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GUIANA



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SUMMIT OF RORAIMA.

Frontispiece.

GUIANA:

BRITISH, DUTCH, AND FRENCH

BY

JAMES RODWAY, F.L.S.

AUTHOR OF

"A HISTORY OF BRITISH GUIANA," "THE WEST INDIES AND THE SPANISH MAIN,"
"IN THE GUIANA FOREST," ETC.

WITH A MAP AND 36 ILLUSTRATIONS

T. FISHER UNWIN

LONDON

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The author is indebted for the photographs of Roraima to J. J. Quelch, Esq., and F. V. McConnell, Esq., and for those of cattle and primitive Indians to J. Ogilvie, Esq., and J. Martin, Esq.

INTRODUCTION

THE story of Guiana is one of colonisation under very great difficulties, of trading ventures, failures through ignorance, quarrels, wars, corsairs, bush negroes, and labour experiments.

Although not generally thought of much importance to-day, it was once a bone of contention to the great nations of Europe. The first country of America to be explored by others than Spaniards and Portuguese, it still stands alone as distinctly foreign from the rest of South America. English, French, and Dutch took possession and fought among themselves for the different trading stations and colonies, ultimately settling matters without reference to the original claimants.

To the Englishman it represented Raleigh's dream of El Dorado; that a New Britannia could be established which in a few years would bring more treasure to the Mother Country than Mexico and Peru were then sending to her great rival. The Dutchman did not dream of empire, but he well knew that the fragrant weed tobacco, which so early became a necessity to him, was to be had here. What the Frenchman thought is hard to say, for he has done little with his slice of the country; possibly he only came for a share because he would not be left as an outsider.

The Pilgrim Fathers thought of coming to Guiana before they decided upon the bleaker shores of New England, and it was often compared with Virginia as a field for settlements. A little later comparisons

were made between it and the New Netherlands, when the advantages of a warm climate and two or three crops a year were proven to the satisfaction of the writers on the matter. Even when, after the Dutch war, Surinam was virtually exchanged for New York, few Dutchmen felt aggrieved and some Englishmen were hardly prepared to agree to the transfer.

Nowadays, even though one of its Governors called British Guiana a "magnificent province," it is practically ignored. It gained a few weeks' notoriety when the Venezuelan Boundary trouble raised fears of a war with the United States, but soon again fell into the background when the cloud passed over. Demerara sugar is well known, but few recognise that Demerara practically means British Guiana. Its gold, diamonds, balata, and greenheart timber are only familiar to experts, and even they sometimes confound it with the West Indian islands, if it is not confused with Guinea and New Guinea. The newspaper man knew the country in connection with the Dreyfus case, and, no doubt, looked upon it as unfit for a dog, much less a Christian.

A century ago, when all the colonies were temporarily British, it was thought of some importance, and during the anti-slavery agitation Demerara was stigmatised as next door to the nether regions, with black-hearted whites and pure-minded blacks as masters and slaves. Of late years it has been the experimental field for tropical immigration, and the lessons taught by the experiments have been exceedingly valuable. In fact, from the earliest times, Guiana has been a field for labour experiments; and if so many proved failures among a few partial successes, the lessons taught will no doubt be useful in preventing future mistakes.

That the first settlements failed we, with our fuller knowledge, can say might have been easily predicted. But, in the absence of knowledge and experience, the pioneers of a settlement, whether in Guiana or Virginia, could hardly be expected to do better. "Adventurers" they were called, and their experiments, whether trading voyages or attempts to found new colonies, were certainly risks. We may laugh as we read of the "Orange" colony in the Oyapok in 1676, with its hundred directors, the elaborate provisions for a settlement, and also the expected profits. Every arrangement possible seems to have been made, and yet it failed ignominiously like so many other schemes that did not allow for the climate.

Only the results of the pioneer work of Spain and Portugal were visible; little was known of their difficulties. Successes only, and these but few, remained—failures were lost in oblivion. Spain failed as far as her West Indian colonies were concerned; Hispaniola was by no means a success. Only in settled countries like Mexico and Peru could anything be gained. Those who came after her got only what she thought worthless or of little importance.

The later arrivals were traders, privateers, or pirates. Their trading was often forced, or at least illegal, their piracy attacks on the weaker Spanish settlements. No great galleons were these, but vessels of 50 to 150 tons, sometimes small craft of 15 to 20. They were the fly-boats we read about which often depended for safety on their speed and small draught of water. They were the kind of vessels that hung on to the Spanish Armada in the Channel, giving a few blows, running off, and then returning again and again before the enemy could demolish them.

It was in such a vessel of 50 tons that Leigh took 46 men and boys to the Oyapok in 1604 to found the first English settlement in Guiana. All he knew of the country, was gathered from the accounts of Keymis's voyage. No European had yet done more than trade in the rivers. He wanted to found a colony, and at first it seemed as if he would have been successful. The natives gave him a welcome, but it could not be expected that they would give his people all their provisions. For, like most tropical people, they lived from hand to mouth. Trouble began when Leigh's supplies gave out and the expected vessel did not arrive. The remnant left by a Dutch trader and for a time the Oyapok was abandoned.

This is a type of several attempted colonies ; all failed for want of knowledge and experience. Whether English, Dutch, or French, the result was much about the same. But they did not abandon their attempts altogether. One fell to be followed by another which did a little better. The English started in what is now French territory ; then they gained a measure of success in Surinam to be ousted by the fortunes of war. The Dutch were more plodding ; their early settlements in Essequibo and Berbice were retained, notwithstanding troubles with English and French. For over a century the Dutch went on in a quiet way slowly developing their rivers and contending with bush negroes. It was, however, the English who ultimately brought capital and energy into the colony of Essequibo and Demerara, until at last they obtained actual possession of these rivers and made them of greater importance than those of their Dutch neighbours.

Besides lessons in colonisation, Guiana shows us

what a settlement is when worked by a trading company. The meanness which looked for immediate profit was conspicuous in the West India Company and the Berbice Association. In the case of the former the settlers were hampered in every direction by monopoly laws and, more especially, stinted in their labour supply; in Berbice no working blacksmith or carpenter could carry on his trade for wages, because the workmen of the Association monopolised these trades. The companies fell at last, but as long as they controlled the settlements there was little progress. It is true they brought some capital, but it was always too little for anything like permanent good.

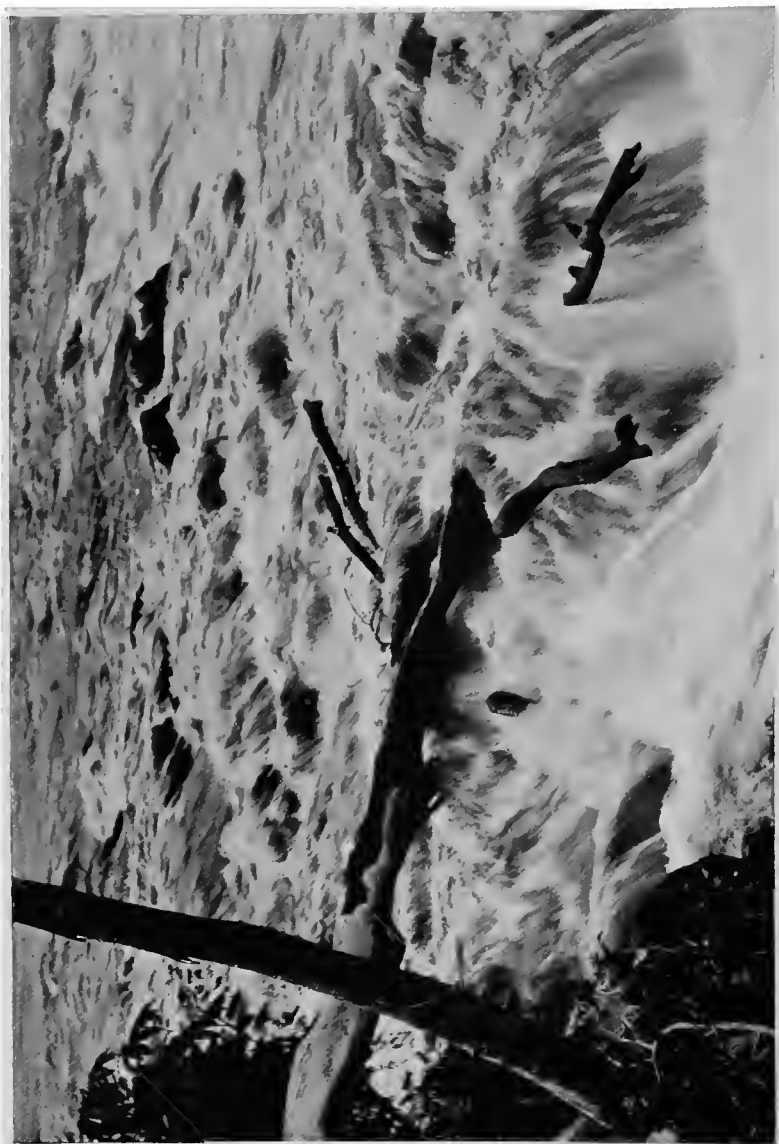
Possibly the most interesting lessons to be learned are those bearing upon a tropical labour supply. Native Indian women were the first slaves, but they were not a success; then came the African, who has been a bane as well as a blessing. With such a large country behind the plantations runaways were safe in the forest; and in Surinam they became such a serious danger that at one time it appeared as if the colony must be abandoned. Only by the help of the Indians were they captured and suppressed in Demerara. There is no doubt, however, that without the negro Guiana would have been still in the same position as the Orinoco delta on the one hand and the region north of the Amazon on the other.

Slavery came to an end, but the problem of a labour supply was rendered all the more acute, in spite of the predictions of the Anti-Slavery party that free men would work all the harder when induced to do so by wages. The contrary was proved at once, and the exports soon fell to about a third. Labour must be had or the colonies would soon be

as worthless as the land really was and still is. Experiments were tried, and at last the right kind of labourer was found in the East Indian coolie. If Guiana is ever to be developed, it will be as a new India.

Among the lessons was one that should have been learned by the Anti-Slavery party—the fact that the negro does not increase in Guiana. Of course, the heavy death-rate was ascribed to overwork, although every one knew that the slave would not labour half as hard as an Englishman in his own country. He was capable of doing more, as is shown by later experience. The party made an interesting experiment in Berbice, when a Commission was appointed to carry on four Government plantations and control the colony tradesmen, who were slaves like the people on the estates. But they could not reduce the death-rate nor make the estates pay, and had to give them up as failures. Of course, the planters jeered at them for their ignorance.

There is no doubt that Guiana is a magnificent country, with grand rivers, waterfalls, and wonderful mountains. Its scenery is hardly equalled anywhere in the world for picturesque beauty. The traveller and the naturalist will revel in its streams and forests. The cultivation, so far, is no more than a few strips about three miles deep on the coast and banks of the rivers; the interior is in much the same position so well described by Raleigh over three centuries ago: "Guiana is a country that hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked, turned nor wrought. The face of the earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance, the graves have not been opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges."



IN A RAPID.

GUIANA

CHAPTER I

DESCRIPTION AND GEOLOGY

The "island" of Guiana—The coast—Lowlands—Itabos—Forest region—Rivers—Hills and mountains—Falls and rapids—Fantastic rocks—The three regions—The great savannah—Geological formations—Work of floods—The mud-flat—Rocks—Gold—Diamonds—Sandstone formation—No active volcanoes or disastrous earthquakes—Conglomerate—Granitic bed-rock—Differences of soils—Denudation—Natural palisades—Coast protection by courida—Changes of currents—Sea defences—Nickerie washed away—Georgetown's sea wall—Well borings—Mineral waters—Cayenne islands and their phosphates—Swamps—Pegass or tropical peat.

GUIANA is the name of the country lying between the Rivers Orinoco and Amazon, which form the boundaries north-west and south. It was spoken of as an island from the general idea, partially confirmed by modern exploration, that the two great boundary rivers were connected far away in the interior. This connection, by means of the Rio Negro and its branches with the Orinoco, is quite possible, but somewhat difficult for anything but the lightest Indian corials.

Like the valley of the Amazon, to which system it may be considered an offshoot, it is a land of

forest and stream. The coast is generally an alluvial flat, often below high-water mark, fringed with courida (*Avicennia nitida*) on the sea-shore, and mangrove (*Rhizophora manglier*) on the banks of the tidal rivers. Where it is not empoldered it is subject to the wash of the sea in front and the rising of the swamp water behind. In fact, it is a flooded country, as the name, from *wina* or *Guina* (water) seems to imply.

The lowest land is the delta of the Orinoco, where the rising of the river often covers the whole. Coming to the north-west of British Guiana, we have a number of channels (*itabos*) forming natural waterways through swamps, navigable for canoes and small vessels. A similar series of natural canals is found in Dutch Guiana. From the Orinoco to Cayenne this alluvium is rarely above high-water mark, and is subject to great changes from currents, the only protection being the natural palisade of courida, with its fascine-like roots. On the coast of Cayenne, however, the land rises, and there are rocky islands; here the swamps come at some distance behind the shore, and between ridges and banks of sand.

Behind this low land comes the old beach of some former age—reefs of white quartz sand, the stunted vegetation of which can only exist because the rainfall is heavy and almost continuous. This is the fringe of the great forest region which extends over the greater part of the country. Here the land rises and becomes hilly, and the rivers are obstructed by a more or less continuous series of rocks, which form rapids, and prevent them running dry when the floods recede. Behind these, to the south, the hills gradually rise to mountains of 5,000 feet, and in

the case of a peculiar group of sandstone castellated rocks, of which Roraima is the highest, to 8,000 feet.

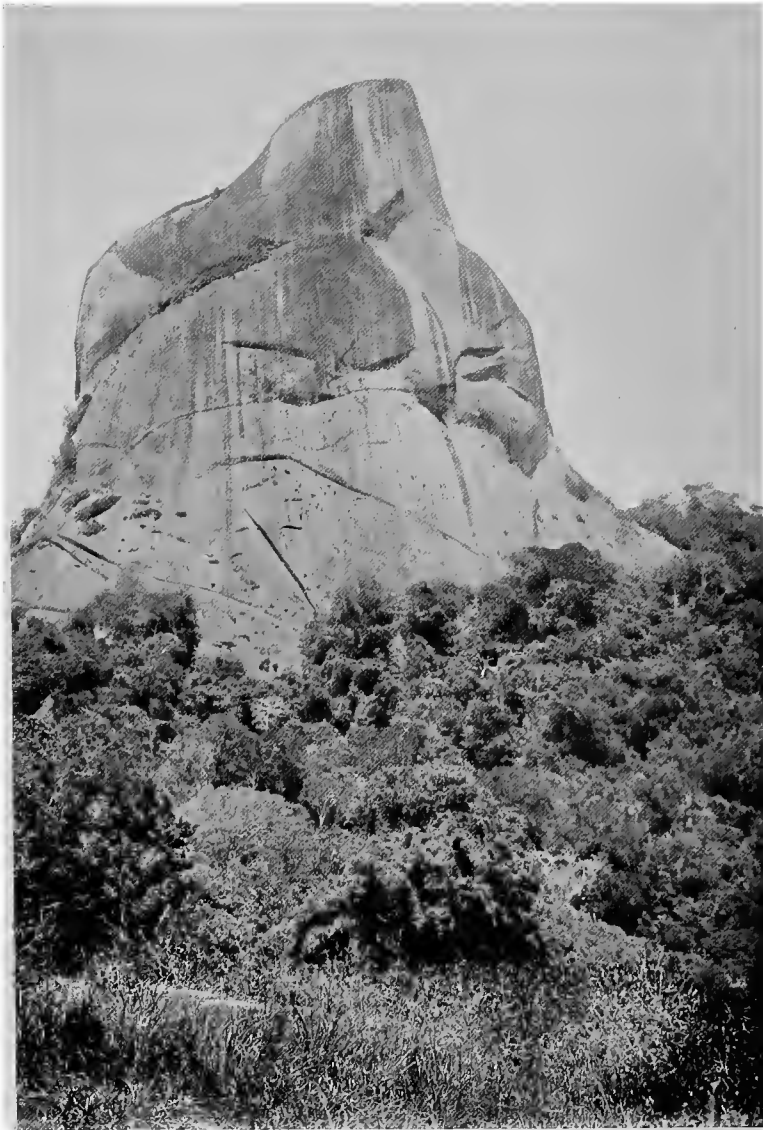
The numerous rivers bring down vegetable matter in solution, clay and fine sand suspended, and great masses of floating trees and grasses. These form islands in the larger estuaries and bars at the mouths of most of the rivers; they also tinge the ocean for about fifty miles beyond the coast from green to a dirty yellow. Wind and wave break down the shore in one place and extend it in another, giving a great deal of trouble to the plantations by tearing away the dams which protect their cultivation. Every large river has its islands, which begin with sand-banks, and by means of the courida and mangrove become ultimately habitable. In the Essequibo there are several of a large extent, on which formerly were many sugar plantations, one of which remains in Wakenaam. The Corentyne and Marowyne have also fair-sized islands, but none of these has ever been settled. Off the coast of Cayenne the rocky Iles du Salut and Connetable are quite exceptional, for the coast is elsewhere a low mud-flat, sloping very gradually and quite shallow.

The longest river is the Essequibo, which rises in the extreme south, and like most of the larger streams, flows almost due north. It is about 600 miles in length; the Corentyne is nearly as long, and the Marowyne and Oyapok are probably about the same length. Other rivers that would be considered of great importance in Europe are seen at intervals of a few miles all along the coast. The Demerara, on which the capital of British Guiana is situated, is about the size of the Thames, and 250 miles long, and the Surinam, on the left bank of which is Para-

maribo, 300. All are blocked by rapids at various distances from 50 to about 100 miles inland, up to which they are navigable for small vessels, but beyond, only for properly constructed boats, that can be drawn through the falls or over portages.

The smaller rivers, called creeks, whether they fall into the sea or into the larger streams, are very numerous ; over a thousand have Indian names. Many of them are of a fair size, and the majority have dark water of the colour of weak coffee, whence the name Rio Negro has been given to several South American rivers. These take their rise in the pegass swamps, so common everywhere, and are tinged by the dead leaves of the dense growth of sedges, which prevent these bodies of water from appearing like lakes. There are, however, a few deeper swamps, where a lake-like expanse is seen in the centre, but no real lakes appear to exist anywhere. The creeks are often connected with each other by channels, called *itabos*, or, by the Venezuelans, *canos*, through which it is possible to pass for long distances without going out to sea. During the rainy season these channels are easily passable, and light canoes can be pushed through from the head of one creek to that of another, the result being that large tracts of country are easily passed. In this way the Rio Negro and Amazon can be reached from the Essequibo in one direction and the Orinoco in another, the watersheds being ill-defined from there being no long mountain ranges.

The higher hills and mountains are not grouped in any order. The group called the Pakaraima are the most important from their position on the boundary between British Guiana, Venezuela, and Brazil, and also from the neighbourhood of Roraima giving rise



ATAROIPU ; THE DEVIL'S ROCK.

to streams which feed the Orinoco, Amazon, and Essequibo. This peculiar clump of red sandstone rocks forms the most interesting natural object in Guiana. Roraima is the principal, but there are others, named Kukuenaam, Iwaikarima, Waiakapiapu, &c., almost equally curious and striking. All have the appearance of great stone castles, standing high above the slopes, which are covered with rare and beautiful plants, some of which are unknown elsewhere. The main characteristics of this group are due to weathering, the result being grotesque forms that stand boldly forth, together with fairy dells, waterfalls decorated with most delicate ferns and mosses, and grand clumps of orchids and other flowering plants.

The River Potaro is peculiarly interesting from the series of rapids and falls which occur in its course. This is a branch of the Essequibo, and from its mouth in ascending we come to the Tumatumari cataracts or rapids, the Pakatuk and Amatuk falls, besides a goodly number of others, to finally culminate in the mighty Kaieteur.

Up the Essequibo is a curious natural rock-pile, called Comuti or Taquiari, from the Indian name for a water-jar, to which it has some resemblance. On the summit of a forest-clad hill a pile of four great rocks rises for about 300 feet, and consists of four blocks of granite, the lowest supporting the second on three points, above which comes the jar-shaped rock, with the fourth as a cover. Farther on again, on the bank of the Guidaru, is Ataroipu, or the Devil's Rock, a magnificent pyramid rising to a height of 550 feet above a wooded hill of 350 feet. Standing so high above the surrounding forest, this forms a most striking object. Other

fantastic rocks have been compared to a felled tree and a cassava press.

No doubt the other Guianas have interesting natural objects, but the interior has not been so well explored as that of the British colony. The Tumac-Humac Mountains, which are supposed to divide the Amazon watershed from that of Guiana, will no doubt reveal many beauties to the lover of the picturesque in the future. Magnificent falls are to be observed on the Marowyne, one called Singatity being comparable to an undulating snowfield from which mists are rising, and when the sun shines a magnificent rainbow arches over the whole.

The country may be roughly divided into four zones, which are particularly conspicuous in British Guiana, the coast, the forest, the sandstone formation, and the savannah. Each is characterised by its geological and natural conditions, on which depend their plants and animals.

The coast region is the inhabited portion. Apart from the courida and mangrove belt, and the grasses and sedges of the savannah, its flora contains few native plants and almost as few animals. The cultivated grounds are occupied by exotics, and, when abandoned, by a host of cosmopolitan weeds, none of which originally existed in the country.

The forest varies somewhat according to the soil. In the river bottoms, and what is called the wallaba swamp, the soil is rich and the vegetation dense and varied. On the sand-dunes the trees are thin on the slopes and reduced to low bushes on the top. The higher hills have a similar flora, varying according to the strata, the clay and sand being much richer in ferns and low plants than the rock.

The sandstone region is, however, the richest in



CATTLE ON THE SAVANNAH.

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DESCRIPTION AND GEOLOGY 31

flowering plants as well as ferns. It possesses an extraordinary abundance of springs, and is intersected by streams of all sizes. The trees are not so tall as the true forest, and there are open places with grass and low flowering plants. This is the region in which the Kaieteur Falls and Roraima are situated.

The great savannah is a tableland about 300 to 400 feet above the sea level, covering some 15,000 square miles, undulating and broken by isolated granitic rocks, blocks of conglomerate and reddish masses of quartz and clay. Clumps of trees rise here and there where the soil is richer, and in the depressions marshy ground permits the growth of palms, ferns, and marantas, but the general character is somewhat harsh from the wiry sedges and hard herbaceous plants.

The geological formations are either primary granitic rocks or gravels, sands, and clays, the result of the immense power of water in past ages. The rivers are still at work, as may be seen from the amount of suspended matter they continually pour into the sea. Throughout the lower lands the water-courses are continually changing; many a creek on the coast, once marked on the old maps, is indistinguishable since the plantations were laid out. But these changes might naturally be expected where the lands are flat with no rising ground to form channels. In the forest, however, the gullies are often choked by vegetation, and when the heavy rains fall and the floods rise 40 feet above the average changes will naturally occur. The scour of such a flood, which carries with it fallen trees and great masses of debris, must necessarily be very great, and is sufficient to account for the alluvium of the

coast without reckoning upon the deposits of the Amazon current, which also passes along the coast and no doubt contributes to the result.

The mud-flat, as proved by borings for artesian wells, is made up of layers of soft mud, clay, sand, and shells, mixed with more or less decomposed vegetable matter. The soil on the surface varies from clay to clay-loam, exceedingly fertile when properly drained and freed from its impregnation of salt. This varies much in depth in some parts of the coast, extending aback for a distance of twenty miles, in others but a mile or two. Behind this rises a series of sand-dunes, evidently the beach of some former age, the quartz sand of which has been washed until it is perfectly white, and would be barren were it not for the heavy rains. The same white sand is found in the borings under the clay and is obviously derived from the primary and metamorphic rocks, which, disrupted long ago by volcanic agency, crop out immediately behind and form the great barriers to river navigation in the shape of falls and rapids. In the Essequibo rocks are seen at about thirty miles from the mouth, and off Cayenne there are rocky islands of the same formation. From the Essequibo and the Demerara gneiss is quarried for sea defences and road metal. On a branch of the lower Essequibo, called the Groote Creek, gold is obtainable, but the washings are rather poor; this is the nearest gold-bearing district to the coast, the others being beyond the rapids. The water-courses and even the slopes of the hills throughout the granitic, metamorphic, and volcanic formations are more or less auriferous. Gold is also found in the quartz, but hitherto in too small a proportion to pay for crushing.



A BULL ON A CATTLE RANCH.

Throughout this rocky region large boulders of all shapes and sizes are scattered in confused heaps here and there, especially at the rapids. At the falls and along the river banks they are coated with a black or rusty film of oxides of manganese or iron which metals also colour some of the sands. Iron is also very widely diffused in the shape of ferruginous clay, pyrites, and hematite, the latter in some places covering low hills. Diamonds are found in quartz gravel and white clay, which last is a pure form of kaolin and sometimes extends as a surface covering for several square miles, rising also in hills as at Orealla, in the Corentyne. Garnets are found in the granitic gneiss and schistose formations, and quartz crystals, some of them of the beautiful amethystine variety, also occur. Felstones, quartz-porphyrines, and syenites are common, and there are indications of antimony, plumbago, and, perhaps, mercury, but hitherto only in small quantities.

In the south-west of British Guiana is a sandstone formation, presumably of the new red variety, about 140 miles long by 100 broad. So far as can be gathered, it is not fossiliferous—in fact, there are apparently no fossils whatever in Guiana. The strata consist of beds of pink and white sandstone and conglomerate, which latter is in some places much indurated. It is due to a superficial layer of this hard conglomerate that the Kaieteur Fall has retained its position for ages, while the Potaro has cut its way back from the escarpment of the formation. The sandstone extends in broken masses across the country, but does not appear to widen elsewhere; but possibly in some former age it may have covered a large part of the country.

Almost throughout the sandstone formation it is

interbedded with great sheets of volcanic rock, greenstone (principally diorite), which has disrupted, not only here but also in other parts, through granite, gneiss, and quartz-porphry. Denudation has done much to remove the greater portion of these erupted masses, leaving visible the huge dykes which mark the sites, most noticeable at the rapids and falls. On all sides are marks of enormous volcanic activity in past ages, and it may be from this cause that the sandstone is devoid of fossils. There is nothing to indicate recent volcanic action; on the contrary, Guiana appears to be almost free from seismic disturbances, the slight earthquakes felt now and then being probably due to the neighbouring volcanic regions of the West Indies and Central America.

Throughout the conglomerate of the sandstone formation jasper pebbles of all shapes are of common occurrence, and in other parts there are found finely mottled soapstone, often beautifully and regularly veined. On the boundary towards Brazil extensive savannahs take the place of the forest. The soil here is rather poor, composed of gravel, sand, and red clay, covered with layers of thin loam, which is deeper in the depressions, where, during the rainy season, shallow pools are formed. Here and there the bed rocks, primary or metamorphic, suddenly crop out and rise to lofty hills. The red clays are in some places comparable to sienna, and may be utilised as paint; there is also a good yellow ochre. Other clays, widely distributed, are suitable for brick-making, and were once largely utilised for that purpose. Kaolin has been shipped for porcelain, but has not yet found a suitable market.

From the above sketch of the geological formation it will be understood that the bed rock is granitic

and that the overlying strata are largely the result of sunlight and flood through long ages. As might be expected, the lower lands are very fertile—in fact, they are probably among the richest in the world. Some of the plantations on the coast of Demerara have been under cultivation for over a century with one plant, the sugar-cane, and only of late years has any attention been given to manuring or even fallowing. That a soil can endure continuous cropping with such a strong plant for fifty years is almost wonderful. It may, however, be stated that, even in British Guiana, there are differences which have left their impression on the history of sugar production. The coast-lands of Essequibo are not so rich as those of Demerara ; it has followed, therefore, that the once flourishing estates in that country have mostly been abandoned ; much the same may be said of Berbice, where but very few remain. The islands in the Essequibo have a sandy soil, which in time becomes poorer, and here also one plantation after another has been given up. Surinam and Cayenne may be classed with these, and can hardly bear sugar cultivation for any length of time, and certainly not while the product is at its present low price. When first empoldered and not quite free from salt these lands are the ideal for cotton plantations, as is proved by their former output ; they are also well suited for bananas and plantains.

About ten miles from the coast there is a distinct change in the natural vegetation. Here sugar-cane cultivation ceases, but coffee and cacao do well ; these thrive best away from the sea breezes. They can also be grown in the river bottoms and on the slopes of the hills of the interior, where there is a continual wash from the ridges. The sand-dunes

are barren, but even here pineapples and the fibre plants, such as sisal hemp, can be well grown. The forest region is generally rocky, with gravels, clays, and sands in the hollows ; once denuded of its covering, it will not bear cultivation. The first crop after clearing and burning may be good, but attempts to go on always fail, each year giving a less return. This was the cause of failure on the Demerara River, where the old charts show that hundreds of plantations once existed where now there is only second-growth forest. The same evidences may be seen in the upper Surinam River and in Cayenne near the coast.

The savannah region of the interior is fit for grazing cattle and for horse-breeding, but at present there is no possible way of bringing the animals to the coast. There is, however, a project for a railway to the interior of British Guiana, which will probably give the necessary facilities, and be useful in other ways to gold-diggers and balata-breeders, as well as to the woodcutter. Probably in the future water power from the numerous falls and rapids will assist in developing the interior of the country.

Possibly the most striking features about the country are the work of its rivers. Everywhere there has been denudation, and on every hand gravels, sands, and clays indicate that the work has been going on for ages. Hardly anything like the slow, meandering streams of some other countries is to be seen ; on the contrary, the raging torrent is everywhere, rising at times forty feet, to scour the river bank, carry off bushes and trees, and batter down everything that stands in its way. When the flood is high trees will come down and float out to sea, where they have been mistaken at a distance for wrecks.

When, on the contrary, they are thrown ashore by the tide, they help to protect the coast.

The river banks are protected by natural palisades of a giant arum, several kinds of thorny bushes, and the stilted mangrove. The arum is *Montrichardia arborescens*, the mocca-mocca of the colonists, which rises to a height of twenty feet, tapering from the base, where it is six inches in diameter, to about an inch below its crown of arrow-shaped leaves. These stems are clustered by thousands in the shallows, extending everywhere beyond the influence of salt water to form breakwaters, not only for the river banks but for islands as well where they generally face the streams. The mangrove prefers brackish water, and generally continues the work down to the sea.

The coast is protected by the courida (*Avicennia nitida*). A good line of these trees, with their interlaced roots, will withstand the ordinary tidal forces, and in time drive back the waves as it extends outward. But there is no stability about currents, for they are continually changing. At one place land is being made up, in others great slices are carried away, and the rushing tide uses the fallen trees as battering rams to break down other portions of the natural rampart.

We may safely state that, notwithstanding every now and again an estate has to be abandoned because of its difficulties with sea defences, the shores are being continually extended a little. This making up of land is, however, most conspicuous in the great rivers, where, within our memory, islands have been formed; Dauntless Island is an example, at the mouth of the Essequibo. On the other hand, the little town of Nickerie, on the Dutch side of the

Corentyne, has been taken over by the sea, requiring a new town to be built farther inland. This was the only part of Dutch Guiana where a settlement came so near the coast, and, like Georgetown, which is in a similar position, it has had a hard struggle. The capital of British Guiana has, however, succeeded in defending itself by a massive sea wall, thus saving itself from the fate of Nickerie. It is an interesting fact that, whereas the Dutch in what is now British Guiana initiated a system of reclaiming land on the coast, they did not attempt such an arduous task in Surinam.

The changes of the incidence of the wash on the coast are quite evident off the Georgetown sea wall. At one time there is a sandy beach, and a year or so later oozy mud. At the eastern point the beach is sometimes so hard that a man may ride over it at low water, later it is so soft that the feet of a pedestrian will sink at every step. On account of these changes there are also differences in the amount of animal life as well as in the species to be found. A few years ago the anemones were to be observed in pools between the stones; later these pools were filled with sand, to be followed by mud. No coral is found in this muddy water and but few living molluscs, but dead shells are thrown up on the beach in many places, whence they are taken to make up the country roads, after mixing with burnt clay.

Artesian wells have been bored in many places to a depth of about two hundred feet. The strata, as might be expected, consist of clay, sand, and finely broken shells, more or less mixed with decayed wood. These show that the alternations of mud and sand have gone on for ages, but there does not seem to be any regular order in the deposits, for a stratum

of sand, seventy feet thick, will come between fourteen and three feet layers of clay, the sand predominating. The water obtained is impregnated with chlorides of sodium and magnesium, so as to be unfit for domestic use ; it has, however, been found valuable on cattle farms. On account of the large proportion of iron it was at one time recommended as a curative agent, and a spa was started in Georgetown. On exposure to the air a pellicle of ferric oxide forms on the top, rendering the wells and tanks unsightly ; but the water is not unwholesome, especially after some of the iron has been eliminated in this way. The great drawback to all the soils is the small amount of lime they contain ; a little is naturally derived from the slow decomposition of shells, but this must be supplemented on the plantations by importations from Barbados.

Some of the islands off Cayenne are the resort of immense numbers of sea-birds, the phosphatic deposits of which are being utilised.

The swamps behind the settled shores of British Guiana and in the low lands of the other colonies may be considered as tropical bogs. Instead of mosses, we have giant sclerias, sedges with saw-like teeth (hence called razor-grasses) on the margins of the leaves and on the keels. These grow up in the water, giving the effect of a pasture to what is really a shallow lake. The lakelike expanse is, however, only visible when, after a drought, the razor-grass is burnt down to mere blackened tufts, to again sprout with the floods. Below these swamps is a stratum of peat called pegass, which burns with a steady glow and leaves a red ash, due to ferric oxide.

These swamps are mainly the result of rampant vegetation which grows into the creeks that provide

natural outlets for the heavy rainfall. Marantaceæ and prickly palms are common on the margins of these streams, and during the dry seasons they extend by means of suckers until large clumps extend from either side and contract the channels, sometimes choking them altogether. Much of the land now covered by the razor-grass was once forest, but when the drainage was choked the trees gradually died off and sank down to help in forming the bed of pegass. These places may be drained and cultivated where the deposit is not too deep, but the pegass alone is not fertile. However, deep cultivation will in many places bring up the lower stratum of clay, which, mixed with the pegass, will, after weathering, produce good crops.



INDIANS AT HOME.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY—ABORIGINES AND PIONEER SETTLEMENT TO 1665

Prehistoric relics—Pottery—Timehri rocks—Kitchen-middens—Indian tribes—Population—Caribs—Arawaks—Warows—A no-man's-land—Raleigh—Keymis's voyage—Dutch traders—Spanish raid—English settlement in Oyapok—Harcourt takes possession for England—Grant of King James I.—Guiana Company—Captain Marshall in Surinam—Lord Willoughby plants a colony in Surinam—Jews and French in Surinam—Grant to Lord Willoughby—Growth of Surinam under the English—French attempts to settle—Cayenne—The Rouen Company—The Cape North Company—Bretigny the madman—Utter failure of French settlement—New Company with grant of the whole of Guiana—Attempt to settle—Mismanagement and failure—Dutch and Jews occupy Cayenne—Promising colony—French Equinoctial Company dispossess the Dutch—Cayenne put on a better footing—Dutch West India Company—Essequibo—Dutch traders—Berbice—Treaty of Munster—Dutch settlement in the Pomeroon by Jews—Position of the claimants to Guiana in 1665.

GUIANA appears to have been first populated by one or more migrating tribes, who probably came from Mexico through Central America. They were in the neolithic stage, for, with the exception of a few rather fine quartz chipped arrow-heads, all the implements found are of a very high type, beautifully formed and polished. These implements are picked up throughout the country now and again, especially

after heavy rains or floods, as well as at depths of several feet by gold-diggers. Besides these scattered specimens, several fine lots have been unearthed on the Mahaica and Corentyne Rivers, which appear to indicate that there were factories of such implements in different localities. Some very fine specimens have been picked up on the Sand Hills, Demerara River, which point to that place having once had a workman of some excellence on or near the spot. Graves are not common, but some human bones and other relics, found in clearing sugar estates on the east coast of Demerara, point to the possibility of there having been burial-places in these localities. Unfortunately, however, the people who discovered the remains when digging knew nothing of the value of a proper investigation. At Counani, however, two graves were found, from which fine specimens of pottery, almost intact, were obtained. Most of the relics of the primitive inhabitants are found in kitchen-middens on sand-reefs in the district between the Orinoco and the Essequibo. Some of these form large mounds, 20 feet or more in diameter and as high, which, on excavation, are found to contain human and animal bones, shells of molluscs, broken pottery, pebbles in course of manufacture, and more or less worn and damaged implements.

The pottery consists of fragments, in some cases decorated with patterns found on basket-work of the present day, and of figured handles and ornaments similar to those found in Mexico and Peru. They are of two distinct types, the more ornate, and possibly the older, having incised lines probably done by a pointed stick, the others roughly moulded by the fingers. Among them the most common figures are frogs and grotesque human heads, with a fair number

recognisable as the king vulture, so well known to students of Mexican relics.

It will be as well to mention here that the Indian of to-day makes only a plain earthen pot, rarely ornamented with a few wavy lines or painted in a very rude manner. Rough animal figures are, however, carved at the ends of their wooden benches and on dancing sticks. Maze and cross patterns of a high order are conspicuous on basket-work and the bead aprons of the women.

The only other relics of antiquity are the Timehri rocks. These are found about the rapids of the great rivers, and consist of engraved figures suggesting human forms, the sun, frogs, snakes, lizards, and turtles. As a similar engraved rock has been found in Mexico, which may be a record of the halting-place of some primitive wandering tribe, it has been suggested that those in Guiana and on the Rio Negro have been cut for a similar purpose. There are, however, difficulties in accounting for such elaborate works by a people whose implements appear to have been unequal to engraving on hard primitive rocks. We have, however, in the B. G. Museum, a stone pick, which suggests that this difficulty was not so great as might appear at first sight.

The kitchen middens are entirely wanting in Indian settlements of to-day ; in fact, nothing like such a population as is suggested now exists anywhere in Guiana. The collection of sheds, or *benabs*, which constitutes an Indian village, and which is continually being changed from one site to another, could never produce such a large rubbish-heap. If, however, we can credit some of the early writers, there must have been a fairly dense population in Caribana, the name of the north-west coast.

Major John Scott, writing in 1665, said that the most numerous of the "nations" was the Caribs, and that the coast of Guiana had as many as 42,800 families. If we take this to mean an Indian family as we know it, with the two or three heads, sons-in-law, and their children, hardly less than twelve, we have over half a million of this tribe alone. But, even allowing for cannibalism, we can hardly accept such an evidently crude estimate. His estimate of the Arawaks as 8,000 families and the Warrows 5,400 is quite as unreliable; possibly, however, of other tribes 4,000 persons may be nearly correct, and if we say persons instead of families for the others we shall be not far wrong. However, such estimates must necessarily be only guesswork, yet they suggest that the early voyager found a much denser population on the coast of Guiana than can be found now anywhere in South America.

Of the three coast tribes the Caribs, called Galibis by the French, were certainly the most warlike, and it is generally agreed that they were cannibals. If we take the kitchen-middens as representing the refuse of their cooking, we may say that they lived mainly on molluscs and fish, game being scarce near the coast and human flesh only procurable in war. No proper hunting-grounds, and therefore no regular meat supply, was probably the reason why human flesh was eaten. Cannibalism, however, could hardly have been the rule, for human remains form but a small portion of the refuse.

The Caribs were undoubtedly very strong and fierce. Whether they were a later migration than the other tribes is doubtful; the Arowaks informed the Spaniards that the Caribs were the original inhabitants, and that they (the Arowaks) came along



PRIMITIVE INDIAN IN FESTIVE DRESS.

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the coast and at first were friendly. But, finding these fierce people to be cannibals, they quarrelled and fought, so that on the discovery the Spaniards were asked to help in their defence. This they sometimes did, thus gaining the enmity of the guardians of Guiana, who in their turn got help from Dutch and English, who were then declared enemies of Spain.

The Arowaks lived up the rivers and creeks, where the men could hunt and fish and the women cultivate their cassava-fields in peace. Their enemies, however, often found them out, and both tribes fought valiantly, the general result being that the Arowak was conquered or compelled to retire farther away from the coast. Now that the Caribs are almost extinct, it is the less warlike people who have survived to form the bulk of the Indian population of to-day.

The Warows were the people who lived in trees, according to the old voyagers ; in fact, they build their huts on piles in places that are often inundated. They do not appear to have taken part in the quarrels of the other tribes, but seem to have held their own in the delta of the Orinoco, living mainly on fish and the fruit of the Eta palm. Their canoes or corials were considered the best in the country, and no doubt the Caribs found it to their advantage to keep on good terms so as to be able to purchase the best craft. From the situation of one of their villages, apparently in the water, Vespucci named their country Venezuela, or Little Venice.

Guiana seems to have been neglected by the Spaniards, partly, no doubt, from its position on the frontiers of Brazil. There is a record of an attempt to settle in the River Barima in 1530, by Pedro de Acosta, who was driven off by the Caribs, and of

two or three raids in search of cassava bread ; otherwise the country was left alone. The search for El Dorado, the gilded king of Manoa, hardly belongs to Guiana, except so far as it led to Raleigh's voyages. At first this mythical city was located up the Orinoco, and later in the interior of Guiana, but as the story has been so often told, we will only state that Raleigh's first voyage, 1595, and the publication of "The Discoverie of Guiana" made known the country to Europe, and induced Dutch, English, and French traders to sail into its rivers. The voyage of Captain Keymis, 1596, however, did more than that of Raleigh, for he gave the first list of the rivers to be seen in sailing along the coast. To him we are indebted for something like a detailed account of the country, which, together with the information gathered in Captain Berrie's voyage in the following year, left little of the coast-line unknown. The publication of accounts of these voyages, translated into several languages, including Latin, soon induced adventurers of other nations to undertake trading voyages to this cannibal land on the great wild coast.

The first traders were Dutch, who since their revolt from Spain found it difficult to get tobacco, for which they already had a great liking. In small vessels of fifty to a hundred tons they encountered the dangers of an ocean voyage and the risk of destruction by their enemy. Every effort was made by the Spaniards to capture them and prevent their settling, but as Spain was very weak on this side nothing could be done. As early as 1597 a Spanish party captured five Dutchmen in a boat, who were trading in the Barima River, and at the same time they heard of men who were clothed and fought with arms in the Esse-

quebo, but not having force enough to risk a fight, they did not stay long about these rivers.

Only one case is reported of a real attack on a trading post. This was in 1613, when twelve men from Trinidad, twenty from the new town on the Orinoco, and a priest sailed from Trinidad to the Corentyne. Here there was a wooden fort thatched with palm-leaves, occupied by a few Dutch and Carib Indians, near which was a tobacco plantation. The Spaniards waited until night before attacking, and when the alarm was given by a dog they called on the inmates to surrender. The Dutch answered that they would rather die, and defended the place until the attacking party set it on fire. Even then the defenders refused to come out, preferring to die in the flames, only their Carib friends making their escape.

About the same year Fort Kijk-over-al, the parent of the colony of Essequibo, is said to have been erected. There is some doubt as to the exact date, but the evidence is fairly plain for 1613 or 1616. At this time the Spaniards at Margarita and Trinidad were asking the Mother Country for assistance to drive the Flemings and English from their settlements, who were said to have three or four flourishing settlements between the Orinoco and the Amazons. Nothing, however, was done, and the natural result followed: Spain lost any little claim she had on Guiana.

Going back a few years, we find that the English were beforehand in attempting a real settlement. Whether they purposely left the western portion to the Netherlands, on account of its nearness to the Spanish settlements, is not quite certain, but it was in the Oyapok, now the boundary river between French

Guiana and Brazil, where all the early English adventurers started their colonies. From the first the English were more than traders, their idea being to plant tobacco, cotton, and other things, as well as to purchase from the Indians. The El Dorado myth had not yet been discountenanced altogether ; it followed, therefore, that gold-seeking was among the possibilities.

In 1604 Charles Leigh sailed from Woolwich in the *Olive Plant*, a bark of fifty tons, carrying forty-six men and boys. Arriving in the Oyapok on the 22nd of May, they went up to an Indian town, where they were received in a friendly manner and offered assistance in food, and granted land in consideration for help if their Indian friends were attacked by other tribes. Houses were built, and the nucleus of a town named Mount Howard established. Unfortunately, however, want of experience led to difficulties, and ultimately sickness carried off Captain Leigh and several others before help could arrive from England. The relief ship was unfortunately lost in the West Indies, and the remnant abandoned the place, some in two Dutch vessels and others in a French trader.

For five years nothing further was done, but in 1609 Robert Harcourt made a second attempt to colonise the Oyapok. This was on a larger scale than that of Leigh, but his three ships were small, the largest of eighty and the others thirty-six and nine tons. The last had a crew of four men ; no wonder these people were called adventurers. The Indians were well pleased to see them, and the chief of the town, Caripo, as well as two others, who had been in England, were able to act as interpreters. Using the names of Raleigh and Leigh, Harcourt took

possession by twig and turf, *i.e.*, chopping a tree and digging with his sword, and began an unsuccessful hunt for gold ; this possibly interfered with a proper settlement of his people. However, he got a Patent in 1613 from King James I. for all the country called Guiana, between the rivers Amazon and Essequibo.

Sir Walter Raleigh touched the mouth of the Oyapok on his last sad voyage in 1617, where he found his old Indian servant Leonard, who once lived with him in the Tower for three or four years. By this time Harcourt's colony had been abandoned, but two years later a new project was formed for an Amazon Company, with Captain Roger North as Governor. King James was then friendly with Spain, and hesitated when she protested against the licence, which, however, was granted and then almost immediately revoked. North rushed off to Guiana before the revocation was published, and on his return with a cargo of tobacco, he was imprisoned in the Tower and his vessel and cargo seized. As, however, notwithstanding the protests of the Spanish Ambassador, no proof could be brought forward that the cargo had been obtained from Spanish territory, North was released after seven months, and his damaged tobacco given up. The delay was disastrous to North's Oyapok colony, and though it still lingered on in a small way, it was further hampered by fear of attacks from the Portuguese from Brazil, who, it must be remembered, were then under the King of Spain. However, it was reported that, in 1623, Captain North and some Irishmen brought into England from Guiana 28,000 lb. of tobacco. In 1626 a new Amazon Company was projected to take over the rights of Harcourt and North, and in the following year a grant was made to the Company

of Noblemen and Gentlemen of England for the Plantation of Guiana. A few of the old settlers were still in the Oyapok under Master John Christmas, and to these were now added a hundred English and Irish, who went out in a Dutch vessel. In the two following years four vessels with two hundred colonists were sent, and the reports were favourable. Forts, buildings, and sugar-works were being erected, and the Indians doing all they could to feed and assist the colonists. The Company, however, appears to have been much hampered by want of means, and in 1629 King Charles I. was asked to take the adventurers and their plantation under his protection. If the King would send out 3,000 men, with 100 pieces of ordnance and ammunition, transport the settlers and protect their estates, there was great probability of a profit of £50,000 per annum. The prime cost was estimated at £48,000, or £15,000 in ready money. The only result of this application appears to have been a licence to export four drakes (small cannon) for the Company to use in defending their plantation.

From this time the Oyapok colony seems to have been in difficulties. North appears to have lost his Patent, and was told he might have it again by submitting to ecclesiastical and civil government, for which no provision was made. Then there were differences in the Company; some of the subscribers had paid nothing. Captain Bamfield claimed £300 and was informed that he would have £100 from the first money they received from arrears of adventure. In 1638 George Griffith, an English merchant, said that the old Company was doing nothing in Guiana, and he wanted protection for his private trade. If something were not done to encourage adventurers,

the country would fall into the hands of the Dutch and Portuguese. The French were also making some poor attempts to found settlements, and this may have helped to dishearten the English, who finally gave up the Oyapok, which, strange to say, has never been settled down to the present time.

The failures in one river did not deter the English from making further attempts. People from the Oyapok started the first settlements in the West Indies, St. Kitt's, and Barbados; the latter was indebted to Guiana for help in her first planting. From there also came some of the sixty English colonists who accompanied Captain Marshall, who, in 1630, started a colony in Surinam, which lingered until about 1645, when, becoming friendly with a party of Frenchmen who had quarrelled with the Indians, they were cut off or dispersed.

Captain Marshall's colony seems to have had fair prospects, for a little town was laid out and named Tararica. This became the centre of the first real colony in Guiana, the honour of founding which belongs to Francis, Lord Willoughby of Parham, who in 1650 became Governor of Barbados.

The Surinam River was not quite deserted at that time, for a small colony of Jews had taken refuge there about 1644, after the defeat of the Dutch in Brazil. Living quietly, they seem to have done little towards developing a real settlement, and when Lord Willoughby sent over an exploring party they were not even mentioned. The remains of the French fort stood on the site of what is now Fort Zeelandia, and possibly there may have been some ruined houses at Tararica, but Marshall's people were gone and not a Frenchman could be found. It remained, therefore, only to conciliate the Indians, which was soon

done, for the English had always been on friendly terms with them. The civil war in England brought out to the West Indies a fair number of Cavaliers, and the new colony of Surinam was provided for their reception.

The experience gained by so many failures and the comparative prosperity of Barbados were no doubt factors to be reckoned upon in establishing this new settlement. Again, Barbados knew the value of the negro, and was able to command a supply. Without his help Surinam would almost certainly have gone the way of the other settlements; by his aid it attained a fair measure of success. In 1663 a grant was made to Lord Willoughby of a tract of land between the Rivers Saramacca and Marowyne, including the watersheds of the Surinam and Commowijne Rivers, to be called Willoughby Land.

From a report to the Secretary of State, made in November, 1663, it appears that the country was becoming populous, having already 4,000 inhabitants, with fresh arrivals coming weekly. During the previous two months nine vessels had been consigned there, and if the English nation were really informed of the goodness of the country, there would soon be thousands more settlers. The chief commodity was sugar, as good as could be made, and were the planters supplied with plenty of negroes, "the strength and sinews of that Western world, they would advance their fortunes and his Majesty's customs." Some of the settlers were breeding cattle, and there was a store of excellent fish. The inhabitants were very generous and obliging, the country healthy and fruitful, the air moderately hot, and the natives at peace with the English.

The town of Tatarica was on Marshall's Creek, and

consisted of about a hundred houses, a Government building, and a church. Like Barbados, the colony was a little England, having parishes, and a Government on the lines of the home Parliament, with at one time a Protector's and at another a King's representative. Cavaliers and Roundheads had their quarrels, and one or two malcontents were banished. One of the republicans went so far as to stab Lord Willoughby when on a visit, but fortunately the wound was not mortal. According to Warren, whose account of the English colony is very quaint, "the Government is Monarchical, an imitation of ours, by a Governor, Council, and Assembly; the laws of England are also theirs, to which are added some by Constitutions no less obliging, proper to the conveniences of that Country."

At this stage it will be well to trace the development of French Guiana, which, however, as we shall see, has always been behind the others. Possibly it was more a matter of honour than anything else that led Frenchmen to settle in the country. Where the Dutch came only to trade, and the English to trade and settle, the French appear to have done neither, the result to-day being a disgrace to the country.

Cayenne has been the Frenchman's goal from the beginning, and he has been most pertinacious in clinging to that poor spot. It is reported that as early as 1613, 160 families settled there. Like the later colonists, they quarrelled with the Indians; not being able to get on without native help, most of them perished and the remnant left. Two years later 280 people from Zeeland tried to settle on the same spot with similar results. No doubt the Indians were influenced by evil treatment at the

beginning, and retaliated on people of any nation that arrived there. These Caribs or Galibis were always one of the causes of non-success in Cayenne.

Some merchants of Rouen, who had been trading along the coast for some years, in 1624 left twenty-six persons in the River Sinamary to collect produce from the Indians, but for some reason or other this little trading factory was not a success. Two years later a colony was started on the Conanama, for the protection of which a fort was erected and an armed vessel provided. Very little is known of this, but it probably went the way of the others. Some French adventurers tried to again settle Cayenne in 1631, but, as usual, they got mixed up with the Indian quarrels and ultimately became dispersed or destroyed.

The most disastrous of the French projects was the Cape North Company, formed at Rouen in 1643. Three or four hundred men were sent out, under the command of the Sieur de Bretigny, who can only be described as a madman. As might be expected, he quarrelled with the Indians at once, who, of course, retaliated. He seems to have had a continual fear that some one would murder him, which was hardly wonderful when he punished the poor Frenchmen with a refinement of torture only possible to a depraved mind. The gallows, the gibbet, and the wheel were not enough; he must invent other cruelties, which he called purgatory and hell. He asked his people to tell their dreams, and punished them if these were not to his liking. One of them dreamed he saw the Governor dead, on which he was broken on the wheel, for Bretigny argued that the thought of murder must have been in the dreamer's mind. At last his temper became

unbearable, and most of his people took refuge among the Indians, a few for greater security going to Surinam, where they built their fort near the Indian village of Paramaribo.

Bretigny was not satisfied with these desertions to the Indians, for he naturally expected the refugees would incite the cannibals to come and attack him. Taking some of his myrmidons, he therefore went up the river and demanded that the runaways be given up. This being refused, his people fired on the Indians from the boat, but the red men, from the cover of trees and bushes, poured a shower of arrows and killed every one of the party. Finally, bringing the bodies ashore, they were made the occasion of a great cannibal feast and dance.

The Indians, however, did not follow up their victory by a general massacre, as they could easily have done, but offered peace if the whites would leave them alone. This they were quite willing to do now their tyrant was dead. As, however, all hopes of success were gone, the settlers left in despair, some for the new French colony at St. Kitts. Very few remained, and most of these were adopted by the Indians.

A small number of Bretigny's people went back to France, where a gentleman of Normandy named De Royville heard from them of the fertility of Guiana and its suitability for plantations. With some of his friends, he got up a company and a subscription of eight thousand crowns. Others were induced to join, and finally, in 1652, the King granted Letters Patent for the Cape North or Equinoctial Company, with the exclusive right of trading and settling in Guiana between the Amazon and the Orinoco. The Rouen Company, whose rights were

thus infringed, had not entirely abandoned Cayenne, although they hardly got enough to pay the cost of an occasional trading voyage. Hearing of this new Company, however, they hurriedly sent off a supply of goods and sixty men, who arrived more than three months before their rivals. With these supplies the fort was put in order and the few inhabitants were able to extend their operations.

The new Company got together about eight hundred people, under the command of De Royville, and in July, 1652, left Havre in two vessels, armed with twenty-six and thirty-six guns. On account of a long voyage of nearly three months the provisions were reduced, and short allowances caused a mutiny, in which the leader was killed. At last, however, they arrived at Cayenne, where the settlers took the vessels for promised supplies from the Rouen Company, and under this mistake six of the chief men went off to give them a welcome. They were civilly detained and obliged to send for the commander of the fort, who, having no power to resist, was compelled to surrender.

The new arrivals were under a dozen heads or "lords," who soon began to quarrel among themselves; four were arrested, one of whom was executed and the other three put on one of the islands until an opportunity served for the Antilles. Two of the remaining lords died, but even with six things were mismanaged worse than ever. The peace with the Indians was broken; the new arrivals plundered their provision-grounds and took away some of them as slaves. This meant war; the outlying settlements were burnt; those who escaped took refuge in the fort, where no provision supply had been stored, and none could be got on account of the Indians

having control of everything outside. Famine and disease carried off a great number, and at last the remnant went off in leaky boats to Surinam, where they were helped on their way to the West Indies. Thus the colony was entirely deserted, everything in the fort, including guns, ammunition, and merchandise, having to be abandoned.

In 1656 a number of Dutch and Jews took possession of Cayenne. By keeping on good terms with the Indians they very soon put the new settlement on a fair basis. But the French had not entirely given up the idea of a Guiana colony, notwithstanding their many failures, and in 1663 the French Equinoctial Company for colonising the country between the Amazon and Orinoco was projected. The Governor was M. de la Barre, and in February, 1664, five vessels, with two hundred colonists and two men-of-war, sailed from Rochelle. They arrived off Cayenne on the 11th of May and compelled the Dutch colony to surrender. At first the Indians were prepared to fight, but finding that the new colonists were more reasonable than the other Frenchmen, they offered their friendship and alliance. Ultimately an agreement was drawn up, which, being respected by both parties, prevented further trouble. The French colony was now able to follow the lead of its neighbour, and may be considered as having made a fair start. Unfortunately, however, it got a bad name from the first, and later mistakes have only tended to confirm it.

Having dealt with the English and French failures and disasters, we must now return to the Dutch, whom we left as traders with one small factory in Essequebo. The English and French settlements were mostly in the hands

of companies, many of them very small ; but we have now to deal with a Dutch Company which was of some consequence. And where these other companies were formed of private persons and supposed to be at peace, the Dutch West India Company, was intended to fight as well as carry on an illegitimate trade with the Spanish possessions. Down to 1648 the Netherlands were at war with Spain, and the Company was empowered to maintain armies and fleets, to build forts, to carry on war, and make treaties. The area of its jurisdiction was both sides of the Atlantic, the west coast of Africa, and east of America, including Guiana. At one time it possessed almost the whole of Brazil, on the conquest of which it spent about £4,000,000, and in its operations damaged Spain to the extent of about £17,000,000.

Such was the Company which in 1621 was chartered and which a year or two later took over the Essequibo trading factory. The first official commander of Kijk-over-al was Jacob Canijn, who carried on the post until 1627. There appears to have been private traders in Essequibo as well as those of the Company, and among them was one Aert Adriaentz van Groenwegen, who is said to have built the Fort Kijk-over-al, and was afterwards commander. He seems to have often gone to long distances on his trading expeditions, and is said to have lived here forty-eight years, dying at the age of eighty-three. In no other part of Guiana was there anything to equal these journeys from the Essequibo factory. In 1627 the West India Company gave permission to Abraham van Peere or Perez of Vlissingen to colonise the River Berbice. Under the agreement, by which forty men and twenty boys

were allowed to go, the settlers had the right to establish a fort at some place suitable for trading and to do everything necessary to the interests of the colony as long as they did not settle or trade in Essequibo or any other river where the Company had a settlement.

Thus the colony of Berbice was started, but as yet there was no real Dutch settlement in Guiana. The West India Company had its hands full in other directions and did nothing for Essequibo ; it was even proposed to abandon it in 1632, but some of the directors being in favour of its retention, it was kept up. No doubt its unprofitableness was due to the fact that the original traders, who had been there before the Company was formed, had the pick of the trade. It was in 1627 that the infant colony of Barbados got help from Essequibo. Thirty Arawak Indians were brought to teach the English how to plant cassava, yams, and other ground provisions ; thus commenced an intimate connection between Guiana and Barbados, which has been of the greatest importance to both down to the present day. It has been suggested that the Courteens, who founded the island colony, were also interested in the Essequibo trade, and perhaps the employers of Van Groenwegen, who is said to have been a friend of Captain Powell, the leader of the Barbados pioneers.

In 1648 the Treaty of Munster was signed and the war between Spain and the Netherlands came to an end. The main occupation of the West Indian Company was now gone, but its losses in Brazil were so great that little could be done to develop its trade. Its only resource was now the bringing of slaves from its African factories to America, but few were yet

brought to Essequibo. The factory did not pay expenses, and at last, in 1657, the Company decided to abandon it. There were, however, a few of the directors in favour of its retention, and they agreed to take it over as a fief and to pay £125 annually from the profits on anatto.

The new owners were the Burgomasters and directors of the Company in the three Zeeland towns of Middelburg, Vlissingen, and Vere ; they at once decided to do something towards founding a real settlement. Probably they saw what Lord Willoughby was doing in Surinam, and thought they could do as much in their own possession.

As Essequibo, near the fort, was not quite suitable, the River Pomeroon was chosen as the site for an entirely new settlement, named Nova Zeelandia. The most prominent mover was a Jewish merchant, David Nassy ; by his influence arrangements were made to transport Jews from the Netherlands and to supply slaves from Africa, at a cost of 150 guilders each. Inducements in the shape of free land and slaves on easy credit terms were offered, with the result that a fair beginning was made. Two towns were laid out (on paper), but it does not appear that they ever got beyond that stage. A small fort was, however, erected and a deputy commander appointed, who was under the Commander of Essequibo. Sugar was grown there, and first offered for sale at Middelburg in 1661.

Now that each of the nations concerned in Guiana was fairly established, it will be well to review their position in 1665. They all claimed the whole of the country from the Orinoco to the Amazons, but were quite unable to do more than occupy a few places, even when supposed to control a large river

with its affluents. These settlements were then : British—Surinam or Willoughby Land ; Dutch—Aprouage, Berbice, Essequibo, and Pomeroon ; and French—Cayenne and Sinamary.

The British colony was of most importance, situated on the two Rivers Surinam and Commewijne, which join a few miles from the sea. On the site of what is now Fort Zeelandia was the fort built by the French, occupied by the English as a defence to the entrance of the River Surinam, but the Indian village of Paramaribo, close by, was not yet occupied. The capital, Tararica, a town of about a hundred houses, was situated some fifty miles up the river ; here were Government buildings and a church. The plantations to the number of five hundred were scattered up and down the rivers, the lowest being some twenty miles above the fort, which, therefore, could be easily cut off from the colony by an enemy. The names of the plantations suggest that there were Cavaliers, who called them after themselves, such as Neale, Wilkins, and Talbot, and Roundheads, who affected Bible names like Succoth, Gilgall, Beersheba, and Goshen. The sugar plantations numbered about forty, some driven by wind but the majority by oxen or horses. The land near the mouth of the river was considered less healthy, but near the town there were savannahs, with plenty of game. The only cattle were those used for the mills, hogs did not thrive on account of vampire bats ; it followed, therefore, that meat could only be obtained by hunting. Leaf-cutting ants were such pests in some places that it was difficult to plant ; “ though but little creatures,” said Warren, “ yet they were so many and hurtful that Surinam had scarce a greater trouble.” Some Jews lived at what

was called the Jews' Savannah, a few miles beyond the town, but these people were not so numerous as they became later. There were no gold-seekers, but Warren said the Indians told of mighty princes in the interior, and golden cities, how true he knew not ; but, however that might be, it was a brave country to a mind untainted with ambition and that could live according to Nature.

The French colony of the "island" of Cayenne occupied an irregular square of about twelve miles each way, with a fort called Ceperou or St. Louis, near which were a few houses hardly worth calling a village. The inhabitants had small plantations, but few negroes to work them ; this was one of the reasons why Indian quarrels came about when their assistance was demanded instead of being asked for in a friendly way. The soil was hardly rich enough for sugar, but cotton, tobacco, and anatto were grown and exported. From the very beginning Cayenne was a poor colony, although, no doubt, it could have been made valuable.

The Dutch made a fair start with the Pomeroon, but it was too early to predict its future. Essequibo and Berbice were trading factories with only a few settlers. The Fort of Berbice was a wooden building, surrounded by palisades, situated some fifty miles up the river, and the few plantations were mainly provision-grounds for the supply of the traders and the petty garrison. There were probably plots of cotton, tobacco, and anatto, with perhaps some sugar. Another small trading post was in the Aprouage, but it was never of any importance.

CHAPTER III

HISTORY—WARS AND THEIR RESULTS

War, England against the Netherlands and France—English raid on the Pomeroon and Essequibo—Dutch capture Surinam and recover Essequibo—English capture Cayenne—Surinam recaptured—Peace—Surinam given to the Dutch in exchange for New York—Difficulties of the English—Dutch refuse to let them leave—Another war—All the Guiana colonies ruined—Runaway negroes in Surinam—Slow restoration—Huguenots—Society of Surinam—Sommelsdijk—His character—Murdered by soldiers—War, England and the Netherlands against France—French corsairs in Cayenne—Du Casse repulsed from Surinam—Captures Berbice—Corsairs again—Capture of Surinam—Ransomed—Origin of bush negroes.

Now that the nations interested in Guiana had got over their first difficulties, and each founded a real colony, it might be supposed that developments would have proceeded without further trouble. Hitherto, although each claimed the whole of the country, there had been no disputes except that for the possession of Cayenne. Now, however, a European war upset everything, and troubles of another kind began. England, in 1665, was pitted against the Netherlands and France, with the result that immediately the Governor of Surinam captured a small Dutch fort in the Aprouage and a French settlement in the Sinamary.

Early in 1666 Major John Scott was commissioned by Lord Willoughby to make a raid upon the other Dutch settlements, and by the help of the Caribs he captured and destroyed that in the Pomeroon, and then went up the Essequibo and occupied Fort Kijk-over-al. In his report he spoke of having burnt the enemy's towns, forts, goods, and settlements, to the value of £160,000, and disbursed for the King's service 73,788 pounds of muscovado sugar. This is probably an exaggeration, for he occupied one of the forts, and no doubt wanted to justify his claim for the cost of the expedition. An English privateer also attacked Berbice, but was repelled, then the plucky Dutch Commander of that river went over to Essequibo and recaptured Kijk-over-al.

On receiving the news of this English raid, the States of Zeeland sent out a fleet of seven vessels and a thousand men under Abraham Crynnsen, to join the French at Cayenne and go with them to attack Surinam. Not finding the promised French fleet, he went on and demanded the surrender of the English colony. Governor Byam could get no help from his people because the settlement was some fifty miles from the fort, which stood on the site of the present Fort Zeelandia, in front of which the Dutch fleet was anchored. After a little consideration, he therefore surrendered, on condition that he and his soldiers should march forth with their arms and flying colours, and be at liberty to go where they pleased. The Governor hurried up to Tararica and summoned the Council and Assembly for advice as to surrender or further resistance. These bodies, however, were against fighting, for they were not in a condition to resist such a power-

ful enemy. Owing to sickness, one-fourth of the ablest men had been swept away, and of the remainder, a third were weak and unfit for service. If they stood out, the enemy would daily burn and destroy their habitations and settlements, and their slaves would flee away into the bush. For these and other reasons they advised a speedy accommodation with the enemy before the expected French fleet arrived. Governor Byam therefore did his best to get easy terms, and after considerable delay an agreement was made, the most important article, in view of what happened later, being—

“ 5. In case any inhabitant of the Colony shall now or hereafter intend to depart hence, he shall have power to sell his estate, and the Governour in this case shall procure that he be transported at a moderate freight, together with his estate.”

Having, as the Dutch said, “taught the covetous Britons good manners,” Crynnsen named the fort Zeelandia, and left a garrison of 150 men, after which he proceeded to Berbice, where he found that Essequibo had been recovered. Going on to Kijk-over-al, where he left two of his officers, he then proceeded to the West Indies, and thence home to boast of the “glorious” capture of Surinam.

The Dutch fleet left Surinam about the end of March, 1667, and in June following Admiral Harmon arrived in Barbados from England with a squadron of seven men-of-war, two ketches, and two fire-ships. After a cruise among the islands he came back to Barbados, and it was decided on the 19th of August that Cayenne should be attacked.

Meanwhile, however, peace had been signed on the 21st of July, with the proviso common at that time for an allowance of ten weeks for captures from Cape St. Vincent to the Equator. These "days of grace" would expire on the 29th of September for Guiana, and the news of the treaty arrived in Barbados about the middle of November. It followed, therefore, that peace had actually been concluded when the attack on Cayenne was arranged, and, as we shall see later, other operations took place after the time limit for places abroad had been passed. Under the treaty, it was agreed that all places captured by either party were to be retained, the effect of which was that what is now New York became British and Surinam Dutch.

The Governor of Cayenne was warned of the English fleet, and the people of the outlying districts were visited by him and called to the fort. While still engaged in this mission he descried the fleet in the offing, on which he at once hurried to Fort St. Louis and took two hundred men to oppose a landing. Getting another hundred, he proceeded to the place where he expected the enemy's attempt and waited all night. The English were, however, on their guard, and with fifteen boats suddenly changed their course and went off in another direction. The Governor rushed along the shore, wading through mud and scrambling over mangrove roots with his panting followers trailing a long way behind. By the time he reached the spot sixty English were drawn up in good order with flying colours, while poor De Lezy had only about a score. Quite undaunted, however, he fired his pistol before even arriving within range. The English returned the

fire, slightly wounding the Governor and his Lieutenant, who were the only Frenchmen within range. Then De Lezy called on his men to charge, but found they had left their swords in the mangrove swamps. Nothing was left to him but an ignominious flight, the English being too busy with their landing to follow at once. The French made a stand at the village of Remire, where were about sixty houses, the English soon following in perfect order. The invaders were, however, very thirsty, and wanted to pillage the wine-store, but their General preferred to burn the village, for the French were pouring a most galling fire from the houses. The wall of fire covered the retreat and permitted the Governor to reach the fort, where the colonists were already taking refuge. Notwithstanding the supposed strength of this fortress De Lezy seems to have been discouraged, for, taking two hundred of his men, he embarked and fled to Surinam. A sergeant took command of those who remained, but he was also frightened, and got off in the night, to take refuge among the Indians. Then a Swiss sergeant tried to induce the fifty soldiers who remained to hold out long enough to obtain an honourable capitulation, but even this they refused. The panic was so general that nothing was left but to surrender as prisoners of war.

In the fort the victors found 39 cannon, 1,500 balls, 27 barrels gunpowder, 26 barrels bullets, 400 shells, 6 barrels brimstone, 80 pieces armour, 200 bundles match, and 430 small arms. With such an armament the wonder is why there should have been such a panic. It is interesting to note that armour must have been worn, although people who live in a tropical climate like Guiana can hardly

see how it could be endured. The property in the colony included 295 negroes, 51 sugar coppers, stills, &c., 10 mills, 49 cattle, and 10 horses. Taking as much of the plunder as possible, the English then set fire to the houses and churches and left for Surinam. The French afterwards declared that Admiral Harmon knew of the peace negotiations, and therefore took no measures to retain the colony for England.

Arrived at Fort Zeelandia on the 3rd of October, the English found the garrison prepared to fight, even the runaway Frenchmen taking part. On the 7th the English landed, and after a gallant assault, in which fifty-four of the defenders were killed or wounded, the fort surrendered. In speaking of this affair, Lord Willoughby said : "Hans exceeded Mons much in his defence and it was an honourable parting blow."

Thus Surinam was again restored to England, and everything possible done to put matters on a sound footing. All hopes of prosperity were, however, blighted when the news came that it had been ceded to the Netherlands by treaty. Lord Willoughby, however, was not content to let his property go without doing something ; he therefore sent off his son with orders to use his utmost endeavours to bring off the inhabitants and their movables, so as to prevent the Dutch from getting any advantage from the colony. If the people would not leave Willoughby was determined to suspend the transfer as long as possible, or until he got special orders. His idea was to strengthen other British colonies and leave Surinam bare.

Henry Willoughby hurried off to Surinam, and, according to his instructions, did everything possible

to make the colony useless to the Dutch. The sugar-mill of his father's plantation, Parham Hill, was stripped and burnt, and some of those who intended to leave also demolished or burnt the buildings on their estates. The Jews, however, took no part in these disturbances.

In January, 1668, the Ambassadors of France and Holland complained to King Charles of these actions, claiming restitution and satisfaction for what had been done contrary to the articles of the treaty. Meanwhile, a Zeeland frigate and six trading vessels arrived in November, bringing the news of the peace and demanding the rendition of the colony. The English Governor Barry replied that he could not surrender his charge without positive orders from the King or Lord Willoughby. There was thus a deadlock for several months, in the course of which an English frigate arrived with an invitation from Lord Willoughby for the planters to go to Antigua. Some hesitation was, however, felt in accepting this offer, there being yet hopes that the colony might be retained.

Whatever hopes remained were, however, lost when on the 15th of April Admiral Crynnsen again appeared with three men-of-war, and delivered to the new English Governor Bannister the King's letters for the restitution of the colony. The Governor hesitated, and called his Council together, who agreed that the King's orders must be obeyed. Even then the surrender was not made until the original articles of capitulation were confirmed and a promise given that everything done to the prejudice of the Dutch should be forgotten.

Surrender having been made, the English began to think of removing; but their Dutch masters,

feeling sore at the trouble they had given, were inclined to dispute their right to carry off their effects, especially the slaves. When, therefore, Bannister made formal demand for a licence for himself and some of the most important of the colonists, Crynnsen, on the ground that he was acting beyond his sphere in comprehending others, sent him to Holland as a prisoner. Bannister protested, and wrote to Lord Willoughby, who sent to Crynnsen stating that he conceived only the land to be Dutch ; that Englishmen ought not to be detained or refused permission to transport their goods and negroes, yet Colonel Bannister was sent prisoner to the High and Mighty for asserting these articles. A great deal of correspondence took place, but Bannister was released in December, yet even then the English were detained in Surinam on one pretext or another.

In March, 1672, the English and French declared war against the Netherlands, one of the pretexts being this trouble about Surinam. The Declaration stated that the Dutch had been bound, under the Treaty of Breda and articles of surrender, to permit the English in that colony to remove with their effects ; they had not carried out their obligations, but, on the contrary, imprisoned Bannister for demanding permission to leave. Complaints had been made, and after two years' delay two vessels were sent to transport the British subjects ; but only a few of the poorest went off, to carry back the prayers of the richest and most influential to be delivered from this servitude. Further complaints were made, but the English Government got no satisfaction. The Dutch replied that the English planters were not willing to forsake their effects

and subsistence, they therefore stayed upon their own choice. During the war no attempt was made upon Surinam by the English, and it may be presumed that such a ruined colony was hardly worth having ; the Dutch, however, took New York. Peace was concluded in February, 1674, and the fifth article provided that permission should be given to the English in Surinam to leave, together with their substance, goods, and slaves, and that the Dutch Governor should not make any special laws against the English colonists. Ultimately most of the English left, the larger portion going to Jamaica, where they met with a cordial welcome.

Thus the three colonies of Guiana were "nipped in the bud" ; Pomeroun entirely destroyed, Cayenne devastated, and Surinam ruined. To add to the trouble in Cayenne, to which De Lezy returned when the English left, it received another severe blow from the Dutch. In March, 1676, it was captured by Admiral Binkes after De Lezy had declared his intention to await an attack, and that he would not derogate from the honour and valour of a true Frenchman, which he intended to protect at the cost of his life. Notwithstanding this declaration, however, no sooner had the Dutch stormed the palisades than he surrendered, to be sent a prisoner to Holland. The Dutch were now in possession of the whole of Guiana, but the honour of France must be vindicated, and therefore fifteen vessels were sent out in October to regain Cayenne, in which they easily succeeded. We may now leave French Guiana, for its war troubles were ended for a time. As for its progress as a colony, this is hardly worth noting, for there never has been a proper settlement. No doubt it would have been inconsistent with the honour of

France to give it up, but it could be no great loss.

Surinam was now the only real colony in Guiana, but the Dutch were not discouraged. Most of the plantations were ruined ; very few English remained, and many of the slaves left behind deserted rather than submit to new masters. They ran away to become the dreaded bush negroes of later times, and there was no means of capturing them. Without settlers nothing could be done, and therefore every possible inducement was offered. A few of the ruined Jews from Pomeroun came first, and these were followed by a fair number of Huguenots.

Holland was then a refuge for the distressed. First came the Jews, and about this time French Protestants began to flee for their lives. These were the people who helped England to become a great manufacturing country, and the few hundreds who went to Surinam were a godsend to that distressed colony. They settled in the new town of Paramaribo as poor workmen, but later we find them all over the Dutch colonies as planters. In 1685 came the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, which drove thousands to take their flight, with happy results wherever they took refuge. Among other places, a fair number came in a ship to Surinam and took up a plantation named La Providence. These people were sufficiently numerous to require their own church, and their influence for good was felt throughout the colony.

Before anything else the Dutchman was a trader. As such he was not satisfied without a profit ; it follows therefore that the owners of Surinam were discontented. There were no returns, and something must be done. So they got up a syndicate called



SOMMELSDIJK, GOVERNOR OF SURINAM.

To face p. 73.

the Society of Surinam. First the Province of Zeeland sold the colony to the West India Company for 260,000 guilders, and they, finding that their capital was insufficient, in 1683 sold one-third to the city of Amsterdam, and another third to Cornelis van Aerssen van Sommelsdijk. This third shareholder was appointed Governor, and proved the salvation of the colony.

Sommelsdijk was one of those arbitrary gentlemen who almost make us love a despot. There is no doubt that a strong hand was wanted ; the hour came, and here was the man. He found everything in confusion ; order must be introduced. The colony did not want the typical Dutch Governor, who planned out something for the next generation to accomplish, but one with the ardent desire to drive things on at once. He arrived in Surinam on the 24th of November, 1683 ; his character is thus given by Pistorius :—

“ His Excellency's disposition was upright and pious ; by his daily example he became a leader and model to his subordinates by acting in accordance with his Christian duties. Those who followed closest in his footsteps became his best friends, independent of colour, creed, or station. He was the enemy to everything loose, vicious, or immoral, and without regard to the offenders being of high position or low degree he condemned them fearlessly.”

This may be true and yet not quite all the truth. For if he had been nothing more he could hardly have brought order out of chaos. For some time the Caribs had been troublesome ; they took the part of the English ; Sommelsdijk conciliated them. Horses for the sugar-mills were required ; he winked at their illegal importation from New England. He

also looked after the labour supply, and managed to get slaves. Above everything, however, he would have no idlers ; therefore he set the garrison to dig a canal, which still remains as his monument.

He undoubtedly played fast and loose with the charter of the colony, and neglected the orders of the directors of the Society. He told them that they could not drive trade and commerce into grooves. Experience had taught him what he had never thought of before ; had he, like a fool, followed his instructions to the letter, the State, the city, and himself, would have had cause to regret it. " God be thanked ! " he said, that had not happened.

His portrait shows a typical cavalier, a gentleman of the period, and one who could hardly be expected to make a business man. His accounts were said to have been badly kept, and the directors were of opinion that he would ruin the Company. Fortunately for Surinam, however, from his position he could afford to ignore such complaints and carry on his good work. But even in Surinam, although the friends of law and order were favourable, there were many malcontents. In June, 1687, he issued a proclamation that the Court would sit to hear any complaints against him as Governor ; but no one appeared, and though this notice was repeated in October and January, with a promise to appear in person and give satisfaction to any one who felt aggrieved, these were equally without result.

There was strong religious feeling at the time, especially among those who had suffered persecution from the Roman Catholics, but Sommelsdijk seemed to have had the rare virtue of tolerance. Three priests were allowed to come to the colony ; but complaints were made to the directors, who ordered

them to be sent back. Meanwhile, however, they died, and Sommelsdijk sent their remains with the following characteristic letter :—

“ HIGHLY HONOURED SIRs,—By Captain John Plaz I take the liberty of sending to Zeeland the bodies of three popes who died here, who you are pleased to call Divines. I believe that a Chest of Ducats would have pleased you more, those however are fruits which up to the present have not been grown here. In the absence of these, I hope that an abundance of sugar will sweeten and mollify your crying throats, and, when moistened with syrup and juice, cure you of your raging fever and cause you to be more *en courant* with what happens here.”

The honourable gentlemen were not much pleased with this letter, so they sent back the remains of the priests to be buried in the colony.

The soldiers in Surinam had been accustomed to do as they pleased ; taking them altogether, they were a nuisance. Sommelsdijk gave them plenty of work, and, as provisions were short, he reduced their rations, without a proper explanation. Used to indulge in their unbridled passions, they were not prepared to listen to reason ; they considered themselves ill-used and determined to resist. On the 17th of July, 1688, they refused to proceed with the works on the Sommelsdijk canal unless their rations were increased. Having been brought before the Governor, they were dismissed with scant courtesy ; in case the store was well supplied they might expect additional rations. Grumbling and muttering, they returned to work, but two days later they absolutely refused to go on, and declared that

if rations were not at once increased they would kill the Governor. Their Commander and his lieutenant tried to pacify them, with a promise of success, until Sommelsdijk appeared, sword in hand, and advanced to cut down the leaders, the Commander taking his place beside him. Not having any quarrel with their Commander, they hesitated, calling upon him to retire, but when he refused they fired a volley, killing both. The soldiers then took possession of the fort and terrorised the whole colony until the burghers rose, almost to a man, and succeeded in capturing them, after which eleven were executed.

In 1689 war again broke out, this time the English and Dutch joining against France. Cayenne had lately been a refuge for pirates or privateers whose occupations could not be carried on when there was peace. They had commenced to plant when war broke out, but on the arrival of the noted corsair Du Casse they left everything to join him in a raid on Surinam. This colony was, however, in a good condition, and the new Governor, Scharphuijsen, compelled them to retire, leaving one of their vessels grounded to be captured by the Dutch. Du Casse then went on to Berbice, which he captured.

The Dutch were less fortunate in 1712, when another war with France brought to the front Jacques Cassard, "the Hero of Nantes." He arrived in Surinam on the 8th of October with eight large and thirty small vessels and about 3,000 men. For three weeks these rough fellows pillaged the colony, going up and down the rivers and driving the planters to take refuge in the bush with their slaves. Among other insults it is reported that they broke into the Jewish synagogue, killed a hog within the building,

and sprinkled its blood over the furniture. Finally, Cassard was bought off by a ransom of 747,350 guilders, which, in the absence of coin, was mainly paid in sugar, slaves, merchandise, provisions, stores, and jewellery. In fact, the colony was stripped of almost everything that could be carried off.

As if it were not enough to be ruined by war, a new danger was produced by this raid. Many of the negroes who were sent away to hide in the forest never came back, but joined the runaways who had hitherto been of little consequence. In a few years, however, the bush negroes became very dangerous, for they made incursions on the plantations, burning and destroying houses and sugar-works, killing the whites, and carrying off the slaves to increase their own communities.

In less than ten years after Cassard's departure the bush negroes began to make their presence felt in the outlying districts of the colony. In their raids on the plantations they got firearms, in addition to bows and arrows which they made for themselves. Soldiers and burghers were sent out to capture them, but with little success, for the negroes knew well how to hide and shoot from behind trees. If by chance some were captured, they were punished severely as examples, in hopes of deterring the slaves from taking to the bush. Burning over slow-fires, breaking on the wheel, and hanging were supplemented in one or more cases by suspending with a hook through the ribs until the man died. Great efforts were made to subdue them, in every case unsuccessfully, until, the number being greatly increased by runaways from the plantations they destroyed, they became a real danger. The peril was much greater than that formerly endured from the Indians, because

there were always negro friends on the plantations ready to give information of their weak points and open the way.

In 1730 there was a negro revolt on the plantation, "Berg-en-Daal," which extended to other estates, and which required three years of hard fighting before it could be suppressed for a time. For nearly twenty years after this the struggle between blacks and whites went on with slight intermissions, in every case the result being favourable to the bush negroes. Hitherto all efforts were strained to capture them as runaways, but in 1749 an attempt was made to make a treaty of peace on the understanding that they were to be free and be bound to restore any slaves who might run away from the plantations. The first treaty was made with a Captain Adoe, who received from the Governor a staff of office and a promise of a lot of presents. Unfortunately, however, a treaty with one chief was not respected by the others, and when the presents were being carried to Adoe the bearers were attacked by Captain Samsam and cut off. The presents not arriving, Adoe considered the treaty broken, and again began to make raids. This sort of thing went on for some time, and when the danger was not from the bush negroes it was from the slaves in general, who no doubt were incited to revolt from their knowledge and envy of the others. In 1761 peace was made with the Aucans, and a year later with the Saramaccans, but this did not prevent a great insurrection of slaves next year, which almost drove the whites out of the colony and resulted in new sets of runaways taking the field. They took refuge on the Marowyne, and were supposed to have got assistance in guns, &c., from the French. For twenty

years war raged with these runaways under the two chiefs Bonni and Baron. White soldiers were brought from Holland, a contingent of Black Rangers embodied, and the new danger fought under difficulties so well described by Captain Stedman. At last, however, the Bonni bush negroes were pacified; but not conquered, for they demanded and got their full liberty.

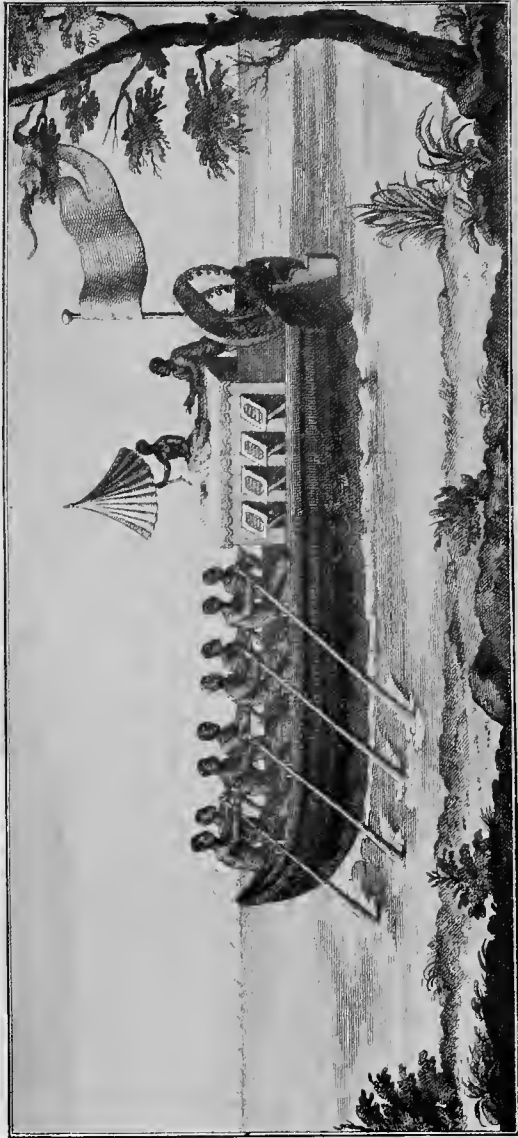
CHAPTER IV.

HISTORY—DEMERARA AND BERBICE

Essequibo as a trading factory—Dispute with Berbice—Van Berkel's visit to Kijk-over-al—Description of the young colony—Corsair raids—Berbice captured and ransomed—Difficulties in paying—Curious position—Van Hoorn's Company—The Berbice Association—Charter of Berbice—Gravesande in Essequibo—Remove down the river—Essequibo opened to all nations—Land boom—Capital and labour from English islands—Opening of Demerara—Dearth of slaves—No runaways allowed—Progress of Berbice—Great slave insurrection—Panic among the whites—Rebels overrun the colony—Massacres—The fort untenable—Inmates frightened—Fort abandoned and set on fire—Governor with a few whites takes refuge at the mouth of the river—Assistance arrives—Recovery of the colony—Ruin—Difficulties in restoration.

ESSEQUEBO lost little by the war which almost ruined Cayenne and Surinam, for there were no plantations to be destroyed. The West India Company sent a new Commander, Hendrik Rol, in April, 1669, who lived at the fort and traded with the Indians. A vessel arrived once a year, bringing stores and trading goods, filling up with such products as had been collected since the last voyage. Berbice was in the same position, not yet worthy to be styled a colony, although there were a few plantations.

Rol was a good trader, and looked well to the interests of the Company. When, therefore, the



TENT-BOAT OF AN EARLY PLANTER.

traders of Berbice went beyond what he considered their boundaries, he took action, and in 1670 seized a boat and cargo, which he found in the Pomeroon.

The news was brought by an Indian, and the Council of Berbice commissioned their factor, Adrian van Berkel, to proceed to Fort Kijk-over-al and inquire into the matter. His account of this journey gives a picture of the primitive condition of the country, and some interesting details of the Indian villages, where he stopped when going through from Berbice to the Demerara River, which as yet was a wilderness. The party consisted of Van Berkel, the predicant, and three other Europeans, who, on arriving at the bank of the Demerara, met a tent-boat which had been sent round the coast. With ten Indians they dropped down the river and proceeded along the coast to the Essequibo, where they were struck by the beauty of its many islands, none of which was yet occupied.

Kijk-over-al was twelve hours from the sea on a little island, a stone's-throw from the shore. Everybody was looking out for them, for a tent-boat was a strange thing in these waters. On their arrival at the landing, the Commander, sword in hand, came down and gave them a hearty welcome. Then the party passed up the steps through a double line of soldiers, who fired a volley as a salute. Arrived at the entrance, they proceeded upstairs, when three cannons were fired, and the secretary received them in state. So grand was this reception that Van Berkel and his party thought it quite princely. Coming now to Rol's chamber, the Berbice factor wanted to go into business at once, but the Commander said he must not think of such a thing; it would be time enough after three or four days' rest. His

European followers were entertained by the soldiers, and he and the predicant invited to take as much drink as they liked, either from a large jar of wine on the floor or a flask of gin on the table. Then came a grand dinner of five courses, to which they did justice, after which they went to bed full.

Next morning they took a walk, but there was not much to see. The fort was square ; on the lower floor was a magazine and store for heavy goods, above were three rooms, one for the Commander, a second for the secretary, where light stores and trading goods were kept, and a third for the soldiers. In the afternoon arrived a Christian servant with an invitation from Heer de Graaf, a private planter, to pay him a visit next day. This was accepted, and next morning they went over in a corial and found everything in first-rate order, with the appearance of an estate in Europe. The dinner was perfect, consisting of many kinds of meat, including deer, fowl, duck, turkey, pigeons, labba, and water-hare. The drinks were mum, wine, and brandy, with which they kept merry until the evening, when they returned to the fort full and jolly.

There were only three private estates, that of De Graaf being the largest, having about thirty slaves ; the other two had about a dozen each. The planters lived a princely life as far as food and drink were concerned, but he who wanted society must not go there. The sun was very oppressive, and there were many things wanting to make life agreeable. The living at the fort was not so good as on the plantations ; on the latter was plenty for the worshippers of both Venus and Bacchus.

On the fourth day the Commander allowed his visitor to come to business, and after some discussion

it was agreed that in future the people of Berbice should not trade in the Demerara River, and that the Abary should be the boundary. The boat was restored, but the cargo had been already used ; Rol, however, paid Van Berkel its value in balsam copaiba.

Such, no doubt, is in brief a fair picture of Essequibo at this period, and very little progress was made for a long time. Two cargoes of slaves were brought to Essequibo, and three sugar plantations started for the Company, and in Berbice there were five estates belonging to private settlers. It may be presumed that these were much inferior to that of De Graaf.

From the beginning there had been few Indian difficulties in Essequibo, but in Berbice sufficient care was not taken to prevent red slaves being bought ; this was always a cause of trouble, and was ultimately prohibited. In Essequibo this was done in 1686, when a proclamation was issued that no one should buy such slaves without first bringing them before the Commander, on pain of confiscation.

In 1686 an attempt was made to again settle the Pomeroun, but with little success. Three years later it was attacked by a French pirate, who burnt the little fort and the few huts of the planters, after which the project was entirely abandoned. Kijk-over-al was not then attacked, but in 1708 came a French privateer named Anthony Ferry with three vessels and three hundred men. A few soldiers were sent down the river when their arrival was reported, but they could do nothing. The enemy came up the river, burning the Indian villages on its banks, anchoring at last opposite Bartica. Here the

manager of Plantation Vryheid tried, with the aid of his slaves, to stop their landing, but the enemy, simply laughed at them. These defenders fled to the bush, and the manager sent to the fort for help. But the Commander thought it better to keep inside his refuge, for he knew well that his force was insufficient for an attack. To save the plantations he was ultimately compelled to ransom the colony, for 50,000 guilders, which was paid in slaves and goods, with only 2,500 guilders in cash.

In connection with the corsair raids on Essequibo it is stated that in 1709 a second party came and finished the work of the first. They plundered and burnt both the Company's and private estates, took away five hundred hogsheads of sugar and a number of slaves, so that there remained but two sugar-mills in the colony.

Berbice suffered in 1712 from Cassard's people, with serious results. Under the command of Baron Mouans three large and several small vessels attacked Fort Nassau. The Commander refused to surrender until the neighbouring plantations had been plundered and the fort bombarded for three days. The corsairs then demanded a larger ransom than the colony could pay; after a great deal of talk this was reduced to half. Even 300,000 guilders was quite beyond the means of this small settlement; still, nothing remained to be done but to try and satisfy these people, who only worked for prize money. By scraping up everything portable the Governor of Berbice succeeded in getting 118,024 guilders in slaves, sugar, stores, and a barque, the balance being given in a bill of exchange on the mercantile house of Van Peere, the proprietors of the colony. Not yet satisfied, the corsairs demanded a further 10,000

guilders in cash, which was more than the colony possessed, but at last 6,000 was collected and the balance made up with gold and silver trinkets and ornaments and a few pieces of plate.

As security for the draft two of the members of the Council were taken to France, one of whom died on the voyage and the other about a year and a half after his arrival. He was not liberated because the Van Peeres refused to accept the bill on the ground that the amount was more than the value of Berbice.

The Marseilles merchants who fitted out Cassard wanted money, not territory; the corsairs fought for themselves, not for the Government. It followed, therefore, that no claim was made for Berbice when peace was signed at Utrecht in 1713, the only reference being a demand of the French Ambassador that the Van Peeres should be forced to pay. Nothing, however, was done for some time, and meanwhile Berbice was in a curious position, for under the laws of that time the produce could only be shipped to the Netherlands, for it was not French territory. There were no means of collecting the money, but at the same time the people of Berbice were not prepared to do anything that might result in reprisals when another war came and the corsairs were again let loose. It was a deadlock that could only be got over by an agreement between the parties. At last one of the French merchants went to Amsterdam and sold the bill for 108,000 guilders to three Dutchmen, who thus became owners of Berbice, with the Van Peeres, who, no doubt, were concerned in the transaction. This was known as the Van Hoorn's Company from the name of the principal shareholder.

Berbice did not flourish, for the capital of the

Company was too small, and there was little profit, which was what all the trading companies wanted, but rarely got. After six years it was therefore decided to establish a new Company to be called the Association of the Owners of the Colony of Berbice, with a capital of 3,200,000 guilders. The prospectus stated that the colony was admirably situated and the soil suitable for sugar-cane, the proof of which was shown by the fact that there were already six plantations. There were two estates in cacao, and indigo, coffee, cotton, and anatto could also be grown. There was a great fort (Fort Nassau) and a guard-house between the fort and the mouth of the river, a redoubt opposite the fort, and four posts in the interior. On all the plantations there were 895 slaves, and the produce of 1721 was calculated at 700 hogsheads of sugar, besides other things.

There was no great demand for the shares, only about three-fourths being subscribed, and even these were not properly paid up. However, the "Societat" was formed, with a proper directorate, who attempted to make the colony of more importance. The then Governor Tierens was promised 1,200 slaves to open out about ten new sugar plantations, and ordered to increase the cultivation of other things. Coffee had lately been introduced into Surinam, and the Governor of that colony sent a boatload of beans to start it in Berbice.

The West India Company, finding that something was being done, tried to enforce their supreme rights, but the directors told them that Berbice was captured by French privateers and redeemed by the former owners. The dispute lasted some time, and was only settled by the necessity for slaves, which only the West India Company could supply. This caused

the Berbice Association to agree to pay 300 guilders for every vessel sent to the colony.

Not quite satisfied, and thinking that possibly the West India Company might at some future time refuse to continue the grant, the Berbice Association decided to apply to the States-General for a charter, which was granted on the 27th of September, 1732. Under this charter an annual head-tax of fifty pounds of sugar for each inhabitant was imposed, a customs duty of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on both exports and imports, and a tonnage duty. No other taxes could be imposed during the first ten years, and not even afterwards without consent of the States-General. Thus Berbice became a chartered colony, and thus conditions were imposed not always favourable to its development in the future.

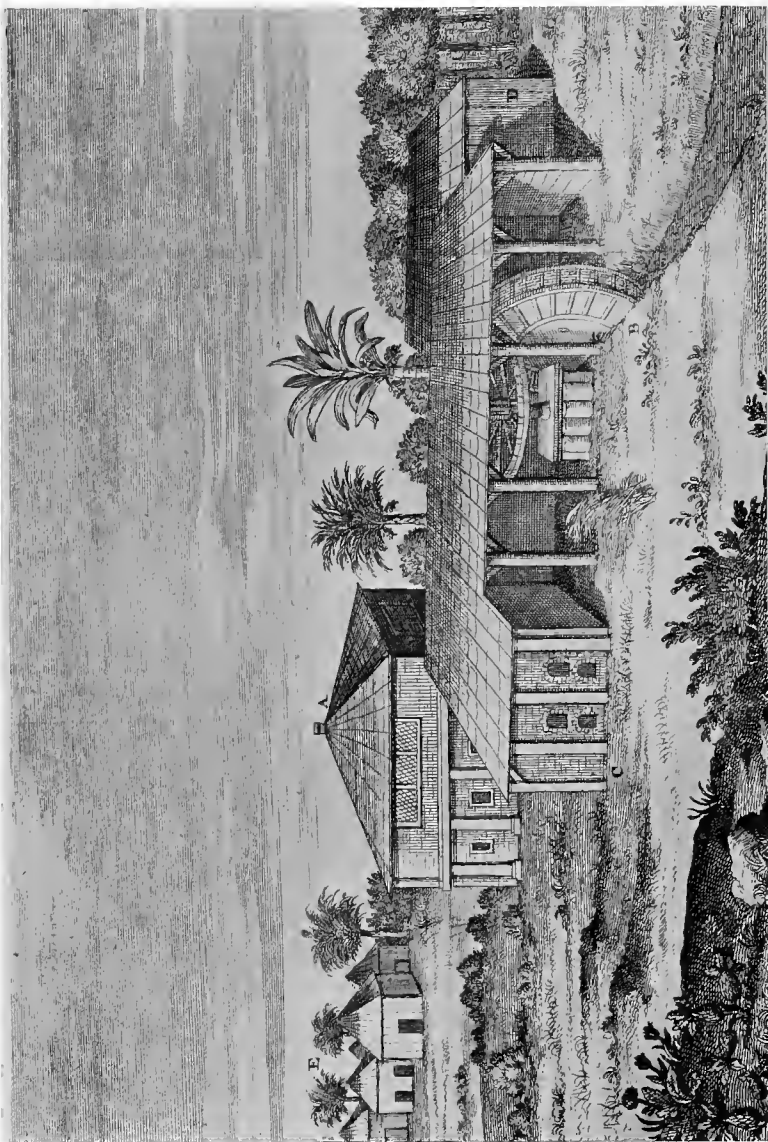
Essequibo was of little importance as a colony until the arrival of Laurens Storm van 's Gravesande, who arrived there as secretary in 1738. Hermanus Gelskerke was then Commander, and at once the relations between the chief and his secretary became very cordial. For some time the Commander had seen the necessity for considerable changes, the principal being a removal from Kijk-over-al to the mouth of the river. Already a wooden fort was put up on a small island called Great Flag Island, but this was quite unsatisfactory, and a brick building was suggested by Gravesande two months after his arrival. After some delay the Company gave permission, the fort was built, and the removal took place in 1739.

The results of this change were soon apparent. Hitherto there were only a few scattered plantations near the mouth of the river, but after the removal there was a growing tendency to vacate the worn-out estates near Kijk-over-al. The development

would, however, have been very slow had not the Commander and his able secretary been able to wring from the directors a concession which was so novel as to be almost revolutionary. Hitherto only Dutchmen might receive grants of land and practically, only Zeelanders, the exceptions being French Huguenots, who, however, were considered as naturalised. Now the River Essequibo was opened to all nations, with free land and ten years' freedom from taxes.

The news was circulated throughout the British West Indies, and immediately there was a considerable influx of British from Barbados, St. Kitts, Antigua, and other places. These brought slaves and also capital, with the result that the prospects of the colony were entirely changed. When in 1743, after the death of Gelskerke, the energetic secretary became Commander, there were even greater signs of progress. All the available land, with the façades on the river, was taken up by 1745, and attention was directed to the Demerara. Gravesande saw the need for such an extension, and got permission in October of that year. The settlers were, however, warned that if they went to their new grants they must do so at their own risk, for the Company would build no fort or otherwise afford protection. Notwithstanding this drawback, applications poured in, and on the 3rd of April, 1746, five concessions were granted on condition that cultivation should be commenced within a year and six weeks. Thus began the new settlement, which ultimately became of more importance than any in Guiana.

Under the wise administration of Gravesande, Essequibo and its offshoot became of some importance. No longer was it a trading factory, but a



PRIMITIVE WATER SUGAR-MILL.

real colony, although as yet in its infancy. The Commander would have done much more had he not been hampered by a Company that wanted profit at once. Gravesande knew very well that the infant must be fostered, that no colony could be built up at once, and that money was wanted to do many things necessary for future benefit. But the meanness of the Company always stood in his way. He went so far as to ask the directors to allow him to resign in 1746; he had spent all his savings, as well as his salary, which was only 500 guilders per annum, besides rations. But the directors knew he was the right man, so they sent him a flattering letter, saying they were very much pleased with his administration, and would agree with his views in regard to Demerara if he withdrew his resignation. His salary being increased to 800 guilders and one of his sons appointed assistant, he decided to remain.

There were many difficulties; first and foremost was the scarcity of labour. The West India Company held the monopoly of the slave trade, but they were very cautious in their dealings with new settlers. They were justified in this by the fact that many of the English were inclined to speculate in the grants they took up rather than to develop them. Gravesande once proposed to buy slaves from the English, but this was out of the question, and he was reprimanded for thinking of such a thing. He was, however, permitted to erect a brandwagt at the mouth of the Demerara River as a signal-station and look-out for vessels arriving or departing; this was on the site of what is now Georgetown and was built in 1748.

There were few difficulties with the slaves in Essequibo and Demerara, mainly because they were

not very numerous, and from the friendly terms of the colonists and Indians runaways were either brought back or killed. Gravesande would have nothing like the bush negroes in Surinam. In 1763, however, the colony was much alarmed by a disaster to Berbice, which went near to destroying that colony altogether.

Berbice had been progressing slowly for some years and was now a real colony, although the plantations were still situated well beyond the coast in the main river and its branch, the Canje. According to the returns of 1762, there were in Berbice, excluding native Indians, 346 whites, 244 Indian slaves, and 3,833 negro slaves, making a total of 4,423. Two slave vessels arrived in 1763, increasing the number of negroes, and some of the whites died of a "sickness," the result being a greater preponderance of the black element. There were sixty soldiers and their officers to protect the colony, besides whom every white man was a member of the Burgher Militia. The Governor was Wolfert Simon van Hoogenheim, a man of great ability, who in July, 1762, dealt with a slight disturbance, in which thirty-six slaves set fire to their master's house and ran away into the bush, most of whom were captured and punished.

In February, 1763, the slaves on two plantations in the River Canje revolted, killed two whites and three slaves, and then took refuge up the Corentyne, from whence they appear to have incited the great insurrection which followed. All the estates in the Canje were plundered, the whites killed, and then the negroes to the number of nine hundred banded together and marched through the path to Fort Nassau. No alarm had been given, so that the first

news was brought by refugees from the Berbice plantations who ran away to escape the rebels. There was a general stampede, for every one seemed mad with fright ; some fled to Fort Nassau, others up the river to a brick house at Peereboom, on the Wieronie, and a few down to Post St. Andries, where New Amsterdam now stands. Everywhere, as the whites ran away, the slaves joined the rebels, until only a few who followed their masters remained faithful. The plantations were plundered without hindrance, and the rebels exulted over their success. No attempt was made, however, to attack the fort.

The trouble at Fort Nassau was increased by the general panic ; only the Governor and a planter named Abbensetts were inclined to resist. The Council of Government first met on the 2nd of March, when the Governor reported that the burghers were called upon to go against the rebels, but only a few assembled, and these ran away when they saw the numbers of the enemy. Mr. Abbensetts decided to defend his plantation, "Solitude," and asked for assistance, but no one would go ; even the captains of the two slave vessels, when ordered up the river, went but a short distance.

Only twenty soldiers were at Fort Nassau, and eight of these were sick ; the few burghers were weak. The Councillors inspected the fort and reported the defences to be in a very bad condition. The military officers said it might stand the first attack, but they must leave a way open for retreat to the ships. The two captains were asked to stand by in case of an emergency, which they promised to do. Abbensetts appeared on the 3rd, and was authorised to demand assistance from the slave vessels ; but even with a guarantee of compensa-

tion for damages and offers of reward for the capture of the rebels the captains refused to go. A few who remained with this brave man got frightened when they heard of attacks and murders in the neighbourhood, so that even Abbensetts could do nothing more than leave and come into the fort.

On the 6th Predicant Ramring and his wife arrived with news of the defeat of the whites at Peereboom, where twenty, including women and children, had taken refuge with some of their faithful negroes. They successfully resisted two attacks, after which one of the rebels called out that they had fourteen barrels of powder and could prevent the whites from escaping. A council of the besieged was held in which the outlook was discussed. They saw no signs of help from outside and would soon be starving. One of the whites then opened a parley, and in reply to his remonstrances a rebel said that the Christians were cruel; they did not want any whites in the colony; they would be gentlemen themselves; all the plantations must be given up. A truce was decided upon for a day, and it was then agreed that the whites should be permitted to leave in the boats and go down the river unmolested. The refugees accordingly left the house, but when in the act of embarking the rebels fired, killing or wounding the women and children. Two or three men managed to swim across the river and to get into the bush, where they suffered great hardships.

This came as another shock to the inmates of the fort, who wanted to get on board the vessels and leave at once. The Governor, however, with Abbensetts, tried his best to get them to stay, and went with the Council to make a second inspection of the fort. The palisades were then found to be quite

rotten near the ground, and were likely to fall if the guns were fired; the negroes could either pull them away or climb over. The fort could be easily surrounded, and there would then be no means of obtaining water. Then the provisions were getting low now that nearly all the whites, with a number of faithful negroes, had come in. However, it was agreed to remain for the present, as the Governor had already sent to Surinam for assistance and the captains of the slave vessels were willing, notwithstanding the sickness of their crews, to remain.

Now came news from the lower part of the River Canje that the negroes were revolting, and this brought on another panic. Even the secretary took away the books and placed them on board one of the vessels, so that when called to read the minutes he could not produce them. On being rebuked, he said he was not bound to remain there and be shot for twenty guilders a month. On the 7th the burghers petitioned to be allowed to leave. The fort was untenable, the neighbouring plantations were on fire; they therefore wanted to go on board the vessels. The officers agreed that their position was dangerous, for many of the petitioners were sick and worn out by the privations and fatigue of their flight through the bush.

On the 8th a woman with her child arrived; she had been a prisoner, but was sent with a message. The rebels numbered a thousand; they were under chiefs who kept strict order. She was shown the mutilated bodies of seven murdered whites. The letter she brought recited some grievances, and then went on to say that the Governor must go back to Holland at once; if he agreed and fired four guns as a signal, they would leave him alone, otherwise he

might fire three guns and they would then come down and fight. On this the burghers became clamorous, the officers were called in, and on being asked if they could defend the fort replied with a most emphatic "No!" Even Abbensetts became depressed and despondent. The defences were rotten, the soldiers weak, the burghers frightened, and the good faith of the negroes with them was uncertain. Nothing could be gained by a defence; they would be worse off here than down the river; the way to the Canje was then open, but how long that might be they could not tell. He therefore proposed that the fort be abandoned and that they proceed down the river to Plantation Dageraad. The other Councillors assented, but the Governor said it was a hard and bitter thing for him to consent to the proposition, but as they all agreed there was nothing to be done but reluctantly to carry out their wishes. It was then agreed to abandon the fort that evening, after setting it on fire and spiking the guns.

Thus the colony of Berbice was left to the mercies of the rebels. The vessels went down the river, where they found the rebels burning and plundering; at one plantation they were fired at and at another rescued a poor widow. On the evening of the 10th, a week after the news of the rising, they came to Dageraad, then the lowest estate on the Berbice River. Here all was as yet quiet, and they agreed to wait for assistance. The Governor ordered the vessels to remain, but the captains wanted to go, one of them first demanding payment in proper bills of exchange for the slaves he had brought. This matter having been settled, the vessel left, carrying away some of the small supply of provisions which had been saved. The secretary also went off in the

vessel, in spite of the protests of the Governor, saying he would render his accounts in Holland, for there was now neither Governor nor Council in Berbice. Rumours of revolts came in at intervals with threats from the rebels of an attack on Dageraad, which caused another panic and a petition to be allowed to go down to Post St. Andries, now the lunatic asylum at New Amsterdam. This was granted, and the vessels which remained floated down, leaving the last of the plantations to the rebels. They arrived on the 16th and found the post in a miserable condition for defence. Having no use for a set of cowards who clamoured for permission to depart, the Governor let them go and settled down with a few to await the arrival of assistance.

The vessels left Berbice with letters to the directors, dated the 27th of March. The Governor wrote that he was anxiously waiting for help at the Post St. Andries in a barren savannah, with only one battery of two rotten cannon to defend it. The rebels now numbered three thousand, had four hundred muskets, plenty of ammunition, and cutlasses and other sharp weapons, while the whites had but few muskets and no ammunition for the battery even if the guns could be fired; provisions were scarce, and if attacked they could get no water.

From this state of almost utter despondency the Governor was roused on the 28th by sight of a vessel, which proved to be English, bringing a hundred soldiers from Surinam. There being no Dutch ship at hand when the appeal for help arrived, the Governor chartered the *Betsy*, and at the same time sent a detachment to the Corentyne to prevent the rebels from joining the bush negroes in Surinam. This opportune arrival altered the aspect of affairs

and caused Governor Hoogenheim to make a step towards the recovery of Berbice by going back to Dageraad, the name of which ("daybreak,") perhaps, suggested hope. At the same time a small detachment was sent up the Canje to recover some of the plantations.

Arrived at Dageraad, they were joined by several hundred faithful negroes who did not like the rule of the rebel chief Coffy. This potentate sent a message by a white lad who had been captured, and who was ordered to return with the answer at the risk of his life. Styling himself Governor of Berbice, Coffy asked Hoogenheim to come and talk with him. He would divide Berbice into two parts, his people would go up the river but never again be slaves. Of course, the Governor would not come to such terms, especially when he had already repulsed a party of rebels the previous day.

Nothing, however, could be done on the offensive until on the 3rd of May two vessels arrived from St. Eustatius with 154 soldiers. They came at a time when provisions and other necessaries were almost exhausted, and Hoogenheim hoped to be able to do something at last. It was agreed, however, that the force was insufficient to do anything decisive, for it was feared that they could only drive the negroes into the bush to be a future danger to the colony. It was also agreed to offer rewards—for the capture of Coffy 500, Akkara (another chief) 400, for each live rebel 50 and if dead 20 guilders.

On the 13th of May the rebels attacked Dageraad in force, and had it not been for the last arrivals it would probably have been the final catastrophe. But every precaution had now been taken, and with the help of the ships and after five hours' sturdy

fighting they were repulsed with considerable loss. This checked them and prevented a further attack, which was a mercy, for sickness fell upon the party ; soon there were hardly enough to serve as sentries. On the 29th of May Hoogenheim wrote that a hundred men were sick, the vessels were helpless, many were dead, and they were without proper food and medicines. "For God's sake," said he, "send and help us in our hour of need!" By the 29th of August fifty-four soldiers from one ship were dead, nearly all the sailors of the two others, besides two Councillors, two captains, and a book-keeper.

An accession was made on the 7th of July by the arrival of a barque from St. Eustatius, with a supply of provisions and forty men, which came at a time when there were not enough soldiers to relieve guard.

The news of the revolt caused much alarm in Demerara when it was brought by some refugees. Gravesande took such measures as were possible to prevent the rebels from coming over, and by means of a contingent from Barbados and a party of Indians effectually checked them on that side.

Meanwhile the news also arrived in Holland, and at once a petition to the States-General was drawn up, asking for two frigates and six hundred men. Two vessels were accordingly prepared, one leaving on the 23rd of July and the other on the 15th of August with 260 men, and later another vessel. At the beginning of December the work of recovering the colony was begun, which was much facilitated by the action of Demerara and by quarrels among the negroes.

It appears that Coffy quarrelled with another chief named Atta ; being conquered, he shot himself ; Akkara was also deposed and ordered to work. Four

other leaders were chosen, but these were charged with treating the others worse than their former masters ; in fact, it was a change from one servitude to another of a worse type. Under such circumstances the rebels were no longer united when the expedition started up the river on the 9th of December. They retreated into the bush as the vessels appeared, so that when detachments were sent ashore at the plantations there was no fighting. Some surrendered and excused themselves on the ground that they had been forced to join against their own wishes. When fifty or more surrendered in a day there was some difficulty as to their disposal—in fact, the trouble was, in the absence of any discipline, to re-establish the management of the estates, most of which were in ruins and the cultivation choked by weeds. At the Wikkie creek there was some severe fighting, in which the rebels as well as the whites suffered ; but, of course, the victory was to the latter. At Savonette they found the Demerara contingent, who had fought and driven back a party that wanted to cross over to Demerara. Parties were sent into the bush with indifferent success, the negroes having the advantage from their familiarity with bush fighting. By the end of January, however, a great many had surrendered, including two chiefs, and on the 27th of March 2,600 were reported as having returned or been captured, including the chiefs. Executions now took place as warnings, some of them particularly cruel, including burning over a slow fire, after which, but not until the end of the year, a general amnesty was proclaimed. The sufferings of the whites from sickness and exposure were so great that when the time came for their departure the vessels could hardly be manned.

Berbice was ruined and the work of restoration was almost as great as the planting of a new colony. One-third of the whites were gone, some of whom, no doubt, feared to return or could not undertake the serious task of establishing anew their ruined estates. The negroes were about half the former number, and more were wanted before the arduous work could be carried out. To restore the fort and posts the Association wanted money, and at first they proposed an increase of taxation, but the ruined planters said that this was a time when they wanted help and not an increase of their burdens. Every one was embarrassed ; the directors even went so far as to suggest that the colony should be abandoned, for the costs of the expeditions had not only left them penniless but heavily in debt. A little help was given by the States in the shape of loans, but this was too small to restore the colony. Governor Hoogenheim became sick and depressed, his memory was impaired, and though only thirty-five years of age, his troubles made him feel like an old man ; he therefore asked the directors to accept his resignation when the worst was over and when his arduous work was finished.

CHAPTER V.

HISTORY—WARS AND BRITISH CONQUESTS (1780-1831)

Progress of Demerara—Wars—Bristol privateers terrorise Demerara—British man-of-war arrives—Surrender of Demerara and Berbice—French allies of the Netherlands overcome British force—French rule—Town laid out—Peace negotiations—Restoration to Dutch—West India Company's misrule leads to its downfall—Revolution in the Netherlands—"Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity"—British man-of-war arrives—Governor leaves in her—A petty revolution—British fleet's offer of protection is refused—Slave insurrection—British forces demand surrender—British rule—Introduction of capital and labour—Restoration after Peace of Amiens—Recapture by British—American war—Final cession to Great Britain—Berbice Association's properties—Anti-slavery agitation—East Coast insurrection—Case of Rev. John Smith—Union of Demerara and Essequibo with Berbice under the name of British Guiana.

DEMERARA progressed slowly but on the right lines during the administration of Governor Gravesande. That able man could not do all he desired, but nevertheless he laid the foundation on which the colony of British Guiana is laid. To him was largely due the fact that there were no bodies of runaways to terrorise the colony, or anything like the great catastrophe of Berbice. The laying-out of plantations on the upper Demerara was a mistake due to fear of the enemy's corsairs, and perhaps justifiable in view of



SEA WALL, GEORGETOWN.
(See p. 38.)



PRIMITIVE HORSE SUGAR-MILL.

the fact that there was absolutely no protection in case of war. In the natural course of development, however, estates were granted down to the coast, notwithstanding the feeling of dread, which was justified by the course of events.

In 1780 England was at war with her revolted colonies, and presently France, the Netherlands, and Spain combined against her. Now was the time for the Dutch colonies in Guiana to be on the look-out, for they were charged, as well as certain West Indian islands, with favouring the privateers of the American colonies of Great Britain. War was declared on the 20th of December, 1780, and immediately privateers seem to have sprung up in the West Indies, or were there already. On the 3rd of February, 1781, Admiral Rodney captured St. Eustatius; on hearing this four privateers from Bristol went off to Demerara at once, where they arrived on the 21st. There being no fort or any means of defence, they blockaded the river, sailed up and down, captured all the boats they saw, and terrorised the plantations.

An extraordinary meeting of the Council was called on the 22nd to consider the situation, but nothing could be done, for even the Burgher Militia were unable to assemble. Next day a letter was brought to the Commander signed by four captains, stating that as there was war with the States-General, they intended to cruise there until the arrival of more warships and 2,000 troops, which they hourly expected, when they would enter both rivers. They also informed him that St. Eustatius was captured and that five vessels had gone against Surinam. On the 24th an officer arrived under a flag of truce and demanded the surrender of the river, which, after

deliberation, was done. On the 27th, however, two British men-of-war arrived with a letter from the Governor of Barbados, in which the Governor of Demerara was asked to surrender on the same terms as St. Eustatius. As, however, these terms were not known, two Councillors were deputed to arrange with Lord Rodney, which was done at St. Eustatius on the 14th of March, but fortunately not on the same terms, as the island. Berbice was attacked by two privateers on the 6th of March, and ultimately surrendered on similar terms to Essequibo and Demerara.

On the 17th of October the English Governor, Kingston, arrived in Demerara and put matters on a sound footing. With so many English planters in the colony it naturally followed that there was no strong antipathy to the British occupation, although the losses of boats and produce was considerable. The new Governor was not pleased with the situation of the public offices on a small island up the river, he therefore at once proposed to remove them to what is now a part of Georgetown. Several other improvements were suggested, including the important one of roads and bridges, but the British occupation so soon came to an end that they could not be carried out.

In January, 1782, there were seven British vessels armed with ninety guns and manned by 376 men. On the 30th of that month a French squadron of eight men-of-war, with 136 guns and 1,850 men, appeared off the coast of Demerara, and next day they entered the mouth of the river. Being unable to cope with such a force, the British vessels sailed up the river, intending to make a stand at the first island. The French Admiral, the Count de Kersaint,

demanded the surrender of the river, with a threat of destroying all the plantations of the English if this were not complied with at once. After consideration, an honourable capitulation was arranged, and the three rivers were taken over on behalf of the allies.

The French immediately set to work as if the colonies were their own, upsetting both the British and Dutch colonists. Everything was to be altered at once ; in fact, the new authorities treated them as if they belonged to the King's domain. Forts were projected at the mouth of the Demerara on either bank, and a town must be built where the British were building the new public office. In the flowery language of the proclamation after stating that this was the only example of a European colony throughout the world without a town or village, it said: " That it is considered necessary, from the great extent of this river and its banks, to have a capital which will become the business centre ; where Religion will have a temple, Justice a palace, War its arsenals, Commerce its counting-houses, and Industries its factories ; where also the inhabitants may enjoy the advantages of social intercourse."

The town was therefore planned, grants made, and a fair start given to what is now Georgetown. The Dutch in their slow way had talked of a town for over ten years, and even drew elaborate plans. But it was not at the mouth of the river, for here neither wood nor fresh water could be got. However, the site was chosen, and it was a good example of the old saying that the Dutch drew plans for others to carry out.

According to a French report on the condition of the three rivers, it appears that there were then about 34,000 negroes, including 18,000 in Demerara

and 8,000 in each of the other rivers. There were 387 large plantations with 15 to 300 slaves, and 250 small with less than 15 each. The value of the products was about £500,000.

The French authorities called on the planters for a supply of labour for the forts, did what they liked with the revenue, raised the taxes, ordered the canals to be cleaned, roads to be made, and altogether drove the poor Dutch to protest against such *friends* and *allies*.

In 1783 negotiations for a peace ended in the Treaty of Paris, signed on the 3rd of September, and on the 6th of March, 1784, the French gave over the control of the three rivers. At once attempts were made to revert to the conditions which formerly existed, but there had been such an upset that this could not be done. The West India Company wanted money to put things in order, and to get it they proposed certain changes which were not agreeable to the settlers. Delegates were sent out, and on their report it was agreed to retain the new town, which they now called Stabroek, and the fort on the east side of the river to be named William Frederick. A new Governor was sent out, who at once discharged all the officials, as well as the Councillors, who under the old regime were elected for life or as long as they remained in the colony. Some were, however, nominated by the Company for the new Council, but they refused to sit, claiming that they were already Councillors and could not be discharged. As representatives of the people, they were not nominees of the Company. The Governor tried to get others, but only after many had refused could he make up a quorum. This *pretended* Council, as it was called, commenced to alter the taxes, which were, in the

main, assessed on the number of slaves (a head-tax) given in by the planters. Almost to a man these refused to send in the returns, and therefore no head-tax was collected. Proclamations were issued with threats, but it was no use, for the planters combined in protesting against any new impositions without representation. Thus a deadlock occurred, and the directors of the Company, as well as the States-General, were deluged with petitions and protests, which ultimately ended in the renewal of the Charter being refused and the final winding-up of the West India Company in 1791.

Under a Colonial Council the two rivers were put on a better footing. A plan of redress or reform was adopted and the old Council restored. The fort was put in order and a garrison sent out. These latter preparations were taken in view of the disturbances in Europe due to the French revolutionary action in calling on "Batavians" to join them against the Stadtholder and his friend the King of England. The probability of war with France was discussed in the Council on the 17th of March, 1793, when rumours were reported of a probable invasion from Cayenne. Arrangements were then made for a line of signal stations along the coast, but as nothing happened they soon fell into disuse. In July, 1794, the Council was warned against the French ideas of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, but in April following news came of the flight of the Stadtholder and friendly relations with France.

On the 3rd of May, 1795, the British man-of-war *Zebra* arrived with a letter from the Prince of Orange, dated at Kew, commanding the Governor to consider all forces sent by Great Britain as of a power in alliance with the States-General, and as coming to

prevent the colony falling into the hands of the French. The Governor was a partisan of the Prince, but the Council agreed that they could not obey the Prince, because they had been officially informed of the restoration of friendly relations with France. Governor van Grovestins then went on board the *Zebra* and sailed with her, thus leaving the colony without a head at a most critical period.

The Governor sent a letter announcing his departure, and advising that certain secret dispatches be opened. This was done, and two names were found of successors in case of the Governor's death or absence. Only one of the persons named was in the colony, and he excused himself on the plea of ill-health and weakness. The Council could not decide what should be done, and on the 8th Stabroek was in a ferment. The two parties, French and Orange, marched about displaying cockades, and almost fought with each other. Cries of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" came from the one party, and a drunken fellow ran about crying, "Justice must be done ; some men must be hanged." By remonstrating, the secretary succeeded in preventing the mob from taking away the papers of the colony, but the burghers, becoming alarmed, met at a coffee-house and passed a number of resolutions to meet the contingency. After declaring that the Government was overthrown by the Governor's departure, and that the people would have no other Governor, they wished the administration to be placed in the hands of the Councillors, who, in succession, should each act as President for eight days. The Council agreed, but the Fiscal resigned rather than be a party to such a revolutionary project. Under this arrangement the Burgher Militia was

called out and the uproar ceased, the only serious result being some excitement among the slaves.

On the 27th of May a British fleet of nine vessels appeared, and next day a letter was brought under a flag of truce, stating that H.B.M. had ordered a force to protect Demerara and its dependencies from the French arms, and inviting the inhabitants to place themselves under the mild protection of the British Government. The Council met and agreed that as peace was restored between France and the Netherlands, they could not and must not accept this offer. As it appears that there were no orders to use force the fleet departed after the answer was received.

Now came trouble with the negroes, who got distorted ideas from the talk of equal rights and liberty. Some bush negroes were camped aback of the west coast of Demerara, and plotted with the slaves in that district for a general rising. In June there was almost an insurrection, and many of the planters came to town with their families. By the employment of Indians and a good number of troops, some of whom were brought from Berbice and Surinam, the negroes were captured or shot.

Letters were published on the 27th of June that Antony Beaujon was appointed Governor under the Batavian Republic, and the peculiar administration came to an end.

The colony of Demerara and Essequibo having refused to put itself under the protection of Great Britain, a fleet with 1,200 men set out from Barbados on the 15th of April, 1796, and arrived off the Demerara River on the 20th. An officer was sent under a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the colony on very easy terms. The Governor called his Council together, who could do nothing but accept

them, for there was no Dutch force to offer resistance. The troops were then landed and the colony again became British, to the satisfaction of the majority of the inhabitants. A few days later Berbice surrendered on similar terms, but Surinam was not taken until 1799.

This capture by the British made a great impression on the two colonies that now form British Guiana. At once there was an influx of capital and labour, the results of which are seen to-day in spite of the vicissitudes of the planters in later years. As was usual at that time, a fleet of merchant vessels followed the men-of-war, and there was at once a demand for stores, which led to the extension of the town of Stabroek. "Prime Gold Coast negroes" were also imported in considerable numbers to supply the new planters from the West Indies, who came to take up new land or buy the estates of Dutchmen who were not quite satisfied with the new conditions. The change will be best understood when we state that hitherto taxes were paid in produce, with the result that mucky sugar, soiled cotton, and the sweepings of the coffee logies were often set aside to pay the receiver. Hitherto also there had been no proper roads, the vehicle everywhere being the tent-boat; now roads and bridges were ordered to be made along the coast and for some distance up the rivers, every planter being bound to make up the section through his estate. Posts were established at intervals, with signal stations by which the arrival of an enemy could be telegraphed by semaphore signals, and the roads and bridges must be in order to allow troops and guns to pass. On the east coast a party was sent before these conveniences were ready, and the troops had to be billeted on a plantation at the owner's

expense until the passage was free, which naturally was not long under such circumstances. Even in the town the main street was only a grassy dam, on which riders were prohibited from galloping because the turf would be churned into mud. No wheeled carriages existed, but a few ladies enjoyed the luxury of sedan chairs.

The cultivation was at once extended, so that where in 1799 the shipments from the three rivers were—sugar, 35,189 cwts. ; rum, 14,456 gallons ; coffee, 39,089 cwts. ; and cotton, 3,593,053 lb. ; they increased in 1801 to sugar, 95,031 cwts. ; rum, 139,781 gallons ; coffee, 142,819 cwts. ; and cotton, 7,622,942 lb. All the plantations were now empowered along the coast and mainly planted with cotton. Berbice was extended to the Corentyne by an arrangement with the Governor of Surinam, which was now in the hands of the British. The present town of New Amsterdam was started a little before, but it had not got beyond a forest clearing with a lot of bare stumps until the British came and took up the whole coast. Everything flourished, for prices were high, and it appeared as if the country would soon become the most important in this part of the world. Fortunes were to be made and the West Indian nabob began to appear in England and to stand as the emblem of a personage of much the same importance as the American millionaire of to-day.

A check came in 1802, when the Dutch colonies were given up to the Batavian Republic, but in less than a year they were again British. The boom was not now so pronounced, for there was a dread that another peace would upset everything, but progress was steady, until a great shock came. In 1807, the

slave trade was abolished, and at once the labour supply came to an end. No longer could the planter increase his cultivation in the usual way by purchasing additional slaves, for the demand made prices almost prohibitory. It is true that all the estates worth having were occupied, but no single one could cultivate the whole area of its grant. The former method was to open out twenty-five or fifty acres of the 250, and when that was under cultivation buy slaves out of the profit to extend the work ; now every one wanted more labour, and only those who gave up were willing to sell. The " sinews of the Western world " could no longer be obtained, and many a budding plantation was abandoned.

Although the French war continued there was no attempt to recapture the Dutch colonies ; in fact, the tricolor was almost unknown in the West Indies. War freights and insurances were, however, kept up, for there was still danger in the Channel, but the high prices enabled the planter to go on. In the early years of the century the value of the exports from the three rivers amounted to over two million sterling, and those from Surinam, which was then the most valuable, were about as much. These were the " good old times " of the planter, when common sugars sold at a hundred shillings, where now the very superior article hardly fetches one-tenth of that price. Cotton and coffee were equally valuable at 2s. and 1s. 2d. per pound respectively.

Trouble came again in 1812, when the American War brought a host of " Saucy " and " Scurvy Jacks " and " Hornets " about the coasts. At one time the mouth of the Demerara was blockaded, and no vessel could pass without the risk of capture. The colonies were, however, left alone, for this war

was not a war of conquest; nevertheless, the Yankees caused more trouble than Napoleon. One of the disasters of this war was the sinking of the British man-of-war *Peacock* by the U.S. ship *Hornet* off the east coast of Demerara, after a fight which showed great pluck on both sides.

In 1812 Demerara had a British Governor, who was intensely loyal. Hugh Lyle Carmichael did his level best to drive off the American privateers by sending out some of the armed traders, and he succeeded. He also abolished some of the Dutch institutions, in spite of protests that under the capitulation the inhabitants were guaranteed their ancient laws and usages. The English language was introduced into the courts, and Stabroek was renamed Georgetown. And yet there was no certainty that the colonies would be retained when the war was over, if ever such an event should occur. Perhaps some thought that as it had lasted for over twenty years it would never come to an end.

The year 1814 saw the downfall of Napoleon, but his sudden rise next year made the outlook still doubtful, till after Waterloo. Then came the question, What will be done with the Dutch colonies? The local papers spoke of this uncertainty; with resignation they made up their minds to become Dutch, then again they were plunged into a state of "betweenity," and afterwards began to recommend the importation of Swedish dictionaries. At last, however, in July, 1815, the news came that Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice were to be retained with the Cape of Good Hope in consideration for a payment of one million sterling to Sweden on account of her claims on Holland, and a further two millions for improving the defences of the Low Countries.

“ Thus, at last,” said the *Demerara Gazette*, “ they have condescended to inform us to whom we belong.”

During the war Surinam had prospered, but Cayenne suffered greatly. The French were under Governor Victor Hughues, a man of some note, and it was not captured until 1809, when a combined force of British and Portuguese from Brazil took it after several days' hard fighting. The capitulation was signed on the 12th of January, and after that until the peace the flag of Portugal was kept flying, but as Portugal was an ally of Great Britain, we may say that the British controlled the whole of Guiana.

Berbice was coming down the river when it was first captured by the British, but as yet it was hampered by the Association, who did little to develop the colony. True, they had their own plantations, and these gave some trouble. The question whether they were private property or belonging to the Government was difficult to decide. At the first conquest Governor van Batenburg was retained in office, and he got the British authorities to consider them as not liable to confiscation ; but after 1803 he decided otherwise, and the British authorities became possessed of four plantations with their slaves, as well as a body of workmen, carpenters, blacksmiths, &c., called *winkels*, who were also slaves. At first these were leased, but on complaints of the anti-slavery party of the high death-rate, they were given over to a parliamentary body called the Berbice Crown Estates' Commissioners, which included several prominent anti-slavery agitators. They expected to do wonders ; not only was the death-rate to be reduced, but a revenue be derived as well. In this, however, they did not succeed, for the number of

slaves went on decreasing and the profit was the same as before—*i.e.*, nothing. In their report for 1812-14 they said that a worse field or a less favourable time for an experiment could scarcely have been chosen, for what with the losses from American privateers and the low price of produce, it could not have been expected that the estates would suddenly become remunerative. Everything they thought desirable was done to improve the condition of the slaves, including missionary instruction, but with all that they made no profit, while their neighbours, under the same conditions, managed to do fairly well.

In 1814, when arrangements were being made to settle things in view of the peace, the Berbice Association claimed their plantations and slaves as private property, and it was agreed to give them up, which was done two years later. Under the circumstances very little could be done, for they were not paying the cost of administration, and it was therefore decided to dispose of them. This was done in 1818, the four working plantations realising, with the 683 slaves, the sum of £66,000; others, which had been abandoned, could not be sold. Thus the owners of Berbice dropped out, and after winding up their affairs the second Guiana trading company ceased to exist. Surinam was also free from its first trammels, and might have gone on progressing had it not been for two misfortunes in the shape of fires, which almost destroyed Paramaribo, and the fact that the Dutch take more interest in their Eastern colonies.

The difficulties of the planters in getting a labour supply were intensified about 1820. Slaves could hardly be obtained at any price, and as there was

no natural increase, they became fewer every year. Coffee and cotton fell in prices, the latter mainly from the competition of the Southern States. Everywhere along the coast of Demerara and Berbice plantations were seized for debt, and when offered for sale only the negroes found purchasers. Insolvents were common ; even the Governor of Berbice compounded with his creditors. Sugar gave fair profits, therefore all the slaves from the cotton-fields went to grow canes. It was the survival of the fittest, and in spite of later attempts to grow the abandoned products, no one has heard of a real success.

The great trouble now to be faced was the British anti-slavery party. The slave was represented as overworked and cruelly treated, and his master as an ogre. Some good people went so far as to give up the use of sugar because it could only be grown by slave labour. And yet all this time the planter was at his wits' ends to preserve his labour supply, which now became so valuable. When slaves could be bought for £20 they might possibly be overworked, but now that an able-bodied man was worth four or five times as much, no risks must be taken. There is always a desire to keep a valuable horse in good condition, especially when it cannot be replaced. It is a fact, however deplorable it may appear now, that the slave was better fed and housed than the negro of to-day. There was no poverty, for every master must keep his negro, whether in sickness or old age. There was also practically no crime, for on a plantation order was kept in the same way as in schools of the same period. A whipping was given to the incorrigible, and he was sent about his work. Nothing like the cat-o'-nine-

tails could be tolerated, for that meant a week's confinement and a corresponding loss. To charge a planter with ill-treating or starving his slaves was a deadly insult that could only be met with a challenge. In a Demerara paper we have seen an advertisement calling for a full inquiry into the libel on the writer's character by a charge of ill-feeding his slaves. A planter might be poor, or even insolvent, but his human property must be well treated.

A great deal was said about the difficulties of manumissions, but these were quite proper under the circumstances. It might suit a needy planter to give freedom to an old or worn-out negro, but the law said he must first pay a heavy sum to the Poor's Fund to provide against the freed man becoming a pauper. A faithful negro was sometimes freed, but we have a case on record where one of them refused to be free as long as his master remained alive or in the colony. We have met poor old men and women who remembered slavery and were groaning over their poverty; they wanted the good old days when "Massa" could not drive them out to starve.

From about 1813 the influence of the anti-slavery party had been felt in Demerara, but it was not till ten years afterwards that the crisis came. During these ten years missionaries had been at work, against the wish of the planters, who considered them to be in the position of outsiders interfering in a family. The slaves were children, and the master, as a parent, resented their getting advice from any one but himself. Then he believed them to have strong feelings against slavery, however they might speak in other terms. No doubt they quoted such texts as "Be subject to the powers that be" and "Servants, obey

your masters," but many of them wrote to the societies at home in terms that the planters considered libellous.

On the 15th of May, 1823, Fowell Buxton moved in Parliament that the state of slavery was repugnant to the British Constitution and the Christian religion and also that it ought to be abolished as quickly as was consistent with the well-being of the parties concerned. Meanwhile slaves, although still to be attached to the soil, should be allowed certain privileges, including giving evidence in courts of law, the removal of all obstructions to their manumission, religious instruction and marriage, a free Sunday, and the restraint of the master's authority. Mr. Canning did not go quite so far, but proposed three resolutions: first, to ameliorate their condition; second, to give them civil rights; and third, that measures be taken as soon as possible. The Government, when these were carried, acted at once, and sent dispatches to all the colonies concerned, including Demerara, the main point insisted upon being the abolition of female flogging. Already, in view of what was coming, the Council had been talking of reducing the hours of work on the plantations, but it was left over. A special meeting was called on the 21st of July, when the dispatch from the Secretary of State was read. The matter was, however, left over for consideration till the next meeting of the 4th of August, when a letter from certain absentee proprietors in London was read, in which an active co-operation was recommended. The meeting was adjourned to the 6th, when an ordinance was proposed and carried, providing, first, to prohibit female slaves from being flogged; second, to discontinue the whip in the field; and third, to provide

measures to control females. It will be seen from these dates that there was no delay in carrying out the orders from England.

Meanwhile, however, in the few days that elapsed before the law was authorised, the slaves learnt that something had been done by Parliament, and rushed to the conclusion that freedom had been given and was kept back by their masters. They talked among themselves, especially at a chapel on *Pln. le Ressenouvir*, on the east coast of Demerara, the minister of which was the Rev. John Smith, of the London Missionary Society. How far the missionary had knowledge of these discussions is doubtful, but nearly every one in the colony thought he must have known. However that may have been, a plot was formed at the chapel after a Sunday meeting to have a general rising on Monday, the 18th of August, when the planters' houses were to be stormed, arms taken, and the white people put into the stocks. Later they would send the whites to town and wait for the arrival of the Governor, who would, of course, come to make inquiries. The plot was simple and foolish, but it cannot be supposed that turbulent mobs of half-savages would be bound by any rule or order once their passions were aroused. It was afterwards proved that Mr. Smith heard a rumour that something was going on, but did not inquire into it.

On Monday morning, between six and seven o'clock, a mulatto house-servant told his master that all the slaves would rise that evening. At once Mr. Simpson, who was a burgher officer, hurried off to the Governor, who at once ordered the cavalry to proceed up the coast. The number was only fourteen, but they hurried off, followed by the Governor in a carriage, to Captain Simpson's estate,

where an investigation was held and the news sent up the coast to the different plantations. The militia of the district were also called out, but before they could assemble a fire was seen, on which the Governor's party hurried off to find out the cause. They were met by a body of armed negroes, who rushed upon them, shouting, "We have them!" The Governor inquired what they wanted, on which they answered, "Our rights." When called upon to put down their arms, a few did so, and the Governor told them of the intentions of the Government and the new laws, advising them to return peaceably to their homes, where he would see them in the morning. There was some hesitation at first, but presently, with cries of "No! No!" they blew their shells and came towards him, some of the more quiet ones advising him to go away. Seeing nothing better could be done, he left.

Then began the east coast insurrection, which some feared might become something like the trouble in Berbice in 1763. However, the people of Demerara were not so frightened; they resolved to fight for their homes and properties. Martial law was declared, the militia and soldiers were sent up the coast as soon as possible, a provisional battalion enrolled in Georgetown, and every white man in the colony, without exception, called upon to serve. This call met with an eager response, the only man apparently who did not come forward being Mr. Smith, although he admitted having seen the proclamation. Methodist ministers reported themselves, but were not asked to serve, but Mr. Smith claimed exemption when all exemptions were cancelled.

The results of these measures were soon apparent, for by the end of the week the negroes began to

surrender themselves. Few of the whites were killed, but the slaughter among the negroes was considerable, although there was no real battle. On the appearance of a force they took their way to the bush, where they were hunted by Indians and brought back to be hanged. A severe lesson was perhaps wanted, but every one must regret the necessity for so many executions, the hanging in chains and the heads stuck on poles at the fort and along the public road.

Mr. Smith was arrested and charged with stirring up discontent among the slaves, conspiring to bring about the rebellion, knowing of the plot and saying nothing about it, and communicating with a well-known rebel after the insurrection without attempting to arrest him or to give information. He was tried by a court-martial, on which no one interested in a plantation sat, and the trial was as carefully conducted as in any court of justice. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged, but this sentence was never intended to be carried out, as can be seen by the fact that it was referred to the home authorities for confirmation. Poor Smith was weak in mind and body; as far as can be gathered he was consumptive. No doubt trouble brought the end a little sooner, but there was no cruelty in his detention, for his prison was an airy room or garret in the Fiscal's house. He died before the news came that he was pardoned on condition that he left the colony and did not go to any of the West Indian islands. The anti-slavery party made capital of his death and called him a martyr, but we cannot find any principle in his actions—they were certainly not worthy of a good citizen.

This insurrection was quite a godsend to the anti-

slavery party, who tried their best to whitewash the negroes and to paint Mr. Smith in the brightest colours. The general result was continued friction, especially when new Orders in Council were made for compulsory manumissions with or without the consent of the master, who resented the idea that his property should be alienated in such a manner. However, opposition was useless, and in the end a protector of slaves was appointed from England, whose business was to see that the negroes had all the rights of free men except bondage to the master. A savings bank was established where slaves might deposit the proceeds of their sales of provisions, and where wills were kept showing what should be done with these savings in case of death. The only obligation now was nine hours' work per day, and the master was bound to supply food, clothing, and houses, as well as medical attendance.

In 1831 Berbice was united to Demerara and Essequibo to form the Colony of British Guiana. Hitherto the two Governments were as separate as they had been under the Dutch, but it was considered more economical to have the whole administered by one set of officials. Some of the Berbicians did not like it, for it was more dignified to have a colony than to sink to a mere county. As a matter of fact, Berbice was always behind Demerara, mainly from the fact that she had always been dominated by the Dutch element, while the sister colony got English and Scotch settlers from the very beginning through the enlightened policy of Gravesande. We still call it the ancient or old-fashioned county, and there is no doubt that, like Essequibo, it has lingered behind while Demerara has progressed more than even Surinam, which was once far more important.

CHAPTER VI

HISTORY—THE EMANCIPATION AND AFTER (1834-1911)

The emancipation—Difficulties of planters—Immigration started—First East Indian coolies—Bad results through ignorance—Chinese coolies—Reduction of differential duties—Negro dislike to Madeirans—Riot—Emancipation of slaves in Surinam—Gold discoveries—Difficulties from the disputed boundary—British Government introduce law and order—Venezuela protests—Surveyor and party of police captured—Venezuela asks for assistance from the United States—President Cleveland's message—Arbitration—Brazilian boundary settled—Balata industry—Position of Guiana to-day—Getting rid of a bad name—Changes on the plantations—Expensive government.

SLAVERY was doomed, and in 1834 it came to an end in the British possessions. Every one in the colonies predicted utter ruin, while the abolitionists crowed over their victory. The good people of England thought they were doing a wonderful thing when they voted twenty millions to carry out a grand and good principle. Every one will admit that slavery was a blot on humanity, but that need not prevent our sympathising with those who lost their labour supply and with it all hopes for the future.

Four short years of grace were allowed, during which the negroes, who were now called "apprenticed labourers," were bound to work seven and a half hours a day. All the infants born during this term were,

however, free, an absurdity which the abolitionists could not perceive until, too late, it was brought to their notice. Poor babies ! They were nobody's children, for it could not be expected that the planter would keep up the estate's nursery when nothing could be gained by it. There is no good in suppressing the truth, and it may, as well be spoken : the negress is not a good mother, whether as slave or free woman. The old manager knew it well, for it was one of his duties to see that babies were kept clean and properly fed. The abolitionists said the slave women were kept at work so that there was no time for suckling or washing the little ones. Such cases may have been found, but when we know that every child meant an addition to the value of a plantation, we know also that self-interest alone would ensure care for the nursing mother. We can understand that when everything depended on " Massa " the mothers took little responsibility, and were not yet prepared for such a revolution as now took place.

The negro was no longer punished by the master ; the magistrate was brought from England so that he might be free and independent. But the treadmill was also introduced and the cat-o'-nine-tails, once so rarely used, was found more necessary. One of the Quakers who came out to see how the apprenticeship system worked was shocked. The people were worse off than when they were slaves.

Some disturbances took place when the change was made in 1834, but the apprentices did very well on the whole. Many were willing to work overtime for wages, and in this way saved fair sums before the final emancipation, with which some of the ruined plantations were bought, to ultimately become the villages.

The compensation money in British Guiana amounted to about one-third the value of the slaves. As, however, many of the estates were mortgaged for half their appraised value, the difference must be made up or the place abandoned. Without labour every one knows the land to be worthless, and though there might be a mansion and a hundred negro dwellings, these could hardly be sold at their value as old materials when broken down. With so many foreclosures and bankruptcies the lawyers were busy, and it is interesting to note that they were among the few who kept on their plantations. We knew one legal gentleman as late as the early seventies who, it was said, could not replace the ragged gown he wore in court on account of the burden of keeping up a sugar plantation. If this were the case in good times, what must it have been when ruin was staring every one in the face? For the freed man would only work when and where he chose, rarely more than two or three days in a week. For a time every means was taken to induce the labourers to work, some planters, in their fear of ruin, offering higher wages than could be justified by the price of sugar. Then an attempt was made, in 1842, to regulate wages by a combination, with the result that a strike took place on the West Coast.

Already efforts had been put forth to get labour from outside. Immediately that the hours were reduced by the apprenticeship law attempts were made to import free negroes from the West Indies and Africa, but without much success. Then Madeirans were brought in considerable numbers, only to drift from the plantations and become pedlars and petty shopkeepers. A few Maltese were found inefficient, and, soon becoming vagrants, were quickly sent back.

Even Germans and Irish were suggested as suitable, but, fortunately, no such hazardous experiments were tried. So eager was the drowning planter to catch at a straw that he forgot how necessary it was for every new-comer to get seasoned, and as a natural consequence the Madeirans died in considerable numbers. Yellow fever was then in the colony, and the poor half-starved creatures who came from Madeira because it was ruined by the vine disease became easy victims.

At last the right kind of labourer was found ; Mauritius discovered that the East Indian coolie was a good man in the canefield. The first plantations to receive East Indians were those of John Gladstone, the father of the great politician, and Messrs. John and Henry Moss. This was in 1838, when two vessels brought 406 from Calcutta, but the same year the permission to recruit such labourers was rescinded.

This prohibition was due to the influence of the Anti-Slavery Society, whose agent in Demerara did everything possible to prove that the coolies were ill-treated. A commission of inquiry was appointed, and in their report, dated June 15, 1839, they stated that several cases of ill-usage had been proved, but these were due to the Sirdars, who claimed that they did no more than what was done in India. On account of the ignorance of their language the planter left over the entire control of the coolies to these people.

The necessity for immigration led to the appointment, in 1838, of an official as agent to encourage emigration from the West Indies, and in the following year to a Voluntary Subscription Immigration Society. This Society brought between April, 1840, and

February, 1841, 1,620 people, but these made little impression on the labour market. The Government was urged to do something, and especially to press upon the British authorities the necessity for coolie immigration on a large scale.

As slavery still existed in Surinam, the negroes there began to run away whenever they could steal boats to bring them across the River Corentyne. These evasions led to the posting of a vessel off the coast, which measure was successful in checking them.

In 1845 the British Government permitted coolie immigration to be resumed as long as provision was made for a return passage after five years. Unfortunately, these people were picked up in the bazaars of Calcutta and Madras, and when they arrived were found in most cases to be utterly unfitted for plantation labour. Not being bound by any contract, they often became vagrants and a burden on the colony. This would not do, and by the end of 1850 it was felt that something more must be done. To pay the cost of importing and a back passage for people who were useless was out of the question. And yet the British Government, backed by the anti-slavery party, refused to allow contracts, coercion, or a vagrancy ordinance. Delegates from this party who visited the colony that year gave a most disheartening account of the position. Formerly a land of mud and money, it was now a wilderness of mud and mosquitoes. The coolies imported were the refuse of the population, most of them unaccustomed to field labour, and in Demerara were nothing better than mendicants. Some had probably died of want, others were lying about the streets or picking up refuse from the gutters. From 1834 to 1848, 46,514 immigrants

of all nationalities were imported at a cost of £360,685, besides the extra expense to the colony of hospitals, gifts to beggars, prisons, and police.

In 1853 Chinese coolies were imported for the first time. The planters were not quite agreed as to their suitability ; but there is no doubt that these people have become valuable colonists. By this time the system of indenture had been legalised, and there was no longer so much ground for complaints as to the quality of the immigrants. In this as in every other innovation there must be mistakes at the beginning.

Besides the labour difficulty the planter was met by the gradual reduction of the differential duties, by which his sugar had to compete with that from countries where slavery still existed. This he considered iniquitous, for the people who were prominent agitators against slave-grown sugar were now free-traders. By pluck and energy, however, and with the aid of powerful machinery, including the vacuum-pan, Demerara sugar came to the front and got its good name. Plantations were united, the cost of manufacture much decreased, and about 1870 the estates were in a better position than at any time before. Exports rose to double the amount of those before the emancipation, and it appeared as if the colony would continue to prosper and increase its cultivation if only enough labour were procurable. In the early eighties, however, the output of beet-sugar, with the bounties on its export, brought prices so low that ruin again stared the planter in the face. The exports did not fall off to any great extent, but the value was reduced to about half, driving every planter to his wits' ends to reduce the cost in every direction. Many estates were abandoned, and only those that

could reduce expenses and extend cultivation were kept up. Every year this has gone on until now only forty factories are in operation ; in some cases these take the canes from as many as six of the old plantations. The largest is Plantation Diamond, with nearly 8,000 acres, the others ranging from 1 to 2,000, the annual output of sugar averaging 110,000 tons from about 70,000 acres.

Immigration did not altogether please the negro and his friends. The Madeiran came to Demerara more destitute than even the slave had once been, yet he gradually came to the front by his thrift and honesty. He was certainly cringing and would stand insults to any extent if he gained a few pence. In the opinion of the negro he was a low fellow, not a "buccra," or gentleman, nor the ideal white man. Then he was a Roman Catholic, while most of the blacks were rabid Protestants ; this was an offence. Beyond everything he had driven out almost every pedlar and small shopkeeper of the coloured race by under-selling, and could get credit where a black man's application would have been treated with contempt. It was the oft-recurring complaint against the foreigner, for the negro was the native or creole who alone had the right to prosper in his own country.

In 1856 an anti-Popery agitator named John Sayers Orr, a native of the colony, arrived from a tour in Great Britain and the United States, where several towns made things too hot for him. Soon after his arrival he began a series of open-air lectures, in the course of which he abused the Pope, the priests, and the Portuguese. Fearing trouble, the authorities prohibited the meetings, and, as Orr persisted, he was charged before the magistrate with

bringing together an unlawful assemblage and using inflammatory and seditious language, and was committed for trial. This inflamed the negroes, and when a false report went round that a Portuguese man had stabbed a black they commenced a cowardly attack upon the Madeirans and their shops. Houses and shops were stormed by mobs, led by women and boys, and the owners were obliged to take refuge with other whites. For a time not only Georgetown but the country districts of Demerara and Essequibo were under mob law, and it was not until the arrival of a man-of-war that the riot was quelled. Similar riots took place in Georgetown in 1889 and a strike riot in 1905, all going to show the savage nature of the low-class negro when excited.

The natural development of British and Dutch Guiana has always been hampered by want of labour. We have seen how it brought ruin into the British colony, mainly because the emancipation was too sudden. The Dutch avoided such a catastrophe by binding the slave for ten years, to work for wages when freedom was given in 1863. In anticipation of entire freedom coolie immigrants were introduced in 1872 to the number of 2,720. There has, however, been nothing like the revolution which took place in Demerara. Still, the emancipation had its effects, for some plantations were given up, and probably were it not for the East Indians and Javanese the five sugar factories could not have been kept working. These five are all that remain in what was once a sugar colony, and though more attention has been paid to cacao during the last century, even this has been blighted by the witch-broom fungus. Bananas are being exported, but it is doubtful whether the subsidy to the line of steamers employed will be kept



A GOLD PLACER.

up. Only immigration on a large scale can bring Surinam back to its once flourishing state. Every year it has to get a grant from the Mother Country to the amount of near a million guilders, while British Guiana is entirely independent of such assistance.

The industry which once raised the hopes of the three colonies is gold-seeking. Gold was first discovered in French Guiana about 1820, but for a long time little was done. In Surinam gold-digging was commenced on the Marowyne about 1875, and has now extended to several other rivers, but the ardent enthusiasm of the early years has settled down into a more quiet feeling. But the industry is by no means dead, for a railway is being laid down in Surinam to afford more easy access to the diggings.

As long ago as 1863 an attempt was made to start quartz-crushing in the Cuyuni, British Guiana, but it failed, partly from the poorness of the ore and partly from the mine being in territory then claimed by Venezuela. Placer washing was, however, started about 1879 by some people from Cayenne, and during the next five years it was carried on with fair returns to the few people employed. Little was known of the amount of gold collected, for the washings were in disputed territory, which by an arrangement with Venezuela in 1850 was not to be occupied by either party. The first river to be exploited was the Puruni, a branch of the Masaruni, and the people concerned were in the employ of M. Henri Ledoux, then French Consul for British Guiana. At first everything was carried on in a quiet way, but soon it was reported that gold was being got in considerable quantity, and something like a rush took place. This, however, was nothing like that of California or Australia, for

the real digger had no money and must be financed by some one, often quite a novice. A boat, with proper hands as well as labourers, must be provided, with supplies of food and other necessaries for three months. The usual way was for a man to go to a likely person, show him a few grains of gold got from the washing of one or two battels, and then ask to be fitted out at a cost of five hundred dollars. There would be, of course, a fortune for both parties when the expedition returned. The sharper generally returned with a few ounces and a lame story that there was too much water or not enough, and if the dupe believed all he was told another trip was made with a similar result. Sometimes the men stole away and could not be found, and there was no means of prosecuting them, for the whole transaction was in a way illegal and in a country where neither British Guiana nor Venezuela had any right to interfere. A few came back with the results of good finds, and these examples were always more conspicuous than the failures. The man who got nothing did not go driving round in a cab, treating his friends at every rum-shop, or showing off his girl in a hired carriage, but when he wanted to fleece a new man he could point to such examples.

The Government could not let things go on like this ; there must be some rule and order. Already in 1880 an ordinance was passed, at the instance of M. Ledoux, to provide for grants of land, correct returns of gold and silver, a tax of 2 per cent., a miner's certificate for five dollars, and provisions to prevent blocking waterways. No districts were mentioned, there was as yet no reference to the boundary dispute, nor did Venezuela take any notice of the irruptions into what she considered her territory until

1884. Then a movement was made by granting a large tract of land in the delta of the Orinoco to an American, the chart of which showed it to include part of the disputed territory. This led to the sending of an official to put up notices warning trespassers that they would not be permitted to encroach on what was considered a part of the British colony. A Venezuelan named Wells was prosecuted for interfering with a British subject and duly convicted. This brought matters to a head, for in 1886 a proclamation was issued that, whereas grants had been made by Venezuela within territory claimed by her Majesty's Government, the Governor proclaimed that no title would be admitted, and that any person exercising any right under such pretended title would be treated as a trespasser.

The colonists had been waiting for years to get some such declaration, for they considered the agreement with Venezuela a mistake and wanted a settlement. Now that it was believed that gold was to be the salvation of the colony (sugar being then much depressed), it became absolutely necessary to take a stand of some kind. But the matter was not yet put on a proper footing, for in 1887 the then acting Governor said in the Court of Policy that he had applications for mining licences in the disputed territory, and had been directed by the Secretary of State to caution persons interested that these were issued subject to the possibility of the land becoming a part of Venezuelan territory, when no claim for compensation would be admitted. This made some stir in the colony, and a meeting was held in Georgetown, where resolutions were passed urging the Imperial Government to maintain its rights and to settle the boundary question as speedily as possible.

Already, in view of the proclamation, an impetus had been given to the gold industry and a Company projected with a capital of a million dollars. This Company was actually started, but with a smaller capital than proposed, mainly on account of the Governor's statement. In July, 1887, a gold-miners' association was proposed, but not adopted at the time ; later the idea developed into the Institute of Mines and Forests, which has done a great deal to prevent fraud and to provide suitable labour for the diggings.

Venezuela could not see British Guiana developing her gold-diggings without interfering. Not only did she protest but went out of her way to hamper a surveyor in his work and to arrest him, also to attack and loot a police-station on what was considered British territory. Notwithstanding these interferences, the officials of the colony did not retaliate ; they protested when taken as prisoners, but never fired a shot. Even the Venezuelans could do nothing but set them free, to find their way back to the colony as best they could. The general result was a fairly good control over the diggers, so that life and property were as safe as they could be in such places. No real trouble ever occurred ; this seems to have been entirely due to the fact that the disputed territory was not left over to what might have become a lawless set of people.

In 1890 a Gold Commissioner was appointed and efforts were made to systematically open up the country. This could not be done in a hurry, for tropical countries always go slowly. Yet by means of steamers the distances to be travelled were reduced, and by regulations in regard to boats and their bow and steersmen the dangers of the rapids became less.

By these means the output of gold was increased, until it reached in the year 1893 the value of over half a million pounds sterling. This was gathered by about five thousand labourers, entirely negroes, who alone are well suited to the rough work and exposure inseparable from placers in the tropics.

Probably Venezuela envied this half-million annually, coming from what she considered her territory, for she began to urge upon the United States the desirability of interfering. Here was, she said, a poor weak nation being bullied and deprived of her rights by that of the strongest. The American people knew nothing of the true story of the case, and, unfortunately, the British Government, conscious of its integrity, did not think it necessary to enlighten them. It followed, therefore, that when certain agents of Venezuela wrote pamphlets to show that the old colony of Essequibo had always belonged to Spain and her successor there was no one to deny the assertion. Again, Lord Salisbury, who was then at the head of affairs, objected to arbitration because the area in dispute was so plainly British, as successive to its former Dutch owners, that he considered only a small portion at all doubtful. Offers to Venezuela had been made at various times of fair slices of the territory, all of which, unfortunately for her in the end, she persistently refused.

At last the President of the United States, Grover Cleveland, made a startling declaration which almost brought on a war between the two great English-speaking nations. President Cleveland proposed, in December, 1895, to appoint a Commission to inquire and report on the merits of the case, regardless of the consent of the British Government.

“When such report is made and accepted it will,

in my opinion, be the duty of the United States to resist, by every means in its power, as a wilful aggression upon its rights and interests, the appropriation by Great Britain of any lands, or the exercise of governmental jurisdiction over any territory which, after investigation, we have determined of right belongs to Venezuela."

This was compulsory arbitration, and an assertion of the Monroe Doctrine of America for the Americans. If something were not done before the Commission reported trouble would certainly arise. Fortunately, the matter was discussed in a temperate way, and although the Commission investigated the claims of both parties, it was not required to decide; for on the 2nd of February, 1897, Great Britain and Venezuela agreed to submit to arbitration, and in 1899 the decision was given at Paris by which British Guiana was secured against future trouble. The extreme claim of Great Britain was not pressed, and two small areas were given to Venezuela that were within the line drawn by Sir Robert Schomburgk, but these were not considered of much value, although one of them has since been proved auriferous.

Another boundary dispute with Brazil was easily settled, and thus British Guiana at last knew the extent of her territory and how far licences could be granted. This was undoubtedly, of much importance, but meanwhile the output of gold slowly decreased until now it reaches only about half that of the best years. Still, the work of developing the interior is going on in connection with balata and timber.

Balata has been known as a kind of gutta-percha for about fifty years, but at first, like india-rubber,

it was considered more as a curiosity than as a valuable economic product. In 1865, 20,000 pounds were exported, but during the last three years the exports averaged over a million pounds per annum. A number of companies are now at work, with the result that the whole colony is being exploited; in fact, the industry has become almost as important as that of gold-seeking, for though the returns are not so great in pounds sterling they are less precarious. The industry is also of great importance in Surinam and Cayenne.

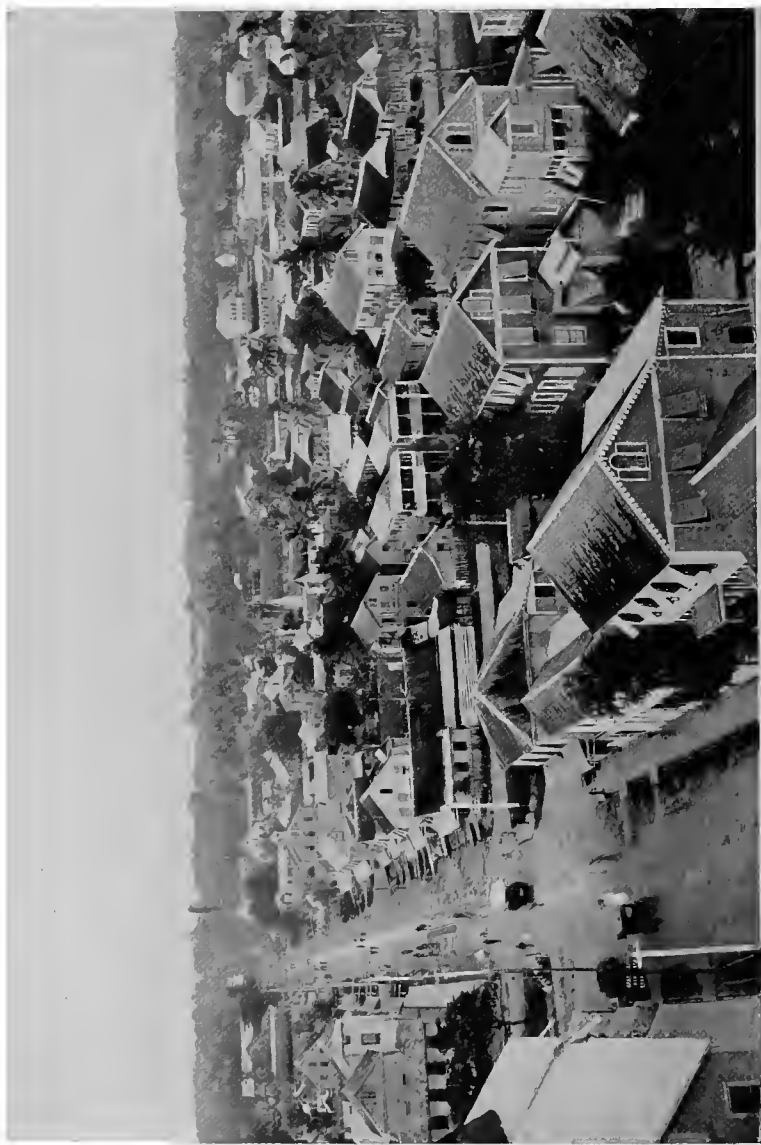
The position of British and Dutch Guiana to-day is on the whole encouraging. By means of immigration the former has attained a position that compares favourably with most tropical colonies. Unlike Surinam, it requires no subsidy from the Mother Country, and is able to pay its way without difficulty. Notwithstanding the decrease in the number of plantations, the exports of sugar keep up in spite of many difficulties.

Complaints are made in British Guiana that things are worse than they were in the old times. Fortunes could be made a century ago, and good incomes forty years back, when sugar bounties had made little impression. Now, however, the planter has to work very hard to make a small profit, and difficulties, once of little importance, such as drought or deluge, put the balance on the wrong side. Several estates have been driven to ruin during the last few years by encroachments of the sea. Were there no public roads to keep up the sea-dams might be retired, but as it is, the road must be protected in front at an enormous cost. The nearest estate to Georgetown once belonged to Mr. Quintin Hogg, the well-known supporter of the Polytechnic in London,

but he gave it up on account of difficulties with sea defences, on which he spent something like a hundred thousand pounds. The sea-wall of Georgetown is a grand success, but estate-owners under present conditions cannot afford to lay down tens of thousands of tons of stone for such a massive structure.

British Guiana and Demerara are mere names to most people in Europe and North America. Those who know a little class the colony, with the West Indian islands, and perhaps remember that their families were ruined at the Emancipation. Others have heard of it as a "white man's grave"—a hotbed of yellow fever—only to be classed with Cayenne. No doubt it was unhealthy at one time, when the whites were noted for their drinking habits, and when soldiers were brought from cold climates and placed in barracks the surroundings of which were flooded at every tide. The old chestnut which says an Irishman wrote that "the people come out to Demerara, and they drink, and they drink, and they die, and then they write home and tell their friends that the climate killed them," was applicable when Georgetown was a reeking morass on the north, with filthy mud-lots on the west.

Then Demerara gained a bad name which it has been trying hard of late years to wipe out, with a measure of success. Every one knows, however, that a stigma of that kind dies hard, even when it is known that yellow fever has not appeared for thirty years. In the old times, when the pioneers of these colonies were bringing order out of chaos, they were not afraid of sickness, neither were British soldiers cowardly in that respect, even in the presence of "Yellow Jack." The planter incurred risks which he dared not put on his slaves; only the strongest



GEORGETOWN.

survived, but the general result was that a very few made fortunes and flaunted as nabobs at the assemblies of Bath and other fashionable resorts. Now that fortunes are no longer to be had only the bad name persists.

As a matter of fact this bad name stands in the way of progress. Capital can be spared for almost any South American republic, but hardly for the West Indies and Guiana. Here is a British colony almost as large as the United Kingdom, only waiting for a good supply of capital and labour to become, what one of its Governors called it, a magnificent province. With such a stable Government as here exists there are none of the revolutionary difficulties which, unfortunately, are almost chronic in the neighbouring State.

There is room here for immense extensions of cacao-planting, which, no doubt, could be combined with rubber. Already both are successfully cultivated in a small way. There need be no real difficulty, for the pioneer has already been at work ; it is for the people of Europe, Canada, and the United States to come in with capital and labour.

What is the position to-day?

The small sugar plantations of old time have been replaced by large estates with powerful machinery and systematic cultivation ; in fact, they are central factories. From about twenty pounds a ton the modern planter has reduced the cost of production to less than half. Wages are low, for the price of sugar is kept down by the continental bounties, but it still pays where the conditions are favourable.

The plantations of British Guiana are the backbone of the colony ; without them it would be in the same backward position as Surinam, having to

beg for an annual subsidy. On them depend not only the labourers, but a host of tradesmen, shopkeepers, merchants, and the people connected with the shipping. Without them the colonies might possibly sink to the condition of some of the West Indian islands, where only a few peasants live in a half-savage condition by growing plantains and yams. Such people could not support anything like the present Government, which is certainly too expensive in British Guiana for such a small community. But then it must be considered that the country is large and must be controlled in a way even to its utmost boundary. Nowhere, perhaps, is there more security for life and property, but this is gained at considerable expense. The taxes run to over ten dollars a head, and are mostly raised by customs duties. Shops pay heavy licences, and the excise imports on spirits are also large. All these are absolutely necessary to keep up the expensive system, which includes justice and police, with jails and a penal settlement, medical officers, with hospitals, a lunatic and a leper asylum, steam navigation with the upkeep of wharves, roads, sea defences, railways, and, in fact, all the ordinary appliances of civilisation suitable for a population of several millions. The capitalist, however, is quite safe from anything underhand; he finds out what is to pay and tips nobody, which is somewhat different from the experience of foreigners in some of the republics.

CHAPTER VII

CAYENNE : THE BLOT ON GUIANA

French Guiana a danger—Once fairly prosperous—Colonising in the wrong way—Ten thousand lives lost—Continual mistakes—The revolution—Capture by British and Portuguese—Beginning of the exile system—Sufferings of political prisoners—A bad name—Vain efforts at colonisation—Exiles under Napoleon III.—The bad name as a deterrent from crime—Republic of Counani—Convict settlements—Refugees in other colonies—Dreaded everywhere—Moved on—Deplorable results of the system—A Frenchman's views—Horrors of confinement in a tropical country—Cayenne town well situated—A century ago—Capabilities—Population to-day.

CAYENNE is now a blot on Guiana and a danger to the other colonies. But it was not always so, nor is there any real need for such a disgraceful state of things. We have seen in another chapter how one colony after another failed through mismanagement, and now we must show that all the experience that was gained and utilised by others has been ignored by the French.

The French colony could once compare with her neighbours ; she was always a little behind, but not as she is to-day. Once there were plantations ; only a few ruins indicate their sites. In 1752 the exports were : anatto, 260,541 lb. ; sugar, 80,363 lb. ; cotton, 17,919 lb. ; coffee, 26,881 lb. ; cacao, 91,916 lb. ;

and timber, 618 logs. All these resulted from the industry of ninety French families, with the aid of 1,500 negroes and 125 Indians. On proper lines this fair beginning could have led to something at least equal to the output of Demerara, then in its infancy.

But the Frenchman must do something worthy of his great and grand country—something to show the world what a fine colony this “equinoctial France” would become if properly exploited. Settlers must be induced to go in their thousands at once, not a few at a time, and they must found a colony quite apart from that which was well known—far away from the experienced settlers who could instruct them in the right manner of living and working in the tropics. Of course, these people would have said at once that only black men could do field work, and the projectors of the great colony on the river Kourou did not want their people’s minds warped or prejudiced by such ideas. No, they must be free to work on the same lines as they did in their native Alsace. Therefore, in 1763, twelve thousand were induced, by the offer of free lands, to go to this grand and beautiful place, where the soil was rich and every one could have his little Eden. The projectors ignored all past experience; acclimatisation was a factor quite beyond their knowledge, and they probably supposed that in a hot climate dwellings could be erected in a day. Whatever may have been the idea, the fact remains that no provision was made for their housing, and the food was scant and unsuitable. No one with any knowledge of the proper arrangements necessary was engaged to teach even the rudiments of tropical education. Isolated, and without proper food and

shelter from the drenching rains, they necessarily became sick. Most of them died very soon ; those who remained were too sick to work and improve their surroundings. The place chosen was low ; no account was taken of possible floods. The French were not like the Dutch, they knew nothing of empoldering. The floods came and drowned a part of those who had survived the malarial fevers. Two thousand only returned to France, with stories of disease and insect plagues ; the climate was blamed for the ignorance of the projectors, who lost over a million sterling on account of their foolishness. If such a thing were done nowadays, these people would certainly be treated as criminals.

Three years later another experiment was made, in hopes of better success, but with a similar result. The people sent were the dregs of the population, unfit to be free colonists anywhere ; in the tropics they were practically sent out to die. This cost the Company, through their criminal mismanagement, the lives of hundreds, and in cash about 800,000 livres.

The real colony was not, however, a failure, for in 1775, when there were 1,300 whites and 8,000 slaves, produce to the value of half a million livres was exported. In 1790 the produce reached 700,000 francs ; this may be considered the palmy days, for afterwards there was a decline.

During the Napoleonic wars it shared the fate of other French colonies so far as to be cut off from communication with the Mother Country. The Revolution was reflected as in Haïti, slaves were declared free in 1794, only to be again brought under servitude. As might be supposed, this could only lead to trouble. At first the negroes would not

work for wages ; in fact, freedom meant idleness as far as they were concerned. But the French authorities would have no drones, so force was brought to bear upon them until they consented to annual engagements. These arrangements made it more easy to re-enslave them, when the French Government repented of its rashness. The final emancipation took place in 1848.

A Colonial Assembly was established in 1790, but the deputies became so unmanageable that seven were arrested and sent to France. The colony was not captured by the British at the same time as those of the Dutch, but it was bound to suffer the same fate in the end. In January, 1809, while under the rule of the gallant Victor Hughues, it was compelled to surrender, after a hard fight, to a combined British and Portuguese fleet. The Portuguese flag was kept flying until 1817, when the ruined colony was restored.

Meanwhile the bad name which Cayenne gained from the Kourou and other disastrous experiments had been further emphasised by the revolutionary leaders, who sent their opponents to what was called the dry guillotine. It is even stated that a prisoner once chose the real guillotine when offered the choice of exile to Cayenne. French Guiana became a byword for unspeakable horrors. But it was not the country that could be blamed, but the brutal treatment of gentlemen evidently sent out to die. In 1797 sixteen deputies, among them the celebrated General Pichegru, were arrested and paraded through the streets of Paris in four cages like wild beasts. Exposed to the winter's cold, they were thus carried to Rochefort and put on board ship for Cayenne. After recovering somewhat from their

exposure and sea-sickness, they naturally became hungry, and one of them was compelled to scream out from the close cabin where they were confined, "Captain, I'm starving!" The result of this outcry was a slight increase of their rations of boiled beans and biscuits.

After a voyage of fifty days they were at last landed in the "white man's grave," and were at once sent to a post at Sinamary. As they passed along a settler compassionately remarked, "Oh, gentlemen! you are come into a tomb." And it was a tomb to several of them, for how could white men, newly arrived from a cold country, endure confinement in a miserable room without the simplest conveniences, much less comforts, and in a burning hot climate where every respectable house is open to the breeze? A few escaped to tell the story of their sufferings from the climate, insects, and bad food, and to confirm the opinion that Cayenne was unfit for even a dog.

In 1798 five hundred political prisoners were exiled to further blacken the character of Cayenne. It seemed as if everything was being done to make it detested in France. There was, however, a little break when the colony came into the hands of the Portuguese, but after the restoration to France it never again rose from its depths of degradation. It could not be expected that French planters would go there, even when some writers called attention to its resources.

One of them said he would like to see France bearing in mind that she had a heritage named Guiana, the soil of which, when cleared of forests, would yield everything in abundance. France had not seriously made use of it, but left it in the hands

of some indolent farmers, who were contented to scratch the borders. It would be of great advantage to create a powerful colony, and it was only by immigration on a large scale that the wealth of Guiana could be brought into existence. But they still hankered after European colonists to work in the field, although their own experience had been so disastrous. They would set slaves to clear the land until, when the place was comparatively healthy, *bound* white men might be imported. However, free men have not been induced to come to Guiana by such representations, and we may as well say at once that any attempt of the kind will certainly end in disaster.

Not being able to get free colonists, the renewal of transportation was started by Napoleon III. He, no doubt, thought that some of his political opponents would be safer out of his way in this remote country, from which so few ever returned. He therefore, in 1854, turned Cayenne into a penal settlement, thus condemning what might be a beautiful colony into a sink of iniquity. Even he however, must have seen the error, for a few years later it was agreed that no Frenchman should be sent there ; it was fit only for Africans, Arabs, and Annamese. Yet, in spite of all this, transportation of Frenchmen was renewed in 1884.

Now the bad name of Cayenne is utilised and exaggerated as a deterrent from crime. The judge says something like this when the habitual criminal is brought before him : " You scoundrel ! if you come before this court again you will be sent to Cayenne, where you will probably die." No doubt this acts on a few as does the fear of the executioner, but there is surely no good in keeping up the bad

name for such a purpose. If the place were really so bad as it is painted, why not abandon it altogether? Why let six hundred military spend their best years in such a pest-hole? Why, again, try to hold the territory and quarrel with Brazil about the Counani district?

This district was for a long time in dispute, and was settled by arbitration during the last decade. While still pending, however, it was the occasion of a grand colonisation scheme, which was started with such a flourish of trumpets as is only known among such impulsive people as the French. A new republic under the name of Counani was projected in 1888 and provided with all the necessary officials, including a President and his secretary. The Company, *sold* honours in the shape of a Grand Order of the Star of Counani to provide means whereby the republic could be put on a sound footing. Gold was there waiting to be picked up, forest products easily accessible; it was a wonderful El Dorado, a wilderness capable of becoming a paradise. Nothing was said of poor Cayenne—the bad name was, of course, suppressed. But the whole project ended in a fiasco; the Governments of Brazil and France agreed to keep out the President and his staff, who arrived in Georgetown to find their way blocked by a gunboat. Poor President Gros was compelled to go back, and the republic ended in nothing.

The French praise the colony at one time and condemn it at others. We may give them credit for good intentions, these being to found a tropical colony of reformed characters; those who failed in France might have an opportunity to gain something better in Cayenne. Therefore settlements were established in outlying districts, where convicts were

encouraged to marry, females of their own types and make homes for themselves. A visitor to one of these said the convicts generally looked cheerful; some, however, were villainous-looking, the murderers especially so. The surroundings seemed to be in good order, the huts neat and clean, no doubt from official inspection and control. Bananas, cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, sugar-canes, and tobacco were grown, and a few of the married couples did very well.

Then there are the Iles du Salut, one of them known as Devil's Island, where poor Dreyfus was imprisoned. The labour of the convicts has converted terraces into gardens, and cut down the trees which once covered them. But when these workers died they were thrown into the sea to feed the sharks. However, we understand that this has now been abolished.

That there must have been something wrong in the treatment of these people is evident. Rogues are not generally fools, and would hardly risk their lives, as they continually do, to get away from a place if they were well treated. A story is told of four such runaways who got off into the forest, with the intention of finding their way through the wilderness and across the mighty rivers to Demerara. They had no provisions, no weapons to kill game, no hooks for fishing, and no knowledge of hunting. They were mad with starvation, and when two happened to be left together, one fell on his companion and stabbed him with his knife. The others returning, one of them joined the murderer in a horrid cannibal feast, for which, when captured, the two were guillotined.

Many a sad story could, no doubt, be told of

the sufferings and privations of these refugees. They hate Cayenne and fear to remain there ; possibly this dread has been fostered by their guards, who have been spoken of as cruel tyrants. However that may be, there is a natural feeling in every one that revolts from anything that appears like torture. That something of the kind must exist is evident. Of course, a rogue wants to get to some place where he is not known, and will therefore often risk his life in a leaky boat. He lands in Surinam or Demerara, starving, and either begs or steals to keep body and soul together. Out of pity the refugees are sometimes helped as far as food is concerned, but told to move on. They are not wanted, for however plausible their stories may be, and their promises of good conduct for the future, the poor wretches cannot be allowed to remain. Experience has taught both Dutch and British that they cannot be trusted ; from Surinam they are driven to Demerara. British Guiana wants good colonists, but not rogues or vagabonds. They are arrested by the police, and almost every month an official notice is issued ordering certain persons, whose names have been given to the police, to leave the colony within fourteen days. When some of them manage to get work the Government insists on their leaving, even when employers have petitioned that they be allowed to go on with their employment. "Move on!" is the cry from the authorities, and go they must. If their boat has not been battered to pieces they try Venezuela, where perhaps they steal food from the settlers' provision-grounds. What ultimately becomes of them nobody knows, but it has been hinted that Venezuelans do not hesitate to shoot them at once.

The French refugee is the bugbear of Demerara.

He is the thief, the burglar, and the footpad. When a party lands on the coast the women take to their heels and the men go off for the police. Forty years ago his reputation was so widespread, that whenever a crime of violence took place the police first looked for a refugee. If you woke up in the night to find a hand at the window, it was a Frenchman. A woman dared not go out after dark in a village on the coast for fear that one of them might be lurking in the bushes, ready to pounce upon her. Now and then they quarrelled among themselves, using knives, thus giving trouble to police, magistrates, and judges. No wonder that they were feared and detested!

Why were they not handed over to the French authorities? At one time they were detained until an officer arrived to march them off on board a French steamer; this is no longer generally the case; the officials of Cayenne will not take the trouble to carry them back. Although supposed to be confined to the colony, even there they are pests and nuisances, burdens on the community, a danger to property and even life. The idea of colonising with such wretches is an admitted failure, yet the system is continued. Of late years only the very worst criminals are sent to Cayenne. It is the last resort; the idea of reforming the rogue appears to have given place to something like killing him. The bad reputation of Cayenne appears to be fostered by the French authorities as a deterrent. Botany Bay was vile enough, but it was not in the tropics; Englishmen refused to allow its continuance, and it is for Frenchmen to protest as strongly against Cayenne. As if the French authorities wanted to make a hell upon earth, they keep up a system that

is already condemned by the most enlightened of that nation. As for Surinam and Demerara, they must naturally protest against such a slur on Guiana, and the trouble and expense entailed on them by the refugees. Possibly Brazil also is ready to protest against the irruption of these people into the Counani district.

It might be supposed that we are exaggerating the evil, but really words are not strong enough. In 1910 M. Boucon wrote a pamphlet entitled, "La Transportation Coloniale," in which he advised immediate abolition. From this brochure it appears that, after serving as prisoners for a term, during which they are employed on the roads, and even by the free settlers, the convicts are released as *libérés*, free in a way but not to leave the colony. This ticket-of-leave man, as we should call him, has no money, and is not put in the way to make a living. Therefore, says M. Boucon, three-fourths die of hunger—surely an exaggeration. Of course, they go wandering about in search of work, which is naturally hard to get, for most of the rough labour is already being done by prisoners under control, which naturally is more reliable. Even when the free man knows a trade he is not provided with tools, and not generally permitted to remain in the town where work might perhaps be obtained. Off he goes to the country, to perhaps try for work, otherwise to steal growing provisions when actually starving. Then he is liable to be arrested and punished as a vagabond. Even when employed he gets such a bare pittance that he can hardly live, much less take such precautions against the rains and noxious insects as are absolutely necessary for the white man. A few of the prisoners from tropical

colonies are working at the gold-diggings, but these places are not suitable for the Frenchman, unless he is an overseer or clerk. If he tries to work with the shovel, he has often to stand up in water all day, and is exposed to drenching rains. The result is naturally sickness and death. White labour has been tried on the wood-cutting establishments with the same results. Laws have been passed to provide for the sick, but they are not properly carried out. A sanatorium at the mouth of the Maroni became such a dreadful place that it was condemned by the Surgeon-General and abandoned. A few who have received permission to return to France have neither money nor friends, and therefore cannot leave, for no free passages are given. Surely the liberated prisoner might be carried back and not left stranded where he has no means of getting work. About half of the *libérés* are prohibited from living in town on account of complaints from the citizens, which complaints are natural, but, as M. Boucon says, not justified by any increase of crime. Those allowed to remain are treated as social pariahs or lepers, and are bound to act as spies upon each other.

Surely such a condition of things will not much longer be allowed to continue. It may be safely stated that Cayenne will never become a valuable colony until this blot is removed. To compel a white man to work in the field is torture, and this is condemned everywhere. The prison cell is just as bad, for no white man in Guiana can endure a close room. The ideal house is only a shed, open to the wind on every side, and an Englishman, when visiting the Mother Country, is at once struck by the poky rooms and stuffy dwellings; in Guiana he practically lives in the open air.

Cayenne is not more unhealthy than other tropical colonies. In some respects it compares favourably with the other Guianas, for the town is higher and can be easily drained. Visitors, however, speak of its sordid appearance and of the want of good roads. This could easily be put right, and there is no reason whatever, except the curse of a penal settlement, to prevent it from again coming up to justify what Charles Waterton said a century ago: "Cayenne is capable of being a noble and productive colony."

It was then, as now, thought the poorest in Guiana, yet there were beautiful places like the national plantation or Botanic Garden.

"No plantation in the Western world can vie with La Gabrielle. Its spices are of the choicest kind, its soil particularly favourable to them, its arrangements beautiful.

"While the stranger views the spicy groves of La Gabrielle and tastes the most delicious fruits which have been originally imported hither from all parts of the tropical world, he will thank the Government which has supported, and admire the talents of the gentleman who has raised to its present grandeur, this noble collection of beautiful fruits."

Beautiful spots can still be found in the neighbourhood of the town. If Georgetown is a garden city, why should not Cayenne be even more lovely? Standing on a rocky eminence, it commands a pleasant view of the harbour, with the shore line broken by jutting reefs which form alcoves and delightful places for bathing. The town itself is embowered in palms with forest-clad hills in the background. It is not so fertile as the coast of Demerara, but there are fertile places in the colony, waiting to be empoldered on the same system as that of the other colonies.

French authors have praised it for over two centuries. "Les richesses de la Guyane Française" have been the subject of many books, but these riches do not attract capitalists or settlers. Martinique is a French tropical colony, subject to hurricanes and volcanic eruptions, but it is not a failure. Only the convict system now stands in the way of progress, and it is for the enlightened Frenchman to protest in every possible way against its continuance. Like the other colonies in Guiana, it can only prosper when suitable immigrants can be obtained, but at present these can hardly be expected to go there.

According to a return dated March 5, 1911, the population numbered 49,009. The town of Cayenne contained 13,527, more or less connected with mercantile pursuits, other towns and villages 12,798, making a total urban population of 26,325. The convicts numbered 6,465, military 603, and seamen 74, besides which there were 12,000 gold-seekers and 3,542 Indians. These gold-seekers produce nearly the whole of the exports, which amount to about 400,000 pounds sterling per annum. There are no extensive plantations, but a little cacao and sugar are grown, as well as vegetables, to supply local wants. An essential oil from the rosewood is of some importance.



GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN THE BUSH.

CHAPTER VIII

GOVERNMENT

British Guiana's Court of Policy—Expensive government—Law—Drunkenness—Churches—Schools—Orphan Asylum—Department of Science and Agriculture—Negro's contempt for field work—Crown lands—Communication—Telegraphs—Post Office—Municipalities—Fires—Water supply—Precautions against mosquitoes—Medical service—Immigration requirements—Village administrations—Railways—Steamer service—Anthony Trollope's opinion—Heavy taxation for a small community—Surinam—Cayenne.

BRITISH GUIANA is almost a Crown colony, for the Governor is generally responsible only to the Colonial Office, and is in a way absolute, except in financial matters. The Legislative Council is called the Court of Policy and consists of an equal number of officials and electives. As the Governor enjoys the right of a casting vote and can always control the official section the electives have little real power; in practice, however, the Governor does not insist upon carrying a measure when the electives combine. This Council is composed of eight officials, including the Governor, and the same number of electives, chosen by the people on an income or property qualification. For ways and means a Combined Court is formed of the Court of Policy, with six electives called Financial Representatives, chosen by the people in the

same way as the colonial members of the Court of Policy. In the Combined Court the people's representatives are in the majority, but no member can propose a money vote without the consent of the Governor. The representatives are of all shades, two or three of them being pure negroes, others coloured, one of Portuguese origin, and the others British. As may be expected, there is no united action, and therefore the Governor and his party are always in the ascendant. Most of the representatives are lawyers or mercantile people who have little time to think of public matters ; it follows, therefore, that the laws are made by officials, who generally know but little of the condition of the colony or of its requirements. The tendency of late years has been to pass laws for everything—in fact, red-tapeism rules to the exclusion of common-sense. New countries are hampered by too much law, and however satisfactory it may be to keep order and protect life and property there is hardly room in a small community like this for such a code as exists. The want of local knowledge often causes much trouble, for laws are made that almost immediately are found to be unworkable and yet have been kept nominally in force for many years. Again, so much red-tapeism is very expensive, requiring often as many as three clerks to do what could better be done by one were there not so many forms. The result is that the expenditure of the colony increases annually ; since 1876 the increment amounts to a million dollars. It is true that part of this increase is accounted for by the development of the colony in the shape of steamer subsidies and control of the gold-diggings, but these extensions do not account for the whole. There is a small public debt which on the 31st of

March, 1911, amounted to \$4,258,152.00, and the elective members often try to get things on loan account when the Government are inclined to raise more taxes. The revenue for the year ending March 31, 1911, was \$2,702,884.69 and the expenditure \$2,605,238.14. Some will be inclined to say that this is too much for what we may call a young colony of less than three hundred thousand inhabitants. At times projects have been mooted for confederation with the West Indies and then taking the whole over to the Dominion of Canada ; this last seems feasible, for there is no doubt that closer relations with British North America would be of assistance to Guiana. At present, on account of the competition with beet-sugar in the United Kingdom, Canada is taking the greater portion of the sugar production of Demerara, and no doubt there is room for further extensions in that quarter.

When the Dutch colonies were surrendered the capitulation guaranteed the people their ancient laws and usages ; it follows, therefore, that Dutch laws were enforced for many years, only to be gradually modified as times changed, and especially after the slave emancipation. Parts of the old civil law are still retained, but probably this remnant will be abolished in a few years. The criminal law is now founded on that of England, with modifications.

The people of British Guiana can hardly be described as law-abiding ; the fact is that the numerous laws make offences equally numerous. The convictions before judges and magistrates are so numerous that we may put them down at 1 per cent. per annum. The majority are fines, but there are sufficient grave crimes to make us wonder when the low-class negro will become really civilised.

Quarrels and fights are very common, especially between women and mainly on account of the laxity of sexual relations. The East Indian murders his faithless wife without the slightest hesitation, and no doubt wonders that the law should hang him for doing what every husband has done for ages, law or no law. The coolie labour laws and the gold-digger's cash advances account for a great many convictions, but these offences are not very grave. Theft of the pettiest kind is common, but robberies with violence are rare. The great drawback is the want of a strong public opinion against vice and crime—*i.e.*, the almost entire absence of self-respect and shame. The friends of the criminal think none the worse of him because he has been fined or sent to gaol. In one district the magistrate has often spoken to the crowd who club together to pay fines that should never have been incurred. These people can get ten to fifty dollars in such an emergency, when they are at the same time actually begging for pennies. Every negro is a lawyer; he knows the consequence of his actions, and yet he will sometimes vent his spite upon another when he has no means of paying the fine. Some of the incidents in the courts would be amusing were they not so deplorable. On one occasion we saw the aunt of a prisoner, when giving evidence, jump up in the box and tell him that for years she had been praying to God that he should be sent to Masaruni (the penal settlement) and now she was glad. Sometimes the prisoner calls a witness and asks, "You know me?" who says, "Yes," and then goes on, "You know me for tief?" with similar questions for as long as the magistrate permits.

Visitors to the colony say they see no drunkenness,

and it is a fact that very few cases of incapability are seen. Unfortunately, however, rum-drinking is much too prevalent and is responsible for many of the quarrels and fights which give work to police and magistrates. The beer-drinker is more often ready to lie down in the gutter, but the black man who has taken a schnap of rum is primed for a row.

The negro is very religious in his way and the colony subsidises the principal Churches. The present system of parishes was settled in 1825, equal rights being claimed by the English and Scotch Churches. Under this system Georgetown is in the parish of St. Andrew to the Presbyterian and of St. George to the Anglican; the country parishes alternate with each other, the result being that one of the Scotch Church extends for a few miles and then the English Church takes its share. The Roman Catholics and the Methodists receive annual grants, but the Independents have not asked for assistance. Several smaller denominations are represented, including Mohammedan mosques and Hindu temples, but are not assisted by Government, except in a few cases with grants-in-aid for their schools.

The school system is denominational, each Church having its own in the parishes as well as mission schools in outlying districts. The grants are made on the reports of the Government Inspector of Schools, who examines the pupils and passes those who reach certain standards, on which the clergy who manage the schools receive certain sums per head. The average cost of each scholar is about \$5 and the annual Government grant \$120,000. Attendance is compulsory within the settled districts. There is a very good Secondary School in Georgetown called Queen's College, which is an undenominational

Government institution, and compares favourably with the first-grade Grammar Schools in England. In connection with this Cambridge Local Examinations are held annually, on the result of which a scholarship at some British university is awarded. As the examination is open to all, pupils from private schools may take part and gain the scholarship if they come up to the standard of excellence. Girls as well as boys may compete, and on one occasion a girl gained it and is now a qualified medical practitioner. Several girls' schools of a high class are established in Georgetown, but hitherto they have received no Government grants.

There is an orphan asylum in Georgetown and a reformatory school in Essequibo, the latter under the control of the Director of Science and Agriculture, a Government Department of the utmost importance. This department controls the Botanic Gardens and Government Laboratory in Georgetown, besides some agricultural experiment stations in other parts of the colony. The staff includes a number of agricultural instructors, who visit the outlying districts and give advice to farmers. Under the auspices of the department a long series of agricultural experiments has been carried on for about twenty years, among the results of which are the Demerara seedling canes, which are now known wherever the sugar-cane is cultivated. Among the educational institutions we may place the British Guiana Museum and the Carnegie Free Library, both of which receive grants-in-aid from the Government.

The general effect of education is a desire to become clerks, office-boys, and shopmen. Field work is beneath the notice of the rising generation of black and coloured; even the creole East Indian follows

suit. The consequence is that the mercantile class is overstocked and Georgetown is pestered with a lot of idlers who have no visible means of subsistence. Even those who own village lots neglect them and come to town, where they degenerate into unemployed and unemployables. Every effort is now being put forth to induce these people to "go back to the land," but hitherto without much success. It is quite obvious that when a family can be supported on the result of one good day's work a week there is more real comfort and independence than as a store hand at \$10 a month. But the boy wants to ape the gentleman, to wear clothes unsuitable for the tropics, to force his feet into tight-fitting boots, and, above everything, to idle or play. The first generation after the emancipation had fathers who knew how to work; that now rising up has no such examples. The creole whites and Europeans are ardent lovers of cricket, therefore the young negro must follow their example.

Thousands of square miles of land can be had from the Government in grants of various sizes, including homesteads of five acres at a cost of fifty cents per acre. After building a house during the first year and a residence of ten years on the place it becomes the absolute property of the grantee. This homestead grant was the outcome of a complaint made some years ago that the then price of \$10 per acre was prohibitory, but there has been no rush for these allotments. As a matter of fact abandoned plantations and land in private hands is so cheap that at present there is hardly any need for Crown lands, situated as they are in out-of-the-way districts. Practically the whole façade of coast and rivers belongs to private owners, and only in a few cases have estates

come into the hands of the Government through non-payment of taxes for keeping up roads or sea defences. One or two of these have been put in order and sold, mostly to East Indians, and may possibly in time become something better than the present negro villages.

The Government gives licences for cutting timber and balata-bleeding over large tracts of country, also leases and licences for agricultural purposes and concessions for gold and diamond mining. Royalties are collected on the export of gold, balata, timber, and a few other things.

Communication is easy within the settled coast-line and for some distance up the principal rivers. The roads are good and are supplemented by a fleet of steamers, some of which are posted as ferry-boats. Telegraphic communication is also complete from one end of the colony to the other, with stations at the post-offices. There is cable communication through the West Indies from Georgetown and a wireless station to provide against failures of the cable, which are rather frequent. The British Guiana system is not connected with Surinam, where cable communication exists through another line. It would be of advantage to have such a connection, and possibly in time it may be made.

The British Guiana Post Office is quite up to date with savings banks, a telephone exchange, a penny post, sixpenny telegrams, and a parcel post, with regular deliveries in most places. The savings banks are much appreciated by the East Indians, who often have large deposits when the time comes for their departure, the average savings of those people who return being \$100 per head. The savings banks have over a million dollars on deposit, which may be considered creditable to a tropical colony.

The municipal governments of Georgetown and New Amsterdam are under mayors and town councils, who generally assess the taxes on lands and buildings at the rate of 2 per cent. of their value. As the majority of the buildings are detached and surrounded by gardens it necessarily covers a large area ; in fact, it is a Garden City. It is almost a square, about a mile and a half each way, with fifty miles of broad streets, many of which have canals in the centre or draining trenches at the sides, connected with sluices that are opened at low water, and when necessary, draining engines are used to get rid of a heavy rainfall. As the city is built upon a mud flat the roads are necessarily expensive, for the materials sink in very wet weather and would become quagmires were they not attended to at once. Under the care of the municipality there is never any difficulty, and there is rarely anything like a flood nowadays. Formerly, however, when a rainfall of two to six inches in the twenty-four hours filled up every trench and could not be got off at once, some of the roads were impassable except to bare-legged people. The houses do not suffer in such cases because they are all built on pillars to avoid the damp, which even in dry weather would render a ground floor unhealthy.

Most of the streets are lined with trees, and every house of any importance has a number of palms and flowering shrubs in its garden. These trees are not only pleasant to the eyes but they are also useful in case of fire, for they prevent in many cases the spreading from one house to another. Unlike the trees of northern climes, especially pines and firs, the trees here do not ignite unless the heat first dries them completely. We have seen a kitchen saved by

a mango-tree when otherwise it would certainly have been burnt with the house.

Fires were once more common and disastrous than at present. The more congested part of Georgetown is the business quarter, Water Street, which was almost entirely destroyed by two fires in 1864. As generally happens after such disasters, the street was widened and the buildings were isolated, with the result that later fires have been confined within a limited area. There has also been a great improvement in the fire brigade and the water supply.

Fire-stations are well distributed throughout the city, under the charge of the police and connected by telephone, so that immediately an alarm is given the engines are on the way, with a general result that little damage ensues. The fire brigade is kept up by the Government, the municipality, and the fire insurance companies, of which there are two, conducted on the mutual principle with great success.

The water supply has always been a difficulty; in fact, the Dutch in projecting a town in Demerara were very particular that the site should have wood and water in its neighbourhood. For this reason they were not altogether pleased that the British and French in 1781 and 1782 chose a mud flat at the mouth of the river for military reasons. This, however, was quite in accordance with the old saying that the Dutch laid out plans but the British accomplished the work. However, the town was an accomplished fact, but the difficulty of a water supply has been felt by every citizen. The only way was to erect vats and cisterns for storing rain-water, and this is still necessary, for the municipal water supply is unfit for drinking. About ninety years ago a canal was dug to supply certain estates near the town with

savannah water, and ultimately this was enlarged and extended to form the Lamaha Canal. The water is of the usual brown-coffee colour of bog water, not unwholesome but repellent, and unfit for domestic purposes unless clarified. It is, however, very useful in many ways and is laid on in most of the houses and is connected with fireplugs in all the streets.

New Amsterdam has a similar water of a rather better quality, but throughout the coast the only good supply for drinking is that collected from the roofs of the buildings. To supply the poor of Georgetown there are town tanks where in dry weather rain-water is sold at a penny a bucket. When the dry season—from August to November—passes without rain there is always a difficulty in procuring water of any kind. Formerly punts were sent up the river for thirty miles to bring supplies from the sand-hills, but this has not been necessary for many years past. The plantations have each a canal to provide drinking water for the labourers, but these sometimes get very low and filthy when a real dry spell is on. The Government has done something on the west bank of the Demerara by damming up the great savannah, so that fresh water may be obtained at any time ; this is called the canal's polder. The estates and villages also do their best, but the fact remains that the water supply for the poor is insufficient and not as good as it might be. We may safely state, however, that this will be remedied in the near future.

Since the discovery of the connection of mosquitoes with malaria, yellow fever, and elephantiasis efforts have been made in Georgetown to prevent the breeding of larvæ in vats and water vessels. The Government has passed laws to compel screening and the removal

of all receptacles that could harbour these pests, with good results. The difficulties are, however, very great in a low country like the coast of Guiana, with hundreds of square miles of swamps behind the inhabited portions. Mosquitoes seem to be less troublesome of late years in Georgetown since the sanitary arrangements have been improved, and especially since street avenues have been planted. Some have gone so far as to say that trees harbour mosquitoes. Possibly they do afford cover for them and thus in a way prevent their taking refuge in the houses. Our experience of over forty years is that these pests take refuge in bushy places to leeward of a swamp when there is a breeze, but otherwise they prefer open places. In a low country like Demerara trees are important agents in preventing pools of stagnant water from remaining long within reach of their roots. They not only drain the land but also raise it a foot or more for as large an area as the branches extend. When Georgetown was almost wanting in trees yellow fever was rampant, but it has not appeared since systematic street planting was properly carried out. There is a great difference in the condition of the street parapets of late years, partly on account of the planting and partly from better draining. Formerly they were oozy in wet weather and the feet would sink in water, now we can tread firmly without wetting our boots. Such ooze was no doubt congenial to mosquito larvæ. This matter may seem trivial, and yet it is so important that it has received the attention of the Government and the municipality as well as the medical profession everywhere throughout the colony.

The British Guiana medical service is efficient and well paid. Under the Government immigration



BROAD STREET, GEORGETOWN.

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system every estate must provide a proper hospital, medicines, and appliances, with dispensers or sick nurses. The district medical officer attends regularly and orders whatever he thinks suitable for his patients. Under this system the death-rate on plantations has decreased, and is now less than that of the general population. The Immigration Agent is also a Government official and pays regular visits of inspection. The general result is that the coolie is somewhat pampered and is sometimes inclined to play the master. Everything possible is done to satisfy him, whether sick or well, and he is the real head of the plantation. Nothing less will suit the British authorities and the Indian Government, and no doubt they are right. An overseer or even a manager must be discharged if the Immigration Agent sends an adverse report, otherwise the estate might be left without labourers. This power is not abused, but it causes anxiety at times when a coolie makes an unfounded complaint of ill-usage which he is ready to back up with a host of witnesses, who are bound by custom to tell as many lies as may be necessary to bolster up a case. So much discretion is required that nothing short of a change of managers will at times satisfy the coolies, once they have taken a dislike to the man in charge. However, the general result of the immigration system is so beneficial that a few drawbacks must be expected and taken as a part of every manager's work.

The Government have had many troubles with the villages in the past, and even yet the Councils are by no means easy to manage. Several ordinances have been passed at different times, most of which were found unworkable. Money has been lent to allow of sanitary improvements, the making up of

roads, and the opening of trenches, but some villages could not pay, and ultimately their debts were wiped off. In 1892 the present system was inaugurated. The larger villages were placed under a Board of Health, with the Inspector of Villages as an officer. The affairs of each were to be under a Village Council, elected by the tax-payers. These Councils have done fairly well, but there is still room for improvements in every village. As we first saw some of them forty years ago, they were unfit for even a negro ; in wet weather it was practically impossible to walk about the so-called streets. Under strict Government rule the roads are always passable, and the surroundings of the dwellings not quite so bare and sordid. The Local Government Board, the successor to the Board of Health, now controls about ninety villages and country districts. Loans are granted for improvements and the arrears are small.

The railways are three, the longest being $60\frac{1}{2}$ miles, connecting Georgetown with New Amsterdam. The second starts from the bank of the Demerara and extends along the west coast for 15 miles. Both of these are worked by the Demerara Railway Company under a Government guarantee of interest. The third is a line to connect the Demerara with the Essequibo above the rapids of the latter river ; it is $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, and is worked by Messrs. Sproston, Limited, in connection with their steam-boat service.

The local steamer service is of the utmost importance in British Guiana. By means of a fleet of various sizes, the coast from the Berbice to the Barima is accessible, the rivers Demerara, Essequibo, and Berbice are ascended as far as navigable, the islands of the mouth of the Essequibo kept in



SPROSTON'S DOCK, GEORGETOWN.

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communication, and steam ferry-boats ply on the Berbice, Demerara, and across to the Essequibo island of Leguan in connection with the West Coast Railway. The Corentyne has not yet a steamer service, but a motor-car runs from New Amsterdam to Skeldon.

Sproston's, Limited, are the steamer contractors and the Government pays an annual subsidy of \$57,000. In connection with their business they have a dock in which moderate-sized vessels can be overhauled and repaired, and a foundry where repairs to machinery can be made. The dock is such a convenience that the local steamers from Surinam and Cayenne are brought at intervals to be put in order. The firm also carries on a trade in timber for which it has many facilities.

Surinam and Cayenne are not so well served as the British colony, but they have several local steam-boats, and there is a service of Sproston's to both colonies at regular intervals. At present there are no means of getting from Guiana to Brazil without going to Barbados, but we may anticipate that in the near future the communication may be continued from Cayenne to Para.

It will be seen from the above that the Government of British Guiana has done a great deal to make the colony a desirable place to live in. Even fifty years ago, when Anthony Trollope wrote, he was delighted with it, although it was then far less healthy than it is to-day. He said the Government was a mild despotism, tempered by sugar. The Governor was the father of his people and his wife the mother. The colony formed a large family, which gathered itself under the parental wings. When he settled out of England for good British Guiana would be

the land of his adoption. "If there were but a snug secretaryship vacant there—and these things in Demerara are very snug—how I would invoke the goddess of patronage!" For Demerara is the Elysium of the tropics, the Happy Valley of Rasselas, the one true and actual Utopia of the Caribbean Seas, the Transatlantic Eden.

To the negro of Guiana the Governor represents "Massa" of the olden time. He is very loyal, and it was a common thing after the Emancipation for him to speak of Queen's law and to contrast it with that of his old master. There seems to have been an idea that as the King or Queen had abolished slavery they would be likely to help the freedmen in other things. The Government must do this, that, and the other thing, but not ask for additional taxes. The ordinary citizen, however, is sometimes inclined to wish that these beggars had a little more commonsense. However, the Government does not always respond to their petitions. With a larger population more could be done without putting heavier burdens on the tax-payers. Unfortunately, there is a class of people in the colony who sneer at the sugar plantations and speak as if they would be better off without them and the East Indians. How they could have any Government at all under such circumstances probably never enters their minds, or what they would do if the million and a half sterling now spent in the colony were withdrawn.

The Government of Surinam is vested in a Governor appointed by the Queen of Holland. He has more power than the Governor of British Guiana, but is assisted by an Executive Council of four official members. There is a Legislative Assembly (*Koloniale Staten*), elected for six years by the citizens

who pay income-tax on not less than 1,400 guilders. Ordinances are proposed by the Governor and Council to this Assembly, and after passing must be approved by the Queen. Estimates of income and expenditure are also submitted in the same way to be confirmed by the Home Government, which has generally to pay the deficiency which always occurs, generally to the amount of about a million guilders. In 1910 the income was estimated at over four and the expenditure at five millions, leaving a deficiency of 900,000 guilders. The colony is divided into twelve districts besides the capital, each managed by a district commissary. Education is compulsory between the ages of seven and fourteen; Government Primary Schools, a Secondary and a Normal School are under the Education Department, besides which there are many private schools, including those of the Moravian Brethren, in some of which the negro English or "talki-talki" is used. The churches include the Dutch Reformed, Anglican, Moravian, and some other Protestant sects, as well as Roman Catholic and two Jewish Synagogues. Complete religious toleration is allowed as in Holland, and salaries are paid to the principal clergy by the Government. A railway to the interior for the convenience of gold-diggers and balata-bleeders has already been laid down for a hundred miles, and it is proposed to extend it farther.

Surinam is certainly going ahead. For a long time her people have been looking with envy on the progress of Demerara, and urging the Government to do something to prevent the utter downfall of the colony. Now that coolie immigration has been adopted, a Director of Agriculture appointed, and a banana trade commenced, it is hoped that prosperous

times may dawn after the downfall of what was once the most important of the Guiana colonies. Trouble is looming ahead in the shape of a banana disease, which, coming after the witch broom on the cacao, is very discouraging. Gold and balata are, however, well to the fore, and Surinam may yet become self-supporting.

Cayenne is governed by a Governor, assisted by a Council of officials. There is also an Elective Council of sixteen members. The Mother Country pays about a quarter of a million sterling to keep up this poor colony, but only about £20,000 of this is spent on the settlement as distinguished from what is required for the penal establishment. There is a college and six Primary Schools, and the Roman Catholic Church is well represented. Some attention is paid to agriculture, but, unfortunately, the fact that it is a penal colony obtrudes itself everywhere.



A VILLAGE SHOP WITH ITS CUSTOMERS.

CHAPTER IX

VILLAGES AND RIVER-PEOPLE IN BRITISH GUIANA

Similarity of the three Guianas—Labour difficulties—Villages—Plantations bought by freedmen—Their gradual ruin—Drainage choked—Dams broken down—Public roads—Government interference—Villagers resent taxation—Negro thieves—Want of control—East Indians grow rice—River people—Bovianders—Careless habits—An old-time Dutchman—Idlers of to-day—Children managing boats—The degenerate—Indian missions—Opinions of a negro catechist—A better type.

THE three Guianas are much alike in their situation near the coast, three wedges of the great Amazon region of South America. The largest is the British colony with about 90,000 square miles, the Dutch comes next with 46,000, and then the French with 31,000. The climate and rainfall are alike, as are also the geological formations, the fauna, and flora. Much the same products are grown or have been grown in the parts selected for cultivation ; all have begun with sugar. This staple has, however, entirely gone from Cayenne and is reduced to five plantations in Surinam and to forty in British Guiana. Other products have had their day ; coffee and cotton have dwindled to a very little ; cacao is well represented in Surinam, and a few plantations grow it in Demerara.

All have had their labour difficulties—these and the

convict system have put Cayenne into the background. The slaves in French colonies were emancipated in 1848, but they were too few in Cayenne for the change to make much difference. Surinam was not ruined by her emancipation in 1863 as the British colony was after 1834, but in both the negro gradually severed himself from his old work on the plantations. Why he should give up the kind of labour for which he was most fitted is a problem. He can and will work intermittently if sufficient inducement be offered, but he cannot be depended upon to continue for five days a week unless removed from his usual surroundings and taken to the gold-diggings. As the work of a plantation is continuous, especially when sugar-making, the planter must have a reliable set of labourers on whom he can depend.

The inhabited portion of British Guiana extends along the coast and up some rivers for short distances, the whole line extending to about two hundred miles, with a depth of one to six miles ; there are also plantations on three canals which connect with the Demerara River, and which were once lined with coffee estates. The whole cultivated area on which live nearly three hundred thousand people is hardly more than three hundred square miles. This may be considered rather a dense population for such an area, the east coast of Demerara coming first. Here villages, some of three thousand people, alternate with plantations, the back lands of which villages are cultivated in a loose manner by some of the inhabitants, who occasionally work for a few days on the adjoining plantations.

These villages represent the ruined estates of the old planters, who, not being able to go on after

the Emancipation, sold them to their former slaves, who in many cases had amassed fair sums by working overtime, or even while yet slaves, from the grounds allotted them, and the hogs and poultry they were allowed to keep. Most of these ruined estates were in working order, or could have been continued under proper supervision. But the freedman would have no master, even of his own colour, for anything like a boss was highly repugnant to him. In one case an attempt was made to keep on the sugar-planting, but it soon came to an end where all were masters and no one was content to take orders from his fellow black man.

At first these estates were owned in common, but later they were divided into lots, with the view that each should have a section in front for a dwelling and a larger slice behind for a provision-ground. This might have worked very well had there been any bond of union, but when the empoldering of land is thoroughly understood, it will be seen that something more was absolutely necessary. The owner or manager of a plantation on this coast must be continually inspecting his dams and trenches, and be on the watch for any flaws that may lead to an inrush of the sea in front or the bush water behind. This can only be done by one who knows the weak points, and who can command a supply of labour at an hour's notice if a breach occurs. It can easily be understood that the negro was not now prepared to turn out at such a short notice, with perhaps heavy rain falling, to wade up to the middle in a rushing torrent and carry bags of clay to stem the flood. The natural consequence of neglect was an inundation, with houses standing in water and the dams impassable except by wading. Sometimes the only

means of getting about a village was by boats or corials.

The canals were as necessary as the dams, for when they became choked the heavy rains which fell within the empoldered area could not be carried off. The "kokers," or flood-gates, must also be in order, with watchmen to see that they are opened and shut according to the tide, and that they are not undermined by crabs and thus rendered useless. Enough has been said to show the absolute necessity of proper control, and it can easily be understood that these people could only have vague notions of the dangers to their cultivation entailed by the least carelessness.

Most of the plantations when purchased were well stocked with fruit-trees, on which the negroes could almost live at some seasons. The old notion that the tropical man sat under a tree and allowed the fruit to fall into his mouth was only an exaggeration of a fact, for it is well known that the negro will live almost entirely on mangoes when they are plentiful. Here, then, was an ideal life ; the freedman did a little to keep up the plantains and other vegetables already present, and then sat down under his own fruit-tree, with no master to make him afraid. But Nature in Guiana is too rampant for such a state of things to last. Every draining trench became choked with water plants, their outlets were silted up, and even if no breach in the dams took place, there was danger from heavy rains. Every member of the community was supposed to dig and clean a certain portion of the main drainage as well as that on his own plot, but very few did it. We have seen a village canal where such an arrangement existed ; there was a piece of clean-dug trench

between two lots, where nothing but tall weeds were visible, then a few hundred yards along the line came another open spot, the general result being that no water flowed to the outlet sluices, and the dam was under water when the rain fell. Under such circumstances the once well-drained estate was gradually reverting to the swamp from which it had been reclaimed with so much labour and care. In some cases the sea poured in at spring tides, in others the village was flooded for weeks in the rainy seasons. Then the sun came and dried up the mud, producing vile odours, and leaving pools for mosquitoes to swarm and carry on their deadly work when dry weather came. The fresh-water canal, which once was dug for the convenience of a proper supply, was, of course, polluted by the flood, which carried with it the contents of the cesspools; no drinking water was, therefore, obtainable, for few of the villagers had such a convenience as a rain-water vat, so necessary here, where there are no springs or wells.

Another matter was also of the utmost importance. Under the old plantation system every estate was bound to make and keep up the public road and the necessary bridges as far as they extended through the estate. This obligation was almost entirely ignored by the villagers, so that by 1850 some of the roads were impassable in wet weather, and even the mails from Georgetown to New Amsterdam were often delayed or bogged. At one time it was actually proposed to carry only letters on horseback, because of the difficulty of getting through in wheeled vehicles, and it appeared at that time as if the colony would have to revert to the Dutch system of tent-boats.

Something must be done and that speedily. The Government could not see the colony go back from a state of civilisation to barbarism. So they took over the roads through the villages and restored the lines of communication. Then came the difficulty of dams and drainage. By this time most of the fruit-trees were killed by stagnant water at their roots, and the village huts on their stilted pillars stood up either in a shallow lake or on a bare mudbank, according to the season. The Government said they must be drained and that the villagers must be taxed to pay the cost. The villagers were quite willing to have their surroundings put in order at the expense of other people, but not to pay taxes. If they were satisfied to live in mud and slush, why should the Government interfere? However, a commencement was made by making up the dams and digging the trenches of one village, to pay for which a tax was imposed. This was resented; some refused to pay, even as little as a dollar. The old idea was that "Massa" must do everything for them, now it was the Government. As for paying or even working out an obligation, such a thing was impossible under freedom. The Governor, Sir Francis Hincks, would have no delay; he was determined that the villages should no longer remain as a disgrace to the colony. Under their then condition churches and schools could hardly be attended and even police supervision was almost impossible.

The defaulters had their little properties levied upon and sold, the officials first doing everything possible to get payment or even promises to pay within a reasonable time. When nothing remained but to deliver the property to the new owner there was almost a riot. One man who had thus lost a

cottage went in and sat down, refusing to leave. "This is my house and I shall stop here." He was turned out by the police, arrested, and fined, but even then he appealed and got judgment in his favour on a technical point. For a time it seemed as if the villages would never be put in order, but at last the malcontents were cowed and a steady advance was made.

The villages to-day are generally in a far better condition than they ever were before. No longer do we see such floods as once made them a disgrace to all concerned. Village Councils have been in existence for some years, which work under the Government Superintendent, and are not quite so conspicuous for bickering as they once were. But much remains to be done, for there is a sad want of some bond of union among the negroes themselves. They have a proverb to the effect that a black dog does not bite his mattee black dog, but the black man has no love for one of his own colour. We see here and there a really industrious negro trying to cultivate his piece of land to the best advantage, but continually hampered by a lot of thieves, who will not work themselves even when they have the same opportunities. Cases have been known of people being hired to go aback for twenty bunches of plantains, which had been marked as ready to cut, only to find that every one had been carried off the previous night. This is of course disheartening, and we can hardly wonder that some have given up in despair.

Speaking generally of the coast lands of British Guiana, we may state that they cannot be worked properly without the supervision of the white man. The continual attention to dams, canals, and sluices

means that every estate and village must have a superintendent, who can command labour at the right time. The sugar estates have such men, and the result is patent, but the villages never prospered because such a head was wanting. Of course such work is expensive, and here also the villages are behind, for they cannot be heavily taxed. What would pay a sugar estate to have properly done cannot pay the villages, for in the one case the area under cultivation is large and uniform, while in the other it is much smaller and patchy. The negro's character is impulsive, and this is shown in everything he does. He will take upon himself at one time to do really good work, and you think his efforts will be successful, but he soon tires and gives up, thus giving scope to the rampant weeds, which soon turn his provision-ground into a wilderness. Clean cultivation is seen where there are Chinese, and the East Indians' grounds are almost equal, but it is rare to find such a thing where the owners are negroes.

During the last few years the East Indian has come to the front as a rice-grower, but the negro has not taken up the industry to any great extent. Formerly the imports of rice were enormous; even as late as 1899 over eleven thousand tons were brought from India. Now about 40,000 acres are under this cultivation, the imports are almost nil, and the exports amount to about five thousand tons per annum. As may be supposed, this is an ideal country for rice-growing, and with proper attention to the distribution of water there are no difficulties in its way. Then the East Indian is in most cases well acquainted with the conditions necessary, and can therefore increase the output to almost any extent, for the

suitable land now unused amounts to thousands of square miles. Mills are working in several districts turning out a product which compares favourably with that from the southern States of North America.

Away from the coast the country is sparsely populated only on the banks of the great rivers. Here resides a motley set of people of all shades, difficult to classify but commonly mixtures of white, negro, and Indian. They are generally called Bovianders, probably because they live above yonder, away up beyond the plantations. Some are descended from the original owners of the estates that failed and were abandoned when the land near the coast was found more fertile. Such ownership is still recognised where descent can be traced, but the land is only useful for cutting firewood, of a rather low grade, because the valuable timber trees have long been carried off, and the second growth is of a different character.

These people have adopted some of the habits of the Indians, but instead of living in open sheds they build low huts with thatched sides, which make them very undesirable abodes for a tropical climate. A community of Chinese on the Demerara river have, however, adopted the Indian benab, with the addition of palisaded sides, which are airy and comfortable. The low hut is characteristic of the black man, for even the bush negroes of Surinam, who, no doubt, learnt much from the Indians, live in a similar poky hovel. The surroundings of such huts are overrun by weeds, often to the smothering of the few fruit-trees which remain from the old time when a Dutchman perhaps lived on the spot and kept it in such order as is never seen nowadays. What these places were like in the olden time may

be gathered from the following extract from one of Waterton's Essays :—

“In the year 1807, some thirty miles up the beautiful River Demerara, there lived an elderly Dutch settler whose name was Laing.

“He was one of those farming-looking gentlemen who sauntered up and down his sylvan domain with a long pipe in his mouth and with a straw hat on his head, broad enough to serve both himself and his wife by way of an umbrella in the blazing heat of an equinoctial sun.

“Mynheer Laing had stubbed the surrounding trees to a certain extent ; and this enabled him to have a little dairy and enough of land to feed his cattle and to enclose a garden for the culinary wants of his household.

“In passing up and down the river in your Indian canoe his house appeared to great advantage. It stood near the top of a gently sloping hill ; whilst the high trees of magnificent foliage surrounded it on every side, saving that which faced the river, and there the greensward came down quite to the water's edge. On viewing it you would have said that it was as lovely a place, for a man of moderate desires, as could be found on this terrestrial globe.”

This spot is now a wilderness like almost all the old river plantations ; it has fallen into the hands of people who have no idea of comfort or convenience, and who live after a fashion by doing nothing. How they live is a problem, for we rarely find them or their families with anything to eat. On one occasion we stopped at such a place where there were four huts, and, wanting something to eat, inquired if any of them had a fowl, eggs, fruit, or barbecued meat, some of which can at times be found at such places.

The reply was that they had nothing but a few green plantains, of which a kind of porridge was made for the children. We had to be satisfied with a few of these roasted, which, without butter or any other seasoning, are among the most tasteless of all vegetables.

There is generally a bed of plantains near the hut, but they are nearly always choked with weeds. Those who have never lived in the tropics may perhaps think these weeds something like those of temperate climes; but such is not the case, for they are thickets, impassable without the aid of a cutlass. Weeding under such circumstances is necessarily very hard work, and these people are decidedly averse to labour of any kind. No doubt the Indian blood comes to the front, for chopping down trees is more congenial than tilling the ground, which is women's work. These people often own an estate of 250 acres, the greater portion of which is hardly penetrable. Here, where there is no difficulty with the drainage, and no empoldering necessary, it might be supposed that a man could live comfortably by working a few hours every day; in fact, one day's work every week would be sufficient to provide the few real needs of a household.

There are no roads along the banks of the river, so every family must have its bateau, or dug-out canoe. It is interesting to note how early in life a boy or girl learns to manage one of these craft. Little more than babies, they go off to the nearest shop, perhaps five miles away, to buy a pennyworth of salt fish to flavour the otherwise tasteless plantains. Sometimes they go "for a walk," as they call it, and visit some other children, the mothers never

thinking that there is any risk. Yet a traveller some years ago, no doubt exaggerating for effect, described the neighbourhood as swarming with dangerous animals, such as jaguars, alligators, and rattlesnakes, all of which might be seen in a morning's walk. As a matter of fact, few people, even those who live in the forest, have ever seen a living jaguar, and the other animals are too wary, for any one to discern but the huntsman or naturalist. The nearest to a sight of the jaguar is generally, its footprints or the remains of its dinner.

Formerly the Dutchmen took wives from the Indians, with the result that many of the half-breeds owned plantations and were important personages on the rivers. Some had been sent to Europe for their education and were gentlemen of the old school and yet degenerates in almost every respect.

There is a fascination about such a life which even the civilised man can hardly resist. To be free from the cares and worries of the strenuous life and the burdens of conventionality, has its attractions. With few wants, and these so easily supplied, the man degenerates until he becomes lower than the real savage. Yet they seem always happy, for there is no ambition ; a shelter from the rain and a meal of plantains can easily be got without the proverbial sweat of the brow. Clothing is a luxury, hardly needed by children at all, and is reduced in the adult to the simple shirt and trousers of the man and a frock for the woman.

In these upper river districts there are Indian missions, where there is generally a catechist or schoolmaster, who thinks himself a very superior person and looks down upon the Indian as a naked savage. What the Indian thinks of this negro

teacher is hard to say, but we can get some idea of the mind of this exalted personage, for one of them wrote a book about twenty-five years ago, which is a medley of curious notions. Fortunately for the curious, he did it all himself and got it printed by a jobber ; it follows, therefore, that we may take it as the genuine outpouring of his mind. We do not suggest that he was a typical negro or an average schoolmaster, nevertheless, we may safely state that others of a similar type may be found. The quiet Indian was a pitiable creature, but—

“ Poor Children of the Forest, I can readily excuse if they appear to be lazy ; for the everlasting sleepy-like sounding rills of pleasant cool sweet waters, coupled with their ‘ cold damp ’ forest earth, are sufficiently reasonable causes to induce these cold people into arms of *Morphus* or ‘ Nature’s Sweet Restorer ’—Balmy Sleep.”

His bateau crew was very mixed :—

“ A brown fellow (not an Indian) grinned a sort of smile, with almost open mouth—yawning out laziness—and his closing lips of sunlight-painted-heat, as if beating from his proud little coloured heart (as such hearts do generally appear to beat) through similar signs, such jealous symbols.”

This wants interpreting, as does also the next paragraph :—

“ All these lads of my batteau’d crew of lads, were of mixed races of Indians and fair bovianders, or those sometimes curious folks, whose appearance and actions could warrant any sensible stranger who had seen a wild Indian, and a domesticated mulatto, to suppose and conclude when judging that if strikes between any such two individuals be produced what natural consequences must ensue.”

The whole book, or rather pamphlet, is loaded with such gems, and is decidedly humorous, although this was certainly not intended by the author. Below the surface there is often something suggestive to the psychologist, as in the following attempt to picture the Indian :—

“ With all the affection or love manifested towards these Aborigines, or amongst them, they appear to be more naturally capable of living out of their woods than are they forgetful of what perhaps they still consider the usurpation of their now buried authority ; for it seems to me that notwithstanding their true signs of contentment and acts of unquestionable love or affection to those of a different tribe or race than that of themselves ; yet there is nearly apparent among them some lingering shyness, some sort of discontentedness, some mourners as if for property lost, and will not be really comforted whilst 'tis not recoverable ; some tingy doubt, some restless antipathy of doubt, which notwithstanding all their known English songs or hymns of praise which they can sing, still lingers irremovable within their breasts and hearts.”

Fortunately for British Guiana this type is rare, and we are glad to say it is dying out. The new missions have generally white men at their head with some ideas beyond conventionality. Too much stress was formerly laid upon the matter of clothing, which is undoubtedly one of the causes of the passing away of the American race. The old missionary thought it indecent for the people to go about in laps and aprons only, and the expression “ clothed and in his right mind ” was taken as applicable to tropical man. We can safely affirm, however, that in a climate like Guiana, where sudden showers



GIRLS OF AN INDIAN MISSION.

fall almost without warning, the naked man will always be less liable to chills and fever. The Indian with one shirt should take it off when wet, even if he does shock the good missionary, for, after all, health is more important than conventionality. That this is now being understood is shown by the pretty group of children, here reproduced from a photo, of the Patamona and Macoushi tribe, attending St. Mary's Anglican mission school on the Rupununi. Only a prude could cavil at this picture.

CHAPTER X

THE PEOPLE AND IMMIGRATION

Races represented—National traits in negro—Bush negroes—Coloured people—Negro characteristics—The East Indian, the man of the future—The Chinese—Madeira Portuguese—Native Indians—Wild Indians disappearing—Javanese—Cayenne rogues—Whites—Jews—Effect of a hot climate—Tropical man—Labour difficulties—Slavery—Acclimatisation—Tropical colonies entirely dependent on labour supply—Land worthless without labour—Immigration experiments—First East Indian coolies—Opposition of anti-slavery party—East Indian immigration established—Chinese coolies—Slave emancipation in Surinam—India the only source of a tropical labour supply—“New slavery”—Disputes with the East Indians only connected with wages—Immigration department—Results of immigration.

THE people of Guiana are probably more varied than those of any other country in the world. Every race is represented—the European and Indo-European, the African negro, the Chinese, as well as people from Anam and Java, and finally, the true American. Besides these there are mixed breeds in all proportions—white with black, negro with East Indian and Chinese, negro with American, and white with East Indian, Chinese, and American. To the ethnologist these must necessarily be peculiarly interesting.

Among the other points of interest there is the

impress of the three nationalities upon the negro, which are very conspicuous in the women. The French negress is unlike her sister in Surinam, and she also differs from the English type in Demerara. Again, they all stand apart from the real African and the bush negro, illustrating the possibility of the perpetuation of acquired characters and the manner in which tribal differences have been developed. "The French," said an old writer, "are a civil, quick and active sort of people, given to talking, especially those of the female sex"; the Dutch have a more heavy look and wear their clothes loose and baggy, cleanliness being more conspicuous than a good fit; the English (including specially the Barbadian) are decidedly careless and slovenly, and inclined to ape the latest fashion. A Frenchman speaks of the Demerara negress as dressing up in her mistress's old gowns and wanting a style of her own; we have seen a cook going to market in an old silk dress once trimmed with lace, now smudged with soot and reeking with grease. They all have a love for finery but no taste in colour; here and there, however, a girl with a pure white dress and embroidered headkerchief pleases the eye and proves that dress is of some importance in our estimate of these people.

The negro man has no peculiarity in his clothes; he simply follows the European. His working dress is generally the dirty and ragged remains of what we may call his Sunday suit. He may be clean otherwise, but his covering gives us the contrary impression. There is a character about the Demerara creole, but he is not so English as the Barbadian, who is "neither Carib nor creole, but true Barbadian born." Loyalty to the Mother Country as

well as to his own island is very conspicuous ; he has followed the white man in this as well as in his language, which retains some of the obsolete words and phrases of the Stuart period, including the asseveration "deed en fait" for "in deed and in faith." These national characteristics go to prove that the negro has been changed somewhat by environment, and this can be easily seen when he is compared with the African, who is represented here and there by a few of the old people who were rescued from slavers.

The bush negro of Surinam, who ranges also through Cayenne and into Brazilian territory, is a distinct type. Made up of a number of African tribes, and probably dominated by the Coromantee, the most independent of these, he has not been much affected by his short service under the Dutch. From a physical standpoint he is a fine fellow, muscular and brawny ; a good boatman and warrior, he has held his own for two centuries. Having first gained his freedom by his strong arm, he fought to retain it ; the result is a man that must be respected. Possibly he learnt something from the native Indian, but he has never been very friendly, for the aborigines do not like the negro. In Demerara, and to a less extent in Surinam, Indians were formerly employed to hunt runaway slaves, and this accounts for the ill-feeling.

We may consider the bush negro as an African savage, very slightly altered by the change from the forests of the Congo to the wilds of Guiana. Like African tribes, the communities have no bond of union, but are each under its own granman, or chief. This segregation has been the cause of much trouble in the past, for a treaty might be made with one

chief which was by no means binding on the others. Their huts are low and confined, lacking any conveniences and without order. Their few arts are of African types, and their tribal marks coarse scars. Small clearings are made near their dwellings in which ground provisions enough to support their families are raised, and sometimes a little rice to sell. They also cut timber and bring it to Paramaribo for sale, with the proceeds of which they buy finery. Latterly they have been found useful to carry gold-diggers and balata-bleeders into the interior, for they are well accustomed to navigate the rapids. In Surinam the latest estimate of their number is 8,000; a few years ago they were put down as about 25,000 in all Guiana. They do not appear to increase to any extent; in fact, judging by the number of runaways who have taken to the bush in two centuries, the decrease from war and other causes must have been enormous. Their sexual relations, which are very loose, as among negroes generally, do not consist with an increase, but at the same time there is no doubt that we have here a survival of the strongest. Whether these people will ever mingle with other negroes is doubtful; at present the bush negro despises the fellow with a master or employer, and the black man of the settled portion of the colony treats him as a savage.

In British Guiana the runaways were hunted by Indians; it followed, therefore, that no such communities of wild men were possible. The river people are largely of mixed African and Indian blood, more often perhaps with more or less of the European. They carry on the timber trade and are prominent as boat hands. Formerly, every family had its bateau

or corial, but since steamers have been plying up the rivers a craft is less needed.

The coloured people are of all shades. The offspring of black and white is the mulatto, who generally partakes equally of the character of both races, but with variations. The man is coarser-looking than the woman, but as a rule he is strong and healthy ; if, however, he marries a woman of his own colour the offspring are in many cases weaker than the parents. A cob is a reversion towards the negro, the child of one black parent with a mulatto, three-quarters black and hardly distinguishable. The mustee or quadroon, who is three-fourths white, and the costee or octoroon may be considered as practically white and in many cases can only be distinguished as coloured by those who know their parentage. In Guiana colour prejudice is most conspicuous among these lighter people, for they want to marry a "higher" colour than themselves, and are considered as degrading the family when demeaning it by coming down towards the negro. A black woman will think more of her illegitimate mulatto children than of those she has borne to her negro husband. The ideal of the pure negro is the bukra—the well-to-do European ; poor whites or coloured people are in his opinion unworthy of respect. He rarely gets on well as servant to one of his own colour ; quarrels and fights are common among workmen where they are under men of their own class. The negro also despises the Chinaman and East Indian, who in turn prefer to have few dealings with them. The general result is that there are not many sexual unions between the races. Now and again a respectable black man, doctor or lawyer, marries a white woman, but such

unions generally, bring trouble. The tendency now is for the darker coloured people to merge themselves in the black and the lighter in the white ; the probable result will ultimately be to increase the distinction and reduce the present variations.

There will almost certainly, however, always remain a coloured class, the future of whom has often been considered by travellers and anthropologists. Some have gone so far as to say that they will ultimately be the rulers of the West Indies, but there is little foundation for such an opinion. No doubt the lighter-coloured people will in time take the place of the pure whites from their greater suitability to the climate ; their number will, however, probably never be great enough to make much impression. The coloured man is not so aggressive as the educated negro, who has come to the front in late years as a political agitator, and who speaks of "the people" as being those of his own race, notwithstanding the fact that in British Guiana they are exceeded in number by the East Indians.

The negro is prominent in the Legislature and the learned professions ; he is the schoolmaster, the dispenser or sick nurse, and the lower grade clerk, but he does not succeed as a shopkeeper. The gold and diamond diggers and balata-bleeders are also black men under white superintendence. He undoubtedly fills a place which, in his absence, could only be occupied by inferior workmen of other races, and is gradually becoming a useful member of the community. As a plantation labourer he fails, mainly because he expects higher pay than estates can afford. He is capable of doing more hard work than any other tropical labourer, but he prefers a job of a few hours rather than steady, continuous

work. His passions are easily roused, and when the fit is on it is useless to reason with him. After giving his employer volleys of abuse he sometimes asks a favour as if he had done nothing. Some will boast that they bear no malice, that they are open-minded, much better than some other people who will not forget an offence. Morality is largely a matter of law. "You can't do me nothing" is a common reply when he is told that something he was doing was wrong. Many of them are well versed in the law, for crowds assemble round the magistrates' courts every day. Sometimes one will say that if he had ten dollars to pay the fine he would do something illegal; in fact, it is notorious that people who complain loudly of poverty can often pay fines of what is to them very large amounts. One day a poor woman will be begging a penny, and the next paying two to five pounds in the court. Yet they have rarely anything saved, but the fines can be raised by loans and gifts from their relations and friends.

The East Indian will certainly be the man of the future in Guiana if the immigration system is continued. Already he is ahead in British Guiana, and forms more than a third of the population of Surinam, if we include the Javanese. Though not so strong as the negro, he is more reliable, and without him there would be no Demerara or Surinam sugar. He enjoys better health in the tropics than other races, as is easily seen by the census returns of India and death rates on the plantations. A great increase of population may generally be predicted where people are kind to their children, and in this the East Indian is pre-eminent. We shall say something further about him in another place,

and will only here deal with his clothes. He is probably, the only real tropical man who dresses to suit the climate, and he is always well dressed. With a few yards of cotton cloth he drapes himself in a manner that could only be emulated by a great artist. Any one who knows what tight-fitting European clothing means in the tropics can appreciate the loose folds of the East Indian. Through the ages he has learnt how to dress in a graceful and picturesque manner, which, however, is practically inimitable by others. The women wear most gaudy colours, but their taste is so perfect that there is rarely anything discordant. And yet these people are hardly ever of a higher class than that of the field labourer. This natural taste in drapery and colour must have been the result of experience during long ages ; that light clothing is a success is proved by the natural increase, notwithstanding war, famine, and pestilence.

The Chinese were imported as agricultural labourers, but may be considered as failures in that line, although in other respects very useful colonists. They have been condemned in other countries as undesirable, and even in British Guiana they were once stigmatised as sly rogues and thieves. Now the stigma is undeserved, for they form a trading class of considerable importance. A few have worked at the gold-diggings as well as in the forest as wood-cutters and charcoal-burners ; there is also a small agricultural settlement on the Demerara River which is a picture of clean economic cultivation. They are, however, more conspicuous for their success in carrying on small country shops, where the profits are hardly sufficient to support people who are not content with a very bare living.

The only white men ever imported as labourers were the Madeira Portuguese. Madeira was almost ruined by the vine pest about the time of the slave emancipation, and thousands of poor people came to British Guiana. For want of care during the year of seasoning many died, and the remainder were found quite unfit for field work. They were, however, useful colonists, and are now traders and in many cases well-to-do property owners. They came as paupers, but by thrift and industry went ahead, until practically every spirit-shop and corner grocery was in their hands. Only the Chinaman can compete with them, and he only does so in the villages. The Madeiran is a law-abiding citizen, but he cringes too much to the negro. The general result of the competition of the small shops is that the poorer classes get their provisions very cheap. Unfortunately, by giving way to the demands of their customers, a condition of things has arisen that no independent shopkeeper could possibly endure. However, the Madeiran has learnt to bear and forbear, and he hardly ever resents the insults and bullyings which the negress with her penny is always ready to launch upon him. He is generally looked upon as mean, and willing to stint himself to save, but this is a character which is generally wanted in the tropics, where the tendency to thrift is always sadly lacking.

The native Indian can hardly be reckoned as a member of the community; he is, however, useful to the traveller, the gold-digger, and balata-bleeder. As a boatman, wood-cutter, or huntsman, he is in his place, but his sturdy independence prevents him from becoming a reliable servant. Make him your friend and he will do anything in his power for



INDIAN GIRL.

you, but he takes orders from no one. This refers to the man of the forest whose wants are few, and when satisfied, there is no further necessity for his working. For a gun, powder, or shot you may induce him to help you ; when he gets these he naturally wants to be free to use them. There is, however, a class of half-civilised Indians growing up who are fairly reliable, but they do not remain in town longer than is necessary for transacting their business as carriers of timber, charcoal, and cordwood. No Indian man can endure the trammels of civilisation ; sometimes a buckeen, as the women are called, will take a place as house-servant, but even these are not common. Unfortunately, the men are given to rum-drinking, and laws are made for the country districts to prevent the sale to them of spirits.

The real wild Indian is disappearing from his old haunts. Forty years ago he could be found in many of the creeks of the Demerara river where now only a few of his degenerated descendants exist. As a huntsman he must have a sort of game preserve, which is impossible where gangs of woodcutters and balata-bleeders carry on their work. He still exists, however, in the far interior, living in much the same way as he did when America was discovered, except that he does not fight. The men are still expert hunters and fishermen and the women as proficient in cultivating and preparing the staff of life, cassava-bread. Their old weapons, the bow and blow-pipe, are largely replaced by the gun, but the large fishes about the rapids are still shot in the old way.

It is generally supposed that the Indian is dying out ; whether this is really so is not quite certain.

There is no doubt, however, that he has disappeared from the coast of British Guiana ; he has also gone from those districts in Surinam and Cayenne that are occupied by bush negroes. When the colonies were in their infancy, he was a power in the land, now he is of little importance. However this may be deplored, we may safely affirm that no country can maintain a large population of hunters and fishermen, where each small community must have its own preserve. Possibly, the large number of Caribs once reported as living on the coast of Guiana really existed because they were cannibals. The meat supply was of little importance, even when supplemented by fish. Cannibalism is now quite unknown in the country, and even two centuries ago the Caribs resented any imputations of a taste for human flesh. The name is generally supposed to have been derived from these man-eaters, and there seems no reason for doubting the reports of the early travellers.

The Javanese of Surinam, who number nearly ten thousand, may possibly add another valuable element to the population. They are not considered as strong as the East Indians, but are decidedly useful labourers, and may become good colonists in the future.

Cayenne has a sort of colonising with the refuse of her tropical settlements, Algeria and other parts of Africa as well as Anam. They certainly add to the variety of races in Guiana, but it will be long before they become more than rogues and vagabonds. Meanwhile they are a danger to other colonies, for the French refugee has become notorious in everything obnoxious to a law-abiding community.

Of the whites, other than Portuguese, little can be

said. Few of them settle in the country, for officials and estates managers generally retire when their work is done. There is no leisured class and consequently no idlers, except the white women, who, unfortunately, lead very dull lives, that are only relieved by regular visits to the Mother Country. In Surinam there are two Jewish communities who keep up the old traditions, but even they are hardly prosperous. In Paramaribo they are generally shopkeepers of a somewhat better type than the Madeirans in British Guiana, but comparable to the Portuguese merchants of Georgetown. Hardly a trace of the old Dutch families can now be found in British Guiana, but the names are conspicuous among coloured creoles and blacks.

In looking over a map of the world we see European colonies or possessions everywhere, but they are only progressive to any great extent outside the tropics. The white man cannot labour in the field under a burning sun ; he can only direct and control. If there is a dense native population something may be done, but even then there is not the same desire for work as is felt in a cold climate, nor is the labourer driven so much by cold and hunger. One who has lived for many years in a hot climate and then goes home must either coddle himself over the fire or else be continually on the move. In fact, a climate makes him energetic or languid, and he can easily understand why the man of the tropics cannot do half the work of one born and bred in a temperate clime. Again, there is the winter, the incentive to thrift, for without stores laid up man must starve for half the year. Such, however, is not the case where there is no cold season, fruits and vegetables ripen twice a year,

and are practically to be had at all times without a resort to storehouses and barns. It follows, therefore, that there is no incentive to thrift—no particular desire to work more than is really necessary to provide for the wants of the day.

Under such conditions the man of the tropics has lived for ages, and the Indian of tropical America has become more independent than possibly any other race. He is a hunter and fisherman ; and his wife does the little cultivation which provides bread for the family. Under such conditions it cannot be expected that these people would ever work on a plantation, and only the ignorant Spaniards made such experiments as drove the inhabitants of the Indies to suicide. A few of the early settlers in Guiana tried compulsion, with disastrous results to themselves ; others attempted to carry out the work by white labour. But it would not do. Sickness and death carried them off one after another until the remnant was compelled to flee the country.

Then came the benevolent idea of saving the Indian by bringing another tropical race—people who had always been labourers in Africa, either as actual slaves or under chiefs whose commands must be obeyed on pain of death. Slavery was natural to them, and only a few were prepared to struggle for freedom. Until Africans were brought to Guiana every attempted colony failed, but immediately after the importation of these suitable tropical labourers we find the English colony of Surinam making a fair start.

Whatever may be said against negro slavery there is no doubt that hardly one of the negroes of to-day wishes to go back to Africa. The Guiana creole black man looks down with contempt on his black

brother who was rescued from a slaver and brought here as a free man. Slavery, has peopled the West Indies and Guiana, and will, no doubt, result in future benefit to the world.

The mistake of all early settlers was in taking no account of the fact that even the Guinea negro had to be acclimatised to Guiana. The white man found out for himself that he could do little for the first year after his arrival, but he did not consider that the change from one tropical country to another was of much importance. This he had to learn by bitter experience, not once only, but several times. Even horses must be seasoned before they can be put to work ; as for English plough-horses, they die very quickly.

It may be safely stated that tropical countries can only be developed by tropical races. The European may direct, but he cannot labour in the field. A Dutch Governor of Guiana once said that a plantation without slaves is a body without a soul ; in the absence of labour land is worthless. If there is not a supply in the country the planters must give up or import people from other tropical countries.

On the amount of imported labour has always depended the prosperity of Guiana. The most important of the three colonies is that belonging to Great Britain, and it is so because the labour supply, although not by any means as large as could be wished, is greater than in the other colonies. The ups and downs in the past were dependent on the number of slaves, and these were always deficient. At the same time, as long as the slave trade was permitted, this was only a matter of money. However cheap the African might be, he was always an expensive item in the laying out of a plantation,

and when a mortgage was passed the number of slaves was of far more importance than acreage, buildings, or cultivation. The cry was always for cheap negroes on long credit—the more the better. Under the Dutch, what is now British Guiana became of some importance when it was opened to all nations. The result was the arrival of British settlers from the West Indies, bringing capital and labourers. The two rivers Demerara and Essequibo were developed by this cause alone. For a time the boom continued, but the labour supply was still deficient. A planter, with his 250 acres, could only cultivate a small portion. From 1796, however, while under British rule, the supply of Africans was increased, with the result that in three years the exports were trebled. New land was taken up, cultivation extended, capital flowed in, the whole sea-coast was blooming with cotton. Then, in 1807, came the abolition of the slave trade and a serious check to development.

Surinam was practically ruined when it was given up to the Netherlands. Under the capitulation the British colonists were permitted to leave with their effects, which in their opinion included slaves, of whom there were over four thousand. The Dutch knew that a colony without labour was worthless, so they put as many obstacles as possible to this removal. Only by another war was the full permission granted, and nearly half the slaves taken off to Jamaica, where they and their owners met with a hearty welcome. Poor Surinam was put back for some twenty years, and Jamaica gained advantages which no doubt much assisted in her development as a young colony.

After the slave trade was abolished by Great Britain other countries still carried it on, even when

their Governments were supposed to discountenance it. Several vessels brought Africans to Surinam, notwithstanding the reports and protests of the British consuls. The fact was, the demand for labour justified the risk of execution for piracy.

In the British colony the want was quite as urgent, but no illicit slave-trading took place. Protests were, however, made against the law that prevented labourers from being removed from one colony to another. Prices were very high where the demand was great and correspondingly lower in depressed West Indian islands. Why should the trade be hampered? Here in Demerara £100 to £150 was asked for an able-bodied man; in some of the islands he was worth about half as much. But the law prevented removal.

Now came the British emancipation. Immediately the hours of work were reduced from 10 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per day—a reduction of one-fourth. Already most of the plantations of cotton and coffee were abandoned to concentrate labour on sugar estates; now ruin stared the planter in the face, for in four years the apprentice would be entirely free. When this critical time arrived the labour supply failed; women no longer went into the field, men only worked when they pleased, and at extortionate wages. More than half the plantations were abandoned, and the others worked at a loss in hopes that immigration might prevent total ruin.

Already a few negroes had been brought from the West Indies, but nothing like a supply was obtainable. Some Africans from condemned slavers also helped a little, and an attempt was made to get Kroo boys. But the Exeter Hall contingent would not allow recruiting of labourers in Africa for fear

it might develop another kind of slave trade. Suggestions were made to bring Irish and Germans, but without success, only a few people coming who were quite unfit to labour in the field. Maltese were tried, but without success, and were sent back. Madeirans, who were then suffering very much from the result of the vine disease, were brought in some numbers, but they could not labour in the field. They, however, became gardeners, pedlars, and shop-keepers, their descendants now forming a very important element in the population.

Finally, coolies from India were brought under engagement. At last the best labourer had been found, but the planter waited a long time before he got a proper supply. The first coolie immigrants from Calcutta came as strangers to a strange land. The planter knew nothing of their habits, customs, or language, and could only leave them to their sirdar who, it was said, beat the coolie and drove him into the field whether sick or well. No one seems to have thought of the care necessary during acclimatisation or the sympathy required by a stranger. The coolie was an experiment; he was the last resort of the ruined planter, who had no money to provide all the necessaries now demanded by the Government.

Those good people the Aborigines' friends, &c., were soon up in arms against a system of immigration under contract, and yet they could hardly think it desirable for people to be dumped down in a foreign country, without arrangements being made for their support. It was absolutely necessary that some one should be responsible for their food and shelter, and equally necessary that a consideration be given. But, in their opinion, the immigrants

were going into a "new slavery"; the planters wanted to drive them as they once did the slaves. Complaints were made that the Sirdars beat the coolies, and a manager was fined, although he knew nothing of the matter. There were difficulties connected with a contract made in India and not ratified in the colony, on the strength of which some of the coolies left the plantations and became vagrants. A curious case was that of the Gladstones, when they sold Plantation Vreed-en-Hoop. An official was sent to inform the coolies that their contract with John Gladstone & Co. was broken by the change of ownership; unless they chose to sign on with the new proprietor they were free to do as they liked. The result was that some left and joined the vagrants. The end of the agitation was that coolie immigration was stopped by the British Government.

After a great deal of trouble and the passing of many ordinances the present system was adopted. Under this arrangement the coolie agrees to serve five years and to work at the current rate of wages, after which a residence of another five years entitles him to a free passage back to India. There is a Protector of Immigrants and a large staff of agents, Government medical service, provisions for housing, and hospitals. Under this system about five thousand have arrived annually until of late, when the number has been lessened, more than half of whom remain in the colony. By their means the exports of sugar have nearly doubled as compared with those of the highest years before the emancipation. Even now, however, there is a want of cheap labour if the colony is ever to be developed to the extent that might be wished.

Chinese coolies have also been brought to British

Guiana under similar arrangements, but without success. They are not so well suited for field labour, but most of them have become very useful colonists, competing with the Madeirans as small shopkeepers.

The slaves in Surinam were emancipated in 1863, but the change was not so violent as in the British colony, for the negro served ten years for wages before becoming entirely free. The want of labour is, however, much felt, and coolie immigration from India and Java on similar lines to that in British Guiana has worked well for some years past.

When we search the world for a good tropical labourer we have to profit by the experience of the Demerara planter. Having excluded the American race, we may go over to Africa. But the tropical negro is not prolific, nor is his country over-populated. War and the slave trade have done their work, and it may be safely stated that even were the negro the best labourer, he is practically unattainable. In Asia we have Chinese, but they are more suitable to temperate climes, as are also the people of Japan. Ultimately we must come to India as the only place within the tropics where the people are prolific, and where at times it is of advantage that the population be reduced by emigration. For ages India has been civilised, and for as many ages the balance of human life has been kept by war, pestilence, and famine. Under British rule these checks have been much reduced, with the result that the people are too numerous. It has become necessary to look out for new homes, and here in tropical America there is room for millions. "Give me my heart's desire in coolies, and I will make you a million hogsheads of sugar without stirring from the colony," said a Demerara planter to Anthony Trollope, fifty years

ago. As yet the number hardly exceeds 150,000 ; but we can safely look forward to an increase, for, unlike the negro, the East Indian does not die out. In many respects this new India, as the early voyagers called America, is similar to the Eastern tropics, and the children of the coolies are growing rice as their forefathers have done for ages in the old country. They have learnt how to accommodate themselves to the new conditions, and are fast becoming the backbone of British Guiana.

The good people who stigmatise coolie immigration as a "new slavery," do not understand the East Indian. Having thrown off the fetters of caste, he has become more independent than he once was at home. The system may be a five-years bondage in one sense, yet in another it is such freedom as was never before known by these people. No doubt the losing of caste may be felt at first, but afterwards the man comes more to the front ; instead of being one of a hidebound set he becomes an individual. Every one knows that travel to a foreign country and the observation of other people develops the mind.

Those who speak of bondage would perhaps like to have the stranger to a new country left entirely free to become a vagrant and a burden on the community. But they would not advise an English labourer to go to one of the temperate colonies without having some work provided for him on arrival. This is what is done in British Guiana. The planter takes the coolie as a raw hand, a "tender-foot" if you like, and turns him out at the end of five years as a fit and proper colonist, if he is content to forego his back passage at the end of another five-years residence. As over 100,000 East Indians are now settled in British Guiana and hardly think

of going back, it may be safely stated that the future prospects of the colony are largely dependent upon them. What makes the prospect more bright is the fact that his exemplary kindness to his children prevents the heavy death-rate among the little ones so conspicuous in the negro villages. The dark side is perhaps indicated in the fact that the rising generation, by mixing with what is called the "centipede" class of negro boys, may become something like the "hooligans" of North America. However, it is hoped that this evil influence may be reduced before it becomes serious.

Let us see what these "new slaves," as they have been called, really are. In the first place "Sammy" is no fool. He may be somewhat of a hypocrite, or even a liar, but you could no more treat him as a slave than you could your fellow-European. He knows his rights; he is always ready to resent anything like tyranny. Like the English workman, he is always ready to dispute about wages. Touch him on this sore point and he is armed at once—the arm being a formidable hackia stick, the quarter-staff of the mediæval Englishman. Misunderstandings occur, and Sammy must be pacified. He is, however, open to reason, and here comes in the immigration agent, to see that he is not cheated.

Sammy a slave! The idea is absurd. He is the real master of the sugar estate; without him everything would go to ruin. The Government humours and pets him. The planter must see that he is properly housed and doctored, but above everything his wages must be paid when due. At the least suspicion of stopping his pay, even for bad work, off he goes to the Immigration Office. Sometimes a gang of fifty will march twenty miles to have a matter

of a penny a task adjudicated. On occasion he does not hesitate to chop or beat an overseer who perhaps finds fault with his work. On the whole, however, he is not vindictive ; he sticks up for what he believes to be his rights.

Nowhere in the tropics, except India, do we find a thrifty people. For ages they have been forced by circumstances to hoard up valuables ; probably the grasping nature of their rulers was the predisposing factor. The man loads his wife with silver, and sometimes gold, until it seems as if she must feel the weight as a burden. This was the old way ; he now deposits his money in the savings bank. Guiana wants the man who saves, not he who spends everything at once and then becomes a burden on the community. Perhaps at some future time, if he survives, the negro may also learn thrift, but at present we can only hope for the development of such a grand virtue.

Though not so strong as the negro, the coolie can be depended upon for five days' work every week. Of course, there are malingerers, and in the early days of immigration, when the sweepings of the bazaars were sent off, many weak and unfit coolies were only burdens on the estates, until they could be sent back. Now, however, the selection is well done, and it is quite a pleasure to see the arrivals from a coolie ship. When they first land they go about the streets hand in hand, chattering with their more experienced countrymen, and specially inquiring as to wages. They are not very energetic, but they want money and will work and save to get it. Wages run to about a shilling a day, and food costs about fourpence. The man's clothing is only a few yards of white cotton, and the woman's dress, although always

graceful and picturesque, is not expensive. The savings of a couple are invested at first in necklaces, nose and finger rings, bracelets and anklets, all of which can be pawned or sold if necessary. There is a strong feeling of amity between them, which makes them combine for any object they think desirable. This feeling, however, gives trouble in the magistrates' courts, for all relations and friends will combine to deceive when one of the party is charged with an offence. No doubt this feeling is intensified by living in a foreign country. Money-lending is common, and often very high rates of interest are charged, but as a rule the borrower is honest. Unlike the Chinaman, the East Indian is not a gambler.

From the legal standpoint, perhaps the great difficulty with the coolie-man is his jealousy. Unfortunately, the number of women brought from India is insufficient; some of them leave their husbands when offers of rich jewellery are made by other men. In such cases the husband does not hesitate to chop the faithless woman to pieces. Possibly he wonders that the law takes cognisance of such a thing and wants to hang him, for after all it is one of the primary laws of nature to kill a woman under such circumstances. We can hardly help admiring this trait in his character, for after all the condoning of such an offence is dishonourable. Carelessness in sexual relations is by no means conducive to morality or the higher family life. When we see how happy the East Indian is with his wife and family around him, we are compelled to contrast them with the negroes, whose infidelity is common and hardly reprobated.

Coolie riots are now largely a story of the past, but they must not be forgotten. The causes were

almost entirely disputes about wages ; they may be compared to the strikes so common now in Europe and the United States. Some have been serious, but hitherto have always been confined to a particular estate. Combination was conspicuous within that area, but never became universal in British Guiana. Armed police and even soldiers have been necessary at times, but the row was soon over. In no case was there any renewal of the disturbance ; arbitration by the immigration officials always settled the matter. "Sammy" is open to reason, and has great respect for the "coolie papa," as they call the chief of the department. The danger always lies in a misunderstanding ; the planter has therefore learnt to be very cautious in his dealings, and to see that there must be no mistake in the pay-sheet. Nothing serious has occurred for nearly forty years, but now and again an overseer is assaulted, or a gang may be seen marching off to the immigration agent to make a complaint that wages are too little. The matter is at once taken in hand, and the agent's decision is considered final by both planter and coolie. These decisions may appear at times somewhat arbitrary, but the authorities are prepared to enforce them, even going so far as to demand the discharge of an overseer, and in one case, at least, of a manager. The proprietor is bound to submit, otherwise the coolies might be removed ; this would, in many cases, mean utter ruin.

The results of coolie immigration in British Guiana can best be seen by comparing it with the other colonies. Cayenne has done practically nothing, and only of late years has Surinam begun to develop its cultivation by their aid. Everywhere in Guiana the negro is decreasing ; in the middle of the eighteenth

century Surinam had a larger population of slaves than the whole number of its present inhabitants. British Guiana also received compensation in 1834 for about the same number of black and coloured people as it has to-day, leaving immigrants from the West Indies, China, and India out of the calculation. The negro in Barbados increases rapidly, as also does he in the Southern States ; here he is certainly decreasing. Surinam was the most important colony before the French wars, 1793-1815, and it prospered under British rule ; since that time it has been at a standstill. Possibly it may again rival British Guiana in the future should immigration be increased. Possibly also the Javanese may be an important factor in this development. For work on rubber and cacao plantations they seem the ideal labourers. Like the Chinese, they are very careful in what they undertake ; in fact, they may be considered as skilful gardeners rather than rough labourers. If Guiana ever becomes noted for its rubber plantations, the Javanese will undoubtedly come to the front, but they do not appear to be as suitable for sugar estates as the East Indians.



MACOUSHI GIRL.



INDIAN WOMAN WITH HER BURDEN.

CHAPTER XI

THE NATIVE INDIANS

The different tribes—Their houses—Canoes—Cassava, “the staff of life”—Pepper-pot—Cultivation—Woman's work and man's work—The hunter and fisherman—Weapons—Cotton hammocks—Mosaic feather-work—Geometrical patterns on baskets and aprons—Laps—Dancing dresses—Piaimen—Esoteric cults—Word-building—Polygamy in the chiefs—Its advantages—Curare—Medicines—Independent nature of the Indian—Blood-feuds—Hospitality—The Akawois, the gypsies of Guiana—Thrift unknown—Famines—Piarrie feasts—Drunken orgies—Native modesty—Danger of clothing—Use of the Indian to the traveller—Decreasing near the settlements—Christian missions.

THE Indians of Guiana are of different tribes, each with its own language, but their manner of living varies but little. The Caribs or Galibis, once the rulers of the coast, are now much reduced in number, but branches under the names of Arecunas, Akawois, Patamonas, and Macushis are still well represented in the interior. They are now quite peaceful, neither fighting with each other nor interfering with the colonies. The Akawois are, to some extent, wandering traders, but their occupation has now become of little consequence. The Waraus of the coast still exist and carry on the work for which they were once famed, the making of corials or canoes. This was the tribe once reported to live in trees, the fact being that their huts are raised above the mud flats

on the stems of Eta palms, the upper part having been cut off. They are generally considered dirty, as well as ugly; this is probably due to their surroundings. The Arawaks inhabit the creeks a little inland; they are the same gentle tribe that once was at enmity with the Carib and that found it so difficult to stand against him. Practically, also, this is the only tribe that has become more or less civilised from contact with the European. The inland tribes besides these are, in British Guiana, Wapisianas, including Atorais and Amaripas, Tarumas, Wai-wois, and Pianoghottas; in Surinam and Cayenne, Roucuyennes, Emerillons, Trios, Aparai, Oyampi, and Ouapichiane. Some of these are dying out as certain others have in the historic period. Smallpox was once very fatal, but it has not been recorded in Guiana as epidemic for fifty years.

The native Indian is leaving the coast, but he can still be found in the far interior, living in much the same manner as he did when Guiana was discovered. His settlements can hardly be called villages, for they are composed of but a few houses, and rarely contain more than half a dozen families. The forest houses are large thatched sheds, open on all sides, generally large enough to contain twenty people or more without crowding. Slung to the rafters are the hammocks, which are beds, couches, and seats, practically the only articles of furniture; here and there is, however, a bench, but this is of little importance. On the Savannah the houses are circular, with wattled sides and open doorways, to keep out the damp, chilly wind which sometimes blows in these open places. There is no wind in the forest, therefore only a shelter from the rain is necessary.

The open shed, or benab, was probably invented to protect the fire, and a small shed is still used for that purpose, especially where the house is enclosed. In former times, and even still in outlying parts, the fire is carefully preserved, because of the difficulty in very wet weather of kindling it by the primitive method of drilling one stick by another.

The settlements are almost universally on the banks of rivers ; every man has his dug-out canoe or corial, and in the shallower creeks a bent slab of bark called a wood-skin. With the aid of these small craft they journey to long distances, hunt and fish, as perfectly at home in them as we should be in the most stable boats.

The staff of life is cassava, the root of a poisonous plant which through the ages has been cultivated and manufactured into food and drink. The poison, which is prussic acid, can be driven off by heat, and no doubt it was a wonderful discovery, perhaps causing many a disaster before the poison was properly eliminated. The root is peeled and grated, after which the pulp is pressed in a curious snake-like tube of basketwork, called a "matapee," which on shortening opens out to take the pulp, and when drawn out by a weight or lever is lengthened and much reduced in diameter, with the result that the poisonous juice is extracted. The pulp is then spread in a layer upon a hot stone or iron plate to form a pancake, which is wholesome and palatable, especially with sauce from the pepper-pot, otherwise it is dry and has been called saw-dust bread. The expressed juice is evaporated to the consistency of molasses and becomes cassareep, the basis of the pepper-pot, into which any kind of meat is thrown and by daily sterilisation is kept sweet for ever. The cakes are

chewed and thrown into water to form an intoxicating drink called "piwarrie," of which the Indian is very fond, although it takes a gallon or two to make him drunk. There is a sweet cassava, with less poison, which can be boiled and eaten as a vegetable, but this is not used for cakes. Some of the Indians make a granular preparation called "farine" or "couac," which can be stored and kept for a long time; the starch of the root can also be prepared as a powder or granulated into tapioca.

The cassava is grown on a clearing in the forest by the women, but the men chop down the trees, leaving them to dry for a few months, after which they are burnt. It is interesting to note that though the fire in such a clearing is like a furnace, yet the surrounding trees are only scorched, for such a thing as a real forest fire is unknown. Between the blackened logs the cassava stalks are planted by simply digging holes with a cutlass, which now replaces the pointed stick, once the only digging implement. Such a clearing is fertile for two or three years, but later weeds begin to overrun it, and then another is made. Besides cassava, sweet potatoes, yams, Indian corn, and capsicums are grown in small quantities, but the staff of life is generally cassava. The women do all the planting and preparation of food, their province being, from the Indian's point of view, that of production; a man destroys life, but a woman represents fertility.

Bread being provided by the wife, it is the man's special business to get meat. He is the hunter and fisherman, and must go out at regular intervals to supply the pepper-pot and barbecue. He is as much bound to do his duty as the woman is to do hers; a wife has been known to leave her husband when he

became too lazy to hunt or fish. Dogs are kept to assist in tracking game, but the Indian himself is an excellent tracker. His naked skin harmonises with the tree trunks, and his footfall is so silent that nothing in the forest is alarmed.

His weapons are of the utmost importance. Although the gun is now common, the bow and arrow are still used, especially for shooting large fish that will not take a bait. The blow-pipe with poisoned darts is also used for birds and monkeys. The making of these weapons is the man's work, for it would not do for a woman to handle them ; in fact, they would be spoiled. A great deal of time is spent in fixing up the bows, which must be the right length, about the height of a man, and the arrows with different points to suit each kind of game, beast or bird.

Formerly the man was also a warrior, and he still generally keeps a heavy hard-wood club hanging up in his *benab*, although he may never have reason to use it, except as a *kenaima* or avenger of blood. This duty is sometimes imposed upon him when a relation is killed in a drunken quarrel or even accidentally, for the law of retaliation prevails here as in most other primitive communities.

Near the house are generally grown a few cotton-bushes for hammocks, agaves or bromelias for bow-strings and hammock-ropes, arrow-canes for arrow-shafts, anatto shrubs for the red paint with which the face is painted, and *beenas* or charms to promote success in hunting. The woman spins the cotton into strong cord for hammocks with a spindle and her fingers. Her cotton hammock is so well netted that no colonist would have any but the native article. It was evidently an invention of some past

age, to avoid lying on the damp ground or a griddle-like bed of sticks. It appears to have been unknown in the Old World before the discovery of America, and to have been adopted at once by the early voyagers ; the name is the Carib "hamaka," not, as some suppose, "hang mat," which looks so plausible. The more common hammock is netted in a peculiar way, but some are woven, and a few of these decorated with feather-work.

Mosaic feather-work seems to have been peculiar to America. It reached its highest point in Mexico, where the Spanish priests utilised the artists in applying it to the forming of excellent mosaic pictures, some of which are still in existence. The Indians of the interior of Guiana, on the borders of Brazil, make elegant decorated hammocks, but they are now very scarce. The Indian crown is a head-dress that suggests the halo of a saint. It is worn aback of the head so that it shows as a corona rather than a hat ; there is, however, a cylindrical variety which, no doubt, is that represented in old pictures ; so far, we believe, this kind is only found among the Indians of the upper Marowyne. The harmony of colouring is excellently produced by laying feathers of one colour over another, the result being a band of three tints finished off by three long tail feathers of a macaw. These concentric circles of different colours are reproduced upon the decorated hammocks, but there are also other patterns.

Geometrical patterns of most intricate lines are found on basket-work, old pottery, *queyus* or aprons, and on their painted faces. The general idea of a painted Indian is vague ; the fact is not appreciated that this painting is done in a most careful and artistic manner. The lines are thin and delicate,



INDIAN WOMAN'S APRONS.

more commonly red lines on the forehead, the cheeks, and at either end of the lips, generally angled, barred or latticed, often varied with black and yellow. The cross is common, as is also L H T, the broad arrow, and key patterns. These are generally rather simple, but far more intricate geometrical patterns are found on the basket-work and aprons. The maze in a host of forms, and the cross, with its variant, the swastika, are conspicuous, together with geometrical modifications of snakes, monkeys, frogs, dogs, trees, and even men. The lines are always true, and the general effect very good. Wavy lines are seen on pottery, but the exigencies of working with coloured beads and strips prevent other than combinations of straight lines in baskets and aprons.

The *queyu*, or apron, is the only article of dress worn by the women. Since intercourse with European traders was commenced it has been made of glass beads, but when America was discovered it was simply in its best form strings of threaded seeds, and in some cases only a triangular strip of bast, the inner bark of the monkey-pot. Necklaces of seeds as well as beads are also worn by the women. The man's lap is a piece of blue Salempore cloth hung from a cord drawn tightly round the body above the hips; this is usually his only article of dress, but when out hunting he carries a skin wallet for his powder and shot, hung from a cord passing over the right shoulder and under the left arm. Only on festive occasions does he wear the feather crown in conjunction with necklaces of the canine teeth of the peccary or the incisors of the acouri or aguti. At dances he wears a mantle of the tail feathers of the macaw and hangs down his back from his necklace a bob of toucan's skins or a circlet hung with the

elytra of a Buprestis beetle to make a rustling noise. In addition there is a calabash rattle in the hand with a belt and anklets of rattling seeds. In his right hand is a length of about five feet from the trumpet-tree, which he strikes on the ground to mark time, and blows at intervals. The chief, who is also leader, generally wears a mantle of dry palm-leaves, which rustles as he moves to the time of a drum. The movements are quite deliberate, and the whole affair is carried out without the least appearance of excitement, it being more of the nature of a march with stamping than a real dance.

There is no bond of union between the different families, and hardly a trace of the old system of electing a war-chief. Sometimes we see an acknowledged captain, who is often a Piaiman, a sort of doctor, priest, and chief in one person. Some of these are decidedly clever, and have ideas that are almost startling to one who only thinks of them as impostors. Mr. F. P. Penard, of Surinam, was able to get a great deal of their hidden lore, from which it appears that they have esoteric cults only known to the initiates. Unfortunately, Mr. Penard died before he could complete the work, in which he appears to have gone farther than any other anthropologist. His work was to have dealt with Carib word-building, which would have been most interesting had he lived to finish it. He said the language was very rich, and gave examples of how words were built, one of which was *ono* to sleep, *oné* to dream, *oni* to wake, *onu* to think, and *ona* to realise. In connection with many of these words are myths, some of which are peculiarly interesting. Only the initiates know these root words and their proper meaning, which, of course, they are supposed

to keep secret ; this they call *aw-la*, the self or ego, and the names built up *wa-la*, things compared or like. The Arawaks must build up words in the same way, as may be seen in names like *ara*, the red macaw ; *aroa* the jaguar, *arowta* the red monkey, *pirara* a fish with red spots, *caria-caria* a red flower, *curri-curri* a red bird, *caricuri* gold, &c. ; the meaning of the root word would in this case be red, from which would come shining, fierce, and bloody.

The Piaiman has been condemned by good people as the upholder of a religious system which must be abolished before the Indian can become a civilised man or a member of the community. But as he represents the old traditions and laws of the community, we should not be too hasty in condemning him, certainly not until we have replaced his natural religion by something better. Meanwhile, however hard it may be to get at his esoteric thoughts and ideas, they should be carefully studied for the light they throw on primitive man.

The Indian is generally a monogamist, but the chief is entitled to have two or three wives, for he has sometimes to entertain strangers, and must therefore be able to provide a larger food supply than one woman can cultivate. His dignity requires him to be somewhat different from the others, but at present he is not recognised as having any real authority. Missionaries sometimes attempt to get them to abolish polygamy, but this is a matter in which they should not interfere, for a discarded woman has no place in the primitive community, and it would be cruel to have her cast off. There is no such person as an old maid or even an unattached widow, for every woman is married when

she arrives at the suitable age. While admitting that monogamy is the better condition, we must also admit that the natural man is polygamous, like many animals, and that there is nothing really wrong in the system under certain conditions.

The Piaiman is, no doubt, in some cases an impostor, but in others he seems to be a very sharp fellow. He is, in a way, a seer, for his knowledge of the habits of animals enables him to advise the others where to hunt and fish with the greatest prospect of success. As a medicine-man he knows the properties of the plants which grow in the forest, and also the method of preparing the celebrated arrow poison, curare. There are, no doubt, superstitious observances connected with his process, but similar unnecessary rules were laid down in European herbals of a century ago. Some of his remedies are good—for example, vapour baths, counter-irritation with stinging ants, and the application of barks containing tannin to cuts and ulcers. Inoculation against snake-bites is worth investigating, for while we do not admit its entire efficacy, there may be something in it. The bush negroes and creoles of Surinam are generally inoculated, and have confidence in the supposed immunity.

The most striking characteristic of the Indian is his quiet, gentle nature ; this is especially noticeable in the Arawak. If he does not agree with you he goes off, and will perhaps leave you to find your way alone without troubling himself about his pay. Theft is impossible within the community, for everything is practically common. At the same time, the individual belongings are respected as a matter of custom rather than law. Personal wrongs lead to a blood feud in which the whole family is concerned,



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the nearest of kin to the person taking upon himself to avenge the wrong in the case of murder or manslaughter. The primitive man is so liberal with anything he has that he will sometimes hand over a weapon or article of dress if he sees that the stranger admires it ; a woman has been even known to hand over her pretty bead apron to a white traveller, exposing herself stark naked. Sometimes they will leave themselves almost bare of food to supply a large party. They cannot understand that a white man must not be equally free with his belongings, and no doubt think him very mean to withhold a valuable knife or gun when the chief has been so liberal.

Hospitality is expected from the chief, who, by means of help from others, makes a large clearing and employs his wives to plant it. If a party is travelling they sometimes exhaust the provision supply, and the poor chief has to take his people to the next settlement, where they can do as the others had done. All this is a matter of course, and no one is annoyed. We may suppose that there is a limit to such hospitality, as is shown in the history of the early colonies, but it may be safely stated that among themselves it is never resented. Something like the rule of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us has been adopted for ages.

No doubt this has another side, which is shown in the position of the Akawois, the gypsies of Guiana. This tribe was once much feared by the other Indians, and even by the early settlers. They were wandering traders, noted for their skill in preparing the arrow poison, which, possibly because it was troublesome to concoct and required much care and trouble, was correspondingly valuable. Too costly to be given away for a mere asking, it was bartered for ham-

mocks, tools, and weapons. Not content to keep shops in any one place, these people hawked about the country, going long distances, and sometimes among tribes that were by no means prepared to welcome strangers. In such cases the traders were not content to take a refusal, but fought until an arrangement was made, or conquered and took what they wanted.

As may be supposed, the Indian is not thrifty ; such a virtue is unknown in the tropics. Some food products cannot be stored, but cassava is an exception, for as farine or couac it will keep in a dry place for months. As a rule the Indian's supply of his staff of life is limited ; his cultivation is regulated by the fact that one woman has to do all the work after the man has made the clearing. We cannot expect hard labour from these women, and therefore the supply is never more than the requirements of the family. A bad season, perhaps a flood, or more generally a drought, reduces this to almost nothing, and then a famine ensues. Or a wandering family may unexpectedly come and eat up everything, with the same result. If the famine is general, as is sometimes the case, the poor Indian is put to great straits, for at times game, birds, and fishes are difficult to catch. Famine, war, and disease have been the factors that always kept down any possibility of an increase in numbers, and thus the balance of life in man, as in other animals, was preserved.

Even with a good season the provision supply might be wasted on that deplorable orgie, a piwarrie feast. This is the great blot on the Indian's character ; above everything else he has a longing to get drunk. Near the coast restrictions are put on

the sale of rum, which has done so much in the past to wipe him off the face of the earth. But he can always fall back upon his beloved piwarrie or casseri. The first is made with toasted cassava bread, chewed by the women and children round a hollowed log or a corial. At intervals they spit the chewed pulp into this great vessel, spoiling, in some cases, the food of a family for weeks. Water is poured on, and in about forty-eight hours the beer is ready. Then begins a disgusting orgie. The men lie in their hammocks, and the women hand round the liquor in calabashes. Plenty is required to make a man drunk, in some cases three or four gallons. It acts as a diuretic in all cases, and in some as an emetic as well ; it can therefore be understood that the orgie is disgusting. When drunk the Indian is no longer the gentleman of the forest ; he boasts of former deeds, rakes up old feuds, and sometimes provokes a quarrel which ends in a fight, with a consequent blood-feud. When these orgies occur the traveller should get far away, but this is not often possible, for his own boatmen will certainly want to join the revel and to linger for two or three days. In any case a white man will hardly be able to sleep if he takes up his quarters within hearing of the din. Even the women take part and lose their usual modest demeanour.

It might be supposed that a woman with no more covering than a bead apron about a foot square could hardly be described as modest, but such is really the case. Probably no women in the world are more free from the suggestion of indecency than the Indian. In the first place her colour harmonises with her surroundings. Where a naked white woman, as painted by an artist, at once suggests that some-

thing is wanted to cover her, no such idea is possible in the case of the red or black race, except, perhaps, to the prude. We have seen the really modest women of the forest, and have been told by white women who have lived among them that there is not the least suggestion of indecency in them. Such gestures as are seen among negresses, and even sometimes among white women, are quite unknown. But the good people say they must be clothed, even in the tropics, where comfort consists only with the very lightest covering. It is a very suggestive fact that the Indian boatman who wears a shirt and trousers generally takes them off and packs them away when he sees a heavy shower coming. The rain beats on his bare shoulders and does not hurt him, but if the white man gets drenched and has not a dry suit he often gets fever. The sun comes out, the Indian puts on his dry clothes and goes on with his paddling in comfort. The sooner the white man learns that the dress for a tropical climate should not be in the English fashion the better for his health.

The Indian is by no means useless to the community. In the past, although he never would till the soil, he was the meat provider when there were no cattle or other domestic animals. Every planter then kept an Indian huntsman, who, when treated as a friend, was much attached to the white man. He was also useful in clearing the land, for he is an expert with the axe. As a guide in the forest he is indispensable, for no traveller can get on without him. The captains and bowmen of the gold-diggers and balata-bleeders' boats are almost universally Indians, or of the blood of the red man, more or less mixed with white and black. These

things are within his province as a *man*; agriculture is woman's work and would be degrading, or at least improper. Some of his old prejudices will possibly be modified in time, for already he will, on occasion, carry loads for a traveller over the Savannah, one of the woman's special duties, which formerly he could hardly be got to perform. It is only, however, when special inducements are offered that he will demean himself in such a way.

Something will have to be done for him when the country is overrun by the gold-digger, balata-bleeder, and wood-cutter, for his hunting-grounds will be no longer available. Already he is getting away from these disturbing elements and will, perhaps, wander off to that wilder country to the north of the Amazon, leaving only a few half-civilised people to represent the numerous tribes which once occupied the coast and kept off some early voyagers, who were not considered as friends. Within our own forty-years experience there has been a great change. On the creeks of the Demerara we have seen the unsophisticated red man, living his natural life as a hunter or fisherman, and moving up and down the creek in his own dug-out canoe. He is now represented by a few wood-cutters and charcoal-burners who have lost the old pleasant manners and quiet demeanour of their fathers. Some will say that they are becoming civilised, but the first stages in a radical change of any people are not pleasant. Their old safeguards of habit and custom give way before the new conditions, and for a long time nothing is adopted to take their place.

Christian missionaries do not always try to find out the good points of native races with a view to developing them on suitable lines. Their attempts to

bring together larger communities than the neighbouring hunting-grounds can support are bound to end disastrously. The Roman Catholics in Venezuela did better, for they started with cattle farms, thus providing meat from the beginning and rendering wide hunting-grounds unnecessary. On such lines reservations may be granted, but not otherwise, for large communities of hunters and fishermen in one place are impossible.

CHAPTER XII

THE CENSUS AND MORTALITY OF DIFFERENT RACES

Sanitary conditions—Drunkenness—Ganje and opium—Decrease of population—Laxity of sexual relations—Slave nurseries—Census returns—Coloured people—Infant mortality—Birth rate—Causes of death—Sanitary arrangements—Tight clothing—Cleanliness of the naked man.

GUIANA is not now an unhealthy country. There is no yellow-fever, no smallpox or other epidemic disease, and even consumption is not such a pest as in some other countries. True, there are malaria and dysentery, both of which will, no doubt, be much reduced, if not eliminated, when the drainage is improved and a better water supply secured for the lower classes. There is no doubt a great deal of sickness of the low-fever type, due to improper modes of living, close dwellings, and unsuitable clothing, but this is largely preventable. At one time the drinking habits of the whites were responsible for a great deal of the mortality; in fact, a medical man in Georgetown sixty years ago showed that in his profession at least one-third of the deaths were due to drunkenness. This is not so conspicuous nowadays, although, unfortunately, excessive drinking is still too common.

The negro is not often a drunkard, but he will

sometimes indulge in rum until he becomes maddened and give work for the police and magistrates. The East Indian rarely takes spirits, but he likes to have a pipe of ganje or Indian hemp ; the Chinaman also loves his opium. Unfortunately, the smoking of these drugs has been discouraged in favour of rum-drinking, which is decidedly more injurious. Possibly smoking of opium or ganje tends, as does tobacco, to lassitude, but nothing that is smoked can possibly give so much trouble as rum-drinking. However we may feel convinced of the needless waste of time and money on these things, we have to admit that intoxicants of some kind satisfy a craving of almost every race.

The negro in Guiana is not increasing in numbers. During slavery the decrease was set down to cruelty and oppression, but under present circumstances we must look for the real cause. This is undoubtedly the absence of the proper appreciation of the duties of mother and father. Sexual relations have always been lax, and probably they are more so than they could possibly have been when under the paternal care of the old master. Man was originally a polygamist, but promiscuous sexual intercourse is decidedly unnatural and wrong.

Man is a mammal ; children are born in a helpless condition, as in monogamous animals ; this seems to indicate that even polygamy was a drawback. The rule everywhere in the animal world is, that when the young are helpless they must have parental care from both sexes. Hence cats and dogs, that pair under natural conditions, have blind and helpless kittens and puppies, while horses and cattle, on the contrary, walk about with their foals and calves almost immediately after these are born. Polygamy

and promiscuity mean that paternal care is wanting and children are neglected.

The negro of the lower class has always been noted for his laxity, even when legally married. This applies to both sexes, and therefore children are often considered an incumbrance. Under slavery, and especially after 1807, when importation was stopped, the greatest possible care was taken of the children. Privileges were granted to mothers, and it was part of the manager's duties to see that babies were properly fed and kept clean. We have seen a gold medal presented by the Essequibo Agricultural Society to the planter who raised the greatest number of negro babies in proportion to the women on his estate. But notwithstanding all their efforts, the planters found their labour supply decreasing. Even the Berbice commissioners, who belonged to the anti-slavery party, could not lower the death-rate on the colony plantations while under their management. Surinam shows a similar state of things. It is estimated that 300,000 slaves were imported before the trade was abolished, and a few shiploads smuggled after it became penal. It is impossible to account for the decrease there in view of the immense number of runaways ; but as the population in 1816, when the colony was restored to the Dutch, was only 60,000, there must have been a serious natural decrease. Down to 1872, when immigration began, the number remained about the same, notwithstanding every effort to preserve the labour supply. In fact, Surinam was at a standstill, while British Guiana was getting over her emancipation difficulties by means of imported coolies and other people from the West Indies.

Palgrave, in his "Dutch Guiana," speaks very

strongly upon the negresses and their baby-worship. Although these women make little gods of their infants, they are at the same time entirely wanting in thoughtfulness. Heated from fieldwork, a woman often rushes home and catches up the infant to her breast, with the common result that in half an hour she is howling over her offspring convulsed or dead. Or perhaps, when she is about to give the required nourishment, a friend comes in and invites her to a dance or merry-making close by. Off she goes, making some sort of arrangement for supplying the wants of her infant, or perhaps none at all, purposes to come back in an hour, stays until midnight, to perhaps find her baby sick unto death. Over-feeding, injudicious feeding, ailments misunderstood, quack-doctoring, superstitious usages, violent outbursts of passion in which even maternal love is forgotten, account for the fact that half the negro children die before they are weaned.

Under slavery every plantation had its nursery, where old women were engaged in looking after the infants while the mothers were working. These foster mothers were called to account if the infants died, for every death meant a loss to the estate. Possibly, also, at times the old "mammias" might get a whipping when neglect was proven. This may have appeared cruel at times, but the result was the saving of many a child who would otherwise have died.

The population of British Guiana in 1831 was estimated at 100,518, made up of whites 3,529, free black and coloured 11,050, and slaves 89,468. At the emancipation in 1834 the British Government paid compensation on 84,915. Some were, no doubt, manumitted in the four years, but not enough to

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account for the decrease ; however, we cannot entirely trust these figures. At the first census in 1851, when the total population was 135,924, only 86,145 were recorded as natives of the colony. As there were about 40,000 immigrants, some of whom had been here for fifteen years, their children would necessarily help to swell the total of natives, which, without allowing for such additions, shows a falling off. In 1861 the natives had increased to 93,861, in 1871 to 113,570, and in 1881 to 149,639, these additions being undoubtedly due to immigration. In 1891 the returns help to show that the creole negro had decreased, for the number born in the colony of African or negro parents was 96,182. In face of the fact that something like 50,000 negroes had been brought from the West Indian islands since 1834, many of them with wives, to swell the total of the native population when their children were born here, it can at once be seen that the native blacks are not increasing. The blacks in Georgetown are so well known to be either Barbadians or the children of West Indians, that the Demerara creole is certainly inconspicuous. The mixed races in 1891 numbered 23,977 ; this gives the total of black and coloured as 120,159. The last census of 1911 goes to confirm the opinion that the negro is slowly dying out. The blacks are 115,486, of whom 105,653 were born in the colony, and the mixed races 30,251, with 27,112 natives.

The position is something like this : in 1831 there were in British Guiana about, in round numbers, 97,000 black and coloured people ; there are now 132,000 natives, including the children of the host of immigrants from the West Indies. We can hardly conceive that the West Indians, who numbered about

50,000, and are prolific, can be credited with less than the 35,000.

The mixed races are increasing to some extent, but it is difficult to say how much of this comes from the marriages of this class or from illicit connections between the different races. It is possible that educated black men in the future may, by marrying white women, affect the number of coloured people.

The census returns of British Guiana, 1911, give the following :

Races.	Whole Population.	Natives.
Whites, Portuguese ...	... 10,084	8,176
„ Others ...	... 3,937	2,207
East Indians ...	... 126,517	66,668
Chinese... ..	... 2,622	1,988
Negroes ... ..	... 115,486	105,653
Mixed races ... ..	... 30,251	27,112
Aborigines ... ..	... 6,901	6,901
Not stated ... ..	... 243	—
Total ... ..	... <u>296,041</u>	<u>218,705</u>

The urban population was—

Georgetown and environs ...	57,577
New Amsterdam	8,604
	<u>66,181</u>

The villages numbered 53, varying in population from 514 to 4,951. The most important are on the east coast of Demerara, the largest being Buxton and Friendship, the next Plaisance, with its neighbour Sparendam having 3,694 and Triumph 2,786. The total of all the villages was 70,502.

The aboriginal Indians of the interior who are beyond the reach of the census enumerator are esti-

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mated at 13,000, against 10,000 in 1891. This, however, does not go to prove that they have increased, but rather that a more fair estimate can now be made.

The death-rate among all classes is high, about 31 per thousand. This is largely due to the infant mortality, which is nearly one-fifth of the total for children under one year. The births are a little less than the deaths ; negresses are generally prolific, but rarely bring up large families. It is not rare to find a black woman who has borne eight or ten children and has lost more than half. After the children have got well advanced, however, they are generally strong and healthy—we may presume that the strongest have survived. Centenarians are often reported, but these reports are not often reliable. We once made inquiry into a case where a black man was put down at 165, but could only come to the conclusion that he might have been a hundred. A few old people who were slaves are found here and there, but they are rare.

The death-rate for children under one year for 1910 was as follows :—

	Per thousand Births.
Portuguese 	263
Other Europeans 	88
East Indians 	230
Chinese 	154
Aborigines 	168
Blacks 	259
Mixed races 	201

The low rate for Europeans other than Portuguese is largely due to the fact that white men are often single, and in some cases, when married, send their wives and children to the home country. The

Portuguese are often ill-fed and hard-worked ; their high death-rate goes to prove that the white man cannot flourish in the tropics. As might be expected, the black children die in great numbers ; after the Portuguese, they head the list. The future development of the country will depend upon a race which increases ; possibly when the East Indians can all marry they will come to the front, even apart from immigration. Every year the creole negroes will become fewer, but the decrease is hardly appreciable.

The birth-rate is highest in the blacks, with about 30 to the thousand ; then come the mixed races and East Indians with about 27 ; we may expect the East Indians to have a higher rate as females grow up.

The principal causes of death are malarial and other fevers, dysentery, pneumonia, bronchitis, and tubercular diseases. It is interesting to note that less than a century ago Demerara was recommended as a suitable place for consumptives, and also that phthisis was quite unknown among the labouring population. Such, unfortunately, is not the case to-day, and the cause may be looked for in the changes which took place after the Emancipation, some of which we have dealt with in another chapter.

The sanitary arrangements in the villages, as well as the towns, have been much improved of late years, but close dwellings are still too common. The negro is afraid of the night air, and will close up fixed ventilators before going to bed. In Georgetown, where landlords are bound to provide such ventilators, it is not uncommon to see them plugged up with old and dirty rags.

But the real trouble is, no doubt, the wearing of tight clothing. Tropical man generally goes

naked, and if clothed, always wears his garments loose. The negro has taken to European clothing, and affects especially the black coat of the learned professions, which appears to be his highest ideal. Formerly his dress was of the simplest, now it must be tailor-made and a close fit, quite unsuited to Guiana. As for the women they have adopted the corset, and their figures, once so remarkable, are quite spoilt. Fortunately for the East Indians, they have not yet injured themselves by tight clothing, and it is to be hoped they will not follow such absurd fashions. No doubt corsets and close-fitting dresses are responsible for the increase of consumption, as well as child-bearing difficulties hardly known in the old time.

The conventional idea of decency must be utterly condemned in the tropics. The man or woman who works in the field, at one time with the burning sun overhead and at another in a heavy downpour of rain, must not have a lot of clothing to remain sodden until dried off by the intense heat.

There is another side to this question. Europeans are accustomed to change their underclothing at frequent intervals, and must therefore have a stock of clean linen. But the man with one shirt and the woman with a single frock are in quite a different position ; they must go naked while this one garment is being washed. As a natural consequence there is little washing and much dirty linen. Black men and Indians are not dirty, until they wear clothes ; in fact, it may be safely stated that many Europeans are more dirty than the aborigines of Guiana. We see black men wearing coats that have never been washed, and never will be, and can also see that here is one of the causes of the high death-

rate. This is, no doubt, a disagreeable subject, especially to the prude, but there is no getting over the fact that the naked man is more healthy than he who wears the conventional garb of civilisation. Even the white man has in many cases taken to European clothing where formerly he wore white linen or cotton, thus ignoring all past experience, and especially the example of Eastern nations, who have learnt through the ages that the covering should be light and loose. Some good people teach the Indians to clothe their little ones ; we can hardly call this anything but murder, for in a country like Guiana these sweet little children are exposed to all weathers and are bound to suffer from even one wet garment.



JAGUAR ATTACKING TAPIR, RIGHT.



JAGUAR ATTACKING TAPIR, LEFT.

(Group in B. G. Museum.)
Digitized by Microsoft®

CHAPTER XIII

FAUNA AND FLORA

Animal life—Interdependence—"Tigers"—Cavies—Ant bear—Snakes, lizards, and frogs—Birds—Fishes—Insects—Work for the microscope—Plant life—Flowers—Giant weeds—Multiform vegetation—Epiphytes—Parasites—Sand-reef plants—Foliage large and striking—Palms—Ferns—Selaginellas and lycopodiums.

THE character of Guiana as a land of forest and stream is impressed on its animal and vegetable life. Its animals are as varied as its plants, and though both kingdoms have been investigated for over two centuries, new species are found by every collector. While writing this I have before me the descriptions of over two hundred new species of insects just worked out by a specialist, and no doubt, when fuller investigation is made thousands may be added to the already multitudinous lists. Even mammals of the bat family and small rodents remain to be described.

Nowhere in the world, perhaps, are such beautiful adaptations to natural conditions and such perfect interdependence. The trees bear nuts and fruits to feed monkeys, rodents, birds, bats, and fishes, and because these are present in such numbers the cat family is also well represented. Again, every tree has flowers that require insect fertilisation, consequently myriads of insects are here ; these, in turn, are kept within

bounds by ant-eaters, birds, monkeys, lizards, and those classes of insects which feed on them, such as mantids, wasps, and robber flies. In the water the smaller fishes feed on fallen fruit ; they provide sustenance to the larger species, which in turn become the prey of alligators and otters. On the ground, in the water, and up in the trees the struggle goes on by which the balance of life is kept even. Notwithstanding this universal war on every side, species hold their own and develop greater capabilities according to their needs. Beautiful contrivances have been gained to suit the conditions under which they live, among them being protective coloration and the careful adjustment of means to the end, whether to catch and hold or to get away. The jaguar stalks the acourie so that not a twig is snapped or a leaf rustled, but the sharp rodent is always on the alert, ready to leave its feed of nuts the moment it recognises the nearness of its foe. Under this pitch-dark canopy, through which no glimmer of moon and stars can penetrate, many a painful tragedy goes on every night. But the acourie still lives, in spite of its enemies, for, like its relation, the guinea-pig, it is very prolific. The Indian says that every animal has its tiger ; he himself is one of these, and must move as silently or be content to go without meat.

Under such circumstances wonderful developments have taken place. With the exception of about three species of deer there are no herds of grazing animals, and even these are more often solitary. Each animal, with the exception of the peccaries, goes alone to fight the battle of life. There are stories of waracabba tigers hunting in packs, but as they have never been seen and such combination is unknown

among the cats, we may safely put them down as unreliable. We have a beautiful series of these graceful animals, including the jaguar and its dark variety, puma, ocelot, hacka tiger, and several tiger cats, none of them really dangerous to man. The other carnivora include the savannah fox, much like that of Europe, the coatimondi, and the kinkajou.

Their prey consists mainly of the cavies, which range in size from that of a pig to a rat. The largest, the capybara or water-hare, is sometimes caught in our canefields, where it can do a great deal of damage. Others of the family, such as the labba, acouri or agouti, and the little adouri, might be as troublesome as rabbits were they not checked by the native Indian and the cats. The largest mammals are the manatee and the tapir, both herbivorous, the former confined to water, the latter almost amphibious. The tapir is sometimes killed by the jaguar; possibly the manatee may be kept down by alligators. Both of these large and unwieldy creatures are protected somewhat by their thick skins, but otherwise, as they have no defensive weapons, they are, no doubt, often destroyed when immature.

The cavies and other rodents are also preyed upon by snakes, of which there are many species, a few of which are poisonous. The land and water camudis (*Boa constrictor* and *Eunectes murinus*) are often very large; their prey generally consists of the smaller rodents, but when hungry they will not hesitate to attack large animals such as the alligator. Several animals are omnivorous, including peccaries, monkeys, opossums, and kinkajou.

The insects are kept down by that wonderful animal the ant-bear and its relatives, the small ant-eater

and the armadillo, as well as by lizards, birds, and other insects. The general result is that no single species is rampant, but all hold their own.

The wonderful variety of animals suggests that the winners in the battle of life have a hard struggle. We can quite agree with the Indian's idea of each animal having its tiger, for it is easily conceived that the cavies, as prolific as guinea-pigs, might seriously upset the balance of life were there no cats.

Snakes, lizards, and frogs are numerous and very beautiful. The great pythons will take to the water ; in fact, they are called water-camudis ; they are dark in colour and hardly distinguishable. Others of more brilliant colours only glow in the sunlight ; on the tree-trunks they harmonise with the bark in such a way that only a careful observer can see them. Lizards and frogs are, if possible, more beautifully protected by their colours. The iguana is green, like the foliage of the trees, and some of the lizards have the power of changing colour from green on the leaves to brown on the bark. The lovely greens of the frogs can be contrasted in the same way with their mottled yellows and browns. Over a hundred species of frogs are found, and no doubt many new ones will reward the collector.

Birds are as varied as the other classes ; about a thousand species have been recorded. On the coast the long-legged ibises are conspicuous, the curricuri (*Eudocimus ruber*) being particularly noticeable from its congregating in flocks, which in the glowing sunlight are peculiarly brilliant. The jabiru or negro-cop is the largest of this class ; it is found beside the great rivers where they run through open savannahs. It is about five feet high, white, with



A FISHERMAN'S MORNING CATCH.

To face P. 241.

a red neck ; a flock, when standing on the bank of a river, has been compared with a company of soldiers. The flamingo is almost as tall and even more striking, and the egrets, in their spotless purity, suggest that every effort should be put forth to prevent their extinction.

Game birds are numerous and include the curassow (*Crax alector*), almost as large as a turkey, the trumpeter (*Psophia crepitans*), and the large musk duck (*Cairina moschata*). Many other birds are eaten by the Indians, but the law to protect wild birds now in operation in British Guiana prohibits shooting except to a very limited extent.

To enumerate the lovely birds found in Guiana would require a volume ; we will therefore only mention that they vary in size from the tiny humming-birds to great macaws. The curious hoatzin, a link with reptiles, is common in Berbice, and the cock of the rock, unique in its orange colour, can be got in the interior.

With so many birds, most of which feed on fruits and insects, it naturally follows that the birds of prey are also numerous. The largest is the harpy-eagle, which may be compared with the golden eagle of Europe. Other fine hawks are common, as are also owls and vultures. Nocturnal insects are responsible for the number of goatsuckers, whose weird cries are so startling to a traveller. The balance of life is as beautifully preserved by birds as by other animals.

Fishes are probably as numerous in species and as varied as birds. Off the coast sharks, saw-fish, and giant rays feed upon shoals of smaller species, some of which are of great importance for food. The fishes of the great rivers are also valuable, as they form a

most important element in the food supply of the Indian. Some are very large; the arapaima has been reported to sometimes weigh 400 pounds, and many other species range as high as twenty to fifty. Their beauty when alive is something wonderful, the markings of spots often equalling those of the peacock in colour and sheen. As for the sizes and shapes, they are equally varied.

When we come to the insects we are more than bewildered by their beauty and variety. There are more species of butterflies in Guiana than in the whole of Europe, and probably new species will continue to be discovered as they have hitherto been by almost every collector. On account of their size and beauty, however, butterflies have been collected for over two centuries, beginning with Madame Merian, whose delineations of Surinam insects are still valuable. Moths are far more numerous, and new species are continually being discovered. In other classes the same bewildering variety is to be seen; we have, in the British Guiana Museum, about forty thousand species, a fair proportion of which are probably new. At present over two hundred new species of Hymenoptera are being described by a specialist, and probably an equal number may prove new on a full investigation. Examples of mimicry and protective coloration are everywhere patent, and beautiful illustrations of the manner in which the balance of life is kept up can be studied.

The nests of termites, wasps, and ants are peculiarly interesting from their variety. Some wasps make immense pendulous cylinders a yard long, of one gallery above another; a second will spread out one layer of cells in the shape of a pot-lid, a third arranges the cells underneath a palm-frond

and covers them with a curtain. The nests are generally constructed of wood pulp, the most conspicuous examples being like paper or cardboard evidently gnawed from growing trees. The majority are, however, more fragile, prepared from bark or rotten wood.

Mimicry of wasps by flies and moths, and of ants by Homoptera are patent. Beautiful examples of the imitation of green and dead leaves are found in the locusts and other grasshoppers. Mantids and stick insects (Phasmidæ) are practically invisible in the bushes from their resemblance to their surroundings, and moths can hardly be distinguished when they alight.

In the water insect larvæ, especially mosquitoes, swarm, to feed fishes, water-beetles, bugs, and dragon flies. As might be expected, prawns and the tiny Crustaceæ are very numerous and varied, ready for the worker with his microscope. Rotifers and worms, including many species of *Dero*, delight the student, who can work in comfort all the year round. Protozoa are, of course, everywhere ready for the host of students who may, perhaps, at some future time come here to carry on their work.

Plant life in Guiana shows as beautiful adaptations to natural conditions as the fauna. The first impression to a stranger is one of grandeur and even perhaps coarseness. The grasses are large, some of them rising above our heads—we are not speaking of bamboos but common weeds. Very few flowers are seen in the pastures, for the grasses overrun everything. Only on the roadside can a few wild plants manage to exist in dry weather, but even these are overpowered when the heavy rains come. The wet savannahs are equally wanting in flowers,

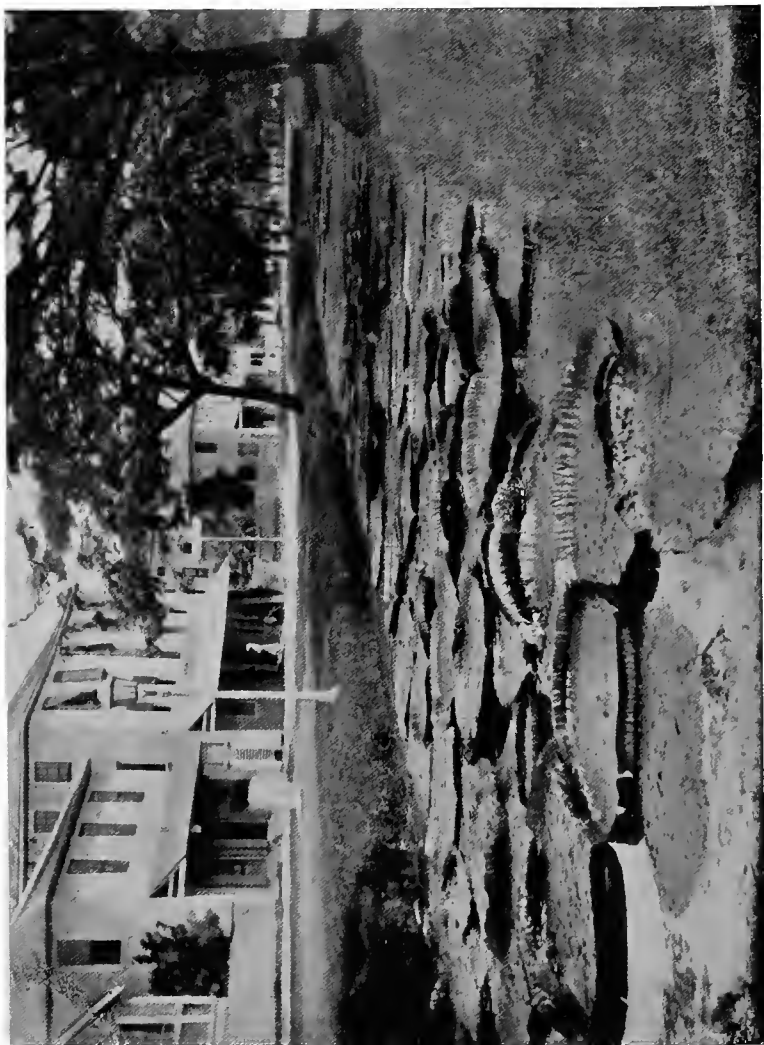
for the sedges gain the mastery. Under such circumstances anything like buttercups and daisies are impossible, and even thistles are entirely wanting.

Flowers are, however, conspicuous in the canals and ditches, where they struggle with each other. By growing in different ways, submerged, floating, or rising above the surface, they give a lot of trouble when cleaning is necessary. They are, of course, weeds in such places when they stop the flow of water ; nevertheless some of them, including the water-lilies, are very beautiful, and the flowers of *Eichornia*, the water hyacinth, are lovely.

Weeds in cultivated land are rampant. These are not low-growing herbs like those of temperate climes, but great shrubs, and even trees, some of which will grow fifteen feet in a rainy season. Trees like the papaw have stems as soft as cabbage-stalks, and come up everywhere in gardens and plantations ; even the sand-box, although not so soft, is a rampant weed. After a year's neglect a garden will become a jungle, impenetrable without the use of a cutlass, and a coffee or cacao plantation is enclosed by bush in four or five years, many of the weed-trees rising sixty feet and covered with masses of creepers, epiphytes, and parasites.

The vegetation of Guiana is multiform. The forests are not made up of one or a few species, but of hundreds. Owing to differences in the manner of growth, branching, and shape and size of leaf their crowns interlace with each other to form a perfect canopy and exclude from the ground every ray of direct sunlight. Lower growing shrubs and bushes are only found on the banks of the rivers, where they extend for some distance into the water. Then come the giant arums (*Montrichardia arbores-*

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VICTORIA REGIA IN GEORGETOWN.

cens) to form palisades, and beyond these floating grasses extend as far as the stream will permit.

It can be easily seen that there is here no place for dwarf plants; no flowers come out under the trees, for they are never bare. The new leaves push off the old and prevent the growth of myriads of competitors from the litter of seeds. Every small plant must either live in the water or up in the trees, and in the dense forest even epiphytes can hardly find enough diffused sunlight. Near the creeks, however, the break allows a half-light to penetrate, and here every branch is crowded with orchids, bromelias, ferns, cacti (*Rhipsalis*), peperomias, and aroids. Here, also, specialisation is carried to extremes, for every part of the main trunk and branches is occupied. On the upper edge grow bromelias, with leaves forming cups in which water is always found, on the sides orchids with nodding leaves and flower spikes, and below other orchids with pendant leaves and flowers, as well as grass-like ferns and the mistletoe-like cactus. Every twig is decorated by a host of tiny orchids, some of which are but an inch high, together with delicate creeping ferns and peperomias, all revelling among mosses and hepaticæ.

Besides the epiphytes there are the smothering creepers, the strangling figs, and the blood-sucking loranth. The bush ropes are everywhere prominent, some hanging in screw-like twists where some young sapling has been strangled, others irregularly flattened, called monkeys' ladders, and a host of cables the tops of which are lost in the canopy above. These are always at work fighting for places, first to rise, and when once in the sunlight to spread their branches over the trees. The tree tries to push

its branches through the great flowery pall, the smotherer to cover up everything and gain the mastery, in which it often succeeds. The wild fig provides a fruit attractive to birds, who, however, reject the seeds, which are deposited in the forks of the trees, where they soon sprout. The aerial roots soon begin to flow as it were like pitch down the trunks, spreading as they go, uniting with each other, until a reticulated cylinder covers the stem. Like iron bands they compress the exogen until it can no longer grow; it dies, and its successful antagonist takes its place, seeming to exult in its victory as it utilises the remains of its victim as food for itself. The blood-suckers are propagated by birds in a similar way, but they are true parasites, never touching the ground. The aerial roots twine round the branches and twigs everywhere, octopus-like, twining and sucking by means of disks which adhere so tenaciously that they cannot be loosened without tearing. Every branch has the power of giving out these suckers; it follows, therefore, that the parasite becomes a great bush, often larger than the crown of its victims. Even when one is sucked dry, there are generally others already secured, so that the monster may go on for a very long time. Only when the tree stands alone does the parasite come down with its victim.

On the sand-reef, where the soil is barren, the bushes are low, the creepers run over the sand, the orchids grow among the shrubs, and provide a supply of water for the dry season in great pseudo-bulbs, the ferns become hard and grass-like and lichens flourish upon the sand, with a few hardy mosses. Plant life is everywhere, and as varied as in the forest, although distinct. In another place we speak

of the flowers on the Roraima slope, and that may be taken to represent the mountain flora.

To a stranger the most striking plants are those with large foliage. The aroids come first with the great Philodendrons, which are tropical ivies climbing to the tops of the highest trees, there unfolding great heart or arrow shaped leaves, sometimes six feet in diameter. Some are perforated as if holes had been purposely made, others cut into segments as if recklessly snipped with scissors. All throw aerial roots down the trees; if above a creek these will drop straight down to the water as fifty-foot lines, to divide into a mat of roots as they immerge themselves. Along the creeks grow thickets of marantas and wild plantains, the foliage of which is so striking. Some of the aroids come up where they can get room, but they hardly compete with the marantas.

The palms are here in all their graceful beauty. The stately eta (*Mauritia flexuosa*) stands as one of a line of sentries round the swamp, its fan-like leaves hanging gracefully over a little garden, which has been formed on the dead and rotting foot-stalks, in which the most conspicuous flower is the orange-coloured orchid (*Catasetum longifolium*), with grass-like leaves waving in the wind. The manicole (*Euterpe oleracea*) rises for 80 to 100 feet, its stems but 4 to 6 inches in diameter; the leaves hang gracefully, and show their white under-surfaces even in a light breeze. The more sturdy cocorite and troolie are here also, the latter with its leaves almost entire. Then come those aggressive palms which grow in clumps, and warn off animals, as well as plants, by their needle-like thorns. Not only is the stem triply armed, but the leaf-stalks, mid-ribs,

and the leaves themselves. These palms grow close together, the needles of one stem impinging on those of another, until the clump extends for many yards in every direction and is impassable. The climbing palms (*Desmoncus*) are not only armed with needles, but provided with a double row of hooks at the end of each leaf. To climb a tree the growing stem pushes itself between the branches with the hooks pressed close, then they are opened out and hitched on to anything that will give a holdfast. Here and there we find pretty delicate palms (*Geonoma*) with stems not larger than walking-sticks, in contrast with others a foot or more in diameter.

Ferns are more delicate, but the tree-ferns are as large as the smaller palms. Some climb the trees to long distances, others run along the branches, decorating them with their graceful fronds. On the banks of the creeks filmy ferns are found matted upon the boles of the trees, and on the slopes of the sand-reef those delicate species of *Trichomanes* which curl up and wither at once if brought into the sunlight. In some places, where the forest is not too dense, great beds of selaginella are seen, and in some swamps lycopodiums massed like miniature pine-woods.

CHAPTER XIV

AGRICULTURAL AND NATURAL PRODUCTS

Early trade products—Tobacco-planting—Sugar—Early plantations—Empoldering the coast—Dams and trenches—First sugar-mills—Steam-engines—Vacuum pans—Cotton—Coffee—Cacao—Rice—Plantains and bananas—Coconuts—Indian corn—Fruits—Cassava—Isinglass—Cattle-farming—Tobacco—Fisheries—Timbers and furniture woods—Balata—Rubber—Gum anime—Hyawa, or incense gum—Tonka beans—Oils—Tanning barks—Fibres—Saouari nuts—Medicinal plants—Minor forest products—Paper stock—Pegass—Bitumen—Sands—Clays—Gold—Diamonds—Population of gold diggings—Falls and rapids as sources of power in the future.

THE first Europeans who came to Guiana were not colonists but traders. They came at long intervals and got whatever the Indians could spare in exchange for hatchets, knives, trinkets, beads, bells, cloth, and a few other things. They got in return tobacco, cotton, pita-hemp, anatto, and letter-wood, the products of the Indian clearing or the forest. There was also a large demand for hammocks, which were manufactured from cotton or eta fibre, and which seamen had already found very convenient. Later it was found more advantageous to leave a small party behind to collect against the return of the ship ; these constituted the first trading factories. The only cultivation near the log-house or fort was generally a field of tobacco and the provision-ground,

which the Indian women and ultimately slaves bought from the Caribs were induced to keep in order. The supplies were, however, very precarious, and with all the inducements that were offered the Indians of any one river could not make up a cargo once a year when the little ship arrived.

The first plantations were of tobacco, but soon the European demand for sugar, which the Spanish colonies did not supply in sufficient quantity, led to the introduction of the cane, probably from Brazil. The first plantations were in Surinam, which was the pioneer agricultural colony, about 1652. A little later, in 1658, a colony was started on the Pomeroon River by some Dutch and Jews, and in 1660 sugar was exported from this settlement. Slaves were now brought from Africa, and intending settlers were recommended not to bring white servants, for blacks were very cheap. Little food need be provided for them because they could easily catch fish, oysters and crabs, and in three months plenty of yams and sweet potatoes would be raised. A few cartloads of canes would be enough at the commencement ; then, as the land was cleared, these would give all that might be required. With six or eight slaves a planter could double his capital in three years, and a family be worth 40,000 guilders in five years. Like many other calculations of the same kind, these were not borne out by experience.

However, these two real colonies were started and attained a measure of success. But, unfortunately, for both, war between England and the Netherlands ruined that in the Pomeroon and proved unfortunate for Surinam. Under the articles of capitulation of the latter colony, the English were allowed to leave with their effects, which they understood meant

slaves. In the course of the troubles many of the coppers from the sugar-houses were taken away and the buildings damaged. But the Dutch knew very well that a colony without labour was worthless, and they therefore put every obstacle in the way of the removal. By insisting on their rights, however, and after another war, two thousand, which was half the population, were allowed to depart. These people went to the then infant colony Jamaica, where they met with a hearty welcome, while poor Surinam got a few of the ruined planters from the Pomeroon.

Surinam was a waste, most of the plantations overrun with weeds and the mills broken down. The worst misfortune was, however, the loss of half the labour supply, and, to add to the trouble, some of the negroes that had been bought ran away into the bush, to become later a danger to the whole colony. The slave always resented a change of masters, and even a removal after he was once settled. Somehow the Dutch got a bad reputation for cruelty, and there was undoubtedly some ground for this on account of their criminal law, which, however, was not a black code, for it was that of the Spanish Netherlands. Again the negro took his cue from his late English master, who resented the transfer of the colony.

Under Governor Sommelsdijk the colony began to recover, and notwithstanding the invasions of French corsairs it became fairly prosperous. It was, however, almost at a standstill for about a century, until by coolie immigration and the starting of a banana trade it began to show a little more energy. Sugar has, however, gone down very much and is of little consequence.

Coming back to Essequibo, which was still a

trading factory, we find no settlers of consequence until 1740. The land in the neighbourhood of the fort was sandy, with outcrops of rock, covered with virgin forest. The few plantations were carried on like the Indians' clearings. Trees were felled and allowed to remain until the dry season, when they were burnt. The result was a litter of charred logs, between which canes were planted in holes. The first crop was generally good, sometimes giving a return of over a ton of sugar per acre, but every year this became less until the soil was exhausted; then a new clearing became necessary. Under such conditions sugar exports were very small, and even the two or three company's plantations hardly paid expenses. Now and again a plantation was abandoned as worthless and a new one taken up, to be as quickly ruined.

We have already seen that the coast of Guiana is a deep alluvium, and probably the few Dutchmen saw something of its possibilities long before anything was done. But the coast was open to French corsairs and English pirates, while here, fifty miles up the river, they did not often appear. Then again, even a Dutchman could see what an arduous task it must be to reclaim the swamp and morass, by excavating trenches and piling up dams. It followed, therefore, that the estates in Demerara were first laid out on the banks of the river from twenty to eighty miles upward. But again these were failures, for although not so poor as Essequibo, the land was soon exhausted. Then began the grand work of empoldering, first near the mouths of the river and later along the coast. Up to his eyes in muck the planter worked for months, risking his life daily, and often doing himself more work than he dared to

impose on the negro slave, whose life must not be risked on account of his value. The Dutchman led the way, but it was the English and Scotch planters who carried out the work, for they were generally more pushing and less cautious. As might be expected, many died, but as the value of tropical produce was high, every one hoped to get a fortune. Few succeeded, and of the others only some tombstones remain to indicate their disastrous failures.

The system of empoldering introduced by the Dutch and more fully extended by the British planter is modelled on that of Holland. The coast of Guiana is fringed by a courida swamp, which forms a natural fascine dam in front of every plantation. The grants were free, consisting of 250 acres, with façades on sea or river of about a quarter of a mile, and extending to three miles back. The condition of this strip when granted was that of a morass or bog, flooded during the rainy season or at high spring tides. The work of empoldering was commenced by cutting canals and throwing up banks as far as the cultivation was to extend, to keep out the flood from the morass on three sides and the sea in front. Within this area other ditches were cut, the mud being thrown up to form raised beds on which cotton or the sugar-cane were planted. The flood from outside being excluded, it only remained for the rainfall on the polder to be let off when necessary by flood-gates, or kokers, which were opened at low water and closed with the rising tide. This system is still carried out everywhere in the settled districts, whether plantations, villages, or towns. In many cases steam draining engines have been erected, for a day's rainfall sometimes amounts to five or six inches, and has been known to reach as high as ten.

When first empoldered the soil is very rich, but being impregnated with salt, is less suited for the sugar-cane than for cotton. After washing by the rains, however, and excluding further contamination from sea water, it is excellent for the sugar-planter, who in some cases has gone on cultivating without a change for over fifty years. It is, however, found necessary, after such a long time, to use manure. It will be easily understood that only a very rich soil could remain fertile under the same cultivation for such a long period, without fallowing or alteration of crops.

So much depends upon the security of the dams that the planter has to be continually on the alert. If the pressure on the back dam becomes too great after a heavy rainfall, the labourers must be turned out at any time to strengthen it or repair a breach with bags of mud, otherwise the estate may be flooded. Even worse is the danger in front, for the sea water will damage the canes beyond recovery. The expense of keeping up the sea dams has latterly become so great that several fine plantations on the west coast have been abandoned. The tidal wash changes at intervals and makes a sudden onslaught on the protecting fringe of courida, with the result that the dam must be retired inland or the estate given up. The difficulty in the way of retiring is generally the public road, for if it becomes necessary to go aback of this, then a new road must be made.

The earliest sugar-mills on the rivers were driven by water-courses, where these were available, otherwise by cattle or horses. On the coast, however, windmills were most common on account of the prevailing sea-breeze. The trading vessels of a century

ago took their bearings from these windmills, as they sometimes do to-day from the factory chimneys. But the enterprising Demerara planter was not satisfied with such an unreliable source of power, which was liable to a serious falling off when most required; he therefore adopted the steam-engine as soon as it became workable in 1805. This date may be put down as a starting-point for the development of the sugar industry, which resulted in the adoption of vacuum pans in 1830, after which Demerara sugar got its good name in the British market.

A century ago cotton was the principal export of Demerara and Berbice, its importance having been much increased when the British took over these colonies in 1796. From the mouth of the Demerara to the Corentyne a continuous line of this handsome shrub was under cultivation, which, in the new empolders, still impregnated with salt, flourished to perfection. In 1807, however, when the slave trade was stopped, further increase became impossible, and then came a drop in price from the competition of the Southern States. Sugar paid better and the slaves were gradually drawn off to that cultivation, until ultimately hundreds of cotton plantations were abandoned, only a few being kept up as cattle farms. Ultimately cotton fell off to nothing, and though it was attempted to reintroduce its cultivation during the American war, this was not a success. There are no particular reasons why it should not be revived, except the scarcity of labour, which might prevent a crop from being picked at the proper time. A week or two makes little difference to the sugar-canes, but cotton would be blown away if not picked to the day. We have already mentioned this as one of

the products collected by the early traders from the Indians, who still cultivate enough for their own wants.

Coffee was introduced to Berbice and Cayenne in 1725 from Surinam, to which plants had been brought from Amsterdam in 1718. It could not be grown well in the neighbourhood of Kijk-over-al, but it was a success in Cayenne and Berbice. Later, when Demerara was settled, it became one of the staple products of plantations that were not exposed to strong winds. Berbice coffee gained a reputation, but, as in Demerara, it gave place to sugar on the failure of the labour supply. Cultivation fell off to nothing for many years, but lately there has been a revival. As, however, the output of Brazil is so very great, the low price is likely to prevent developments to any great extent.

Cacao is probably a native of Guiana, and was cultivated in America for centuries before its discovery. Surinam exports a fair quantity, but latterly, owing to the witch-broom fungus, its prospects are not so encouraging. Cayenne once grew cacao, but now its plantations have been practically abandoned; Demerara, however, has two or three estates in good condition, and will probably increase its output in a few years. There is room for great development, for cacao grows well within the forest region, in the fertile river bottoms, but it cannot endure the sea-breezes. Even on the coast, however, it may be protected by wind-breaks of tall trees. The product is of good quality, quite equal to that grown in Trinidad or near Caracas.

Rice, which up to the last few years was imported in enormous quantities, is now so largely grown that the exports from British Guiana have become of some importance. The imports in 1899 reached 11,300

tons, but ten years later they fell to 354 tons, and there was an export of 5,489 tons. About 40,000 acres are now under cultivation, and this will probably be much extended, now that the East Indies have made a fair start. The flat lands of the coast are eminently fitted for this cereal, for arrangements for irrigation can be easily made. Surinam and Cayenne are equally fitted, and will, no doubt, soon extend their cultivation, which, in view of the importation of coolies, has become highly desirable. The quality is much superior to the ordinary East Indian grades and well compares with that of Louisiana, from which the seed appears to have been brought in 1782 to feed the negro slaves.

The negro is a lover of the plantain, which is grown in enormous quantities. It has been highly praised for its food value, and compares well with wheaten bread. We may consider it as an unripe banana, from which it differs very little. It is never eaten as a fruit, but when ripe can be sliced and fried to make an excellent adjunct to our dainty dishes. The unripe plantain is usually boiled, but it is even nicer roasted and buttered ; it can also be sliced and dried in the sun, after which, being ground into flour, it can be kept for a long time and used for puddings. If well known, this plantain flour should be appreciated in other parts of the world as a food for infants and invalids. There is quite room for development of this valuable food product, which could replace with advantage arrowroot and sago.

The banana, as a fruit, grows under similar conditions as the plantain, and is being exported from Surinam to the United States. Attempts have also been made in Demerara to establish an export trade,

but hitherto without success. As a by-product of banana culture, where there will always be a fair number of bunches too ripe for shipment when the steamers arrive, it is highly desirable that arrangements be made to dry the surplus as chips or figs, which latter can be prepared to take a place with the real fig and date. Banana flour from the unripe fruit is similar to the product of the plantain ; having a sweetish taste, it will suit some palates, and can be used without sugar. The unripe fruit, and specially their skins, contain a fair quantity of tannin ; experiments might be tried with a view to their utilisation ; the stems and leaves also give an astringent juice, on the surface of which a pellicle forms that, when dried, is an inferior rubber.

The coconut is largely cultivated and grows well on the coast, where it is all the better for a little salt. It seems to revel in the sea-breeze, against which it braces itself in a manner peculiar to itself. Several plantations and one oil and fibre factory already exist in British Guiana. There is great room for development, and there are signs of an increase, not only in the exportation of nuts but copra as well. The more carefully prepared desiccated coconut, now largely used in confectionery, could also be produced here, as well as mats and other fibre products. There are about 10,000 acres in cultivation in British Guiana, and every year shows an increase.

Maize or Indian corn is grown to some extent, but it seems to be more suitable to sub-tropical conditions like those of the Southern United States. In some places, however, it flourishes, and can be grown everywhere for stock-feeding. Guinea corn is not much grown, but there is no reason why it

should not be developed. Arrowroot is a minor product, which may be classed with cassava starch and tapioca ; other starch-producing tubers and seeds may also be utilised. The bread-fruit is common, but not much appreciated ; there is room for improvement in its cooking ; when dried it forms a good flour.

Tropical fruits other than the banana could be well grown here. At present little care is taken to select good varieties, consequently they are not suitable for export. Oranges, shaddocks, and limes come first ; they are so common that in the country districts the ground is often littered with them. Lime plantations are in operation, and the production of citrate of lime will justify the increase of this cultivation. Mangoes of the common kinds form part of the food supply of the negroes when they are cheap, which is twice a year. During the seasons they are often sold at twenty or thirty for a penny, and the negroes may be seen everywhere with their faces smeared with the yellow pulp. Pine-apples are often common, and could be exported fresh or canned ; they grow on the sand-reefs practically wild, but not really so, for everything goes to prove that they indicate the site of some Indian settlement which once existed on the spot.

One of the most delicious of the fruits is the sapodilla, which, like a medlar, is not fit to eat until it is very soft and appears rotten. Probably it would bear a voyage well and become popular, but it is not attractive in appearance, being covered with a rough brown skin. The pulp is of a dark warm brown, exceedingly sweet and luscious at the proper stage of ripeness.

Many of the fruits make good jams and jellies,

and in this connection the guava must be mentioned. There is room for a preserve factory, where care will be taken to prevent burning by the use of water-baths and steam. As prepared in the rough creole way, guava jelly is almost wanting in the true flavour, which prevents its full appreciation. In food products it is also necessary to pack in such a way as to be attractive ; this could easily be done.

Cassava, the staff of life of the Indian, could be exported in the form of biscuits which, being toasted and buttered, are generally appreciated. Packed in tins, they keep for any length of time, and even in barrels they are not much deteriorated. The poisonous juice obtained in making it, when evaporated to the consistence of molasses, forms cassareep, the basis of the famous pepper-pot. With capsicums and properly diluted with water, it is kept in an earthen pot (an enamelled saucepan will do) and any kind of meat put in from time to time. Every day it is put on the fire and brought to table, with the result that it becomes an everlasting resource. For all kinds of meat and game are put in at intervals, with more cassareep and capsicums, until some of the contents may be months or years in stew. There is a saying that only when the Dutchman died was the pepper-pot empty.

Isinglass, or fish-glue, is exported in small quantity ; it is the swimming-bladder of the gilbacker, a large fish of the Silurid family. The fish is caught at the mouths of the great rivers, and is fairly common ; its flesh is eaten, and of a very good flavour.

Cattle-farming is carried on to some extent, but not, as yet, beyond the necessities of the colonies ; in fact, there are importations from Venezuela now

and again. The interior of British Guiana is likely to furnish a good supply in the near future, for it borders upon the grassy plains of the upper Rio Negro, where ranches are common. A railway is under consideration, which, if it should be laid down, would bring this part of the country within reach of the coast and cause a great development of cattle-breeding.

Tobacco, which was once an export from Guiana, is now only grown by the Indians for their own use. There is, however, no reason why it should not be cultivated, for experiments lately made have proved that a good quality can be produced. Anatto is another of the old exports which is still grown to a slight extent in Cayenne, but we believe that it is only used now in small quantity for colouring butter and cheese. Indigo comes under the same category, and would not probably be worth reviving.

There is room for developing the fisheries. At present some boats are engaged in deep-sea fishing to supply the local markets, but formerly the Indians dried pacou and other fresh-water fishes to some considerable amount. There is no reason why this industry should not be revived to prevent such a large importation of salt cod from North America. The rivers abound with fish to the number of three or four hundred species, many of which are well-flavoured and worth salting. At present they form a large portion of the food supply of the Indians and Bovianders. Shrimps, or rather prawns, are so plentiful in the canals and trenches that people may be seen everywhere catching them in baskets.

The forests of Guiana produce some of the finest timbers in the world. About three hundred kinds are known, varying in weight and hardness to an

enormous degree, many being so heavy as to sink in water. Such woods are slung in the water outside a punt, and in this way brought down the rivers, for at present few of the lighter kinds that float have been much used.

One of the heaviest and most striking is the letter-wood (*Brosimum Aubletii*), which is as hard as ebony and weighs about 80 lb. to the square foot. Only the heart wood has the peculiar pattern of very dark lines, which gives it its name, and this is rarely more than four inches in diameter. It was much appreciated by the early voyagers, and fetched a good price in Europe, but at present it is rather scarce. Another very hard species is the wamara, which has the same dark brown colour without the markings.

Greenheart (*Nectandra Rodiæi*) stands pre-eminent in Europe, as well as in the colonies, for its durability in water and its resistance to the ship-worm and termites. It is yellow, with a greenish cast, very close-grained, and hard, and when dry weighs about 70 lb. to the square foot. Mora (*Mora excelsa*) is almost as valuable, but not so hard and not quite so heavy. Its colour is a pleasant ruddy brown, and it is largely used in the colonies, like greenheart, for house timbers. Wallaba (*Eperua falcata*) is a dark wood that can easily be split into staves and shingles. It contains an oleo-resin which is protective against termites; it is very useful for house timbers, vats, and palings.

The best woods for boat building are the different kinds of silverballi (*Nectandra sp.*), which are hard and elastic, weighing about 50 lb. to the square foot. There are two kinds, yellow and brown, both of which are also good furniture woods. A similar

wood is hackia (*Tecoma leucoxydon*), which is light brown and makes good spars. The Indians' paddles are made from masara or yaruri (*Aspidosperma excelsa*), which is characterised by its thin, flat buttresses, that only require shaping and a little thinning to be ready for use. Good furniture woods are numerous, the most useful being crab-wood (*Carapa latifolia*); when properly cured this almost equals mahogany, which it resembles in grain and colour, especially when old. It is, however, much lighter, weighing only about 40 lb. to the foot, and being much softer, can be more easily worked. Already this wood is being exported, and there can be no doubt that, when well known, it will be much appreciated. At present, however, the logs are cut up before they are properly matured, with the result that the boards split; this fault can be easily remedied by curing in the log. Other timbers have suffered in their reputation from the same carelessness. Red cedar (*Cedrela odorata*) is also a good furniture wood, specially useful for cabinets. Wamara (*Swartzia tomentosa*), the wood used by the Indians for clubs, is heavy, and equals many of the varieties of mahogany. Locust (*Hymenæa courbaril*) is lighter coloured, but heavy, generally over 50 lb. to the foot, and could be well used to contrast with darker woods. Hububalli (*Mimosa guianensis*) is of a light brown, with darker veins, and well worth introducing; its weight is about the same as locust. Purple-heart is unique, but it does not retain its beautiful dark violet colour when exposed to the light; nevertheless it is a fine brown and worth using to a greater extent than at present; it is hard and weighs about 60 lb. to the foot. Numerous others are to be had, varying in colour from deep mahogany to

oak, and of all degrees of hardness and weight. The best light wood for inside cabinet work is the Simaruba (*S. officinalis*), which is almost white, even-grained, and weighs only 30 lb. to the foot. The tree is very large, and logs of six feet diameter can be obtained ; when properly cured it is the ideal wood for light boxes and drawers. Of the numerous other kinds at least a hundred are available, all of which would, no doubt, become very useful if properly introduced. At present the Guiana wood-cutter has to realise on his timbers at once, and therefore he cannot afford to cure them, hence complaints of splitting. From the damp, steamy forest the logs are floated to a mud flat in town, where they remain covered with water at high tides and exposed to the burning sun at low water. This, however, does not affect the real quality of the wood, and could be immediately rectified with a little more capital.

Besides timber, the Guiana forest produces balata, well known as a kind of gutta-percha much used for belting. It comes from the bullet or bully-tree (*Mimusops globosa*), which is tapped in the same way as india-rubber. During the last few years the output has enormously increased, and as there appears to be no limit at present to the demand, like rubber it has increased in value. The Governments issue licences to collect within certain defined areas, and now that companies are continually being formed, the whole country is ranged by prospectors and bleeders. The output is now over a million pounds annually from British Guiana alone ; Surinam ships double as much, and Cayenne has begun. The milk from the tree is so much like that from the cow that it is sometimes used with coffee, but probably it is not very wholesome. The average yield from a

tree is about one gallon, which, on drying, produces 5 lb. balata ; some trees have, at times, produced as much as five gallons. To ensure a supply, in the future tapping must not be repeated until the first wounds are healed—about four years—when an equal supply may be obtained. Regulations have been made to prevent carelessness in tapping and to ensure the continuity of the product.

Rubber trees of several species are found in the forest, and are now being exploited. *Hevea* and *sapium* are represented, but whether it will pay to tap them is not quite certain ; there is no doubt, however, that plantations of *Hevea braziliensis* can be made anywhere in the forest region, and already sufficient has been done to show that plantation rubber will be a product of Guiana in the near future.

Among the forest products is the locust-gum, or anime, a resin well known as the basis of varnishes generally called copal. It cannot be collected by tapping, but when the tree dies and rots the resin flows together in masses, to be accidentally found by wood-cutters. Possibly it might pay the balata-bleeder to search for such deposits with a steel rod as is done in New Zealand for kauri resin, which is formed under similar conditions. Another resin can be produced by bleeding the hyawa (*Icica spp.*). In its pure state it is white, like camphor, and has a very pleasant resinous odour ; when burnt as incense it equals the better known gum benzoin, for which it is an excellent substitute. At present it is hardly known, and is one of the natural forest products that may be worth collecting. Like benzoin, it is sometimes used medicinally for coughs ; the branches of the tree make excellent torches. The

oleo-resin, balsam copaiba, is also found and sometimes collected by the Indians, but only in small quantities ; it is the produce of several species of *copaifera*. Another balsam is obtained from *Humirium floribundum*, but it is not yet recognised in commerce. There is also an essential oil known as laurel oil, obtained from *Oreodaphne opifera*, which has a reputation in the colony as an external application for rheumatic and other pains.

The well-known tonka bean, the basis of so many perfumes, is also collected in small quantities ; probably it may become an article of export when the balata-bleeder finds it economical to collect everything within his range. Vanilla grows wild, and there is no reason why something should not be also done with this valuable flavouring. There is a spice called the Akawois nutmeg, used for colic, that might be found of some value, either in cooking or for medicine.

Oils are prepared from various palm nuts, and a vegetable tallow from the dalli (*Virola sebifera*), a tree near allied to the nutmeg. The crab or carapa oil is, however, the most important of the forest oils. It is extracted by grating the nuts, exposing the pulp to the direct rays of the sun or over a fire until the albumen is coagulated, and then pressing. Every Indian makes it to lubricate his body and to dress his hair, with a view to prevent the attacks of noxious insects. The creoles also know that it is effectual in keeping the head free from vermin. Its great objection is a rather strong and unpleasant odour, possibly due to the bitter principle which it contains, and from which it derives its properties. A soap has been made from it, which is claimed to be useful in dealing with scald head.

Tanning bark can be obtained in great quantity near the mouths of the rivers from the mangrove (*Rhizophora manglier*). Several tanneries are in operation, and probably they will soon supply the local demand for leather. At present no other bark has been found equal to the mangrove, although many contain fair quantities of tannin.

On the sand reefs are found several wild plants which produce good fibre. They include species of agave, bromelia, nidularium, and the pine-apple. The pita hemp answering to sisal was much valued by the early traders to Guiana, and every Indian makes his hammock-ropes, fishing-lines, and bow-strings of this fibre. Another type is the eta, or tibiserie, from the young leaves of *Mauritia flexuosa*, from which "grass" hammocks are made. It may be compared with the well-known rafia, so much used in England by nurserymen. Very pretty natural ribbons may be obtained from the inner bast of monkey-pot trees (*Lecythideæ*), which could be made into hats. Some of the species have the bast free from holes, and almost as fine as a silk ribbon. When the timbers of Guiana are fully appreciated these basts will, no doubt, become by-products. As weeds in cultivated ground, several fibre plants are common; some of them would make excellent substitutes for jute, and, if utilised, render unnecessary the enormous importations of rice and sugar bags.

Of food plants the forest produces very few. There is one that must be mentioned, and that is the saouari, probably the most delicious nut in the world. It is hardly known in commerce, but it may be described as a large tuberculated, hard-shelled nut of the type of the well-known brazil-nut, which is also found here. Its only fault is the hard shell,

which no ordinary nut-crackers can grasp, much less break. However delicious this saouari may be, it is not sufficiently common to form any part of the general diet of the Indian. When the man of the forest suffers from famine, which he does sometimes, when the cassava crop fails, he has to fall back upon mora and other seeds that are even less palatable than acorns. A very few trees have edible fruits, but these are often difficult to obtain without cutting down the trees. It is rather a shock to our ideas when we see a kinip (*Melicocca bijuga*) cut down for the sake of its fruit, which is only a thin stratum of pulp round a large seed, but it has been done.

The medicinal plants are numerous, but little is yet known of them. Beeberine is got from the greenheart bark and seeds, but it has not come up to the expectations of those who once thought it equal to quinine as a febrifuge. Simaruba bark is a good stomachic, but little used, and other medicines of the same class, such as the stems of species of *Aristolochia* and leaves of *Mikania*, make fair substitutes for other stomachic bitters. The curare poison is, no doubt, valuable; perhaps other poisonous plants may, after proper investigation, be proved useful, such as those used to stupefy fishes. At present, however, we are very ignorant of their properties.

A forest industry is charcoal-burning; the product is largely used in the colony, and is shipped to Barbados, together with firewood. Wallaba shingles, paling, and vat staves are of great economic value, and are also shipped. At one time orchids were exported in quantity, but a heavy licence and export duty killed the industry, and though the dues have been lowered, it has not revived in British Guiana.

Now and again a collector goes to Roraima, mainly for *Cattleya Lawrenceana*, but there is no reason why the shipments should not be much increased. A small trade in walking-sticks once existed, but this also has been killed by the Government, who are altogether too strict in controlling the Crown lands.

Light woods suitable for paper stock are numerous, and will no doubt be utilised in the future. Some bamboos are found wild and probably wild pines, which have been used in Brazil, may ultimately go to the paper-mill. No doubt many useful forest products remain to be discovered.

A possible natural resource is peat, a kind of peat found to a depth of several feet below the swamps or wet savannahs. It is less fibrous than peat, the lower stratum being almost solid and the upper made up of several layers of leaves. It burns with a ruddy glow and leaves a red ash. Possibly it might be found useful to absorb petroleum and make a good fuel. The swamps extend behind the coast throughout the country, and therefore the amount of peat is enormous. It has been suggested as a source of ammonia, for it contains about 2 per cent. of nitrogen.

Efforts have been made during the last two years to locate a deposit of bitumen off the coast of British Guiana, near the mouth of the Waini River. Specimens have been picked up on the shore, and there is not the least doubt that something like the pitch lake of Trinidad must exist near by. It is also hoped that petroleum may be found, but although two companies have been prospecting, it is not yet proven to exist. The pitch is certainly there, and we may soon hear of its being found.

A pure white quartz sand, suitable for glass-

making, and kaolin for pottery, are obtainable in any quantity, for they form reefs and hills in many parts.

Red and yellow ochreous clays are found in several places. A sample of the red pigment was reported as comparable to the tierra de Sienna of the painter. Everywhere there are clays suitable for brick-making, and possibly there may be yet a good cement material found in micaceous sand.

The gold-diggings of Guiana extend through the forest region, only that little known section between the Berbice and Coppename Rivers being as yet free from seekers. As might be expected, from the conformation of the land and the geological formation, the primary rocks come nearer the coast in Cayenne and recede backward in Venezuelan territory, where the Caratal diggings are situated at about two hundred miles distance. The zone is fairly well defined, and almost every river is impeded by rapids and cataracts which indicate a rise of the country from the mud-flat and sand-reefs. The pay-dirt is generally got from existing river-beds, or those of some former time, and is made up of red and white clays, with sand and gravel. There are also conglomerates and gold-bearing quartz, but up to the present real mining has not been successful on account of the small yield of the crushings. Most of the workings are carried on by means of sluices, but hydraulicing and dredging are fairly successful. The returns are necessarily precarious, being much reduced by the cost of the long journeys to and fro and the freight of tools and provisions. Sometimes fine nuggets are found; the largest from British Guiana, got in the Barima, weighed 330 ounces. The gold is very pure, but generally contains a little silver.

On account of the difficulties of long journeys and the necessity of having supplies for months, men without capital cannot carry on the work. The gold-digger with his swag, who tramps his weary way in other countries, is unknown in Guiana. A good sound boat must be bought or hired, expert bowmen and steersmen be employed, and negro labourers engaged. The load of provisions and tools necessary costs a good sum, then every labourer gets an advance on his prospective wages. In the early years of the industry there was much trouble with the labourers, but now this has been much lessened. A man would sign an agreement and take an advance, but when the time of embarking came he could not be found. Many persons have suffered from "gold fever," as they have in other countries, but there is no doubt that gold is to be got, for already the exports have totalled about eight million pounds sterling from British Guiana, and fully as much more from the other colonies. Although some of the placer workings have been abandoned as worked out, there are still large areas untouched, and it may be noted that this year (1911) new discoveries have been made on the Wenamu River, in British Guiana on one side and Venezuela on the other. Probably expert miners will ultimately find some quartz reefs and make the industry of more permanent value than it is at present.

Placer mining is carried on in British Guiana on the Rivers Barima, Barama, Cuyuni, Masaruni, and Essequibo; in Surinam on the Coppename, Saracca, Suriname, Marowyne, and Lawa; and in Cayenne on the Mana, Sinamari, Mahuri, Approuage, and Oyapok. The gold-bearing strata also extend into the Counani, which now belongs to Brazil.

Although the output from British Guiana has fallen off to half the amount of the best years, there is no reason for thinking that the supply is exhausted. Most of the auriferous tracts have been discovered by accident ; any day there may be a new find that will bring the industry again to the front. The forest region is so wild and vast that prospecting is very difficult ; it may therefore be safely stated that only a small area has been yet explored. Diamonds have been found in considerable numbers in British Guiana, on the Masaruni and Cuyuni Rivers. The matrix is a conglomerate or gravel, made up of water-worn quartz and other pebbles with pipe-clay. They are usually small, ten or fifteen to the carat, but two of over twelve carats each were lately discovered ; the colour is all that can be desired. The gravel is thrown on an iron screen, puddled with water, and afterwards picked carefully on a table. Sapphires are also collected. The output of diamonds in 1909-10 was 7,180 carats.

The British Guiana census of 1911 shows that about 6,000 people were engaged in and about the gold and diamond diggings.

The rivers of Guiana will probably in the future become sources of power almost without limit. Every one of any importance has potentialities in its falls and rapids that should render electric energy easily available and cheap. The Kaietur Fall rivals Niagara, and could supply energy for crushing machinery in the goldfields, timber-hauling in the forest, and electric railways. This, however, is only one of the sources of water power, for throughout the whole interior of the country magnificent streams can be utilised in a thousand ways.



A STREET-CORNER, GEORGETOWN.

CHAPTER XV.

TRAVEL NOTES

Communication — Waterways — Local steamers — Georgetown — Races and nationalities—Sugar estates—The Tadjá festival—Humours of the people—Indians in town—Airy buildings—Other towns—Picturesque scenery in the interior — Kaieteur Fall — Roraima — A botanical El Dorado — Grand cliffs — Difficult to reach — River travelling — Beauty of the forest—Creek scenes—Obstructions—Indian settlements—Reports of dangerous animals—No real dangers—Pleasure of camping out—A few pests—Some inconveniences—Sickness—Unexplored region—Climate—Bugbears—Bad name no longer deserved—A rainy country—No fogs, earthquakes, or hurricanes.

ALTHOUGH Guiana is outside the usual lines of steamer communication, it is connected with the West Indian Mail services of the United Kingdom, Holland, and France. Other steamship lines run regularly from London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, and there is a mail service with Canada, as well as frequent steamers from New York. By means of these Barbados and other West Indian islands may be reached, from whence travellers can go to South American ports, and, by way of the Isthmus of Panama, to any part of the world. Fine sailing vessels, known once as West Indiamen, are now gone, and besides the steamers only a few schooners

from American ports and local traders come into the rivers.

Guiana is specially characterised by its rivers, which, though hardly comparable with the grand waterways in other parts of South America, would be considered in Europe of great importance. The Essequibo is about 600 miles long, and the Corentyne and Marowyne nearly the same length; all of these form broad estuaries as they enter the sea, where there are many picturesque islands. Were it not for the rapids, river navigation would be easy, but at present these checks much hamper those who work in the hinterland. River navigation within these limits is, however, easy, and has no doubt prevented the laying down of proper roads in Surinam and Cayenne. Communication in British Guiana is much better; coast and river steamers ply regularly from the Berbice to the Barima, there are railways from Georgetown to New Amsterdam and from opposite the capital for fifteen miles on the west coast. There is also a railway nineteen miles long about sixty miles up the Demerara River which connects with the steamer service on that river, and enables the gold-diggers and balata-bleeders to avoid the rapids of the Essequibo, on the right bank of which is its terminus. The coast roads are complete almost from the Pomeroon to the Corentyne, with extensions up the Demerara and Berbice Rivers for a few miles; they are well kept, and are traversed by all kinds of wheeled carriages and motors. In Georgetown is an electric tramway which extends into the suburbs and a short distance up the east bank; cabs are always available, and more stylish carriages may be hired from the livery stables.

Georgetown is a tropical garden city, and is well



A STREET IN GEORGETOWN.



ENTRANCE TO CEMETERY, GEORGETOWN.

worth seeing. From one of its towers it is seen to be embosomed in palms. The streets are broad, and in some cases have long canals extending their whole length, in which grow the Victoria and Nelumbium water-lilies. At the east stand the Botanic Gardens, an ideal place in which to spend a couple of hours morning or evening. There is a club and reading-room where visitors may be introduced by members, and a museum in which can be seen the fauna of the colony and its natural productions. Here, also, a stranger will note among the numerous visitors types of the varied population, especially the East Indians in their picturesque dresses, with their wives and families.

There is no lack of interest in the streets, for here are types of the various races and nationalities. Off some of the stellinges or wharves can sometimes be seen a timber punt, on which is erected a thatched shelter for the Indians who have brought it down the river and are living here in much the same way as they do in the forest. The market may also be visited by the curious, but they must not be too fastidious, for the negro women who crowd here are by no means choice in their language. In Lombard Street are Chinese shops, where interesting curios can be picked up, and there are elsewhere shops of the East Indians where also can be obtained Indian brass and needlework, some of which will interest the collector. The stores kept by Europeans are full of everything necessary for comfort and convenience, and well up to date. On the streets may sometimes be found pedlars with collections of native Indian curios, from which can be bought such things as feather crowns, bead aprons, basket-work, blow-pipes, &c.

About seven miles from Georgetown is the finest sugar estate in the colony, Plantation Diamond, which now reckons its cultivation by square miles. Here the coolie system can be seen in working order, with model dwellings, hospitals, and other conveniences. By consent of the manager the factory may be inspected, and in about an hour the whole process of sugar-making followed from the field to the loft, in which the finished product is put into bags for shipment.

If the visitor comes at the right time, he may see the Tadj festival of the Mohammedans, which generally takes place early in the year, and is fixed according to a lunar calendar. It is the Mohurram, and is supposed to commemorate the sad deaths of the last members of the Prophet's family, Hassan and Hosein. A model mosque or tomb, made of bamboo, most gorgeously trimmed with coloured papers and tinsel, is then carried in procession with drummers in front and wailing women behind. There is generally an almost naked man striped to represent a tiger, who is held by a cord and allowed to spring at the crowd, thus turning what should be a solemn performance into something like horse-play. At the manager's house there are exercises in fencing with cloth cylinders, and other sports. Finally the great tadj which is sometimes sixty feet high, and has cost several hundred dollars, is thrown into the river.

To study the humours of the people he may visit the racecourse when there is a meeting, or see an inter-colonial cricket match. The negro is prominent, but the East Indian tends to add an element of the picturesque from his graceful dress. The negro is decidedly blatant ; he bawls, jumps, lifts up his hands, offers to bet, and shows that he is here in his true

element. Whether he ever has the deeper feelings of humanity is doubtful ; his mind is superficial, and thinking is done aloud. We often see a negress walking along the road talking and gesticulating with no one near to listen ; she is airing some grievance.

The negro, and even the East Indian creole, has adopted the English game of cricket with enthusiasm. It is interesting to note that this game is spreading in such a way that clubs are everywhere, and days are often spent in matches between them. The negro is also a rabid dancer, and his nocturnal orgies are often a nuisance to his neighbours. He is supposed to be musical, but harmony and melody are beyond his comprehension. He can strum on a guitar or play a kind of jig on the violin, but his music is generally all time and no tune. An old tin can will do almost as well as a drum, the tum-tum of which is sometimes heard the whole night. His chanties on the boats when paddling are not very different from white sailors' songs at the windlass ; in fact, they are generally adapted from them. He can improvise in a way, but he has no real idea of poetry or rhyme. A striking example of his want of appreciation of pathos was once seen at a Penny Reading, where the whole audience burst out laughing when Dickens's account of the death of Little Dombey was read. The negro will laugh at an animal, or even a child, when it is hurt and cries out. Taken altogether, his character is not attractive.

The East Indian, on the other hand, is exceedingly interesting in every respect. His love for animals is hardly exceeded by that for his wife and children. A cow-minder is almost universally a coolie, and we may see him carrying a young goat in his arms as

a shepherd does his lamb. He also takes an interest in sports, but is not so boisterous as the negro. Unlike the black man also, he takes his wife and family wherever he goes.

The Chinaman also attends entertainments of various kinds, generally alone. He sits or stands up and gazes on the spectacle without the least indication that he approves. Now and then you see him nudge a friend, but he never joins in the applause.

The native Indian is evidently out of place in a town. He seems bewildered, and it looks as if he has lost his way. Wanting to buy something, he enters a store, looks round, and if he sees the article, points it out and slowly offers one coin after another until the price is settled to his satisfaction. If, however, he cannot see what he wants, he stalks out without attempting to convey his wishes. Indian file is a familiar expression, but we never understood it very well until one day a party of eight men, women, and children was seen crossing a street in Georgetown. Every one came at an even distance from the next as if stepping into his footprints, and when they wound in and out among foot passengers they still kept the line.

The buildings are neither ancient, grand, or particularly interesting from an architectural standpoint. Georgetown has a fine Roman Catholic cathedral, an attempt in wood of an imitation Gothic style, by no means paltry. Other churches and public buildings are fairly good, one of the best being the town hall. But it is not in beauty or grandeur where the tropical building is notable; comfort only consists with coolness, and this means that the nearer we get to an open shed the more pleasant it is.



CEMETERY, GEORGETOWN.

Open galleries and jalousie shutters are necessary everywhere, and on all sides ; walls give way to screens, allowing the grateful breezes to blow through the whole flat. The inhabitants become so accustomed to open houses that they can hardly endure the poky rooms of the old home when they pay it a visit. In such a house in Georgetown or on the coast it is always pleasant to face the breeze, especially where there is a garden to rest the eyes with its verdant luxuriance.

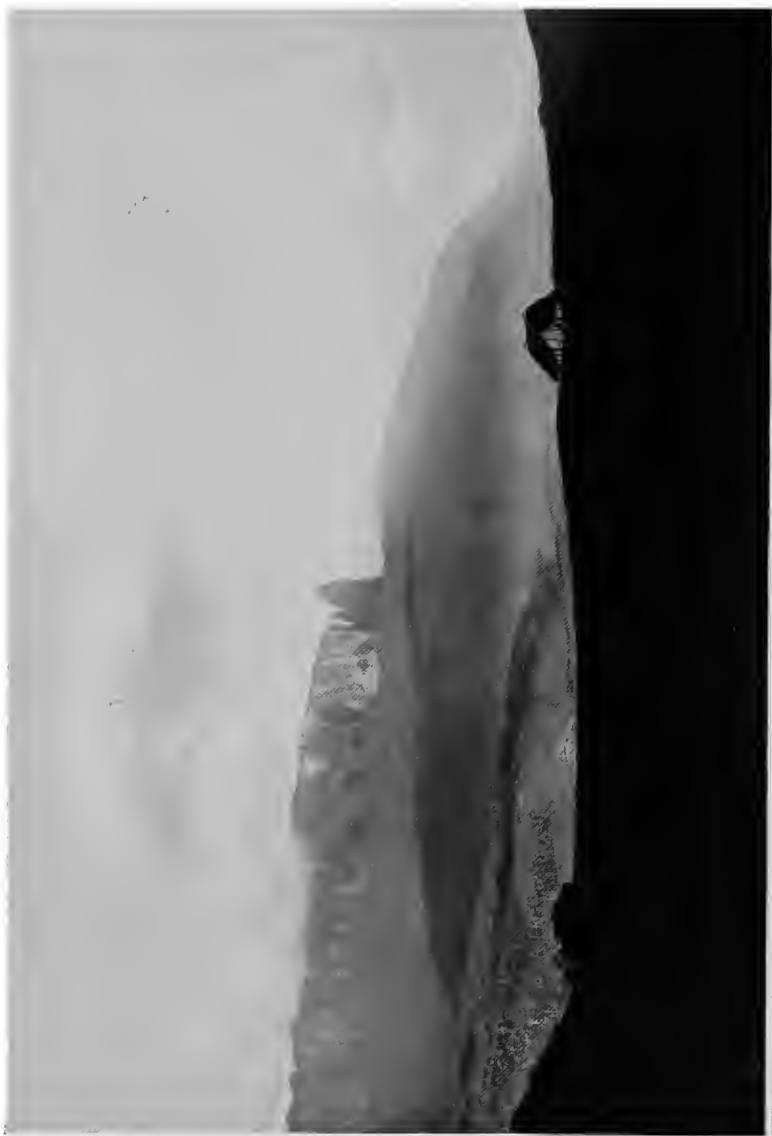
As might be expected, Georgetown is ahead of the other towns in Guiana. New Amsterdam is a miniature copy, Paramaribo less distinctly tropical with a suggestion of Holland, Cayenne dominated by its penitentiaries, which make the colonist think with horror of what he should feel if "cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd" in such a climate. And yet Cayenne is more picturesque than the other towns, for it stands on a hill, while Georgetown is on the mud-flat below high-water mark and Paramaribo on a sandy flat only a little higher.

The inhabited portion of Guiana is only relieved by its rampant vegetation ; were it not for the beautiful palms and other tropical plants it would be almost ugly. However, even a field of sugar-canes, especially when in flower, is worth seeing.

The visitor to Guiana will be interested in its forests and rivers. Scenes of grandeur and beauty will be found everywhere in the interior, for every great river has its rapids and falls, in most cases set in backgrounds of grand forest, with rocks and boulders decked with lovely ferns. The grandest fall is the Kaietur, which, though not comparable in breadth with the mighty Niagara, is five times the height, being 741 feet in one great leap, with a

series of small cataracts below, making a further 81 feet. The weathered sandstone rocks in its neighbourhood, decked with ferns, mosses, and other vegetation, give the scene a grandeur and beauty, worthy the name of a fairyland. Other falls on the same River Potaro, though not so grand, are quite as lovely, notably the Pakatuk. Arrangements have lately been made by which these falls can be visited in about ten days from Georgetown, and on this trip a fair idea of the forest and river scenery can be gained, including a portage at the Tumatamari rapids.

Another grand natural object in the sandstone region is the mighty castellated rock Roraima, situated on the boundary between British Guiana, Venezuela, and Brazil, and the source of streams flowing into the Orinoco, Amazon, and Essequibo. Towering up from a slope 6,000 feet above sea-level rises an immense red sandstone rock about eight miles long by four wide. The top, which was first gained in 1884, after many failures to find the way, is a giant's playground with enormous weathered boulders, cheesewrings, and balanced rocks. On account of the rain and mist there are water-courses everywhere, which at the edges pour over and fall down to the slopes as misty veils. Other great rocks of a similar character are seen in the neighbourhood, including Kukenaam, which is nearly as large as Roraima, but which has not yet been ascended. Dr. Richard Schomburgk, the well-known traveller, described the slope of the mountain as picturesque in the extreme. Spread before him lay a small marshy plain, on which Flora had assembled her most beautiful children—where the charm of flowers had culminated. The whole plain was covered with the dark blue *Utricularia*



RORAIMA.

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humboldtii, the most beautiful species of this genus, with red-tinted flower-stalks three or four feet high, from which three or four of the curious flowers were suspended. While the amazed eye was looking upon this charming carpet of flowers, it was especially attracted by the interesting pitcher plant, *Heliamphora nutans*, with light-green and red-ribbed leaves on a hollow urn-shaped petiole, open at the top, the lamina forming a small concave lid, something like a *Nepenthes*, the tender flower-stalk bearing white or red-tinged flowers. High above these rose the flowers of the magnificent *Cypripedium lindleyanum*, the charming *Cleistes*, and the yellow flowers of *Rapateas*. His eyes were dazzled by the splendour of the fresh green and the brilliantly-coloured flowers on this plain, while the air was impregnated with delightful fragrance. He fancied himself in a magic garden ; such a display of colours, such a variety in so small a space, was up to that day unknown to him. The border of forest enclosing this botanic El Dorado was of elegant trees covered with flowers and tree-ferns in fantastic confusion, entwined with creepers to form a dense enclosure. Looking up at the gigantic sandstone wall and the waterfalls rushing from its platform, he felt small and insignificant. There were so many new objects that he was unable to give attention to one for even a single minute. His heart was jubilant with delight—all the troubles he had gone through were forgotten. Without gathering a single flower he hurried off to the place where his tent was pitched between large rocks covered with mosses and ferns.

Dr. Schomburgk also described his feelings in camp during the night. Having pitched the tents, the poor

naked Indians built small huts from fern-fronds between the rocks, and lighted large fires in which, with their feet almost in the flames, they cowered shivering with the damp cold, the lowest temperature being 52° . About seven in the evening the mist changed to rain, which came down in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning. It was a terrible change; the rain beat through the canvas, until everything was saturated, the fire was almost put out, and he sat shivering and with his teeth chattering until the storm ceased. The moon and stars then shone upon a scene of indescribable grandeur; by the silver light the swollen masses of water were seen rushing down from the high gigantic walls with a bewildering noise as if hundreds of engines were at work. From Kukenaam it thundered as if the sea had broken its shores and was rolling on to bury them all. His amazement was yet to be increased, for suddenly a lunar rainbow appeared. Sleep was impossible, and he was thankful when the much coveted daylight appeared, enabling him to take a brisk walk. The noise of the torrents had ceased, the falls were of their usual size, and all that had happened seemed almost a dream. The young day unfolded new charms; Roraima and Kukenaam were perfectly bright and cloudless, but deep below the country was spread by white mist like a great carpet of snow, or a northern landscape illuminated by the rising sun, with the most extraordinary changes of light and refraction. The contrast between the luxuriant vegetation of the gigantic colossus with its shining waterfalls—its dark-red walls—was most surprising, and recalled the tales of the Arabian Nights. This charming scene did not last long, for the mist began to rise, and the



SUMMIT OF RORAIMA.

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rocks were soon wrapped in a cold, damp, impenetrable veil.

For ages the walls of Roraima have been scaling from the influence of sun and rain. The result is a pitting which, in the beams of the glorious sunshine which alternates with the cloud veil, glow with prismatic colours. The misty tablecloth, however, generally makes the walls dark like those of some giant's castle. Appun, the traveller, wanted to make a sketch of the sunlit effect, but a mass of clouds hung like a great pall over everything, covering up all below and leaving only the strange forks and pinnacles of the cliff to be illuminated by the rising sun, which, according to the refraction, glowed with splendid purples and yellows. When the sun rose higher the wind blew and commenced to tear asunder the veil of clouds; the fragments floated towards the cliff and reunited to form a screen, until the wind also reached them and chased them swiftly along the great wall. Appun, although a skilful artist, admitted the utter impossibility of portraying these lovely effects of sunshine and cloud.

At present the difficulties of reaching Roraima are too great for the ordinary visitor, but it is expected that some of these will shortly be reduced, especially when visitors show a strong desire to see "Roraima, the red rock, never-failing source of streams." The real difficulty is the walk of two or three weeks in going and returning to the river, where supplies are left in the boat. It follows that, as no provision supply can be got on the way, everything must be carried, and therefore the time is limited by the amount of food, about 50 lb. for each man.

River travelling is necessarily slow and monotonous, especially when pulling against the stream

and ascending rapids, A boat journey may last a month in going up and only a week coming down. There is certainly a spice of danger in shooting the falls, but the number of accidents is not large, having been much reduced by prohibiting boats leaving without properly certified bowmen and steersmen. Tents are used on large boats, by which passengers are protected from sun and rain ; the paddlers, like the Indians, often strip and pack up their garments until a shower is over, when they can put on dry clothing instead of working with water pouring down upon the thwart and at the risk of a chill.

To see the beauty of the forest, however, we must adventure in small bateaux drawing only a few inches ; for the creeks, the only paths, are often shallows and littered at the bottom with logs, the remains of trees which have fallen in years gone by and left only their hard and almost stony hearts to block the passage. Where possible it is well to proceed to the mouth of a creek at night, or in the early morning, to avoid exposure to the burning rays of the sun, which will blister the face and neck on the open river in the day.

Having provided a suitable craft, we may enter the creek at high water, if within tidal influence. The dark waters are dammed back, as it were, and the force of the stream much lessened for some distance, allowing our little craft to glide softly round one bend after another, every one a scene of loveliness impossible to picture. Clumps of palms, tree-ferns, and marantas alternate with tall trees festooned with a host of epiphytes, including many species of lovely orchids. The sun may be shining with all his intensity, but only a few broken rays come through the canopy overhead. Even a light shower

may rattle on the tree-tops and only a few drops come down upon us. No noxious insects, except a few ants that are brushed off the hanging creepers, disturb us, for mosquitoes do not live in the forest. A snake may be seen coiled round a branch, but is probably a harmless species, and even if poisonous will not interfere with us if left alone. Now and again a flock of bats will fly out from under a tangle of creepers and give us a momentary thrill. More startling is the reverberating roar of the howling monkey, whose voice is so penetrating and weird. At early morning, and again near dusk, there will be screeching of parrots and macaws above our heads, or the puppy-like bark of the toucan is heard, but rarely can a bird be distinguished in the canopy above. The only living thing which appears in sight is the beautiful blue Morpho butterfly which moves gracefully across the creek.

Presently we come upon an obstruction ; a tree has fallen across the creek and stops the way. It may be submerged, and then we find the advantage of a light craft, for the boatmen get upon the trunk and branches and pull us over. In another case it may be a foot or two above, and then we all get out, push the boat under, and re-embark on the other side. With a large bateau a delay of an hour might be necessary to cut a passage.

Now the full force of the current is felt, our paddlers pull hard against the stream. But the craft is light and their arms are strong, so we put on speed as the men strike up one of the well-known river chanties. In front is a tunnel of vegetation, at the end of which a strong light appears.

Suddenly we are out of the forest and in the midst of a grassy savannah—a glade surrounded by

eta palms. Through this winds the creek, now almost choked with water-lilies, which hamper the paddlers. However, we get through these, and again enter the forest, which is here what is called Wallaba swamp. The trees rise from pools of ruddy brown water, each with its bole loaded with mats of filmy ferns and with other ferns and mosses growing up their trunks.

At last our destination is reached. Here is evidently a landing-place, for there is a dug-out canoe and a woodskin, indicating that Indians are not far off. We land and pass up a track little more conspicuous than the run of some animal. On the top of this sand-hill stand two benabs or Indian sheds, which we enter, to find only one old woman, who knows nothing of English. The men are out hunting and the women planting cassava. However, her instinctive knowledge of our wants comes to the rescue, for she soon gets a leg of labba and some thick cakes of cassava bread, which we eat with a relish hardly known at our ordinary dinner-tables. As we have eaten labba and drunk creek water, we shall die in the colony if we believe the old saying.

The Indians will take us into the forest, show us how they hunt and fish, and, for a consideration, act as guides to the sportsman. But they evidently dislike to have a white man with them when hunting for themselves, for he is too noisy. No one can safely take a walk alone, even where there is a path, for sometimes there may be forkings that can only be recognised by the expert. Even the Indian is sometimes lost when hunting in a strange locality.

A great deal has been written about the dangers of the forest, but these have been highly exaggerated.

To a reader of Brett's "Mission Life in Guiana" it might appear that jaguars, alligators, and poisonous snakes are everywhere. Such is not, however, the case, for the traveller rarely encounters any dangerous animal. Even the naturalist who wishes to study them can only do so by the most cautious examination of their haunts. As most of the carnivora are nocturnal in their habits, it might naturally be expected that they would be dangerous to us when camping out in the forest, but we never hear of an attack. The gold-digger and balata-bleeder never think that there is any danger, and the experience of thousands prove that travelling in Guiana is perfectly safe. The writer has passed many a pleasant night in the forest, lying in his hammock and protected from rain by a tarpaulin, the camp-fire being quite enough to prevent wild animals from coming near. Even if the fire goes out there is no real danger; in fact, no one fears anything.

In some places, no doubt, insects are troublesome, but here again there is much exaggeration. The bush scorpions, centipedes, and mygale spiders can be found when hunted for in dense clusters of dry twigs and heaps of leaves, but rarely, indeed, is one of them seen except by the collector. When they are reported to be deadly we may safely take such reports with much hesitation, for, although painful, their bites and stings are hardly worse than the stinging of a bee or hornet. The wasps, or marabuntas, often sting severely, and some ants are quite as venomous, yet a man may live for years in the forest without suffering from any one of them. Stinging ants of the less virulent species are, however, so common that they are treated with contempt.

Mosquitoes and sand-flies are, undoubtedly, great pests in some districts, but in the real forest they are unknown; in fact, it is a common experience to find them absent where the waters are dark brown. The jigger flea is troublesome on the sand-reefs, especially in Indian benabs, but it is extracted so easily that it may be compared to a thorn, which also requires a little skill to extract without breaking. There is a fly which deposits its eggs under the skin of man, as well as animals, where they develop into what is called the "mosquito worm"; this can be quickly destroyed by placing a lump of pitch or a piece of plaster on the opening through which it breathes. Ticks are troublesome in places, as they are brushed into our clothes as we push through the bushes; no cleanly person, however, lets them remain long enough to take hold.

No doubt this enumeration is sufficiently alarming to the nervous person, and especially to women, but we have known ladies to camp out in the forest without suffering from any one of them. The real inconveniences of this travelling are the want of what are generally considered necessaries, but which are quite unknown either to the Indian or the river people. Everything likely to be wanted must be carried, for neglect or forgetfulness—often misplaced confidence in others—produces worry and trouble during the whole trip. The simplest thing, such as the want of a proper case for your matches, may cause more difficulty than all the insect pests and wild animals. For, if the matches are damp, no fire, candle, or lamp can be lit, and you may perhaps have to fix up a covering for the night in pitch darkness. Even when we expect to lodge with Indians or Bovianders it will never do to reckon

upon anything from them. Not that they are inhospitable—on the contrary, you are welcome to everything they have. But their all is so little ; on one occasion I found the only food supply in a small settlement to be a few plantains. There will be a natural prejudice against some of the meats eaten by the Indians, although most people enjoy berbecued game and fish, with cassava bread. The pepper-pot, however, may disclose the hand of a monkey, which suggests too closely the cannibalism of their ancestors.

Sickness is a bugbear to many people who wish to visit the tropics. Malarial fever is undoubtedly common, but in most cases it is little more troublesome than the influenza of other climes. Where English people speak of a cold, the Guiana negro frightens the new-comer with the word "fever." Every little ailment is fever, even "hot coppers" after a night's spree. It may be safely stated that a healthy person coming here on a three-months trip will have hardly time enough to contract any serious illness. A little later, however, if he remains six months or more, he is practically certain to go through a few months' seasoning. This comes after the profuse sweating of the first change to such a hot climate is checked ; the whole system is accommodating itself to the new conditions. The symptoms are headache, lassitude, and weakness of the knees, with more or less pronounced "colony fever," which, as we said, may be compared to a common cold. This seasoning is often the cause of future trouble ; the sufferer is advised to take brandy or whisky, with a common result that he takes to habitual drinking. Those who know the tropics also know that stimulants are even more injurious here than in

temperate climes. The bad name of Guiana has been largely due to this evil, for no doubt stimulants have killed more white men than the climate. The depopulation of the coast, where once lived thousands of native families, is also, where not the result of introduced diseases such as smallpox and measles, due to spirits, the curse of the Indian.

For the explorer there is a tract of country to the east of the River Corentyne, in Surinam, where possibly unknown tribes of Indians may be found ; there are also the Tumac-Humac Mountains on the borders of Brazil to be studied. For the naturalist there is an immense amount of work in every class ; even mammals such as rats and bats will be found rich in new species ; as for insects, probably half are unknown to science.

Guiana is within easy reach of Europe and North America ; it is the ideal place in which to spend a winter. Nowhere, perhaps, can tropical nature be so easily studied, for there are few real difficulties. The weather is often rainy, the forests steaming, and the sun hot, but these are matters of little consequence to the real traveller or naturalist. With ordinary care it is not unhealthy, but it must not be expected that a new-comer will become naturalised at once. The writer has been through some of the worst swamps where mosquitoes were rampant, has waded into the water to cut down palms, has pushed his bateau through mud and slush, been exposed to rains that necessitated baling, sat up on a river journey, for eighteen hours at a time, and never contracted more than a slight headache. He is of opinion that elderly persons would be far more comfortable in a tropical climate than they generally are when winter comes in England or the United States. He

anticipates that in the future this will be better understood and the bugbears of malaria and yellow-fever vanish, as some other bogies have done, before the march of sanitation.

Guiana has a bad name, partly from the fact that Cayenne deserves everything that has been said against it. This is, however, not the fault of the climate, but the treatment of poor Frenchmen sent out to die, as so many really were. To lock up a man in close quarters in hot weather anywhere is but a form of torture ; to do so in a tropical climate is murder. Yellow-fever is now unknown ; in Demerara the last slight outbreak happened thirty years ago. Malarial fever is common in some places, but no doubt this will go when mosquitoes are properly kept off. No doubt the climate is relaxing to one who lives in it for a long time, but that does not affect the visitor who comes to avoid ice and snow. The man who has lived in the open air knows that a poky home is disagreeable, and he who has enjoyed the ideal life in Guiana will hardly care to exchange it for a fireside, however pleasant that may be. Even where, as in Paramaribo, the heat makes you drowsy in the middle of the day, there is still the pleasant coolness of the morning and evening. But there is never any great change, for the difference of temperature at night does not amount to more than about five degrees.

Guiana is undoubtedly a rainy country, for which it has reason to be thankful. The average is a hundred inches a year, and sometimes four to six inches will fall in a day. There are, however, no fogs, and even when the sun is obscured for an hour or two at one part of the day it shines again between or after the downpours. The temperature rarely goes

above 80° in the shade or falls below 74° at night. The winds on the coast are cool and refreshing, but there are no gales. There has never been a serious earthquake, for the mud of the settled districts acts as a non-conductor to the shocks, which are very rare. Floods are provided against by the system of dams and ditches, and the building of dwelling-houses on pillars prevents damage, even should a dam be broken away. Unlike the West Indies, Guiana is entirely free from hurricanes.

CHAPTER XVI

TRADE

Value of exports—Amounts at different periods—Sugar—Gold—Balata—Timber—Diamonds—Coconuts—Coffee—Cacao—Isinglass—Rice—Rubber—Collecting of forest products—A larger population required—Labourers in the towns—Imports—Salt provisions—Wages—Banks—Exports, 1910-11.

DEMERARA and Surinam have always been noted for the value of their trade with the mother countries. The exports per head are still considerable, but a century ago they were, on account of the high prices, very much larger. With a population of one hundred thousand, Demerara and Essequibo exported produce to the annual value of about two millions sterling—*i.e.*, £20 per head. The present average total is a little more, with three times the number of people, but even now the value is about £6 for each individual.

In calling attention to the value of these colonies to the Mother Country, stress was laid on the amount of shipping employed, the machinery imported, and the home duties levied. Great changes have taken place during the century, but there can be no question that British Guiana is still valuable to the United Kingdom. But whereas forty or fifty years ago its sugars were always exported to Great Britain, now

they mainly go to Canada, which has, in recent years, taken the place until lately occupied by the United States.

In the year 1801 the exports from what is now British Guiana were, in tons : sugar 4,750, coffee 7,140, cotton 3,811, besides 139,781 gallons of rum, and some molasses. Sugar came to the front and soon began to excel when the slave trade was abolished, so that in 1816 the amounts were : sugar 29,250, coffee 6,000, and cotton 3,250 tons ; with rum 2,000,000 and molasses 1,000,000 gallons. The largest export of sugar before the emancipation was about 50,000 tons in 1827, after which there was a decrease to about 45,000 in 1835, which may be considered the last grown by slave labour. Cotton was then recorded as 5,319 bales, coffee 1,640 tons, rum 27,014 puncheons, and molasses 27,160 casks. This was the last of the prosperous years for quite a long period ; there was a gradual decrease to the lowest point in 1846, when cotton had gone entirely and coffee was reduced to 51 tons, to entirely disappear the following year, and sugar to only 19,000 tons, with 8,384 puncheons rum and 14,605 casks molasses. Here, however, the downward tendency was checked by immigration, and the exports of sugar and its by-products, rum and molasses, began to rise, until in 1861 they reached the same point they had occupied thirty-four years previous. But coffee and cotton were entirely gone, and it is only within the last few years that the former has appeared in a very small way on the export returns.

Sugar has now reached to over a hundred thousand tons, but there is no longer any sign of an increase, for, although some large estates have extended their cultivation, others have been entirely abandoned.

There are, however, signs of improvement in other directions, for several items have been added to the export list since sugar was checked in its upward course. The most important of these is gold, which started in 1882 with 40 oz. and reached its highest point in the financial year ending March 31st, 1904, with 137,629 oz. The encouraging steady increase which led up to this substantial result has not, however, been continuous, for the year 1909-10 recorded only 64,830 oz., and that ending March, 1911, 55,543 oz. There is room for further development here, as in other exports, and possibly this is only a temporary check.

Balata has lately come to the front in Surinam, as well as British Guiana. It has shared in the rubber boom, and is now fetching a good price. The first sample was sent from British Guiana in 1859, and at the London Exhibition of 1862 it was brought into notice, with the result that in 1865 over 20,000 lb. were exported. After that it fell off, only to revive again, until in 1889 the export reached 363,480 lb., after which it again declined for a few years, to reach over 500,000 lb. in 1902-3 and beyond the million in 1908-9. Being a natural forest product, it has to be collected in the same way as rubber, and the industry now employs a large number of negro bleeders. It is a means of opening up the country, and a source of revenue both from the licences and export duty.

Timber is becoming of some importance, but nothing to what it might be. The export was prohibited in early times, and it was not until 1851 that it appeared in the list of exports from British Guiana with 177,780 cubic feet, probably all green-heart. The highest point was reached in 1896-7,

when 404,234 cubic feet were recorded. Charcoal is exported to the West Indian islands, especially Barbados, where also there is a market for wallaba shingles for roofing, and firewood.

Diamonds are receiving attention, but the stones are generally small, running from ten to fifteen to the carat. The exports started in 1900-1 with 996 carats and reached 10,949 in 1902-3 and 7,180 in 1909-10. The stones are similar to those of Brazil, and of good quality.

Coconuts figure in the exports in some years to the number of half a million; copra is receiving attention, and fibre can be obtained in large quantities.

Coffee is grown mainly for local consumption in British Guiana, but in Surinam there is a small export, which in 1910 amounted to 159 tons. Cacao is most prominent in Surinam with 2,022 tons in 1910, while British Guiana has had only about 60 tons in its best years, besides the local market supply. This product can be increased to any extent, and compares in quality with that of Trinidad.

Among other products isinglass, or fish-glue, figures at its highest to about 16,000 lb. in the British colony.

The latest addition to the exports is rice, which until a few years ago was imported in immense quantities. Over eight million pounds were exported in 1908-9, and it is increasing, while the imports have fallen from near 12,000 tons to 354 tons in 1909.

Rubber is being collected from the forest and planted. It first appeared in the exports in 1904-5 with 951 lb., and in 1909-10 it reached 6,369 lb. As Guiana is similar to the Amazon region, there



LANDING FIREWOOD, GEORGETOWN.

is no reason why it should not become a very important source for the future supply of the world, for it is being largely planted.

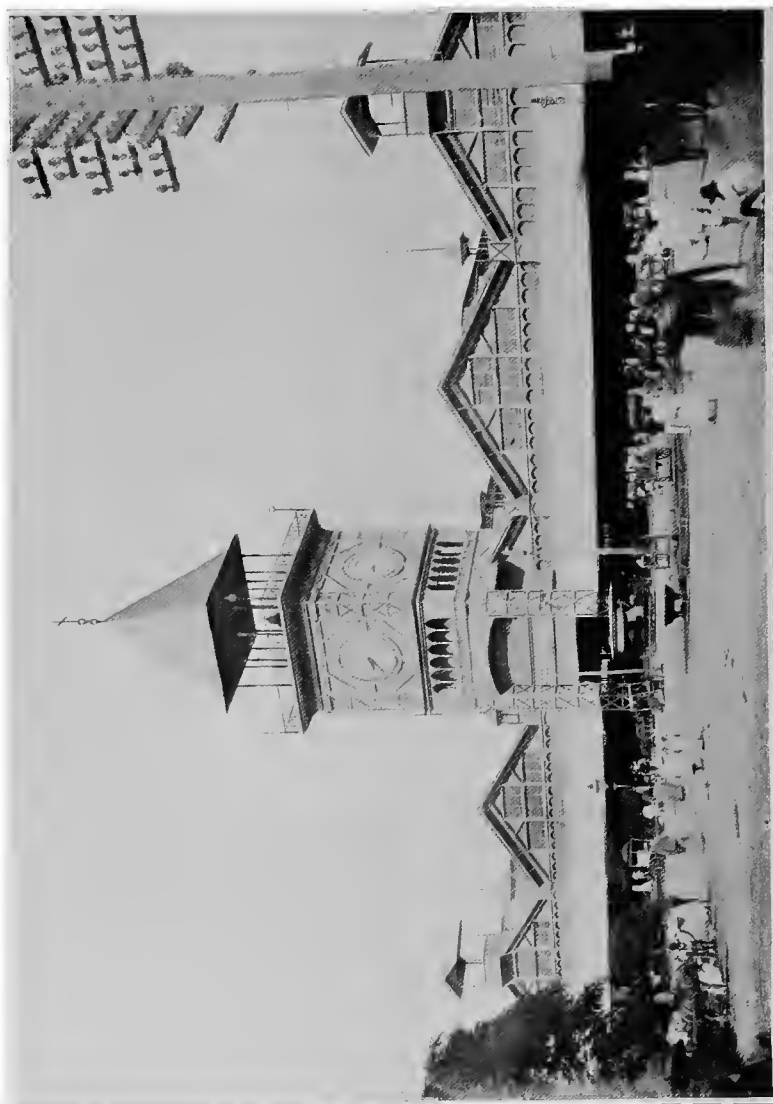
Balata and rubber collecting requires negroes, for East Indians are hardly suited to the exposure of a life in the forest. Again, the immigration authorities will not permit of their employment beyond the possibility of proper superintendence. It follows, therefore, that negroes from Barbados or some of the West Indian Islands will soon have to be imported. We have shown in another chapter how necessary to the development of the country is free immigration. What we mean by free is that the immigrant should not be bound to a plantation and be under Government control. As a free man he should be able to engage himself in any work, regardless of the existence of a hospital, doctor, and immigration agent. There are, however, the British and Indian Governments to be reckoned with, and they naturally object to any chance of a system where there is no responsibility. Under that now legal no one can engage coolies unless he has complied with the regulations and satisfied the authorities, which only the proprietors of a paying sugar estate can do. When the coolie is free he can hire himself to any one, but even then there is an amount of supervision that somewhat interferes with his actions; in fact, there is something like a paternal care exercised which does not consist with complete freedom. It is not always possible to get labour for new industries, therefore they are nipped in the bud. Palgrave thus speaks of this difficulty in Surinam :—

“ And so that a colony may flourish, be wealthy, prosperous, successful, what first? Population. What second? Population. What third, thirtieth,

three-hundredth if you will? Population. But let not the word be misconstrued. By 'population' I do not mean the sufficient merely ; that is, a population just adequate to the working of large estates, with nothing over—enough for a monopoly of labour and strength, whatever its direction ; this is not the 'population' I mean. Or rather, it is this, and something more ; this, and a surplus population into the bargain—'over-population,' in fact, with an ample margin, after the large properties of the land have drawn from it their necessary labour-supply, to create, enclose, and cultivate those small freeholds, that varied minor produce, without which staple products are only an unbuttressed wall ; vast exports, a vast risk ; and giant estates, a giant instability. No cup is truly full till it runs over ; no man rich till he has not enough only, but to spare ; no territory flourishing till it has an over-supply of labour and life, sufficient not for great uses only, but for small—for waste at times."

The labouring population in the towns mainly consists of wharf negroes, who get a precarious living by loading and unloading the steamers. They are very rough, and cause trouble at times. In 1905 they rioted in Georgetown, and a few were shot by the police before the trouble could be brought to an end. As a rule, however, they work very well, for they are strong, and will go on steadily for many hours ; in fact, it is in jobbing like this where the negro excels. He does not like to work continuously as a plantation hand, but when he can earn in a few hours enough to keep him for several days, he is generally satisfied.

The imports are less than the exports by about half a million sterling per annum. They consist



STABROEK MARKET, GEORGETOWN.

mainly of food substances, the highest in value being flour, after which comes cured fish. Clothing materials are important items, as are also machinery and tools. It is an interesting fact that cured fish has always been imported; formerly it was salt herrings for the slaves, now cod is the most important. When the old trading factories existed ship's rations were regularly issued; on the plantations allowances to slaves were issued on similar lines to supplement the ground provisions, and the staple of cod-fish and plantains remains yet the food of the negro, with the addition of bread. Gold-diggers and balata-bleeders cannot carry fresh meat or vegetables, ship's rations are therefore as necessary in their case as in that of the trading factories. Forty years ago everybody lived on such poor nutriment; with the general use of canned food of all kinds, this has undergone a great change, which is undoubtedly for the better.

The coolies on the plantations work by the task; this was introduced long ago to suit the seven and a half hours of the "apprentices'" day. It is generally understood that an able-bodied man can do two such tasks in twelve hours. The price varies according to the labour supply, but may be reckoned at a shilling a task. However, the East Indian rarely earns more than a shilling a day—*i.e.*, he does no more than his legal amount of work. This may seem small wages, but as he can live in comfort on half there is no real want. The negro will sometimes work at cane-cutting, for which higher wages are paid, but he cannot be reckoned upon for the ordinary routine tasks. He does not, however, earn as much for any length of time, for anything like continuous labour is abhorrent to him.

When employed at gold-digging and balata-bleeding the labourer is paid about two shillings a day, with rations; without rations the pay would be about 2s. 8d. Store porters get about ten dollars a month, and shopmen of the lower grades from twenty to thirty dollars. Europeans necessarily demand and get what appear to be high salaries, but as the cost of living for them is very much more than for the creoles, this is necessary.

Business is carried on as in other countries. Open shops with plate-glass fronts have taken the place of the close stores of fifty years ago, when a stranger would remark that Georgetown was half a century behind.

There are two banks in Georgetown, the British Guiana, a local company, and a branch of the Colonial Bank. The currency is English silver and the money of account, the dollar of 100 halfpence. The banks issue notes of five dollars and upwards, which are redeemable in silver.

The exports of British Guiana for the financial year ending March 31st, 1911, were :—

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

		Value, \$.
Sugar ...	100,954 tons	4,994,231
Rum ...	2,996,600 glns. (proof)	457,035
Molasses ...	179,463 glns.	36,198
Molascuit ...	9,230 tons	105,267
Rice ...	8,474,214 lb.	242,895
Rice meal ...	1,288 tons	11,990
Coconuts ...	1,023,631	23,387
Copra ...	80,447 lb.	2,646
Coffee ...	108,378 lb.	10,149
Cacao ...	46,347 lb.	5,020
Citrate of lime	7,928 lb.	948

NATURAL AND FOREST PRODUCTS.

Gold	55,543 oz.	946,777
Silver	285 oz.	157
Diamonds	3,009 carats	29,573
Balata	1,162,588 lb.	650,192
Rubber	1,156 lb.	899
Timber	256,845 c. ft.	94,275
Lumber	335,108 ft.	32,578
Wallaba posts	5,946	2,704
Railway sleepers	12,694	3,980
Shingles	2,996,600	12,949
Firewood	9,912 tons	20,063
Gum anime	3,124 lb.	468
Isinglass	17,833	5,752

The exports from Dutch Guiana in 1910 were as follows :—

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS.

Sugar	9,720 tons
Rum	129,793 glns.
Cacao	2,022 tons
Coffee... ..	159 tons

NATURAL PRODUCTS.

Gold	31,045 oz.
Timber	59,400 c. ft.
Letterwood	245 tons
Balata	1,983,613 lb.

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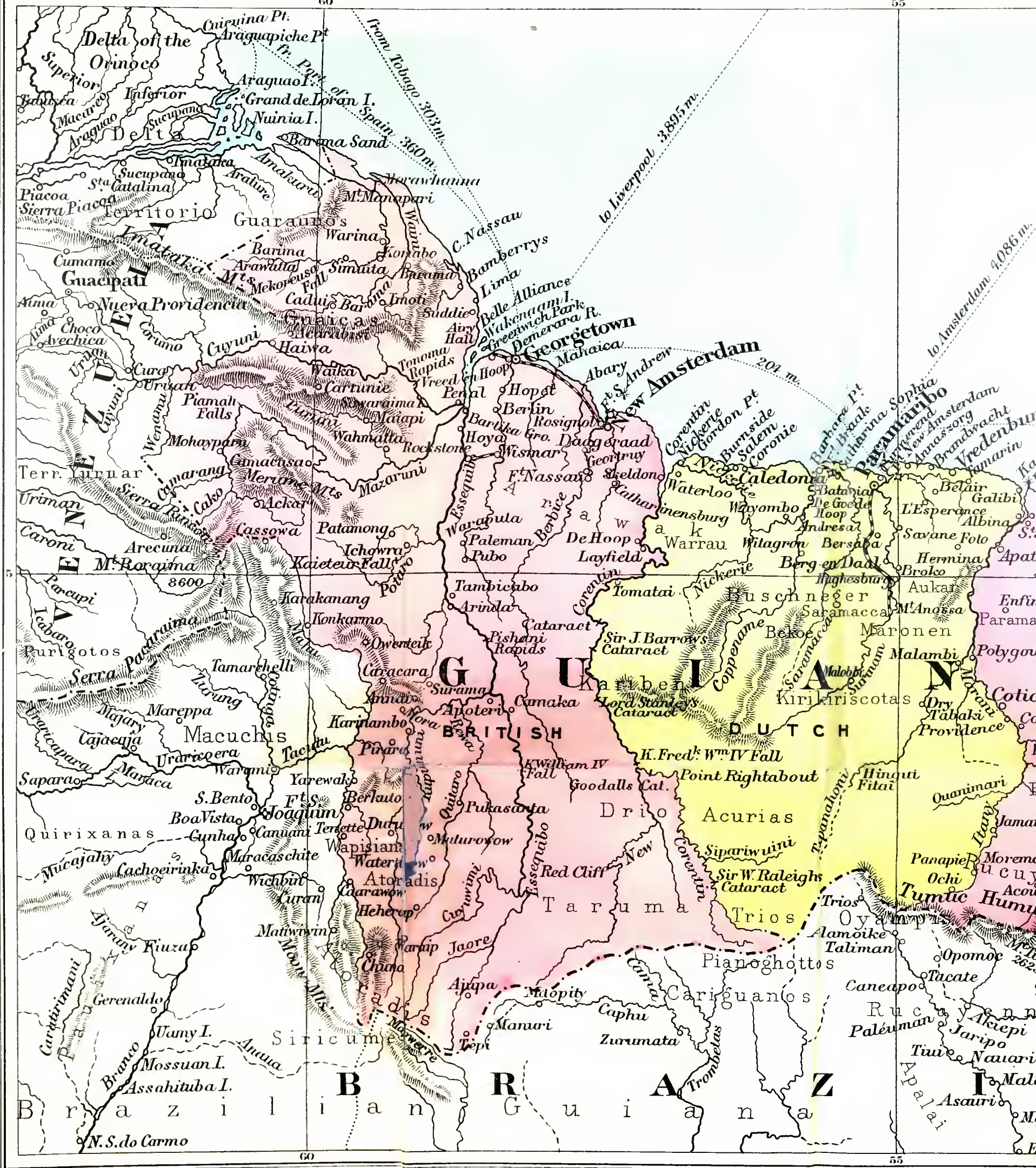
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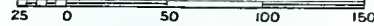
MAP OF THE
GUIANAS
 (BRITISH, DUTCH, & FRENCH)
 to accompany
"GUIANA" BY JAMES RODWAY

Natural Scale-1:3,800,000

Scale of Miles

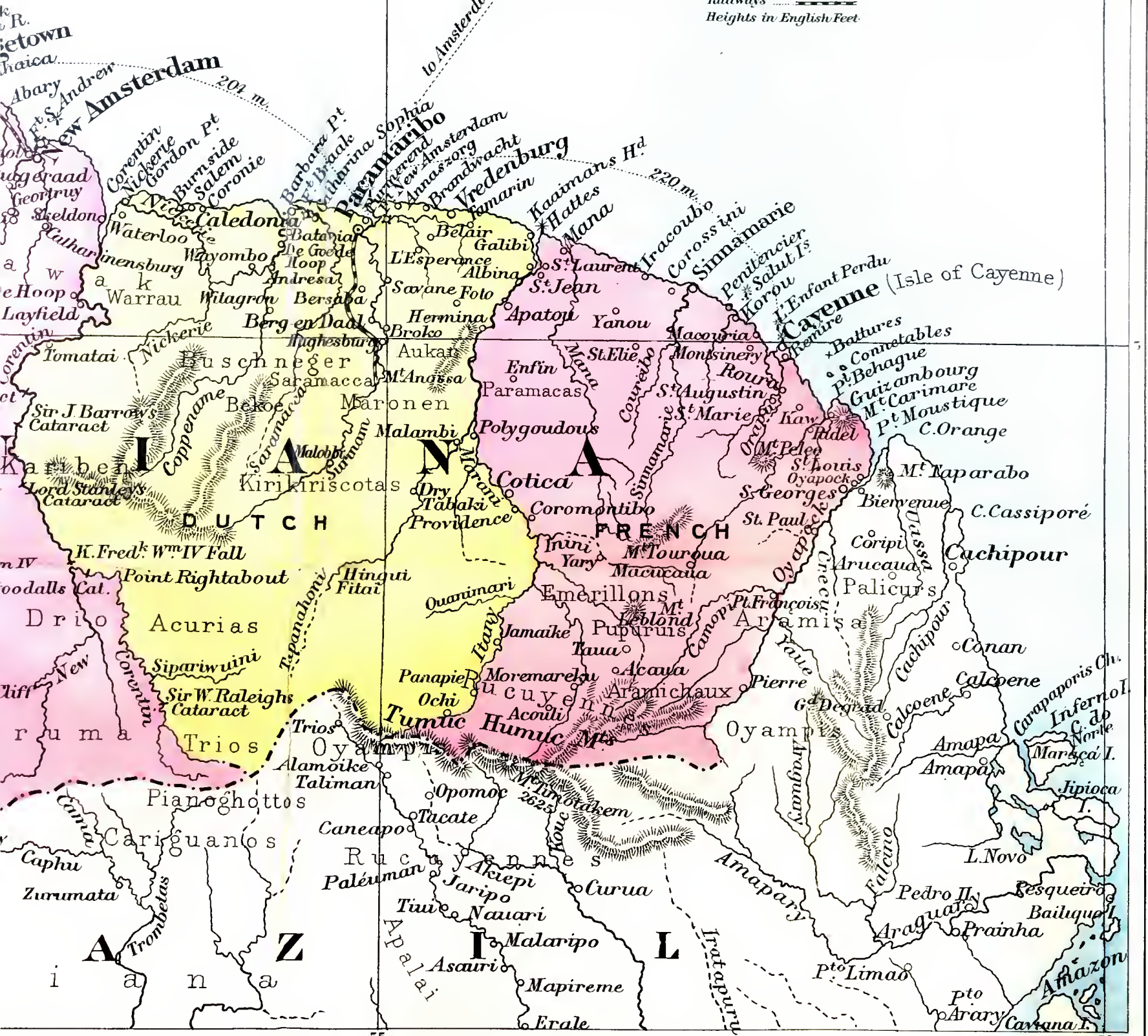


Scale of Kilometres



Railways

Heights in English Feet



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