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BRITISH GUIANA.

HERBY G.P.

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LABREY & CO.

LONG ST. GEORGETOWN.

DEMERARA.

AFTER

FIFTEEN YEARS OF FREEDOM.

BY A LANDOWNER.

"Sit down, my masters : your rise hath been my fall."
LORD BACON (*to his Servants.*)

LONDON.

T. BOSWORTH, 215, REGENT STREET.

1853.

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To his Excellency
HENRY BARKLY, ESQUIRE,
GOVERNOR OF BRITISH GUIANA.

SIR,

As the arrangements for publishing these Notes did not allow me an opportunity of asking your Excellency's permission to dedicate them to you, I now venture to do so without it, as a slight mark of that respect and esteem for your Excellency which is felt by the writer in common with every one interested in the progress and welfare of British Guiana.

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

It is attempted in the following pages to direct attention, at this time, to the West India Colonies, and in giving an impartial statement of the position of the Emancipated Classes, to enlist the energies of both the Philanthropist and the Utilitarian for their improvement; and in support of the advantages offered by Emigration to British Guiana, for all people suffering under the accursed yoke and the unholy bondage of slavery, where, subject to British Laws and Institutions, they may become a free, civilized, and Christian peasantry.

DEMERARA

AFTER

FIFTEEN YEARS OF FREEDOM.

CHAPTER I.

BRITISH GUIANA—GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF—CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT FROM 1580 to 1850.

BRITISH GUIANA, although the largest of our West India Colonies, is yet, perhaps, the least known of any; even in parliament and in some of the public papers it is occasionally called an island, whereas it forms a part, and in fact the only part, of the entire Continent of South America which belongs to Great Britain.

This want of correct information concerning the colony may arise from our comparatively recent acquisition of it, in 1803, and from the absence of those national associations which are in some degree enjoyed by most of the West India Islands. Another reason may be, that it was only in 1831, when Berbice was added to Demerara and Essequibo, and placed under our government, that the three, at one time separate colonies, were officially distinguished by the general name of British Guiana; Demerara, however, being still frequently used to signify the whole.

The Atlantic Ocean washes the northern coast of the colony for a distance of 240 miles. The eastern boundary is the adjoining Dutch settlement of Surinam, in Dutch Guiana, and the western, the wild and ill-defined limits of the Venezuelan republic;

while to the southward, or interior of the country, the British rights extend to the borders of Brazil, embracing a territory which has been estimated at 60,000 square miles, but the exact extent of which has never been accurately ascertained.

This "magnificent province," as it has been justly called by a former governor, is now divided into the three counties of Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice, so named after the three principal rivers which water them. Situated between the other two, the county of Demerara occupies the centre of the seaboard for nearly ninety miles. To the north-west, the county of Essequibo stretches along the coast towards the swamps and forests of the western frontier; while to the south-east lies Berbice, separated from the Dutch possessions by the river Corentine.

Besides the settlements on the main land, the magnificent stream of the Essequibo, 21 miles wide at its mouth, contains a cluster of beautiful islands partially cultivated: the largest are Wakenaam and Leguan, each from fourteen to eleven miles in length, by two and a half in breadth; Tiger island, about half that size; Varken, or Hog island, as long, though not so broad as Barbadoes, being twenty-one miles in one direction, and three in the other; and Fort island, formerly the seat of Government. This river divides the counties of Demerara and Essequibo, and is said to owe its name to Don Juan Esquibel, an officer under Diego Columbus.

The other rivers of British Guiana are the Pomeroon and the Barima, near the western boundary; the Cayooni and Mazaruni, branches of the Essequibo; the smaller streams of the Mahaica, Mahaiconi, and Abari, in Demerara; and the Canye, or Canie, in Berbice; with their innumerable creeks and tributaries.

The capital of the colony, Georgetown, is situated in latitude $6^{\circ} 49' 30''$ north, and longitude $58^{\circ} 11' 30''$

west, at the mouth of the river Demerara, which is there about three miles wide. Essequibo has several Negro villages, but no town; Berbice, however, having once been an independent colony, possesses the port of New Amsterdam, three or four miles up the river Berbice, a stream of similar size to the Demerara.

The most likely person to have discovered this portion of South America was Vicente Yanez Pinzon, a Spaniard, [*v.* Appendix 1.] the friend and companion of Columbus. He sailed from Spain in December, 1499, and, steering south-west, his ships, shortly after crossing the line, were blown by a gale to the coast of Brazil, where the seizure of one of his boats, and the murder of eight or ten of his men by the natives, induced him to bear up for the mouth of the Oronoco, which had been previously visited by some of his officers. Running along the coast to the north-west, the seamen are said to have been astonished at finding the water of the ocean so fresh that it could be employed for the ordinary purposes of the fleet and even to fill the casks. This circumstance, which must have been observed long before any appearance of land was visible, led to the discovery of the river Amazon, whose powerful current repels the waters of the Atlantic, and forces itself, pure and unmixed, for many miles into the sea. As Pinzon, still steering for the Oronoco, sailed along the coast of Guiana, he might have witnessed the same phenomenon off the mouth of the Essequibo, where, also, the immense body of water, which rushes down from the interior of the country in the wet season, freshens the sea for a considerable distance from the shore, so that it may be dipped and drunk alongside the coasting vessels, even when out of sight of land.

However, whether British Guiana was discovered by Pinzon, or visited by Raleigh, is a question of little importance to the present generation of colo-

nists. If those daring adventurers ever landed on its shores, the probability is, that they gladly quitted its muddy waters and mangrove swamps, streaming with musquitoes and stinging flies, for clearer seas and more inviting lands. Indeed, to none but a Dutchman could the country present the slightest attraction; and accordingly we are not surprised to find that amphibious people to have been the first settlers on this part of the continent.

The records of the colony are too interesting and instructive to be passed over without notice. [v. Appendix 2.] They tell of trials and struggles on the part of the early colonists, not only against the natural difficulties of a new country and hostile savages, but also against servile insurrections, and the attacks of rival European powers; from the last of which, at all events, emigrants of the present day are fortunately exempt.

The earliest accounts represent that in 1580 some vessels belonging to the inhabitants of the province of Zealand, in Holland, were despatched on a cruise, in search of settlements and discoveries to the river Amazon, and along the shores of the continent as far westward as the Oronoco, exactly the course taken by Pinzon eighty years before; and that in the same year a body of these enterprising Dutchmen established themselves on the rivers Pomeroon and Essequibo, and on the Abari Creek. Sixteen years afterwards, those who had settled on the Essequibo were driven from their homes by a party of Spaniards and Indians; but the Dutch commander, Joost van Den Hoog, succeeded in gaining and keeping possession of a small island some fifty miles up the river, on which he was fortunate enough to find shelter in the remains of a fort, built of hewn stone, with the arms of Portugal over the gateway. This had probably been erected by the Portuguese as an outpost to their possessions in Brazil, and does not

lead to the conclusion that this nation had ever colonized the adjacent country.

Notwithstanding the jealousies and incursions of their enemies, the perseverance of the Dutch eventually triumphed; for in 1613 they reported the colony of Essequibo to be in a flourishing condition, and the government not only offered to grant four years free and exclusive trade to whoever might discover new rivers, basins, or creeks, but also undertook to supply the colonists with negro slaves from Africa.

The charge of fostering these infant settlements was committed to the "Dutch West India Company," who, in 1627, granted to Jan van Peere the exclusive right of trading to Berbice. This adventurer, a native of Flushing, had upwards of twenty years before attempted to open a traffic with the Indians on the Oronoco, but had been defeated in his object by the Spaniards; and he now commenced colonizing the banks of the Berbice river, where his speculations must have been tolerably extensive and successful, as it will be seen that nearly a hundred years after his descendant was called "the Proprietor" of that colony.

In 1634 the Commandeur of Essequibo sent proposals to the company relative to the searching for gold mines on the Oronoco, a scheme which was carried out in 1851 by the Venezuelan government with but very indifferent success.

In 1657 the towns of New Zealand and New Middleburg were erected on the river Pomeroon and the Murruca Creek; they shortly afterwards suffered from an attack by the French, and now, after a lapse of scarcely two hundred years, their very sites are unknown, but their ruins may yet possibly be found amidst the tangled depths of the forests, like the long lost cities of Central America.

About this date, the settlements on the Essequibo

were taken by the English, and subsequently plundered by the French. An English vessel also sailed up the Berbice river and attacked Fort Nassau, situated some thirty miles from the entrance, but was repulsed; and in the following year the invaders were expelled by an expedition from Holland.

In 1681 the salary of the Commandeur of Esse-
quibo was fixed at twenty-five florins a month. Taking the florin to have been of the same value as the guilder now current, the income of his Excellency must have been somewhat less than the ordinary pay of a negro labourer in the present day. Five years after, the company increased the amount to fifty florins, against which the colonists protested, as being an intolerable burden. This appears to have been the earliest precedent on record for those unfortunate contests regarding the salaries on the civil list, which have since become so common in the colony. The protest, however, had little effect on the commandeur, for, in a few years, he not only applied for an increase of salary and fees, but also for the appointment of a "predicant," or clergyman.

In 1712 an incident occurred, painfully illustrating the "rights of conquest." During the war with France, Admiral De Casse, after taking Surinam, sent Baron De Mouans with two ships to seize upon Berbice. The inhabitants submitted to pay a ransom of ten thousand florins in cash, twenty-five thousand in merchandize, and to give a bill for one hundred and eighty-one thousand florins, drawn by the commandeur and council on Van Peere, of Flushing, "the proprietor" of the colony. Part of the first two items was paid down, and as security for payment of the bill, De Mouans carried away with him the two junior members of the council; they both, however, died, one on the passage, and the other shortly after his arrival in France. On presentation of the bill, acceptance and payment of it were very naturally

refused, Van Peere possibly objecting to the utter absence of anything like value received in the transaction, or to the authority of his agents and attorneys to draw upon him for so heavy an amount. The Dutch government, however, seem to have considered it all fair, and formally recognized the right of the French to payment by provisionally ceding the colony to them. The protested bill remained unpaid until the treaty of Utrecht, in 1714, and by that time must have begun to be looked upon as rather "doubtful paper," as it was then endorsed to the house of Van Horne and Co., of Amsterdam, on their paying sixty per cent. of the amount, the French, at the same time, handing over to that firm three-fourths of Berbice, and restoring the other fourth to the unfortunate Van Peere.

During the next twenty years Berbice advanced with great rapidity. The proprietors, not having sufficient means of their own to develop the resources of the colony, formed a company, with a capital of three millions of florins, and the States General passed regulations for supplying them with slaves from Africa, at the very low rate of two hundred and fifty florins a head. Their high mightinesses also granted to the colony the germ of a constitution, in which, though since ingrafted to a considerable extent with English institutions, may yet be traced the origin of the present form of government in British Guiana.

In 1719 the Dutch West India Company contracted with a Jew, named Abrahams, to search for gold and silver in Berbice; but the project failed, and the colonists found a more certain source of wealth in the cultivation of coffee, from seed received through M. Courtier, the governor of Surinam, to whom, in return, they presented a saddle-horse.

In 1735 a passage from the Amazon to the Essequibo was discovered by Silva de Rosa, a Portuguese.

He had been private secretary to the viceroy of Brazil, but having killed a nobleman in a duel, he fled with some negroes in a canoe, and traversing the intervening rivers and creeks, at length reached the upper branches of the Essequibo. Four years after, Nicholas Hortman, a surgeon, was sent by the commandeur to make discoveries in the interior of the country. He was furnished with a boat and four free-men, and having been intimate with De Rosa, pursued the track of the latter until he reached the Amazon, where he settled at Para, and sold the boat and the free-men. Meeting M. De la Condamine, this unprincipled medico gave him a false account of his voyage, which that author published. All this was proved by the four men, who, having escaped from Para, returned to Essequibo, as they went, by the route of De Rosa.

Hitherto the settlements had been confined chiefly to the banks of the rivers; but, in 1741, the inhabitants, finding the alluvial soil near the sea more fertile than that which they had first occupied, began to remove to the coast, and to engage in the cultivation of coffee and cotton, nearly fifty years before the latter plant was introduced into the States of America.

The rich lands of Demerara had also been entirely overlooked and neglected until 1745, when one Andrew Pieters obtained permission to lay out plantations on the "uninhabited river Demerara." This was to be a distinct colony; but the planters of Essequibo were to possess for ten years the privilege of removing there on favourable terms.

In 1763 the prosperity of Berbice was suddenly checked by a dreadful insurrection of the slaves. Horrid acts of cruelty are stated to have been committed by them. Fort Nassau was declared unfit to resist an attack, and Governor Hoogenheim, with consent of his council, blew it up, the governor,

garrison, and inhabitants retiring on board the shipping in the harbour: they afterwards relanded, and made a stand; but, although troops were sent from Surinam and St. Eustatia, it was not until the arrival of a squadron from the Netherlands, that the insurrection was finally quelled, and possession regained of the ruined colony.

In 1774 the capital of Demerara was established, where it now stands, at the mouth of the river, and named Stabrök, the settlement at the same time receiving a governor and council of its own, subordinate, however, to the Commandeur of Essequibo.

For the next ten years the colonists were constantly complaining of the insufficient supply of labour, of the small number of slaves brought to the colony, and of the high prices asked for them.

In 1781, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were captured by Lord Rodney, who reported them to be an acquisition of greater value to the British empire than all its West India Islands. The next year Colonel Kingston, who had been left in charge by the admiral, capitulated to the French, and among the governors appointed by them appears the chivalrous name of the Marquis De Lusignan. The tenure of the captors, however, was brief, as, at the peace of Paris, a few months after, the colonies were restored to the Dutch, who, in 1789, united, under one Governor and Court of Policy, the hitherto separate settlements of Demerara and Essequibo.

In 1796 the united colony and Berbice were again taken by a detachment of Sir Ralph Abercrombie's forces, under the immediate command of General White, and again restored to the Dutch at the peace of Amiens, in 1802.

During the seven years they remained masters of these colonies, the English appear to have discovered their value and importance, for, immediately on the breaking out of war in 1803, they

were taken possession of by that nation for the third and last time, and have ever since formed a humble portion of the British empire. The consequences of this change of rulers were soon perceptible. The name of the capital was altered from Stabrœk to Georgetown; the slave trade was abolished; St. George's church, the earliest episcopalian place of worship erected in the colony, and since constituted the cathedral of the diocese, was opened, and a clergyman provided: previous to this, a sermon on Sunday from the garrison chaplain, in a long room, had satisfied the spiritual wants of the inhabitants of Demerara.

In 1812 the courts of justice for Essequibo, which had still continued to be held at Fort island up that river, were removed to Georgetown; and in 1852, after a lapse of exactly forty years, they have been re-established in that county for the trial of all criminal cases.

About 1817 the cultivation of cotton, hitherto the staple of the colony, began rapidly to decline. The British planters were unable to compete with those of America, who still enjoyed the advantages of the slave trade; the abolition of which in the British colonies had greatly increased the value of labour and the cost of production. In a few years, the quantity of cotton exported from our possessions became so trifling as to render its protection by fiscal regulations no longer expedient, and it was quickly driven out of the market; at present not a single bale is grown in British Guiana. The sugar-cane, which was introduced to supply the place of the cotton plant, is, in its turn, now undergoing a similar decline, and from nearly the same causes. A few years hence, it may possibly be told, how the planters of Guiana, having been unable to compete with the slave owners of Cuba and Brazil, had been compelled to abandon their plantations, and how sugar had consequently ceased to be exported from the colony.

By a registration of the slaves in 1817, their numbers were found to be 101,712, including those in Berbice; and the free population was computed to amount to 8,000 persons.

In 1823 an insurrection occurred on the east coast of Demerara. The cause of it is stated to have been the omission on the part of the Governor, General Murray, to communicate to the negroes the substance of Mr. Canning's resolutions "for ameliorating the condition of the slaves," which had passed the House of Commons in the early part of that year. Some head men on the estates, however, obtained information from a servant of the governor, that "something had been done in England for them;" and under that impression formed a plot, with one Jack Gladstone as its leader, for the purpose of demanding and taking their immediate freedom. In pursuance of their object, they committed several murders and excesses; but martial law having been proclaimed, and the most vigorous measures taken by the authorities, order was quickly restored, and the colony saved from destruction, for there is no doubt that the slaves in other districts were in communication with those on the east coast, and only waiting for the slightest appearance of success on their part to have risen and carried fire and bloodshed throughout the entire country.

On the 21st of July, 1831, Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were formed into one colony, under the name of British Guiana.

In 1830 and 1832, orders in council were sent out, considerably abridging the authority of the masters over their slaves, but making no practical provisions for teaching the duties and responsibilities of free men to a people who had grown up in a state of the most childlike dependence and ignorance. Consequently, when parliament decided that slavery should cease, it, at the same time, decreed that the

negroes should undergo a probation, or, as it was called, "an apprenticeship"—handicraftsmen and domestic servants for a term of four years, and agricultural labourers for six.

The number of slaves in British Guiana for whom compensation was claimed was 82,824; and their value, according to an appraisal based on the average sales of the eight preceding years, amounted to £9,489,559. The amount of compensation actually paid was £4,494,989. It must be acknowledged, even by those who suffered most from such a confiscation of their property, that this forced composition of nine and sixpence in the pound, having once been determined upon, was carried out in the most business-like manner by the British Government, and the money immediately paid.

On the 1st of August, 1834, the "apprenticeship" commenced, and a more idle and insubordinate set of apprentices probably never tormented their masters. With no little trouble they were kept within bounds for four years, until 1838, when the exertions of influential societies in England to hasten the freedom of the negroes, and the natural impatience of the people themselves to be out of their time and to set up as freemen on their own account, made it evident to the colonists that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, any longer to continue the term of probation; and an ordinance was passed by the local legislature, fully and freely discharging from their apprenticeship all those persons who, by the imperial act, were yet liable to serve for a further period of two years.

It was interesting to observe the first effects of uncontrolled freedom. The negroes at once assumed, as much as possible, the manners of the white man. A shirt and a high stock, a pair of shoes carried in one hand, and an umbrella in the other, which had once been considered the correct costume on a Sunday,

quickly received the decorous addition of a pair of trousers and a coat; satins and ribbons of the gayest hues adorned the other sex; horses and vehicles of every kind came into common use; costly entertainments prevailed; and houses and lands were purchased by the negroes in the best parts of the colony. But, as time rolled on, the freed man found that these luxuries were only to be obtained by money, the reward of steady toil and honest industry. He considered them dear at that price, and quietly resigned them for ruder and less expensive pleasures. Emulation ceased, and a rapid reaction commenced towards that idle and savage state of life, which, in reality, was more agreeable and congenial to his untaught nature. Perhaps by a perusal of the following pages some opinion may be formed of the results of emancipation, as they have affected the interests both of the slaves and of their masters. Though the former class has not at all advanced in the scale of civilization, it has undoubtedly achieved a position of rude ease and stubborn independence, in comparison with which the condition of the peasantry of Britain is one of endless toil and galling servitude. To the colonists the consequences may be easily conceived by a glance at a statement compiled in 1850 from official documents:—

Return of Crops made in British Guiana in 1829 and 1849.

YEAR.	No. of Estates in Cultivation.	Pounds of Sugar made.	Pounds of Coffee made.	Pounds of Cotton made.
1829, (Slavery.)	404	103,898,617	9,230,486	1,596,171
1849, (Freedom.)	196	60,811,854	91,056	none.

The number of Estates brought to sale under Writs of Execution, from 1839 to 1849, was 173.

CHAPTER II.

PRODUCTIONS OF THE COLONY—ADORIGINAL INHABITANTS—CLIMATE
 —CITY OF GEORGETOWN—GEOLOGICAL FORMATION—DRAINAGE,
 NATURAL AND MECHANICAL.

ALTHOUGH the exports of the colony are at present confined to the produce of the sugar-cane and a small quantity of coffee, with an occasional ship-load of timber, yet its resources are almost innumerable. The long and varied list of valuable articles which were sent to the Exhibition of 1851 may serve to show the treasures of this neglected country. Gold was formerly known to exist in the interior of Guiana, and it has recently (in 1852) been re-discovered in considerable quantities on the upper Essequibo. But it is not to the precious metals that the colonist looks for wealth. He seeks it rather in the inexhaustible fertility of the soil, and the spontaneous productions of the forests, and there would he find it more abundantly than even in the region of the gold fields, were he only freely permitted to procure the labour necessary to assist his energy and enterprise.

Besides the cane yielding as much sugar as in any other country, coffee equal to that of Arabia, and cotton of so fine a quality as only to be excelled by that of the celebrated "sea island," the moist lands of Guiana give within a few weeks two reapings of the finest rice from a single sowing. Tobacco grows luxuriantly, and by the slightest exertion three crops of corn may be obtained from the same field in one year: while month after month the plantain and banana throw out their heavy branches of nutritious food, almost without care or culture. The forests

abound with durable and costly woods, for ship-building and furniture making. Dyes and drugs and the rarest gums are wasted, merely from the absence of hands to collect them.

The aboriginal inhabitants of the colony consist of five tribes of Indians, a copper-coloured, straight-haired race, and evidently members of the one great family which is met with throughout the entire American continent. Formerly, when slavery existed, they were found to be useful allies and auxiliaries of the planters, in capturing runaway negroes who had fled to the "bush," and they were then conciliated and kept in pay by annual presents; but now that their services are no longer required, these subsidies have been withheld. They still, however, enjoy the protection of certain officers charged with the superintendence of rivers and creeks, who, while they look after the rights of the crown on the ungranted lands, at the same time prevent any acts of oppression or injustice on the part of the wood-cutters and squatters towards the Indians, and also, as far as possible, all quarrels among the different tribes and families. Nor is the spiritual welfare of these people neglected; numerous schools and missions having been established by the Bishop, for their instruction, in the remotest portions of the diocese.

It is difficult to ascertain correctly the number of aborigines within the British territory, scattered as they are over an immense tract of forest land, impenetrable to any but themselves, gliding along the narrow creeks in their "wood skins," or threading their way through the still narrower bush paths, invisible to any save an Indian's eye; they may, however, be estimated as amounting to about ten thousand persons. They are an inoffensive and indolent people, occasionally assisting the wood-cutters of the interior, and more rarely coming out in small parties to the estates, where their services are given to clear

the canals and trenches from weeds, or to cut down "bush;" but they cannot be induced to handle the hoe or the spade, the use of which is looked upon as a degrading occupation, only fitted for negroes, to whom they consider themselves a far superior race. Neither do they ever remain above two or three months at work; as soon as the failure of their crops, or other pressing necessity which induced them to labour for a season, is overcome, they immediately return to their forest homes and their free life. These Indians display considerable skill in making various articles of a fine kind of basket-work, or rather weaving with reeds, ornamented with arabesque patterns, and also in the manufacture of porous water jars and other vessels.

Though several degrees nearer the equator than any of the East India Presidencies, the climate of Guiana is not hotter than that of Calcutta; the mean temperature of each being about 79° , but in the former the heat of the sun is so agreeably tempered by a constant sea breeze, as to render unnecessary the eastern luxuries of punkas and other artificial modes of cooling the air. The sun rises and sets all the year round within a few minutes of six o'clock, and for a couple of hours before and after these periods, there cannot be a more delightful climate in the world; indeed, on the sea-coast the weather is seldom at any time warmer than on a July day in London.

Where perpetual verdure exists, the only division of seasons is into those of wet and dry. May, June, and July constitute the very wet season; and December and January the lighter one; the other months are fine with occasional showers, excepting September and October, which are dry and sultry. The quantity of rain [*v.* Appendix 3.] which falls during the year in Guiana is very considerable, and in so low and level a country is a subject of daily importance. The

annual average fall is about 100 inches, and when it is recollected that the average in England during the same period does not exceed 30 inches, some idea may be formed of a tropical wet season.

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The dreadful earthquakes and hurricanes which so often lay waste other parts of the West Indies are happily unknown in Guiana. While buildings are levelled with the earth, and vessels are driven on shore in the neighbouring islands, the same storm passes harmless over the low lands of the continent, scarcely moving the heads of the palm trees, or ruffling the surface of the sea.

Before proceeding to describe the country districts, the city of Georgetown deserves a few words, as being perhaps the prettiest town in the West Indies. It is situated on the east bank of the river Demerara, at the entrance of which is "The Fort," as it is called, but which looks like a green field, with a few guns pointing towards the sea, and a house or two for a single officer and a dozen artillery-men. Sailing up, the next most striking object is a lofty lighthouse, and then the town itself, laid out with wide streets or roads intersecting each other at right angles, perfectly level and well macadamized. The houses are of wood, with open verandahs in front, and neatly painted in cool and quiet colours: they are shaded by the graceful palm and cocoa-nut, and almost hidden among orange and other trees, intermingled with clumps of sweet-scented shrubs, each within its own grounds, and presenting altogether rather the appearance of a collection of villas than that of a town. The street along the river side, where all the stores and shops are situated, and where business is chiefly transacted, however, forms an exception—there every thing is plain, bare, and business-like. The ships lie alongside the wharves, or a short distance in the stream, which is also crowded with innumerable smaller vessels engaged in the

island trade, or in bringing produce from the more distant estates.

The Hall of the Legislative Council, the Courts of Justice, the Custom-house, the Treasury, and all other public offices are most conveniently established in one building of considerable extent and architectural pretension, with shady porticoes and marble-paved galleries or verandahs supported on cast-iron columns. A cathedral, several churches, liberally maintained hospitals for the poor of the colony and for the merchant shipping, elegant and commodious barracks, and the neatest market-place in the West Indies, with an ice-house, complete the principal public edifices of Georgetown. The population, about 25,000 in number, is composed of men of almost every clime and colour. The English merchant, sun-burnt and yellow as the gold he is in search of, the Scotch planter from the estates, with a face of the most brilliant carmine, and natives and immigrants exhibiting every shade, from the faintest tinge of olive to the deepest black, meet the stranger at every step: nor is variety of dress and language wanting to complete the picture. The Coolie from India in his bright coloured muslins and graceful turban, the unwashed immigrant from Madeira, the native negro enviably cool in shirt and trousers alone, the recently arrived African looking well in an elaborately tattooed skin, and the Indian from the interior with the scantiest quantity of clothing imaginable, mingle with Europeans in white jackets and linen shooting-coats.

Little can be said of the comfort or economy of living in Georgetown. Indifferent butchers meat is to be obtained at eightpence to a shilling a pound, with a tolerable supply of native vegetables; but fish and poultry are both scarce and dear. Occasionally a vessel arrives from the United States with a cargo of fresh provisions packed in ice, comprising almost

everything, but all possessing a most unnatural flavour. To the *bon vivant*, however, Demerara possesses one redeeming trait, for probably in no part of the world can the vintage of Madeira be drunk in such perfection; and this apparently arises not so much from the superior quality of the wine, which at the same time is generally to be had of the best vintages, as from some peculiarity of climate, which draws forth and matures all the choicest features of that particular production of the grape.

The colonized parts of British Guiana bear about the same proportion to its entire area as one hem of a handkerchief does to the whole square of cambric or silk, being merely a narrow strip along the sea-coast, and for a few miles up the rivers, including a portion of the islands in the Essequibo. The soil of the colony may be divided into three strata, each bearing evidence of a distinct formation. The most recent is the rich alluvial land of the coast, extending from low water mark to a distance of five or six miles inland, where it is bounded by a flat narrow reef of sand running exactly parallel with the present line of coast. Against this reef, which once formed the shore of the Atlantic, and on which sea-shells have been found, and the remains of stranded vessels, and anchors eaten through with rust, the sea has within a comparatively recent period deposited banks of mud and vegetable matter, washed down by the rivers of the continent; thus forming a delta of the richest possible soil, when reclaimed from the tides by embankments, and freshened by a few seasons of tropical rains. Running parallel to this first reef, at irregular distances, varying from ten to twenty miles, is a second and higher range, composed of coarse white sand, this also at a period yet more remote was probably washed by the waves of the Atlantic. In the wet seasons, the intermediate tract between these two reefs becomes the bed of

extensive savannahs, for the creeks being then unable to carry off the torrents of rain which fall, overflow their level banks and inundate the surrounding country to the depth of five or six feet. On the return of dry weather, the waters gradually subside, leaving behind a thick layer of decayed grasses and aquatic plants which had floated and flourished on their surface, producing in time a vegetable mould of considerable thickness. Large patches of these savannahs are sometimes completely covered with the broad shining leaves and brilliant white blossoms of the water-lily; and it was on one of these spots, far up the Berbice river, that Sir Robert Schomburgk discovered that splendid species the *Victoria Regia*.

Beyond this belt are swampy plains intersected by sand reefs, and extending to the mountainous regions of the interior.

Although, as a general fact, the most recent alluvial deposit may be considered as now in the course of returning to the ocean that created it, yet the causes which produced this, the most fertile portion of the continent, are daily occurring on a smaller and less permanent scale. It is evident from the surveys and charts of many plantations made not more than sixty years ago, that even in that space of time, upwards of a mile of what once was solid land under cultivation, is now a portion of the sea where ships may sail: while in other places, on the contrary, deposits of mud and vegetable matter are forming along the shore, from the washing away of other parts of the coast, and from the debris of the rivers, and gradually becoming raised above the ordinary level of the tides, the floating seeds of the *Courida*, (*Avicennia nitida*,) immense forests of which fringe the entire shore, being carried and left on these flats by some extraordinary tide, in a few months shoot up into dense plantations, binding toge-

ther the new made earth with their net-like roots. In the same manner creeks and smaller streams become filled up, and their former courses are only to be traced by narrow marshy veins of land winding through the estates.

“ Sic toties versa es, Fortuna locorum.

Vidi ego, quod fuerat quondam solidissima tellus,
Esse fretum : vidi factas ex æquore terras :
Et procul a pelago conchæ jacuere marinæ :
Et vetus inventa est in montibus anchora summis.
Quodque fuit campus, vallem decursus aquarum
Fecit : et eluvie mons est deductus in æquor :
Equæ paludosa siccis humus aret arenis.”

Ovid Met., lib. xv.

The face of places and their forms decay,
And what was solid land is now the sea ;
Seas in their turn, retreating from the shore,
Make solid land what ocean was before.
And far from strands are shells of fishes found,
And rusty anchors fixed in mountain ground.
And what were fields before, now washed and worn
By falling floods from hills to vallies turn,
And, crumbling, still descend to level lands,
And lakes and trembling bogs are barren sands.

When the land begins to wash away on any part of the coast, considerable labour and expense are entailed upon the proprietor, who is then compelled to retreat more inland, and to make new sea-dams, sluices, and roads ; and even, sometimes, to erect new buildings, as the sea swallows up the old ones, or else, at immense cost, to maintain a daily struggle against the waves, in which he is certain to be eventually defeated. Instances of this may be seen in the present enormous outlay by the Ordnance Department to preserve Fort William Frederick at the mouth of the Demerara river, and in the endeavours of the Colonial Government to

save the jail in Essequibo, with its few inmates, from being washed into the Atlantic.

The estates, or plantations, are laid out in parallelograms on the first belt of coast land, and for a short distance up the rivers. The original grants or concessions were limited to a "facade," or frontage to the sea, of 100 rods, extending backwards 750 rods, comprising 250 acres of land, (the Dutch rod in use being 12 feet 4 inches.) As two-thirds of this are brought under cultivation, the owner has the right of "poldering," or taking in 250 acres in addition, by continuing his lines still further inland, and so on again as far as he may require; an annual land-tax of about two-pence an acre being payable to the Colonial Treasury. At the present time, two or more of these grants are frequently owned by one person, and form extensive properties.

The surface of the land being perfectly level, and lying from three to four feet *below* high-water mark of spring tides, it is necessary to secure each estate against inundation by a strong dam or embankment in front. A similar erection at the back or inland boundary, as well as one on each side, are also requisite to keep off the immense body of water accumulated in the savannahs during the wet seasons, and which, if not thus repelled, would rush down to the sea, sweeping everything before it. Where the estates are contiguous, and the front and back dams of one, adjoin those of the next, as they generally do, the perfect maintenance of the side lines becomes less imperative. But the state of his other dams is at all times a planter's first and constant care: not the slightest hole or leakage is allowed to exist in them; and, by the law of the land, their wilful injury is considered felony. Inside, and at the foot, of these dams are trenches twelve to eighteen feet wide, and five feet deep, running round the whole

plantation, into which smaller trenches and open drains convey the water that falls upon the land. These large trenches discharge their contents into the sea through one or more sluices, or "kokeis," as they are called, the doors of which are opened as the tide ebbs, and shut against the returning flood. The natural outfall at extreme low water of spring tides, is only between five and six feet below the surface of the land, and at neaps not more than one or two feet; and this fall, trifling as it is, must be gained by a long deep channel cut through the land in front of the sluices.

It frequently happens that even this scanty outfall is totally and completely stopped up by shifting banks of the muddy deposit before mentioned, or by sand and shells, or by floating masses of vegetable matter called "pegass." Of these obstructions the mud is by far the most serious, as it is impossible to remove it. A mass of it is formed or deposited for a mile or two out at sea up to the very doors of the sluices, and spreading eight or ten miles along the coast, as the action of the waves gradually carries it nearer and nearer to the shore, this mass or bank of mud becomes as high as the cultivated lands of the estates, varying in consistency from the thickness of treacle to that of tar; and of course stopping the entire drainage. The rain now descends in torrents to the depth of three or four inches a day, and the surface of the estate is soon a sheet of water, over which a canoe may be paddled: in time, the sun shines forth fiercely, heating the water, and actually boiling up the inundated cane plants. The planter from the very commencement of the rain has summoned his people at every tide, at noonday or at midnight, and plunged them up to their necks in this muddy mass. Fifty or a hundred men are seen, attempting to push it aside, or before them, so as to admit of even a small discharge from the sluices,

but all in vain; it closes round them like thick pea-soup round a spoon dipped into the tureen, and as far as the eye can reach to seaward, nothing is to be seen but a smooth dazzling flat of mud, with here and there a flock of the brilliant scarlet ibis wading and feeding upon the firmer parts. As the flood-tide comes in, the planter and his workmen return home, weary and dispirited; the former to contemplate his ruined fields, and if a poor man, perhaps to consider where he shall find a sufficient number of dollars to pay for all this labour in vain. Daily and nightly for weeks are these unsuccessful endeavours to- "force drainage" continued, and even Sunday sometimes brings no day of rest. At length the mud-bank is nearly washed ashore, a passage is opened through the small quantity remaining in front of the sluices, the doors are lifted, and out rushes the long pent-up waters from the drowned cultivation. In two or three months the cane plants have shed their scorched and yellow leaves, and recovered from their drooping appearance: to a casual observer the fields have resumed their usual luxuriant aspect, but in reality many of the roots or stocks have been completely destroyed, and the growth of the whole retarded and injured, and serious is the result, when the crop and the expenditure are compared at the end of the year. It is the commonest thing possible to hear managers of estates exclaiming: "Had it not been for the drift mud, I should have made 300 instead of 200 hogsheads;" or, "if I had only had drainage during the last wet season, my crop would have been double what it is:" the quantity of sugar thus lost making all the difference to the proprietor, between receiving a clear income from his estate, and being brought into debt by it. The great increase, amounting to upwards of 10,000 hogsheads, in the sugar-crops of the colony in 1851 and 1852, was no doubt mainly, if not

entirely, owing to the extraordinary mild and favourable seasons of those two years ; during which sufficient rain scarcely ever fell at one time to inundate the estates, even where the drainage was indifferent.

The owners of a few estates, who can afford it, have made their properties altogether independent of natural drainage [v. Appendix 4,] by erecting large water-wheels, or pumps, worked by steam power, which at all seasons lift and throw the water from the draining-trenches over the sea-dams upon the mud-flats ; and these gentlemen find themselves amply repaid for their outlay by greatly increased crops : but to the poor or embarrassed landowner, this costly mode of relief is out of the question, and he consequently continues to cultivate his swamps with a perseverance and energy worthy of a better-drained soil. It seems singular that the local legislature, which has voted hundreds of thousands of pounds for the purpose of introducing immigrants into the colony, should never have appropriated a comparatively small sum to establish a system of public drainage by steam-power in those parts of the country which most require it ; thus, as it were, beginning at the beginning, and preparing the land to be profitably worked, before putting upon it thousands of labourers, whose exertions are often in a great measure thrown away, and their employers ruined in the perpetual efforts to force a scanty crop of sugar from the soddened soil. The system pursued is about as rational, as if a farmer in England should sow his rich water-meadows with corn, and when the undammed floods overflowed the land, complain that it did not repay him. It is very certain that the question of drainage must precede the question of labour, before British Guiana can ever advance in prosperity. Besides the trenches used for draining, there are others called navigable canals ; intended, as their name implies, for carrying on the internal

traffic of the estates, by means of water-carriage. These extend from the front dam to the back dam, usually running on each side of a wide road which divides the plantation in the middle, with cross canals branching off at right angles into the centre of every field, and are always kept filled, almost to the level of the land, with fresh water, admitted by a small sluice communicating with the savannahs or creeks. Along these canals the canes are brought from the fields to the buildings in punts, and the produce, when manufactured, is carried to the sea or river side, or to the railway, for conveyance to the ships in the harbour; in fact, transport of every description is effected by means of them; and the negro, when disinclined to walk to his work, skims along their surface in his light canoe. The water in these canals is confined, and prevented from running into the cultivation, by slight embankments at the head of each branch.

The public highways which run nearly parallel with the line of coast, a few hundred yards inland, may be mentioned here as forming part and parcel of the estates; for, although toll-free, and constantly cut up by the heavy carts and other vehicles belonging to the untaxed classes of the community, yet they, as well as the numerous bridges which span the canals and trenches, are kept up and repaired solely and entirely at the expense of the property through which they pass. Even where estates have been abandoned, and partly purchased by negroes, whose cottages skirt the road for miles, the owner of the uncultivated back lands is alone responsible for the state of the highways. This relic of the laws of former times has been generally condemned as unfair and unjust towards the landowner, but hitherto no steps have been taken more equitably to arrange the burden.

Between each estate there are spaces from three to six rods wide, reserved by order of the old Dutch

West India Company, at the time of laying out the concessions, and called "Company's Paths." They were originally intended for the purpose of affording communication from the sea to any estates which might be subsequently settled further in the interior, "aback" of those on the sea coast; but none such having ever been formed, the company's paths, in course of time, have come to be considered as common property between the owners of the land on either side of them, and in some parts of the colony have been converted into wide and deep canals with high banks, leading from the savannahs to the sea, and serving in wet seasons as outlets for the overflowing water of the interior, which, rushing down them with considerable force, relieves the pressure on the back dams, and at the same time assists in sweeping away the banks of mud, and other impediments, which obstruct the drainage of the estates.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION OF A SUGAR ESTATE—THE CANE FIELD—THE BOILING HOUSE—THE ATTORNEY—THE MANAGER—THE LABOURER—A STRIKE—PAY DAY—METAIRE MODE—CENTRAL FACTORIES—THE PROPRIETARY BODY—WHITE AND BLACK—NEGRO VILLAGES.

A SUGAR estate is divided into fields of from five to ten acres in extent, by the cross canals already mentioned, and the method of planting the cane is simple and easy when labour is at command. The brush-wood and grass having been cut down and weeded, are piled into rows, six to eight feet apart, across the intended beds into which the field is to be divided. These beds are formed by digging open small drains two feet wide and two feet deep, at

intervals of every thirty or thirty-six feet across the entire field, beginning within a few yards of the canal, in the centre of the estate, and running to the side draining trenches, into which they empty themselves. The soil from these small drains having been carefully thrown upon the beds, so as to raise and round them off in the middle, narrow banks or ridges of earth are made across them from drain to drain, —parallel to, and equi-distant between, the rows of grass and brushwood; and in these spaces, between the banks of earth and grass, the canes are planted in line, each line being three to four feet apart, and each cane plant nine or ten inches from the next. The plants are procured by cutting off the tops or upper joints of growing canes into lengths of ten or twelve inches, which are thrust, in a slanting direction, into the well stirred ground, and in ten days or so the long grass-like leaves begin to spring from the "eyes" at every joint. These young canes require to be kept well weeded, and moulded about the roots from the ridges of earth or decaying grass on either side of them, which had been previously prepared for that purpose; and this must be repeated as long as there is room for the labourers to pass between the rows, which, according to the season, will be until the plants have attained the age of six or eight months, after which time the spreading of numerous leaves from each stock will have covered the surface of the field with so dense a jungle, as in a great measure to prevent any further growth of weeds.

When about nine months old the cane throws out its "arrow," a long reed-like stem, surmounted with a tuft of waving downy blossom. At this period the plant is poor and weak, and little more than a mass of water; it soon, however, recovers, and in twelve or thirteen months from the time of planting, is considered at maturity, having then, sometimes, attained a length of twenty to twenty-five feet, but

more frequently of ten or twelve feet, about as thick as the wrist, and divided into joints like a bamboo. When ripe, the canes are cut down to the very ground, in lengths of three or four feet, and thrown into punts, which are towed along the canals by mules or oxen to the wet dock, at the door of the sugar-mill. Immediately after cutting, the large quantity of "trash" or dry leaves are rolled clear of the cane stumps, and heaped in rows, there to decay, and form a rich manure for the succeeding crop. In a few days the stumps throw out their shoots, and the same routine of cultivation is repeated for twelve months more, any vacant spaces where plants may have missed being carefully supplied. The canes of the first year are called "plant canes," those of the second and subsequent years being distinguished as "ratoons;" and these ratoons have been known to be produced from the first plant for twenty years and upwards, the canes having been annually cut down, and the stumps allowed to shoot again. But this continued reproduction from the same stocks, which is now compulsory on the planter, from the scarcity of labour, of course causes the canes to degenerate, and to yield less abundantly. An acre of newly planted land will give two tons of sugar for the first year, gradually falling off to not more than one-fourth of that quantity, as the stocks become old; and was there sufficient available labour in the colony to admit of the land being replanted every third or fourth year, there can be little doubt that the present crops would be nearly doubled. The productive power of the greater part of the soil of British Guiana indeed appears to be unlimited; as an instance, it may be mentioned, that on an estate in Essequibo, the return obtained in 1851 from certain lands, which had been properly worked and perfectly drained, amounted to a fraction within four tons of sugar per acre.

The "Buildings" or manufactories of a sugar estate are of considerable extent, many of them being three to four hundred feet in length, lofty, light, and well ventilated. They comprise an engine-house, a boiling-house, a store for sugar, another for rum, and a distillery, with large lofts for the fermenting vats. On properties, the owners of which possess either capital or credit, each department is fitted up with the most perfect and powerful machinery, and with every *proved* invention and apparatus for manufacturing produce, or economising labour; while, as if in answer to those who tax the West India proprietor with being slow to avail himself of the advantages to be derived from scientific discoveries, tons of machinery, in every shape, lie scattered about, the plans and patents of scientific men, which, to his cost, the credulous owner has too hastily adopted, and found utterly useless when brought into operation.

Besides the manufactories, there are extensive fuel sheds, a well fitted up hospital, separate dwelling-houses for the proprietor, the manager, and the overseers, and numerous cottages for the labourers resident on the property.

In the engine-house is a steam-engine of twenty to thirty horse power, attached to a sugar-mill. This consists of three heavy solid iron rollers, each six to eight feet in circumference, and four or five in length, arranged in a horizontal position: two of them, raised a few inches above the floor, turn side by side in the same direction, while a third revolves above, the opposite way—the spaces between all being barely sufficient to insert a finger. Leading to the rollers, from the canal or dock where the cane punts float, is a moving platform, working on endless chains; and on this the canes are thrown, and carried crushing through the rollers, which, pouring forth a luscious juice, groan again as they draw in at

one side the ripe canes, thick as the wrist, and thrust them out at the other, flat as a piece of pasteboard, with every fibre bared and mangled, into light waggons, which, by the assistance of the engine, are dragged along a railway running through the upper part of the fuel sheds, where their contents are emptied by simply opening the hinged sides.

The preservation of these squeezed canes, called "megass," forms an important item in the economy of an estate, as, when dried, they are the only fuel used in boiling the cane juice into sugar; and the destruction of a megass house by fire, an event not unfrequent, from the inflammable nature of the contents, is a most serious drawback to taking off the crop.

The boiling house occupies the greatest space in the buildings. About the centre of it, but standing a little back, are two or three large bright copper vessels, called clarifiers, shallow, yet holding five or six hundred gallons each; they are set in brick-work, with a furnace beneath, and into them the cane-juice is conveyed by wooden gutters, as it is pumped up from the reservoir below the mill rollers, having previously passed through a fine wire strainer. The proper quantity of temper lime required to clarify the juice is then ascertained and added, and the contents of each clarifier permitted merely to simmer, so that all impurities may rise to the surface.

The cane juice, or liquor as it is then called, being thus prepared, is gently drawn off as required through large cocks into other gutters, which carry it to the first or largest of the boiling coppers. These are huge caldrons of iron, built into masonry, and arranged close to each other in a row against the wall, with flues and furnaces beneath. They are five in number, gradually decreasing in size from the first, which may be twelve feet in diameter, down to the smallest or "tache," which is not more than four

feet across the rim. After partially boiling in the first caldron the liquor is ladled into the next, and a further supply taken down from the clarifiers, which in their turn are again filled from the mill. The first batch of liquor after passing into, and boiling to a higher degree in each of the caldrons, at length reaches the last one or tache, where it presents the appearance of a thick and clear brown syrup, boiling and bubbling fiercely, and from which it is taken by means of a "dipper" let down by a crane, and poured into large wooden troughs or trays, there to cool and granulate, or, in other words, to become sugar, before being packed in casks for shipping.

But, during the process, the cane juice has not been allowed to boil unattended. The entire row of caldrons has become filled with syrup in various stages of ebullition, and at each is stationed a man, armed with a long handled skimmer and ladle, with one of which he beats down the foaming contents as they boil over, or skims the froth from the surface, or leisurely ladles the liquor from one caldron to another, all the while, when in good humour, yelling out the name of his dark ladye love, or improvising a song to the fire makers for strong fire, and to the manager for plenty of rum and more money.

The skimmings of the caldrons, and, indeed, all the refuse and washings, are carefully collected in a large cistern, whence, after being mixed with certain proportions of water and molasses, they are pumped up to the vats of the distillery, there to undergo fermentation, and, in due time, to be converted into rum. The planter usually calculates upon obtaining ninety to one hundred gallons of strong spirit to every ton of sugar, provided he distils all his molasses, which is the thick black syrup known in England as treacle, and is merely the drainings and drippings from the casks into which new sugar has been put: it is either shipped in its natural state for

the use of the home refiners, or else is distilled into rum in the colony, as may be found most profitable according to the relative current prices of the two articles.

The preceding description of the mode of making the common or muscovado sugar, will in a great measure serve to explain the manner in which the crystallized or Vacuum Pan sugar is prepared, the difference of the two processes being, that in the former the syrup is boiled to sugar entirely in open caldrons, while in the latter, after having been partially boiled in the tache, it is conveyed into a large covered airtight vessel or pan, from which the air is exhausted by an air pump. The vacuum thus created causes the contents to boil at a lower temperature than the ordinary boiling point, on a supply of steam being admitted between the double casing of the pan, and the result is a large grained sugar, resembling sugar-candy: this is emptied on a frame work of fine wire, and a few pails of water poured over it, which, with all the molasses, is immediately after drawn out by an application of the air pump. By this process the value and appearance of the sugar are considerably improved; and it is so perfectly dried, that it may be shipped the very day it is made, whereas the common sugar requires at least a month to drain before it can be removed from the storehouse.

In the Appendix No. 5 will be found some statistics of a sugar estate, which could not be conveniently inserted here.

The control and management of a large plantation affording daily employment to two or three hundred labourers, negroes, coolies, and Madeirans, all variously engaged in husbandry, in manufacturing sugar, and distilling rum, may readily be supposed to require considerable intelligence, and increasing attention and activity. The staff of such a property consists of an attorney, a manager, four or five overseers,

and frequently an English engine-man, and master-carpenter; besides numerous black superintendents, coopers, carpenters, sugar boilers, distillers, house-servants, watchmen, boatmen, and hospital nurses. A medical practitioner may also be included, for, though not resident on the estate, he receives an annual salary from the owner, and regularly visits the labourers in their cottages or at the hospital.

The attorney, who represents the proprietor by virtue of power of attorney, (*unde nomen*,) has no connexion with the law, but is a gentleman generally residing in town, who regulates the expenditure of the property, conducts the correspondence, and, in fact, does everything which the owner might be supposed to do, were he in the colony; but with this difference, that, being always if prudently chosen, a person of judgment and experience, the estate is not unfrequently more successfully carried on under his direction, than when the control of it has been assumed by the nonpractical proprietor during his occasional visits to the colony, for, whatever may be said of the evils of absenteeism, instances have occurred in which the active interference of the owner has not been conducive to the interests of his property.

Once a month, or oftener, the nonresident attorney inspects the estate, and is at all times cognizant of what occurs upon it. When crops are short, expenses heavy, and prices low, he it is who receives the complaints and lamentations of the owner, which he transfers in rather stronger language to the manager, who in his turn delivers them in a yet more emphatic manner to his subordinates.

The manager is appointed by the attorney, and is responsible to him alone for all things, and for the welfare of the property. Many years of severe trial and probation must be undergone as overseer before a man is considered capable of being placed in charge

of an estate as manager, particularly if unfriended and unknown. Within the last ten or fifteen years a very great change for the better has taken place in the class of persons who are selected to fill these situations; formerly it was difficult to name a trade or calling which had not furnished a member to the planting body. Soldiers and sailors, gentlemen's servants, mechanics, music-masters, mountebanks, butchers, bakers, adventurers of every kind, were to be found among the number; and Dickens must have had good authority when he sent out Alfred Single and Job Trotter to an estate in Demerara. But at present it is very different: junior members of respectable families and young men of education and refined habits have in a great measure supplanted the former race; and the improved tone of society consequent on the change is evident to all who recollect West India life in the days of slavery.

A manager's income varies from two to three hundred a year, with free residence, servants, horses, and many other perquisites; his duties are healthy and agreeable; and his life is one of active industry. Up at the earliest dawn of day, he receives his superintendents, to whom, according to their native country, he issues his orders in a singular polyglot patois of Creole, Hindostanee, and Portuguese, and points out the work to be performed by their respective gangs. While these are leisurely loitering along to the fields, he further explains his wishes to the overseers, one of whom, with a superintendent and water-carrier, is attached to each gang or class, into which the labourers are divided; namely, strong men, strong women, old people, and children. Giving them time to settle to their work, the manager mounts his horse and rides to his sea dams and sluices, which he rejoices to find all right, and the drainage of the estate deep and unimpeded; he then visits each body of labourers, and narrowly inspects the work they

are doing. If an old stager, he cares but little for the murmurings and threats of the negro gang, that the grass is "nasty—true," and that they must have an advance on yesterday's wages, or else they will leave the field, although those wages enabled them to earn one shilling and eightpence by *four* hours weeding. After looking at his back dam, he turns towards home, occasionally pausing to calculate how many tons of sugar such a field may give, or by what mode of tillage another may be improved. He breakfasts, and as the clock strikes twelve, recollects the day when he always drank a sangaree at that hour, but bad times and reduced salaries compel him to quench with lemonade his ever-burning thirst, scientifically accounting for its cause, from the rapid evaporation of the natural fluids of the body by the extreme heat of the climate: this remarkable phenomenon he looks upon with regret, but as one which must, however, be patiently submitted to with the other *désagrémens* of the colony. The boiling house engages the remainder of the manager's time until dinner, when he again meets his overseers, for these young gentlemen, though residing under a separate roof, and receiving salaries of forty to eighty pounds a year, live free at the manager's table, for which hospitality he is paid by the proprietor. By eight o'clock the buildings are usually shut, the night watchmen posted, and a bed or a hammock receives the wearied limbs of the manager, from which he rises to repeat the same blameless course of existence, perhaps for years, and if he be fortunate in time to save money and acquire reputation, to take his place among the magnates of the land.

But this is the *couleur de rose* of a manager's life, when everything goes smoothly. Very different is it at other times; and, at the risk of being tedious, it is only fair to look at the darker side. It may be that the manager is a young man, who has, for the first

time, taken charge of an estate, after several years training as overseer; he is perfectly unacquainted with the labourers upon it, and they, in their turn, know him not, but are quite prepared to try "what he is made of." An opportunity soon offers, for the attorney sends instructions to push on with sugar-making, as the owner's or mortgagee's ships are waiting for produce. Anxious to show his zeal, the manager explains his position to the labourers, who hurry to the fields with apparent cheerfulness and glee, and the ripe canes soon fall beneath their sharp cutlasses, the coppers boil, the tall chimneys smoke, and all goes briskly for a few days; the manager is delighted, praises the people, and by way of encouragement, gives them a little molasses or sugar. But alas! these praises and presents are looked upon as signs of weakness and timidity in the young man, and as there happens to be more canes cut than the engine can grind in less than two or three days, the chances of making something by a strike during such an emergency are too good to be thrown away. Accordingly, the first information which the manager receives in the morning from his foremen is, that the people do not intend to "turn out," unless their wages are increased, for, as they allege, "their massa is a rich man, and they are making plenty of sugar." While the foremen are yet speaking, and before the manager has even time to consider these demands, the determination not to work is fully confirmed by the appearance of two or three labourers sauntering along towards their provision grounds, and of a numerous party carrying fishing seines and nets, hurrying to the canals and the sea side, followed by a few sporting men, armed with rusty fowling-pieces; and, as if this was not enough, on a sudden a loud and fearful drumming issues from the cottages, and groups of younger people are seen twisting themselves into all the

indelicate attitudes of the "Joan Johnny dance," to the sound of a rude drum, assisted by the voices of the performers. It is altogether the coolest, most contemptuous, and most passive resistance conceivable.

The manager vows to have the people before the stipendiary magistrate for absenting themselves without notice; but, on cooling down, he recollects that although they hold their cottages and provision grounds rent free, and can only be ejected from them by due legal process, yet it is still an undecided point of law whether they are not merely *daily* labourers, and consequently free to quit their work whenever they please, without any notice; besides, there is the difficulty of summoning a couple of hundred people, and, above all, the knowledge that he is entirely at their mercy for carrying on the cultivation of the estate, for if he offends his gang, they have only to offer their services to the neighbouring properties, where they will be gladly received, and provided with houses and grounds. So he waives all proceedings, and in a few days the negroes return to their work, in the mean time, however, the owner has suffered considerable loss. It is evident that there must be something rotten and unhealthy in the system, which makes so large an amount of property entirely dependent on the daily whims of these fickle people.

Pay-day also brings its troubles to the manager. This, on some estates, comes every week or fortnight, but more frequently on the first of every month. A table is placed in the porch of the house, the pay-books arranged, and canvass bags of Mexican dollars and English silver open, but no small change, for the negro looks down with contempt on copper money. The overseer takes his seat, and commences, alphabetically, "Adonis!" The foreman at his elbow repeats "Adonis!" and up steps the gentleman who

answers to the name, a well-made, neatly dressed black man: with a slight bow and a broad grin he gathers up the fourteen dollars, which appear to be his due, for he has not only worked regularly during the month, but has also occasionally performed double tasks. Apollo comes next, and affects to be rather surprised on finding little more than four dollars to his credit. However, on adding up the account kept by himself by means of a board and a piece of chalk, acknowledges that he has worked only ten days in the month, having, as he states, been compelled to take a trip to town to look after his dress for the Fancy Ball, to be given on the estate in celebration of the 1st August, and of which he is a steward. All the men indeed are paid with little trouble, but not so the women. The first on their list is "Ann," a big, strapping, able woman, who never, by any chance, works herself, for being lucky enough to have three children, from eight to twelve years of age, she manages to make a tolerable livelihood out of their earnings, as she enjoys a cottage and provision grounds rent free on the estate on account of their services: it is true that the poor children go about nearly as naked as they were born, and have never entered a church or a school; for to enable them to do so, would not only entail upon the mother the loss of their wages, but would also probably compel her to work occasionally, in order to provide them with decent clothing, and she calmly remarks, "*she* has lived without either Buckra school, or Buckra church, and no doubt her children will be able to do so just as well." With folded arms and pouting lips she strides up to the pay table, then turning her back upon the overseer, and putting one hand behind, she feels for the nine or ten dollars laid out for her children, picks them up, and walks off, emitting a sound from her lips, intended to indicate the most supreme contempt.

The overseer proceeds with much patience, and perhaps gets down the list as far as "Dido," or "Dolly," who at once declare their money to be wrong. In vain are each day's work and wages told over to them; they will listen to no explanation, but commence to pour forth a torrent of abuse, in which they are cordially joined by all of their own sex, and a few of the men. They declare the manager and overseers to be thieves and robbers, who plunder the canvass bags of dollars to send to "their *white* mothers in England." Should the manager be a married man his wife is insulted, for it is a singular negro peculiarity, never directly to abuse the person with whom they may be in a passion, but always to select the female members of his family—whether dead or alive—as objects for the most brutal and indecent remarks. Finding, on this occasion, that their rude language is unheeded, the women make a general rush and scramble at the money on the table, but the foremen repel them until the bags are safely removed, and the overseer closes his books, and pays no more that day.

Sometimes the negroes unite in an invincible dislike to a manager, and declare their intention to abandon the estate unless he be discharged; this intimidation is of course never openly submitted to at the moment, but ere long it has produced the desired effect. Neglected cane fields over-run with weeds, a burnt megass house, and everything out of order, soon compel a change, and the manager receives his letter of dismissal. From that moment, if a young and unfriended man, things go hard with him. An advertisement appears of the public sale of "all his household furniture, plate, glassware, china, books, choice wines, carriage, &c., &c., &c.;" it might be imagined that the Proprietor of the estate himself was selling off; but it is only the professional zeal and lively imagination of the auctioneer

which has thus magnified the simple contents of his unostentatious dwelling. Poor fellow! sometimes he makes a manly struggle and descends a step to take an overseer's place, but more frequently, too proud for that, he holds on in hopes of another management; but hope deferred at length drives him to seek the melancholy, though almost invariable course of the unemployed, broken hearted man within the tropics. He is missed, and soon forgotten; and once more only is his name brought to the recollection of those who knew him, as they read in the Gazette an official notice that on such a day he died intestate.

It is much to be regretted that no opportunities are afforded to the unemployed manager and overseer of turning their time and their savings to advantage in the pursuit of their profession. Unless such persons involve themselves in the purchase or lease of an entire estate, which their means are inadequate to carry on efficiently, there is actually no occupation for them in the colony.

Some notice of the Metairé mode of managing estates must not be omitted here. Soon after the emancipation several estates were attempted to be carried on under this system of management; that is, the cultivated fields were given over to the negro labourers, on condition that they worked them without wages, the proprietor, or landlord, engaging to convert the canes into sugar and rum at his own expense, and to give to the metayers, or labourers, one half of the produce; but the plan entirely failed, as appears from returns collected by commissioners appointed in 1850, to inquire into the state of the colony. From these it would seem, that out of thirty-one estates on which the system was tried, it had only been even partially successful for a time upon four. And the commissioners add, "as regards sugar, the experiment may be said to have entirely failed. More than one fine property has been ruined

by trusting to this method of cultivation, and in nearly every instance proprietors have been obliged to take back the fields from the farmers on account of their neglect and inattention. In theory the system is all that can be desired, and its failure, when sought to be reduced to practice, is attributable solely to the unfitness of the working-classes to appreciate its advantages. They are not yet sufficiently advanced in the social scale to feel the benefits which would arise to them from the mutual relations of landlord and tenant, between employers and employed. The great cause of its want of success arises from the indolent and unsteady habits of the labouring population, not even the prospect of reaping a lucrative harvest can induce them to bestow anything like *continuous* labour upon their fields, which consequently soon get neglected, and in process of time are either abandoned, or else taken over again by the proprietor of the estate."

Having so fully described the sugar estates, it will be unnecessary to say anything of the small patches of provision grounds and grazing-farms, which are thinly scattered on their outskirts; nor will an apology be required for having dwelt on the fortunes of the manager, when it is recollected that he is the very main-spring which regulates the entire labour of the colony, and that on him depends the judicious outlay of the two million of dollars which are annually paid away in wages, and by his direction, in a great measure, rests the question of gain or loss to the proprietor of the land.

It remains to speak of the proprietary body, to whom, indeed, precedence should have been given. This consists of almost as many classes as the land-owners of England, and includes among its members the peer and the commoner, the man of fortune, (of course, independent of his West India property,) the partners in wealthy mercantile firms, and a few

residents of long standing, who have made the colony their home. The estates of all these owners are usually in the highest order, a judicious outlay of money, and punctually paid wages, keeping things together, although little or no revenue may have been derived from them for many years past.

It is evident that none of the above classes can be expected to quit the duties of their respective stations in the mother country, for the purpose of permanently residing on their colonial properties, nor is it their actual presence, so much as their countenance and capital which are required by the colony.

It may be a humiliating fact to the 125,000 inhabitants of British Guiana, but it is nevertheless a true one, and a fact which should never be forgotten, that the very existence of the colony, and the lives of the greater part of this population are, under Providence, in the keeping of some fifty or sixty gentlemen in Great Britain, that is to say, if the capitalists connected with Guiana, were merely to issue orders to suspend the workings of their estates on and after the first of January next, and which they might possibly do without any very great loss or inconvenience to themselves, in twelve months more the country would be a wilderness, and the people remaining in it reduced to starvation and famine, whenever their precarious provision crops might fail from heavy rains or extreme droughts; for of course the moment that the estates ceased to pay money for wages and stores, it would be no longer worth while for the merchant to maintain his establishments and warehouses in Georgetown. Fifteen years experience has fully proved that the negro if left to himself will never produce an exportable commodity, nor even cultivate the soil with sufficient steadiness to insure a regular supply of food for his own wants. With an abundance of the most fertile land at their com-

mand, the inhabitants of Guiana still draw the greater part of their food from the states of America.

It has been suggested by some writers who know but little of the real state of the colony, that if sugar does not pay, some other staple might be tried. Now, admitting that the enormous amount already invested in sugar works should be altogether sunk, or be partially applied to other processes, what are the productions of the tropics which do not require assiduous labour? Will rice, or cotton, or tobacco, or indigo grow without the aid of man? or is it to be expected that the labourer who already understands the cultivation of sugar, but who objects to the ordinary work of the cane-field, will eagerly acquire and carry on the pestilential processes of the rice or indigo plantation, or the equally laborious though more uncertain and tedious duties of the cotton estate? The cry in Demerara is not that the soil is ungrateful, or the climate ill adapted to the cane, but that there are not enough willing hands in the colony to produce either that or any other article of export in remunerative quantities, and to afford assurance to the planter, that where he has sown there also shall he reap. If like all small communities, the colonists of Guiana are perhaps rather apt to imagine that they occupy a more prominent place in the eyes of the world than they really do, appeals to the mother country ought not to be looked upon as the whining importunities of sturdy beggars too lazy to work, but as the suggestions of honest though interested men, who venture for the common good to bring before government the result of their dearly bought experience. All classes in the colony still have claims on the people of Britain; the owners of property have a right to ask that the nation does not stop short in the good work, and abandon the great experiment of Emancipation, but

that it affords every aid to conduct it to a successful issue: while those for whose benefit the important change took place have a still stronger right to demand that they be not left to their own untutored impulses, nor be permitted by the ruin of the colony to relapse into barbarism, but rather that the fostering care of the government should be continued to them, and the prosperity of Guiana be upheld until time and education shall have raised up a middle class with the habits and energies of the white man, and an industrious labouring population, not ashamed to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Another class of the proprietary body consists of industrious, hard working, practical men, who, since the great depreciation in West India property, have been enabled to purchase a few half-abandoned sugar estates, but having neither capital nor credit to work them effectively, have soon been placed in such a position, that nothing could relieve, or indeed further involve them. Dilapidated buildings, swampy lands, patched and jingling machinery, and labourers' wages in arrear, all plainly bespeak the hand to mouth system which prevails on their properties. The plain truth is, a poor man has no business with a sugar estate in Demerara: he might as well, on the strength of being able to purchase an old barn in Lancashire, consider himself qualified to set up as a Manchester manufacturer. The "land and buildings" are now-a-days the least expensive part of an estate: after these have been obtained, and before the owner can possibly expect to make anything by them, he must have a large and never failing supply of ready money at command, to improve his machinery, and to drain and till his fields: he must be independent enough to be able to give his canes time to ripen and arrive at maturity, instead of being compelled to cut them young, or at a season when their juice is poor and watery, and scarcely convertible into

sugar, in order to furnish labourers wages, or to satisfy the demands of some inexorable creditor: he must have the means of renewing and replanting his land instead of trusting to "ratoons" year after year: and above all, he must be in a position to purchase his coals and other stores at the market price, in place of promising to pay the merchant fifty per cent. above their value for the risk of trusting him. The needy landowner is a nuisance and a hindrance to the colony. He only wastes and fritters away the labour which, in the hands of a man of capital, would be a source of permanent prosperity to it. The day has gone by, when to be a proprietor was to be a man of station and influence, now the name, of the poor one at least, is little better than a by-word and a reproach.

But the experience and practical knowledge of these gentlemen, (and of many others disheartened by the uncertain tenure of a manager's situation,) their small capitals, and their local influence with the labouring population, which are now all wasted in hopeless struggles, ought not to be permitted to be thus lost to the colony. A most important step towards restoring the prosperity of Guiana would be the establishment of sugar-farms with central manufactories, [v. Appendix 6.] where this most valuable class of colonists might find a field for the exercise of their skill and industry. Let a capitalist or a company purchase one or two thousand acres of our rich though cheap land, and erect a central manufactory, fitted with the most perfect apparatus, under the superintendence of a skilled European sugar-boiler. Let this land be properly drained by steam power under charge of a competent engineer, and then divided into farms of one or two hundred acres, and leased to practical men (planters) whose whole and undivided attention would be directed to the cultivation of their farms. At crop times their canes

would be carried to the central manufactory, and the produce proportioned between the landlord and tenant, on such terms as might be agreed upon, probably one half to each. The change under such a system, in the position of the needy proprietor, or unemployed manager, then becoming a thriving tenant, would be this, that instead of planting his own, or some other poor man's lands, the drainage of which is constantly liable to be impeded from some of the numerous causes incident to the colony, and struggling to obtain from the swampy fields, a scanty return of half a ton an acre, he would be confidently availing himself of the rich man's means to cultivate none but well drained land, and perfectly independent of the heaviest seasons, would be able to calculate with certainty upon every plant he placed in the ground yielding its rich juice in due time, and giving him at least two tons to the acre. When ripe, instead of grinding his canes at his own dilapidated works, where one half of the juice is lost from defective machinery, and the other half converted into a damp black sugar of little value, the same, or a smaller outlay of fuel and labour, at the scientific apparatus of the central manufactory, would afford him a large white grained crystal, rivalling the finest productions of the English refineries. In place of his time and money being wasted, at one moment in imperfect and abortive attempts at planting, at another in draining, then in sugar boiling, and again in distillation; they would be concentrated in the production of the raw material, leaving it to men who have made it their study and their business to drain the land, and to manufacture the produce. Finally, the tenant would probably be able to draw forth much of the dormant labour of the colony. Many of the indolent and capricious spirits among the labouring population, who now refuse to submit to the perpetually recurring work and ordinary discipline, required of all

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those who occupy cottages on the plantations, would band together for a season, as in other countries, to weed the plants or cut off the crop of the farmer. There is no reason why this division of labour should not succeed in Demerara as well as in Great Britain. Suum cuique: the engineer to the drainage, the man of science to the manufactories, and the planter to the canes.

The advantages to the capitalist or company would be a large return for the money invested, as is attempted to be shown in detail, in the Appendix No. 6.

It is not expected or proposed, that wealthy proprietors having large estates already in good working order, should throw them into farms, although even some of these, perhaps, might not suffer by adopting a few of the suggestions here held out, but that the plan should be tried by a Company.

Last, and lowest on the list of proprietors, are the emancipated slaves, who have joined together in large bodies, and purchased estates, sometimes from their former masters, whose ruined fortunes have forced them to seek a home in other lands. For a time a scanty straggling cultivation is kept up by the new owners; a dozen of whom may be seen at once, standing over their working gang, consisting of half that number of old people, abusing and bullying their very lives out of them.

The black proprietor of a joint-stock estate never works with his own hands, although not unacquainted with manual labour, for who ever saw a white gentleman with a shovel or a hoe? He is well aware that property has its privileges as well as its duties; and, as he reads them, the former consists in wearing a high stock and close-fitting trousers tightly strapped over an "extra-sized" fancy cloth boot, in leading a life of perpetual semi-intoxication, and galloping about the country on a

half starved pony. The duties of his station, are to pilfer from his neighbour on every occasion, to force his aged parents to labour on his land for a mere pittance, and when too feeble any longer to work, to allow them to perish from neglect. A visit to one of these negro properties is a melancholy sight. There stands the once elegant mansion house, now fast decaying, and from which a plank or a post is torn whenever wanted; the gardens are gone, and the orchards cut down for firewood; the doors and windows of the boiling house swing on broken hinges; and the wild fig tree with its long air roots, grows vigorously on the crumbling brickwork; everything denotes desolation; and the visitor turns away with a sigh, as he beholds a herd of swine rooting beneath the clump of tamarind and palm trees, which mark the burial place of the former owners.

“Impius hæc tam culta novalia, ‘niger’ habebit?
Barbarus has segetes?

en, quis consevimus agros.”

VIRGIL, Ecl. i.

The end of these estates is quickly accomplished: the sea breaks in, and out, through the ill-kept sluices and neglected sea-dams, until an equinoctial spring-tide, rough and high, overwhelms the land, destroying every vestige of cultivation. Disputes ensue, a land-surveyor is called in to divide the property, and allot to each shareholder a separate and individual portion; and the legislature is petitioned to pass an act, compelling the several owners to keep up the dams and drainage, for their mutual benefit.

The negro villages, which abound in all parts of the colony, may also be noticed here. They are generally situated on the front lands of estates, the owners of which have found it prudent and profitable to lay them out in building lots, of a quarter to half

an acre in extent; for which, prices varying from one to two hundred dollars are asked. The first purchasers are usually a few of the more opulent labourers in the neighbouring plantations, who are ready to exchange the vassalage of a cottage and grounds, held only during good behaviour, and at the manager's pleasure, for the independence of their own freeholds, in a locality to which they are attached. Half a dozen houses having been built, some enterprising Portuguese obtains a license, and opens a "grog-shop," which considerably increases the popularity of the place. Odd as it may seem, the further the town advances, the wilder and more uncivilized is the aspect it presents; for many of the settlers, prematurely seized with the spirit of building, but without calculating the cost, pay down a few dollars, and obtain possession of their lots, on which they run up slight wooden frames of cottages, and partially roof and board them in, when, funds failing, they very contentedly squat in a corner, leaving the remainder to rot and tumble down without ever being finished, while here and there large patches of tall grass and brushwood intervene, growing thickly on the lots which remain unsold, and completely blocking up the streets which were originally laid out. The last step is to christen the village, and the honoured names of Victoria, Buxton, Stanley, Grey, or Gladstone, are selected for the purpose.

This system of village freeholds, although the undoubted source of much enjoyment and comfort to the lower orders, has been truly described as the bane and ruin of the estates; for the simple reason, that the labourer who worked with a certain degree of regularity and industry, as indispensable conditions of occupying his employer's cottage, no sooner becomes an independent householder, than he ceases to work, except when agreeable to himself.

CHAPTER IV.

POPULATION—CENSUS RETURNS—IMMIGRANTS—FROM EAST INDIES—FROM MADEIRA—CAPTURED AFRICANS—OLD AFRICANS—IMMIGRANTS FROM BARBADOES AND OTHER WEST INDIA ISLANDS—NATIVES—FREEHOLDERS AND RESIDENTS ON ESTATES—TASK GANGS—NEGRO CHARACTER—MISTAKEN POLICY OF THE PLANTERS TOWARDS THE NEGROES—LOCAL TAXATION AS A MEANS OF CIVILIZATION.

The following abstract from the official returns of the census taken on the 31st March, 1851, will afford an accurate idea of the population of British Guiana.

COUNTRY.	Residing in the county of Demerara, including Georgetown.	Residing in the county of Essequibo.	Residing in the county of Berbice, including N. Amsterdam.	Total population of British Guiana.
Natives of British Guiana	51,044	15,776	19,631	86,451
Natives of Barbadoes	3,644	794	487	4,925
Natives of other W. I. islands	2,756	1,077	520	4,353
African Immigrants	2,405	2,035	2,728	7,168
Old Africans	3,931	1,333	1,819	7,083
Madeirans	6,204	1,301	423	7,928
British, Dutch, and Americans	1,499	269	320	2,088
Coolies from Madras	2,710	301	654	3,665
Coolies from Calcutta	1,574	2,031	412	4,017
Unknown	0	8	9	17
Total	75,767	24,925	27,003	127,695

In order not to extend this table, the population of Georgetown, 25,508, and of New Amsterdam, 4,633, are included in the general returns for the counties of Demerara and Berbice respectively.

Under the head Natives of British Guiana, are comprised 2,000 aborigines or Indians living near

the cultivated parts of the colony. Their number within the boundary of the British territory probably exceeds 10,000.

Taking the strangers first, the immigrants from the East Indies, or Coolies, as they are called, may be set down as a most valuable class of labourers. With less physical strength than the negro, they far surpass him in intelligence and docility, and quickly become expert at all descriptions of work, excepting the use of the shovel, which they are seldom, if ever required to handle, their labour being chiefly confined to weeding and cutting canes, and to the lighter work about the sugar buildings. Frugal and simple in their habits, there are very few of them who in the course of a five years residence in Demerara, do not save sums of money, which they might vainly strive to acquire during a lifetime of toil and privation, in their native country. [v. Appendix 7.]

Besides the occasional official notices of the Administrator General, (a public officer charged with the administration of the property of those who die intestate in Guiana,) to the effect that he is in possession of money, belonging to deceased Coolies, which will be remitted to India for the benefit of surviving relations there, unless any claims upon it can be proved in the colony; innumerable instances might be mentioned of the comparative wealth which these people amass. The following are stated on the most undoubted authority. Some time ago, a Coolie labourer having died suddenly from diseased spleen, as appeared from the medical evidence at the inquest, his humble property was taken possession of by the coroner, and in his strong box, besides several pieces of the finest linen and muslins, upwards of two hundred silver dollars, or forty pounds, were found, which were sent to the authorities to be remitted to India, in case any of the family of the Coolie could be

found, to claim this handsome windfall. The next case is worthy of record for other reasons. During the great distress which prevailed in the colony in 1847 and 1848, when more than one estate was suddenly compelled to stop work from the failure of the proprietors in England, and the consequent want of funds to pay the wages of the labourers, the Coolie gang, some five and twenty in number, on a property so circumstanced, where they had lived about two years, not only offered to continue their services on credit, after the negroes had ceased to work, but also brought to the manager their savings bank-books, and ready cash, amounting to between eight and nine hundred dollars, which they freely placed at his disposal as a loan, if it could be the means of saving the estate; little knowing how many thousands of pounds it would have taken to avert the ruin which had fallen on their master, a London merchant of high standing. Of course their generous offers were declined, and they were urged to take employment on some more fortunate property, as the wary negroes had already done, at the first alarm.

In August, 1851, the ship "Lucknow" sailed from Demerara to India with some 250 Coolies, who availed themselves of the free passages at their disposal, to revisit their native country; and Governor Barkly is reported to have said in his place in the Court of Policy, that "they carried with them a large sum of money, twenty thousand dollars (four thousand guineas) having been delivered into the custody of the captain, while half as much more, as his Excellency believed, remained in the possession of the people themselves." Besides this, many were loaded with massive rings of gold and silver, on their arms and ankles, which, with the savings bank, appears to be the favourite mode of investing their money.

The Coolie immigrants seldom embark in any trade or speculation, excepting sometimes in a wholesale purchase of rice, in which several are interested, thus prudently laying in a supply of their favourite food on advantageous terms : a few of their number, however, are found among the petty shopkeepers in the country districts. In 1852 one of them appeared before the bench of licensing justices, to renew a license for his spirit shop, for which he was prepared to pay two hundred dollars himself, and presented two of his countrymen as sureties in double that amount, for his due observance of the revenue laws ; being considered good and solvent men, although they had been brought from India, at the cost of the colony, and were entitled to a free passage back again, their bonds were immediately accepted. Another instance of the position which these people may attain in British Guiana is to be found in the fact, that at the last registration of voters for the county of Essequibo, the name of a Coolie immigrant appears on the list ; nor is there anything in the constitution of the colony to prevent him, should his ambition point that way, from eventually taking his seat in the financial assembly.

Under the stringent regulations of the East India directors, the Coolies are permitted to emigrate to British Guiana, only on condition that the expense of their conveyance thither should be defrayed by the colony, and that after a residence there of five years, free passages back to India should be provided for them, the total cost to the colony being about thirty pounds a head. It is needless to say that these terms have been most faithfully observed by the colonial authorities, onerous as they are upon the owners ; of the Coolie immigrants, whose time of residence expired in 1850 and 1851, the greater part eagerly agreed to remain in the country for five, or three years longer, on receiving bounties of fifty

and thirty dollars each, while many of those who returned to India, declared their intention of coming back again to Demerara; and several actually arrived in the very ships which had carried them over, a flying visit of a few days to their native shores, having apparently satisfied their *amor patriæ*.

The East India Company has never very clearly stated its objections to the unconditional emigration of these people, (*v.* Appendix 7.) but has assumed an authority over their destinies, far greater than her Majesty either possesses, or pretends to hold, over the most humble of her subjects. There can be no fear of any wrong or injury being inflicted on the Coolies, for on their arrival in the colony, they are located on the estates of wealthy proprietors, in considerable bodies, under the immediate superintendence of a "Sirdar," or head man of their own selection, generally a person of much shrewdness and intelligence. Their wages, at the same rate as those received by the negroes, are stipulated to be paid every week in cash; for any plan approaching to the "truck system," or payment by allowances, is strongly discountenanced. Their cottages, hospital accommodation, and regular medical attendance, are under the supervision of officers specially appointed for those purposes in every district; and the stipendiary magistrate is at all times accessible to their slightest complaints; although I believe, the records of these gentlemen might be searched in vain, for a single instance of the complaint of a Coolie against his employer for ill-usage.

The following is a comparative statement of the rate of wages, current in the two countries. The scale in India, is taken from a recent work by Dr. Royle, in which it is quoted on the authority of Mr. David Lees, a member of the Commercial Association of Manchester, who visited India in 1850, and commenced the cultivation of cotton

under his own supervision, at the rates here given:—

Daily Scale of Wages in the South-East of India.

	Anna.	Pice.	Pence.
A Coolie-man 18 to 50 years of age .. 1	2	about	1 $\frac{3}{4}$
A great boy 14 to 17 years of age ...	8	"	1
A little boy 12 years of age	6	"	$\frac{3}{4}$
An old man	6 @ 8	"	$\frac{3}{4}$ @ 1
An old woman	6 @ 8	"	$\frac{3}{4}$ @ 1

“ At noon the Coolies have jaggery (coarse sugar), and drink water, at a cost of one farthing each adult, and half a farthing each child.”

“ The above are the rates of wages from August to December, but from January to July, the wages of a Coolie are advanced to 1 anna, 5 or 6 pice, or about 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ pence per day, as in those months the people go into distant parts to reap the rice, and are also engaged in drawing toddy from the Palmyra trees.”*

Daily Scale of Wages in British Guiana.

	Shillings.	Pence.	Shillings.	Pence.	Stg.
An able-bodied man	1	4	to	2	0
An able-bodied woman	1	4	to	1	8
A child 12 years of age	0	8			
An old man or woman	0	8	to	1	0

In Guiana, the Coolies have generally finished their day's work by noon, and are never refused a gratuity of sugar or molasses. They have also ample time, if they please, to perform a half or an entire additional task, for which they are paid at the same rate.

Another race, which has largely benefited by emigration to British Guiana, is the Portuguese; or, more properly speaking, the Madeiran, for they nearly all come from that island of vineyards and

* Culture and Commerce of Cotton in India, by Dr. ROYLE.

wine presses, of poverty and ill paid toil. Several of these people, who within the last ten years landed in Demerara as field labourers, are now possessed of extensive mercantile establishments in Georgetown, and the retail trade of the colony, is also almost entirely carried on by them. In every village, and on every estate, their shops are to be seen ; and even in the remotest parts of the country, the Madeiran pedlar is met with, patiently trudging along beneath the burden of his heavy pack, selling the coarse cloths commonly worn by the negroes. Without them, indeed, much inconvenience would be felt in the rural districts, for the "Portuguese shop" is ever well stocked with all the necessaries, and not a few of the luxuries, required by the labourer. It is somewhat singular, that throughout the length and breadth of the land, there is scarcely such a thing to be found as a shop of any kind kept by a black man : not, of course, from any want of means, for the negro has the same opportunities as the Madeiran of beginning business, but from an utter absence of ordinary energy and common prudence on the part of the former. When he does attempt a little traffic, the prime cost and profits of his first stock of goods are squandered, as fast as they are realized, in debauchery and on the "ladies," or in dress and the purchase of a horse, which he speedily gallops to death,—for a beggar, and a black man on horseback, proverbially know but one pace. The Madeiran, on the contrary, practises the most pinching economy, until firmly established, and even then his only recreations are his guitar, and a drive on a Sunday with his family in the shop cart. These immigrants, when acclimatized, make excellent field labourers, but seldom remain very long in that capacity, as they soon save sufficient money to purchase a pack, or open a shop, and indulge their predilection for trade.

The African immigrants, mentioned in the census table, consist partly of those natives of Africa, who have voluntarily come over from Sierra Leone, and the Kroo Coast, to try their fortunes in the colony; but principally of young people and children, who have been captured in slave ships, by Her Majesty's cruisers; and, in place of being restored to their afflicted families and friends at Yaorie, or Wowou, have been conveyed to British Guiana, the inhabitants of which, have thus been made the receivers of the stolen goods, while other colonies have advanced to the very verge of rebellion, at the idea of receiving a ship load of convicts from the mother country. The West Indians, with that loyalty which has ever distinguished them, have permitted their plantations to be made the receptacles of hordes of savages, without a single murmur, unless it might be an occasional remonstrance with the British Government, for not sending greater numbers of these unfortunate creatures, to participate in the means of civilization and happiness, so abundantly held out to them by the colonists.

On their first arrival in the country, the captured Africans present the appearance of the most thoroughbred savages; their teeth are sharpened with a file, and there is a restless licking of the lips, and a greedy rolling of the eyes about them, which causes the flesh of a timid man to creep. They are indentured for one year, or until they have attained the age of eighteen, as far as is practicable, upon adjoining estates; so that the whole ship load have daily opportunities of seeing each other, and comparing notes. The first step is to feed and clothe them, and then to place them under the especial charge of some elderly matron of their own nation, as a *chaperon*. These old women, have seldom forgotten their

native language, even after a lapse of forty or fifty years, and take peculiar pride in their strange protégés, whom they march to church on a Sunday, with all the neatness and regularity, of a school of charity children in England. Though, probably but little edified at first, the new Africans soon acquire the great facts of religion by their attendance at church, and at the evening schools and lectures which have been established on the estates for their instruction, by the clergy, and the board of education, and are then baptized; but, long before this, they have taken their places in the field, and on the pay list, beside the native negroes of similar age, from whom, in time, they cease to be distinguished, excepting by greater steadiness and firmness of purpose, by good humour and civility, and, above all, by the absence of that overweening self-conceit which is the greatest bar to the improvement of the negro of Guiana. While these Africans are the most desirable description of labourers for the colony, the benefits conferred upon them by removal from their own country, are infinitely greater than those derived by any other class of immigrants. They exchange an existence little better than that of the brute, for the position of civilized and Christian men.

The old Africans, are those who were brought to the colony, during the days of the African slave trade. As this was abolished in 1807, the youngest, and last imported of this class, even allowing that they came as children, cannot now be under fifty or sixty years of age, but they are generally much older, and would seem from the census tables to be fast dropping off, their numbers having been reduced from 15,796 in 1841, to 7,083 in 1851. They are, or rather have been, excellent labourers; and either from natural disposition, or from the effects of the strict discipline under which they have been brought up, are regular and indus-

trious in their habits, and quiet and obedient in their manner. Few as they are, they form in the rural parishes the majority of the communicants, and of the married labourers; at least, of those who do not openly set aside their vows; not one of their number is to be found at the convict settlement, nor in the minor prisons; but, as might have been expected, they constitute the bulk of the recipients of parish relief. The general allowance to them, is two to three dollars a month, the estates to which they formerly belonged invariably adding free residences and medical attendance. Poor creatures, their lives have been passed, perhaps not unhappily, in regular toil, and they have well earned this pittance in their old age.

The immigrants from Barbadoes, and those from the other West India Islands, have been very properly separated in the tables, as marked distinctions exist between them. The latter are chiefly mechanics and artizans, whom a wider field and higher wages for their labour, have attracted to Guiana. They are civil and industrious, differing but little in other respects from the natives of a corresponding class. The Barbadians, on the contrary, are readily distinguished by a striking similarity of countenance and tone of voice, and by a most extraordinary fertility of imagination in the invention of oaths and expletives, which they indulge in with extreme prodigality, even in the common course of conversation. Their idiom is purer than that of the creole negroes, and they are generally more intelligent; but, at the same time, they are more addicted to gambling and cock fighting, and ready to wound with the knife, or the razor, the latter their favourite weapon, on the slightest provocation. Many of the Barbadians in Demerara, are agricultural labourers, and continue to exercise those habits of industry and frugality, which they have acquired in their small, and densely populated island.

The only other inhabitants of British Guiana, of whom it will be necessary to speak, is that portion of the native population, which in other countries, would constitute the labouring classes. Their numbers may be stated at 70,000, and they present the singular spectacle, to be witnessed in no other part of the world, and of which history affords no parallel, of a people just emerged from slavery, now enjoying property in houses and lands, for which they have probably paid little less than a million of money. This fact would appear altogether incredible, was it not substantiated by official documents. In these, it is stated that the number of houses in the villages and hamlets throughout the colony amounts to 11,152, taking the average price of each freehold lot to be twenty-five pounds, and the cost of erecting each cottage at sixty pounds, which those acquainted with the colony will admit to be a low estimate, the total value will be found, as stated above, to fall but little short of a million sterling. As the immigrants, and white inhabitants, own but a very trifling portion of this description of property, it is not unreasonable to assign ten thousand of these village freeholds as belonging to the native negro population; and as each house contains an average of five persons, the result is, that fifty thousand, or upwards of two-thirds of those whose services were looked upon at the period of emancipation, as available for the future cultivation of the colony, now literally sit down beneath the shade of their own cocoa-nut and plantain trees, in a state of perfect happiness,—taking a long holiday. And who shall blame them? They have only been fortunate enough to attain with unexampled rapidity, that, which their fellow men in every clime, are daily struggling to acquire; namely, the means of retiring with a competency. Their philosophy, their indolence, or their limited ideas, whichever may be the

real cause, render them perfectly contented with what they already possess. Their lands afford them food, the waters teem with fish, and an occasional day's work on some neighbouring estate, supplies all their wants. They dream life away without a care, and without a thought. In vain does the planter seek to tempt them forth from these happy scenes of easy retirement, to labour in the dense jungle of his cane fields, or beside the hissing steam, and rapid machinery of his sugar works. They feel that man was not made for sugar-boiling alone; and are apt to consider that the daily use of the hoe and the shovel, are not essential to human happiness.

The peasantry who have not yet purchased their own properties, but reside on the plantations, and whose numbers may be estimated at twenty thousand, including children, are in nearly as comfortable circumstances as their more independent brethren. They are provided with cottages free of rent, and as much ready drained land as they please to cultivate. Their ordinary wages, vary from one and eightpence to two shillings a task; but when cutting canes in crop time, or working with the shovel, three to four shillings, are easily earned in a day. Nearly every description of work is regulated by a scale of "tasks," a custom which the labourers themselves insist upon, in preference to day work, as, when a certain quantity is measured out, and a certain price agreed upon for it, there is little possibility of any mistake or dispute arising, and the steady workman is enabled to complete his portion in three or four hours.

A very general custom exists among the villagers, and other labourers, of banding together for a short time under a head man, and wandering about the country, in search of any easy, money making employment. This practice chiefly prevails for a few weeks before the Christmas, and other holidays, for the due celebration of which, a little loose cash is felt to be

indispensable. These roving bodies, are known by the name of "task gangs," and of course only work when they like, and as they like; sometimes disappearing in a single night without any notice, at the slightest whim, or on any fault being found with their work. Many a proprietor has thrown away his money, in paying these people to clear his land, and prepare it for planting; for when nearly finished, they have suddenly taken advantage of his position, to demand the most exorbitant wages to continue the work, or have left his fields to grow again into bush; as they have sufficient tact, only to engage themselves as daily labourers.

The negro character, has been often described as a compound, of cunning and suspicion; but, perhaps its chief distinguishing trait is the most insufferable self-conceit; this is the greatest obstacle to the improvement of the race, which presents itself to the Legislature, the Clergyman, and the Schoolmaster. Utterly unaware of the extent of his own ignorance, and supremely happy in it, the negro neither seeks, nor even admits, the advantages of instruction. Food and rest he maintains are all that man requires; he acknowledges no superior, and insists that he could easily equal the white man in every respect, if he so pleased. He is affronted at his wife being called "his wife," and corrects your want of good breeding, by informing you that her title is his *lady*.

So extremely low is the tone of morality among the labouring classes, and so totally insensible are they to any feeling of shame or disgrace, that the person who has been convicted of any crime, however heinous or brutal, no sooner returns from his term of punishment, than he at once assumes his place and popularity in the village, or on the estate, where he is looked upon, rather as a victim to the tyrannical laws of the white man, than as one, whose conduct and company, were to be condemned and avoided. (v. Appendix 8.)

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The present position of the negro is thus truly foreshadowed, in a dispatch from Lord John Russell to Sir C. T. Metcalfe, Governor of Jamaica, dated Downing-street, 27th September, 1839.

* * * "The labourers, if they shall be induced to prefer the mere means of life, to the wages and earnings of a comfortable subsistence, will yearly decline in civilization, become an ignorant, degraded class in society, and lose all the advantages which may be secured by a moderate degree of industry and exertion."

If it be thought, that throughout these pages, the negro has been painted blacker than he really is, it must be recollected that in order to present a correct picture of the difficulties under which the colonists are now sinking, it is particularly necessary to exhibit in its true colours, the population on whom the proprietary body are dependent, for the cultivation of their estates; and at the mercy of whose intelligence and industry, the very existence of British Guiana is placed; unless a continued stream of immigration be directed into the Colony. But, having thus plainly stated the present condition of the emancipated negroes, far be it from me to assert, that their vices and failings are inherent in the race, and not to be eradicated; on the contrary, they would seem to be merely the natural consequences of the great change from slavery to freedom, which the present generation has undergone. With it, will pass away the latent jealousies of the slave towards his former master, and the doubts and suspicions with which every act of the white man, for the benefit of the black man, is now regarded, will disappear. If those, who are now free from their birth, be rescued in time from the debasing examples and traditions of their parents, and be taught and trained to habits of industry, they will learn to look upon labour not as the badge of slavery, but as the common lot of mankind in every

land. For those, who have felt in their life time, both the bonds of slavery, and the untrammelled joys of freedom, great allowances must be made ; their recollections are not to be effaced, nor their feelings altered, and they will continue to persist in the luxury of laziness after their long day of toil ; but, it will be the fault of the colonists alone, if the children of these people are suffered to grow up, and to become, as too many have hitherto been permitted, a reproach and a danger to the country.

Considering the large sums of money which have been annually voted by the local legislature, for the education, and the religious instruction of the negroes, and the munificent donations, which have been contributed by various societies, and private individuals in England, for the same purposes, it is mortifying to think what little progress has been made in their improvement; and to be now compelled to acknowledge, after a lapse of Fifteen years, that the beneficial results of this vast expenditure, are no where perceptible; but that, on the contrary, the emancipated classes have rapidly retrograded in all that constitutes civilization. Let not the blame, however, be entirely laid upon the black man. From the very beginning, the policy of the planters would seem to have been a great mistake. The freed negro was treated as a wayward child, but never as a freeman ; he was coaxed, but never compelled to fulfil the duties of his station. That stimulus to exertion, which exists in other countries, was carefully removed in Guiana; houses and grounds and hospitals were placed at his command, without charge; food and clothing were equally within his reach, by the slightest exertion ; schools were established, to which he was entreated to send his children ; and churches were erected, for the support of which he was never required to contribute. When inclined to work, his services were jealously competed for on neighbouring estates ; and when disposed for idle-

ness, no laws restrained him from wandering at will, over every man's property. It did indeed appear, that the colonists, long taunted with the proverbial inhumanity of slave owners, had determined to show the world, how kind and tender hearted they were in reality; and it became a fashion among men, who had not unjustly struggled to the last, for the maintenance of their own rights of vassalage, loudly to denounce the horrors of Cuba and Brazil, and to hold up as a contrast, the paternal treatment of their own dependents. Even now, when the British nation, disappointed at the results of Emancipation in the West Indies, plainly demand that the lazy and ungrateful negro, should not be allowed to relapse into barbarism; but be called upon to perform his duties to himself, to his neighbour, and to the government which affords him its protection; there are men in the colony, who start up and declare, that "the negro is not yet sufficiently advanced to assume these responsibilities," as if the idea was fraught with cruelty and injustice.

In February, 1851, Earl Grey thus addressed the Governor of Jamaica, and his Lordship's despatch is equally applicable to Guiana. * * * "It appears to me greatly to be regretted, that on the abolition of slavery, the emancipated population, were not required to make some small weekly payment for the support of schools, of churches and chapels, and of public dispensaries and hospitals. Such institutions would have greatly contributed to their civilization and moral improvement, and the necessity of earning in each week the means of making the required payment, would have been a wholesome stimulus to industry, and would have supplied that motive for labour, which was unhappily wanting."—"If these views are just, it may not be too late to adopt, partially at least, the policy which ought then to have been acted upon."—"Parochial taxation properly im-

posed, is calculated to act as a stimulus to industry." —“ I entertain a firm conviction that the principles on which these suggestions rest, are sound.”

There can be no doubt of the soundness and expediency of his Lordship's conclusions. The negroes must be civilized in spite of themselves, and nothing would more effectually tend to accomplish this object, than a system of moderate parochial assessment.

A direct tax on the labouring population, which might be objected to, if imposed for the general purposes of government, could hardly be considered as oppressive, when levied solely for certain objects of plain and palpable advantage to the negro alone; such as the establishment of free schools, to which every rate-payer might send his children; and to the support of places of worship, equally accessible. And, I much mistake the dispositions of these people, if they would not avail themselves of the benefits afforded by these institutions, were it only from a determination to have *something*, in return, for the money, which they contributed towards them; thus making the assessment, an indirect, but most important element, in their advancement.

It has been calculated, that of the 125,000 inhabitants of British Guiana, at least 53,000 (omitting Hindoo immigrants) are able adults, residing in the rural parishes, with 15,000 children of a proper age for receiving instruction, and that a weekly rate of the smallest current coin of the country, or two-pence on each able adult, would be amply sufficient, with ordinary assistance from the legislature, to place the means of education and religious instruction, within the reach of every inhabitant of the colony. (v. Appendix 9.)

CHAPTER V.

ON EMIGRATION FROM AFRICA TO BRITISH GUIANA.

It will be seen, from the preceding chapter, how many different countries already contribute to form the population of British Guiana.

In addition to these, the local legislature has voted £50,000 for the purpose of introducing immigrants from China, and an agent, appointed by the British Government, has recently visited that empire, on behalf of the colony. In 1851, also, a gentleman of considerable persuasive powers, was accredited to the free blacks in the United States, and a correspondence was at the same time opened with the Azores; but, as yet, the results in the two latter instances, have been any thing but encouraging.* Many years ago, Germany and Malta were tried for labourers, with indifferent success; the Germans, having generally turned out bakers, and the Maltese, beggars. In short, so desperate is the position of the planters, and of such vital importance is immigration to them, and to the very existence of the colony; that no sooner do they discover a people, capable of working beneath a tropical sun, than money is immediately voted, and emissaries despatched to treat for their services. By some oversight, Tripoli, Tunis, and Cairo, seem as yet to have been overlooked, as sources from whence labourers might be obtained. The bazaars of these towns, are said to be abundantly supplied from Berber,

* Perhaps an attempt to induce the fugitive slaves to settle in Demerara would be more successful, as the climate of Canada must be uncongenial to the greater part of those who are reported to have fled there by thousands.

Dongola, Darfur, and even from Central Africa; and probably there is no law, to prevent an agent of the colony, from redeeming these unfortunate creatures from the mutilating hands of their Mussulman masters, and transmitting them in freedom to a British colony.

Before entering upon the somewhat difficult question, of African emigration to the West Indies, the indulgence of the reader is asked for a moment, to refresh his literary recollections of the social condition of that continent. "All the accommodations of life throughout Africa," says a popular writer, "are simple and limited in the greatest degree. The intellectual character of the natives presents a peculiar and remarkable deficiency. In their religion, the negroes labour under the disadvantage of being left to unassisted reason, and that, too, very little enlightened. There is one point on which their faith assumes a savage character, and displays a darker than inquisitorial horrors. The hope of an immortal destiny, dimly working in the blinded human heart, leaps to the wildest errors. The African despot, the object of boundless homage on earth, seeks to transport all his pomp and the crowd of his attendants to his place in the future world. His death must be celebrated by the corresponding sacrifice of a numerous band of slaves, of wives and of courtiers; their blood must water his grave, and the sword of the rude warrior once drawn, does not readily stop; a general massacre often takes place, and the capitals of these barbarian chiefs are seen to stream with blood."

"With regard to the social aspect of this continent, the unimproved condition in which it appears may be regarded as that perhaps in which violence and wrong have the widest field, and cause the most dreadful calamities to the human race. The original simplicity, founded on the absence of all objects calculated

to excite turbulent passions and desires, has disappeared, while its place is not yet supplied by the restraints of law, and the refinements of civilized society. War, the favourite pursuit, is therefore carried on with the most unrelenting fury, and robbery on a great and national scale is generally prevalent."

"Slavery seems, also, to belong to the barbarian state. Man has emerged from the limited wants of savage life, and sees productions of art which he eagerly covets without having acquired those habits of steady industry by which he might earn them for himself." "His remedy is to compel those whom his superior strength, or any other advantage enables him to bring under subjection, to labour in supplying his wants, and generally a great part of the population of every barbarian society is placed in a state of bondage."

Now, this surely presents a melancholy picture of human life, which both the Philanthropist and the Utilitarian, might usefully unite their efforts to improve; and while snatching thousands, from the wretched fate which awaits them in their native country, to a position of freedom and civilization, under British institutions; they might at the same time, ensure the means of fostering and restoring, the almost exhausted energies of the West India Colonies. Though the English Government, at vast sacrifice of life and treasure may, possibly succeed in suppressing the *export* trade in slaves; the internal system of domestic bondage, and human sacrifices, must be far beyond its reach, and its control; and the probability is, that from this cause, slavery will increase, and become more common throughout the country. Every man of any consideration in Africa, will then own a barracoon of slaves, and the individual who never aspired higher than a mixture of bones and hair, as a charm against evil; will be able to indulge in the fiendish, and far more potent spell, of a human fetish;

and, poor will be the widow, and destitute the family, which cannot afford to dispatch, at least, a single slave, after the lamented husband or father, to crack his "goora nuts," and prepare his "foofoo," in a future world.

Some years ago, it was proposed by Mr. Hume, to encourage extensive emigration from Africa, to the West Indies, as being mutually beneficial to either country; but objections were urged against the scheme by the Anti-slavery Society, on several grounds, which are thus summed up in a memorial from that body. to the Right Honourable Sir John Pakington, in August 1852.

1. Because the scheme of African emigration as proposed, extended it beyond the limits of British jurisdiction, and consequently beyond the range of efficient government control.

2. Because there existed no satisfactory evidence that the people of the Kroo country were really free.

3. Because it did not provide for the introduction of families, or at least an equal number of the sexes.

4. Because the planters, mortgagees, and merchants, for whose especial benefit it was designed, would be relieved from the charges and responsibilities attending it; whilst the colonists generally, and the emancipated classes in particular, would have to pay the heavy expenses attendant upon its prosecution.

5. Because the laws intended to regulate the labour of the African emigrants, were of an exceptional, oppressive, and coercive character.

6. Because it would introduce a purely pagan element, likely to prove seriously detrimental in its influence to the creole population.

7. Because it would afford a convenient pretext to foreign nations to recruit the labouring population of their slave colonies and territories in a similar manner, with nominally free, but really enslaved Africans.

In reply to these objections, it may be urged on behalf of the colonists—

1st. That (particularly since the establishment of a line of African steamers) there are few parts of Africa, to which resort would be had for labourers, which might not easily be brought under efficient government control; by the appointment of resident, or visiting emigration agents, acting under a code of regulations, which the Anti-Slavery Society itself might approve; and that moreover, even within the limits of British jurisdiction, there is a large population which might be induced to make the West Indies their home, if the advantages offered them, were fully explained. There are also the liberated Africans, now located at Sierra Leone, of whom the late Governor of that colony, Mr. Macdonald thus wrote to Earl Grey:—

“ I confess I never have been able clearly to comprehend the grounds upon which objection has been taken by certain parties in England to the emigration of the liberated Africans to the West Indies; for assuredly, they possess as equal a right to take their labour to any market they choose, as those do who are almost daily quitting the shores of the mother country on a similar errand.

“ I have heard it argued, as a strong ground of objection to the measure, that the liberated Africans cannot judge for themselves, and that they consequently cannot be said to emigrate voluntarily, and of their own free choice.

“ Now I shall grant (only for the sake of argument, however, for in reality it is not so) that such is the case with the newly captured African, and that he is urged to emigrate to the West Indies, without being able to discriminate as to the propriety of the step he is about to take; and I hold that the very ground advanced as an objection to his emigrating, namely, that he is incapable of deciding for himself,

is the very strongest reason which could be urged, in favour of advice being given to him on so momentous a question; one in fact, upon which entirely depends his future welfare and onward progress through life; and as from the moment of their capture by British cruisers, liberated Africans become the adopted children of Great Britain, children in the very fullest sense and meaning of the word, incapable of judging for themselves, ignorant, naturally so, as to the best course for them to adopt in the new position in life, in which they find themselves accidentally placed; utterly destitute and friendless, save in the protection extended to them by Great Britain; penniless, and very paupers, with nothing but the solitary morsel of cloth round their loins, as the sum total of their worldly wealth; and in many instances not even that with which to commence the world anew on their own resources. In such a position, free although they be, can objection, with justice, be taken to the advice which the Government might choose to give them to emigrate, in the same way that thousands are annually advised to emigrate from the United Kingdom? Surely, if it be held wise and proper to advise our fellow men at home, who *can* decide for themselves, to emigrate in order to improve their lot, it cannot be urged that in adopting a like course with liberated Africans, it is unsound in principle or unjust to them.

“I am apt to think that those who view the emigration of the liberated Africans as an objectionable measure, do so, because they possess no practical knowledge of those people. They have heard of them, but have never seen them, and know them not, and they cannot understand why they should not get on in this colony, as in the West Indies. I will briefly explain why they cannot. It is, simply, because there is no demand for their labour; and as the importation of every fresh batch of captured

Africans, if located here under existing circumstances, would be nothing more nor less than turning adrift in the colony so many paupers, to exist as they best could, and without scarcely any prospect of being anything else than paupers : which, I may ask, is the better, the more humane course to adopt towards them :—To allow them to remain free paupers here, or to advise them to emigrate to the West Indies, where they would be equally free, but, with the wide difference of having the means placed within their reach of becoming, by the exercise of their honest industry and labour, independent members of their own class of society ? Let those who object to their being required to emigrate, answer the question.

“ Were this colony as fertile as the West Indies ; was its soil as fruitful, and was agriculture pursued here as generally as it is in the West Indies, there might then be some show of reason in the objections raised to the emigration of these people ; and I might probably in a measure coincide with them, but only then to the extent of objecting to their emigrating in such numbers as would deprive this colony of the supply of labour it might require. But, where the very reverse is unfortunately the case, and where agriculture is, as it is here, totally neglected, and, consequently where the labour of these new people is not required, I cannot understand why they should not only emigrate themselves, but I will go further, and say, why they should not be required to do so by the Government.

“ If the British Government or the nation bear the whole expense, as they have done, both in sinew and money, in suppressing the slave trade, and rescuing its victims from bondage, surely they have a right to dispose of their newly acquired subjects in the way, in their opinion, most conducive to their moral and social advancement ; especially as these poor creatures do not know, nor can be supposed to know,

what is best for their own interests ; and, I feel confident that no one practically acquainted with the liberated African, will contend that he is a more useful member of society in a state of comparative or positive poverty here, and without the means of bettering his condition, than he would be in a state of comparative or positive independence in the West Indies, secured to him by the exercise of his own industry and labour there."

2nd. It might be imagined, that the very objection here raised by the Anti-Slavery Society, against emigration from the Kroo country, namely, "that the inhabitants are not really free;" would, in fact, be a powerful argument in favour of any scheme, which afforded them an opportunity of exchanging their present state of bondage, for the freedom and other advantages of a British colony.

"The Kroomen," says the society, "are under the authority of chiefs, and dare not act independently of their will. They cannot leave the country, or even ship themselves on board any vessel for a short period, without the permission or appointment of the headmen, who receive in advance from those anxious to secure their services, two months wages ; and on their return,—for that forms a necessary part of the stipulated agreement,—these head men *take their earnings* as an equivalent for the debts of the family contracted during their absence!" Quoting from the report of a Government agent, the society further states, "that the chiefs who came on board the vessel at Neffoa, told us, it would be folly on our part to attempt anchoring, as they would not permit a single man to emigrate," giving the same reasons for their hostility to emigration which had been alleged in other places, namely, "that the people they had permitted to go to Guiana a few years before had not been brought back according to promise." Hence the opposition of the chiefs to emigration,

as their subjects who had acquired wealth in Guiana had not returned to permit themselves to be plundered, "*for that forms a necessary part of the agreement, these headmen taking their earnings as an equivalent.*" The fact was, the shrewd Krooman preferred remaining in a British colony, where his money was his own, where there was no headman to take it from him, where he had purchased land and formed connexions, and lived a life of ease and independence; where, in short, "*there existed the most satisfactory evidence that he was really free.*" In 1852, when these people were called upon to accept free passages back to their native country, and to return to the tender mercies of their amiable chieftains, they all allowed their love of ease, to get the better of their sense of loyalty, and respectfully declined the excursion.

3rd. In any extended scheme of emigration from Africa, the colonists could have no possible reasons, for discouraging the introduction of a due proportion of women, and of children. With the African, as with most savage nations, women are accustomed to toil as hard, if not harder than the men; and in Guiana ample employment can be found, suitable for either sex. On this point, the West Indians, would doubtless consent to place themselves, entirely in the hands of the Society.

4th. The fourth objection refers to a question, which has been already raised in the colony, namely, whether it be just, that the cost of immigration, should be borne by the colonists in general, or only by those, who are supposed more directly to benefit by it, namely, the Proprietary body. Hitherto, through the jealousy of government, obstacles have existed to the introduction of immigrants by private individuals, at their own cost; for it is specially enacted, by the immigration laws, Ordinance 22 of 1851, sec. 4, "that unless by permission of Her Majesty's Government

previously had and obtained, no contract entered into by any employer, with any emigrant, from any part of India, or from any part of the African continent, or from the island of Madagascar, or from any other island adjacent to the coast of the African continent, and inhabited by the negro race, shall be valid, *unless the same shall have been made within this colony ;*" and it is evident, that with such a law before him, no landowner, however enterprising or wealthy, would incur the risk and expense of introducing immigrants, from any of the above places, who, on their arrival in the colony, might refuse to enter into a contract with him, and locate themselves where they pleased, leaving him without the slightest remuneration for their passages. The proprietary body, "the planter, mortgagees, and merchants," are perfectly willing, and, indeed, would consider it as a great boon, to be permitted to relieve the "colonists generally, and the emancipated classes in particular, from all share in the expenses attendant on the prosecution of immigration," were they only allowed, by means of contracts, made at the place of embarkation, to introduce labourers with the certainty of securing their services, for a term of years, at the usual wages current in the colony. Those parties,—who argue against the justice of any portion of the expense of immigration, being borne by the "colonists in general, and the emancipated classes in particular," must be reminded, that these latter classes, do not contribute to the revenues of the colony, nor consequently to the support of immigration, excepting by their consumption of such articles, as are subject to an exceedingly low import duty ; but, that even were they called upon, to bear a much larger share of the task of populating the country, neither hardship nor injustice would be inflicted upon them for *none are more deeply interested in the success of immigration, than the emancipated classes, and their descendants. As*

these retire in comparative independence, from regular labour on the sugar estates; others must be found, to supply their places; or abandonment of property must proceed, until entire districts are converted into wildernesses; wages must fall; the "colonist in general," the tradesman, the mechanic, the petty shopkeeper, and all who are dependent, on the vast sums of money, circulated by the estates, must suffer; the chapel and the village school must be closed, and the clergyman and the teacher depart; for where will you then find the means of supporting them? Let immigration cease, and the planters will be ruined, it is true; but they may still depart to happier lands, where British energy and industry will not fail them; but what would then be the condition of the "emancipated classes?" They would find few climates suitable to their race, had they even the wish, or the intelligence, to follow in the steps of the white man. Would the British nation, already grumbling at the "cost of colonies," provide and pay a government, with clergymen and teachers, for a people who gave nothing in return; or, would it abandon the colony, and permit the inhabitants to relapse into a state of barbarism? On the other hand, let a large and continued stream of immigration flow into Guiana, till her sunny shores be adequately peopled, and her teeming soil duly cultivated, then shall her emancipated classes, advance in civilization, and her colonists in general, partake of that prosperity and comfort, which are ever attendant on the outlay of capital, in return for steady industry.

5th. The Society can scarcely have seen, the modern statutes of the colony, when they take upon themselves to assert, that "the laws to regulate the labour of African emigrants, are of "an exceptional, oppressive, and coercive character."

The laws regulating labour in British Guiana, are strictly based on those, which define the duties of

master and servant in Great Britain, and by them the Creole and the African are alike guided and governed. The only "exceptional" law regarding the African emigrant, is one passed by Governor Barkly and the Court of Policy, in 1850. It is numbered No. 22, of that year, and entitled, "An Ordinance to provide for the subsistence, moral and religious instruction, and well being of liberated Africans sent to British Guiana." The preamble recites, that, "whereas, it is expedient to secure to all such Africans a suitable maintenance and support immediately on their arrival in British Guiana, and locations in such places, and with such persons, and in such manner, as may best conduce to their well-being, to their moral and religious instruction, their improvement in civilization, and to their acquirement of the means of gaining an independent subsistence." The contents of the Act, as declared by the marginal references, are,—Section 1. Africans to be divided into two classes. 2. Africans above seventeen years of age, to be indentured for one year; under seventeen years, until they are eighteen years old. 3. The Agent-General of Immigration to indenture Africans as above. 4. Designations of indentured African and employer. 5. Term of service (as above). 6. That shall constitute a renewal of contract to serve. 7. Governor may cancel indenture after conviction for ill treatment. 8. Liberated Africans sent to the colony since 4th March, 1848, not subject to provisions of this Act, if they have been in the colony one year, or have already completed their eighteenth year. 9. Penalty for removing indentured African from the colony. 10. Wages due by an employer to an indentured African, under fourteen years of age, to be paid monthly to the special justice of the district, for deposit in the savings bank, until the African to whom it belongs shall attain the age of fourteen years. And it is

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further provided, that the same rate of wages shall be paid to the immigrant, "as is paid to other labourers on the same plantation for similar services." Further, the African, during the term of his indenture, is subject to the regulations which govern all immigrants in a similar position; namely, that he shall not be located on any estate where "comfortable and sufficient accommodation, and medical attendance, according to law," have not been previously prepared for him; that, if absent from work, he shall forfeit his wages; and if guilty of misconduct, shall be punished by fine or imprisonment, on conviction before a special Justice.

These are the *only* laws which bear upon the emigrant from Africa, and, probably, few persons will find in them anything to characterize or condemn as "exceptional, oppressive, and coercive."

6th. The colonial legislature has always been most liberal in making provision for the religious instruction of all classes, and the local board of education has established evening schools for the special teaching of African immigrants wherever they are located. In place of such immigration "proving seriously detrimental in its influence to the Creole population," any one who has ever witnessed the intelligence and orderly behaviour of the liberated African, after a short residence in the colony, will readily admit that, in place of corrupting the Creole, this indolent and volatile race might take many useful lessons in steadiness, sobriety, and other virtues, from their more savage brethren. Besides, are these pagans to be permitted to remain pagans, when so ripe an opportunity offers of Christianizing them? The deadly records of our African settlements, the sad fate of every European traveller in that country, and the melancholy result of the last Niger expedition, all too plainly tell that it is not by the white man, in person, that the people of Africa are destined

to be reclaimed from their rude and savage state. The civilizers of that continent must arise from among her own sons. Acquiring the arts and the knowledge of the superior race, by a sojourn in the British colonies, they should revisit their native country before they have forgotten its language and its feelings; nay, even before they have been forgotten in their native villages, and by the friends and companions of their childhood. Such men would be received with confidence, and their teachings understood.

7th. The last objection is the weakest. Are the West India colonies to be neglected, and ultimately sacrificed, merely on account of what the world may say? Pure in her intentions, Great Britain might disregard the opinion of Spain or Brazil, and place emigration from Africa on a footing far beyond the possibility of suspicion.

It would certainly be costly; but if the nation insisted upon it, and would bear a portion of the expense, let the African, in the first instance, be carried to England, if necessary, and his freedom formally recognized. It would be merely what thousands of another race are daily doing—emigrating for their own benefit. To the African, Guiana would be all, and more than all, that the gold fields of Australia are to the starving Celt, for there he would find, not only wealth, but the novelty of freedom and the blessings of Christianity. Ere many months had passed, it may be reasonably concluded that the letters of our emigrant, could he write, would teem with glowing accounts of the splendid colony in which he was settled; and he would describe to admiring relatives left behind, the singular but agreeable custom which prevailed in his new home, of rewarding labour with shining silver, instead of with a thong of hippopotamus hide.

We will not remark on the tone, it is very much to be regretted, too often assumed by the members of

the Anti-Slavery Society whenever speaking of the West India proprietors, men their equals in humanity, in position, and in knowledge of the world; for immigration has not, as asserted by them, been the cause of driving large numbers of the emancipated classes from the estates; on the contrary, it is the cessation of these classes from labour, which has driven the proprietor to immigration. Over population, low wages, and want of work would have driven the Creoles to starvation, to misery, and to death by the wayside; but certainly not to those comfortable freeholds of their own, whither they have retired in independence.

Happier perhaps would it have been for Guiana, was her climate less genial, her fields less fertile, and her water less teeming with food; then capital might have exercised the influence which it possesses in other countries, when expended in giving employment to an industrious population, struggling for a livelihood on an impoverished soil; but here, a few years of ordinary labour raises the peasant to the rank of an owner, and places him far beyond the influence of his former employer.

Immigration is not asked for to supply the place of labourers worn out by excessive toil or an unhealthy climate; but to perform the work of those who have rapidly risen above their station, and achieved a position of ease and rude enjoyment, which is equally attainable by thousands more who may visit the colony. One thing, however, is at all events certain, that without immigration, British Guiana must ultimately be abandoned by the European.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHURCH IN GUIANA—PROGRESS AND PRESENT STATE OF EDUCATION AMONG THE LABOURING CLASSES—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—POLITICAL FEATURES—REMEDIES APPLICABLE TO THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE COLONY—CONCLUSION.

BRITISH GUIANA is divided into nineteen parishes, ten of which belong to the Church of England, and nine to the Scotch Church. Besides the cathedral and parish churches, with their several chapels of ease, there are numerous places of worship belonging to the Wesleyans, the London Missionaries, and other bodies of Dissenters, as well as a small staff of Roman Catholic priests, whose missions are chiefly confined to the immigrants from Madeira. All these denominations which choose to accept of assistance are supported by liberal annual grants from the local legislature, as the church in Guiana possesses no property, not even so much as a residence for the Bishop of the diocese.

The colonial church has been well described as essentially a missionary church, and nowhere is this term more applicable than to the church in Guiana. Those who have only seen the clergy of England in their compact parishes, with all the conveniences of intercourse, now common to civilized countries, can form but little idea of the labours of a clergyman in this colony. Most of them have extensive districts under their charge, with services to perform in places far apart, after lengthened journies in a most exhausting climate; and although their congregations cannot be exactly said to speak a different language, yet a greater part of them are not easily made to understand the simplest phrase, unless couched in their Creole patois.

But, in the patient performance of all their duties,

the clergy are set a noble example by their spiritual head, the Right Reverend William Piercy Austin, Bishop of Guiana, whose unwearied zeal permits no portion of the diocese to escape his care. Every part of the extensive parishes, the remotest negro villages, lying far beyond their boundaries, as well as the Indian settlements of the interior, are alike visited by his lordship. Dangerous and fatiguing journeys by sea in small coasting boats, and many days travel along the rivers and creeks of the wild and uncolonized parts of Guiana, with no other guide than the native Indian, and no resting place but some open hut or the shade of the forest, are undergone by the Bishop with that cheerfulness and power of endurance which may be often remarked as the peculiar attributes of a refined and highly educated mind.

“ I have visited every station,” says Dr. Austin, in a recent charge ; “ travelled by sea, river, land, about eighteen hundred miles, remaining sufficiently long in each place to enable me to obtain some knowledge of the people, and of their circumstances : personally examining the schools, holding confirmations in almost every church and chapel, and partaking of the Holy Communion with many of the congregations committed to my oversight.” And his lordship might have added,—ever foremost with sound advice and liberal pecuniary assistance, whenever a new church was to be erected, or an old one repaired ; a school to be opened, or a teacher provided ; an act of charity to be accomplished ; or a good work to be done.

Whilst the colonized parts of Guiana have naturally received the first care of the clergy, the spiritual interests of the aborigines, thinly scattered throughout her immense forests, have not been neglected. Many missions have been established for their religious instruction, and rude chapels erected with

their own hands, in some of which a portion of the Holy Scriptures is read in their native language, the gospels having been translated and published in the Arawák dialect by the Rev. Mr. Brett, the present rector of Trinity parish.

Amidst all the trials to which the colony has been subjected, it is satisfactory to reflect that the church has always received the liberal support of men of all parties ; for all have felt that upon her and upon her ministers, in a peculiar degree, depends the future of Guiana.

The progress of education (*v.* Appendix, No. 10.) perhaps forms one of the most curious pages in the history of the colony. If tradition be trusted, the proprietors of the olden time did not look with much favour on the instruction of their people, and consequently, at the commencement of the apprenticeship, in 1834, there were few of the emancipated classes who could either read or write ; but entire freedom soon followed, and then a great educational movement took place on the part of the negroes themselves. They fondly imagined that nothing more was necessary to place their children in the coveted position of the white man, than the mere mechanical acquisition of reading and writing. It soon became impossible to obtain the services of the young freed man, either about the mansion house, or in the lighter work of the plantation. Some person, perhaps only just less ignorant than themselves, was sought for by their parents, to whose charge they were rigidly committed. In order to meet this universal thirst for knowledge on the part of the peasantry, the benevolence or policy of the proprietors induced them to erect school houses on their properties, and to provide better teachers for the gratuitous instruction of both children and adults. Then, throughout the day, in the pauses of the clanging machinery, and the rude chants of the sugar boilers,

there arose from the school rooms the shrill sounds of perpetual hymns, and the loud repetitions of lessons. As evening advanced, tittering crowds of big men and buxom women pushed, and pinched, and flirted before gigantic alphabets, and gazed upon scriptural pictures displayed on the wall; even the old white headed African, leaning on his long bamboo, took his stand near the door to pick up the crumbs. But the novelty wore off, and the thing became tiresome and stupid in time, and few persevered. Some, it is true, went forth, able to read and to write correctly, who waited for their reward, and for the advantages which they thought were to follow on education; but they waited in vain; and the scholar soon found himself in a worse position than his more unlearned brother, who had long left his book, and taken to the spade. Too conceited to work, he hung about the village or estate, and picked up a precarious livelihood by being occasionally called upon to fill up cards of invitation to a dance, or to produce those singularly tortuous compositions known as "complaints," and "defences," with which every magistrate is so well acquainted. They hardly even made good servants, for the literary house boy read his master's letters to an admiring circle in the pantry, and imitated his autograph, to a turn, with chalk on the door, or, with a fork, on the polished surface of the sideboard. Though the highest honours of the colony are now, of course, equally open to all; yet here, as in other lands, other acquirements are needed, to rise in the world.

Disappointed in their laudable motives, a rapid reaction took place, and the negroes began to inquire as to the practical utility of learning, for it was very evident that they could grow their provisions, and catch their fishes, just as well without it. "*We* never learned to read and write," said they: "yet we live, and so will our children after us."

What good do they get by it?" And the answer was found in the desertion of the school houses of the estates, and their final conversion into Portuguese shops, or Coolie cottages. Here and there, however, a village school survives, supported by the colonial legislature, which, with much enduring faith, still continues to vote nearly five thousand a year for the education of the people.

In 1850, a Board or Council of Education was appointed to frame a better system, and a gentleman of high attainments selected for the office of Inspector of the schools. The more effectually to carry out his duties, Mr. Dennis visited nearly all the great educational establishments in the United Kingdom; and, on his return to the colony, reported the result of his labours, (Appendix, 10,) in a document remarkable for elaborate research and sound reasoning, in which he recommended that the system pursued by the British and Foreign School Society, or that of the Irish National Schools, should be adopted in the colony. Contrary, however, to the suggestions of their Inspector, contrary to the declared opinions of the Clergy, and members of the English and Scotch churches, and those of the Wesleyan body, contrary to the protests of their own colleagues, a bare majority of the Board proceeded to prepare a bill, in which it was enacted that "*No religious instruction should be given by any teacher in any school,*" though once a day the LORD'S PRAYER might be read, "subject to the provisions of this ordinance." It is needless to say that there is not the slightest probability of this unholy scheme ever receiving the sanction of the legislature, or being accepted as a proper plan of education for a people, the greater part of whom are ignorant of even the simplest truths of Christianity. Moreover, indifferent to instruction as the masses may be, few events have occurred in Demerara, for many years, which would

more powerfully excite them, than the attempt to levy a poll-tax, (as proposed by the bill,) for the avowed purpose of removing the Bible from the hands of their children. Already, with jealousy and suspicion the negroes significantly ask,—“Are they afraid, then, to learn us the Bible, like the slaves in America?”

It is to be hoped that the Combined Court will settle the question in a satisfactory manner, and not permit the self opinion of two or three gentlemen to stand in the way of the declared wishes of the whole community, or to retard one of the most important movements towards the permanent improvement of the colony.

Under British rule the colonial statutes contain a succession of orders in council, and local enactments, gradually ameliorating the condition of the negroes, until the great and final act of 1838 threw entirely upon their own resources, the young and the old, the strong and the weak, and left those who had hitherto been provided for, and treated as children, to the full play of their passions, ignorant alike of their rights or their duties. The progress of a people suddenly bursting into freedom, requiring to be directed and encouraged on the one hand, while checked and restrained on the other, may be traced by the laws, which followed on the emancipation. First of all ordinances were passed, providing additional churches, and schools, as well as for the maintenance of the poor, for the establishment of free hospitals and savings banks, and for defining the duties of master and servant. Then came police, prisons, and a convict settlement; with laws to compel the decent clothing of the person, and abstinence from the use of profane and obscene language.

As the peasantry acquired property, they loudly demanded a trespass act, which was given them; and

more recently, those who had embarked in joint stock purchases of estates, supicious, and disgusted at the conduct of their directors and head men, prayed the legislature for powers to divide and apportion their possessions. This, the late Attorney-General effected to their satisfaction, besides adapting many of the laws to the altered state of society. But the task is not finished, for no sooner is one head of the hydra, bred in the swamps of Guiana, cut off, than another immediately springs up; and the present Attorney-General will be called upon to frame law after law, as some new phase or feature of our ever changing community presents itself. The name of Chief-Justice Arrindell will not be known in the annals of the colony, as an able and dignified Judge alone; he will also be remembered hereafter as the founder of the Demerara Orphan Asylum, for children of all creeds and colours, and for the active and unwearied part he has taken in framing the laws when Attorney-General of the colony, which by the favour of his sovereign he now administers.

Besides the higher tribunals of civil and criminal justice, presided over by one or more of the three judges, the colony is divided into nine judicial districts, each under charge of a stipendiary magistrate, appointed and removable only by the Secretary of State for the Colonies; assisted by unpaid Justices, holding their commissions from the Governor. The laws are mildly and leniently administered, the ignorance of the great mass of the population being always taken into consideration by those in authority; and as the stipendiary magistrates also periodically visit the estates, justice may be literally said to be carried to every man's door. Courts are held in each district twice or thrice a week, upon which occasions the verandas and steps of the court house are crowded with Negroes, Coolies, and Madeirans, all in their holiday attire: some have business there,

but the greater number are spectators and friends of the litigants. One or two planters also are present, and then the magistrate drives up. The court is soon opened, and as many of all classes as can find accommodation settle themselves on benches round the room, and prepare to enter into the proceedings with considerable gusto; for no people are fonder of law than the negroes.

As a slight sketch of the political features of Guiana may be looked for in these pages, it will be sufficient to state, that the constitution still retains the traces of its Dutch origin. The legislature consists of a Governor, appointed by the Crown, who presides over the Court of Policy, composed of four Government officers, sitting *ex officio*, and five colonists, elected for three years by a "College" of seven electors, who have been chosen for life, solely to perform that single duty, by the inhabitants possessing the right of suffrage. The general legislative business of the country is carried on by the Court of Policy, but it has no power of imposing taxes; that important privilege being reserved for the "Combined Court," consisting of six representatives, directly chosen by the people for two years, who are annually summoned to "combine" in session with the Court of Policy, for the purpose of transacting the financial business of the colony. The electoral qualifications are various: the lowest being an annual income of £125, or real property of the value of £20 a year; both of which are now enjoyed by large numbers of the emancipated classes.

From this, it will be seen, that the colonists possess a constitution not altogether dissimilar from that of the mother country, with the further privilege of electing one half of their Upper House. A bill for increasing the number of members in each chamber, is at present under the consideration of Her Majesty's ministers, but the colonists, in general, seem to take

no interest in the matter ; for, in fact, there is probably no part of the British dominions, where people trouble themselves so little with politics, as in Demerara—the upper and middle classes being deeply engaged in business, which occupies all their time, and the lower orders knowing nothing whatever about the matter. The consequence is, that instead of a seat in the legislature being eagerly sought for, the person who accepts one is considered as conferring a favour on the electors ; and should bribery and corruption ever arise in the colony, it will be in the shape of a constituency buying a member in place of the opposite arrangement. In short, there is a comfortable feeling of entire confidence in the local government.

There are few more practical business-like assemblies than the Honourable the Court of Policy, or the Combined Court, the members of which, seated in well-stuffed easy chairs around a horse-shoe table, settle the affairs of the country in a quiet conversational manner, only rising to their feet when about to make a longer speech than usual, or when addressed by his Excellency, the Governor.

The only question of any political interest which has occurred for some time past, is that regarding the propriety and expediency of reducing the salaries of public officers. It is argued by one party, that as private incomes have decreased of late years, those of Her Majesty's servants should be diminished in proportion, forgetting, that while a favourable season, a rise in the market, or a lucky speculation, may restore the former, nothing can add to the fortunes of the official. In vain for him do genial showers fall, or prices "look up ;" in vain does Bessemer or Ramoz invent an apparatus, or a process, doubling the production of sugar ; or Turner increase the returns of our rum ;—he profits not by it, but plies his pen with no prospect beyond his fixed allowance. Nor can it in

any way be for the advantage of British Guiana, while a chance of returning prosperity remains, that so magnificent a province, with all its vast resources, should, for the sake of saving some four or five thousand a year, be reduced to the position of a third rate settlement, governed by an invalid major of foot, in place of an accomplished statesman, and worked by a staff of less able and efficient officials, than that which at present conducts the affairs of the colony.

Before closing these notes, it merely remains to recount, in a very few words, the remedies which have been pointed out in the preceding pages, as applicable to the present condition of British Guiana.

The simplest and most obvious and of these, first and far beyond all others, would be the establishment of a general system of mechanical drainage. From what has been said on this subject in a previous chapter, it is needless now to enlarge on the importance of such a step, as a source of permanent prosperity to the country. To enable the proprietary body to avail themselves of this costly, but invaluable mode of relief, it would be necessary to extend the provisions of the English Drainage Act to Demerara, where ample security could be found for the comparatively small loan which would be required, and in cases where the value of a single estate was considered inadequate, two or more adjoining properties might unite for the purpose of receiving the assistance of the act.

That first necessity of the planter—efficient drainage, once secured, there can scarcely be a limit to the number of immigrants, which the grateful soil would be ready to receive. Madeira, and the impoverished Western Isles, dark and benighted Africa, famine stricken India, the intolerant free states of America, and the Celestial Empire itself, might then pour in their surplus population with

a certainty of improving their own condition, as well as of enriching their employers; while a vast market would be created for British manufactures among a variety of people, too poor, in their present positions, to become customers of any consequence. It has recently been stated on good authority, that the value of imports into British Guiana in 1851 amounted to £855,410, with a population of 127,695, or above £6 10s. for each person; which, there can be no doubt, would be increased in proportion to the progress of the colony. If objections be raised to immigration, on the ground that a portion of the cost is thrown upon the emancipated classes (though such in reality is not the case), then give the proprietor permission to go where he pleases, *at his own proper cost*, in search of labourers, and to make his agreements untrammelled by the onerous restrictions which now beset him; and, let it always be remembered, that a numerous staff of local officers or agents, are appointed and paid for the express purpose of looking after the interests and comforts of these people.

As for the great panacea "Protection," which certain writers will insist that we seek, I sincerely believe that the colonists themselves would be the first to regret any mode of relief, which might have the effect of increasing the cost of their sugars in England; on the contrary, as far as they are concerned, they would willingly see the entire nation sweetening its tea at one half the present price, if such a concession was convenient to the exigencies of the British Treasury. All that they ask is, that some distinction should be drawn between the man who cultivates his land on the principle of a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, and he who does it with a gang of slaves. They pray that a differential duty be continued on the produce of countries which still encourage the slave trade; such duty to be reduced when that traffic is, in reality, stopped, and ultimately

equalized with the amounts levied on our own colonial productions, as soon as slavery itself shall have ceased, and all start fair in the race. The West Indians fear no competition; but what competition can there possibly be between the manufacturer or farmer, who summons his workmen on Saturday to receive their wages in solid dollars, and he who only throws them a few handfull of mouldy farina in return for their almost incessant toil?

An improvement in the position of our managing agriculturists, whose "indomitable spirit" has been recently publicly acknowledged, could not but also produce the most beneficial results, by still further calling forth those energies and exertions, which are now so frequently deadened by the almost humiliating uncertainty of their situations; and although it might not be desirable to disturb existing arrangements on wealthy and well paid estates, there can be little doubt that the introduction and establishment of central factories, and sugar farms, where capital and science, and practical plantership, duly encouraged by fixity of tenure, might each be developed to the fullest extent, would be one of the most important steps that could be taken for the purpose of restoring the staple productions of Guiana to their former amount.

A loan for drainage, unrestricted immigration, and a due discouragement of slave grown sugar, are remedies which rest with the mother country. One of scarcely less consequence remains for the colonists themselves to apply, namely, the elevation and improvement of the emancipated classes, which will best be attained by no longer leaving the negro to the rude instincts of his nature, but by compelling him to work out his own and his childrens advancement, by the appropriation of a small portion of his earnings to the support of his church, his school, and his hospital; by inducing him to fulfil those

duties, which every man owes to society, and by teaching him that life has other objects than the occasional performance of a few hours work in the field, or a drunken debauch in the spirit shop.

With the colonists does it rest to determine whether our rural population shall relapse into ignorance and barbarism, growing into a vast and dangerous power, which will, at no very distant day, assuredly possess itself of the entire colony; or whether, on the other hand, it shall become a sober, and settled community, knowing, and discharging the responsibilities, and obligations of civilized society; from which, in time, may arise a loyal and intelligent middle class, with the feelings and sympathies of Europeans, as well as an industrious peasantry, content to do their duty in that state of life in which it has pleased God to place them.

But to achieve all this, the colonists must give up those besetting sins, which have ever, hitherto, so seriously marred their own progress. That utter want of unanimity and concert, that intense love of self, and self alone, that wretched plea, that things will last their time, must all be set aside, for the more enlightened views, and united efforts, which everywhere, but in Demerara, distinguish and animate men having the same wants and interests, and the same ends to attain. Without this sacrifice of selfishness, utterly in vain must be any sympathy, or aid, which the people or Parliament of England can bestow on British Guiana.

We have endeavoured to give a general idea of the present position of the colony, neither describing it, as in a flourishing condition, nor yet as being on the brink of ruin; but rather, as we believe it to be, in a state of transition. And if an opinion may be formed, from the marked improvement and progress, which have taken place during the last three years, under the government of Mr. Barkly,—from the

great increase of the crops,—from the more settled and industrious habits, as well as the contented spirit of the labouring classes, both native and immigrant, and from the judicious and liberal course of legislation, there can be but little fear that if His Excellency's health be spared to carry out the enlightened and statesmanlike views which have distinguished his rule, and gained him the esteem and confidence of the community, that a Great Future exists for Guiana, and that she will yet become one of the most important and valuable dependencies of the British Crown.

Few have lived any time in the colony, and then left it for a season, without looking back with feelings of pleasure and gratitude, at the warm hearted kindness and hospitality of its inhabitants.

Even in thy desert what is like to thee?
Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
More rich than other climes fertility.

ROGERS.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX I., page 5.

Vicente Yanez Pinzon.

See "The Lives and Voyages of Early Navigators."

APPENDIX II., page 6.

Records of the Colony.

These interesting sketches of the early history of British Guiana are chiefly derived from the "Local Guides" of 1825 and 1843.

APPENDIX III., page 18.

Quantity of Rain in Guiana.

The following is the monthly fall of rain in inches, for five years, as registered at the Georgetown Observatory by Mr. Sandeman:—

	1846.	1847.	1848.	1849.	1850.
January	2.06	9.29	6.30	5.60	15.16
February	0.85	3.23	6.91	7.44	3.86
March	2.06	6.15	7.68	12.59	14.60
April	5.93	11.48	7.24	7.55	5.94
May	14.08	12.88	20.28	17.94	15.60
June	14.92	14.29	11.17	20.44	7.94
July.....	13.27	10.21	5.55	20.38	9.88
August	8.80	3.82	2.55	10.80	10.41
September	0.61	1.12	6.42	1.16	0.63
October	5.88	3.29	0.60	3.55	1.86
November	5.57	7.30	3.49	10.36	5.15
December	11.23	10.29	19.14	14.40	6.31
	85.26	93.35	97.33	132.21	97.34

APPENDIX IV., page 27.

Drainage by Steam Power.

We have availed ourselves, in investigating the subject of drainage, of "Hydraulic Tables by Nathaniel Beardmore, C.E.," &c., &c.; and the following extract from a work by G. Dempsey, C.E., may be cited here for the use of colonists, as regards the drainage of low lands, similar to those of Guiana, together with our own impressions upon this subject.

Districts lying below the level of an adjacent river, (or sea,) or so little above it, that drains of adequate capacity must have their beds below the water-line, necessarily require artificial means of discharging the drainage waters into the receiving channel or river. In the low lands of Holland this is commonly the case, and accordingly we find the Dutch were early adopters of contrivances for this purpose.

The greatest improvement, however, effected in mechanical draining, is by the employment of the steam-engine for this purpose. In the year 1820 Rennie applied one of Watt's engines to the working of a large scoop wheel for draining Bottisham Fen, near Ely. Since that time large districts have been efficiently drained by steam power, and of them we may enumerate the following:—

	Containing Acres.	Drained by	
		Engines.	Horse-power.
Deeping Fen, near Spalding Lincolnshire	25,000	2	80 and 60
Marsh West Fen, Cambridgeshire	3,600	1	40
Misserton Moss, with Everton and Graingeley Carrs	6,000	1	40
Little Port Fenn, near Ely (7½ wind-engines were employed in this district before steam was used.)	28,000	2	30 and 40
Middle Fen, Cambridgeshire	7,000	1	60
Waterbeach Level, between Ely and Cambridgeshire	5,000	1	60
Magdalen Fen, near Lynn, Norfolk	4,000	1	40
March Fen District, Cambridge	2,700	1	30
Feltwell Fen, near Brandon	2,400	1	20
Soham Mere, Cambridgeshire (Formerly a lake,—the lift is here very great.)	1,600	1	40

If the drainage from the high lands be discharged through catch-water drains, that from the low levels will consist of the

rain water only; and as this, in the fen districts on the eastern side of England, seldom exceeds the average of 26 inches the depth per annum, of which a large quantity is carried off by evaporation and absorption; two inches in depth, or one and a half cubic feet of water on every square yard of surface, is the ordinary maximum quantity to be lifted per month. Adopting the admitted standard of horse-power, viz.,—33,000 lbs. raised one foot per minute, and the weight of a cubic foot of water to equal $62\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., or 10 lbs. per gallon, a horse's power will raise 330 gallons, or 52.8 cubic feet of water, 10 feet high per minute. The total quantity to be raised per acre per month, viz.:—7,260 cubic feet may thus be raised a height of 10 feet and discharged in about two hours and ten minutes. Upon this calculation, which Mr. Glyn (a high and practical authority in these matters) has found to be supported in practice, it appears that a steam-engine of 10 horse-power will raise and throw off the drainage water due to a district of 1000 acres of fens in each month, in 232 hours, or less than 20 days, working 12 hours a day. The scoop-wheels used for raising the water resemble an undershot water-wheel, but, instead of being moved by the force of the water, they are adapted for forcing the water upward, deriving their motion from the steam-engine. The float-boards or ladle-boards are of wood, and fitted to work within a track or trough of masonry: they are usually about 5 feet long, that is they are immersed in the water to that extent, the width or horizontal dimension of them being varied according to the power of the engine, and the head of water to be provided for, from 20 inches to 5 feet. The lower end of the wheel-track communicates with the main drain, and the higher end with the river, the water of which is excluded by a pair of doors, pointing like the gates of a canal lock, and closed when the engine ceases to work. The wheels are of cast iron, and fitted in parts. The float-boards are attached to the wheel by oak starts, stepped into sockets cast in the periphery of the wheel for that purpose. The wheel is fitted with cast-iron toothed segments, working into a pinion upon the crank shaft of the engine. If the level of water in the delivering drain and in the river does not vary much, one speed for the wheel is sufficient; but if the tide rises to any great extent, it is found desirable to have two speeds of wheel work, one to be used at low water, and the more powerful combination to act against the rising tide. It is usually not necessary to raise the water more than three or four feet above the surface to be drained, and that only when the river is filled by long continued rains or floods from the uplands. If the main drains be $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, and the floats dip 5 feet below the surface of the water, 1 foot in depth will be left below them to admit the passage of weeds or other matters, and the water will yet be kept 18 inches below the surface of the land. If the wheel dips 5 feet below the drain-water level,

and the level of the water in the river is 5 feet above that in the drain, the wheel will be said to have 10 feet head and dip, and should be 28 or 30 feet in diameter. For a dip of 5 feet and head of 10 feet, that is a head and dip of 15 feet, Mr. Glyn uses wheels of 35 to 40 feet in diameter. A wheel of 40 feet diameter, and situated on the ten mile bank near Littleport, in the Isle of Ely, is driven by an engine of 80-horse power. The largest quantity of water discharged by one engine is from Deeping Fen, near Spalding. This fen comprises 25,000 acres, drained by two engines of 80 and 60-horse power. The 80-horse power engine works a wheel 28 feet diameter with float-boards $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet by 5 feet, and moving with a velocity of 6 feet per second. When the engine has its full dip, the suction of the stream is $27\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and the quantity discharged per second is 165 cubic feet, equal to more than $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons. These two engines were erected in 1825, before which time the district had been kept in a half cultivated condition, being sometimes wholly under water, by 44 windmills.

It is stated that one of Appold's centrifugal pumps, worked by a 25-horse power engine, will lift to between 2 and 3 feet in height, and discharge 101 tons of water per minute, a quantity which would cover the area of an acre of land to the depth of one inch.

Taking into account the quantity of rain which falls in Guiana, according to the preceding table, it is easy to apply to the colony the data here given: recollecting, moreover, that in Demerara it would be probably unnecessary ever to work the engines for more than 50 days throughout the year, as when the rains were moderate and the outfall unobstructed, or after a channel had been formed by the "play" of water from the engine, sufficient natural drainage could be obtained through the ordinary sluices of the estates.

In establishing a system of mechanical drainage in British Guiana, there can be no doubt that it would be much more efficiently carried out on a large and comprehensive scale, than by private individuals on their own properties. Four or five powerful engines would provide drainage and outlets for an entire parish containing twenty or more estates, as the immense quantity of water delivered by them would sweep away impediments which might resist the action of smaller engines, and form deep channels for natural drainage.

A small loan to the colony for drainage purposes, would be one of the greatest boons which Government or Parliament could bestow on British Guiana. It would restore her to more than her pristine prosperity. Taking the English Drainage Act as a basis, such a loan might be made on the security of the lands of a district or parish, and bearing interest at the rate of six and a half per cent. for twenty-two years, would be extinguished altogether in that time, by the payment of so small an annual amount.

APPENDIX V., page 35.

Statistics of a Sugar Estate.

It is the usual custom in British Guiana to calculate the crop of an estate by the "hogshead," an exceedingly vague and indefinite weight or measure, and one which varies from 14 cwt. to a ton and upwards, according to the size of the cask and the quality of the sugar; but throughout these pages the ton of 20 cwt. has been taken as a standard.

To fix any certain price, at which a ton of sugar can be produced is manifestly out of the question, as the cost must depend upon the yield of the land according to its natural fertility and skilful cultivation, including efficient drainage.

In cultivating one or one hundred acres of land, there are certain expenses which must always be the same, whether that acre produces one or two tons or only half-a-ton of sugar: for instance, the items of salaries, the maintenance of dams and drainage, the wear and tear of buildings, and the taxes which fall in the shape of repairs to public roads and bridges, are in no way affected by the extent of the crop. Nor is there much, if any difference, in the amount paid in wages for *field labour*, as it is very evident that the preparation and minor drainage of the land, the planting, and the weeding must also all cost the same, whatever the crop may turn out; the only possible increase of wages, arising from the fact that it would take a little more labour to cut down a thick than a thin stand of canes, though this is generally considered as compensated for by the fewer weedings and "supplyings," which a thick stand requires, from the manner in which the canes cover the ground and check the growth of weeds, so that up to a certain point, the planter who by skill and *good luck* (that men in 1852 should trust their fortunes to good luck!!!) in escaping the visitation of mud and sand banks, has turned out a ton and a half of sugar per acre, is at no more annual outlay than his less fortunate neighbour, whose fields have been drowned for a few weeks, and have consequently given him but half-a-ton to the same extent of land.

The agricultural labour expended in cultivating an acre of canes, yielding one ton of sugar, may be estimated at	£ 5 0
The cost of labour for manufacturing one ton of sugar	2 0
Salaries, fuel, stores, &c. per acre	4 0
	<hr/>
Total cost per acre	£11 0

Value of a ton of Muscovado sugar after paying all duties, freight, dues, &c., @ 16s. per cwt.	£16 0
Leaving a net profit per acre of	£ 5 0

The agricultural labour expended in cultivating an acre of canes, yielding two tons of sugar per acre, may be estimated as above, adding £1 for the extra cost of cutting down, or	£6 0
The cost of labour for manufacturing two tons of sugar	4 0
Salaries the same as above, allowing £1 for extra fuel, stores, &c.	5 0
Total cost per acre	<u>£15 0</u>

Value of two tons of sugar as above	£32 0
Leaving a net profit per acre of	<u>£17 0</u>

The agricultural labour expended in cultivating an acre of canes, yielding half-a-ton of sugar, may be estimated as above, viz.—	£5 0
The cost of labour for manufacturing half-a-ton of sugar	1 0
Salaries the same, allowing 10s. saved in fuel, stores.	3 10
Total cost per acre	<u>£ 9 10</u>

Value of half-a-ton of sugar as above	£8 0
Leaving a <i>loss</i> per acre of	<u>£1 10</u>

So different, however, is the cost of production on different estates, that taking two neighbouring properties, each equally fertile, and equally well supplied with money and labour, but one of which happens from artificial causes to be always well drained, while the other is subject to the usual impediments in that respect; and dividing the number of acres of canes cut on each in 1851 by the total annual expenses, the amount is found in one case to be £13. 8s. 9d., and the other £22. 14s. per acre.

The sugar cane contains in 100 parts :—

Water or juice	72 parts
Soluble matter	18 "
Woody fibre	10 "
	<u>100</u>

of which juice and soluble matter, the most perfect and powerful machinery in general use does not extract on an average more than 55 parts.

The "richness," or quantity of sugar contained in this juice, varies very much according to the season in which the cane may be cut: for instance, during a very wet season and for a short time before and after the blossoming of the plant, as much as 3,600 gallons may be required to make a ton of sugar, while at a more favourable time of the year 1,800 gallons will give the same

weight, showing the quantity of sugar contained in one gallon of juice to vary from ten ounces to one pound and a quarter, besides the amount which is lost in the process of skimming.

APPENDIX VI., page 48.

Central Manufactories.

In recommending the plan of sugar farms and central manufactories, no claim to originality is made, for as long ago as 1846 the following prospectus was issued in London:—

BRITISH WEST INDIA COMPANY.

(INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER.)

Capital £500,000, in Shares of £50 each; with power to increase the Capital to £1,000,000. The responsibility of Shareholders is limited to the amount of their subscriptions.

Directors.

WILLIAM MAXWELL ALEXANDER, Esq;
 GEORGE HENRY AMES, Esq.
 MONTAGUE GORE, Esq., M.P.
 BENJAMIN GREENE, Esq.
 HENRY HILL, Esq.
 JOHN INNES, Esq.
 HENRY MORRIS KEMSHEAD, Esq.
 COLONEL GEORGE ALEXANDER REID, M.P.
 NASSAU WILLIAM SENIOR, Esq.
 JOHN STEWART, Esq., M.P.

With power to increase the number.

Auditors.

JAMES COLQUHOUN, Esq., Agent for St. Vincent, &c.
 JAMES LEWIS, Esq.
 EDMUND NUGENT, Esq., Agent for Antigua.

Bankers.

Messrs. PRESCOTT, GROTE, CAVE, AMES, and CAVE.

Solicitors.

Messrs. JAMES, CHARLES, and HENRY FRESHFIELD.

The system which has hitherto prevailed throughout the British West India Colonies of having a separate set of works for each Sugar Estate, however small, and of having the cultivation of the cane, the manufacture of the sugar, and the distillation of the rum, all superintended by one person, is universally admitted to be both imperfect and expensive. Now that the days of Protection are numbered, all planters see the necessity of an immediate change; but each small proprietor feels his inability to effect it

without the co-operation and pecuniary support of his neighbours, which, from the position of the majority of the planters, is unattainable.

To remove the difficulties in the way of an improved system, Her Majesty's Government has incorporated by Royal Charter "The British West India Company," with such powers as will enable it to afford to the planters all the aid they can require. The Charter confers authority to establish manufactories and distilleries in any part of the British West India Colonies, to open communication, by roads or otherwise, between the plantations and manufactories; to hire, purchase, and let land for sugar cultivation, &c., &c. With such ample powers, with the large capital which the Charter allows, to be raised by the issue of shares, and with the privilege of borrowing money, it may be said with truth, that there is no limit to the good which may be effected through the instrumentality of the Company.

The arrangements will be so framed that every planter, however circumstanced, whose property can be brought within the sphere of the Company's operations, will be essentially benefited, and that without depriving the shareholders of a liberal return on the capital embarked. That great gain to the planter and a large return to the shareholder, are compatible, will be easily understood by merely adverting to their relative positions. The planter manufactures on a small scale, and so imperfectly, that he suffers a heavy loss by drainage on board ship, and in the docks after arrival in this country, the latter loss being aggravated by the payment of freight and dock dues. Whereas, the Company will manufacture on a large scale, and scientifically, by which means the quality of the sugar will be improved, and drainage entirely avoided.

Considering the numerous and great advantages of large sugar manufactories over small, and the great improvement which distillation on a large scale will render easy, it may be safely asserted that the Company would secure to itself a large profit by giving to the planter the same amount for his canes as the sugar which he could make them yield would produce to him, thereby saving him the whole expense of manufacture. For the convenience of planters who may desire to continue to consign produce to their correspondents in this country, the Company will pay for the canes either in money or produce, at the option of the planter.

Entirely relieving the planter of the manufacturing department will simplify his operations, and be an unspeakable advantage to him; under the present system he is subject to daily annoyance and expense, as well from the defects of his machinery as from the inattention or want of skill of the persons employed about the works; but when his attention is confined to agriculture, relieved from these distractions, his sole study will be how he can produce

the greatest quantity of canes at the least expense. With undivided attention and easy access to a knowledge of the agricultural improvements in this country, it cannot be doubted but that he will rapidly increase production and economise labour. It may also be fairly anticipated that land will acquire a marketable value; and there will be every inducement to enterprising young men with small capitals, from the agricultural districts of this country, to settle in the colonies.

The advantage which the planter will derive from the operations of the Company has been insisted on, because it is on his concurrence that the extent of their operations mainly depends. The advantage which the shareholders will derive may be inferred partly from the very nature of the transaction. It is like the establishment of a corn-mill in a district in which every farmer previously was forced to grind his own corn. Like the miller, the Company will turn the raw produce of the cultivator into a marketable form; and while they do this, on terms favourable to him, there must remain a margin between their actual expenses, and the sum which he will be ready to pay, returning a very large profit.

It may also be inferred, from direct experience in establishing central sugar manufactories, the British West India Company does not embark in an untried undertaking; although new to the West India Colonies, they have been established in the East Indies, and are carried on with success, and that success without railways, or many other facilities and advantages which this Company will possess.

The Directors will proceed with the greatest caution, so that no manufactory may be established without its having been ascertained, beyond doubt, that there will be sufficient employment for it on terms remunerative to the shareholders. On the establishments in the East Indies, to which a reference has already been made, profits are realized which are producing large dividends, and occasion the shares to be in demand at a very high premium.

By the Charter, no call can exceed £5 per share, and there must be an interval of at least three months between the calls.

Shareholders are at liberty to pay the full amount of their subscriptions (or any part) before calls are made, being allowed interest thereon not exceeding 5 per cent.

Calls will only be made as the Directors are enabled to enter into favourable arrangements for carrying out the objects of the Company, and no arrangement will be considered favourable but such as will secure an ample remuneration to the shareholder.

Applications for shares to be addressed "To the British West India Company," 61, Moorgate Street, London, (the temporary offices of the Company,) where any further information required will be readily afforded.

JOHN INNES, *Honorary Secretary.*

London, December, 1846.

Referring to such a scheme, the *Times* of the 23rd December, 1846, says—"We have adverted on several late occasions to the improvident union of agriculturist and manufacturer in the person of the planter. The inconvenience of this union is not simply that obvious one which is an invariable attendant of such a condition, to wit, the imperfect discharge of both employments; but it is productive also of great extravagance in the item of expenditure of labour. According to calculations which we believe to be correct, a saving of at least 40 per cent. on this head would be the immediate result of separating the agricultural and manufacturing processes; and this saving is quite independent of any increase or improvement that may be effected in the quantity or quality of the article manufactured. The manner in which it is proposed to bring about the separation is by establishing central sugar factories in each parish, to supersede the independent works now used on each estate. We are thoroughly convinced of the great advantages that may accrue from the establishment of central sugar factories under good management, but we are equally alive to the many practical difficulties that must be overcome. The colonists themselves are, we believe, almost unanimous with reference to the mere abstract proposition; but the estimate of opposing forces is very different in different minds. An examination of details would hardly be of sufficient general interest to warrant our entering into it in this place, and probably it would not be intelligible to the majority of our readers. On the general question, however, we have no doubt there is sufficient sympathy in the public at large with colonial affairs; and should it be found necessary, in order to carry the above-mentioned scheme into effect, to petition the Legislature for a loan in aid of it, we hope that the desires of the colonists will not be coldly received."

But probably a parliamentary loan would not be necessary, as a comparatively small capital would be sufficient to carry out the scheme, and might be raised among parties interested in the colony.

It will not be out of place here, to consider the details of such a plan, merely premising that it is not proposed, as stated in the *Times*, to supersede the present mode of conducting wealthy and well established estates, but rather for the purpose of proving how much may be done towards restoring the colony by a due combination of capital and skill, and also with the view of turning to profitable account, the practical knowledge of a numerous body of men who are at present only wasting their own energies and the costly labour of the colony in disheartening and imperfect attempts at producing sugar, not to mention the certainty which the plan affords of being the means of drawing forth much of that labour now dormant and lost to the country.

Estimated cost of establishing a Central Sugar Factory, capable

of making 4,000 tons of sugar per annum and rum in proportion, with 2,000 acres of land attached:—

Purchase of one or two abandoned estates, containing at least 2,000 acres of good arable land	£10,000
Draining machinery for the same—two steam engines of 50-horse power each, with pumps, cost of erection, sluices, &c.	20,000
Erection of sugar manufactory and distillery, fitted with the most improved machinery and apparatus, capable of making 15 to 20 tons of sugar per day	50,000
Residences, and workmen's cottages	5,000
Division of the land into 10 farms of 200 acres each, with tenants houses	5,000
Total	<u>£90,000</u>

Annual outlay for conducting the same:—

A resident engineer at a salary per annum of	£ 500
A resident skilled sugar boiler	500
Two assistants, each £250.	500
A skilled distiller	300
One assistant	100
A superintendent of drainage and dams	300
Labourers and workmen engaged in the manufactory, £350 per month	4,200
Labourers attending to the drainage, dams, and trenches, £50 per month	600
Coals, wood, oil, and similar stores	5,000
10 per cent. on cost of buildings, &c., (£80,000,) allowed for annual repairs thereof	8,000
Total	<u>£20,000</u>

Annual income derivable from the above:—

The average price of "vacuum pan" sugar in 1852 was 40s. per cwt., from which must be deducted duty, freight, dock dues, insurance, commissions, &c.; the whole of which may be set down as amounting to 20s. per cwt., leaving 20s. per cwt. or £20 per ton for the producer.

The net price of strong rum may be taken at 1s. 6d. per gallon. Therefore, the produce from 2,000 acres of land, at the rate of 2 tons of sugar and 150 gallons of rum per acre, would give the producers £51 per acre, or on the 2,000 acres £102,000

One half of which, belonging to the owners of the land and manufactories, would be £51,000

From which must be deducted their annual outlay as above for draining and manufacturing 20,000

Leaving *net* annual income of 33 per cent. on the capital £31,000

The tenants share would be half the produce of the land (as above stated) from 2,000 acres	£51,000
From which deduct cost of cultivation at £5 per acre	10,000
Leaving a net profit of £20 per acre per tenant, or	<u>£41,000</u>

Each tenant should be bound by his lease to replant a portion of his cane farm every year, so as at no time to have canes more than three to four years in the ground, and also to furnish a certain quantity of canes every month in the year, so as to keep the works fully employed, although it would be for the advantage of all parties to close the manufactory during the heavy rainy seasons in June and July, when the canes yield badly.

There could be no difficulty in distinguishing each tenant's sugar, as a pause of half an hour in the works would carry one tenant's juice into the boiling coppers, before another's had passed through the mill.

APPENDIX VII., pages 54 and 56.

Objections of the East India Company to the unconditional and permanent emigration of labourers from the East Indies to Guiana.

Our views of the position of the Coolies are fully borne out by the testimony of members of our own family, who have visited, and who are residing in the East Indies, and the improved condition of the Hindoo immigrants in Guiana may here be contrasted with the miseries and impositions to which they are constantly subject in their native country. A modern writer on British India states:—"That during the last sixty years the sum of one thousand millions of pounds sterling has been levied on the Hindoos in the shape of taxes, &c.;" and referring to British India, by Mill, vol. i., p. 168, is the following:—"The business of the Sudras is servile labour, and their degradation inhuman. Even their persons and labour are not free. A Brahmen may seize without hesitation the goods of his Sudra slave."

"Let not a Brahmen," says the law of Menu, "give advice to a Sudra; nor let him give spiritual counsel to such a man," &c.

The following is a list of the famines which have occurred in India since its occupation by the British. In 1766, 1770 (when half the inhabitants are said to have perished in Bengal), 1782, 1792, 1803, 1804, 1819, 1820, 1824, 1829, 1832, 1833, 1836, 1837, and 1838, threatening the whole country from Cutch to Cape Comorin.

The famine of 1837 extended over an area of 40,000 square miles, and about 20,000,000 of inhabitants, of whom, at least, half a million perished: the rivers were choked with dead bodies; the

air putrified with the stench of dead and dying beings and animals ; the jackals and vultures were seen preying on the still animated bodies of our fellow-creatures. Mothers drowned their children by night, unwilling that the morning sun should witness their famishing state ; and whole families of respectability poisoned themselves rather than beg a little rice for their support.

Deaths in Agra, from famine in 1837, were at the rate of 10,000 a month : a destruction of life which would sweep off the whole population in less than twelve months.

Letters from Lord Auckland's camp to the 20th January, 1838, announce that " the country was in a dreadful state of famine."

Delhi.—" Letters from the interior give the most horrible account of the state of the country ; starvation and misery prevail to an unexampled extent."

Cawnpore.—" These districts are in a most deplorable state. The dead lying in 'fifties' by the road side, and two establishments obliged to be formed, one to bring the corpses to the river side, and another to keep pushing the bodies into the stream."

Allahabad—" Country suffering from the severest distress : the people are starving, and flying they know not whither, in the hopes of obtaining food."—*Asiatic Journal*, May, 1838.

Sir Thomas Munro admits, " that in Malabar there were 40,000 landowners little above the rank of common cultivators, from whom we take ninety, and sometimes one hundred, per cent. of the proprietors rent, thereby annihilating one species of property—his rent as a landlord."

Major-General Briggs says:—" Under the present system it would be of no avail, even if the soil produced gold instead of grain, when the government take all the produce except what is necessary to pay the labourers."

The same officer says:—" We treat the people as if they were savages."

The Honourable Mr. Shore says in his notes:—" The British Indian Government has been practically one of the most extortionate and oppressive that ever existed in India ; one under which injustice has been, and may be, committed both by the government and by individuals (provided the latter be rich) to an almost unlimited extent, and under which redress from injury is almost unattainable."

APPENDIX VIII., page 66.

Native Population.

The Commissioners appointed in 1850, to inquire into the condition and prospects of British Guiana, report as follows:—

" Of all classes of people in this country the native Creoles are

by far the best adapted for raising the colonial staples, but an overwhelming majority of their number have wholly withdrawn from the labour market. Where whole districts present but a scene of abandoned estates, it is very easy to purchase land for a trifling consideration ; and thus numbers combining, deserted plantations are bought up, and villages quickly formed on their sites. The accounts your Commissioners have received of the demoralization going on in these negro villages is calculated to excite the deepest alarm, and rioting and debauchery seem to be but too prevalent among them. In many of the most populous villages, in the most thriving parts of the country, very significant signs of actual retrogression are plainly perceptible. Formerly the Creole had a taste for luxuries in food and dress, and would willingly work to earn the means of gratifying his desires ; but now he seems content to go about with the least amount of clothing consistent with decency, and to be satisfied with the coarsest fare.

“ Great numbers of them, up the rivers and creeks, seem to shun as much as possible all intercourse with their more civilized neighbours, and especially with the white men. Their dwellings, which are little better than savage huts, are built at a distance from the water's brink, and carefully shrouded by trees so as to exclude the observation of passing vessels. Thus they live in the bush, with scarcely a thought or a care for the moral or religious education of their children, who are growing up around them in a state of nature, and mostly stark naked.

“ Although the country districts are well supplied with churches and schools, the religious observances of the people are greatly neglected.

“ With the progressive retrogression of the African race in this, the heathen superstitions of their ancestors seem to be gaining ground, and ‘Obeah’ is practised to a much greater extent than is generally supposed. All the gentlemen connected with the landed interest, whom your Commissioners have examined, concur in representing the idle and vicious mode of life pursued by the villagers, even in the most flourishing (comparatively speaking) parts of the colony. The depredations committed by them in the neighbouring plantain walks, and cane rivers, and upon each other's lands, are almost inconceivable.”

APPENDIX IX., page 69.

Parochial Taxation.

Since the above remarks on parochial taxation were written, a Bill, embracing a plan of general education, has been prepared by two or three gentlemen, unconnected with the Colonial Govern-

ment, in which it is proposed that a *Poll-tax* should be levied on every male above 21 years of age, for the purpose of defraying the expenses of education. Now whatever mode may be adopted for levying a tax on the population in general, it is very evident that a *Poll-tax* can never succeed. Difficult of collection in any country, it would be utterly impracticable in Demerara, where a considerable portion of the labouring classes are continually in the habit of removing from estate to estate, and from parish to parish, without the slightest previous notice; and where at the sight of the collector, it would only be necessary to plunge into a field of high canes or brushwood to be completely beyond his reach; while the difficulties of levying on the "goods and chattels" of those in arrear for the tax would be equally insuperable, not only from the impossibility of correctly proving the ownership of the effects, but also from the army of police it would require to be perpetually putting up at sheriffs' sales, the wooden sofas and polished bedsteads, the china, glass, and foofoo mortars of the unfortunate defaulters.

The only feasible plan of carrying out a scheme of taxation with a view to the advancement of the emancipated classes, by compelling them to contribute to the support of institutions for their own advantage, would be by the imposition of a single fixed and uniform tax or rate, for all purposes, on houses alone.

With regard to the manner of collection, there could be little difficulty, if in all cases the landlord was made responsible for the tax or rate due by his tenant, with a power of recovering it from him. The thing would then work thus:—On the estates, the cottages belonging to which are mostly of equal comfort and value, and always occupied only by labourers working on the property, who receive their wages weekly or monthly, it would devolve on the manager, at pay-day, to deduct and retain from the wages due to the adult inmates of each house, the weekly or monthly proportion of the rate levied on such house. And there could be no fear of any abuse of this power, as, for many years past, the owners have possessed an exactly similar right of recovering from their tenants the rent of their cottages, for such days as they may have absented themselves without cause from the landlord's work; the only preliminary step being to obtain an authorization to that effect from a magistrate, to whom an immediate appeal is open, by any person feeling himself aggrieved, but which is seldom, if ever resorted to.

Taking into consideration the great object in view, we cannot consider that "a tax for all purposes," to the extent of four dollars or sixteen and eightpence a year on each house, would be at all onerous. Calculating the able adults in the rural parishes, exclusive of Hindoo and African immigrants, to amount to 50,000, occupying 25,000 houses (though the village freeholds will be found to be more densely inhabited than the estates cottages), the portion

of the tax falling on each able person of either sex would be two-pence a week, in return for which, with moderate aid from the general revenues, *every* child in the colony might receive a *free* education in a *free* school, *every* person possess a *free* seat in a place of worship, as well as *free* medical advice and assistance in sickness.

We would rather see this tax boldly imposed by the combined court, than left to local boards ; though we would also have such boards, composed of certain ex-officio members, as the rector and stipendiary justice of the district, and a number of elective members chosen by delegates from each estate and village,—to whom should be entrusted the management of the funds, and the *financial* superintendence of the parochial instructions,—subject to the supervision of the colonial authorities ; and we feel confident that in a very short time such a tax would be cheerfully and willingly paid by the people, when they saw the really important and beneficial purposes to which it was applied, and the tangible return they received for their money.

A single "tax for all purposes" would also possess the advantage of sparing the religious feelings of those denominations which depend entirely on the voluntary principle, and object to any special rates, either for the repairs of churches or the extension of education : as, by such a provision, no deeper wounds of conscience could be inflicted than those which are patiently submitted to without a murmur. Under the existing plan of taxation, whereby the monies received from the Roman Catholic Madeiran, for permission to retail rum, as well as those paid by the orthodox native churchman for his shooting license, are indiscriminately mixed with the proceeds of the registration tax on the boat and batteau of the Dissenter, to be issued in the shape of grants to any church or sect seeking support at the hands of the Government.

APPENDIX X., pages 87 and 89.

Report of the Inspector of Schools.

The reasons which led Mr. Dennis to recommend a system of religious instruction, are so beautifully and forcibly expressed in his report, that no apology will be necessary for giving a few extracts from that document.

"I was anxious, if possible, to see a system of purely secular education in operation, and to learn the results. I was desirous, on the other hand, of ascertaining, if moral and religious training could be combined with secular instruction in the daily school routine, in cases where the pupils belong to various Christian sects,

without offence to the peculiar views or prejudices of their parents.

"The former system, as regards popular education, I found to be one of mere theory. I could not learn that in any single instance in the United Kingdom a purely secular system was carried into operation in educating the children of the lower orders. I was well aware that it had long existed on an extensive scale for the education of the middle classes; but the social and domestic condition of these classes differs too widely from that of the lower orders to allow me to draw any satisfactory inference as to the results of the system, if applied to the latter.

"Deeply impressed with the importance of the question, I gave it much careful consideration, not only in its general bearings, but also in its relation to the peculiar circumstances of this colony; and I may at once state that I have arrived at the conclusion, that no popular system of education can succeed here which does not make religious and moral instruction a prominent feature. I say this, not as an advocate for committing the public education solely to the control of the clergy, still less from a desire to see it sectarianised and narrowed in comprehensiveness; but from the sincere conviction, that, without the constant inculcation of high Christian principles, it is impossible to meet the peculiar requirements of this colony; and that any system of purely secular instruction, which would make moral improvement secondary to intellectual advancement, must not only inevitably fail of its aim and purpose to elevate the condition of the labouring classes, but must prove positively detrimental to their interests, and to those of the colony at large.

"My visit to Europe has proved to me, that it is possible and not difficult to unite all sorts of Christians, even those between whom the greatest differences exist, in the great work of popular education, without omitting moral and religious training from the course. It has also convinced me, that any system which would confine such training to a certain day of the week, and which would not permit the daily and hourly inculcation of moral precepts drawn from the sacred scriptures—the sole standard, and only true fount of moral truth—would be hollow and unprofitable; and that the substitution of such a system for that which at present exists in the colony, many as are its defects, would be attended with great and manifold evils.

"Education, be it remembered, has a double object—the improvement of the individual intellectually or personally, and morally or relatively to society. The first can be attained by secular instruction alone; the second demands moral training also. Reading and writing, and arithmetic, to an uneducated mind, are as limbs to the body or sails to the ship; but they can effect, *if given alone*, nothing for good conduct. They are mechanical, not moral

elements. They can no more make a good man than a crucible can make a chemist, or a plough a ploughman.

“If religious and secular education cannot with safety be separated even in a country like England, which has for ages enjoyed the blessings of Christianity, and whose standard of morals is derived from that source, how much more indispensably necessary is the union in a land like British Guiana, where the vast mass of the population has for generations been not only not Christian, but degraded below the level of humanity, and in the lowest possible state of moral debasement. It were vain to hope in such a society that moral and religious principles, if not inculcated at school, will be enforced by home precept or example. To a child growing up amid such evil influences as surround him in this colony, where is the advantage of a mere smattering of elementary knowledge? The disease is malignant and admits of no half measures. To skim over will be of no avail. The corruption must be eradicated. Sound religious principles must be implanted, a sense of moral responsibility inculcated, and habits of industry established.

“These are the main objects to keep in view—a knowledge of his duty to God and to his neighbour is infinitely more important to the Creole than the acquirements of the rudiments of secular learning. No cultivation of his intellect can make amends for the neglect of his moral nature. Teach him to read, write, and cipher only, and he will be so puffed up with his acquirements, as to forsake the occupation of his fathers; whereas, train him at the same time in his moral duties, and he will be far more likely to remain contented with his position, and to prove a useful member of society. The only means, indeed, of putting a stop to the fearful secession of the Creole population from labour, is to shame them from their love of indolence and savagery, and to give them notions of decency, comfort, and respectability; to teach them their duty to society, and to make them feel that the highest happiness lies not in the mere gratification of their animal nature.

“But a secular system of education does not profess, it may be said, to leave the child without religious and moral instruction. It would merely separate the offices of schoolmaster and clergyman. It would set apart one day of the week expressly for religious instruction, to be imparted by the clergy of the respective Christian denominations to which the children may belong. I am far from undervaluing the instruction imparted on such occasions, but it can never take the place of the daily inculcation of moral and religious truth. As an addition to this, it is truly valuable; as a substitute, it can be of little avail. The one is certain and regular; the other uncertain and precarious. It is a matter of great doubt to my mind if such religious instruction would in general be regularly imparted. Not that I call in question for a moment the zeal of the clergy of any religious body in this colony; yet, however great their willingness and desire to give the necessary instruction on set

days, there are such serious impediments to the performance of it—in the great extent of their parishes where the clergy of the churches of England and Scotland are concerned—in the number and distance of the schools—in the badness of the roads at many seasons of the year—and in the numerous demands on their time, that it is extremely doubtful if the best intentions will enable them fully to accomplish the task. As far as it can be performed, I doubt not it will be done; but to do it completely it will require a much larger staff of clergy than is at present provided, which would entail a serious additional drain on the resources of the colony. After all, the result of such a system would be that the children would be left for five days in the week without any moral and religious instruction, while in such a corrupt state of society as here exists, more regular and frequent instruction of this kind is absolutely necessary, and could be as efficiently and much more economically imparted by lay agency. In those countries, and among those classes of society where the children receive a careful religious training from their parents, and have in their own families patterns of the highest and purest morality, the evils attending the separation of secular and religious education may be in some degree lessened; but in a land like this, where home example is too often at utter variance with the precepts of the religious teacher, how can an hour or two's instruction from a clergyman on one day in the week possibly suffice to neutralize the pernicious effect of constant bad example at home?"

From Report of GEORGE DENNIS, Esq., Inspector of Schools in British Guiana, to the Commissioners appointed to frame a system of education for that colony.

