any man through the body, who should throw water upon him, again: but scarcely had he said the words, and brandished his sabre, before several bucketsful of water were dashed upon his head and shoulders, by some sailors who had placed themselves in the main-top. The poor man stormed violently, swore, stamped, and raved. The sailors, laughing at his impotent rage, continued to pour down bucketful after bucketful. He was unable to climb up the shrouds; and they diverted themselves at his wrath, until, at length, seeing that they defied all his threats, he again returned to the cabin, loudly denouncing vengeance, unmindful that his best remedy was to change his clothes, wipe himself dry, and let his choler subside. Custom is absolute, and, in the hands of such hardy ministers, it were folly to oppose its despotic government.



After reaching the latitude of the trade-wind we passed very little of our time in the cabin; nor, throughout the whole passage, did we neglect to take our exercise upon deck, whenever the weather would permit; occasionally also, in order to divert the sad indolence of our inactive life, we gave assistance at the capstan, or in working the pump, or pulling the ropes.

During our fine tropical sailing we were frequently amused in observing the immense shoals of porpoises, dolphins, and flying fish, which, from time to time, assembled about the ship. The frightful shark and spouting grampus also made us frequent visits.

Harpoons and other instruments, called gigs, or grains, were prepared for the purpose of taking these inhabitants of the ocean. They are formidable weapons of iron, made with barbed points. At the time of using them, a wooden handle, loaded with lead, is affixed to them, together with a long cord; and they are struck into the animal while he is swimming at the side of the ship. If they penetrate beyond the barb he is unable to free himself from the instrument, but is turned upon his back, by the weight of the lead in the handle, and consequently has no power to escape. Often the iron points are bent double without entering; or sometimes they are thrown out by his



struggles, and he swims off with his wound. This we saw happen to a large porpoise while he was amidst a shoal of his species so numerous as to darken the sea; when, instantly, every individual of them abandoned the ship, not to protect or console their wounded brother, but, according to the unfriendly habit of these hideous and rapacious creatures, to pursue him as their prey.

The flying fish, the shark, and the dolphin, are all used by the sailors, as food. The shark is a most stupid animal—unlike other fishes, he disregards being seen. He shuns not people who appear before him, nor is intimidated at things falling near him, or even upon him in the water. Does this arise from a deficiency of nervous sensibility, or from a consciousness that he is armed against the objects he commonly meets? By throwing out to him occasionally a piece of fat pork, he may be induced to continue, at the side of the ship, whilst a rope, let down into the water, is passed over his head, and drawn tight round his body, in order to take him alive, and if it happen to slip off, he is torpid enough to remain until it be fixed a second time. We caught a very large one in this manner; and also, with the hook, took a smaller one, which the sailors consumed as delicate food.

The shoals of dolphins are often so crowded



as to convert the sea into a kind of rich and dazzling mine, exhibiting many brilliant interchanges of colour.

The novelty of immense multitudes of fish darting from the sea and taking wing in the air, you will believe attracted our attention. To speak of fishes flying might seem to be a traveller's tale; we were, therefore, led to a minute investigation of the fact. We watched them with a sceptical eye, and, at many different times, before we admitted even the evidence of our senses. It appeared possible that their short flight might be the effect of a single muscular effort, supported by the expansion of long membranous fins; and this opinion became strengthened from observing them, occasionally, touch the water, as if to gain new force from its resistance, and then rise again, and fly as far as before. But, upon regarding them with accuracy, we observed their wings employed, like those of birds, in fluttering motion as they flew. We saw them change their course, from a direct line; we perceived them rise and fall in their flight, to surmount the waves they met, and remarked that they often continued their progress to the distance of two or three hundred yards, without touching the water: at length some of them flew on board the ship, and, striking against the masts, fell dead upon the deck; thus affording us



an opportunity of satisfying our doubts. After minutely examining their external form, we further assured ourselves, by carefully dissecting them; and we have now no hesitation in saying that fishes - - - - *do fly!* The wings are very long: arising from behind the gills, they lie folded at the sides nearly the whole length of the fish, being formed of several fine cartilages, and a thin transparent membrane not unlike the wing of a bat. At the insertion, near the gills, they are narrow, but become considerably wider towards their extremities. When used in flying they are raised from the side, and expanded, by the cartilages separating from each other, and stretching out the membrane which covers them. They are not connected with the body by extensive muscular insertions; but are united by a ligamentous membrane. Two small muscles pass into each wing, terminating in strong ligaments. These serve to give them the command of the wing, but are not calculated to support long and powerful action. The fish is about the size of a herring. They are caught, in great numbers, near Barbadoes, where they are pickled, and salted, and used as a very common food.

The day before we made the land we met with shoals of flying fish of much smaller size than those we had commonly seen; not larger, indeed, than sprats. On rising out of the water,



in large bodies at a time, they caused a sound like the splashing of rain, which being heard by the captain, he instantly exclaimed "*Ha! bravo! land, land! here are the little splashers, we can't be far from the land!*" This small race of flying fish, it seems, is never observed at any great distance from the shore, nor in the deeper parts of the Atlantic: wherefore their appearance is assumed as a sure indication of a speedy approach to the land.

We observed upon the passage, that after the great heat of the day, the water of the Atlantic was somewhat warmer than the circumambient air. In latitude  $14^{\circ}$ , at 10 o'clock at night, the thermometer stood at  $72\frac{1}{4}$ , and upon being put into a bucket of fresh-drawn sea water it rose to 73.

Like all young sailors we felt our attention strongly attracted by the phenomenon of the lights produced in the sea, at night, from the ship beating her way through the water. We often witnessed them in a very striking degree, and were, frequently, led to the fore-castle to view them in their greatest splendour; for, there, the vessel appeared to be sailing through liquid flames. On every side the lights were vivid and beautiful, but at the head we saw the pitchings and plunges of the ship strike out wide flashes, resembling sheets of fire. At the stern these lights appear as if they poured



from the vessel in bright streams of fire, extending to a considerable distance in her wake.

We drew up water in buckets, occasionally, to the deck, and found that by agitating it, either with the hand or a piece of wood, we could excite the same luminous appearance: but, after disturbing it for a short time, this effect ceased; and no degree of agitation was sufficient to renew it in the same water. You know the various theories and speculations which have been offered in explanation of this phenomenon; I need not, therefore, swell my letter by repeating them.

The beautiful appearance of the iris resting in small circles upon the surface of the ocean, was also a frequent subject of our notice. These were only seen near the ship, and it will occur to you that they proceeded from the minute particles of water, beaten off by the vessel, dividing the rays of light, and causing them to fall upon the sea in the form of rich and distinct rainbows. They are often extremely brilliant, and are observed, lying as it were, in numbers upon the water.

The very beautiful rising and setting of the sun and the moon were many times the admired objects of our contemplation. Viewed from a West India sea, the surface of these orbs does not appear as in Europe, like a mere plane fixed in the sky, but their convexity, and globular form



are seen very distinctly. When rising they appear as detached globes protruding from the deep: at setting they resemble distinct spheres sinking, or rather dropping, divested of their rays, into the ocean.

The moon is brighter than in England, and reflects a clearer light. When only a few days old the whole orb is visible—not decked in uniform brightness, as when it is at the full, but with the great body in shade, while the horned edge, alone, is dressed in silver.

The appearance of the western sky was likewise an object of novelty to us. By day the whole canopy is one fine azure expanse, bright and unclouded; but, at evening, dark mountainous clouds accumulate into deep masses, and impend, in awful majesty of form, over the horizon.



## LETTER XVI.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

IN pursuance of my promise I still direct my pen towards you, notwithstanding the uncertainty when I may be able to send away my letters.

The period is critical and important. News from each shore of the Atlantic, to its opposite, is sought with the most lively anxiety. While you are looking to us for tidings of ourselves, of our scattered fleet, and of endangered islands; we, unable to relieve your suspense, are looking to you, with no less anxiety for intelligence of England and of Europe. The avidity for news, which, here, displays itself, is vivid beyond all I can express. Our anchor was not dropped, indeed we had scarcely entered the harbour before a variety of people came out, in boats, to meet us, and, scrambling on board, asked the news in such hurried solicitude as scarcely to wait for a reply, before each question was followed by another. What news? what news? what news of the fleet? what news of England? what news from the Continent? were all uttered in such rapid succession, that the only answer we could properly make, served as



a general reply - - - "None! we have been nine weeks at sea, and have every intelligence to seek—none to give."

Our abrupt visitors were extremely disappointed, when, instead of being able to satisfy them, they found that we were equally solicitous to demand news of our convoy, of the Islands, and of the sailing of the packet for England. We could impart nothing satisfactory; and the information we acquired was not very gratifying. The following were the leading circumstances which we collected at the moment. Grenada, we were told, was, almost wholly, in possession of the brigands: St. Vincent in imminent danger from the Charibs: and Guadaloupe, if not St. Lucie, so strengthened by reinforcements from France as to bid us defiance.

Two French frigates, and numbers of privateers had been cruising, with too much success, against our scattered transports and merchantmen. The frigates had lately been daring enough to look into the harbour of Carlisle Bay, and the Charon of 44 guns armed *en flute*, one of the earliest arrivals of the Spithead fleet, had been sent out, with La Pique frigate, in pursuit of them.

The Leda frigate, employed to convoy a fleet of victuallers from Cork, had been upset in a gale, and, unhappily, sunk to the bottom



with all hands on board, seven only excepted. These had since arrived in one of the victuallers, at Barbadoes ; but several of the convoy, left unprotected by this fatal accident, had been captured by the enemy's cruisers.

The commander in chief was still unheard of ; nor was there any accurate intelligence of the fleet, although a few straggling vessels had arrived.

This was the sum of the news that greeted our arrival at Barbadoes. But gloomy as it was, the distressful feelings it produced were, in some degree, alleviated by our learning, soon afterwards, that the Brunswick, which had been ordered to proceed with troops to the relief of St. Vincent, had arrived most opportunely to save the island ; and that the Stanley, which had sailed with the first fleet in November, and was supposed to have been lost, during the disastrous storm which arose in the channel, had arrived safely in Carlisle Bay, on Christmas day, being the only ship of the *November* convoy that made good her passage ; and, further, that nine or ten of the vessels of the *December* convoy had reached Barbadoes in safety, with upwards of two thousand troops on board.

The delight we felt on the glad occasion of setting our feet, again, upon terra firma was more exquisite than I can describe ; and it was highly augmented by the novelty that surround-



ed us. The houses, the streets, the people, the fruit, fish, and vegetables, the trees, the fields, every thing before us, was new. The very means of labour and amusement were novel, and all combined to indicate the change we had made—all bespoke our removal to a tropical latitude. We gazed on all we met, and all we passed. Objects which, at other moments, would have been trifling and unimportant, now called forth our attention. Chaos seemed to be renewed; and, without being able to discriminate, we contemplated, in anxious curiosity, this seeming change of worlds.

We took our umbrellas in our hands, by way of parasols, but found less occasion for them than we had been taught to expect; for notwithstanding that the heat was greater, by several degrees, [in Bridge-town, than in the harbour, we did not feel any degree of languor or oppression. A pleasant breeze counteracted the ardent rays of the sun: and, at our first visit, we rambled about, for two hours, with far less inconvenience from heat, than I have often experienced in the close and sultry days of England.

It will be quite within your recollection how long, and how much I have wished to visit the ships trading to Africa, and to witness personally, the manner of treating those poor beings, who are torn from their native home,



by the iron hand of commerce, to be transported to a land of slavery. In this wish, I have had an early opportunity of being gratified. A slave-ship, belonging to North America, and bound to Savanna in Georgia, had arrived from the coast of Guinea just before we came into harbour, and was lying very near to us, with a cargo of negroes on board. Fearing she might sail for America, and being unwilling to lose the first occasion that offered, of indulging our curiosity, Drs. Master, Cleghorn, and myself took off a boat, the morning after we came to anchor, and went to visit the Guinea-man. We found both the master and mate of the ship disposed to show us every civility, and to oblige us by freely replying to our questions.

A little before they made Carlisle Bay, the captain and his mate had been taken out of their ship, and detained a whole night, on board an English frigate, while their papers were examined, under the suspicion that the vessel and cargo were Dutch property: but the property being proved to be American, they were released, and the ship is now taking in water, preparatory to pursuing her voyage to the state of Georgia.

The cargo consisted of a hundred and thirty slaves, of whom two-thirds were males, and one-third females. The two sexes were



kept separate by a partition, or bulk-head, built from side to side, across the ship; allotting the *waist* to the men, and to the women, the *quarter-deck*. A great majority of them were very young, being from ten to eighteen years of age. We were pleased to observe that an air of cheerfulness and contentment prevailed among them. In a few only we remarked despondency, and dejection of countenance. Both sexes were without apparel, having only a narrow band of blue cloth put round the waist, and brought from the back to fasten before. Many of them had marks upon the skin which appeared to have been made with a cutting instrument. These, we learned, were distinctive of the nation to which they had belonged. Some had their teeth cut, or filed to sharp points, giving them a very hideous, and canine appearance. They looked well fed and healthy, although some of them had an eruption, called the *cra-cra*, upon the skin.

Their sleeping births were the naked boards. Divided into two crowded parties, they reposed, during the night, upon the bare planks below—the males on the *main-deck*—the females upon the deck of the *aft cabin*. In the daytime they were not allowed to remain in the place where they had slept, but were kept mostly upon the open deck, where they were made to exercise,



and encouraged, by the music of their loved banjar, to dancing and cheerfulness.

We saw them dance, and heard them sing. In dancing they scarcely moved their feet, but threw about their arms, and twisted and writhed their bodies into a multitude of disgusting and indecent attitudes. Their song was a wild yell, devoid of all softness and harmony, and loudly chanted in harsh monotony.

Their food is chiefly rice, which they prepare by plain boiling. At the time of messing they squat round the bowl in large bodies, upon their heels and haunches, like monkies, each putting his paws into the platter to claw out the rice with his fingers. We saw several of them employed in beating the red husks off the rice, which was done by pounding the grain in wooden mortars, with wooden pestles, sufficiently long to allow them to stand upright while beating in mortars placed at their feet. This appeared to be a labour of cheerfulness. They beat the pestle in tune to the song, and seemed happy; yet nothing of industry marked their toil, for the pounding was performed by, indolently, raising the pestle, and then leaving it to fall by its own weight.

I am most happy to conclude my report of this visit by informing you that we discovered no marks of those horrors and cruelties, said to be practised on board the ships occupied in this sad



traffic of human flesh; and which are represented as so frightfully augmenting the manifold ills of slavery. Chains, stripes, and severities did not seem to have been in the catalogue of means employed on conveying these poor Africans to their American masters. Our minds, necessarily, suffered in contemplating the degrading practices of civilized beings towards the less cultivated brethren of their species: but the eye was not shocked by the abuses of tyranny and inhumanity. The comfort and health of the slaves were promoted with every care. Being fond of washing in cold water, they were encouraged to the free use of it; and their persons, as well as the ship, were kept remarkably clean. They were plentifully fed; and, in the daytime, were dispersed about the vessel, so as to be prevented, as much as possible, from assembling together, in close unwholesome crowds. Mirth and gaiety were promoted among them: they were roused to bodily exercise, and care was used to divert their minds from dwelling upon their change of state, and loss of home: and I may truly say, that a more general air of contentment reigned among them than could have been expected. While many were dancing and singing, and playing together, others were giving their assistance in working the ship; and we learned that several of them had made



themselves highly useful on the passage, and were already becoming expert sailors.

They all seemed to regard the master of the vessel more in affection than fear; and, although strictly obedient, they did not appear to be at all under the influence of terror. Crowded they, necessarily, must be, particularly in the place where they slept; but every attention was paid to prevent the injury which might derive from it; and to keep them in health.

We went down below to see their place of repose, where the hard planks formed one common bed, each individual employing his arm as his pillow. The men could not stand between decks, without stooping; and when they lay down, the boards were so closely covered, that that it was scarcely possible to set a foot between their naked bodies. They were always taken upon deck early in the morning, and the sleeping birth was thoroughly cleaned and washed: still it was highly offensive to European olfactories; and plainly indicated, that if it were not for the great attention paid to cleanliness and ventilation, disease must inevitably be generated. Their nakedness is, perhaps, their best security; for although they had neither bed-clothes, nor personal covering, nor any kind of baggage, or furniture in the place, we perceived that all the cleaning and airing which were em-



ployed could not subdue the stench caused by their sleeping together in such crowded heaps.

Although they are fond of washing, and seem to have a sense of personal cleanliness, they have none of cleanliness of place, nor of common decency: for, notwithstanding the strictest prohibition against it, they cannot always be prevented from the filthy habit of depositing their natural excretions upon the spot where they sleep.

The wool of their heads forms a thick cover for vermin, of which they have, commonly, a swarming abundance; therefore to prevent this, and to further the rules of cleanliness, all their heads had been shaved: but this, we were told, had deprived them of a great source of occupation and amusement; it being a singular pleasure to them to sit down in pairs, for hours together, to enjoy the social feast of picking each other's heads, and afterwards twisting and plaiting the wool into a variety of forms.

The pleasure we had experienced from finding these poor blacks in a state of apparent contentment, and, with respect to the reported cruelty, enjoying a degree of comparative comfort, was succeeded by feelings of horror, on hearing the relation of an insurrection which had taken place, on board the ship, previous to their sailing from the coast of Africa. Many of the



negroes being detained on board for a considerable time while the cargo was completing, and lying, during this period, within sight of their native shore, from which, and, perhaps, from their wives and families, they were about to be torn for ever, had grown indignant even to desperation, and rising upon the ship's company, murdered the master and mate, who then belonged to the vessel, and wounded several of the men: nor was it until after a very severe and bloody contest that they were overcome; when the ringleaders were put to death, as an example to deter others from revolting. One of the sailors showed us three desperate wounds which he had received on the face, the breast, and the arm, from the stroke of an axe, with which one of the blacks had, just before, struck off the captain's head.

The next day, after our visit to the American slave-ship, an opportunity offered of seeing one of our own nation—a Liverpool Guinea-man; a ship of much greater burden, fitted out expressly for the trade, with a sufficient number of hands and of guns on board to protect her against the enemy's privateers; and calculated for a cargo of five hundred slaves.

We were taught to believe that we should find the negroes much better accommodated in this, than in the American ship; but we could



not observe any great superiority. Although the vessel was larger, the number of slaves was more than proportionally greater. In other respects the accommodations were nearly equal. The Liverpool ship was kept remarkably clean; but the other was not less so; and, between the decks, the American vessel was the most commodious, being higher, and having more room in proportion to the cargo, from which the slaves had the advantage of being less close and confined during the night.

In the sleeping-place of the English vessel we could not stand up without stooping almost double: in each, the men and women were kept separate; in both, their food was rice; and in both they slept naked upon the bare planks, crowded together like sheep in a fold.

The most striking difference that occurred to our observation was, that the slaves of the Liverpool ship were of blacker and smoother skin than the others, and all of them free from that dirty eruption, the cra-cra; but upon our noticing this better appearance of one cargo than the other, the apparent superiority was instantly explained to us, by the remark that the Liverpool vessel had reached her destined port, and that her cargo had been made up for market, by having their skins dressed over three or four times with a compound of gunpowder,



lime-juice, and oil—a preparation which not only destroys the cra-cra, and gives the skin a smooth, black, and polished appearance, but likewise renders it sleek and fine: and it was further observed, that the American cargo would be made to look as well, before they reached the port where they were to be exposed for sale.



## LETTER XVII.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

FROM the details I gave you of our tedious voyage, you will learn, with surprise, that we still continue to live on board ship. But to this we have many inducements. It is much cooler in the harbour, than it is in Bridgetown; we are far less annoyed with mosquitoes; and, from our belonging to the St. Domingo staff, and being in daily expectation of receiving orders to proceed to that island, we are, at all moments, ready to move, without the risk of leaving our baggage behind; moreover, by living on board, whilst we are detained to windward, our sea-habits are continued, and perhaps we may thereby avoid the tormenting sickness of a second voyage.

We have a regular mess established. Every morning we go or send to market for provisions; and our domestic arrangements are better regulated, and in more of comfort than if we were on shore. Occasionally we dine, and spend the whole, or part of a day at Bridgetown, but we never fail to return on board to sleep.

We find that the accommodations of a West India tavern, are by no means despicable:



and you know that I am enough a traveller, rather to court the varieties we meet, than to regard them as hardships, because they are not, in every particular, the same as we are accustomed to in England.

But you have desired to be told of these varieties as they occur, and I have an early opportunity of trying your patience. Our first dinner on shore was at a tavern in Bridge-town, kept by a mulatto woman, Mary Bella Green. Plenty prevailed. The crowded table smoked with fish, a piece of boiled beef, a pepper-pot, a turkey, some roasted veal, and a quarter of mutton, with several different kinds of puddings, and quite an assortment of vegetables, of eight or nine different species—European and tropical. Our liquors were most excellent bottled porter, good Madeira, tolerable claret, and very fine Noyeau. In the dessert we were sadly disappointed, for, instead of the fine tropical fruits which we had expected, three or four of the very common and inferior species were set before us, unripe, and bad in quality: viz. goavas, bananas, and sour-sops, with some tough, and bitter shaddocks; to all of which, the commonest apples, or gooseberries of Europe would have been preferable. But Barbadoes is not an island abounding in the finer fruits of the climate, hence we do not judge of the deli-



rious productions of the West Indies by this ill-chosen sample.

Our party, for whom we had ordered dinner, consisted of nine persons, but upon coming to table, we found covers for fifteen, and learned that, instead of giving us a private dinner, as we had directed, they had put us into a large public room, and served a kind of *table d'hôte*. Not being prepared for this arrangement, we remonstrated against it, and, with some difficulty, prevailed in having the extra-covers removed; but we soon perceived that we had gained little by thus interrupting the customs of the house: for they, directly, spread another table in the same room, and, setting down the six strangers close by us, divided the dinner, between the two parties.

In making out their bill for payment, they do not detail the separate articles of the dinner, the number of bottles of wine, the different plates of fruit, &c. as in England, but put down the whole sum, under the three general items of *dinner*, *wine*, and *fruit*; and, at any house you are accustomed to use, if you call, occasionally, in a morning to rest, or to take shelter from the sun, or rain, they give you a glass of lemonade, or of coco-nut water, with a "*very welcome*," and consider themselves rewarded, by the payment you make when you take dinner at the house. Nor is the demand



for this at all extravagant, except, in so far as regards the bad fruit. We paid a dollar each for dinner; the same for the wine; and half a dollar for the dessert.

They make the wine and porter pleasantly cool, by putting the bottles in wet cloth bags, and placing them in the open windows, for some time before dinner; taking care to sprinkle them, occasionally, with water, as they stand exposed to the breeze. A rapid evaporation is thus produced, and, consequently, far more heat carried off, than by merely setting the bottles in cold water. The porter is so highly improved by the climate, and rendered so grateful, by this method of cooling, as to be superior to any that is drank in England.

The attendants of the table are very numerous, black and yellow, male and female; perhaps too numerous to serve you well; for they are badly regulated, and the duty of one being that of all, it is not regarded as the particular duty of either, and, consequently, is apt to be left unheeded. Each, being idle and inactive, waits for another to step before him, when any thing is called for; and, although you have a crowd of servants present, it is difficult to obtain what you want.

The females are, mostly, of erect figure, and stately carriage, but they move in all the languor of the climate. They appear without



shoes and stockings, in a short white jacket, and a thin short petticoat. They wear a white turban on the head; but the neck and shoulders are left bare. Silence is not esteemed a necessary qualification among them, for they often join with great freedom, and a sad drawling accent, in the conversation of the table. This will appear to you but little consistent with the reserve and abject forbearance of slavery; but it is the consequence of the public situation in which these women are placed, and the familiarity that is commonly used towards them by strangers; to any, or all of whom they are the very obliging, and *most obedient* humble servants.

On first making inquiry, respecting the accommodations of the house, we were surprised to learn their extent, and the facility with which they are attainable. A bed may be had for half a dollar per night, or three dollars per week; and, for an additional sum well understood, the choice of an attendant to draw the curtains.

The hostess of the tavern is, usually, a black, or mulatto woman who has been the favored enamorata of some *backra*\* man; from whom she has obtained her freedom, and perhaps two or three slaves to assist her in carrying on the business of the house; where she now

\* *The negro term used for white.*



indulges in the good things of life, grows fat, and feels herself of importance in society. To those who, in compliance with the Highgate privilege, seek her services in preference to those of the persons employed by her, she is supposed not to be impolite.

It is to her advantage that the female assistants in her family should be as handsome as she can procure them. Being slaves, the only recompense of their services, is the food they eat, the hard bed they sleep on, and the few loose clothes which are hung upon them. One privilege, indeed, is allowed them, which, you will be shocked to know, is that of tenderly disposing of their persons. This offers the only hope they have of procuring a sum of money, wherewith to purchase their freedom: it is so common a resource among them, that neither shame nor disgrace attaches to it; but, on the contrary, she who is most sought, becomes an object of envy, and is proud of the distinction shown her.

One of our attendants at table, appeared, both from her conversation and behaviour, to be very superior to her degraded station. She had nothing of beauty, nor even prettiness of face, but she was of good figure, and of respectable and interesting demeanor, and, in point of intellect, far above her colleagues. Together with gentleness of manner, and an easy, pleasant



address, she possesses a degree of understanding and ability which claims respect. In principle, and in sentiment, she appeared virtuous; and, from the frankness of her replies, it was evident that she knew no sense of wrong in her conduct. We could not but lament that the imperious habits of the country did not allow of her being a more respectable member of society.

This woman is the great support of the house—the bar-maid, and leading manager of the family. Her mistress had refused to take a hundred guineas for her; which, she assured us, had been offered by a gentleman who would have purchased her. She has a very lively interesting little daughter, a Mestee about four years old. Of this child she spake with great tenderness, and seemed to bear it all the fond attachment of an affectionate parent. Yet, as the infant was born in slavery, should the mother, by any means, obtain her own freedom, she cannot claim her child; but must leave it, still the disposable property of her mistress, equally liable to be sold as any other piece of furniture in the house: for, in Barbadoes, the offspring of a woman in slavery becomes the absolute property of the owner to whom the mother belongs, whether it be black, yellow, or white; as the law knows no period when the child of a slave shall be born free, however removed from the African: nor can the mother,



under any circumstances of subsequent liberation, claim her infant from its owner, even though it should be of fairer skin than the fairest European. Thus are the natural ties of our species torn asunder; and the dearest attachments, and purest affections of the heart cruelly broken down! Babes are separated from their parents, and mothers robbed of their children, by this unnatural appropriation of human substance!

The manners, and the circumstances attending the situation of this mulatto were strongly interesting. Her whole deportment bespoke a degree of refinement, with a superiority of understanding; and indicated talents capable of high improvement. Probably, if fortune had so placed her in life, as to have offered her the acquirements of a chaste and cultivated education, this woman, notwithstanding the colour of her skin, would have made a faithful and virtuous wife; been an ornament to her friends and society; and a blessing to the man who should have made her the partner of his hours.

The taverns are commonly known by the names of the persons who keep them. The most frequented, at Bridge-town, are those of Nancy Clarke, and Mary Bella Green; the former a black—the latter a mulatto woman. Mrs. Clarke, or Mrs. Green would scarcely be



known! A party is said to dine at Mary Bella Green's, or at Nancy Clarke's; or, more concisely, at *Mary Bella's* or at *Nancy's*. The title *Mrs.* seems to be reserved, solely, for the ladies from Europe, and the white creoles, and to form a distinction between them and the women of colour of all descriptions; none of whom, of whatever shade or degree, are dignified with this appellation.

In the evening, after taking our first dinner on shore, Dr. Cleghorn and myself made a walk to visit the hospitals and barracks at St. Anne's Hill; on our way back to Bridge-town, we were accosted by two negro girls of respectable appearance, sitting upon the step of a gentleman's gateway, by the road side.

Being just arrived in a land of slavery, and feeling desirous to converse with the Africans, and their descendants, in order to ascertain whether any deficiency of intellect, or inferiority of natural capacity was observable among them, we gladly passed a few minutes, in conversation with these decent-looking young slaves. They were the property of the gentleman, at whose gate they were sitting; and were employed as house servants, or as they are here termed, "*house-wenches* \*," in his family.

Trifling as it is, I give you the conversation as it passed, divesting it only of the broken

\* *Domestics of the kitchen, not slaves of the field.*



accent, with which our language is spoken by the negroes. It will serve to show you that the replies were not inapposite: and perhaps not inferior to what might have been expected, from the common order of people in Europe. One of the girls was about sixteen, the other eighteen years of age. They conversed with ease and affability, but were very respectful and unassuming; and their whole conduct might have done credit to European servants, not of the lowest class.

On our asking to whom they belonged, they replied, "We belong to Col. B.'s lady." Is this Col. B.'s house? "Yes; but the Col. is not at home—he is gone to England." How does it happen that you are sitting here, instead of being in the house at work? "Our work, for to-day, is finished, and we came to the gate to see the strangers, as they pass by." What strangers? "The strangers, who are come with the army, from Old England." Do you like to meet strangers? "Oh! yes, yes!" And to talk with them? "Yes, if they talk with us." Are the people, here, kind to strangers? "Oh, yes! it is always our custom: every body should be more kind to strangers than to their own people." Why so?—should we not be kind to every body? "Yes! we should be kind to every body, but we should be more kind to strangers, because they come far from their own home,



and their friends; and because we may some time travel ourselves, and want kindness from others." Have you ever been far from your home? "No! but, perhaps, we may some day." How far have you ever travelled from your master's house? "Never more than five miles." Did you ride or walk? They both smiled, and hung down their heads. No reply could have been more expressive, or better understood! "Ride! a slave ride! you are strangers here indeed! No! we walked, bore our burden on our backs, and journeyed on our naked feet!" We bade them good night, and walked on, pleased with the rencontre.



## LETTER XVIII.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

THE office of caterer for the mess having fallen to the lot of your friend, I may tell you that I sometimes go to Bridge-town, to buy living meat for dinner. You will, perhaps, be surprised to learn that, here, animals are brought alive into the market, to be killed after the different joints are sold: and, that it often happens, that the meat is slaughtered, consigned to the pot or spit, brought to table, and eaten, without growing cold!

The filthy custom of blowing the meat, is carried to greater excess at Barbadoes, than in England. As soon as the calf is dead, a small opening is cut near to the hock, and the whole surface is inflated like a full-blown bladder. The skin is then taken off, and the meat distributed to the purchasers for immediate use.

Leaving our comrades, Weir, and Master, on board, Cleghorn and myself frequently make excursions on shore, and stroll about the town and the fields, by way of exercise, and of gratifying a strong curiosity to see and know all that appertains to the change we have made. In these ramblings, we often surprise the West In-



dians, by, what they term, the dangerous extent of our walks; and they assure us that, a few months hence, we shall be little inclined to use such *violent* exercise. A walk of five or six miles appears to them *tremendous*: but we suffer no inconvenience from it, and, without being, yet, well able to judge, we fancy that much of the languor and inactivity of the creoles and creolised, might be prevented, and stronger health enjoyed, if they were to accustom themselves, more freely, to habits of activity. Against our theory they urge experience, remarking that all Europeans, however fond of using much exercise, on their first arrival, gradually lapse into the same indolent indulgence as the natives.

After one of these excursions we returned to Bridge-town, by way of Pilgrim, the residence of the governor; a pleasant home, situated upon an elevated spot, about a mile from the town. Near this place our attention was arrested by a party of slaves, or, according to the language of the island, a *gang of negroes*, who were employed in making a road to the governor's house. It was the first large body of slaves we had met with, toiling at their regular employment, immediately under the lash of the whip; and we could not but remark that the manner of executing the task afforded a striking example of the effect of climate, and of sla-



very. Nothing of diligence, or industry appeared among them; and but little of bodily labour was expended. They seemed almost too idle to raise the hammer, which they let fall by its own weight, repeating the blow several times, upon the same stone, until it was broken to pieces. A mulatto overseer attended them, holding a whip at their backs; but he had every appearance of being as much a stranger to industry, as the negroes; who proceeded very indolently, without seeming to be at all apprehensive of the driver or his whip, except when he made it fall across them in stripes.

In proportion to the work done by English labourers, and the price, usually, paid for it, the labour of these slaves could not be calculated at so much as twopence per day; for almost any two men in England would do as much work in a given time, as was performed by a dozen of these wretched, meager-looking *blacks*.

In our perambulations, we often witness gross and disgusting scenes among the slaves. Lately we saw a naked washing party, whose skins exhibited very indecently the crowded scars of repeated punishment. Women are sometimes seen milking themselves, as they walk along the streets, and both sexes are observed lying about in pairs, picking the vermin from each others heads.

You will be more shocked, perhaps, than



surprised that such-like indecencies should be practised among the slaves; but you will join in my regret that they should happen before the eyes of European wives, and spinsters; and will lament the sad effect which the frequent recurrence of such offensive exhibitions must, necessarily, have in destroying that modesty and delicacy of sentiment, which render so truly lovely, while they so much embellish the female mind.

Of this baneful effect, I am sorry to have it in my power to mention a striking example, which lately occurred to my notice. Being in company with a large party of Europeans, and white creoles, friends and strangers, male and female, husbands, wives, widows, and maidens, it happened at the time when the party was assembled, during the short interval before dinner, that a sweet little babe, only a few months old, was brought into the room, by its black nurse, to be presented to the company; when the woman, who, with the exception of one short petticoat, was in perfect nudity, was desired, before all present, to suckle the child; and at the same time the mother and grandmother, two most respectable ladies, in order to divert the infant, amused themselves by slapping, pressing, shaking about, and playing with the flaccid breasts of the slave, with very indelicate familiarity, and without seeming to be at all



sensible, that it was, in any degree, indecent or improper !

One day, in passing along the street, we chanced to see a fight between two women of colour, one a negro, the other a mulatto. The crowd, about them, was very great, and European curiosity induced us to wait the result ; but we have no desire to witness such another contest. You can have no conception of the ferocious means which were used by these women to injure each other. Not only biting, pinching, slapping, and scratching were employed ; but with the more horrid brutality of the American gouchers, and in the most deliberate manner, did each of these females thrust her thumb or fingers into the nose, mouth, or eyes, of the other, striving, in all the bitterness and cruelty of savage nature, to tear to pieces, to blind, or to maim her opponent.



## LETTER XIX.

Barbadoes, Feb.

It is Sunday, and, separated by the wide Atlantic, I take up my pen to hallow the sabbath to my friend. Mentally I am every day in your society: but on the sabbath I breathe a still warmer aspiration to dear England, and sanctify the wish that we were, personally, nearer. Were you here to participate, with me, the novel scenes which occur to my observation, they would have a double interest, and I should find a charm in many things which now convey only a languid impression.

This is a day of festivity among the slaves. They are passionately fond of dancing; and Sunday offering them an interval from toil, is, generally, devoted to their favorite amusement. Instead of remaining at rest, they undergo more fatigue, or at least more personal exertion, during their gala hours of Saturday night and Sunday, than is demanded from them, in labour, during any four days of the week.

They assemble, in crowds, upon the open green, or in any square or corner of the town, and, forming a ring in the centre of the throng, dance to the sound of their beloved music, and



the singing of their favorite African yell. Both music and dance are of a savage nature. Their songs are very simple, but harsh and devoid of melody.

The instrumental parts of the band consist of a species of drum, a kind of rattle, and the ever-delighting banjar. The first is a long hollow piece of wood, with a dried sheep-skin tied over the end; the second is a calabash containing a number of small stones, fixed to a short stick which serves as the handle; and the third is a coarse and rough kind of guitar. While one negro strikes the banjar, another shakes the rattle with great force of arm; a third sitting across the body of the drum, as it lies lengthwise upon the ground, beats and kicks the sheep-skin at the end, in violent exertion with his hands and heels; and a fourth sitting upon the ground at the other end, behind the man upon the drum, beats upon the wooden sides of it with two sticks. Together with these noisy sounds, numbers of the party of both sexes bawl forth their dear delighting song with all possible force of lungs: from the *tout ensemble* of the scene, a spectator would require only a slight aid from fancy to transport him to the savage wilds of Africa. On great occasions the band is increased by an additional number of drums, rattles, and voices.

The dance consists of stampings of the feet,



twistings of the body, and a number of strange indecent attitudes. It is a severe bodily exertion—more bodily indeed than you can well imagine, for the limbs have little to do in it. The head is held erect, or, occasionally, inclined a little forward; the hands nearly meet before; the elbows are fixed, pointing from the sides; and, the lower extremities being held rigid, the whole person is moved without lifting the feet from the ground. Making the head and limbs fixed points, they writhe and turn the body upon its own axis, slowly advancing towards each other, or retreating to the outer parts of the ring. Their approaches, with the figure of the dance, and the attitudes and inflexions in which they are made, are highly indecent: but of this they seem to be wholly unconscious, for the gravity, I might say the solemnity of countenance, under which all this passes, is peculiarly striking, indeed almost ridiculous. Not a smile, not a significant glance, nor an immodest look escapes from either sex: but they meet, in very indecent attitudes, under the most settled, and unmeaning gravity of countenance. Occasionally they change the figure by stamping upon the feet, or making a more general movement of the person, but these are only temporary variations; the twistings and turnings of the body seeming to constitute the supreme excellence of the dance.



For the most part only two enter the ring at a time, but, occasionally, as many as three or four; each making a small contribution to the band at the time of stepping into the circle. They dance, violently, together until one is tired, and when this escapes from the circle another assumes the place, thus continuing to follow, one by one, in succession, so as frequently to keep up the dance, without any interval, for several hours.

The musicians and dancers equally delight in the amusement. They exert themselves until their skins pour off copious streams. The band seem quite insensible to fatigue, for in proportion as the fluid distils from their pores, they increase their efforts, raising their voices, and beating the drum and the rattle, with additional violence; and such of the spectators whose olfactories have no relish for African odours, are sadly annoyed by the high-essenced exhalation which spreads itself around.

As I was looking on, at one of these dances, I observed a soldier's wife, from the north of Tweed, gazing with curiosity and astonishment amidst the throng; and seeing her features marked with surprise and dissatisfaction, I asked her what she thought of the African dance. "*Oot,*" said she, "*'tis an unco way o' spending the sabbath night.*" And on my asking her if there were any as pretty women in the Highlands



of Scotland, she, instantly, replied, "*Whether or not—they smell better.*"

Presently a soldier, passing that way, and observing the dance, asked a mulatto who was standing by, for a cud of tobacco, and twisting it between his lower lip and his teeth, forced his path, through the crowd, into the middle of the ring; and there placing himself, between the negro and the girl who were dancing, set the nymph in African step and figure. Wowski was responsive, and they danced, cordially, together; but soon finished by footing it, in quick step, from the ring, happily enfolded in each others' arms, to the great disappointment of poor Sambo; who, no doubt, thought to regain his partner as soon as the soldier had grown tired in the dance.

Near this merry green I witnessed a sad fracas between a negro man and woman, in consequence of gaming; which is a very prevailing passion among the blacks.

Having led you to the loud song, and sprightly dance of the slaves, let me now conduct you to their bed of death. Seeing a crowd in one of the streets, and observing a kind of procession, we joined the multitude, and soon found ourselves in the train of a negro funeral. Wishing to be present at the ceremony of interment, we proceeded to the burial-ground, with the throng. The corpse was conveyed in a neat



small hearse, drawn by one horse. Six boys, twelve men, and forty-eight women walked behind, in pairs, as followers, but I cannot say as deeply afflicted mourners. The females were neatly clad, for the occasion, being mostly in white. Grief and lamentations were not among them: nor was even the semblance thereof assumed. No solemn dirge was heard: no deep-sounding bell was tolled: no fearful silence held. It seemed a period of mirth and joy! Instead of weeping and bewailing, the attendants jumped and sported, as they passed along, and talked and laughed, with each other, in high festivity. The procession was closed by five robust negro fishermen, who came behind playing antic gambols, and dancing all the way to the grave.

At the gate of the burying-ground the corpse was taken from the hearse, and borne by eight negroes, not upon their shoulders, but upon four clean white napkins placed under the coffin. The body was committed to the grave, immediately on reaching it, without either prayer or ceremony; and the coffin, directly, covered with earth. In doing this, much decent attention was preserved. The mould was not shovelled in roughly with the spade, almost disturbing the dead, with the rattling of stones and bones upon the coffin, but was first put into a basket, and then carefully emptied into the



grave; an observance which might be adopted in England very much to the comfort of the afflicted friends of the deceased.

During this process an old negro woman chanted an African air, the multitude joining in chorus. It was not in the strain of a solemn requiem, but was loud and lively, in unison with the other gaieties of the occasion.

Many were laughing and sporting all the time with the fishermen, who danced and gambolled upon the neighbouring graves during the ceremony. From the moment the coffin was committed to the earth, nothing of order was maintained by the party: but the attendants dispersed in various directions, retiring, or remaining, during the filling up of the grave, as inclination seemed to lead.

When the whole of the earth was replaced, several of the women, who had stayed to chant, in merry song, over poor Jenny's remains, took up each a handful of the mould, and threw it down upon the grave of their departed friend, as the finishing of the ceremony, crying aloud, "*God bless you, Jenny! good-by! remember me to all friends t' other side of the sea, Jenny! Tell 'em me come soon! Good-by, Jenny, good-by! See for send me good - - - to-night, Jenny! Good-by, good night, Jenny, good-by!*" All this was uttered in mirth and laughter, and accompanied



with attitudes and gesticulations expressive of any thing but sorrow or sadness.

From the grave-digger we learned that poor Jenny had been a washerwoman, and that the females who had, so merrily, sounded her requiem, had been her sud associates. They had full faith in Jenny's transmigration to meet her friends, at her place of nativity: and their persuasion that death was only a removal from their present to their former home; a mere change from a state of slavery to a state of freedom; did not barely alleviate, but wholly prevented the natural grief and affliction arising from the loss of a friend. They confidently expected to hear from poor Jenny, or to know her influence in the way they most desired, before morning.

The faith of these poor ignorant slaves, regarding a happy transmigration, after death, might seem calculated to lead them to the crime of suicide; and, this effect of their superstition is said not to have been unfrequent among them. A tale is told of a singular remedy having been practised against this fatal proceeding of the negroes. Several individuals of a gang having hanged themselves in order to escape from a cruel master; and others being about to avoid his severities by similar means, he prevented them, by the happy expedient of threatening to hang himself, also, and to transmigrate, with



them, carrying the whip in his hand, into their own country; where he would punish them ten times more severely than he had hitherto done. The stratagem is said to have succeeded. Finding they could not, thus, escape from the tyrannic lash, they resolved, rather than receive disgraceful stripes, among their African friends, to continue their existence under all the hardships of slavery.



## LETTER XX.

Barbadoes, Feb.

HAVING fatigued you, in my late letters, with tedious notes, concerning the slaves and their customs, I feel happy to have it in my power to introduce you to the society of their masters. Through the friendly medium of Mr. Benjamin Hinde, a merchant of great respectability in Bridge-town, we have been made known to several gentlemen who reside in the country, and are of importance in the island: and who, with the most liberal and friendly hospitality, offer us the means of seeing the whole of Barbadoes, and of witnessing the customs and manners of its inhabitants. It were unnecessary to remark that this will be a great source of gratification, and will lead us to rejoice in the event, while we lament the cause of our delay.

We have made a ride about four miles into the country, to dine with one of our professional brethren, Dr. Hinde, a man of high acquirements, and sound knowledge. He was educated in England, and remained many years, in the prosecution of his studies, at Cambridge. Until lately he employed himself in the practice of



medicine, at Bridge-town; but he has now retired, in great part, from the fatigues of medical occupation, to engage in the more genial, and more lucrative employment of a planter. To the inhabitants of the town this is a severe loss; and they, justly, lament the absence of a man not less endeared to them by his urbanity and private worth, than by his eminent professional talents.

We enjoyed exceedingly the ride to the doctor's estate; which is situated upon much higher ground than the immediate environs of Bridge-town; the country rising towards the interior of the island, in elevated ranges of distinct table-land. At one spot we ascended by a very steep road, and, having reached the summit of the acclivity, found ourselves again upon an extensive plain. Soon afterwards we came to another rocky precipice, and having mounted this, by a path of difficult ascent, we arrived upon another, and still higher range of table-land. From the points of these sudden elevations we commanded extensive and pleasing views of the country below, of Bridge-town, of the sea, and of the shipping in Carlisle Bay.

The land is cultivated in open fields: hedges, walls, and all the usual fences seem to be unknown; nor does the eye discover any distinct separation of the different estates; but it ranges, uninterrupted, over a wide-extended sur-



face, richly spread with the various productions of a tropical soil, and pleasantly interspersed with the mansions of the *whites*, and the huts of the *blacks*. Cotton, pigeon pease, and Guinea corn, constitute the chief produce of this part of the island. Some fields of aloes, and of plantains, were also seen : but a degree of nakedness was perceptible from the want of wood, of which there is not a sufficiency to give a general richness to the landscape, although about the great *Backra*-houses there are several fine groves of the coco-nut and the majestic mountain-cabbage trees.

We arrived about two o'clock, having made our ride in the strongest heat of the day ; but from the purity and freshness of the air, and from the country being more elevated, as we advanced, we felt no degree of languor or oppression, from a full exposure to the sun. At the doctor's house, in consequence of the situation and construction of the building, we felt it cooler than either in Bridge-town, or Carlisle Bay. The party at dinner consisted of eight ladies, and fourteen gentlemen ; the attendants were also numerous, yet, notwithstanding the number of persons in the room, and the many smoking dishes on the table, the steady perflation of the breeze kept us sufficiently cool.

The day passed most pleasantly : all was harmony and good cheer. The hospitality



which supplied the feast, enriched its flavour; and the entertainment was highly graced by the urbanity and attentive politeness of the doctor and his lady. On our way back to Bridgetown, in the evening, we perceived the air to be more close and oppressive, and the heat greater as we descended from each plain of table-land; so that the difference we felt between breathing in the town, and in the cool breeze of the country was very striking, and led us to felicitate the doctor on having so advantageously exchanged physic for sugar, and the confined streets of the town for the open hills of the country.

It was the season of the cane harvest, and Dr. Hinde, kindly seeking our gratification, had contrived that the works should be going, in order that we might witness the method by which the juice is separated from the plants, and afterwards prepared into sugar. We also visited the distilling house, and inspected the apparatus for making the rum; hence, we had, this day, an opportunity of observing the progressive steps from the cutting of the canes, to the converting of their fluid parts into sugar and rum. At some more leisure moment, perhaps, I may note for you the whole of the process.

We made our excursion in single-horse chaises, like those, with leather tops, used in England; from which they only differ by having



the leather, at the sides and the back, made to roll up, and let down at pleasure, for the two-fold purpose of admitting the air, and excluding the rain. We were attended by slaves as running footmen, whose duty it was to travel as fast as we did, and to be in readiness to hold the bridles, or stand at the horses' heads, at any spot where we might chance to alight, or to pause. They were equal in number to our horses, but as we were unaccustomed both to running footmen, and to slaves, we had strong feelings of compunction respecting these pedestrian pages; and from seeing them run, and pant, exposed to the mid-day heat of a tropical sun, merely for our convenience, it became so painfully annoying to us, that we lost all sense of comfort and enjoyment: Dr. Cleghorn and myself, therefore, stopped to desire that they would get up, alternately, and ride behind our chaise. Two of them, only, accepted the offer; all the others continued to walk or run throughout the journey.

Upon our mentioning to the gentlemen of the island our uneasiness respecting these sable attendants, they smiled at our European *tenderness*, and assured us, that, so far from it being a fatigue or hardship to them, they always hailed such an excursion as a holiday, and preferred it to remaining quietly at home. We could not, for an instant, dispute the information; but



from believing that this violent exercise, under the excessive heat, must have been fatal to ourselves, and not being such experienced West Indians as to know how very differently it affected the negroes, we could not regard them without strong feelings of discomfort.

At one spot, in the course of our ride, we had our attention arrested by observing a party of four, almost naked, females working in a cane field. Curiosity would not allow us to pass on without devoting to them a moment of particular regard. We, therefore, went a little off the road to approach them nearer; when we found that they were labouring with the hoe, to dig, or cut up the ground, preparatory to the planting of sugar; and that a stout robust-looking man, apparently white, was following them, holding a whip at their backs. Observing that he was the only one of the party who was idle, we inquired why he did not partake of the task, and were told, in reply, that it was not his business—that he had only to keep the women at work, and to make them feel the weight of the whip if they grew idle, or relaxed from their labour.

Impulsive nature was roused at this information, and we felt shocked and indignant, at seeing a man, apparently strong enough to do as much work as the whole of the four, employed in the sole occupation of brandishing the whip



over these poor degraded females: Reverting to the protection demanded from us, by the tender sex, we forgot for a moment, all the circumstances of the country we were in, and, indulging in a train of European sentiments, could not refrain from rebuking the man! Reflection whispered "*he is but on duty;*" still I confess that I must remain long in a land of slavery, before I can witness such a scene, without feeling a strong desire to take the whip from the fellow's hand, and lay the lash across his shoulders, until he shall relieve the women, by, at least, partaking of their toil.

Notwithstanding the alarm of our Barbadoes acquaintance, Dr. Cleghorn and myself continue our walks, by rambling about the fields, and the paths, in the environs of Bridgetown, at an early hour of the morning: nor do we feel more fatigue than we might experience from the same degree of exercise in Europe. We walked lately from six till nine o'clock, and if you had the opportunity of consulting our stately mulatto attendant, at Mary Bella Green's, you would learn that we exhibited no marks of a diminished appetite at breakfast-time.

Near the sea we were protected from the great force of the sun by the shade of trees, whose leaves and trunk very much resembled the common pear-tree of England; but whose fruit was, in form, a correct likeness of the



apple. We knew not that it was forbidden, but had enough of caution to avoid tasting it. However I gathered a small branch, bearing fruit and leaves, and put it into my pocket as a specimen, from which we might ascertain what tree it was. Soon afterwards we met a negro, and upon our showing it to him, and asking its name, he, instantly, exclaimed with alarm, "*Ah, Massa, dat poison---dat no good for nhyaam---dat daamm manchineel, Massa.*" Finding that I had fostered a serpent, I directly threw away every leaf, and every apple; but I discovered that, like other insidious foes, manchineel had quickly diffused its poison, and I afterwards smarted for my curiosity. Either my handkerchief, or my gloves had imbibed the offensive particles, and from having incautiously used them, my lips and face burnt for many hours after, with all the scorchings of cantharidistical acrimony; also from their having reached the tongue and fauces I was thrown into a copious salivation, and my mouth and throat were much swoln, and throbbd with fiery heat throughout the morning.

Near the sea we saw likewise some other trees, bearing a fruit very like grapes; but experience of the manchineel made us cautious in gathering further specimens of tropical production. Some negroes, whom we met, informed us that they were called sea-grapes, and were



used as fruit; upon which we ventured to gather a few of them, and found that they were of pleasant flavour. In the course of the same walk we met with a fine avenue of coco-nut trees, bordered with the aloe and the plantain. This was not to be resisted. We could not forego the pleasure of exploring the extent of this delightful shade, therefore proceeded to its utmost depth; when we found that it led to a gentleman's house, from which, as we approached, the lord of the mansion came out, to bid us welcome, and to tender us the courtesies of hospitality. We accepted the very grateful refreshment of a fine shaddock, pulled fresh from the tree; and the gentleman, kindly, conducted us to the plantain-ground, the negro-yard, and different parts of the house and estate.

We had, before, seen many negro huts, some shaded by the sea-grape, some sheltered by the broad and balmy leaf of the plantain, some protected by the umbrageous coco-nut, and some standing amidst the open fields, exposed to the full ardor of the sun: but all these were of a mean order, straggling, and dispersed, and bearing no kind of resemblance to the collective abode, constructed for the slaves of this estate.

It is common at the plantations to allot a small piece of ground, at a short distance from the house, to the use of the negroes. This is



called the negro-yard. Here the slaves are allowed to build themselves small huts to live in, but they are, commonly, of very coarse construction, and are dark, close, and smoky. At the estate I now speak of, a circular piece of ground was appropriated as the negro-yard, but instead of the slaves being left to construct their own habitations, sixteen very neat and uniform cabins were erected of wood, and well roofed with shingles\*. Placed in eight divisions they form a hollow octagon, a free opening being left for the breeze at one end of each hut. In the centre of the octagon is built a common kitchen, which serves for all the sixteen families. The huts are neat, and the whole premises wear an air of order, and of cleanliness, not common to the abode of slaves.

We contemplated this spot with much satisfaction, and were gratified in observing the high degree of attention, which was here given to the comfort and accommodation of the negroes; who had little cause to lament their removal from the wild woods of an opposite shore; and could scarcely desire to change their present lot for the high-rated freedom of European paupers.

This happy negro-yard forms, as it were, a complete village of sixteen families, all of whom

\* Wooden tiles.



may assemble, each evening, after the labour of the day, to join in the merry dance, or to smoke and sing together, free from every care. They have no thought how to provide for their infants, or their aged parents; nor have they to seek either food, habitation, or apparel. To each family is allotted a separate, and to all a common home; the necessary food and clothing are issued to them; and they know none of the anxious vexations or difficulties of the world. No fearful concern, nor harassing incumbrance can arise to them on account of their offspring, who, like themselves, are furnished with all that is needful; and those who have most children find themselves most valued and esteemed. In sickness, medical attendance is provided for them, and whatever is required is administered without any trouble on their own behalf. Thus are they guarded, at every avenue, against the approach of want and solicitude. Six days labour is demanded from them in the week; but the sabbath is given them as a day of rest and relaxation; and, from the total absence of care, it is usually spent in unbounded mirth and festivity.

In the course of our walks we have met with a washing party, and as you desire to know all that occurs, whether of much or little importance, I may tell you that, in this operation of cleaning, our linen is beaten and rubbed, and scrubbed to pieces in a most



unmerciful manner, and, after all, without being made, even, tolerably clean.

The following is the process employed: the linen is first put into a tub, and rubbed through some water, then it is taken out and sprinkled with sand, previous to being pressed and beaten with a piece of wood, upon a coarse large stone, by the side of the river; after which it is rubbed out in the open stream. Next it is sprinkled with the fine white sand of the shore, and spread by the sea to whiten; then it receives another dipping in water; and, finally, is rinsed out in the wide channel of the river. From the rough treatment it undergoes, it seldom comes home without being torn into various rents and holes. The demand made for this rude cleaning is *a bit* for each piece, without any regard to its size, or the labour required. A dozen shirts are washed for *twelve bits*, or, according to our coin, for twelve sixpences, and for the washing of a dozen pocket-handkerchiefs we pay the same.



## LETTER XXI.

Barbadoes, Feb.

WE have made another very delightful excursion, and find this little island more interesting and picturesque than my pen can tell you. Being invited to form a party to the plantation of Col. Williams, and to go early, in order that we might extend our ride to some of the most beautiful spots of the island, before dinner, Drs. Cleghorn, and Master, and myself rose in time to leave the ship at 5 o'clock. On arriving at Bridge-town we found slaves, horses, and all the requisites of the expedition, provided by the friendly attention of Mr. B. Hinde, under whose guidance we placed ourselves for the journey.

We went to the house of his brother before breakfast, where the table was spread, and the doctor waiting to receive us, prepared to join the party; as was also Mr. Abel Hinde, another of his brothers. After amply satisfying our morning appetites, we proceeded towards Col. Williams's, which is some miles further. The sun had become more powerful than we had felt it on our way from Bridge-town to the doctor's; but we gradually ascended to higher land,



and coming into a mountainous part of the country, the breeze was sufficiently strong to prevent all sense of languor or oppression.

A little before we reached the abode of Col. Williams, we passed through a field where a large gang of negroes was employed in cutting canes. This proved a seasonable refreshment to us, for we had grown thirsty, and were glad to adopt the Barbadoes custom of giving our whips to the slaves, and taking sugar-canes to ride with; sucking one end to quench our thirst, while we beat on our horses with the other.

Thus equipped, we presently arrived at the dwelling of the owner of the canes. He greeted us very cordially, invited us to alight, and, perceiving that some of us were strangers, conducted us to the buildings, to show us the process of making the sugar. While looking at the works, we were joined by Col. Williams, who had come thus far to meet us. Our party being now complete, we proceeded to a most romantic and beautiful part of the island, called Scotland.

Near Bridge-town we observed that the soil was of rich black earth, but not of great depth, being in many places only thinly spread upon calcareous rocks, which are formed mostly of madripores. Further in the country the earth is of a reddish colour, and evidently argillaceous. This is broken, by cultivation, into fine



mould ; and the soil is deeper, though less rich, than that near to the town.

In some divisions of the part of the country called Scotland the land is white ; and pieces of earth have, here, been found so hardened as to bear the knife or chisel : it has been possible also to mark, or write with them, as with chalk ; and hence one spot has been denominated Chalk-estate : but the name is founded in error, for the soil is not calcareous : it is argillaceous, and being hardened by the evaporation of its aqueous parts, the earth is rendered white by exposure to the weather. The district of Scotland comprehends the whole of the parish of St. Andrew, and part of two other parishes ; the tutelar saint contributing in larger proportion than both the others.

This part of the island is uncommonly picturesque, and comprehends a very grand and interesting variety of scenery. With the stupendous irregularity and dark shades of the Alps, and the romantic wildness of the mountains of Wales, it combines the gentle but lively variety of the soft and flowing surface of England : and in addition to these, it offers extensive views of the encircling ocean, the shipping both at sea and in the harbour, and all the luxuriance of the fine tropical vegetation.

The particular spot from whence this part of the island appears to have derived its name, is raised in rugged cliffs, and broken unculti-



vated summits, forming a rude contrast to the high fertility of the vallies, and the bottoms of the hills. Mountains, yet more lofty than these barren cliffs, tower around, clothed with rich verdure; and the great variety of the scene is further increased by the umbrageous foliage and diversified tints of Turner's-hall wood; the most extensive, and the most ancient in the island.

After being long exposed to the scorching sun, in contemplating the many beauties of this delightful neighbourhood, we passed over rough and rugged roads, along crooked narrow paths, up steep acclivities, and down rapid descents, into the deep gloom of the forest; where the change of scene was no less striking, than the coolness of the temperature was refreshing and grateful. Literally might these be called *sweet shades*, for they not only offered the protection we required, but contributed likewise oranges and lemons to quench our thirst, and further regaled us with the fragrance of odoriferous shrubs and plants. We, who were strangers, dwelt on every scene with rapture; and our kind friends, to whom the whole was familiar, expressed new delight in administering, so amply, to our gratification.

The cool shelter of the forest was derived from the mountain-cabbage, from large cedars, and from others of the oldest and finest trees of



the island. Amidst these shades we descended to a narrow gully, between two mountains, to see one of the great curiosities—one of the reported wonders of Barbadoes—"a boiling spring!" On approaching the spot, we came to a small hut, in which was living an elderly black woman, who employed herself as a guide to exhibit, under a kind of necromantic process, all the details of this boiling and burning fountain. The old dame, bearing in her hand a lighted taper, and taking with her an empty calabash, and all the other necessary apparatus of her office, led the way from the hut down to the spring. In a still, and most secluded situation, we came to a hole, or small pit filled with water, which was bubbling up in boiling motion, and pouring, from its receptacle, down a narrow channel of the gully. Here our sable sorceress, in the silence and solemnity of magic, placing the light at her side, fell upon her knees, and, with her calabash, emptied all the water out of the cavity; then, immersing the taper in the deep void, she suddenly set the pit in a flame; when she instantly jumped upon her legs, and looked significantly round, as if anxious to catch the surprise expressed upon our countenances, from the workings of her witchcraft. The taper being removed, the empty space continued to burn with a soft lambent flame, without the appearance of any thing to support the



combustion. We observed fresh water slowly distilling into the pit, from the earth at its sides, and dropping to the bottom; and as this increased in quantity, it raised the flame higher and higher, supporting it upon its surface, and conveying the appearance of the fluid element being on fire; although it was very clear and pure, and not spread with any oily or bituminous matter. When the water had risen to a certain height, the flame became feeble, then gradually declined, and presently was extinct. The boiling and bubbling were now seen as before, and, the pit soon overflowing, the stream resumed its course down the narrow channel of the gully, when all was restored to the state in which we had found it.

You will have discovered before this, that the water was cold, and that the boiling and burning of this fiery deep was only the effect of inflammable gas, which, escaping from the bowels of the earth, and rising from the bottom, supported the flame when the pit was empty, and, bubbling through, when it was filled with water, gave it the appearance of a boiling spring. During the combustion, the smell of the inflammable air was very powerful.

In the stones and soil, in the very rocks and roads, we traced the origin of this phænomenon of nature. Asphaltic productions abounded in every quarter: and, upon inquiry, we found that



we were in the part of the country which produces the celebrated Barbadoes tar; the smell of which we perceived as we rode along; indeed, we saw it exuding from the hills of hardened clay, and even from the rocks at the sides of the road. The argillaceous soil of this neighbourhood is every where strongly impregnated with bitumen, in which you will readily discover the origin of the "boiling, or inflammable spring."

We were next conducted to several spots, amidst the rough and wooded mountains, where we saw the tar issuing copiously into pits from the earth, and witnessed the mode of collecting it. So plentiful is it in this part of the country, that it may be procured from any hole dug deep enough to contain water; for when small openings are made in the earth, and water has flowed into them, the petroleum issuing from their sides accumulates and floats in a thick coating upon the surface. It is collected by laying the palm of the hand flat upon the water, and then scraping off the tar, which adheres to it, upon the edge of a basin or a calabash, repeating the dipping and scraping until the fluid is entirely cleared of its bituminous covering. After a few days the water is again bespread with tar, and more of it may be collected in a similar manner.

In order to reach these pits we were obliged



to scramble, on foot, through deep and mountainous woods, and by way of narrow rugged paths, leaving our slaves and horses to go round and meet us at a distant spot below. Near the pits were great numbers of lemon-trees, whose fruit, like the crabs of the English hedges, having fallen from its branches, lay in heaps, unheeded, upon the ground.

In the part of the wood where we saw the inflammable spring were growing mountain-cabbage trees, which were said to be of a peculiar kind, and different from all others in the island. This magnificent palm is unquestionably the finest tree that is known. From words, or drawings, you can collect only an imperfect idea of it. To comprehend its fine symmetry, its grandeur, and majestic loftiness, it must be seen. Its trunk is very smooth, and almost regularly cylindrical, rising into a superb and stately pillar, resembling a well-hewn column of stone. At the base its circumference is somewhat greater than at any other part, yet lessening so gradually, upwards, as to preserve the most just and accurate proportion. Not a single branch, nor even the slightest twig, interrupts the general harmony of the trunk, which often rises, in a correct perpendicular, to the height of from sixty to a hundred feet, and then spreads its palmated foliage into a wide and beautifully radiated circle. Branches it has none, but the



fine expansive leaves, shooting immediately from the summit of the trunk, extend around it, crowning, and as it were, protecting the massy column, in form of a full-spread umbrella.

It will perhaps occur to you that our noble English oak, with all its rude and crooked limbs, must be a more picturesque object. So it is; and so is likewise the wide-branching silk-cotton: but the loftiness, the stately grandeur, the exact proportion, and the deep-shading foliage of the mountain-cabbage are unequalled, and, in their happy combination, crown this tree the king of the forest—the most exalted of the vegetable world.

When planted in avenues, it forms a grand and imposing approach to a dwelling, conveying an air of greatness to the mansion which it adorns. It grows, free from decay, to a very old age, but cannot be converted to the useful purposes of timber. It is a tree of state, calculated to enrich, and augment the magnificence of a palace: nor let it detract from its majestic qualities to know that, after all, it is but - - - - -  
*a cabbage tree!* Its loftiest summit is a spiral succulent shoot, the sides of which, by gradually and successively unfolding, form the fine wide-spreading foliage. Before this opens, to expand itself around, it is a congeries of young and tender leaves, in which state it is often boiled



and brought to table as a cabbage, of which it is the very best kind I ever remember to have tasted. It is also used, without boiling, by way of salad, and is then eaten with oil and vinegar; and so highly is it esteemed for these culinary purposes, that, too often, a very fine tree has been devoted to the axe, merely because no other means could be found, of obtaining, from its towering summit, this most excellent cabbage.

The variety of this tree found near the inflammable spring, differs only in having its thick tuft of fibrous roots appear several feet out of the ground, looking as if the tree, instead of taking root in the earth, was growing upon another short trunk placed under it, as a base or pedestal, to support it from the soil: a circumstance which seems to have arisen from these trees standing upon the side of a hill, and the earth being partially washed from their roots by heavy rains. In all other respects they are the same as the rest of their species.

After viewing the beauties of Scotland, and seeing the inflammable spring, and the tarpits, we went next to Mount Hilloughby, and ascended the highest point of land in Barbadoes. From what I have said of the part called Scotland, you will believe that the prospect from Hilloughby's summit must be grand and delighting indeed. The whole island, en-



circled by the Atlantic ocean, was under the eye, displaying a scene which comprehended all the variety of land and sea, of hill and vale, of rude nature and high cultivation.\* On one hand were barren rugged rocks; on the other rich and fertile plains. Towns, houses, huts, and sugar-works were seen distributed about; bays and rivulets were before us opening into the sea; a large fleet appeared at anchor, with its forest of masts intermixed amidst the buildings of the town; multitudes of ships and boats were sailing in all directions round the coast; and the solemn forests, and painted groves displayed all the rich foliage of tropical vegetation. To form such a picture would defeat the genius of a Claude, or defy the bold pencil of a Salvator Rosa. It was also further enhanced, by the circumstances under which we saw it; the bright tropical sun being, suddenly, overcast by a heavy cloud, which, stealing along the mountain tops, so varied the shades and tints as to give additional effect to all the beauties of the scene: but while we were earnestly contemplating it, this cloud broke upon us in all the violence of a pelting storm, and drove us to seek shelter in a neighbouring cottage.

Amidst the variety comprised in the view from Hilloughby hill I must not forget to mention that we saw what is here termed the "*Run-*



*away estate*;" which is a territory of many acres of fine and rich soil, so called from having been carried away, at various times, to a considerable distance, by heavy torrents of rain, or sudden ruptures of the earth. It is said not to be an unfrequent occurrence, in this island, for a tract of land thus to assume a change of place; many examples of which are to be seen in the parishes of St. Andrew and St. Joseph. Large trees, plantains, sugar-canes, and different crops of growing produce have been removed with the soil, and have continued to thrive in their new situation, as well as if they had remained undisturbed.

A very singular change of crop, and of soil, is said to have happened at the estate of a Mr. Foster, where a considerable portion of land in the possession of a poor tenant near the coast, suddenly moved into the sea; and, while the unhappy man was bewailing the loss, not only of his crop, but likewise of the territory on which it was planted, the land of his neighbour, Mr. Foster, travelled to the spot, and brought him a crop of canes, which thrived quite as well as before they took their journey.

On our approach to Col. Williams's, we were led into a fine valley of fruits, which offered us the most grateful refreshment that could have presented itself. We had been long



riding in excessive heat, and were parching with thirst: when the Colonel, without previously announcing it, conducted us to the point of a hill from which we suddenly viewed a rich and golden orchard below. Elevated as we were above the narrow gully in which the fruits were suspended, our situation seemed in a degree vexatious and tantalizing: but the Colonel only tempted us, to augment our gratification, for we quickly descended, by a steep and confined path, into the midst of this region of sweets. Such delicious refreshment had never before met our lips! The oranges were not only the best we had ever tasted, but they were taken fresh from the tree, and at a moment which was calculated to render them tenfold sweeter than they could have been at any other time. We gathered and consumed them in dozens; and, after having thus feasted, we proceeded to explore the extent, and to examine the various productions of this bounteous orchard, by whose excellent fruit, and fragrant odour, we had been so exquisitely regaled.

The orchard is planted in a narrow gully between two hills, and is nearly half a mile in length. It abounds in many different species of the orange tribe—oranges, shaddocks, limes, lemons, and forbidden fruit hanging in the most inviting profusion. The banana, the plan-



tain, and divers other fruits are likewise plentifully intermixed. It is the employment of two negroes constantly to attend the orchard and protect the fruit. The oranges which we most enjoyed, and which were esteemed the best in the colony, were from a tree nearly a hundred years old, and the largest upon the island. The fruit was small, but of exquisite flavour.

Having made a most delicious repast in this sweet-shaded valley, we again mounted our horses, and, after a short ride, arrived at Col. Williams's house. Here we had the refreshment of cold water and a change of linen, and having taken a little time to rest ourselves, proceeded to eat our dinners under the "social rock." Descending from the house by a steep path, we came into the valley, not far from the orchard, and passed under a large open arch which formed the grand entrance to a suite of natural and romantic apartments. A little further in the gully we found an excavation called the drawing-room; and, beyond this, under a stupendous and impending part of the rock, we arrived at a smooth and level spot called the dining-room, which is sufficiently spacious to accommodate a hundred people. Here was placed the hospitable board, which is often and liberally spread by the friendly Colonel; and in this sequestered shade were assembled chairs,



benches, wine, punch, fruit, and all that could contribute to the ease and comfort of wearied travellers. But, in truth, we were not of this class; for the gratification and high mental delight we had experienced, had completely protected us against bodily fatigue, notwithstanding our long and scorching ride.

We drank a glass of punch, and explored the deep caverns and various recesses of this natural retreat before the dinner was served. About four o'clock we took our seats at table, having been in almost constant exercise from five in the morning. A hanging rock of madripores shaded us above and behind; and, in the front, the breeze of the valley softly made its way to us through a plantation of bamboos and fragrant limes, while, immediately before us, smoking viands, rich wines, and delicious fruits crowned the board. Having endeavoured to provoke your thirst for the oranges of the valley, I might further urge your appetite in quest of the cray-fish soup of the "social rock," for I do not know that I ever tasted any dish so rich, or of such exquisite flavour.

In the evening the Colonel loaded us home with fruits from the orchard; but the party did not separate until our kind friends had planned for us a still more extensive *marooning* excursion; to which I need scarcely say we gave our most cordial consent. Our return to Bridge-



town was peculiarly pleasant: the moon shone bright, the heat was moderate, and we had quite the agreeable ride of an English summer evening. The distance is about eight miles, and as we descended from the higher to the lower land the air became perceptibly closer, until, at the town, the breeze seemed to desert us, and we, no longer, felt the cool perflation, which had been so grateful to us in the more elevated part of the island.

Never, perhaps, did a long and interesting day pass more pleasantly; nor was hospitality ever bestowed with more friendly urbanity. We felt infinitely less fatigued than might have been expected, from the great distance we had journeyed, and from the length of time we were exposed to heat, and exercise; and the only alloy, which in any degree interrupted our enjoyment, throughout this happy visit, was a sense of suffering, of which we could not wholly divest ourselves, concerning the poor slaves, who had to support, on foot, the very same journey which, in us, was regarded as a surprising exertion on horseback.

In the course of the ride we repeatedly made compassionate appeals to the gentlemen of the island concerning them, but they as constantly assured us that our pity was misplaced, adding, that the negroes were accustomed to the exercise, and would suffer less than our-



selves. Still our European feelings forced upon us the wish that either they had been accommodated with mules, or we had dispensed with their attendance; and it will require a much longer residence, amidst this new order of things, before we shall be able to persuade ourselves that our sense of disquietude was only a misplaced humanity.

I should have told you that in our long ride we had the opportunity of seeing a very extensive variety of the vegetable productions of the tropical world; and that we met with multitudes of trees, shrubs, and plants, which were not before familiar to us—many, also, which were wholly new to our observation. Among those which most attracted our attention were the pimento, wild cinnamon, ginger, cassia, cassada, banana, plantain, tamarind, cashew-apple, mango, sapadillo, papaw, mammee, sour-sop, goava, grenadillo, water-lemon, oranges, limes, lemons, shaddock, forbidden fruit, the aloe, logwood, mahogany, cedar, and lignum vitæ. The great staple productions of the West Indies, sugar, cotton, and coffee, were also brought frequently before the eye, during this interesting excursion.

It appeared to us somewhat remarkable that, in the whole extent of our tour, we should not have seen any pines growing, except at one spot near Hilloughby hill, where they were re-



gularly planted as the crop of part of a sugar-field. The fruit was not ripe; we had no opportunity therefore of comparing its flavour with that of the pines of our English hot-houses; and, consequently, none of judging whether the cultivation of this plant be one of those circumstances, as some have asserted, in which art has been made to rival the works of nature. Improbable as this would seem, upon a first view of the great perfection of nature's productions, still a further consideration renders it more than possible; for, if animals can be improved by culture; if the apple and the cabbage can be rendered more useful, the pink and the tulip more beautiful, by the hand of man; and, if the powers of our organs of vision can be enlarged by his researches in the science of optics; what is there that shall prevent him from enriching the flavour of a tropical fruit, in a temperate climate? It would seem, indeed, to require only an accurate and steady attention to the laws, and operations of nature itself; not with a view to oppose or distort the beautiful harmony of her works; but to profit of the great lesson she so liberally displays, by directing, towards the one great object of our care, those means which she is busied in supplying to all. Her bounty is not confined to one plant, or a single animal, but is unlimited as the universe. It belongs to her not only to foster the fragrant pine and the



honeyed cane, but with equal care, to give pungency to capsicum, and bitterness to the aloe.

If the growth and flavour of a pine depend upon a certain degree of heat and light, with a due proportion of air and moisture—all these we have in England; and, from careful observation, we may enable ourselves to supply to this, or any other particular plant, the necessary quantum of these elements with a more undeviating certainty, than will commonly be done by nature; she having to dispense her means, not to one root alone, but to all creation. The particular degree of moisture necessary for the pine might injure the neighbouring coffee—the appropriate quantity of air, might not be the exact proportion required by the cotton—or the precise ratio of light and heat might differ from that demanded by the sugar-cane! But where man commands the disposal he may direct the elements, in due degree, to his exotic nursling, and, avoiding the irregularities of the natural climate, may learn to cultivate, and to improve, at home, what nature never gave to his native soil.



## LETTER XXII.

Barbadoes, Feb.

WE still remain without any accurate intelligence respecting the great body of our convoy; and, having no tidings of the commander in chief, we continue in equal uncertainty when we may proceed to our original destination, at St. Domingo. All here is suspense and anxiety. The solicitude of the mercantile world is not less than that of the military. No packet is arrived; the affairs of commerce are interrupted; and we have no news of Europe or the war. Straggling vessels of our disastrous fleet continue to join us; and, most unhappily, from the transports coming out, in this dispersed and unprotected manner, we have the painful intelligence of frequent captures being made by the enemy's cruisers from Guadaloupe.

A ship which came in this day reports that she parted from the Admiral and a hundred sail of the convoy, on the seventh of January, in latitude 45, longitude 17. This is received, by some, as favorable intelligence, it seeming to strengthen the hope that the fleet has not been under the necessity of again putting back to Cork, or Spithead. But it is now so long since



the seventh of January, and we have known in the interval such violent,—such repeated and long-continued gales, that, to many of us, this news is equally unsatisfactory as all we had heard before. So little does it meet our hopes, that we have still many apprehensions lest the majority of the convoy may have been obliged to return to Ireland or to England.

Unhappily the finest season is passing away; and before the whole army can arrive, and be brought into action, the rainy period will be fast approaching; but, as many of the men already here are in a sickly state, we hope the delay may prove beneficial to them, by affording them an opportunity of recovering from the ills of the voyage, and of their long confinement on board, before they enter upon the fatigues of the campaign. They are daily taken on shore to relieve them from the close atmosphere of the transports; and, from being regularly exercised, they will have the advantage of becoming, in some degree, seasoned previous to being ordered upon actual service.

We learn from our captain that a great desertion is taking place among the sailors of his vessel. Six have already absconded, and the number of our crew is reduced to fourteen. This intelligence makes us apprehensive lest, by the time we sail for St. Domingo, we may not have enough hands to work the ship. But we



are consoled in the recollection that the friendly *trades* will be entirely in our favor; and that we cannot require so strong a ship's company as amidst the adverse and terrific gales which so long beset us on our passage hither.

A sad alarm has spread throughout the harbour, and we have all been in fearful concern, respecting the fate of twelve men who went out in a flat-bottomed boat to consign to the deep the body of a deceased shipmate. Desirous not to throw over the corpse within the harbour, where it would be instantly devoured by the numerous sharks which infest the bay, and which we see almost daily swimming round the vessels in search of prey, they rowed so far out to sea as to be unable to pull back again; and the tide being against them, their heavy boat, notwithstanding all their efforts to row her into the harbour, was carried out into the wide Atlantic, with all hands on board. The captain finding it long before his men returned, grew very apprehensive regarding their safety. A general concern spread through the bay: it extended likewise to the shore, and multitudes soon covered the beach, while the shrouds, and yards of the ships, were thronged with anxious crowds looking out for the funeral party. No boat appeared, and the fears respecting their perilous situation becoming universal, two schooners



were despatched in search of them. Happily the weather was moderate, or the whole would have been certainly lost, for the boat was found adrift at open sea! Fortunately all the men were in her, and were brought back in safety to the harbour, expressing themselves very thankful for their unexpected deliverance from the all-devouring ocean.

A strong contrast to the dangerous situation of these poor men presented itself in the repose of some other seamen, whom we perceived sitting at rest in their boats, and sailing about the harbour by means of their oars; a custom which we find to be common here; for we often see parties of negroes, boatmen, or sailors, scud indolently about the bay, employing their oars by way of sails. They fix the handles of them at the bottom of the boat, and setting them up, two on each side, with the flat surface to the wind, collect a sufficiency of the breeze to carry them along without the trouble of rowing.

The captains of the Guineamen frequently relieve their ships' company from the duty of the boat, by training some of their black cargo to the use of the oar: indeed so adroit do many of the negroes become, during the passage, and the time they are detained on board, that their assistance is of much service in working the



vessel. We see occasionally the master of a slave-ship rowed ashore by four of his naked Africans, who appear as dexterous, in the management of the boat, as if they had been for years accustomed to it.

Sometimes we observe the captains parading the streets, accompanied by parties of their prime slaves—apparently with the intention of exhibiting them to the eye of the public, in a sound and good condition. This contributes, at the same time, to the health and amusement of these poor beings, who seem delighted at placing their feet on shore, and, in due obedience to their captain, dance and frolic as they go along, either in real, or in well-dissembled contentment.

I made a visit to Bridge-town this morning with the intention of leaving some books to be bound, which I brought out, in sheets, from the printer; but you will be surprised to learn that no such person as a book-binder can be found in Barbadoes. We called on Mr. Hinde, and were informed that, by the assistance of his friends Messrs. Jordan and Maxwell, he had provided horses for our intended "*marooning* party" to Hackleton's Cliff, and the northern coast of the island; when, upon our apologizing to him, and his friends, and observing that we had sent our servants to hire horses for the journey, he



replied that no apologies could be heard, for it would be "quite inconsistent with Barbadoes to suffer strangers to have the trouble of procuring horses, or of seeking, themselves, the accommodations for a country excursion."



## LETTER XXIII.

Barbadoes, Feb. 27.

WE have made our projected marooning excursion to Hackleton's Cliff, and the windward coast of the island, as planned by our friends at the "social rock," and often, in the course of it, did my thoughts wander to another friend, wishing yet one addition to the party!

On the 23d inst. we went off before six in the morning to Bridge-town, where, as before, we found slaves, horses, and every necessary for the journey, provided by the friendly Mr. Hinde, and in readiness for our departure. It was arranged, that we should avail ourselves of the early part of the day, by proceeding to Col. Williams's before breakfast. The morning was dull; the sky lowered, and it threatened rain; but none fell; still, from the sun being obscured, the air was pleasantly cool.

We rode slowly as far as Dr. Hinde's, where we were joined by the Doctor, and Mr. Abel Hinde, and Mr. Jordan. Upon our arrival at Col. Williams's, we found the breakfast board most bounteously spread, and the Colonel prepared to take an active part in the expedition. After breakfasting with good appetite. and being



well rested and refreshed, we left the "social rock," to pursue our route, in the true marooning spirit; making a home whenever we might require it, or wheresoever we could find it. The first object which arrested our attention was a very extensive subterraneous cavern, called "Harrison's Cave." This is within about half a mile of the Colonel's house, and is one of the greatest natural curiosities of the island. Its hidden mouth opens among the rocks of a deep narrow gully, between two lofty hills. There we forsook the light of day, and descended into the dark regions of the earth, in order to advance to the utmost extent of the gloomy depths before us. Our way was intricate and obscure. Taking with us three negroes, with lights, we descended by narrow windings, or spacious openings, by broad walks, or narrow crooked paths, over loose stones, or rocky steeps. At one moment we found ourselves under a fine arch or dome, hung with clusters of petrifications; at another we were in a narrow aisle, whose walls, and impending vault, faintly glittered with multiform incrustations. By the senses of feeling and hearing, more than by the sight, we judged of the varying uncertainty of our situation, and advanced with cautious step—now confined, now in more open space, until we reached a spot where we came to a gentle rivulet, gliding along its subterraneous bed in a pure and crystal



stream. A few soft rays, gleaming from above, silvered over the surface, and exhibited all the purity of this limpid current: while the sky, which appeared at a circular opening, cut through the soil and the solid rock, to the depth of thirty or forty fathoms, resembled the pale moon, or the sun divested of his effulgent beams.

Together with our artificial lights, the mild rays from this opening, penetrating to the very bottom of the cave, displayed the hanging tubes of stalactites, and the various surrounding petrifications, in a manner highly interesting and picturesque.

“ Here incrustations strike the eyes :

There spangled domes, with lustre bright,

Beam down an artificial light ;

Whence pensile hang, in gothic show,

Descending to the sands below,

Fantastic forms——.”

After drinking of the pellucid stream, and examining the pendent vaults, the arches, and recesses around, we proceeded onwards to a considerable distance beyond the rivulet, until the broken path became more and more intricate, and the gloomy cavern seemed to close upon us in endless and impenetrable obscurity. The feeble taper now scarcely illumined the spot whereon we stood, while all beyond us



was buried in perfect darkness. The path grew still more uncertain and irregular: here we bent our persons almost double to pass under a rugged arch; there we descended a sudden steep; then, again, we had to scramble up a craggy and projecting mass: presently we turned the sharp corner of a rock, into a narrow passage, between huge walls of stone; next we opened into a more spacious vault: soon our way was again confined, or our heads struck the hanging petrifications above. At one moment we trod on the firm rock, at another our steppings were upon loose stones, and, perhaps, the following instant we found our feet in water, or upon damp earth; now we seemed to have reached the utmost depth of the cave; then we stepped suddenly into a wide space: at length we reached the remotest extent which had been explored; but unlimited windings seemed yet to lead on, in terrific gloom, to the very centre of the earth.

Having only two or three open tapers, we did not feel it prudent to venture farther into unexplored passages; more particularly as the road we had passed, had been so intricate and perplexing that, in case of any accident occurring to extinguish our light, we might not have been able to trace our way back, to the mouth of the cave. Hence we declined proceeding any deeper into this abode of darkness



and silence, and turned about to retrace our steps to a brighter scene. Feeling better assured respecting our path, we now contemplated more leisurely the stupendous walls of rock, the varied incrustations, the ponderous masses of stalactites, the multitudes of madripores, and the other calcareous concretions, formed by nature from the limpid droppings which were seen on all sides, also above and below, and hanging round about our heads in an endless variety of fantastic figures.

The air, in most parts of the cave, was confined and warm, but, occasionally, we felt it damp and chilly. On our way back, at a narrow pass, where we had been obliged to bend low the knee in order to creep under the arch of a rock, we perceived it rush in strong current: here the whole of our lights were suddenly extinguished, and we were shut in the dark and hollow bowels of the earth, unable to explore our path to the mouth of the cavern. Unhappily, too, we were confined in a damp current of air, and compelled to stand shivering with cold, whilst Col. Williams and the negroes, who had been often in the cave, felt their road out, at great hazard, to procure new lights. We remained buried in the silent seclusion of this subterraneous abode for nearly an hour; and when the distant sound of our conductor's feet returned upon our ears, and the soft glimmerings



of light again stole into the profound depths of the cave, the effect was uncommonly striking. Watching carefully as the negroes approached, we saw the rays of light gleam upon their dark skins, gilding them as it were with fire. Presently we lost them in obscurity, then again, the imperfect rays darted towards us, and at one moment we saw indistinctly the blacks descend from a rock, while at another we perceived them suddenly rise as from the deep. Again the light disappeared, and we only heard their distant hollow-sounding steps : then they escaped from a narrow passage or confined recess, and were seen stepping forth under an open and spacious arch, where the heavy rocks, the vaulted dome, the petrified columns, the massy tubes, and impending clusters of glittering concretions, together with the solemn echo, the fiery blackness of the negroes, and the spreading rays of artificial light, partially absorbed, or feebly reflected, produced an effect, which was at once picturesque, and awful.

In such a situation, buried in darkness and sepulchral silence, but little assistance of the imagination was required to create pictures of horror, or to figure the mighty abode of terrors and punishments. When our eyes first caught these Africans, at a distant part of the cavern, it scarcely needed the aid of fancy to convert



them into demons of still lower regions, approaching us with the tormenting flames of their dread parent! Such an association did actually occupy our minds, as, in stillness, we watched the advance of these seeming spirits of darkness; and by the time these sable beings had reached us, we had so powerfully traced the images of the black spirits below, that it was difficult to persuade ourselves they were only black bodies, bringing us lights from above.

But the voice of the friendly Colonel, who accompanied them, soon roused us from our reverie, and reminded us that, however dismal our abode, it was not *that bourn from whence no traveller returns!* We now hastened to change our gloomy dwelling for brighter regions, but were obliged to tread our way in cautious steps towards the exit of the cave; for the path was intricate and perilous. As we came near to the opening we extinguished the artificial lights, in order to enjoy the appearance of the soft rays which stole in at the entrance of the cave, richly gilding the rocks and petrifications, and gradually, though irregularly, growing stronger until we again met the broad glare of day.

On our first escaping from the cave, the powerful light of the sun, falling through the widely dilated pupils of our eyes, produced a considerable degree of pain; we therefore remained a short time in the gully before we again



mounted our horses, to proceed to a point called Sugar-hill, from whence we obtained an extensive and very beautiful view of the parishes of Scotland, and the romantic parts of the island which we had before visited.

Near Sugar-hill we called at a cottage to give directions for some oranges to be sent down to the "Bay-house," a place we were to visit *en route*. Here we met with two fair cottagers, who, though less ruddy, were not less animated than the lovely and blooming peasants of Old England: they were the healthy-looking daughters of the old dame of the house, and notwithstanding the want of rosy tint, had pretty English faces.

After enjoying the fine views from Sugar-hill, and witnessing the smiles of the neighbouring cottagers, we were conducted to the home of a Mr. Haynes, where we met with a warm Barbadoes greeting, and were welcomed with frankness and a most cordial hospitality. We rested only a few minutes, when Mr. Haynes and his son joined our party, and accompanied us to an adjoining estate called "Joe's River," a most delightful spot, and quite the elysium of the island. Until lately it has been in the possession of the Rev. Mr. H., a man of much genius and learning, whose loss is deeply regretted by all, but more particularly by the literati of the colony. He was a scientific botanist, and as much



respected for his extensive information, as for his friendly and social disposition.

The house is finely situated on elevated ground near the sea, surrounded with extensive plantations of the choicest trees and tropical fruits. The garden and orchard had long been the great objects of their owner's care. It was his wish to procure an useful and ornamental assemblage of all the rare fruits and plants of the tropical regions: and, in this intention, he had already obtained a numerous and valuable collection, which, through his industry and perseverance, was almost daily increasing. His private hours were passed in literary pursuits. Much of his time was devoted to his favorite study of Natural History, and to realizing the improvements suggested by his contemplations. In society he was convivial: to his slaves he was parental and humane; and, possessing great urbanity, he was kind and obliging to all.

This once happy dwelling, which was graced by hospitality and benevolence, enriched by industry, and dignified by science: this delightful home, so lately the pride and ornament of the island, is now left to fall into ruin and decay. The broken walls, the hidden paths, the shattered doors and windows, the wild, neglected trees, the obtrusive weeds, and half-covered walks all bespeak, in doleful decline, its



former beauty ; and truly may it be said that Joe's river mourns in fast-withering sorrow, the afflicting loss of its distinguished proprietor.

We now proceeded to the sea-side, and our next place of call was a cottage termed the Bay-house, a neat little building erected by Mr. Haynes, under a rock upon the open beach, to serve as a home of rest and refreshment for such of his friends, and, in great truth may we say, his friends' friends, who may chance to visit the windward coast. We found it the rendezvous of entertainment and repose. Intimation had been conveyed to the generous owner that it might perhaps be in our way to make a short visit at his villa, and he had availed himself of the information to provide a rich and bountiful repast. All the good things of the island seemed to have been collected. The whole neighbourhood had been ransacked for our accommodation. The best productions, from every quarter, were directed hither to supply the hospitable board. Cook, butler, fishermen, servants, and slaves were assembled to give their assistance. The net was thrown into the sea immediately before the door, and the fishes taken, were presently smoking upon the table ; fruits, wines, meat, poultry, and vegetables were brought in profusion, and made only a part of the feast of this little cottage, built by generous hospitality, and dedicated to friendship and social harmony. A



supply of provisions was likewise procured for the refreshment of our slaves and horses, and these were regaled with no less liberality than their masters—the friendly courtesies of the “Bay-house” being extended equally to all.

Punch and mandram were served to us before dinner, the one to quench our thirst, the other to provoke the appetite; and soon afterwards were set before us a variety of dishes, consisting of boiled, stewed, and broiled fish, a cold roasted lamb, a cold turkey, fowls, tongues, cray-fish, and a multitude of other good things. After we had dined very abundantly the table was covered with punch, many excellent wines, and several species of fruits. Among the latter was a large pine, the first of which we had partaken in the island. I do not know that the flavour was superior to that of some of the pines I have tasted from the hot-houses of England, but it was certainly very delicious.

Having plenteously refreshed ourselves, and the slaves and horses being well fed and rested, we called the negroes from their dessert of rolling and basking in the sun, and proceeded upon our journey. To our great surprise, at the very moment the horses appeared at the door for our departure, a large dish of sprats, smoking from the gridiron, and an immense bowl of milk-punch, were set before us. This was quite a West Indian addition to the repast. Having



eaten very heartily, and indulged in copious libations, we had already done even too much in the way of feasting, but, to my great astonishment, some of the party partook with a renewal of appetite which was rather indicative of sitting down to dinner, than of rising from table! At two o'clock we had commenced with punch; after which came the mandram; at three was served the dinner: busy eating and drinking continued until five; and then appeared the sprats, and bowl of milk-punch: thus did nearly four hours pass in high banqueting and conviviality at this social cottage. At length, due honors having been done to the punch and sprats, we again put ourselves *en route*. We rode along the sands to a spot called Beersheba, which is so enclosed among the rocks as to form a natural bathing-place. From thence we proceeded to a large mass of rocks, lying in the water, near the edge of the sea, where we had the expectation of viewing a curious natural production called the animal flower. But here we were disappointed; for the tide being in, the sea running high, and the wind strong, we were unable to reach the spot where this phænomenon of nature is usually found.

Although we lost the opportunity of seeing it, I cannot refrain from giving you the account of this uncommon *flower*, and its dwelling-place, as communicated to us by our brother Maroons.



—Within a deep cave, formed in the rock, is a spacious natural basin of water, which is about eleven feet above low-water mark. It is collected from the sea beating into the cave in rough weather; and hence, that which lodges in this basin is entirely salt water, except a very small admixture from rain, which distils in drops, through the small openings of the rock. In the middle of the basin is a large stone, or piece of detached rock, which is usually covered with water. About this stone, and adhering to its sides, as if growing therefrom, are seen numbers of apparently beautiful flowers, finely variegated in vivid colours, and of radiated form, somewhat resembling the petals of the garden marigold. Some are of a pale yellow, or a light straw colour, tinged with green; others of a greyish purple, intermixed with black spots.

To gather any of these seeming flowers is a task of difficulty, for when the hand approaches them, the petals instantly contract, and become invisible. If left undisturbed they re-appear, in the course of a few minutes, gradually expanding into their former bloom; but again retire, with surprising quickness, on the approach of the hand, a cane, or any other body that may be directed towards them.

This circumstance, as you will expect, led to early investigation regarding the nature of



this singular flower, when, instead of a fine blowing vegetable, it was discovered to be an animal that was decorated with all this gaiety of colouring; and hence the name "animal flower."

On examination the body is found to be of a blackish hue, less than an inch in length, and about a quarter of an inch in thickness. It adheres by one end to the rock, and from the other extremity, which projects outwards, are thrown off a number of fine membranous filaments, in a radiated and circular form: and from the point or head, at the centre of this circle, project four long slender fibrils, not unlike the legs of the spider. Thus, while the body appears as the calyx, and the expanded filaments as the petals, these fibrils serving as the stamina, complete the resemblance of a regular and beautiful flower.

It has been suggested, that as this animal is almost wholly deprived of locomotive power, the fine colours, given to the membranous filaments, serve as a provision of nature, to allure and bring within its reach the smaller insects, upon which it feeds; and from the quick spontaneous motion of the fine central threads, from side to side, or round the whole border of the radiated circle, these may be designed to act as forceps, for conveying the food to the mouth, the extended filaments serving as *antennæ*, or feelers, to discover the prey, and



from their contractile power enclosing it, when seized, as in a purse, or sacculus, until it is devoured. With much disappointment at not being able to see this natural curiosity of the island, we left the coast, in order to ascend the mountainous summit, called Hackleton's cliff; the only spot which vies with Hilloughby hill in being the loftiest point of Barbadoes. The path was rugged, and singularly precipitous. To walk up it was a degree of fatigue which, it was said, Europeans ought not to encounter; and to ride was not free from danger, besides being a cruel labour to the horses. But as it was contended that they would better support the toil than ourselves, we were induced to continue upon our saddles, although, indeed, with much difficulty, from the rapidity of the ascent. By stopping frequently to let the poor animals recover their breath, we did, at length, reach the summit; but never before did I sit upon a horse to climb so steep a mountain. In the Alps of Switzerland, and of Savoy, it is not unusual to ride small horses, called Mountain Ponies, over the lesser hills; but previous to ascending the more difficult acclivities these are always changed for mules; with which I have often ventured up ascents even more nearly perpendicular than Hackleton's Cliff: but the mule is a more quiet, a more enduring, and more patient animal: he is not irascible



and impetuous like the horse, and moreover, in such situations, he is so accustomed to climbing, that he appears sensible of all the dangers around him, and is careful in every movement, to consult the safety of himself and his rider. He looks with caution at each stepping, and he ascertains that his foot will be secure, before he ventures to bear upon it the weight of his body.

In the Alps a mule will carry you up mountains which are so steep as to appear from the valley quite perpendicular, proceeding by a narrow path, in which he cannot possibly turn himself round, and passing close by the edge of the most terrific precipices, ascending only by means of irregular holes made among the roots of trees, or steppings roughly broken in the rock; yet have you only to give him the bridle and sit still, holding by the mane to keep yourself from slipping back, and you are in the utmost safety.

But I must return from the Alps, and tell you that in consequence of our feasting delay at the Bay-house, and the time required to go up the cliff, we found the evening stealing upon us before we came to the top. The sun had already sunk too low, to gild the landscape with its rays, or to enliven the view of the ocean, with the brightness which shone upon our visit to Hil-



loughby hill; but, from what I have already said of that, your imagination will readily suggest to you the beauties of the scenery, and the extent of the prospect from Hackleton's Cliff. From viewing the delightful variety around, at the decline of day, the effect was new and pleasing. A soft and placid picture succeeded to the strong and vivid colours of noon: the landscape, though less bright, was not, perhaps, less interesting; and, as we had visited Mount Hillooughby in a full glow of light, we did not lament that we saw Hackleton's Cliff under the retiring beams of evening.

Unexpectedly we found the top of this elevated spot to be a wide-extended surface, covered with herbage, and so gradually declining on the opposite side, that on turning our faces from the steep precipice of the east, we appeared to be upon a broad plain, instead of a rude summit, which formed nearly the highest point of land in the island. On the cliff we visited the estate of Mr. Stewart, at which is a pleasant house, delightfully situated, near the most lofty part of this high land, bearing no appearance of being so raised, or within so short a distance of the stupendous precipice which is near it.

Ginger is the produce of the plantation, We saw great quantities of this root spread before the house, upon a large square neatly paved, for



the purpose of drying it, preparatory to sending it to market.

From Mr. Stewart's we proceeded to the Colleton estate, where we purposed taking up our quarters for the night. On our way I happened to learn that the gentleman of the house was not apprized of our intended visit; and on discovering this, it seemed to me that it would be only a necessary civility to acquaint him with it; I therefore proposed that we should despatch an *avant courier* to announce our approach, lest, from descrying so large a party, unexpectedly, the family might believe us to be indeed a horde of Maroons; or, still worse, might mistake us for a foraging party, coming to levy contributions upon the estate; but I was desired to suspend my anxiety, and be assured that we should not fail to meet with good accommodations, and a sincere welcome, by only announcing ourselves "*in propriis personis*;" and this information proved to be perfectly correct, for Mr. Hollingsworth greeted us cordially, and entertained us with all the genuine hospitality of the island. Eight visitors, eight slaves, and eight horses, thus dropping in without notice, and at night, were received with such unaffected kindness as to assure us that thrice the number would have been joyfully hailed. No cold, or forbidding ceremony; no seeming hurry or disorder; no derangement of the house-



hold was manifested. We were all immediately *at home*; no surprise or inconvenience was evinced; not an individual was incommoded; the duties of the family were continued; nor was there the slightest mark of interruption in any department of this hospitable dwelling. The usual order was maintained, and it appeared as if we were a part of the family. The *mauvaise honte*, the confusion and embarrassment but too common, upon similar occasions, in England, were utterly unknown. The brimming punch-bowl was set before us, and pleasant lively conversation prevailed: soon the supper called us to further feasting, which continued until the hour of repose.

We retired to rest, according to the custom of the country, at an early hour. Drs. Master, Cleghorn, and myself were accommodated in one spacious room. It was the first night we slept on shore, and you will judge of the temperature of these regions, when I tell you that, in this cool part of the most Windward Island, and in the month of February, we set open the windows of the room, and threw aside all the bedding and clothes, preserving to each person only a hard mattress, and a single sheet. With this arrangement we passed the night in sound repose, and rose at six in the morning, well prepared for another marooning day.

We rode before breakfast to see the Barba-



does or Codrington College. On our way we passed an estate called "Society," and on approaching the college from the high land of that quarter we obtained a fine view of the building, with the plain on which it stands, and the wide expanse of the sea, spread before it. Descending from the hill we met with the finest avenue of mountain-cabbage trees that we had seen in the island.

The college was founded and richly endowed by Colonel Codrington, with the generous and very laudable design of establishing a great and useful seminary for the education of the youth of Barbadoes; the liberal founder appropriating the revenue of two large estates to the institution, in the desire of affording an opportunity to the creole generations of the island, of acquiring learning, and fitting themselves for the important duties of society, and of their individual stations, without incurring the expense of an European education. But the benevolent intentions of the Colonel have not been duly regarded. The profits intended for this best of purposes have been squandered away, and the funds disgracefully neglected or abused. The superb edifice, which was planned, has not been finished, and even the part that was erected, has, from shameful neglect, been brought into early decay. Only one side of the intended quadrangle has yet been built, and that, to the dis-



grace of those concerned, has long been left to fall into ruin.

The present manager, highly to his honor, has done much toward recovering the estates, and directing the funds, arising therefrom, into their proper channel. By his care a very considerable sum has been recently accumulated, and the part of the building which has been erected, is now undergoing a repair, in the hope of saving it from utter and premature destruction.

The walls are built of stone, and are of uncommon strength. They withstood the dreadful hurricane of 1780, and appear to be still capable of a complete restoration, but it must be at great labour, and a prodigious expense.

As we were viewing the large hall, and the chapel, we received a message from the master, the Rev. Mr. Thomas, requesting us to take breakfast with him: but our plan for the day, and our engagements with Mr. Hollingsworth, did not allow us to accept the invitation. We had, however, an opportunity of thanking him, by making him a visit in the house built for the principal of the college, which we were sorry to observe, like the other parts of the structure, had been left unheeded, and was falling into comparatively youthful decay. Mr. Thomas showed us a model in wood, according to the original design; but if the building had been completed



upon this plan, Barbadoes might have boasted a college, vying in grandeur, and elegance of structure, with the greatest ornaments of the celebrated universities of the mother-country. The model, like the building, feeling the destructive effect of the climate, and of sad neglect, was fast crumbling into a state of decay.

Twelve boys, only, are yet admitted on the foundation, and these, instead of occupying any part of the college building, are accommodated in the house of the master, the parlour being converted into a kind of a school-room.

We returned to Mr. Hollingsworth's by a different road, from that we had taken in going, ascending some high land near the college, called "Coach Hill." This ride afforded us an opportunity of seeing a numerous gang of negroes grouped in the middle of a field, taking their breakfast, during the temporary suspension allowed them from labour. They were seated upon the bare earth, and exposed to the full scorching of the sun.

On our arrival we found a handsome breakfast prepared for us, and neatly served in a large cool room, with all the taste and fashion of the West Indies. While partaking of it I several times detected my thoughts wandering to the poor blacks in the field, contemplating the simplicity of their fare, and the humble natural board on which it was spread.



The Colleton estate is one of the largest in the island. It is, at present, the property of a Mrs. Colleton, who resides in London. The direction and sole management of it are left to Mr. Hollingsworth; and the owner is fortunate in giving her confidence to a person of high honor and integrity, who does every justice to the estate, and the proprietor. At this plantation we witnessed the mode of claying, or (as they commonly term it) *improving* sugar. This is a very simple process by which the sugar is much whitened, and increased in value. A coating of clay, softened nearly to a liquid state with water, is spread over the surface of the sugar, as it stands in the deep earthen pots into which it is received from the boiler, and the fluid parts gradually draining away, the clay becomes hardened into a dry cake at the top; while the water passes through the whole of the sugar, and carries with it a considerable portion of the melasses, passing off by an opening at the bottom of the pot, leaving the sugar greatly whitened, and improved. The clay having become hard and contracted, is easily removed from the surface. We saw it lifted from several of the pots; and the difference between the sugar in these and in the vessels which had not been subjected to the same process was very striking. After being thus treated the sugar sells at a price nearly one third higher, than in its raw



state : other advantages are likewise said to derive to the planter from this partial mode of refining the produce of his canes. Soon after breakfast we resumed our *marooning* wanderings, taking our departure from the Colleton estate impressed with a strong sense of the kind reception, and the very warm hospitality it had afforded us.

After leaving Mr. Hollingsworth's, "Clarke's Court," and "Kendall" estates, were the two earliest plantations which arrested our attention. The latter is under the direction of a very singular and eccentric character, whose great ambition is to act differently from other men ; and who finds a secret pleasure in deviating from established rules. His mill is oddly trimmed, the sails strangely cut, and all the works, by some deviation or other, made peculiar. Among a multitude of other singularities he has planted a patch of pigeon peas in the neighbourhood of a field of canes, in order to allure the borers from the sugar,—a piece of policy very like setting a dish of tough beef before an alderman to seduce his appetite from a haunch of venison !

From Kendall's we rode to "Drax-Hall," the largest plantation of the island, and the property of the Grosvenor family. The house is a spacious and venerable edifice, quite proportionate to the size of the estate, which we observed, had two mills, and a double set of works for



the preparation of the sugar. This was also the case at the large estates of Colleton and Kendall.

No interruption,—no chasm occurs in the hospitality of Barbadoes! It is universal, and literally, as justly, entitles it to be ranked among the “friendly isles.” In all the liberality of the country Mr. Chatterton of Drax-Hall, invited us to pass the day at the good old mansion, kindly proffering us every friendly accommodation. But it was not consistent with our plan to take up our quarters at so early an hour; we were therefore compelled to violate our inclinations, which would have detained us throughout the day at the Hall. After having the refreshment of some wine and water, we pursued our ride, and passing by way of a wood, called after the name of the plantation “Drax-Hall wood,” we proceeded to the estate of “Spendlove,” which is under the care, and very excellent management of Mr. John Waith, a gentleman in no degree less hospitable than any we had seen in the island, and although very active, no less fat and good-humoured than some of our well-fed yeomen who feast upon the best things of England.

Spendlove was our place of dinner. Whilst this was preparing, we begged permission to see the negro-yard, and to extend our visit into some of the huts, being desirous to inspect the



habitations, and observe the mode of life of the slaves. It was remarked to us that the negroes were tenacious of their home, and disliked to have their huts exposed to the prying eye of strangers. We accordingly treasured the information, promising not to be too minute, but to regulate our curiosity with all becoming decorum, paying due regard to the feelings and prejudices of the sable inhabitants: and I should have been truly mortified not to have had this opportunity of telling you, from the testimony both of my eyes and ears, the very comfortable, and, I might say, happy state in which we found the slaves of Spendlove.

In your future good wishes for the comfort of the poor Africans forget not to pray that all masters may possess hearts as kind, and humane, as that which beats in the bosom of "Jack Waith," this being the title by which that gentleman is best known in the island. The friendly indulgence of the master is amply repaid by the attachment of his slaves; and the history of Mr. Waith and his gang, may stand in everlasting reproach to the self-arrogating opinion which maintains that negroes know not the divine sentiment of gratitude, but are most treacherous toward the master who treats them best. Were this the fact, as is not unfrequently asserted, it would offer itself in direct opposition to a great law of human



nature, and would place the *blacks* very far indeed below the *whites*; but, however much individual instances might seem to countenance the opinion, these, perhaps, do not occur more frequently among Africans, than among Europeans, and surely cannot be considered to arise more from any original defect in them, than we should be willing to admit that they do in ourselves. Such instances are only the result of depravity in either, and proceed from a *perversion*, not from a genuine *principle* of nature; and hence cannot in the one, more than in the other, serve to establish any general maxim.

By kind attentions, and occasional indulgences to his slaves, Mr. Waith had so meliorated their condition, so softened to them the hardships of slavery, and so improved their comforts, as to attach them to him, by the secure ties of affection and gratitude. The loud clang of the whip was seldom heard among them, and the smartings of its painful lash were scarcely dreaded; for a better principle than fear impelled them to their duty. Their friendship for their master made his interests their own; and their gratitude rendered his safety the object of their solicitude, and even of their lives. Of this he had, in two great instances, known the most unequivocal proof; one when the negroes of the estates had formed a conspiracy to rise



upon their masters; the other upon an alarm being given that the island was attacked by the French! On both these occasions the slaves of Spendlove voluntarily offered to lay down their lives in defence of Mr. Waith and his house.

At the negro-yards it is common for the slaves to plant fruits and vegetables, and to raise stock. Some of them keep a pig, some a goat, some Guinea fowls, ducks, chickens, pigeons, or the like. At one of the huts of Spendlove, we saw a pig, a goat, a young kid, some pigeons, and some chickens, all the property of an individual slave. This is mere favor, but it gratifies and amuses the negroes, and becomes, in various ways, highly useful. The little garden, and their stock, not only afford them employment and recreation for their leisure moments, but create a degree of interest in the spot, and excite feelings of kindness toward the master, who both grants and protects the indulgence. The negro-yard, viewed from a short distance, forms an object of highly interesting and picturesque scenery: it comprises all the little huts, intermixed with, and more or less concealed by the variety of shrubs and fruit-trees, which kindly lend their shade; likewise the many small patches of garden-ground around them, and the different species of stock, some appearing in



pens, some tied by the leg, or the neck, and some running at large: if it be evening, you have also the crowd of negroes, male and female, as they chance to be at rest, or moving in busy occupation, some passing from hut to hut, some dancing to their favorite music, some sitting at the door with the pipe in their mouths, and others smoking their loved sagar under the broad leaf of the plantain. The picture is also further enlivened by the groups of black children; some running and skipping about, some seated, playing before the doors, in Nature's ebon dress, and some, unable to walk, attempting little excursions upon their hands and feet. Perhaps within so small a space, few scenes could offer so much to interest, or to aid the pencil of a painter.

They are at liberty to take the whole of their own private stock to market, and to procure whatever additional comforts they prefer with the money it produces. Strange as it may appear, the markets of the island depend almost wholly upon this mode of supply. They are all held weekly, and upon the Sunday; that being the day when the negroes are free from labour, and have leisure to attend.

Mr. Waith has learned the happy art of governing his slaves with kindness, and he finds it a better steward than the whip. With great goodness of heart he indulges his own humane



feelings, and finds it better policy than using stripes. He is a man of social manners, and would certainly deceive Lavater himself, if he possessed not all the generosity and benevolence for which he has obtained such universal credit; for all this is plainly written upon his brow. He is of a ruddy complexion, and with an uncommon degree of fatness, is very active, and appears to have all the strong health of an European. Never was entertainment more bountiful, or given with greater liberality, or a more cordial welcome, than at the plantation of Spendlove. Punch and mandram preceded the dinner; at table was an extensive variety of good things; and after the cloth was removed, the board was spread with fruits of various kinds, together with claret, port, and madeira wines, and goava-punch.

The round of feasting having continued for several hours, it was followed, like our dinner at the Bay-house, by new provocatives; and the appetite, having already consumed more than it required, was invited to take more than it ought, by the unexpected appearance of smoking sprats, hot lobsters, and a large bowl of milk-punch.

Mr. Waith's father and brother came from their different plantations to meet us at Spendlove, and were of the party at dinner. The old gentleman is an uncommonly handsome man,



sixty years of age, with all the health and spirits of a person of forty. He is not so fat as his son, but *très enbonpoint*. He is jocose and lively, a facetious companion, highly convivial, and, in the full spirit of the West Indies, a perfect *bon vivant*. He intreated us, with much kindness and urgent solicitation, to make a visit to his estate before we leave Barbadoes, apologizing in his own mirthful way, for not having it in his power to offer us more than a "plain farmer's dinner,—a pig, a duck, and a turkey cock."

In order to reach Bridge-town in time to go on board to sleep, we left Spendlove earlier than our inclinations would have dictated. On our way we called at the house of Mr. Ellcock, brother to an eminent physician of that name, whom we had met at Dr. Hinde's. The road leading to the mansion was bordered by the stately mountain-cabbage trees, which are so peculiarly calculated to form a grand and imposing approach to a gentleman's dwelling. These were the finest which had yet occurred to our observation, not excepting those we had seen at the college. Mr. Ellcock's is the most modern, and most European-looking abode we met with in the course of our tour. The house and little flower-garden before it, resemble those of England. Near to the door is a cool avenue forming an agreeable promenade, deeply shaded with



the foliage of a very handsome tree called the "Evergreen."

We walked into the small garden before the house, which is laid out *à l'Angloise*, and has much more correctly the appearance of an English garden, than the many very humble imitations, which Englishmen are so often invited to see in France, Germany, and other parts of the continent, under the abused title of "Jardin Anglois."

Mr. Ellcock's favorite pursuit is botany. He is occupied in obtaining an extensive collection of rare and select plants, and of the different species of tropical fruits and trees. He is particularly curious regarding his orchard; but unfortunately he was from home, and the key was not to be found; hence we lost the opportunity of seeing perhaps the most varied, and valuable assemblage of fruit-trees in the island. Nor could we even steal one look at it through any opening, for the gate was close as the door of a convent, and the surrounding fence was a high hedge of the *lignum vitæ*, so thick and impenetrable as to resist even the prying eye of curiosity.

Both the orchard and garden were originally planned, and have been wholly planted under the immediate inspection of Mr. Ellcock, to whose taste and industry every credit is due



for the improvements made, and the very valuable productions already brought together.

Although disappointed in this visit, we have still an eye to the collection, and do not intend to let it escape without minute observation; for should it happen that we may be called away, before we can return to it ourselves, we have made known its situation to a friend of ours, whose industry and acuteness in the science of botany will not allow a twig or a flower to pass unnoticed. Our colleague, Dr. Wright, is told where to find it, and as he is of the Charibbee island staff, and may remain longer here than ourselves, or may possibly be stationed in the island, it will be the greatest pleasure perhaps, that could offer to him, to explore this depôt of tropical plants.

From Mr. Ellcock's we rode to Bridgetown without further delay, and arrived in time to go off to the Lord Sheffield before the prohibited hour of nine, after which no boats are permitted to leave the shore.

To bring into one point the sum of gratification afforded by this delightful excursion, would be a work of difficulty. You will form some idea of it from the loose details I have marked. It has offered us an abundant opportunity of seeing the whole face of the island; of viewing many of the different plantations; of observing the produce, and method of cultiva-



tion; of witnessing the manners and customs of the inhabitants; and of noticing the labours and habits of life of the slaves; whom we have seen in the fields,—in their huts,—in the sugar-works,—about the houses,—at their moments of rest and retirement, and amidst all their various occupations and modes of employment.



## LETTER XXIV.

Carlisle Bay, Feb. 29.

It proves that we might have lengthened our marooning excursion, without the slightest interruption from the fear of being called away to St. Domingo. Scarcely any vessels arrived in the bay during our absence, and very few have come in since our return. Our solicitude, concerning the commander in chief and the convoy, is still undiminished. One ship left them in one latitude, another in another, one parted from the fleet in the bay of Biscay, another off Portugal, a third off the coast of Africa, and others in different latitudes. Some suppose the convoy to have put into Lisbon, some say Gibraltar, and others various other ports. All is still enveloped in a cloud of uncertainty.

One vessel has at length reached Barbadoes, which sailed subsequent to ourselves. It is a Glasgow trader, and you will judge what multitudes thronged on board, as soon as she entered the harbour, to ask for news. She brings papers of January, and we are much gratified to learn that the admiral had written to England, so late as the fourth of that month, saying



that he had, then, with him one hundred and eleven sail!

At this very interesting period of suspense, if a strange vessel enter the bay, the whole harbour becomes a crowded and moving scene, in consequence of almost every ship sending off a boat to seek tidings of the fleet. You, who can feel for our solicitude, will compassionate our disappointment, when we happen to find that she is not direct from England. This frequently occurs, and we return loaded with chagrin. Of two ships which have been this day thronged with eager visitors, one proved to be from Newfoundland with fish, and the other from the coast of Africa with slaves; consequently neither of them knew so much of England or the convoy as ourselves.

I am sorry to tell you that information of an unpleasant nature has reached us from Grenada, in consequence of which it has been deemed expedient to embark a body of troops, on board the Expedition *armée en flute*, and other smaller vessels, to send to the relief of that island, without waiting for the arrival of the commander in chief.

Could it have been known, that the remainder of the convoy would have been detained so many weeks behind us, the troops which have assembled at Barbadoes might have been beneficially employed in restoring



tranquillity to our disordered islands, and, perhaps, have been still in time to have joined in the great, and more combined object of the campaign. But it is not given to humanity to foresee events, and the sad disasters of this formidable armament only tend to prove the extreme uncertainty which must ever attend our expeditions. The plan may be concerted with wisdom; all the necessaries amply provided; and the force, on sailing, fully adequate to the intended purposes: yet, after all, the lamentable fickleness of the elements will often frustrate the best and wisest arrangements.

We have an encampment of negroes formed near Bridge-town, upon a spot called Constitution-hill. They are a fine body of men, who have been enlisted from the revolted French islands, or brought away on the evacuation of them by our troops. They are active and expert, and are training into a formidable corps to assist in our intended attacks. About sixteen hundred of them bear arms; besides whom there are twelve hundred to be employed as pioneers. They have all the vivacity and levity of the French character; and it, occasionally, affords us amusement to observe the Barbadoes negroes looking at them with evident amazement, and seemingly wondering at their volatility and alertness. John Bull differs not more widely from a Parisian *petit-maitre* than



many of the Barbadoes slaves from the *sable fops* of this sprightly corps.

It is now the dry season of the year at Barbadoes, and if you have imbibed the same idea of a tropical climate which I remember to have once felt, you will learn, with surprise, that very few days have passed, since we have been here, without a refreshing shower of rain. The heat is far more supportable than we had expected. The thermometer, at noon, is commonly about 80, and very seldom exceeds 82: we have not yet seen it above 84.

It happens, fortunately, that some of the ships, laden with the temporary hospitals, made in England, have reached Carlisle Bay, and, likewise, a few of the men belonging to the corps of artificers; who, together with some creole and negro carpenters, are actively employed in fitting and putting up these frames with all possible speed: but much of hurry and difficulty might have been avoided if the hospitals, the barracks, and other buildings had been sent out in time to have been put up before any of the troops, or any division of the moving part of the expedition came in.

The confusion that must necessarily arise from the arrival of the soldiers, of the buildings requiring to be erected, and of all the various departments, at the same moment, must be self-evident; and it will readily appear, from the



hurried and numerous claims each department will have upon the artificers, that many of the requisites attaching to the hospitals may not be completed, before the more urgent necessity for them may have ceased. Present experience may convey an useful lesson.

From the great exertions now making we hope very soon to have hospital room at St. Anne's Hill, for, at least, a thousand sick, and I am sorry to remark, from the unhealthy state in which some of the transports have already arrived, that it seems likely we may have occasion for it all; but we have the further convenience of hospital ships, should they be required, and have, therefore, the prospect of seeing all the sick very tolerably placed, and amply provided with such necessaries as their unfortunate condition may demand. This, to a medical officer, is a circumstance of no trivial import. To the service it is likewise essential: but, speaking as an individual, I know of few things that could be so truly distressing, as to behold a crowd of brave and suffering soldiers lying destitute of the comforts and accommodations required in sickness; and you will believe that I feel a cordial gratification in finding that I am not likely to witness this example of misery.

In a moon-light walk lately from St. Anne's Hill to Bridge-town, after our visit at the



hospital, our attention was very powerfully arrested by the peculiar appearance of a grove of coco-nut trees, at the side of the road. From the brightness of the moon, the peculiar form of the trees, and the dead stillness of the night, we were suddenly struck with the grandeur and solemnity of the scene. The trees grew nigh, one to another, and the naked trunks formed so many stately pillars, supporting their palmated summits, which, stretching to meet each other, assumed the semblance of extensive aisles of Gothic arches. A gentle breeze waved the leaves in soothing undulation, while the dark shading foliage shut out the silver moon-beams, allowing only an occasional ray to steal in at partial openings, to relieve the sepulchral gloom. At the same time the sea at the bottom of the grove rolled its tranquil billows in soft murmurs to the shore, and broke in whispers scarcely to be heard upon the sands.



## LETTER XXV.

Barbadoes, March 1796.

It being stipulated that all subjects of remark may find place in my *Notes*, you will not reproach me, if an occasional sentence shall chance to be given upon medical matters. Indeed, you have desired it should be so, and this prevents the necessity of apology.

You will have collected, from what I have said before, that there are gentlemen engaged in the healing art in Barbadoes, who are, equally, an honor to their profession, and an ornament to society, and I may here repeat that many such are to be met with in the island. But it is an unhappy truth that there are others who are only pre-eminent in ignorance, for, alas! practitioners in medicine may be found in this colony, who, in learning and manners, are not far removed above the slaves. They are more illiterate than you can believe, and the very *negro doctors* of the estates too justly vie with them in medical knowledge. It has happened to us to see, among them, men, who instead of having the care of the health and lives of their fellow-subjects, ought not to be intrusted to compound a pill, or a bolus. A tyro, advanced



only a year or two in his apprenticeship, in England, is far better instructed in medicine, than some of the soi-disans and practising *proficients* of Barbadoes. Totally unprepared with a classical education, and, indeed, wholly devoid of the very rudiments of literature, they indolently waste a few years, in the house, or idly looking out at the shop-window of some uneducated apothecary of the island, and then, in all the bold confidence of ignorance, they commence *Doctors*, feeling themselves fully qualified, without professional reading, without visiting the schools of Europe, without experience, and I might say, without thought, or judgment, to undertake the cure of all the direful maladies which afflict mankind; in short, without one necessary qualification do these creole *pretenders* feel themselves competent to exercise all the various branches of the healing art.

In every climate, a sound judgment, and an acuteness of discrimination, together with a correct knowledge of the human frame, are necessary to the successful treatment of diseases: but in the West Indies, where the attack is too commonly sudden, and the progress destructively rapid, if the disorder be neglected or badly treated, in its incipient stage, medicine becomes inefficient, and, too often, the disease cannot be subdued by all the art of the best-informed Physician. How lamentable, then, is it that such ig-



norant medicasters should be intrusted, and particularly in a tropical region, with the health and lives of multitudes of their fellow-beings !

When we reflect that the riches and prosperity of a country are intimately connected with its population, and that the lives of men are of the greatest importance to the state, it becomes matter of surprise and astonishment, that, even in the remotest colony, such uninstructed pretenders should be permitted to disgrace the healing art. If that wise principle, "*salus populi suprema lex*," be correct, and I suspect it cannot be disputed, the health of the people must be a subject of the highest consideration to every government : how then are we to account for the apathy which permits such dangerous *doctors* to wield the destructive lance, or, how shall we explain the miscalculating policy which not only tolerates a tremendous host of empirics, but suffers them to overrun every part of the state, under the all-creating sanction of a *patent*, or allows them, on the bare privilege of bold assurance, to commit depredations upon the health, the purses, and *the lives* of His Majesty's subjects ?

In one of our late walks, near Bridge-town, we met with two small windmills, erected for the purpose of clearing the cotton from its seeds ; and, as they happened to be in motion, we availed ourselves of the opportunity of waiting



a short time, to witness the process. The cotton envelopes the seeds, forming the matrix in which they grow and are embedded; when pulled from the pod it is separated from them by being caused to pass through the bite of two small metallic rollers, placed horizontally, one over the other, and turned by the action of the mill. These going round, near to each other, are fed with the cotton, which they take in, without receiving the seeds, leaving them to fall to the ground, or into a basket below, while the cotton, drawn between the rollers, is ejected into a box on the opposite side. The process is so entirely simple, that it might be performed equally well by a smaller instrument worked with the hand, or the foot, and which we are told is the method practised in many of the colonies.

Among the novelties which meet the eye of an European upon his arrival in the West Indies, is the practice of carrying the children across the hip, instead of seating them upon the arm. The lower class of white women, in Barbadoes, have adopted this custom, from the example of the negroes, among whom it seems to be the universal mode of nursing. A deformed negro is a very rare object, and this may probably be attributed, in great measure, to the management of them in their infancy: they have the advantage of being allowed to crawl



about upon their hands and feet at a very early age, in perfect freedom, unrestrained by ligatures, or tight garments.

Although the mode of carrying children upon the hip is the common method among the slaves, yet, when they have to take them to a great distance, they neither place them upon the hip, nor the arm, but upon the back; for which purpose a mere pocket handkerchief, tied carelessly round the mother, often suffices.

A few evenings ago I witnessed a scene of cruelty, which strongly exemplified the abject and wretched condition to which human beings are subjected in a life of slavery. It happened that I was waiting upon the quay for the Lord Sheffield's boat, when two men, apparently white creoles, came up, and seized a negro, who was standing near me, accusing him of having run away from his master. The poor black assured them that he had no master,—that he belonged to Mrs. —, that he was well known in the town, and that they must, certainly, have mistaken his person! Upon these grounds he strongly urged the impropriety of their taking him to prison: but, regardless of his remonstrances, and of their own error, they tied him with a thick cord, fastened his hands, and forced him towards the place of confinement! Curiosity led me to follow them. The poor man still pleaded his innocence, and the wrong they had committed,



begging and praying to be allowed to refer them to his mistress, or to another family in the town, to identify his person. Heedless of his protestations and entreaties they still dragged him on, and from his only expressing a reluctance at being thus, unjustly, hurried to a prison, one of these hardened wretches struck him a violent blow on the head, with a large stick, calling out to the other, in broad Barbadoes accent, "Daa-am him, cut him down."

A little before they reached the prison they had to pass a door-way where there happened to be a strong light, by means of which one of these cruel instruments of the law of *force* instantly recognised the poor ill-treated slave, and finding that they were actually guilty of the mistake which the negro had stated, he called out to his savage comrade, who had struck the helpless black upon the head, "Daa-am him, I know the fellow, we must let him go;" upon which, they both, with dreadful imprecations, ordered him to stand, *without stirring*, whilst they should untie him: and, upon his only moving his arm to expedite the loosening of the cord, they swore, that if he dared "*to stir, or look savage,*" they would "cut him down," or put him "directly into prison." Such was the compensation dealt him for the unjust and cruel treatment which he had already received. The wretches not only drag-



ged the unoffending slave to a prison, in defiance of his solemn assurances of their having erroneously seized him, and without allowing him an appeal to any one who knew his person, but, because he ventured to say they were committing an error, had the inhumanity to strike him with a force sufficient to have fractured his skull, and to threaten him with the further severity of death, or a dungeon, should he dare only to cast a *look* of displeasure.

What must have been the feelings of this injured man! who, after being abused and maltreated, was put in fear of his life, if he should only permit nature to assume her seat on his brow,—if the cruelty, pain, and injustice which he had suffered, should only cause a mark of disapprobation to appear upon his countenance! But nature, however proscribed, was not to be restrained by such command! While the power of memory remains to me I can never—*never* forget the indignant, but hopeless expression of injury which overspread the features of this poor slave, as he retired! He felt aggrieved, and was conscious that - - - - - he had no remedy, —no appeal!



## LETTER XXVI.

Barbadoes, March 9.

It occurs to me that, amidst all the uncertainties of our unfortunate fleet, it may be pleasant to you and others of our friends to know which of the ships have made good the passage; I send you, therefore, the annexed list of upwards of sixty, which are now safe at anchor in Carlisle Bay.

A vessel from Liverpool is come into harbour, which sailed on the 9th of January, but we are still without any late news of the fleet, which took its departure on the 9th of December; and, singular to tell, the Liverpool ship, now arrived, performed the whole voyage without falling in with any one of the convoy. It is now thirteen weeks since the fleet left England, and we know about as much concerning the great body of it, at this moment, as if it were sailing in the moon.

We, who are destined to proceed to St. Domingo, have new disappointment in finding that the Cork division, intended for that island, had not sailed at a date many weeks subsequent to the time when it had been reported to be at sea; and we now feel it probable that we may be



long detained or even placed on duty at Barbadoes, in consequence of the increasing number of sick, and the non-arrival of the medical officers of the Charibbee-Island, or what is incorrectly called the *Leeward*-Island staff.

You will be surprised, perhaps, to know that the transports in Carlisle Bay have been several times interrupted, and the whole harbour disturbed, and brought into a state of anxiety, by the visitings of different press-gangs, in the exercise of that necessary custom, so repugnant to the feelings, and the freedom of Englishmen.

In one instance an alarming scene took place in consequence of the sailors of one of the ships resisting this arbitrary and unconstitutional method of obtaining their services. They opposed the boarding, and beat off the agent, and two boats with the press-gang. This resistance was soon followed by the appearance of a party of soldiers, with firelocks and fixed bayonets, who were called to aid the press-party, and to force the sailors to submission.

It has been our fortune on board the Lord Sheffield to be visited by two different bodies of the press-gang in the course of the same night: one of which came alongside at midnight; the other at two o'clock in the morning. From stealing upon us unexpectedly, and in the dark, you will suppose that much hurry and confusion was created. Being wakened by the noise of



people over my head, I put on my *robe de chambre*, and went up to learn the cause, when, finding what visitors they were, I felt a strong disposition to observe their conduct and manner of proceeding, and therefore remained upon deck, during the time they continued on board.

A Lieutenant of the navy was stalking up and down with a huge drawn sabre in his hand, calling out, with boatswain's lungs, for the steward to bring a light. His men were running about every part of the ship with cutlasses, pistols, hangers, and various other weapons. The sailors whom they found upon deck, were instantly tumbled into a boat at the side, filled with armed men; the others secreted themselves in holes and corners, while the old steward with seeming haste, but with fox-like cunning, delayed the candle. Perhaps you will say it was a little severe to demand a light, at all, from the ship, in order to rob her of her own men; but the whole proceeding was alike arbitrary and despotic, and this only consistent with the other parts of it. They came in darkness, and with muffled oars, that they might take the vessel by surprise.

The steward, somewhat endangered, from the ire which he had provoked by his well-contrived delay, at length appeared with the lantern; and a general search was immediately made below. The cabins,—the cable-tier,—the



pantries,—the lockers,—the very pig-sty,—every hole and corner they could think of were hunted out, and they seemed resolved that not a spot should be omitted. Yet, notwithstanding all their vigilance, several of the sailors contrived to elude the search. One, who had not time to escape to a place of more probable security, remained quietly in his hammock, and, when they came to examine it, affected to awake uttering a loud groan, strongly expressive of pain and suffering. Hearing this, the press-gang asked who it was, and if a sailor. The mate, who was watching them with a vigilance not inferior to their own, immediately replied that it was a sick man, who had been long confined to his birth. His promptitude was successful: sick men they did not want; and the sailor was left undisturbed—his freedom the fruit of his well-timed stratagem, and of the expertness of the mate in promoting it.



## LETTER XXVII.

Barbadoes, March 15.

WE made a visit this morning to the senate-house, and were present at a sitting of the general assembly of the island. The proceedings were conducted according to the routine of our House of Commons, which the assembly regards as its model. The representatives, like ours, are returned from the provinces, two, not from each county, but from each parish: and, there being eleven parishes in the island, the assembly, consequently, consists of twenty-two members.

As in our house, so in theirs, the person who presides is denominated "the speaker."

Among the members we recognised several of the gentlemen whom we had seen upon our marooning excursion into the country. It did not happen to be a sitting of great interest to strangers, there being but little before the house for discussion, and, consequently, few debates. Reading and passing a militia act, and some other bills, constituted nearly the whole business of the meeting. One part of the proceedings, however, we thought to be strictly in the *order of the day*. It was excessively warm.



and we were parching with thirst, when two persons suddenly appeared with a large bowl, and a two-quart glass filled with punch and sangaree. These were presented to "Mr. Speaker," who, after dipping deeply into the bowl, passed it among the members: nor was the audience forgotten, for we were most gratefully taught that the hospitality, so universal in the island, prevails in the senate. The glass was handed up to us, and we found that it was *relevant* for strangers to join in this part of the debate. It came at a moment peculiarly opportune, and we drank cordially to our friends, and the house of assembly.

We have, lately, had a very interesting party to dine with us on board the Lord Sheffield; among whom were three gentlemen who had recently returned from imprisonment; one from France, the others from Guadaloupe.

One of the gentlemen, who had been taken to Guadaloupe, was confined on board a prison-ship, with several others of our countrymen, where, being treated with great rigour, and fed with a very scanty allowance of bad food, he entered into a confidential agreement, with one of his fellow-prisoners, to concert some means of escape; and, one day, seeing a boat, convenient for their purpose, come to the ship, they stepped over the side of the vessel, and descending suddenly into it, as it lay alongside, imme-



diately threw overboard three of the five negroes, who were in it, and compelled the other two to take up their oars, and assist in rowing them away.

The success of this perilous enterprise was equal to the boldness with which it was undertaken. The sentinels fired at them in vain: being once clear of the ship they pulled the oars with vigour, and, encouraging the blacks to their aid, were soon out of reach. Neither boats, nor bullets were able to overtake them: they were quickly at sea, in their open skiff, and, gladly, entrusted themselves to the mercy of the elements. The weather favored them, and they soon made a port of safety in a British island.

The manner in which the other gentleman, who had been confined in Guadaloupe, obtained his release was also attended with peculiar circumstances. Having an opportunity of speaking with the secretary of Victor Hugues, he represented to him, in strong colours, the very serious personal injury which his confinement might bring upon him, and urged the absolute impossibility of his release being injurious to any individual of the French nation, supporting his appeal with the offer of a sum nearly equal to 1200*l.* sterling, to be paid to the citizen secretary, provided he would contribute his aid in obtaining him and two of his friends permis-



sion to leave the island. The secretary rejected the offer with disdain, expressing both anger and astonishment that he should dare to imagine that he was capable of being seduced by a bribe; adding, that "formerly Frenchmen were venal and might be *bought*; but now, citizen, we are republicans! and a good republican requires not a bribe to encourage him to the execution of his duty, nor can he be thereby impelled to commit a breach of it." He, nevertheless, listened with attention to the peculiar severity of the case, and having heard the particulars, appeared to feel a degree of interest regarding the hardships which were represented. Upon leaving the gentleman he said that he would try to intercede in his behalf; and intimated a hope that he might be able in the course of a week to communicate some report to him. A few days only had elapsed when he returned, bringing with him the prisoner's release, which he presented to him, with felicitations, expressing himself happy in being the means of his regaining his liberty, and, peremptorily, refusing to accept, even the slightest compliment for the service which he had rendered him.

Would all men act thus, my friend, of how little consequence might it be whether they were denominated republicans, aristocrats, or royalists! What the form of government, or who



should rule the land, could be of little importance, were honor and virtue made the directors of men's actions. Speaking from the warm feelings of the heart, a very elegant writer has said, "I cannot be more convinced of the truth of any demonstration in Euclid than I am that that system of politics must be best by which those I love are made happy:" but, perhaps, it might be said, with still greater correctness, that *that system of government must be best, where virtue, among the people, most prevails.*

It is idle to declaim against a government, while individuals—while even *those who complain* have not virtue enough to withstand the seducing lures of corruption! Let the people be virtuous, and the government will never be corrupt. Were men to resist bribery, and to expose their seducers to public reproach, few attempts would be made against their independence.



## LETTER XXVIII.

Barbadoes, March 16.

WHAT a day of hurry, confusion, and solicitude! A packet has at length arrived! From December the 9th, to March the 16th, we have been separated from you, without hearing one word of our friends, or scarcely of our country. How shall I convey to you any just idea of the scene which this day has produced, by the impatient multitude crowding in anxious eagerness to obtain letters, to see the papers, and to ascertain the news!

Early in the morning a signal appeared at the fort, implying that a vessel was in sight. Soon afterwards, this was lowered down, and the packet signal hoisted in its place; when instead of the pleasing expectation of seeing a vessel of our fleet, and learning tidings of the convoy, all were on tiptoe in the still more lively hope of hearing not only of our unfortunate armada, but of Europe, of England, and - - - - - our friends! Concerning the fleet we had grown quite weary of conjecture, and now saw it probable that we might obtain more accurate intelligence respecting it, by way



of England, than by any ship which had been separated from it upon the passage.

On the packet making the harbour it caused a crowd not unlike what you may have seen at a sailing or rowing match upon the Thames. Each wishing to be first, and all being eager to learn the reports, the vessel was beset on every quarter before she could come to anchor, and the whole bay became one animated scene of crowded ships and moving boats. Many who could not go to the packet as she entered the harbour, repaired on shore to be ready, there, to meet the news. The people of the town, also, thronged the beach in anxious multitudes. All was busy expectation. Impatience scarcely allowed the bags to reach the office: every avenue to which was so closely blockaded that the house was quite in a state of siege, and the post-master and his mansion in danger of being taken by storm.

It was about eleven o'clock when the inspector-general, Dr. Master, and myself, following the common impulse, went to inquire for our letters and papers; but we could only advance within sight of the post-office walls,—to approach the door was utterly impossible.

Seeing no prospect of ascertaining whether we had any letters, we returned from the hot and crowded town to take our dinners quietly on board, and to enjoy the high feast of reading



some newspapers, which our obliging and attentive friend, Mr. Hinde, had kindly allowed us to put into our pockets. You will believe that this formed a most exquisite dessert after our meal, and was of more grateful flavour than all the fruits and sweets of a tropical soil.

To an Englishman a newspaper is a never-failing source of amusement; and the high delight thence derived appears to be, in some measure, peculiar to our nation. If, therefore, even at home, and in a peaceful hour, it be a great pleasure to take up the Times or the Chronicle of the morning, I put it to your feelings to judge what must have been our enjoyment, when I tell you that, at this wide distance from our country, and after being long shut in ignorance regarding it, we have been quietly seated, in the shade of a cool cabin, perusing papers in the regular series of a whole fortnight. We remained for several hours secluded and in silence, each fearing to speak lest he should disturb the others. If you had not been already a traveller I could have wished you a long voyage, that you might know the real value of a Morning Herald, or an Evening Star—that you might enjoy the high flavour of a true English feast, seasoned with absence! Send out our friend \* \* \* \*, that he may be roused from the apathy which so distressfully encroaches upon his mechanical round of luxury and indulgence! Tell him that if he



were held in disappointed expectation, from day to day, through many anxious weeks, he would find the amusements which he now partakes with indifference to be really exquisite: and assure him that the variety of occurrences, during a temporary privation, might divert him from a life of indolence and palling pleasure, and convince him that many things, which he now disregards, are capable of affording far more enjoyment, than the vapid time-killing routine of parading in Bond-street, treading upon muslin trains in the crowd of Kensington-gardens, or lounging at the play and the opera, without hearing five words of the performance!

The arrival of the packet has removed the uncertainty regarding our convoy, but not so satisfactorily as we had hoped; for we have the mortification to learn that the fleet, with which we sailed from Spithead on the 9th of December, and which, for so long past, we have hourly expected, instead of being safe at Barbadoes, is lying quietly at anchor in England!

From the papers it is ascertained that the great body of the convoy, with our commander in chief and the admiral, are returned to St. Helen's, after continuing seven tedious weeks at sea, beating against contrary winds and destructive storms, and that many of the ships, which had separated, had previously put back to Cork, Kinsale, Plymouth, and various other ports.



This is very distressing and vexatious news, for it robs us of the pleasing hope with which we had expected our comrades, and tells us that all still remains - - - - to be done again! Twice has this great expedition put to sea, and during many months has it been, daily, expected to arrive: yet after a long suspense do we now learn that it is still in an English harbour, only preparing to sail!

A voyage to the East Indies or to China might be performed in less time than seems to be required for this unhappy fleet to reach its destination. It was intended to sail so long since as the month of September, and actually did put to sea in November, and again on the 9th of December; and its arrival has been impatiently looked for, by the people of the islands, during more than half a year!

The season is rapidly advancing: the milder temperature of the climate, and the more favorable period of the year are wearing away, and the wet months fast approaching: we fear, therefore, that all the ills to be apprehended from climate may overtake us in the midst of the campaign, or even before the troops can be brought into action.

When or how the convoy is again to attempt the voyage we do not learn; but it seems to be the opinion, on your side the water, that the commander in chief will sail in a frigate without



delay, and that the fleet will follow, in small divisions, as speedily as the ships can be repaired and made ready for sea. This would undoubtedly be most advisable; for the waiting to assemble large bodies of vessels, and the delays and accidents which necessarily happen to them at sea, seem to be the very bane of the enterprise.

We are still told that the Cork division may be daily expected, yet we learn that it had not sailed when the packet left Falmouth. From all we can collect it seems probable that more than six thousand troops, and upwards of sixty ships, many long since arrived, may have still to wait through another tedious period at Barbadoes.

We find it among the reports of the day that honors are to be conferred on the Admiral for braving the weather, during so many weeks at sea, and returning to port *in England* with so great a number of the convoy in safety. On reading this the captain of our ship wittily asked "What honors are those to receive, then, who fought through all the perilous storms, and have made good their passage to a port *in the West Indies?*"

The papers we have received having been printed during the Christmas holidays, furnish us with no parliamentary news; but we learn from them, with much regret, that our country experiences a scarcity of corn, and of specie.



Without money and without bread John Bull would make war very badly indeed! Wheat we find is at the extravagant price of thirteen shillings per bushel, and bread as high as thirteen-pence half-penny the quartern loaf. This, we fear, may create dissatisfaction, and lead to commotions and ill-judged excesses, from the people erroneously attributing events to causes which have no just connexion with them\*.

I am sorry to have again to tell you that late accounts from Grenada state the island to be in great danger, and that we hold possession of it by a very precarious tenure, the troops being pent up in the town, and not in sufficient force to march against the Brigands. From St. Vincent we hear, also, that the inhabitants have been obliged to fly to arms to assist the military, and that still they are not strong enough to defeat the Charibs. It is further added that the negroes, impatient of remaining inactive, have petitioned to be sent against the enemy, threatening to go over to the Charibs if not soon employed to subdue them.

I had nearly forgotten to mention that a French spy has been detected among us, who has been, for some time, watching the proceedings

\* We have been so accustomed to pay extravagantly for bread, in England, since this period, that the price which then seemed frightfully enormous, might now be deemed moderate.—1806.



of the fleet at Barbadoes. It were unnecessary to add that his life will be the forfeit of his temerity.

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March 17.

How eventful are the hours which now pass before us! The sons of St. Patrick have not felt themselves more blessed, nor have they hailed in more joyous greetings this hallowed day than the anxious multitude at Barbadoes. It was only yesterday that I took up my pen to announce to you a glad arrival, and I have now to mention one still more happy. Before breakfast this morning a signal appeared at the fort, implying that a ship of war was in sight; and about eight o'clock a proud frigate, with sails swelling to the breeze, cut her liquid path silently into the bay, and dropped her anchor in the midst of the fleet. A general feeling of joy, instantly, spread throughout the harbour. It was the *Arethusa*, with Sir Ralph Abercromby, and the officers of his staff on board. A signal was made from the agent, and all the ships in the bay immediately manned their yards and rigging, to hail, and to welcome, in loud salutation, our long-expected commander in chief. Three heart-felt cheers were, rapturously, shouted



from every vessel, and as cordially echoed by the *Arethusa's* company.

The scene thus introduced was novel. It was, also, highly interesting. The yards, the tops, the masts and rigging of all the vessels being covered with men, they resembled clusters of bees, as they hang about the hive at the moment previous to swarming.

Crowded as it was, the harbour resembled a thick forest, the leaves of which were men, not rustling in the wind, but set in motion by the more animating breeze of joy and gratulation. Loud shouts of welcome resounded throughout the bay, and when the General went off in the boat towards the landing-place, each ship repeated three cheers as he passed; the multitude upon the beach again shouting his welcome as he stepped on shore. On reaching the government house at Pilgrim he was received by a salute of twenty-one guns. The same number was then repeated from the fort, which, we remarked, did not fire any salute when the frigate entered the harbour.

All is now motion and activity. An impulsive sensation vibrates throughout the bay. Every breast throbs with ardour, and, inspired by the presence of the commander in chief, all look forward to a successful campaign. No one imagines that fate has destined him to fall; but each anticipates the joyous moment, when



He shall return to relate, to his friends in peaceful England, histories of battles won, and islands conquered. Yet, alas! to how few is it allotted again to visit either England or their friends! But to such reflections let me be silent! to speak them were unmilitary! Still the duties I may have to perform will, sometimes, call up strong associations in my mind, and amidst the busy din of war, or the loud rejoicings of victory, my heart will often swell with painful sympathy, in the contemplation of individual sufferings and affliction.

In his third attempt to reach the islands the commander in chief has been very successful; the *Arethusa* having sailed only on the 14th of February, and, consequently, made the voyage in thirty days.

It is now rumoured that none but the troops, belonging to those regiments already in the West Indies, are to come out with the fleet; and that the others are actually sent into cantonments, in England, there to remain until next September, before they again sail for the West Indies. Of this we have many doubts; yet might it seem to be a prudent arrangement: for, advanced as the season now is, it were, perhaps, wise to postpone the grand object of the expedition until December; and to employ the troops which are now here in restoring tranquillity to our disturbed and en-



dangered islands, thus fulfilling the more immediate, although perhaps the minor objects of the armament.

A body of troops brought out in October or November would have the season before them for a long campaign, but were they to leave England now, the length of time required for the voyage and for their being assembled at Barbadoes, and again prepared for leaving it, would bring them so near to the wet season, and to the hot and unhealthy period of the year, that not only would multitudes fall victims to disease, but impediments, occasioned by the weather, might interrupt the proceedings before any thing important could be effected.

We find that the Cork fleet has, unquestionably, been for several weeks at sea, and may be daily expected; the *Arethusa* having spoken several of the ships of that convoy upon her passage. At the time this frigate came into the bay two other ships appeared in sight: they are since arrived, and prove to be the *General Cuyler* merchantman, of our division (long supposed to be lost), and the *Clarendon* transport of the Cork division: their arrival, and the reported approach of the Cork fleet, add to the auspicious events of St. Patrick's day.

The sad uncertainties of a sea voyage are strongly exemplified in the combined arrival of the *General Cuyler* and the *Clarendon*. The



one sailed on the 9th of December, and the other on the 9th of February (periods more distant than the time usually required for making the voyage); yet, so favorable had been the elements to the one, and so adverse to the other, that they both came into Carlisle Bay at the same moment.

The Clarendon, we are told, left the harbour of Cove with a fleet of 132 sail, having ten thousand troops on board; but she parted from the convoy, in the course of the first night, and has not seen any ship belonging to it since. She has brought out nearly 200 men of the 99th regiment, who, we are sorry to find, have been very unhealthy, notwithstanding the quick passage they have made. From this we are led to fear that those who are longer detained at sea may arrive in a very sickly state.

The safety of the General Cuyler spread consolation among us, and very much augmented the great and general joy diffused by the presence of the commander in chief. You will feel that I had real pleasure in felicitating my friend Nichol, who was one of the passengers, when I tell you that it had obtained universal belief that this ship was lost at sea, or, at best, taken by the enemy. Indeed, for several weeks past, such had been the despondent feelings regarding her, that it would have been a great relief to us to have heard that she was in



the enemy's possession, She had sailed with us on the 9th of December, and was the last ship we had spoken in the European seas, which was on the 4th of January, and on the 10th of February we reached Carlisle Bay; hence, from our having been five weeks in harbour without hearing of her, scarcely a hope remained of ever seeing her again. Nor were our apprehensions far from being realized, for on the 7th of January, only three days after we had hailed her, she sprung a leak, and during twenty succeeding days, was merely kept from sinking by the persevering toil and exertions of the ship's company and the passengers, all of whom took their regular watch at the pumps, for six or eight hours each day. With great difficulty she was preserved afloat: daily their peril increased, and, for nearly three weeks, they had the melancholy prospect of going to the bottom. Almost exhausted with fatigue and apprehension, the hope of being saved had nearly abandoned them, when, fortunately, they made one of the Canary Islands.

Few occurrences can be so truly distressing, or so strongly calculated to weigh down the mind with desponding feelings, as this critical, and very perilous situation at sea. To prevent the threatened fate, excessive bodily exertions are required, when, from the impression of terror, a sufficient degree of hope scarcely re-



mains to stimulate or support the fatigue. Extreme toil is demanded, perhaps, too, in an exhausting, and ungenial climate, and under the depressing prospect of the vessel sinking notwithstanding every effort!

The Dutch are said to have a mode of punishment somewhat resembling this very dangerous and afflicting situation, although infinitely removed from it, on account of the person who is exposed to it knowing a certain means of saving himself, provided he has enough of industry to continue his exertions. The prisoner is confined in a room, into which water is made constantly to flow, so increasing in depth that he must, inevitably, be drowned if he be idle: but if he will be industrious and persevere at the pump, he knows that a certain proportion of labour will keep down the water, and preserve his life. Surely none but the amphibious and toiling Hollanders could have invented such a watery punishment! although it must be allowed to be a most excellent one against idleness. But in a leaky ship at sea no such certainty is attainable. The leak may increase, and no human effort be sufficient to keep the vessel upon the surface; yet all resource is denied, and the impending doom can, no way, be averted! No mental powers, no bodily exertion can avail. Safety is not to be procured by any effort of strength, or



wisdom: no opening is left for intellect or enterprise: each road leads equally to despair; and the event can neither be avoided nor resisted. On either hand the wretched sufferers see only the wide jaw of destruction. The leak still increasing, the water continues to gain upon all the means employed. It grows deeper: the sinking ship moves heavily on: her weight opposes all the force of wind and sails: she labours to proceed: her progress is more and more impeded: the slow motion ceases at intervals: a dread pause succeeds: the ship no longer moves! A momentary silence,—a death-like stillness prevails throughout the crew. She sinks to the bottom, and all hands perish in the silent deep.

You will join in our rejoicings that such, although long threatened, was not the fate of the General Cuyler. Happily she put into Palmas, and was saved. At the time of gaining the harbour she had many feet water in the hold, and, only with great exertion, was kept afloat while the cargo was removed. A fortnight's delay was occasioned in repairing her, and fitting her for the remainder of the voyage. It is upwards of fourteen weeks since she sailed from England, twelve of which have been actually passed at sea: most of them in struggling against storms and gales—against contrary winds, and contending elements!



The passengers are struck with surprise to find that, even at this late period, their ship is among the *early arrivals* of the convoy; having imagined that, during their perilous delay, the whole fleet must have reached Barbadoes, and the troops have again embarked for their respective destinations.

On the other hand, all who arrive in the ships from England or Ireland are astonished to find so many vessels of the convoy at Barbadoes, having been led to believe, by the reports of those who returned, that the whole must have either gone back, put into different ports on the passage, or been lost at sea.



## LETTER XXIX.

Barbadoes, March 22.

CARLISLE Bay is become quite the busy Thames of the West Indies. Scarcely a day passes without the arrival of vessels from one part of the globe or another. To us this affords a degree of interest and amusement; for we are frequently enlivened by the signals made for vessels either coming into harbour, or appearing in sight, and which prove to be from different, and widely separated coasts. English ships of war, merchantmen, and transports; slave-ships from the coast of Africa; packets, prizes, American traders; island vessels, privateers, fishing smacks, and different kinds of boats, cutters, and luggers, are among the almost hourly variety, to be seen either entering or quitting Carlisle Bay.

The day after the *Arethusa* came in we were early enlivened by signals for two other vessels approaching from windward; but they proved to be ships from very opposite coasts; one being from Halifax; the other a Guinea-man with a cargo of slaves from Africa.

Several vessels of the Cork division have joined us within the few last days; but none of



them bring any accurate tidings of the fleet; most of them having parted from the convoy, during the first or second night after quitting the harbour, and not having met with it since. The Charlotte transport was chased by a privateer at the distance of only a few leagues from Barbadoes, and must, inevitably, have been taken, but for the fortunate circumstance of a slave-ship, from the coast of Guinea, coming up at the time, and engaging her pursuer. A running action was maintained, for two hours, between this ship and the privateer, when the latter sheered off, leaving the Guinea-man, and her protégée, to proceed quietly to Barbadoes; the slave-ship having suffered considerably in her rigging.

The Madras East Indiaman and a packet are this day arrived from England. They departed, the one from Falmouth, the other from St. Helen's, on the 23d of February, and have completed the passage within a month. The Madras brings a cargo of ordnance stores. She sailed alone, and made a running voyage. Several persons availed themselves of the opportunity of coming out in this ship as passengers: she has also a small party of artillery-men on board.

The arrival of the present packet has not caused so great a sensation as was produced by the appearance of that which I mentioned to you before, although we are much pleased and



gratified to see it. We have now an ample supply both of English and American papers, and from the arrivals being more frequent, and the commander in chief among us, the sad torpor of the preceding weeks no longer reigns. Activity prevails, and the suspense of waiting is alleviated by busy preparation.

We have lately had an opportunity of visiting the Venus slave-ship of London, just arrived with a cargo of blacks, from the coast of Africa. The ship appeared small: there was a want of space, and the negroes seemed crowded; but, in all other respects, we were pleased to remark the excellence of the accommodations, and the great attention paid to the health and comfort of the slaves. The cargo consisted of 230 prime negroes, all in high health, and good spirits. The ship was remarkably clean. No sickness had occurred among the Africans, or the crew; nor had any one died upon the passage. They made the voyage in six weeks, and the slaves were fed the whole time with Guinea corn. The average value of the cargo is calculated at nearly 50*l.* for each person. The captain has but few hands in his ship's company, yet, from his kind treatment of the blacks, he has so well secured their attachment and obedience, as to feel no apprehension of a revolt, or of any occurrence to menace their safety.



Dr. Cleghorn and myself continue our pedestrian excursions about the neighbourhood of the bay. In one of our late rambles we ascended some hills in the vicinity of Bridgetown, which afford a fine landscape of the island, together with a view of the town, the harbour, and the sea.

Situated below this mountainous range is the plantation of a Mr. Daniel; an old estate which is sheltered, and rendered picturesque by the adjoining hills. Here we saw a very lofty and fine avenue of trees, of the valuable *lignum vitæ*; also an immensely large and ancient tamarind-tree, of more extended branches, and wider trunk than the antique oaks, or spreading elms, which are sometimes seen to grace the door-way of our old English dwellings. The tamarind is of the *Mimosa* tribe, and may be regarded as a very handsome example of vegetable production. It bears an immense quantity of fruit, which hanging among the small leaves, in the numerous pods of a dirty brown colour, gives a singular appearance, without adding to the beauty of the tree. Upon this old ornament of the mansion were many bushels, perhaps I might say many hogsheads of tamarinds, which were left to fall useless on the ground. Esteemed as this fruit is in Europe, in its preserved state, it seems to be as



little valued here, as the common crab of the hedges in England, and is equally neglected, not being considered worth the labour of gathering, or the expense of the sugar required in preserving it.



## LETTER XXX.

Barbadoes, March.

I SHOULD have mentioned to you in my last letter, that, from joining in the general greetings on the glad occasion of Sir R. Abercromby's long-expected arrival, and hoping to learn that we were immediately to proceed to St. Domingo, we lost no time in waiting upon the commander in chief: but I am sorry to tell you that we are likely to be detained longer from our place of destination, it being intended that we should wait the arrival of General Whyte, and the Cork division, and all proceed to St. Domingo under the same convoy.

I am happy to announce to you that the ills of climate have, hitherto, scarcely reached me: but my friends Cleghorn and Master are greater sufferers than myself. All of us are annoyed by the prickly heat, and those tormenting insects the mosquitoes; but, in Cleghorn, the prickly heat is so violent, as to become a sore eruption; and, on the legs of Master, the bites of mosquitoes have produced very troublesome ulcers: in addition to these evils, both of my friends are frequently seized with bleeding



at the nose ; with which I have not been once attacked.

Notwithstanding that they are more disturbed by the effects of climate than I am, they often amuse themselves at my continuing to observe an abstemious diet, and to persevere in the habit of drinking water ; and are even bold enough to propose that we should establish a tontine, with the benefit of survivorship. " Let us," say they, " enter into an engagement that he who lives longest shall be entitled to the clothes, arms, baggage, and horses of those who may chance to die, previous to our return to England. Water," continue they, " will render you the most palatable to the hungry devourer of these regions, and, of course, *you* will be his earliest prey."—" On the contrary, my friends," I reply, " you lay a bait for this ravenous destroyer, by preparing for him inviting juices, enriched with wine, and high essenced dishes!"

Were it fit to take up this subject professionally, or to trouble you with medical discussions, I might offer some powerful reasons why I have a better chance of again seeing England, than either of my agreeable associates. Our comrade, Weir, smiles at our calculations, and being in a manner secure, from having undergone nine years seasoning at Jamaica, feels it



probable that he may have to return alone, and report the fate of us all.

Endless, surely, are to be the vexations and disappointments attending this expedition! In every attempt, every branch of it would seem destined to meet with delay and disaster. In the papers, received by the last packet, we read that the Cork fleet, which we had flattered ourselves was within a few leagues of Barbadoes, has put back into Cove harbour. In this we have great and severe disappointment. It was the division with which we were to proceed to our place of destination, and from the ships which have already arrived reporting so favorably of the voyage, and the weather, it is a mortification very unexpected.

We have now to bid adieu to our rural excursions, and maroon-like wanderings, about the pleasant island of Barbadoes; for it is ordered that the physicians of the St. Domingo staff shall consider themselves on duty, at the general hospital at St. Anne's Hill; and it has fallen to my lot to be the first employed. We are also further required to inspect the troops on board the ships of the Cork division, as they come into harbour, in order to report their state of health, or disease. Luckily our residence, on board the Lord Sheffield, is singularly convenient for the performance of these services; we hope therefore to be able to continue our social



mess ; and to live in the cool breeze, afloat, instead of being crowded into close and heated lodgings on shore.

Being in the bay, we readily see every ship as it comes in, and can, without delay, take off a boat to proceed upon our visit of inspection : nor are we less happily placed for the hospital, being able to reach it in a boat, much quicker than we could walk to it from the town.

Sickness, I am sorry to remark, is already appearing among us. The hospitals are full, and some of the troops are obliged to quit their barracks, in order that these may be converted into sick wards : but do not imagine that we are suffering from disease of climate. It is not so. The disorder which now exists, has been brought with the troops. It is the common hospital or ship fever—is the consequence of the soldiers being long detained in crowded vessels, and has nothing to do with “ *La Maladie du Pays.*”

The ships of the Cork division, notwithstanding their quick passage, arrive with the troops in a very unhealthy state, but they must have been sickly when they embarked, or before they left the harbour. From the specimen we have in the Abergavenny and Hindostan, we have nothing favorable to expect from the seeming accommodation of employing such large



vessels, as troop-ships. In none of the transports have we, yet, found the men more unhealthy: but, from the habits of cleanliness, commonly observed on board the East India ships, and, more especially, from several active and intelligent military officers being on board, no suspicion can be entertained of any of the rules of cleanliness or regularity having been neglected among the troops.

To me it has always appeared unwise to employ any ship, as a transport for troops, in which the men are obliged to sleep upon two different decks, the one below the other; and, from present appearances, this expedition seems likely to strengthen the opinion.

When so large a number as from three hundred to five hundred men, in addition to the ship's company, make a passage in the same vessel, they cannot but be crowded; and if the weather should prove bad, it will be impossible to have the lower deck kept so clean, and well ventilated, as will be requisite: hence, from many of the soldiers becoming sick; from their taking food in their sleeping births; and crowding themselves with knapsacks, blankets, and other baggage; and from multitudes breathing together, in a close and confined place, the air must, very quickly, be rendered unwholesome, and disease will, necessarily, be generated. Where there are two decks it is also more diffi-



cult to keep the men sufficiently exposed to the open atmosphere, as the idle and disobedient can more easily conceal themselves, and remain below, throughout the day.

The difference, in point of health, is peculiarly striking between the troops conveyed in transports from England, and the slaves brought in the Guinea ships from Africa. Perhaps, from the present mode of conducting the slave-ships, some useful hints might be derived, for the management of transports. The negroes are much more crowded than the soldiers, yet far more healthy. The cause of this, I much suspect will be found in the difference of treatment and accommodation. According to the present method of proceeding with the blacks, a Guinea ship would carry, with less danger of disease being generated among them, a cargo more than thrice as numerous as a transport would carry of soldiers.

I took occasion to remark in a former letter that the nakedness of the slaves was their best security against sickness, but, in addition to their being without clothes, they are compelled to remain constantly upon deck in the day-time; and are encouraged to exercise and amusement: their sleeping-places are completely washed out as soon as they quit them; and no species of baggage, or clothing; not a bundle, nor any article of bedding; not even a blanket,



or a sheet, nor any kind of thing that can create filth, or collect impurities is admitted. Ventilation and washing are strictly enjoined, and the slaves are reduced, or compelled to observe cleanliness of person : together with these means, perhaps their simple diet of vegetables and water may greatly contribute, by diminishing the predisposition, and lessening the susceptibility of disease.

Hence it would seem that cleanliness, exercise, cheerfulness, a simple diet, and free exposure to the atmosphere are the great preventives of illness ; and that by a strict observance of these means the negroes make the voyage, from Africa to the West Indies, without engendering infectious maladies, although infinitely more crowded, than troops on board the most confined transport.

Many causes conspire to prevent these grand objects from being equally attained by the soldiers ; but it is a desideratum, even, to approach them. If I were to enter into a detail of all that might be offered upon this very important subject, instead of a letter I should write a volume. The difference of climate, of habit, of education, and of diet would all require to be taken into the discussion ; but it were foreign to our present purpose to engage in such an extensive inquiry. I may content myself, therefore, with adding that, both in re-



gard to transports, and barracks, the service would reap the most essential benefit, if the rules, which might be prescribed by its medical officers, were strictly followed ; and policy, no less than humanity seems to demand it.

I must not forget to tell you, that the 23d instant was the hottest day we have felt, since our arrival between the tropics. In the morning the thermometer stood at 73°, and the weather was pleasantly cool, but it afterwards grew very close, and the little air that was stirring, coming from the south, we felt the temperature much increased, and every one complained of excessive heat. We were on shore during the forenoon, but having left our thermometers in the ship, had not the opportunity of observing the degree of heat, either in the town, or the bay : from our feelings, compared with the preceding days, we judge it to have been at least 86.

Although it was unusually hot and oppressive in Bridge-town, we perceived a great difference, in the more elevated part of the country. We dined at Dr. Hinde's, some miles from the town, and did not there feel the heat unpleasant. Thirteen persons sat down to table, and I remarked that not one of the party had occasion to use his handkerchief, in a way that might have shocked the delicacy of a Chesterfield.



## LETTER XXXI.

Barbadoes, March 30.

I FEAR you will be tired of reading tales of disappointment and uncertainty, which, as I before observed, would seem to know no end. On the morning of the 28th inst. we saw an ensign hoisted at the fort, and heard three guns fired; which constitute the signal of alarm implying a strange fleet to be in sight. It was, immediately, concluded that it was the Cork convoy, and its arrival was readily explained, by supposing it to have put to sea again, quickly after its return to harbour, and to have availed itself of the favorable wind which had already brought to us so many single vessels of that division. Dr. Cleghorn and myself happened to be on our way to the hospital, and on reaching St. Anne's Hill we had a most splendid view of about eighty ships sailing smoothly below us, spreading their white canvass along the coast of the island, as they proceeded towards the bay. Our expectations now seemed confirmed. It must be the Cork fleet: and we felt assured of a speedy departure for St. Domingo! But our measure of vexation was not yet filled;



for it proved to be only a fleet of merchant-men!

It would seem that the very elements had been set in hostile array, exclusively, against the expedition, and that it only required the sailing of the convoys to provoke the wrath of the winds, and the ocean. Amidst all the vexatious delays, that continue to occur, it is mortifying to discover that not one of the troop-ships has made the passage with this fortunate fleet of traders, which sailed from Spithead on the 27th of February, and reached Barbadoes early on the 28th of March.

After breakfast we went on shore to make our marketings and to learn the additional news brought by the fleet, which had now come to anchor. The streets of Bridge-town were crowded, and the place so over-run with strangers, that not a fish, nor a joint of meat was to be had: and a single chicken was all we could procure.

Barbadoes is the best supplied of all our colonies to windward of Jamaica. The island abounds with provisions and stock; but from the late multiplied arrivals, and from a numerous fleet being so long detained in the bay, the demand has been so great that a degree of scarcity, or, at least, that mark of it, an increased and extravagant price, begins to prevail.

Single ships of the Cork division still con-



tinue to join us ; and among them we now find the George and Bridget with hospital stores, having our comrade Henderson on board. The George and Bridget, as I before remarked to you, is a large North country ship, of vast bulk, very unwieldy, and manifestly a slow sailer.

Our lost assistant, poor Mac—, who was left behind in consequence of going to Portsmouth in search of our cow, is also among the unexpected passengers on board this vessel. The narrative of his adventures, with and without the cow, has diverted us exceedingly. He is a little fat, sturdy man, of short, punch-like figure, between thirty and forty years of age, with a vast deal of good humour and willing activity about him—bustling, well-intending, and officiously desirous to be useful. He is confident, and presumptuous, yet possesses a degree of personal timidity bordering upon superstition. Abruptly familiar with those he seeks, he grows importunate, and attaches himself even to annoyance ; being one of those people who have more of freedom than good manners, are perfect masters in ease, and as perfectly ignorant in politeness. He is of that class which possesses more of willingness, than judgment—more of haste, than order ; one of those who engage with bold confidence, in whatever presents itself, without looking to the event, or observing any thing of method in the execution ; who are



ever ready to plunge into difficulties, without a thought how to subdue them.

The same sanguine feelings which lead him into troubles, tend to support him through them. Not being of a disposition to brood over his distresses, he is seldom the subject of dismay, or the victim of sombre reflection. Involved in one dilemma, he commonly escapes from it by rushing headlong into a greater, and often blunders on to his object, overcoming every impediment by forcing circumstances through all hazards to the end proposed; then, forgetful of the new difficulties which he has created, piques himself upon the merit of having accomplished his design!

It being an essential comfort to have plenty of milk on the passage, we had purchased a cow to take on board, but owing to some neglect, on shore, our valued animal had not reached the Lord Sheffield at the time the signal was made for sailing. We applied to the captain to know how we could proceed with the greatest probability of procuring her; who, telling us that it was not an object for which he could delay the ship, observed that the only chance of having our milk was by sending off some person, instantly, to Portsmouth, who would bring the cow, without a moment's loss of time. Mac—, hearing this, immediately volunteered his services. A boat, returning to the shore, was



accordingly hailed, and away hurried Mac—for the cow; not once dreaming of the possibility of failure, or that there could be any risk of his being left behind. In the same unthinking haste in which he left the ship did he bustle on when he reached the town; and from a thoughtless blundering in every step of his proceeding, he was defeated in all his attempts to return on board. First he neglected to secure a boat at the time he went on shore—next he forgot the address of the person from whom the cow was purchased—afterwards he lost time in cavilling with the man for not sending her off according to his engagement—then he delayed by sitting down to take refreshment; and when at last the poor animal was led to the water's edge, it proved that every boat was absent, and Mac—was compelled to wait in great anxiety for the return of one from Spithead. He now began to discover that he had proceeded rashly, and without calculating the means of success; but he unjustly cursed his fortune, and abused the quiet, unconscious cow.

Thus it ever is with the improvident,—whether regarding his time, his purse, or his pursuits. The errors of *imprudence* he never fails to attribute to *misfortune*, and he unfairly accuses the fates with what is only the result of his own folly or neglect. When a lugger arrived it was too late to overtake the fleet; but



he impulsively jumped into it, insisting on making a trial, and after remaining at sea for a considerable time, was obliged to return to Portsmouth, both himself and the cow having lost their passage.

Now he hastily determined to go to the Isle of Wight, and try from thence to get on board the Lord Sheffield; and after failing in this, he hurried to Plymouth, idly fancying that he might succeed from thence. Here he was alike defeated. He then travelled to Milford Haven and embarked for Ireland, and happened to arrive at Cove in time for the Cork convoy, with which he found the George and Bridget, and, knowing that Dr. Henderson and others of the hospital-staff were on board, he applied to the captain for a passage, relating his adventures, with and without the cow, as his passport.

From the frankness of his manners, and the willingness he expressed to put up with all the inconveniences which might present themselves, as well as from his companionable familiarity, the master of the vessel became interested in his behalf, and soon adopted him as his principal associate.

The ship met with an accident at sea, but afterwards made a favorable passage, and Mac—is arrived in safety at Barbadoes; where he re-



lates with great delight all his perils by sea, and his troubles on shore \*.

\* The George and Bridget afterwards sunk in the harbour of Cape St. Nicholas Mole; and poor unfortunate Mac—, soon after his arrival at St. Domingo, fell a victim to the yellow fever.



## LETTER XXXII.

Barbadoes, April 1, 1796.

WE are here all joy and delight. Without the humours of an April day, the morning has been hailed in cheerfulness, from bringing to us friends we have long been anxious to meet.

At an early hour the ensign was flying at the battery, announcing the approach of unnumbered strangers.

On this occasion, as on many others, we were both pleased and surprised to observe the acuteness of sailors in discovering the nature and extent of a distant fleet. Before we could well distinguish a ship from a brig, our tars, from the cut of the sails, proclaimed it to be an English convoy, but not that of Admiral Cornwallis. From the mode of setting the canvass, from the form of the ship, the figure of the masts, or some slight circumstance, attaching to different vessels, but totally imperceptible to us, they had no hesitation in declaring, while yet very remote, that instead of the fleet from Spithead, it was our long-wished-for convoy from Cork.

The whole fleet is now at anchor in the bay, and has brought to us a large body of troops,



destined for St. Domingo, under the command of General Whyte. This being the division of the expedition to which we are attached, we had twofold pleasure in greeting its arrival.

In our gladness to hail it, we climbed the shrouds up to the main top, and there stood to view its entrance into the bay. Such a scene must have been highly interesting, even if it had been wholly independent of the intimate connexion we had with it: the day was fine; the breeze soft and mild; and the surface of the water gently moving. The picture was rich and varied; comprehending, under a bird's-eye view, the town, and neighbouring plantations, the bay crowded with shipping, a great extent of the fine country around, and the wide ocean, together with the numerous vessels of our desired convoy dropping, with full sails, into the harbour.

This fleet, which had been so often reported at sea, even so long since as before we left England, and which did once sail and return, finally took its departure from Cove on the 25th of February: hence it may be considered to have made at last a very favorable passage, having been precisely five weeks at sea.

We now look forward to a speedy change of place, and I may soon have to address you from St. Domingo, where I hope to meet your letters, and learn tidings of ye all. It is about a week's voyage, and is considered a very pleasant



one, being as fine sailing as is known on any part of the ocean; the ship having only to spread wide her canvass and fly before *the trades*.

Indolence is considered to be the general effect of excessive heat of climate; and if the ingenious Bruno had visited the tropical regions, he might here have found many facts in support of his very plausible doctrine. The languor of climate is felt by few on their early arrival in the West Indies: the first effect of the heat seems to be that of stimulating the rigid northern fibre into increased activity; and creole inertness follows only as the result of continued residence.

“Precisely thus,” would have exclaimed Dr. Brown, “and so with wine, opium, brandy, and all other stimuli. They, at first, only increase the excitement, and give new vigour to the frame; but, continued to excess, they exhaust the excitability, over-run ever-delighting excitement, and plunge the body into indirect debility, inducing a state of body, precisely similar to that of creole inactivity; a state from which there is no escape, but through the medium of new or still more powerful stimuli.” Yet, the renewed vigour—the restored excitement, acquired by a return to the *sedative north*, would seem an everlasting obstacle to the theory as stated by its great projector: the languor of climate, or in-



direct debility, being removed by a directly debilitating power—the abstraction of heat.

But I am straying from our path. Let me, therefore, retrace my steps, and tell you the effect of climate upon a cold Hollander of our crew.

I have already made known to you that neither my comrade Dr. Cleghorn, nor myself, feel yet any sense of tropical indolence, but that we continue our habits of exercise in all our rude European strength. We have, for some days past, been closely watching one of our sailors who is a Dutchman. He is recently from Holland, and, in manners and appearance, a true Batavian. On the passage he was a dull, heavy, slow, and plodding Dutchman—frigid, and inanimate as the most icy boor of his aquatic nation. His movements were a tolerably accurate representation of the crawling sloth; and the unvaried sedateness of his visage no less emblematical of his native home.

Having particularly noticed him throughout the voyage, we feel some surprise in now witnessing, as it were, a complete revolution of his nature and habits. The rays of a tropical sun seem to have given play to his muscles, set free all the circulating juices of his frame, and thawed the icy coldness of his soul. The change we observe in him is indeed greater than you can imagine: roused from the torpor of un-



heeding sameness, by the all-vivifying power of tropical warmth, the frigid cloud of indifference is dissipated from his brow; he is grown cheerful and gay; wears a smile of mirth upon his countenance, and moves with an alertness, beyond all that could have been expected in a Dutchman. He now skips merrily about the ship; pulls his oar with glee in the boat; and, on all occasions, appears animated and lively; vying in spirits and activity with the sprightliest tar of the ship.



## LETTER XXXIII.

Barbadoes, April.

PERHAPS you will feel surprised if I should tell you that we have seen an African slave perform a chirurgical operation, with greater dexterity than it could have been done by the most skilful surgeon of Europe!

Walking on the beach, we remarked two negroes sitting on the sands, occupied with something, which seemed to command minute attention. On approaching near to them, we found the one engaged in extracting that sadly troublesome insect the Chigoe from the other's foot. Our curiosity being excited, we stopped to witness the operation, and saw it executed with great neatness and ability.

The chigoe is a very minute insect, which insinuates itself, imperceptibly, under the skin, most commonly of the toes, and there, forming a nidus, produces its young. These are enveloped in a small cyst or bag, which usually increases to the size of a pea, as the period of maturity approaches. When the young are about to escape, a sense of tingling, or itching is felt in the part, at first very slight and often not sufficient to attract the notice of Europeans;



but, if longer neglected, it increases to a sense of soreness on pressure, or on treading upon that part of the foot. This commonly leads to examination, when a dark point is discovered, which directs to a small, and scarcely tumid circle, whitish, or very slightly inflamed, of an appearance somewhat like what might arise from a pea lodged under the skin. If, at this period, the cyst be removed, the disease may be eradicated, and nothing further apprehended; but if it be still neglected, the nidus ruptures, and the young ones escaping, penetrate into the parts around, producing a sore which degenerates into a troublesome ulcer, and this being increased by the new cysts of many chigoes, often proceeds to incurable disease, and ultimately to the destruction of the toe.

The chigoes prevail most in sandy places: in this island they are very numerous. A negro sometimes extracts five or six from his feet, at one sitting; and so expert is he at finding them, that, in examining the foot of an European, a slave will, frequently, discover two or three chigoes, before the individual could perceive the least itching or uneasiness from them.

The mode of extracting them is as follows: with a pointed pen-knife, not very sharp, or the blunt end of a large needle, a slight opening is made in the skin, at the small black point over the cyst. From this opening the skin is forced



away, by being torn, or broken down, and pressed outwards, on all sides, care being taken not to puncture, or otherwise rupture the cyst. The skin being thus separated, the nidus or small bag becomes exposed in form of a little round body, and is, afterwards, extracted by forcing down the point of the instrument, at one side, and turning it out. A hole remains not unlike a pea issue: this the negro commonly fills with ashes from the pipe or sagar, mixed with butter, tallow from a candle, or any other kind of grease that happens to be at hand, and the cure is completed with the operation.

A specimen of indolence in labour has occurred to our observation, which, whether it be regarded as the effect of climate, or of slavery, I may note to you as an additional example of the feeble exertions used by slaves in their unrequited round of toil. A party of negroes being employed to remove some hospital stores, from the side of the water to a warehouse, Dr. Cleghorn and myself took the opportunity of passing that way in our walk, in order to see them at work, and observe their industry and mode of labour. We found no less than ten slaves occupied in rolling a middle-sized chest, with a black driver holding his whip at their backs, and an overseer, of fairer skin, to command them. It was perhaps, in



all respects, the very worst way in which such a package could have been moved! From the size of the chest it was only with difficulty each negro could find space for an assisting hand; from its shape it was most inconvenient for rolling; and from its contents, most improper; being filled with bottles, jars, earthen pots, and the like. In England four men would have carried it upon a hand-barrow with great ease: but here, the time and labour of twelve men were consumed in moving it, at a rate incomparably slower, and at the expense, probably, of great part of its contents.

We pointed out to them the injury that might, and the loss of time that necessarily must derive from this method of moving it, and endeavoured to convince them how much safer, and more expeditious it would be, to take it up, and carry it. But, no! that was not their way! "*We no savez carry him, we roll him gently, Massa, den we no break 'em bottles inside,*" was the reply. In even the most liberal it is always a task to oppose habits confirmed by long usage; among slaves it were utterly in vain to attempt it! Had we insisted upon the case being carried, it is more than probable that it would have quickly fallen to the ground, and the whole contents been shattered to atoms; we, therefore, left them to pursue their own means.

We have since met with another circum-



stance nearly similar, which I might offer to you as a further example of the indolent manner in which slaves execute their task : or I might note it as a specimen of the cruelties which men, held in slavery, may, and too frequently do become subject to, from passionate, and unfeeling individuals. Walking towards the hospital we met a party of negroes rolling a box of stores from the boat, in which they had been brought on shore, to the store-room. Perceiving the case to be light, and knowing it to contain only vessels of tin, a desire to see how they would perform led us to try the experiment of making them carry it : nor, in doing this, were we aware of exposing any of them to an act of cruelty, or we should have left them, as before, to their own way. On attempting to lift the package to their shoulders, they set about it precisely in the awkward and ludicrous manner we had expected ; still as no accident, nor injury of consequence could derive from it, we, who were recently from Europe, were quite diverted at their fruitless and incompetent efforts ; but Captain ——, who was with us, and had resided long enough in the West Indies to have accustomed himself to the arbitrary treatment of slaves, seeing the stupid way in which they attempted this new task, immediately gave one of the poor fellows a cruel cut, with a large horse-whip, across the face and



eyes! We remonstrated with him on this unnecessary and unmerited severity; and could not but mark it, in our minds, as an act of wanton cruelty; which, if I may judge from the impulse of my own feelings, will long stand against him. We desired the poor negroes to put down the box, and convey it according to their own method; and, in sentiments of indignation, left the Captain to the remorse which ought to be his punishment.

You will be pleased to know that intelligence has just reached us of the defeat of the brigands at Grenada, in an action with our troops, commanded by General Nicoll. Their loss is said to amount to three hundred men.

The Portsmouth fleet is still a truant to our expectations. From the tidings we had received of it we now think it long delayed; and have many fears lest Admiral Cornwallis may have sailed into Admiral Christian's unfortunate path; and, like him, been obliged to trace his course back into an English port.



## LETTER XXXIV.

Barbadoes, April 7.

HAVING, from time to time, detailed to you, in desultory remark, the whole chain of circumstances passing under my eye, perhaps, you will not deem it premature, should I now offer you a few general observations concerning the island of Barbadoes. After a residence of many weeks it is probable that my remarks may possess more of correctness than any I might have given you immediately on my arrival. I feel it likely also, that you may find them rather more interesting after the irregular notes which have preceded them. I purpose therefore taking up my pen, at each moment of leisure, until I shall have copied the few memoranda which I have collected on the general subject of Barbadoes; and shall send them to you, in a full packet, by some early occasion.

From the situation of the West India Islands in the Atlantic ocean, extending in form of a semicircle, nearly from the coast of Florida to the river Oronoko, it might seem that, at some remote period, they had been detached from the great continent of America, either by the gradual and progressive power of the ocean,



or by some great and sudden convulsion of nature. But from their being of very irregular and mountainous surface, while the land of the proximate shore is peculiarly low and flat, to a distance of many miles from the coast, it is probable that the islands and the main land had a different origin. The craggy shores, and rugged broken figure of the islands bespeak a sudden formation; while the smooth and muddy surface of the opposite coast indicates a less disturbed and slower beginning. Probably the latter has been produced from the gradual deposit of a feculent ocean—the former from volcanic eruptions.

Barbadoes is the most windward of the West India Islands; and is in that division of them known by the appellation of Charibbee Islands; a name they have obtained from one of the nations of Indians, who formerly inhabited them.

It is about twenty-one miles in length, by fourteen in breadth; lying in latitude  $13^{\circ}$  North, longitude  $59^{\circ}$  West. The English have occupied it nearly two centuries, having taken possession of it in the reign of James I. At the time of being settled by our countrymen, it was covered with wood, and had no marks of having been, before, occupied by man; but it now appears under a very different aspect, the destructive axe having converted its deep and



heavy forests into even characteristic nakedness.

West Indians regard it as of low and level surface: but this can be only comparatively speaking, in reference to the neighbouring islands, whose bold summits pierce the clouds; for Barbadoes has all the pleasant variety afforded by hills and broken land, and, in some parts, is even mountainous, though less so than Grenada, St. Vincent, or St. Lucie.

It is considered as an old island, and, from having been long in cultivation, is said to be much exhausted, and wearing to decay. Those concerned in the culture of more recent, and now more prolific colonies, seem to compassionate Barbadoes as the venerable and decrepit parent of the race; while its inhabitants pride themselves upon its antiquity, and, like the feudal lords of still more ancient states, assume a consequence, I might almost say claim hereditary rank and privilege from priority of establishment. Some of the creoles of the island commit the excess of attaching to it a degree of importance beyond even the mother-country. "*What would poor Old England do,*" say they, "*were Barbadoes to forsake her?*" This sense of distinction is strongly manifested also in the sentiment conveyed by the vulgar expression so common in the island—"neither Charib, nor creole, but true Barbadian," and which is parti-



cipated even by the slaves, who proudly arrogate a superiority above the negroes of the other islands! Ask one of them if he was imported, or if he be a creole, and he immediately replies, "*Me neder Chrab, nor creole, Massa! me troo Barbadian born.*"

Perhaps the late decline of this island may be less the effect of exhaustion of the soil, than of the extensive emigration, and the diversion of commerce consequent on the cultivation of new islands and colonies. In the early period of its culture Barbadoes yielded a produce, and gave rise to an extent of commerce, not known in any other island, and its population increased to a degree, perhaps unprecedented in any part of the globe. Within the first fifty years the trade of the island had become sufficient to employ four hundred sail of shipping; and the number of inhabitants amounted to no less than one hundred and fifty thousand, being upwards of five hundred to every square mile.

To enable the land to continue the bountiful produce it now afforded, required much labour, and a great and expensive supply of manure; therefore as new colonies were settled, and new land brought into cultivation, which was capable of yielding equal returns with less labour, and less of artificial supply, it became an object to individuals to emigrate from the neighbouring island of Barbadoes, and engage



in the culture of the more recent, and less exhausted settlements; and, thus, with the population, the commerce, which before had been confined to the parent island, was necessarily diverted into new and various channels.

At this day the Dutch colonies of Guiana, and the captured island of Martinique are a continual drain upon the population of Barbadoes. But notwithstanding its decline from what it once was, it is still the most populous, and one of the most important of our West India possessions. From situation, and from its fine bay for shipping, even independent of its produce, it must ever be valuable to us; and may be considered as the key of the West Indies.

If in the richness of its crops Barbadoes now yields to other settlements; if its population and commerce have decreased; if its thick woods have fallen before the ruthless axe; and if its mountains are less aspiring than the towering summits of some of the adjacent islands; still its trade and produce continue to be important; its population great; and the picturesque scenery of its surface, perhaps, unrivalled. Nor are these its only advantages; for, in consequence of being more cleared, and more generally cultivated, than the other islands, its temperature is more equable, and its air more salubrious. Damp woods do not interrupt, nor stagnant morasses empoison the breeze. Every



part is exposed to the influence of the trade-wind ; by the coolness and salubrity of which, this is rendered the most healthful of the islands ; insomuch that it is common, in sickness, to make a voyage from the neighbouring colonies to Barbadoes, as the Montpelier of the West Indies. Being situated to windward of the other settlements it receives the steady breeze, brought to it, in all its purity, from a wide extent of ocean, unimpregnated by the septical exhalations of stagnant waters, or marshy soils. Its temperature has been far less inconvenient than we expected : we have felt but little oppression from heat ; and have continued our habits of exercise without interruption. In the harbour, and placed in the shade, the thermometer has seldom been higher than 84, and at no time has exceeded 86 degrees.

Yet blessed as the island is in its exemption from excessive heat, from noxious miasmata, and from great and general sickness, it has its peculiar ills ; being visited with an endemial affliction, so much its own as to have obtained the appellation of *the Barbadoes disease*. It appears in form of the elephantiasis, or what is here termed the “glandular disease,” and is a most unsightly and distressful malady.

Bridge-town is the capital of the island, and is situated on the S. W. bank of Carlisle Bay, which is one of the finest harbours, for



shipping, in the West Indies; but is not considered to be secure during the hurricane season. It derives its name from the circumstance of a royal grant of the island having formerly been made to the Earl of Carlisle. The other towns are Speights-town, Austin-town, and Hole-town, all of which are much inferior to Bridge-town.

Both the scenery and the population of the island are more indebted to the number and variety of mansions, cottages, and huts, dispersed over its surface, than to its towns; which, as is too commonly the case in all countries, are built with less regard to general appearance, and the health of the inhabitants, than to the convenience of trade, and the profit of individuals.

On all quarters of the island are seen windmills, storehouses, and other buildings for sugar, coffee, and cotton; houses of planters, the smaller dwellings of cottagers, and the huts of negroes; all of which improve the scenery, while they convey the idea of extensive population, and delight the mind with images of rural enjoyment, and of generally diffused comfort and tranquillity. The various buildings, together with the protecting shades about them—the luxuriant vegetation—the constant verdure of the fields—the evergreen foliage of the trees—the broken irregular hills,



lofty mountains, and cultivated plains—all surrounded with extensive views of shipping, and the open sea, create an effect more diversified and interesting than is often to be met with, and contribute to render Barbadoes a most pleasant and picturesque island.

I have before mentioned to you the general appearance of its soil : near Bridge-town it is of rich black earth, mostly spread on a base of calcareous rock, formed of madripores, and other marine concretions : in some districts it is of a red earth, of greater depth, but less rich : in others the soil is of a light whitish earth, broken into a grey-looking mould, or hardened into lumps resembling chalk ; but actually consisting of indurated argille, bleached by exposure to the weather.

From this variety in the land, together with that which attaches to situation, as being flat, or mountainous, protected, or exposed, it will necessarily happen, that the produce will differ in different parts of the island : and as the whole has been long under cultivation, it is manifest that if a due supply of manure cannot be procured, a degree of exhaustion, bearing a certain ratio to the deficiency, must result.

It is established, from the mode of agriculture adopted in some counties of England, that, by an adequate supply of manure, estates may be kept in a constant round of cultivation,



yielding as prolific crops as upon their earliest tillage; and this is found to be no less certain, than that if the land be subjected to continued culture, without such supply, it will be so exhausted, in the course of a few years, as not to give sufficient produce to compensate the labour and expense.

The same facts equally apply to Barbadoes, where, if the artificial supply be not commensurate with the harvest removed from the land, a gradual diminution of the crops will succeed; or, in order to have these in their usual abundance, the acres in cultivation must be reduced to such a number as the island shall be capable of furnishing with an adequate quantity of manure; and we accordingly find that herds of small steers are kept upon the plantations, for the purpose of supplying this indispensable addition to the soil. These are employed instead of horses in the heavy labour of the estate, and we often see from twelve to twenty-four of them yoked in a waggon, drawing a single hogshead of sugar, or some other load, such as in London would be conveyed with facility by one horse in a cart.

At night the cattle are penned upon a bed of trash, collected from the refuse of the canes, and other waste materials of the estate; by treading upon which, and mixing it with their own



dung, they trample the whole into an useful compost for the fields.

It necessarily follows from such numbers of cattle being required, for the purpose of manuring the land, that a greater supply of beef and veal is raised for the markets, and that fresh provisions are more plentiful than in most of the other colonies. Of the custom of buying the veal in live quarters for the pot I have already spoken; and I may now remark that the beef is commonly killed so very young as to form neither beef nor veal, but something of appearance and flavour between the two.

The seasons here are not divided into winter and summer, but into wet and dry: yet are they, by no means, what many, from these terms, would believe, who might imagine that half the year is drowned with incessant rain, and the other half parched with constant drought. Such a construction of the terms *wet* season, and *dry* season, though not unfrequent, is far from correct, and leads to a very inaccurate idea of the climate; for, notwithstanding it has been the dry season, during the whole time we have been at Barbadoes, we have scarcely had two successive days without refreshing rain; although the showers are not so heavy at this period as at that of their greater frequency, termed the wet season, when the torrents which fall might convey the idea of a sudden rupture



of the clouds, letting forth their waters *in streams* to the earth.

The quick evaporation which succeeds to rain in this climate creates a most agreeable and refreshing coolness. The extreme ardor of the sun's rays is also counteracted by the ever-grateful breeze, which sets in from the sea about eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and continues throughout the day, ceasing only as the sun forsakes us at evening; when we are again defended from oppressive languor by a breeze springing up from the land. This sets in as that from the sea subsides, and diverging, as it were from a central point, is felt on all quarters of the island.

The day is nearly of equal length throughout the whole circle of the year. We have none of the short dark days of an English winter, nor of the still shorter light nights of a Scottish summer. Nights of one or two hours, and days of six or seven, are here equally unknown. It is light about six o'clock in the morning, and dark about seven at night. Evening is scarcely observed. The sun traversing his vertical course sinks at once from the horizon, and, refusing his oblique beams to protract or soften the decline of day, robs us of the twilight hour, and suddenly throws around all the obscurity of night.

This uniformity of the diurnal round scarce-



ly exceeds that of the general temperature of the climate, which brings us one perpetual summer. The fields and the trees are always green. Nature ever smiles. Uninterrupted by the torpor of winter, she is neither chilled with frost, nor buried in snow. But, for these advantages we forego the sprightly delight, and genial comfort of a summer's evening, the all-animating pleasures of a returning spring, and the soft joys of the twilight hours. If I had time for such discussions, I might enter into a long digression upon the comparative excellence of the climate we have left, and that we now inhabit: yet should I yield the palm to my native island; for of all the charms of climate in other countries, however great or durable, I know none that can stand in competition with the balmy softness of England's spring.

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April 8.

The uniform returns of day and night in this climate induce a regularity of habit in the hours of rising, and going to rest. It is common to leave the pillow at six in the morning, and few persons remain out of bed after eleven at night. The coolest and most pleasant part of the day



is from six to about half-past seven o'clock in the morning: about eight a degree of closeness is often experienced, arising from the decline of the land breeze, before that from the sea has become sufficiently strong to diffuse its influence. A similar period, likewise, occurs at evening, between the abatement of the sea breeze and the setting in of the breeze from the land. Some days the closeness of these hours is so slight, as to be scarcely perceptible, but commonly they are by far the most oppressive of the twenty-four.

Respecting the mode of living it may be remarked that in all countries said to be civilized, and among all people calling themselves refined, too much of time and attention is devoted to the business of eating and drinking. Perhaps the majority of diseases in social life may be traced to this source. Were it possible to convey, in a single sentence, the frightful train of ills, the melancholy interruptions of health, and the immense consumption of time, thus produced, men would be shocked to read it! They would be terrified to behold the magnitude of an abuse, to which, unheeding, they had so long been devoted. This remark applies but too correctly to the island from whence I am addressing you, and where, from the state of indolence induced by tropical heat, the in-



gesta taken to excess may be expected in a peculiar degree to oppress the human frame.

The people of Barbadoes are much addicted to the pleasures of the table. The breakfast usually consists of tea and coffee, or chocolate, with eggs, ham, tongue, or other cold meat. Bread is seldom used, but substitutes are found in roasted yams or eddoes, both of which a good deal resemble roasted potatoes. They are taken hot, and eaten with butter, which is sometimes made in the country, but more frequently barrelled and brought from Ireland; that prepared in the island being of cream-like softness, and not always of good flavour. In the course of the forenoon are used fruits, or sandwiches, with free libations of punch and sangaree: immediately preceding dinner, which is commonly at an early hour, are taken punch or mandram. The dinner, for the most part, is profuse, and many hours are passed at table in full and busy feasting.

After a more than plentiful consumption of food, a free indulgence in fruit, and a bounteous supply of wine and other good liquors, the appetite and thirst are further provoked by a dish of sprats, or other broiled fish, and a large bowl of milk-punch. Tea and coffee are next served; and lastly comes the supper, which forms no trifling meal. After this the bottle, the glass,



and the punch-bowl experience no rest, until bed-time.

From the nature of the climate we expected to have found the inhabitants men of meager person, half dissolved in perspiration, and exhausted almost to shadows: nor, indeed, are such figures rare, but they are to be found, mostly, among the clerks, the book-keepers, and those orders of white people below the managers who are employed in active and busy occupation, and have but little time to devote to indolence and the luxuries of the table.

We observe that condiments are used very generally, and with great freedom. Acting as stimulants they appear to have the effect of causing the relaxed and enfeebled stomach to digest more than it would, otherwise, require—more, indeed, than it would, otherwise, take. The various species of red pepper, known in England under the common term *Cayenne*, are employed in quantities that would seem incredible to people of colder climates.

A most heterogeneous mixture of food is often consumed; and with this compound of solids, are used wine, punch, porter, cyder, noyeau, and other good liquors in free libation; yet are there specimens of health and vigour, amidst all these indulgences, which might seem to invalidate the doctrines of the advocates of abstemiousness.

In the order of the feast plenty more pre-



vails than elegance. The loaded board groans, nay almost sinks beneath the weight of hospitality. That delicacy of arrangement now studied in England, under the term economy of the table, is here deemed a less perfection than a substantial plenty. Liberality is more esteemed than neatness in the supply; and solids are, sometimes, heaped upon the table in a crowded abundance that might make a London fine lady faint.

The repast not unfrequently consists of different kinds of fish—a variety of soups—a young kid—a whole lamb, or half a sheep—several dishes of beef, or mutton—a turkey—a large ham—Guinea fowls—and a pigeon pie; with various kinds of puddings; a profusion of vegetables; and multitudes of sweets. I was lately one of a small party, where, precisely, this dinner was served, and where the half of a sheep, kicking its legs almost in the face of the master of the house, adorned the bottom of the table—forming the most unseemly dish I ever beheld.

The generous board is often supplied wholly from the produce of the estate, and on the occasion of giving an entertainment it is not unusual to kill an ox, a sheep, or, literally, the fatted calf: hence it sometimes occurs that several dishes of the same kind of food, under different forms, make up the principal part of the dinner.

The liquors most in use are Madeira and



claret wines, punch, sangaree, porter, and cyder. Punch and sangaree are commonly used as the *diluents* of the morning. The latter forms a most delightful drink. A glass of it, taken when parching with thirst, from heat and fatigue, may be ranked among the highest gratifications of our nature! It consists of half Madeira wine and half water, acidulated with the fragrant lime, sweetened with sugar, and flavoured with nutmeg. A stronger sort of it is sometimes made under the superlative name of *sangrorum*. This differs from the former, only in containing a greater proportion of wine.

The too-prevalent English custom of *sending away* the ladies, or, according to the politer term, of the ladies *retiring* after dinner, for the gentlemen *to enjoy* their bottle, prevails also at Barbadoes; and, we have thought, even to a greater extreme than in England. They leave us very soon *after* dinner, and, often, we see no more of them during the evening. Frequently they do not join us *before* dinner; but we find them all assembled, at the head of the table, when we enter the dining-room. The party is sometimes so badly arranged, that we have scarcely more of the society of the ladies, and the people of the island, than if we had remained on board ship. Instead of the different persons being, pleasantly, intermixed, it is too common to see the ladies grouped together in a body at the



upper end of the table ; the officers and strangers, just arrived from Europe, placed at one side ; and the gentlemen of the island, who are familiar acquaintances, at the other. The attendants at the dinner-table are very numerous. In addition to those of the family, almost every gentleman has his own slave ; and, thus, to frequently happens that the room is crowded with sable domestics, whose surfaces emit an odour not less savoury than the richest dishes of the board.

In its supply of fresh provisions, particularly what is here termed *stock*, such as fowls and the like, Barbadoes exhibits a degree of plenty unknown in the neighbouring islands. This seems to be the happy effect of allowing the slaves to raise these things for sale, together with there being many small settlers, distributed about the country, who find their support chiefly in breeding stock for the markets. Poultry has been our principal food. Turkies, Guinea fowls, and chickens, we have had in great abundance. When we arrived, in the month of February, they were sold in the public market at little more than a bit (about  $5\frac{1}{2}d.$ ) per pound, but from the increased demand, consequent upon the presence of so many troops, and such throngs of shipping, the price is now raised to nearly two bits. The Muscovy ducks are also bred in numbers upon the island, and are so large as to appear like geese, when dressed



for the table. Next to small stock they have veal and pork in the greatest plenty. In Bridgetown they have also a fish-market, which at times is well supplied, but not so regularly, as, from the insular situation of the country, might be expected.

You will form some idea of the immense flocks of poultry raised on this little island, when I tell you that not only the ships of war, and the transports, but most of the West India trading vessels, recruit their provisions at Barbadoes; and that in addition to this constant and extensive drain it furnishes occasional supplies to the other colonies. Since we have been in Carlisle Bay, we have seen, at various times, great quantities of stock shipped for Martinique.

In point of clothing the people of Barbadoes deviate less from the habits of England than the difference of climate would seem to warrant. Their dress resembles that worn in our more northern latitude, being commonly a cloth coat, white cotton waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons. In some instances people of very active employment, or those who are much exposed in the fields, have the whole suit made of nankeen. Their night clothing seems more appropriate to the greater heat of the climate than the apparel of the day. It is common to sleep on a hard mattress in a long cotton shirt, without any other covering, except in the coolest sea-



son, when they make the slight addition of a cotton sheet.

One of the most prominent characteristics of the island is the tedious languor in which the people of Barbadoes pronounce their words. To convey to you, by the pen, any idea of their manner of speaking is utterly impossible: to be comprehended, it must be heard. The languid syllables are drawled out as if it were a great fatigue to utter them; and the tortured ear of an European grows impatient in waiting for the end of a word, or a sentence. "*How you do to da—ay,*" spoken by a Barbadian creole, consumes nearly as much time as might suffice for all the compliments of the morning! nor is this wearisome pronunciation confined to the people of colour; it occurs, likewise, among the whites, particularly those who have not visited Europe, nor resided for some time away from the island. In the same lengthened accent do the lower orders of Barbadians vent their unrestrained rage, in vollies of uncommonly dreadful oaths, which, in their horrible combinations and epithets, form imprecations peculiarly impious.

In manner, also, and in movement, as well as in speech, a degree of indolence and inaction prevails, beyond what might be expected, merely from heat of climate, and which is extremely annoying to Europeans.

The state of the negroes in Barbadoes va-



ries, as the state of slaves must ever do, according to the disposition and circumstances of the master. Under such humane and benevolent characters as Mr. Waith, and others whom we have visited, their situation might be envied by the poor of European nations! But under severe and cruel masters it becomes a state of ceaseless vexation and misery.

On the very important question of slavery in general I do not feel that my experience, hitherto, in the West Indies, enables me to judge with accuracy. But I will take care to note for you such facts as shall occur to my observation, and I may some day, perhaps, give you them in a separate letter.

Very much to the discredit of Barbadoes, numbers of old, diseased, or decrepit negroes, objects of compassion, and of horror, are seen lying at the corners, or begging about the streets. This, like the toleration of the swarms of mendicants in England, is a nuisance for which there is no excuse. If these poor unfortunate negroes be free, they should be relieved by a general tax upon the island: if slaves, the law should compel every master to provide for his own. Should the laws of humanity be insufficient, and those of justice inadequate, a law of coercion should constrain the unfeeling owner to protect and cherish the being, whose youth and vigour have been expended for his benefit;



and who, having worn out his days, in the heavy toils of bondage, is grown aged and infirm!

What can be so unworthy! what so disgraceful, as for a master to neglect, in old age, the slave from whom he has exacted all the labour of youth, and all the vigour of manhood? Perhaps nothing portrays in more melancholy demonstration, the possible depravity of the human heart! No longer able to exert himself to his owner's profit, the aged slave, enfeebled by years, and exhausted by toil, is left to beg his *yam* from door to door! Abandoned by his cruel master, he becomes a pensioner upon promiscuous charity, or is allowed to fall a prey to disease, and to want!

Without some compulsory law the slaves of the avaricious and of the lower orders, who are, themselves, scarcely removed from indigence, must ever be subject to this hard lot of neglect and cruelty.

The first specimen of West India slaves which met our observation was singularly calculated to impress us with sentiments of compassion and disgust. It occurred at the very moment, too, when the impression would be most powerful, and consequently it will remain indelible. Immediately on our coming to anchor in Carlisle Bay, a woman appeared alongside the ship in a small boat, with some bad fruit, tobacco, salt fish, and other articles of traffic. She



was rowed by two negroes, who were her slaves. Two such objects of human form and human misery had never before met our eyes! They were feeble, meager, and dejected—half-starved, half-naked, and, in figure, too accurately resembling hungry and distempered greyhounds! They crouched upon their heels and haunches in the boat; their bones almost pierced their filthy and eruptive skins; their wasted frames trembled with debility; and, while their hollow eyes and famished countenances rendered them ghastly images of horror, their whole appearance shocked humanity, and appalled the sight! Are these, we exclaimed, what are called slaves? Is this the state to which human beings are reduced in bondage? Afflicting and cruel indeed! Well may slavery be deemed a curse! Can it be possible that these spectres once were men? Are such the objects we are to see? Are these the wretched and deplorable beings who are to appear every day, and every hour before our eyes? Forbid it humanity! forbid it Heaven! Such was the apostrophe of the moment, and I feel a sincere gratification in being able to inform you that the melancholy subjects of this first impression were not correct examples of the general mass of slaves. Still it is grievous that any such should be seen: but we hope to find them only rare instances, for we learn that the large gangs of negroes kept by the



great merchants, and the planters, are generally treated with kindness and humanity, and appear contented and in comfort.

It is easy to distinguish the slaves of the opulent and respectable inhabitants from those of the poor and needy people of the town. The latter, being in poverty themselves, can only give to their negroes a scanty allowance of food, while their indigence induces them to exact an over-proportion of labour. Hence the slaves of this class of people appear too often with sharp bones and hungry sallow countenances, having eruptions about the body, and their skins of an unhealthy hue. Their general appearance indeed is dirty and unwholesome, and strikingly marks their neglected state. Want and wretchedness are deeply stamped in every line of their persons; and they may not inaptly be said to resemble the worn-out horse or the starved and jaded ass, too often seen trembling under a heavy burden, or reeling in an old tattered cart upon the roads of England.

It is not the practice to load the slaves with a superfluity of clothing: a shirt, and a pair of breeches, or only the latter, for the men; and a single petticoat for the women, constitute the whole apparel. Bedding and bed-clothes find no place in their list of necessaries: they usually sleep on a hard plank, in the clothing of the day. Repose is both ensured



and sweetened to them by labour; and the head needs no pillow but the arm. Some who, by means of industry and economy, are more advanced in their little comforts, procure a kind of matting, a paillasse of plantain-leaves, or some other species of bedding, to defend them from the bare plank; but this is an indulgence self-attained, not a necessary provided by the master. The architecture of their huts is as rude as it is simple. A roof of plantain-leaves, with a few rough boards, nailed to the coarse pillars which support it, form the whole building. The leeward side is commonly left in part open, and the roof projects to some distance over the door-way, forming a defence against both the sun and the rain.

Notwithstanding the great heat experienced by Europeans, the negroes feel the evenings chilly, and we frequently see them crowding round the bit of fire which they make for cooking their supper. This is commonly in the open air near to the door of the hut; but they sometimes place it upon the middle of the dirt floor withinside the building; where they seem to have great enjoyment in squatting round it, amidst the thick cloud of smoke, to whiff additional fumes from the short pipe or sagar, and to join in loud and merry song.

Smoking is an universal custom among them. In order to be at all moments provided



for this enjoyment, they carry in their breeches pocket a short pipe, about an inch in length from the bowl; or instead of this a leaf of tobacco rolled into a *sagar*. Very often the pipe is so short, or the *sagar* so closely smoked away, as to endanger burning the nose, or even the lips. I have frequently seen them smoking with the pipe so short as to hold it in the mouth by pressing with the lips upon the lower part of the bowl. They often kindle their pipes, by putting bowl to bowl and nose to nose, and smoking into each other's eyes, until the tobacco has taken fire.

The food of the negroes is issued to them weekly, under the inspection of the manager. It is very simple and but little varied; breakfast, dinner, and supper being similar to each other, and the same throughout the year. It consists mostly of Guinea corn, with a small bit of salt meat, or salt fish. Formerly a bunch of plantains was given to each slave as the weekly allowance: but the plantain-walks being mostly worn out, this is become an expensive provision. Rice, maize, yams, eddoes, and sweet potatoes form an occasional change, but the Guinea corn is, commonly, issued as the weekly supply; and in order to obtain some variety of food, they barter this in exchange for other provisions, or sell it for money, and with that buy salt meat or vegetables. We see them oc-



asionally offering the Guinea corn for sale; and on being asked why they sell it, they thus express themselves: "Me no like for have him Guinea corn always! Massa gib me Guinea corn too much. Guinea corn to-day! Guinea corn to-morrow! Guinea corn eb'ry day! Me no like him Guinea corn—him Guinea corn no good for gnhyaam."

The weekly supply being issued to them on the Sunday, it becomes their own care how to use it so as to have a sufficiency of food until the following Sabbath. Those who are industrious have little additions of their own, either from vegetables grown on the spot of ground allotted to them, or purchased with the money obtained for the pig, the goat, or other stock raised about their huts in the negro yard.

A mess of pottage, or very hot soup, called pepper-pot, is one of their favorite dishes, which is also much esteemed by the inhabitants, and by strangers. It is prepared by stewing various kinds of vegetables with a bit of salt meat, or salt fish, and seasoning it very highly with the pods of the red pepper. The vegetable, called squashes, is much used in these pepper-pots. Bread is unknown among the slaves of the West Indies: nor, indeed, is it in common use among their masters, but they find very excellent substitutes in the yam, the cassada, and the eddoe.

The usual round of labour of the slaves



is from sunrise to sunset, having intervals of rest allowed them, at the times of breakfast, and dinner.

The negroes are generally sad thieves; they appear to know no sense of honesty. Ignorant of all moral principle, they steal without thinking it wrong, and without any apprehension, except that of being detected. The planters are obliged to employ one or two of the most trusty of them in the capacity of watchmen to guard, by close and constant attention, the orchards, plantain-walks, provision-stores, and the like, from the depredations of their own and their neighbours' slaves. Although they have no remorse in stealing whenever or wheresoever opportunity offers, still they are peculiarly prone to robbing their masters; and this they do not even consider a theft, as is too evident by an expression very common among them, viz. "*Me no tief him: me take him from Massa.*"

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April 9.

In speaking to you of the exemption of Barbadoes from great and destructive sickness, I remarked that, although it escaped some general ills, it was visited with a malady peculiarly its own. As this forms a characteristic feature of



the country, and cannot but attract the notice, and excite the curiosity of strangers, you would not excuse me if I were to neglect offering you a few words upon the subject.

The disease is the *elephantiasis*; called by some the "*glandular disease*," but, by the many, designated simply the "*Barbadoes disease*." It commonly appears in the form of an enormous enlargement of one or both legs; but affects occasionally other parts, particularly the scrotum, which becomes increased to a surprising bulk. When once established, it is extremely difficult to remove, and for the most part proves to be incurable. It disturbs the general health less than might be expected, and frequently exists for many years, or, even during the remainder of a long life, without seeming materially to impair the constitution. It is mostly seen among the negroes, but it occurs also among the creole whites, and even suffers not the Europeans to escape. Although so frequent in Barbadoes, as to be held in a great degree peculiar or endemic, it is not wholly confined to this country: some instances of it being found in the neighbouring islands.

It would seem not to have been so prevalent, as it now is, from any very distant period of time; for about the year 1760 died at Barbadoes a man named Francis Briggs, more commonly known by the fictitious appellation of



Christopher Columbus, who, from the uncommon and monstrous appearance of his legs, had been represented as the bugbear or object of terror for the purpose of frightening children.

Male and female, young, middle-aged, and old, black, yellow, and white, are now all subject to its attack; and, in walking along the streets, the eye is distressed, at almost every corner, with the appearance of this hideous deformity.

The disease usually begins with an affection of the inguinal glands, from whence a red streak, or line of inflammation extends down the limb, in the direction of the lymphatic vessels; the part becoming tumefied, and taking on a shining and œdematous appearance. The swelling gradually occupies the whole of the leg, increasing until, in many instances, the limb is more than double its ordinary size. The skin assumes a morbid change, grows rough and scaly, or is covered with irregular wart-like risings. In some cases deep belts or indentations appear in various parts of the tumor, as if formed by the pressure of ligatures: in others the swelling bulges out in a number of irregular protrusions: sometimes, from extreme distention, the skin breaks into fissures, and a watery fluid oozes out, which, on exposure to the air, grows gelatinous upon the surface. The foot frequently partakes of the disease: but in many cases the immense tumor of the leg terminates



abruptly at the ankle, hanging over the foot in knotty, and scaly excrescences. The deformity is thus diversified; the enormous bulk of leg appearing under a variety of unseemly and disgusting shapes. As the enlargement increases, the whole extremity becomes hard and squamous; and the distended skin, which was at first œdematous, grows thick and corneous, and entirely resists the pressure of the finger.

It has been found on dissection that, from the effused lymph which originally caused the tumor being coagulated and hardened, the substance of the enlarged limb has assumed an appearance not unlike brawn; the morbid skin, and the cellular membrane under it, being thickened into a tough, horny, and almost cartilaginous consistence.

From this unsightly malady being mostly accompanied with fever of an intermittent type, we often hear it termed "the fever and ague." Indeed from the periodical returns of the paroxysms, and from the tumefaction succeeding to them, the disease has been very generally considered only as an effect resulting from intermittent fever. The practice, said to be successful in its removal, seems also to be founded upon this view of it. Regard being had to the fever as the original affection, the elephantiasis is viewed only as a sequel, and the curative means are directed solely to the extinction of the



febrile symptoms: which being effected, by antimony and Peruvian bark, the patient is sent for a time to some other island, by way of change of climate, in order to prevent a relapse. No particular attention is paid to the tumor, which, on the fever being removed, is expected gradually to diminish. But sometimes, instead of receding, it remains stationary, or is increased; or if it subside, is renewed on any future invasion of the fever.

Often a return to Barbadoes brings a return of the intermittent, and a consequent addition to the enlargement of the already thickened extremity; and from the attacks of the disease recurring in frequent repetition, there remains no way of preventing it from being established into an incurable deformity, but by seeking the remedy of a more temperate climate. Frequently the disorder seems to be entirely subdued by a few years residence in England, yet again takes place on the patient returning to Barbadoes.

Some regard the disease in a directly opposite point of view, considering the glandular tumor, with its attendant inflammation of the lymphatics, as the primary affection, and the fever merely as symptomatic: but it is not consistent with my present purpose, to enter into the discussion of this question.

Different opinions have been held respecting the origin of this singular affection. Being



most frequent, or first observed among the negroes, many have believed it to be imported with them from the shores of Africa: but this opinion is divested of probability, by the extraordinary prevalence of the disease at Barbadoes. Were it brought by the slaves from Africa, it would be equally common in the other settlements; and, not being infectious, would not be seen among the white creoles, or the Europeans. It is undoubtedly the indigenous offspring of the island, and perhaps is connected with a peculiarly arid state of the atmosphere; for in the colonies shadowed with thick forests and vegetation, it is still unknown, and has only grown common at Barbadoes, in proportion as its woods have been removed, and the surface of the land left unsheltered.

Except on its early attack, or at the periods of acute relapse, the disease is attended with little or no pain, and the enlargement sometimes proceeds so gradually, that the person himself is almost insensible of it. He walks about as usual, and appears to suffer but little inconvenience, either from the additional bulk, or the great increase of weight. Hence it is often less afflicting to the individual, than offensive to others. It is extremely repugnant to the sight; and as the negroes walk in the streets with these diseased limbs exposed to every eye, Europeans, but recently arrived, are exceedingly



annoyed by their filthy and monstrous appearance.

Perhaps nature has not formed, nor can the human mind conceive a being at once so disgusting, and so pitiable, as an old half-famished negro woman, of withered frame, hobbling about with her loose and naked skin hanging shrivelled in deep-furrowed wrinkles; and dragging after her one or both legs grown into an immense bulk of hideous disease—her feet only toes, protruding from this huge mass of distempered leg! Yet such are the objects too often seen upon the streets of Bridge-town!

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April 10.

As planter here supersedes the title of farmer, so does plantation that of farm. The land is cultivated in a number of divisions, which in Europe, might receive the common designation of farms, but in Barbadoes, they are termed plantations, or estates. Of these the distinguishing appellation is not derived from the name of the existing possessor; but from some specific title long since assigned to them, or from the name of the original occupant, or of the family to whom they have for many years belonged. Thus a person, going to visit Mr. Hollingsworth or



Mr. Waith, would not say he was going to Mr. Waith's, or Mr. Hollingsworth's, but to "Colleton's," or to "Spendlove;" these being the names by which the estates have long been known.

Besides the great number of hospitable mansions found on the large plantations, in the different parts of the country; many humble dwellings attract the notice of the traveller, and improve the general scenery of the island. They are the cottages of a poorer order of white people,—obscure individuals, remote from the great class of merchants and planters, and who obtain a scanty livelihood by cultivating a small patch of earth, and breeding up poultry, or what they term *stock* for the markets. They are descended from European settlers, but from misfortune, or misconduct, in some of the race, are reduced to a state not much superior to the condition of free negroes. This numerous class of inhabitants, between the great planters and the people of colour, forms a striking feature, distinguishing Barbadoes from the more recently settled colonies. They have no precise knowledge when their ancestors first arrived: through several generations they have been born, and have lived on the island; and, regarding it as their native and only abode, they do not, like their more wealthy neighbours, look to England as another, and a better home.



Curiosity has led us to visit several of these families.

In the part of the island near the tar-pits, we called at a small hut, or cabin, where we met with a large family of Barbadian cottagers ; and, with all the inquisitiveness of strangers, we addressed them in a multitude of interrogatories, to which their replies were highly gratifying. They were living amidst the mountains, apparently shut from the world, and but seldom exposed to the intrusion of visitors. The dame of the house was nearly seventy years of age. We found her occupied in playful attentions with two of her grandchildren—two, of seven, of the offspring of her daughter. Making inquiries respecting the old woman's history we learned that she could trace back her family in regular lineal descent, as far as her great-grandfather, the successors of whom have never removed from Barbadoes ; so that the children we here saw, were, to a certainty, as distant as the sixth generation, and probably much more remote, in direct descent, from parents who had always lived in the torrid zone. One of them was about six, the other eight years old. In fairness of skin, in feature, and in figure, they might have been mistaken for children born in England, or any other temperate climate.

Near Hilloughby hill we met with another



cottage family, regularly descended from British parents, of long standing in the island, and having all the features, and general appearance of Europeans. The father of this family was sixty years old, and some of his predecessors had lived to upwards of ninety. We could not trace the pedigree so accurately as in the other family; but this probably was not less ancient, the old man having no knowledge but of his Barbadian predecessors, and not knowing when they first came to the island. The occupation of this family was that of planting a small spot of land with ginger, and raising stock to sell at Bridge-town market. They were poor, like the others, and compelled to labour much in full exposure to the sun. Like the negroes, too, their diet consisted chiefly of vegetables.

At the fort, commanding the entrance of Carlisle Bay, are living a man and his wife, both natives of Barbadoes, whose ancestors for generations, beyond all that tradition has traced to them, have resided constantly in the island: sitting round the mother were five fine children, their offspring, who were in face and form as fair as the fairest Europeans.

These facts stand in direct opposition to the speculative doctrines of those who derive the various colours of the human race from climate or locality of residence, together with the con-



comitant circumstances of diet, and mode of life.

The three families above mentioned are, undoubtedly, of the fifth or sixth, or, perhaps, a still more distant generation, in direct lineal descent, from parents, originally, English; but whose offspring, through every race, to the present children, have always resided between the tropics. They have, moreover, lived in circumstances of mediocrity, exposed to labour, and to the full influence of climate; or have known only the abode of poverty, and by needy fortune have been compelled to use a diet very similar to that of the Africans. Yet is there not an individual among them, who, either in form, feature, or colour has made the slightest approach to that change, which a constant residence, through so many generations, must have effected, were their descendants, of future ages, to become of negro form, and hue.

Children born in England have not fairer skins, nor features more correctly European. The younger have all the cherub face and form of the lovely smiling babes of a temperate climate. Those more advanced are thinner, and bear about them more of that languor, which universally results from long residence in great and constant heat.

To whatever age the parents may have lived, it is remarkable that, although the face



and hands shall have become brown, from immediate exposure to the sun, the other parts of their bodies remain white and unchanged; and not the softest shade, not the slightest tinge of the acquired darkness of hands or face is communicated to their offspring, the children being, invariably, born as perfect whites as those of Europe.

But the strong and incontrovertible fact with respect to the American Indians, militates so decidedly against the doctrine of conversion, that scarcely another argument can be necessary to its refutation. Although living for unknown ages under the same parallel of latitude as the Africans, and exposed to precisely similar habits and occupations, not an individual of them has ever been known to resemble the negro, either in skin or feature. Nor, indeed, would it be less reasonable to expect that the negroes of Africa, or those of the West India islands, should be converted into Indians, than that Indians, or Europeans, should degenerate into Africans!

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April 11.

It is almost incredible that on the 11th day of April the people of Barbadoes should remain ignorant regarding the situation of an immense fleet which sailed for that island, from England,



in the month of November preceding ! Yet so it is respecting the Portsmouth convoy. Signs of moving are now exhibited, which seem to indicate that the troops already arrived will not be longer detained inactive. Among other marks of approaching service, we have been called upon for a general return of the sick, and it appears in orders that Drs. Henderson and Cave, with a detachment of our staff, are to remain at Barbadoes in charge of the hospitals appropriated to the St. Domingo division. In consequence of many of the ships arriving in a sickly state, the hospitals became crowded as soon as they were erected, notwithstanding our having the further accommodation of converting a part of the barracks into sick wards. But we have, in some measure, relieved the hospitals, by forming a small encampment, and putting the convalescents under canvass.

We expect that you will hear from various quarters, and read in all the newspapers sad histories of disease and death, but let me caution you not to believe that we are all dying. Should it be told you that more than a thousand sick are already in the hospitals, be not deceived into a belief that so many are about to become the victims of climate, and yellow fever.

The hospitals are certainly thronged, from the number of sick, but this cannot be placed to the account of the climate or of endemic



disease, for, nearly all the men, now ill, *arrived* in sickness. They had been detained on Spike Island, or in crowded transports, during many weeks of inhospitable weather, whereby extensive disease was generated among them; and hence it happened that, upon arriving at Barbadoes, the troops in many of the ships, although not actually ill, had approaching disease so strongly marked in their features, that it became necessary to remove every one of them on shore, in order to have the vessels thoroughly fumigated and purified; and from this circumstance it occurred that many slight cases were thrown into the hospitals, which otherwise would not have appeared upon the list. This will in some measure explain to you why the hospitals are crowded, although neither “yellow fever,” nor any other malignant disease reigns amongst us.

While I am upon the subject of sickness I may remark to you that I have had my first opportunity of seeing a case of that destructive malady, which has lately excited such universal alarm, under the term “yellow fever;” but, perhaps, you are not prepared to hear that, after a residence of so many weeks in the West Indies, I have seen only a solitary example of that disease: yet such is the fact—for, amidst all our sickness, and crowded hospitals, only a single instance of “yellow fever” has, hitherto,



occurred. I visited this patient with my friend Dr. Jackson, the learned author who has so ably written upon the diseases of Jamaica, and obtained his clinical remarks concerning the leading and more characteristic symptoms of the disease. You will believe that the event has impressed upon my mind a very powerful sense of the subtle malignity of this devouring complaint.

The patient was certainly very ill, but, to those who had not before witnessed the disease, he did not appear to be in extreme danger; yet, alas! on repeating our visit the following morning, we found him a cold and yellow corpse!



## LETTER XXXV.

Barbadoes, April 12.

A RUMOUR is strongly prevalent, that a division of the troops, now assembled at Barbadoes, is to be detached on secret service. Should this take place, and the detachment be formed from the St. Domingo armament, it is more than possible that our happy quartette may yet be dispersed before we reach our original destination. Of course our expectations have always led to this: but from having lived on board, together, and in the utmost harmony, during a period of many months, it would be matter of regret, to either of us, to be taken from our congenial mess, at the very eve of sailing for our destined port; particularly as we should be separated under circumstances which would render it probable that we might never meet again.

I do not recollect to have noted to you in any former letter the great fondness which the negroes have for the water, or their singular address and expertness in moving upon that element. In one of our late walks we met with a slave who was amusing himself by exercises of uncommon agility in the sea. Not an otter, nor a beaver, nor scarcely a dolphin could appear



more at his case. He was quite at play in the water, and diverting himself in all kinds of antic tricks, and gambols. He dived to the bottom—swam in a variety of ways—walked or paddled along like a dog—concealed himself for a long time under the water—laid himself at rest upon its surface, and appeared as much at home in the ocean, as if he had never breathed a lighter, nor trodden a firmer medium.

This expertness is much derived from an early habit of bathing, or, as it might be termed, exercising in the water; and it renders the negroes peculiarly useful in cases of accident at sea, or in the harbour. Let them have a good boat, or canoe, and it will scarcely happen that they can be drowned. Even if they are upset, and the boat turned keel upwards, they rise at her sides, and there continue to swim or paddle until they again *right her*, then, bailing out the water, resume their seats and proceed as if nothing had happened.

A sense of cleanliness attaches to their love of the water, for we not only see them often in the sea, but frequently also washing themselves in the rivulets. It seems to form one of their favorite amusements to stand in the sea, or a river, and to take up water in both hands and pour it over their shoulders down their backs. This is practised both by the men and women,



and is one of their most frequent methods of bathing.

Another mark of cleanliness also prevails among them which was less to be expected; viz. that of paying great attention to their teeth. The chew-stick which is here employed for cleaning the teeth is far more in use among the negroes, than the tooth-brush among the lower classes of people in England.

Our adroit negro, amidst his many gambols in the water, dived often to the bottom of the sea, and brought up a handful of sand. With this rough dentifrice he soundly scrubbed his teeth, and by way of essence to wash it off, plunged down, for another handful, with his mouth wide open; thus, alternately, repeating the rubbing, and sea-water washing, until his teeth were duly contrasted with his ebon countenance.



## LETTER XXXVI.

Ship Grenada, at Sea, April 17.

THE apprehended division of our long associated mess has taken place! It has fallen to my lot to join an expedition under General Whyte, and I am separated from my friends, perhaps soon to meet again, perhaps to meet no more! To what quarter we are bound is held in secrecy. Curaçoa, Demarara, St. Eustatia, and various other destinations have been conjectured, but, from the course we are at present steering, the coast of Guiana seems to be most probable.

We were ordered away at very short notice. On returning to the Lord Sheffield after my visit at the hospital on the morning of the 14th inst. I received instructions to embark on board the Grenada transport before twelve o'clock; and to take the direction of a detachment of the hospital staff, appointed to accompany a division of the army, which was to sail that afternoon, on secret service.

Being advised to carry with me as little baggage as possible, and assured that I might expect soon to return, in order to proceed with General Whyte, to St. Domingo, I made up a soldier's kit of apparel, and left all my heavier



packages, under the care of my late comrades, in the Lord Sheffield.

The Grenada is a very fine vessel, and sails remarkably well. Like the Lord Sheffield, she is a West India trader, engaged as a transport only for the passage out, and as soon as she has completed her voyage is to return to England laden with sugar, cotton, or other colonial produce.

I thought myself fortunate in being appointed to so good a ship; and, hearing that troops were to be thickly stowed on board the different vessels of the expedition, anticipated much of comfort upon the passage, by observing that the Grenada was free from the crowd I had expected to meet. But these self-gratulations proved to be somewhat premature. Upwards of three hundred troops arrived quickly after, and a scene of confusion was introduced surpassing all that even fancy had created.

The lieutenant-colonel commanding the regiment, the commanding officer of artillery, and myself, are the only officers who have the accommodation of separate births : all the others are obliged to lie down together without beds, or mattresses, upon the bare decks of the cabins, and even there, they are compelled to stow closely, in order to make room for them all.



On the upper deck the soldiers are still more thickly spread; they sleep without any other covering than their clothes of the day, using the arm, or the knapsack as a pillow; and so near do they lie to each other, that a foot can scarcely find place between them. Happily the wind is very favorable, and we are led to believe that whithersoever we may be bound the voyage will not be long. Having the steady breeze of the *trades* on her quarter, the ship is worked almost wholly by the helm, and we seldom have need to shift the sails—occasional bracing being all that is necessary. If the weather had been bad, and the wind against us, you will readily imagine the sad state we must have been in, with such a body of men, sick, and ill, and crowded in every quarter of the vessel. Even as it is, we have much difficulty in keeping them sufficiently clean to preserve them in health. They lie down in their clothes at night, where they have been standing or sitting the whole of the day, and from the deck being their seat, their dinner-board, and their bed, all about them soon grows unwholesome and offensive: pieces of broken food, sloppings of broth, or grog, bits of meat, old bones, crumbs of biscuit, and various other kinds of filth collect under them, and about their clothing; and, from the great



heat of climate, and still more unpleasant heat occasioned by the crowd, this dirty commixture soon becomes sour and fetid; and would, in a short time, generate disease, were not the rules of cleanliness strictly enforced.

Besides those who sleep upon the open deck above, there is another multitude in a more confined situation between decks. Observing this place to be very close, and not sufficiently ventilated, I have recommended that the troops should be divided into three watches, and that two of the three divisions should be kept constantly upon the open deck, relieving those below every four hours. Likewise as a further means of prevention I have advised that all the men should bathe every morning, while the decks are thoroughly washed and cleaned. Fortunately I am supported in this by the approbation of Colonel Tilson, who is exceedingly zealous to do every thing that can preserve the health of the soldiers, and has issued his orders accordingly.

We have contrived a method whereby the bathing is effected with less trouble than was at first apprehended. The men are regularly assembled by companies upon the quarter-deck, at an early hour of the morning, and there undressing, two at a time, they go down to the waist of the ship, and remain at the bottom of the step leading from the quarter-deck, until two



or three buckets of water have been dashed upon them by some of their comrades standing directly above them upon the edge of the deck, others being stationed at the sides to draw up water for the purpose. After being thus washed, they move on to the fore-castle to dress themselves, others following in succession until the whole are bathed.

We find some difficulty in establishing this practice, but I hope in a few days to see it brought to the regularity of a military movement: the benefit of it is not confined merely to cleanliness of person, for, while the bathing is going on, the decks, where the soldiers sleep, are thoroughly swept and washed. Its utility is also further extended, in the general movement it creates, and the refreshing coolness it brings to every one on board. Were the voyage to be long, our experience of the few past days seems to assure us that this daily washing would be our best, and, perhaps, our only preservative against sickness.

The expedition consists of about thirteen hundred men of the 39th, 93d, and 99th regiments commanded by Lieutenant-colonels Tilson, Hislop, and Gammell, and a party of artillery, under the command of Captain Bagot. The squadron of the fleet, employed with us, is under Commodore Parr, and consists of the Malabar of 50 guns, La Pique, Le Babet, and



the Undaunted frigates ; to which are added, the Grenada armed transport, with several sloops, and schooners.

I must not forget to note that I am now addressing you from the opposite side of the sun. This day, in latitude  $9^{\circ} 27'$ , we passed immediately under that burning orb, receiving his perpendicular rays directly upon our heads. I have nothing further to tell you on this occasion. His southern face seems neither hotter nor colder, brighter nor darker, than his northern. The only striking circumstance arises from the novelty of looking to the north at noon, to take our meridian; and habit will be required to reconcile this seeming inconsistency. While you at mid-day look south for the sun, I shall look north, and although our noon will be different, this circumstance will often, mentally, place me with you. The effect, I wish to flatter myself, will be reciprocal, and, attracted by his opposite sides, the cheering sun will be frequently the medium of associating us in mutual sympathy.

Adieu.



## LETTER XXXVII.

At Sea, April 20.

OUR destination is no longer a secret! The captain went yesterday on board the commodore, and received his instructions; when the Dutch colonies, upon the coast of Guiana, were avowed to be the object of our expedition.

In the evening we came into thick water indicating our approach to the shore; but no land could be perceived even from the top-gallant-mast head. This morning the sea was still more muddy, of a yellowish colour, and, comparatively, very shallow. Land was unquestionably near, but, still, not visible. In the course of the day trees were seen from the mast-head, and we came to anchor only a few leagues from them; but, even yet, without being able to see the soil on which they grew. It is common to descry a streak at the horizon, or a kind of line, or fixed point in the clouds, denoting the coast which a vessel approaches, long before it reaches it; but, here, we are in muddy water, near the colony, with trees in view, without being able to distinguish any other mark of the territory before us. It seems to be



a peculiar shore, the water being very thick and shallow at a great distance from the land.

Orders are issued for three days' provisions to be cooked, and for the troops to hold themselves in readiness for immediate debarkation. They have, consequently, been paraded this evening upon deck; their arms and accoutrements cleaned and inspected; and all put in a state for action. The soldiers are forewarned in general orders that all irregular conduct, towards the inhabitants, on landing, will subject them to certain punishment and disgrace; and plunder is prohibited on pain of death. The field-artillery, with carriages, sponges, ammunition, and all the necessary apparatus have been put into boats, this evening, from our ship, preparatory to being conveyed on shore with the troops in the morning, and, after a day of great hurry and labour, all is in readiness for leaving the vessel.

Instructions are given concerning the plan of attack by the troops, and the stations to be taken by the different ships; and every thing seems to imply a busy morrow; yet, notwithstanding our vessel is to be at a post of some danger, I shall hope to note to you the detail of our proceedings in a future letter. At present, I seek my birth, cordially bidding you . . . . good night!



## LETTER XXXVIII.

Stabroek, April 23.

I HAVE again the pleasure of addresing you upon terra firma, and of telling you that the united colony of Essequibo and Demarara is ours. All being in readiness for landing on the morning of the 21st, the troops were ordered to proceed on shore, with the earliest tide, and the frigates, with the Grenada, and the slave-ship, were directed to take their stations before the fort, at the entrance of the river. The larger ships were unable to approach near enough to give any protection to the landing of the troops and stores, which were put on board a little fleet of light vessels, some of which were brought with us from Barbadoes for the purpose; and some taken after our arrival upon the coast; but it proved unfortunately that even these, light as they were, drew too much water for this shore; for, about five o'clock, we had the mortification to learn that our advanced fleet was fast aground, deep fixed in mud. Finding the small vessels to be in this dilemma, our ship, together with others which had sailed through a very confined channel towards the



fort, came to anchor near the entrance of the Demarara river, having the fort, also a Dutch frigate, and a number of shipping in full view before them. This accident might have proved of serious consequence, as the troops were compelled to remain until the next flood tide; being unable either to reach the shore, or to return.

In the events of this day we had a further proof of the extreme uncertainty of military operations, more particularly when connected with, or dependent upon maritime movements. In the morning we had every prospect of seeing the troops on shore, the fort taken, and the whole affair decided before we slept: but, in the evening, chagrin and disappointment were our lot; the great expectations of the day having ended in bringing some of the ships to an anchor off the mouth of the river, and placing the troops in an unhappy situation, from which it was out of the power of man to extricate them, until the unerring operations of nature should send back the waters of the ocean to their relief.

The ships were anchored so near the river as to prevent the escape of any of the enemy's vessels, and the troops on board were ordered to lie on their arms, upon deck, during the night, to prevent a surprise; and to be in readiness to act against the fort, at any hour they might be called upon.



At eight o'clock the following morning the flag of truce which had been sent off to the fort returned. Due secrecy was of course observed regarding the reply; and presently the boat was again despatched to the fort; but as the little schooner fleet was ordered to return to the ships, at the flowing of the tide, instead of proceeding to land the troops; and as no orders were given to advance to the attack of the fort, it was presumed that the answer had not been hostile.

Between ten and eleven o'clock the flag of truce again returned, and it was then announced that the capitulation was accepted, and that the fort was to surrender immediately to our troops. A party was accordingly detached, to take possession of a post agreed upon, and the whole garrison was to march out at four o'clock. Consequently, by evening, we found ourselves fully established in Fort William Frederic, the strongest, and almost the only defence of the colony.

Notwithstanding our strict observance of cleanliness, and all our care to prevent disease, I am sorry to remark, that numbers of the soldiers fell sick on the passage: but, in mentioning this, I ought to observe that the 39th and 99th regiments were mostly composed of draughts from various other corps, consisting principally of old men, and unseasoned boys, who had been collected together, not according to the best regulations of the recruiting service; and



also, that multitudes of them had been sick on the passage from Cork to Barbadoes, consequently many (of those now ill) are only suffering from a relapse of former disease.

It is worthy of remark that, although upon the passage, not a morning had passed without a considerable number being reported for the sick list, we had not one new patient the day it was intended to make the landing; but, on the contrary, the list of the preceding day was diminished. The spirit of attack seemed to operate as a specific remedy. Many actually recovered, and were allowed to join their companies; others stole off, without reporting themselves, fearful the doctors should not allow that they were well enough to be reported efficient; and others, far too weak to bear arms, came feebly from under the awning of the quarter-deck, which had been converted into a sick-ward for their accommodation, and begged of me to permit them to go on shore to join their comrades in the battle. The idea of going into action proved a more salutary stimulus than could be found in the Pharmacopœia of the college of physicians; and the sound of the destructive cannon promised to be a more healing balm, than the mildest emollient prescribed by the doctor.

In adverting to the country, from whence I address you, I may observe that circumstances attended our landing, which were not calculated



to create a favorable impression of the colony. The day being wet, we were completely drenched with rain in the boats, and then set on shore in the midst of a heavy shower. From the landing-place we had nearly a mile to walk to the town; and such a walk, perhaps, could not have been found in any other country—Holland excepted. From the nature of the road it was almost impossible to maintain ourselves upon our feet for a single step. Fatigued by heat, we had to drag along in the rain, either ankle-deep in mud, or slipping and sliding about upon a wet surface of clay.

We arrived at the town in a sadly wet and bespattered condition; but here we found our feet relieved by stepping on a narrow causeway, paved with small bricks put edgewise into the ground. This was a glad change to our trembling limbs, and now, from requiring less heed to our steps, and the rain ceasing, we had an opportunity of looking round, to observe the general appearance of the town and the country. I could have fancied myself in Holland. The land appeared as one wide flat, intersected with dykes and canals; the roads mere banks of mud and clay, thrown from the ditches at their sides; and the houses bedaubed with tawdry colours, like Dutch toys, giving the whole a striking resemblance to the mother-country.



The town is simply two long rows of houses, built very distant from each other, with a wide green in the middle, by way of street. It is more than a mile in length, running in a line from the river back to the forest—the most inconvenient form that could have been contrived, as it places most of the buildings far away from the river, and deprives them of the great advantages, for trade, which they might have had by being erected parallel with the course of the water. To remedy this defect canals and ditches have been cut, at the backs of the houses, which are perhaps the worst neighbours the inhabitants could have near them, for, being the receptacles of mud, and all the filthy drainings of the town, and only partially emptied by the reflux of the tide, they become highly offensive, and tend to generate disease. The causeway of bricks is continued throughout the whole length of the street; but the carriage-road is of mere clay and mud.

After waiting upon the General, at the government-house, I lost no time in proceeding upon duty; and, without delay, went out in search of some building to convert into an hospital, or place of accommodation for the sick. This would have led to a new journey, by way of the wet and slippery road, to the fort; but, among the happy events of the day, fortune threw me in the path of a gentleman residing in the town,



who, upon observing me toiling through the mud and clay, insisted upon my taking his boat and slaves to convey me to the fort, by way of the river, assuring me that to walk so far might be a dangerous excess of fatigue; and, further, directing his negroes to wait, and bring me back to his house, to dinner. Perhaps I was little inclined to refuse, but it would have been difficult to resist the pressing civility with which the accommodation was offered; accordingly, I accepted the boat, and, afterwards, returned and ate of boiled fowl, and a roasted kid. During dinner the friendly invitation was extended to a request, almost amounting to a demand, from both the gentleman and lady of the table, that I would make their dwelling my home so long as the service should require my continuance at Stabroek. Thus has fortune, at once, established me in good quarters in the enemy's country, without a billet, and even without the trouble of seeking them.



## LETTER XXXIX.

Demarara, April 28.

HAVING secure possession of the colony of Essequibo and Demarara, a division of our armament has been detached to the attack of the adjoining settlement of Berbische, which separates us from Surinam.

The whole of the coast not being yet cleared of its wild woods, no regular road is established between the two colonies, although Demarara and Berbische lie contiguous to each other: hence this, like most of our expeditions, is exposed to all the uncertainties of the wind and the ocean. The troops were embarked on board small sloops and schooners, calculated for the shallow waters of this muddy coast; and it is expected that they will reach Berbische to-morrow evening, or the following morning, the distance between the two great rivers, which give names to the colonies, being but little more than twenty leagues.

We are taught that it will not be possible to procure fresh animal provisions in these colonies, in the quantity necessary for the army; but it is suggested that we may obtain a supply from the Spaniards, who have great numbers of



wild cattle, in the island of Trinidad, and upon the neighbouring coast of Oronoko. Vegetables and fruits we find, here, in great plenty. The market, as at Barbadoes, is held on Sunday, and is supplied by means of what the negroes either grow, or steal.

Being anxious to provide for the sick, in the best way that was in my power, I became, on Sunday last, quite a forestaller of the market. It will, perhaps, surprise you to learn that among our purchases I bought a hamper of pines, nearly as heavy as a negro could carry, for the small sum of *three bits*. On counting them over, I found that I had seventeen large pines for fifteen-pence, being somewhat less than a penny each.

On our arrival in the town of Stabroek, we met with an infuriated citizen-republican in one of the inhabitants, whose rash and jacobinical zeal outran all the bounds of discretion. He not only avowed, but sought to inculcate the most violent revolutionary principles; and although he had much cause of distress, from domestic affliction, he could not resist the pleasure of grossly abusing the "*English aristocrats*," and indulging in loud political declamation! His wife had died the evening the Dutch garrison surrendered; but the colony becoming subject to the "*monarchical English*," was deeper grief to this *modern* republican, than the loss of his



wife. Religion, and even its forms seem to be, here, dispensed with, for they have neither a place of worship, nor of interment. Citizen M— followed his poor unlamented wife to the fields, and there consigned her to a hole in the earth, uttering his grief in loud curses against . . . . . *the aristocrats!*

A few days since I had an opportunity of dining in company with several of the planters of this colony, who have estates upon the sea-coast; and I could not but remark a striking difference between these gentlemen, and those who reside constantly in Stabroek, or in Bridgetown; compared to whom they would seem the more robust inhabitants of a temperate climate. Both in countenance and in general stamina, they are very unlike the sallow-looking subjects of the towns. To find any of the colonists with such strong and healthy frames, was particularly satisfactory to me, having been impressed with a contrary expectation, from the discouraging reports I had heard regarding these settlements.

From all that I had collected upon the subject, I understood it to be a generally received opinion at Barbadoes, and the neighbouring islands, that the climate upon the coast of Guiana was, singularly, unhealthy: but the appearance of the gentlemen alluded to is sufficient to rescue it from a prejudice so unwarranted.



I have made a visit to a coffee plantation, near the town, where I saw an extensive display of the luxuriancy of the soil of Guiana. This estate differs from the wide fields upon the coast, only in being a flat surface of coffee, instead of cotton; but it is rendered rich and inviting, from being traversed with green walks, shaded with fine rows of trees, whose loaded branches bend under the various species of tropical fruits, serving, at the same time, to delight the eye, regale the olfactories, and refresh the palate. A pleasant path, more than a mile in length, and of sufficient width for carriages, leads down the middle of the estate, the sides being decorated with mangoes, oranges, avagata-pears, and many other kinds of fruit.

Crossing this walk, near the centre, is a thick grove of many hundreds of orange-trees, clad in all the variety of umbrageous foliage, fragrant blossoms, unripe *green* and ripe *golden* fruit.

In the genial climate of Europe, how delightful would be fields or gardens thus planted, and how exquisitely enjoyed! But, here, under the scorchings of a torrid sun, while the eye, and the olfactories, and the palate are gratified, the tortured sense of feeling precludes every possibility of comfort. If exposed to the open sun, the excess of heat produces insupportable languor and fatigue; and if we seek



the protecting shade of the fruit-trees, we are, there, plagued with the sharp bitings of myriads of musquitoes.

Invited by the grateful odour, and taking advantage of the cool shade, I left the broad and heated path, to ramble in the sweet avenues of the orange grove, but, ere my foot had traced its second step in the soft grass, I was beset by thousands of these tormenting insects, and compelled to make a hasty retreat.

In my escape I experienced more courteous fare; for, upon turning from the shaded path, a very fine mulatto woman of the house, seeing me walking, and observing me to be a stranger, came out, with a plate of the sweetest oranges of the grove, and, inviting me to eat, with much gracefulness and urbanity, bade me welcome.

Presently afterwards I met a robust negro carrying a heavy basket of fruit upon his head, and, asking him how they disposed of the immense numbers of oranges growing upon the estate, he replied "Gib 'em to de neighbours, Massa." Availing myself of this information, I wrote to Mynheer Meertens, the attorney of the estate, and have obtained permission to gather basketsful of oranges for the sick soldiers, whenever I please.

I should feel it an unworthy omission not to give you a copy of Mynheer Meertens' obli-



ging note to the manager, after reading my request. It was as follows: "Monsr. Keller, à l'habitation Vlessingen, aura la bonté de procurer, de tems en tems, pour les militaires qui sont malades, les fruits tels qu'ils s'y trouvent. Il obligera son très humble serviteur,

"A. MEERTENS."

During the few days, since our arrival here, events and circumstances have occurred, as if they had been designed expressly to place before us what was likely to be most striking to Europeans. Already we have witnessed the humiliating, but very interesting sight of a cargo of several hundreds of human subjects being landed from a slave-ship, and exposed to public sale; and on the other hand, naked beings, who range in the utmost freedom of human nature, have presented themselves in crowds to our observation; parties of copper-coloured Indians, from the wild woods, having come down the river in their canoes to visit the town. It has also happened to me to be addressed by a wretched slave, strongly intreating me to purchase her from her master; and I have further witnessed with surprise, the more than apathy, perhaps I might say, the exultation of a white lady, on hearing the cries of a negro suffering under the whip. Likewise the honor has been done me of having a young



slave placed by my elbow at dinner-time, with a fragrant bough to defend me from the flies; and I have been complimented with a negro to sleep at my bed-room door, in order to be in readiness, in case I should require him to beat off the musquitoes, or to bring me any thing in the night.

It proves that we are here just in time to witness the setting in of the rainy season; it having announced itself by the falling of rapid showers almost every morning since our landing: and, amidst all the novelties of this moment, I must not forget to add, that I now experience the tormenting sensation of having my whole skin thickly beset with prickly heat.

We find that the Western code of hospitality, so prominent at Barbadoes, is not confined to that island. It extends equally to the coast of South America. The planters, whom I have had the pleasure to meet at Stabroek, have invited me, in the most cordial manner, to their several homes, offering me every accommodation at their plantations in the country, whenever I may find time to visit them.

I should tell you that the unhappy slave, who came to me to intreat that I would purchase her, was a very decent young woman, here termed a "house-wench." The hard.



ships and ill treatment she had suffered, had created, she said, such an entire dislike to her present home, that if she could find no "*good Massa*" who would buy her, she had determined to try to escape from her misery by running away. The poor creature shuddered as she mentioned this expedient, sensible that if she should be retaken, her sufferings, great as they were, would be sadly multiplied. Still she declared she was firmly resolved to hazard the attempt, rather than continue her, now, wretched life, hopeless of relief.

The heavy tear swelled on her dark cheek as she related the severities to which she had been subjected. Her tale was at once interesting and distressful. It needed not the aid of eloquence to move compassion. The simple narration of the cruelties imposed, and the punishments inflicted for only trivial faults, instantly roused the feelings, and in strong appeal begat a new regret that hosts of human creatures, for the mere lucre of a few of their fellow-beings, differing in the colour of their skin, should be degraded to a situation, which not only deprives them of the command of their persons, but, also, robs them of all the powers of will.

Divested of every right, a slave has no redress, not even against the bitterest wrongs: however oppressed, however injured, he has no



resource—no means of relief! Not having the power of changing his home, he has no escape from ill usage or cruelty; but is condemned to travel the long journey of life in hopeless discontent.

The corporal punishment of slaves is so common, that instead of exciting the repugnant sensations, felt by Europeans on first witnessing it, scarcely does it produce, in the breasts of those accustomed to the West Indies, even the slightest glow of compassion. The lady I have above alluded to appears of good natural disposition, and in no degree disposed to general cruelty; but the frequency of the sight has rendered her callous to its usual influence upon the feelings. Being one morning at her house, while sitting in conversation, we suddenly heard the loud cries of a negro smarting under the whip. Mrs. —— expressed surprise on observing me shudder at his shrieks, and you will believe that I was in utter astonishment, to find her treat his sufferings as matter of amusement. It proved that the punishment proceeded from the arm of the lady's husband, and fell upon one of her own slaves! Can you believe that on learning this, she exclaimed with a broad smile, "Aha! it will do him good! a little wholesome flagellation will refresh him: it will sober him: it will open his skin, and



make him alert. If Y— was to give it them all, it would be of service to them !”

I could not compliment the lady upon her humanity. The loud clang of the whip continued, and the poor imploring negro as loudly cried, “ *Oh Massa, Massa,—God a’mighty—God bless you, Massa! I beg you pardon! Oh! Massa, Oh! I beg you pardon! Oh! God a’mighty—God bless you!*”—Still the whip sounded aloud, and still the lady cried “ Ay, it is very necessary !”

Such is the effect of habit in subduing even our most amiable emotions. Could this lady have known how much her remarks deformed her, policy would have led, no doubt, to a different expression, although humanity had not taught, nor custom allowed her to possess a better sentiment !

What would you say were you to see me return home rich as a West India planter? Sanguine whisper fondly augments the value of our captured property to upwards of £200,000! We hear of various ships, of extensive stores, of large estates, and of whole gangs of slaves, all public property, to be confiscated for the benefit of the *captors* ; and from my being here, in the direction of a department, I am told, that I ought to calculate upon receiving a sum by no means despicable. My expectations, however, do not run very high, being aware of the close



meltings, which such kind of property usually undergoes, before it becomes sufficiently refined for the pockets of the claimants\*.

\* It proved that considerable property was actually condemned and sold; but not the smallest dividend has yet been paid to those entitled to it. . . . . April 1815.



## LETTER XL.

Stabroek, May 6, 1796.

PREVIOUS to giving you the intelligence which reaches us at this place, it were fit to inform you that the island of Barbadoes is now become, as it were, the London of the West Indies—the great capital to which we anxiously look for events, and for news. Removed to a still farther distance from you, and without any direct communication, we seem dependent upon this sub-metropolis; and we acquire the tidings of England, of Europe, of the West India Islands, and of the main body of our army, only as conveyed to us, indirectly, *viâ* Barbadoes.

Two vessels have arrived from thence; by which we learn that the Commander in Chief, and the troops did not sail until the 21st of April, being six days after the time we left Barbadoes. It was not publicly known whether they were gone against Guadaloupe, or St. Lucie; but, from all the circumstances of the armament, it seems now to be the current opinion that Guadaloupe is not to be attacked during the present campaign.

We are told that Admiral Christian arrived just before the troops departed from Barbadoes,



bringing with him twenty-seven sail of vessels, the remnant of the immense fleet with which he originally sailed, in the month of November!

You will not envy our walks in the neighbourhood of Stabroek, when I tell you that the wet season is completely set in, and that from the soil being of pure mud and clay, we cannot move a step from the door without being ankle-deep. Such roads were scarcely ever seen; and, not having yet an opportunity of purchasing a horse, I am compelled daily to walk mid-leg deep in moist clay, or to drag my limbs through a path still deeper in mud.

Since the date of my last letter, I have been witness to a gentleman calling up one of his slaves, into the breakfast-room, and giving him orders to go with three others into the fields, the highways, or the woods, and cut grass, to sell in the town, charging him to recollect that it was at the pain of a "good flogging" if they did not each bring him home four bits\* at night; adding, by way of encouragement, that, if they could gain more, they might keep the surplus for themselves. They went out, each taking a long knife and a string, and returned, punctually, in the evening with the sixteen bits.

Unfortunately I am now enabled to speak of the punishment of a slave, which was far

\* About 1s. 8d. sterling.



more severe than that mentioned in my last letter; and, I am sorry to add, attended with similar marks of insensibility, and want of feeling, on the part of a white female. Happening to call one morning upon a lady at Stabroek, in company with several Europeans who had been my fellow-passengers hither, we were scarcely seated before we heard the clang of the whip, and the painful cries of an unfortunate black. The lady of the house, more accustomed to scenes of slavery than ourselves, pointing to the spot, as if it were a pleasant sight for strangers, or something that might divert us, asked, with apparent glee, if we saw them "*flogging the negre!*" Truly we saw the whole too clearly. A poor unhappy slave was stretched out naked, upon the open street, tied down, with his face to the ground, before the fiscal's door, his two legs extended to one stake, his arms strained out, at full length, to two others in form of the letter Y, and, thus secured to the earth, two strong-armed drivers\*, placed at his sides, were cutting his bare skin, by turns, with long heavy-lashed whips, which, from the sound, alone, without seeing the blood that

\* Slaves so termed from being promoted to the distinguished office of following their comrades, upon all occasions, with a whip at their backs, as an English carter attends his horses.



followed, conveyed the idea of tearing away pieces of flesh at every stroke.

I am exceedingly happy to be able to relieve you from this painful scene, by presenting to you one of a very opposite nature—one in which every feeling of your heart will warmly participate. A party of recently arrived Europeans went to dine at “Arcadia;” the plantation of a Mr. Osborn, about eight miles from Stabroek. Five slaves were sent, with a handsome covered boat, to conduct us thither. We had a most pleasant sail, about six miles up the river; and, then, we were drawn about two miles further, by the negroes running at the side of the canal, leading to the estate, singing all the way, and pulling, in merry tune, together. On our arrival at Mr. Osborn’s, we were presented with wine, fruits, and various refreshments; and, afterwards, were amused, till dinner-time, in viewing the coffee plantation, the negro yard, and the different premises. At dinner we shared all the good things of the colony, and, in the afternoon, were conducted across the canal to visit the estate, and happy home of Mr. Dougan, a neighbour whom Mr. Osborn had invited to meet us. Here we found a rich sugar plantation bordered with coffee and fruits.

I cannot express how much we were interested and gratified with all we saw at this



cheerful abode of Mr. Dougan. The plantation is laid out with much taste, and having every advantage of culture, it exhibits, in high perfection, all the luxuriance of an opulent tropical estate. Utility, comfort, and convenience, are here most happily combined. A private canal leads through the middle of the grounds, and serves for ornament and pleasure, as well as for bringing home the copious harvests of coffee and sugar.

At its sides are smooth walks of grass; and between these and the sugar-canes are borders planted with all the choice tropical fruits, rendering a promenade upon the water, or its banks, most fragrant and inviting, and offering to the eye and the palate all the variety of oranges, shaddocks, forbidden fruit, citrons, limes, lemons, cherries, custard-apples, cashew-apples, avagata-pears, grenadilloes, water-lemons, mangoes, and pines. The other walks, which traverse the plantation, are also cool and sweet-smelling avenues of fruit-trees.

But however great the richness, beauty, and fragrance of the estate, its canals, and its walks, still I am sensible that I shall more firmly secure your attachment to it, by mentioning the simple fact that, to the slaves it affords . . . . . a happy home!

I know not whether, upon any occasion, since my departure from England, I have expe-



rienced such heart-felt pleasure as in witnessing the high degree of comfort and happiness enjoyed by the slaves of "Profit." Mr. Dougan not only grants them many little indulgences, and studies to make them happy, but he fosters them with a father's care, whilst they, sensible of his tenderness towards them, look to their revered master as a kind and affectionate parent; and, with undivided—unsophisticated attachment, cheerfully devote, to him, their labour and their lives.

Not satisfied with bestowing upon his negroes mere food and raiment, Mr. Dougan establishes for them a kind of right. He assures to them certain property, endeavours to excite feelings of emulation among them, and to inspire them with a spirit of neatness and order, not commonly known among blacks; and I rejoice to add that the effects of his friendly attentions, towards them, are strongly manifested in their persons, their dwellings, and their general demeanour. Perhaps it were not too much to say, that the negro yard at "Profit" forms one of the happiest villages within the wide circle of the globe!

The slaves of Mr. Dougan are not only fed, and clothed, and tenderly watched in sickness, without any personal thought, or concern; but each has his appropriate spot of ground, and his cottage, in which he feels a right as sacred as if



secured to him by all the seals and parchments of the Lord High Chancellor of England, and his court.

Happy and contented, the slave of "Profit" sees all his wants supplied: never having been in a state of freedom, he has no desire for it: not having known liberty, he feels not the privation of it; nor is it within the powers of his mind either to conceive or comprehend the sense we attach to the term. Were freedom offered to him he would refuse to accept it, and would only view it as a state fraught with certain difficulties and vexations, but offering no commensurate good. "*Who gib me for gnyhaam Massa,*" he asks, "*if me free?*" "*Who gib me clothes?*" "*Who send me a doctor when me sick?*"

With industry a slave has no acquaintance; nor has he any knowledge of the kind of comfort and independence which derive from it. Ambition has not taught him that, in freedom, he might escape from poverty; nor has he any conception that by improving his intellect he might become of higher importance in the scale of humanity. Thus circumstanced, to remove him from the quiet and contentment of such a bondage, and to place him amidst the tumults and vicissitudes of freedom, were but to impose upon him the exchange of great comparative happiness, for much of positive difficulty and distress.



From what has been said you will perceive that it is difficult to do justice to the merit of Mr. Dougan. His humane and liberal conduct does him infinite honor; while the richness of the estate and the happiness of the slaves loudly proclaim his attentive concern.

The cottages and little gardens of the negroes exhibited a degree of neatness, and plenty, which might be envied by free-born Britons, not of the poorest class. The huts of Ireland, Scotland, France, Germany, and many, even of England itself, bear no comparison with these. In impulsive delight I ran into several of them, surprising the slaves with an unexpected visit. They mostly consist of a comfortable sitting-room, and a clean, well-furnished bed-chamber. In one I observed a high bedstead, according to the present European fashion, with deep mattresses, all nicely made up, and covered with a clean white counterpane; the bed-posts, drawers, and chairs bearing the polish of well-rubbed mahogany. I felt a desire to pillow my head in this hut for the night, it not having fallen to my lot, since I left England, to repose on so inviting a couch. The value of the whole was tenfold augmented by the contented slaves being able to say, "All this we feel to be our own."

Too often in regarding the countenance of a slave, it may be observed that



“ Dark Melancholy sits, and round her throws  
A death-like silence, and a dread repose ;”

but throughout Mr. Dougan's happy gang the more striking features are those of mirth and glee; for, here, the merry dance and jovial song prevail, and all are votaries to joy and harmony.

Before the doors of the huts, and around these peaceful dwellings were seen great numbers of pigs, and poultry, which the slaves are allowed to raise for their own profit; and from the stock, thus bred in the negro yard, the master usually purchases the provisions of his table, paying the common price for which they would be sold at the market.

The conduct of Mr. Osborn to his slaves, and, indeed, of many others I might mention, is also very highly commendable. The negroes at Arcadia have much cause of contentment; their happiness and welfare being guarded with a parental care. Were all masters kind and humane as Mr. Dougan, and his neighbour, the peasants of Europe, although blessed with freedom, might sigh, in vain, for the happiness enjoyed - - - - by slaves!

Owing to the tide being out, at the time we returned, there was not sufficient water in the canal to admit of our going down in the boat; we were compelled, therefore, to walk nearly two miles before we embarked. During



this walk, we were almost in danger of being devoured by the mosquitoes, which attacked us in such daring hosts that we were obliged to carry small boughs in our hands, and to continue, the whole time, beating them from our legs and faces.

The fire-flies were, scarcely, less numerous; but, notwithstanding the annoyance we suffered by their flying against us, they inflicted no pain. They neither tormented us with bites, nor stings; but in such myriads did they dart and play about us, that it appeared as if we were walking in an atmosphere filled with moving stars. One piece of coffee, in particular, had its whole surface so illumined by these insects, as to convey the idea of the field being overspread with fire. After going into the boat, and proceeding towards the middle of the river, both fire-flies and mosquitoes forsook us; and we were pleasantly rowed down to the town by four of Mr. Osborn's contented slaves.



## LETTER XLI.

Stabroek, May 8.

GENERAL Whyte and part of the detachment which accompanied him, are returned to Demarara, leaving the 95d regiment, in garrison, at Berbische; that colony having capitulated upon the same terms as Demarara and Essequibo. The commerce is to be directed to the ports of England; in return for which she offers protection and defence. All that concerns the military proceedings is to rest with the English; but, in whatever regards the civil administration, the settlements are to preserve the established laws and form of government, until the end of the war; and the present Dutch governors are not to be removed.

Under these conditions most of the Dutch soldiers, who were in the garrison, have consented to enlist into our service, and to act conjointly with our troops in defence of this coast. We thus acquire the aid of a corps well seasoned to the country, and ready, at all moments, to act in concert for the general benefit of the settlements.

It is likewise intended to strengthen the garrison by forming a corps of negroes to be



called "The South American Rangers." This will be a valuable addition to our force, as these men are not subject to the debilitating effects of climate, but are active in the greatest heat; and are capable of supporting the most fatiguing duties under the direct rays of a vertical sun.

Surinam, belonging to the Dutch, borders Berbische, on our right, and a little further up the coast is the French colony of Cayenne. With such restless neighbours about us, we shall require to be watchful and alert. On our left we approach the river Oronoko, and what is termed the Spanish main: and not far from the coast of Essequibo is the Spanish island of Trinidad. From this quarter we hope to procure beef: from the other we expect only blows.

A communication is to be opened directly with the Spaniards, in order to negotiate for the purchase of cattle from the woods; which, we are told, they will be glad to sell at six or seven dollars per head.

We are now very much in want of fresh animal provisions; for, since the time of our arrival, I have only been able to procure two or three small sheep, for the use of the hospital. But, as the guardian of the sick, I owe much gratitude to the gentlemen of the colony, for some liberal presents of beef and mutton,



which their humanity has induced them to send to the hospital for the comfort of the suffering soldiers. Two neighbouring gentlemen, in particular, Mr. T. Cuming, and Mr. Waterton, have the prayers of the sick, and the best acknowledgments of their attendants. Occasionally they have sent us an ox, or a sheep; or have shared, with the sick, the best provisions of their table.

Fruits are given to us from various estates, not only by gallons and bushels, but by cart-loads and boat-loads, at a time; and, by these generous aids, we have been able to improve the comforts of the sick, beyond all that money could have effected.

A few days ago I had the opportunity of being present at a more regular sale, or market of slaves than I had seen before, and here I witnessed all the heart-rending distress attendant upon such a scene. I saw numbers of our fellow-beings regularly bartered for gold, and transferred, like cattle, or any common merchandise, from one possessor to another. It was a sight which European curiosity had rendered me desirous to behold, although I had anticipated from it only a painful gratification. I may now say - - - - - *I have seen it!* and while nature animates my breast with even the feeblest spark of humanity, I can never forget it!



The poor Africans, who were to be sold, were exposed, naked, in a large empty building, like an open barn. Those, who came with intention to purchase, minutely inspected them; handled them; made them jump, and stamp with their feet, and throw out their arms and their legs; turned them about; looked into their mouths; and, according to the usual rules of traffic with respect to cattle, examined them, and made them show themselves in a variety of ways, to try if they were sound and healthy. All this was distressful as humiliating, and tended to excite strong aversion and disgust: but a wound, still more severe, was inflicted on the feelings, by some of the purchasers selecting only such as their judgment led them to prefer, regardless of the bonds of nature! The urgent appeals of friendship and attachment were unheeded; sighs and tears made no impression; and all the imploring looks, and penetrating expressions of grief were unavailing. Hungry commerce corroded even the golden chains of affection; and sordid interest burst every tie of the heart asunder. The husband was taken from the wife, children were separated from their parents, and the lover was torn from his mistress: the companion was bought away from his friend, and the brother not suffered to accompany the sister.

In one part of the building was seen a wife



clinging to her husband, and beseeching, in the strongest eloquence of nature, not to be left behind him. Here was a sister hanging upon the neck of her brother, and, with tears, intreating to be led to the same home of captivity. There stood two brothers, enfolded in each other's arms, mutually bewailing their threatened separation. In other parts were friends, relatives, and companions, praying to be sold to the same master; using signs to signify that they would be content with slavery, might they but toil together.

Silent tears, deep sighs, and heavy lamentations proved the bitter suffering of these poor blacks, and told that nature was ever true to her feelings. Never was a scene more distressful. Among these unhappy, degraded Africans scarcely an unclouded countenance could be seen. Every feature was veiled in the gloom of woe; and their grief was poured forth in all the sadness of affliction.

A host of painful ideas rushed into my mind at the moment; and all the distorted images of this abhorrent traffic presented themselves to my recollection. The many horrors and cruelties, which I had so often heard of, appeared in their worst shapes before me; and my imagination was acutely alive to the unmerited punishment sometimes inflicted, the incessant labour exacted, the want of freedom, and all the catalogue of hardships endured by slaves.



I endeavoured to combat the effect of these impressions by directing my mind to opposite images. The kind treatment of negroes under humane masters occurred to me; I recollected the comfort and harmony of the slaves I had lately seen at "Profit." I contemplated their exemption from care, and the many anxieties of the world; and I remembered the happiness and contentment expressed in their songs and merry dances: but all in vain! The repugnant influence would not thus be cheated. With such distress before my eyes, all palliatives were unavailing. The whole was wrong, and not to be justified. I felt that I execrated every principle of the traffic. Nature revolted at it; and I condemned the whole system of slavery under all its forms and modifications.

When purchased, the slaves were marked by placing a bit of string, or of red or white tape round their arms or necks. One gentleman, who bought a considerable number of them, was proceeding to distinguish those he had selected, by tying a piece of red tape round the neck; when I observed two negroes, who were standing together entwined in each other's arms, watch him with great anxiety. Presently he approached them, and, after making his examination, affixed the mark only to one of them. The other, with a look of unerring expression, and with an impulse of marked disappointment,



cast his eyes up to the purchaser, seeming to say - - - - - "And will you not have me, too?" then jumped, and danced, and stamped with his feet, and made other signs to denote that he, also, was sound and strong, and worthy his choice. He was, nevertheless, passed by unregarded; upon which he turned to his companion, his friend, brother, whichever he was, took him to his bosom, hung upon him, and, in sorrowful countenance, expressed the strongest marks of affliction. The feeling was mutual: it arose from reciprocal affection: his friend participated in his grief, and they both wept bitterly. Soon afterwards, on looking round to complete his purchase, the planter, again, passed that way, and not finding any one that better suited his purpose, he hung the token of choice round the neck of the negro whom he had before disregarded. All the powers of art could not have effected the change that followed. More genuine joy was never expressed. His eye became enlivened: grief and sadness vanished, and flying into the arms of his friend, he caressed him with rapture, then skipped, and jumped, and danced about, exhibiting all the purest signs of mirth and gratification. His companion was not less delighted, and a more pure and native sympathy was never exhibited. Happy in being re-associated, they now retired apart from the



crowd, and sat down, in quiet contentment, hugging and kissing the red signal of bondage, like two attached and affectionate brothers—satisfied to toil out their days, for an unknown master, so they might but travel their journey of slavery together.

In the afternoon of the same day I chanced to be present when another gentleman came to purchase some of the slaves, who were not sold in the morning. After looking through the lot, he remarked that he did not see any who were of pleasant aspect; and going on to make further objections, respecting their appearance, he was interrupted by the vendor, who observed that, at that moment, they were seen to great disadvantage, as they looked worse, "*from having lost their friends and associates in the morning.*" Ay, truly, I could have replied—a very powerful reason why they are unfit for sale this afternoon! If to be of smiling visage were necessary to their being sold, it were politic not to expose them for long to come. Still, some were selected, and the mark of purchase being made, the distressful scene of the morning was, in a degree, repeated.

Only a few of the most ill-looking now remained, who were meager, and of rough skin; not thoroughly black, but of a yellowish, or dirty brown colour; of hungry, unhealthy aspect, feeble, of hideous countenance, and, in



general appearance, scarcely human. These remained to a future day, and would, probably, be sold, not to the planters, but to the boat-women, tailors, hucksters, or some of the inferior mechanics, or shopkeepers of the town, at a price somewhat lower than that demanded for the more robust, and well-looking; and, alas! though least able to bear fatigue, these feeble beings would be subjected to a far more heavy slavery than those of stronger frame; for it is, commonly, seen that the labour exacted by the poorer orders of people, from their few and weakly slaves, is more severe than that required by the opulent planter from his regular, and better-appointed gang.

We find it extremely difficult to procure a sufficient number of workmen and labourers, in this colony, for the services required. Although the wages are extravagantly high, an extraordinary number of hands, for any emergency, cannot be obtained, without having recourse to a system of coercion.

A few days since a soldier was admitted into the hospital with the direful malady of the country, called "yellow fever." The disease had made great progress before he was brought to us, and he died on the sixth day after his admission. The body was examined, with a view to ascertain the changes produced by the disease, but the appearances were not precisely such, as



from conversing with the colonial practitioners, and reading a variety of authors, we had been led to expect. The stomach was found to be the organ which exhibited the strongest marks of derangement. The inner coat was surcharged with blood, appearing very red, and at one spot near the upper orifice it was of a livid hue, and its texture so weakened, that the finger was passed through it, by only a slight degree of pressure.

The name commonly given to this disorder seems to be highly inaccurate. Our patient, although several days ill, had no yellowness of the skin, until a few hours before he died. If, therefore, his dissolution had occurred only a short time sooner; or if he had recovered previous to the period when this change of colour took place, we could not, with any correctness, have called the fever he had suffered a *yellow* fever, although he had undergone all the characteristic symptoms of the disease so termed, except the casual one from which it has been improperly named. Moreover, affixing to a disease a name derived from a symptom, and particularly a symptom which is not always present, is calculated to deceive, and may be of dangerous tendency, by rendering the practitioner unsuspecting of the real nature of the disorder, until it be too late to arrest its destructive progress.



## LETTER XLII.

Demarara, May 16.

SINCE I last addressed you I have experienced a sad disappointment, in having to make my congé to the general, on his return to the islands. After all my expectations of being soon at St. Domingo, I am left behind with instructions to continue in the direction of the medical department of these colonies, until our detachment shall be relieved from the staff of the Charibbee Islands.

Instead of my being permitted to proceed to head quarters, it is found requisite that the branch of the hospital staff, serving here, should be augmented. I have made out a return of the medical establishment, which seems necessary for these colonies, and still hope that we may soon be relieved, and allowed to proceed to our original destination.

In consequence of the sick-list becoming numerous, we are compelled to employ the medical officers of the regiments in the duties of the general hospital.

I have great pleasure in remarking to you, that General Whyte has been particularly at-



tentive to the comfort of the sick, and the accommodation of the hospital department. In every thing proposed for the benefit of the suffering soldiers, we have always been happy enough to meet with his full and ready acquiescence. It has only been necessary to point out what was required, and every attention was immediately given to the representation. You will believe that this has been highly gratifying to me, and the more so, when I add that the measures proposed have not been indifferently acceded to, but examined with a degree of attentive consideration, not less honorable to the general than satisfactory to myself.

It is also with much pleasure that I am enabled to add that Colonel Hislop, who succeeds to the command, is a man of great humanity and benevolence, and that we have every prospect of finding him desirous to follow a good example in promoting the comfort and well-being of those who are in sickness.

Before he left us, General Whyte gave orders that a large cotton logis at La Bourgade should be fitted up as an hospital, and that a house near to it should be appropriated to the use of the medical officers. Thus have we the satisfaction of seeing the sick, and the whole of the department, very conveniently accommodated; the patients being lodged in a spacious



and well-aired building; and their attendants having commodious quarters immediately near to them, with proper offices, and what is of consequence in this climate, a large cistern for fresh water adjoining.

Here we are stationed, as a distinct department, quiet, and secluded, free from the noise and hurry both of the town and the fort, and nearly equidistant from the one and the other. The public road, from the fort to the town, passes close by the gates; and within less than a hundred yards from the road is the sea, or rather the opening of the river, so that the sick are readily brought to us on either side, by land, or by water. Perhaps another situation, equally commodious for the purposes of the medical department, could not have been found in the colony.

I have already changed my quarters from Stabroek to our new home at La Bourgade; but it does not seem probable that I shall long remain stationary, for I have received instructions to proceed to the colony of Berbische, to make arrangements for the hospitals there, as soon as I shall have brought these at La Bourgade into a proper establishment.

I now suffer considerably from the "prickly heat," but this would be very supportable were it not for the still greater torment of mus-



quitos, ants, centipedes, jack-spaniards\*, and the multitudes of other insects biting, buzzing about our ears, crawling upon every thing we touch, and as it were filling and vivifying the whole atmosphere around us.

As I am to note all occurrences, I must not omit the following, although it may seem to border upon the incredible. A few days ago I was applied to by the wife of a colonist to request that I would *make some complaint* to her husband, against the slaves of the house, very *humanely* urging as a reason for imposing upon me so *grateful* a task, that she wished “*to get them a good flogging!*” I trust that neither you, nor any of our fair friends, on the European shore of the Atlantic, will condemn my want of gallantry in resisting the solicitation. It was not even contended that any specific fault had been committed to justify the punishment, but this was *to be invented*, and merely because some idle whim, some fit of caprice, or ill humour had led the mistress of these poor slaves to wish them “*a good flogging!*”

You have probably read that in the woods of these colonies there are numbers of men called “Bush-negroes.” These are mostly runaway slaves who have revolted from their mas-

\* A large species of wasp.



ters, and having collected together in the forest, have there formed themselves into bodies, under certain captains or leaders; and have established various habitations and encampments in the thickest parts of what is termed "the Bush;" where they now live in all the bad habits of savage nature; and are become mere hordes of brigands or marauders.

They are negroes of the worst description, cruel, blood-thirsty and revengeful: men whose crimes in European, and all well-ordered states, would have been punished with death. Many have murdered white inhabitants, massacred their masters, or revolted in combination, plotting the destruction of the planters, in order to take the colony into their own possession; but being frustrated in their designs, have saved themselves from punishment, by flying into the hidden recesses of the forest; from whence they issue only to ravage and plunder.

They had subjected themselves to a sort of regular discipline under their captains and lieutenants, and the lower orders of them (for there are distinctions even among runaway slaves) were compelled to toil in the night, by going out of the woods, in parties, to steal plantains and other provisions from the estates; but the labour to which they were exposed, by this night duty, was so much more



severe than that required of them, in their common round, as slaves upon the plantations, that some of them have been known to desert back from the woods, and return to a state of slavery, after having fled from their masters to live in idleness, as they had expected, with their brethren in "the Bush."

I wish I could repeat to you, as eloquently as I heard it related, the very interesting detail of an expedition sent into the woods against these Bush-negroes, last year, under the command of Major M'Grah, and Captain Dougan. Many persons had been robbed, and had their property otherwise injured by their predatory excursions; indeed the whole colony was disturbed, and, from the increasing number of these sanguinary hordes, was threatened with eventual destruction. It was resolved therefore that a body of troops should be sent into the woods to search for their places of resort, and to endeavour to subdue or exterminate them. A party of the Dutch soldiers of the garrison was, accordingly, equipped for this duty; and marched in due military order into the forest.

But this was not the species of force calculated for such an enterprise: from not having observed all the minute precautions required, in this new and hazardous warfare, they were surprised and defeated by the blacks; and very few of the soldiers escaped, most of them



being killed, and their scalps, or bodies, fixed against the trees, to serve as examples of what others were to expect who should venture on a similar service\*.

The government and the colonists having discovered, from fatal experience, that the Bush-negroes were more formidable than had been imagined; and finding that regular European troops were not the best fitted for this kind of duty, raised a corps of blacks from among the most faithful of the slaves; and also engaged in their interest a party of Indians from the woods, who, happily for the planters, hold the Bush-negroes in great abhorrence.

Well provided and equipped, this second expedition, commanded as above-mentioned, separated into two parties, and boldly advanced into the forest to form a combined attack. Upon their march they passed the dead bodies of the Dutch soldiers, tied to the trees at the sides of a narrow path. Not deterred by this horrid scene, they proceeded onward, having the sagacious Indians on their flanks; by whose acuteness and penetration they discovered the various situations, where the different companies of the brigands had taken up their resi-

\* Upon this occasion one of the officers was carried out of the wood by a faithful slave, who, afterwards, refused to accept his freedom as a reward; and only begged to have a silver medal to wear on days of festival.



dence, and, by well-concerted attacks, defeated and routed them wheresoever they met them. As an encouragement to the able and new-raised troops, a premium was offered for every right hand of a Bush-negro that should be brought in; and, when they returned from the woods, they appeared with seventy black arms displayed upon the points of their bayonets, causing a very singular and shocking spectacle to the beholders. Three hundred guilders each had been fixed as the price, but it was found necessary to reduce the premium, lest the slaves should kill their prisoners, or even destroy each other to obtain it.

The exertion and fatigue required in such a movement cannot well be conceived by those who are accustomed only to regular and systematic warfare: nor is it probable that such a service could have been supported in this climate by European soldiers. In addition to all the difficulties of making their way through the unknown and almost impenetrable woods, they knew not where to find the enemy's posts; and were, at every minute, liable to be fallen upon by surprise.

At first entering the Bush, the march was continued for a great distance, nearly knee-deep in water: when further advanced, the troops had to scramble through the thickets, or follow each other, by a confined path, in



Indian file; and, after the harassing march of the day, to lie down at night, on the bare ground, under the trees, the officers suspending their hammocks from bough to bough in the open air. They had, moreover, to carry the whole of their provisions, arms, ammunition, and every other necessary required for the success of the enterprise, upon their backs.

But for the assistance given by the Indians, the brigands would, probably, never have been subdued; perhaps not found! The expertness of these men, in such a pursuit, is peculiar, and beyond all that could be imagined, by those who live in crowded society. They not only hear sounds in the woods, which are imperceptible to others, but judge, with surprising accuracy, of the distance and direction from whence they proceed. The position of a fallen leaf, or the bending of a bramble, too slight to be noticed by an European eye, conveys to them certain intelligence respecting the route taken by those whom they pursue. From constant practice and observation, their organs of sense become highly improved, and they hear with an acuteness, and see with a precision truly surprising to those who are unacquainted with their habits, and their vigilance. With such guides, the corps moved in confidence, and was conducted with safety. Seven encampments of the brigands were discovered, and com-



pletely routed; some of which had existed during fifteen years, concealed in the profoundest gloom of the forest.

The following was the mode usually observed in establishing these places of residence and resort. Having fixed upon the spot most convenient for their purpose, a circular piece of ground was cleared of its wood: in the centre of this, they built huts, and formed the encampment, planting around the buildings, oranges, bananas, plantains, yams, eddoes, and other kinds of provisions; thus, in addition to the trees of the forest, procuring themselves further concealment by the plantations which gave them food. The eddoes were found in great plenty, and seemed to constitute their principal diet. Round the exterior of the circular spot was cut a deep and wide ditch, which, being filled with water, and stuck, at the sides and bottom, with sharp-pointed stakes, served as a formidable barrier of defence. The path across this ditch was placed two or three feet below the surface, and wholly concealed from the eye by the water being always thick and muddy. Leaves were strewed, and steppings, similar in their kind, made to the edges of the ditch, at various parts, as a precaution, to deceive any who might approach, respecting the real situation of the path. But the proper place of crossing was found out by the saga-



city of the Indians, who soon discovered that to attempt to pass at any other part, was to be empaled alive.

It was found that the brigands had eight of these encampments, or points of rendezvous in the woods, one of which is supposed still to remain undiscovered. After much fatigue in endeavouring to find it, the search was relinquished, in the idea that some of the prisoners, either by indulgence or torture, would be induced to make it known: but this expectation has only led to disappointment. All the means used have failed, and the prisoners, faithful to their cause, have suffered torture and death without betraying their forest-associates.

The cruel severities inflicted upon these miserable blacks have been such as you will scarcely believe could have been practised by any well-ordered government: for, however strongly punishment was merited, the refinement of torture, with which it was employed, ought never to have been tolerated in any state professing to be civilized. Humanity shudders at the bare recital of it.

Most of the ringleaders were taken, and brought to Stabroek, where they were afterwards tried and executed, the majority of them suffering with a degree of fortitude and heroism worthy a better cause. One in particular, named Amsterdam, supported the extreme of



punishment with a firmness truly astonishing. He was subjected to the most shocking torture, in the hope of compelling him to give information regarding the remaining encampment—but in vain! He despised the severest suffering, and nothing could induce him to betray his late companions, or to make known their yet undiscovered retreat.

He was sentenced to be burnt alive, first having his flesh torn from his limbs with red-hot pincers; and in order to render his punishment still more terrible, he was compelled to sit by, and see thirteen others broken upon the wheel and hung; and then, in being conducted to execution, was made to walk over the thirteen dead bodies of his comrades. Being fastened to an iron stake, surrounded with the consuming pile, which was about to be illumined, he regarded the by-standers with all the complacency of heroic fortitude, and exhibiting the most unyielding courage, resolved that all the torture ingenuity or cruelty might invent should not extort from him a single groan; or a syllable that could in any way impeach his friends.

With the first pair of pincers, the executioner tore the flesh from one of his arms. The sudden infliction of pain caused him to recede, in a slight degree, from the irons; and he drew in his breath, as if to form it into a sigh, but he



instantly recovered himself—his countenance indicated self-reproach, and he manifestly took shame for having betrayed even the slightest sense of suffering; then, resuming more, if possible, than his former composure, he patiently waited the approach of the next irons, and, on these being brought towards him, he steadfastly cast his eye upon them, inclined a little forward, and with an unshaken firmness of countenance, deliberately met their burning grasp! From that moment he showed himself capable of despising the severest pain. Not a feature was afterwards disturbed, and he preserved a degree of tranquillity implying absolute contempt of torture and of death.

Finally, when the destructive pile was set in flames, his body spun round the iron stake, with the mouth open, until his head fell back, and life was extinguished. I am told, by a gentleman who had the melancholy task to attend the execution, that the most horrid stench continued for many hours, to issue from the roasting body, and was extremely offensive throughout the town, penetrating so strongly into the houses to leeward, as to make many persons sick, and prevent them from taking food during the remainder of the day.

Another of the chiefs, or captains, who was taken, is still in confinement at the fort, under sentence of death. His execution has



been delayed in the hope of learning, from him, the situation of the yet remaining encampment; but, hitherto, to no purpose; and from his present conduct, it may be expected that he will die as firm and dauntless as his comrade Amsterdam.



## LETTER XLIII.

La Bourgade, May 21.

I HAVE already informed you that the barrack allotted to the medical officers is a very commodious house, situated near to the hospital; but I gave no account of the furniture; nor did I describe what we here esteem a comfortable dwelling. Let me, therefore, tell you that our mansion is built wholly of wood, and is of the simplest construction. Being set upon low pillars, it is so raised from the ground as to leave sufficient space for dogs and small pigs to pass under it. Chimnies and fire-places are not required. The windows are mere holes in the sides, and are neither closed with plate glass, nor well-fitted sashes, but hung with heavy shutters on the outside, to protect us in time of rain. No fine stucco covers the walls, nor are the rooms hung with rich paper or tapestry. No painted cloth, or soft carpet spreads the floor, nor do any rich cornices, or figured compositions decorate the ceiling. Above, below, and at the sides, all is plain wood: the walls, the ceilings, and the floors are alike of naked boards; many of them so loosely joined together as to allow free admission to air and light. Sitting in the



parlour, we see through the openings into the bed-room above; and to the pigs routing below. The roof is also of wood, and open to the bed-chambers, which are hung only with the well-spun tapestry of industrious spiders. An old bench, or form, with three or four chairs of rough wood, and a coarse deal board, laid upon a pair of cross legs by way of a table, complete the furniture.

Thus accommodated, you will be amused to hear that we have had company to visit us at our dinner table: a party from one of his majesty's ships of war, who were led, by curiosity, to see how the "*soldier-officers*" were accommodated on shore. They did not express themselves violently envious of our comforts; but were much diverted in forming conjectures as to what might have been the remarks of some of our foppish friends in London, could they have glanced an eye upon our humble banquet, and the general order of our *manege*. A piece of hard salt beef graced one end of the table, a heavy lump of salt pork the other, and salt-meat soup supplied the place of the rich *plateau* in the middle. Such is our daily repast, and such was our feast; for we gave to our visitors the most sumptuous fare of the larder. Fresh animal provisions are dainties we can seldom procure, and if it were not for the daily allowance dealt out to us by government, we should be confined to a diet of yams and plantains, like the slaves. During the



passage from England, and while we were lying at Barbadoes, we disregarded our salt allowance; nor did we, till now, duly estimate the value of a government ration; but it is here become of the greatest importance, and forms, to us, as well as to the soldiers, the principal supply.

We often despatch negroes to the distant plantations upon the coast, or the borders of the river, in search of fowls, ducks, roasting pigs, or any other fresh provisions; but they so commonly return empty-handed, that we have been led to suspect them of idleness or neglect, and have been induced to make the experiment ourselves, by going in a boat to different estates up the river, with a view of purchasing poultry or other stock. But we have been equally unsuccessful; sometimes failing altogether, and at others procuring only a single chicken, or a sucking pig to serve a mess of six persons for the week. It happened once that we met with a whole litter of young roasters to the number of six, when we thought ourselves in high good fortune; but as we had no convenient means of keeping them fat or in condition, we were unable to economize the use of them, and from eating pig every day till they were all consumed, we became so entirely satiated with this kind of food, as to make it doubtful whether we shall ever be able to enjoy it again.

Beef, veal, and mutton are luxuries beyond



our reach. This settlement does not supply them in sufficient quantity for the ordinary consumption: we do not therefore expect them, except by way of an occasional feast. The great additional demand for fresh provisions, since our arrival, has likewise taken off all the surplus of smaller stock, and left scarcely a spare duck, or chicken in the colony.

In one of our provision-hunting excursions to the western coast, we had the good fortune to meet with Captain Dougan, whom we found to be residing there, in command of the remnant of the black corps, which was raised last year for the expedition against the Bush-negroes. From this gentleman we experienced every mark of polite and friendly attention. In our conversation we discovered that he was the son of the gentleman whom I had seen at "Profit;" and, on his learning that I had visited his father, we became at once as intimate as old acquaintances. But this was not required to call forth the captain's hospitality, for he had previously insisted upon our dining, and passing the remainder of the day with him; which we did, and he gave us an excellent dinner, with plenty of good wines, and a most cordial welcome. Cassada cake and roasted plantains were served instead of bread, and with our fowls we had a sauce prepared from the cassada juice, which loses its poisonous quality by boiling and evaporation, and becomes some-



what like the essence used under the name of soy.

On taking our leave, in the evening, we received many polite and liberal invitations to repeat our visit; had our boat loaded with fruit, and were desired to send for a further supply whenever it might be acceptable. The estate was rich in oranges and plantains, beyond all we had visited; and so universally were the fields intersected with rows of fruit-trees, that whichever path we pursued, the eye looked down a fine avenue, loaded and yellow with fruit.

You will be pleased to hear that although we are still sadly annoyed with musquitoes during the day and the evening, our nights are passed, at our new home, in quiet and comfort. In Carlisle Bay, and at Stabroek, notwithstanding I slept with the door and windows open, I always felt heated and restless in bed; and, too commonly, rose with a painful and spotted skin in the morning. At La Bourgade I am free from these inconveniences. I lie upon a hard mattress, without any bedding under it, covered only with a thin cotton sheet, and protected by my friendly musquito curtain. Even with the door and windows shut, I can remain without feeling myself unpleasantly heated; and, surrounded with my netting, I can regard the hosts of musquitoes and other insects, buzzing



about me, without the fear of their disturbing my repose.

From the situation of these colonies with respect to the sun and the ocean, and from the territory being a continued flat, we are scarcely ever without a free and steady breeze, which creates an equable temperature, and renders the climate peculiarly uniform. At six in the morning the thermometer is usually between 74 and 77 degrees, and at noon it has seldom varied more than from 81 to 84. It being now the wet season, much rain commonly falls during the night; and, frequently, very heavy showers in the course of the day; such as quickly find their way through all the garments of those who happen to be exposed to them: the most violent thunder-storms of England are scarcely sufficient to give you an idea of their force and rapidity.



## LETTER XLIV.

Demarara, May 25.

THE hospital at La Bourgade being now established, and placed under proper regulations for the accommodation of the sick, I shall proceed, without delay, to the settlement of Berbische in order to make the necessary hospital arrangements for that colony.

With grief I find that we are likely to have an ample opportunity of prosecuting our inquiries respecting the state of the viscera after yellow fever : but, that we may not be deceived by appearances, we purpose, likewise, to examine the bodies of those who may be destroyed by other maladies, whereby we shall be enabled to judge more accurately what are the real changes induced by that disease.

Among the late sufferers we have had the misfortune to lose our superintending cook, at the hospital. He was a man of peculiar strength, voice, and appetite. The sick on board ship used to complain that he ate up almost the whole of their food : when he spake, his voice was as the roaring of thunder ; and in point of muscular strength, he was quite Herculean. The attack was severe, and he quickly fell a sacrifice, expe-



riencing all the inveterate symptoms of the fever, with the exception only, of the yellowness of the skin,—that uncertain mark from which the name of the disease has been, erroneously, taken. The disorder was early marked with uncommon restlessness and anxiety, an indescribable sensation at the region of the stomach, and an almost incessant vomiting of a black fluid resembling the grounds of coffee.

Among the distressful scenes it has lately been my lot to witness, I chanced to be at Sta-broek a few mornings ago, at the time of the execution of the captain of the Bush-negroes whom I mentioned to you in a former letter. He died faithful to his cause, and no information could be obtained from him regarding the encampment said to be still remaining in the woods. He was sentenced to be suspended by the neck for a short time, and then taken down, while yet alive, to have his head severed from his body. The executioner was a negro, who, without any feelings of compunction, or of sorrow for his countryman, exulted in the adroitness with which he took off the head at a single blow.

After the execution I sat a short time with the officers, at the barrack of the 99th regiment; when another painful scene was exhibited to our observation, in the flogging of a party



of negroes, before the fiscal's door, upon the public street.

On one of them being released from the stakes, to which he had been tied down, with his face to the earth, during his punishment, I thought that I recognised his features, and upon going out to ascertain the fact, discovered him to be one of the carpenters, who had been set apart to work, under my direction, at the hospital. It happened, too, that he had distinguished himself by his industry, and was the man with whom I had most conversed, on account of his speaking English, and being able to explain my instructions to his fellow-workmen.

You will believe that I felt an interest regarding him, and that I was anxious to learn by what offence he had brought upon himself the severe punishment which we had witnessed. To this end, in company with Major Say and other officers, I followed the bleeding slave to his home, where we learned that the alleged crime, for which he had been punished, was——striking a white man; although, in fact, it appeared to have been a refusal to get up from his bed, at 9 o'clock at night, to work for an European inhabitant of the town, after labouring at the hospital during the whole of the day. It was further hinted by those about him, that something of pique or prejudice, on account of the poor man



expressing himself pleased with his employment at the British hospital, might possibly have operated in deafening the ear of justice against him.

A Dutchman who chanced to be present at the time we were making inquiries, in the carpenter's shop to which the negro belonged, told us, with an air of confidence, that he had been punished for striking *him*, and cutting his elbow with a *large chisel*; showing us the very instrument with which the wound had been made, and the precise spot whereon the offence had been committed, at the same time exhibiting his arm supported in a sling. All this being so circumstantially stated, four of us, Major Say, the surgeon of the 99th, another officer and myself, begged to see this frightful wound which had been cut in the elbow: some objections were offered, on the ground of disturbing the dressings, unsewing the bandages and the like: but as Mr. Blackader promised to replace all these in fit order, we persisted in the request; and the Dutchman finding that we were urgent, and rather inclined to be peremptory, at length submitted: but the coat was said to fit inconveniently tight; the shirt sleeve to be tied in a hard knot; and other little difficulties and delays were thrown in the way. Still we determined to subdue them all; and when, at last, we succeeded, lo! instead of the many bandages, and complex dressings which we had been taught to expect, we could



neither find a plaster, nor the wound. Instead of a deep cut from a chisel, a slight bruise only appeared upon the elbow, the skin being neither cut, nor broken. This strengthened our suspicions that the slave had been unfairly treated; and by prosecuting the inquiry we learned the following history.

The Dutchman had gone to the carpenter's shop in the evening in search of a carpenter to do some work at a house in the town; and finding this negro sleeping in the room over the workshop, ordered him to get up and accompany him. The poor fellow pleaded that it was night, that he had toiled through the whole of the day, and further that he was directed, by the commandant, to work only at the hospital, until that was completed. The Dutchman, nevertheless, insisted upon his going. The slave unhappily refused. Words ensued; and the white man, seizing the black by the hair of his head, dragged him down into the workshop; where, in the scuffle, the Dutchman happened to receive a bruise of the elbow.

The following morning a complaint was made to a public officer, high in power, stating that the negro had struck the Dutchman, and wounded him; and it being an offence utterly unpardonable for a black man, under any circumstances, to lift his hand against a white one, the miserable slave was sentenced, without fur-



ther inquiry, to receive the punishment we had witnessed.

We could not feel satisfied that the proceedings had been conducted with a due regard to justice, we therefore waited upon the person who had decreed the punishment, to inquire more into the merits of the case; and were told by him, that the negro had been punished "for striking a white man, with a *heavy stick*, and a *large nail* in it, and therewith cutting a deep wound in his elbow." As this account differed from that of the Dutchman himself, we asked this man of power, if the sentence had been pronounced barely upon the man's own report. Certainly not, he replied; the deposition was also sanctioned by the testimony of *four respectable* witnesses who appeared in evidence, having seen the negro strike the white man with the *great stick* with a *great nail* in it.

We then used the freedom of asking if he had taken the trouble to look at this wounded elbow *himself*. He had, he said, "and a sad cut it was." If we had not been stricken dumb with the reply, we might have exclaimed, "Alas! unhappy blacks! what hope have ye of justice, if not only private, but also public punishments be thus awarded?"

As soon as our surprise and indignation would permit, we informed this *man of equity*



that four of us had minutely examined this frightful cut of the elbow, and that, with all our eight eyes strained as wide as they could stare, we had not even been able to discover the wound; adding, for his further information, that the Dutchman had, himself, assured us that it was cut with a large chisel: but that, in fact, it had neither been cut with a chisel, nor with a nail in a stick, nor cut at all; being only a slight bruise which had probably happened in the struggle, when the Dutchman was pulling about the negro by the hair of his head. We also ventured to add that the whole tale of this mighty wound was a scandalous imposition; and the punishment which had been inflicted upon the negro a gross injustice. We then appealed to this arbitrary guardian of the laws, very earnestly demanding whether, in justice to the injured negro, to the public, and to himself, who had been thus imposed upon, he would not feel it incumbent upon him to institute an inquiry regarding the fact, and to have the cruel wretch, and his four perjured witnesses, severely punished! Of course we made no remark upon his having seen the sad cut in the elbow *with his own eyes!* Whether from feeling himself implicated, or from a reluctance arising out of any other cause, this great officer of *justice* did not seem to be of accord with our sentiments upon



the subject ; but endeavoured to divert us from the question by expatiating upon the paramount necessity of holding slaves in subjection, and the great danger and impolicy of overlooking, in any instance, the crime of their lifting the hand against a white man. We readily conceded to him that, upon the present system, it was absolutely necessary to be tenacious of the privileges assumed, but we could never agree that it was either just or wise, to punish an unprotected man upon the false accusation of a set of perjured wretches, merely because Nature had covered him with a dark skin, and them with fair ones ; nor that it was fit not to expose such wanton malice to public shame, whenever the falsehood and injustice of the testimony should be detected ; therefore, pledging ourselves to appear in evidence, whenever called upon, we left the office obtaining a promise from this man of power, to institute an inquiry, and to have justice done to the poor injured slave !

Whether our endeavours in his behalf may be crowned with success, is extremely doubtful, but the unhappy history of our carpenter's punishment will convey to you some idea of the kind of justice to be expected by slaves. The alleged offender is not heard in mitigation, nor are any of his colour admitted in evidence, al-



though they might be able wholly to disprove the charge; hence, whenever a white man is base enough to perjure himself in accusation, the negro can have no hope of escaping from punishment.



## LETTER XLV.

Berbische, May 31.

EXPECTING a passage of only a few hours to this colony, I left Demarara the day after writing to you my last letter, in a small vessel which I had not seen previous to embarking in her, and which offered no accommodation but that of being bound direct to the place of my destination. This, indeed, seemed to be all that was required, for I was assured both on shore, and when I arrived on board, that, in less than twenty-four hours, we should be at Berbische. But, in consequence of a multitude of adverse circumstances, this short passage became sadly tedious and extended; and in many respects, the most comfortless and disagreeable that I have known. Instead of a few hours only, we were four long days at sea. A minute detail of the progress of each successive day would be as tiresome to you as the voyage has been to me: yet, to say, merely, that we were four days going only a few leagues, would convey to you no idea of the extreme discomfort, and the multiplied annoyances to which I was exposed. Let me, therefore, give you some of the particulars.



At eight o'clock on the morning of the 26th inst. I embarked on board the above sloop to proceed from Fort William Frederic, at the mouth of the Demarara river, to Fort St. Andrew, at the entrance of the river Berbische. The vessel was employed by the Commissariat, to convey stores and provisions to the garrison. She was named *Voltigeur*.

Quite unexpectedly I met with five other passengers, to all of whom I was an entire stranger. I thought myself fortunate in having procured three small chickens, and a salted pig's face, with some fruit and vegetables, as my share of stock for the voyage; and which, I was told by my friends on shore, who had often made the passage, was an ample supply, it being probable that I should not have to remain more than a single day on board. The other gentlemen, having more confidence, than myself, in the wind, the sea, and the *Voltigeur*, had embarked without provisions or stores of any kind.

The anchor was weighing when I reached the vessel: as usual, my head became sensible of the sea-motion before we had passed out of the river, and my stomach sympathizing, a violent sickness seized me, which compelled me to hasten to bed.

Till now I had taken no thought regarding either cabin or couch, the shortness of the



voyage, and the warm and steady temperature of the climate had superseded all concern respecting a birth for the night. But I now discovered that to sit up was impossible, the severity of the retching being altogether insupportable, and, as the sloop offered no protecting shade, to lie down upon the deck, exposed to the full power of a burning sun, was to invite almost certain disease.

Under these circumstances I was driven to seek shelter in the cabin, such as it might chance to be: for this purpose, I was conducted to a kind of trap-door in the quarter-deck, called a hatchway; and, the hatch being lifted off, a dark hole below was pointed out to me as the cabin, and the only place where I could recline my aching head, or hope relief for my sickened stomach. Subdued by the depressing languor of nausea, I was too ill to hesitate: to lie down was my only care! and, unassisted by stairs or ladder, I dropped myself, by means of my trembling arms, through the opening, into this murky cell. My feet were quickly arrested by the old chests, and other lumber scattered about this filthy place, which was not of sufficient depth to admit of my standing upright, without being half out at the hatchway; neither was there room to sit down, nor a chair, or stool to rest upon; hence it only remained to me to crawl upon my hands and knees, feeling



my way, over the loose chests and barrels to the farthest extent of the cabin, and there throw myself into a wooden birth fixed at the side; which I found too short to admit of the full extension of my person, and too near the planks of the deck above, to allow of my remaining in any but an extended posture.

At a moment when the sickness had a little subsided, a sailor with a light in his hand, dropped through the hatchway by which I had descended. It would be impossible to describe the sensations I experienced upon discovering the scene which now opened to me. The execrable nest in which I was lying was not simply crowded and confined, beyond all that the annoyances which I had felt had led me to suspect; it was a *tout ensemble* of nastiness, that defies all description. Words can convey to you but a faint idea of the dirty and abominable place, in which, for four long days, sick and without food, I had to live.

This horrid cell, called a cabin, was only six feet long, seven wide, and four in depth; and was further contracted to less than half its dimensions, by the loose old chests, and worm-eaten coffers standing on the deck below; the thick sheets of cobwebs suspended from the deck above; and the crowd of filthy ornaments hanging on all sides. To sit or to stand up appeared impossible; scarcely, indeed, was there



room to lie down, or to breathe. Not only was I shocked to see the noxious den I was in, but was puzzled to conjecture how I could have steered my passage to the birth, where I was lying. Both the entrance to the cabin, and the path by which I had travelled to my couch were such as I could only have passed during the insensibility of a severe fit of nausea. Descending from the hole above, I must have alighted upon a heap of unfixed trunks and coffers, at the risk of my legs being jammed between them; then I had to crawl, upon my hands and knees, over the old unsteady lumber, breaking my way through filth-thickened cobwebs, at the hazard of being entangled in the strong net-work of gigantic spiders, whose labours had known no interruption since the building of the sloop; and who, by constant toil, had manufactured sheets of cordage of almost sufficient strength to work it. But when compared to the many other offensive things which filled the place, these dirty hangings might be regarded as the rich tapestry of the apartment.

At each side of this dark abode was a fixed sleeping birth, which was narrow, short, and dirty. The centre was filled with barrels, tubs, old sea chests, greasy coffers, and other lumber. At one end stood a tub of stinking salt meat; at the other, one with rotten potatoes, and pots of rancid butter. The cabin was the general



receptacle—the store-house, cellar, pantry, and larder of the vessel. Under the births, saluting the noses of those lying in them, were filthy worm-eaten chests, filled with long-worn apparel, and other high-essenced contents. One was set apart for dirty knives and forks, unwashed plates, basins, and dishes; another for the odorous remains of yesterday's dinner. In one corner stood a bag of musty biscuit, in another hung an old grease-thickened lantern. Hand-spikes, marline-spikes, swabs, a shattered mouldy case with a compass, a worm-eaten ditto with a quadrant, two or three broken fishing lines, a battered speaking trumpet, and a variety of other implements, hung, or strewed about, added to the furniture of the apartment.

But worst of all were the poisonous long-used blankets of the sleeping births; and the myriads of insects and vermin crawling about, and making a public highway of my body. Rats and mice, cockroaches, musquitoes, fleas, and ants formed only a part of the catalogue.

You will believe that on discovering how I was placed, I lost no time in attempting my escape from this wretched place. But, on rising, a violent and enfeebling sickness again seized me, and, from the causes I have mentioned, it was impossible to remain upon deck; I therefore made the experiment of standing in the hatchway, with my head through the opening,



so as to catch the passing breeze; but the intense heat from the perpendicular rays of the sun, and the death-like nausea and incessant retching, produced by the erect posture, soon chased me from this wholesome station, and left me only a choice of evils; either to extend myself upon deck, exposed to burning heat, and the risk of being rolled overboard into the sea; or, again, to throw myself into a deadly hole, threatened with a poisonous suffocation, and the danger of being devoured by vermin.

In this dilemma—viewing it as the lesser evil, I, at length, resolved to return to the manifold ills of the cabin; but remained at the hatchway, supporting a degree of sickness which almost inverted my stomach, while one of the sailors removed the blankets, and other offensive things, which were in the birth, and swept and scrubbed it out, in order to give me the bare boards as a resting-place.

I now drew on a pair of thick fustian pantaloons, reaching down to my feet; buckled them fast in my shoes; put on a pair of strong gloves; covered my head and great part of my face, with my night-cap; and changing my coat for a loose morning gown, rolled myself up so as to leave scarcely more than my nose accessible; and, thus protected, tumbled again into the birth I had quitted, bidding defiance to the insects, vermin, and every annoyance



around me. Luckily my senses were not, at this moment, very acute, for I laboured under a severe catarrh, which deprived me of the faculties of smelling, and tasting, and almost robbed me of sight. Situated as I was, all this might be considered as fortunate, for I was compelled to continue throughout the remainder of the day, either violently retching, or loathingly viewing the hateful and disgusting scene around me.

Before evening poor old Mr. Serjeant, one of my fellow-passengers, was likewise seized with sickness, and compelled to seek relief by reclining his head in the opposite birth of the cabin. In painful sympathy we bewailed each other's distress, looking with anxious hope to a less offensive birth upon the deck, when the sun should take his leave for the night.

But in this expectation we were grievously disappointed. The retreat of the sun was succeeded by heavy torrents of rain; and instead of our being able to return upon deck, all the other passengers were driven below, crowding both the cabin and hatchway, so as to threaten us with the pains of suffocation. Every old chest and trunk now cracked with the weight of some one hastening down to escape from the wet; and, quickly, no less than seven or eight persons were crowded into this contracted hole of spiders and vermin, committing depreda-



tions upon the net-work hangings, in which they had long rested undisturbed. The whole host was thus put to flight. All the living things of the cabin seemed to be let loose in alarm. Numerous flocks of old spiders, overgrown cockroaches, rats, ants, and other travellers, ran distractedly about the births, kicking up their heels in our faces, and scampering over every part of our persons.

In a state truly deplorable did we pass a long and wearisome night. My head throbbed with pain; the heat of the cabin was intolerable; and I was almost expiring from want of air. How anxiously did I wait, and how joyfully hail the returning dawn of day!

I now contemplated a speedy escape from all the perils and annoyances of the execrable Voltigeur: but the term of our sufferings was not thus soon to close. New vexations arose, and disappointment again presented its thorns. An old sailor, who had been employed to take his watch at the helm, during the night, had sacrificed to all-subduing Morpheus, and steered the vessel a wrong course; by which accident we had now the mortification to find ourselves more distant from Berbische, than we had been in the evening.

One of the passengers, who proved to be the owner of the vessel, observing my solicitude, offered me consolation, by remarking that we



were not far distant from an estate of his, upon the coast, and assuring me that if the vessel should not be able to reach Berbische in the evening, rather than we should suffer such another night, he would take us all off in the boat to sleep at his house on shore. This was a comfort indeed, and I supported the sickness and other ills of the day, in the full confidence of being, one way or other, relieved from them at night.

Our sloop proceeded in dull movement, scarcely regaining, during the whole of the day, the distance she had lost in the night. Evening again approached, and our captain saw no prospect of reaching Berbische. Finding this, the passengers upon deck kindly sent a message down into the cabin, informing me, that we were within sight of the estate, at which we were to sleep.

But vexation and disappointment were again our lot; and no alleviating remission of our sufferings was allowed. It was discovered that we were too far from the shore to go off in the boat; moreover, that it was ebb tide, which rendered it impossible that we could traverse the deep bank of mud, which extended from the water's edge to the land.

It was next debated whether we should avail ourselves of the return of the tide, and of our nearer approach to the shore, at a later hour;



but, again, our hopes were defeated, by the unexpected decline of the breeze, which, most provokingly, fixed us in a dead calm. Presently the evening closed, and it growing suddenly dark, we were compelled to abandon the project, and to submit to the torture of passing another night on board.

As my next resource I resolved to avoid the poisonous stench and filth of the cabin, by pillowing my head upon the open deck until morning: but I found that my measure of vexation was not yet filled, for I was quickly chased from this well-aired couch, by the falling of heavy rain; and compelled to return to my nest of spiders. As the evil was without a remedy, I hastened below, and, keeping on my clothes and shoes, tumbled in again upon the bare boards.

The rain continued to fall, and from all the passengers crowding into the cabin, as before, we were close-stowed in confined and offensive heat, and passed another sadly wretched night; which to me was more distressing than the former, on account of my cold being somewhat relieved, and my olfactory powers in a slight degree restored. How anxiously did I wish to place an additional feather in the wing of time—how pray, ere the night had well commenced, that morning would again appear!

To prevent the accident of the preceding



night, we had let go the anchor; and, without the risk of steering away from our course, remained near the shore until the sun protruded from the waters of the east to guide our path. It was now discovered that we had been lying near to the estate of our fellow-passenger, where it was intended we should have slept; it also appeared that we were only a few hours run from Berbische; and that, unless some new obstacle occurred, we could not fail to complete our voyage in the course of the day.

But, unhappily, the proprietor of the sloop wished to be set on shore, and we could not weigh anchor until the sailors, who went off with the boat, should return. At seven o'clock Mr. ——— took his departure from the vessel, carrying with him the other passengers, and leaving me to make the remainder of the voyage alone.

It was observed, before, that these gentlemen brought no provisions on board; and as my scanty stock had only served the mess for a single dinner, we had already been reduced to the negro diet of plantains and water, for nearly two days. This had been, hitherto, no inconvenience to me, for my sickened stomach refused every kind of nourishment; but my greatest distress arose from the other passengers having devoured every morsel of my fruit, whilst I was lying sick and ill below, not



leaving me a shaddock, or an orange, to moisten my lips, or cool my tongue.

On their leaving the sloop, I earnestly intreated them not to detain the boat a moment after they landed, lest we should be prevented from reaching Berbische by night. They assured me that it should not be delayed an instant beyond the time necessary for sending us "some fruit, and some provisions for the captain's dinner." But, instead of the boat coming back, directly, we were kept waiting the whole of the day, under an anxiety which it were more easy to conceive, than express.

The third night came on, and no boat appeared. Our situation was now tenfold more distressing than before. Without the men who went off with the boat, we had not hands enough to work the vessel. No remedy, therefore, remained, but to wait for them, however protracted their return.

The poor captain, grown even more impatient than myself, became quite outrageous, and from no satisfactory cause explaining to his mind the detention of the boat, he sought not to restrain his rage, but kicked and stamped upon the deck, pouring forth dreadful sea oaths, in the full coarseness of broad Barbadian dialect, and with all the emphasis of unbounded execration. His curses were really tremendous. They were unlike all that had before met my



ear; and were rendered doubly odious by the drawling accent in which they were pronounced.

Notwithstanding my determination to meet the rough and the smooth of life as they shall chance to fall in my path, this I confess was a day of trial to my philosophy. Being without food and drink, without society, or any other *agrément*, I was not able to beguile the slothful hours, either by conversation or the pleasures of the table; and was even disappointed in the hope of diverting my mind, from the fatigue of unremitted suspense, by reading. Intending to make the trial, I begged of the stamping, raving captain to show me his library. Ay, exclaimed he, with a broad oath, that I can soon do! And, in truth, so he might; for it consisted only of a torn, mouldy copy of the sailor's *Vade-mecum*, and the second volume of *The Tatler*, worm-eaten, and held together by a needleful of worsted! As I was not in humour with the sea, or any thing appertaining thereto, I threw aside the musty old guide, and sat down to tattle with Mr. Bickerstaff, hoping in his society to forget the cares of the moment; but still the boat—the *boat* annoyed me at every page, and I found it impossible to abstract my thoughts from the painful apprehension of passing another night on board the abominable *Vol-tigeur*.

I remained, during the greater part of the



day, upon deck; but as is common, at this season of the year, heavy rain again fell at night, and I was driven below to pass the hours of darkness amidst the filth and perils of my former retreat.

The poor enraged captain, bidding defiance to the showers, remained throughout the greater part of the night swearing and stamping upon deck; and, in his watchful look-out for the boat, kept himself awake by pouring bitter curses upon the heads of those who detained it.

After a sad and wearisome waiting the day again broke in at the opening of the cabin. Much rain had fallen during the night, but the sun smiled propitious through his morning robes, and seemed to offer cheerful greetings. With eager anxiety I sought tidings of our boat, but could obtain no intelligence regarding her. Neither was she arrived, nor in sight. The complete round of twenty-four hours had passed, since she left us, and we were wholly lost in conjecture what could possibly detain her.

I now began to feel alarmed for my fellow-passengers, and became more anxious concerning their safety, than regarding the return of the boat. Something surely must have happened! The tide and the mud appeared no longer sufficient to explain the delay. Still had we no means of obtaining, nor even of seeking information, and it only remained to us to con-



tinue the expectations of the preceding day, rendered doubly solicitous from our apprehensions respecting the fate of the gentlemen who had left us.

I made my escape very early from the cabin, and having exhausted all inquiries and conjectures, without discovering any possible remedy, it next became a question how to kill the heavy time. Already, had I travelled as far as *Finis* with Isaac Bickerstaff; and had nothing left, in the shape of a book, but the dirty worn-out Vade-mecum: therefore, great as was my aversion to the sea, a seeming necessity drove me to separate the dirty pages of the old guide. A Dutch dictionary might have been as entertaining. I, nevertheless, laboured through latitudes and longitudes, and meridians, and altitudes, quite to the end; and still . . . . . no boat appeared.

I, next, resumed my tattling with Mr. Bickerstaff, pursuing our conversation of yesterday, until about noon, when, to the great joy of all on board, our long-lost boat hove in sight. Both tatler and guide were instantly forgotten, and, leaping up, I asked, impulsively, if we had yet time to reach Berbische by night. The captain assured me that we had; and you will believe that we kept our eyes, steadfastly, on the boat, wishing her ten-fold speed. At length, after an absence of thirty-two most tedious



hours, she came safely alongside; when we learned that no accident had occurred; but that owing to the immense beds of drifted mud on the coast, and to the tide making against them, when they first *neared* the shore, all the party had been kept at sea in the open boat, exposed to the full ardor of a vertical sun, and without a morsel to eat, or a drop to drink, during the whole of the preceding day, from seven o'clock in the morning until ten at night: since which the boat had been kept on shore to give rest and refreshment to the poor sailors, who were extremely exhausted by heat and fatigue.

Thus did it appear that there were situations even more distressing than being confined on board the odious *Voltigeur*; for those who had gone off in the boat had been greater sufferers than myself. But I was surprised to find that men, who had so recently known the ills of privation, did not experience some feelings of sympathy towards others. Although they knew that we were lying waiting in sad suspense, and without food or drink, except some stale plantains and bad water, notwithstanding the boat remained on shore full twelve hours after they landed, they had not the consideration—the compassion, I might say, to send off either a bit, or a drop to the master of the vessel, whom they had kept waiting; or to the person whose provisions they had eaten.



We could not but feel hurt at this neglect : but we recollected that they landed at night and in a state of fatigue and discomfort but little calculated to extend their concern beyond their own persons ; and we hoped to feel it the less on account of speedily reaching the haven whither we were bound : but, as if the torments of this vexatious voyage were never to end, it was discovered when the boat reached us, that the tide did not serve for us to get under weigh ; consequently, we were obliged to spend two hours of more tedious waiting than all that had passed, before we could open our sails to the wind. At length, the boat being hauled up astern, and the tide serving, we again stood out to sea ; the captain assuring me that we had still sufficient time to reach Berbische by sunset. Knowing her talent for sailing, I had strong doubts of this ; but did not deem it wise to discourage the commander by condemning his vessel.

The wind was not in our favor, and on my first venturing to ask how we proceeded, I learned that we were about half a league *further from port* than when we were lying at anchor. Still I was enough a sailor to have this explained to my satisfaction, by the observation that it was necessary to *stand well out*, in order to *fetch the river upon the next tack*. But very soon after, on attempting to *bring the vessel*



*about*, new perplexities arose. The Voltigeur disobeyed the helm, and would not *veer to the wind*. In the sailor's language, she would neither *tack nor wear*, but remained fixed like a log upon the water. I stood equally fixed, observing all that passed, without hazarding a syllable of remark ; for, however bad a vessel may be, and however much her captain may abuse her, himself, still every commander is so tenacious regarding the ship under his direction, that it were treason for any other person to speak of her as a slow sailer.

The poor captain now stamped and swore worse than ever ; and I had a full opportunity of hearing the whole catalogue of vulgar sea-oaths, delivered in the broadest creole dialect. He reviled the vessel's eyes, her heart, and her sides ; uttered dreadful curses upon her head, her soul, and her liver ; and after loading her with all the horrid imprecations that vulgar rage could invent, he completed the climax, by exclaiming to the sailors "*Da-amm her, cut her old throat, da-amm her !*"

After much exertion, and a varied repetition of oaths, and enraged stampings upon the deck, the vessel was brought about, and we stood in for the shore, sailing for a short time in steady approach to the river ; but within less than half an hour, the bright prospect, which had so recently opened to us, was again ob-



scured, by the Voltigeur striking upon the mud, and being nearly fixed aground. Fortunately she *went about* on this tack, with greater facility than the other, and hence, by putting her round, she was soon set afloat again: but it was now necessary to stand away, and make a long reach, from the shore, in order to get into deep water. This would necessarily delay our arrival; still the captain insisted that we should reach Berbische at night. But upon my next inquiry respecting our progress I found that this was not very probable, for we were then *six miles further off* than when the boat came to us in the morning.

Soon afterwards all hands were summoned and “*about, about,*” re-echoed throughout the sloop. But the obstinate Voltigeur again resisted. She had a sad antipathy to the Berbische river, and on their attempting to tack for the shore, she refused to turn her head that way. The poor captain, who had cautiously stationed every man at his post, and prepared, with all due care, for putting her about, grew almost frantic. He stamped and raved, and swore with all the bitterness of unbridled wrath: and, having gone through his whole volume of oaths, he threw himself down, exhausted by his exertions and his fury, exclaiming, “*Dammee if we shall get in to-night, for she’ll neither wag one way nor t’ other.*” For this I was not unprepared,



my expectations having been long of accord with the information; and although the epithets of old, rotten and leaky, used by the enraged captain, were, from all appearance, very correctly true, I was grown too resigned, or too callous to all the ills of my situation, to experience any feelings of alarm respecting our safety.

After some delay the vessel did *come about*, and we again *stood on*, boldly, for the land, making all possible sail, the master and his crew not despairing of being able to reach Berbische by night. But, as if the very fates had combined with the elements, to throw every obstacle in the way of our passage, the breeze suddenly dropped, and we were beset in a calm! Against this impediment neither the rage of the commander, nor the exertions of the sailors could aught avail. The captain, who had already opened his whole store of imprecations, was about to repeat them with manful energy, but, recollecting himself, he bestowed one round curse upon the wind and the passage, and as a closing exclamation cried out—" *Da-amm the old tub, it is not her fault neither—there is not a thimbleful of wind! Dammee if we shall get in this week!*"

Thus ended the sailing of the day, and we again let go our anchor for the night. The poor harassed man now became more tranquil, and I



took courage to address him in conversation, when I learned, that after all the fatigue and exertions of the day, we were further from Berbische than we had been the preceding night ; but that we had the advantage of lying in deeper water, and, consequently, were better situated for availing ourselves of the morning breeze.

I resumed my hard birth, protected as before, and in nausea, and discomfort, rolled out the tedious hours of night.

The fifth morning of this wretched voyage was serene and clear, and I left my sleepless couch at an early hour to breathe a purer air upon deck ; when, upon looking out, I perceived an island not far distant, lying directly in our course. From the sailors I learned that it was within the mouth of the river Berbische. This was happy intelligence, and seemed to promise a speedy termination of our eventful voyage. When the captain came upon deck, he greeted me with a broad oath, assuring me that I should breakfast at Fort St. Andrew. I wished it might be so : indeed all seemed now within our reach, and it appeared to be scarcely possible that any new impediment could interrupt the completion of our passage ; but the experience we had had was sufficient to create doubts in the mind of the most sanguine, and to temper his warmest expectations to the sobriety of tardy and interrupted accomplishment ; or, even, to convince him that the uncertainties of



a sea voyage could never end until the foot was again upon *terra firma*.

At seven o'clock we weighed anchor, and immediately made all possible sail, with the island displaying its thick woods, directly ahead of the sloop, and forming a very pleasing object. As we came nearer to it, I observed that it was situated about the middle of the river, and nearly opposite to the landing-place at the fort. All seemed now propitious, and we sailed smoothly on: but we had yet to experience a further trial of patience! An hour had not passed, from the time of our getting under weigh, before our progress was completely arrested by the Voltigeur again striking upon the mud. "*By Heav'ns,*" exclaimed the captain, "*she's aground! This is worse than ever!*" All his vexations were now cruelly aggravated by the mortification of being seen from the fort; and he ran, stamped, stormed, and cursed in loud bursts of rage, which outdid all his former doings. I felt the less uneasy at this additional delay, from the opportunity it afforded me of contemplating the scene before us: more particularly as the vessel could not suffer any injury from her soft bed, and as we were near enough to reach the shore in the boat, should any accident render it necessary for us to quit the sloop. The best exertions of the crew were of no avail: fixed in the mud we were com-



pelled to let go the anchor, and wait until the flood tide should again set us afloat.

The view before us was that of a wild country, only just opening into cultivation. It comprised an extent of wood and water, with small patches of land breaking into incipient tillage; but it had nothing of the bold and romantic scenery of mountainous regions: the picture was soft and harmonious. We were lying a few miles out at sea, looking directly up the river; the quiet waters of which were gliding, in tranquil stream, to the ocean. No part of the territory of the island was visible, but, from being flat and low, it appeared as a mere cluster of trees, growing out of the water, and causing a pleasant break in the wide opening of the river. On the right was the western shore covered with a continued mass of heavy forest, whose gigantic timbers, gradually elevating their crowded summits from the water's edge, formed a broad expanse of interminable verdure, which fancy might have easily converted into a green field, of immense extent, gently sloping to the river. On the left was the eastern shore, shaded also with deep forests; but on this side, the river's bank was partially thinned of its woods, and presented to our view, the fort and batteries, with a wide savanna at the back of them. I gazed in earnest contemplation upon the solemn wildness of the scene, and la-



mented not the accident which had so peculiarly placed it before me. For a moment my mind was abstracted from every thing more immediately around me, and I was totally absorbed amidst these vast and unbounded forests. But my attention was quickly diverted from these endless woods, by a loud cry of "*All hands to heave the anchor.*" The tide had supplied us with water to float the sloop, and we lost no time in attempting to escape from our muddy birth.

The vessel now stood directly into the mouth of the river, and, being careful to keep the middle of the stream, we again felt secure of our passage. But the fates had not yet filled their page. Before we had time to reach the fort the wind dropped, and, from the vessel disobeying the helm, we again drifted aground. This was worse than all: and the poor captain now swore that "*the very devil himself must have set his spell upon the vessel!*"

We were again compelled to let go the anchor, in order to wait the return of the breeze. Being near to the island and the fort, I might have gone on shore in the boat, but could not venture to ask our angry commander to spare any of his men for that purpose. I had often seen him expend his wrath without presuming to interrupt him. It was now increased to frenzy, and he loudly vociferated "*There is some daamm devil in the sloop that's bringing us*



*this passage, and we must heave him overboard, or we shan't get in this month."* It was perilous to speak to him, for if any thing I might say should chance to cross him, it was not certain but, in the overflowings of his rage, he might fix upon me as the "*Jonas*," and deem it expedient to take his measures accordingly. At all events it was necessary to keep out of the way, in order not to interrupt him or his men in working the vessel; I therefore remained below, during the high tide of his ravings and stampings, showing my head only at the hatchway, like an unhappy object peeping out between the bars of a prison.

We remained for a considerable time, deep fixed in mud. Luckily the meridian sun brought a fine breeze, and we were once more set afloat, when we were quickly placed alongside the battery at St. Andrew's fort, and I most gladly jumped on shore, rejoicing in the termination of a voyage which had been harassing and vexatious, beyond all that the most ill-tokened calculation could have anticipated. Never was any poor suffering captive more happy in being released from long confinement, than I was to escape from my noisome abode in the *Voltigeur*. During four sad long days, and four still more wearisome nights had I been immured in the filthiest of all filthy dungeons, ill, and in a



manner without food or support, having only the repetition of bad plantains and water.

I was met at the landing-place by Mr. Mackie, the acting surgeon of the garrison, who kindly conducted me to an apartment, where I could cast off my sea garments, and submit myself to the purifying process of a complete ablution. No person could have wished for my birth on board the wretched *Voltigeur*: but every one might have envied me the luxury of my bath on leaving it! I cannot tell you how delightful—how grateful it was! It so refreshed, and animated me, that I felt, and certainly was . . . . . *a very different being!*



## LETTER XLVI.

Berbische, June 3, 1796.

**F**ORT St. Andrew is situated on the eastern bank of the river Berbische, opposite to the island which graces its entrance. Nothing bearing the semblance of the abode of man is within sight of it: nor is there any way of escaping from it, either on foot, in a carriage, or on horseback; the river being the only private path, and the only public road. At the back of the fort is an extensive savanna, giving habitation to loud-roaring frogs, also to enormous snakes, alligators, and other reptiles. This naked waste stretches to a great distance, and is bordered by dark forests, which reach near to the fort, and preclude every view except of the water and the flat uncultivated savanna. In these woods wild Indians range in all the freedom of nature. Sometimes also tigers are seen prowling from their deep shades; and our ears are daily and almost hourly saluted with the loud chattering of monkies, the louder screaming of parrots, and the confused noise of numerous other inhabitants.

The fort is calculated for the accommodation of between two and three hundred men.



The territory attached to it scarcely reaches beyond the buildings, and the whole garrison is confined to a circle of less than half a mile; the sole promenade, without the gates, being from the barrack to the hospital, and back from the hospital to the barrack, a distance of little more than a hundred yards. A short path has, indeed, been opened into the savanna, which forms a very limited walk, in the dry season, only. A few of the government negroes, who are employed at the fort, have constructed small huts at the back of the hospital, which call to my remembrance the cottagers' cabins in the Highlands of Scotland. At these habitations, we sometimes witness the joyous dance, and have our ears regaled with the sound of the rude African drum, the rattle, and the banjar.

Beyond the immediate precincts of the fort we do not find any human abode, without making a journey of, at least, a mile and a half by water. At that distance is now forming the town of Amsterdam, the new capital of the colony. Between the fort and the town the river Kannyé opens into the great Berbische river; and between the Kannyé and the fort, the border of the parent river is still covered with the wild woods: but these are doomed to the axe, and soon a road will be opened upon the bank of the river Berbische to the river



Kannye, and from the opposite shore of that river to the town. This will be a great, and desirable improvement. It will at once relieve the gloominess of the situation, and scenery of the fort, form a convenient promenade, for horse and foot, and remove the dull solitude of the garrison, by establishing a more easy intercourse with the capital.

The town is yet in-embryo. According to a plan formed for its construction it is to be built upon the angle, or peninsula, between the rivers Berbische and Kannye, extending along the bank of the former. The land on which it is to be erected is in part cleared of its wood, and divided into lots ready for building; but, at present, only here and there a scattered house is to be seen. Beyond the prepared land, and not half a mile from the government-house, the Bush still overhangs the river Kannye; but those destructive engines fire and the axe are now directed against it.

The whole scenery at New Amsterdam, as well as at Fort St. Andrew, betrays the infant state of the colony. The dreariness of the land, just robbed of its thick woods; the nakedness that prevails around the government-house; the want of roads and paths; the swampy savanna; the heavy forests; in short all that meets the eye conveys the idea of a country just



emerging from its original rudeness, into cultivation.

Since my arrival in this colony my hours have been busily occupied in attending the sick, and establishing regulations and arrangements for their accommodation. We have a garrison-hospital, built by the Dutch, which is tolerably commodious, and, with a few alterations, may serve for the present garrison. The Hollanders, without any regard to climate, had preserved their European custom of placing the sick, two or three together, in a species of box, with high enclosed sides, instead of keeping them apart, and giving them the advantages of air and cleanliness, by putting them upon open bedsteads.

I have directed that all these confined and offensive bed-boxes should be removed, and have given orders to have some bedsteads made upon a new construction, which I trust will prove both convenient and comfortable. They will consist merely of four short posts, those at the top a little longer than those at the bottom, and two side-rails, fitted together with wooden pins, and so contrived as to be easily taken to pieces, and packed in a portable form, in case we should at any time wish to remove them. They will be made of mahogany, a wood which is so plentiful in these colonies as to be used for every common purpose. A piece of



strong canvass, stretched from side to side, will form the bedding; a head-board will slide into grooves in the two upper posts, and the side-rails will move up and down in an opening cut through them, and be fastened with pins, so as to be at any time raised or lowered at the head, without disturbing the patient. When these shall be finished, I hope to see a very complete hospital. The unfortunate sick will have the comfort of being well lodged; each will have his mahogany bedstead to himself; and men, with different maladies, will not be crowded together in filthy boxes, nor shut up from the refreshing air.

The 93d regiment is intrusted with the defence of this colony. The mess is one of the pleasantest I have yet met with. In gratitude I ought to tell you that every individual emulates his commander in kind and friendly attentions toward me. Indeed I cannot but be strongly sensible of the many marks of politeness and civility with which I am daily honored. Most of the officers are men of cultivated manners. Among them are several of considerable fortune, and some of rank; men who are not only well-disciplined soldiers, but well-bred gentlemen; being no less versed in the polished rules of civil, than in the austere observances of a military life. The general order and decorum which mark their conduct



afford the surest indication of correct discipline, and offer the most convincing proof of the high advantage derived from serving with a strict, but respected commander. Colonel Gammell, while he suffers no remission of duty, is affable and pleasant towards those who are under him. He treats them as companions, and seeks to engage their affection and esteem. The soldiers consider him severe; but he is their friend, and the majority of them are not insensible of it. We frequently overhear the conversations and remarks of those about the hospital, respecting him, and they always terminate very much to his credit; for if one calls him rigorous or severe, another instantly contrasts what they regard as his better qualities, saying—"Why, to be sure, he is a little *close upon us*, and *keeps us to it*; but then you know it is for our own benefit; and, besides, how good he is to us when we are sick! You see he keeps these doctors to their duty, too. He comes to see us himself every day, and makes them give us plenty of every thing that's good for us; and 't isn't all officers do that, you know! Some of 'em are more afraid of an hospital than a cannon-ball, and never care whether we die or live!"

In this way their remarks usually go to the approval of the Colonel's conduct towards them; and, like good soldiers, they acknowledge their esteem for a commander who, by imposing



a strict routine of duty, gives them cause to pride themselves upon a degree of pre-eminence in point of health and discipline.

Among the many ills of climate, I am now suffering from a teasing eruption which has thrown itself out upon my legs; a complaint which I find has lately been prevalent among the troops in this colony, although we had not observed it at Demarara. It is more severe than the prickly heat, but somewhat of the same nature; and is, perhaps, only an aggravated degree of that disease. It creates an uneasy sensation, not amounting to actual pain, but sufficient to rob me of rest.

The second day after my arrival at Berbische I had the unhappy opportunity of inspecting the body of a soldier who had fallen sacrifice to yellow fever. The appearances were similar to those which we had witnessed at Demarara, except that, in the present instance, there were some striking marks of inflammation in the chest.



## LETTER XLVII.

Berbische, June.

I HAVE lately been present at the sale of a Dutch cargo of slaves, at the new town of Amsterdam. Many of the officers went from the fort to witness this degrading spectacle, and although my feelings had suffered from a similar scene at Demarara, I could not resist the novelty of observing the Dutch mode of proceeding in this sad traffic of *human cattle*.

On arriving at the town, we were surprised to find it a holyday, or a kind of public fair. The sale seemed to have excited general attention, and to have brought together all the inhabitants of the colony. The planters came down from the estates with their wives and families all arrayed in their gayest apparel; the belles and beaux appeared in their Sunday suits; even the children were in full-dress; and their slaves decked out in gaudy clothes. It was quite a gala-day, and greater numbers of people were collected than we had supposed to have been in the colony. Short jackets, with tawdry petticoats of large flowered patterns, and loose Dutch slippers formed the prevailing dress of the females. Scarlet, crimson, and poppy,



with all the bright colours used in a northern winter, rivalled a tropical sun, and reigned conspicuous in their flaming apparel. To the inhabitants it seemed a day of hilarity, but to the poor Africans it was a period of heavy grief and affliction; for they were to be sold as beasts of burden—torn from each other—and widely dispersed about the colony, to wear out their days in the hopeless toils of slavery.

The fair being opened, and the crowd assembled, these unpitied beings were exposed to the hammer of public auction. A long table was placed in the middle of a large room, or logis. At one end was seated the auctioneer; at the other was a chair for the negroes to stand upon, in order to be exhibited to the view of the purchasers, who were sitting at the sides of the table, or standing about the different parts of the room. All being in readiness, the slaves were brought in, one at a time, and mounted upon the chair before the bidders, who handled and inspected them, with as little concern as if they had been examining cattle in Smithfield market. They turned them about, felt them, viewed their shape and their limbs, looked into their mouths, made them jump and throw out their arms, and subjected them to all the means of trial as if dealing for a horse, or any other brute animal. Indeed the indelicacy shown towards the defenceless



Africans, by some of these dealers in their species, was not less unmanly than it was disgusting, and insulting to humanity.

We were shocked to observe women in the room who had come to the fair for the express purpose of purchasing slaves. Even children were brought to point the lucky finger, and the boy or girl, thus chosen, was bought by papa at the request of superstitious mamma, to give as a fairing to young massa or missy!

The price of these poor degraded blacks varied from 600 to 900 guilders, according to their age and strength, or their appearance of being healthy or otherwise. The boys and girls were sold for 600 or 700 guilders; some of the men for as many as 900; and the women were knocked down at about 800.

In the course of the sale, a tall, robust negro, on being brought into the auction-room, approached the table, with a fine negress hanging upon his arm. The man was ordered to mount the chair. He obeyed, though manifestly with reluctance. His bosom heaved, and grief was in his eye. The woman remained in the crowd. A certain price was mentioned to set the purchase forward, and the bidding commenced: but on the slave being desired to exhibit the activity of his limbs, and to display his person, he lowered his chin upon his breast, and hung down his head in positive refusal;



then, looking at the woman, made signs expressive of great distress. Next he pointed to her, and then to the chair, evidently intimating a desire to have her placed by his side. She was his chosen wife, and nature was correctly intelligible. Not obtaining immediate acquiescence, he became agitated and impatient. The sale was interrupted, and as he could not be prevailed upon to move a single muscle by way of exhibiting his person, the proceedings were at a stand. He looked again at the woman,—again pointed to the chair; held up two fingers to the auctioneer, and implored the multitude in anxious suppliant gestures. Upon his countenance was marked the combined expression of sorrow, affection, and alarm. He grew more and more restless, and repeated signs which seemed to say—“Let us be sold together! Give me my heart’s choice as the partner of my days, then dispose of me as you please, and I will be content to wear out my life in the heavy toils of bondage.” It was nature that spake, and her language could not be mistaken! Humanity could no longer resist the appeal, and it was universally agreed that they should make but one lot. A second chair was now brought, and the woman was placed at the side of her husband. His countenance instantly brightened. He hung upon the neck of his wife, and embraced her with



rapture; then folding her in his arms, and pressing her to his bosom, he became composed; and looked round with a smile of complacency, which plainly said, "Proceed!—I am yours, yours, or yours! Let this be the associate of my toils, and I am satisfied." The bidding was renewed. They exhibited marks of health and strength, and, quickly, the two were sold together for 1650 guilders.

"Enough!" you will say. "Give me no more of slaves, nor of slavery!" For the present I obey, and, leaving the dusky Africans, hasten to introduce you to the copper-coloured Indians; thus, leading you to the opposite extreme of human life, and placing you among those of our species, who spurn alike the shackles of slavery, and the slavish trammels of society. I have lately had an opportunity of seeing several parties of the wild and naked inhabitants of these woods—men who range, at large, in the fullest enjoyment of native freedom; neither suffering their liberty to be effaced by bondage, nor abridged by civilization. Being one day at the town of New Amsterdam I took a walk with the acting surgeon of the garrison, down to the Bush\*, on the border of the creek or river Kannye. Nigh to the water we met with a party of Indians, and observing

\* Upon this coast the forest is termed the *Bush*.



that they made no attempt to avoid us, we went so near to them as to mix in the group. We found them engaged in various pursuits; and remarked that none of their occupations suffered any interruption by our presence. A woman and her son, who were in the river, continued to bathe before us, and seemed greatly to enjoy the water. Some were cutting wood for firing; some collecting the Bush-water\* with a calabash, for the purpose of drinking, or of cooking—some were stewing crabs, together with capsicum and cassada-juice into pepper-pot; and some were eating the raw tops of the mountain-cabbage. To the latter I held forth my hand, implying a desire to partake of their repast. They immediately gave me a part; and seemed pleased on observing me eat of it. A better salad I never tasted. It was very crisp and white—much superior to the best lettuce or endive; and, in flavour, somewhat resembling the filbert. Perceiving that they were not incommoded by our society, we continued a considerable time attentively watching their proceedings; but their curiosity was not commensurate with our own, for they scarcely looked at us, or appeared to be, in any degree, interested concerning us. With indifference they saw us approach; they regarded us with indif-

\* The rain-water which lodges in the low parts of the forest.



ference whilst we remained; and with indifference they witnessed our departure.

Two days after, I saw a much larger party of Indians, who came to the government-house to ask for rum, as a compensation for felling timber; and the same evening, on walking towards the creek with some of the officers, we met with a still more numerous body of these inhabitants of the forest, who had been employed by the Governor to cut down wood preparatory to clearing the land near the town for cultivation. They were busied in packing up all their little store of implements and utensils, in order to return to their native abode in the Bush. Bows and arrows, apparatus for preparing cassada, the clay cooking-vessel, hammocks, calabashes, and crab-baskets constituted their whole list of stores and furniture. All these were light in structure, or in the materials, and, being arranged in compact order, were easily carried on their backs. The women were made to bear the burden; while the men took no share of the load. One man, who had three wives, packed upon their backs, very neatly, the whole of what he had to carry away; then taking up a long staff, he marched on before with lordly step, the wives following him in silent train, one after another. We walked gently behind a party of about forty as far as the creek, and



there saw some of them embark in their canoes, to paddle up the river; while the others took a narrow path leading into the depths of the forest: so that quickly all of them were out of sight, leaving not a trace of their visit behind.

They come down, occasionally, in parties, and enter into an engagement to cut wood for a certain compensation; but no dependence can be placed upon them for a single day, for they sometimes pack up all belonging to them, and return suddenly and unexpectedly into the Bush; from whence they come not again for several months, perhaps not at all. They are naturally indolent, and, being tenacious of freedom, they become impatient of the restraint imposed by daily labour; wherefore, they hastily cast it off, and fly back to the forest to range in their native liberty. From possessing a degree of expertness in the felling of timber, they might be highly useful in forwarding the cultivation of the colony; but they have no sense of industry, nor do they seem to acquire the least disposition to emulate the colonists in any of their pursuits: content with finding food and pepper in the woods, they have no ambition to become planters. Cotton is not necessary to protect their naked skins; nor are their appetites so refined as to require either coffee or sugar.

At the fort we have had a visit also from



an Indian family who came to us in the true style of forest accommodation, forming a scene of high interest and novelty. Before their little vessel reached the fort, we observed the long black hair and naked skins of the man, his two wives, and several children, who were all stowed about the vessel with the strictest attention to equipoise—*trimming* it most exactly. The canoe was large, and, in addition to the family, was loaded with cedar and other kinds of wood for sale or barter. On the top of the cargo appeared a ferocious-looking animal, setting up his bristles like the quills of the porcupine. It was a species of wild hog caught in the forest, and hence called a *bush-hog*. A small monkey was likewise skipping about the canoe. At one side sat two very fine parrots, and on the other was perched a large and beautiful mackaw, displaying all the splendour of his gay plumage. On the canoe arriving at the landing-place, the bow and arrows, the clay cooking-vessel, calabashes, hammocks, and crab-baskets, were all brought into view; and we gazed on the whole, as forming a very complete and striking specimen of original equipage. The entire family, the household apparatus, the canoe and paddles, in short all the furniture and implements for cooking, for sleeping, for shooting, fishing, and travelling were



here moved together in one compact body, so as to render it indifferent to them, whether they should return to the home from whence they came, or take up a new abode in any other part of the forest.



## LETTER XLVIII.

Berbische, June.

SEVERAL opportunities have lately offered to me of making boat excursions, with Colonel Gammell and others of the officers, to New Amsterdam, and I have had the honor of being presented to Governor and Madame Van Battenburg, of whose hospitable and polite attentions I cannot express myself in sufficient terms of praise. They have kindly invited me to take up my abode at the government-house, during my stay in the colony, but I have to lament that my duties at the hospital will not allow me to avail myself of so flattering and agreeable an accommodation.

The government-house is, beyond all comparison, the handsomest and most spacious edifice I have yet seen in South America. It is built near to the river, with one front commanding the water; the other the town.

A few days ago I joined a small party from the fort, in an excursion to some of the planters' estates up the river Kannye, and was particularly gratified in viewing the rich plantation of Mynheer Ongre. We set off at an early hour, in order to have the day before us, and arrived



at this gentleman's abode just as he was sitting down to his Dutch breakfast of very excellent crab soup, some fine fish, a tongue, and a variety of other good things. It is the custom of the Dutch to take coffee in bed, or as soon as they rise, and to make a more substantial breakfast of soups and solids about ten o'clock. After partaking of this repast, we were conducted about the estate, which is rich and well-cultivated, yielding abundance of coffee and cocoa, and some cotton. The annual produce of coffee is estimated at 140,000lb. weight, and of cocoa 10,000lb. Two hundred slaves are employed upon the estate, calculated at the value of from 50*l.* to 100*l.* each. The house is handsome and spacious, the plantation extensive, and the coffee logis upon a very large scale: the whole exhibiting the appearance of fertility and opulence. Having visited the fields of coffee, and the cocoa plantation, we next went to the logis, where we saw the cocoa seeds exposed for drying, preparatory to their being made into chocolate; and, also, great quantities of coffee undergoing the last process, previous to their being sent to market. I observed that what is commonly used as cocoa, in England, is only the shell or outer covering of the seed—the kernel, or better part, being used for making the chocolate.

At another estate we were regaled with fruit,



and several pines were put into the boat, when we were going away. Here we also pulled from the trees a number of calabashes of uncommon size, to take home with us to use by way of bowls and platters. We likewise gathered some roots of jalap from under the hedges, and observed the ipecacuanha growing in the fields. Thus, you find, that however shut from the world, we can neither want fruit, food, nor physic; for the hedges, the fields, and the gardens amply supply them all: drink, clothing, and condiment we also collect from the trees, the plants, and the bushes; and, in the calabash, bountiful nature has even furnished us with plates, basins, and dishes.

Although we had not the usual incitements of a sumptuous dinner and a splendid ball, we were not unmindful that the 4th inst. was a day of rejoicing. The troops fired a *feu de joie*; and a royal salute sounded through the thick woods both from the fort, and an armed schooner which was lying in the river. Bumpers were filled to His Majesty's health, and we were merry and happy as you, who were revelling in all the luxuries of London. One treat was added to our feast, which, even in that all-supplying place, you would fail to meet with, and which I know would have much pleased you; viz. the report of the cannon through the deep woods around us, with the loud shrieks of par-



rots, monkies, and the other wild inhabitants, on hearing it: and, above all, the enchanting echo which was returned to us across the river. I had listened each night with delight to the solemn reverberations of the evening gun, and was quite prepared to watch the effect of a more heavy firing. It was grand, and wanted only the stillness of evening, and the placid rays of the moon to render it sublime. On escaping from the fort, the sound seems first to cross a part of the water, and roll softly through the island of trees, at the river's mouth: from thence it traverses the remainder of the wide stream, and on reaching the thick woods of the opposite shore, it suddenly echoes, as if abruptly repulsed into the water. Afterwards it breaks through the forest, and is heard in rumbling undulation, as if again interrupted in its course, till at length its awful reverberations steal their hollow way through the distant woods in deep and heavy-rolling thunder.



## LETTER XLIX.

Berbische, June.

ON the 10th inst. a sloop arrived from Demarara, bringing us news of the surrender of St. Lucie: but stating only the simple fact, unconfirmed by any authentic details. Still we cheerfully hail the tidings, not doubting but the conquest has been honorable to our countrymen and comrades.

Since I wrote to you last we have had the misfortune to lose one of the soldiers by the disease called coup de soleil, or ictus solis. The poor man was on guard and stationed as sentinel to take his turn of duty for two hours at the gate of the fort, but before this short period had elapsed he was seized, fell down suddenly, and expired at his post. The day was excessively hot, and the perpendicular rays of the sun struck directly upon his head. Others of the men have likewise experienced the disease, but we have only, in this instance, seen it fatal.

I may also mention a very marked and melancholy case of yellow fever which has occurred at Fort St. Andrew, affording a striking example of the nature of this afflicting malady. A grenadier named Llewellyn, a hand-



some, well-made man, of robust figure, was brought into the hospital, complaining only of an uneasy sensation about the region of the stomach, which although indescribable, conveyed to him an early assurance of the fatal tendency of the disease, with which he was attacked. On asking him to explain his complaints, and the feelings which so alarmed him, he replied, "*I feel that I shall die,*" and placing his hand over his stomach, said he had "something there" that would soon kill him. We used all the means in our power to divert him from this depressing impression; but in vain! Nothing, he said, could restore him, for he knew the hand of death was upon him. He evidently laboured under an attack of the disorder, termed *yellow fever*; but, with the exception of this fatal sensation, no symptom was present which could have led to the apprehension of immediate danger. At my next visit, on the following morning, I found him sitting up, and apparently somewhat relieved; but on my asking him how he was, he still replied, "*Dying! I feel that I shall soon be gone.*" He continued perfectly rational and collected until the next day; when, alas! death but too surely confirmed the accuracy of his predictions. From the moment of attack he had been assured, that nothing could save him! The indescribable feeling he complained of, seemed to induce a rapid exhaustion of the vital powers,



while it formed, not only the leading feature, but almost the only symptom of the disease.

Upon examination, we found the same redness of the inner coat of the stomach, which we had observed in all cases after yellow fever: in the lungs also were some strong marks of recent inflammation.

I mentioned in a former letter that alligators were in the list of our neighbours at Fort St. Andrew. They abound in the adjoining savanna, and in their journey down a small muddy stream to the river, they often visit the fosse surrounding the fort; and sometimes are even bold enough to ascend the works, and creep over the ramparts. One of them lately alarmed a sentinel in the night, by suddenly approaching him as he was standing at his post within the fort. The soldier, terrified at so unexpected a visitor, in the impulse of surprise fired upon the animal, and spread an alarm throughout the garrison. The guard instantly turned out, and all the troops were roused, and flying to arms, in the idea that the enemy was about to land. But lo! the frightened crocodile retreated, and the soldiers had only to return to their beds!

We have since had one of these frightful amphibia killed; and a more hideous specimen of the animal creation could scarcely be met with. It appeared the most forbidding of nature's forms. The green eyes, the sharp teeth



and monstrous jaws, the strong waving tail, the hard impenetrable skin, and the short thick legs, and formidable claws, together with the circumstance of its crawling so near the earth, render the alligator a real object of horror. He is well armed both for attack and defence: while his scaly horn-like skin serves as a protecting coat of mail, he possesses, as an assailant, the devouring grasp of his shark-like teeth, and the ability of striking a blow with his shell-like tail, which might knock a man down, or fracture his legs. His limbs are also of peculiar strength, and are each armed with four powerful claws.

With all this strength of form, and of action, he is singularly tenacious of life: indeed, by the common means of destruction it is impossible at once to deprive him of animation; for however cut, beaten, or torn, still signs of vitality remain for a considerable time. It is only with extreme difficulty that he is conquered in the first instance, and, even when subdued, to kill him is still a task. Unless at certain parts, a musket-ball will not penetrate his skin, and a violent blow scarcely does him any injury. If cut, or torn in pieces, and left to appearance dead, he, for a long time after, exhibits marks of sensation upon being touched.

The one we destroyed was first shot in the head, but he was still a most dangerous and



active enemy, and had nearly seized one of the negroes by the leg. Notwithstanding his being wounded, he remained unsubdued until he had received many severe blows behind the neck; and for long after this he struck very forcibly with his tail. Further attempts were made to kill him, but, as late as two hours from the time he was conquered, he pressed my hand with considerable force, on my taking hold of one of his claws; for several hours after, he continued to show signs of life, and it was even difficult to mark the moment when it became extinct. It was my intention that you should some day see his formidable coat of armour, and for that purpose, I had given directions to have it carefully preserved; but from waiting to know that the creature was actually dead, before we stripped him of his skin, we unluckily lost him, and I shall only be able to present you with his claws. Having left him near the hospital whilst we walked into the fort, the negroes took an opportunity of stealing him away; and, on returning, we found our alligator chopped in pieces, and already stewing into soup—the slaves anticipating the mess, as a delicious feast. The meat was white, and not unlike the flesh of a rabbit. But for the common prejudice attaching to its form, perhaps the alligator, as food, might not be found inferior to other amphibious animals:



possibly it might be equal to our rich turtle, or the more delicate frogs of France.

We have lately made a party from the fort, and spent two most pleasant days—one at the governor's, the other with Mr. Blair, an opulent planter, residing at a short distance down the coast on the opposite shore of the river.

At the governor's a dance and fête were given in the evening to the slaves, and we were extremely delighted to see how much they enjoyed themselves. They assembled in the great hall of the government-house, having a violin, with the fife and drum for their band. Both negroes and mulattoes danced with a degree of animation and pleasure, which bespoke them free from care. The governor, his lady, his sister, several gentlemen of the colony, and our party from the fort, attended as spectators, and were all amused and gratified in witnessing this merry dance of slaves.

Until now I had only seen the slaves perform the rude African dance upon the open green, and had not imagined them to be capable of moving with such order as they here exhibited in regular country dances. Even minuets were led down, in precise and stately step, and with a degree of ease and gracefulness of movement which are seldom witnessed among the common people of England.

In the course of the evening a circum-



stance occurred which had nearly interrupted the order and harmony of the fête: but it terminated with only affording to the governor a pleasing and facetious opportunity of convincing us of his intimate knowledge of the English language. In the midst of the dance three officers of our army and navy, who were not of the party invited, and who had been devoting rather too freely to the rosy god, came staggering, abruptly, into the hall. One of them, with the busy officiousness of inebriety, insisted upon introducing the others to Madame Van Battenburg: but he had forgotten his English! or, in the confidence inspired by wine, was ambitious to display his knowledge of French; and therefore addressed her only in the latter dialect, speaking it so incorrectly that it was difficult to comprehend what he said, or rather what he meant to say. Alarmed at his condition, Madame Van Battenburg begged to be protected lest he should tumble against her; and true enough, at this moment, the poor captain fell sprawling at her feet. After much exertion, and with some assistance, he rose up, and supported himself upon his legs. He had now to make his apologies, which were likewise attempted in broken French, too bad to be understood. During all this his companions were reeling about the hall, but, regardless of them, he continued to persecute Madame



Van Battenburg with his bad French, insisting that either she or Mademoiselle Van Battenburg should join him in the dance: "*Venez, venez, Madame,*" said he, "*il faut danser*"—*voulez vous viens danser avec moi?*" but finding he could not prevail with either of the ladies, he suddenly turned from them, and happening to stumble again upon his companions, each of them seized a sable damsel, and dragging their partners into the row, took their places in the dance. But it soon appeared that they could perform only *reels*, and the country dances being interrupted by their presence, it became necessary to lead away these *slaves . . . . . of the bottle*, in order to prevent both the spectators, and the dancers from being deprived of their amusement; accordingly, with some trouble, they were conducted to the barrack. Madame Van Battenburg feeling surprised at our intoxicated captain speaking to her only in unintelligible French, mentioned it as remarkable, that he did not utter one syllable of English: when the governor replied, "No, my dear! it is not at all strange that Captain —— should not speak English to-night! on the contrary it is highly proper and correct: you know he is a British officer; and it would be disloyal in a British officer *to clip the King's English.*" On another occasion this agreeable Dutchman gave a similar proof of his close acquaintance with our lan-



guage. One day as they were sitting over the bottle, he and an officer of the navy debated respecting some captured property, which the governor considered as private, and the officer as public. The former urged that it was sacred, and ought not to be confiscated; while the latter insisted that it was colonial, and should be condemned for the benefit of the captors. Each maintained his opinion with amicable warmth—neither yielding to the other. In the evening a ball was given to the party at the governor's house; when, in the mirthful dance, the officer, perhaps a little elevated by the debate, or *the bottle*, took Madame Van Battenburg in his arms and saluted her. The governor observing it, instantly called out with emphasis, "Very well, captain! Do you not consider that *private property* either?" Perhaps few foreigners, who have not resided a long time in England, have acquired a more just idea of the spirit of our tongue. The governor is an agreeable well-informed man; and a social companion. His address is genteel, and his manners are polished. He is hospitable and friendly: his mind is highly cultivated, and in his conduct he obtains general respect and esteem. His door is always open to his friends, the officers are frequently invited to his table, and he allows them to consider his house as a home.

Madame Van Battenburg is cheerful and



entertaining. Her disposition is lively and animated; she sings very sweetly, and in conversation is sprightly and affable. She emulates the governor in his friendly hospitality, and, together, they make their abode pleasant and familiar to us all.

There being neither coffee-house nor tavern at New Amsterdam, and the government-house being most conveniently situated at the landing-place on the bank of the river, we are happy to avail ourselves of the kind offer of the governor, to make his mansion our resting-place, and point of rendezvous, in our occasional visits to the town.

To speak of the sumptuous entertainment we had at Mr. Blair's were to throw an air of doubt upon my former notes regarding the paucity of fresh provisions in these colonies. But let it be remembered that individuals of large estate may find the means of procuring a most ample supply for their own tables, although the colony may not furnish an overplus to send to the public market. At Berbische fresh animal food is provided for the troops more frequently than we had been able to procure it at Demarara.

Mr. Blair is one of the most opulent planters in these parts. At his place of residence, stock and provisions are in sufficient abundance to enable him to treat his friends with the most



splendid liberality. He is generous and social, and the riches of his table are dispensed with all the bounty of his nature. Instead of a plain cottage just rising from the wild woods of an infant settlement, we might have fancied ourselves feasting in one of the hospitable mansions of Old England, or in some chartered hall even of voluptuous London itself.

The house is a compact dwelling, neatly built of plain timber, offering, in its exterior, nothing to attract the stranger's eye, nor to bespeak the many luxuries within. It stands on the border of the sea, open to the wide ocean. Before it, is an extensive and flat beach of firm sand, forming a pleasant ride or walk at the side of the water. The estate is quite in its infancy, being recently formed out of the rude forest, and only now breaking into cultivation. In great part of it the young plants of cotton are just shooting from the soil between the remaining stumps of trees lately destroyed. There being no market in the colony, each planter's abode must furnish all within itself; every necessary, every comfort, all that is given, or enjoyed, must be found in the house or upon the plantation, yet in such plenty were they served at this prolific home, that one might have fancied a Covent-garden, or a Leadenhall market to have been near.

A large and very handsome boat was sent



for our conveyance, having an awning at the stern to protect us from the sun; and we were rowed across the mouth of the river by eight of the finest slaves of the estate, who pulled us on with surprising speed. At the landing-place another party of slaves attended with horses to conduct us to the house. The sun was extremely powerful, but we had a delightful ride about a mile and a half through fields of cotton and of plantains; the negroes running at the horses' sides, according to the custom of the country, as fast as we chose to proceed.

Hock and Seltzer water were presented immediately on our arrival, and the time, until dinner, was most gratefully occupied in the perusal of a packet of newspapers, just arrived from England: than which, perhaps, a greater treat could not have been offered us. For dinner we had excellent soup, with boiled fish, stewed fish, and fish in pie; also turtle, and crabs, most exquisitely dressed, forming two uncommonly rich and high-seasoned dishes. We had likewise a side of lamb, a fine goose, a large ham, &c. &c. After these followed a complete course of sweets. The cook was quite a proficient, and did great justice to the entertainment, the whole dinner being well dressed, and as well served. We had afterwards pines, shaddocks, melons, water-lemons, and multitudes of other fruits. Hock, Claret, Madeira,



and Port wines were in liberal use. We had also Seltzer and Spa waters, bottled small beer, ale, porter, brandy, rum, Hollands, noyeau, and several different liqueurs—all in supply sufficient for a lord mayor's feast.

After our eating and drinking we took a walk about the plantation, and found every corner of it equally bounteous as the table and the cellar. Such a store of living stock, both large and small, I had not seen upon any estate since my arrival in the Western world. A more gratifying assemblage of domestic plenty could scarcely be found in any country. Among the stock I should not omit to mention a pen of living turtles kept in readiness for the table: large droves of crabs were also running about near the door; and the neighbouring sea is, at all times, made tributary to the board. Several hundreds of negroes employed at work, or moving from place to place, improved the variety of the scene, while they added essentially to the value of the home. Together with the abundance of usual productions at this all-supplying abode were likewise some of the more rare and curious specimens, such as the small lion-monkey; and the large powys, or wild turkey of the woods; also the trumpeter, the fly-catcher, and several other uncommon birds. Our walk was highly gratifying, and offered much to excite, as well as to interest our



contemplations. We extended it to the sea-beach, and found the sand flat and firm as a bowling-green, and of a dark brown colour, neither liable to be blown into the eyes, nor to offend them by its brightness. A cool sea-breeze adds to the many advantages of this situation: it is always free and pure, there being nothing to impede or contaminate it between the house and the ocean. After it grew dark a rubber was proposed as the amusement of the evening: but cards had no power to attract the majority of us from the *dear* unfinished Times and Chronicle. We slept in hammocks according to the common mode of the country, and a most convenient mode it is, for a very large party may be thus accommodated in a small house, it being only necessary to hang up as many hammocks as there are persons. Neither beds, sheets, nor blankets are required, for the hammock includes them all, and serves as bedstead, mattress, and coverlet besides!

The next morning I rose at an early hour, and took a walk before breakfast, to visit what is here termed the "yaw-house;" a kind of hospital, placed at a distance from all the other buildings, for the use of such of the negroes as may be afflicted with that hideous and distressing disorder, the yaws. Here I saw some most striking pictures of human misery—sad objects of compassion, and disgust! Not to commise-



rate their sufferings were impossible, but their offensive and diseased appearance creates a sense of horror on beholding them. Of all the unsightly disorders which the human body is heir to, this is perhaps the worst. Imagine to yourself a group of meager sickly-looking negroes, with their bones almost piercing their unhealthy skins, and their bodies beset with ragged noxious sores, and ulcerous excrescences, and you will have some idea of the wretched inhabitants of a *yaw-house*. Congregated disease, crowded suffering, and accumulated wretchedness are spectacles common to the eyes of medical men: they have been long familiar to mine! Yet the effect of this scene was too impressive ever to be effaced from my mind. Some of these truly pitiable beings were crouching upon their haunches round a smoky fire, some stood trembling on their sadly ulcerated limbs, others, supporting themselves by a large stick, were dragging their emaciated bodies from place to place; while many, too feeble to rise, lay shivering with pain and torture upon the bare boards of a wooden platform.

Unhappily for our species, this most odious distemper is contagious, and readily communicated from one person to another; nor has it been found to yield easily to the power of medicine. It often exists for years, and com-



monly its removal is more the effect of time and regimen than of medical treatment.

When a negro is attacked with this cruel disorder, he is separated from his fellow-slaves, and sent to the yaw-house to remain until he shall recover. Usually it is six, often twelve months, or even more, before he is again fit to return amidst the gang. An improved diet, with cleanliness, pure air, and sea-bathing are most conducive to his recovery; whence it may be inferred that filthiness, and poverty of food, are among the occasional causes of the disease. From its resemblance to an afflicting malady, but too well known in Europe, mercury has been much employed as a remedy, but, unfortunately, with very little success.

I may here announce to you that another excursion of a more extensive nature has been projected, for the purpose of visiting the planters' estates in the remotest parts of the colony; and of proceeding up the river even beyond the farthest settlement of the colonists, in order to see the Indians in their native dwellings amidst the deep woods. If it takes place, I shall endeavour to be one of the party; and shall not be the first who will propose to return.



## LETTER L.

Berbische, June 28.

How true it is, my friend, that where inclination leads, difficulties are easily subdued! After hearing many apprehensions expressed, and various obstructing circumstances enumerated, we have performed our contemplated expedition, without encountering a single impediment which was not readily overcome. This confirms the opinion that most of the obstacles which interrupt our minor plans, and even of the mighty stumbling-blocks placed in the more important path of life, exist only in imagination. In far the majority of cases discretion and prudent perseverance might surmount them; but where exertion is required, we are too indolent to remove the opposing forms which fancy has created. Terrified, or too implicitly yielding to visionary impossibilities, a torpid inaction prevents us from examining whether they are phantoms or realities, and we forego the advantages of the pursuit, from a disinclination to use the efforts which may be required in its execution.

In the present instance, if we had listened to the timid counsel of those whom fancied



difficulties had deterred from engaging in it, themselves, we should have neglected making an excursion which has afforded us infinite gratification.

But, to our subject. Soon after our visit at Mr. Blair's, our party was formed, and we set off *en quartette*, Captain de Courcy, Captain Webb, Lieutenant Mackie, and myself, on our fondly anticipated journey. We had a four-oared boat from the fort, with an awning built over the part where we sat, which not only protected us from the sun, but also, by means of a door and windows, enclosed us as it were in a cabin. Sufficient intelligence could not be collected to enable us to fix either the limits of our journey or the period of our return. We had, therefore, no settled route, but our movements were to be forward or retrograde, as we found that pleasure or discomfort attended our path. It was completely a *marooning* adventure. Where to find food, or where take rest depended entirely upon chance. Every planter, and every estate were alike unknown to us: but we knew that there were plantations, and places of abode, upon the borders of the river: we knew, also, that in all civilized countries, where strangers are but seldom seen, hospitality is a prevailing characteristic of the inhabitants; we became intruders, therefore, upon the good-will of the colonists, resolving to regulate our proceedings



by the information we should acquire, and to govern ourselves wholly by events.

Among the obstacles said to present themselves, was that of the period of the year being unfavorable; and it was suggested that from the heavy rains of the wet season, the river would be swelled, and the current so rapid, that the negroes would not be able to row against the stream. Upon this account it was pretended that we could go only a very short distance each day, and not even that without great labour and fatigue to the slaves. If we had not received other more encouraging reports, this would have deterred us from the undertaking. It certainly was a circumstance that merited consideration, and we found in it an additional reason for avoiding every thing like a settled plan. At worst, should night chance to overtake us, when no plantation was nigh, we should always have the remedy of tying the boat to a tree or a bush at the side of the river, and letting the negroes rest until morning.

The principal difficulty that presented itself was our ignorance of the Dutch language. It happened that I was the only one of the party who had any knowledge of it, and whether I might be sufficiently conversant with it to make myself understood was doubtful. However, by a little Dutch, a little French, and a little English we trusted we might make our



way. We established a certain routine of duty, such as directing the slaves, presenting the party to strangers, making the necessary arrangements, &c.; and agreed that each should take it by turn to be "orderly" for the day; thus forming a sort of military *fatigue duty*, which was to fall upon each in rotation, according to a settled muster.

To provide for ourselves the comforts, or even the necessaries of the journey, was not in our power. Our whole list of stores consisted of a cold ham and some bread, with a supply of plantains for the negroes, some wine and Hollands, a few bottles of water, and our hammocks.

Thus equipped, we embarked on the morning of Wednesday, June 15, from the town of New Amsterdam. We ordered the most intelligent of the negroes to assume the post of cockswain, and putting the others to the oars, took our departure without having decided where to make even our first place of call. Rich estates, commodious houses, and hospitable planters, were not deficient about this part of the river; and as we had adopted the principle of seeking a home, wheresoever we should find it most convenient, we resigned ourselves to the discretion of the slaves, desiring them to make a port whenever they might feel themselves fatigued, or should find the tide impede



their progress. It happened that they took us on shore, about two o'clock, at a plantation called "Het Pleytanker." We advanced to the house, without hesitation, and introduced ourselves by observing that we were engaged in an excursion up the river, and had put in for the purpose of resting the slaves; and of learning where we might conveniently take up our quarters for the night. We were received with great cordiality by M. Deen, the manager, who insisted upon our having dinner before we proceeded further. At table we met a Dutch gentleman, named Abbensets, who very kindly invited us to accompany him to the plantation "Essendam," where he was pleased to say he should be happy to accommodate us not only for the night, but for the morrow, and as long as we could make it convenient to give him our company. We hailed this as a fortunate rencontre, as it augured favorably respecting the hospitality we might require at the various plantations in the course of our journey. We partook of a very good dinner at Het Pleytanker, and, soon afterwards, availing ourselves of the tide, accompanied M. Abbensets to Essendam, which we found to be one of the richest coffee plantations of the colony. The house bespeaks the value of the estate, being a spacious building, much superior to any we had seen in Berbische, except the governor's mansion. No-



thing could exceed the kindness and liberality of M. Abbensets. He entertained us with all the cordiality of a friend, and we lamented that, from speaking a different language, we were deprived of the full enjoyment of his society. M. Abbensets knew only his native tongue, therefore, in conversing with him, we were obliged to speak in French through the medium of a Mynheer Wohler, a Hanoverian surgeon, to whom we were presented on our arrival at Essendam, and who, very obligingly, undertook the office of interpreter to both parties. On account of my being a medical man, and having some knowledge of the Dutch language, M. Wohler mostly addressed himself to me in conversation : as a professional brother, I was likewise honored with further attentions, and invited to accompany him in a ride round the estate ; for which purpose he ordered a very excellent horse to be saddled and brought to the door ; accordingly, leaving the other gentlemen to converse by signs with M. Abbensets, we made the tour, not only of Essendam, but also of *Sans Souci*, the adjoining plantation under the management of M. J. Abbensets, nephew of Mynheer Abbensets of Essendam. Green paths, bordered with luxuriant fruit-trees, traverse these estates at various parts, and while they form pleasant rides, give a general air of



neatness, and add to the richness conveyed by the fertile coffee-bushes which spread the fields.

On our arrival at Essendam we were served with tea and coffee, and at nine o'clock was set before us a handsome supper of soup, fowls, omelet, and many other good things. Madeira and claret wines were amply supplied, also Hollands, bottled small beer and porter. At eleven we went to our hammocks, congratulating each other on the success of our first day's adventure.

Our intrusions were not barely permitted, but we were treated with the most unaffected hospitality, and, in the kind attentions of those we visited, we could discover that genuine welcome, which seeks to make the stranger feel that in giving his company an obligation is conferred—not received,



## LETTER LI.

Berbische.

WE left Essendam early the following morning, but not without receiving additional proofs of attention from Mynheer Abbensets, who kindly intreated us to lengthen our present visit, and invited us to make his house our home, and remain longer with him on our return. In all the generosity of his character he ordered some bottles of wine, and a store of provisions to be put into the boat for our use, en route; and, likewise, supplied the negroes with a fresh stock of Hollands and of plantains. According to the Dutch custom, coffee had been served to us as soon as we rose from our hammocks, but we reserved ourselves for a more solid breakfast at our next place of call.

This was at one of the sugar plantations of Mr. Blair, on the border of the river, nearly opposite to Essendam. Here again warm greetings met us at the landing-place. M. Schneider, who has the management of the estate, received us with a most friendly welcome; and a breakfast of fowls, eggs, and other solids was, pre-



sently, set before us. We found M. Schneider a very intelligent man, and acquired more information from him respecting our journey, than from any other person. He had made a similar excursion ; but to a far greater extent than we could possibly follow him, he having gone many hundred miles up the river. He was equipped for the purpose, and attended by a party of Indians as conductors, together with a young Indian girl, who had resided among the colonists, as interpreter.

The tide serving for us to proceed, we were compelled to make our visit at M. Schneider's much shorter than we could have wished ; we had therefore barely time to take our breakfast, and accompany the manager in a short walk about the estate, in order to see the sugar-works, some fine trees of the mango, and a young plantation of the bread-fruit. At ten o'clock we resumed our seats in the boat, when M. Schneider kindly desired to contribute to our store, some bread, and some rum. We also discovered that he had sent on board, without our knowledge, half a dozen bottles of very fine porter, of which he had observed us to partake, with great enjoyment, at our second breakfast. Instructed by M. Schneider, we were to make our next home at Vigilantie, where we arrived at seven o'clock in the evening. This was a severe day for the slaves. In-



deed they were exposed to far more of labour and exertion than we should have required of them, but from their own consent to the proposal of M. Schneider; who, assuring us that they were fully competent to the toil, asked if they could row to *Vigilantie* that evening? They replied in the affirmative, and cheerfully executed the task, arriving in high spirits, and smiling when we asked them if they were not sadly tired. Except the short time we remained with M. Schneider, we were in the boat from half past eight in the morning until seven in the evening. That even negroes could support so many hours of heavy and incessant labour in such a climate was past our conjecture. The only relief they required was to rest, occasionally, for a few minutes, upon their oars; at which intervals, although extremely heated, and bathed in perspiration, they plunged from the side of the boat into the river, and swam about in order to cool themselves, and drive away fatigue. Hazardous as this might seem, they did not suffer the slightest inconvenience from it, but returned to their oars with renewed spirit and vigour, feeling more refreshed, and more delighted with their bathing than with their food, or even their beloved grog, which we gave them in very plentiful supply.

The borders of the river offered but little to arrest our attention or to gratify our curiosity,



so that we were in danger of suffering more fatigue from our wearisome confinement, in the boat, than the negroes did from the heavier labour of pulling the oars.

We were received with great kindness, and entertained with much cordiality, by M. Malsted, but unluckily no person at Vigilantie understood any other than the Dutch language; our conversation was therefore very limited, being carried on only by signs and broken words. The task of interpreter fell to the lot of your friend, and you would have been highly diverted could you have seen him occupied throughout the evening in repeating a few words of bad Dutch to serve all purposes, and explain for all parties.

Desirous to know the mode of life, and to observe the habitations of the slaves, as well as of their masters, I did not neglect to make visits to the different negro yards at our various places of call. Pursuant to this custom, soon after my arrival at Vigilantie, I took with me one of the house negroes, as conductor, and went to view the huts of the slaves. In one of them my ebon guide, with great form, begged to introduce me to a very fine negress, his sister. I dare not tell you what soft overtures were made by this young lady, on my having the honor of being presented to her. But, to convey kind hints, seemed equally the object of brother and



sister. I mention this fact only to show you in what light prostitution is viewed by slaves—the brother would feel honored in placing the pillow, for his sister, on a *backra* man's bed!

In my walk to the negro yard I met a slave who appeared under a peculiar mode of punishment, being compelled to wear an iron collar with three long spikes projecting from it, in sharpened points, to the distance of eight or ten inches from his person. What crime had led to this strange method of punishment I did not learn. The poor man not only suffered the annoyance of moving about, loaded with this heavy collar, but he was effectually prevented from lying down, and from approaching near to any person without the danger of injuring him with the sharp points of his iron yoke.

The house at Vigilantie was very inferior to that at Essendam, but we found in it good fare, and an honest welcome. Fowls, milk, rice, eggs, and various other dishes, were set before us for supper; and we had afterwards some very fine Hollands; but as my bad Dutch gave no charms to conversation, we retired at an early hour to our hammocks.

The following day was far less fatiguing to us: although equally busy, it was broken into more varied succession. We went into the boat between three and four o'clock in the morning, in order to avail ourselves of the tide,



so as to reach the old town of Amsterdam before breakfast. We accordingly arrived at seven, in time to take coffee with Mynheer —, le vieux fiscal, with whom we afterwards shared a more solid breakfast à la Hollandoise. Our visit was divided between *the fiscal*, and *the doctor* (M. Scholten), both of whom received us with great urbanity, and invited us to prolong our stay at the old town.

The fiscal is 61 years of age, and although his youthful days are past, he is still active and alert. He walked with us to M. Scholten's, and the different parts of the town, during the morning, and was very animated and facetious, meaning to be good company; but sadly fatigued us with an incessant flow of senile garrulity. He knew but little French, and although he was more fluent in Latin, it was neither classical, nor always intelligible. At dinner he took his glass rather freely, as we afterwards learned was too commonly his custom. He now became officious and troublesome in his attentions, and at length grew unpleasant and querulous. He professed a high esteem for the English, and his civilities to us had seemed in unison with his professions. He drank bumpers to "George the Third and Old England," but on the health of the Stadtholder being given, as we had intended in complimentary return, the mask at once fell off, and exposed him in the



full character of a modern leveller. He raved and swore, called himself a patriot, and declared that he was the *firm friend* of Holland, adding, "*I hope again to see Batavia a great nation, for England has not yet conquered all the world!*" But still, in loud noise, and with strange inconsistency, the poor old man would drown himself in bumpers to George III.! It availed nothing to tell him that His Majesty and the Stadtholder were friends: he would lose his senses, and sober himself again, drinking to the king of England; but nothing, he persisted, should ever compel him to *swallow a drop* to the health of the prince of Orange. His nephew, who was present, was very much distressed, and, begging us to accept apologies from him, intreated that we would pardon the conduct of his uncle, which he attributed to the royal bumpers he had taken. We could only regard his effusions as the harmless ravings of imbecility, which but served to verify the common adage! Before dinner his sentiments were disguised: wine tore away the veil, and in deep drinking, the intemperate old man again became a child—was unguarded, and . . . .  
*spoke the truth!*



## LETTER LII.

Berbische.

**M**YNHEER Scholten, although not so advanced in life as the fiscal, has been many years in the colony, busily employed in the practice of medicine, and acting as chirurgien major to the troops. He has one of the best houses in the old town, and all about it wears a degree of order, bespeaking much of ease and independence. Madame Scholten appeared to be a lively pleasant woman. We took tea with her after leaving the angry *vieux-fiscal*. She conversed in good French, and seemed inclined to wit and humour. M. Scholten is about to remove, from the old town, to New Amsterdam, so that we have a prospect of seeing this family added to our circle of society near the fort, which, in this thinly inhabited settlement, will be a great acquisition.

Old Amsterdam, as a town, has little more to recommend it, than New Amsterdam, which is only now growing into existence; and the latter, with regard to commerce, has every advantage of situation; while the former, although many years established, has no superiority to claim from regular streets, handsome



houses, churches or other public edifices. We were conducted to one large building, but it was more commodious as a strong-built storehouse, than ornamental or splendid. It was erected at great expense by the Dutch government, as a general depôt of stores, only a few years before it was determined to abandon the old town; and by this event is rendered, in a great degree, useless.

In our walk about the streets we met with a house inhabited only by Indians; also one possessed by a party of manumitted negro women. Curiosity led us into both: the latter appeared the cleanest and best ordered abode: in the former, the family were lying or sitting about in listless indifference, heedless of passing events and occurrences. We purchased from them some bows and arrows, and other specimens of Indian workmanship. Among the group we remarked a half-naked female, whose face and form were very beautiful; and whose fine long jet-black hair exhibited the interesting peculiarity of gently waving from the lank unyielding straightness so universally observed in the sable tresses of the natives of this coast.

On preparing our persons for dinner at the fiscal's we had an opportunity of remarking that the old professional association of surgeon and barber so long practised in England



was not grown obsolete among the Dutch. One of our party, in the indolence of the moment, wishing to avoid the trouble of smoothing his own chin, sent into the town for a person to shave him. Quickly appeared the hospital-surgeon, equipped with a set of surgical instruments and tonsoric apparatus. He bowed most respectfully, and not ungracefully, on entering the room, demanding in Latin, which of us it was, who required his services. Struck with his address and the formidable appearance of his case of instruments, we imagined that the slave who had been sent to fetch *the barber* had committed some mistake: but, on asking the question, our hero of the brush instantly replied, "*Non, domini! Sum chirurgus-tonsor!*" then, displaying his razor and basin, assured us that he was more attached to the *operative*, than to the other branches of his profession. Without further hesitation, therefore, two brave officers submitted to be taken by the nose, and underwent *the operation*, with much ease and pleasantness, from the dexterous hand of Mynheer the *chirurgus-tonsor*; who, during the whole process, conversed fluently in Latin, upon medical and various other subjects. His education had been liberal, and he was not devoid of information, either literary, or professional: yet, from custom, he did not seem to feel any sense of humiliation in stooping to the



menial office of cleaning another man's chin! Such is the force of habit! What would our English knights of the scalpel say were they called upon, in these enlightened days, to *shave* even the most dignified of his majesty's subjects?

It was within our plan as recommended by M. Malsted, after passing the day at Old Amsterdam, to proceed with the evening tide to the estate Johanna. We held it a fortunate circumstance, therefore, that we met with M. Fenner, at M. Scholten's, who was from that estate, and who very kindly desired to be our conductor to his home, an offer which we most gladly accepted. Upon entering the house at Johanna we were presented to a party of six white females, Mrs. Fenner and five of her friends. Such an assemblage of *backra* ladies we had not met since our arrival in South America: but, unhappily, only the Dutch language was known to them, which prevented us from the full enjoyment of their society. Johanna also afforded other marks of European resemblance, which are not common in the colonies, such as an excellent garden laid out and cultivated very much à l'Anglaise; and in the fields a numerous herd of cows and oxen. In the garden we saw asparagus, artichokes, turnips, cucumbers, carrots, French beans, cabbages, and other European vegetables



growing in all the vigour of a more temperate climate. The various tropical productions were likewise abundant. Some of the walks were bordered with the fragrant lime, others were shaded with the grateful water-lemon, or the grenadillo; and a general neatness with an unusual freedom from weeds prevailed throughout. This well-managed and productive spot was cultivated wholly by two hard-working negroes, each having only one arm, and hence M. Fenner wittily observed that the labour of one man effected it all. This was an uncommon example of industry in slaves, for so luxuriant are the weeds and so rapid the vegetation in this climate, that it is always difficult to maintain the soil in, even, tolerable neatness of appearance: but, here, two single arms subdued the obtrusive weeds, and kept the garden in far better order than many others we had seen, upon which the time and exertions of three or four robust blacks were constantly expended.

In the course of the evening we were conducted to the logis to see the slaves who were engaged in the occupation of ginning cotton. The building was very extensive, and we were led by way of a gloomy staircase to the upper story, where the blacks were all employed in one deep room, which ran through the whole length of the logis, and which, from the scene



suddenly breaking upon us, created strong ideas of the fabled regions of old Pluto. The stairs opened at the end of the long building, so that on entering the room the eye at once looked down an immeasurable depth of glimmering light, through which was obscurely seen a multitude of naked black beings, either at rest or skipping about from place to place, without our being able to distinguish what was their employment. As we approached nearer to them, we found them to be a gang of negroes, old and young, robust and feeble, male and female, all busily and variously occupied in preparing cotton, by the aid of one faint light, suspended in the centre of what would otherwise have seemed an interminable gloom. Some were sitting on the floor; some at the ginning wheels; some were crouched upon their haunches; others standing, and many moving about, each according to the varied employment of ginning, of beating and pulling, of fetching and carrying, or of packing the cotton. Still we saw none distinctly, not even those immediately near to us: and the unusual noise, the various movements of the negroes, and the general confusion of the scene, augmented by the feeble light of the centre, and the impenetrable darkness at the extremities of the place, so powerfully called to mind the dismal abode



of queen Proserpine and her grim lord, that we could not divest ourselves of the impression.

At supper-time the usual hospitality of the colony was displayed, and a generous plenty crowned the board. A party of thirteen took their seats at table; where a lively festivity prevailed, until a late hour, when the ladies left us, and we retired to our hammocks.



## LETTER LIII.

Berbische.

WE rose at seven o'clock. Coffee was brought to us on quitting our hammocks, and at nine was set before us a more substantial repast. Soon afterwards we made our congé to the ladies, and took our departure from Johanna. We crossed the river in a boat belonging to M. Fenner, the negroes having been sent on with ours early in the morning. To our surprise, on reaching the opposite bank, we had to ascend a hill, which to a Dutchman might have seemed a mountain; and on arriving at the summit of this elevated shore we found slaves and horses, equal in number to our party, in readiness to conduct us to Arends, the home of Mynheer Paùels. The distance was much shorter by land than by water: our negroes, therefore, were sent round with the boat, by way of the river, in order to meet us in the evening; while we proceeded on horseback, across the woods, and savannas. This change in our mode of travelling was planned by M. Fenner, and it not only afforded us a pleasant variety, but relieved us from a tedious and uninteresting journey in the boat. The first part



of our ride was across a wide plain bordered with heavy forests, and exhibiting all the rudeness of primitive nature: next we traversed the deep woods, by way of a narrow path, following each other in the Indian file: then we escaped, again, into an open savanna, more varied and interesting than any uncultivated spot we had seen in the colony. As we were trotting through the still shades of the forest, we perceived that the notes of our conversation became unusually soft, and rumbled in gentle murmurs amongst the trees. Struck with this unexpected charm of our voices, we were induced to sound the huntsman's call, and the halloo of the chase, in order to observe the melodious echo. But we quickly discovered that, however musical and delighting in the copses of England, these were calls of danger in the woods of Guiana! Our friendly conductor, M. Fenner, instantly took alarm, and begging us to desist, desired that we would quicken our pace, and be still, lest we should bring down the Bush-negroes; who, if they should find themselves able to overpower us, would certainly take off our scalps, and perhaps not leave us our heads! Need I say that we were obedient to our guide, and rode on in silence?

The accommodations of this day's journey were quite West Indian: we had blacks as foot-



pages holding by the horses' manes, or their tails; and each slave was loaded either with a trunk of clothes upon his head, or a bottle of Madeira wine, of rum, or of water in his hand. Imagine to yourself the picture of a party of *Europeans* riding through the wild woods and savannas of *South America*, with a body of *African* slaves running at their sides, carrying bottles in their hands, and trunks on their heads, and you will have a correct idea of our travelling group. The negroes kept pace with us throughout the journey, and were not only at hand to give us drink on the road; but were likewise in readiness to supply us with dry clothes on our arrival.

At the distance of about nine miles from Johanna, the estate Arends opened suddenly to our view, and the scene became unusually varied and European. It, in some degree, reminded us of England—a circumstance which gave it additional interest, and led us to contemplate it with a kind of filial respect. Looking down from high land we saw, below us, a rich plantation of coffee, cotton, and cocoa, together with the house and home of M. Paùels. On descending from the rude plain to this finely improved estate, our road was continued along a fragrant path bordered with rows of oranges and pines, which leads across the plantation up to the house.



Our reception at Arends was cordial and friendly. We found M. Paùels to be a man of liberal education, and of refined manners. The house and environs, indeed the whole order of the home, no less than his personal address, indicated an improved and cultivated mind. We took dinner, and passed a few hours so pleasantly, that we regretted, they could not be tenfold multiplied. In the evening, M. Paùels, with his own boat and slaves, undertook to conduct the party to M. Heynemann's, the remotest European settlement of the colony. We embarked from Arends on a narrow river or creek, which, at a short distance from this estate, falls into the great river Berbische. On the point of land, at the angle formed by the two streams, is a small battery, and an old established military post, which is still kept up by a Dutch guard, or at least the semblance of it, formed of a few antiquated invalids.

The journey from the fort to M. Heynemann's afforded nothing of interest or variety. The scenery was a dull sameness of river and forest: wood and water overspread by the azure canopy, were all that met the eye. We were two hours and a half in the boat, and arrived at M. Heynemann's just as it was growing dark; having completed our expedition from the sugar plantation of Mr. Blair, in three days;



although we had been told at the town that we could not perform it in less than ten. Moreover we had effected it with the greatest ease, notwithstanding our having been assured, by several persons, that such a journey could not be executed, especially in the wet season, without infinite difficulty and fatigue, if at all. We felt it singularly fortunate that M. Fenner was of our party to M. Heynemann's, the latter gentleman not speaking any language but Dutch, and it being from him, particularly, that we expected to acquire a great fund of information, as well regarding the customs and manners of the Indians, as respecting the country and its natural productions. He had been chosen king, or captain of a band of Indians, and having resided for many years among them, was better acquainted with their habits and pursuits than any other person in the colony. To him they frequently brought presents of whatsoever they esteemed rare or curious, and it had been intimated to us that he had accumulated an extensive collection of specimens in natural history; also of Indian implements and apparatus. We found a number of Indian men and women, living in the house with this king of the district. He had also a gang of negro slaves; so that the household consisted of a medley of white, copper-coloured, and black inhabitants, who were assembled in this remote corner, from



three different quarters of the globe, the group being composed of Europeans, Africans, and native Americans.

The day having been spent in busy occupation, we went to our hammocks very soon after supper, in order to rest and recruit ourselves for the morrow's fatigue.



## LETTER LIV.

Berbische.

UNWILLING to lose my time in sleep, I rose at an earlier hour than my comrades, and had the opportunity of inspecting the whole of M. Heynemann's collection before breakfast; also of hearing his observations and remarks respecting the Indians, with whom he had long been in habits of intimate association. At breakfast Messrs. Fenner, Paùels, and Heynemann planned our journeyings for the two or three succeeding days, informing us that we might have an opportunity of seeing numbers of the inhabitants of the forest in their native dwellings, in the environs of an old estate, called Savonette, about twenty miles higher up the river; and remarking that, according to the nature of our expedition, we should be unable to proceed further with any prospect of comfort or gratification. We could not oppose the opinions of these gentlemen; therefore, embracing their proposal, we agreed to pursue our journey to Savonette with the evening tide, and after visiting an Indian village, and the other curiosities of the spot, to return to M. Heynemann's.



The morning was pleasantly spent in examining the collection of Indian curiosities, and of specimens in natural history; but more especially in hearing M. Heynemann relate his adventures among the men and women of the woods; whom he termed *Bucks* and *Buckeen*, these being the names commonly given to them in the colonies. We were also amused by seeing M. Heynemann and one of the Indians shoot with their common bow and arrow, and blow the poisoned arrow at a mark, from its tube. The accuracy of the Bucks, in using both these weapons, was described to us as being minute almost to a wonder. The common arrow employed in their wars, or for the purpose of killing game, is nearly six feet long, made of a peculiarly straight and fine reed, without a knot or inequality in its whole length, and strengthened at the point with a piece of sharpened bone, having a barb at one side. At the shaft it is furnished on each side with a piece of cut feather, in order to steady it in its flight. Sometimes a thin piece of hard wood, pointed, and cut in many notches at the sides, is fastened to the reed, and forms the end of the arrow: but those who have mixed with the colonists, for the most part arm the extremity with a sharp piece of steel. The arrows used for striking fish are forked, having three iron points, with a barb



near the end of each, the middle point projecting considerably beyond the others. The bow is usually two or three inches longer than the arrow, and when strung, is not, at its greatest curvature, bent more than an inch and a half from the cord. Various kinds of wood are used for the bows, the most beautiful of which is called letter-wood, a name which it has obtained from its peculiarly marked appearance, being richly mottled, as if stained by art, and somewhat resembling the skin of a snake. The string is made of the silk-grass, and is remarkably strong. An Indian can hit a chicken with tolerable certainty, at nearly a hundred yards distance. He is very particular respecting his arrow, and examines it with great care, in order to ascertain that it is perfectly straight, before he attempts to use it. His attitude, when pulling the bow, is highly graceful, and exhibits the human figure to much advantage.

The arrow which the Bucks are in the habit of poisoning is made of a light hard wood. It is about ten or twelve inches long, and of the thickness of an oat straw. It is blunt at one end, and cut to a point at the other, that which is sharpened being dipped in the poison. The manner of using it is by blowing it from a cylindrical tube, about seven feet in length. A bit of cotton is lightly put in at one extremity of



the tube, the arrow is dropped in at the other, and falls to the cotton; the lips are then applied, and the arrow is forced forward by a sudden puff, or jerk of the breath, and is thus shot to the distance of eight or ten yards with surprising accuracy. So expert are some of the Bucks in the use of this tube, that at twelve or fourteen feet distance, they will strike the arrow almost to a certainty upon the edge of a penknife stuck on the back of a chair. The tube is made of a species of reed, and they are very careful in preserving it. Indeed, from the difficulty of finding it perfectly straight, a good one becomes highly valuable to them, and its worth is enhanced by an idle fancy which prevails among them regarding the cutting of the reed. It commonly grows in wet places, or wide stagnant marshes; and superstition has stationed an evil-spirit to defend it, whence the Indians have the apprehension that some ill must befall him who ventures in to procure the reed. This weakness has probably originated from some of them having been injured by alligators or serpents—evil beings which commonly inhabit such-like places.

We asked many questions respecting the poison used upon the arrows, but M. Heyne-mann did not seem to have possessed himself of the secret. He described it as a compound of the juices of three different plants; but he had



not correctly ascertained the mode of preparing it; nor do we learn that it has ever been formed by any European; although some travellers have described it with a degree of precision, which might seem to imply a full and correct knowledge of its composition. It is a vegetable extract, and we are informed that it is unquestionably prepared from several different plants, sometimes more, and sometimes fewer in number, but whether, in either case, all that are used are necessary to the efficacy of the poison is a dubious question. Its fatal effects are certain and almost instantaneous, provided the minutest particle of it mixes with the blood. You already know that a quantity of this poison has been carried to England, and that experiments, made with it in London, have proved the rapidity and certainty with which it destroys animal life.

M. Heynemann gave us a plentiful dinner, and sweetened its flavour with an unaffected welcome. He expressed himself much gratified that we had made so long a journey to visit him; and confirmed his professions by his obliging conduct, and his bounty in entertaining us. In the afternoon we lost our kind conductors, M. Paùels, and M. Fenner, who left us in order to return to their respective homes, but not until they had earnestly enjoined us to repeat our visits at Arends, and at Johanna, on our way down the river. Being thus deprived of our friendly



interpreters, M. Heynemann sought to remedy the evil by calling to our aid an old non-commissioned officer, who had acquired a knowledge of our language, from having been in the English service during the American war. Attended by this aged soldier, we set off by six o'clock in the evening for Savonette, the late home of M. Heynemann, where he had long resided amidst whole tribes of Indians, and received honors as their captain or chief. Under his direction, many of them had been taught to labour, and although without much of industry, the plantation Savonette had been cultivated principally by the *Bucks*. Studious to promote our comfort, the generous Heynemann had put into our boat some food, drink, candles, and other necessities for the journey. One of our party being seized with a fit of affection for a *handsome Indian specimen* which he had seen, pleaded *sickness*, and declined proceeding with us to Savonette: but the *major domo* discovering the nature of his complaint, pleaded, in his turn, the necessity of *attending the sick*, and remained behind likewise, *in order to administer* the kind offices of *hospitality*.

The effect of the tide, so far from the sea, was very inconsiderable, and scarcely sufficed to counteract the current of the river: hence this stage of our journey became a heavy labour to the slaves. The day soon closed in, and,



being enveloped on each side by the impenetrable gloom of the forest, we moved slowly along the limpid surface, amidst all the solemn stillness of night. It was two o'clock in the morning when we reached the Indian plantation (if so I may term), Savonette, having been nearly eight hours in the boat, and much of the time in the dark. This was a sadly tedious sitting, but we were relieved from the fatigue of it, part of the time, by lighting a candle, and amusing ourselves with our books.

We regretted the lateness of our arrival the less, on account of its affording us an opportunity of seeing some of the Indians as they were sleeping in their hammocks, and observing their manner of disposing themselves to rest for the night.

On quitting the boat, we ascended what, in this country, might be called a hill, and proceeded to the house formerly occupied by M. Heynemann, which is situated upon a more sound and dry soil than is common on the borders of this river. Near to the water was an Indian hut, built like the common sheds of England, the roof only being covered, and the sides left entirely open. Desirous of witnessing their mode of sleeping in their native dwellings, we made no calculations of peril, on the score of unexpectedly disturbing these rude inhabitants of the woods in the night; but with-



out hesitation, entered the house, and advanced, with our light, close up to their hammocks. In the middle of the hut was burning a small fire of wood, immediately over which were suspended three hammocks, made of the bark of a tree, and open like net-work. Two were placed abreast very near to the fire, and the third directly above the others. In one of the lower was lying a naked Indian man: over the sides of the others were hanging several legs and arms, and two heads, which we discovered to belong to a boy and a woman, who were lying naked together in the same hammock: in the upper one was another man with his long legs projecting out, soliciting his share of influence from the fire below: but, from the breeze being freely admitted at the sides of the hut, it was manifest that the fire was more intended to protect them from insects, than to add to the heat of this almost equatorial climate. We rambled about until three o'clock, availing ourselves of this moment of unexpected visitation, to gratify ourselves with all the variety in our reach. We looked into every hut we met with, and observed the above to be the common mode of taking rest for the night. It was matter of surprise to us to find how little these people were incommoded by our sudden, and nocturnal appearance among them. They expressed no concern at our presence, nor evinced



the slightest apprehension or curiosity regarding us. Not so with Vandyke, a hardy Dutch soldier, whom M. Heynemann had stationed at Savonette, as a kind of manager, and deputy post-holder, in order to take charge of the estate, and maintain a friendly intercourse with the naked inhabitants of the *Bush*. This man, like the *Bucks* themselves, was living almost in a state of nature. The natives of the forest were his only companions, and from some of his habits, it might have seemed that, in their society, he had forgotten the duties of civilization: yet, in his general conduct, he was attentive and respectful, and appeared to possess the soft feelings of humanity. No European resided nearer to him than at M. Heynemann's, and the few, who were there, he seldom saw; nothing therefore could exceed his surprise, on waking in the dead of the night, and finding a party of officers, armed, and in scarlet uniform, standing at his bedside. You will imagine that it was with difficulty he gave credit to his senses, or believed that he was actually awake. Although I carefully remarked the expression of his countenance, his incoherent replies, and all his agitated movements, you will better conceive the effect of such a visit upon his mind than it is possible for the pen to describe it. Vandyke's bed, like the couch of the Indians, was a simple hammock, and only differed from



theirs, in being made of cotton instead of the bark of a tree. In another hammock close at his side, was lying a naked Indian woman, whom he had selected from the woods as his wife. She appeared to be ill, and we were led to ask some questions regarding the means of procuring her medical relief, when Vandyke, with an air of nonchalance, instantly replied, "Och ! als zy ziek is, moet ik eene andere hebben," which may be thus translated, "when she grows sick, I turn her into the woods and take another."

Vandyke was too much astonished at our unexpected appearance, as well as too much a soldier, to remain quietly in his hammock, while he saw a party of officers unprovided; he rose, therefore, very quickly, and, conducting us to the best room he had, set before us such fare, as his scanty means enabled him to collect, and kindly bade us welcome; then pointed out to us some hooks, whereon to suspend our sleeping births for the remainder of the night. Our chamber very much resembled an old barn. The repast presented by Vandyke was cassada bread, with Hollands and water: but the hospitality of M. Heynemann had prevented us from being thrown upon the humble fare of Savonette—compared to which our boat was a luxurious larder.

The convenience of hammocks was never greater, nor more striking than upon this occa-



sion. In such an apartment beds or mattresses would have been objects of terror to us, but suspended in our netting, we lay in comfort, bidding defiance to lizards, thick cobwebs, dirt, vermin, and all other annoyances.



## LETTER LV.

Berbische.

EAGER anticipation tracing in my mind all that we were to see, hear, and acquire at Savonette, I had scarcely closed my eyes before it was time again to open them. The period allowed to us, by the arrangements of Messrs. Heynemann, Fenner, and Paùels, was very limited; fearing, therefore, to lose the smallest portion of the allotted hours, I was up and abroad before my companions. It was seven o'clock. Vandyke had risen with the sun, and now came to offer himself to our command. Our non-commissioned interpreter was also ready, and obedient to our will. As soon as my comrades left their hammocks, we took our breakfasts of coffee and cascada-bread; and, without further delay, set forth into the woods, in search of the Indian town; to visit which was the great purpose of our journey to Savonette.

Entering the forest, the first thing that attracted our notice was a cluster of wild pines, growing ten or twelve feet high. Our path was good. Although pleasantly shaded at each side, it was not so narrow as to confine us to the usual Indian file. It more resembled the



open ridings which embellish the woods of England. The scene was new; and every object created a lively interest. Expectation was ardent, and on the point of being gratified. It was a walk of nearly a mile to the Indian town. Feeling anxious to avoid every possible cause of offence, we begged of Vandyke to instruct us in such rules of conduct, as it might be proper to maintain towards the naked tribe; but he did not consider any precautions necessary: being himself familiar with these natives of the woods, he left us to our own discretion, and assured us a civil, if not a polite reception. On our arrival he led us directly into the simple buildings which are used for houses. No ceremony was observed: neither rapping at the door, nor ringing at the bell was required. "Parlez au Suisse" offered no impediment, nor delay. Vandyke advanced, and the party was at once amidst the family. You will believe that our attention was active. Not a house, a hut, or a hammock escaped us. Not an article of furniture, not an implement, or utensil; not a step of ground; not a movement, or a look of any inhabitant was disregarded. We hunted through every corner and place, taking up some things in our hands, inspecting others, and assailing Vandyke with questions concerning all. The *Bucks* were gone into the forest to cut wood, the *Buckeen* and their children being left at home.



Most of the women were engaged in one part or other of the process of preparing the poisonous cassada into food. Wishing to see them in their different employments, we hastened from hut to hut in the idea of coming upon them, before their occupations were interrupted by the surprise which we thought it probable might be excited, from the unexpected arrival of a party of clothed strangers, among them. But on this head we need have had no anxiety. Not an individual suffered any interruption from our presence. The curiosity, by which we were actuated, was in no degree reciprocal; for scarcely did any one take the trouble even to look towards us! We passed through their huts, and around their persons, in a manner unnoticed; and they continued at work, or unemployed, precisely as we found them! Whether on their legs, whether seated, or lying in their hammocks, so they remained; no observable change being induced by our visit.

Added to other gratifications it was in part our object to collect specimens of natural production, or of Indian workmanship. In our varied assemblage, was a small and beautiful little animal, called the lion-monkey; also a Laba, which in appearance somewhat resembles the hare. Its flesh is esteemed the most delicious food of the country; the taste of it ap-



proaches to a mixed flavour of the hare, and very delicate pork. It is dressed without casing; the skin being considered the favorite part. This is very thick, and in cooking becomes gelatinous, like the calves head, or turtle. The Indians scald off the hair or fur, then cut the body in pieces, and stew it in cassada-juice, seasoning it very highly with capsicum. Thus prepared, it is extremely good, and if it could be had in London, might form a dish not unworthy the notice of a mansion-house purveyor.

Many fine bows and arrows were among the collection which we procured at this forest village. In one of the huts I fixed my eye upon a small pair which appeared to be extremely delicate, of exquisite workmanship, and by far the finest specimen of the kind we had met with. I wished to show them to my friends in England; and, taking them into my hand, resolved to purchase them if possible. But I was disappointed, by an unexpected circumstance, which very much interested me, and which I shall ever remember with pleasure. Holding the bow and arrow to the naked woman of the house, I was about to offer money, my pocket-handkerchief, or my neckcloth in exchange for them; when a little copper-skinned urchin, almost covered with long black hair, broke out in such piteous bewailings, that (although to have had them I



would have given almost any article of my apparel) I was, at once, diverted from every thought of possessing them. I felt that no terms could induce me to take them, if at the expense of the tears, and broken-hearted lamentations of the young archer to whom they belonged. Still I own that I was cruel enough to prolong the little rogue's cries and fears, by an experiment upon the mother. I wished to ascertain the sentiments of an inhabitant of the rude forest upon such an occasion; and to observe what would be the conduct exhibited under the circumstances of a son's distress; I persevered, therefore, in my seeming attempts to prevail on the woman to let me have the bow and arrow: but she was true to nature; and her child's happiness was the first object of her parent-breast! No offer—no inducement could tempt her to barter her son's peace. If her dear infant's peace was to be the price, nothing was adequate — nothing could compensate! The little distressed boy hung about my knees—ran to his mother—held up an imploring hand—and uttered sad cries of affliction. I resisted, for a time, the impulse of my feelings—displayed to the woman my handkerchief, and my pocket-book — offered her money — tried to sooth her son, and feigned every means of persuasion: but all in vain! She remained inflexible! Her child was unhappy, and with his



comfort there could be no compromise. It was enough! The experiment was made; and I was delighted to find that in the wild woods the sacred laws of nature were not subordinate to all-subduing interest.

I had no desire further to tantalize the little weeping fellow, or his affectionate mother, therefore gave him the bow and arrow, and made him happy—compensating the affliction I had caused him, by the pocket-handkerchief which I had offered as the purchase of his arms. His grief instantly vanished; but he flew to his mother, and, clinging to her, did not again venture from her side, whilst we remained in the hut.

Further examples occurred to us evincing the powerful operation of the affections among these uncivilized people. One of the women pointed out to our observation the grave of her son; a youth who had destroyed himself because the mother of a young *buckeen*, of whom he was enamoured, could not be prevailed upon to let him take her daughter for his wife. Thus the wily Cupid would seem to wield his bow with equal prowess amidst the simple beings of the forest, as among the more pampered swains of crowded society. The son of our afflicted buckeen was young, and his attachment as pure as it was ardent and disinterested. Without the adored object of his affections life was insup-



portable, and he resolved not to survive the disappointment: deprived of his heart's choice, existence lost all its charms, and he yielded himself a victim to despair! These rude people honored the sentiment. In sad grief his parents deplored their loss, and the inhabitants of every hut lamented the fate of the youthful lover. An additional instance of natural affection and attachment occurred in the solemn observance paid to his remains, which as an ever-dear and sacred deposit, were entombed within the chamber where his afflicted parents dwelt!

Like all other tribes, who are ignorant of the comforts and conveniences of civilization, the Indians of Guiana procure their food from the rivers, the sea, and the forests. They have no animals domesticated, nor any grain or roots, except the cassada, brought into cultivation; and hence they depend very much upon the fortune of the chase for subsistence. A small species of deer, called *wirrebocerra*, the laba, and the armadillo are among the animals they most esteem. Crabs and various kinds of fish are also much used, particularly the former, which they find in great abundance in the muddy margins of the rivers; especially at the parts where they open into the sea. When fortunate in the chase, they indulge their natural indolence by lying in their hammocks, most of the time, until their provisions are expended: and when the supply ob-



tained by the bow and arrow is less plentiful, or when their hunt in the woods happens to prove unsuccessful, they find a resource in crabs and cassada, which may be considered their staple articles of consumption. Indeed the latter may be called their *staff of life*, for it offers a resource when they fail in the chase, and becomes to them what plantains are to the negroes of these colonies, or potatoes to Irish peasants. Being the only vegetable they cultivate, it is usually planted, in a rough and irregular manner, near to their huts. Very commonly they prepare their food in the form of pepper-pot; their favorite dishes being crabs, or laba, stewed with cassada-juice, and seasoned extremely hot with red pepper.

I can give testimony to both of these being very rich and good; perhaps in point of flavour the pepper-pot of crabs claims the preference; but either might be a feast for an epicure. In one of the huts we saw part of an armadillo, which had been broiled or roasted in its shell. In appearance and taste it was not very unlike young pig. Water is their common drink, but they sometimes use a fermented liquor called *pixoorree*, which they make from cassada. This is intoxicating, and has some resemblance to beer.

The huts are usually constructed like that which we saw near the landing-place at Savo-



nette. I hope to show you a model of them on my return, having the promise of one, made by the *Bucks*, with furniture complete. At the village some of the huts were closed in at the ends; others were left entirely open. The roofs were neatly thatched with the leaf of the coco-nut or the mountain-cabbage. Near to the cabins that were inhabited, we observed a detached building enclosed on all sides, forming a single room, into which light and air were only admitted at the door-way. Upon inquiry we learned that this was devoted to the use of the sick—not as an hospital, but as a temple of incantation, for the purpose of expelling disease. Their superstition leads them to attribute sickness to witchcraft, or the visitation of some evil spirit like the Obeah of the Africans; and having faith in spells, they make little decorated instruments, of tender rushes about a foot long, which the physicians, or priests called *Pyeis*, employ, together with other magical implements, as wands to drive out these demons of ill, which they term *Yowahoos*. The *Pyei* is thought to possess a peculiar influence over the *Yowahoo*; and by means of dissimulation, and superstitious forms, the sick and his friends are made to believe that he holds an intercourse with him, previous to removing the effect of his malign visitation from his patients. The build-



ing seems better calculated for their more natural remedy, the hot or vapour bath, which they contrive by throwing water upon a large heated stone, and enveloping the sick person in the steam.

Around the village the wood had been partially cleared away, and the scenery of this interesting spot was much improved by several cows coming out of the thick part of the forest to browse about the open space. They were the produce of a herd originally brought by M. Heynemann to Savonette.

After having gratified our curiosity by a long visit, and a minute inspection of every thing worthy of notice at the Indian town, we were led, through a close and narrow path, devoid of any turning, either to the right hand or the left, into the profoundest shades of the forest. The way was difficult, and we were compelled to follow each other in single file, throughout the whole length of our walk; which, from the closeness of the wood, the narrowness of the path, and the consequent defection of the breeze, was distressingly hot and oppressive. The object from which we were to expect compensation was . . . . . *a tree!* We had strong apprehensions that the sight of it might not be an adequate reward for so fatiguing a walk, but we had thrown ourselves upon the judgment of Vandyke, desiring him to conduct us to all that



might be gratifying to strangers; we therefore marched on, in tacit obedience, relying upon his guidance; and our perseverance was amply recompensed by viewing the great chief of the forest—an enormous tree of the Tonquin-bean, which appears in lofty and majestic trunk, extending its high-exalted foliage above the hosts of aspiring rivals that surround it. The body forms an immense perpendicular pillar rising to the height of 70 or 80 feet before it throws out a shoot or a bud, then spreading its wide-expanded branches in proud canopy, so elevated as to protect from the reach, and even to conceal from the eye, the nuts which contain its sweet-scented beans. Viewing this huge tree with regard to its straight and perpendicular trunk, its immense bulk, and, above all, its prodigious height, it may be considered as one of the finest specimens of vegetable production growing on the face of the globe. In beauty and grandeur it is equalled only by the stately mountain-cabbage, whose noble trunk, and fine palmated foliage, stand unrivalled in the vegetable world.

The trees grow to a size, in these forests, not easily to be imagined by persons who have seen only those of the more temperate climate of Europe. They are tall and stately, and contain a great proportion of timber, in consequence of running up to an immense height before they throw off their branches. It is often difficult,



and not unfrequently impossible to reach their fruit, or foliage. The Tonquin-bean tree, when growing out of the forest, seldom attains to this grandeur of form: it branches off at a shorter distance from the ground, and in its growth more resembles the English ash; the bark is somewhat like the poplar, and the leaves resemble those of the pear. The one we saw had been drawn up to an unusual height, by growing in a crowd, and was indebted to health and years for its extraordinary bulk. The nuts containing the fragrant beans are abundantly plentiful in the forest, and may be picked up in bushels under the trees, at a certain season of the year. While we were gazing at this vegetable giant, Vandyke cut on its bark the initials of our names, and the date of our visit: this necessary ceremony being duly performed, we trod our way back, by the narrow path, to the residence of our friendly guide, and there, most gladly, made a resting-place. But Vandyke was allowed no respite, for we still beset him with hosts of questions. When he had satisfied our inquiries, and we learned that Savonette offered no further novelty, we resumed our seats in the boat, and returned to the abode of the hospitable Heynemann. Vandyke presented us with a young Kiwihî, an animal which bears some resemblance to a pig, and is about the size of a large cat, having a very long tail, marked



with alternate rings of black and white hair. He also gave us several specimens of Indian implements, most of which I hope to bring to England. Some of the Indians followed us to the water-side, and put into our boat large baskets filled with fine water-lemons, which they had gathered from the woods.

On our quitting the shore Vandyke honored our departure with the firing of cannon. He was a soldier, and in addition to other civilities, felt a pride in showing to officers, who visited him, every mark of military respect. We were the more pleased with the compliment, as it afforded us an unexpected opportunity of hearing the enchanting echo from the forest.

We were in time to take a late dinner with Mynheer Heynemann, and in the evening, according to the plan laid down for us, we proceeded to Arends. M. Paùels was from home, but we found the best arrangements of the family ordered for our accommodation. We were sumptuously entertained by a young gentleman, the friend of M. Paùels; and at night were conducted to very excellent bed-chambers, fitted up more in the style of European accommodation than any we had seen in the colony.



## LETTER LVI.

Berbische.

THE generous Heynemann appeared much gratified by the satisfaction we expressed ourselves to have experienced in our visit at Savonette, and in our acknowledgments of the civil attentions of his deputy, Vandyke. He was particularly pleased at the interest which he said I seemed to take "respecting every object, and every circumstance in this remote part of the world," and so devoted himself to the means of indulging me, that I was compelled peremptorily to arrest the liberal hand with which he would have bestowed multiplied marks of his favor—to the injury, and almost the extinction of his own collection. At first I had freely pronounced my admiration of such things as were calculated to call it forth, but I soon discovered, that to admire what I saw was to tax his liberality; for if he only heard me breathe approval, or but perceived, by my eye, that I liked any specimen, it was instantly mine. He gave me samples of various gums, nuts, and woods employed in medicine by the Indians, also crystals, bows and arrows, Indian paddles, musical instruments, instruments of war, im-



plements of household furniture, used by the *Bucks*, and a variety of other curiosities: indeed, if I could have persuaded myself to have taken all that he offered me, I might have fitted up a small museum; but I could not reconcile the idea of trespassing upon such kindness, and therefore positively refused many specimens of which I observed that he had no duplicates, and which I felt it possible he might afterwards lament. He was equally liberal in all his attentions, and seemed desirous to explain to me whatever I wished to ask. You will believe that I had less reserve in my questions, than in the acceptance of his offerings, and that I was happy to call forth the observations and remarks derived from his long and familiar intercourse with the Indians. At his present abode, and at Savonette he had resided, during many years, in the appointment of post-holder, having constant intercourse with the Indians, and forming the connecting link between them and the colonists.

It was the policy of the Dutch government to expend a certain sum annually in the purchase of blue cloth, beads, ribands, hatchets, and other implements, and ornaments to give to the Indians; and it was made the duty of the person placed at the most remote estate of the colony, to associate with them, and to cultivate their friendship, in order to prevent acts of hostility



on their part, and to secure to the colonists the peaceable possession of the territory which they had appropriated. Hence, from situation and appointment, as well as from natural disposition, abundant opportunities had offered to M. Heynemann of intermixing freely with the Indians, and observing their most retired, as well as their more exterior habits. Possessed of enterprising talents, and a certain hardihood of mind and frame, together with affable and conciliatory manners, he was peculiarly qualified for the trust which had been so long confided to him. He associated with the *Bucks*, adopted their customs, insinuated himself into their good opinion, and became so entirely one of themselves, that at Savonette they elected him their chief or king; and he could, at any time, assemble them in a body of several hundreds, in military array, and appear as captain at their head.

This was a novelty which he offered to exhibit to us, if we would consent to prolong our visit, or would repeat it, giving him only a few days notice of our coming. I regretted extremely that it could not be in my power to accept either of these proposals. It was a high compliment offered to us, and what I should have particularly enjoyed; but I had only a short time to remain at Berbische, and dared not hope for another long absence.



M. Heynemann is a person of great zeal, activity and exertion. With considerable penetration, he possesses much of perseverance, but, from the want of a liberal education, his observations, though valuable, are loose and undigested—devoid of arrangement and scientific correctness; and evidently not the result of any systematic train of inquiry. Governed by chance, and with no specific object in view, his pursuits and remarks are not so conducted as to promote, essentially, the advancement of natural science; but, a man of high literary acquirements would be less fitted perhaps for the post which M. Heynemann has so long filled with credit to himself, and advantage to the colony. I should have been much gratified to have prolonged our visit, and with regret bade adieu to this generous chief of the naked tribes.

Although, from my short stay among them, you cannot expect an elaborate disquisition upon the subject of the native possessors of these extensive forests, you will demand a passing word on such prominent points, concerning them, as more immediately strike the eye. I may therefore tell you that the Indians who inhabit this part of the South American coast are of four tribes or nations, the Arrouwacs, the Accawaus, the Warrous, and the Charibbees. The Charibbees, or Charibs, as they are more



frequently called, are the tallest men, and of the most warlike aspect. Those we have seen of the other tribes are rather short, but in general well formed; although their figure denotes more of substance than of gracefulness. They are of a bright bay colour, their hair jet black, long, and straight. In common they are rather personable, and their features are more indicative of mildness than ferocity; for, although in some of them the lines of the Tartar face may be traced, the character more generally denoted by the countenance is that of gentleness and tranquillity. The eyes are very black, they are small, distant from each other, and deep in the orbits. The cheek-bones stand a little wide, but they are not strongly prominent; the forehead tends to squareness of form, and the eyebrows are heavy. The nose, though not decidedly aquiline, when viewed in profile somewhat approaches that shape; the mouth is of middle size; the lips of moderate thickness; the teeth small, white and regular; the chin round; the angles of the lower jaw somewhat wide: from all which you will perceive that the face is rather broad than round, although the contour approaches more to the circular than the long or oval. We did not observe among them any resemblance of the flat nose, the wide mouth, thick lips, or large teeth of the negroes.



Their necks are thick, and for the most part not sufficiently long so be graceful. The chest is high and full; the shoulders square, going off at nearly right angles from the neck. The limbs are fleshy and robust. Upon the whole, they may be said to be of the figure usually denominated square-made, and consequently their form denotes more of strength, than of gracefulness or agility. Still there is a difference between them and the strong-marked muscular subjects of colder and more mountainous regions. Among the Indians of Guiana, the rough lines denoting strength are concealed in consequence of the interstices between the muscles being so filled with fat as to give a general smoothness to the surface; and from the same cause, the fine action of the different muscles becomes less obvious, when they are in motion, or under any exertion. Hence, although an Indian be square, full, and robust, still his appearance does not convey precisely that idea of strength which attaches to the rough and muscular frames of the North; and yet his form is *more unlike* that of the negroes.

It has happened to me to have frequent opportunities of seeing parties of Indians, and of Africans standing naked together, and I have always remarked a striking distinction in their persons. The negroes have longer necks, and a



finer fall of the shoulder. Their chest is not so full and open. The limbs are not so stout, but thinner, and longer in proportion to the body. The form of the Indians appears close and compact, while that of the negroes is more loose and slender, and more indicative of the languor arising from the heat of climate. The projecting curvature of the tibia, so common to the Africans, does not prevail among the Indians. The difference of countenance is still more remarkable than the difference of form; but, as the negro face is familiar to you, I need not enter into a more minute detail of the discordant features.

The Indians wear no clothing, except a band tied round the waist and brought between the legs to fasten before; such as I have mentioned to be in use among the negroes of these colonies. This is worn both by the men and women. Some, who have visited the colonists, have it made of blue cloth: but those who have not had the same opportunities of procuring cloth, make it of the bark of a tree. Sometimes, instead of this band, the women use a small apron about three or four inches square, which being tied round the waist, and left to hang loose before, serves by way of a *fig-leaf*. These aprons they call *kways*. Among those who have associated with the colonists, the *kway* is occasionally made of small beads of dif-



ferent colours, ingeniously put on threads of cotton, or of the silk-grass, so as to give the apron the appearance of being woven in a variety of figures. This is used as high dress, and is much valued. It happened that I, one day, met a young buckeen, thus ornamented, walking with her mother, and, being desirous to add a sample of the kway to my collection of specimens, I made signs to the parent, meaning to ask if she could procure me one; when, without the slightest hesitation, she took off that which was before my eyes, and presented it to me: the young lady very modestly, but without blushes, supplying its place with the pocket-handkerchief which I gave her in exchange.



## LETTER LVII.

Berbische.

FROM the inactivity of the Indians they are generally seen to be *enbonpoint*, and this, as I remarked before, gives them a certain equality of form, and of surface; but their skins have not that velvet softness so common to the negroes. Their bodies are peculiarly free from hair. Possessing an idea, that it is more becoming not to have any hairs, except upon the head, they are in the habit of pulling them out from the chin, the breast, the armpits, and other parts. The general smoothness, thus given to the surface, has led some travellers, who have been ignorant of the cause, into the error of considering this to be their natural appearance; and hence have arisen the strange opinions that they differed from Europeans, and were in this respect a peculiar race of the human species. The instrument used for eradicating the hairs is a small piece of wood partially split. Those who intermix with the colonists often employ a bit of wire, twisted into a spiral form.

From the heat of the climate, and the facility of procuring food, the Indians of Guiana are naturally indolent. In every quarter of the



globe the great incentive to industry is either necessity, interest, or ambition. Labour, simply as such, is no where a natural impulse. It is the effect of our real, or imaginary wants. Among the natives of these woods, it springs from necessity alone, and ceases with the immediate occasion which calls it forth. They have no interest in the accumulation of property; and therefore do not labour in order to obtain wealth. They live under the most perfect equality, and hence are not impelled to industry by that spirit of emulation, which, in society, leads to great and unwearied exertion. Content with their simple means, they evince no desire to emulate the habits, or the occupations of the colonists: but, on the contrary, seem to regard their toils and customs with a sense of pity or contempt. I have, occasionally, seen parties of them looking on, when our soldiers have assembled to go through the various evolutions of their exercise; and they always regarded them with a quiet indifference; or indicated by their features a sort of contemptuous pity, which was sometimes expressed by a significant look, that seemed to say, "Ay, foolish people! you take vast pains with these things: but we do them much better, with infinitely less trouble."

They are very fond of drinking rum, and eagerly swallow it to intoxication. But they



observe a kind of method in their drunkenness : for when they come down to the towns in bodies of considerable number, it is remarked that half the party will freely devote to Bacchus, whilst the other half carefully refrain, in order to watch the helpless ; and these, when restored by sleep, are observed to take *their turn* of watching, and to guard their late protectors through similar visits to the deities of turbulence and repose. They have no pleasure in long sipping, but swallow large draughts of rum, or drink quickly glassful after glassful, till they are unable to move.

The Indians are excessively arbitrary and despotic towards their women. Polygamy is practised among them. Each man takes as many wives as he can conveniently maintain. They are very jealous, and commonly appoint the senior of their wives as a spy or guardian over the conduct of the others ; but, as a spice of intrigue has found its way even into the wild woods, it is said that means have been found to convert the old Duenna into the best channel of obtaining an introduction to the junior branches of the *harem*.

All the domestic labour is done by the females, and in their journeyings, from place to place, the women are made to toil under the burden of whatever they may have to transport. Thus, in removing from any abode to



take up a new home, the different articles of furniture, and all the little variety of implements and utensils are placed upon the backs of the women, who follow in silent train, bending under a heavy load, while their imperious lord marches on before unincumbered.

From the rigid government exercised over them, by the men, the women appear to be sombre and reserved. They commonly sit with their backs towards strangers, and remain in profound silence when their husbands are present. In their absence they show less restraint, and seem disposed to cheerfulness and vivacity. Like the men they are very fond of rum, and drink bumpers in rapid succession as if it were only water.

I have observed, that notwithstanding the great heat of climate, the Indians of this part of South America are not of the same meager appearance as the negroes. From their habits of indolence a portion of fat is deposited under the skin, which gives them a soft fulness of form; but we did not see, among the people of the woods, a single instance of the heavy, protruding obesity so common among the luxurious sons of civilized society. Figures, it is true, may be found among them as lean as hard-toiling slaves; but perhaps no Indian was ever seen palpitating under that oppressive protuberance of fat, which the *bons vivans* of



Europe, and particularly the beef-eating subjects of England so frequently carry before them. This circumstance may tend to show that great obesity is only the effect of indolence, or good living, or of both acting together; and that by a due observance of exercise and abstemiousness it might, in all cases, be prevented.

Let me return with you to our tour, and tell you that M. Fenner very kindly met us at Arends in the morning, with a fine mule, and a whole troop of slaves and horses to conduct us back to his home at Johanna. According to the usual custom, coffee was brought to us at seven o'clock, on leaving our hammocks, and without waiting for a more substantial breakfast, we went round the plantation, and walked to see some Tonquin-bean trees, which were growing upon the estate, then mounted our ponies, and put ourselves on the march, attended, part of the way by M. Mittelholster, with whom we had been guests for the night.

The party formed a motley group, consisting of Dutch planters, British officers, and naked Africans marching across an immense waste surrounded with wild woods, under a scorching and vertical sun, with M. Fenner our friendly conductor, seated upon a prancing mule, leading the way as commander at the head of the squadron. His grotesque appearance would have highly diverted you; for, worthy



man, he was not barely a Hollander on horse-back, but a *gros-culottes* dressed in a white coat and broad-brimmed hat, capering upon a slender mule, and in danger of falling off at every step: indeed it was evident to the whole corps, that if they should venture to move quicker than the Dutch *pas grave*, their leader would soon *fall* in the *rear*: nor had we gone far before our fears were realized, and our decanted conductor seated on the *parterre*; leaving his sprightly mule to kick her heels in air across the wide savanna. Finding that our chief had fallen without being wounded, the whole troop was quickly engaged in a chase across the plain, to overtake their captain's charger. At this moment a rapid thought winged its way to England, and I wished I could have placed a picture before you, representing your friend occupied, amidst a group of horse and foot, planters, officers, and slaves—*Englishmen, Africans, and Dutchmen*, scampering over a wild savanna, enclosed by the deep forests of *Guiana*, in pursuit of a *South American* mule. We fortunately surrounded the animal before she had made her way into the woods, and after a long gallop about the plain, she was brought back into the ranks.

It now became a question, who should mount our captain's steed; for Mynheer Fenner, though not hurt, had grown pallid and nervous, and was



in truth, so bad a horseman, that there was not the least probability of his remaining many minutes upon her back, if he should again attempt to ride her: and to leave our commander, our guide, and our host behind us, to walk to Johanna, could not be endured. In this dilemma it fell to my lot to undertake the management of the frisky mule, throughout the remainder of the journey. Whether her capering fit was subdued by the chase about the savanna, or whether she preferred an English to a Dutch rider, it were of no consequence to determine: she carried me pleasantly and quietly, and we arrived at Johanna without any further disaster.

On our way we were conducted to an Indian village, built at the edge of the savanna, just within the border of the forest. Very few of the people were in their dwellings. They were engaged in the chase, in search of provisions, or had concealed themselves in the woods, upon seeing us approach. In one of the huts we found an old woman wretchedly diseased, left quite alone, and lying naked in a hammock. She seemed to be only a breathing skeleton: her countenance was deeply *Hippocratic*; eruptions and foul ulcers disfigured her body, and rendered her a perfect object of horror; she was unable to move—almost to speak, or to respire, and exhibited, altogether, a most striking example of human misery.



In the neighbourhood of the huts we saw some of the fine reeds growing, which are used by the Indians for making their arrows. They appeared to have been planted about the village for the convenience of furnishing a ready supply.

In our ride through the woods, some large trees were pointed out to us as being a species of wild cinnamon. The bark had somewhat the flavour of that spice, and on being broken resembled it in odour, but it was very rough and coarse.

We reached the Johanna estate three hours before the negroes, who had been sent round by way of the river with our boat; their journey by water having been above four hours longer than ours by land, notwithstanding our delay in the savanna.

Having gone to the extent of our expedition, and it only remaining to us to return down the river amidst the same unvaried scenery which we had passed, we became anxious to reach New Amsterdam and the fort, with as little delay as possible, and, therefore, set off in the afternoon for Fort Nassau, intending to hang our hammocks at Mynheer Scholten's until the morrow. But in this, we were disappointed, by the failure of the tide; consequently, finding at the dusk of evening, that we were not likely to arrive at the old town, we pursued our marooning system, and put into the first port



we could make. This happened to be at the plantation Helvetia, where we were received with great kindness and civility by Mynheer Freinde. Coffee was presented on our arrival: soon afterwards the supper-board was plentifully spread; and, although unexpected intruders, we found excellent accommodations for the night.

We did not enjoy the society of Mynheer Freinde so much as we could have wished, in consequence of our limited knowledge of his native language; yet, by means of the many good things he gave us, he made himself extremely well understood. The estate is large, and is the property of Mynheer Freinde jointly with three other gentlemen, one of whom resides in London, the two others at Amsterdam.

I might have remarked to you that at the Johanna plantation, we were this day indulged with the luxury of having two young negroes, and an Indian girl, placed behind us waving lime boughs around our heads, in order to keep us cool, and prevent us from being annoyed by insects, while we were eating our dinners; and, in addition to this general protection, I was farther indebted to the flattering attention of Mynheer Fenner, for the distinguished honor of having a separate slave stationed at my elbow holding an Indian fan, with express orders to



give me air, and guard me from the musquitoes.

We left Helvetia with the early tide, in order to breakfast at the old town; and accordingly arrived at nine o'clock at Mynheer Scholten's. During breakfast we were visited by the fiscal, who, looking extremely abashed, begged us to believe that he felt it incumbent upon him to offer multitudes of apologies, for his rude behaviour on the day we had dined at his house, adding, that he had been greatly afflicted, from the moment he had been told of it; and, in explanation, ascribing all his loud noise and political violence to the *levelling* bumpers which he had taken of claret and Madeira. We likewise met, at breakfast, another of the oldest inhabitants of the colony, an uncle of Mynheer Scholten, whose aged and venerable figure commanded great respect for his person, while it impressed a favorable idea of the salubrity of the climate.

After satisfying the calls of appetite, we took a walk into the town, and, in the course of our promenade, had an opportunity of procuring a very beautiful lion-monkey, from one of the handsomest Indian women we had seen, and who, by signs and gestures, gave us to understand, that if desired, means might be devised, to make the mistress the companion of the little animal, at our quarters at the fort.

Before noon we were again in the boat



pursuing our journey down the river. Having the current in our favor, we were carried rapidly on, and were enabled to make longer tides than when going the opposite way. In proceeding up the river, the slaves had found it necessary to avoid the centre, and to keep the boat as near as possible to the shore; but in returning, they gladly sought the middle of the channel, in order to avail themselves of the current. As the evening approached, the return of tide overpowered the fresh-water stream, and, by putting a stop to our progress, compelled us to seek quarters at an earlier hour than we wished. The plantation Daargradt being nearest, we dropped our anchor, there, and, without ceremony, took up our abode for the night.

This is one of the colonial estates, and is subject to a question of sequestration; it being yet in doubt whether Daargradt, together with some other plantations similarly circumstanced, may not be condemned as public property, for the benefit of the captors. The estate is extensive, and cultivated by a numerous gang of slaves, who are attached as stock, and consequently make a part of the property. My mind anticipates the idea which suggests itself to you upon this subject; but you will not expect that I should offer comments upon the prospect of sharing *prize-money* from such a source.



The usual difficulty respecting language would have occurred to us, from the manager not knowing either English or French; but fortunately, a gentleman whom I had met at Mynheer Ongre's, happened to be at Daar-gradt, who, with great kindness, undertook the troublesome task of interpreter; and procured for us the best accommodations of the house.

We went early to our hammocks; but passed a sad restless night, owing to our being assailed by hosts of musquitoes, whose venomous bitings wholly deprived us of sleep.



## LETTER LVIII.

Berbische.

WE rose with the sun in order to go round the plantation and the negro yard previous to our departure, and before ten o'clock we took our seats in the boat, availing ourselves of the early tide, with the intention of hanging our hammocks at Mynheer Roboloski's in the evening; and of proceeding on the morrow to New Amsterdam. M. Roboloski had made a visit to the British officers at the fort, and had very pressingly invited us to his plantation; which we understood to be situated on the opposite bank of the river, between Mynheer Abbensets' and the town, and very conveniently for becoming the last place of rest upon our excursion. A little past noon we arrived at Essendam, intending to make only an *en passant* call upon Mynheer Abbensets; who received us with all the kindness and cordiality of a friend; nor would he hear of our going further, but insisted that we should pass the remainder of the day with him; and, the more effectually to reconcile the delay, he assured us that the tide would not carry us so far as M. Roboloski's by night. Finding this to be the case, we yielded to his kind soli-



citations: and the more readily from our knowing that the town and the fort were still within the morrow's journey; besides having proved by experience, that neither shore of the river could supply us with more desirable quarters. Having agreed to pass the night at Essendam, we rested for a short time, and then made an excursion across the river to offer thanks to M. Schneider, for the information he had given us respecting our journey; and to see the sugar-works at Mr. Blair's estate. As soon as we returned, a well-served dinner, with plenty of good wines, was set before us: and the generous Abbensets warmly bade us welcome. It is not the custom in these colonies, as in England, to consume the whole of the afternoon over the bottle. Wine is taken liberally at dinner-time, and the party withdraw from the table very soon after. At M. Abbensets', cards were introduced almost as soon as the cloth was removed. When the sun was declining we engaged in a pleasant promenade about the plantation, and proceeded as far as *Sans Souci*, the adjoining estate, to call on Mynheer Abbensets' nephew.

Soon after we returned from our walk, the supper-board was spread, and to crown the evening, some very fine old Hollands, and the social pipe were introduced. You will perhaps be surprised to learn, that I was the only one who could not enjoy this part of the repast: most of



the officers have acquired the habit of smoking, and some of them have become such adepts in this very dirty and inelegant, however social custom, that they can already drink gin, and whiff a pipe or sagar almost as well as any Dutchman of the colony! You will probably envy them the accomplishment as little as I do! We went to our hammocks very soon after supper, hoping, by a long sleep, to relieve the heavy fatigue of two disturbed and restless nights; but we were sadly disappointed!—the tormenting mosquitoes again besieged us, and the third night proved no less sleepless than the two preceding. The heat and itching from former bitings, the pain of new and acute punctures, and the still more wearisome buzzing of the insects, in our ears, combined in such utter annoyance, as not only to deprive us of sleep, but of all ease and quiet. Even the power of lying still was unattainable. The irritation, caused by the pain and excessive itching, rendered us quite feverish, and with the weariness and languor arising from want of sleep, made us really ill. At length, grown impatient of suffering, and finding it impossible to rest in our hammocks, we got up, walked about the room, washed with cold water, rubbed ourselves with orange-juice, and with limes, then opened the windows, shook our hammocks, beat about the apartment with cloths and handkerchiefs, and



tried various means of driving away the insects, and obtaining relief: but in vain; all our efforts failed of success; and we were compelled to drag out a most wearisome and comfortless night.

We left our room early in the morning oppressed with feverish feelings, and a sense of general stupor. Our eyelids were swoln and heavy; our faces inflamed and tumefied, and we were almost blind.

We breakfasted with M. Abbensets, and at nine o'clock embarked for New Amsterdam. The negroes took no rest between Essendam and the town. They cheerfully pulled the oars for five hours without intermission, in order to reach the landing-place before the turn of the tide; all the relief they sought, throughout the whole of this time, being that of occasionally taking up a handful of water from the river, and pouring it upon the oars, to prevent them from becoming hot and dry, and thereby blistering their hands. At two o'clock on the 23d of June we finished our journey, and were again safely on shore at the government landing-place, at New Amsterdam.

You will feel that the excursion was, altogether, one of high interest and gratification: but I have proceeded in such minute, and (I fear you will say) tedious detail, that very little remains to be offered by way of general remark.



The novelty which presented itself to our observation was not more striking than the unbounded hospitality, which welcomed us at each place of call. Although unexpected intruders, we were every where received with a cordial urbanity, which is very inadequately expressed by the common term *civility*. It seemed to be the study of all, who should most serve, and oblige us. Not satisfied with administering the best accommodations of the house, whilst we remained with them, a generous regard for our comfort extended their liberality yet further, and they either openly, or privately contributed to our convenience, by adding to our travelling supply. Porter, wine, and spirits, food and fruit, and plantains for the negroes, all found their way into the boat.

Our mode of travelling was in itself highly commodious, and afforded many facilities. The party sat together as comfortably as if in a small room on shore; we advanced at ease, and were scarcely sensible of any motion: by the awning we were protected from the sun; and by means of the open windows at the sides, we had always a stream of cool air. Enough of space was afforded for provisions, wine, clothes, and all other stores of the journey; also convenient stowage for whatever specimens we might collect. Together with these accommodations a secure harbour was found for the boat at every



plantation, and our slaves either fed themselves from the provisions of the vessel, or foraged among the negroes of the estates; so that we had no care concerning either servants or cattle, carriage or roads.

The variety in point of scenery, you will have perceived, was not very great, but the inanimate sameness of wood and water was pleasantly relieved by the occasional openings of the different plantations. In some parts of the river, the water was singularly still and clear, and, with its forest borders, exhibited a novelty of peculiar feature. Its smooth and lucid surface formed a perfect mirror, so completely reflecting every thing around, that it seemed difficult to discover how we were supported—by what means suspended, as it were, in the centre of space. At the sides of the river no line of termination could be distinguished. It was not seen where the water ceased, or where the land commenced; but the trees, on each border, being within the edge of the water, were so distinctly reflected as to convey the semblance of a forest, growing upwards and downwards from the same roots. The boat was reflected in a similar manner; as was likewise the unclouded canopy of the skies. The watery medium made no impression upon the eye; but the open azure expanse was seen the same, whether we looked upwards or downwards. We seemed suspended



in the centre of a hollow globe, having the same concave arch above and below, with an inverted and an upright forest on either hand. At one spot we met a huge mass of earth resembling a small island, floating down the silent river, with a variety of plants and shrubs growing upon it; and from the water being invisible, the perfect reflection of this little plantation gave it the appearance of a clump of young trees calmly moving in a wide vacuum, with each plant growing perpendicularly upward and downward, in precise resemblance. If we held out a hand, or an oar over the side of the boat, the same was seen below, without discovering the limpid medium between them. In short, we seemed only to move, like our globe itself, in ethereal space.

The difficulties which many of the gentlemen of the colony had urged, as necessarily attendant upon the expedition, proved to be ideal. Until the last three nights, scarcely any thing occurred to interrupt the full enjoyment of the excursion. Indeed the torment of these nights served only as a variety, which placed in a stronger light the many facilities we had met with; for, amidst the woods, and at the estates far up the river, we had almost wholly escaped the annoyance of insects. Musquitoes did not seem to inhabit the depths of the forest. In these parts we had also found the air cooler, and the



land less heated than where it was cleared of wood, and more open.

I must not neglect to inform you of a custom, which we observed to be very prevalent, it being an act of politeness quite novel to Europeans. As a mark of attention the gentlemen of the different plantations usually accompanied us to our sleeping-room, at the time of our going to bed, when, on taking their leave for the night, they concluded the compliments of the day in the following terms, "S'il y a d'autre chose, Messieurs, dont vous avez besoin, il n'en faut que demander au garçon—cela n'est pas mon affaire." This was genuine West Indian complaisance; and it offered a lamentable proof of the absence of moral principle in a country degraded by the usages of slavery.

Adieu.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



VOL. I.

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2. Coombe, Strand, Little Queen Street, London.

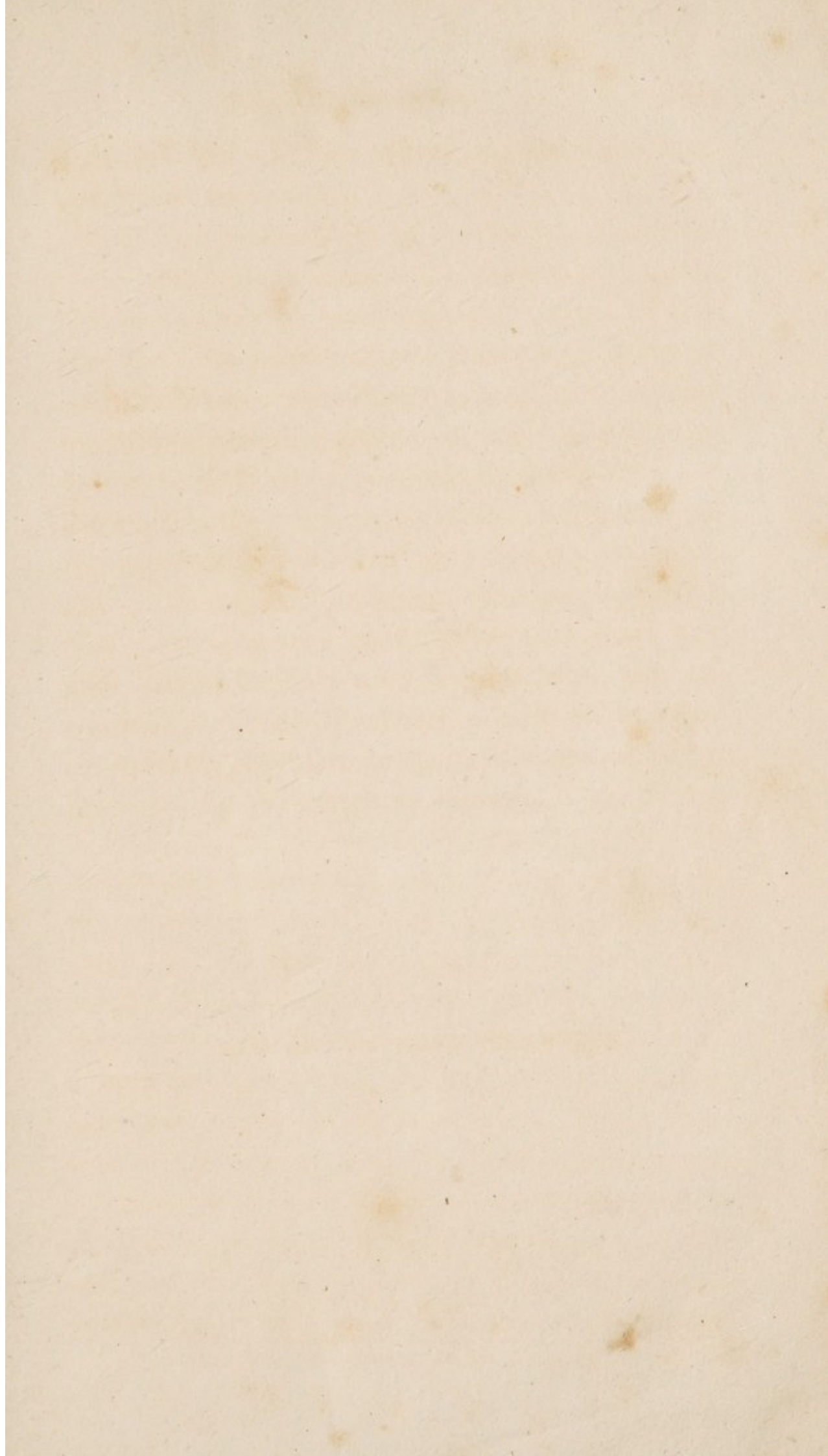


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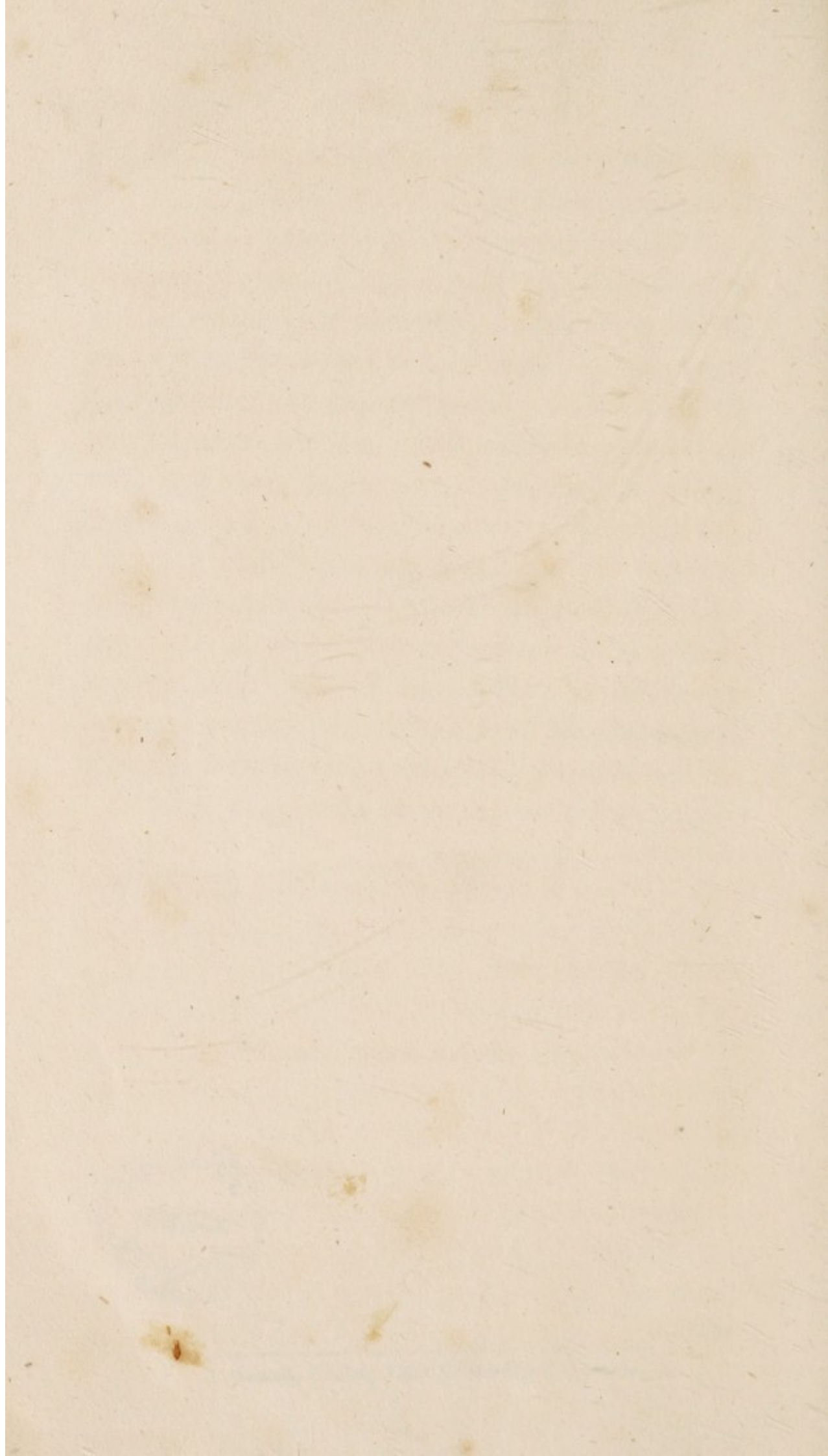
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