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TWENTIETH CENTURY JAMAICA



SIR SYDNEY OLIVIER

Frontispiece

TWENTIETH CENTURY

31664

JAMAICA

*West Indies
J.*

BY

H. G. DE LISSER

Author of "In Cuba and Jamaica"

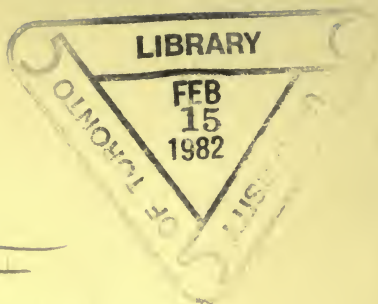
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS



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To
J. F. MILHOLLAND,
CROWN SOLICITOR FOR JAMAICA,
AND
HENRY ISAAC CLOSE BROWN,
REGISTRAR OF THE SUPREME COURT,
I DEDICATE THIS BOOK,
NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY ARE MEN OF WHOM
THEIR COUNTRY IS RIGHTLY PROUD,
BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY ARE MEN WHOM
TO KNOW WELL
IS TO THINK WELL OF HUMAN NATURE.

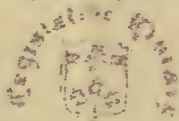


P R E F A C E

No book on Jamaica, written with intimate knowledge of the country and its people, has appeared for twenty years. Sir Sydney Olivier's *White Capital and Coloured Labour* does not pretend to treat of Jamaica only, and is in any case concerned mainly with the economic and political aspects of West Indian life. It is the best book of its kind on the subject, though now and then I have found myself obliged to disagree slightly with some of its conclusions.

Mr Archibald Colquhoun is another writer who (in *Greater America*) has surveyed the West Indian question; but he has done so from what may be called the international point of view. No abler work on the future of America in the Caribbean Sea has been issued since *Greater America* was published; but though the author devotes a couple of chapters to Cuba, on Jamaica he writes but a sentence or two.

Mr Algernon Aspinall's *The West Indies* holds the field as the most reliable and best written compendium of information on the British Caribbean Islands. These three books—Sir Sydney Olivier's, Mr Colquhoun's, and Mr Aspinall's—are invaluable to the student of West Indian affairs; but it is not so much the student as the general reader that I have had in mind when writing the chapters contained in this little work. I have aimed at giving a brief but accurate view of life in Jamaica, and at expressing a few carefully thought out



opinions on the development and future of the Jamaica people. I have not said everything that could with profit and instruction be said about Jamaica: the general reader is impatient of length, and I confess that my sympathies are with him.

To Mr C. Thornley Stewart, of Kingston, Jamaica, who designed the cover of this book, I wish to express my gratitude. The average English artist has usually failed to transfer the Jamaica light and colour to canvas: Mr Stewart has succeeded. Years of residence in Jamaica, a study of its people, and a love of its wonderful scenery have enabled him to produce pictures that are true to life and nature.

H. G. DE LISSER.

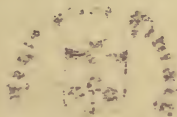
KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
October, 1912.

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Twentieth Century Jamaica

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY—JAMAICA'S FUTURE : WITH ENGLAND, CANADA, OR THE UNITED STATES

AFTER having been almost forgotten by the civilised world for wellnigh upon a century, the West Indian Islands are attracting attention once more; and it is probable that within another decade the problem of their future will present itself to the minds of the statesmen of at least three civilised countries.

During the eighteenth century they were fought for as prizes. They were esteemed for their products; the wealth to be obtained from them was thought to be incalculable; in those days they were regarded as 'the natural cockpit of the European nations in the struggle for hegemony.' All this seems strange to us now. When we speak of the Tropics, we have in mind India, Africa, the islands of the Pacific, and vast stretches of territory on the southern continent of America. The West Indies hardly occur to the memory, so insignificant they seem as compared with other lands of vast extent and of varied resources, where the days are awful with heat and the nights wonderful with the light of moon and stars. Sometimes one hears of them, hears of them in terms of poverty and distress. An earthquake, a hurricane, a volcanic eruption occurs; the world is startled, moved to pity and assistance—then forgets. What are a few islands scattered upon the bosom of the Caribbean? What are a couple

of millions of people, chiefly coloured, in the affairs of the nations of the world?

Very little perhaps ; nor is it possible that the West Indies can ever again assume the importance they once had as prizes to be fought for and possessions to be held. The reason has become historical.

By the end of the eighteenth century the British were masters of India. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw Santo Domingo, the richest of the West Indian Islands at that time, wrested by revolted slaves out of the hands of France. In the future, the attention of England was to be given more to East than to West Indian affairs, and what remained to France of her West Indian possessions was of but little account.

Spain still had Cuba and Porto Rico, and clung to them all the more desperately because, after 1810, one after another of her Spanish-American states threw off her yoke and proclaimed their independence. But Spain herself decayed as the years went on, and little was heard or thought about her colonies in the Caribbean Sea. The abolition of the slave trade, the emancipation of the slaves—these events attracted some attention. But after freedom had been proclaimed in the British islands, to be followed by freedom in all the other islands, the West Indies ceased to be thought of, ceased to be considered; and, however the people of them might rage and cry, the outside world would not be disturbed.

In the meantime, and not far from them, something had happened which was destined to have a far-reaching and determining influence upon their future. More was heard about them than about the mainland of North America at the beginning of the eighteenth century. But in the last quarter of that century a new nation came into existence on the North American continent, and in less than a hundred and fifty years it has grown to such greatness that what it thinks and says to-day must needs be considered in every

chancellory of Europe. It is the growth of the United States of America, and its aims, its ambitions, and its manifest position as paramount Power in the American Hemisphere, that have brought about a change in the condition and outlook of the West Indian Islands within late years, a change which even at this moment continues to operate, and of which the full significance and ultimate issue remain to be seen. To Europe the West Indies may be of little importance. To the United States, they are of the greatest value. A war for the possession of Cuba and Porto Rico was fought with Spain in 1898, just fifty years after President Polk had offered to purchase Cuba, and still a longer interval after John Quincy Adams had spoken of both the Spanish West Indian Islands as 'the natural appendages of the North American continent.' If one reads the opinions expressed by Jefferson, Madison, Buchanan, and others, as to the inevitable future of the Spanish dominions in the Caribbean, one cannot fail to see that many American statesmen have regarded the United States as the inevitable heir of Spain. In their opinion, it was but a matter of time when the United States should be owner of two of the four principal islands in the American Mediterranean, and who shall say that they had but two in mind?

Indeed, it is plain enough that the ablest leaders of the American people have foreseen the day when not one or two alone, but perhaps all the West Indian Islands, shall own allegiance to the Stars and Stripes. It is a matter of history that negotiations for the transference of the Danish West Indies have more than once taken place between the Governments of Denmark and America. It is a matter of certainty that some day that transference will occur. The Dutch Islands do not count for much, and in any case the Monroe Doctrine secures to America the final ownership of them, should they pass out of the hands of Holland. There is Santo Domingo, the island divided into the republics of Hayti and San Domingo, and perpetually a scene of anarchy and strife.

No one can doubt what its end will be. General Grant advised its annexation over forty years ago, and the only reason probably why the island has not formally been taken possession of is because the problem of dealing with hitherto independent coloured populations—and especially the Haytians, who fought for and won their independence—is one which no American Government is desirous of attempting to solve. It was one thing to go to war with Spain on behalf of the oppressed Cubans, as the story ran then. It would be another to take forcible possession of a country which was itself oppressed by the tyranny of slavery, and which has for a hundred years endeavoured to maintain the freedom it so valiantly won. Yet the issue is not doubtful. American capital will go to Santo Domingo¹ in even greater quantities than has hitherto been the case. It will demand protection, as it has demanded protection in Nicaragua and in the Spanish part of the island of Santo Domingo itself. Such protection can only be afforded adequately by the United States exercising a dominant influence over the Government of the Republic of Hayti; and from this to complete control the way will not be long. Thus Porto Rico, Cuba, and Santo Domingo will all be under the tutelage of the United States. They constitute three of the four large islands known as the Great Antilles. What is the fate of the fourth—Jamaica?

What is the fate of all the other islands? might well be asked at the same time. There are the French colonies, and the numerous British islands scattered about the Caribbean Sea. Both Britain and France are Great Powers. Neither of them is a Spain; in none of their Caribbean colonies is there anything like tyranny, anything that would give the United States a plausible excuse for intervention. A wanton attack upon either, for the purpose of wresting away its possessions, would bring at least two allied fleets into the Caribbean; but, as a matter of fact, there is nothing to be gained by

¹ This island is also known as Hayti and Hispaniola.

pursuing this line of argument. For if either the British or the French West Indies are ever taken by force, it will be as the result of a war which will have some other cause than a mere desire on the part of the United States for the islands. America would not engage in a war for such an object. The case of Cuba and Porto Rico was different: the enemy was weak, the prize was great. Now that the prize has been won, now that Cuba and Porto Rico are in the hands of the United States, and that Santo Domingo can at any moment be had for the taking, the United States would never think of attempting to acquire by force a few West Indian islands whose value to her is so much less because she already has the finest of the group. She will be content to wait until they themselves ask to be transferred to her, or until their present owners are willing to transfer them.

As will be seen a little further on, the United States has many weapons to her hands in dealing with the West Indies: weapons quite as effective as, though very different from, the sort she used in her struggle with Spain. Her writers and statesmen believe that she has time on her side, and some of them openly prophesy that the day is coming when she will be mistress entirely of the American Mediterranean, and of all the islands in that sea. The only solution of the West Indian problem which they perceive is for the islands to drift beneath the protecting folds of the American flag. Thus Dr L. S. Rowe, a writer who unquestionably commands respect, lays it down that 'a combination of economic and political forces, which seem almost irresistible, is driving the West Indies into the arms of the United States.'¹ Mr Brooks Adams is of the opinion that 'the Archipelago must be absorbed into the United States, or lapse into barbarism.'² I could fill a page with similar remarks by other writers, men whose views cannot be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders. But there

¹ *The United States and Porto Rico.*

² *American Commercial Supremacy.*

is no need to do that. What is of more immediate importance from the British and the British West Indian point of view is a consideration of the prospects of a closer and more profitable connection between the British West Indies and the mother-country than has existed during the last few decades.

It need hardly be stated that the problem of the West Indies is essentially an economic one. It was not so much for political freedom that the Cubans fought, as for freedom to find a market in the United States. The people of Porto Rico welcomed the Americans, not because they had been ill-used by the Spaniards, but because they believed that industrial and economic progress, and the benefits which flow from this, would be the result of their connection with the United States. Experience has proved that they were right. There can be no question that the development of Cuba and Porto Rico during the last ten years has been astonishing. The world now knows what America has done for her West Indian possessions—for Cuba is practically an American possession. We have now to ask if England can do as much for her West Indian colonies.

So far as ability to do so on England's part is concerned, there can only be one possible answer to such a question. She could, by a differential tax on foreign fruit, foreign sugar, and foreign coffee and cocoa, give such a tremendous impetus to the West Indian trade that her colonies in the Caribbean would soon be able to regard the American market, if not as negligible, at any rate as secondary. And this is what some Tariff Reformers assume that a Conservative Government will do. Only recently (August, 1912) one read in the Conservative papers that the next Government will be able to give a preference to West Indian sugar which will ensure the rapid revival of the West Indian sugar industry; and, of course, not only sugar, but the other articles of consumption mentioned just now will also come in for some assistance. Writing while a Liberal Government is still in power, though diminishing



KING STREET

in popularity, it is impossible for the writer to say that the next Government, if Conservative, will not do what a section of the British Press so confidently promise that it will do. But it is obvious that the triumph of the policy of Imperial Preference depends on many factors, and that to transform that policy into a practical programme will be the work of some time. Leaving out of count the negotiations that must take place between the mother-country and the self-governing colonies—negotiations which may have no direct bearing upon the West Indian share of the benefits of preference—we have to remember that if there is a strong Radical, Free Trade Opposition, the Government will not be able to give as large a preference to the West Indian products as it may wish to do. For instance, it has been estimated that by the abolition of the bounties formerly given by the Continental Powers on sugar exported to England, the latter country has had to pay seven millions sterling a year more for the sugar it has consumed. If we now suppose a preference given to West Indian sugar, and sugar grown elsewhere in the British dominions, we see at once that the British consumer will have to pay for his sugar, for some time at any rate, as much as or more than he pays to-day. Then if an appreciable tax is put upon foreign bananas, oranges, sugar, cocoa, and coffee, the food bill of the Britisher must rise still higher. This would be of immense benefit to the British West Indies. But how long would the average English and Scotch voter tolerate it?

It may be argued that a small tax on foreign products will not be paid by the consumer but by the producer anxious to retain the English market, even at some sacrifice of former profit. It may be so. But if the foreign producers could afford to lose part of their profit, and still keep the English market supplied with great quantities of the things exported by the West Indies, it is difficult to see where the considerable benefit to the British Caribbean colonies would be. The foreign producer would lose something. The British Treasury would

benefit by the tax laid on foreign imported goods. But the West Indies would be in much the same position as they are to-day.

Suppose, however, that the tax imposed in favour of West Indian products were paid wholly or in large part by the British consumer. In that case, if one may argue of the future in terms of the present political struggle in Great Britain, the Tariff Reform Government would not endure for long. The increased cost of living is felt in England as elsewhere to-day, though there it is not so keenly felt because there is no tax on food-stuffs—tea, coffee, cocoa, and sugar excepted. But let a heavy tax be placed on such necessities as sugar, fruit, and cocoa, and let it be paid by the ordinary working-class and middle-class man, and all the imperialistic talk in the world, all the passionate reminders of the part which the West Indies have played in the history of the Empire, would not prevent him from demanding the abolition of a system which seemed to make him pay for the enrichment of the West Indian colonies.

This, anyhow, is what West Indians have been repeatedly told by the London *Spectator* and other organs of British public opinion, and they are coming to believe what they have so often heard. So far as they can judge, the average Englishman may take pride in the Empire, but the immediate benefits of Free Trade are of more consequence and importance to him than the future of the British West Indies. It is true that the importation of raw sugar from the West Indies, though of late it has meant a larger expenditure on sugar on the part of the British consumer, has also meant a larger sale of British manufacturing machinery in the West Indies. It is also true that the sugar-refining business of the mother-country depends upon the importation of raw sugar. It is clear that the British West Indies could produce great quantities of cheap sugar if secured for some time against ruthless competition and the fear of such competition, and that the

increased price of sugar to the British consumer would be balanced by the benefits to the British manufacturing and sugar-refining industries. But, in the past, the Free Trade Englishman has displayed much satisfaction in buying sugar cheap, and so-called Free Traders are even now anxious to buy sugar made cheap by the reintroduction of the bounty system. In these circumstances it is difficult to believe that they will consent to a tax being put on certain articles of common consumption for the sake of assisting, or even of conserving, the British West Indies.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that the writer is somewhat sceptical in regard to the British West Indies being so assisted by the mother-country as to become largely independent of the United States. This remark applies especially to Jamaica, which is more dependent upon the United States than is any other British island. Now, what would happen in Jamaica if the United States should offer the colony a good reciprocity treaty?

There is nothing impossible in the suggestion. American statesmen, wishing to maintain their hold on the islands, or even on Jamaica alone, might offer something which would be a temptation too great to be resisted. The capacity of the United States for consuming the products of these colonies is far greater than that of any other country; the United States could offer to any or to all of them a degree of prosperity, a promise of success, at present beyond their hopes. They would prefer something less, so long as that meant direct continued connection with England; they would deliberately set aside riches and the foreigner's domination for comparative prosperity merely and an assured future with England. But it is the uncertainty of the future which troubles the West Indians; they can never feel sure that what is done in England to-day in regard to them will not be undone to-morrow. In these circumstances, would they reject the American offer? Would Jamaica, particularly, reject it?

yes!

Not for a moment. They might be prevented from accepting it, and that would give rise to deep-seated and openly-expressed discontent. But of themselves they would welcome it as a solution, though not the best possible solution, of their economic problem. Apart, too, from the material benefits which the West Indians know they would derive from reciprocity with America, there are other influences and beliefs which would urge them to accept her offer. The proximity of America to the islands, the extent of her markets, the amount of American capital now devoted to West Indian development, the prevailing opinion that it is America's destiny to be mistress acknowledged, as well as mistress in fact, of the Caribbean Sea, the growing belief that some day she will own most of the islands in that sea—all this is even now operating silently in the minds of the West Indians in favour of any American offer which may be made one day.

If an offer of reciprocity were rejected by the order of the mother-country, and the United States still desired to keep the British West Indies economically dependent upon her, economically at her mercy, she could simply throw her markets open to the islands, asking for no special privileges in return. Would not this make the British Caribbean possessions but 'mere adjuncts' of the United States? Few persons would hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative, yet the answer really depends upon more than the economic factor. If, for example, the West Indians, although trading with the United States, knew that if the latter ever closed her doors to them they still would find a sure place in the markets of the mother-country, they would remain as staunchly British in sentiment as they have ever been. I repeat that they would prefer less with Great Britain than more with the United States; they would take all that the latter had to give them, but their love would be with England. At a crisis, they would sacrifice the greater market of the United States for the smaller one of the United Kingdom,

for loyalty to England and pride in the British Empire are no mere words in the British West Indies. But there is, unfortunately, nothing certain about Great Britain's attitude towards the West Indies, and they are becoming tired of stagnation.

Enough has now been said to show how completely, from the economic point of view, the United States dominates the West Indian situation. Is the fact perceived and admitted in England? There can be little question that it is.

Some years ago an anonymous writer in the *Fortnightly Review* (believed to be Mr Allwyn Ireland) suggested the exchange of the British West Indies for the Phillipines. He thought that America, and America alone, could help these colonies to prosperity. More recently still (in the *Morning Post* of 3rd April, 1911) we had Mr Archibald Colquhoun saying that 'it is certain that Jamaica and other West Indian islands, in view of local, geographical, and economic conditions—and especially in view of the change which will be wrought in those conditions by the opening of the Panama Canal—must, sooner or later, decide between Canada and the United States.' Now, both Mr Ireland and Mr Colquhoun are in a position to write authoritatively on West Indian questions. They know the situation perfectly. Still more emphatic was the opinion expressed in an editorial in the South American Supplement of the London *Times*. Speaking of the expansion of the United States, this paper said (July, 1911):—'Its supremacy in the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea is to-day practically undisputed; there can be little doubt, therefore, that the islands of the West Indies and the outlying units of Spanish America will, upon the completion of the Panama Canal, gravitate in due course to amalgamation with the Great Republic of the North.'

When English writers express themselves thus plainly in regard to the West Indian future, one may take it that they do not stand alone. It is safe to say that thousands upon

thousands of educated men in England hold a similar opinion, while, of course, the mass of the people are indifferent as to what may become of countries of whose existence they have barely heard. But it will have been noticed that Mr Colquhoun points out an alternative to American absorption of the West Indies, and of Jamaica particularly. He mentions Canada. And Canada to-day is looming very large on the West Indian horizon. What will be her relations to the islands?

It is impossible to say definitely: nothing is so deceptive as political prophecy, though nothing perhaps is so fascinating. So far as the facts of the situation are concerned, they may very briefly be summarised. Canadian statesmen, after giving British West Indian sugar a preference of thirty-three and two-thirds per cent. for a number of years, decided a couple of years ago that some return should be made for this concession. At the same time it was suggested, by the Colonial Office apparently, that Canada might be able to do for the British islands what the United States had done for Cuba. With a view to bringing about closer trade relations between the Dominion and the British West Indies, therefore, a Royal Commission, with Lord Balfour of Burleigh as its chairman, visited the islands and took the evidence of their representative citizens, and shortly afterwards a reciprocity treaty was arranged. This treaty is on the basis of a twenty per cent. preference on both sides, and it has been signed by Canada and the majority of the West Indian colonies. But Grenada is not a party to it, nor the Bahamas. More important still, Jamaica refused to have anything to do with it. The Bahamas would be satisfied to be taken over entirely by Canada: reciprocity merely, they feel, will not benefit them much. Grenada prefers to run no risk of injuring her cocoa trade with the United States. Jamaica has emphatically declared that reciprocity would be of little use to her, unless the treaty were between herself alone and the Dominion. The treaty is to endure for ten years; at the end of the first three years

those colonies which have refused to become parties to it may find that they have lost the Canadian preference entirely.

Jamaica may, towards the termination of the probation period,¹ fall in line with the other colonies; but only if quite satisfied that the United States will not retaliate by putting a tax on Jamaica bananas. This the United States is not likely to do, both because it wants Jamaica fruit and because of the large amount of American capital invested in that industry. Other reasons which incline one to discountenance the fear of American retaliation is the well-known desire of the United States to cultivate friendly relations with the Dominion of Canada, and the perception by American statesmen of the fact that a ten-year reciprocity treaty between a group of West Indian islands and Canada cannot materially affect the condition of dependence which now subsists between Jamaica and the United States. The mere treaty, in fact, if accepted by Jamaica, will not alter her economic situation considerably. If Canada wants to become the dominant factor in the British West Indies she has adopted one of the slowest means of achieving her aim.

One has no need to burden one's pages with statistics to prove how small, comparatively, is the consumption of West Indian products in Canada. It is safe to say that, even allowing for the rapid growth of the Canadian population, it would be some twenty years before Canada alone could *begin* to do for the British Caribbean colonies what the United States has done for Cuba. But twenty years is rather a long time for a colony to wait in these days when development is rapid, and when discontent with local conditions grows apace in every island where the people are animated with an ambition to progress. There is little real enthusiasm in the colonies in regard to the Canadian reciprocity treaty. There is none whatever in Jamaica. An alternative proposal, a proposal to the effect that Canada should take over Jamaica

¹ About the middle of 1915.

alone, and develop that island, would meet with far more appreciation among the Jamaicans; and it is obvious that such a policy would have every promise of success. Canada may not be able to do very much for a fairly large group of islands; but she could do a great deal for Jamaica alone. She could consume a great quantity of the sugar which the island can produce; she could take a large quantity of Jamaica cigars, fruit, cocoa, and coffee. The political connection of Jamaica and Canada would, in a word, place the former in a position such as it has not occupied since the opening years of the nineteenth century. Its future would be assured.

It may be taken for granted that in Jamaica there would be no serious objection to the transference on the part of the majority, if it were seen that the banana industry would run no serious risk. That industry is, indeed, as much American as Jamaican. To ruin, or almost ruin, a huge American Trust would not be a very wise way of hurting Jamaica; besides, the loss of the American fruit market would be, in the existing circumstances, more than compensated for by the gain of the entire Canadian market. But is Canada prepared to take over Jamaica and Jamaica alone? That is the question she should decide within the next ten years. If she still holds to her present policy of being loosely connected with all the British West Indies, she may soon find that Jamaica sentiment has turned still more strongly in the direction of the United States. If she determines to wait for twenty years, she may have lost the prize.

We have still to face the question: would the United States calmly allow Jamaica to become part of the Dominion of Canada? The answer largely depends on what the United States hopes will be the future relations existing between Canada and herself.

I am one of those who do not believe that reciprocity between the Dominion and the States is a dead issue; I think it is a very live issue indeed. The growing Canadian West

wants reciprocity with America. A part of the East wants it also. The demand for closer and better trade relationships between the neighbouring countries will wax louder every year; and the United States will welcome this change in Canadian sentiment, for the United States has need of Canadian wheat. American statesmen, too, are convinced that Canada and the United States must be friends. They show no disposition at the present day to belittle Canada or place obstacles in her way. They could hardly fear that Canada would hold Jamaica against the United States at some distant day, when the Dominion had grown so strong as to become a menace to the Republic south of her. A country with ninety millions of people, a country, too, which is still growing in wealth and population, cannot possibly regard with dread a neighbour with less than eight million people, even though that neighbour may also be rapidly forging ahead. Canadians may say they look forward to the day when the Dominion will have some forty million of people; but the climatic conditions of the country cause one to doubt much if that magnificent dream of greatness will ever be realised, or realised in a hurry. But suppose it should be some day. How will the United States stand then? Emigrants still flock to her shores. She is still the land of greatest opportunity. One half of the emigrants to Canada, too, are men and women from the United States; and though they become perfectly loyal to the Dominion, though they make excellent citizens, there is no reason in the world why they should be in the least inimical to the land of their birth. They are not, as a matter of fact; and it is upon their influence that the United States depends partly for the ultimate success of her reciprocity overtures.

The relations between Canada and the United States inevitably tend to become closer and more friendly. American influence is seen and felt everywhere in Canada. American capital as well as American muscle is assisting to develop and build up the great Dominion. Consequently there does

not seem much strength in the supposition that the United States would passionately fight against the acquisition of Jamaica by Canada. Nevertheless it is a possibility that should not be altogether ignored. But the fight, if embarked upon, could not be with the carnal weapons of war. As said before, a Great Power cannot be told that it must obey an outsider. What the United States could do would be to close her markets to Jamaica products, or go further and threaten all the British West Indies with exclusion. As Canada could not adequately provide for all of them, and as Jamaica would certainly not find it to her interest to be taken into the Canadian Confederation with the rest of the British West Indies, such a policy would probably have the desired effect. It would however, be a challenge thrown in the face of the British Empire, and especially in the face of Canada. There is nothing that would lead one to believe that the United States would venture as far as that.

Great Britain might be willing enough to hand over Jamaica and her other West Indian colonies to be administered by Canada. The arrangement would be looked upon as merely a readjustment of the relationships of one part of the British Empire to another. It may be questioned, however, if the West Indies as a whole would view with contentment such an arrangement, unless they were persuaded that they would gain by the change. They would not, for a considerable time to come, even if they lost nothing in the meantime. Knowing this, Jamaica would object to going with the others; her inhabitants would almost to a man declare their preference for annexation by the United States. So far as Jamaica is concerned, it must be Jamaica and Canada alone, or Jamaica and the United States.

But would the black and coloured inhabitants of the colony hear of political connection with the United States? They would, in preference to a connection with Canada, which would bring them but little or no material benefit,

which would not place the island in a better position than it occupies at present. Annexation by the United States is not so much dreaded in Jamaica as it once was. The reason of this change is to be found in the developments which have taken place in the Caribbean during the last few years. It is known that there is a large coloured and black population in Porto Rico. It is also known that those elements of the Porto Rican people are as free as the others, are equal with white men before the law, are eligible for public positions, and are prospering financially. Jamaicans, too, are now compelled by circumstances to go to New York, Boston, and those parts of Central America where Americans are the chief employers of labour, and though they do not love the latter, they yet are able to work with them. One even hears it said in Jamaica that the conditions which exist in the Southern States between the two races could not exist in Jamaica, and the available evidence goes to show that this view is right. Intense friction between white and black prevails only where they are nearly equal numerically. In New York there are no serious race troubles, and this because the Negro element of the population is small; and where the Negro is very much in the majority the white population recognises the madness of attempting to stir up active racial hostility. For one thing, it could profit absolutely no one, and would occasion serious loss to the dominant race. The factors making for ultimate success would be on the side of the majority. A settled tropical country, where the peasants own much of the land, where the coloured section of the people are and must always be the chief labourers of the country (the white man not being able to do manual work in such a climate); a country, too, where the newspaper readers, the patrons of shops and stores, the patrons of street cars and railways, the police, and a great number of the professional men and public functionaries are members of the coloured section of the people, is a country where attempts at degrading racial discriminations must

fail. You could not have cars 'for white only' and 'coloured only.' For the white cars would not pay to run : they would travel empty most of the time. You could not have restaurants 'for white men only.' For many white men, knowing that their livelihood must in the circumstances depend upon coloured patronage, would not care to affront their customers by countenancing racial distinctions of this kind. You could not even have cars divided into white and coloured compartments. For if the coloured people refused to ride in a coloured compartment (as in Jamaica they would emphatically do) the company, whether public or private, would soon be in a bankrupt condition. The native whites of the West Indies would not care to have anything like a race war stirred up in the West Indies, and no one can seriously imagine that Americans would ever become, in any appreciable number, residents of the West Indian tropics.

But Canada is part of the British Empire, and patriotic sentiment must inevitably lead West Indians to prefer to remain within the Empire, other things being equal. Thus, while it is true that in Jamaica the talk is of the United States and not particularly of Canada, the Dominion would be preferred if the economic problem could be settled to the satisfaction of both parties.

Assuming, however, that within the next decade, or even within the next twenty years, the Dominion shows no great inclination for political connection with Jamaica, with its corollary of free trade between both countries, and premising that the desire of the United States to become possessed of an island which commands the Atlantic entrance to the Panama Canal has grown apace; taking it for granted, too, that Jamaica, impatient for progress and alarmed at precarious economic condition, looks anxiously towards incorporation in the great Northern Republic, what is likely to be Great Britain's attitude towards the severance of the ties which bind this colony to the Empire? That attitude, it is

obvious, will largely depend upon the circumstances then obtaining; it will depend upon the atmosphere of political thought in the mother-country, upon the pressure which the United States may be in a position to bring to bear upon Jamaica, and also upon the practical value which this island may have, in the opinion of British statesmen and people.

That value is at present small. But it is constantly stated that it will be considerable when the Panama Canal is opened. It is laid down in books and newspapers that the Canal will afford an additional route to British warships going east, that it will be a new way to Australia, New Zealand, to China, and the islands of the Pacific. And as coaling stations are required by fleets that travel far, it is contended that Jamaica and Trinidad will be important naval stations, that they will in the future be strongly fortified, that British battleships and cruisers will be found in their harbours, and that something of the martial glory which attached to them during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries will return once more.

This is the current view. No eminent statesman, however, seems to have consecrated it with his explicit approval. Speaking of the abandonment of St Lucia as a naval station, Mr Balfour once said in the House of Commons (11th May, 1904), that 'it is a distinct disadvantage for any harbour required as a place of repair, refitting, and refreshment, that it should be within easy reach of a hostile or potentially hostile Power.' He added that 'there are strong reasons for thinking that in so far as we required any place of coaling and refitment in those seas, both Jamaica and Trinidad would be better.' At first blush it might seem that the re-establishment of Jamaica and Trinidad as naval stations were contemplated by the late Prime Minister; but a careful study of his words only reveals the fact that he thinks those islands would be better than St Lucia for the purpose he mentions. So they would be; but it is obvious enough that if the United States became a hostile, or potentially hostile, Power, the

objection which applies to St Lucia, which lies but eighty miles from the French West Indian naval station, must apply with even more force to the island of Jamaica. For America has two naval stations in the neighbouring island of Cuba. Not a hundred miles away is Guantanamo. She will have another station at the Mole St Nicholas (to the north of Hayti) whenever she decides that she should lease or take, and fortify, that place. New York itself is not fifteen hundred miles from Kingston, and Key West is not as far. The only way in which Jamaica could be of service as a naval base is with America as a friendly Power. Almost the first blow that would be struck at Great Britain in the unfortunate event of hostilities between herself and the United States would be the taking of Jamaica.

But if the two Powers continued friendly, would not Jamaica be of value to Britain? Yes, if the Canal route were to be used as an alternative to the Suez Canal. But it would only be used as an alternative in a case of necessity. For the journey to the East, the Suez Canal is the easier and shorter route for ships sailing from English ports; only New Zealand is brought a few miles nearer to England by the Panama route. And the necessity which should force England to choose the longer route would mark a crisis which would probably prevent her sending any ships from her shores. The day the Suez Canal becomes closed to British ships, or the day it becomes dangerous for British ships to endeavour to pass through the Suez Canal, that day the world will know that England is fighting for very life.

The Suez Canal is England's natural waterway to the East. However much it may have been internationalised, the fact still remains that in the last resort it is controlled by England. As long as England remains powerful, so long will her way to the East be through the Suez Canal.

The great strategic value of Jamaica to the mother-country is not, therefore, very apparent. The Jamaica station was abandoned long ago, and though a future Conservative

Government may do something to rehabilitate it, after the opening of the Panama Canal, that effort is not likely to amount to a very great deal, and may even be nullified shortly after. The Earl of Selborne, in fact, has in a few words stated plainly the new situation that has arisen in this part of the world. 'The whole naval strategic situation,' he said, in a speech delivered on 22nd March, 1904, 'has undergone a complete revolution. . . . That revolution is the birth of the American Navy.' Never were words more true.

If, then, economically, Jamaica has not much to hope for from the mother-country, and if her value from the strategic point of view is not great, why should Great Britain obstinately refuse to allow the island to become connected with the United States of America, in the event of Canada not being willing or able to make Jamaica a part of the Dominion? There is the sentiment of Empire, some one may say. That was the ground upon which Froude rested his passionate plea for the preservation and development of the British West Indies, and since then every writer has been telling us, in a paraphrase of Froude's words, that it was in the West Indian waters that the foundations of the British Navy were laid, that the Caribbean has been the cradle of England's naval greatness, that in the epic of Empire the West Indies must hold an important place. Excellent rhetoric, no doubt; but the policy of nations is not entirely swayed by rhetoric. Practical circumstances have to be considered. And among those circumstances the economic condition of a country is of the very first importance.

To sum up the argument.

What may be called England's tropical interests lie chiefly in African and in the East to-day. America needs tropical colonies, and naturally prefers those that are at her very door. Canada also needs tropical possessions, being herself wholly within the temperate zone. America believes that, some day, the West Indian islands will own allegiance to her flag,

Now!

and she knows that already her influence over the major part of them is almost supreme. Canada vaguely hopes that some day she may be a West Indian Power; but at present she is preoccupied with her own development, and has not yet made up her mind to try to grasp the prize that may be within her reach. That prize is, for the present, not all the British West Indian islands, but one or two of them only; and unless she can decide within the next few years to take what she can properly manage, she may find that her opportunity is gone.

The United States would probably not oppose the Canadian ownership of Jamaica, even though that island lies directly in the path to the Panama Canal. She would not oppose this, because she believes that between Canada and herself there will always exist the friendliest of relationships, based upon a community of interests and a treaty of reciprocity. But if Canada fails her fortune, the wish of Jamaica to become absorbed by the United States will grow, and its indifference towards the Dominion of Canada will correspondingly increase. The transference of the island by England will in all probability be at the desire of the inhabitants, a desire created by economic circumstances. It will be peacefully, amicably, honourably arranged.

yes! 720.
yes!
'Events mock at human foresight.' Thus says Froude somewhere, and the present writer pretends to be no more than a simple student of West Indian affairs. Events may prove that he has seen the future wrongly. His own intimate wish is that it should be so. A happy, prosperous West Indies—a prosperous Jamaica directly owning allegiance to the mother-country—that is the future which he would much prefer. That is the future which all West Indians, and many Englishmen, would prefer. Still, one has to take account of existing tendencies and facts; one has to set down one's vision of the future just as one sees it. Whatever one may hope, whatever one may wish, must not be allowed to colour or distort one's view of an important situation, whatever that view may be.

a pipe dream!

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE OF JAMAICA

OVER two hundred and fifty years have elapsed since Oliver Cromwell's soldiers captured the island of Jamaica and drove the Spaniards out of it. We know that the old race of Jamaicans was exterminated, we know that for nearly a hundred years before Jamaica passed into the hands of the English there were no native Indians in it; their place had been taken by imported negro slaves, and these with their Spanish masters were the people of Jamaica at the time when the English expedition cast anchor in what is now known as Kingston Harbour. It is probable that some of the men and women whom the English found here were born in the colony; if so, they were as much natives of the country as any Jamaican of the present day; and not every one of them was forced to leave the colony. The Spaniards had to go, but it is stated as an historical fact that a few Portuguese (mainly Jews), who had lived in the island on ill terms with the Spaniards petitioned for permission to remain and were allowed to do so. Many of the Spanish slaves also escaped to the mountains, and there they formed the nucleus of the roving predatory bands of free negroes who soon came to be known as Maroons. Thus at the very beginning of the English occupation we find in the island the three elements out of which the present population was to be formed. We find the Britisher, the Jew, and the African.

Oscar Wilde observes in one of his works that American
J. C

women are as skilful at concealing their parents as English women are at concealing their past. The quip is clever whether true or not; what is true, is that a new country would very often like to forget its past, while the people of it would sometimes be glad to obliterate the memory of their parents. It is not so very long since a newly-arrived Governor-General of Australia warmly congratulated the people of that colony on having developed into so fine a nation in spite of the fact that the first colonists had been convicts. He did not remain in Australia long after that speech; the past was too recent to be pleasant to recall. But two hundred and fifty years make a considerable period; and already it is nearly eighty years since the slaves were emancipated. Consequently the present inhabitants of Jamaica should now be able to begin to look back upon their origin without the unpleasant feeling that it is not sufficiently remote to be discussed with freedom. They should be able to do this, just as a man might boast without shame to-day that one of his ancestors of the seventeenth century was the greatest murderer of his time.

It has to be admitted that the claim to being murderers could with perfect justice have been made by many of those English who succeeded the Spanish masters of Jamaica; a considerable number of them could have run through the catalogue of known crimes, and could have confessed to most of them, without any one venturing to believe that they had maligned themselves. After the island had been captured, Oliver proposed to send to it a thousand Irish girls and a large contingent of 'Scotch rogues and vagabonds.' This deportation of undesirables from 'home' served two purposes at one time; it cleared England, Ireland, and Scotland of persons whom the Protector thought had better be out of it, and it helped to people Jamaica. There were also the soldiers who had taken the island. As members of Cromwell's army, and presumably Puritans, one would have expected them to

behave with that degree of sobriety and sanctity which was supposed to characterise the godly Roundheads. But either the climate of Jamaica must have affected them detrimentally—a favourite theory with writers on the Tropics nowadays—or else they were of an ungodly disposition originally; whatever the explanation, we know that their commander, Sedgewicke, wrote that, ‘I believe they are not to be paralleled in the world a people so lazy and idle,’ and he wondered greatly that, ‘such blood should run in the veins of any born in England.’ What, then, with ‘rogues and vagabonds,’ and with a lazy and dissolute soldiery, it cannot be said the colony had much to boast of in so far as its first British settlers were concerned.

There were some others, however, who would sternly have objected to being classed in such obnoxious categories as those just mentioned. These were the people who came from the West Indian island of Nevis, men, women, and children, who, with the slaves they brought with them, numbered about sixteen hundred. After these came men from Barbados and a band of emigrants from New England, planters of substance these last, and of the Puritan variety. But Puritanism was not destined to flourish in Jamaica. The soil was not congenial and never has been. Our New England settlers might come in good numbers; but rogues and vagabonds, gentlemen known as loose livers in England, buccaneers and adventurers, and ‘others of that ilk,’ were coming too, and the charming manners and customs of these gave the tone to society. It is said that General Sedgewicke died of a complication of mental and bodily troubles, amongst them being want of ‘godly society.’ The subsequent Governors of the island were probably selected as men not likely to suffer through this sort of deprivation. All the world has heard of Morgan, the pirate who governed Jamaica. It is more than probable that he was highly appreciated by the Jamaica colonists of his day. Sir Thomas Modyford was also not above filibustering, yet he was both Governor

and Chief Justice of Jamaica. A monument to his memory in the Spanish Town Cathedral may be seen by the curious to-day; the legend upon it declares that he was 'the soule and life of all Jamaica.' It is true that some one who knew him protested that he was 'the openest atheist and most profest immoral liver in the world'; but that, clearly, was of no importance. For whom amongst the people in the country at that time could not the same thing with more or less truth have been said?

Lord Vaughan, another Governor, is described as 'one of the lewdest fellows of the age.' No doubt he was. Nearly a hundred and fifty years afterwards the same thing was suggested of Lord Balcarres, who does not even seem to have been a gentleman. In fact, the less we inquire into the lives and conduct of the Jamaica seventeenth and eighteenth century Governors the better; at the worst they were no worse than the people whom they governed. The only sort of excitement life afforded in Jamaica in those days was buccaneering, gambling, drinking, and licentiousness, and the early settlers indulged in these recreations to the full.

They ruined themselves at dice. Men were known to have gambled away their estates, then even their carriages and horses that were waiting to carry them home. Duelling was frequent; cruelty was a commonplace of existence. They feared the African slaves, and at the slightest suggestion of rebellion or gross insubordination on the part of the latter the masters applied the most terrible torments to them. Unruly slaves would be whipped until they were a mass of bloody flesh. Then salt and pepper would be rubbed into the wounds, and sometimes hot wax. Faggots would be tied to the limbs of a slave, and fire applied to them. Thus he was burnt from the extremities up to the head; burnt slowly, so that he should suffer the uttermost torture. Men who could witness such punishments, and could even inflict them with pleasure, were of necessity demoralised; consequently it is nothing

surprising to learn that many of them drank themselves to death.

Some curious statements of the early Jamaica drinking habit have been left us by Sir Hans Sloane, the Duke of Albemarle's physician, who was in the colony a little over forty years after its capture from the Spaniards. He kept a list of the people whom he attended, and of one of these he wrote : 'Dr Cooper, aged forty-five years, was a great drinker of rum punch, and told me that he had had twenty-five several violent fits of the belly-ache, with drinking that sort of liquor.' It is interesting to learn that shortly after consulting our worthy doctor, this gentleman 'fell into a strong convulsion fit, and died.' Another gentleman 'used to drink two bottles of burnt wine every night when well, in the night time, to support, as he thought, his spirits.' Sir Hans Sloane adds that, 'he had a great cough, and died.' Not many of the white men of the seventeenth and even of the eighteenth century lived to a good age; and when to drink and debauchery we add the diseases of the country, the terrible mortality among the European settlers is not to be wondered at. The gentlemen were more or less all of a type, the white artisans followed their example somewhat, but were on the whole more moderate. These formed what we may call the middle class whites of the colony, and many of them earned an excellent living. Skilled workmen were so few that it paid to be a good artisan in those days. It was these men, and those of their craft that came after them, that trained the black and coloured artisans who helped to build the splendid houses and who made the magnificent furniture, which win the admiration of most people at the present day.

There was still another class of white men from the mother-country; men who had indentured themselves to work in the colonies. They were bound to serve their masters for periods ranging from three to seven, and even ten, years; they were little better than slaves, and sometimes were treated worse.

They lived much as the slaves lived in the first fifty years of colonisation. They slept on mats in a thatched hut, they were flogged, they were forced to do menial labour. Hundreds were worked to death. It was a hard age, human life was held cheap, power was wantonly abused. These men were of a pretty desperate character themselves, being described as late as 1774 as 'the very dregs of the three kingdoms.' It was an Englishman who wrote the following description of them: 'They have commonly more vices, and much fewer good qualities, than the slaves over whom they are set in authority; the better sort of which heartily despise them, perceiving little or no difference from themselves, except in skin and blacker depravity.' One would not have liked to meet any of these gentry on a deserted Jamaica road in the year 1750 or thereabouts; but it is difficult to see what but depravity and drunkenness could be expected from white men treated as these indentured servants were, and in such a country at such a time. For even the Puritans either died from lack of 'godly society,' or else fell into line with the profligates. And the indentured labourers never made the slightest pretence to admiration for Puritanism.

Of the white women who came to the island or were born in it during the first hundred years of its history, little need be said. There were not many of them, and they had very little influence on the course of affairs. In 1673 it was computed that there were 4050 white men in the colony, and 2006 women; that is, more than two men to every woman. In all newly-colonised countries the same story of male preponderance is told; it is also safe to say that of the 9504 slaves in the island in 1673, the majority were men. For men were more useful in the fields and plantations than women, and the planters were thinking not of population but of labour. As for the slave girls, many of them did not become so much the wives of the men as the mistresses of the masters. The

offspring of such unions became known as the 'coloured' people of Jamaica.

Although there were not eight thousand white persons all told in the island in 1671, and though it would seem as if Jamaica needed as much population as it could get, the English settlers desired to expel the handful of Jews who were then resident in the colony. The Jews were traders mainly, and were looked upon with appreciation by the Governors. They were the only persons with business enterprise, and it was the opinion of Sir Thomas Lynch that the king could have no more 'profitable subjects than they and the Hollanders.' But the local merchants were jealous. They insisted that the Jews should go. There were, however, only sixteen Jews at that time without letters of naturalisation, the majority having become subjects of the English king and recognised denizens of the colony. Naturally, therefore, the petition of the merchants was treated with scant ceremony; even though it was probably at this time that the English colonists fell back most strongly upon religion as an excellent support in their argument against the Jews. The Jews ought to go, they said, for 'they are the descendants from the crucifiers of the blessed Jesus!' Piety could go no further. Considering the character of the petitioners, the Jews might with as much unction have argued that their rivals were the heirs (morally at any rate) of the crucified impenitent thief. No doubt the king was of this opinion, for he must have known something of the doings and disposition of his worthy subjects beyond the seas. As for myself, I can never read those words about the 'blessed Jesus' without being filled with admiration for the influence of early training in the home and Sunday School. It seems that a man may be a thief, murderer, slave-holder, adulterer, and pirate, and yet consider himself to have the right to appeal to the Christian religion when his supposed interests are at stake. Fancy our Jamaica gentlemen of the seventeenth century

being filled with pious compassion for the 'blessed Jesus!'

The Jews remained and prospered exceedingly, and steadily the prejudice against them broke down. Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen came over the water and settled in the island; the majority died after a brief sojourn, a few made fortunes and returned home, others lived all their lives in Jamaica and left families behind them. Slaves were imported in large numbers, for the natural increase was small. Many of them were literally worked to death, and it can probably be said with perfect truth that the present-day descendants of the earlier inhabitants of English Jamaica are not very many. For the first hundred years or so the population had constantly to be recruited from the outside. The deaths always exceeded, and greatly exceeded, the births. The Jews, being far more temperate than the Christians, endured the climate well, and steadily increased. The coloured or mixed-blood population, too, grew steadily. But these latter only began to form an appreciable element of the population after a century had passed since the coming of the Englishman to the island. In 1775 the free coloured people numbered 4093.

The cessation of the slave trade in 1808 may accurately be said to mark the beginning of a new and most important epoch in the history of Jamaica; it marked the dawn of an era during which the population would increase according to the fertility of the people, the capacity of the country to support them, and the general improvement of social and sanitary conditions. It did more than that too. It heralded the time when slavery would become as much a thing of the past as the slave trade itself; every far-seeing man perceived when the slave trade was denounced that emancipation was certain to follow. Roughly speaking, from about 1770 to 1820—a period of fifty years—Jamaica reached the height of her prosperity. It was during that period that the greatest fortunes

were made, the finest mansions erected, that the largest number of white men came to the country, and the highest prices were obtained for its products. In 1791, for example, we find that the population numbered 291,400 souls of all classes and complexions. Thirty thousand of these were white. At no previous or subsequent counting has the number of the white inhabitants ever stood so high; yet it is clear enough from the always comparatively small number of native and British whites that the Englishman never intended to make Jamaica a permanent home, differing in this from the Colonial Spaniard who settled in the Tropics with no thought of returning to Spain. Many of those thirty thousand whites must either have gone back to England or have died without leaving pure-blooded issue; both explanations, in fact, are true. Thus, forty-three years after the figures just quoted were obtained, it was found that there were but fifteen thousand whites in the colony, while the free coloured (or mixed-blood people), who had numbered less than ten thousand in 1791, had increased to forty thousand by 1834.

At the time of the Emancipation there were, of course, many persons in the island who were born in Africa, and many among the white people who could claim the United Kingdom as their birthplace. What was the number of the native population, white, coloured, and black, we have no means of knowing; but from 1834 onwards, the population rapidly became almost purely native; the Africans have died out since, and but few British immigrants have come to Jamaica. Hence the Jamaica people of to-day are almost entirely natives, the official census of 1911 showing that of the 831,000 persons in the island on the night of 2nd April, 1911, fully 812,500 were born in the country. Add to this number the fifty thousand or so Jamaicans who are now to be found in Central and South America (a large proportion of whom may return), and you have a population of natives who, born in the island, and brought up in it, constitute not only the people of the present,

but will be almost entirely the parents of the Jamaicans to come.

For the population of Jamaica will not to any appreciable extent be augmented from without in the future. Asiatic immigration has taken place, and to-day there are over seventeen thousand East Indians in Jamaica. But these represent only half the number that have been introduced from India since 1845, and ten thousand of them were born in Jamaica. The rest have either died or returned to their native land. The uses to which these coolies can be put are limited, and no one can believe that they will ever become a considerable element in the island's population. Over two thousand one hundred Chinese were counted in April, 1911, and since then some more have arrived. But they, too, will not bulk large in the numbering of the people at any future time. For they are entirely shopkeepers, and the field for them is limited; there are nearly six men to one woman, too, with the result that, however slowly, the Chinese will be absorbed by the native population. To some extent this absorption has already begun. Half Chinese people are not unknown in Jamaica.

The Syrians and the odds and ends of foreign peoples whom we find residing in the colony may be left out of consideration; they are not sufficiently numerous to modify the development which the people of Jamaica seem destined to undergo. What is that development? I glance at the statistics of 1834 once more, and I see from those figures that the population at that time was divided as follows:—

Slaves	..	..	..	..	311,070
Free Blacks	..	..	..	..	5,000
Coloured	..	..	..	..	40,000
White	..	..	..	..	15,000

371,070

I take it that there were some persons of mixed blood among the slaves. How many, it is impossible to determine just now, for the manumission of the coloured element of the people had begun a hundred years before the Emancipation, the white parents not only making their offspring free, but often leaving them a considerable amount of property. For practical purposes it may be said that in 1834 there were three hundred thousand black, fifty-six thousand coloured, and fifteen thousand white people in Jamaica. What are the relative numbers to-day?

I take the figures from the census :—

White	..	..	..	..	15,605
Coloured	..	..	..	..	163,201
Black ..	..	..	..	..	630,181
East Indian	..	..	..	..	17,380
Chinese	..	..	..	..	2,111
Not Specified	..	..	..	..	2,905
					<hr/>
					831,383

Commenting on these figures the editor of the census points out that 'the number of coloured people has increased in a greater proportion, and the number of black people in a slightly less proportion, than the total increase of the people.' As a matter of fact, the number of 'coloured' people in the country is far larger than the figures of the census indicate.

A 'coloured' man in the British West Indies is one who has both white and black blood in his veins to any appreciable degree. There are in these islands people who have a strain of African blood but who write themselves down in the census as white, and are considered such; there are any number of black people who also have a strain of white blood but who count themselves or are counted as black. But there is also a considerable element of the Jamaica population which is

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known as 'sambo,' an element with about one-fourth or one-fifth of white blood; this Caucasian or Semitic mixture shows itself plainly in their colour or their features, and they should, strictly speaking, be classified as 'coloured.' But very few members of this section of the people have so classified themselves in the census. I instituted an inquiry which embraced a very large number of persons, immediately after the census was published. I found that almost every person I could reach, who had at least one-fifth of white blood in his or her veins, had been set down in the census as black, the term coloured having by custom come to be applied to persons of a distinctly brown or clear complexion.

The fact is interesting. For it shows that the number of mixed-blood people in the colony is larger than the census states, very much larger; it shows that race mixture has been going on more extensively than many students have believed.

The probabilities are that a large proportion of the people are still pure-blooded. But I should not hesitate to say that at least three hundred thousand, or over one-third, of the present population are of mixed blood, however slightly; and if any one should now assert that the proportion is greater, I should not be inclined to contradict him. The old theory was that the coloured section of the West Indians could not reproduce its kind except by mating with pure white or pure black. That theory (never accepted by any scientist of repute) has now gone by the board. But the coloured people of Jamaica have not only increased by intermarriage among themselves, but by intermarriage among the whites and the blacks, and also by the intermarriage of the whites and the blacks. The inevitable result has been their rapid multiplication; they are increasing faster than any other element of the population. Will they continue to do so? I expressed some doubts on this point in a former publication;¹ I there wrote that it was to the pure-blooded Negro and not to the mixed-blood people that

¹ *In Cuba and Jamaica, 1909.*

the future of the island belonged; I did not then realise sufficiently that persons whom at first blush one might term black might really be of mixed descent. That the vast majority of the people will always be dark is indisputable; there are economic as well as other reasons for this. But that they will always be pure-blooded is an assertion open to some question. The time may even come when, in the towns, there will be hardly one person of pure African descent.

We turn now to the white population of the colony. Of the 15,605 persons classified as white, we may depend upon it that a fair number were, strictly speaking, coloured. It is the same in Cuba, Porto Rico, Mexico, and even in the United States itself; wherever there are two races we may count upon race mixture, and in the veins of members of the white population will run the blood of the darker race. There were also a number of persons who were merely here on a visit; at the lowest computation these amounted to five hundred. The men of the British Army and Navy totalled up to 1076 and 538 respectively; if we say that the white soldiers and officers are residents, we are still obliged to count the navy men as visitors. Without elaborately going into the figures, it can be stated without fear of contradiction that, including the army men, not more than fourteen thousand of the number classified as the white population of the island were permanent residents. At least sixteen hundred were transients. If, then, we compare the resident white population of the present day with the number it stood at in 1834, it will be seen that it has decreased. If we compare it with what it was twenty years ago, it will be found to have decreased. Emigration among this element of the people has been steadily going on during the last two decades. Inter-marriage is also another explanation of this decrease of the white population and the considerable increase of the coloured.

Take the Jews of Jamaica, people who have been colonists

for two hundred and fifty years, and who have been identified with every phase of the island's fortunes. One reads with surprise that in 1881 they numbered 2535, and that in 1911 their number stood at 1487 only. That a large number of Jews have married Christians during the last twenty years is indisputable, and the process of amalgamation continues still. But in spite of that we should confidently have expected that by 1911 the Jews would have numbered over 3000 souls, whereas we find that they are less than half that number. This means that many have gone to the United States of America, and indeed it is to that country that many other Jamaicans have emigrated in the last two decades, and especially since the beginning of the nineteenth century. There are greater opportunities in any of the States than in Jamaica; and, besides, the increasing competition of the darker people is driving the fairer people of Jamaica to seek a livelihood in other lands.

It was bound to be so. Over a hundred and thirty years ago a Jamaica historian argued strongly in favour of the training of coloured artisans, his point being that they would force the white artisan to charge less for his labour. He did not conceive it possible that the new men could drive the old out of the field of employment altogether, for, of course, he could not foresee the Jamaica of the twentieth century. But this has not only happened; but, in his turn, the coloured or brown man has been driven to a certain extent out of the ranks of the artisan by the darker man, who has shown himself quite as capable of learning to use the tools of the skilled worker as any other man.

The inevitable effect of education must be to give the poorer or weaker classes of the population a chance to compete with the wealthier or dominant section; the inevitable effect of the spread of democratic ideas is an increasing unwillingness to restrict any sphere of occupation to one class of the people only. Then there is the economic factor to take into consideration.

Whatever sentiment or prejudice may prompt, men will strive to get their work done at the cheapest rates, and, in a colony like Jamaica, will naturally come to think less and less about race and colour as time goes on. Competence and cost will affect the question of employment far more than complexion and class; avenues to a decent livelihood once closed to dark men and women are opening to-day, and the effect of this will be seen in the population of to-morrow.

Now though, owing to a continued mixture of blood, the time may arrive when very few of the people will not have a white strain in their veins, I do not see how the majority of the population can ever become fair, or even brown. For the inhabitants of pure African descent have always outnumbered, and vastly outnumbered, the colonists of pure British descent, and the black population increases steadily. So does the coloured, but the white does not. It may in the future. There may some day be as many as twenty thousand white men and women in the island. But by that time there will also be over a million native Jamaicans, most of them dark and black; the white men, too, will probably come as temporary exploiters and not as permanent residents. What is possible is that race admixture will continue until there is something like uniformity of complexion in the Jamaica population; if that should ever be the case, the future average Jamaican should be a dark person showing distinct indications of a white strain. What is known in the West Indies as clear 'sambo' should be the average colour, and there would also be thousands of persons of lighter hue.

Every conceivable shade and gradation of colour may be found in Jamaica to-day, and the mixture of blood has taken place in such varying degrees that the old classifications have to some extent become obsolete. The Spaniards it was who, in the West Indies and in Spanish America, first established these categories of colour. The offspring of white and black they called mulatto; of mulatto and white, quadroon; of

quadroon and white, mustee; and so on. The offspring of mulatto and black was termed sambo; and the children of a sambo and a black were usually considered as black, and are so to-day in Jamaica, the complexion not clearly showing the result of race mixture. But the features almost invariably do; and no experienced observer but must be struck in these days by the difference between the features of thousands of presumably pure-blooded Jamaica peasants and the features of African Negroes. The prognathous face is gradually disappearing in this West Indian colony; the features are becoming refined. This, of course, is not merely the effect of race mixture. To some extent it is also the consequence of civilisation, and possibly of climatic influence. Educated men and women of undiluted African blood differ much in appearance and features from the common people; it can scarcely be doubted, indeed, that physical and mental influences are playing their part in modifying the old racial stocks and creating new types in Jamaica.

Whether a uniform type of individual will eventually be produced in this island or not cannot be dealt with in this chapter. What can be maintained at this point is that the Jamaican of any colour is not precisely like any other man; he is a Jamaican, and has characteristics that are common more or less to all his fellow countrymen. One is not born and brought up in a country for nothing. One does not read the same papers that all one's fellows read, hear much the same sort of talk all the year round, come into close contact with all other classes of the people, eat the same food, and enjoy the same recreations, without one's mind becoming assimilated to the minds of one's countrymen. The Jamaican whose parents were English or French is Jamaican in his habits and customs, in his speech and ideas. He is not an Englishman, he is not a Frenchman,—he will be that only if he has been entirely brought up out of the colony. His accent and manner proclaim him at once for what he is, as well as his way of looking



A HOLIDAY CROWD AT WATER FRONT, KINGSTON



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, KINGSTON

upon life. He is easy-going, drawls a little, is often vehement in expression, but a kindly man at heart. He takes life as it comes, grumbling; but in his grumble one may detect an undertone of contentment so long as fate is not unduly unkind. To describe him as a brute or an oppressor would be laughable; he is more given to condoning offences than to punishing them. He may be condemned on the score of his easy acceptance of the prevailing loose moral and social conditions; but those conditions do not startle him in the least, for he was born in the country and is used to them; not being a hypocrite as a rule, he does not cry out against them.

If you take the Jews of Jamaica it will be found that they too are distinctively Jamaican, thinking, acting, and living precisely as do the other people of their respective classes. Thus the Jewish planter is like any other planter of his standing in the community; he thinks as they do in terms of sugar, bananas, and rum, is a great hater of Free Trade, is satisfied that the island has been steadily going backwards, is like all his class inclined to be extravagant, and is patriotic after his planter fashion. For two hundred and fifty years, as said before, have the Jews been in Jamaica. By the middle of the eighteenth century they had won to wealth and importance; a century ago they were entertaining the Governors of the colony. For over a hundred years they have been amongst the most public-spirited of Jamaicans, have filled the highest political positions, have served the country in every capacity. The consequence is that though the number of Jews in Jamaica to-day is smaller than it was some thirty years ago, yet Jewish influence is everywhere perceivable in the colony, and Jamaicans of all classes are proud of every Jamaica Jew who distinguishes himself either in the island or abroad. There is no separate Jewish class in Jamaica; there are many classes of Jews. These associate with Christians according to class and not according to race; race indeed has less and less to do with Jewish enterprise and social intercourse every day.

Jews and Christians work side by side and compete side by side against other combinations of Jews and Christians; the truth is that an appeal to race would not meet with any hearty response either amongst the Jews or the Christians of Jamaica. There is not a Jew in Jamaica who is a native who has not Christian relatives or connections. There is nearly as much Semitic as European blood flowing in the veins of the coloured population. Intermarriage may still further lessen the numbers of the Jamaica Jew, as it is already threatening to lessen the numbers of the English Jew; yet the Jewish contribution to Jamaica civilisation is permanent, and it is impossible to forget that some of the ablest business men and politicians of the colony have been, if not always pure Jews, at any rate men of Jewish descent.

The coloured or mixed-blood people of the country, ranging from dark to fair, are also divided into classes; they take their place with the other members of the population according to their class. Thus some are simply peasants or domestics. And as such, they are of an inferior status to people of purely African parentage but of a superior class. Not that colour discriminations are unknown in Jamaica, or that it is no advantage to be clear-complexioned; unquestionably it is an advantage, and must of necessity be so in a country like Jamaica at the present stage of its evolution. But property, personal worth, education,—these count for much also, and they will often outweigh and do outweigh the mere advantage of colour. As for the higher classes of the coloured people, they mix with the higher classes of the white residents of the country on terms of social equality; and what may be called the middle classes of the Jamaica coloured population, mix with the white middle-class people also according to their social status and financial position.

As the coloured section of the people has grown with remarkable rapidity during the last hundred years, and as it is certain to become larger during the course of the present

century; as some persons have even gone so far as to think that the time may come when there will be few or no purely black people in Jamaica, it may serve a useful purpose to hear what a competent student of West Indian racial and social conditions has to say on this section of the Jamaica people. I quote from Sir Sydney Olivier's *White Capital and Coloured Labour*. 'I am convinced,' he writes, 'that this class as it at present exists is a valuable and indispensable part of any West Indian community, and that a colony of black, coloured, and whites has far more organic efficiency and far more promise in it than a colony of white and black. A community of white and black alone is in far greater danger of remaining, in so far as the official classes are concerned, a community of serfs, concessionaires, and tributaries, with, at best, a bureaucracy to keep the peace between them.' In other words, the presence of a large number of coloured people, ranging from dark to fair, helps to weld the community together into something like an organic whole, and even gives promise of a fair degree of homogeneity in the future.

Now I have suggested above that there is such a thing as a Jamaican as distinct from an African or Englishman, or even from a Trinidadian. I have tried to show, however briefly, that there is a way of living and thinking common to all Jamaicans of the same class, without any particular distinction of religion or race. Here, then, we have a most important social and intellectual factor in the development of organic unity; and the coloured section of the population, forming as it does both a ladder and a link between the white and the black sections, constitutes a racial and political factor without which anything approximating to effective solidarity would be out of the question.

As for the mass of the island's population, those categorised as black, even though mixed-blooded in a certain degree, form the bulk of the agricultural workers, the peasant-proprietors, and the artisans. They are 'the people,' and they

number three-fourths of the population. What is their attitude towards the other sections of the Jamaica population?

Their attitude is a friendly one for the most part; it is an attitude of peace and goodwill. Between all the several sections of the Jamaica people there is a certain amount of jealousy, and this jealousy is often expressed in terms of colour. There is also, as is inevitable in every country, a good many individual dislikes and perhaps hatreds, and often these are also expressed in terms of colour. A quarrel between a black and a coloured man may sometimes take the form of references to the colour of each; but this becomes rarer every day, and the old saying that the black man had no love for the brown, but heartily disliked him, is decidedly not true to-day. The black man does not dislike the brown man as such. He does not dislike the white man. White and brown again, in spite of the occasionally harsh language indulged in by individuals amongst them when alluding to the bulk of the Jamaica people, do not really dislike the black man, and are by no means desirous of seeing him kept down and oppressed. Anything like ill-treatment of an individual black man by a white or coloured man at once raises a storm of protest, not merely from black men, but equally from white and coloured men. Even the complaints of criminals in the Penitentiary find a hearing among the white and coloured sections of the community; conversely, the black voter, who is in the majority, has no sort of hesitation in sending white and coloured men to the Legislative Council and to the Parochial Boards to represent him. An appeal for his support on the score of colour would not move him much; such an appeal has been frequently made by demagogues, but so often has it failed that it is not now considered a good political card.

It is rather difficult to say in what proportion the peasantry and working classes stand to the middle classes, and the latter to the highest class. I have already pointed out that colour alone does not determine class in Jamaica, though it may have

much to do with it. Among the artisans, peasantry, and working classes we must count at least one hundred thousand of those persons who are specified in the census as of mixed blood; while a good many of the white inhabitants belong to the middle class, and a few to the working class sections of the people. Even the classification of the population according to occupations is no absolute guide. There are 9211 professional persons in Jamaica. These would include the highest officials, the elementary school teachers, as well as doctors, lawyers, parsons, and many others who would be recognised as professional men in other countries, as well as some who would not be. One thing is certain, there is much difference in the social status of the professional man who earns a thousand pounds a year and the man who is passing poor upon fifty. The people occupied with commerce, too, range from those who are shop assistants to those who make between three and four thousand pounds a year; and of the 19,754 persons engaged in commercial pursuits and undertakings in Jamaica, the number earning over three hundred a year is decidedly in the minority. In agriculture, again, we find that the heads, the bigger men, are few; so taking men, women, and children together, if we put the highest classes of the country—the classes with an income or salary of six hundred a year and upwards—at about ten thousand souls, our estimate may not be far out. It should hardly be necessary to add that this money category is a very imperfect one, since there are people with money who are considered as not of the best class in the social hierarchy of the colony, while there are others who, though comparatively poor, are recognised as the social equals of the wealthiest.

The middle classes, split into a number of smaller classes, might number about eighty thousand. This leaves us with seven hundred and thirty-one thousand persons who are peasants, peasant-proprietors, and working people; and of the total population of Jamaica the vast majority live outside of the towns. The chief towns of the island total up to fourteen, but

these fourteen contain, in round figures, but 120,000 people, which leaves the inhabitants of the country districts at 711,000. The country gentlemen live on their plantations and estates, visiting the city and the neighbouring towns often, going on frequent visits to England and the United States, but still identifying themselves with parochial matters, being members of boards, justices of the peace, and so forth. Their homes and their influence stand for civilisation in many a backward district. The peasantry recognise this in an instinctive sort of way, for they show no desire to get away from the neighbourhood of the big man. They prefer to be in his vicinity, and he in his turn likes them near him, being thus sure of a good supply of labour if his relations with them are at all cordial, which more often than not they are.

Do I picture a sort of tropical paradise, in so far as the relations between the different races and classes of the people are concerned? That is not exactly my intention; at any rate I would hasten to add that there is enough of the serpent of snobbery to make life in Jamaica interesting; there are sufficiently numerous class and personal distinctions to create that amount of social unhappiness without which no British community would be complete. Snobbery, says M. Andre Seigfried, is a characteristic of British civilisation. So it is; and the civilisation of Jamaica is British. There are innumerable classes in Jamaica; classes amongst the white, classes amongst the coloured, classes amongst the black; there are therefore ever present in every Jamaica town those lines of social demarcation which too often are a source of bitterness to those for whom they form a bar. But the great mass of the people are not affected by social considerations. The peasant in the village does not anxiously think about what may be said of him should he be seen associating with So-and-So. Hence it may truly be said that there is as much social happiness and contentment in Jamaica, take it for all in all, as there is in any country where the population is of one race, or is practically homogeneous.

CHAPTER III

THE ENGLISHMAN IN JAMAICA

WHEN I mentioned to a Scotchman resident in Jamaica that in my chapter on the Englishman in Jamaica I intended to include the Scotch and Irish colonists, he demurred. A Scotchman is not an Englishman, he contended, and the contention is as old as the two peoples. It is perfectly true, of course; but for my purpose the caption I have chosen will do very well, though it may be necessary for me here and there to refer specifically to Scotchmen and to Irishmen.

According to the census for 1911, there are settled in Jamaica 1291 persons who were born in England, 13 who were born in Wales, 239 from Scotland, and 123 from Ireland. The number is respectable, though it is below two thousand. These 1666 persons include the Governor as well as the army private; and it is not too much to say that their influence on the life and the affairs of the country is far greater than their mere number would seem to indicate.

Yet at the very outset one is forced to remark the difference which exists between the Englishman of to-day and the Englishman of a hundred years ago in Jamaica. A century since he was not only in the colony in much larger numbers, but was in reality the dominant Jamaican. He was the chief landowner, he governed the island as a member of the House of Assembly and of the Governor's Council: he was *the* Jamaican, the real colonist, the other sections of the colony did not count for much. The white man of pure British extraction who was born in the country did not regard himself as anything but an Englishman. In the vast majority of instances he would, if of the better classes, have been educated

in England, and 'home' to him would always mean England. When the boom in sugar declined and emancipation followed, he returned to England if he could, as a matter of course; but in Jamaica he was never a stranger: he was the owner or, at least, the director. All that is changed to-day. In spite of the fact that large tracks of land are held by British absentee proprietors still; in spite, too, of the fact that men from the United Kingdom are amongst the biggest planters at the present time in Jamaica, the Englishman is often regarded, and regards himself, as a stranger; he is distinct from the Jamaican, and is but the largest of the groups which make up the non-native population of the island.

This is the inevitable result of many circumstances. A great deal of the land is now held by white men who were born and have grown up in the country, by coloured men who either acquired their possessions by purchase or inherited it from white ancestors, by black men who form the peasant proprietary of the country. Then, the vast majority of the island's officials are natives. It is now rather the exception than the rule for Englishmen to be appointed to the Jamaica Civil Service; even amongst the heads of the most important Government Departments we find a fair number of natives. Thus the Governor is an Englishman; but the next most important official, the Colonial Secretary, who frequently acts as Governor, is a Jamaican. The Collector-General is a Jamaican; the last Treasurer was a Jamaican—his place has up to the time of writing not been filled; one of the three judges of the Supreme Court is a West Indian from one of the other colonies; another is a Jamaican. The late Attorney-General was a Jamaican; the present-Attorney General is a man from one of the smaller West Indian islands; the Crown Solicitor and the Registrar of the Supreme Court are both Jamaicans; the Director of Education is a Jamaican; the Administrator-General and the Surveyor-General are Jamaicans. So we see that the number of Englishmen, as

compared with the number of Jamaicans, in the public service is very small; and the tendency is not towards increasing the English personnel.

The same thing holds true of other departments of the life of the colony. In the preceding chapter allusion was made to the white workers in wood and stone and iron who were once the artisans of Jamaica. There is hardly one left now. There are English professional men (chiefly parsons and doctors), English accountants, English clerks, shop-assistants, builders and contractors, engineers, merchants, and magistrates; but the number of natives in the same callings and professions is far greater. The colony has grown and developed, and, as its development has proceeded, what has taken place in other colonies has taken place here. The native, the man on the spot, fills most of the positions that the man from the United Kingdom could fill; and the man from the United Kingdom comes to Jamaica as a stranger.

Yet the manners and customs of the country, in so far as they are civilised, approximate to English manners and customs; the life of the country bears the indelible impress of English influences; the language is English, the literature is English, the sentiments of the people are more English than anything else, the religion is English, and Jamaicans are proud of their connection with the British Empire. The word 'home' to the educated Jamaican has two significations. In the first place it signifies Jamaica. But it also signifies England, and Englishman and Jamaican will talk of England as 'home' without either man being conscious of any incongruity in the expression as used by the native. It is the commonest thing to hear an Englishman ask a Jamaican if he is going 'home' this year, and the latter will reply 'yes' or 'no' quite simply. Hence, though the Englishman coming to Jamaica in these days comes as a stranger, he is less of a stranger than the Englishman who goes to Canada, where, as he has probably heard beforehand, he is not liked. The

difference is that he goes to Canada in considerable numbers, and more often than not develops into a good Canadian. It is only the minority of Englishmen who become Jamaicans; that is, settle in the country for good, without intention of returning home. In a tropical colony, the place of the Englishman is of necessity small. Yet of its importance there cannot be two opinions.

The Englishman who remains in Jamaica for but a few years must be regarded as always a stranger. He rarely has any deep interest in the country, and for the most part hardly ever understands its people. There have, indeed, been Englishmen who have lived for over twenty years in the colony and have left it with almost as little knowledge of its inhabitants as they had when first they came. They have been entirely out of sympathy with their surroundings; they have mixed as much as possible with other English only; they have not liked Jamaica and the Jamaicans. The sentiments of men of this type are very soon discovered. For the most part, they make no attempt to disguise them. The natural consequence is that a good many Jamaicans, and even educated Jamaicans, get to believe that the Englishman as such is contemptuous of all things Jamaican, even though they may know Englishmen, Scots, and Irishmen who accept the local conditions and the people for the best that there is in them, and who identify themselves with most of the efforts made to further the progress of the community.

Englishmen themselves are keenly alive to the faults of their countrymen in Jamaica, and if they sometimes stand by one another it is not because they dislike the people, but because a very natural feeling of comradeship compels them to support the Englishman who finds himself at odds in a strange land. The Jamaican would do the same if he and others of his country found themselves where they were for the most part outsiders. It would, however, be a mistake to imagine that the British element in Jamaica is always to

be found fighting as one body of men against the natives in the interest of individuals from the mother-country; as a matter of fact, the Britisher in Jamaica constitutes no class apart, especially after he has been in the colony for some time, and has become acquainted with the people and with their point of view. The greatest critics of Englishmen are very often Englishmen; and where we find an Englishman being vigorously backed by his countrymen, we may be certain that they are his personal friends, and we may be equally certain that amongst his assailants are other Englishmen. In such a case, clearly, it is not so much a matter of race and country as it is a matter of class and personal friendship. There is hardly a man from the United Kingdom residing in Jamaica to-day who does not count Jamaicans among his friends; there are Englishmen who are more friendly with Jamaicans than with other Englishmen; and I have no hesitation in saying that the Englishman who is generally disliked by Jamaicans is equally disliked by Englishmen.

It is a matter of temperament. At first, it is probable, every man from 'home' who comes to Jamaica feels himself out of place, is bored or disgusted by the entirely different conditions in which he finds himself, is filled with a longing for the land he has left, and is, in consequence, disposed to run down everything he sees, and to be contemptuous of the country and its people. The untravelled Jamaican does not understand this feeling, and resents it; the travelled Jamaican knows that, to a considerable extent, it will wear away if the new-comer be the right sort of man. And it does wear away. The shock of change and difference, which is natural and inevitable, loses its effect after a while, though it is apt to return every time a man comes back from a holiday in the United Kingdom. It wears away, and one begins to appreciate what is good in tropical life in the Jamaica of this century. For one thing, the Englishman can never complain of the hospitality of the Jamaicans. Many Jamaicans may criticise

Englishmen as a body, but for the individual Englishman they will do a great deal; first, because they are by nature hospitable; secondly, because he is an Englishman; thirdly, because he is a stranger; and lastly, though by no means least, because to be an Englishman in Jamaica carries a good deal of prestige with it.

It could not be otherwise. Considering that the governing classes have been mainly English, that the colony belongs to England, and that every Jamaican is as firmly convinced as any Englishman that Britain is the greatest country in the world, it follows as a matter of course that the individual Englishman starts in Jamaica with much in his favour. But his success or his popularity will depend upon his own qualities eventually; and there are few Englishmen, if any, of any experience and of any position in the colony, who will prefer any Englishman as such to a Jamaican who shows himself capable.

That may have been the case once upon a time. The glamour of prestige, the tradition of efficiency, the mere fact that one was an Englishman may have helped one all through life, just as they obtain for one a fair chance to-day. But more than a fair chance the average man from England will scarcely get to-day. A very proper feeling of national pride, to say nothing of ordinary pity, will prevent Englishmen in Jamaica from callously letting a countryman sink into the gutter; but if he will not respond to the assistance they offer, they will leave him to his fate. The beach-comber Englishman has not been unknown in Jamaica, though happily rare. And it is but honest to add that even the Jamaican of the humblest class feels sad and sorry when an Englishman in Jamaica goes to ruin and wreck.

The men who come from the United Kingdom to fill positions as clerks, accountants, inspectors of police, merchants, etc., live quietly as ordinary members of the community. Sometimes they marry Jamaicans, take very little interest

in politics, help to organise sports, and are popular in the circles in which they move. But there are others whose influence is extensive. The great English planters are mostly men who have succeeded by dint of perseverance and ability, and, living in the country parishes, they are each of them a considerable force. Amongst the fourteen elected members of the existing Legislative Council, there are three Englishmen and two Scotchmen; and one of the Englishmen, a large banana planter, is certainly one of the most popular men in the island. Nobody questions the sincerity of his interest, and the people of his parish are proud to have him represent them. The present Mayor of Kingston (September, 1912) is an Englishman. At the last election of the Mayor and Council he was returned at the top of the poll, chiefly, of course, by the votes of the working people. There is, I think, a certain jealousy of Englishmen, but the individual Englishman has nothing to fear from it. It is directed against a class and not against a person, consequently it can harm no one. There is, on the other hand, an unquestionable admiration of Englishmen, an admiration grounded on their achievements in the world. This admiration may not always extend to the individual Englishman, but as the member of a class he benefits by it.

Englishmen are welcomed in the political as well as in the social life of the colony. And in the social life of the colony they are often the leaders. Some of the highest officials and a few of the greatest planters being Englishmen, they set the tone of society and form the exclusive 'set.' Their way of life in the colony is much as it would be in England. Dinner parties, lawn-tennis, afternoon calls, afternoon tea, with riding and driving, and visits to the theatre and attendance at the races form their recreations for the most part; and these too are the recreations of all the other classes of the people who have anything like social desires and ambitions. The difference is mainly one of degree. This is a bit of English life transported to Jamaica; and it testifies to the influence of the Englishman in Jamaica.

The majority of the English residents, then, do identify themselves with the life of the colony—some of course to a greater extent than others. There are two classes of them which come frequently and directly in touch with the people—the ministers and the officials; each class does so in a different way, and it has been claimed by one Governor of the island that in promoting the general welfare of the peasantry and working people the Government (with its officers) come first and the ministers next. I am not certain that this dictum can be altogether accepted: there are many who would reverse the positions and would put the ministers first. If, indeed, we take the history of the island for the last fifty years, there can be no question about the ministers of the several denominations in the colony having done more for the great mass of the people, in the way of uplifting and civilising them, than the Government has done. If we merely take the history of the last eleven or twelve years—the first years of the present century—the Government does in truth stand forth conspicuously as the leading influence in a dozen different movements all making for the amelioration of conditions in Jamaica, and for the betterment of the common people. It is not that the Churches and their ministers are doing less. It is that the Government and its officers are doing more. But the pioneers in education, the teachers of morality, the sworn friends of the friendless, the downtrodden, the unconsidered, have for many decades been the missionaries and the ministers, and a great deal of what is of good report in Jamaica must be attributed to their untiring zeal and to the personal efforts they have put forth.

The ministers have come far more into personal contact with the mass of the people than have any other class of Englishmen, and your English or Scotch parson has been, as it were, the head of a large and heterogeneous family, the leader of a considerable section of the people; he has been guide, philosopher, and friend; he has been politician also when

necessary, and has never hesitated to enter the political arena to fight actively for the welfare of the masses. His home has been a centre from which has radiated sympathy. His family—his wife and himself more particularly—have known the interior of hundreds of homes, some of them of the most humble description; and this personal association, this kindly inquiry into the trivial worries and details of the peasant's life, has had an effect on the lives of the people greater than most persons appear to have imagined. As a rule, the parson from 'home' has come to Jamaica with lofty spiritual ideals and with a determination to accomplish some noble work. Disappointments awaited him; hardships had to be endured; often he has thought he is building on shifting sands. I remember one Scotch parson who confessed to me how heart-weary he was, how sad at thinking that he and his fellow-labourers had done so little. He was alluding to the large percentage of illegitimate births which the Government records showed year after year: he felt that he had no foundation of character to build upon, and that the influence of himself and of men like him counted for nothing in the colony. I was not surprised at this lament: I had heard it before. I had heard it from Catholic priest, as well as from Protestant parson. But I knew something about Jamaica's past, and for myself I could not but think that the missionary had builded better than he knew, had accomplished considerable things—had assisted greatly to civilise the country, to change its manner of living, to improve it socially, morally, and religiously in the short space of sixty years. They have trained a native ministry which is no discredit to them. A hundred years ago Jamaica was almost entirely heathen. To-day, in spite of remaining superstitions and loose sexual connections, it is a Christian country. As I intend to deal with Jamaica religion further on, I will say nothing more upon this point just here; but I may remark that the personal influence of the men who have taught and have preached

to the people has had as much to do with the improvement observed as the doctrines they have disseminated. The mere preaching would have altered nothing. The sympathy, the kindness, the interest which the British missionaries and ministers give constant evidence of have borne and will bear fruit of inestimable value.

The foremost Englishman in Jamaica to-day, all things considered, is a man who came to the country over forty-five years ago as a simple parson. To-day he is the Archbishop of the West Indies, having won to that high position through sheer force of character and ability. He is not merely the head of his own Church. In a way he is the unofficial head of all the Protestant Churches. An Englishman of Englishmen, he is also a Jamaican of Jamaicans; so that while the Englishmen in Jamaica are very proud of him as a fellow-countryman, the Jamaicans under fifty years of age look upon him as a Jamaican—there are actually some who believe he is a Jamaican by birth! He is supremely the type of Englishman who can uphold and cherish the finest ideals of his country while entirely sympathising and identifying himself with the people and the interests of the country which he has made his by adoption. A man of his force of character could not have failed to influence the young English clergyman in that way of conduct which should make for success in ministering to people and congregations in many respects different from English people and congregations, and in surroundings very different indeed from those of England. Thus we find that the Anglican Church in Jamaica, once without influence and not deserving it, once the Church of a few wealthy, contemptuous, dissolute persons, is to-day as much the Church of the poor as the most democratic Nonconformist body; a circumstance which I attribute mainly to the personality of the man who has been its head for so many years, and also to the personal character and influence of those who have so zealously assisted him.



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The English official has also been described by a Governor, Sir Sydney Olivier, as a 'missionary,' but it must be admitted that he is a very well-paid missionary, though in the majority of instances it cannot be denied that he earns his money. His contact with the people is that of a director, not of a friend. He knows them from the outside for the most part; and though in his dealings with them he is actuated by a sense of justice, he is usually a man apart; though he may take a pride in his work and may sincerely wish to improve the colony, he cannot have that affection for it which the life-long colonist and the native have; he has not the same kind of stimulus which the missionary and the minister have. He has to do with things far more than with men. Even as judge and magistrate he is above the crowd, and not in it. Yet this comparative aloofness is more the result of conditions than of explicit determination. Men of the same class and position in England do not mix more with the working people there than do the English officials in Jamaica with the Jamaica people of the lower orders. The difference between the two sets of men is that, as an Englishman, the official more or less understands his own people: whatever the difference in class, they are of one blood; whereas, in Jamaica, it takes the Englishman time and sympathy and close acquaintanceship to understand the average Jamaican and the Jamaican point of view. Yet, even in this connection also, there has in late years been a wonderful improvement in the relationships existing between the English official and the people; the time has gone by when the official element formed an exclusive caste; when it was regarded as a matter of course that they should constitute one section of the community, and the rest of the people another. The filling of some of the highest official positions with natives and the general advance in culture and civilisation on the part of the country as a whole have served to bridge the chasm between the English official and the native; the personal friendships, comradeships,

the social intercourse, and constant interchange of ideas between English official and Jamaica gentleman make of these both one class; and, as a member of this class, the English official learns more about Jamaica and Jamaicans than he otherwise would.

It must also be added that the English heads of large administrative departments have for capable native officers a genuine appreciation. This is generally the outcome of time and experience. At first the new chief is inclined to be over-critical, to assume ignorance on the part of his subordinates, to expect English methods in conditions which are not English. But he learns after a while what he ought to expect and what is impossible in the circumstances, and in his annual reports to the Governor he very often—I might say he always—refers in high terms of praise to the men under him, nine-tenths, if not all, of whom may be Jamaicans. Nor is the average English head of department desirous of filling vacancies in the Civil Service with men born out of the country. That is not, indeed, the policy of the Government; but individual officials could hamper and hinder the Government if minded to do so, and could strongly urge the importation of young officers. As a matter of fact, they prefer to train men found on the spot, and this policy naturally commends itself to the community, the older members of which remember the time (not twenty years since) when to be a Jamaican was rather a serious bar to official preferment.

I have purposely left to the last the remarks I have to make on the Governors of the colony, the men directly responsible to the Colonial Office for the proper administration of the island's affairs. Of the seven who have governed Jamaica since 1866, one was a Scotchman, one an Irishman, one a West Indian (from Antigua); the other four have been English. Of only one of these can it be said that his administration was marked by feebleness. He was a weak though entirely well-meaning man: he was not equal to the task

laid upon him. The other men have been energetic: five of them have been conspicuous for their ability. This is a good percentage and an excellent record. Highly paid as is a Jamaica Governor, there are not many competent Jamaicans who would say that a good Governor was not worth the £5000 a year he receives; and there are few who have been in touch with Jamaica Governors but know that they are amongst the hardest worked men in the island.

In my present remarks I must deal with the Governor as an Englishman, and not merely as the head of the Government—as the chief part of an administrative machine. That is to say, I wish to deal with his character, with what he is or should be, and not particularly with his duties. Naturally, it is not possible in practice, or even in discussion, to differentiate between the man and the public functionary: the influence the man derives largely from his position. Still it is indisputable that position alone will help no man to gain the respect of the West Indians: character and reputation count for as much as place and power.

A reputation for impartiality is one of the best assets that the English official, and especially the English Governor, in the colonies could have, though not every Governor has possessed it. It is indeed very difficult in Jamaica to win the reputation of being impartial; even if you are, you will often be thought not to be. A Governor begins his administration under difficulties therefore; he is the man upon whom the searchlight of public opinion is always beating; he can never feel sure that those who applaud him to-day will not censure him to-morrow. Consequently, the career of a Governor can only be calmly and adequately judged after he has been out of the colony for some years. Now, what is the general opinion of the Jamaica Governors since 1866? The general opinion is that all of them have been deeply interested in the country, and that most of them have worked their hardest for it.

The wish to succeed may and probably does have much

to do with their exertions. Even a Governor thinks of promotion and praise. But there has also been, as an animating and inspiring principle, a high sense of duty, a feeling of obligation towards the people and the Empire, and this has helped more than one Governor through a hard and trying time. No Jamaica Administrator has ever been suspected of furthering his own financial interests. No Governor has ever been considered an unimportant quantity. Even the weakest of them has been credited with some ability, and all of them have been credited with good intentions. Great Britain, then, has on the whole been well served by the men she has sent out to govern Jamaica: they have not been incompetent place-seekers or impecunious younger sons. Had they been, the first to have uttered a loud protest would have been the English residents in Jamaica. For a critical attitude towards their Governors distinguishes them as much as it distinguishes any one else.

One is rather surprised to learn from the figures of the census that the American residents in Jamaica number as many as 337. This shows how little they interfere with the public life of the colony and how unobtrusive they are. Considering that sixty-one per cent. of the island's export trade is with the United States of America, and that millions of dollars have been invested in the country by American capitalists, it would not have been astonishing if the American had been a little more evident in Jamaica than he is. He is here, however, simply as a man of business, and he minds his own business; he is a courteous man, pays well, recognises ability, and does nothing to make himself objectionable. The consequence is that the American is not disliked in Jamaica. On the contrary, he is liked. He gives no evidence of his innate colour prejudice, accepting the conditions of the country as he finds them; while the average American tourist, who now annually comes to Jamaica in his thousands, never

shows any disinclination to ride in the street cars with coloured people. The American visitor who has once been to Jamaica, indeed, is more often than not likely to return.

The Roman Catholic Church is represented by Americans in Jamaica, the Bishop and priests being members of the Society of Jesus. But it is of the genius of that Church, and particularly of the Jesuit Order, that the attention of the outsider is hardly ever drawn to the nationality of the men who serve it; consequently few persons in Jamaica think of the Catholic college as a part of the American community. And here again one sees how little of separateness, of hard-and-fast boundary lines, there is in regard to the social life of Jamaica, using the word social in its widest significance. The Roman Catholic Bishop takes his place in the colony as a bishop, as the local head of a Christian Church; his participation in movements of a philanthropic nature is eagerly sought; he is respected, is liked, is regarded as one of the leaders of the country. In the controversies that take place between Catholic and Protestant the personality of the Bishop is never drawn in; the sort of criticisms levelled at Church dignitaries even in Roman Catholic countries would not be tolerated for one moment in Jamaica. The custom, in fact, is to identify both priest and parson with the country; *they* at any rate are never foreigners and strangers. Their work being amongst the people, they become associated with the people and the country in the minds of every one.

The Canadian residents number 77—a mere handful. Writing in an English paper (*The Daily Chronicle*) in August, 1912, Sir Harry Johnston gave it as his opinion that the American was more liked in Jamaica than the Canadian; and as Sir Harry Johnston was in Jamaica for a short time only, it is to be presumed that he was told this by some of the people whom he met. On the whole, I think he is right. I have heard the same thing myself. The Canadian is believed to be as prejudiced as the American, and not as free with his money.

'American' and 'open-handedness' almost seem to be interchangeable terms in the minds of thousands of Jamaicans. The Canadian, then, is credited with the bad qualities of the American minus the good ones, and thus the individual Canadian is prejudged. But what does the Jamaican know of the Canadian? Canadian visitors to the island have hitherto been few; the number of the residents has already been given as only 77. It is quite true that the Canadian does not spend his money as freely as the American does; he has less to spend for one thing. He is not extravagant in his own country, and therefore is careful out of it. Yet, the question has to be asked again, what does the Jamaican know of the Canadian? Not very much, the truth being that he misjudges the Canadian through ignorance.

No one who knows Canada and the Canadians, however little, but must appreciate the fact that the Canadians have excellent qualities, and are, take them for all in all, a fine people. Perhaps this will be realised in Jamaica before long: it ought to be realised if the two countries become more closely connected. It is not, however, the Jamaican alone who is somewhat prejudiced against the Canadian; the English resident is quite as much so; and his feeling is probably the result of what he has heard of the Canadian attitude towards Englishmen. That attitude it is not within the scope and purpose of this little work to discuss; one can only regret that people of the same stock mainly, and under the same flag, should sometimes show themselves unfriendly towards one another. And one may hope that this antagonism (which is, after all, not very deep-seated) will wear away under the influence of a better understanding. No one can deny that the Canadians in Jamaica offend nobody by their conduct; and those who know them do not dislike them—just the contrary. When there are more Canadians in the colony, Canadians generally will be better understood. In time they will be liked.

CHAPTER IV

CITY, TOWNS, AND COUNTRY

JAMAICANS are sometimes apologetic in speaking of their capital and of the towns of their island; but they hardly say anything about the country proper. They perceive that Kingston is sadly lacking in many of the attributes of a capital city; they know its defects, and are daily aware that its appearance is not calculated to dazzle or impress the stranger. But they will remind you that Kingston is not the island, just as the Canadian in Toronto or Montreal will solemnly protest that if you have seen only the eastern cities of Canada you have not seen Canada. The Jamaican, having done his duty to his country by reminding you that Kingston does not stand for it, leaves it to you to form and pass your own opinion on Jamaica as a whole, and complacently awaits a favourable verdict. He has heard it so often that anything else would be surprising. From the time of Columbus to the present day every writer has been trying to find appropriate adjectives with which to ornament his words of praise. It was left to an American tourist to give it as his opinion that 'the island is very handsome!' 'Handsome' is here used in a new association, but the sincerity of the sentiment excuses the novelty of the expression.

This handsome island has not a handsome city; yet, to me at any rate, the city has an eternal fascination. I never weary of it. It may be variously described: for example, the term 'tin-roofed town' would be appropriate if applied to the lower section of it, the business section known as 'down town.' After a great fire had burnt down most of the houses in lower Kingston, thirty years ago, some means had to be

found of making the buildings fireproof. Then it was that some ingenious person suggested corrugated iron roofing, and corrugated iron roofing it has been to this day. The dull gray of the metal strikes a most inharmonious note in a country of vivid greens and blues; and iron as a covering, with a thermometer normally over eighty degrees in the shade, does not give one the impression of being the coolest thing imaginable.

Or you may describe Kingston as 'the place where one moves slowly'; slowly, that is, as compared with the movement in the cities of England or the United States. I pointed out the absence of hustle one day to an American visitor who had landed only that morning.

'I don't wonder at it,' he thoughtfully replied, as he mopped the perspiration off his face. 'I guess I would move slow too if I lived here.' I think he would, and nothing more amuses the resident than to hear the man newly arrived in the country lay down the law on the necessity of the people 'getting a move on!' Of course, they can do this if they want. But the move will come to a full stop after a while. You cannot spend your energy and have it, and it is a wise economy of energy that gives to the streets of the city an atmosphere of comparative leisure. Perspiration may be healthy, but too much of it is a decided nuisance.

Or again, you may describe Kingston as 'a city with a noble background of mountains and sloping gently towards the sea.' This is the conventional description and borders upon the poetic; it also has the merit of being true. But every description packed in a sentence is at best but partial, and not at all the equivalent of a good photograph: you cannot compass a city with a phrase. Even 'tin-roofed town' is not wholly true of lower Kingston. For the principal business thoroughfare now has most of its buildings roofed with cement, which alone makes it a street apart from every other in the island. It is, too, the street that one sees most of, the street where the Government offices are, and most of

the leading stores and shops. It represents much of Kingston, and to say of it that it is tin-roofed would move all the inhabitants of Jamaica to protest.

Kingston has had the advantage of being destroyed by fire two or three times, and of being shaken down by an earthquake in January, 1907. Except for that little matter of the corrugated iron roofing, it has benefited much by these catastrophies, having improved itself on each occasion as far as the means, tastes, and ambitions of its inhabitants would allow it to do so. When a man erects a building in Kingston, he does so with the feeling that he has accomplished something with the nature of the everlasting about it. He does not foresee the day when his successors may wish to improve upon what he has done, may wish to tear down the structure created by him and put something finer in its place. He does not foresee that day, for he calculates that those who will come after him will not wish to do anything madly extravagant. Kingston is so purely a commercial city, in fact, that beauty is not much considered by those responsible for its architecture; a man strives to get all he can out of his property, and the public would never think of suggesting that he ought to improve it for the sake of appearances merely. Yet the wish for a fine city is in the hearts of Kingston's inhabitants, and when fate or accident affords them an opportunity to improve their capital they make some attempt in that direction. Kingston was rebuilt after a great fire in 1882, a fire which destroyed the business section of it. For five-and-twenty years after its rebuilding no change took place in the style of structure adopted, and very few new places were built. Then came the earthquake of 1907, and since that year the city has got at least one street of which it has good reason to be proud, a street which as a business and commercial centre is the finest in all the West Indies. It is well paved, well served by electric cars, taxi-motors, and horse-cabs; the buildings on either side are strong, earthquake

proof, and sufficiently commodious for the purposes they are intended to serve; in this thoroughfare, too, are the new public gardens, and the colonnades in front of the stores enable the pedestrian to walk nearly the whole length of lower King Street without being roasted by the sun.

'Quite a modern street,' the reader may say, and the observation will be just. Any one coming straight from a country where buildings five or six stories high are the rule—still more, any one coming from a city where any structure of less than fourteen stories is not considered very high, may now and then feel in walking about King Street that on either side of him are dwarf buildings: that is the effect of custom. Yet, so long as he is in the shade, he will appreciate the change. He will observe that the people who pass, singly, in couples, in groups, all look as if care-free, that there is a nonchalant swing about their movements, a carelessness that attracts. Here he will see every shade of complexion to be found in the island. The buggies and motor cars drawn up by the sidewalks contain dames of fair or olive hue; on their heads the hats of 'the latest fashion,' on their bodies simple white dresses that look cool in the heat of the day. Girls of chocolate colour, with dresses fitting them 'like gloves,' step briskly along, almost as briskly as they would in a northern city. Swarthy men, black men, brown men, fair men move up and down, not rapidly, but with what, after a while, the visitor would come to consider a good pace, the heat considered; and vehicles continuously ply for hire, the cabmen calmly breaking the law that forbids them to appeal to the pedestrian for patronage.

One of the attractions of Kingston is the facility with which the law relating to minor matters can be broken. Jamaica has the reputation of being a very law-abiding country, and it deserves its good name; dangerous crimes are few; compared with Porto Rico, say, Jamaica is almost crimeless. But the laws relating to trifling misdemeanours are many, and are often ignored. Now and then the police

make an attack upon cabman or taxi-cab driver and hale him before the courts, charge him with furious driving, or annoying passengers, or with some other offence of which he has been guilty a hundred times; but the warning and fine are unheeded, for one cannot be virtuous in small things as well as virtuous in large.

There is a law against loitering in the streets. The policeman can ask you to 'move on' if you break this law. But everybody breaks it at his sweet will and pleasure; half the joy of life in Kingston consists in loitering. You loiter to look at some interesting object you have seen a thousand times before, and could not forget if you tried; you loiter to greet your friends; you loiter to gaze at the smartly dressed shop windows; you loiter to pass criticisms on any motor-car or other equipage that you think you are seeing for the first time; you loiter because it is hot; you loiter to enjoy the breeze as it sweeps up from the sea, the breeze that tempers the heat of the hottest day and makes life bearable; you loiter because loitering is in the atmosphere, in your blood, in the blood of every one around you. Loitering is pleasant; and, besides, you know that you will accomplish the day's work, know too that in northern cities they do not work much harder than you do. Loitering is one of your recreations; the rest of the time you give to work.

You will think the streets of Kingston deserted if you are accustomed to crowded thoroughfares; you will think the city strangely silent if you have become used to the roar of a great metropolis. The people shun the sun by day, and (presumably) the moon by night, except on Saturdays and Sundays. But Sunday is a separate theme, a theme to be dealt with as a thing apart; let us confine ourselves here to week-days and week-a-day topics. While, then, you will always find a few people in the streets of Jamaica's capital city, there never, except on holidays, will be anything in the least approaching a crowd in them. One seeks the shelter

of yards and houses here; nor does population overflow into the streets, as it does in cities which have passed the million mark. Sixty thousand inhabitants may be congregated on a square mile or so of land without their presence being obtrusively obvious.

Let us go back to lower King Street again—indeed, we have never left it—and see how compact is our life; how very near is one thing to another. Hardware stores, haberdashery, grocery shops, drug shops, book shops, jewellers' shops, a bank, the Government offices, a church—you will find them all within a quarter of a mile. This is Jamaica's Broadway, Oxford Street, Boulevard des Italiens, too, if you like; but after the sun has gone down it is deserted, for street promenading is unknown in Jamaica. The citizens ride in the cars when they wish to enjoy the open air. They do not, like those of the neighbouring Spanish-American countries, assemble on regular nights of the week to walk about, meet their friends, and listen to the music of the band. A public band does play each Thursday; but it plays in the afternoon, in the Central Park, which is the northern boundary of lower King Street; chiefly girls and children go to listen to it. Not that Jamaicans are not fond of music; they very much are. But the habit of promenading has not yet been acquired, and so they keep at home.

The business section of the city is small compared with that given over to the residences, to the one or two story buildings in which the people live. No house in Kingston, or in any other parish, is higher than two stories. Most of them are built half of brick, half of wood, and sheer upon the street. But the farther one gets away from the lower portion of the town the finer do the residences become; here you find cottages standing in their own grounds, with flower gardens in front of them and a general air of quiet comfort; here you find villadom with all its conventions; here abide the 'respectable' people. There are plenty of slums in Kingston too; many of the lanes are slums; and there is a lane between every two principal streets. What would you have? The people

are poor, and must live where they can and as cheap as they can. The fortunate thing for them is that there is no cold, and consequently no intense suffering. They live mainly in the open air; they but sleep in their tiny rooms, and prefer it so. But there are also suburbs in Kingston where the better working classes live; where there are pianos if you please, and rose gardens. These may not be very many, nevertheless that they do exist is interesting. And they are steadily on the increase.

This West Indian city now has a theatre, which it obtained after five years of argument and heated discussion. The earthquake having overthrown the theatre which the municipality had built, the question was, how was another playhouse to be obtained? The Press suggested that the Legislative Council should give a grant to the city for this purpose, and the Governor did not seem unwilling. But some of the city parsons protested that public money should not be used for such a purpose, and a few other folk joined them in that protest. Then the Press, or, rather, one section of it, suggested that the city itself should borrow the money required and build the theatre; but here again the parsons protested, and one or two of the newspapers threw their support on the parsons' side. Then it was suggested that a tax of a shilling per head should be levied on all tourists coming to the island, as is the case in Costa Rica. But this brought the shipping agents into the field of battle, and the parsons came to their support, and one or two newspapers followed. The parsons, it was plain, did not want a theatre. The opposing newspapers wanted something to oppose. Nobody could agree as to what should be done, and such fierce things were said in that five-year discussion about the theatre that some persons must have wished the controversy might continue for ever. The debate was the thing; it often is the only thing in the island. Then happened the unexpected, and a fruitful source of contention was taken away. A prominent and wealthy Jamaican, Colonel

Charles J. Ward, who is one of the biggest sugar planters and manufacturers of native liquors in the colony, quietly announced that he would give the city the amount required to provide the theatre, whereupon some of the parsons said they withdrew their opposition to the theatre, or words to that effect. The donation of Colonel Ward was £12,000 (not by any means his only gift to Jamaica); the building itself has been constructed by a native firm of builders and contractors, after a design furnished by one of the brothers connected with the firm. The competition for the best design was an open one, and the prize was won by a native, Mr Rudolph Henriques, a very young man who acquired the knowledge he possesses by dint of his own exertions. An impartial and competent jury gave him the award, and his brothers obtained the contract for erecting the building. It stands on the site of the former theatre, and unquestionably is the best play-house in all the West Indies, including Cuba. It is one of the few handsome structures in Kingston, and one is pleased to be able to point to it as an instance of native generosity and public spirit, and of native ability and talent.

As the seat of the island's government, Kingston is naturally the centre of the island's commercial, professional, and official life. It is in Kingston and in the bordering parish of St Andrew that you will find the chief officials and many of the men who are the leaders of the country; out of the 1666 persons from England, Ireland, and Scotland, for instance, 1136 live in Kingston and St Andrew. It is the one city of Jamaica. Its harbour, which has the reputation of ranking among the largest and finest in the world, makes it the colony's chief port; this harbour is like a great lagoon, with but a narrow opening to the south-west, and is a magnificent sheet of water fringed with mangrove plant and cocoa-nut palm. The harbour, indeed, dwarfs into insignificance the little city lying on the lip of the great plain that sweeps down from the mountains' base for miles and miles; one looks at the

shining lake-like water, the mighty wall, green-clothed and cloud-capp'd, in the background, and at the mass of houses apparently huddled up on a tiny patch of land, where for every house there seem a dozen trees, and one perceives that what man has done shows up poorly beside the work of nature. But nature has been at this work for a hundred thousand years, and man has just begun.

The city possesses hotels, of course, and these in the months when tourists come to the island are filled to overflowing. The chief hotels in Kingston are the Myrtle Bank and South Camp Road Hotels; the first is built by the sea, the second is situated in the city's finest residential quarter, and both have the benefit of the breeze that comes from the sea in the day-time and of the delightful winds that steal down from the mountains at night. It is these breezes that never lull except during the month of September, that make the heat of a tropical city like Kingston so different from what one has to endure in New York, Boston, or the eastern cities of Canada during the summer days. There one gasps and suffocates; in Kingston, in Jamaica generally, so long as you can find a bit of shade there will be some wind to keep you from panting, while you need never fear sunstroke, with ordinary care. I have never heard of a case of sunstroke in Jamaica myself; but this is by the way. To return to the hotels, it may be said that they serve a double function: the first, naturally, is to cater for guests, and this they do in a manner creditable to them; the other function is the organising of public dances, and in this they also succeed admirably. Balls are frequently given by them, and at some of these you will find hundreds of handsomely dressed people—Jamaica's best—and will get some idea of what a social function in the West Indies is like. On the whole, there is nothing quite so lively in the way of public entertainment as the dances arranged by these hotels, and their foreign guests seem to enjoy them thoroughly. They afford the average

visitor the only chance he will have of meeting at close quarters the better classes of Jamaicans.

But I think I have said enough of Kingston in this chapter, though not all that I could wish to say. After all, there is something about it, something about the life of it, which one cannot tell of on paper, but which gives to it an individuality of its own and constitutes its main source of interest. It is not beautiful; except in the winter months it is not cool; it is not in the slightest degree impressive; it is not charming, like Havana; it is not even historic. And yet it is interesting, and the more familiar you are with it the more interesting it grows. One loves to watch its people walking, sauntering along its streets, standing at the street corners, greeting one another with audible cordiality, obviously taking life as it comes, and not troubling much about the morrow. One sits in the Central Park, and hears the orators there discoursing to a seated audience of two or three—it is never more—on the subjects that have been discussed for the last four or five years with no appearance of finality. Life does not vary much in this city; change, unless caused by accident or catastrophe, comes imperceptibly; old age creeps upon one unawares. The cables bring daily the news of the outer world, of battles, murders, great speeches, epidemics, and epoch-making discoveries, and the people take them all as a matter of course. It is not ignorance, it is not lack of interest, this. It is habit mainly, the habit of going through the day calmly, through the long days of resplendent sunlight, only varied now and then by the darkness which the thunder-clouds cast, a darkness which resolves itself into a torrential shower that washes the atmosphere to a crystalline purity, through which one looks at the soft-shining snow-clouds drifting and floating above in a concave ocean of azure and gold.

But it is not in Kingston even at its best, it is not in Kingston with its surrounding ramparts of mountains and the blue sea at its feet that you will see the island at its greatest beauty



THE DRIVE,
HOPE
GARDENS



LOADING
BANANAS



SOUTH
CAMP ROAD
HOTEL,
KINGSTON

and fascination. It is away amongst the hills, it is on its level savanahs, and down by its long northern shore that you will learn what it is that has caused Jamaica to be classed as one of the three most beautiful islands in the world : with Ceylon and Java, and not as inferior to these. Let us picture ourselves as about to travel through some part of it for a day or two; we will go by motor-car the whole way, for France and Jamaica are the two countries that have the best roads. It is morning when we start, and the city is quietly awaking to the work of the day. We stir the dust up as we pass, little shops open, and sleepy women peer out at us; groups of artisans, clerks, labourers, and others are strolling down to the lower part of the city, and though the sun is rapidly mounting overhead, there is still something of freshness in the morning air.

For two or three miles our route leads northward. Past the market, which is already crowded with buyers and sellers, past houses dilapidated and old, but still crowded with people, past the northern boundary of the city, and into the contiguous parish of St Andrew. The character and appearance of the buildings have changed. This part of St Andrew's parish is in reality but an extension of the residential area of Kingston; every man who lives here works in Kingston; but land is cheaper here and the rates are low; it is cooler too, and hardly a house but has its own grounds, with fruit trees and shade trees, and grass and flower beds. Some handsome houses we pass, built of wood and brick, or of brick alone, in the West Indian fashion; the homes these of officials and prosperous merchants. We turn south-westward now, having reached the village of Half-way Tree. South-westward we run for a while, and now we are surrounded by wastes of green, enveloped in silence and overarched by a mighty dome of blue. How still it is! No sound is heard, save that made by our car; no human beings to be seen except ourselves. Even animals are rare; it looks as though this part of the

countryside were deserted. Yet we know that behind the trees, buried amidst the tall grass, shielded by the thick foliage, are cottages here and there, and people; and perhaps, although we do not see them, some curious youths may be peeping at us from behind that hedge or lolling within the shadow of that thicket.

Soon we come to a shallow river running across the road; we dash through it and speed onwards. We are now in the region of cultivated land and of visible human habitations. We are in the parish of St Catherine—saints seem to have been popular with the Jamaicans of the past—and on either hand of the hard white road, for miles and miles, are plantations of the banana. From nine to ten feet high, and even twelve feet, are the stems of these plants, the thickest part of the stem being about two and a half feet in diameter. It is so soft that you could run a knife through it, it is so weak that the single bunch of fruit which hangs from its summit among the broad spear-like, olive-green leaves causes the whole tree to heel over. It is this fragility which makes a storm so serious a thing to the Jamaica planter. It is not pleasant to look this evening upon a banana plantation in full bearing, and to-morrow morning to see nearly every tree broken and levelled to the ground.

The road here is dusty, so dusty that you cannot see far in front of you. It is one of the great highways of the island, and by night and day huge wagons filled with fruit, laden with sugar, or piled high with merchandise pass, continually over it. There they come, some of them slowly drawn by oxen, which nothing in the world will induce to a reasonably active pace, or by sturdy mules, which stand first amongst the local beasts of burden. 'Whoop! Hoo-hoo!' Dashow! This the call of the drivers and the sharp crash of the bull's hide whip as it strikes the body of some recalcitrant cow or erring mule. 'Cow, cow, cow, cow!' Crack! The whip cracks this time in the air, but the animals know that it will fall upon them shortly, for your driver in Jamaica is not an ardent

member of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the members of which, indeed, he regards with unmitigated contempt. He talks to his horse, mule, or ox as if it were a rational being. He believes it understands him very well, and that when it does anything of an annoying nature it does so out of sheer cussedness, or from a desire to be personally provocative. Thus he resorts to warning, abuse, and blows, in dealing with his animals, arguing that they should be beaten because they have sense to understand, and also that they should be beaten because they have no souls to be saved.

Thus through dust and carts and shouting men we come to Spanish Town. Here is the oldest town in the island, a place which was the head-quarters of the Spaniards when an English buccaneer attacked Jamaica more than three hundred years ago. It is on record that when Cromwell's commanders captured Spanish Town (or St Jago de la Vega, as it was and still is sometimes called) he found half of it deserted. Half of it is deserted still. This town, indeed, seems always to have lived up to its reputation of desertion; it has always had more houses than people to occupy them; it has always been a silent funereal sort of place. Yet it was for a long time the English capital of Jamaica. The Legislature met there, the Governor lived there, the Supreme Court sat there, the Cathedral was there, and tradition and the historian Leslie actually say that once upon a time a theatre was there. The old Governor's House (King's House it was called, of course), the old Assembly Rooms, the old Court House, and the rest of the State buildings are still to be found in Spanish Town to-day. They surround a square in the midst of which is a little park filled with tropical shrubs and trees. They are interesting reminiscences of a bygone day, and the town itself is from this point of view interesting.

Its population is over seven thousand, but you would never suspect it. You would drive through one of its long streets and not meet more than a dozen human beings, a

sad-looking goat, and a score or so of dogs who look as if they too were historical chiefly. The problem has always been to find out what the people of Spanish Town do for a living, for there is very little commerce in the place, and but one industry. It is the centre of a banana and sugar parish, however, and it is to be presumed that many of those who are employed on the plantations and estates live or keep their families in Spanish Town. It has a handful of people of the professional, planter, and official class, and these form the upper crust of the society of the town. They are more or less like a large family, and their social intercourse and amusements are all after the English pattern. Living in a dull town, one becomes used to mere dullness, and one learns to make the most of friendships and social reunions. It is all provincial, yet I should say that as much happiness comes to the people of Spanish Town as to those of towns and cities of far greater pretensions.

From Spanish Town we go north by west and through the heart of the country. For some distance we have the Rio Cobre on our left, and great mountains of limestone on our right; the road is hard and level, and a cool wind makes the journey delightful. The river is shallow here, and beautiful exceedingly. The water is streaked with colour, emerald-green near the banks where the wild cane grows, silver where the white sands gleam through the hyaline medium, dark blue where the forest trees cast their shadow over the water. Placidly it flows along, lit up with the light of the sun. The mountains to the right of us rise sheer into the sky, so high we cannot see their summits as we look upwards. Here and there the rock crops out bare and yellow-white or brown; but for the most part the sides of these cliffs are covered with vegetation, and it is through an avenue of green that we go. For on the other side of the river the ground rises also, in places, and where it is level and where it is not are trees and trees, and yet more trees.

Our way is now towards Moneague, a town where, in the very midst of summer, it is always cool. The temperature changes perceptibly as our car speeds upwards, a glorious breeze blows incessantly, and travelling is a delight. We reach the town, and now we are in the region of upland savanahs; fenced pastures dotted with cattle are on either hand; magnificent silk-cotton trees stand out singly, dead or dying in the grip of the parasitic creepers that wind them round and prey upon their sap. The sun is vertical, but its rays occasion no inconvenience; we are too high up for the heat to affect us much.

Before reaching Moneague, we crossed one of the highest roads in the island and saw some of the most wonderful scenery. We crossed Mount Diablo, the devil's mount, called so, doubtless, because of the peril of it in days gone by. Time was when even the strongest pair of horses would strain and pant as they pulled a light buggy up the hill; and a slip was dangerous, for on one hand was a towering wall of cliffs, and on the other a succession of yawning precipices. To-day a motor-car makes nothing of the steep incline, and parapets have been built to prevent an accident. But the view remains as of yore, a view which few writers can adequately describe; which, indeed, is indescribable. Bits of the landscape frame themselves into perfect pictures between breaks in the hills. You look down upon sleeping villages aglow with sunlight, upon range upon range of greenest hills rolling away to the far-off horizon. The sky is of most delicate blue; every tint of green is visible; cultivated spots appear; and, if lately it has been raining heavily, you may catch a glimpse of a lake shining like silver in the distance. Pass this way again a month hence and you will look in vain for this lake. Only now and then, at long intervals, does it appear—a thing of beauty while it lasts. But Mount Diablo has been passed and Moneague is reached, and now our journey lies directly northward and downward. We are going towards the sea.

Down, down, steadily downwards, and with every mile the temperature grows slightly warmer. And here you observe one of the commonest features of life in Jamaica; in a day you can pass from the warm lowlands to the coolest heights, to elevations which remind you of northern countries in the verdant spring months, to a temperature that may be likened to that of an Indian summer. And as you travel you will be tempted at times to ask if Jamaica is very sparsely populated, so few, comparatively, are the people you see. Yet let your motor-car break down, and you will be surprised at the number of curious folk that will appear, whence, you can scarcely guess! Still it is true that the country could support a much larger number of inhabitants, and will, as time goes on.

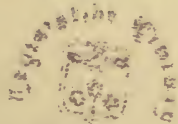
The lowlands at last! We turn due west now, and in a little while, unexpectedly, the sea of the northern coast bursts upon our view. We have come to Ocho Rios, the place of the eight rivers; we are in the parish that has been called 'the Garden of Jamaica'; we are in that portion of the country which Columbus first saw and where he first landed, and where he lived a whole year in sickness and distress. In this parish was built the never-completed Spanish city of Seville; and from one of its little coves the last Spanish Governor of the island set out in his open boat for Cuba, a fugitive.

Nowhere is the sea more beautiful than here. All the colours of the rainbow are reflected from its surface, and in the distance the waves dash themselves to foam against the line of breakers that here and there run parallel to the shore. This is cultivated country. Our journey is by the seashore; but sometimes the sea is hidden from our sight by trees and peasants' gardens, and for long distances we travel through a lane of green steeped in the shadow thrown by overarching trees. Hut after hut we pass, and large cattle pens, and peasants trudging their way along stolidly, and giving you politely 'the time of the day.' Buggies drawn by pairs of tough,

wiry country ponies rattle past at a jog-trot pace, their occupants chiefly farmers owning from fifty to a hundred acres of land, making a good living and contented with their lot. They know you at once for a stranger, and gaze curiously, but never rudely, at you, and you know that you will be the source of a few minutes' speculation to them, and may even constitute the staple of that evening's conversation.

It is afternoon now, the sun is slanting westward, the shadows are lengthening on the road. We have lunched at Moneague, and know we shall arrive at St Ann's Bay in time for dinner; we recline comfortably in our car, and feel at peace with all the world. An hour passes; another. We are in rocky regions again. What is that? The roar of falling water has smitten our ears, and a glimpse of a great volume of something white has been caught by our eyes as we hurried along; we halt, and, alighting, walk back to look upon one of the waterfalls for which the island of Jamaica is famous. The noise is thunderous, as through a narrow gorge a huge body of cream-coloured water leaps into a chasm below. The rock here is yellowish-white and soft, the soil is of the same composition and has coloured the water. This is a branch of the Roaring River, and a little later on we shall see the real Roaring River Falls, the immense cascade that tumbles over a mass of rocks with an infinity of foam and flashes of pale green—shall see it through a tangled medium of tossing trees, and shall carry away an unforgettable memory of it: a joy for ever.

Night has fallen when we reach St Ann's Bay, supposed by some to be the place where Columbus first landed. It is a town built at the foot of a hill, a town of wooden houses chiefly, and having 2592 inhabitants. Its streets run up and down, and at night are shrouded in darkness. Save for the lanterns with which the higglers light up their bowls and trays of fruit and bread and fried fish and cakes, and for the gleam which comes from the two or three shops that are open, there is no lighting. Everybody moves about indistinctly, the sound of



a piano makes itself distinctly heard a long way off; a primitive town this, yet picturesque because of its very primitiveness and simplicity. Flowers grow profusely here, the crotons are gigantic; and after it rains the sky at sunset is a riot of colour, a tumultuous blaze of crimson and purple and gold. It is one of those towns which, somehow, you never forget, with its dark streets and here and there a little lantern gleaming.

We shall have accomplished our first day's travel through Jamaica with the conviction that the hotel accommodation is good. We have had good food wherever we have stopped, the beds have been comfortable, and the attendance satisfactory. This way of travelling is much more convenient than spending a whole day in a train and taking our meals in a dining-car; that sort of thing wearies one after a while, as the writer has often found when sight-seeing in other countries.

Starting in the early morning from St Ann's Bay, we hug the sea-coast once more, and the farther we go the more sugar estates we begin to see. Sugar was once the chief product of Jamaica, and is still one of the principal exports. The cane is planted in squares, and the green spears and pale purple plumes of it bend and wave as the wind passes over them. From the chimney of the boiler-house, where the juice of the cane is turned into sugar, a column of thick smoke ascends, and a sweet odour pervades the road. Farther on, alas! we come upon other sugar estates, but these are as quiet as the grave, as deserted as a churchyard. They are abandoned properties; the sugar-works have fallen into decay, the fields are overgrown with weeds and wood, the 'Great House,' where the planter or his overseer once lived, is now the habitation of bats. This is one of the tragedies of the old Jamaica industry. Once fortunes were made out of sugar, then a bare living, then came the time when the competition of European bounty-fed sugar told the Jamaica planter of his approaching ruin. But Jamaica will always make sugar, for modern machinery and modern science have come to the aid of the

planter, and some of Jamaica's sugar soils are among the best in the world.

But it is when one has passed through the parish of St Ann and entered that of Trelawny that the full extent and meaning of the decadence of the sugar industry become apparent. For a large part of Trelawny is deserted to-day; estate after estate is passed, all in a condition of ruin; it needs no further knowledge to convince one that this parish at any rate has never recovered from the blow which it received during the nineteenth century. The effect of so many ruins, of expensive sugar-works given over to absolute neglect, of fine mansions dismantled and falling slowly to pieces, is saddening in the extreme. We observe, too, that the people we meet in this part of the country seem poorer than those we have seen elsewhere, and that is indeed their condition. Still, they appear cheerful and happy. They scream out a request at us as we go by—'Beg you a tup!' a tup being equivalent to three half-pence. It is only about here that you will hear this word; it is, like some other terms, quite peculiar to the district. In other parishes the peasant will beg you a shilling, though not expecting to have his wishes attended to. He has learnt that tourists are liberal, and raises his demand accordingly. But in Trelawny, where probably few tourists go, the simple peasant is content with asking for a tup, and is apparently equally content if no attention is paid to his request.

It is while on our way to Falmouth, the chief town of Trelawny, that we see some of the finest scenery that the island has to show. Up a high hill we climb, then, as we reach its summit, a steep precipice breaks away upon our left. We look down, and below us lies a valley through which a wide dark-gleaming river flows—the Rio Nuevo on its way to the sea. Cocoa-nut trees and bananas are growing thickly on its banks, and in the fertile fields on either side of it, and the metallic polish of fronds and leaves flash back the rays of the sun as they move and rustle in the wind. Gray-green

mountains surround this valley, with here and there a house visible on the sides of them, and in the valley itself a collection of huts marks the site of a village where the peasants live. A stone bridge spans the river, and the road that passes over it loses itself among the hills. The air is delightful, and a scarcely broken silence seems to brood over this beautiful spot, a silence pierced but not disturbed by the piping of little birds.

As we approach Falmouth, we once again have the sea in view, a multi-coloured sea breaking on delicate, fine white sand, and along the edge of the shore grow thousands of coconut palms, tall and slender, laden with fruit, and wildly waving their branches when struck by a puff of sea breeze. Seeing them thus, with their yellow-green fronds glinting in the sun, one begins to wonder if, after all, the famous Royal Palm is more beautiful than they. The writer has seen forests of Royal Palms in Cuba—hundreds of thousands of them covering the ground for miles. And yet these shore-loving cocoa-nuts—surely they have nothing to fear from any comparison with their rivals of Cuba? So we think; but soon we are entering Falmouth, and the first thought that comes to us is that this must be Sunday. As a matter of fact it is Saturday, the busiest day in all the island. But so still and deserted is this town that one would never think it could be Saturday there.

Falmouth is the classical example of a deserted city in Jamaica. Spanish Town is populous and a hive of activity compared with it. Once it rivalled Kingston; it was the chief sugar port of the island, the produce of two rich parishes was shipped from its wharves. To-day nearly all its wharves have rotted, and but a few planks remain in certain spots, or a few stumps of piers, to remind one that there once were wharves and warehouses along the sea-front of the town. We remark that most of the houses are large. We notice that most of the houses are closed, and that there is not one amongst them that looks less than a hundred years old. Two-thirds of the shops are closed—more than two-thirds. We

count three persons in the principal street, one dray is standing outside an empty warehouse; we spy a man looking out of the window of the Government building which dominates the town. The dust is inches thick upon the street, grass grows everywhere; this surely is a town that has been dead for sixty years; some would say dead beyond the hope of resurrection. Yet it is not necessarily so. The Parish of Trelawny is slowly but surely developing as a banana-growing district, and the better the trade relations between Jamaica and Canada or Jamaica and the United States become, the more hope there will be for the Jamaica sugar industry. It is impossible for any one to doubt that all the Great Antilles have a most promising industrial future. And in that future every parish of Jamaica must share.

The one thing of interest to learn about present-day Falmouth is that it has nearly three women to every man, and that the majority of its 'men' are either minors or persons long past the meridian of life. It may be of some interest to learn also that this once-flourishing town, where the planters used to congregate and money flowed like water, had 2517 inhabitants in 1891 (when it had already decayed) and but 2288 in 1911. Further decay seems impossible to us as we ride between the silent, shuttered, dust-covered houses and pass into the open country once more.

Our journey will end at Montego Bay, twenty-one miles off. There are other towns which we could visit, magnificent stretches of country we could pass through, beautiful waterfalls we could pause to gaze upon, and high mountains we could cross. The journey is well worth taking, but this time we cannot do it. The whole of the interior and the south side of the country must be left unvisited; and this (if the truth must be told) because other topics demand space and attention in these pages. Our road is no longer level, but rolls up and down; the gradients are still easy, and it is pleasant to see that in this parish of St James, which we have now entered, there are

sugar estates at work and but few signs of desertion and poverty. When we come to Montego Bay, we find a town of wooden houses mainly, but a town that looks prosperous enough in its quiet, contented, tropical way. Six thousand six hundred people live in it, it supports a weekly newspaper, it has several large, well-built churches and good hotels; and it calls itself the capital of the Northern parishes. It is a busy town, as commercial and industrial activity goes in the British West Indies; its wealthier classes live on 'the hill,' the poorer people live on the levels, and every one seems to accord very well with every one else, in a placid provincial sort of way. One of the chiefest persons in the town is an American vice-consul, whose vice-consular position cannot be the reason why he resides in Jamaica, since he is reputed to spend a large part of his official salary in helping forward local efforts towards improvement. In him we have an instance of an American identifying himself with the island and being one of the leaders in everything in that part of the country where he resides. He certainly does a great deal for Montego Bay.

Our journey is at an end. It has been hurried; we have only caught a brief glimpse of things from the interior of a motor-car. We have stopped nowhere, except at night; we have visited no ancient mansions, listened to no weird legends, explored no caves, and hardly talked to any of the people. Our impressions have been concerned with externals only, and we have only partially seen a part of those. And, when night finds us on 'the hill' of Montego Bay, and we watch the town twinkling with lights below, with the dark sea rolling out to the far horizon in front of it, we know that we have passed through some of the most magnificent country in the world, but feel that by no effort of ours can we convey to any other mind a vivid and true impression of the things we have seen.

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE'S LIFE

It was in relation to the tropics, I believe, that some one wrote a hymn about 'where every prospect pleases and only man is vile.' The compliment to the physical features of the countries thus characterised is all right, but the inhabitants of them might justly murmur at being held up, so to speak, as blots upon the landscape. However, consolation may be found in the fact that it is beyond the power of a landscape to be vile; that sort of thing is left to the lord of creation, and marks him out as superior to the inanimate world. Besides, tropical man is not all vile. He is like man in almost every part of the world, a composition of good and bad, angelic and bestial, false and true. He has his virtues as well as his shortcomings, and we must take him as we find him and not expect perfection. And yet that is what most persons who are new to countries such as the West Indies, or who remain extremely foolish no matter where they have lived or how long they have lived, will insist upon doing. They credit the West Indian working classes with an unlimited amount of stupidity, and demand from them the recognition of the highest moral standards. They are always ready to tell you what the Negro is incapable of in the way of sustained mental effort, and they seem to take a sort of pride in this. But this will not prevent them from expecting him to show a degree of intelligence equal to that of a college professor, and if he doesn't—and of course he doesn't—they point to his failure as proof of their contention. If your Jamaica peasant were to act as he is popularly expected to act, he would have qualified for sainthood. If he lived as he is presumably expected to live, he would

work about twelve hours a day, with brief pauses for meals, would save nine-tenths of his wages, would be content with whatever was paid him, would be absolutely honest, painfully truthful, absurdly devoted to work, always cheerful, would never answer back, and would show a dog-like fidelity to those who would not think twice about him after he had ceased to be of any service to them. Well, he does nothing of all this. He goes sometimes, it must be admitted, to the very opposite of what is expected from him, and does much less than he reasonably could. Thus it is quite true that many of the labourers do not work more than three days a week, and that many of them love to take lengthy spells of rest when they think they have toiled long enough. But it is also true that often they cannot get work when they want it, and in some of the parishes the planters cannot find employment for the people surrounding them for more than two or three days a week.

Then there are the illegitimacy statistics. Briefly stated, sixty-two per cent. of the children born annually in Jamaica are illegitimate, and the rate does not tend to grow less. It has been practically stationary for the last twenty years, while the proportion of married people to the population is just about half what it might be. 'This is very shocking,' I hear some one say, but somehow it doesn't shock any one very violently in the West Indies. You may attribute this to the climate if you like, or to use and wont. It is not impossible to regard with equanimity in the Tropics things that would send the temperate zone into hysteria, if only they were published in the newspapers. Even Mr William Archer confesses that the moral condition of Jamaica does not appeal to him as immoral, and he does not want to change it.¹ Such is the effect of latitude upon one's ideas.

But, to be serious, you must remember that the people of Jamaica have begun to learn about high standards of moral conduct, according to European ideals, only in late years. In

¹ *Through Afro-America.*

the second chapter of this book I have said enough about the old Jamaica manners and customs, and the class of colonists who came here, to convince the intelligent reader that no one was likely to learn morality from them. Nor did the slave bring any exalted moral ideas with him from Africa; there a wife was property, and if adultery was severely punished, it was as an offence against property. Polygamy was and is practised in West Africa, and the monogamist ideal—namely, home, love, domesticity, one wife, and the due observance of social duties—does not appeal to the West African savage.

The upper classes of the Jamaica people always defend the peasant's way of life by saying that even if he does not marry he is faithful to the woman he selects as his partner. In a considerable number of instances this is no doubt true; I should say that comparative faithfulness was the rule, the absolute being difficult to achieve in normal life. The Jamaica peasant does not marry, because he does not want to be tied for life to one woman. Apart from the responsibility of marriage, which he fully appreciates, he is aware that he may not get on very well with the woman he is supposed to spend his whole life with, and it does not appear to him to be reasonable that he should marry for worse as well as for better. We must bear in mind that Mr Bernard Shaw is also decidedly of this opinion. No one should marry for worse, says Mr Shaw, and in the average Jamaican peasant he has an enthusiastic supporter. So our peasant marries rarely; so to speak, he reverses St Paul's dictum and says, 'it is better to burn than to marry.' And frankly, the results of some of the marriages that take place—and they are not so few after all—are not calculated to fill the heart of the people with admiration for the institution of monogamous marriage. 'My wife having left my care and protection, I am no longer responsible for her,' is a legend which not infrequently one may read in the newspapers. Sometimes the wife will retaliate by saying that she has been forced to leave her husband's protection; and

at every sitting of the Circuit Court the local papers have a couple of columns of print entitled 'The Story of Some Unhappy Marriages,' reading which you might be justified in believing that the reporter found much happiness in recording the proceedings of the divorce court.

The number of married couples in Jamaica is about 150,000, and it is at once obvious that this number does not represent the better classes alone. All classes marry in the island, peasants as well as professional men; still the bulk of the lower or working classes are unmarried, and show at present no tendency to change their mode of life. But it has also to be taken into account that those persons who are above the peasant class think it incumbent upon them to marry, and this irrespective entirely of colour. Social position largely determines what a man's marital relations shall be, and the simple truth is that no disgrace attaches to members of the labouring and peasant class who do not choose to get married.

In Kingston the working classes and domestic servants live chiefly in the lanes of the city and in the poorer suburbs; in the country parishes the peasants live in villages, forty, fifty, or even a hundred together. They supply the neighbouring plantations with labour, and a part of their time is spent in cultivating their own patch of ground. When you learn that the number of planters returned in the census of 1911 was 112,542, you will understand at once that there are a great number of peasant planters in the colony, over a hundred thousand as a matter of fact. Life in the village is very simple. The duties one has to perform are not numerous, but digging and planting are not so easy as one may think, especially when the planter or labourer has to toil under a pitiless sun. The houses the people live in are oblong structures of plaster and wattle thatched with palm leaves or straw, plaster and wattle houses roofed with shingles, and wooden houses shingled and floored, the last description of building having gained in popularity as the people's circumstances have improved. In



THE ARCHBISHOP OF THE WEST INDIES



every village is a shop, and sometimes two; not very far away as distance goes in Jamaica is a schoolhouse, and now and then a rural policeman passes through the place. The law is observed here, the Church is respected. And so the days go by, calm and uneventful, and not unhappily we may safely believe.

As it is with the domestic servant that strangers and the better-class people of the towns come chiefly into contact, and as this section of the people, male and female, numbers no less than forty thousand, let us see how the average servant is trained and develops. It will be apparent that if out of a population of less than nine hundred thousand, most of whom serve themselves, the number of domestics is forty thousand, almost everybody who has the slightest pretensions to be considered anybody employs a servant. In fact, you are not respectable if you have not a servant. That at least is one law of Jamaica life. And when you have learnt how the domestic servant lives, you have learnt how the working-class people of all the Jamaica towns live.

No Jamaica peasant woman ever troubles her mind about the future of her girls while they are still very young; so long as there is a roof over their heads and something each day for them to eat, she is content to take no thought of the morrow, knowing that, as she herself will tell you, the Lord is certain to provide. But the day comes when she is obliged to recognise that the girls are growing to woman's estate, and then she realises that the little family field cannot much longer support so large a family. Then she prepares for the inevitable parting with her eldest daughter. She says it is now time for the latter to 'look living,' and this is what the girl may herself have been thinking for some time. While she has been ripening to womanhood new ideas and sensations have crept into her brain and heart. At the little village church she may have seen some youth whom to her eyes had all the wonderful qualities of manliness, or, on some visit to 'town,' she may have caught a glimpse of some one of whom she has been thinking ever

since. So mother and daughter are agreed that the parting of the ways has come; but the mother does not know what vague thoughts and feelings are fermenting in her daughter's mind, never quite perceives the woman in the growing, maturing girl.

Now in some parts of the island field-work is almost the only form of employment open to women. But most of the girls dislike it, and public sentiment revolts at the idea of girls of tender age working along with boys and men under circumstances conducive to the most thorough demoralisation. The aim and ambition of every decent countrywoman, therefore, is to secure for her girls good places as domestic servants. Hence, while it may sometimes be somewhat difficult to obtain cheap female labour for the fields, women for household work are never hard to find; with the result that almost any one in Jamaica, with any pretensions to respectability, invariably keeps a servant, and sometimes two, for wages are low, and your Jamaica domestic is content with surprisingly little. Often, however, when a mother is planning the future of one of her girls, the girl solves the problem for herself by quietly going off with a youth who has caught her fancy. When this happens there may be perturbation and distress in the family, but it does not last long; for there is always an elderly friend to remind the mother and the others that, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform"; that perhaps (who is to tell?) this may be the best thing that could have happened to Jane; that in any case Jane is only one of thousands who have done the same thing; and that it is the duty of us all, being good Christians, to shoulder our crosses humbly, take courage, and go forward.'

Such consolation is always accepted, and is usually effective. Perhaps the elder female relatives of Jane remember that they themselves acted in precisely the same manner in the days of their youth. And though it is true that Jane had no right to follow their example, there is clearly no sense in fretting over what cannot possibly be undone. Thus Jane goes out

into the world on her own account; and soon her people learn that she is getting on very well, or ill, as the case may be. In any event, the friendliest of relationships are soon re-established between the girl and those she has left in her desire to 'look a living,' and no further word of censure is uttered against her. Few girls, however, will venture to take the bit in their teeth before they are sixteen or seventeen, and it is when they are about twelve years of age that their mothers begin to think of having them learn something by which they will be able to earn their bread.

One day a woman, accompanied by a girl, may arrive in one of the towns, having walked all the way from a village some ten or fifteen miles distant. Perhaps this woman has heard of a lady who wants a servant girl, perhaps she merely hopes to hear of one. She has brought some produce with her to the town-market, and this disposed of, after much higgling and many unnecessary appeals to conscience and Providence, she sets out with her sturdy little daughter to seek for some one who may be willing to give food, clothing, and shelter to the child in exchange for her simple services.

This person may be a stranger in the town, may be a visitor from Kingston, that far-off city where (as the story runs in the country districts) cars run about without the aid of mules and carriages without the help of horses; where wealth is abundant and life a long series of intoxicating enjoyments. News of the stranger's arrival somehow reaches the old woman's ears; an interview is solicited; does the mistress want a school-girl? Probably the mistress does; but is she a good girl? Oh, yes; the parson is prepared to give her a good character and to protest to the excellence of her Christian upbringing; her mother also has taught her how to work, and now suggests an unfailing remedy for all indications of insubordination or laziness on her part: 'Flog her well, missis, if she don't wants to hobey y'u; flog her well, ma'am, if she take up wid bad company. When I put her wid a kine, good lady like you,

who will take care of her, she mus' do what y'u tell her. Don't spare de lash an' spoil de chile, missis.' . . . Thus the bargain is struck. The girl is handed over to her first mistress to be taken away and trained in the way she should go in the future. The mistress may be a 'white' or 'coloured' lady, or a 'brown female.' It is chiefly the latter who makes it a point not to pay wages, substituting therefor such sound moral admonition as shall suffice to make religion and morality a very bugbear to the youthful catechumen. This 'female' sometimes makes her living by selling milk, bread, fruit, and other things; keeps at least two schoolgirls at a time; teaches them to cook, clean, wash, and do other household work in an indifferent manner; whips them when they misbehave; and always tells them of the girls she has trained, and who now (according to her uncontradicted version of the story) are a credit to Church and State, and spend much of their time in congratulating themselves that in early life they came under the tuition of so good a mistress. She is not unkind as a rule, for not only is the average Jamaican a kindly person, and public opinion much averse to the ill-treatment of children, but the latter are independent enough to run away if existence is made a burden to them. More often than not they sleep on a bundle of rags on the floor; but this they take to be no hardship. They are fed on coarse food: rice, yams, sweet potatoes, bread, saltfish, and split-peas, red-peas, gongo-peas, and pumpkin soup forming the staples of their fare, with meat occasionally. But for fresh meat most of them never develop a liking, not having become accustomed to it in their youth. Their passion is for pretty clothing, and this taste is gratified to a limited extent by wise mistresses.

Thus their life may pass from year to year until they are eighteen. They are not unlike serfs, but decidedly they are not unhappy. Their relatives occasionally come to visit them. They stand on a familiar footing with their mistresses, are consulted by the latter on business enterprises and even

on matters of domestic concern; are praised often, designated as ungrateful upon those occasions when they manifest an unwilling disposition; and, as they increase in experience and value, are given pocket money so that they may not steal.

This, of course, does not prevent them all from stealing. Hence a girl sometimes obtains the reputation of being a 'puss' quite early in life, and once having developed a strong disposition to levy contribution on other people's goods, it is rare indeed to find her becoming honest in later life. Then there is always some trouble about boys. An inclination on the part of the girls to linger in streets and lanes after nightfall with members of the masculine sex has to be sternly suppressed, 'big missis' even going so far as to declare at times her unalterable determination to send the offender back to her parents in the country, and thus deprive her of all the benefits of a high and progressive civilisation which, in her mistress's opinion, she at present enjoys. But the day comes when custom stales and threats are of no effect. The school-girl may be eighteen now, and a spirit of unrest has developed strongly within her. It may be that she is in love, and wishes to leave. If so, she may tell her mistress that she is going to the country to see her people, and thus make a comparatively honourable exit; or, her courage failing her, she may one night decamp suddenly, taking her few articles of clothing with her. When her flight is discovered, her mistress will say that she always expected something of the sort to happen, and may in her anger accuse the poor girl of so many crimes and misdemeanours that you (if a stranger) will wonder how such youthful depravity could possibly exist.

But our 'schoolgirl,' when seventeen or eighteen, may simply feel that the time has arrived when she should become an independent, wage-earning woman. She may hint this to her mistress, who will then see that it is quite impossible for this schoolgirl to remain much longer with her. Perpetual fault-finding, discontent, and quarrels now denote

the developing estrangement; then one day the climax comes, and she goes for good. She is now her own mistress, her 'own woman,' as she herself puts it, and henceforth she is responsible to herself alone. For the most part, her career will be that of a domestic servant.

Her early career will have been different if she has been a schoolgirl in a better-class family. There she may have been put to look after the younger children, run errands, and do odd jobs about the house. If a girl of steady character, she may remain for years in that household, her manners becoming refined and her appearance steadily improving. She may marry 'out of the family,' as the local expression goes, and always she will keep up friendly communication with those to whom she will believe (and rightly) that she owes a great deal; or she may remain a trusted servant till her death. Faithful, perfectly satisfied that those she serves are the finest people in the world, efficient and somewhat arrogant towards the rest of the servants, she rules that household as one born to command. She is referred to as an 'old-time person,' such as you never see in these degenerate days. She herself is convinced that women of her type have passed out of existence for ever, the younger generation of Jamaica girls being entirely without virtues of any sort.

How do they live, these women, on whom falls most of the domestic work of Jamaica?

Briefly I have given some idea of their existence in their 'schoolgirl' days, in the days when they had not to think of what they should eat, what they should drink, or wherewithal they should be clothed. Then they were without means of their own, but also they were without care. And at the worst they could always return to the country, to the little village in the hills, to the thatched hut nestling under the great rustling leaves of the banana, certain to find there a shelter for a while. Indeed, so long as the old people are alive, the little home in

the country will always have an open door for the daughter who has gone out into the world. Yet no grown woman likes to return home, except on a short visit, and as a person of independent means. Very rarely will the girl who has 'taken the world upon her shoulders' consent to let her people know that she is in desperate straits. She loves her independence, she takes a certain pride in being able to manage her own affairs and direct the course of her own life. In her progress from youth to old age she passes through many experiences and suffers many vicissitudes, but to her old 'home' she but rarely returns for good. Always she acts upon the principle that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. She does not fret about the future. She does not think of it. She struggles on through adversity until better times come round.

Sometimes your servant will be glad to sleep in one of your servants' rooms, with which every Jamaica house is provided. There are generally two of these; small boxes as a rule, and built at about thirty or forty feet away from the house. These are sometimes plainly—very plainly—furnished by employers; as a rule, however, your servant is supposed to have her own furniture, which more often than not consists of a truckle bed, a deal-board table, and a couple of small boxes as substitutes for chairs. The walls of the room will be decorated with pictures cut out of old newspapers and periodicals; and two servants usually sleep in one room. This by preference and for company; and at night they bar the door and bolt the shutter, and close the jealousy windows tight, thus excluding as much fresh air as possible. This room is their sleeping apartment, and except at night they scarcely use it. Most of their time is passed in the kitchen, in the wash-house, in the streets, in the yard. Most of their life is passed in the bright sunshine, in the full blaze of it, with the blue sky above their heads. They may not think of these, yet it is this environment of blue sky and bright sun that helps them to accept drudgery and ill-fortune with such

light-heartedness. So long as it is warm and there is colour in the sky, their hearts are glad.

But most often your servant will not sleep on the premises. 'She would be glad to do so, but——' That settles it. There is no sense in insisting that she shall sleep if you want to retain her services. Perhaps she has a little child or two at home, and the possession of those children may compel her to give up a comfortable room in a big and fairly sanitary yard, and may oblige her to rent a little place in an insanitary yard, paying the rent out of the scanty wages she receives. Yet, after all, the children are dearer to her than the comparative comforts of a room attached to your residence; besides, the day may come when they may be the only barrier that stands between her and the Union Poorhouse.

Your servant's day's work does not end when she leaves for her little home. If you have undertaken to feed her, she will take her dinner away with her, and, arrived at home, may do some cooking on her own account. By the threshold of her little room (built all of wood) she will place a box, and on the box a lighted stove. A tiny saucepan is soon steaming on this stove, what time her little ones stand patiently round waiting until their dinner is prepared. When the food is cooked, it is supplemented by the victuals she has brought with her, and carefully apportioned out to each one according to his or her needs; then the children will be bidden to say grace, for spiritual matters are never far from the thoughts of the West Indian woman at any time. The meal over, the children are put to bed. Then the mother either sits in her own room and talks to her next-door neighbours (from whom she is divided by thin partitions of board only), or she squats on a box in the yard and converses with others who congregate there, or strolls to the gate to see what may chance to be happening in the dusty lane. Early in the morning she will rise and do some washing for herself or her children. Periodically she comes into possession of a 'friend,' and then,

for the time, her burden may be lightened. But as her family grows, grows also the necessity for her to work harder and more steadily. Then some day her eldest girl goes off to 'look a living' for herself, or her biggest boy departs to carve out an independent career. And then it is that, perhaps for the first time, she realises that her life is slipping away and that she is no longer young.

If she lives to be old, she will probably become a regular member of a church, and her children will see that she and their father do not starve. But if there are no children and Caroline is still in the morning of womanhood, she indeed is a person to be envied. Her chief concern and the delight of her life is dress; she insists upon taking the Sundays-off which are hers by agreement, and on public holidays the chances are that she may suddenly fall sick for the purpose of attending a picnic.

To many persons the way in which their servants dress in these days is something of a mystery. But to the initiated there is no mystery at all about the matter. Some years ago there appeared in Jamaica a small number of men who could barely speak English, who went about with packs on their backs, and soon came to be known by the generic name of 'Turks.' Later on they were recognised as Syrians, and from the first they set themselves out to get into touch with servants and other people of much the same class. They sold and still sell everything. Boots, cloth, jewellery—all these and more are to be found in the wonderful packs of the Syrians; by paying a shilling a week, or two shillings at the most, you may have a dress or a fine pair of shoes costing a pound and upwards. The temptation is great, and Caroline cannot resist it. So on Sundays or on important holidays, did you meet your servant in the street 'tis ten chances to one you would not recognise her at first, so bravely is she decked out. Her joy reaches the highest heights when she receives an invitation to a wedding; for to be one of the 'gesses' at such a function is a rare privilege (weddings themselves being rare); and to

dress in white or pink muslin, wear white shoes, adorn one's hair with roses, and be driven through the streets in a carriage so that all the world might stare—could existence have finer and more exquisite pleasure to offer?

She thinks not; so for weeks she will save money (and run herself into any amount of debt), all for the sake of being a guest at the wedding. And to every one she meets she will show the card of invitation with its letters of gold, and she will want her mistress to see her in her resplendent garments, and for days, weeks, and months after she will speak of that wedding, and narrate the things said to her and the things she said, and perhaps she will leave her employment before she has finished paying the Syrian the full amount she owes him, for well she knows he has charged her double the money the things she took were worth, he having argued (not wrongly) that she would not be anxious to meet her obligations in good time.

The ambition of Caroline is to have a dress 'just like the mistress own.' She is not envious, but emulous. And if there is one thing she objects to more than another it is being charged with dishonesty, for between 'taking' and 'stealing' a little of your essence she draws a firm line. If she is honest (as most often she is) she will leave your money alone; your clothes, too, she will leave undisturbed. But if, after she has repeatedly given proof of such incorruptible rectitude, you should find fault with her for merely 'taking' a little sugar, or even for 'taking' a little essence, the chances are that you will lose forthwith a servant with outraged feelings. She will henceforth regard you as utterly mean, and will almost prefer to starve than to continue working with such as you. You can, of course, point out to her that you have objections to your essence or powder being disturbed, and the warning may be heeded. But she must not be ridiculed before the other servants, or spoken to roughly and harshly. Whatever you do, in fact, you must not ridicule the peasant people of Jamaica or shame them before others. An insult hurts them more than an injury.

CHAPTER VI

SOME BELIEFS AND CUSTOMS

NOT more than a century has passed since the work of Christianising the people of Jamaica was begun; at the beginning of 1800 the island was practically heathen. A great number of the people then living had been brought from Africa, most of the slaves born in the country had African parents; and it is a favourite saying among the white men who have lived in the Dark Continent that only a sheet of fine paper divides West Africa from hell. There we find all the superstitions which have degraded and brutalised the minds of men; there we find the worship of imaginary evil beings; and, it need hardly be said, the people who came from West Africa to Jamaica in the days of the slave trade were steeped to the lips in all the abominations of that country.

They brought their beliefs with them. They remembered their practices. Before the emancipation of the slaves most of those practices could not be openly indulged in, yet that did not prevent them from being carried on in secret. One thing, however, I do not remember to have seen mentioned by any early writer on Jamaica history: I do not recollect any reference to human sacrifices here. If they did take place, all knowledge of them must have been sedulously kept from the masters and the Government. But I do not think they took place, and none has ever been heard of since freedom was proclaimed. To-day, the very memory of such a thing has gone from the minds of the most debased practitioner of African witchcraft. And this witchcraft itself, or obeah, as it is locally known, is rapidly undergoing modifications; is

progressing from the tragic and dangerous to the merely ridiculous.

What is obeah? Excellent descriptions of the practice of it are to be found in a score of books dealing with Jamaica; not one authentic explanation of its origin and meaning has been given before. Writer after writer refers it back to ancient Egyptian religion; we are told that obeah is derived from the word *Ob*, the Egyptian word for serpent, and it is assumed that the serpent or snake plays an indispensable part in the practice of obeah. As a matter of fact, it does not. Authoritative works, especially those by Miss Mary Kingsley and Colonel Ellis, have been written on West African religion and witchcraft, and very little is said about snakes in them. I have, indeed, never come upon the word obeah in connection with Africa, though it may be used somewhere on the West Coast, for all that I know to the contrary. What exactly corresponds to the old obeahism of the West Indies is what is generally described as witchcraft by students of West African beliefs and customs; and witchcraft amongst the West African peoples is as much hated, condemned, and feared as it has ever been in these islands. For the West African wizard (or obeahman) is not a priest, and has never been regarded in any country save as a dangerous person.

Obeahism itself has undergone so great an evolution in Jamaica, the origin of it is so completely forgotten, that it may be well to trace that origin here, to show what it was in Jamaica a century ago, what it was at the end of the nineteenth century, and what it is to-day. In this way we will obtain some idea of the progressive forces at work in Jamaica; for the progress from base superstitions to saner beliefs is one of the finest evidences of a developing civilisation. Let us see, then, how a man becomes a wizard in West Africa.

The West African natives, and particularly those of the Gold Coast (from which part of Africa the larger number of the Jamaican slaves were brought), believe in a number of

gods of different classes and unequal power. All these gods have their priests and priestesses, but there is one particularly malignant spirit which, on the Gold Coast, has no regular priesthood. He is called Sasabonsum, and any individual may put himself in communication with him. Sasabonsum's favourite residence is the ceiba, the giant silk-cotton tree. He is resorted to in the dead of night, his votary going to the spot where he is supposed to live, and, collecting there a little earth, or a few twigs, or a stone, he prays the god that his power may enter this receptacle. If he believes that his prayer has been heard, he returns home with his *suhman*, as the thing is now named, and henceforward he has a power which is formidable for injurious purposes, to which he offers sacrifice, and to whose worship he dedicates a special day in the week. By the aid of this *suhman* he can bewitch a man to death. He can also sell charms that will cause death or bodily injury. To other less pernicious uses his charms may also be put: thus a *suhman* charm, in the shape of a bundle of twigs, is very efficacious for keeping thieves away from a house or provision ground, if hung up where it can be seen.

But a man with such a 'power' is, potentially at least, a very dangerous person. Any one may go out and get a *suhman* if he likes, but there are few who dare do so. They are afraid of Sasabonsum, the witches' god; they are likewise afraid of the opinion of their neighbours, who, knowing that power to do harm is very likely to be used harmfully, condemn the keeping of a *suhman* as prejudicial to the public welfare. There are also the priests, who are the proper and legitimate means of approaching the gods. These look upon the man who has a *suhman* as an upstart rival, and they keep a vigilant eye on him. The man with such a malignant power, therefore, often avoids publicity; but either through the temptation of gain, or because he wishes to be respected and feared by the people, or because he thinks he is powerful enough to flout public opinion, he sometimes lets it be known that he has a *suhman*.

But if he should be publicly accused of being a wizard, and is not strong enough to defy the crowd, his chances of escaping death are few, for an infuriated, terror-stricken African people are not to be trifled with. If it is believed that he has deliberately bewitched some one—and every West African believes himself bewitched pretty often during the course of his life—he must be a very powerful or very lucky individual indeed to escape the consequences of his alleged wickedness.

A priest, on the other hand, may also sell you charms to scare away thieves, help you to prosperity, or keep away disaster. All this comes within the functions of a member of the West African priesthood. He may even undertake to 'put death upon a man,' as the wizard does, if he is sufficiently well paid for the business. But priests do not care to indulge in this sort of thing. Their main function is to propitiate the gods, to unbewitch people; in a word, to prevent disasters from occurring. They know, too, that if they came to be regarded as willing to act the part of common murderers for any one and at any price, their influence would be shaken: at the very least they would be bitterly detested. Then, as things go in West Africa, they make a very good revenue out of their witch-doctor work; consequently they generally leave bewitchings to those who make a practice of them.

Both witches and wizards, priests and priestesses, were brought to Jamaica in the days of the slave trade, and the slaves recognised the distinction between the former and the latter. Even the masters saw that the two classes were not identical, and so they called the latter 'myal men' and 'myal women'—the people who cured those whom the obeahmen had injured. Of the present-day descendants of these priests or myal men more will be said later on. It is probable that many of the African priests became simple obeahmen after coming to Jamaica, for the very simple reason that they could not openly practice their legitimate profession. But,

when known as obeahmen, however much they might be treated with respect, they still were hated and feared. Every evil was attributed to them. The very name of them spread terror.

They worked with charms and spells and poison. When a man saw a bundle containing odds and ends of things at the threshold of his door, he gave himself up for lost; and, if terror did not do its work effectually, poison would be employed. It is related that one old obeahwoman alone was responsible for the death of a hundred slaves in fifteen years. This was in the middle of the nineteenth century. At the close of the last century one sometimes heard of an obeahman confessing, when on the point of death, that he had been the cause of several persons dying, though this was probably an exaggeration. For the fear of obeah, terrible a hundred years ago, has decreased steadily ever since emancipation. It is still to be reckoned with, but is much feebler than even when I witnessed the scene I describe below; and it should be mentioned that the obeahman to-day is mainly employed not to work others harm but to bring good fortune. He is not so much a terror as a fraud.

It was in the year 1897 that I had an opportunity of seeing a high-priest of obeahism at work. In one of the yards of Kingston, just a little above the northern limit of the city proper, there lived an old woman who was considered a good member of the church to which she belonged. She went frequently to religious services, supported the church to the best of her ability, was scrupulously cleanly and respectful to her superiors, but hard and unyielding towards those whom she disliked. She was a firm believer in obeah, and it was even darkly whispered by her enemies that she once had been an obeahwoman herself. She had two children of her own and several step-children; and when her second husband died she possessed herself of all his goods and chattels, including the yard in which she lived. To this her

step-children objected, not unnaturally, for there was a will, and she was not even mentioned in the will. No one, however, was prepared to resort to law just then, for the very good reason that no one felt quite sure of his or her legal position. Some members of the old man's family, however, delegated by the rest, came down from the hill districts to the north one day and took forcible possession of some of the rooms in the yard. Physical force being on the side of the invaders, the old woman had perforce to submit, though with rage in her heart. She uttered vague threats against them, and they returned her sinister remarks with interest. They felt sure that they would be injured by her some day, if only she should get the chance to work them harm. For her part, she was satisfied that they would stop at little to drive her out of the place.

The old woman's son lived with her, but her daughter did not. She lived in the hills to the north of the city, and had set up housekeeping with the man who was the father of her three children, and on whom, unluckily, another lady had cast envious eyes. This led to many bitter quarrels between Susanah (as the old woman's daughter was called) and the other woman; at last, one day, a fight took place between them, and Susanah was severely wounded in the head with an iron bar. She was sent to the nearest hospital, and the woman went to prison; she recovered, and for a year or so everything seemed to go well with her, as usual. Then she began to complain of severe pains in her head, and these steadily grew worse. The crisis came one day when, working in her little provision field on the hill-side, under a vertical sun, she fell down in a fit; and when she recovered consciousness it was to scream and rave and toss herself about—a doctor would have said she was deranged. She had moments and even hours of calmness and lucidity. She had at those times a faint idea of what she had been doing, but declared that she could not restrain herself. Her madness continued;



A JAMAICA
TOWN



A COCOANUT
PLANTATION



A
JAMAICA
VILLAGE

eventually her mother went for her and took her to Kingston to have her treated for the mysterious malady that had so suddenly afflicted her. The old woman had no doubt whatever as to the nature of the complaint. It was clear that Susanah had been obeahed, and it was her half-brothers who lived in Kingston who had done the deed! A ghost had been 'put on her.'

All this I learnt afterwards as a result of diligent inquiry. What I saw for myself was that there was no attempt to call in a doctor to see the unfortunate woman who was a victim both to madness and to superstitious fears. Night after night, day after day, in a tiny room raised but two feet from the ground, and with its two small windows carefully closed to prevent a draught, Susanah lay mourning and tossing upon a wooden bed. The room was always crowded with people, partly sympathetic, partly curious to see a woman who was being haunted by a ghost. At the threshold of the door a sheet of tin was placed, and heaped up on this was a mixture of bush and weeds of an awful smell, and bits of cows' horn and hoof, and dried orange peel, and one or two powerful drugs. The whole heap was kept burning continuously, day and night, and a thick smoke from it rose upwards and drifted into the room.

This was supposed to be a means of driving ghosts and evil spirits away, and sometimes the watchers would sing with the same object in view. The sound seemed to distress the sick woman, for often in the midst of the lugubrious howling of the people she would spring from her bed and scream, and make a desperate effort to rush out into the yard. At such times it was believed that the ghost was particularly active in working its wretched will upon her, and her mother, her face a picture of rage and terror and despair, would mutter terrible threats against her enemies, and invoke curses on their heads, and would heap more cows' horn and stinking bush and asafœtida on the smoking platter at the threshold of

the door, and the women in the room would read aloud the Bible story of the man possessed by devils who lived among the tombs, and then, lifting up their voices, would endeavour, by repeating verses of Scripture, to exorcise the ghost that was tormenting poor Susanah.

For three or four weeks this sort of thing went on. Over fifty persons lived in the yard, and the other yards in the immediate neighbourhood were as crowded. Hence there were always between thirty and forty persons to gather after night-fall round the room in which Susanah lay, for the purpose of watching her and of discussing her strange illness. Most of them believed she had indeed been obeahed, and clearly the obeah was strong, since the power of it had not been broken by the singing of hymns, the reading of the Bible, nor even by the burning of cows' horn and stinking weed.

Then something occurred which proved to the full how terrible was the ghost which haunted the woman. Susanah's brother, going out one day at noon to purchase drugs to burn at the threshold of the room, suddenly fell down in a fit. Shrieks of horror rose from those who saw him fall, and I, hearing the noise (though living at some distance from the yard) rushed in to see what was the matter. There on the ground the young man lay, unconscious and gasping, the victim of his own superstitious fears.

When he recovered, he told the anxious group around him that just as he was about to leave the yard he felt 'something cold blow upon him,' and then had fallen down. The consensus of opinion was that the ghost was angry with him for interfering with its work, and so had punished him. This determined his mother upon a desperate course. As a member of a church, she could not call in an obeahman to look at Susanah without cutting herself off from religion and definitely taking a place among those who were considered to be dealers in evil. Yet her need was great, and superstition was always stronger in her mind than faith. She felt that she had to

fight obeah with obeah. She decided to seek help from those who dealt with and had control over the spirits of hell.

During her daughter's illness, however, the old woman had not been able to earn any money; and her son's time had been so much taken up with fighting the ghost (and with fighting his own fears of the ghost) that he also was in a bad financial condition. As for Susanah's 'husband,' he did not seem to assist very greatly at this crisis, having, I believe, transferred his affections to some other lady. Yet to employ an obeahman required money—three guineas at least; and it was difficult to find this amount. Nevertheless the old woman found it. A thrifty woman, she had put by a few shillings at different times; every penny of these savings she now drew out of the Government Savings Bank; and now she was left destitute, save for the rent from two or three small rooms—not a pound a month in all.

Still, she could at last make a great effort to cure Susanah. So one day, at about noon, the people in the yard was startled by a peculiar demonstration made by a man who was to them a stranger. He was a tall fellow and jet-black; intelligent looking and substantially dressed. He was standing in the yard, talking aloud and at large, in a language that no one else understood. Presumably he was addressing the ghost, but the address was only a part of the performance.

Presently he went inside the room and closed the door, he and the sick woman remaining alone together. Then rappings were heard, and sounds as if a struggle were taking place; of a sudden the door flew open, and the obeahman rushed into the yard and down the whole length of it to where the kitchen was situated. He had in his hands a tumbler covered with a towel, and in this receptacle was the ghost—caught at last. This was the claim he made, at any rate. He had previously caused a hole to be dug behind the kitchen, and into this hole he deposited the covered tumbler and buried it, speaking an unintelligible jargon all the while. His work

completed, he solemnly warned the spectators on no account to dig the tumbler up, an unnecessary warning, since not one of them would have touched it for his life. He went back to the room where the sick woman was lying, ate a tremendous lunch, and assured Susanah's mother that although her daughter was necessarily weak after the ordeal she had just gone through, she nevertheless was cured, and would be able to go about her business as usual on the following day. All listened to his words with respect, not unmingled with fear. Having been paid in advance—a little matter always insisted upon by obeah practitioners—he took his departure amidst the blessings of the deluded old woman.

The next day Susanah was as bad as ever, and it had to be admitted that the obeahman had failed.

The explanation was that his 'power' was not as great as was the 'power' of the man who had been employed to obeah Susanah. Bitter was the old woman's disappointment, yet she did not dream of remonstrating with the man who had failed. She knew that remonstrances would avail her nothing, and she did not believe she had been duped. She simply knew that now she must employ one of the most powerful and notorious obeahmen in Kingston, a man who had been twice to prison, but whose reputation still stood high as a worker of witchcraft. This man charged her five pounds, and the unfortunate woman set out to raise the money by every means in her power.

For several days she went about selling her household gods. She offered a good mattress for a few shillings to one of my servants; hearing of it, I remonstrated with her. 'Surely,' I said to her, 'you cannot believe that this obeahman can help your daughter?'

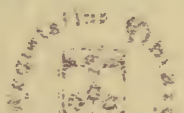
'Don't say so, massa; don't say so!' she answered, with a touch of indignation in her voice. 'If y'u don't want you' servant to buy de matrass, she needn't buy it; but don't tell me what I know better dan you.'

Such an answer, and especially the tone in which it was given, showed that the woman's nerves were strained to breaking point. Even her habitual feeling of respect was no proof against a morose tendency to regard with suspicion any one who should now counsel her to pause in her foolish efforts to rid Susanah of the ghost.

She raised the money, reducing herself to direst poverty in the endeavour to do so. The Sunday after the conversation just recorded took place, I went into the yard to see how the sick woman was getting on, being curious (I must confess) to know what more was to be done with Susanah. Under a guinea tree that grew close to the latter's room, I noticed a small white kid so tightly secured that it was crying piteously. 'Poor little thing,' I cried sympathetically, 'why don't you slacken the rope?'

'Don't sorry fo' him, massa! don't sorry fo' him!' the old woman ejaculated. 'Him is a little brute!' I began to suspect that the kid was being reserved for some particular purpose.

It was so. I got a hint that day that something mysterious was to take place on the same night, and I took good care to be where I could see what was to be done. The new obeah-man was a very different sort of person from the one who had failed to cure Susanah; he went about his business in a grave, quiet, methodical manner, as though impressed with the importance of it. At about half-past eleven he appeared, and with some bundles of wood which had been laid at the foot of the tree to which the white kid was tied he kindled a great fire. Round this fire he drew a circle, and in the circle he placed a box. To this box Susanah, robed all in white, was led from her room, and upon it he gently put her to sit. Her head was tied with a bit of white lawn, she wore white shoes, and she seemed to understand quite well that this was a ceremony for exorcising the ghost which she had been told was haunting her.



Quietly she sat there while the obeahman, waving his hands and chanting, began his horrid work. A number of persons stood round; fed constantly with fuel, the fire blazed up with a fierce crackling sound, and the sparks flew upwards in showers amongst the leaves and the branches of the tree. Still the obeahman waved his hands and swayed his body, chanting the while, and all the time the woman sat silent upon her lonely seat gazing straight in front of her, and the terror-stricken spectators looked on with fear-filled eyes. Midnight came, the great bell of the Parish Church telling forth the hour distinctly upon the silent night. Before the last stroke had died away the obeahman had leaped upon the kid, severed the rope that tied it to the tree, and, lifting it up by the head, had plunged a sharp knife deep into its upturned throat. The poor brute cried out once as it felt the cruel stab, a sharp, half-smothered bleat; but it was dead a second after, and the blood, spurting from the ugly wound, was falling over Susanah's head and body. White and red her dress stood out now in the bright glare of the fire; her face was drawn, her eyes stared wildly as though striving to see something that lay beyond in the darkness. Concealed behind a fence, I could see everything clearly without myself being seen. It was easy to perceive that the spectators were horribly frightened. This was something new to them: a sacrifice such as the majority, at any rate, had never before assisted at in all their lives.

And now another part of the ceremony was to be performed. Drawing some of the wood away, the obeahman thinned the fire until it became a narrow bar of glowing embers. When the flames died down pitch darkness descended on the scene, save only where Susanah and the obeahman were standing. The two figures stood out faintly; the woman was placed in front of what was left of the fire, and again she was sprinkled with blood. Then, at a word from the obeahman, Susanah gathered up her skirts and leaped lightly over the

glowing bar; leaped once, twice, and yet again, and then passed out of the circle. The man wiped the perspiration from his brow. His work was accomplished.

The next day I saw Susanah walking about her yard, to all appearances cured! It may be that faith in the obeah-man and in the ordeal she had gone through had had a great effect upon her mind; it may be that she had gradually been winning to sanity, and that, persuaded now that the ghost was laid at last, she had become comparatively calm once more. But the 'cure' was not for long. In a few days she was raving again; in a few weeks she was dead. Her mother soon followed her; her brother is still alive, and no doubt still a firm believer in ghosts. But the very next year the Legislative Council passed such a stringent law against the practice of obeah that such a scene as that I have described could not now take place without detection and punishment following. And since that time the police—a native police it must be remembered—have been so active in the repression of obeahism that its high priests have become fewer, and its practice has diminished steadily.

I should say it would be difficult for an obeahman to do now in any part of the island what I saw two of them do in 1897 in the city of Kingston. Now and then obeahmen are captured and taken before the courts; but the most they are charged with is pretending to be able to 'give luck' to those who resort to them. They are shameless cheats; but it is proof that the fear of their supernatural power has considerably lessened when those whom they persuade to consult them will sometimes report them to the police! It will take some time yet for these gentry to lose all their influence—it will take many years. Yet, considering what their power was a hundred, fifty, or even twenty years ago, it may be said with certainty that the combined effect of religion, education, and law has broken the back of a practice which spells withcraft pure and simple, and which in the past has often led to murder.

The other ceremony I will now describe is of a much more pleasant and altogether different character. I was living in Kingston when, one night, about five years ago, I was startled by hearing a long-drawn-out shriek. It fell away to silence, then rose again and again, a series of piercing sounds that stabbed through the darkness and waxed and waned with monotonous regularity. In a minute or two I was out in the street and endeavouring to locate the direction from which the sounds were coming; the only other living beings to be seen were two boys, whose peculiar attitude attracted my attention. They were kneeling with their heads held close to the ground, and listening intently. 'What is the matter?' I asked them. 'Nine-night, sah,' they replied laconically.

'Where?'

They bent their heads still nearer to the ground, were silent for a moment, then pointed positively in a north-eastern direction.

'It is there, sah,' said the elder of the two; then with the volubility of the Kingston gamin he went on to explain to me how he and others of his type were always able to detect where a 'ninth night' was being held in Kingston. It appeared from what he said that a very large number of persons made it a point to attend this ceremony, and that these had by constant practice become able to hear the sound of singing at almost unimaginable distances. By placing their ears close to the ground, they claimed that they could discover the direction from which the sound proceeded; and as, though 'ninth nights' are supposed to be family gatherings chiefly, any stranger is free to attend them, it is indubitably true that thousands of persons in the West Indies periodically derive a great deal of happiness from the death of a fellow creature. Nothing can give a whole neighbourhood more solemn satisfaction than to learn that some one has died in the locality. There is first the wake, then the funeral, then the 'ninth night'; and as the West Indian of the lower classes loves

midnight orgies of a semi-religious nature, and has specialised in the singing of Moody and Sankey's hymns, even an epidemic would in some of the islands lose something of its terror in view of the opportunities it might afford in the way of funerals and wakes and 'ninth nights.'

I handed the elder of the two youths a shilling : could I go to this 'ninth night'? He looked at me doubtfully, but agreed. 'I will teck y'u, sah,' he said; 'but a nine-night is a funny ting. Y'u must be sarrawful until it come to about two o'clock; for if y'u laugh before dat time dere is some man dat will teck stick an' lick y'u. Y'u can't meck fun as y'u like.'

He was full of worldly wisdom and experience was this youth; and as I had heard of frivolous persons being beaten with bits of prickly cactus tied to sticks by gentlemen of a religious and belligerent turn of mind, who maintained that the singing of hymns and the reading of the Scriptures should occupy the first part of a 'ninth night' ceremony, to the total exclusion of all other matters, I faithfully promised to be as sad as the situation might seem to warrant. I more readily gave this promise as I realised that a policeman was not likely to be within hailing distance of the place where the 'ninth night' was being held.

So off we started in a north-westerly direction, my guides ingenuously giving me lessons in the art of how to be happy though workless. They were not untidily dressed. Both wore battered straw hats; both carried sticks; both confessed proudly to never having done a stroke of hard work in their lives. Nevertheless, as man must have some occupation, they had learnt to play on the Jew's harp and the guitar, and had cultivated their voices to the pitch of loudness and shrillness suited to wakes, 'ninth nights,' and revivalist demonstrations; and with these accomplishments they were for the present satisfied. As we walked on they explained to me that all that it was necessary to do at a 'ninth night' was

to enter boldly, take a seat if one were vacant, look 'sarrawful,' and, for the rest, behave as every one else did. It was also prudent for a stranger to sit near the gate, for many persons had been known to experience a desire to escape hurriedly from the scene of a too enthusiastic 'ninth night.'

We walked for about a quarter of a mile, the sound of the incessant singing guiding us, and then I found myself in one of the poorest and most wretched of the slum-suburbs of Kingston. Inhabited by a heterogeneous population whose means of existence has been a problem to those who interest themselves in the condition of the Jamaica poor, it combines the characteristics of a village and a slum. Gutters paved and unpaved abound, and in all of them fetid water stagnates. Trees and bush grow everywhere; the streets are narrow and crooked; and the architectural aspirations of the owners of house property there have been expressed in designs that are peculiar to the place. Thus, for example, some ingenious persons have collected a number of old kerosene cans, carefully flattened them out, nailed them to a skeleton of posts and rafters, and thus constructed a house on the most economical principles. Others have built tiny houses out of odds and ends of board. Then there are yards with long rows of tenement rooms—small kraals every one of them—and a few shops, a little church or two, and dust and dirt and indifference everywhere.

As we entered the village the singing, which had ceased for a moment or two, burst forth again with increased violence, and the air was filled with sound. I heard the words,—

Know that the Lord is God alone,
He doth create and can destroy,

thundered out by the sonorous voices of the men, and sent to pierce the darkness and the sky above by the shrill ear-splitting *crescendo* of the women. My guides paused before an open gate; this was the place we were seeking.

Let me describe the scene exactly as I saw it. A great booth of dirty white canvas, and under this booth a crowd of persons of all ages and of both sexes. This was what first caught and held one's attention. The crowd was assembled in the centre of a large yard, and at some distance from the gate; and above the booth towered a giant tree. There must have been at least a hundred persons huddled under the frail canvas covering, some sitting on chairs and benches, others squatting on blocks of wood. In the midst of them was a table, on which were drinking-glasses and mugs and Bibles and hymn-books; and I noticed a smaller table covered with a white cloth, at the head of which sat a coal-black elderly man, who apparently presided over the proceedings.

On either side of the booth, and along the whole length of the yard, ran a range of rooms, not more than nine feet in height from floor to roof. At the thresholds of some of these rooms sat women and children, and on nails driven into the poles which supported the booth a few storm-lanterns hung. Kerosene lamps placed on the tables gave forth a brilliant light. The heat was intense, for it was August. Everything stood out distinctly: the sable faces shining with perspiration; the glistening white teeth, the swaying bodies of the hymn-intoxicated people. There was something weird and wild and garish about that midnight gathering of men and women shouting under the calm star-lighted sky, vociferating that the Lord is God alone, while the rest of the city was hushed in the silence of sleep.

I entered the place with some hesitation, and as I did so all eyes were turned upon me, though the singing did not cease. One man rose and courteously offered me a chair a little apart from the singers; some of the younger women stared and giggled; a few withered dames glared at me suspiciously. Remembering my young guide had said that the religious men present would probably resent anything on my part which smacked of levity or contempt, I looked at the old women

with so serious a countenance that they probably decided that I appreciated the importance of the function. While the singing continued, I had time to glance curiously round.

One of the little rooms which I faced stood with its door and windows wide open, and from where I sat I could easily see into it. A large iron bed, covered with a clean white spread, was conspicuous; the rest of the furniture consisted of two small tables; evidently the chairs belonging to the room were being utilised in the yard. The room I observed, and it looked as though it had been garnished for some particular purpose. Seeing me gaze into it, one of my guides came over to me with the explanation, 'In there, sah, the woman dead.' Afterwards I discovered what he meant, and what the meaning of this peculiar 'ninth night' function was.

Nine days before some one had died in that room, a woman whose children and relatives and friends were now, on the ninth night since her decease, holding a ceremony for the purpose of taking a last leave of her spirit. It is believed by the peasant people of the West Indies that if this leave-taking should be neglected, the wraith of the dead person would constantly hover near her last earthly residence, and be a source of discomfort and even serious danger to its living occupants. The custom, of course, was brought over from West Africa, where, even to-day, it may be witnessed in all its pristine elaboration. On the West coast, eight days after the death of a husband, the widow proceeds to the seashore, attended by a great concourse of howling people, beating drums and blowing shells. The noise is made for the purpose of scaring away the ghost; arrived at the sea, the woman plunges into the water, throws away the clothes she has been wearing since the death of her husband, puts on a new garment, and returns home. During the interval food and drink have been placed in the hut for the use of the dead one, and he is spoken of just as if he were alive. But when the ceremony of ghost-laying has taken place, it is assumed

that, if no hitch has occurred in the proceedings, the ghost will have been deprived of all power of working harm to the widow or her next husband. In the West Indies the 'ninth-night' ceremony is held not only for men, but for women and children as well. Very rarely a night passes in any large West Indian town but you will hear the sound of vociferous singing, which indicates either a wake or a 'ninth night.' And at some time or other during the proceedings the singers will loudly proclaim that the Lord is God alone, that being the one item which seems never to be omitted.

On this night of which I write, the hymns were given out verse by verse, so that all should have a chance to sing. The man at the head of the smaller table reads with stentorian voice, and with a sublime disregard of all the rules of pronunciation. He pauses as he ends a verse, then leads the singing, the assembled guests valiantly following in his wake. Jealous of his authority, one or two old women suggest that he is 'taking a note too high,' and endeavour to create a diversion by singing the hymn in an entirely different key. But jealousy does not prevail over vested authority; consequently the hymn, in spite of occasional cacophony, goes on to the last word.

Another hymn followed, and another; then the leader suggested that 'p'rhaps one of de sisters would like to offer a word of pr'yer.' There was nothing that the sisters would have liked better. Prayer came naturally and fluently from their lips; they embraced the whole world in their supplications, and so vehemently protested their belief that what they asked for would be granted, that they led at least one of their listeners to suspect that they had serious misgivings on that score.

This singing and praying had been going on from about ten o'clock, and now it was nearly one. I began to hear murmurs. I detected a note of discontent. One man, in a loud whisper, expressed the opinion that though spiritual

food was admirable in its way, something more material was required if one was competently to go through with the business of the night. Another guest remarked to a relative of the deceased, 'See here, I come to sing for y'u to-night, an' look how y'u treat me!' The tone was reproachful, the suggestion being that reward sweetens labour, and that the man who sings ought to be strengthened with food and drink for the singing.

Suddenly I heard a shout—'Fry fish and bread advance!' It came from one of the guests who had so far forgotten personal dignity in his hunger that he had undertaken to solicit refreshments publicly and without shame. The appeal was not ignored. The hymn-book fell from the leader's hands, and a movement on the outskirts of the crowd caused every one to glance with a look of expectancy in that direction. Satisfaction was visibly expressed on the faces of most of the people when three or four women were seen approaching with trays, for every one then realised that the religious part of the 'ninth night' was at an end, and that the time for feasting and speech-making and rejoicing had come.

Small sprats fried in cotton-seed oil, large slices of bread, fritters made of a mixture of flour and picked salt fish and pepper, coloured with annatto and fried in oil; bananas and oranges; cups of coffee sweetened with heavy moist sugar; huge mugs of chocolate flavoured with cocoa-nut milk, were handed round. Then there was rum for the men, and a little ginger-wine for the older women, some of whom murmured gently that St Paul had strongly advised the taking of a little wine for the stomach's sake; and in the midst of a buzz of conversation the feasting began.

But not every one was satisfied that the ceremony had ceased to be entirely of a religious nature. Not far from me was a 'sister' who had been anxiously awaiting her opportunity to offer a prayer. Disgusted at finding that she would not be able to do so during the rest of the function, she accepted

a cup of chocolate as a very inadequate compensation for her disappointment. She loudly muttered something about 'those people who make them belly them God,' but the general opinion clearly was that there had been enough of prayer.

The change from grave to gay was absolute. The girls, too excited to be sleepy, began to make jokes with one another, while the young men engaged in open love-making. There was no longer any need to be sorrowful, and my guides gave me a hint to that effect. In fact, one would have thought that the guests greatly rejoiced in the death of the woman, but for the circumstance that they loudly expressed their regret that she had left them, and dwelt with considerable emphasis on her extraordinary virtues.

No such person, it appeared, had ever existed, and now that she was dead her equal could not be found. It is true that, as I subsequently learnt, it was only a month or so before she died that she had had a fight with a neighbour, and had been fined in the police court in consequence of it. Several of her intimate friends had also been in the habit of accusing her (behind her back) of many grave crimes and misdemeanours. But all this was now forgotten; and to-night, under the influence of sympathy, excitement, and refreshment, we are all agreed that the world is poorer by the loss it has sustained. Nevertheless, the most of us find consolation in the fact that, after all, if there had been no death there would have been no 'ninth night.' Comforted by that thought, we loudly renew our expressions of regret and pay further tributes to the memory of the deceased.

Nothing could now turn the meeting into a religious function once more; but if the time for prayer had passed, there was still an opportunity for speech-making. The leader knew this, and seizing a favourable moment he rose to his feet and remained standing until the last whisper had died away. Slowly and deliberately he surveyed his audience, endeavouring the while to convey by his looks an impression

of mental suffering. When he felt that he held the attention of every one, he began :—

‘My friends, dis is a sarrawful occasion. We is all human, all got to dead. I don’t ’fraid to dead meself, but I don’t like to see young people lay down an’ just dead off widout any reason.’ (A murmur of applause from the young people; encouraged by it, the speaker determines to please the appreciative ones still further.) ‘It is we ole people who is to dead.’ (Gestures indicating disapproval are made by the elderly.) ‘Yes, I say, it is we ole people who is to dead, because . . . because . . . because we is prepare fo’ heaven.’ (This compliment, perhaps because it is entirely undeserved, reconciles the old people to him, though not to the idea of dying.) ‘We is prepare fo’ heaven, but de young folkses has to enjoy demselves firs’, and if they dead young, how can dem enjoy demself? And if dem dead while dem enjoying demself, how dem is to be saved?’ He paused with the air of a man who has asked an unanswerable question; and as no one was able to say how any one who was happy on earth could possibly expect salvation, he again took up the burden of his discourse, greatly encouraged thereto by the sympathetic groans of the elderly, who wished to intimate that they were now in extreme misery—a condition which clearly entitled them to mansions up above.

‘Our sister was young. She has die in the evening of her youth. But in spite of dat, I don’t mean to say dat she is not gone to ’er Fader’s home, for aldough she was a han’some female she keep out of de way of temptation, an’ nobody use to attend church more regular. Whenever on a Sunday mornin’ she pass me place, she use to call out : “Fader B., I gone to church, yah !” An’ I use to say, “Walk good, me daughter, say a word for me.” A female like dat mus’ gone to heaven; an’ de best ting we can do is to follow in him footsteps.’

He sat down, the applause being enthusiastic. This



A CORNER OF HENRIQUES' PANAMA FACTORY



UNLOADING JAMAICA PRODUCE AT THE SEA-WALL OF MYERS & SON

address is regarded by all as finally marking the close of the first part of the 'ninth night,' and preparations are immediately and openly made to pass the rest of the morning (for it is now three o'clock) in merry-making.

Tales are told, games played, wrestling matches between adventurous youths and ardent damsels take place. The 'ninth night' becomes a picnic under the morning stars.

More refreshments are handed round, the laughter is now as loud as the singing was before. Clearly the period of mourning is over.

And then the skies begin to lighten and the shrill crowing of a thousand cocks is heard. The air becomes fresh, and the stars grow pale. And soon it is 'good-bye' and 'good-bye,' and yet again 'good-bye.' All the mourners are going home; most of them will have to be at their work an hour or two hence. As they depart, I notice that the dead woman's sister goes into the clean unoccupied room, and, taking up a covered jar, pours the water it contains into the yard.

'Well,' she remarks, 'we done wid Cecilia now,' and those who hear her heartily agree. Thus good-bye is said to Cecilia also, and the hope is that she will never return to earth to frighten her friends and relatives.

And why should Cecilia return, since her life, at best, must have been hard?

CHAPTER VII

JAMAICA RELIGION : THE MUD AND THE GOLD

WE are told in the census of the island that 'the people were asked to state the name of the religious denomination with which they were connected, or the name of their religion.' I should imagine that a large number set themselves down as being Episcopalians, Baptists, Presbyterians or what not, mainly because they had been baptized as such; they gave the name of their religion and passed over that part of the question which referred to the denomination with which they were actually connected. This, indeed, is obvious enough to any one who knows Jamaica; you are a Presbyterian even if you have not been in a Presbyterian church for twenty years; you are a Presbyterian so long as you were christened by a pastor of that denomination and have not changed your religion since. When there is a controversy on foot—and there always is a religious controversy on foot in Jamaica—you call to mind that you are or have been connected with such and such a denomination, and accordingly take sides with all the bitterness of religious rancour; or, rather, with as much bitterness as is to be found in a country where peace and not strife is the rule and where the foe of to-day is very often the friend of to-morrow. In much the same spirit you answer the questions asked as to your religion by the census paper, and thus the churches are credited with a larger number of adherents than are to be found on their rolls.

For example, the Church of England is credited with having 266,478 persons attached to it in 1911. These, of course, include children; but we must not forget that people are admitted

at an early age into the Anglican Church, and that the latest printed returns of that Church give the number of its communicants as 41,000. Even if we multiplied this figure by four, to include the children who have not been confirmed and the grown-up persons who attend Anglican places of worship but have not become registered communicants, we should still have something like a hundred thousand people to account for. These hundred thousand have declared themselves to be Anglicans, but the Church, we may safely say, does not see as much of them as it would like. It is much the same with all except the smaller denominations. Thus I take it that the Seventh Day Adventists may justly boast that every member of their body is fervent in church membership; but then the Seventh Day Adventists only number 3955. And there are some half a dozen denominations in Jamaica with less than a thousand members each; these have few backsliders or weak brethren; every member is more or less vocal and militant. In spite, however, of the fact that thousands of people gave the name of their religion to the compilers of the census, though they had long since drifted away from the churches, there were still over ninety-five thousand about whose faith no answer was returned. This caused the editor of the census to remark: 'There are no doubt many persons throughout the island whose connection, if any, with any church is very slight. It is probable that the more conscientious of this class when faced with the question left it unanswered both as to themselves and to their children.'

That little compliment about conscientiousness makes pleasant reading, but I have already hinted that the number of the unconscientious outnumbers those whose silence proclaims them to be outside the pale of organised religion. And yet, even as I write these words, a doubt assails me. Are there many persons in Jamaica who have no sort of connection with the Churches? I seriously question it. The connection may be very slight, may be but a memory and an intention;

yet it is there. The memory is perhaps of the time when one went to Sunday School; the intention is that at some time in the future, when one has begun to live a godly, sober, and righteous life, and has sufficiently decent clothes to wear, one will attend some church, and may even become a member of it. There are very few Jamaicans, in fact, who are not going to 'join church' at some time or other in the future, if they have not yet arrived at that respectable stage. For to be a member of a church is not only to have stamped upon one the hall-mark of respectability, it is to have taken a definite and important step heavenward, and heaven is the goal of the majority of Jamaicans.

The point to grasp is that the average Jamaican is not an unbeliever, and has a natural liking for religion. In Jamaica, as in every other Christian country in the world, more women than men attend religious services; yet men are frequent in attendance too. Counting out-stations with churches and chapels, there are about eight hundred buildings devoted to religious purposes in Jamaica; and if we say that about one-fourth of the island's population is in close connection with the Churches (whether as members, Sunday School scholars, adherents, or frequent visitors), we shall have made a fair estimate.

Do the figures show badly? Is the result poor for a century of effort? Is one entitled to draw the conclusion that three-fourths of the people hardly hear anything about religion, are never inside a church, are almost in a heathen state? To these three questions I should give a decided negative. The number of persons in the colony who absolutely never go to church must be negligible, the amount of religious knowledge possessed by the people is astonishing. Much of it may be distorted, yet a great deal of it is not. I have said that the average Jamaican has a liking for religion. Let me now add that he takes to Biblical information as a duck takes to water. If he put into practice all that he knows concerning the Way,

the Truth, and the Life, he would be something of a saint. He does not; no one ever does; but you must not imagine that he is a heathen; you will find that he can argue very well upon religion, and will quote you a dozen texts of Scripture to prove his points.

In a community where one-half of the adults live together without going through the ceremony of marriage, and where the Churches must of necessity set their faces against all well-known instances of sexual misconduct, it follows that large numbers of persons must keep themselves away from church membership. Yet these occasionally attend the services, and it must be borne in mind that most of them have learnt something about religion at the elementary school or even at open-air religious meetings. One striking aspect of life in Jamaica is, indeed, the extraordinary church attendance, especially in Kingston and the towns. In the country districts many of the churches are at considerable distances from some of the surrounding villages, and this would to some extent explain a poor attendance. But I am not aware that the attendance anywhere in Jamaica has been so poor during the last decade as to warrant any one writing to the papers to ask: 'Why do not the People go to Church?' On Sunday nights particularly, in every considerable centre of population, the churches are crowded. One may say that the occasion is regarded as an excellent opportunity to enable many folk to wear their dresses and fine suits, to sing, to meet one another, to have a good evening's recreation. There is no doubt some truth in all this. Still, if one believes that church-going has a beneficent, a civilising influence, one need not inquire too closely into the motives that bring a large congregation together. The fact itself is of some importance, and it is the fact I am concerned with here.

But I must reserve to a later stage my remarks on what I may call 'the gold,' or better part of Jamaica religion; here I want particularly to deal with 'the mud,' with those aspects

of religion which are debased, with those professedly religious persons who mingle the most wretched superstitions with Christian rites. If we consult the census again, we shall find that among the 736,000 persons whose religion was defined, 1135 were described as Bedwardites. These Bedwardites are the followers of one Mr Bedward, who announced twenty years ago that he had had a vision in which he had been told that a stream to the north-west of Kingston had blessed healing properties, and that whoever bathed in it, in faith, would be cured of their bodily ills. Crowds resorted to this new John the Baptist, and the lucrative business of baptism and bathing has continued ever since. In this, perhaps, there is no particular harm, but since the rise of Bedwardism, and encouraged by it, there has been a recrudescence of what was known fifty years ago as 'Myalism,' a practice or cult which is nothing but a modified form and remnant of the old West African priest dance and divination. In the last chapter it was mentioned that the old 'myal men' undertook to cure the evil wrought by the obeahman. Thus we see that the myal man was a witch doctor. The term 'myal' is no longer used in Jamaica; instead, we have 'revivalist,' a most respectable word. Our modern Jamaica revivalists, therefore, claim that they are preaching Christian doctrine, and that no doubt is their intention. Accuse them of heathenish practices and they would be mortally offended. Yet one has only to attend a revival demonstration, and, in spite of the Christian veneer, the real origin and meaning of the thing will not remain hidden. Let me describe one such demonstration as I saw it.

It was an Easter Sunday afternoon, about six o'clock; the sun was rapidly going down, but heat still radiated from stone walls and streets; the dust lay thick everywhere, and only the presence of gaily-dressed groups of dark-hued people relieved the monotony of the scene. I was strolling up one of the long streets when I caught sight of a revivalist band marching swiftly towards me; it consisted of about thirty

persons, two only of whom were men. All the women were robed in white, all wore turbans of white twisted into fantastic shapes; all were screaming out a hymn as they swept along the thoroughfare, while one of them, waving a long wand, performed a sort of circular dance in the midst of her companions.

I followed the band a little while. The leaders of it were the two men; these marched in front, and at a word from one of them the women presently halted and lined themselves on a side walk against the wall of a shop, one of the number standing in front of the others with closed eyes and the look of a maniac.

An open-air meeting was to be held, and the order of it must have been carefully arranged beforehand. The two men walked up and down in front of the line of the women uttering sharp exclamations and encouraging their followers to further efforts in screaming. These men were of a villainous appearance, hypocrisy, debauchery, and conceit being written on every lineament of their faces. Both were dressed in semi-clerical garments, and it was easy to see that they were endeavouring to ape the manner of a minister of the Gospel.

Each of the white-robed women had a bit of withe twisted round her left wrist, and each carried a short cane. Noticing this, I remembered that when the priests and priestesses of the African Gold Coast were about to dance in honour of the gods and to become possessed by them, they bound their wrists with *addor* and carried bundles of canes in their hands.¹ Here then, clearly, was the survival of an African custom masquerading as a native Christian revivalist demonstration. I decided to see the thing out to the finish.

When the hymn came to an end at last, a woman with a damaged eye began walking rapidly up and down the side-walk, waving her wand and speaking at the top of her voice. She could not have been more than twenty-five years of age, but

¹ See Ellis's *Tshi-speaking Peoples of West Africa*.

already she had developed a cast of countenance that indicated both fanaticism and complete demoralisation of character. She had a trick of closing and opening her damaged eye as she spoke, and this did not tend to improve the impression she gave at first sight. Yet it was plain that she stood high among these revivalists, for she it was who had been selected this evening to preach.

Not for an instant did she pause in her pacing to and fro. She swept with a look the crowd which had been attracted by the noise. 'I have come out here to speak to you to-night, which are but a poor pilgrim on my journey home,'—with these words she commenced her address. 'I am the vilest of sinners, a miserable woman who was going down to hell. But I can tell you I was rescued by the spirit an' the blood, an' baptized unto life; an' wort'less an' unwordy though I am, yet I can tell you what de blood has done for me.'

'Yes, oh, yes!' came in a shout of encouragement from her listening companions.

'I cannot keep silent.'

'No! speak on!' thundered the men.

'By baptism an' the blood we are redeemed, an' let us take care that we do not neglect our salvation until it be too late!'

'Amen, amen,' from the white-clothed people, some of whom were now emitting horrible grunts and groans.

'Long, long ago it was asked in heaven, "who will go down to save mankind?"' an' although there was cherubims an' seraphims, angel an' archangel, none could be found except the Son, an' to-day, this blessed Easter Sunday, we are bound to remember that sacrifice, fo' to-day He is risen!'

'Risen, risen! Praise God!' was the cry that went up, not only from the revivalists but from some members of the crowd that had now assembled in the street, and now three or four of the revivalist women began to utter short impassioned speeches and the hubbub became great.

At this moment the young woman caught sight of a mocking face amongst the crowd. Pointing a threatening finger in its direction, she burst into invective. 'Some here will mock an' laugh, an' will want to ask why we move up an' down, an' cannot rest, an' go on in a foolish way. But we say we are de empty vessels of de Master, an' that when His Spirit fill us we mus' testify.'

'Yes, we mus' testify!' from the male leaders and the rest, followed by an incoherent splutter of words.

'As fo' dose people who laugh, hell is gapin' wide for dem, the devil is prepare for dem. Them can laugh now, but the day is comin' when they will gnash their teeth an' cry aloud in anguish for mercy, an' none will be found. Ah! that will be a day, a dreadful day!'

Then pandemonium broke loose for the space of a few minutes, and anathema maranatha was pronounced by these evil-living fanatics on the whole city of Kingston. When a lull came, the young woman concluded her speech with the request, 'I will now ask my captain to raise that hymn for me, "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross."'

The words were scarcely out of her mouth before the man had started to scream forth the hymn at the top of his voice, and presently a crowd of over a hundred persons were shouting it out. While they sang one old woman among the revivalists went off into a fit, from which she soon recovered. The conclusion of the hymn was the signal for the revivalists' departure; they formed a procession and marched up the street. As they went the bells of a dozen different churches pealed forth, and the darkness fell suddenly. Hundreds of people hurried on to the several services to be held that night, and these, I noticed, took no thought of the revivalists. The crowd that followed the latter consisted mainly of the debased, the diseased, and the unclean; I followed too, for I knew that what I had seen was but a minor part of the practices of these revivalist bands. It was behind closed doors that the weird

dances of West African tribal religion would be held, and I wanted to see them that night.

The captains and their women marched for about a mile until they reached a slum to the north of the city, known locally as Hannah's Town. They disappeared into a yard, the fence of which was formed principally of a thorny cactus, the stout candelabra-like stems of which sprang as high as twenty feet into the air. The gate was of board, and was hung on hinges on an upright post standing close to a cactus plant. A curious observer would have noticed that the iron plate bearing the number of this place was nailed upside-down upon the gate.

Just behind the gate sat a man clothed in white, with a small dish in one hand and a whip in the other. 'One penny,' he said laconically to every one who passed in and who was not of the order of the revivalists. I paid my penny and went in with the rest; I noticed a few persons who had evidently come to see what a 'faith working,' or revivalist dance was like; they were clearly respectable people, and had no connection whatever with the revivalists. Perhaps it was with a view of raising some revenue from this class of visitors that the revivalists were in the habit of demanding an entrance fee.

The yard was an extraordinarily long one. The entrance was narrow, but farther up was a wide open space, and the crowd already gathered there showed me that it was on that spot that the crowning ceremony of the revivalists was to be held. There was something weird and grotesque about the scene, something that caused the heart to beat swiftly and the blood to course rapidly through the veins. The night was dark, and the farther corners of the yard were shrouded in obscurity. To the left, as one looked towards the west, great trees grew; on the opposite side were other trees; in the centre of the open space already mentioned was an oblong arrangement of stones and rope, each little pile of

stones a foot high, and about three feet apart, and these stones served as props for the rope, which marked the boundary of the enclosure in which the dancers were to invoke the Spirit.

At the top of the enclosure was a covered shed, the back of it boarded up, the front and sides of it open. This shed was connected with the roped-in enclosure; you passed from one to the other, and both things viewed as one, as they were intended to be, resembled a cross.

The shed was brightly lit with lanterns and candles; festoons of crotons and other evergreens swung overhead; fruit and ground provisions were scattered about, and flowers and coloured cloth and ribbons. But it was upon a platform under the shed that the lights blazed brightest and the flowers were strewn in thickest profusion; a slightly raised platform ornamented and arranged so as to resemble an altar. 'What is that?' I asked some one standing near me. 'The sanctuary,' he replied, indicating the shed and all that it contained. The idea of a sanctuary and an altar had evidently been borrowed by these people from the Roman Catholics for spectacular purposes, though they would have described themselves as Protestants to the core. The yams and plantains and fruit that I saw scattered about the enclosure were a sort of offering to the supernatural powers. And so the sanctuary glittered in all its bravery of colour and light, and the wind stirred and rustled the branches and leaves of the gloom-enshrouded trees, and the stars looked down upon the strange, fantastic gathering. And soon other people began to arrive, and every now and then you could see a white-robed figure emerge from the surrounding darkness into the lighted space.

There were fully two hundred persons in that yard that night. About fifty of these wore costumes of white; the rest were spectators, many of them sympathetic. While I had been looking around me a number of the revivalists had stepped within the rope enclosure, and about twenty of these

had ranged themselves in two lines facing each other, in a peculiar crouching attitude. Between these two lines stood three young women and a girl child, all dressed in the prevailing garb of white, all wearing great white turbans, and each carrying a long lithe switch in her right hand. Suddenly the two lines of crouching women raised a chant, a low, weird, monotonous chant, quite unlike anything I had ever heard, and which sent a thrill down one's spine as one listened to it. As the blood-chilling tune rose, the standing women and child began to move their feet and bodies in unison with it. Round and round they moved, slowly, keeping accurate time to the monotonous infernal singing. Rising slightly at times, falling, rising again, but never becoming loud; quickening now and then, the tune scarcely varying, and never losing its tone of infinite weariness, the chant went on. The dancing women sang also—gibberish, it seemed to me. Not one word could I understand; it was not English, and it is hardly possible that it could have been a treasured African dialect, for African words are hardly heard in the British West Indies to-day. The revivalists themselves call this language that they use 'the unknown tongue,' the tongue of the spirit or spirits which take possession of them while they dance themselves into a frenzy; and their leaders profess to be able to understand it. It consists of a spluttering forth of senseless sounds. After a while, those who sang and spoke began to foam slightly at the mouth. And in the eyes of the gyrating women was a strange, far-away look as of persons in a trance.

A tall, quiet, authoritative-looking man—not one of the two already mentioned—directed the proceedings. With folded arms he watched the dancers wheeling round and round.

The spectators looked on, some of them whispering, for absolute silence was not imposed. One of them attempted to light a cigarette. He was peremptorily stopped by a woman. 'De Spirit won't come if you smoke, or if anybody here been drinkin' rum,' she explained.

All at once a piercing cry broke from two of the women who were sitting, or rather crouching, within the enclosure, a cry half laugh, half scream, accompanied with convulsive shuddering. The chanting quickened just a little, the voices of those who chanted rose triumphantly, the dancing women rocked their bodies to and fro and breathed with a fierce, hoarse, audible sound; the coming of the Spirit was nigh. Over a hundred persons, revivalists and others, were now moving themselves from side to side as if swayed by an impulse they could not master. Dozens of them were shuddering as if seized with ague. A slight tremor ran through my body; I became cold with horror and disgust. The scene was bestial.

And now a man sprang violently into the enclosure and began swiftly moving his body up and down, jerking himself backwards and forwards with prodigious effort, and uttering a continuous 'hum, hum, hum,' as he did so. He was trying to become possessed of the Spirit, but the attention of every one was fixed, not on him, but on the three women and the little girl who still wheeled round and round, and were now speaking and singing in a tone of voice which conveyed a suggestion of immeasurable distance. The girl was reeling and tottering now. Of a sudden she threw up her arms exclaiming, 'De pitcher full,' then sprang forward as if about to fall upon her face. Immediately one of the dancing women struck her with her switch. 'You are bad, wicked!' exclaimed another of them, in the same strange, distant, unnatural voice in which she had been singing; 'why did you strike de chile?'

She struck out at the offending 'sister' as she spoke, and half a dozen other whips lashed at the young woman with terrible force. There was no sham about this castigation; you could have heard the sound of the lashing several hundred yards away. The supposition was that the woman who had struck the child had done so under the influence of an evil

spirit, and it was this spirit which was now being whipped out of her. In the meantime the dance continued and the excitement visibly grew. Then, at length, the woman who was being lashed broke from her chastisers and rushed into the 'sanctuary,' where she fell prone, face downwards, on the ground. As she did so, the cry went up, 'She gone to confess!'

What she confessed I never heard, for now the child too had fallen to the earth, her body contorted and twitching as if she were in a fit. The two lines of chanting women were swaying from side to side as if possessed, and every now and then one, two, and three of them would emit that weird hysterical shriek which I could not hear without shuddering. Most of them were talking in the 'unknown tongue,' the leader interpreting at intervals. Once he was especially impressive, imposing silence with a gesture. 'De Spirit say,' he enunciated solemnly, 'that last Sunday night there was a bad woman here wid an axe. Nobody could see her, but it was she who injure de sister who is now in de hospital.' He paused a moment, then added: 'Our sister is dead.'

He ceased, and a loud, long wail burst from the members of his band. He must have heard of the death of the woman in the hospital during the earlier part of the evening, but he announced it as though it were a revelation made by some supernatural agency through the mouth of one of the half-hypnotised dancers, and no one seemed to doubt him.

The wailing continued, and the chanting. The wailing grew louder with every moment that passed. Looking towards the enclosure again, I now observed that several new dancers had entered it, and that outside of it were a number of women lying stark on the ground, apparently senseless. A few others were beating themselves on the ground; these, like the rest, were supposed to 'have the spirit.' Only one man, and he the leader, appeared quite unmoved by what was proceeding, he alone was unaffected by the frenzy which had unquestionably taken hold of his followers.

About eleven o'clock I got weary of the scene—the gloom of the huge yard, the lighted enclosure, the wailing and chanting and the swaying, dancing, hysterical crowd—and so I left. But this invocation of the spirit—what was it but a slightly modified form of the divination dance of the priests and priestesses of the Gold Coast of West Africa? Substitute the names of the Trinity for those of African deities, and in parts of West Africa to-day you would find men and women painted white¹ and robed in white dancing and prophesying much as these lower-class people did that night in a suburb of the capital city of Jamaica.

Why are not these practices prohibited? Partly, no doubt, because it is believed that education and higher religious influences may well be left to exterminate what remains of West African superstitions in the island. This belief is grounded in reason and supported by experience. No really decent peasant would dream for a moment of becoming a revivalist, and the power of revivalism has been steadily diminishing since 1862, when the last wild general outbreak of it took place. A recent law, too, has made it illegal to hold meetings likely to become a nuisance after eleven o'clock at night, and if this law were more rigidly enforced the power of the revivalists, such as it is, would be broken still further. The 'ninth nights,' as we have seen, have now become little more than a social gathering of the working classes. There is no particular evil in them. Obeah is sternly prohibited and punished, for that means fraud and terrorism. But it is difficult to see what the Government could do to put a stop to revivalism, though no defence could be advanced for it as a 'native religion.' Native religions are not recognised in Jamaica, the mass of the people would be insulted by the very suggestion of such a thing. Revivalism will disappear steadily as the people learn to laugh at the gyrations and howlings of

¹ The Jamaica revivalists claim that they wear white to signify purity of heart.

the revivalists, who represent one of those 'survivals in culture' so interesting to the student of social customs and religious ideas.¹

Great is the power of respectability, and I have alluded above to the circumstance that, while our revivalists were holding their open-air meeting in the street, hundreds and hundreds of people passed them without so much as a second look. These people were hurrying to some one of the many churches of the city; and if, on that same Sunday night on which the revival dance I have described took place, I had peeped in at any of the churches, I should have found them crowded. If six hundred persons went to dance and sympathise with the revivalists, over sixteen thousand must have attended the regular places of worship. One need say no more.

Sunday is a great day in Jamaica; it is a day of rest and of religious observance for the most part; here there are no musical promenadings in the afternoon as in Havana, no attendance at places of amusement. No more complete change has taken place in any aspect of the life of Jamaica than in the observance of Sunday. Eighty years ago it was the popular market day, church-going was out of the question as a general rule. A hundred years ago a Governor's wife could write: 'Received the sacrament at our own desire, as it is only administered here three times a year,' and 'At the Communion, there was only one old white man and woman, and one *brown* lady, besides ourselves, for the clergyman's two daughters, who came with us, left the church with the rest of the congregation; and yet they were certainly of an age to join in the service, being nearer to thirty than to twenty years old. But altogether it was a most extraordinary scene, for, just before the service began, and when I thought the doors were to be closed, in walked a strange gentleman and

¹ Two nights after writing the above I saw a band of revivalists laughed out of countenance by an ordinary street crowd.

took his seat in our pew, and began making fine speeches about our going to his house to-morrow. . . . When we went up to the altar, the clergyman began *his civilities*—first asking whether we would prefer having the bread and wine brought to our pew, then hoping the heat was not too great, and in the midst of the service, stopping to inquire whether I would like a window opened that was over the altar. . . . All this time, the young ladies were laughing and talking, loud enough to be heard, as they sat in the carriage at the church door; and, in short, it was altogether shocking.' One more quotation: 'After dinner, had a conversation upon religion. Some of the opinions of the gentlemen were shocking. Not one professed to have the least religion, and some said it was all a farce.'¹ When Lady Nugent could write thus about the conduct of the ladies and gentlemen of the island at a communion service, it may easily be supposed that reverence for Sunday and for services of a religious nature was not demanded from the slaves.

To-day the communion services in the several churches of the island are as solemnly conducted as they are in England, the United States, and Canada.

Sunday dawns upon a quiet country, and many of those who do not attend religious service will sit at home and sing hymns. As for those who do go to church, you will see them in the early morning, dressed for the most part in simple white, on the way to their respective places of worship. In the towns you will notice how the manner of dressing among the higher classes has been made their own by the poorer sections of the people. No gaudy colours now, no blues swearing at reds, no violent contrasts and startling contradictions. White is the wear of the morning, and though, at the eleven o'clock service, there will be more variety in the way of dress, though the women will wear pinks and laces, though silk and satin will be brought out, there is nothing barbarous about the

¹ *Lady Nugent's Journal*, 1801-6.

clothes now worn. A person loudly dressed, no matter whether she be white, black, or brown, will be singled out for stares and comments. The tendency is steadily towards neatness, especially in the towns, and the splendid figures of the women are admirably set off by the dresses they wear.

The men dress for the most part in tweed suits. In the afternoon the children are sent to Sunday School, all clad cleanly, all wearing boots. If you have no boots, you stay at home, pride preventing one from sending one's child barefooted to Sunday School. But it is at evening service that you see the townspeople at their finest. They are best dressed then, the colours they wear are more variegated. though still not inharmonious, the churches—the Anglican churches especially—are filled to overflowing. There is no difference between the form of the service in a West Indian colony and in an English town. Everything is done in precisely the same manner. In some of the smaller churches, for example, the clergyman may be a black or very dark man, the organist of the same complexion, the choristers like them both. But the service varies not at all; the parson will wear the prescribed robes, the female choristers will dress in simple white with sailor hats, the male choristers will wear the white surplice. An attempt at a 'native Christian Church' has been made by one or two men, 'ministers' presumably. It has been a failure. The people do not approve of it. They are not and could not be driven to it. The churches in Jamaica are churches for all the natives, irrespective of class or colour, here at any rate it is true that 'whosoever will may come.'

In times of general depression, the finances of the Churches suffer and the congregation falls off. In 1910 a pessimistic wail went up from more than one religious denomination; so far as statistics could prove, the Churches were not progressing. And, indeed, the figures published did show a stationary

if not a retrogressive condition of affairs religious, did seem to show that the people were becoming somewhat indifferent; in proportion to the increase of population, the Churches had not increased in membership, rather the contrary. But there is another side to the picture. The Protestant religious bodies in Central America have grown in numbers considerably during the last six years. This has been the direct result of the emigration of twenty thousand Jamaicans to Central America during that period. The ups and downs of fortune which the island has suffered since the beginning of the new century, too, must have affected the Churches considerably, just as they affected the school attendance. It is too early yet to say that the Churches are beginning to lose their influence, though perhaps a stage has been reached when further progress will be slow, and when efforts must be made to hold the ground already won. Thirty years ago James Anthony Froude lamented that with the decay of religious belief in the civilised world, one of the surest means of moralising the people of the West Indies and of softening and improving their character was being taken out of the hands of their teachers and guides. But the Churches have grown stronger since Froude wrote, and, in Jamaica at any rate, the people of to-day are a distinct improvement upon the people of thirty years ago. I know that those who can see no good in the Present will disagree with me, but the opinion of some of the oldest and ablest men in the colony is on my side. Indeed, there are men who have been in Jamaica but fifteen years who take the view I take here. And much of this improvement must be attributed to the influence, direct and indirect, of the Churches.

I do not wish to be understood as saying that religion only, or the Churches only, could have effected the progress observable in Jamaica to-day. I think nothing of the sort. Other influences have been at work which have aided the religious organisations as much as the religious organisations have aided them; and when these influences lessen, or cannot

be brought to bear upon large sections of the people, the Churches find themselves marking time and even (as they imagine) in danger of slipping backward. Yet Jamaica would have been a very different sort of country had it not been for the Churches. It would have had revivalism rampant, for one thing; the sacredness of human life would not have become so highly respected, the manners of the people would not have softened, there would not have been one-tenth so much respectability and general good feeling. I cannot believe either that, as a social factor, the influence of the Churches is waning. I think that influence is certain to increase.

CHAPTER VIII

REAL POLITICS AND TIN-POT POLITICS

IN a country like Jamaica, where life flows placidly on, where there are no great enthusiasms, violent partisanships, fierce hatreds, or 'burning questions of the hour,' you will not expect to find politics pursued either as a permanent profession or as the expression of a bitter class war. Your average peasant is not by nature a politician; he is not of the stuff out of which fighters or fanatics are made; his personal freedom is absolutely assured, and if the rains do not fall and the crops wither, he is too logical to blame the Government for that.

Politically, the people of Jamaica are contented enough, but it would be a mistake to imagine that they are inclined to accept as unchangeable the present system of government. This system will be fully described in this chapter; it is, briefly, government by the Crown through a Colonial Governor, who is supposed to be checked and advised by those members of the Legislative Council who are elected by the people. This Legislature consists of fourteen members elected by popular suffrage, and fifteen members appointed by the Crown on the understanding that they are to support the Government generally, and specifically to do so when instructed to that effect by the Colonial Secretary. The Governor himself is the President of the Legislature, which meets regularly once a year, and sometimes twice. It is the highest deliberative body in the island, the Parochial Boards (one for each of the fourteen parishes) having very attenuated powers, and the other public bodies, such as school boards and boards administering public trusts, having only very limited functions.

Of the Legislature more must be said, for its future is largely the political future of the colony. Its deliberations and development are real politics: the tin-pot variety of politics concerns those gentlemen who are mild agitators, election organisers, and would-be redressers of imaginary grievances. They are to the fore at every election, and they help to make life in the colony interesting. The type is no doubt to be found in every country. It is to be hoped and believed that it will never disappear from Jamaica.

The political agitator has sometimes been described as a man without any visible means of livelihood, but, after all, the same thing may be said of a good many other persons in Jamaica. Besides, the political agitator is not by any means an idler; he does work at some ordinary calling when politics are not remunerative, and he works pretty hard at politics when he has an opportunity. He loves agitation. He delights in trying to persuade his fellow-citizens that a certain candidate or a certain policy will infallibly save Jamaica from the destruction which he sees to be rapidly approaching. Under him he usually has a body of men who are canvassers merely; men whom, I regret to say, have no thought whatever for politics, but are always thinking of pay. They will embrace any cause so long as the rewards for service are adequate. All parties and all party-cries are to them the same. They desert with unblushing frequency to the enemy, but are invariably passionately loyal when there is no prospect of being tempted to play the traitor. But your real agitator does endeavour to be faithful to principles. He is a Radical, of course; every man who appeals to the people for their support is a Radical: the Conservatives are those who defend the Government, and these do not venture to offer themselves to the voters for election, for they know it would be useless. The Government, as the voters know, is the party in possession. It is a permanent and a powerful quantity. It has honours to bestow; more, has it not money with which

to reward the faithful? It is no use trying to induce the average elector to believe that the Government cannot do something handsome for those who are its men, for belief in the absolute incorruptibility of the Government is by no means an article of his creed. To be known to be kindly disposed towards the authorities, then, opens you to being suspected of wishing to deceive the people for personal motives. You are a 'Government man'—a thing alleged against you by those who feel sorrowfully that they have no chance of becoming the same. Now, your professional agitator deliberately includes all those who are opposed to him, or to whom he is opposed, in the category of Government men, and in the name of true and fervid patriotism he goes forth into the election arena attacking, defending, arguing, always hinting darkly at some conspiracy being plotted against the liberties of the people, always protesting his unalterable determination to defeat that conspiracy.

Forty years ago he was probably connected with a newspaper office. At that time the capital needed to establish a West Indian journal was small, and much could be done in the way of credit. The journalist took himself seriously, though nobody quite shared his opinion of himself; he was ill-paid, wordy, a violent critic of every one who received a bigger wage than he, a firm believer in parliamentary institutions. His existence had something mysterious about it, since his visible means of support were scanty. The little sheet he published inflicted punishment on the eyes of those who attempted to read it, and did not as a rule appear regularly. He always demanded reforms, without taking care to specify precisely what reforms he wanted; he was invariably in debt, he usually had patrons whose virtues he praised in public and whose vices (and especially the vice of meanness) he scathingly commented upon in private to those whom he thought (erroneously) that he could trust. Times having changed, and newspaper enterprise being out

of the question to-day except to those with large sums of money, your professional politician is obliged to confine his energies to the platform and to personal talks. Fifty years hence he may have developed another means of influencing his fellow men, for he is a man of resources. But whatever else changes or disappears, his type will persist.

Elections for the Legislative Council are held every five years, and for several months before the writs are issued the professional organisers of election contests are busy endeavouring to promote a contest in each of the parishes. Gentlemen anxious to be known in the local political world also begin to write letters to the newspapers imploring other gentlemen to come forward and be elected, the writers promising the return of these with all the certainty of prophets. There is something like excitement in the several taverns, rum-shops, barber shops, and other favourite rendezvous of those who love an election, and deputations are formed to wait upon reputedly unwilling gentlemen whom the whole community (as we are informed) desire to see in the Council. It sometimes transpires that these deputations have been organised by some of the unwilling gentlemen themselves. But nobody pays any particular attention to such reports, for it is expected that during an election campaign a politician will do things which would be considered improper on other occasions.

When the persons approached have all consented to come forward as candidates, there follows an issuing of manifestoes. These are, frequently, as vague as they well can be, and are strikingly lacking in originality. The problems which a small West Indian island has to face are necessarily few, nor are those few such as can be immediately solved by legislation. If certain forms of disease are prevalent, if education has been neglected in the past, if the wages paid to labourers are low, the remedy for these things is scarcely to be found in the mere assertion that disease must be prevented, education promoted, wages raised. The candidates understand this perfectly;

yet they must say something. So they all more or less say the same thing, promise to do the same things, appeal to the high sense of duty and the intelligence of the elector (who is perfectly aware that it is only at elections that his intelligence is at all perceived), and then proceed to deal with their opponents on strictly personal lines. In vain does the Press beseech the rival politicians not to be personal. They have to be : if they were not, there could be no election addresses. Absolute vulgarity, of course, is not often indulged in; indeed, the personalities employed at election time are not usually of such a nature as to warrant an appeal to a court of law. Yet they are frequently unpleasant enough, each speaker seeing in an opponent a person whose sole aim is to 'feather his own nest,' 'grind his own axe,' 'serve the interests of some great corporation,' or 'get jobs for his family and his friends.'

Some of these assertions are believed, too, however absurd they may be. For that the politician is dominated by some personal motive, that he is seeking to gain something, is a not uncommon opinion. Yet there have been scores of candidates for the Legislature who have contested an election for no other reason than a desire to serve their respective parishes; and eventually this has come to be perceived. But when the excitement of an election is upon the orators and politicians, the air is full of rumours and insinuations. You would think that the fate of the country depended upon this particular election. Nevertheless the average voter knows perfectly well that the destinies of the country are controlled by a power which does not depend upon elections for its authority, a power often represented by a simple policeman who leisurely strolls about the fringes of a political crowd, interfering with no one; but also taking good care that no one interferes with any one else. No matter who is elected, the Government remains unchanged. Knowing this, the Jamaica elector will never allow his zeal for any candidate or for any cause to lead him to disturb the peace.

Yet the election organiser will not allow the seriousness of the approaching contest to be forgotten, and if he is a man of energy he will infuse some of his own ardent spirit into about twenty voters who, so to speak, form the body-guard of their candidate. Some of these, during three or four weeks preceding election day, are usually to be seen in the vicinity of the would-be legislator: they attend upon him wherever he goes: they make his life a burden to him. But they are useful. All over the city or town they will distribute themselves at a word of command (but chiefly in the vicinity of rum shops), and they will make it their business to proclaim the wonderful virtues of their candidate. They wear huge rosettes of his colours, they each carry a stick, and their arguments in favour of their candidate are emphasised with a wild yet dexterous flourishing of the stick, and with declarations of their readiness to go to prison for so noble a man as the one who has now put his services at the disposal of the people. For this service they, as well as the professional canvassers previously mentioned, are paid a weekly wage, and it is usually the candidate's henchman (the organiser of elections already mentioned) who employs them. They, of course, would rather have dealings directly with the candidate himself. Although they declare that their zeal in his behalf is supremely disinterested, the question of adequate remuneration for services performed or to be rendered is one which they think merits the closest personal attention from the great man; for, first, they hold that he would be more generous than his agent; and next, human nature being prone to suspicion, they firmly believe that they are being robbed by that agent. This is probably true; yet the latter, after all, saves the candidate a great deal of worry, and without his assistance the cost of an election would probably be greater than it is.

The regular canvassers go from house to house with Voters' Rolls in their hands and canvass for votes. They make

promises in the name of their candidate. Are the gutters bad? They shall be looked after when Mr So-and-So becomes a member of the Legislative Council. Are people sick in the district? The hospital grant will be made twice as much as it is as soon as Mr So-and-So represents the constituency. Work is scarce? It shall be the duty of Mr So-and-So to see that the Government embarks upon a system of relief works the moment Mr So-and-So takes his seat in the Legislature. Sometimes enthusiasm carries these canvassers too far, especially if they are not quite experienced in the work. Thus one man, addressing a small crowd of people in one of the poorer suburbs of Kingston, was once heard to declare fervently that that suburb should shortly have a police station, which, he asseverated, it was a shame that it should lack. Immediately he lost the sympathy of his audience, and a more wily and rival canvasser made much capital out of the mistake by asserting with passionate indignation that an attempt was to be made by Mr So-and-So to put everybody who was not of his own class in prison. After that, Mr So-and-So was never given a hearing in that district, the crowd shouting, 'Take him away!' whenever he attempted to address them.

When this election excitement is at its height, the local Press is naturally obliged to comment on the speeches made and on the merits of the several candidates. This latter thing is neither easy nor pleasant. In a small community where there are no party politics, and where the platforms of all the candidates are distinguished more by their sameness than by their difference, support has often to be given on purely personal grounds. But it is exceedingly hazardous to do so openly, seeing that none of the newspapers cares to make enemies when (as they all very frequently believe) it will not make much difference which candidate succeeds. At this time, therefore, the political articles are couched in terms of sweet reasonableness, and, if definite support is given to one man,

care is taken to point out that the other men are only a trifle less excellent than the candidate supported. Indeed, during a certain celebrated election contest, one newspaper day after day announced its fervent desire that the best man might win. But as it took care never to mention who, in its opinion, was the best man, it could not be said that it acted as an effective guide to public opinion. If a newspaper does come out strongly in favour of a particular candidate, as is sometimes the case, its editor is personally attacked by the man whom he opposes, and is held up to public contempt as a time-server, as a writer without conscientious convictions, as an enemy of the people, as one who will have an ignoble end. The ignoble end here prophesied for the offending journalist is the loss of his job, a matter which is of very serious importance in the eyes of the crowd. Strong resolutions condemning him may also be passed at these election meetings, and you would imagine from the language used that he would be afraid to walk the streets without police protection. But the local journalist knows better. Jamaica is not Cuba, where editors are frequently shot. It is not Hayti, where they are frequently deported. He simply continues to write, often with the conviction that his lengthy leaders will not have the slightest effect upon the issue. And when he is met by the partisans of the man he is opposing, he is not infrequently pointed out by them with apparent anger but secret admiration.

And when the day of election at last arrives, the excitement reaches its culminating point. From an early hour of the morning wagonettes and cabs, gaily decorated with flags and with the colours of the respective candidates, begin to parade the streets. A 'band,' consisting usually of two cornets, a flute, a fiddle, and an enormous drum, heads the procession, which is invariably made up of the unwashed. A popular air is 'Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean.' Another still more popular air is known as 'Sweetie Charley'; it is sung with

much gusto to words which I shall not transcribe here, the laws of all British communities making obscenity a serious offence. Another air much in vogue on election days is called 'Marse Charley,' and the words accompanying it are: 'Marse Charley sey him wouldn't kiss Mattie, Not for a t'ousand pounds,' the idea being that Mattie's mouth is altogether of an abnormal size. These and other patriotic airs are played by the band, the excellence of the music being in exact proportion to its loudness.

While these bands parade the town, the candidates, their lieutenants, and their assistants are busy moving about in cabs and carriages bringing the voters to the polling station. The candidates themselves, however, go out but rarely. They prefer to remain at the polling station with some of their staunchest and most robust adherents, for the purpose of button-holing and converting voters who have not yet made up their minds whom they should vote for. This process of persuasion is the cause of many fierce encounters between the rival candidates and their followers, the latter, of course, being in that fit and proper state of intoxication without which no political contest could decently be carried on. It may be that a hesitating voter is seized on the right side by a member of the red and blue party, and on the left by a member of the pink and gray. Both agents ask him at the same time if he does not remember them, and he assures them both that he does, though very probably he has never seen them before. On the strength of his admission of a long-standing acquaintanceship, each agent tries to drag the unfortunate voter to the voting booth, and each asks the other one, 'Why the something or other he does not let the man go, seeing that he has already clearly stated whom he is going to vote for?' This brings a crowd to the spot, an excited crowd, which shouts and waves hands fiercely in the air, and proclaims that 'it will have to be war,' but never proceeds beyond the declaration. Then somebody runs for the respective candidates,

who hastily arrive on the scene and begin to harangue the voter at one and the same time, only stopping now and then to ask each other 'if he cannot behave like a gentleman?' At last the voter decides, and is led off amidst the triumphant jeering and shouting of those with whom he has cast his lot, and the same scene is repeated again and again.

Many voters will not come to the poll unless sent for. Now that motor-cars have become well known in Jamaica, some free and independent electors insist on being taken to the poll in a motor-car. So, either in cabs, carriages, or in motor-cars the voters go proudly to the poll, registering their votes with the air of men who know that they have saved an important situation and served their country, then returning to work or home in high spirits (but on foot), having enjoyed their ride through the streets.

When five o'clock approaches the uproar in the polling station becomes terrific. Every vote is snatched at, language of an impolite nature is freely used by gentlemen who assure you with tears in their eyes, and with much calling upon of Providence to witness to their truth, that their candidate shall win, must win, and has indeed won already. Bold members of a candidate's party even venture to rush up to him occasionally to ask 'how he is running: two lengths in front or neck and neck?' racing terms being regarded as most appropriate to an election, which is in truth a very diverting sport. Every one is the equal of every one else to-day. Every one is prepared to drink freely at every one else's expense. Five o'clock comes: the voice of the returning officer is heard peremptorily ordering the closing of the polling station. Then cheers arise from the voters and the canvassers on both sides, and the bands of the candidates (who are usually only two) simultaneously strike up a triumphant march signifying victory. Immediately after each one strikes up the 'Dead March in Saul,' to intimate that the other party has been

hopelessly beaten. The crowd outside the polling station cheers, then the station itself is closed for a couple of hours.

At about seven o'clock the counting of the votes in a hot, ill-lighted, stuffy room begins. The place is crowded with tired, vociferous, excited, enthusiastic politicians. As box by box the votes are counted, cheers are raised by the party of the candidate who has the largest number of votes to his name, and echoed by the crowd outside, who all night parade the street in front of the polling station. In the small hours of the morning the counting continues. As the end draws near the fever grows. At last it is over. The name of the winner is made known, and a great cheer goes up—goes up from everybody in the room, for, the fight now finished, friendly relations are established once more. Some speech-making follows. Listening to these addresses, the stranger would conclude that everybody assembled in that room that morning was a person of heroic virtue and patriotism, with whom it has been a pleasure for everybody else to have been associated. The candidates usually shake hands with one another, unless the election abuse has been of a particularly virulent character. Each professes the greatest respect and admiration for the other. Then every one goes home, and on the next day the newspapers publish accounts of the election, which is sometimes described as the most enthusiastic ever witnessed in Jamaica, and also long leading articles on the responsibility which now rests upon the successful candidate, who is immediately spoken of as the Hon. So-and-So, and complimented on his victory. Everybody now is anxious to congratulate the victor. Many of those who voted against him now inform the world how they changed their minds at the last moment and voted in his favour, perceiving (by inspiration as it were) that he was the better man of the two. As for the professional organisers of elections, and the canvassers, and the men who played the band, they retire thoughtfully

from the political arena. They have fought the good fight. But—has their reward been adequate?

Let us leave them in a discontented state of mind, their permanent condition. The candidates they imagine they have helped to elect are of quite a different type, being as a rule lawyers, planters, and sometimes one or two merchants. They are mostly men who have succeeded in life; they are not impecunious; the majority of them are above forty years of age. They have the power to initiate legislation of a non-financial character, and they may suggest, by resolution, the undertaking of schemes directly involving the expenditure of money. The power of spending money, or of introducing Money Bills, rests with the Government; but the elected members may, by the united vote of nine of their number, veto a Government Money Bill. Thus the electives act as a financial check upon the Government. Again, although there are fifteen Government members as against fourteen elected members in the Legislative Council, which places the Government in a position of numerical superiority, it is provided in the Constitution that if the fourteen elected members vote together, on any matter whatever, the fifteen votes of the Government members cannot be taken. Thus it would appear that all that the elected members had to do would be to vote solidly (nine on financial questions and fourteen on all questions of ordinary legislation) and they would practically rule the country. But we have not yet done with checks and balances. For the Jamaica Constitution also gives the Governor the power to overrule the united votes of the elected members by declaring a matter put by him before the House to be of paramount importance to the welfare of the colony. When a Bill or any measure whatever is declared to be of paramount importance, the votes of the Government members are taken, and the matter is decided. The Governor, it is true, has then to justify his action to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; but English Colonial Secretaries make it



MYRTLE
BANK
HOTEL,
KINGSTON



KING'S
HOUSE,
THE
GOVERNOR'S
RESIDENCE



TITCHFIELD
HOTEL,
PORT
ANTONIO

a matter of policy to support their chief officials in the tropical colonies. Of course, if a Governor deliberately flew in the face of a unanimous local public opinion, and set both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution at defiance, there might be trouble. But Governors do not go so far as that; or, if they do, they manage to explain away their action with arguments which are accepted only because nobody cares to bring about an open fight in these days between the Executive and the country.

The situation is not a stable one. The same thing may be said, no doubt, about every political situation: 'an unstable equilibrium' is the best word for it. But in Jamaica it is more unstable than almost anywhere else, for, since 1884, the Government has been steadily encroaching upon the powers of the elected members, while the people of the colony are becoming less and less disposed to be ruled entirely by officials. But to understand and appreciate the present political situation of Jamaica we must go back to the past.

As has been said in our second chapter, the early colonists consisted mainly of planters and their white employees, of a few merchants, and a handful of professional men. Thus eighty years after the English conquest of the colony there were only eight thousand white people in the island, and about eighty thousand slaves. The population grew as time went on, but the whites never numbered more than thirty thousand at any time, and in the hands of a small section of these was vested the extraordinary powers possessed by the old Jamaica House of Assembly. The number of voters during the two hundred years of Representative Government was either, at one time or the other, a little less or a little more than two thousand. These elected a House of Assembly of forty-five members: the popular branch of the local Parliament, which was supposed to be the Colonial counterpart of the British House of Commons, and in which any private member had the right to introduce a Money Bill.

Then there was a Council of twelve members appointed by the Governor and constituting the Colony's Upper House. This claimed the right to amend as well as to reject Money Bills sent up to it by the House of Assembly, and this claim was one among the many causes of conflict between the two Legislative Chambers. For the Assembly always contended that the House of Lords could not amend a Money Bill sent up to it by the House of Commons; and was it not (so the argument ran) in a position similar to that of the House of Commons? As the Council was presided over by the Governor in person when he was in the island, it follows that he was often dragged into the quarrels between the two Houses, each of which was bitterly jealous of the other. Then, besides, the Governor was the representative of the Imperial Government, and the Imperial Government always claimed the right to interfere in the administration of the island. This right was never admitted by the House of Assembly, which stoutly contended that it and it alone could legislate for the island and its people.

Having the power to refuse supplies for the carrying on of the Government (which power they frequently exercised), and always having something about which to quarrel with the Governor, the Council, or with one another, the members of the Assembly took their politics very seriously indeed. They did not hesitate to accuse Sir William Beeston of having misappropriated public money. When a Mr John Ayscough administered the Government, he happened to speak of His Majesty's 'commands.' The Assembly promptly reminded him that the King's *recommendations* should not be spoken of in that way to a free and independent legislature. When he relinquished the Government a few months afterwards (during which interval the Assembly had refused to transact business with him) he was promptly impeached by the Assembly for having perverted justice while President of the Council and Chancellor of the island! To such lengths did the

old legislators go when dealing with stubborn Governors.

The House of Assembly was always insisting on its right to adjourn whenever it liked, and the several Governors of the colony were frequently obliged to adjourn it peremptorily when, instead of proceeding with business, it would devote its time and attention to passing long strings of resolutions denouncing the Government or setting forth its rights and privileges. It is stated that during one period of nine years there were eight general elections and fifteen sessions of the House. And while these contentions between the Assembly and other parties were going on, the members of the Assembly did not forget to quarrel amongst themselves. Somewhat similar scenes continued up to the very eve of the final dissolution of the House of Assembly and the surrender of the old Jamaica Constitution. After the slaves had become freemen (1837) others besides planters and great merchants began to force an entry into the House of Assembly. This, by the old, proud Conservative element, was regarded as the beginning of the end of all things. Then it was that something like two political parties appeared in the island, one striving to maintain the old planter supremacy, the other endeavouring to break it down. Personal attacks were the order of the day in the Press, and duels sometimes took place. Commercial depression prevailed, there was no sanitation, the roads of the island were neglected; and in the existing temper of the times reform was almost impossible. The Government could do little without the co-operation of the Assembly, and that body did not wish to do anything to improve the condition of the people. English and American writers visiting the island about that time (1860-65) saw clearly that the situation could not possibly long endure.

It did not. A peasant revolt broke out in one of the parishes in 1865, and a handful of white people were murdered. The rising was suppressed without difficulty, the alleged

ringleader of it—a coloured member of the House of Assembly—was tried by court-martial and hanged, and the Assembly itself, panic-struck at the thought of a general servile rebellion and massacre, determined to surrender its powers into the hands of the Crown. It did so with much rhetoric, and the Governor complimented it on having ‘immolated its privileges on the altar of patriotism.’ Then followed sixteen years of administration by a Governor, assisted by a small nominated Legislative Council whose vote, however, could not override the decision of the Executive. One Governor, indeed, during this period, when one of the members of the new Legislature mentioned ‘the law,’ informed his hearers that he was the law. But the colony becoming dissatisfied with this system of Crown Government, which undoubtedly was extravagant, it was modified in 1884, and the existing system of semi-Representative Government was introduced in its stead.

It is a compromise system. It is a system that can only be worked with infinite tact and diplomacy, and not all Governors or all bodies of elected members possess these qualities. The Governor, it must be borne in mind, is essentially the Government. The Constitution of the colony provides for a Privy Council, five members of which are officials, three of which are selected from amongst the most influential planters in the island, and the president of which is the Governor himself. The Governor is supposed to consult this Cabinet on all important matters of public policy, but he is under no obligation to follow its advice, and is not supposed to do so if such advice runs contrary to his deliberate opinion. For it is not his Privy Council nor his officers, nor even the Legislative Council, that the Colonial Office holds responsible for the good government of the colony. It is the Governor, who, to be successful, must not only have tact, but also ability, energy, sound judgment, good fortune, and a considerable knowledge of men and affairs. Considering the requirements, there

has never been such a thing as an ideal Governor. Every Administrator has made mistakes, and the people and their elected representatives have not been slow to perceive and comment on those mistakes, though not with anything like virulence. Criticism, in fact, is conducted very soberly in Jamaica; violent denunciations of the Government is only indulged in by extremists who have no following amongst the intelligent people. Nevertheless, no Governor escapes criticism, and very few have been the Governors who have left Jamaica without diminished popularity.

The Governor is the Government, and the Government can, on the plea of paramount importance, or even on the ground that the public service will suffer if certain things are not done immediately, overrule the decision of the elected members. This does not leave the latter without a certain amount of power; they can still, within limits, act as a check upon the Government, and their united vote is not a thing to be easily ignored. Yet, like all elected bodies, the popular element of the Legislature feels that its decision should be final; while the Government is of opinion that what it considers best for the country is absolutely best and should be accepted by the elected members. Constant agreement being out of the question, to say nothing of its being monotonous, we have friction sometimes, and now and then there occurs what is called in Jamaica 'a political crisis.' These crises have invariably up to now left the Government as victor; so long as the Governor is supported by the Secretary of State for the Colonies he has nothing to fear. But there is a growing dissatisfaction with this system, a dissatisfaction that will make itself apparent within another decade if frequent clashes between Government and elected members should take place.

Some form of control over their own affairs the people of Jamaica will insist upon having, and any continued advance towards practically unlimited power and authority on the part of the Government will alienate the sympathy of the

intelligent and educated classes from the Government, which, we must remember, largely represents the British connection. If when the veto power of the elected members is employed, it is overruled by the Governor, the people will feel and say that either the Governor should have no power to overrule the united votes of the elected members, or that the latter should leave the Legislature and have nothing to do with the public affairs of the colony. If it should come to this—and there are indications that it may one day—the task of governing Jamaica will be made harder. For while no violent demonstrations are to be thought of even, there will certainly be much less contentment with the Government than there is to-day, and it will be asked whether Jamaica would not be better off politically, as well as economically and industrially, if connected with the United States. At the worst, it will be said, the colony could not be worse off from the political point of view, and this feeling will be another factor in favour of the connection of the island with the United States instead of with the British Empire.

Do I mean to imply, then, that the Government is solely responsible for the misunderstandings that occur between the Government and the elected members of the Legislative Council? I do not. Often the Government has been right and the elected members wrong, but the contrary also holds. In such circumstances, what is to be done? Considering the responsibility of the Governor, is he to allow the elected members to have their own way, and thus, perhaps, to inflict some damage on the country? Well, there is no doubt in the writer's mind that if the elected members had their own way all the time they would inflict damage on the country, but so would the Government; so would any body of men whose power was practically unlimited. As a matter of fact, however, it is rare that the elected members act together as one man, while the personal influence of a wise Governor is always great, and can be used to guide the country, if not

the elected members. And public opinion is by no means disposed to tolerate abuses on the part of the elected representatives of the country. The latter are unsparingly condemned in the Press and on the platform if they act as though they were irresponsible. The Press may not always take sides at an election, but it will not allow the person elected to do what he pleases; public opinion, in fact, may safely be trusted to act as a check on the elected members; besides, there is always the numerical strength of the Government in the Legislative Council.

There is another consideration. It is not wisdom to expect perfection of any political or public body, and it is not likely that the moral support of the people will be on the side of the Government if it can always reduce the elected members to a nonentity by the use of its extraordinary powers. Every time the decision of the elected members is overruled, the community feels that a blow has been delivered at its self-respect; it has been told plainly that its representatives are only to be allowed to do what the Governor is prepared to allow them to do. Thus the elected members may gain a sympathy which they do not deserve, and the Government may find itself regarded as alien and as antagonistic to the people, which is what it rarely if ever is. The standard of education rises steadily in Jamaica year by year, and with it the standard of intelligence. With this improvement in knowledge and intelligence there must go an increasing measure of political power. It has to be expected that there will be some abuse of that power—it is so everywhere and in every age—but far more serious than that would be the feeling that the people of Jamaica were one thing and the Government of Jamaica another.

It is not within the province of these pages to outline new schemes and systems of Government for tropical dependencies. One may, however, suggest that the association of the elected members with the framing of the yearly financial

proposals of the Government, as is the case in Barbados, would obviate much of the trouble that now and then arises between the elected members and the Jamaica Government. A committee of the elected members and the Government might prepare estimates that would not be quibbled over. In time, too, the elected members of the Legislature will be paid, and this payment of members will undoubtedly be coupled with an insistence on the possession of a good property qualification (properly attested to) on the part of every man seeking election to the Legislature. This should do much both to encourage a suitable class of men to seek election to the Legislature and to prevent impecunious adventurers from endeavouring to gain pay, position, and power at the expense of the colony.

CHAPTER IX

INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL JAMAICA

THE classification of the people according to occupations, which is adopted in the census of 1911, cannot be said to be very illuminating. We are told that 271,000 are engaged in agricultural pursuits, and 72,000 in industrial. But what these industries are is nowhere stated, and I must confess that the figures given in this connection are somewhat astonishing. Perhaps clerks, shopkeepers, and store assistants are counted as persons engaged in industry; but, if so, who make up the nearly twenty thousand souls whose occupation is said to be commercial? Jamaica industries, as distinct from agriculture, are so few, and employ, relatively, so small a number of persons, that it is difficult to see where these 72,000 are to be placed, if not among the agriculturists. At least sixty thousand of them must be agriculturists, the remainder may be makers of things—artisans, manufacturers' assistants, compositors, shoemakers, and the like. In writing of industrial Jamaica, therefore, one may as well include the agriculturists, since agriculture is not only an industry, but the most important industry in Jamaica.

Whenever a writer to a Jamaica newspaper discusses the economic condition of the colony, he invariably remarks somewhere in the course of his letter that Jamaica is an agricultural country. He does not allow the fact to be assumed, and he will not take it for granted that it is generally well known. The obvious comment upon such a remark is, of course, that, her natural resources considered, Jamaica could not very well be anything else. It is true that there has been

an age-long search made for minerals, and that every now and then during the last two hundred and fifty years or so, some one has come upon most promising signs of gold, coal, and other minerals, and has been quite rich (in imagination) for some little time. But now most persons appear to have made up their minds that the only gold to be found is in the golden banana, the banana of commerce which is so highly esteemed in the markets of the United States and England. And that is in truth a source of riches, the source upon which Jamaica mainly depends.

I will not tell here the origin of the Jamaica banana industry. The story has been told so often that one is inclined to disbelieve it, or at any rate to wish it were not true. There is nothing so wonderful about it, after all; what is much more interesting is the development of the trade in the hands of a great American organisation, a development which illustrates how agriculture itself has been organised in these later days on commercial lines, just as if it were a manufacture. The American's business instinct leads naturally towards organisation on a colossal scale; he may know nothing of agricultural matters himself, yet he will handle the agricultural products of more than one country; he knows nothing about steamships, yet he will own more than one fleet. The United Fruit Company consists of men who have invested money in the development of the banana trade between Jamaica and Central America, and the United States and England. These men form one of the biggest and most powerful of American Trusts. They own a great deal of land in Jamaica; they have leased a great deal, and they have entered into contracts with both small and large planters to supply them regularly with fruit. They employ an army of supervisors, sorters, and buyers, and on these they depend. Besides owning some of the finest ships that run between Jamaica and the United States, they are the largest shareholders, and they are certainly the controlling power, in the Elders and

Fyffes line, which supplies a regular fortnightly service between Jamaica and the mother-country. They carry fruit and passengers to England and America, and they have steadily improved their steamers. To a considerable extent, the development of Jamaica for some twenty years is a development due to one great commercial organisation controlled by Americans. And the growth of that Company has not yet reached its culmination.

It is this Company which has made the town of Port Antonio. An insignificant fishing village some thirty years ago, it is now the second in size in the island, and a favourite resort for tourists. There one of the finest hotels in Jamaica—the Tichfield Hotel—is to be found; and the idea of supplying the town with a hotel came from men connected with the Company, which for some time owned the hotel. It is still interested in it, and is extending its activities in Jamaica in other directions. The Company is sometimes spoken of as an octopus, but its operations have benefited Jamaica quite as much as they have benefited itself: Jamaica, rather, has been the larger beneficiary.

The small peasant who once grew half a dozen different things on an acre or two of land, now, in hundreds and even thousands of instances, devotes himself to bananas. These he sells to the United Fruit Company or to its competing rivals, with the result that he is much better off than if he had continued his old methods of cultivation and production. He makes more money, lives better, and is altogether more independent—more of a man. The impetus, too, in the way of organising industry, which this Company has given, has had an effect on other industries besides the one in which it is specifically interested, and its example has been followed by other firms and companies doing business in Jamaica. Thus we no longer find the sugar planter of Jamaica a direct exporter of his produce.

At one time the man who grew cane ground it also, which

is still often the case to-day. Yet it is not wholly the case, the peasants in the sugar parishes now going in steadily for cane farming, being content to sell their cane to the mill-owner at fixed rates, according to quality. The mill-owner or manufacturer grows cane himself, but he no longer ships his sugar and takes the chances of the markets abroad. He is no longer directly troubled about rates of freight as once he was. It is the same so far as his rum is concerned. That also he hands over to the commission agents and great produce buyers of the island, and these take the risk.

Such a firm as Messrs Fred L. Myers & Son has done much within late years to extend the sale of Jamaica rum. It handles the output of several large distilleries, and through its agents abroad it places the rum wherever there is a demand, or wherever a demand may be created. It also handles a great deal of the sugar produced in the island, and it is significant that, in spite of the withdrawal of Great Britain from the Brussels Convention, the members of this organisation have the utmost faith in Jamaica's future as a sugar-producing country.

Another firm, Messrs Lascelles de Mercado & Co. (connected with E. A. de Pass & Company, of London) is part-owner of the Vere Sugar Estates, Limited, and thus are sugar producers as well as sellers. Coffee and cocoa are also handled by this firm, the peasants selling their product in small quantities to its agents, and the larger planters consigning their crops direct to it. The same sort of business is done by Messrs Wessels & Company, a German firm. These three, and others, handle Jamaica produce with the intent, not only to sell again, but to regulate the island's industries, to sort and trade mark the different qualities of produce shipped away, and, consequently, to secure a definite and high reputation for Jamaica produce.

Much has been done in this direction, but still more remains to be done. For the Jamaica peasant-planter is rather a happy-go-lucky individual, and if stones get mixed up with

his coffee, or an old shoe finds its way amongst his cocoa, he may ship them without sorting out either stones or shoe; in fact, his commercial and agricultural education has been rather neglected in the past, and is only now being attended to. The Government is seeing that he learns something about scientific agriculture. School gardens and agricultural instructors, and agricultural lectures and demonstrations are teaching him that his old methods of cultivation can be much improved.

A few miles to the north of Kingston is an institution which has been established but for a few years now—the Hope Farm. It is an agricultural college, and when reporting on it about five years ago, its Director bemoaned the circumstance that while so many of the Jamaica youths of the better working class and peasant-proprietor class were very fond of sitting at a desk with pens stuck prominently behind their ears, they showed no inclination whatever to profit by the opportunities afforded by the Government to acquire a good education in scientific agriculture and stock-rearing. Only three years later he was writing in quite a different strain. He then had as many pupils as he could accommodate, and others were applying for admission to the College Farm. The youths were apt learners, good workers—altogether, he was pleased with them. He had a little misjudged the class he had written about, though by no means wittingly; and the writer has been told by members of the firms mentioned above that the younger generation of the peasant class are not only willing to be helped, but anxious to be helped to conduct their business on orderly and economical lines.

Let me give a simple but significant illustration. The yam industry of the parish of Hanover is an important one, and is entirely in the hands of a group of well-to-do peasants who own small properties in the parish. The yam is brought in August and September principally to Kingston; there it is sold, and thence shipped to Panama, and sometimes to the neighbouring island of Cuba. It is carried from Hanover to

Kingston in small one-masted sailing-boats called *droghers*, boats which can easily carry yams to the value of £150, which may represent the product of three or even two peasants' properties. Up to recently these boats would call anywhere along the western side of Kingston's foreshore, and land the yams without much regard for economy of time or conservation of temper. To go down to the seaside when the droghers came in was to pay a visit to pandemonium; yams would be destroyed, and sometimes fights would occur; the language was forcible, perhaps picturesque, certainly unprintable. Then some of the principal persons connected with the trade approached the junior member of Messrs Fred L. Myers & Son, and put it to him that something should be done to help the yam industry. The suggestion was adopted, a special pier and warehouse were provided for these people, and now any one visiting the wharf of this firm would never dream that there were yam merchants within a mile of it. Order and method now reign where once there was something very much like chaos. Those who know how prone the West Indian peasant is to noise and confusion will understand the significance of this change.

Yet there is nothing so very wonderful about it. It was demonstrated long ago that the peasant and working class people of Jamaica can be trained to do most things. Hitherto they have lacked the training, the organisation, the encouragement, and the result has been backward agricultural methods and a low standard of handicrafts. But when a few men with ability and faith and patience put themselves to the task of improving the commercial methods of the people the benefits are apparent at once. The Government's agricultural instructors, too, do not hesitate to say that, though progress is slow, and though they had at first to fight hard against the suspicions of the peasants, nevertheless the latter have now shown themselves perfectly willing to learn what the instructors have to teach them, and are profiting by that instruction.

Not long ago the cry was raised in Jamaica :—‘What has become of the cabinet-makers of old time?’ None is left, it was said; they had all degenerated; it was now impossible to produce good native furniture at all, comparable with what was produced even fifty years ago. The word degeneration was played upon. The pessimist had it all his own way. But the pessimist did not take account of the fact that it was practically impossible for the native hand-worker to compete with the cheap, stained, machine-made furniture imported in large quantities from the United States. The native workman had not degenerated through the will to degenerate. He had been driven, willy-nilly, out of the market; there was no sense in his making anything like the splendid articles produced in those days when the handicrafts-man could take a bit of rare and lasting wood and fashion it into a bit of furniture which, lasting for a century and more, would grow more beautiful with age. Yet even this art has not quite died out in Jamaica. One large Kingston firm, the Colosseum, still makes excellent furniture with native woods and native labour. But it is caviare to the general. Neither a firm nor a workman can afford to starve in the interests of good work which nobody wants. Such self-sacrifice would not be philanthropy; it would be folly.

One is glad that the old Jamaica industry of furniture-making is still in existence, however, and one is also pleased to know that new industries requiring skill and training have been started. All the world has heard of the Panama hat, but it is not so generally known that this hat was never made in Panama, but principally in Ecuador. They are manufactured by hand out of the straw of the *Torquilla palm*, a plant which grows in Jamaica, and which, seen by the river banks, where it is most luxuriant, is one of the prettiest of the smaller palms of the country.

Only the other day it occurred to one or two enterprising men that a profitable export trade in these hats could be built

up. The peasants had always made them for common wear; but when the C. C. Henriques Company, of Kingston, organised a Panama Hat Manufactory, and began to send samples of the Jamaica-made hat all over the world, it was seen that in this article, as well as in sugar, rum, bananas, cocoa, and coffee, Jamaica could easily hold its own; and every year now the number of hats exported from Jamaica increases. Native workers only are employed in the Henriques Manufactory. There one sees the girls sitting and hears them singing for hour after hour as they plait the fine straw—singing hymns, since the musical taste of the average working-class girl runs strongly in the direction of the 'long metre' when she is at her daily tasks. There is no hurry—that would spoil the work. Indeed, a very fine Panama hat may take two or three months to make. No hurry, but a great deal of care is necessary; and such care can presumably be better taken when a number of young women solemnly chant that 'A few more days shall roll, a few more seasons pass,' as their fingers deftly weave the straw that is eventually to be worn by some gay young man 'up north,' or by some lady in Piccadilly or the Strand.

Excepting the bulk of the banana trade, most of the export business of the island is in the control of local people. And even in the case of the fruit companies, the men employed to look after local interests are mainly Jamaicans and resident Englishmen. The bulk of the cigar export trade is in the hands of a branch of the American Tobacco Trust, known as the Jamaica Tobacco Company, but the local president of this branch is a native. Much has been done by the Jamaica Tobacco Company to extend the sale of Jamaica cigars abroad during the last few years. The Government's figures relating to this article of exportation show a steady rise; but, of course, the Jamaica cigar has to compete in England with the Havana cigar, and that holds the field because of its long-acquired reputation. The duty on cigars going into Canada is simply prohibitive. Porto Rico has an open market in the United

States, but Jamaica is shut out. All this handicaps the Jamaica tobacco products immensely, and it says much for the intrinsic excellence of the Jamaica cigar that the demand for it increases steadily; one has no hesitation in asserting that but for prohibitive duties, the exportation of Jamaica cigars would rival that of Porto Rico, and would, in time, perhaps, be second only to that of Cuba. Jamaica has some excellent tobacco fields; it has even been said that the tobacco lands in the parishes of St Catherine and Clarendon are like those of the famous Vuelta Abajo, in the province of Havana,¹ and it must be borne in mind that not one-half of the cigars exported as 'Havana cigars' are made out of tobacco grown in the Vuelta Abajo. Jamaica should, therefore, be able to look forward, and is looking forward, to a very much larger export trade in cigars.

I do not wish to weary the reader with figures, which, after all, tell no very intelligible story. It is not possible to judge of the prosperity of a country merely by reading columns of statistics all purporting to deal with its export and import trade. Yet, within limits, a few figures may be helpful to the reader, and often serve the purpose of saving a writer the trouble of making his meaning clear in words. They suggest a patient study of one's subject; they imply familiarity with official publications. This is one reason, I suppose, why figures are said to be misleading. I take mine from documents which are easily accessible, but which, perhaps, very few persons think it worth their while to consult. I find that the total export and import trade of Jamaica for the year ending March 31, 1912, amounted in value to £5,762,183, and that 1912 is stated to be one of the most prosperous that the colony has known for some time.

This statement is true enough; it is proved by some other

¹ 'Surtout du côté de Saint-Catherine et Clarendon, on trouve des terrains qui ont à peu près même composition que la fameuse Vuelta Abajo cubaine. . . . En tout cas, les prix des cigares sont plus modérés que ceux de la Havane, et la qualité est excellente.'—*Les Grandes Antilles*, par Daniel Bellet.

figures besides those of exports and imports. It is proved by the fact that in 1912 the people of Jamaica spent £12,250 more on carriages and motor-cars than they had done in the previous year. In 1910 and 1911 the average amount spent on motor-cars and carriages was £30,000 a year. As the natural increase of population in a year or two would not account for the extra twelve thousand pounds, and we know from experience that whenever business is good the average resident indulges in luxuries, we must conclude that business was prospering in the colony. Bananas accounted for the larger part of this revenue, sugar came next (a bad second), then followed coffee, cocoa, rum, and the rest. When one states that more than fifty-eight per cent. of the colony's exports consist of fruit, and but about nine per cent. of sugar, the reader will realise once again the extent to which the latter industry has decayed.

Yet even this figure represents a revival. In 1909 sugar formed but 4.7 per cent. of the island's total exports. In 1910, when the planters at last had come to believe that the sugar bounties had gone for good—it had taken them many years to arrive at this conviction—sugar stood for 10.8 per cent. of the exports. A drought affected the sugar parishes, and in 1911 8.9 per cent. was the proportion in which the exports of sugar stood to the total export trade of the island. Then came the news that Great Britain had decided to withdraw from the Brussels Convention, and that will of a surety have affected the reviving industry adversely.

It is a great pity that a colony capable of producing a variety of products should be compelled to give most of its attention to but one, and that one a most perishable article of commerce. So long as Jamaica produces bananas mainly, and so long as its present fiscal connection with the mother-country remains unchanged, so long will the colony be at the mercy of America. So long as bananas remain the chief staple of Jamaica, so long will the revenue, both of the people and

the Government, be at the mercy of any cyclone that happens to sweep over the land. This is a trite observation; but then there is nothing new to be said upon this point. Bananas pay well to cultivate—of that there is no doubt. But given good markets, sugar, tobacco, cocoa, and coffee would also pay very handsomely, and the colony would have three or four staples to fall back upon.

Cuba gave up producing coffee because its climate and soil were better adapted to sugar. But Jamaica has excellent soil and climate for coffee; she has almost everywhere the altitude that Cuba has not, except in the province of Oriente. Nevertheless her export trade in coffee, so great at the beginning of the last century, has fallen away to an inconsiderable trifle. Jamaica oranges have been driven out of the American market by the high tariff on citrus fruit. Jamaica cocoa has a better chance abroad, and the result is that the production of cocoa is increasing apace, in spite of the great quantities of cocoa shipped from Ecuador, Trinidad, and other places.

The great need of Jamaica are good markets. This is proved by the wonderful industrial and commercial progress made by Porto Rico during the last ten years. Porto Rico is not as large an island as Jamaica, and is certainly not more fertile. It has been cultivated even more than Jamaica has been, so it cannot be contended that its prosperity is due to its rich virgin soil. It has a somewhat larger population, it is true; it had that even when its trade was but equal to the trade of Jamaica. But it has not a hardier population, and if its labouring classes are reputed to be better workers to-day than are the labourers of Jamaica, it was not so long ago when they were described as working only a sufficient number of days to secure enough to eat, and lolling in their hammocks for hours on end.¹ Their food was quite as coarse and as simple as that of the Jamaica peasant. The illegitimacy rate and the morals of the people generally were not better

¹ *Cuba and Porto Rico*, by R. T. Hill, 1898.

than those of Jamaica, and the average rate of wages was about the same. The illiteracy in Porto Rico was greater than it was in Jamaica, and disease claimed a large number of victims. The island was badly provided with roads, and the prospects of immediate progress were not very promising.¹

To-day Porto Rico is a new country, a country with several times the trade of Jamaica, with a population that is increasing by immigration as well as naturally, a country, too, where wages have doubled and even quadrupled in twelve years, and where one no longer hears much said about the indolence of the peasant. A great change has taken place in Porto Rico, and ten years hence the change will be even greater. And what is the magic that has wrought this change? The reader knows it already: a good market. If Jamaica had as good a market for its sugar, rum, cocoa, coffee, and tobacco products as it has for its bananas it would soon be better off than Porto Rico.

Instead of emigrating, the people would stay at home. Instead of idling, or working for but three days a week, the labourers would toil at least as steadily as the labourers of Porto Rico; indeed, Jamaicans in Jamaica might even work as hard as do their fellow countrymen who are employed in Cuba, Costa Rica, and Panama. They would eat better food, for one thing, and so would have more stamina; would be able to endure for longer periods the demand made upon their strength and energy by an anæmiating climate. Then they would develop the same ambition for a better style and standard of living that distinguishes the working classes of the city and town to-day. These work readily enough; so would the peasant if the inducement offered were good enough.

¹ 'The best labourers do not get over thirty to forty cents gold. . . . In squalor and filth, in crudity and ignorance, the larger number of the inhabitants go through their comparatively short lives. . . . Marriage is almost unknown among the very poor classes. . . . Chronic diseases are common, engendered by bad diet, total lack of sanitary measures, and an almost equal shortage in personal cleanliness.'—*Porto Rico*, by William Dinwiddie, 1899.

It is noteworthy that in those parishes where labour is best paid the people work best; where there is but little regular employment, the labourers not only work indifferently but are unable to work steadily; when they move to another more prosperous parish they have actually to be trained to new habits.

At first it might seem as if low wages and a plentiful labour supply were a positive benefit, but experience in the West Indies and in Central America does not support that view. The low-priced man lives upon next to nothing, and is accordingly weak; and if only he has an acre of land to fall back upon, he will not work for a small wage for a day longer than he finds it absolutely necessary to do so. But if his standard of living improves, if he acquires new tastes, if he learns to like luxuries and to spend money, he will give up more and more of his leisure in order to gain these new delights; he will put one enjoyment against another.

It is not the dignity of labour that he will consider; it is not the dignity of labour that any one considers when one goes out to work. It is the benefits of labour, and if the benefits are not equal to those of idleness, the average Jamaica peasant will prefer the latter. Those who are inclined to blame him too loudly might try an hour or so of walking (not working) on a Jamaica summer's day at any time between the hours of ten and three. A further argument might no doubt be found by these in references to the thickness of the labourer's skull and his indifference to heat. But it is a great mistake to think he is indifferent to heat. As to the thickness of his skull, the people I have met with the thickest skulls are precisely those who take things for granted and imagine that their prejudices are scientific laws.

The stimulus of better wages and more regular employment is needed to make the Jamaica peasant a better and steadier and altogether more reliable workman, though this development on his part would no doubt take some time.

The stimulus of better markets is needed to give an impetus to the extension of other Jamaica industries than the banana trade. Such a development would lead to more employment for the people, and higher pay. And this in turn would react upon the general social, industrial, and perhaps even moral life of the colony.

About the shipping of Jamaica a few words must be said. In 1901, 1037 ships (872,006 tons) entered the harbours; ten years later (1911) the figures were 1508 (2,158,647 tons), a considerable increase. Jamaica is now connected with England and the United States of America by several lines of excellent passenger boats. The United Fruit Company's service has already been mentioned, the Royal Mail Company's service is one that hardly needs mentioning. This great organisation is more than a company doing business with the West Indies and with Central and South America; it is an institution that has been connected with this part of the world for over seventy years; it is significantly English; it is taken as symbolical of English methods and ideas even by cultured Americans.

I cannot refrain from quoting what Mr Arthur Ruhl has said about the Royal Mail Company's boats in his intensely interesting book, *The Other Americans*, though it has nothing to do with the subject of this writing. 'You step across a bit of planking into the British Isles,' he tells us. 'It is no less than that. Your luggage is brought by a barefoot *mestizo* spluttering Spanish frantically, and labouring frantically under the obsession that you have robbed him, or that the steamer is going to sail without you, and it is taken by a sandy-haired Cockney steward, who says: "Ticket, sir, if you please, sir," and "Thank you, sir," whether one gives him half a sovereign or tells him that he ought to be hanged. . . . It was inconceivably British, that ship. . . . One could imagine it sailing round the world for ever and peeping into all the world's strange and wonderful ports, and still the steamer chairs

would line the deck on the opposite side of the ship from which things were to be seen, still the heads would be bent complacently over the Colonial novels.'

There is some truth in this humorous description of the Englishman sailing in an English ship; there is also something else that perhaps may be 'inconceivably British' too, but which is indubitably true. That is, the care with which the Royal Mail Company selects its officers and agents. The idea is that these should be English gentlemen, and the ideal is resolutely kept in mind. Thus one day (in 1911) when a Negro labourer on the Company's wharf in Kingston fell dead, after a night's work—a labourer who had long been in the employment of the Company, who had been faithful, and who had been well treated in consequence—the Superintendent of the Company ordered the Company's flag to fly at half-mast all that day, and paid the funeral expenses of the man. He was much surprised to find that his act was favourably commented on in one of the city papers; it was what he thought should be done for every old servant of the Company who died at his post. Acts like this, and the type of men sent out to manage the Company's affairs, have done a great deal to endear the Royal Mail Company to West Indians, who, in addition, feel proud of the excellence of its service and the extent of its operations, because it is British.

In the Jamaica stores—they are called shops in England—the goods sold are mainly of English make, and this attracts thousands of American tourists to them. One can buy in these places things at about half the price paid for them in New York or any great American city; very often one can buy in Kingston goods of English make that are never sold in American shops, the duty being so prohibitive. The tourist trade having increased remarkably during the last few years, the King Street fancy stores and haberdashery establishments lay themselves out to cater for visitors, their managers going every year to England and Paris to select goods for

tourists; and if by any chance there is no large tourist trade in any year, the difference in revenue is felt immediately.

The interiors of these shops are very prettily arranged, and their show-windows are tastefully decorated. They are heavily stocked, and already Kingston has begun to build department stores. Such establishments as the Metropolitan House and the Bee Hive Store—to mention but two of many—would not be out of place in New York or London; you can have suits and dresses made on the spot and at short order; your purchases will be delivered anywhere within the city's limits whenever you desire them; the attendance is prompt and satisfactory. Speaking of the attendance in the Kingston stores, I cannot help contrasting it with that of the stores in the cities of Canada. There the shop assistants are as courteous as they well can be, but they do strike one as being slow. You will be served much more quickly in any Jamaica dry-goods establishment than in any similar place in Toronto or Montreal, even though the attendant may be waiting on several customers at the same time. The men and women employed in the Kingston stores need fear no comparison, certainly, with people who do similar work elsewhere.

The colony's banking business is in the hands of three institutions: one is British and West Indian, the Colonial Bank; the other two are branches of Canadian banks. It is not three years since the Royal Bank of Canada established a branch in Jamaica, but already it has extended its operations considerably, and is doing a large amount of business. The Royal Bank of Canada is one of the great money forces in Cuba; it is one of the biggest of Canadian banks, and is evidently determined to handle as much as possible of the West Indian banking. The Colonial Bank is also an institution which, like the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, is particularly and closely identified with the British West Indies. It has branches in all the British islands in this part of the world; it lends money on real estate; it is an

agricultural loan bank, as well as an ordinary banking institution of great stability. Its home in Kingston is a spacious, handsome structure—as fine a building as one will see in many a city ten times the size of Kingston. Besides these, and a branch of the Bank of Nova Scotia, there is the Government Savings Bank. There are branches of all these banks in the principal towns of the island.

In concluding this chapter, let me again quote some statistics—statistics which will really, this time, illustrate an important fact. Jamaica buys a great part of the manufactured articles it consumes from the United Kingdom; its purchases from that country amounted, in 1911, to £1,291,000. From the United States the colony imported £1,200,000 worth of goods; from Canada, £244,000 worth; other countries need not be mentioned. What is the other side of the picture? This: in 1911 the United Kingdom bought from Jamaica products to the value of £438,000, while Canada purchased sugar and other agricultural produce to the value of £253,000. The purchases of the United States amounted to £1,825,000; which means that the United States took 61.9 per cent. of Jamaica's exports, the United Kingdom 14.7 per cent., the Dominion of Canada 8.6. Does anybody wonder, after glancing over these figures, that the United States is regarded in Jamaica as being in a position to say something about the destinies of the island?

CHAPTER X

EVOLUTION AND PROGRESS

HERE and there in the course of the preceding pages I have been obliged to repeat observations made before, to refer to facts already stated. In this my concluding chapter I must endeavour to gather the conclusions at which I have sometimes hinted into a consistent and intelligible statement; and if to do so some repetition is needed I am sure I shall be pardoned. It has been seen that we have in Jamaica a mixed population of less than nine hundred thousand persons; but as that population is increasing at the rate of more than thirteen thousand a year, we may safely conclude that by the close of the second decade of this century—that by the year 1920—the people of Jamaica will number nearly if not quite a million. And they will continue to increase long after that date, for the colony's birth-rate is one of the highest in the world, while its death-rate is under twenty-two per thousand of the inhabitants. Its health conditions are steadily improving, year by year some further step is taken in the way of sanitation, and the gospel of personal cleanliness is more persistently preached. The limitation of the size of the family, now one of the commonest social phenomena of most civilised countries, is, naturally, not unknown in Jamaica, and the influence of this practice will be still more obvious in the future. But it is among the better classes mainly that smaller families are now beginning to be the rule; and though a movement of this kind can never be entirely confined to one or two sections of the population only, it will affect the lower classes much less than the higher, and will begin to affect

them at a later date. This means that the darker people of Jamaica will increase, proportionately, more quickly than the fairer people, which has been always the case as a matter of fact, though not to the extent it will be in the immediate future. We have therefore to look forward to a growth of population, the rate of increase being affected ultimately by the same causes which have lowered the birth-rate elsewhere. We have also to look forward to a progressive diminution of the death-rate, due to an improvement in the health and the habits of the people and of the sanitary conditions of the country. Every step towards such improvement will directly benefit the working classes, who more than any other are affected by what is bad or backward in the conditions of the present. And this, with their increasing knowledge and intelligence, their natural virility, and the slower growth of the white and fairer sections of the people, will ensure for the darker elements of the Jamaica people a social and economic position in the island which would have been thought impossible a hundred years ago.

This position, I have said, would have been thought impossible a century since, yet there were some even then who saw that the emergence of a coloured middle class must have far-reaching effects upon the future of the country. Long pointed out some of those effects as far back as 1774, James Stewart went further in 1808. But neither writer could foresee the revolution that was to take place, a revolution which has come so quietly that the successive stages of it can only be perceived by those who carefully study the history of Jamaica, and who can estimate the value of acts and events, the full significance of which has not even yet become apparent to every one.

When the House of Assembly allowed persons with more than three-fourths of white blood in their veins to have the rights and privileges of white men; when the white fathers of coloured children were permitted not only to leave property

worth £1200 sterling to their coloured children, but to bequeath by means of special Acts more valuable property still; when such children were sent to England to be educated, and Englishmen resident in the colony could be found writing in favour of still further rights for this element of the people, it is apparent that a great change was steadily taking place in the circumstances of Jamaica, and in the attitude of the ruling classes towards those who were not of their class. Every step which the coloured people made towards a better position was followed by another; and as they moved forward so did the great mass of the island's inhabitants, the slaves. The condition of these improved very slowly, but it improved. As the manners of the masters softened, the slaves were better treated, as time went on the more brutal methods of punishment in vogue were prohibited by law. But no one thought the black man capable of rising very high in the scale of civilisation; those who speculated about the future dealt with the coloured man mainly; and even to-day it does not seem to be generally perceived in the West Indies that the future of these British colonies is not so much the concern of the white man or the fairer coloured man, as of the dark masses who are now rapidly winning to positions which but twenty years ago they could not have aspired to fill.

The considerable increase of the white population is not to be hoped for; if Jamaica ever does count as many as twenty thousands person of pure European or Semitic extraction among her inhabitants, we may rest assured that a large number of them will have come to the country as directors of labour and exploiters, not as life-long settlers. To the West Indian tropics will come thousands of white men yearly, but it will only be for a week or for a month; it will be as tourists flying from the rigours of a northern winter, as visitors seeking new scenes and new sensations, as students curious to see for themselves the effect of the grafting of Western culture and civilisation on apparently unsuitable stock. It will not be as residents,

as planters settled on the soil, as the owners of broad acres, finding delight in the daily round of duties and in the pleasure which a West Indian countryside affords. There has been no time in the history of Jamaica when the wealthier classes of the people did not prefer to pass most of their life in England. The same preference exists to-day, there are still Jamaica absentee proprietors, and men who make money in Jamaica go periodically to spend some of it in England or the United States. Now and then a wealthy Englishman or a wealthy Jamaican shows no inclination to desert the country for nine or ten months of the year, but it is significant that such men are wondered at. The majority of their class would never dream of following their example. In the same way that the cities of Europe and America call with seductive, irresistible appeal to the folk of the rural districts, so do they call to the educated people of Jamaica; holidays are now spent abroad, even by people in ordinary circumstances. Coupled with this attraction which England and America exercises, with this prevailing desire for life in the centres of the world's commercial and political activity, is the competition which the higher classes of the colony have to face, the competition of classes which every year become better educated and are demanding 'their place in the sun.' The tendency of all competition is to keep down prices and wages, and those who come from below recognise that the only way they can win to a good position is by accepting lower pay—to start with. They do this, and the result, as said in a former chapter, is the exodus annually of a certain number of white and practically white men.

If this is true of native white men, what reason is there to suppose that there will be an influx of outsiders—settlers—now or at any other time? For what would they come? I grant that the colony will develop, that its trade will grow; fifty years hence it may even be that its prosperity will be greater than any one would now venture to imagine possible.

Nevertheless if the native population continues to increase, which it is certain to do, and if education spreads and intelligence grows, which we have every reason to expect they will do, the stranger will find that he has to compete with the native in the ranks of skilled labour, in the ranks of the professions, in practically every walk and way of life. It is so now; it will be more so in the future. There is no indication either of the growth of a considerable farmer class in Jamaica, men owning from one to two hundred acres of land, living on their properties and cultivating them highly. Such a class might include white men who could employ native labour, but it will not exist in Jamaica, not during this century at any rate. Large properties and small are the order of the day, and these large properties tend more and more to become organised into sources of supply for corporations; the individual planter is merging into the member of an association or company, and is consequently losing his close personal interest with the land.

Now, the native overseer or manager can look after a property or group of properties very well. The owner or company director, whether English, or American, or Canadian, does not need to live on the spot. He makes periodical trips to the island, it is so easy to come and go, so convenient and even economical; besides, Englishmen, Americans, and Canadians do not love tropical life, and Americans especially avoid it. There are seven thousand Americans in Porto Rico, about the same number in Cuba, and about the same in Mexico. In all three countries large quantities of American capital are invested. Yet only seven thousand persons from the States represent the number to be found in each of these three important Spanish-American places, one of which belongs to the United States. And of the seven thousand in Cuba or Porto Rico, it will be found that a good many are always new arrivals; the personnel of the American colony is always changing.

Why should it be otherwise in Jamaica? I have spoken of Americans especially, because they are the people who will always have most to do with the Great Antilles. But the name of any other European people might be substituted, and what has been said would still hold true.

If, then, we must dismiss the idea that there will be at any time during this century the influx of a large number of white settlers, if too we must expect that as education advances and the training and intelligence of the people improve, the white and fairer coloured people will find themselves elbowed out of spheres of labour once sacred to them alone, it follows that the predominating complexion of the people of this country will be dark. What has happened and is happening in Brazil cannot happen in Jamaica; what has happened in Cuba is out of the question here. The emigration of white men to the Brazilian Republic continues still, while there is no augmentation of the Negro population from without. The natural result is that the coloured element of the people grows apace and that the darker strains are steadily disappearing. The definite social and political policy of the Cubans was to breed out the darker element; race amalgamation was not shunned there, it was considered a means whereby the island could be made to have a white or almost white population.¹ Thousands of Spaniards also settled permanently in Cuba and in Porto Rico, and the consequence to-day is that the white population outnumbers the coloured, and that white emigrants still go to those islands. In Jamaica, as has been said more than once, though there is no continued African immigration, there is an emigration of the higher classes, a falling birth-rate among those classes, and very little chance of the numbers of those classes being permanently augmented from without.

The factors in the economic struggle are on the side of the majority in Jamaica, eventually they are on the side of the majority everywhere. The man who tills the soil and who

¹ *A History of Slavery in Cuba, 1511 to 1868*, by H. H. S. Aimes.

lives on it will eventually come to own it, or at the very least will control the disposition of it. It is he who makes it of value, he cannot be turned off or crowded out, he is in possession and terms must be made with him. If he has brain as well as muscle he must acquire some education, and must gradually increase in intelligence; when this happens he becomes a competitor of the superior classes, and eventually rises into a superior class himself. In Jamaica it was the fairer section of the coloured population that first filled positions once reserved for men of European descent. Other sections succeeded, but these were all, as a rule, among the higher classes of the coloured folk. Now it is the turn of the darker man, so long as he shows he has the character and the intelligence required for positions of trust and responsibility. And as the dark man takes, in many instances, the place once held exclusively by white and fair coloured, and as the latter become proportionately fewer in number (as they inevitably must in the circumstances), the mass of the population will tend to assimilate the minority.

This is what happens in all mixed communities where social intercourse between the people of different races is not rigidly forbidden, and sometimes even the prohibition may be of no effect. No minority intermixes with itself alone; and it cannot be forgotten that the black population stands to both white and coloured in a proportion of more than three to one. It is true that many members of this black population have white blood in their veins, yet the preponderance of the darkest element is too great to allow one to think that the prevailing complexion in Jamaica will ever be anything but dark. The majority will assimilate the minority. The minority, in its turn, will lighten the hue and change the features of the mass of the people.

Yet, however much, during this and the next century, the inhabitants of Jamaica approximate to something like a uniform type, there will always be white men and very fair men

in Jamaica. I want to insist upon this point. By what I have written I have not meant to imply that the white man will altogether leave the island at any time in the future; my argument is that, in proportion to the growth of population, the fairer classes will become fewer. The number of them may actually be greater twenty years hence than it is to-day. The proportion of them to the other classes of the people will be smaller, and, in the opinion of the writer, will become still smaller, as time goes on.

Thus the three elements of the population which have united during the last one hundred years to produce the increasing number and proportion of the coloured people should continue to do so; but as the darkest element is in the majority, the ultimate result of race intermixture and the new economic conditions should be a dark-complexioned type of people in the main—a type which might one day be considered a distinct, though a small, race. For it is thus that the races of the world have been formed. Diverse ethnic elements have combined to form a new type, and climate and time have done the rest.

All this of course is speculation. It is speculation based upon observable tendencies and demonstrable facts, but tendencies may change and new facts may emerge after a while. Let us face the situation. Only because of the low moral standard which obtained in the colony for two hundred years, and which has been modified only in certain directions since, has the population come to be what it is. If the social and moral ideas and practices prevailing in a Puritan community were to be introduced and accepted in Jamaica, if marriage were to be the rule and illegitimacy the trifling exception, it could only be a matter of time when the black population would vastly outnumber the coloured, and in a couple of centuries the latter might have become nearly as negligible as it is in Hayti. Legitimate intermarriage among the coloured population would not cause it to grow as quickly as it has

grown in the past, while legitimate intermarriage between the black and the coloured people would tend to assimilate the complexion of the latter more and more to that of the former. Even so, however, there would be a continued diffusion of Semitic and European blood, and a uniform Jamaican type would eventually be produced.

But there is not much chance of Puritan morals becoming the standard of conduct in Jamaica. The Churches insist upon such a standard, and must of necessity continue to do so, the high illegitimacy rate being in a way a reflection upon their efforts. But we may have a low illegitimacy rate and a much worse moral condition than is known throughout the West Indies. We may have a limitation of births which would directly affect the growth of the coloured population. It has been said above that a limitation of the family is certain to take place, and does indeed take place among the better classes of the colony, and to a certain extent among the other classes also. More or less this is due to the same economic causes that are in operation in other countries. If in addition to these we have a sham morality which will decrease the birth-rate of the island considerably, if we have a limitation of births which will affect the growth of the coloured element of the population, it cannot be doubted that the progress of the people towards a uniform type will be greatly hindered and retarded if not absolutely prevented.

This would not be a gain, morally or socially. From the point of view of the future it would be a distinct loss. It may happen; it will happen if any rash step is taken with a view to hasten an improvement in the habits and morals of the country.

Not long ago there was an agitation for legislation compelling the registration of the fathers of illegitimate children. Nothing could be fairer in theory or practice, yet the practical effect of it would not be an improvement in conditions. I have thought much on the suggestion, but I cannot say

I think the carrying into effect of it would be productive of any good. The belief of many who advocated the compulsory registration of fathers was that it would prevent illicit relationships, the fear of exposure being stronger than temptation. We know now that there would be no exposure, because there would be no births; there would be no moral improvement, but merely a decrease of the birth-rate.

It is a hard thing to say, but the simple truth is that it will be better to leave the situation uninterfered with by compulsory legislation of any kind. The law provides for the support of illegitimate children by their fathers, and the mothers can always make use of the machinery of the law. If there were three hundred thousand married couples in the island, Jamaica would have one of the highest marriage rates in the world; only half that number are married, yet this is an immense improvement on the situation which obtained at the beginning of the last century. Over eighteen per cent. of the people are married to-day. Probably not four per cent. were married a century ago. This is slow progress? Perhaps, but on this point at least two opinions may be held.

It is progress made during eighty years or less, and it has proceeded step by step with the economic betterment of the people, with their improvement in self-respect, with their rise in the social scale. What prevailed not so long ago was an absolute *immorality* and paganism. The conduct of the vast majority of the people mattered to no one, they gained nothing—certainly not respect—by what is called decency; they lost nothing by living as best pleased them. Of the working classes the latter part of this assertion still holds true, and it will be some time before it loses its force. In these circumstances, to mention no other reasons, no different condition could prevail. The missionaries expected that by preaching they could change the manners and customs of the country in a decade, or at the most a generation. But the experience of

the ages was against them. 'Men did not pursue truth-telling, monogamy, respect for human life, and for the property of others, for their inherent abstract virtues, but for their own comfort and safety, material and spiritual, in this world or in the next. Nor did women embrace chastity as a spiritual setting to their physical beauty, or to help them to a life in the Ideal; on the contrary, as Renan says, tens of thousands of them had to be stoned to death before adultery could be got recognised by them as a crime.'¹ 'A new and higher code of morality differing in any degree from that to which men have been accustomed, is a pure burden laid upon the neck of the unregenerate spirit, and the *masses of men* will no more embrace it for its own sake, or for the sake of its effects on civilisation, or indeed for any stimulus less potent than some personal hope or fear, than they will clear forests or drain morasses for their own sake.'² It takes centuries for a high code of morality to get itself established, and but decades for it to be overthrown. In Jamaica it has taken but a few decades to work a distinct and appreciable improvement among all classes of the people, and if something like a halt seems to have been called in one direction for the last twenty years, there is still reason for congratulation that a definite advance has been made even in that direction.

But what of the future? The future of marriage in Jamaica will depend upon the future of that institution in more civilised countries.

It could not be otherwise. The progress of the West Indies will be a progress conditioned from without, and always the islands will keep in the closest possible touch with Western thought and Western ideas. Not only politically and commercially, but also intellectually and morally, are they bound to Europe and America, and ultimately the ideals of the latter countries must become the ideals of the West Indies. There

¹ *History of Intellectual Development*, vol. 3, by J. B. Crozier.

² *History of Intellectual Development*, vol. 1, by J. B. Crozier.

is no escape from this conclusion. It might seem that the conjugal relationships of thousands of the people meant that the Christian conception of monogamy was utterly despised by them. It is not so. It is regarded as the right thing, the theoretically perfect thing; no man who lives with a woman without marriage would defend himself on any other ground save that of convenience; he would plead his circumstances, he is too poor to get married. Whatever it may be in practice, in theory there is no confusion between the two standards of right and wrong. Given then this mental assent to a proposition of such great social value, and we have good reason to expect that, if material conditions steadily improved, there would be a gradual increase of the marriage rate; as the people gained in self-respect and the status of the women became better, the number of marriages would grow until at any rate the percentage of marriages in Jamaica was as high as it is in Cuba. I am speaking, naturally, of Christian marriage, of life-long monogamy. But is that institution likely to endure? It is bound up with religion, with the Christian religion, and a thousand observers tell us that the sanctions of the Christian religion and the utility of Christian marriage are being questioned to-day in Catholic and Protestant countries, and amongst the masses as well as amongst the educated classes. Ideas travel from one country to another with incredible swiftness; what is thought to-day in England will be thought to-morrow in Jamaica; the mental confusion and unrest of the United States will find an echo in this colony. If the institution of marriage ceases to be regarded as primarily religious—and that is how it is regarded in Jamaica—it will in this colony be deprived of a serviceable sanction. But marriage of some kind there must be, even if the relations of the sexes be regarded from the economic point of view alone. Even if it came to mean nothing more than the compulsory support of the women and children, it would imply serious obligations and compel life-long attachments in the majority

of instances. Consequently I should say that even if the Christian idea of marriage undergoes a change, there will be in Jamaica a definite advance in the way of a higher system of relationships between men and women, an advance that will keep pace with an improvement in the condition of the women.

For it is the economic condition of the women that helps to keep low the moral standards of the country. The people of the British West Indies are not one whit less moral naturally than those of the Spanish West Indies; in many respects they are more moral. Yet the marriage rate is much higher in Cuba than it is in Jamaica. One important explanation of this I find in the fact that the Cuban women are not called upon to work for the support of their offspring; they are not hewers of wood and drawers of water like the men; they do not toil in the fields along with their fathers and brothers and lovers; they would refuse to do so, and the men would not expect them to do so. It is this placing of the responsibility of the family upon the shoulders of the men in Cuba that has assisted to bring about the general recognition of the marriage bond. The Jamaica woman of the working classes has to do a great deal too much in the way of supporting her children. The African woman has probably to work quite as hard, maybe harder; but in Africa she is definitely part of a household; she has her place in it, and the man has some duties to perform. But the marriage systems of Africa are unknown in Jamaica, and it is on the Jamaica working woman that the responsibility for bringing up her family really rests when she is unmarried. I do not mean to suggest that the men do not assist; they do. But so long as the majority of the women work as they do in Jamaica, so long as it is a tacitly accepted fact that they will toil for the support of their offspring, just so long will the assistance from the men be small. For, where you have men and women contributing by their wages to the support of the family, there you will have a low rate of wages

paid to the men. The women are really competitors, and by their competition with the men they ultimately hurt themselves. In countries like the United States, where the wives as well as the husbands work out, there are no children, or at most but one. This is as bad as, if not worse, than the Jamaica system, and both are the result of economic conditions which are good neither for the women nor for the future of the race.

So it comes to this : the continued social and moral improvement of Jamaica depends in the last resort upon the economic improvement of Jamaica; the economic factor dominates all others. The women have no wish to be beasts of burden, they are daily becoming better educated, their wants increase, and with an increase of wants, with a rise in the standard of living, and a corresponding rise in the standard of self-respect, there will be less carelessness about consequences and more thought taken of the future. Religion will bring its influence to bear upon this development, for scepticism of the European variety will not easily undermine the strength of the Churches among a people to whom a belief in the supernatural is as easy as belief in the tangible objects of everyday life. This does not contradict what I said a little while ago in regard to the effect of a change in the conception of marriage as a religious duty among European peoples; for, in the first place, such a change can only be gradual, and a revolution in practice may be long in following a revolution in ideas; in the second place the Churches of Jamaica will not hesitate to avail themselves of any means to improve the condition of the people, whether or not those means are as thorough as they would like. If the recognised form of marriage in Jamaica were a five-year contract between man and woman, with support of the children until they reached the age of fourteen, the Churches would make the best use possible of the innovation. They would accept it as a legal marriage, while at the same time insisting upon the moral duty and the higher status

of Christian marriage; they would realise that the simplest recognised form of civil marriage made at least for respectability, and the explicit recognition of responsibilities, and on such a foundation they would strive to build. Even now they would welcome some effort on the part of the Civil power to bind the men of the country more closely to the women. But though something in that direction will certainly be done in time, it is the writer's opinion (already given) that such interference now would be productive of far more ill than good. It would fail, in fact; all the necessary conditions are not present that would render far-reaching social legislation effective. The first indispensable preliminary is a considerable improvement in the circumstances of the people, which means an improvement in the industrial and economic conditions of the country. This in its turn will lead to diffused education, a better social position for thousands whose example will influence others, and a more pronounced disposition among the people to move along the lines of a higher development.

The improvement in material conditions will come. If Jamaica has not the extensive area or the wide level stretches of alluvial soil which Cuba possesses, if it has not the virgin lands of Santo Domingo, it yet has excellent soil and a variety of climates; it has a splendid system of roads, a settled peaceful population, good harbours, and the habit of industry. Its geographical situation is in its favour. The capitalist knows that money invested in the colony is safe in so far as freedom from revolutions and from servile outbreaks can make it so; what it needs are better markets, and these it will find in Canada and the United States. In spite of every obstacle, in spite of all the misfortunes of the past, it has gone forward. It has not been prosperous for a hundred years, nevertheless there has been no slipping backwards, every inch of ground gained has been held, every step in advance made has been maintained. The story of progress told in

the annual Government publications is not fictitious. The peasantry are building a better class of house and becoming thriftier; the number of literates grows, the speech of the people is more and more English and less of a dialect. Change may be slow according to European standards, but it is certain, and when we compare one period with another we see how great it has been. Froude saw nothing but decay when he visited the West Indies, and perhaps there was much to justify his despair. But the situation to-day, in so far as Jamaica is concerned, is a warning against despair, is an incentive to one to trust the future. During the twentieth century, the century of the Panama Canal, of American colonial expansion, of Canadian growth and development, the West Indies will move forward with a rapidity which will be all the more gratifying because there will be no danger of an equally rapid reversal of fortune such as they suffered in the earlier part of the nineteenth century. The old prosperity of Jamaica was laid upon a most insecure and insufficient foundation. Slave labour, monopoly, and war were the main factors in its success; when war ceased and monopoly became out of the question, the cry of ruin began to be heard; when men ceased to be property it was said that the colony must inevitably drift into savagery, that its civilisation was doomed. These direful prophecies have proved false and misleading. It is perfectly true that if the colony is to prosper, if it is to progress in civilisation, it must keep in close touch with the Western world; but that too is inevitable, and so the talk, once much heard, of Jamaica becoming a second Hayti, may be regarded in these days as but wild and whirling words. Rather it is probable that in time the Republic of Hayti will become something like Jamaica, for who can believe that it will be much longer allowed to remain the scene of anarchy and fratricidal strife? If the Great Antilles have lost for ever the importance they had in the eighteenth century, they still may look forward to a future of promise. And not least

amongst them will be Jamaica which, with its independent land-owning peasantry, its freedom from race hatred, its respect for law and love of order, its diminishing superstitions and developing intelligence, has more than once been held up as a pattern to the United States, as a country where white and coloured, Caucasian and Negro, may live and work side by side, with no deliberate injustice on the part of the former and no insolent self-assertion on the latter's part, as a country which has progressed towards homogeneity of sentiment, and which is sufficiently united and self-conscious to feel proud of the achievements of any of its people, whether Jew or Christian, black, white, or brown.

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