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Title: An account of the British settlement of Honduras : being a brief view of its commercial and agricultural resources, soil, climate, natural history, &c. : to which are added, Sketches of the manners and customs of the Mosquito Indians, preceded by the journal of a voyage to the Mosquito shore ...

Author: Henderson, Capt. (George)

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AN
ACCOUNT
OF THE
BRITISH SETTLEMENT
OF
HONDURAS;

BEING
A BRIEF VIEW OF ITS COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL RE-
SOURCES, SOIL, CLIMATE, NATURAL HISTORY, &c.

To which are added,

SKETCHES
OF THE
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS
OF THE
MOSQUITO INDIANS,

*PRECEDED BY THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO THE
MOSQUITO SHORE.*

ILLUSTRATED BY A MAP.

By CAPT. HENDERSON, (Geo.)
OF HIS MAJESTY'S 5TH WEST INDIA REGIMENT.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY AND FOR C. AND R. BALDWIN,
NEW BRIDGE-STREET.

1809.

TO
BRIGADIER GENERAL BARROW,

LATE HIS MAJESTY'S SUPERINTENDANT; COMMANDER OF THE
TROOPS; &c. &c.

AT HONDURAS.

SIR,

AT the moment I submit the following pages to the indulgence of the Public, I feel a very sincere gratification that I am also enabled to offer an acknowledgment to you, however unequal to my wishes, of the perfect recollection I hold of the favour under which I have been placed.

And I beg you to believe that, in common with many others, I cannot but recur with singular satisfaction to the period of service passed under your command, throughout the whole of which you invariably shewed that the duties of the Superior and the urbanity of the Gentleman were not incompatible.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient

and most humble Servant,

GEORGE HENDERSON,

Capt. 5th W. I. Regiment.

*London,
Dec. 1809.*

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ACCOUNT
OF THE
BRITISH SETTLEMENT
OF
HONDURAS.

CHAP. I.

Geographical position of the British Establishment of Honduras. Short political account of the condition of the Settlers until the present period. Climate. Description of the Town of Balize. Outline of the Coast, &c. &c. First Settlers exposed to hostile Indians.

THE British Settlement of Honduras is situated in the province of Yucatan, or Jucatan, a peninsula extending from the province of Honduras to the sea northwardly, forming the Bay of Campeachy on the west, and the Bay of Honduras on

the east. It extends from about 16 to 21 deg. north latitude, and from about 84 to 94 deg. west longitude. This part of America was discovered by Columbus in 1502.

Previous to the treaty of Paris, in 1763, the English settlers had established themselves, with the friendly approval of the Indians, their immediate neighbours, on the east coast of Yucatan. The nearest Spanish settlements are those of Bacalar to the northward, and of Omoa and Truxillo to the southward. An inconsiderable military body is kept at each of the former places, but the latter is a situation of much more importance, possessing a regular force, and having very extensive fortifications. The harbour of Truxillo is also large, open, and commodious, an advantage that is connected with very few places on this immense coast.

On concluding the treaty of peace, in 1763, by the 17th article it was stipulated, that all the fortifications which

had been formed by the subjects of Britain in the Bay of Honduras should within four months after its ratification be entirely demolished. The works, which had been raised for their defence, were consequently destroyed; and in consideration of this, his Catholic Majesty engaged to protect them during their residence in the country. And by the reciprocal article (36) of the treaty of Madrid, the king of Spain further engaged, “that in case of war, notice should be given to the respective subjects of the King of Great Britain, that six months would be granted them to remove their merchandise and effects without molestation.” This condition is understood to have made part of every subsequent treaty between the two nations.

Truth, however, urges the recital, that notwithstanding the above engagements, so liberally made and so solemnly concluded, in the month of September, 1779,

the subjects of Great Britain, without any previous information being given to them on the part of the government of Spain, of any misunderstanding having taken place between the countries, were attacked in their defenceless state by a strong force, their properties materially injured, their persons seized and treated in a way of rather unusual severity. Many persons were blindfolded and put closely in irons, and all of them, of different sexes and ages, marched from their homes to Merida, the capital of Yucatan, afterwards countermarched to the coast, thence shipped to the Havannah, where they were held in captivity until July, 1782, when they were suffered to return to Jamaica.

The losses sustained by many individuals by this extraordinary event, amounted to a very considerable sum; and although many respectful solicitations were made to the British ministry to ob-

tain, if possible, some indemnification from the court of Spain for the outrage, the frequent changes, added to the very fluctuating and uncertain state of public affairs, at this particular juncture, rendered all applications of the kind ineffectual.

Between 1779 and 1784, many of the settlers sought a refuge among the Indians on the Mosquito shore, and formed their principal establishment on Black-river: but in the month of November of the latter year, the treaty of convention was concluded between England and Spain, and the British subjects again took possession of their former situation. Since this period no particular opposition has been shewn towards them, with the exception of an ineffectual attack made in the year 1798. This force was fitted out at Bacalar, and conducted by Don O'Niel, a field-marshal in the service of Spain, but which, after an imperfect attempt, was forced to retire with insigni-

ficant loss from before St. George's Key, a distance of ten or twelve miles from the chief settlement of Balize. It was computed that the number of the enemy employed on this occasion amounted to near three thousand.*

* The sense his Majesty entertained of the united exertions of the Navy and Army, and the settlers, he was pleased to express, by directing the following communication to be made to them through Lieutenant-general the Earl of Balcarres.

Extract of a letter from his Grace the Duke of Portland, to Lieutenant-general the Earl of Balcarres, dated, Whitehall, 8 February, 1799.

“ My Lord,

“ I had great pleasure in laying before his Majesty the account you transmitted of the defeat of the Spanish Flotilla, in its attack upon our Settlement of Honduras.

“ The able and judicious conduct of Lieutenant-colonel Barrow, and Captain Moss of the Merlin sloop, the bravery of the troops and seamen under their respective commands, and the spirited exertions of the Settlement in general, on this occasion, have been such as to receive his Majesty's appro-

Previous to this attack, commissioners had been regularly appointed by the Spanish government to visit the British settlement at certain stated periods. The chief purport of their mission was to exact a scrupulous observance on the part of the settlers of the several conditions entered into by the respective countries: that no forts or fortifications of any kind should be again erected; that the limits assigned for the cutting of mahogany and dye-woods, should not be exceeded; that no plantations beyond a certain extent should be formed, nor any but particular modes of culture pursued. The above event, however, occasioned the discontinuance of these visits, and the settlers, in

bation, which your Lordship is hereby directed to signify through Lieutenant-colonel Barrow, together with the just sense his Majesty entertains of their gallant and meritorious conduct."

A true extract.

(Signed)

BALCARRAS

consequence of it, have ever since considered themselves less bounden to an observance of their original obligation.

The intercourse which subsists between the English and Spaniards is chiefly carried on by a communication with Merida, the capital of the province of Yucatan. During war the English are not permitted to approach nearer Merida than the *look-out* post, as it is termed, of St. Antonio, a short distance from the town of Bacalar : from this last place the public dispatches are forwarded by Indian couriers to the capital. The officer who at present holds the distinguished rank of Captain-general of Yucatan is, Don Benito Perez, a most respectable character, who enjoys a full share of the esteem of those he is placed over, as well as the high regard of all who approach him in his official capacity.

The climate of this part of the American continent is greatly superior to that

of most other parts of the same vast portion of the globe, either in higher or lower degrees of latitude. It is equally superior to the climate of the West India islands generally; for persons whose health and constitutions have become impaired from the effects of the latter, very frequently acquire a sudden restoration of both, after an arrival at Honduras.

With the exception of a few months in the year, this country is constantly refreshed by regular sea-breezes, accompanied by an average of heat that may be taken at the temperature of 80 degrees. The seasons have also their marked difference, though Nature may not have determined the shades of variation here with the same strong lines she has affixed to most other situations under her dominion. Within the tropics, a change of wind, or a shower of rain, often produces a sudden and singular revolution in atmospheric regularity, and occasions a no less

sudden effect on the human system. The periodical rains which fall in this country, and which are neither considered unseasonable nor extraordinary, might almost presage a returning deluge, did they happen in some other parts of the world. But the *wet-season*, as it is emphatically denominated, is not considered here the season of disease. It is fatally otherwise with the whole of the West Indies. The most frequent and violent instances of sickness which occur at Honduras, happen during the *dry-season*, which is usually comprehended within the months of April, May, and June. The sun, during this space, is always most powerful, and its scorching rays are not mitigated by the same uniformity of breeze which prevails during the other months of the year. At the beginning of October, what are called the *norths*, north winds, commence, and generally continue, with little variation, till the return of February or March. Whilst

these winds last, the mornings and evenings are cold, frequently unpleasantly so ; and what in this country is understood by a *wet-north*, might perhaps furnish no very imperfect idea of a November day in England ; a *dry-north*, on the contrary, is healthful, agreeable, and invigorating. The state of the weather during the *norths* is extremely variable ; for a depression of more than 15 degrees in the thermometer has been remarked in the space of a few hours. Thunder storms are frequent during the greater part of the year, and in the hottest months are often tremendously violent.

The town of *Balize*, which is placed at the mouth of the river of the same name,* is the only regular establishment which the English settlers have formed in this country. It is immediately open to the sea ; and, though the situation is low, the

* The Spaniards invariably name this river, WALLIX.

groupes of lofty *cocoa-nut* trees, and thickly interspersed and lively foliage of the *tamarind*, contribute to give a very picturesque and pleasing effect to the dwellings of the inhabitants, independent of the advantage conferred by their grateful shade, a luxury which only those who have felt the powerful and subduing influence of a tropical sun, can fully appreciate. The regularity of the winds which prevail in this country has been mentioned, and were it not for the salubrity of these, the settlement would certainly be far less healthful than it is, as it is placed at the edge of an immense swamp which extends many miles back, and which at most seasons abounds with stagnant waters, but that during the rains is completely overflowed.

The number of houses of all descriptions contained in *Balize* may be numbered at about two hundred. Many of these, particularly such as are owned by the

opulent merchants, are spacious, commodious, and well finished. They are entirely built of wood, and generally raised eight or ten feet from the ground, on pillars of mahogany. The stores and offices are uniformly on the lower story, the dining and sleeping apartments on the upper. Every habitation has likewise its upper and lower piazzas, appendages which are indispensably necessary in hot climates, and that are resorted to as forming the most cool and pleasant parts annexed to it. The buildings within these few years have mostly been shingled, an improvement, which, independent of the security it affords from accident, at the same time furnishes a more finished appearance to the town. Before the introduction of this, the roofs were entirely thatched with a material of the country; the leaves of the *palmetto-tree*, (*Chamærops excelsa*) and which has obtained the name of *bay-thatch*. It supplies an excellent

and durable defence against the weather, and is found particularly valuable for plantation buildings, and those of an inferior kind.

The town being situated as previously described, renders any intercourse with the interior country, especially by land, extremely difficult; there not having been any roads formed, nor is it possible there could without extraordinary labour and expence: travelling to this can therefore only be conveniently performed by water; a distance, however, of four or five miles has been cut through the swamp, which, in fine weather, affords a tolerably pleasant ride on horseback: the sides of this road being profusely lined with a most agreeable variety of foliage, of which, that afforded by the stately mangrove, (*rhizophora mangle*,) manchineel, (*hippomane mancinella*,*) and *poponax*, is most predomi-

* The deleterious quality of the fruit of the *manchineel* is well known. It is believed, however,

nant: the last is a singularly pleasant tree from the delicate fragrance of its small yellow flower. A lavish species of the *mimosa*, or sensitive-plant, is also found in every spot.

In all directions, the approach of the extensive coast which lies contiguous to the Bay of Honduras, is attended with imminent anxiety and danger; and the difficulty of the navigation is alarmingly demonstrated by the numerous remains of vessels which have been wrecked on the different reefs and keys which are so abundant in those seas. The hazard is great at all times, but, during the continuance

in this country, that cattle do not experience any injury from eating it. This noxious property may also be considered as being connected with the leaves or bark of the tree, a soldier belonging to the 5th West Indian Regiment having been completely deprived of the sight of one of his eyes, by the insinuation of some drops of rain which had fallen from it whilst he was sleeping under its shade.

of the *north-winds*, the danger becomes much increased. The weather at such seasons is usually hazy and thick, and the currents, which, in this part of the world, are peculiarly governed by the influence of the winds, run with such extraordinary rapidity, as frequently deceives all calculation, and renders every precaution ineffectual. There is another thing which may also be deserving of remark: so deceptive are the different *keys* from the general resemblance they bear to each other, that the most experienced seaman, when placed amongst them, often becomes fatally perplexed from the impossibility he finds of accurately ascertaining his situation. Indeed, on making this coast, it is seldom safe to proceed without a pilot. On taking a departure from Honduras, the hazard becomes, if possible, greater than that of approaching it, from the increased number of the foregoing impediments. The first object to attain in

this instance is to make what are called the *Northern Triangles*, which are three *keys* immediately close together, of a form analogous to that which their name imports, and distant in a N.N.E. direction about 10 leagues from Balize. A further departure is then taken for Cape Antonio, on the west side of the Island of Cuba. The making of this last place is considered as most important on the voyage homeward, for it has sometimes happened that vessels failing in this respect have been driven, by the force of currents and light winds, into the Gulf of Mexico and not unfrequently remained becalmed there many weeks, or have had to beat up for the Gulf of Florida, an equally tedious time.

Though on a retrospective view of the difficulties and privations which are inseparably connected with first establishments in remote countries, much could not be found interesting as far as such events relate to the settlement at Honduras; yet there

can be little doubt but that some portion of that persevering energy, of mind, which has compassed more sublime designs, might be found to have actuated the early settler in his solitary and unprotected avocations in the early history of this. Not many years past, numerous tribes of hostile Indians often left their recesses in the woods for the purpose of plunder. This they often accomplished; and if resistance were offered, not unfrequently committed the most sanguinary murders. The habitations of these people have never been traced. Their dispositions are peculiarly ferocious, and they are always armed with bows and arrows of curious workmanship: the latter are generally thought to be poisoned. They are without cloathing of any kind, and wander over an immense extent of country but little known. The Spaniards have given to these people the general appellation of *Bravos*.

The Indians, however, of this part of

America possess little resemblance to the tribes of the more northern parts of it, having neither their personal bravery, nor characteristic hardihood: and the dread of the military, whom it has been found expedient frequently to dispatch in pursuit of these fugitives, has latterly operated as a very effectual check to their occasional visits.

CHAP II.

Considerations on the Commercial Advantages of Honduras. Agricultural Resources. Soil and Climate adapted to the culture of most of the productions of the West India Islands. Domestic Animals. Fisheries. Fruits.

IF opportunities were offered for an uninterrupted exercise of the many great commercial advantages which the settlement of Honduras possesses, it might perhaps prove as valuable to the parent country as any one of its dependencies. In point of situation, it is so favourably placed for such purposes in the Spanish American dominions, that the benefits resulting from the indulgence of a licensed trade, granted so late as 1806, have been already very sensibly felt; and there cannot be a doubt, but that a more unrestrained intercourse, especially during

peace, would be productive of the most substantial ends. This must, however, in a very essential degree, depend on Spanish colonial arrangements, which has seldom discovered an excess of encouragement towards any attempts of the kind: the times, nevertheless, are more favourable than heretofore.

It might perhaps be found the most convenient depôt of trade in this part of the world. Its immediate contiguity to so many important stations on the continent seems to strengthen this opinion, and to render it in most respects, for all the purposes required, more eligible than any of the West India or Bahama Islands.

The establishment at Balize could at once command the trade of Yucatan to the northward, and of the extensive province of Guatimala and its valuable dependencies to the southward. This last is peculiarly rich in many important articles of export, of which may be parti-

cularly enumerated a superior kind of Indigo, which has always obtained a very marked preference in the several European markets. Large quantities of this commodity sometimes find a vent by the opposite sea, but more frequently by the river Dolce, which empties itself into the Atlantic, through the Gulf of the same name. Considerable sums in specie are also shipped at stated periods from Guatimala for Old Spain. The articles of commerce obtained from the Spaniards are chiefly procured by money, but it is exceedingly well understood, that goods of British manufacture, suitable to their wants, would be far more acceptable to them.

The Gulf of Dolce, but a few leagues distant from the English Settlement, and Truxillo, from the excellence of its harbour, would deserve important consideration, if an extension of our commercial intercourse were attempted in this quarter of the world. Establishments for the purposes

of trade might also be formed in various parts of the neighbouring Mosquito country, and the friendship of its inhabitants, which it has been the good fortune of the English at all times to preserve, would certainly give very material encouragement to such views.

The principal articles imported at present from Europe, into the Settlement of Honduras, are linens of all kinds, printed cottons, muslins of the most costly manufacture, negro-clothing, broad-cloths, hosiery, hats fine and coarse, shoes, boots, earthen and glass wares, silver and plated goods, hardware and cutlery; of the latter large quantities, particularly of cutlass blades, which are used for clearing the grounds of underwood. Salted provisions of different kinds, either from Britain or America, are also continually demanded for the support of the slaves.

The vast consumption, independent of any re-exportation, of most of the fore-

going articles is extraordinary, considering the size of the Settlement. This is in a great degree occasioned by the comparative affluence of the greater number of the persons comprising it. The proprietors of slaves are in general wealthy : that is, the productiveness of labour renders them so. The slaves themselves possess indulgencies which are not granted to their condition in any other country. The people of colour and free-blacks, who are likewise numerous, all possess some property ; a few are rich, and are alike distinguishable for the feature which so strongly characterizes the same race throughout the West Indies, an expensive gratification of their appetites, and an extravagant passion for dress.

Many of the vessels, however, engaged in this trade, arrive partly in ballast, a few cargoes being adequate to the demands of the country. The case is widely different with those which arrive from the States

of America; for here, as it happens in our colonies generally, articles of American production are determined to be almost indispensably requisite. What are obtained in this way usually consist of flour, salt-fish, potatoes, onions, &c. &c. An importation of beef or pork is only occasionally permitted, on a representation of scarcity by the Governor of Jamaica. Lumber of all kinds from the same quarter also finds a ready and advantageous market. The prohibitions exercised at Honduras towards the Americans, are much the same as those used towards them in our different islands, particularly in that of Jamaica, which in this respect must be supposed to direct.

Vessels from the United States are particularly restricted in the size of the masts they are suffered to carry: this must not exceed twenty inches in the widest part, and for carrying ten thou-

sand feet of the above, they are permitted to take three tons of the dye-wood.*

A very profitable commerce, in cattle, is carried on by a few individuals of the Settlement with the Spaniards, who are resident on what is called the Main. It is principally conducted by barter, the Spaniards exchanging their cattle for linen, cloths, sugars, rum, &c. &c. It is conjectured that a profit of five or six hun-

* The number of American vessels which cleared outwards from the Settlement of Honduras, from the 1st of January, 1806, to 31st of December, 1807, amounted to

Ships	4	} Tonnage 5966. Carry- ing about 14000 feet of mahogany, and a proportionate quantity of dye-wood, &c. &c.
Brigs	25	
Schooners ..	19	
Sloops	1	
Total	49	

The embargo having taken place during the last year, the intercourse has consequently subsided, and any privilege to import provisions is no longer of effect.

dred per cent. is very commonly realized by this traffic. The cattle obtained in this way are either slaughtered, or purchased by the cutters of mahogany, to whom they are peculiarly valuable, for the purpose of draught. The breed is large, and well formed, and the meat they afford extremely well-flavoured. On the Spanish Main is likewise raised an uncommonly large and serviceable breed of mules: these are usually transported to Jamaica.

The frequent inconvenience which is felt in the West India Islands, for the want of regular supplies of provisions from the mother country, is felt as severely, at least in a comparative degree, in the Settlement of Honduras. And without the remotest attempt to arraign that policy which is so peremptorily insisted on as the exclusive privilege of the parent state, it may nevertheless be determined, that unless it had been for the occasional

relaxation of this spirit, the small dependency of which we speak, as well as the islands collectively, would in numberless instances have been reduced to a condition little short of famine. Indeed, at this moment, the most gloomy prospects may be said to await the whole of them, and which a war with the American States would too sorrowfully demonstrate. Unless some amelioration shall suddenly take place in this respect, it can scarcely be doubted, but that many persons must be forced to the unavoidable expedient of turning their thoughts from their present pursuits, to the exclusive one of cultivating articles of food for the sustenance of their families and slaves.

Few countries, perhaps, ever possessed higher advantages, in an agricultural point of view, than the greater part of that which is placed contiguous to the Bay of Honduras. It is certainly but imperfectly known to us, but what has been

ascertained respecting it, discovers in a very striking degree, the vast obligation it owes to Nature, if it be not in any way beholden to the industry of man. The extraordinary benefits which might result from the happiest combination of climate and soil, are almost disregarded; and the cultivation of the earth, which, in almost every other spot of the habitable world, claims our first regard, is here held of no consideration at all. Pursuits, therefore, of the most important utility give place to those which are viewed as being infinitely more profitable. Nor is it probable that such resources will suggest themselves until the opportunities afforded by the latter shall begin to fail. This must happen, and it will be only then that the real value of this country can possibly be discovered. The mahogany and log-wood cutters have long since complained of the limits assigned them by treaty with Spain, within which limits

both these commodities are becoming exceedingly scarce.

The productions common to the West India Islands, with a considerable variety of those more familiarly known to that part of the continent, which is comprehended within the Tropics, might unquestionably be cultivated at Honduras with equal, if not, in many instances, with superior success. The sugar-cane, viewed as the most valuable of all, thrives with the richest luxuriance.* Coffee, another, and now become one of the most profitable articles of our island culture, grows equally well. Cotton must likewise be included. Indigo might also amply reward the labour of the cultivator: an inferior sort

* Previous to the evacuation of the English settlers from the Mosquito shore, several sugar plantations had been formed on Black River, and the sugar and rum which they furnished were very generally deemed, by competent judges, not inferior to the same articles from Jamaica.

is indigenous. Indian arrow-root is abundantly produced, and pimenta has been tried under the most encouraging appearance of profit.

Contiguous to the banks of the many rivers with which this country is so abundantly supplied, the lands would, without question, be found, from the extraordinary richness of their soil, exceedingly well adapted to the growth of rice: and the periodical rains would certainly be highly conducive to the perfection of this most useful grain. That which has been produced for domestic use in many situations on the River Balize in particular, for goodness of quality and quantity to the acre, has been considered every way equal to the finest from the American States.

The above may be contemplated as the most important kinds of culture that might be advantageously attempted. Of other kinds, however, though perhaps not

of equal consideration in an extended view, yet scarcely less valuable from their contributing so immediately to the wants of man, may be enumerated: the maize, or Indian corn, yams of various species, cassava-root, of which is made a very palatable bread.* But of all, perhaps the best known substitute for this indispensable necessary, is the plantain, which flourishes under the congenial influence of a tropical climate, scarcely requiring the labour of attention. Every Settle-

* Until the cassava receives very particular preparation, it is known to possess the most dangerous poisonous qualities. Ulloa (*Voyage to South America*, Vol. i. p. 70,) observes, that it is used, after carefully taking off the upper skin of the root. It is grated and steeped in water to free it from its acrid juice, the water being frequently shifted. In a quotation from Dr. Darwin, by Bryan Edwards, *Hist. West Indies*, Vol. i. p. 128, it is remarked, that cassava, when made into bread, is rendered mild by the heat it undergoes, rather than by expressing its superfluous juice.

ment at Honduras has its plantain-walk ; and many of these comprehend an extent of, at least, an hundred acres : nor can any thing exceed the beauty and richness which the continued groves of these trees display, as the traveller pursues his course up the different rivers. The pine-apple and melon, being very commonly interspersed between the rows of plantains, contribute to heighten the luxuriance of the scene ; and the mountain-cabbage, occasionally rearing its lofty head far above the whole, adds no inconsiderable share of grandeur to the general effect.

The domestic animals of Honduras are such as are familiarly known in most parts of the world. The pasturage afforded them here being extensive and good, cattle, particularly oxen and cows, thrive uncommonly well ; and the latter supply a plentiful quantity of milk. Sheep also, and goats, are found to succeed, the last in a most prolific degree. Of the

sheep it may be observed, as a singular circumstance, and as an additional proof of the mildness of this climate, contrasted with that of the West Indies, that it does not loose its fleece, as it invariably does in the different islands, and which is suddenly succeeded by a kind of goat-like hair ; a change that may be very fairly attributed to the extreme violence of the heat.

Of fisheries, the most profitable, and consequently the most pursued in this country, is that of the turtle. This forms an exclusive occupation, and the quantity usually taken is considerable. A few of the turtle find their way to the London market, being purchased for the purpose by the masters of vessels from that port ; but the principal consumption of this article of food is domestic, and it is very generally preferred by the settlers. The taking of the species called the hawks-bill is particularly desirable, from

the value which is affixed to its shell : this in Europe usually obtains the name of *tortoiseshell*, and is manufactured into a variety of ornamental articles.

The persons engaged in turtling are generally inhabitants of the different keys in the neighbourhood of Balize. Many of them, however, have placed themselves close to the Spanish settlements ; but they seldom meet with interruption from this circumstance. At the seasons of their employment, they commonly form themselves into parties of four or five ; and, perhaps, with a small share of occasional industry, a more independent description of beings could scarcely be found. When the time for taking the turtle is past, they are chiefly occupied in the catching of fish for themselves and their families. The produce of their labour, which in successful seasons is often considerable, is invariably disposed of in the most licentious way, being solely appropriated

to the gratification of one indulgence, an immoderate consumption of rum. During the period of their labour, nevertheless, they are conspicuous for a religious adherence to sobriety, water only being permitted to be taken on the excursion. But, this over, a penance so mortifying is at once atoned for in weeks of continued drunkenness. An entire puncheon of their favourite beverage has often been deemed no profuse allowance for the celebration of a single orgie. Of the Turtler, as of the voluptuous Antony, it may be said,

———He fishes, drinks, and wastes
The lamps of night in revel.

From the uncommon variety of fishes with which the sea, contiguous to this coast, so plentifully abounds, it might be conjectured that the curing of several sorts of them would form an advantageous employment. Of the kinds which might

more immediately answer this purpose, may be named, the baracouta, and jew-fish, both exceedingly well-flavoured and firm. The former is often caught of sixty pounds weight ; the latter frequently upwards of two hundred. The manati is also taken on the coast and in the neighbouring lagoons, the flesh of which, either fresh or salted, is considered a great delicacy. The weight of this sometimes exceeds a thousand pounds.

The inferior kinds are so numerous, that a particular specification of them, with that of many other productions, connected with the natural history of this part of the world, will appear more conveniently reserved for another part of these sketches.

Whoever has become at all acquainted with tropical countries, must have dwelt with peculiar delight on the grateful profusion of fruits with which they have been so kindly furnished by an indulgent

Providence: the whole, or the greater part of which being so singularly adapted, from the exquisite properties they possess, to the convenience of man. Amongst the choicest of these, and which are abundantly obtained in the country of which we speak, may be here enumerated: melons of several sorts, pine-apple in equal variety, oranges of superior flavour, shaddocks, mango, guava, mammee, cashew-apple, tamarind, prickly-pear, avocado-pear, pomegranate, wild-plums of many species, sea-grape, &c. It may also be worthy of remark, that the grape of Madeira has been recently introduced into Honduras, and gives every promise of becoming familiarized to its new situation.

CHAP III.

Rivers Balize and Sibun, their importance to the Settlement : particulars connected with the history of both. Seasons for cutting mahogany : the operation described. Commercial advantages annexed to the above. Slaves, their labour and condition. Concluding remark.

IT has been already observed that cultivation forms no part of the leading pursuits of the British Settlers at Honduras. The cutting of mahogany and logwood is, therefore, almost their sole occupation.

The River Balize, from which the principal establishment has obtained its name, from having the oldest and most valuable mahogany works connected with it, claims the first consideration. Some of the wood-cutters have placed themselves as high up the Balize as two hun-

dred miles from its entrance, and from the sea to this distance, it is perfectly navigable for all the purposes required; the continuance of it further, though conjectured to be far, is not very accurately known.

At no very great distance, however, from the more remote situations of the settlers in this direction, it has been ascertained, that roads of communication can be found which extend from the northern possessions of the Spanish government to its southern ones. Cross ways are also spoken of, which lead to and unite with its interior dependencies. It is perfectly well understood, that the public dispatches which relate to the Spanish colonial departments are principally forwarded by land, particularly during war. They are entrusted to Indian couriers, who perform the longest journies with extraordinary dispatch. Few English have had the opportunity of knowing any thing

accurately of these roads, or of the places to which they lead. It having been invariably the policy of Spain to guard as strictly as possible against every information of the kind being obtained; those persons therefore who have travelled over them, have in most instances been in a state of captivity, and not unfrequently compelled to have their eyes closely bandaged. At the head of the River Balize, a town of considerable size and population, named Potent, is situated. It is placed in the centre of a large lake, and is considered a place of banishment for Spanish culprits. It has a governor and small garrison annexed to it, and in a south westerly direction is deemed about eight or ten days journey from the highest of the English Settlements. The communication from Potent, to the rich and extensive city of Guatemala is believed to be uninterrupted.

The Sibun, or Sheeboon, as it is usually

called, is the next river of importance in this country. The navigation of this is much bolder than that of the Balize, and vast quantities of mahogany are floated down it, and from the many branches and creeks with which it is united. The banks of this river are thickly studded with plantations, and the soil connected with it is generally considered of rich and productive quality. During the rains, the floods in the Sibun are extremely great, for in a few hours, it has been known to rise from its original level upwards of fifty feet: its decrease is usually as rapid; and little inconvenience, excepting the occasional loss of a few cattle, happens to the settlers from this circumstance. Its entrance from the sea is about three leagues in a southwardly direction from the river Balize.

Several of the rivers comprehended within the English limits, plentifully abounding with both mahogany and

logwood, were abandoned at the commencement of our recent hostility with Spain. The immediate contiguity of these rivers to the possessions of the latter, and the insecurity that might have attended the unprotected settler in his employment, no doubt suggested the expediency of this. Our establishments of this kind were more particularly confined to the Rio-Neuvo, and Rio-Honda, each of them a very short distance from the principal settlement, and both navigable for vessels of considerable burthen.

About thirty miles up the Balize, on its banks, are found, what in this country are denominated, the Indian-hills. These are small eminences, which are supposed to have been raised by the aborigines over their dead, human bones and fragments of a coarse kind of earthen-ware, being frequently dug from them. The Indian-hills are seldom discovered but in the immediate vicinity of rivers or creeks, a

circumstance which has afforded another supposition, that they were formed by the natives as places of refuge during the prevalence of floods. The foot of these hills is regularly planted round with large stones, and the whole may perhaps be thought to bear a very strong resemblance to the ancient barrows, or *tumuli*, so commonly found in various parts of England.

On a branch of the river Sibun, named Indian-creek, are situated the caves. These are subterraneous passages which have been formed at the base of three or four mountains of very considerable height, no doubt by the force of the current of water, which probably for many centuries has forced its way through them. The largest of these passages is somewhat more than a quarter of a mile in length, though in this country it has a greater extent given to it.

It would certainly require no common

powers of description to delineate with fidelity the exquisite beauties connected with the largest of the caves. The entrance to it from Indian-creek, after many windings, bursts suddenly on the sight, and resembles very closely the aperture of an oven, and is thickly overhung with rocks and trees of the grandest, but wildest workmanship. When this is passed, a wide and spacious lake instantly commences, the water of which is silent and deep, being scarcely heard to murmur, but during the most tempestuous floods. The lofty roof is arched with the most exact proportion, and is profusely studded with glittering crystallizations. Torch-light affords the visitor the only means of advantageously viewing this sublime piece of scenery ; for if in one or two places, an occasional beam of the sun, bursting with inconceivable lustre through clefts of the mountain, be withdrawn, entire darkness pervades the whole ; and the smallest

sound made in passing, being quickly loudly reverberated, is forcibly calculated to strike the ear with a feeling of solemn grandeur.

The caves are thought by some to have been produced by the labour of the Indians: hence the name of the water which finds its course through them; but this conjecture stands divested of every probability to support it. When the waters are at the lowest, the solitary recesses of the caves are the chosen haunts of many animals of prey, of which the tiger may be most frequently traced.

There are two seasons in the year for the cutting of mahogany: the first commencing shortly after Christmas, or at the conclusion of what is termed the *wet season*, the other about the middle of the year. At such periods all is activity, and the falling of trees, or the trucking out those that have been fallen, form the chief employments. Some of the wood is

rough-squared on the spot, but this part of the labour is generally suspended until the logs are rafted to the different rivers' mouths. These rafts often consist of more than two hundred logs, and are floated as many hundred miles. When the floods are unusually rapid, it very frequently happens, that the labour of a season, or perhaps of many, is at once destroyed by the breaking asunder of a raft, and the whole of the mahogany being hurried precipitately to the sea.

The gangs of negroes employed in this work consist of from ten to fifty each; few exceed the latter number. The large bodies are commonly divided into several small ones, a plan which it is supposed greatly facilitates labour.

Each gang of slaves has one belonging to it, who is styled the *hunter*. He is generally selected from the most intelligent of his fellows, and his chief occupa-

tion is to search the woods, or as in this country it is termed, the *bush*, to find labour for the whole. A negro of this description is often valued at more than five hundred pounds.

About the beginning of August, the *hunter* is dispatched on his errand, and if his owner be working on his own ground, this is seldom an employment of much delay or difficulty. He cuts his way through the thickest of the woods to the highest spots, and climbs the tallest tree he finds, from which he minutely surveys the surrounding country. At this season, the leaves of the mahogany tree are invariably of a yellow reddish hue, and an eye accustomed to this kind of exercise can discover, at a great distance, the places where the wood is most abundant. He now descends, and to these his steps are directed; and without compass or other guide than what observation has

imprinted on his recollection, he never fails to reach the exact point to which he aims.

It not unfrequently happens, when the huntsman has been particularly successful in finding a large body of wood, that it becomes a contest with his conscience, whether he shall disclose the matter to his master, or sell it to his neighbour: a liberal equivalent for this breach of fidelity being always punctually discharged. Those, however, who afford encouragement to such practices, by such impolitic temptation, are perhaps not more mindful of the old adage than of their interest, as it cannot but indirectly sanction their own slaves to take equal advantage whenever the opportunity presents itself.

On some occasions no ordinary stratagem is necessary to be resorted to by the huntsman to prevent others from availing themselves of the advantage of his discoveries; for if his steps be traced by those

engaged in the same pursuit, which is a very common thing, all his ingenuity must be exerted to beguile them from the true scent. In this, however, he is not always successful, being followed by those who are entirely aware of all the arts he may use, and whose eyes are so quick, that the lightest turn of a leaf, or the faintest impression of his foot, is unerringly perceived: even the dried leaves which may be strewed on the ground often help to conduct to the secret spot. Patents for discovery having never been contemplated by the Honduras wood-cutters, any invasion of the right appertaining to it has therefore seldom been very scrupulously regarded by them. And it consequently happens, that persons so engaged must frequently undergo the disappointment of finding an advantage, they had promised to themselves, seized on by others.

The mahogany tree is commonly cut about twelve feet from the ground, and a

stage is erected for the axe-man employed in levelling it. This to an observer would appear a labour of much danger, but an accident rarely happens to the person engaged in it. The body of the tree, from the dimensions of the wood it furnishes, is deemed the most valuable ; but for purposes of ornamental kind, the branches or limbs are generally preferred, the grain of these being much closer, and the veins more rich and variegated.

The last day of falling, if the negroes have not been disturbed in their labour, is always one of festivity and merriment ; and these people now anticipate a leisure that will allow them to think of comforts in which they could not indulge at the commencement of their work. Some are busily employed in the improvements of their dwellings, which are nothing more than huts composed of a few sticks and leaves, that of the master being seldom better : whilst others search the woods for

game; in which they generally are abundantly successful. The more ingenious turn their attention to the manufacture of a variety of small articles, from the less valuable mahogany, for domestic use; and which, either as presents to their wives, or as matters for sale, are disposed of on their return from the woods.

The mahogany tree is seldom found in clusters or groups, but single and often much dispersed; what, therefore, is denominated a mahogany work, comprehends an extent of several miles. The growth of this tree is considered rapid, but that of the logwood much more so, which, it is said, attains maturity in five years.

It has been remarked, that the mahogany which is fallen between the months of February and September is very liable to split; the same observation extends to that also which grows in rocky or mountainous situations. This is the *bay-man's*

greatest evil, for the wood more particularly subject to this inconvenience, is invariably the largest and of the finest quality. There is but one precaution against this, whenever the tendency towards it is discovered, which is to keep the tree immersed as closely as possible in deep water.

The logs of mahogany are generally brought out by cattle and trucks to the water side, or to the *Barquadier*, as it is termed in this country, which has been previously prepared by the foreman of the work for their reception. When the distance is great, this is a labour of infinite and tedious difficulty. As soon as a sufficient number to form a raft is collected, and the waters have gained the necessary height, they are singly thrown from the banks, and require no other aid or guidance than the force of the current to float them to the booms, which are large cables placed across the rivers at the different

eddies or falls. Here they are once more collected, each party claiming his own from the general mass, and formed into separate rafts for their final destination. Sometimes more than a thousand logs together are supported by the booms, and the catastrophe attendant on their breaking asunder, which during extraordinary floods often happens, has been previously noticed.

The mahogany, when disposed of at Honduras, produces from sixteen to thirty pounds, Jamaica currency, per thousand feet: the price of this article, however, can seldom be fixed, and must always fluctuate as it may be governed by quality or size. The shipping of it to Europe, especially during war, has seldom been found advantageous, excepting to a few individuals, who have succeeded in establishing a kind of preference in the London market. The exporting of it to the American States would, it is consi-

dered, be highly beneficial to the settlers, were there less restriction in the way of the dimensions of that which is permitted to be carried to them: this renders the intercourse, as it exists at present, of insignificant importance.

To give some idea of the profit, though perhaps the instances of such success are not numerous, which has been known to attend the cutting of mahogany: a single tree has been found to contain, 12000 superficial feet, and this to produce upwards of one thousand pounds sterling. This certainly is a most flattering view of the subject, but unquestionably many more examples of opposite advantage might be produced. The great expence the settler must incur in the purchase, feeding, and clothing of a number of slaves; the tools, cattle, and furniture, for the purposes of draught, exclusive of a variety of miscellaneous disbursements, are all material drawbacks from any

thing like extraordinary gain in this undertaking.

The annual cost of the negro alone is estimated by each proprietor at Honduras, at something more than 35 pounds Jamaica currency : an expence which, in the history of slavery, is probably without parallel. As a fact so unusual may require more than naked assertion to support it, it may not be unnecessary to particularize what is commonly granted on such occasions, and which custom has long since brought into a regular exaction. First, therefore, of provisions :

Of Irish salt pork, to each negro, 5 ^{lb} per week, which on an average of price, may be estimated for 365 days at	£. s. d.
	8 10 0
Of flour, always the finest, 1 ^{lb} per day each, estimated at.	10 0 0
	<hr/>
Carried forward	£ 18 10 0

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward	18	10	0
Of rum, supposing a gill to be allowed to each slave per day, during the days that work is carrying on, which may be numbered at 260: the spirits at 10s. per gallon	4	1	3
Of sugar, 12 ^{lb} allowed, at each, to each, at 1s. 3d. per ^{lb} .	0	15	0
Of clothing: two suits of fatigue, or working clothes, usually of osnaburgs, at about 1s. 8d. per yard to each, and making	1	3	4
One pair of coarse shoes ditto ditto	0	13	4
Miscellaneous: tobacco and pipes to each negro	1	10	0
Medical attendance, or medicine, per contract, to each	0	13	4
Carried forward	£ 27	6	3

	£.	s.	d.
Brought forward	27	6	3
Saturday's labour, invariably the privilege of the slave, and which is generally en- gaged by his owner: esta- blished rate 3s. 4d. per day*	8	13	4
	<hr/>		
Jamaica currency	£ 35	19	7
	<hr/>		
Equal in sterling, for each slave, per annum.	£ 25	13	11 $\frac{3}{4}$
	<hr/>		

* If he be not employed in regular mahogany cutting, he is at least engaged in some occupation by his master which gives him claim to this compensation. This allowance, however, though it be paid at the nominal rate of 3s. 4d. per day, seldom actually amounts to any thing like so much; it being in most instances accounted for in slops, trinkets, or liquors, of the most inferior kind; and which no doubt are given out in this way at a profit of more than 200 per cent. besides, the principal number of the persons engaged in the cutting of mahogany being also in

The chief property of the settlers of Honduras, from what has been advanced, must be supposed to consist in slaves. These have mostly been imported from Africa by the intercourse with Jamaica, no direct importation having ever taken place ; but many of these people are creoles of the different West Indian Islands, and several have been brought into the Settlement, by their owners, from the United States. And in no part of the world, where slavery prevails, can the condition of beings so circumstanced be found of milder or more indulgent form. The labour they undergo bears no proportion to that which they sustain throughout the islands : nor is it more to

trade, of course the above is provided for in the way of business. To those who may not be so situated, of whom there are likewise several, and who must depend on the merchant for such supplies, this expence consequently bears a very different proportion.

be compared with what they experience in the States of America, a country which at least *professes* to confer a higher portion of freedom than most others, whether it *really* happen or not.

The value of the negro, if recently from Africa, is computed from £120 to £160 Jamaica currency. Those who have passed a few years in the country, and have become accustomed to the labour of it, frequently produce from £200 to £300.

A convoy is appointed from Jamaica for the protection of the Honduras trade to Europe twice a year, in January and July.

It may be here observed, that if the English were removed from the privileges they at present enjoy at Honduras, scarcely any other people could derive equal advantage from them. Even the Spaniards themselves, in the very limited state of

their immediate commercial relations, and while a maritime superiority remains to the former, could be little, if in any way, benefited by the circumstance. Indeed it will possibly be not too much to assert, that the people of the Spanish colonies generally would very cheerfully wave all pretensions of the kind, for the advantage of obtaining an extension of mercantile intercourse, by which the manufactures of Britain might more readily reach them, and for which they at all times discover the most eager predilection.

CHAP IV

A code of laws formed by Capt. Burnaby. Present administration of justice. Courts of Honduras, how held. Humane regulation for protecting manumitted slaves. Revenue. Population. Diseases.

A code of laws or regulations was formed for the English settlers at Honduras by Capt. (afterwards Sir William) Burnaby, in the year 1779. These yet retain the name of their founder, and Burnaby's laws have always been considered the fundamental or statute law of the settlement. An examination of this code will discover that it comprehends little more than what is adapted to society in its most contracted state, and which never could have been intended to embrace any thing connected with a more extensive population and growing in-

crease of property. When these regulations were therefore enforced, it must be believed, it was merely intended, that some direction or restraint should be imposed on a description of persons, who had before lived without respect to rules of any kind; and whose irregularities, murders, piracies, and atrocities of every sort, were continually perpetrated with a barbarous indifference, because punishment was unknown. Such unquestionably was the state of society in this remote quarter, and one that, no doubt, powerfully actuated the British commander, to adopt such measures as he very properly considered might be productive of results more consonant to justice and humanity.

The present administration of justice is vested in a bench of magistrates, consisting of seven. These officers are elective, annually: a mode of appointment, which, in this respect at least, must have

many obvious defects, and which, when exercised in small communities, will not always be found the most certain way of securing the impartial ends which ought ever to be borne in view when annexed to a matter of such solemn importance. And it may very fairly be presumed, that a proper interpretation of laws would be more likely to occur, from the nomination of persons in some previous shape qualified to fill such situations, than could possibly happen from the accidental, or as it is more frequently found, capricious privilege of electing to them. In the weighty and serious business of jurisprudence, the maxim,

Ne sutor ultra crepidam,

should never be forgotten.

If it be the will of government to retain this establishment, it may be hoped, that an early attention of the legislative power towards this momentous point will

occur ; for, as it has been remarked, the increase of property, the more fixed state of society, and above all, the commercial consequence it has attained, would certainly seem to require something of a more defined and systematic form than what at present is acknowledged in it.

The courts of Honduras are held three times in each year : other courts are also occasionally held to determine matters of inferior kind, and to adjust the differences of transient persons. From the adjudications of these courts it is contended there can be no appeal : a conclusive power, that may not appear altogether so satisfactory, especially to those who may have become in any degree acquainted with the more enlarged system of jurisprudence adopted in other countries.

A recent law has been enforced, which entitles the settlers to much commendation, though the feeling idea which suggested

the necessity of so humane a measure may have originated in another quarter.* It is one prohibiting the manumission of slaves, unless the owner previously enters into a specific engagement with an equivalent security, that the persons so manumitted shall

* It is believed, in the island of Jamaica. Previous to the introduction of this regulation, it will not be denied, that the condition of the slave was often found truly deplorable. Broken down by age or infirmity, the boon, thus obtained, was more frequently extended, because perhaps that he had ceased, from one or both of the foregoing causes, to be longer capable of toiling, than from any impulse of a more generous nature.

A temple of *Æsculapius* might occasionally have been quite as convenient in our colonies as it was found on the island in the Tiber, to which the Romans consigned their sick slaves, and from which, if the god was indulgent in restoring them to health, they once more were taken into their masters' employ: if they died, no farther inquiry was made about them.

Mors ultima linea rerum est.

not, in sickness or old age, become burthensome to themselves or to the public. A similar regulation also extends to such freedom as may be granted by testamentary bequest.

The domestic revenue of the settlement is principally drawn from a duty or tax on transient traders, who pay five pounds per cent. on all articles of merchandise. This duty is productive, but much more so whilst an intercourse with the United States remains uninterrupted.

From all wines and spirits imported, one shilling and sixpence per gallon is levied : this contributes very considerably to the Honduras treasury.

From annually licensing retail liquor shops, of which the number in Balize, if its size be considered, is prodigious : these shops are rated as high as thirty pounds each.

From fines levied by the courts on civil and criminal actions.

From non-performance of the duty of magistrate, when elected, one hundred pounds. Non-attendance of jurors, &c.

From public retailers of goods, ten pounds per annum each.

From tonnage of vessels, seven-pence halfpenny per ton ; and a harbour duty on ships of three pounds.

The total of this revenue may be taken, *communibus annis*, at between six and seven thousand pounds Jamaica currency. It is disposed of at the will and under the direction of the magistracy for the time being.

It is computed that there is not more than 200 white inhabitants in the settlement of Honduras, and somewhat more than 500 people of colour and free blacks. The number of negro slaves is supposed to be near 3000. No *census* of the entire population has been recently taken. It may be observed, however, that

the increase of the white population bears no kind of proportion with its decrease.

The diseases more particularly incidental to this part of the world are fevers, chiefly of the intermittent kind. During the hottest months those of a bilious and inflammatory nature are likewise prevalent, and frequently prove fatal to persons newly arrived. Complaints of a pulmonic description are seldom the attendants of hot climates, and are therefore but little known in this.

The influenza, so common and frequently so fatal in Europe, proved peculiarly destructive here during the months of December 1807, and January 1808. It may be remarked, as a singular circumstance connected with this complaint, that it proved invariably more fatal to blacks than to whites.

There is an evil with which the negroes employed in the woods are very com-

monly afflicted, and from which the whites are not entirely exempt; this is called the *bay-sore*. This disorder is believed to be peculiar to Honduras. It usually breaks out in the hands or legs, and is attended in almost every instance with very acute pain. Medical opinion has determined it to be of cancerous description, and the cure is only effected by powerful caustics, or applications of a corrosive nature.

The tetanus, or locked-jaw, the frequent and dreadful attendant on almost every kind of wound throughout the West Indies and the greater part of the American continent, is not known here.

The force contributed by government for the defence of the settlement of Honduras, both maritime and military, is highly respectable. The settlers from amongst themselves have formed a body of militia, composed chiefly of persons of colour and free blacks; confidential

slaves may likewise be included. A considerable share of reliance is placed on the militia, and which, from the zeal and collective energy it evinced, when the Spaniards attempted an invasion in the year 1798, seems very justly to belong to it. And in any instance of future attack, it is entirely evident that the most essential service might be expected to result from a co-operation of this body with the regular force. Still, however, it must be declared, that the present organization of the militia is in no shape as perfect as it is capable under proper direction of being made.

It never has been believed that the settlement can be attacked but by sea. On the land side it is an entire swamp or morass for many miles back, at most seasons nearly covered with water, through which it would be impossible to move guns of the lightest weight, and indeed through which a man would find infinite

difficulty to move himself. If an attempt should be made by the river Balize, an event that at certain periods has been expected, innumerable small vessels would be required for the purpose, and after these were obtained, the passage of them could only be effected during the rains, a season most disadvantageous for every kind of hostile operation in tropical countries. At every other time the navigation of this river would be effectually impeded.

The channel is protected by the guns of a strong fort lately erected by a competent engineer; and, in honour of his Majesty, this work is named Fort George. Its situation is singularly commanding, and, in any attempt of a landing, would be capable of throwing a most destructive fire. An enemy not choosing to face this fort, but inclining to either flank of the town of Balize, the only possible points of gaining the shore, would

have to encounter the passage of shoals of mud and sand which extend a considerable way into the sea, and on each side would be received by the guns of several batteries most judiciously placed, and which must inevitably expose him to the most annoying of all opposition, a cross-fire, independent of what, in addition to this, he might expect to be treated with from the shore, a well-directed discharge from light field-pieces and musquetry.*

* The whole of the slaves of Honduras are permitted to use arms, and possibly a more expert body of marksmen could no where be found. To many this would appear an impolitic and questionable kind of indulgence; but let it be borne in view, that the expectation of fidelity and attachment may be best founded on the consistent exercise of humanity and forbearance, and much of every inconvenient result will be at once diminished.

CHAP V.

The pursuits of the Settlers of Honduras lead to distant, and widely different directions. Christmas the season of general festivity. The slaves particularly happy at this period. Water-sports. The Dory and Pit-pan boats, peculiar to the Settlement, described. Shooting and fishing parties.

ONE of the most frequent, and certainly not least founded, complaints, that has been advanced against establishments in remote countries, is the entire want of neighbourhood and society connected with them; an inconvenience that can scarcely be compensated for by the possession of every other advantage, and one that has often shaken the resolution of the hardest adventurer. Thus it happens in the country of which we speak; for labour here, and that with a small share of occa-

sional relaxation, almost exclusively occupies the attention of whites and blacks ; and, engaged in pursuits that lead to distant and in widely different directions, it seldom happens, perhaps not more than once in many months, that the settlers of Honduras have any kind of intercourse with each other, or for the same interval with their homes or families. The setting out on a mahogany-cutting expedition resembles in some degree that of departing on a long voyage, the preparations for both being nearly similar ; and the dreary time that must be passed in the woods, in this employment, may not unaptly be compared to what is felt by many in a long confinement on shipboard.

Christmas, however, is the season that in this country usually brings all ranks together—the bond and the free ; and the hilarity which prevails amongst the former order cannot possibly be more largely par-

taken of by any beings in the world. The young, the old, even the maimed and the decrepid, all unite in contributing to render this period joyous and happy; it may be added, and noisy!

The morning of Christmas-day is invariably ushered in by the discharging of small-arms in every direction, every thing now from established custom being free and unrestrained; and the master's house (where the festivity commences) and whatever it contains is now open to all. The members of the several African tribes, again met together after a long separation, now form themselves into different groups, and nothing can more forcibly denote their respective casts of national character than their music, songs, and dances. The convulsed rapid movements of some, and the affectedly reluctant steps of others, appear inconceivably ludicrous; whilst the occasional bursts of loud chorus,

with which all are animated, contribute greatly to heighten the singularity of the entertainment.

The endurance of the negroes during the period of their holidays, which usually last a week, is incredible. Few of them are known to take any portion of rest for the whole time; and for the same space they seldom know an interval of sobriety. It is the single season of relaxation granted to their condition; that it should be partaken of immoderately may therefore appear not altogether so extraordinary.

At this season water-sports are also common, and *Dory-racing* affords a very general amusement; and on these occasions large sums are freely betted both by owners and slaves. This species of diversion has no small share of utility attached to it, as it contributes to render the latter highly expert in a kind of exercise that is inseparably connected with the labour in which they are principally engaged.

The *Dory* is usually formed of maho-

gany or cedar, generally from a solid piece; its length is from 25 to 50 feet; and so buoyant and safe is this sort of vessel found, that persons accustomed to the management of it often fearlessly venture out to sea in it, and in weather when it might be unsafe to trust to vessels of much larger kind. It is worked with paddles instead of oars, and the fastest and best manned rowing boats have universally failed in a competition with it and the negro paddlers of Honduras.

The *Pit-pan* is another water vehicle much used in this country, and for celerity is preferred to the former; but this can only be employed in smooth water. It is formed of the same materials, the shape alone constituting the difference—the *Pit-pan* being flat-bottomed, the *Dory* round. Much taste is displayed by all orders in fitting out both these conveyances; and as they afford the only opportunities of travelling in this country, every expedient is resorted to, to render them

pleasant and commodious. They are commonly furnished with capacious awnings, hung round with curtains to defend the passenger from the sun by day and the dews of night; precautions that are extremely necessary, for in journeying to the distant mahogany works, an abode for some time must frequently be taken up in them, and when any exposure in an unhealthy climate might be attended with evil consequences.*

* It is probable that little alteration has taken place in the form and construction of these vessels since the time that Bartholomew Columbus, (on the authority of Herrera; and as related by B. Edwards, *Hist. West Indies*, vol. i. 8vo. p. 103) met one of them in passing through the gulf of Honduras. It was eight feet in breadth, and in length equal to a Spanish galley. Over the middle was an awning, composed of mats and palm-tree leaves; underneath which were disposed the women and children, secured both from rain and the spray of the sea; it was laden with commodities from Jucatan.

Numerous parties of the settlers also now avail themselves of this period of leisure, to make excursions to the woods, or out amongst the sea islands or keys, to enjoy the amusements of fowling and fishing. On these occasions an ample stock of wines, liquors, &c. is laid in, and the gun and net seldom fail to procure an abundant supply of whatever else is requisite. Wherever the most sport promises to be found, a temporary encampment is speedily formed; and the hours not occupied in the pursuit of game are always passed with great hilarity.

CHAP. VI.

Subjects connected with the Natural History of Honduras. Extraordinary advantages that might attend many pursuits annexed to cultivation again insisted on. Trees and plants, their great variety: the uses of several species described.

AN early attention has been directed towards the probable degree of success that might attend the culture of most of the vegetable productions peculiar to tropical situations in the settlement of Honduras. An outline, or general description of those which at present are most familiarly known in it having likewise been given, a farther enumeration of them cannot be necessary. But previous to concluding this part of the subject, it may yet be remarked, that this prospect of advantage is very materially encou-

raged by the acknowledged superiority of the climate and soil of this part of the continent, and from the circumstance of its being happily removed from the discouraging inconvenience of the frequent and continued droughts so fatal to every agricultural attempt in many other parts of it, and from which the greater number of the West India islands are seldom exempt.

It will, therefore, only remain for human industry, if no intervention shall offer to the exercise of it, to improve the benefits thus conferred by the indulgence of nature; for beside her almost spontaneous gifts, little has hitherto been sought in this quarter of the world.

Leaving this branch of the natural history of the country, we now proceed to another, which it is presumed may be less known, though certainly, from the many valuable advantages annexed to

it, it can scarcely be deemed less important.

Independent of the mahogany tree, the value of which has been previously pointed out, there is an infinite variety of other kinds, the growth of Honduras, fitted in as many ways for the most useful purposes, but more particularly for purposes of a maritime nature. Of this class may be enumerated, as being entitled to particular distinction, the three species of the Mangrove, red, white, and black: that of the former colour is greatly preferred for the firmness of its texture and its extraordinary durability: the bark it furnishes has been thought little inferior to that of the oak, when applied to the purpose of tanning leather. This species of the Mangrove usually grows on the borders of the sea, or on the edges of the rivers and creeks contiguous to it: the second and last kinds are found more inland.

The Santa Maria, Sapodilla, and Seagrape, are all found extremely useful; the last particularly so, from the naturally formed knees and timbers it supplies for small vessels. Cedar is also found plentiful and large, and is usually applied to similar purposes.

The Palmetto, of two kinds, the royal and the humble,* is abundant on the different islands or keys. The first is a tree of considerable size, and found remarkably serviceable in the constructing of wharves, or when put to any use where a continued resistance to water may be needed. The last is useful in building, and furnishes a durable thatch from its leaves.

Parallel with the different rivers, in almost every direction, are found extensive Pine Ridges, tracts of land abounding with the Pine tree. The timbers which these

* So distinguished by Browne, Nat. Hist. Jamaica, Fol. 190, 330.

furnish can scarcely be exceeded in size, and are very generally considered, for every necessary purpose, greatly superior to what can be imported of the same kind from the United States. But the cause which has been before assigned, the high value of labour in this country, has occasioned the settlers in most instances, rather to prefer purchasing such materials from the Americans than have recourse to those before them of domestic growth. Of the pine the kinds are various.

For a variety of purposes, the Bullet tree, Iron-wood tree, Calabash tree, and Button-wood tree, are all much admired. On the sides of most of the rivers the Willow is common, so likewise is a species of the Bamboo.

The Mohoe, or Althæa, is also found at some distance up the several rivers. The body of this tree is usually converted into rafts to float the logwood down to the sea. The bark of it is woven into

ropes, which are found to be little inferior to those made from hemp for strength and durability.

The tree which exudes the resinous substance called Caoutchouc, or elastic gum, from which the well known material of Indian rubber is made, is abundantly found in most places. The name which this tree bears in Honduras could not be learned; *Siphonia elastica* is that by which it is familiar to naturalists.* The Locust tree, which affords another valuable gum is likewise common.

* It would be impossible to contend for the accuracy of the nomenclature, which, when treating of the natural productions of remote countries, can only in many instances be resorted to. And as an infinite variety of subjects, connected both with the vegetable and animal kingdoms, may have escaped enumeration in the catalogues of the scientific, such names, therefore, can alone be properly continued to them, which may have been suggested by their respective uses, or which local circumstances may have pointed out.

Of the trees which furnish dye woods, the most plentiful and easily obtained are those of the Fustic and Logwood. Some other kinds adapted to the like uses are occasionally found, but not in such quantities as to render the discovery of them of much importance. A species of that which bears the name of Brasileto is sometimes met with on the islands contiguous to the coast, and forms an article of export. The *Pterocarpus Draco*, which yields the valuable commodity of Dragon's blood, is a native of the interior country.

Of a class different from the foregoing, the first place may very properly be assigned to the Cocoa-nut tree, from the well known variety of uses to which it may be applied. This is the common inhabitant of almost every situation within the tropics; and in this country, both on the con-

continent and different islands, is most abundant.

The Cabbage-tree, the *Areca oloracea* of Linnæus, and *Palma* of Browne, the beauty of which has been before slightly noticed, is justly entitled to more particular remark. It may be considered, as the latter has denominated it, the queen of the woods. In height it frequently rises to upwards of an hundred feet, entirely erect, and tapering with exquisite proportion to its summit. The trunk is without branches or leaves until within a few feet of the top; and the cabbage, or substance from which it has derived its familiar appellation, is also found near the top, enclosed within a thin, green, spongy bark. In trees that have acquired full growth, the cabbage is large, in form not unlike the thick part of the tusk of the elephant, perfectly white, and in long thin convolute flakes. When boiled it is exceedingly pleasant to the

taste, closely resembling that of the artichoke; and in its natural state animals of most kinds eat of it with avidity. It likewise forms a very agreeable pickle, in which way it is often used. The young Cocoa-nut tree also contains a similar kind of substance within its trunk, equally good with the above; but in this it is found nearer the root.

The Silk Cotton tree, a species of the *Bombax* of Linnæus, in this country attains an height nearly equal to the former; and whilst in bloom, is certainly one of the most splendid productions of nature.* At such season it is entirely crowned with a profusion of brilliant flowers of rich and variegated hues, of which the colour of the carnation is the most predominant.

* This is not altogether assented to by Browne, *Nat. Hist. Jamaica*, Fol. 277. But the species of which he speaks, as being common to the East and West Indies, may perhaps differ from that which is found on the American continent.

This bloom is suddenly succeeded by a multitude of small pods which contain the cotton, and which burst when sufficiently ripe. The crop of cotton it affords is said to be triennial.* The trunk of this tree is much used in the building of canoes and small vessels.

For purposes of a medicinal nature, the variety of trees and shrubs peculiar to this country is astonishingly great. Independent of which, many others have become familiar to it from cultivation. Of the former, the *Jatropha*, or Physic nut, claims particular notice. It is the property of this nut to act upon the human system either in the way of emetic or cathartic; or if it be required, powerfully as both; effects which depend on the mode of its preparation, and which in all ways is intimately understood by the inhabitants. It is very generally considered one of the most efficacious antidotes

* Natural Hist. of Guiana, Oct. 66.

to bile, and consequently must be deemed singularly valuable in a climate where the disposition to such habit is so prevalent.

The Palma Christi, from which the castor oil is obtained, grows abundantly.

The plant which bears the name of the Vegetable Musk, or, as it is commonly called, Snake Okro, is also plentiful. The seeds of this contain an highly aromatic oil; and which when bruised and taken internally, are believed to be an infallible remedy for the bite of the most venomous snake. An application to the wounded part, in the way of poultice, of the same kind, is likewise recommended. The Eryngo, also a native of Honduras, is much resorted to for the like purpose.

The *Dolichos pruriens*, or Cowhage, is common. Its generally established quality as a powerful vermifuge is well known, and occasions it to be much used in this country.

The *Contrayerva*, a species of the *Dorstenia* of Linnæus, is found in almost every spot. A preparation from the root of this is known to produce abortion, and is much used for such purpose by negro females. This practice is extremely common with these people, and has its avowed professors.

The *Digitalis*, or Foxglove, is a native of the high lands. The well known article of Sarsaparilla is plentifully obtained to the southward of the English settlement, and forms a profitable export. Four sorts of *Ipecacuanha* have also been enumerated.

The *Gouania*, or Chaw-stick, is also abundant. This is the common dentifrice of the aborigines, from whom the use of it has been learned; and for preserving the teeth pure and delicately white, this simple application perhaps exceeds all others. With the natives any appearance of decay in this respect very rarely occurs.

It will not be contended that the foregoing can be considered, other than an imperfect and diminutive catalogue of the class of vegetable productions, of which it attempts to speak. For, with the requisite ability to accomplish such an undertaking, and which in the present instance is not by any means assumed, it would certainly demand months, if not years, to investigate with any kind of fidelity the profuse variety of subjects dispersed over the immense forests and plains peculiar to this part of the world. There can however be little doubt, but that such research would be most amply rewarded by the extent and value of the discoveries it would be enabled to make

CHAP. VII.

Natural history continued. Quadrupeds.

MANY of the animals found at Honduras are such as are common to the continent of America generally. A very considerable variety, however, will only be recognised as the inhabitants of the warmer latitudes of it.

It is believed that few, if any, of the domestic kind of quadrupeds which are familiarly known in Europe, can be traced as the natives of this quarter of the world. But the supposition rather is, that the greater number of this description have become naturalized to it, from having been introduced by the early European settlers.

It would be entirely foreign to the end in view to particularize the number and

quality of animals of the above class, as, it has been already remarked, they are chiefly such as are common to most parts of the earth. But certainly, it may be repeated, in no part of it, if the least care or attention be extended towards them, can every species thrive better, or more abundantly multiply. Within the Spanish territory in particular, Nature has supplied a rich and almost boundless pasturage, and where the number of cattle and horses raised is prodigious. Many of the latter, so little are they regarded, return to a state of wildness, and associate in immense droves, from which it frequently becomes a task of much difficulty and danger to reclaim them.

Of the less familiar or unreclaimed kinds, which inhabit this country, we may begin by enumerating two kinds of Tiger, the Felis Onca, or Brazilian ; and the Discolor, or Black. The former species is extremely numerous, and often commits the

most open and daring outrages on the plantations of the settlers. Sheep, goats, and hogs, are the particular objects of its depredation. Reports are also given that it has sometimes attacked man, but it is considered that such reports are unfounded; for it fortunately happens, that the otherwise established reputation for courage in this animal is usually found deficient in this respect. The Black Tiger, which is deemed much the fiercest, is but rarely discovered. The *Felis Pardalis*, or Mexican cat, is likewise common, and proves very destructive to the smaller kinds of stock, such as poultry, &c.

The Deer, and a species of Gazelle, or Antelope, are both abundant. The former of the small fallow kind, and which inhabits most parts of the American continent, and the islands contiguous to it. The meat this animal affords is always found extremely poor, which may most probably be attributed to the very ha-

raised life so timid and inoffensive a creature is forced to undergo. In the immense forests of this country it is surrounded by enemies, of which the tyger is the most frequent, and not the least inveterate. Nor is it by any means secure from the hostility of the inhabitant of another element, the alligator; a monster which infests every watery spot, and whose stratagems are often successfully employed in surprising animals of larger and swifter kind than itself. The Gazelle is a most beautiful little creature, and has been considered the Dorcas, or Barbarian Antelope, of Linnæus.* It is about half the size of the deer.

The Peccary, and the Warree, are animals of the hog kind. The former is the

* Perhaps with questionable accuracy, as it appears in contradiction to the established opinions of some of the most able and distinguished naturalists. Mr. Pennant, in particular, has determined, that not a single species of the Antelope has been dis-

Sus Tajassu of Linnæus ; or the *Tajassu* of other naturalists. On the back of this animal is placed a glandulous orifice, which has furnished a very common belief that in this part of it the navel is situated. The flesh of the Peccary is considered particularly good either fresh or salted ; but on killing it, if the glands just mentioned be not instantly removed, the whole carcase becomes tainted with the most noxious and fetid odour. The latter animal has not been so particularly described. It has been denominated the hog of the isthmus of Darien ; and an opinion has been suggested, that it may only be the European hog run wild.

covered in any part of the new world. If the animal in question, however, and which in this country is not known by any other name, be not a member of this tribe, it might be difficult to point out to what other class it should properly belong. The resemblance, as far as description can be relied on, is in every respect essentially the same.

Both the Peccary and the Warree usually go in large bodies ; and at such times it is not considered at all safe to wound or kill any of the party, by firing on them, unless a retreat or place of security be nigh, for those, which remain unhurt, commonly attack the offender in the most desperate way. The approach of these animals may be heard in the woods at a great distance, by the loud and clamorous noise they continually make ; and like the domestic hog, it is asserted that they destroy and eat snakes and reptiles of different kinds.

The Gibeonite, (*Cavia Paca*) is a small animal greatly resembling, though somewhat larger than, the guinea-pig. It is plentifully found at Honduras, and easily domesticated. The flesh of it is extolled as a peculiar delicacy. Under the same head may be included the Indian Coney, or Agouti, which sometimes has been confounded with the former. This ani-

mal, in size, form, and habit, is very like the hare. It does not run, but leaps; and whilst in the act of listening, it rears itself on the hind legs exactly in the same way. The meat of it is wholesome, but exceedingly dry.

Of the Armadillo, three species are very commonly found; the three, eight, and nine banded. They are all easily tamed, and are most inoffensive little animals. But in this state they seldom long exist; a circumstance, it is believed, chiefly owing to the difficulty of supplying them with the kind of food to which they have been accustomed, and which principally consists of the insects found in the decayed roots of trees. It has been generally asserted that this animal usually feeds on fruits, &c.; an opinion that has been in some degree contradicted by observation. The Armadillo forms another luxury of the table in this country.

The Quash, a species of the Viverra,

at the head of which is placed the celebrated Ichneumon, is likewise an inhabitant of this part of America; and, like that singular animal, is destructive to most kinds of vermin. Whenever the Quash makes an attack, it rather strikes with its teeth than bites, and always lacerates in a most severe degree. A dog of the best breed and courage, once wounded by this animal, will seldom again face it.

Two kinds of the *Myrmecophaga*, or Ant-eater, may also be enumerated; the *Didactyla*, and the *Pentadactyla*. These animals are easily domesticated; but are slothful and stupid, usually sleeping throughout the day, and roaming at night.

The smaller sort of Opossum, *Dorsigera*, is abundant. The singular way in which the females of most of this species protect their young from danger, by inclosing them in an abdominal pouch, is well known. When frightened or pursued, the young ones instinctively fly to

this receptacle of the parent, which can be closed or opened at will.

The *Racoon* is extremely common, and very destructive to gardens, poultry, &c. The *Grey Fox* is likewise said to be a native of the mountainous parts; but if it be, it must be rare.

The small *Red Squirrel* is exceedingly numerous.

The *Hystrix Mexicana*, or *Mexican Porcupine*, is frequently taken in out-houses, and on the different plantations. The flesh of this animal is much commended by the negroes, and is said very closely to taste like pork.

But of all the animals which may occasionally be discovered in this country, the most extraordinary is unquestionably the *Tapir*; or as it is here vulgarly, and certainly with no great accuracy, named, the *Mountain Cow*. This animal is an inhabitant of the thickest and most retired woods in the neighbourhood of rivers and

creeks. It is described as being about the size of a small cow, and is gregarious. It swims, dives, and is considered to possess the property of walking beneath the water. It may frequently be traced on the sands by the large, flat, and nearly round impression of its feet. As this animal cautiously avoids the day, it is but rarely met with. Sometimes, however, as the traveller pursues his course up the distant rivers, and when but little noise is made, it is surprised on the banks and shot. The meat of the Tapir, contrary to what has been pronounced of it, is in this country considered exceedingly coarse and rank.

The Monkey tribe is numerous, and the species various: though confined, it is believed, exclusively to the classes which naturalists have denominated Sapajous, and Sagoins. The animals of the former kind are peculiarly distinguishable from all others by the use they make of their

tails, by which they seize and hold on the branches of trees or any other substance, supporting the whole weight of their bodies with surprising tenacity: even when desperately wounded, they are seldom known to quit this grasp but with life. It is very doubtful whether any of the Ape or Baboon species can be traced as inhabitants of the American continent, though such have occasionally been enumerated in the journals of travellers.

The *Fatuellus*, Horned Sapajou, the *Apella*, Brown Sapajou, and the *Capucina*, or Capuchin Monkey, are the kinds most frequently met with in the woods of Honduras. The last is very common, and is a mild, playful little animal.

There is one species of monkey also found in this part of the world, which may perhaps have escaped particular notice. In size and form it resembles the *Apella*; and the female, in which the characteristic difference appears most

strongly to exist, is peculiarly denoted by a loose fleshy appendant membrane, which frequently occasions its sex to be mistaken.*

The persons engaged in mahogany cutting, whites and blacks, include the monkey in the foremost delicacies the woods afford. But we should wish to believe,

* A monkey of this kind was for many months an inhabitant of the writer's quarters. It was the most gentle creature imaginable, and was passionately fond of wine or spirits of any kind, if highly sweetened. When so indulged, it would invariably sip to intoxication, and then become unbouedly sportive and diverting; frequently seizing a small kitten, an inmate of the same abode, and springing with it up the rafters with extraordinary agility, but taking care always to return its captive unhurt on the floor. In this way it would continue until overpowered by fatigue, and then drop on its hands to sleep. Indeed the chief characteristic of this species seems to belong to the ludicrous; and for a morbid or melancholy affection, perhaps a more efficacious cure could not be resorted to than the risible actions of this imitative animal.

that the singularly affecting circumstances, often accompanying the destruction of this animal, would in most instances operate as a powerful incentive to let it remain undisturbed. It is commonly told, that when the mother and her young are found together (a very usual thing), and one falls or is wounded by the hunter's aim, that the other is seldom known to quit its afflicted companion, but to cling to it, and bewail the disaster with piteous cries and lamentations. In this way they both become prey.

The Manati, which is described as forming the boundary between quadrupeds and fishes, has been previously noticed as an inhabitant of the waters contiguous to the shores of Honduras. The male and female of this species of animal are usually found together, and whilst sporting on the surface of the different lagoons, are frequently destroyed by the harpoon or dart, in the use of which the

slaves of the Settlement, and the Indians of the neighbouring Mosquito nation, are wonderfully dexterous. The extraordinary size of this singular production has likewise been remarked. The flesh of it is particularly admired, and thought very closely to resemble that of veal. The tail, which forms the most valuable part of the Manati, after laying some days in a pickle prepared for it with spices, &c. and eaten cold, is a discovery of which Apicius might have been proud, and which the discriminating palate of Elagabalus would have thought justly entitled to the most distinguished reward.

With the above observation, an opinion cannot but suggest itself, that either necessity or curiosity must in a great variety of instances have actuated man in the attempt of converting many productions, animal and vegetable, into the means of his support or gratification. But surely it could only have been the

former, and that of the most peremptory kind, that first placed on the table some things now enumerated amongst its choicest delicacies—we need only name the turtle, guana, &c. &c.

CHAP. VIII.

Natural History continued. Birds.

OF the several productions in animated nature connected with tropical countries, few have more powerfully awakened the admiration of the naturalist than the number and splendid variety of their feathered inhabitants. It will not, however, be contended, that any of the birds of the new world, at least such as are known in that part of it to which these sketches are confined, are entitled to claim a competition with those of the old, in the agreeable powers of harmony and song. Surrendering therefore such pretension, the former must remain content to place their claim for distinction on another qualification—the gaiety of their attire; and in which, with few ex-

ceptions, they in turn may equally defy all rivalry.

Indeed, in some instances, it would almost seem, and such may be the influence of climate, that in individuals of the same species, an additional lustre had been acquired from the accidental difference of the degrees of latitude under which they had become placed. Thus it certainly happens with the Turkey, which is a native of most parts of America: that in the colder region of Canada is greatly extolled for the brilliancy of its plumage; but that in more southerly and hot situations, is admitted, by all who have beheld it, to be the most superb production of nature. The splendid garb of the peacock, even that of Thibet, which is said to surpass the whole of the feathered creation, can scarcely perhaps exceed the beauty of this.

In this part of the continent, the Turkey is usually discovered in the thickest

and most sequestered recesses of the woods. It can rarely be taken alive, and when so taken has seldom been known to exist any time. In the northern parts of America it is gregarious; but in the neighbourhood of Honduras, it is not often seen in the company of more than one associate. The eggs of this bird have frequently been taken from the nest, and placed under the domestic hen of the same species, and hatched; but the young ones produced in this way seldom live, and if not closely confined, invariably disappear, in quest as it is supposed of more congenial haunts.

The bird next in size to the Turkey in this country, and whose habits are nearly similar, is the Curassow; a species of the *Crax*, of the order *Gallinæ*, of Linnæus. This also is remarkably beautiful, and in one respect differs very materially from the generally established order of nature, the male being found much inferior in

size and plumage to the female. The former is nearly black, having only a few downy white feathers on the lower part of its belly. The latter is of a deep rich chocolate colour, with variegated spots of white and black on its neck and pinions. The shape of both is delicately proportioned; and the crest which is placed on the head in a longitudinal form, and which is erected when their attention is excited, gives to both a stately and majestic appearance. These birds soon become perfectly domesticated, going about and feeding familiarly with poultry, &c. They are extremely impatient of cold, which renders their removal to other countries to be seldom attended with success.

Of the same order may likewise be included the *Penelope Cristata*, or *Quam*, as it is named in this part of the world. In appearance this bird has little to recommend it, but it is eagerly sought for on

account of the delicacy of its flesh, which is thought equal to that of the pheasant. The Coquericot, another inhabitant of the woods, is much admired in the same way.

The Partridge, with the exception of one species, the Tetrao Nævius, or Mexican Partridge, has not, it is believed, been discovered to inhabit any part of America. The single bird of the kind just mentioned, however, is quite common in the neighbourhood of Honduras; and in size, form, and the colour and disposal of its feathers, very closely resembles the Guinea-hen. The Quail at particular seasons is plentifully found in the pine-lands, and affords considerable amusement to the sportsman.

The Dove is common; and several kinds of the Wood Pigeon are also abundant. There is one species of the latter in particular, which is perhaps the Leucocephala, or White-crowned Pigeon of

Linnæus, that is migratory from the mountainous parts of the continent to a small island or key about twenty miles distant from the settlement of Balize in a north-east direction. This spot, in consequence of the annual resort of these birds during the months of July and August, has obtained the name of Pigeon-key. And the principal motives for this visit would in all likelihood be found in the avoidance of some enemy, and for the purpose of rearing their young in security, for as soon as the latter object is accomplished they entirely disappear. Nor does the parent find even this retreat free from peril, for during the latter part of the season, and when the objects of its care have acquired some size, numerous parties, chiefly of young negroes, repair to this haunt, and bring off vast numbers, which are afterwards retailed by the score. The nests being formed on the limbs and branches of the lowest trees,

the young Pigeons are consequently obtained with the least possible difficulty; and the old ones afford no inconsiderable attraction to the marksman, for, thus disturbed, they present themselves to his aim in every direction, and much faster than his gun can be prepared for them. The old birds have a peculiarly disagreeable bitter taste, but the young ones are extremely rich and well flavoured, and on being first taken are deemed very choice food.

Of the Crane species, the *Platalea Ajaja*, or Spoonbill, is the most common. The plumage of this bird may be considered handsome, being chiefly of a bright scarlet colour, but in every other respect it is singularly ugly and deformed. With the above may be included several members of the numerous tribe of the Heron, and which are more familiarly known by the names of the grey, blue, and white Gauding, &c. Many kinds

of the Plover, and of the Curlew, are also regularly periodical visitants.

During the season of the rains, the Snipe abounds in the swamps and marshes. At the same period the different rivers and lakes are likewise plentifully stocked with wild Ducks, Teal, &c. The Muscovy-Duck is very frequently shot in the neighbourhood of Balize.

Two species of the Maccaw, the *Psittacus Macao*, and the *P Aracango*, the red and blue, and the red and yellow, are natives of the woods to the southward of Balize; in which direction an almost infinite variety of the Parrot kind can also be found. The greater part of the latter are quickly domesticated, and if taken young, are as suddenly taught to talk fluently. The kinds which are most esteemed for their aptness in this respect are the yellow, and the blue-headed. The former of which is extremely numerous

in the country of the Mosquito Indians, and on the contiguous island of Ruatan. The confused, clamorous noise of these birds, may be heard from the last place some miles before the shore is gained. The smaller sorts, or Parakeets, are equally abundant, and many of them are extremely pretty.

The Toucan, or Bill-bird, as it is denominated in this country, is very common. Its plumage is prettily variegated; but it is remarkably singular for the length and breadth of its bill, which is nearly equal to the bigness of its body, and this is about the size of that of the jack-daw

A species of the Oriole, which in Honduras has obtained the name of the Banana-bird, perhaps from its resorting to the fruit of the Banana tree for its food, is greatly admired for the beauty of its dress, which forms an elegant intermixture of the most gay and vivid colours. This bird is little larger than the European

goldfinch. But the most singular individual of this kind, is the *O. Dominicensis*, or *St. Domingo Oriole* of Linnæus, which is also an inhabitant of this country, and is somewhat larger than the former. Immense numbers of this species resort to the neighbourhood of the river Sibun, where they form their pendant nests at the extreme end of the branches of the tallest trees, and generally overhanging the water. Frequently upwards of an hundred of these habitations may be found on a single tree, and the busy and clamorous solicitude of the old ones in attendance on their young cannot but be particularly interesting to the spectator.

The *Rice-bird*, the *Emberiza Oryzivora* of Linnæus, or as it is frequently termed, from its peculiar richness and delicacy, the *American Ortolan*, (a distinction that an epicurean palate must confess to be not undeservedly bestowed on it), is also mi-

gratory, and is usually found in this country on plantations where the grain is cultivated from which it has derived its familiar appellation.

The whole of this extensive coast, and the numerous islands and keys annexed to it, abound with an infinite variety of the aquatic species, which are chiefly such as are usually found within the tropics. Of which, however, the Pelican and the Cormorant may be enumerated as being the most predominant. The peculiar transparency of the sea in most seasons in this quarter of the world, the multitude and extraordinary variety of its inhabitants, and the great depths at which these may be clearly discerned, are powerful inducements to tempt the resort of such voracious neighbours.

Myriads of Swallows are also the occasional inhabitants of Honduras. The time of their residence is generally confined to the period of the rains, after

which they totally disappear. There is something remarkably curious and deserving of notice in the ascent of these birds. As soon as the dawn appears, they in a body quit their place of rest, which is usually chosen amidst the rushes of some watery savanna ; and invariably rise to a certain height in a compact spiral form, and which at a distance often occasions them to be taken for an immense column of smoke. This attained, they are then seen separately to disperse in search of food, the occupation of their day. To those who may have had the opportunity of observing the phenomenon of a water-spout, the similarity of evolution in the ascent of these birds will be thought surprisingly striking. The descent, which regularly takes place at sun-set, is conducted much in the same way, but with inconceivable rapidity. And the noise which accompanies this can only be compared to the falling of an immense tor-

rent, or the rushing of a violent gust of wind. Indeed, to an observer it seems wonderful that thousands of these birds are not destroyed in being thus propelled to the earth with such irresistible force.

The Humming-bird, in the greater number of its splendid varieties, can perhaps be found in this country. The *Exilis*, one of the most minute and beautiful of this elegant tribe, is quite common. The singular ferocity of this little creature is astonishing. Disappointed of its repast, the honey of a flower, it has been frequently observed to tear and scatter the leaves in the most passionate way. And in the contests it holds with its own species for the possession of some favourite blossom, it often happens that the death of one of the claimants alone grants the other an undisturbed enjoyment of the prize.

CHAP IX.

Natural History concluded. Fishes. Reptiles.

OF the Fishes which inhabit the seas and rivers of Honduras, perhaps the following catalogue may afford the most distinct and comprehensive view. Some kinds of them will be recognized as being likewise familiar to many parts of Europe, but the greater number will be found common to the coast of America generally, and to the West India islands.

Rock-fish	Stone-bass
Hog-fish	Sword-fish
Jew-fish	Gar-fish
King-fish	Parrot-fish*
Baracouta	Cavallee

* This fish is the *Coryphæna Psittacus* of Linnaeus, and is certainly one of the most beautiful of the watery tribe. The description of it, as

Grooper	Snook
Drummer	Sting-ray
Piper	Pike
Tropon	Old-wife
Mud-fish	Flounder
Snapper (red)	Eel
Ditto (black)	Porgee
Mullet	Grunt
Ditto (Mountain*)	Cat-fish
Calapaver	Sprat †
Mackarel (Spanish)	Porpoise
Sheep-head	Shark, &c.

given by that faithful historian of nature, must be the best that can be supplied.—“Head finely variegated; iris flame colour, surrounded with blue; in the middle of the body towards the back a purple rhombic spot, varied with green, yellow, and blue; vent in the middle of the body; dorsal and anal fins linear, reaching nearly to the tail.” Turton’s *Linnaeus*, oct. vol. i. 744. It is very generally considered poisonous, and therefore never eaten.

* Perhaps the *Mugil Albula*. This fish is deemed the most choice of its species, and is usually caught at some distance up the rivers of this country.

† The *Clupea Thrisa* of naturalists. This fish,

The variety of Shell-fish with which every part of this coast abounds can scarcely be exceeded in any part of the world. Three species of the Turtle, the Green, the Logger-head, and the Hawks-bill, are taken in their seasons in prodigious numbers. The former kind, from having been included, at least in this country, amongst the foremost necessaries of life, constitutes an advantageous employment to those engaged in taking it: an allusion to this occupation has been made in the preceding pages. The

which is somewhat larger than the common sprat, is much admired for the sweetness of its flavour, though in certain situations, at particular seasons, it is considered to be highly poisonous, a quality which in this, however, it is not thought at any time to possess. In some of the West India islands, especially in that of Nevis, it can rarely be eaten from the above circumstance. This noxious property is also very generally determined to belong to some other species when taken in certain latitudes; namely, the Baracouta, Snook, &c. &c.

Sea-Lobster, or as it is here called, the Craw-fish, is extremely plentiful, and is much admired for the whiteness and delicacy of its meat. Crabs are also caught in great numbers, and are equally esteemed. The Mangrove Oyster, so named from its adhering in clusters to the branches of the tree of the above name, which incline to the water, is likewise found in most places, but is perhaps the most inferior of the species. The Conque, and the Wilk, are abundant in the neighbourhood of the different keys, and afford a wholesome and nutritious food.

It is very far from being pretended that the above should in any shape be considered other than an extremely limited enumeration of the inhabitants of this vast element, as connected with this part of the world. The kinds, therefore, that have been thus briefly noticed, must only be viewed as being such as came most frequently under familiar observation, and

which consequently seemed more intimately allied to the present attempt.

The number and variety of Reptiles which infest most hot countries are known to be astonishingly great. And perhaps few situations could be found to exceed the one of which we more particularly speak, in both respects.

Snakes of several species are numerous; but fortunately the greater part of them are not considered of a dangerous description. The Rattle-snake is very frequently seen in the high lands, but is seldom found so large as in the American States. The Black-snake is also common, but harmless. The kinds which, next to the first mentioned, are avoided as being the most venomous, are those which have obtained from the Settlers the familiar names of the Tommy Goff, and the Barber's Pole. These usually infest out-houses or thatched buildings.

The snake called the Wowler, which is

more plentifully discovered than any of the former, grows to an immense size, and its appearance is certainly terrific; but it is only in this way that it is alarming, as it has never been known to hurt the human species. It is, nevertheless, a mortal enemy to birds generally, and to the smaller kinds of animals, which it usually swallows entire.

The woods abound with almost every kind of the Lizard tribe; and the Guana, or Iguana, which, next to the alligator, may be viewed as the largest of this class, is eagerly sought as a peculiar delicacy. The Basilisk, in appearance the most disgusting of this unsightly family, is likewise common. It invariably flies the approach of man, and appears but to direct its hostility against the insects which seem to have been appointed for its support.

Of the inferior species of Lizard, he

Galley-wasp, and the Wood-slave, are the only kinds in this country that have the reputation of being venomous; the former, however, is thought particularly so, and much dreaded. They both are the frequent inhabitants of old buildings. But much the greater part of this very numerous class will be found, if prejudice can be surmounted, and the least encouragement be extended towards them, the most inoffensive little creatures in nature, and that may even be soon brought into a state of playful familiarity.

In conclusion it may be observed, that it would greatly exceed the limits of any undertaking which had not professedly embarked on the subject, to point out, from a mass so infinite, the individual objects most entitled to investigation. This, therefore, is left to more competent ability, with the unaspiring, but sincere hope, that whatever may be found imper-

fect in the foregoing sketches of the vegetable and animal economy of an highly interesting part of the world, may be early supplied by superior science and industry.

SKETCHES
OF THE
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS
OF THE
MOSQUITO INDIANS,

MADE DURING A SHORT RESIDENCE AMONGST THEM
IN THE YEAR 1804 ;

*PRECEDED BY THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO THE
MOSQUITO SHORE.*

—— Juvat integros accedere fontes
Atque haurire —— LUCRETIVS.

JOURNAL
OF
A VOYAGE
TO THE
MOSQUITO SHORE.

THURSDAY, September the 27th, at two in the afternoon, I sailed from Balize in the bay of Honduras, on board the schooner *Huntress*, for the Mosquito shore, having under my charge a variety of presents ordered by government for the chiefs of the above nation. The companions of my voyage were, an Indian Major, named Hall, about six or seven men of his country, and a like number of Charaibes, who accompanied us in a small open boat. The last,

I may observe, are the remains of a race of people now almost extinct, the aboriginal inhabitants of some of the West India islands, particularly that of St. Vincent. Before sun set we had passed many of the numerous keys of the Bay, and at the close of the evening, were abreast of the larger one of Turneff. At eight we came to an anchor for the night off Key Bokel.

Friday, 28th.—An hour after day-light we got under weigh. The morning dark and heavy, with rain and thunder. Our wind fair, with a good deal of sea. Towards noon the weather became fine and clear. Bush Key in sight on our lee quarter, Glover's reef on our lee bow, and the high mountains of the continent to the north-west. About three we went on shore on Glover's Key, which is contiguous to the reef; we had previously caught, whilst sailing, several remarkably large fine fish. On this Key we obtained an abundant supply of cocoa nuts, and plenty of dif-

ferent kinds of shell fish. We returned on board to dinner at four, and immediately after put to sea. Before dark we took the Charaibes in tow, they having expressed their apprehension of parting from us, and falling in with the Spaniards, whom they consider their most implacable foes. Our favourable weather continued during the night.

Saturday, 29th.—At sun rise becalmed, with heavy rain. At ten a breeze favoured us, and shortly after the high mountain of Congrehoy shewed itself, bearing from us about south-south-east. At one, the island of Ruatan directly a head in a south-east direction, and that of Utila to the south-west. In the afternoon becalmed, distant from Ruatan about three miles; becalmed also during the greater part of the night.

Sunday, 30th.—For the most part of the day the calm continued. At ten we dispatched the Charaibes on shore at

Ruatan for cocoa nuts. From the sea this island appears singularly rich and beautiful. It is entirely covered with trees, of which the cocoa nut is the most common. Oaks, pines, and many others of various descriptions are also abundant on it. Ruatan is considerably larger than many of the West India islands which are cultivated. Its soil, and the natural advantages connected with it, might perhaps be found in no degree inferior to any of them. It abounds with deer, wild-hogs, Indian rabbits, and birds of many species; parrots are innumerable, and their incessant noisy chattering may be heard a considerable distance from the shore. The Spaniards have a kind of military station, or look-out post, on this island: this, however, may rather be considered as intended to establish their right to it by occupancy than as a means of defence, as the force does not consist of more than five or six men. Towards the evening a

breeze springing up, we once more pursued our course, and shortly afterwards cleared Ruatan, and passed the small adjoining islands of Helene, Moratte, and Barbarette; these may be deemed only as detached parts of the former, being merely separated from it, and from each other, by a narrow channel of the sea. At sun set, we saw the island of Bonacca, distant about eight leagues. During the whole of the night the wind was adverse, and the Charaibes had nearly parted from us, the tow-line of their boat having broke.

Monday, 30th.—Off the north side of Bonacca at day break. A fresh gale from the south-east with a long heavy sea rolling. At nine went on shore. The Charaibes employed the whole forenoon repairing their vessel. Some of the Indians, almost as soon as we had landed, went into the bushes and shot several large parrots. The part of the island we

were on was highly romantic and picturesque, and, like Ruatan, profusely covered with trees. Its natural productions appeared nearly the same. The little bay in which we anchored was of great depth, and so transparent that the shell fish and coral rocks at the bottom might be clearly discerned. On this island we found the flies and mosquitoes intolerably troublesome. At four we were again unde weigh, having previously dispatched the Charaibes before us. Towards evening we wore round Bonacca, our wind blowing fresh from the south-east, with much sea. Vivid lightning during the greater part of the night.

Tuesday, Oct. 1st.—At sun rise six leagues from Bonacca; wind blowing hard from the north-east, and Truxillo bearing from us about south. At ten we cast off the Charaibes with some of the Indians to make their way along shore. The main land in a south-east direction from us,

and distant about eight leagues. The wind increased considerably at sun-set, and, as on the preceding night, the sea ran high. During the night we got round the point of Black-river. It may be observed, that on this river there was formerly an English Settlement, and very extensive plantations of sugar, coffee, &c.

Wednesday 2d.—Early in the morning we were close in with the low lands which approximate the Mosquito country. From eight until eleven becalmed, when we were favoured with a strong sea breeze. The whole of the day we coasted along the sea beach, which extends many miles, and is skirted with a continued grove of palmetto trees. About eight in the evening one of our Indian companions, flushed, not with the Tuscan grape, but with new Jamaica rum, fell overboard, but being a most expert swimmer, as indeed are the whole of his countrymen, he supported himself with little difficulty

until we hoisted out our boat and got him again on board.

Thursday, 3d.—This morning becalmed. A boat with Charaibes visited us from the shore. On its leaving us I dispatched a message to General Robinson, the principal of the chiefs with whom my business lay, announcing my being near the place of our destination, and requesting that he, with the rest of the chiefs, would give me an early meeting. Towards the middle of the day we had a pleasant breeze from the north-west, and passed the mouth of the river Patook. Our course still continued along the shore, which appeared entirely level with scarcely the interruption of an hillock. At noon we were abreast of the plantations of our fellow voyager, Major Hall, and discovered some of his people at work on his grounds. The countenances of the Indians on board brightened at being again so near their home. At seven we reached the entrance

of the Sound or Lagoon of Caratasca. Darkness, however, prevented our crossing the bar, and we came to an anchor for the night, and a most unpleasant one it proved, from a heavy swelling sea, which occasioned our little vessel to roll intolerably.

Friday, 4th.—We got up our anchor at seven, but almost immediately afterwards it fell calm. A breeze again favoured us at eleven, and relieved us from the most violent heat that perhaps was ever felt. We passed the bar in a short time and entered the Lagoon of Caratasca, and had to beat up the remainder of our voyage, a distance of about two leagues, in a course directly contrary to the one we had pursued previous to entering it. It was almost the same as going back by the same sea, the space of land dividing the navigation we had left from that we were in not being more than a few hundred yards. We came to an anchor off the

Settlement of Crata at five. The Mosquito Indians have other settlements on every side of the sound. This terminated our little voyage, which did not prove of as short duration as on setting out I was given to expect. Caratasca Lagoon is considered by the natives a day's journey in length: its breadth, which is nearly equal throughout, may be computed at about ten miles; it is shallow, and only navigable for vessels of small burthen. On landing, I was immediately received by a Captain Potts, a man of some consequence in the Settlement of Crata, with most expressive marks of friendship and regard, and conducted by him to his habitation. The whole of the inhabitants of the Settlement soon crowded round me, and from all I could discover the same signs of welcome. An excellent supper of fowls, eggs, plantains, and the root of the Cassava, was expeditiously prepared, and I do not recollect that I ever made a

meal with more entire enjoyment. I passed the night with my Indian friend. Captain Potts appeared about sixty years of age, and a more kind, amiable being I never met with. His attentions and hospitality were unceasing. He had three wives; the eldest seemed of the same years with himself; the youngest certainly not more than sixteen; the other might be taken at the medium age of both.

Saturday, 5th.—As soon as I had breakfasted, I was informed that a house had been prepared for me to occupy during my stay. Few houses, I believe, had ever been raised with more expedition. It was begun and finished in one night; and although not after any known design of architecture, it was comfortable and commodious, sufficiently proof against the weather, and affording every requisite convenience for myself and servants. Of the latter I never stood in less need, for the unremitted assiduity of the people of

the country to be useful to me would scarcely allow of their interference in any thing. In the course of the day, numbers that I had not seen on my arrival, living contiguous to Crata, came and paid their respects, bringing presents of hogs, poultry, &c. &c. I invited three of the principal men to dine with me. After our meal was concluded, I gave several toasts expressive of regard for their nation and for perpetuating a good understanding between it and my own; all of which they perfectly understood and received with high marks of approbation.

Sunday 6th.—The principal Mosquito chiefs not arriving as I expected, in the forenoon I dispatched other messengers to hasten them. During the remainder of the day I amused myself with short rambles round the Settlement of Crata, and was much delighted with the simple and rural appearance of the Indian dwellings, and the very pleasing scenery which every

where presented itself. I eagerly wished for the tasteful pencil of a Gilpin to delineate some of the many agreeable subjects before me; for, without the language of affectation, most of them were wholly worthy of it. At dinner I again entertained some of the natives, and the day terminated as happily as the preceding one had done.

Monday, 7th.—Early this morning I had the whole of the presents brought on shore. My visitors very much increased, and at a little past four, I had the honour to receive the expected visit of General Robinson. I was greatly pleased with the affability of his deportment, and the evident satisfaction he discovered at our meeting. His suite was numerous, and the persons who composed it conducted themselves towards him with the most perfect respect and deference. The General, as well as most of his attendants, was dressed in British regimen-

tals, with epaulettes, sword, sash, &c. He appeared about thirty years of age, of pleasing features, a strong but active form, and somewhat above the middle height. He seemed likewise possessed of that which is not by any means characteristic of the Indian, an energetic and vigorous disposition. Many of the Mosquito people are of a mixed breed, between that of the aborigines and the African of the Samba country. General Robinson is entirely of Indian descent. The mixed race, however, is considered more active, industrious, and enterprising than the aboriginal.

Tuesday, 8th.—Immediately after breakfast, invariably an early one, I have always found my house filled with visitors since I came to the Settlement; and to such unfashionable lengths were these calls extended, that they regularly continued until bed-time. Under such trials, it may very well be believed, my

patience must frequently have undergone somewhat too much for endurance. The remainder of the persons with whom I had business came in during the day, I accordingly appointed the next for the distribution of the presents. A measure which did not appear displeasing to the greater number of those who had been first with me, for I could often discover many an anxious and impatient eye directed towards the several packages which lay confusedly scattered about within my dwelling.

Wednesday, 9th.—As it might be expected, my appointment of yesterday produced an early assemblage of the men of Caratasca Sound this forenoon. Immediately after their arrival I concluded my business with them. But I must observe, that on this occasion like most others of the same description, the ray of content did not beam from every eye. I could plainly discern several, who seem-

ed to consider the favours of my country by no means proportionate to their expectation or merit. This no doubt would alike have happened, had the gifts with which I was entrusted been much more numerous and valuable. By the aid of that, however, which often makes man in more tutored situations forget the frowns of fortune, a liberal distribution of promise, I was soon successful enough to remove every appearance of dissatisfaction. An ox having been slaughtered for the occasion, I had as many as my house could contain to dine with me, and every thing passed with entire harmony. I cannot omit remarking that the greater part of my guests, if not tastefully or fashionably dressed, were at least splendidly and variously so. I really believe the entire costume of Europe, civil and military, for the last hundred years, might at one view have presented itself at my table. And whatever

was once thought gay and ornamental in the brilliant and refined circles of London or Versailles, might perhaps be now considered equally so on the less polished shore of Caratasca. It often had been matter of surprise with me, to what earthly mart the venders of cast-off gaieties in London could consign the odd articles frequently decorating their doors : this astonishment ceased, the moment my company had collected in the Mosquito nation.

Thursday, 10th.—The Indian Chiefs, with their interpreter, assembled together this forenoon for the purpose of framing a suitable acknowledgment for the regard that had been shewn them by the British government. I obtained this in the afternoon, when I gave them to understand that my departure would take place with all expedition. General Robinson presented me with a horse : I had previously requested his acceptance of a pair of pis-

tols, my gorget, and some other trifles ; I had also disposed of a few little matters amongst his officers. We again dined together ; and the expressions of regret from all around me at my being about to leave the country entirely satisfied me that my conduct had not been displeasing to them.

Friday, 11th.—Occupied the chief part of the forenoon in making arrangements for sea. The weather, however, proved quite unfavourable to our getting off. It rained heavily, with thunder ; it had thundered with much violence almost every day since my arrival. Many of the Indians returning to their homes came and took leave of me.

Saturday, 12th.—The weather boisterous and wet. This might truly be denominated a day of *ennui* ; and though within the tropics, the overpowering influence of a November day in England was perhaps never more strongly felt.

Sunday 13.—The weather continued entirely against our putting to sea. During the whole of the night it literally rained torrents. The heaviest rains in Europe might be considered April showers compared to the sheets of water which fell here. My roof, though of thatch, resisted the storm surprizingly ; but I was not quite so fortunate in other respects, two sides of my dwelling being entirely open, and one of them on the quarter whence the storm came, it, meeting there no opposition, deluged me completely. To add to the unpleasantness of the whole, vivid lightning, accompanied by the most awful thunder, continued incessantly until day-break. About three the sky became clear, and assumed a milder appearance, the wind being likewise fair, we took our departure from Crata. The natives, on my parting with them, gave me every assurance of their wishes that my voyage might be prosperous and

short, and that an opportunity might speedily occur of my being deputed to visit them again. We crossed the Lagoon of Caratasca in a short time, where I had an appointment with General Robinson, and others of the Chiefs, to receive some presents of stock, &c. &c. for Col. B——, and came to anchor for the night. I omitted to mention, that on getting under weigh and hoisting our colours, the inhabitants of Crata gave us a salute of musquetry, which our small party instantly returned.

Monday, 14th.—Early this morning General Robinson came on board our vessel, and shortly afterwards I accompanied him on shore. Whilst the matters I had to take with me were collecting, I amused myself with a walk of about a mile through a spacious savanna, and the scenery on this side the Lagoon certainly greatly surpassed that we had left on the other. This savanna, for a very con-

siderable extent, formed an entire level of continued verdure, and of the finest pasturage; skirted on one side by the water of the Lagoon, and bounded on the other by gentle rising hills. The clumps of pine and other lofty trees irregularly interspersed over the whole gave the view all the appearance of cultivated art, and afforded a most agreeable relief to the eye. At the foot of the hills, the wood in places thickening, almost deluded the imagination to conceive, that in the bosom of these sequestered groves might be found the ornamental dwelling of some tasteful owner. But awaking from this, here all was Nature;

The negligence of Nature, wide and wild,
Where undisguised by mimic Art she spreads
Unbounded beauty to the roving eye. THOMSON.

Where even man acknowledges her almost uncontrolled sway. At twelve I again embarked, when we shaped our course for the entrance of the Lagoon, where we arrived at

dusk, and came to anchor for the night ; but such a night ! Scarcely had I attempted to close my eyes, when a myriad of musquitoes and tormenting flies of every description found their way on board our vessel, and gave me feelingly to understand that it would be vain to seek

The timely dew of sleep.

Tuesday, 15th.—The forenoon employed in making preparation for sea. Several of the Indians whom I had parted with a few days before, met me at our anchorage, and brought with them presents of fruits and vegetables. The wind being unfair we remained stationary for the night, and, as on the one preceding, were again visited by our enemies the flies. That we should be troubled with such company did not appear extraordinary, when we discovered that the poor natives, in whole families, were forced every night during our stay to quit their habitations on the shore, where the inconvenience was yet felt in a more

severe degree, to sleep in their little barks on the water, to escape such horrid torments. Frequently there were not fewer than eight or ten of these boats around our vessel, and some of them containing not less than fifteen persons; their bed, a few loose leaves; their covering, the heavens.

Wednesday, 16th.—The sea deities have never shewn the smallest kindness for me. Ever awaited by foul winds; and who would not complain of foul winds in the latitude of $16^{\circ} 20'$ in a vessel of twelve tons, my allotment of it a space of six feet by four, and with no alternative but of incurring the danger of breaking my neck, or of continually remaining prostrate? In such a situation, who would deny the natural propriety of the Eastern squat, or could help becoming a convert to the singular opinions of Wortley Montague?

Thursday, 17th.—A sleepless night;

not a moment's truce with the flies. The wind still blowing from the exact quarter to which our course must be shaped. My stock of patience being quite exhausted, I was about having recourse to philosophy, but, happily there was not any occasion for it, as at the moment the breeze became somewhat more kind, and we were about putting to sea : again arose a difficulty—our vessel fast aground—now she was off, and then the wind again was foul.

Friday, 18th.—About the middle of last night, the horse I had received as a present from General Robinson, disliking his situation certainly more than I did mine, bad as I found it, jumped overboard. With much difficulty we got him in again, and to prevent any further desperate attempts of the kind, secured him with strong ropes. One of my Indian friends of Crata, learning our detention, kindly sent the half of a fine hog.

It came most opportunely, and prevented a sentence being carried into execution, which had been previously passed on some of the poultry in our coops.

Saturday, 19th.—Our prospect not amending, the captain of our vessel suggested a return to our former station, the Indian Settlement. “What is the life of man! Is it not to shift from side to side; from sorrow to sorrow? To button up one cause of vexation, and to unbutton another?” So writes Sterne, and who can disagree with him? Hope prevailing that a change might suddenly happen in our favour, we remained at our anchorage.

Sunday, 20th.	} At anchor.
Monday, 21st.	
Tuesday, 22d.	

Wednesday, 23d.—At noon, the weather looking more kind, and the wind proving less adverse, we weighed anchor, and once more passed the bar of Cara-

tasca. On the outside of it, we found a very heavy sea, but our breeze proving yet more fair, this was no very painful inconvenience.

Thursday, 24th.—Light showers during the morning, with a moderate breeze from the east-south-east. The remainder of the day fine and pleasant. At night the wind was entirely against us.

Friday, 25th.—The wind from the north-east, with much sea. Bonacca in sight, bearing from us north-west, distant about five leagues. At twelve becalmed, with rain and thunder. Towards evening, we had a breeze which soon increased to a gale, and that blew during the whole night with great violence. The rain fell in torrents, and the sea continually breaking over our small vessel rendered our situation extremely unpleasant. I have before mentioned my circumscribed sphere on board, a space of six feet by four; this could not be found

very agreeable during our finest weather, but how much worse did it prove this night, when the hatches were necessarily forced to be closed? but which, though I was nearly deprived of the power of respiration, did not prevent my being almost drowned with sea and rain.

Saturday, 26th.—The storm did not abate until the afternoon of this day, at which time we made the small island of Barbarette, not without some danger, from the violence of the sea and the narrowness of a passage between the rocks. We gained a tolerably good anchorage, and the weather still appearing relentless, I went on shore and built a hut on the beach. This was reared in a few minutes: it required only a few posts, and the leaves of the cocoa-nut tree, or of the palmetto; and such materials were every where around us. We had good fires made, cooked a rough repast, and prepared for sleep. I do not know how matters

were with my fellow voyagers, but it fared rather indifferently with myself. It continued to rain heavily during the night, and the ground, and leaves which formed my bed, being extremely wet, rendered my situation cold, damp, and uncomfortable.

Sunday, 27th.—The storm returned with added violence. Our little encampment, if not thoroughly weather proof, was at least more pleasant than remaining on board. Some of the Indians rambling this forenoon along the sea beach, met with a fortunate, though here not an uncommon prize, a nest of turtle's eggs containing about 150. One of the soldiers along with me also shot an Indian rabbit, an animal something larger than a hare, the flesh of which is considered very delicate. We rested on the island and rather in a better way than on the preceding night.

Monday 28th.—During the forenoon

I endeavoured to make some way on Barbarette, and, if possible, to ascend the high hills which immediately overtopped our station. However, I soon found this impracticable, from the extremely thick underwood which in every direction opposed my progress. With considerable reluctance I was therefore forced at a late hour to abandon the attempt.

Tuesday, 29th.—Were it not for that fertile and never-failing theme, the weather, of what would the greater part of the narratives of most voyagers and travellers consist? And certainly on this occasion, ours has been as various as the most epicurean weather-monger could wish. It rained throughout the night, and our lodging was in no shape enviable. As well as we were able, we endeavoured, however, to remain content “with our hard fate on the cold ground.” I before mentioned the danger we were in from the sea and rocks of Barbarette; my occasional walks

along the beach have fully discovered, that our escape may not be considered the least fortunate event ; hulls, masts, spars, &c. &c. the vestiges of former shipwreck, presenting themselves in every direction. The disappointment I felt yesterday forenoon, in not being able to gain the high land, served but to increase my ardour for another attempt this day. This was greatly encouraged at noon by the weather turning out particularly fine. An Indian bore me company, but not in the way of guide, as he was quite as ignorant of the way of ascending as myself. After a walk of about a mile and half along the beach, in a contrary course to the one I had pursued the day before, we came to the rocks, and here, although our progress seemed less difficult to the eye, it scarcely presented fewer obstacles to the feet. Difficulties, however, sink before determination. I was resolved to mount : to it therefore I went with hands and knees.

After some trouble, I gained a firm station on a tolerable eminence: and without resorting to the extravagant and affected language sometimes used on similar occasions, I might truly say, the whole was enchantingly beautiful and picturesque. The spot on which I stood might be connected with a space of somewhat more than half an acre, entirely clear of trees, growing with high and luxuriant grass. Beyond this the whole became a thick continued grove,

— “Where scarce a speck of day
Falls on the lengthen'd gloom.” THOMSON.

At the bottom of the rock, the sea rolled with loud and haughty sway: and the confused masses of stone, which lay scattered about, at once confessed its uncontrollable dominion.

Immediately opposite to this part of the island of Barbarette, at the distance of about a league, is placed the small adjoin-

ing island of Moratte. On the south-east, as far as the eye could reach, the high dark mountains of the continent in the neighbourhood of Truxillo terminated the view. In every other direction, the rest was sea. My curiosity not being yet satisfied, on looking around me my ambition aimed at a greater height: this could not be accomplished without first descending and searching another way up the rocks, a few hundred yards further along the shore, and this offered itself. I once more, but with increased difficulty, and certainly with much more danger, ascended: and if every thing before was pleasing, here all was grand. The height I gained was considerable: the objects below me had become quite diminished, whilst the sea rolled with added violence, and the rent crags seemed armed with terrors, which below, or in getting up, I did not discover or feel. I omit the description of Dover-cliff on this occa-

sion, and abstain from recounting the precise number of scrapes and scratches which awaited my progress. The former is regularly served up whenever a hill or mountain is spoken of, from the one of Highgate to those of the Andes. The very pleasing way in which the greater part of this day had been occupied almost compensated for all that had proved unpleasant during my voyage.

Wednesday, 30th.—Last night, the most flattering signs of change were before us. At day-break, the whole had vanished, and heavy gusts of wind with rain gave us feelingly to understand that our departure from Barbarette would be further protracted. To add to our other complaints, we were assailed in our hut by a host of uncommonly large ants, which proved altogether as troublesome as the flies of Caratasca. At noon the weather clearing, I again sallied forth, but a fresh storm arising, I was soon

obliged to return. My excursion however, short as it was, did not terminate without an adventure. One of my servants, a few paces before me, passing through a thicket to avoid being too near the edge of a projecting rock, suddenly darted back with a loud exclamation. On my examining into the cause of this, the man certainly had very fair occasion for so violent an expression of his fears: he had just escaped the danger of placing his foot on the largest snake I ever beheld. It lay half hidden in the grass.—

‘In labyrinth of many a round self-roll’d.’ MILTON.

We instantly destroyed the reptile with an Indian lance I had with me. The extreme bulk of it occasioned me to have it dragged to our hut and opened, when we found in its inside an Indian rabbit entire. I have before remarked that this animal is about the size of an English hare; and this did not appear a small

specimen of the kind. Certainly the power of fascination, as it is contended, or a very extraordinary share of stratagem, must be the natural property of some species of the snake; or why animals, at least as wary, and certainly possessed of much superior powers of swiftness, are thus surprised, must occasion some astonishment.

Thursday, 31st.—Yesterday completed our eighth day since we departed from the mouth of Caratasca Lagoon. With a tolerably fair wind, it is little more than a day's sail from the place we were now at. And what I had feared would be the consequence of so tedious a voyage began now to present itself, a scarcity of provisions. But an excursion of some of the Indians, my fellow voyagers, into the woods was attended this forenoon with particularly good fortune. They returned with no less than five wild hogs. "Not larger or fatter ever ranged the Lucanian forests."

To an Indian the alternate vicissitudes of fasting and feasting are common occurrences. Those with me, for some days, had partaken rather largely of the former dish; chance having now placed one of more substantial shape before them, they determined not to let the advantage escape them. The five hogs were barbecued at once—a Roman meal!

The company collected round an immense fire in front of my habitation. An Indian youth regaled his fellows with a tune on an instrument peculiar to their country. Much could not be said of the sweetness of its tones, or the skill of the performer on it; but as they seemed greatly delighted with both, that I was not equally charmed, must in all probability have been owing to my want of ear or taste for Mosquito music. Nor did the repast cease, day or night, except for the short intervals granted to sleep, until the whole was consumed. There

are many modes of driving off care : some do it by sleeping ; others attempt it by drinking ; an Indian does it effectually by eating.

Friday, Nov. 1	}	On the island of Bar-	
Saturday, 2			barette.
Sunday, 3			

Monday, 4th.—Incessant storms of wind and rain. “King William was of opinion, and please your honour, quoth Trim, that every thing was predestined for us in this world.” It has ever been my fortune, in contradiction to every wish of my own, to have something continually to do with the sea. Now had my inclination been in the least degree consulted in this matter, it would, without hesitation, have at once negatived my ever putting foot on ship-board. I had rather, were it possible, and the strength and spirits were given me to support me in the attempt, make the tour of the world on foot, nay, I had almost said,

barefooted, than pass the narrow strait between Dover and Calais. During a short walk this morning, an old Indian with a most woeful countenance told me he was afraid Potpruan would seize the whole of us, should we remain much longer on Barbarette. This was a most serious piece of intelligence, for Potpruan in the Mosquito vocabulary, is no less a personage than Death, whose fell power oft

Shakes the feeble props of human trust. POPE.

I was half way on the same road of thought before the old man opened his mouth: this hurried me to the end of it with precipitation.

Tuesday, 5th.—The night was passed in my old residence, the hut on shore, but without sleep during any portion of it, owing to the vexatious torments of a vile insect called the sand-fly. Such now became my anxiety to make our way,

that this morning, though the wind was far from fair, I suggested putting to sea. We therefore quitted Barbarette at eleven, and passed between it and the adjacent island of Moratte. I have already observed, that the passage between these islands is narrow and hazardous, and that none but small vessels can safely attempt it. The reef which runs parallel with them is also dangerous and rocky. The sea on the outside ran extremely high; and the wind shortly after became entirely opposed to us. By persevering, however, we succeeded in again making the larger island of Ruatan. Here our further progress was suddenly stopped by the breaking in two of our main-boom. As it was now impossible to proceed, we made the best way we could towards the shore, to find a place of anchorage, that we might repair our damage; this was gained about an hour after we had met with our accident; and some of the

Indians and myself went on shore with our guns in search of game: but the discovery of some human tracks on the sand caused my companions immediately to decline the pursuit. The island of Ruatan, as it has been previously remarked, belongs to Spain, and on it is retained a small military station. This circumstance instantly occasioned the Mosquito-men to determine, that the tracks they had seen could be no other than those of the Spaniards, and as quickly urged them to return on board.

Wednesday, 6th.—The morning proving fine and pleasant, and our damage being repaired, we lost no time in getting under weigh. The course we pursued lay close in with the shore; with any other but a vessel of small burthen this would have been impracticable from the numerous coral-rocks in the passage. The side of the island of Ruatan we passed appeared hilly and covered with wood.

The continued length of the beach, which is computed at 10 leagues, is an entire grove of cocoa-nut trees. Towards the middle of the day we were becalmed, with rain and much heavy thunder.

Thursday, 7th.—At anchor off Ruatan.

Friday, 8th.—Morning. We remained at anchor, but the weather considerably amending about noon we once more put to sea. The early part of the night was fine and pleasant with a favourable breeze from the N. E. Towards the middle of it, the sky became thickly overcast, and the wind greatly increased.

Saturday, 9th.—At day-break it blew a gale, but happily from the right quarter. We were completely drenched from the sea continually breaking over us. At two in the afternoon, we once more discovered Glover's-reef immediately a-head of us, and at four got to anchor at the key of the same name, the place we called at on our passage out.

Sunday, 10th.—At anchor, the wind blowing with great violence from the N.N.W With a moderate and fair breeze, we were now within eight hours sail of the end of our voyage, a conviction that could not in any way contribute to render the situation we were in agreeable. The north-west winds, or norths, as they are termed in this part of the world, prevail at this season of the year, and usually blow with little variation frequently for a continuance of some weeks. Yesterday finished my last plantain; to a single one I had been limited for several days, our bread having long been expended.

Monday,	11th.	} At anchor.
Tuesday,	12th.	
Wednesday,	13th.	

Thursday, 14th.—This morning the wind shifted a little in our favour, and we were soon under sail. Shortly afterwards the high mountains of the con-

continent again appeared bearing from us W.S.W. The day continued fine until towards evening, when it rained and thundered. The wind not proving altogether fair, we attempted to get under the main land to catch the breeze from the shore, and at day-break we were off the small settlement of Mullin's river, a distance of about 20 leagues from our home. The wind being now entirely against us, I went on shore at this Settlement, and obtained from the kindness and hospitality of a mulatto woman, an inhabitant of it, an excellent breakfast of tea, bread, eggs, &c. The sameness, and I may add, the spareness of the diet, on which I had fared so many days before, gave this repast a zest of unusual excellence. But I cannot help most gratefully observing, that in the midst of so much adverse weather, it must ever be considered a very fortunate circumstance, that it awaited us in situations so happily

formed by nature for the convenience of man. For of the different islands amongst which we have been so many days delayed, I believe scarcely one could be found that would not be capable, from the fruits with which at most seasons it abounds, of affording him sustenance for a considerable time.

Friday, 15th.—After a night of much anxiety, and tacking, returning day brought to our view the pleasing sight of Balize at a short distance; and with it, the still more agreeable prospect of a speedy termination to our voyage. The wind towards noon was entirely favourable. At three the anchor dropped. I immediately landed, and as I walked to head-quarters, felt still more confirmed in my attachment to terra firma, and abhorrence of all maritime excursions.

SKETCHES
OF THE
MANNERS AND CUSTOMS
OF THE
MOSQUITO INDIANS.

Peaceful beneath primeval trees———

———What is the world to them?

Its pomp, its pleasure, and its nonsense all!

THOMSON.

THE Mosquito Indians inhabit a considerable space of country on the continent of America, extending from Point Castile, or Cape Honduras, the southern point of the Bay of Truxillo, to the northern branch of the river Nicaragua, called usually St. Juans; and

comprehending within these limits nearly 100 leagues of land on the sea coast, from latitude 11 to 16 deg. A chain of high mountains may be considered as the natural barrier between their nation and the Spanish possessions in this part of the world.

These people have long been in alliance with the King of Great Britain, and entertain generally a most exalted opinion of the justice and magnanimity of the English, and a perfect detestation of their neighbours the Spaniards. A tradition has long prevailed amongst them, that the grey-eyed people, meaning the English, have been particularly appointed to protect them from oppression or bondage. And they may enviably be classed with the very few tribes whose liberties have remained uninterrupted by European aggression on this side the Atlantic.

The soil they inhabit is abundantly fertile, and capable of many modes of

cultivation. Indian corn of the finest quality, plantains, cassava-root, varieties of the yam and sweet potatoe, are plentifully raised from it. The sugar-cane, cotton, and tobacco, thrive equally well; and in the mountainous situations, coffee, no doubt, might be produced, not inferior to that which is raised in the West India Islands.

In this country there is also plenty of mahogany, and many other kinds of wood, which might probably meet the purposes of ornamental use extremely well. But the entire want of harbours of sufficient depth for any vessels but those of the smallest burthen, must prevent any material advantage resulting from these sources. Several species of dye-wood are likewise found, some of which are used in colouring a coarse kind of cloth, the manufacture of the natives.*

* We learn from Mr. Edwards, *Hist. West Indies*, vol. i. p. 55, 56, that as early as the dis-

The rivers flowing through the extensive country are very numerous, and most of them are navigable a considerable distance for canoes or small vessels. The many spacious Lagoons with which it abounds render it in a picturesque point of view singularly interesting. Fishes of infinite variety are the inhabitants of both; and the neighbouring grounds abound with deer, antelopes, warhee, and pecary. Birds of various species, adorned with all the richness of plumage so peculiar to tropical situations, enliven every

covery of Columbus, the people of the islands he visited were found abundantly furnished with a substantial cotton cloth of native manufacture. This they stained with various colours, but the one they most admired was red. A common origin, to go no further, may perhaps be affixed to the early inhabitants of the different islands in this part of the Western world and the people of the adjacent continent, hence the striking conformity in manners, customs, &c. which have been so frequently traced as characteristic of both.

spot. And the whole of these may be viewed as almost holding an undisturbed possession of their native haunts; for necessity alone, and that of the most imperious kind, can ever impel the Indian to seek for either.

The cattle are small, but, from the vast extent and excellence of the pasturage, the meat they supply is fat and extremely well-flavoured. Horses are also very numerous, and, though generally small, not unhandsome. Hogs are raised in extraordinary numbers; and poultry of all kinds is abundant and large.

Many of the Mosquito Indians are of a mixed breed, between that of the aboriginal and the negro of the Samba country. Accident produced this variety, from the circumstance of an African slave-ship, many years past, having been wrecked on their coast, from which several women were saved, and who were

immediately chosen by the natives for wives.

The men in general are athletic and well formed. Their stature, on an average, may be taken at from five feet six to five feet ten. The women are frequently handsome; their children, when young, are particularly so. Their habits and intercourse with each other denote much affection, the old and the young being found in continual association.

They wear little clothing. Seldom any thing more, men and women, than a small kind of wrapper, which reaches from the lower part of the waist to the middle of the thigh. On particular occasions, the chief men usually appear in British regimentals, the military titles of which nation they invariably adopt. Many of them hold commissions from the Governor of Jamaica, and from his Majesty's Superintendant of Honduras. The

women are in the habit of decorating their persons with a profusion of beads, to which species of finery they are passionately attached, and very commonly paint their faces and necks with a kind of red ochre, which is found in their country. Their children go entirely naked; and, when young, are always borne on the back of the mother. Amongst these people, all the offices of domestic kind are exclusively performed by the female: the male would be degraded by such services.

The government of the Mosquito Indians is hereditary; and a very exact and perfect idea of the British law of succession is entertained by them. It is a subject which engages much of their attention from its having long been one of close imitation amongst themselves. Indeed, it would perhaps be found, that many points of our doctrine of primo-

geniture are much more accurately understood by these people than by some that are more immediately interested in such discussions. It certainly is not unfrequent to find Indians in this nation, at least those of the superior class, capable of discoursing on such topics with a precision that might reflect no discredit on a civilian.

The late King, George, was murdered, and his death attributed very openly to the designs of his brother, Prince Stephen. The former was unalterably attached to the English; the latter, it is confidently pronounced, has been seduced by bribery to very opposite interests, and with which he has sedulously attempted to infect his countrymen. The schemes of Prince Stephen, however, have met with little success; which has principally arisen from the unremitting and active vigilance of General Robinson,

one of the next persons in point of consequence to the royal family, and who contrives to preserve a kind of regency until the son and heir of the late king shall become of age to take upon himself the business of government. The present king is but a youth, and some years ago was sent to Jamaica to be educated under the direction and guidance of the Governor of that island.

The laws of these people are simple and concise. The legislative and judicial power, as it usually happens in nations where no fixed principles of either have been acquired, resides exclusively in the will of him who governs. The king, or chief, is completely despotic. Whenever he dispatches a messenger, his commands are always accompanied by his cane : this token establishes the credibility of the bearer, and a sudden compliance with the purport of his errand. In this way decrees are enforced, the punishment due to

offence remitted, or the severest sentence annexed to it carried into instant execution.*

They have one law against adultery which has something curious in it. The fine imposed on the offender is, that he pay the injured husband an ox. This penalty the head man of the particular tribe to which the adulterer belongs is strictly bound by long custom to see punctually complied with, or one of his own cattle may be taken as a lawful indemnity. Should the latter happen, the chief then exacts, as an equivalent for what he loses by the offence, a stated period of servitude from the offender.

In this country there is neither priest, physician, or lawyer; but there is a professor of another science, who commonly unites the duties of the three; this is the Sokee, or Conjuror, a person of high im-

* See Robertson, *Hist. America*, Vol. iii. p. 333, 10th Ed.

portance, and whose occult skill is ever regarded with the deepest and most implicit veneration.

They have no modes of public worship, nor could any particular forms of religious persuasion be found to prevail amongst them. There is little doubt, however, of their paying adoration to evil spirits, from a singular belief which is entertained, that they have much more inconvenience to apprehend from the influence of the bad than the good.

In common with most, if not with all rude tribes, polygamy is freely allowed, and a plurality of wives is the privilege of every husband in the Mosquito nation; but perhaps it has seldom been indulged in equal extent in any country. Many men here claim from two to six wives; few can be found satisfied with one: their late king surpassed all his subjects in this respect, he claimed no less than twenty two! His Mosquito Majesty might very

well have exclaimed with honest Launcelot—"Alas! fifteen wives is nothing." At the same time it may be observed, that this circumstance is attended with far less inconvenience than might possibly be found annexed to it in most other situations, the numerous claimants for the affection or favour of their lord never discovering the least jealousy or hatred towards each other.

A singular custom is scrupulously observed by the women of this nation. At the time of parturition, an habitation is prepared for them in the deepest recesses of the woods, to which with a female assistant they retire, and where they remain secluded from every eye for a stated period. This past, a public lustration of themselves and offspring must take place previous to their being again admitted to the society of their relatives and friends.

These Indians may in one respect be thought to resemble the Improvisatori of

some other countries. Their metrical effusions being entirely spontaneous, and usually thrown into a kind of measure, which, if it be rude and uncultivated, possesses, nevertheless, something peculiarly soft and plaintive to recommend it. The subjects which excite their verse are chiefly of the latter description.

In a political point of view, an alliance with the Mosquito Indians can be considered but of relative importance. They hold little pretension to the character of warlike, the last quality, however, that humanity might wish to contemplate them in; nor are there any advantages of a commercial nature resulting from such connexion. The implacable enmity they have ever borne towards one nation, our frequent foe, from what cause it may be unnecessary to inquire, is perhaps the best claim they can offer for the extension of our friendship.

This nation cannot number at the utmost more than 1500 or 2000 men capable of using arms. Immediately contiguous to it are two other tribes, called the Poyers and the Towkcas. These people are more numerous, and considered much more enterprising and brave, although they are tributary to the former, and have been so from time immemorial. The acknowledgment of this dependance is expressed by the annual payment of a certain number of cattle. But neither the Poyers or Towkcas possess any thing like the civilization of the Mosquito people. Hence unquestionably the cause and continuance of their vassalage.

In conclusion, from all that could be observed during a short residence amongst these Indians, it appeared that they were living in the enjoyment of much social happiness, and with a comparative degree of plenty. That their comforts and con-

venience might be greatly increased were they more industrious, seemed no less obvious; but exertion of any kind is in no shape their characteristic.

*Signification in English of some Words in the
Mosquito Tongue.*

Cortee	God, or Moon
Lapta	Sun
Yco	Day
Toma.	Night
Teetan	Morning
Tootenee	Afternoon
Tusba .	Land
Corboo	Sea
Passa	Wind
Lee	Rain
Alwonna	Thunder
Powta	Lightning
Awolla	River
Ootla	House
Bip	, Cow, or Bull
Oras ..	Horse
Querco	Hog
Cullila	.. Fowl

Yowell	..	Dog
Wykenar	.	Man
Myrin		Woman
Lupee	.	Child
Opliker		Friend
Oplawalla	..	Enemy
Isau		Father
Yaptee	.	Mother
Luper-Myrin		Daughter
Moyka	..	Brother
Lykera	.	Sister
Dama	..	Grandfather
Coka		Grandmother
Wykenikee	..	Husband
Moya	.	Wife
Weeta		Chief
Wyteniva		Head, chief, or first man
Iclarbare		War
Markaswip		Peace
Warmanana	.	Soldier
Rokpuse		Gun
Rokpuse-tara		Great Gun
Tara		Great

Mun	Me
Nowree	You
Blamna	I come
Makhomena or Makwopee	} I go
Yamnee ..	Good
Soura	Bad
Wollosma	Hear me
Nee	I hear
Ploonadogsa	Hunger, or I am hungry
Ploonaryka ..	Give me to eat
Mislaryka	Give me to drink
Outlaryka	Give me lodging
Oya	Corn, or bread
Weree	I am sick
Weree-dowkee	I am very sick
Potpruan	Death
Yapee	Sleep
Itenikee	A rest, or loll

METEOROLOGICAL TABLE

Kept at Balize in the Bay of Honduras.

FEBRUARY, 1806.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	70	83	N.	Morning rain. Noon clear
2	69	83	E. S. E.	Clear and fine
3	68	81	E.	Clear
4	71	80	E. S. E.	Clear
5	74	81	E.	Clear
6	79	82	E.	Clear
7	80	80	N. E.	Clear
8	79	81	E.	Clear
9	79	80	S. E.	Showery during the day
10	78	82	S. E.	Ditto
11	79	81	E. S. E.	Clear
12	78	80	E.	Clear
13	80	81	S. E.	Clear
14	81	81	S. E.	Occasional showers
15	73	80	N.	Morning foggy. Noon fine
16	71	78	N. E.	Cloudy with rain
17	72	80	E.	Rain
18	76	79	E. N. E.	Clear
19	78	80	E.	Clear
20	79	81	E.	Clear
21	76	80	E.	Clear
22	75	82	E. N. E.	Morning rain. Noon clear
23	78	82	E. N. E.	Rain. Strong breezes
24	71	78	N. E.	Rain
25	74	79	N.	Rain
26	72	78	N.	Rain. Strong winds
27	71	79	N.	Clear. Ditto winds
28	68	79	N.	Rain. Blowing hard

Remarks.—Heavy rain generally during the night; frequent heavy showers in the day. This month, being included in what is denoted the *dry season*, the rains that have fallen have, therefore, been considered unusual.

MARCH, 1806.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	68	80	N.	Clear
2	69	78	N.	Clear
3	69	75	N.	Cloudy and moist
4	74	78	N.E.	Cloudy and wet
5	76	79	N.E.	Rain. Clear at noon
6	79	81	E.S.E.	Clear
7	78	81	S.E.	Clear
8	78	82	S.E.	Clear
9	77	81	S.E.	Clear. Noon showery
10	80	82	E.	Clear. Noon rain
11	77	83	S.E.	Clear
12	80	83	E.N.E.	Clear
13	79	83	N.E.	Cloudy
14	79	82	N.E.	Clear. Noon showery
15	80	83	E.N.E.	Clear
16	80	84	S.E.	Clear. Noon sultry, with showers
17	72	82	N.	Clear
18	80	83	N.E.	Clear
19	80	83	N.E.	Clear
20	80	82	N.E.	Clear
21	81	84	E.N.E.	Showery
22	80	83	E.	Clear
23	80	85	E.S.E.	Clear
24	73	80	N.	Cloudy and moist
25	74	80	N.	Cloudy
26	75	83	E.N.E.	Light rains
27	80	83	N.E.	Clear
28	82	84	N.E.	Clear
29	79	83	N.E.	Clear
30	76	82	S.E.	Showery morning. Clear noon
31	79	83	S.E.	Clear morning. Showery noon

Remarks.—The greater part of this month has been dry and pleasant. Light dews at night. The sea breeze, which usually prevails with much regularity at this season, has been partial and moderate.

APRIL, 1806.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	81	86	S. E.	Clear and sultry
2	80	85	S.	Clear morning. Evening rain and loud thunder
3	79	84	N. E.	Morning cool and hazy; noon fine
4	80	85	S. E.	Clear
5	81	85	S. E.	Clear Noon thunder
6	81	86	S.	Clear
7	81	86	S. E.	Clear
8	78	85	S. E.	Clear
9	81	85	S. E.	Clear
10	82	85	S. E.	Clear
11	80	86	E. S. E.	Clear. Strong breezes
12	82	86	S. E.	Clear. Ditto
13	82	86	S. E.	Clear. Ditto
14	83	85	S. E.	Clear. Ditto
15	82	84	S. E.	Clear. Ditto
16	81	85	E. S. E.	Clear. Noon rain
17	82	87	S.	Clear morning. Noon rain and thunder
18	81	86	S. E.	Clear
19	82	86	E.	Clear
20	75	83	E. N. E.	Cloudy morning; noon fair
21	82	85	N. W.	Clear morning; noon rain and hail
22	81	85	N. E.	Clear. Hazy and damp to- wards noon
23	82	84	E. N. E.	Clear
24	75	85	N.	Heavy rains during the greater part of the day
25	82	86	E.	Clear and sultry
26	81	85	S. E.	Clear
27	83	86	E. S. E.	Clear morning; noon rain and thunder
28	80	84	S. E.	Clear
29	81	85	S. E.	Clear
30	82	84	S. E.	Clear

Remarks.—The whole of this month has been particularly fine, and the breezes regular and strong. Rains, with loud thunder, frequent during the night; sometimes accompanied with sudden and violent gusts of wind.

MAY, 1866.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds	
1	82	85	E. S. E.	Clear
2	80	84	E. S. E.	Clear
3	83	86	S.	Morning clear. Noon sultry with rain
4	81	85	S.	Clear
5	81	84	S. E.	Clear
6	79	83	S. E.	Morning rain. Noon clear
7	81	84	E. S. E.	Clear
8	83	85	E. S. E.	Clear; occasional showers
9	82	85	S. E.	Clear
10	80	84	S. E.	Clear
11	81	85	E. S. E.	Clear
12	82	86	S. E.	Clear and sultry
13	80	84	S. E.	Clear
14	81	84	S. E.	Clear
15	82	85	E. S. E.	Clear
16	83	85	S. E.	Clear. Noon light showers
17	80	58	S.	Light showers, breezes fresh occasionally
18	81	83	S.	Clear
19	82	85	E. S. E.	Clear
20	82	87	E. S. E.	Clear. Winds high during night
21	82	85	E. S. E.	Morning cloudy. Noon clear. Breezes strong.
22	83	85	E. S. E.	Clear
23	82	84	E. S. E.	Clear
24	83	86	S.	Clear and sultry
25	82	86	S.	Clear
26	81	85	E.	Cloudy
27	83	87	S. E.	Cloudy
28	82	86	S. E.	Heavy clouds
29	83	87	S. E.	Cloudy. Heavy showers at noon
30	82	85	S.	Rain
31	82	86	E. S. E.	Showery morning. Heavy rains towards evening

Remarks.—This month has been particularly dry, but exceedingly pleasant from the regularity and strength of the sea-breeze. The conclusion of it, however being cloudy and attended with frequent heavy showers, shows the approach of the periodical rains. This month, the early part of it especially, is generally very destructive to cattle, which suffer much from want of water.

JUNE, 1806.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	81	84	S.E.	Heavy rains; light winds
2	82	85	S.	Sultry rains, and during the whole of the night
3	83	84	S.E.	Continued rains with loud thunder
4	81	83	S.E.	Showery during the day; stor- my at night, violent thunder
5	81	84	E.N.E.	Rains with thunder
6	80	81	N.E.	Blowing hard. Noon showery
7	80	84	N.E.	Clear
8	84	86	E.N.E.	Clear
9	81	86	S.	Heavy rains
10	83	85	E.	Clear and blowing strong
11	83	86	N.E.	Clear, blowing fresh
12	82	86	E.	Clear, Ditto
13	83	86	N.E.	Morning fine; noon rain with gusts of wind
14	83	85	E.N.E.	Clear and blowing hard
15	81	78	E.N.E.	Cloudy. Mid-day heavy rains
16	78	84	N.E.	Morning heavy rains with much thunder
17	82	84	E.	Cloudy and blowing hard
18	83	85	E.	Cloudy, blowing hard
19	82	85	N.E.	Clear, high winds
20	83	85	E.	Clear
21	82	85	E.N.E.	Clear
22	82	85	E.N.E.	Clear morning. Noon showers
23	83	84	N.E.	Clear
24	81	83	E.	Rain during night, ditto part of day Thunder
25	76	84	S.W.	Cloudy, with showers
26	82	85	E.N.E.	Clear
27	82	85	E.	Clear
28	81	84	N.E.	Clear
29	77	83	E.N.E.	Rain and thunder
30	81	83	N.E.	Cloudy. Noon clear

Remarks.—The *wet season* generally commences in the early part of this month, about the 10th, and continues throughout the whole of the remainder of it. This season, the rains have set in earlier than common. Thunder at this time is also frequent, and often tremendously violent.

JULY, 1806.

Day of Month.	Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.			General State of Weather.
	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	82	85	E. N. E.	Clear
2	82	86	S E	Clear. Noon cloudy
3	82	84	E.	Clear
4	82	85	E.	Rain, high winds and loud thunder
5	82	85	S. E.	Clear morning. Noon heavy showers
6	82	84	E. S. E.	Clear
7	83	85	E.	Clear
8	80	84	E. S. E.	Clear and blowing strong
9	77	86	S.	Heavy rains, violent thunder storm
10	80	85	S. E.	Clear
11	83	85	S. E.	Clear, vivid lightning during night
12	84	85	E. S. E.	Clear
13	83	85	S. E.	Clear, blowing hard
14	83	80	S. E.	Clear morning. Noon heavy rain
15	82	80	E.	Rain
16	82	83	S. E.	Morning fine, noon rain and thunder
17	77	84	N. E.	Heavy rains
18	78	83	W.	Cloudy with showers
19	79	82	N. E.	Rain, loud thunder during night
20	80	83	N. E.	Squally with thunder
21	82	83	E.	Rain and thunder
22	82	86	E.	Showery
23	81	83	S. E.	Clear
24	80	83	N. E.	Clear, blowing fresh
25	80	85	E.	High winds and showery
26	81	86	E.	Clear
27	81	85	W.	Cloudy, with showers
28	80	86	W.	Ditto, wind and rain
29	76	87	N. W.	Thick fog and sultry
30	82	86	W.	Sultry
31	77	87	W.	Rain, with much lightning and heavy thunder

Remarks.—The weather for the greater part of this month has been unsettled and stormy; much vivid lightning, chiefly during the nights, and frequently accompanied with loud thunder.

AUGUST, 1806.

Height of Fahrenheit's Thermometer.				General State of Weather.
Day of Month.	Morn.	Noon.	Winds.	
1	77	87	W.	Cloudy. Noon sultry with thunder.
2	77	85	W.	Cloudy and sultry
3	80	86	W.	Sultry, much thunder during night
4	82	87	E. S. E.	Clear
5	82	85	E.	Clear
6	83	86	E.	Clear, blowing fresh
7	84	79	E.	Noon rain and thunder
8	83	85	E. N. E.	Clear
9	81	82	N. E.	Showery with high winds
10	77	80	W.	Cloudy and wet, thunder dur- ing night
11	82	85	E.	Clear
12	82	85	N. E.	Clear morning. Showery noon
13	81	85	E.	Clear
14	82	85	E.	Clear
15	82	86	E. S. E.	Clear
16	80	80	E.	Clear morning. Noon heavy rains
17	77	85	W.	Cloudy and showery
18	82	86	E.	Clear
19	81	86	E.	Clear
20	82	86	E. S. E.	Clear
21	79	87	W.	Showery
22	82	87	E.	Clear
23	82	85	E. N. E.	Clear
24	83	85	E.	Clear, blowing hard
25	82	86	E. N. E.	Clear
26	83	86	E.	Clear
27	82	86	E.	Clear
28	83	85	E.	Clear
29	83	86	E. S. E.	Clear
30	78	86	W.	Light rains and cloudy
31	77	84	S.	Rains and loud thunder

Remarks.—The greater part of this month has been extremely close and sultry. Frequent and heavy thunder storms have also prevailed.

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