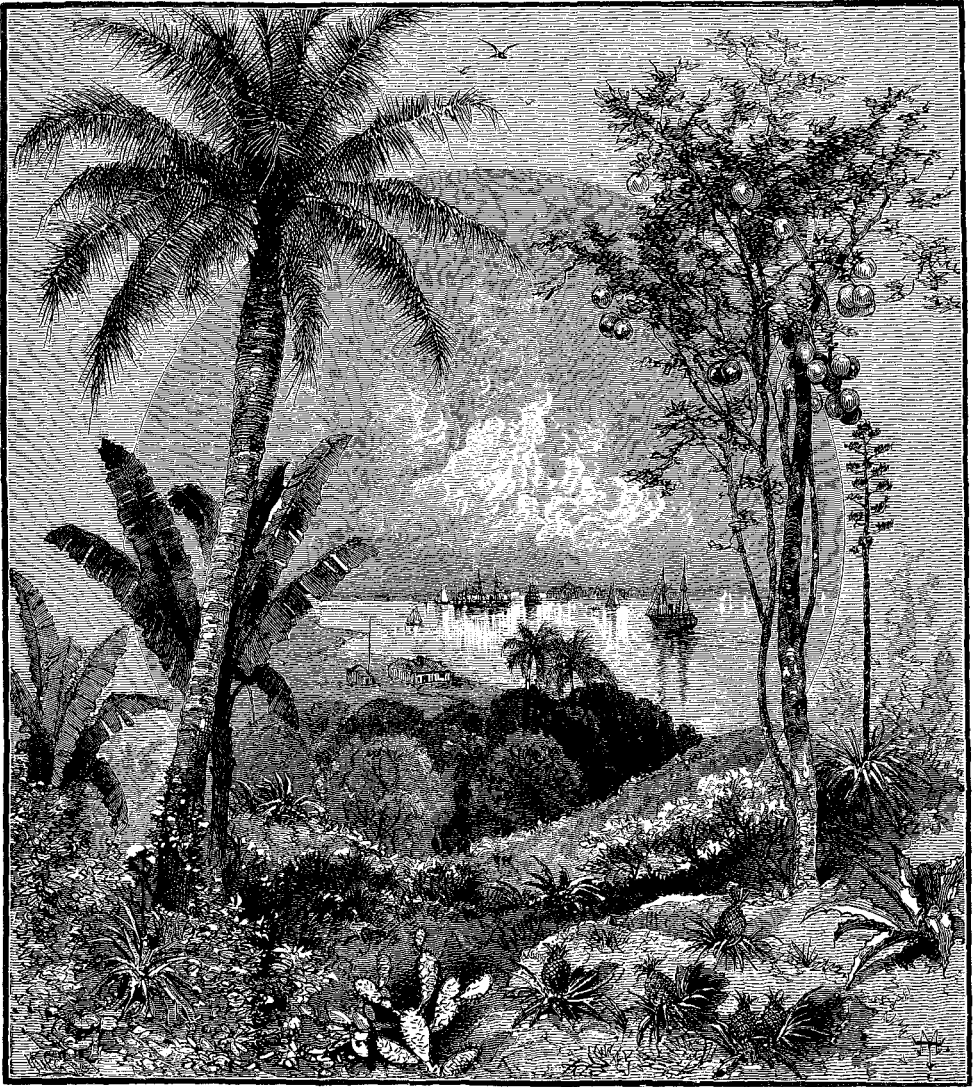


(once opened they would never again be inclosed in the self-same shell); terrapin *à la* Maryland; canvas-back ducks; a small salad of crab and lettuce. Vegetables:—baked Irish potatoes; fried hominy cakes,

and plain celery.” If this shall have been attended by adventitious circumstances it will put the artificialities of refined cookery of the exalted order entirely to the blush.

## AN ISLE OF JUNE.



NASSAU HARBOR, FROM HOG ISLAND.

It was on a cold, rainy morning in February that we left Savannah on the steamer for Nassau. We steamed through the yellow waters of the Savannah River and over

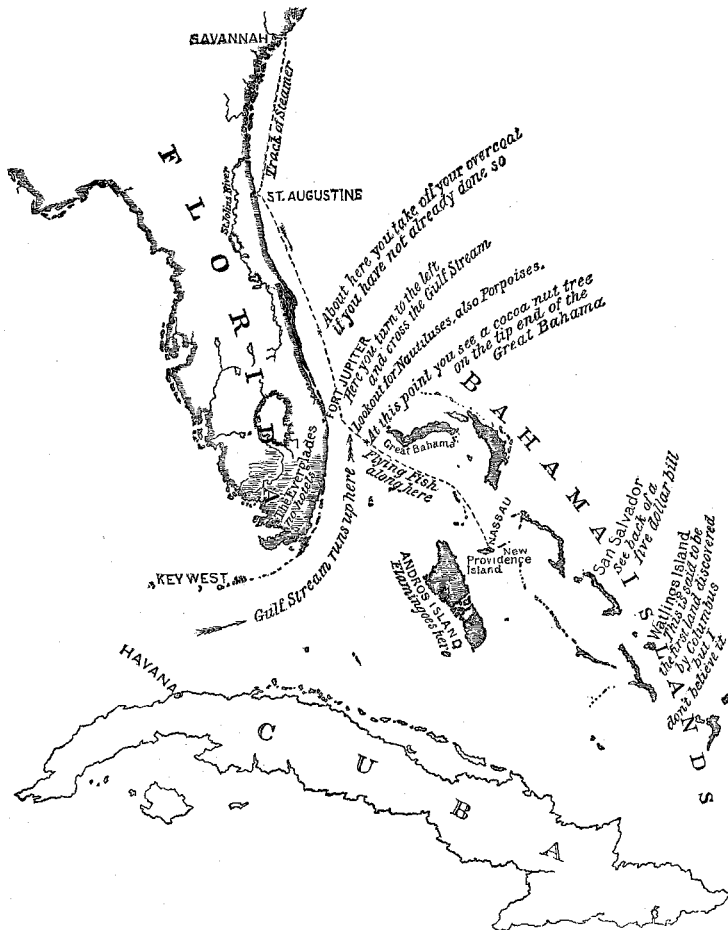
the bar at its mouth, and soon were fairly out at sea, where the long, even swells took our vessel gently in their arms and rolled her slowly from side to side as if they were

trying to put her to sleep. Those of the passengers who remained on deck wore overcoats or other wraps, and did not find it very convenient to do much promenading. However, the light of hope was burning in every eye, and by sunrise next morning we found ourselves off St. Augustine, Florida, with the rolling swell changed to short, chopping waves, which suited some persons better and other persons not so well.

stronger. It seemed as if we had suddenly sailed into early June, or the latter part of May. The sea was smooth, the air was mild, the skies were lovely. Everybody was on deck.

Off came our overcoats. It was no longer winter!

These ever-summer seas were lovely. Out of the waves rose the flying-fish, skimming in flocks through the air, and dropping down



MEMORANDUM MAP OF THE ROUTE TO THE BAHAMAS.

We sailed over the bar and anchored in front of the town. The disposition to get off for an hour or two was very strong, but our captain gave us no time for landing. He took on the passengers who stood clustered on the wharf, hoisted anchor and was over the bar again before the tide fell.

We kept on down the Florida coast until the next morning, when we turned eastward into the Gulf Stream. And now the hope on every countenance grew brighter and

again just as we were beginning to believe they were birds; the porpoises leaped and darted by the vessel's side, and every now and then we passed a nautilus, cruising along in his six-inch shell, with his transparent sail wide-spread and sparkling in the sun.

Early in the afternoon of this delightful day we descried, far in the distance, a speck on the horizon, and were told that this was land—a part of the Great Bahama Island; and as we drew nearer and nearer, we saw

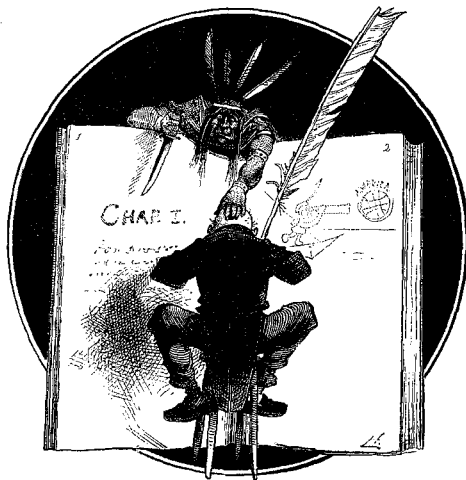
a little tuft in the air and a little thread beneath it, connecting it with the land ; and the tuft and the thread were a cocoa-nut tree !

We were journeying to find a pleasant winter climate,—one that could be depended upon. We knew of very commendable semi-tropical resorts—Florida for instance ; but among the northern visitors to Florida that year had been frost and ice. We could get all we needed of such things at home, and so we had agreed to postpone, until later in the season, our trip to the state of flowers and alligators, and in our search for the happy land we longed for, to do as Columbus did, and begin at the beginning. First to the Bahamas came he, and thither would we go too. These islands might be called the first chapter of America ; we would turn back and see how our continent opened to the eyes of the venturesome Genoese.

And here we were. True, that distant island was not San Salvador, but it was all in the family.

Through the whole afternoon we cruised down the shores of the Great Bahama, and then left it and went southward toward New Providence. Early in the morning, from my open port, I heard voices coming from the water, and the thumping of oars. I hastily looked out, and there was Nassau. We were almost at the wharf. A long boat, full of negroes, was carrying a line to the shore.

I hurried on deck and looking over the rail saw to my astonishment that we were floating in water not more than a foot deep ! This great ship, with her engines, her cargo, her crew and passengers, was slowly moving along



THE FIRST CHAPTER OF AMERICA.

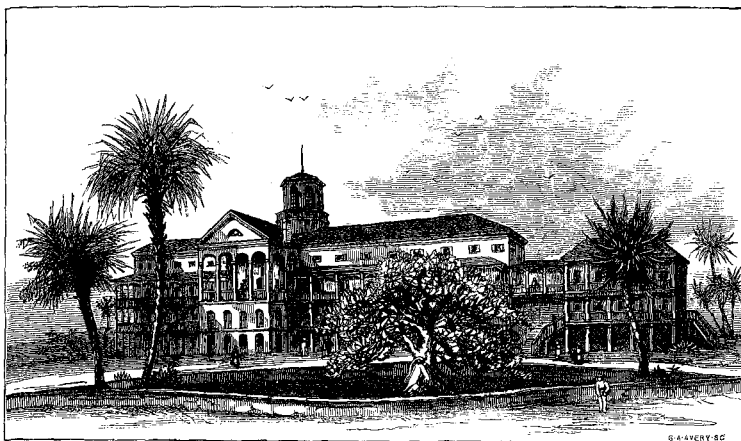
in water not up to your knees ! The bottom was clearly visible—every stone on it could be seen as you see stones at the bottom of a little brook. I could not understand it.

“How deep is this water ?” I asked of a sailor.

“About three fathom,” he answered.

I had heard, but had not remembered, that the waters around Nassau, especially when you looked down upon them from a height, were almost transparent, but the explanation did not make the sight any less wonderful. As to the color of the water, I had heard nothing about that. This water was of an apple-green or pea-green tint,—as charming as the first foliage of spring.

The town—a very white town—stretched before us for a mile or two along its water-front, and seemed to be a busy place, for



THE ROYAL VICTORIA HOTEL, NASSAU.



there were many vessels, large and small (principally the latter), moored at the piers; there were store-houses on the street by the

land called Hog Island. In spite of its name this island is a very ornamental and useful one, for it acts as a breakwater, and



VIEW DOWN GEORGE STREET, NASSAU.—LOOKING FROM GOVERNMENT HOUSE.  
[CATHEDRAL ON THE RIGHT, VENDUE HOUSE AT END OF STREET, HOG ISLAND IN THE DISTANCE.]

water; there was a crowd of people on the wharf; there were one-horse barouches, driven by negroes wearing red vests and dreadfully battered high silk hats, and altogether the scene was lively and promising.

The town was larger than I had expected to see it, but it ought to be a good-sized place, for nearly all of the people of the island of New Providence live there, and they number some eleven or twelve thousand. Columbus named this island Fernandina, which was a good name,—but the poor man never had much luck in christening the lands he discovered.

The town is certainly very well placed—all the passengers agreed to that. It lies on the northern edge of Ferna— of New Providence, and in front of it, less than a mile away, stretches a long, narrow piece of

in a picturesque way, helps to inclose an admirable harbor for Nassau.

There is no lack of islands and islets in what might be called the Bahamian Archipelago, which stretches some six hundred miles from San Domingo nearly to Florida. The collection comprises, according to official count, twenty-nine islands, six hundred and sixty-one cays, and two thousand three hundred and eighty-seven rocks,—assorted sizes.

New Providence is the most important member of this collection, but like many other most important things, it is by no means the biggest, being only twenty-one miles long and seven broad, while the Great Bahama, Abaco, Eleuthera, Andros, and some of the other islands, are very many times larger, some of them being a hundred

miles long. But New Providence has the brains, the other islands have merely size.

The health-officer came on board, and we were soon free to go ashore. We found that, like ourselves, nearly all our fellow-passengers were going to the Royal Victoria Hotel. We speedily secured one of the one-horse barouches; the red-vested driver pulled his silk hat a little tighter on his head, cracked his whip and away we went. As we rode through the town we noticed that the streets were very hard and smooth, and white and narrow, and that there was a great preponderance of wall in every direction; and in about two minutes we noticed that we were at the hotel.

The hotel made quite an impression upon us, even before we entered it. It stands high, spreads wide, and looks large, and cool, and solid. It is a hotel of which Her Majesty need not be ashamed. In front of the main door-way, which is level with the ground, is an inclosed and covered court. In the sides of this are arched gate-ways through which the carriage-road passes, and in the front wall are four or five door-ways. The space—and there is a good deal of it—between the carriage-way and the house is paved and is generally pretty well covered with arm-chairs, for this court, as we soon found, is the favorite resort of the guests. The sun can get no entrance here, while through the numerous door-ways cut in the massive walls the breezes come from nearly every direction. The interior of the house is also arranged with a view to coolness and shade. There is not a fire-place or a chimney in the whole structure. The cooking is done in a separate building, and in Nassau the people do not

need fires for warmth. We found, in fact, that Nassau is almost a town without chimneys. In looking over the place, from some of the high piazzas of the Royal Victoria, scarcely a chimney could be seen on a



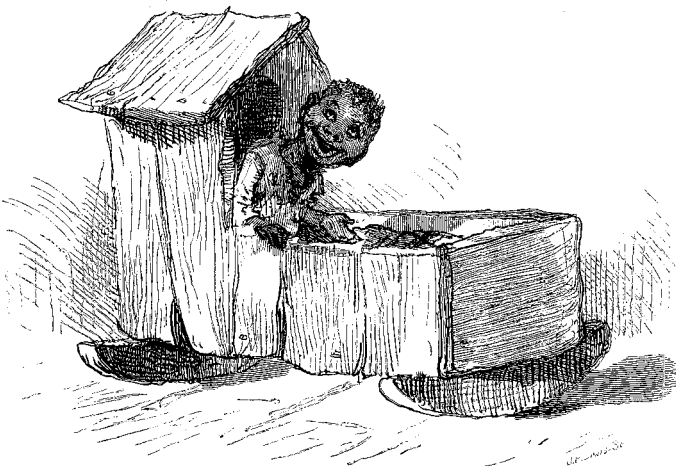
A LITTLE BOY IN FULL DRESS.

dwelling-house, and those on the little outside kitchens were so covered up by foliage that they were not easily perceived.

We went to breakfast with hopeful hearts. It was a good breakfast. In addition to the fare which one would expect at a first-class and well-kept hotel, we had fresh fruit, radishes, lettuce, sliced tomatoes, and other little matters of the kind to which we were not accustomed in winter-time.

The very first thing I did after breakfast was to go and buy a straw hat. I always wear a straw hat in sliced tomato time. I saw a little of the town while I was buying my hat, but I did not look at it much, for I did not wish to take an unfair advantage of my wife; and, as soon as possible, we started out together to see the town.

It was certainly a novel experience to walk through the streets of Nassau. At first it seemed to us as if the



"GIVE US A SMALL COPPER, BOSS."

whole place—streets, houses and walls—had been cut out of one solid block of the whitest lime-stone, for the material in all appeared to be the same. There are very few sidewalks, and these are generally not so good to walk on as the middle of the street. The houses are wide and low, and generally have piazzas around them on every story. Nearly every house has a garden,—sometimes quite a large one,—surrounded, not by a fence, but by a high stone-wall. It is these walls, over which you see the broad leaves of bananas, or the beautiful tops of cocoa-nut-trees, with other rich and unfamiliar foliage, which, more than anything else, give the town its southern, and, to us, its entirely foreign, appearance. The gardens, and all the spaces about the houses, are crowded with trees, bushes and flowers. Roses were in bloom everywhere, and oleanders, twenty feet high, waved their pink blossoms over the street.

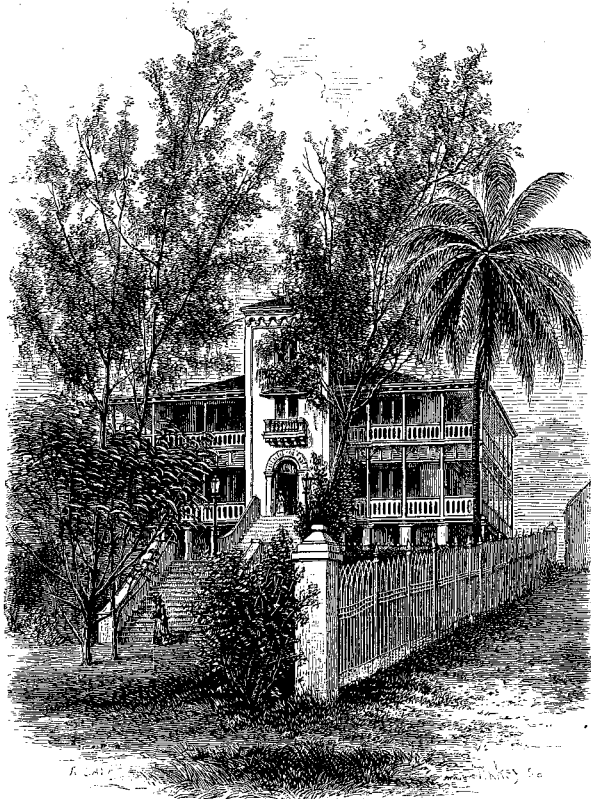
We walked down Parliament street, which leads from the high ground on which the hotel stands to Bay street, which is the principal thoroughfare and business avenue of the town. This street runs along the water-front, and on one side for some dis-

tance there is a succession of shops and business places of various kinds. On the water side of the street are the wharfs, the market, the Vendue House, the barracks, and quite a number of stores and counting-houses. And all these, taken in the aggregate, give Bay street quite a busy appearance.

And here we began to understand what is meant by the statement that there are negroes in Nassau. If I should say that the whole surface of the ground as far as the eye could reach, up or down the street, was covered with darkeys of every possible age, sex, size and condition in life, I should say what is not exactly true. It is difficult, however, to erase that impression from the mind,—for there they were strolling along the sidewalks (this street boasts those conveniences), standing in groups, laughing, talking, arguing, sitting on stones and door-steps, and by gate-ways, selling bananas, short pieces of sugar-cane, roots, and nuts; running hither and thither, flirting, begging, loafing, doing anything but working. Down by the market they swarmed like bees, some selling, some looking on, a few buying, and all jabbering away right and left.

When we next took a walk, we rambled to the south of the town,—to the suburbs, where these darkeys live. We went down a long street, or lane, bordered on each side by little gardens, in which stood thatched cottages and small low houses of various kinds, all in the most picturesque state of dilapidation, and surrounded, covered, embraced, sheltered and fondled by every kind of bush, tree and vine that will grow without the help of man; and, as nearly all the vegetation in Nassau will do that, bananas, cocoa-nuts, oranges and tamarinds clustered around these contented-looking little huts in masses of every shade of green, picked out with the golden hues of oranges, and the colors of every blossom that grows.

Looking down the lane, the view was lovely. The tall cocoa-nuts, with their tufts of long, magnificent leaves, waved on each side, until in the distance they seemed to touch across the white street that ran down through the

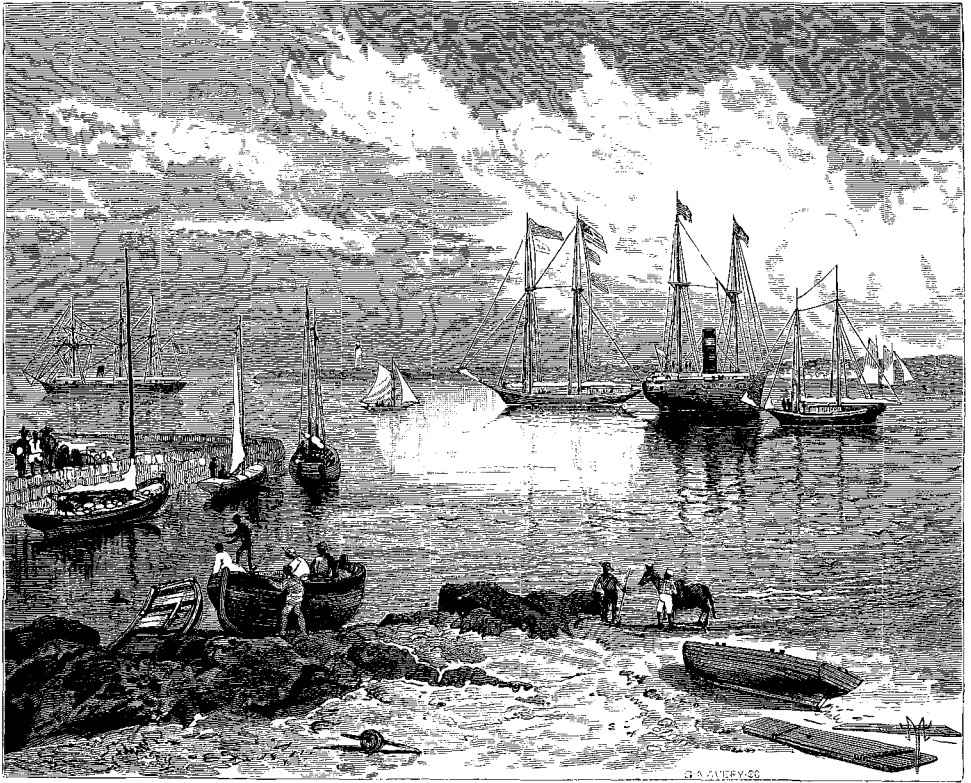


A NASSAU MANSION.



sea of foliage which spread away on either side, broken only by the thatched and pointed roofs that rose here and there like islands out of the green. The red shawls of the distant negro women gave the brilliant points of color, while the strong sunlight gave warmth to a scene that was more than semi-tropical. In the street, in the gardens, on the door-steps lounged and lay the happy people who had

if I gave half of what was asked, I conferred a measureless content upon the seller. Subsequently I learned that about one-eighth of one per cent. of the sum asked was enough for an opening offer, when trading with the negroes of Nassau. The youngsters who had no wares to sell were nothing loth to ask for donations, and "Give us a small copper, boss," was the refrain of most of the infantile prattle that we heard.



NASSAU HARBOR.

all this for nothing. They are true lotus-eaters, these negroes, but they need not sail away to distant isles to eat and dream. Their lotos grows on every cocoa-nut-tree, and on every banana; it oozes out with the juice of their sugar-cane, and they bake it in their yams.

From out of the huts and gardens the brown, black and yellow little girls came with roses and bunches of orange-blossoms. We first bought of one and then of another, until, if we had not suddenly stopped, we should have ruined ourselves. The prices they asked were but little more than the flowers would have cost in the hot-house of a New York florist, but I soon found that

If colored people feel lazy in the Bahamas, it is not to be wondered at. Everything feels lazy, even the mercury in the thermometers. It is exceedingly difficult to get it to move. While we were there, it was always at, or about, seventy-four degrees, once rising to eighty degrees, but soon subsiding again to the old spot. For myself, I like mercury that is content to dwell at seventy-four degrees. There is no better spot on the whole surface of the thermometer. And why should people toil and sweat in this happy island? The trees and vines and vegetables do not ask it of them. Things grow in Nassau for the love of growing; they do not have to be coaxed. In the

negro suburbs we saw very little cultivation. The trees and plants did not even seem to care about soil to any great extent. We saw large trees growing, apparently, right out of the stones and rocks. Of course, there was some earth in the crevices, but there was precious little of it anywhere. The whole island is of coral origin, and is now like a great lime-stone rock, covered with a very thin layer of rich soil. But this thin layer suffices for the luxuriant vegetation of the Bahama's, although I think that one of the long carrots of our country would find it very difficult to grow at Nassau, unless it were furnished with a rock-drill at the extremity of its root.

There is a fine, large jail here, a very cool and well-arranged edifice. The inmates are almost exclusively negroes. There was one white man there when I saw the place, but he was a sailor from a foreign ship in port, who did not know, perhaps, that it was not a custom of the country for white folks to get themselves put in prison. When a negro enters this jail,—and he generally goes in for petty larceny or a similar crime,—his habits undergo a complete revolution. He has to work hard. Dressed in white shirt, trowsers and cap (for here white is the color that does not show dirt), with bare feet and a long chain running from each ankle to a belt at his waist, he marches in military order with a company of his fellows to sweep the streets, mend the pavements and work in the public grounds. He also labors in the jail and learns to despise, from the bottom of his soul, the temporary, but deplorable, weakness of Adam. But it must not be supposed that these criminals are the only negroes who are industrious. There are colored people in Nassau who have found out that it pays to work,—moderately,—and so have arrived at positions of ease and comparative independence. The policemen here, with one or two exceptions, are black men. They wear handsome blue uniforms, and walk slower and put on greater airs of dignity and authority than any other body of police officers that I have ever met.

The government of the Bahamas appears to be highly satisfactory to all parties concerned. As a colony of Great Britain, the islands have a colonial governor, who is assisted in his governmental duties by Her Majesty's executive council and Her Majesty's legislative council. The people at large have also a voice in the matter through the representatives they send to the House of Assembly, a body of about thirty members.

The currency in use is a curious mixture of American and English money, with occasional additions of the coins of other climes. Our greenbacks are readily received at par, and our silver half and quarter dollars at a slight discount, but the smaller money in use with us will not pass current. The small change is principally English coin,—eight, six, four and three-penny pieces, a small silver coin called a "check," worth a penny and a half, and copper pennies and halfpence. Among the latter we met with a great many friends of other days in the shape of our old-fashioned copper cents. One or two of the guests at the hotel, who were coin collectors, found prizes among the coppers. The negroes gave, in change, not only rare United States cents, passing for halfpence, but copper coins of the same general size, from various parts of the world. It quite recalled the feelings of my youth to get change for a quarter, and go about with a lot of heavy coppers jingling in my pocket.

But there is no difficulty at all in getting rid of this weighty change. An opportunity is afforded twice a day at the main entrance of the hotel, where, after breakfast and after dinner, will be found on every week-day a regular fair or market. The negroes come with the greatest variety of commodities for sale, and range themselves around the inside of the inclosure, some sitting down by the walls with their baskets before them, others standing about with their wares in their hands, while others, more enterprising, circulate among the ladies and gentlemen, who are taking their after-meal rest in the numerous arm-chairs on each side of the door. It would be impossible to name everything which may be bought in this market, for new and unique commodities are continually turning up. Flowers and fruit of every kind that grows here, sponges, shells of almost every imaginable variety, canes and hats of native manufacture, star-fish, berries, conchs, sugar-cane, sea-beans of all kinds and colors, and all sorts of ornaments made of tortoise-shell and other shells. One day a boy brought a little dog; a girl had a live bird, which she would either sell or liberate on the payment of a small sum by any humane person. A big black man brought a tarantula spider in a bottle, and you can always get centipedes if you want them. Many things—sponges, for instance—can be bought at very low prices by people who are willing to bargain a little.



We bought and tasted of almost every kind of native fruit; some of it was very curious to look at, and some was very good to eat. The sappadillo is a small round fruit, the color of a potato on the outside, and as sweet as sugared honey inside. The grapefruit has the flavor and taste of an orange, and is a rich and juicy fruit for a hot day, but the skin and pulp must be avoided. Guavas are fragrant and luscious. Jamaica apples, which are masses of sweet custard, covered with a thin skin, are almost too rich for a novice in West Indian fruits. Mangoes are said to be delicious, but they ripen later in the season. The sour-sop is a great green fruit, like a bloated cucumber, and has been aptly compared, in regard to taste, to cotton soaked in vinegar. The lemons are enormous and very fine, and there are limes, and star-apples, and tamarinds, and other things of the kind which I cannot remember. But the fruits we liked best were those to which we had been accustomed, — oranges, pine-apples and bananas. We had not, however, been accustomed to pine-apples naturally ripened. Those sent from Nassau to the United States are shipped in a partially green state, and ripen themselves as well as circumstances allow. But a pine-apple ripened in its native soil, and under its native sun, was an unknown joy to us. It was not the pine-apple season, but in this happy climate season does not make much difference to fruits, and there were generally some pine-apples to be had.

Not only venders of merchandise but every one who has any means of making money out of the visitors is to be found at this hotel-door market,—men with horses and carriages to hire; captains of sail-boats; humbler folk who will take you rowing, or commanders of fishing-smacks anxious to take a fishing party “outside.” As soon as possible I engaged a man to take me fishing.

I have always delighted in the sport, and here I should certainly have some new experiences. We started after breakfast, myself and the fisherman, in a tight little, round little, dirty little sloop, with a “well” in it to keep captured fish alive, and decked over fore and aft. The boat was strong and safe, if not very pretty, and away we went over the bar and out to sea. We anchored off Hog Island, some distance from land, and my good man lowered his sail and got out his lines and bait. The latter was conch-meat. He took up a conch, several of which he had bought in the market before we started, and broke the shell to pieces with a small iron bar. Then he pulled out the inmate, which resembles an immense clam with a beak and a tail, and examined it for pearls. In these conchs, pearls of a pretty pinkish hue are occasionally, but not often, found by fortunate fishermen and divers. One of them sold for four hundred dollars in London, I was informed. Small



SELLING A TARANTULA.

ones, worth from ten to a hundred dollars, are occasionally seen in the Nassau shops. Finding no pearl, my fisherman laid his conch on the deck and hammered it with a wooden beater until it was soft enough to cut up for the hooks. All this made a good

deal of noise, which I was afraid would frighten away the fish, but when the hooks were baited and we were ready to commence operations, the man took an old and empty conch-shell, and holding it over the water

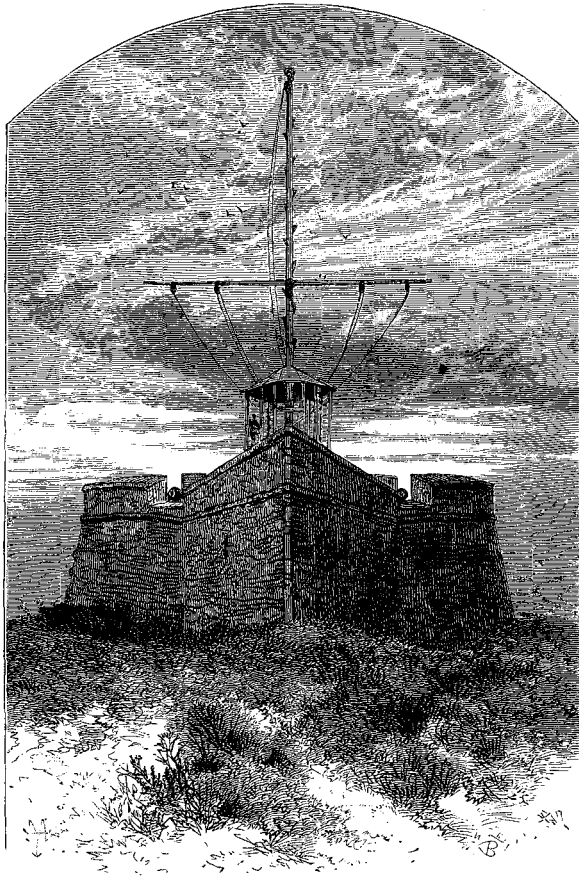
deck he drew forth a "water-glass," which is a light wooden box, about twenty inches long and a foot square, open at one end, and with a pane of glass inserted at the other end, which is somewhat the larger.

He held this box over the side of the boat, and sinking the glass end a few inches below the surface of the water, he put his eye to the other end and looked in. —"Yes," said he, "there's lots of fish down there. Take a look at them." I took the box and looked down into the water, which was five or six fathoms deep. I could see everything under the water as plainly as if it had all been in the upper air,—the smooth white sandy bottom; the stones lying on it, covered with sea-weed; the star-fish and such sea-creatures lying perfectly still, or gently waving themselves about, and the big fish slowly swimming around and occasionally turning up one eye to look at us. Looking through this "water-glass," it was as light as day down under the sea.

The fisherman, who was of white blood, although he was tanned as dark as a mulatto, knew all the different fish and told me their names. The "mutton-fish" and the "groupers" were the largest we saw. Some of these were two or three feet long. We now lowered our lines and began to fish. The man kept the water-glass in his hand most of the time, so as to see

hammered it into bits, making as much noise as possible in so doing. This, he said,—and he seemed to know all about it,—was to attract the fish. These proceedings were very different from what I had been accustomed to in my fishing excursions at home, when everybody kept as quiet as possible, but my fisherman's next move astonished me still more. He coolly remarked that he would look and see if there were any fish in the water about our boat. We were gently tossing on waves that were entirely different from the transparent water of the harbor, and apparently as opaque as any other waves. I could see a few inches below the surface perhaps, but certainly no more. But my man knew what he was talking about. From under his little

what would come to the lines. Sometimes I would take a look and see the fish come slowly swimming up to my bait, which rested on the bottom, look at it, and perhaps take a little nibble, and then disdainfully swim away. They did not seem to be very hungry. Pretty soon the fisherman caught a "hind,"—a fish about a foot long, of a beautiful orange color with red and black spots. I soon caught one of the same kind. Then the man hauled up a "blue-fish," one of the very handsomest fishes I ever saw. It was not at all like our so-called blue-fish. This was about twenty inches long and of a beautiful polished, dark sky-blue all over—fins, head, tail and every other part. It was more like a very bright blue china-fish than anything else.



FORT FINCASTLE.

This man had a queer way of classifying fish. "There's one at your hook now, sir," he would say, and when I would ask if it was a big one he would sometimes answer, "Well, about two shillin's," or "That's a big feller; three shillin's, sure," and sometimes, "That's a little one, biting at you, about six-pence."

While we were fishing, we saw, at a short distance, some conch-divers at work. There were two of them, and neither of them wore any clothes. One of them sculled their small boat, while the other fellow stood like a bronze statue in the bow. Every now and then they would stop and look into the sea with a water-glass, and if they saw a conch, over would go the diver into eight or ten fathoms of water and bring it up. It seemed like a very lonely kind of business, to go away off on the sea in a little bit of a boat and then to leave even that, and dive down into the ocean depths, among the quiet fishes and the solemn rocks, for a three-cent conch. I asked my fisherman if there were sharks hereabouts.

"Plenty of 'em," he answered; "sometimes they come around my boat and snap at my fish as fast as I catch 'em. They soon break the lines and make me pull up and get away. Yes, there's lots of 'em, but they wont bite a nigger."

We soon became convinced that February is June in Nassau. The weather was that of early summer, and everybody was in light clothes and straw hats. In the sun it is often quite warm; in the shade you can generally rely on seventy-four degrees. We never found it too warm to go about sight-seeing, and there is a good deal to see in and about Nassau, if you choose to go and look at it. Back of the hotel, on a commanding hill, stands Fort Fincastle, a curious old stronghold. Viewed from the front, it looks very much like a side-wheel steamer built of stone. The flag-staff increases the delusion by its resemblance to a fore-mast. This fort was built long before steamboats were heard of, so that the idea that it is a petrified steamer is utterly ridiculous.

The fort is commanded and garrisoned by one man whose duty it is to signal the approach of vessels. He must have had a lively time, during our late war, when so many blockade-runners came to Nassau, and when a steamer might come rushing into the harbor with a gun-boat hot behind it—at any time of day or night.

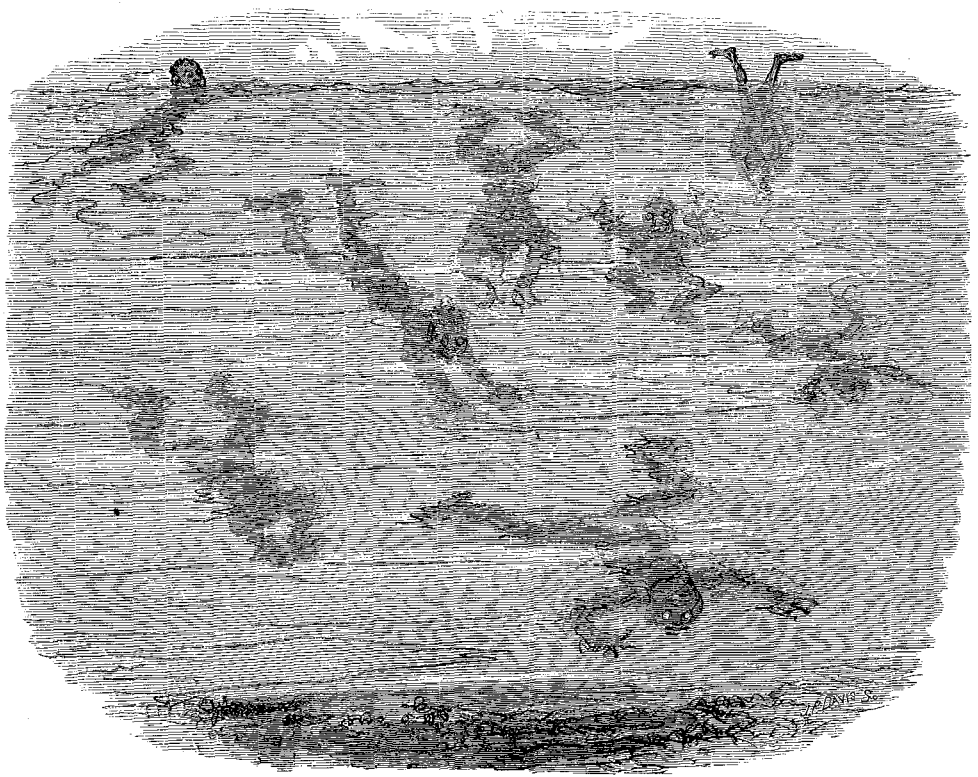
Fort Charlotte, at the western end of the town, is a good place to go to, if you like

mysterious underground passages, deep, solemn and dark chambers, cut out of the solid rock, and all sorts of uncanny and weird places, where a negro with a double-barreled lamp leads you through the darkness. In this fort, which was built by the Earl of Dunmore, nearly a hundred years ago, there is a curious deep well, with circular stairs leading to the bottom of it, and the stairs, central pillar and well are all cut out of the solid rock. We went down that dismal well, slowly and cautiously, and we found at the bottom a long passage which led to the "Governor's room." There was no governor there, for the fort is now deserted, except by a couple of negroes, who help the Fincastle man to look out for vessels, but it must have been a very good place for a governor to go to, if his subjects did not love him.

The military element is quite conspicuous in Nassau. There are large barracks at the west end of the town; a British man-of-war generally lies in the harbor, and in the cool of the evening you may almost always see, down the white vista of the narrow street, the red coat of a British soldier.

There is a nice little public square which lies on the water side of Bay street and fronts the public buildings, where are the court-houses, house of assembly, Bank, and other similar places of resort. Whenever we would go—on a pleasant morning, afternoon or evening—to this square, to sit by the stone boat-stairs, or to stand on the sea-wall and view the lovely water with its changing hues of green, its yachts, its ships, and all its busy smaller craft, and sniff with delight the cool salt breeze that blows so gayly over the narrow back of Hog Island, there would certainly come running to us two, three, or a dozen little black boys with the entreaty: "Please, boss, give us a small dive." If I happened to have any change, and wished to see some funny work in the water, I put my hand in my pocket, and instantly every little black boy jerked off his shirt. It is no trouble for the negro children to undress in Nassau. The very little ones wear only a small shirt and a straw hat. Sometimes there is not much muslin in this shirt, but they are always particular to have it come down low enough to cover the breast-bone. If I find a penny, I toss it into the water, and instantly every darkey boy, clad in nothing but his scanty trowsers, plunges in after it. Sometimes a spry little fellow catches the coin before it reaches the bot-





DARKEYS DIVING FOR PENNIES.

tom, and it is never long before some fellow comes up with the money in his mouth. Sometimes when a coin is not readily found, it is curious to look down through the clear water and see the young rascals moving their legs and arms about down at the bottom like a lot of enormous brown frogs.

There are not many places of public resort in Nassau; but there is a library which has eight sides and six thousand books, and where the pleasant young people of Nassau—and there are a great many of them—go to see one another, and to look over the volumes in the cool alcoves.

There is another place which always looks delightfully cool and shady, and which, if it is not patronized by lovers, ought to be, and this is a very long, narrow and deep ravine which was cut in the lime-stone rock, not far from the hotel, many years ago by the people who were building the town. At the upper end is a long flight of steps leading to the hill on which Fort Fin-castle stands, and this is called "The Queen's Staircase." It has been long since any stone has been taken from this ravine. The stairs, which were admirably

cut out of the rock, have been worn away in places by many feet, and the whole place has grown up cool and green, with all sorts of vines and shrubbery. Here we found a great many of the "life-leaf" plant,—a curious growth, from the fact that a leaf of it will live for months, pinned to your wall, and not only that, but little plants will come out of the edges of the leaf and grow just as comfortably as if they were in the ground.

It is genuine pleasure to take a ride about Nassau. Apart from the fact that there is a good deal to be seen, it is delightful to ride over roads which are so hard, so smooth, and so level that it does not seem to be any trouble whatever for a horse to pull a buggy. If it were any trouble, I don't believe the Nassau horses would do it.

The first time we took a buggy-ride, our little mite of a horse bowled us along at a lively rate, and all was charming—fine breeze, lovely road by the water, suburbs fading into country, and all that—until we met a wagon. Then we came very near having a smash-up. For some reason or other, myself and the other driver turned right into each other. We pulled up in time to prevent damage; the other man swore,

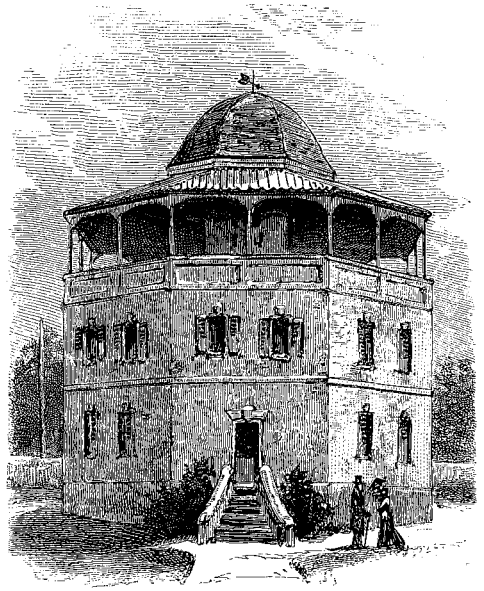
and, jerking his horse around, drove off angrily. I could not imagine why this should have happened, until I suddenly remembered that this was, theoretically, English soil, and on English soil drivers turn to the left. It was well I thought of this and remembered it, or else on our return, when we met all the fashionable people of Nassau taking their afternoon air on the road, I should have run into the governor's carriage containing some of his family; then, in a few minutes, into the governor himself, riding rapidly on a fine horse, and after that into a number of ladies and gentlemen in buggies or one-horse barouches. Some of those in buggies were visitors from the hotel, and very difficult to avoid, having a habit of turning sometimes one way and sometimes the other.

The governor, who resides in the government house, a spacious building on the heights back of the city, is a tall, handsome Englishman, who has filled his present post for about two years to the satisfaction of everybody, I believe, excepting those enterprising people who wish to revive the old business of wrecking, for which the Bahamas used to be so famous. It is certain that there are very few islands which are so advantageously placed for this sort of business; for it is not only difficult for ships sailing in these waters to keep at a safe distance from the twenty-nine islands, the six hundred and sixty-one cays, and the two thousand three hundred and eighty-seven rocks, but there is a constant temptation to skippers to run a vessel ashore and share with the wreckers the salvage money. Then, too, it is so much more enjoyable (to wreckers) to see a vessel smash her sides on a coral reef than to see her sail stupidly into port that any one who endeavors to persuade these people that it will be better for all parties to give up the time-honored business of wrecking and devote themselves to raising oranges and pine-apples, has a hard task before him.

The principal road on the island runs along the northern shore for fifteen miles or more, and is a beautiful drive, for the most part along the edge of the harbor. This was the road we took on our first ride, and among the curious things we saw on the way was a banyan-tree. There it stood by the roadside, the regular banyan of the geographies, with its big trunk in the middle and all its little trunks coming down from the branches above. I always thought of the banyan as an East Indian tree, and

did not expect to find it in the Bahamas. However, there are not many of these trees on the island, I believe, of the size and symmetry of this one.

There are a good many trees of distinction in and about Nassau. In the garden of the Rev. Mr. Swann, rector of the cathedral, there are two very fine royal African palms, and back of the public buildings is a "silk cotton-tree" which is a wonderful specimen of what Nature can do when she tries her hand at curious vegetation. This tree, which is inclosed by a fence to protect it from visitors, is nothing very remarkable, as to its upper works, so to speak, except that it bears a pod which contains a silky cotton, but it is very remarkable indeed when one considers its roots. These stand up out of the ground six or eight feet high, like great wooden walls, radiating from the trunk ten or twenty feet outward, making an arrangement somewhat resembling a small, circular church with high-backed pews. The branches extend outward for a great distance, making this the most imposing tree on the island, although



THE NASSAU LIBRARY.

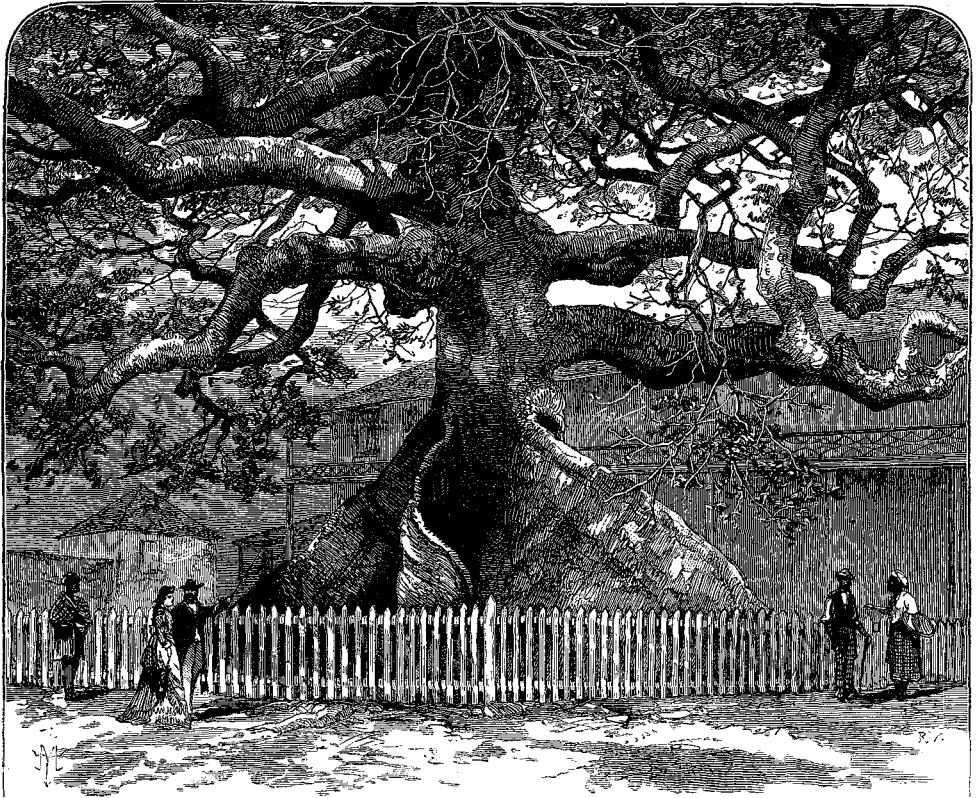
silk cotton-trees are not at all uncommon. There is a very fine one on the hotel grounds.

In the interior of the island are some very pretty lakes. One of these, called, I am sorry to say, Lake Killarney, is a charming spot. We rode over there one afternoon in a one-horse barouche with a high-hatted driver. The road for some miles

leads westwardly along the beach, and gives views of some lovely bays and coves, and the cays that guard the western side of the entrance to the harbor, with the white foam dashing up against their coral sides. Then we struck back into the country and

green and yellow in the leaves, the blossoms and the young fruit, made a very striking picture.

From the top of the hill on which the plantation lies may be had the finest view in the whole island. Before you lies Lake



SILK COTTON-TREE.

rode through the pines to the lake, which stretches up and down for three miles. Its water is a beautiful green, like that in the harbor, and the banks, which were cut up into picturesque little bays and peninsulas, were heavily wooded, except in one spot, where a hill running down to the water's edge had been cleared and planted with pine-apples. Going out on a rude little pier we saw a couple of negroes in a boat, returning from a duck-hunt. One of these we hired to row us to the pine-apple plantation, about a mile away, leaving our stately driver to enjoy the shade of the wild orange and lemon trees until our return.

A pine-apple plantation was something entirely new to us, and this was a very large and fine one. The plants were set out all over the field about two or three feet apart. The alternations of bright pink, purple,

Killarney, its apple-green waters sparkling between its darker-hued shores, while back to the left, you see another and a larger lake shimmering in the distance, and back to the right, over the masses of foliage that stretch away for miles and miles, you can see the ocean, with the steeples of the town peeping up along its edge.

We took another long ride—the road running by the beach all the way—to what are called the Caves. Two of these are good-sized caverns near the shore, but there is another one, better worth seeing, which is nearly a mile back in the country and to which we walked, for there is no road across the fields. The outer portion or vestibule of this cave is divided into two portions at right angles with each other, and one of them is not at all unlike a small cathedral, with altar, pillars, a recessed



chancel, and long cords like bell-pulls or supports for chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. The latter were slender rootlets, or rather branches seeking to become trunks, which came down from banyan-trees on the ground above, and finding their way through crevices in the roof, took root in the floor of the cave. I took away one of them, about one-third of an inch in diameter and some fifteen feet long, and coiling it up, put it in my trunk. When my travels were over, and I had reached home, I hung the coil on a nail in the wall, and there, at least three months after it was cut, that bit of banyan, which had remained perfectly green and flexible all this time, began to sprout out rootlets down toward the carpet, and these are now six or seven feet long. This ridiculous piece of wood is growing yet, without water, without earth, and with no other culture than that of being packed in a trunk and hung up on a nail.

As to the main cavern, which opens from what I have called the vestibule caves by means of a four-foot hole, and which extends for a half mile or thereabouts toward the beach, we did not visit it. We were told by our negro guide, with many gesticulations, that this was a wonderful cave, and that if we had candles and plenty of matches it would be a good thing to go in, but that if we should accidentally be left there in the dark we would never, never come out alive!

The Hog Island beach is one of the best places that I know about Nassau. It is a short row across to the island, which is so narrow that a minute's walk takes one to the other side. Here the shore is high and rocky, rising, in most places, twenty feet above the water-level. The rocks are what are called "honey-comb rocks," and are worn and cut by the action of the waves into all sorts of twisted, curled, pointed, scooped-out, jagged forms, so that it is difficult to pick your way over them, although their general surface is nearly level. The surf comes rolling in on the rocks, and dashes and surges and leaps against them, while every now and then a wave larger and mightier than its fellows hurls itself high up on the shore, throwing its spray twenty or thirty feet into the air, like an immense glittering fountain.

In many places the rocks are undermined for a considerable distance, and the sea rolls and rumbles in under your feet. Here and there are holes, three or four feet wide, down which you can look into the submarine caverns and see the water boiling and surging and hissing, while occasionally, a great wave rushing in below sends a water-spout through one of these holes, high into the air. When the wind is from the north the sight here must be magnificent. There is a reef a short distance from the beach which breaks the force of the surf somewhat, but when there is a strong wind blowing directly on shore, the waves often leap clean over Hog Island and dash into the



A PINE-APPLE IN ITS NATIVE SOIL.

harbor. At such times the light-house on the point would be a better place to view the scene than the rocks where we usually sat.

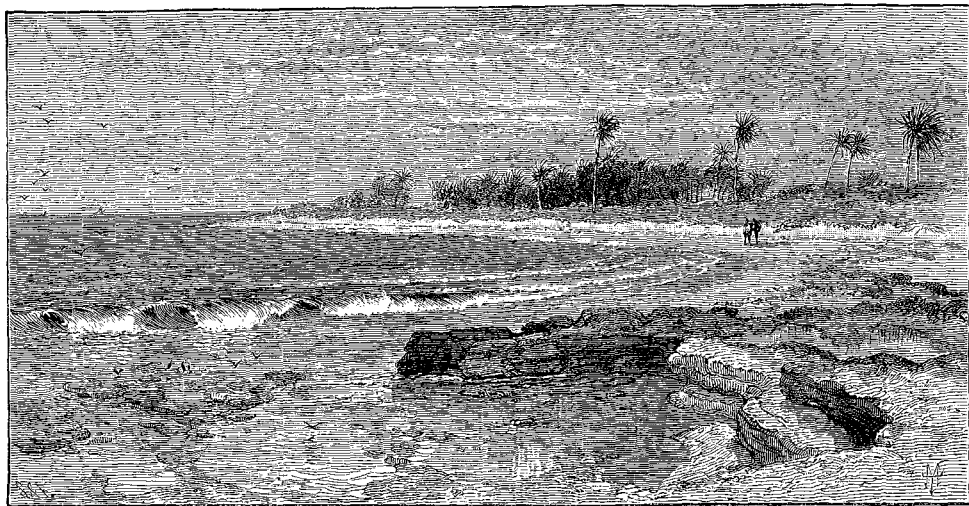
Toward the eastern part of this island, there are several little coves with a smooth beach, of the very whitest sand that a beach can have. Here the surf is not high, and the bathing is excellent. A comfortable sea-bath in winter-time—a bath in water that is warm, and under skies that are blue with the blueness of our summer mornings, is a joy that does not fall to the lot of every man. But here you may bathe in the surf almost any day, and along the water-front

of the city there are private bath-houses, for still-water bathing, and I was told that others are to be erected for the use of the Royal Victoria, which gathers under its wings nearly all the winter visitors, though there are one or two small hotels in Nassau, one good American house of the first class, and some boarding-houses.

Once a year there are regattas at Nassau, and the occasion is made a grand holiday by all classes—the principal holiday of the year. We were lucky enough to be there on regatta day, which fell on the sixth of March, and it would have warmed the cockles of anybody's heart to see so many happy people. All the places of business were shut up, and everybody came to see the sights. The buildings fronting on the water were crowded with white folks, and the piers and wharves, and coal-heaps, and piles of lumber, and barrels, and boxes, and posts were covered with negroes, as ants cover a lump of sugar. And better than sugar to ants was this jolly day to that black crowd with so few shoes and so many hats. Like the shore, the water was crowded. Craft of every kind were to be seen: sloops just in from sponging expeditions or voyages to the "out islands;" vessels at anchor; sail-boats shooting here and there; and among all, wherever there was room for a row-boat, there a row-boat was. There were races for schooners, yachts, fishing-smacks, spongers, and for row-boats of all grades; and there were swimming matches, and a "duck-hunt," in which an active fellow in a little boat was chased, for a wager, by other boats. But the best thing of all, to me, was the per-

formance of "walking the greased pole." This amusement is far superior to climbing a greased pole—there is something æsthetic about it—when the grease is thick. A long round spar is projected horizontally over the side of a vessel, and at the extreme end of it hangs a bag containing a pig. The upper surface of the pole is covered with a coating of grease. Along this pole the competitors must walk and seize the prize—the pig in the bag. About a dozen young negro men, clad in nothing but short muslin trousers, gathered on the deck to engage in the sport. One at a time, these fellows would walk cautiously out, doing everything in their power to keep their balance and to avoid slipping, and then, before they knew it, up would go their feet, and down they would tumble, head foremost, into the water, amid yells and screams of laughter from the excited crowds on shore. But they did not mind the water, and would climb up the ship's side and try it again. After about fifty attempts, during which the negroes on the wharves became so excited that if they had all tumbled overboard amid their wild yells and gesticulations, I should not have been surprised, a long, thin, black fellow made a run along the pole, slipped off the end, but seized the bag in his fall and hung fast to it. The crowd screamed in one mad spasm of delight, and the thin black man got the prize.

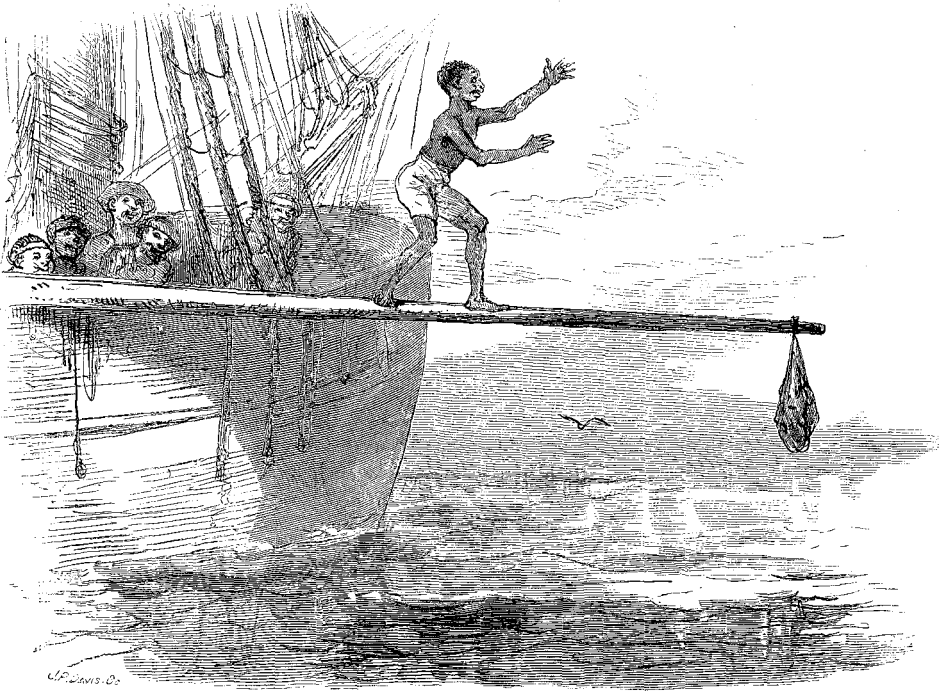
But it is not necessary to participate in a regatta in order to have good sailing in Nassau waters. Sail-boats and yachts are continually cruising about in the harbor, and you can always hire a craft for a sail.



A LITTLE COVE AT NASSAU.

The best sail we had while we were there—and we have no reason to expect ever to have a better one—was an excursion to a coral reef, some five miles from town. We were a party of four, with Captain Sampson Smart at the helm; and we took with us

water.” And his words were true, only what we saw was more like a garden than a farm. Down at the bottom we could see—quite plain with the naked eye, but ever so much better with the water-glass—a lovely garden where there were sea-fans,



A NASSAU DIVERSION.

two young negro divers. Captain Sampson is a fine sailorly-looking darkey, and if you believe him, he can take you in his little boat and sail you to the lowlands low, or the highlands high, or to any other place on earth accessible by water. He certainly can sail a boat, and he took us away on about five Japanese fanfuls of wind, up the harbor, and past the town, and close by Potter's Cay—a narrow island lying lengthwise between Hog Island and the mainland; and past the long suburb of little cabins and cottages belonging to fishermen, and spongers, and other folk with watery occupations, and among the little fleet of small craft always to be found here, and so on to the end of Hog Island, where a strip of channel, called "The Narrows," separates it from Athol Island, which here relieves Hog Island of the duty of harbor guard. We sailed through the Narrows, and in a short time were anchored on the reef, in about ten or twelve feet of water. Here, the captain had told us, we should see "a farm under

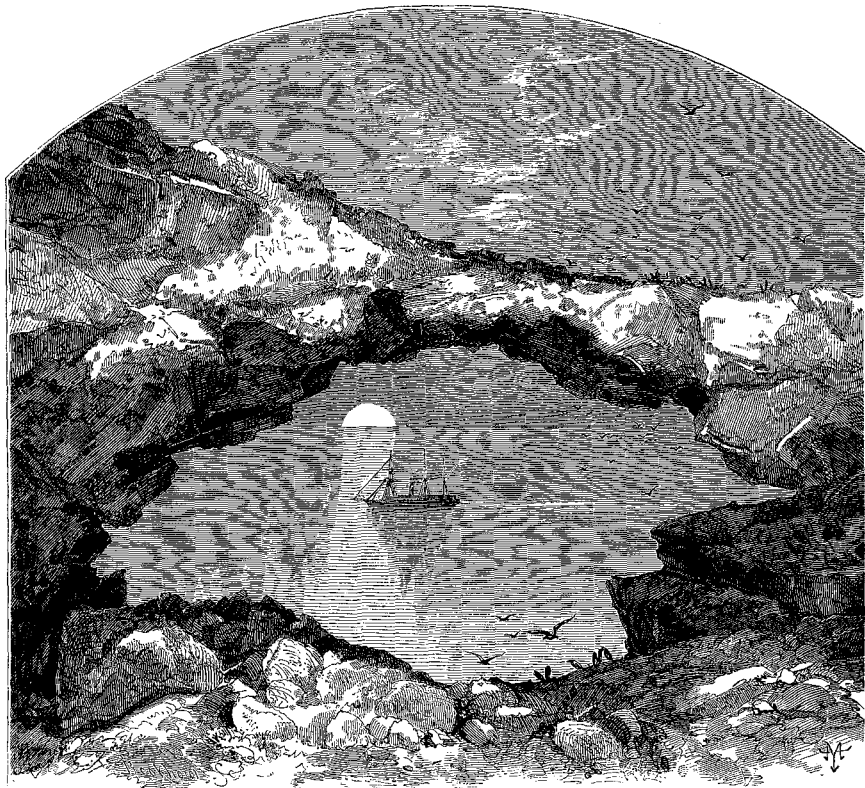
purple and green, that spread themselves out from spurs of coral; sea-feathers whose beautiful purple plumes rose three or four feet high, and waved under the water as trees wave in the wind; curious coral formations, branched like trees, or rounded like balls, or made up into any fantastic form or shape that one might think of, and colored purple, green, yellow and gray, besides many-hued plants that looked like mosses, lichens, and vines growing high and low on the coral rocks. All among the nodding branches of the curious sea-plants, swam the fish. Some of these were little things, no longer than one's finger, colored as brilliantly as humming-birds,—blue, yellow and red,—and there were large blue-fish, and great striped fish, with rich bands of black and purple across their backs. Down into this under-water garden we sent the divers to pick for us what we wanted. Whenever we saw a handsome coral, or a graceful sea-feather or sea-fan that pleased our fancy, we pointed it out to



one of the young fellows, and down he plunged and brought it up to us.

I have never been in the habit of going about with governors' wives to call upon queens, but on one fine Sunday afternoon, the wife of a governor—not the governor of the Bahamas—did take us to call upon a queen—not she of England, but one of un-

ing no authority. Of course we were anxious to see her, and so, as I have said, the governor's wife accompanied us to her house. On the way I took a few lessons in African from our obliging guide, and succeeded in learning one or two phrases which I thought might be useful at court. The queen's palace was larger than an old-fashioned high-



THE GLASS WINDOWS, HARBOR ISLAND.

doubted royal blood. We first went to see the governor. He is a native African, Sampson Hunt by name. About forty years ago, a couple of slavers, containing select cargoes of Africans, were captured by an English man-of-war, and the liberated negroes were brought to the Bahamas. They settled down on the outskirts of Nassau and have since kept pretty well together, the older ones using their native language among themselves, although most of them can speak English. Sampson Hunt is their governor and lives in a little two-roomed house with a tall flag-staff in front of it. He is an intelligent man, and showed us a portion of the Bible printed in his language, the Yuruba. Among these Africans, when they were captured, was a young queen, who still lives, enjoying her rank, but hav-

posted bedstead, but not much. In one of its two rooms we found her majesty, sitting in a rocking-chair in front of the door, while on a bench at the side of the room sat four grizzled old negro men. The queen was a tall woman, with a high *turban* and a red shawl wrapped majestically about her. She stood up, when we entered, and gave us each her hand, making at the same time a low courtesy. She either felt her royal blood or had the lumbago, for she was very stiff indeed. She did not seem to be able to talk much in English, for the governoress spoke to her in African and her majesty made a remark or two to us in that language. Here was a chance for my phrases, so said I to the queen, "*Oqua galle*," which is equivalent to "good evening." What the queen said in answer I don't know, but the

four grizzled old negroes on the bench jumped as if they had been struck by lightning. They rolled about on the bench, their eyes sparkled, their teeth shone, they were convulsed with joy. "You been dar?" asked the grizzliest. He was sorry to find that I had never visited his native land, although he probably thought it strange that I did not go, knowing the language so well. When he found it necessary to subside into English, he gave us a very interesting account of the life on the slave-ship and the stirring events of the capture.

The reputation of Nassau as a health-resort is increasing every year. There are many reasons for this. Not only is its climate in winter warm and equable, but its air is moderately dry, its drainage excellent, and its drinking-water plentiful and wholesome. The island, according to excellent medical authority, is entirely free from malarious diseases, and it is, moreover, very easy of access. Its peculiar attractions draw to it, from our shores, a great many invalids and persons of delicate constitutions who would find it difficult to keep alive during our terrible and deceptive winter weather, but who, under the blue skies of the Bahamas, are happy as kings and are out-of-doors all day. At times there is a good deal of moisture in the air, especially at sunset, when a heavy fall of dew may be expected for an hour or two. But as there is very little change of temperature night or day, even persons with rheumatism and neuralgia may find relief in this steady-going climate. The doctor, from whom I had most of my information on these points, thought that while he would hardly recommend patients having those forms of lung trouble in which there is much expectoration and perspiration to visit the Bahamas, he considered that in the early stages of chronic pneumonia, and tuber-

culosis, in convalescence from acute diseases, in malarial affections and in exhaustion from overwork and worry, Nassau was one of the most healthful resorts of which he had any knowledge. This physician, a New Yorker who visited Nassau and made himself thoroughly acquainted with it, has since written very strongly in praise of the place. He went so far as to have some of the ordinary drinking-water analyzed, and found it very similar, indeed, to Croton water, each of them containing 0.4852 grains of chlorine to the gallon. I never discovered this in drinking it, but I know the water is very good. It may also be remarked, to the credit of the town, that the importation of ice is carefully attended to.

When we speak of this part of the world we generally say Nassau, because it is, so to speak, the center of the whole Bahamian system. But there are many attractions on the twenty-eight other islands, on which are some fifty small towns and settlements, and about thirty thousand inhabitants.

Harbor Island on the northern edge of the group, boasts the most pretentious provincial settlement. Dunmore Town has two thousand inhabitants, and attractions of its own, some of which its citizens believe to be quite equal to anything of the kind in the Bahamas. The "Glass Windows," a high arch or natural bridge, eighty or ninety feet above the level of the sea, is one of the lions of Harbor Island.

I have said it is easy to get to Nassau, and it is indeed a great deal easier than most persons suppose. There is a steamer every ten days from Savannah to Nassau, touching at St. Augustine, and the trip is always short, and generally smooth and pleasant. We made a good, long stay in Nassau, and set sail for St. Augustine, our faces browned with Bahama sunshine, and our souls fired with the spirit of seventy-four Fahrenheit.

## PEACE.

THE king encumbered of his crown,  
In cot content, can lay it down;  
The bird far faring from her nest,  
Some kindly spray may rock to rest.

The lark led on through upper air,  
At eve forgets his journey there;  
And th' eagle's eyes on glories far,  
Ere long recede from sun and star.

The leaves which people lofty trees;  
The snow—shed foam of th' over seas;  
The rain that rings along the sky,—  
Together meet and lowly lie.

Thou too, O Soul, striving to soar  
Each flight beyond the flight before,  
Shalt, past the vexèd years that yearn,  
To humbler haunts of Peace return.