

My men, being directed thereto by Mai-wa, had most fortunately rolled up some big boulders which lay about, and with these we soon managed to block the passage through the overhanging ridge of rock in such fashion that the soldiers below could not possibly climb over it. Indeed, so far as I could see, they did not even try to do so; the heart was out of them, as the Zulus say.

Then, having rested a few moments, we took up the loads, including the tusks of ivory that had cost us so dear, and in silence marched on for a couple of miles or so, till we reached a patch of dense bush. And here, being utterly exhausted, we camped for the night, taking the precaution, however, of setting a guard to watch against any attempt at surprise.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A MIDSUMMER TRIP TO THE WEST INDIES.

BY LAFCADIO HEARN.

First Paper.

I.

A LONG, narrow, graceful steel steamer, with two masts and an orange-yellow chimney, taking on cargo at Pier 49 East River. Through her yawning hatchways a mountainous piling up of barrels is visible below; there is much rumbling and rattling of steam-winch, creaking of derrick booms, groaning of pulleys, as the freight is being lowered in. A breezeless July morning, and a dead heat: 97° already.

The saloon deck gives one suggestion of past and of coming voyages. Under the white awnings long lounge-chairs sprawl here and there, each with an occupant, smoking in silence, or dozing with head drooping to one side. A young man, awaking as I pass to my cabin, turns upon me a pair of immense black eyes—creole eyes. Evidently a West Indian.

The morning is still gray, but the sun is dissolving the haze. Gradually the gray vanishes; and a beautiful pale vapory blue—a spiritualized Northern blue—colors water and sky. A cannon-shot suddenly shakes the heavy air: it is our farewell to the American shore: we move. Back floats the wharf, and becomes vapory, with a bluish tinge. Diaphanous mists seem to have caught the sky color; and even the great red storehouses take a faint blue tint as they recede. The horizon now has a greenish glow. Everywhere else the effect is that of looking through very light blue glasses.

We steam under the colossal span of the mighty bridge; then for a little while Liberty towers above our passing, seeming first to turn toward us, then to turn

away from us, the solemn beauty of her passionless face of bronze. Tints brighten; the heaven is growing a little bluer. A breeze springs up.

Then the water takes on another hue: pale green lights play through it. It has begun to sound. Little waves lift up their heads as though to look at us—patting the flanks of the vessel, and whispering to one another.

Far off, the surface begins to show quick white flashes here and there; and the steamer begins to swing. We are nearing Atlantic waters. The sun is high up now, almost overhead: there are a few thin clouds in the tender-colored sky—flossy, long-drawn-out, white things. The horizon has lost its greenish glow: it is a spectral blue. Masts, spars, rigging, the white boats and the orange chimney, the bright deck lines and the snowy rail, cut against the colored light in almost dazzling relief. Though the sun shines hot, the wind is cold: a vast and viewless presence that fans one into drowsiness. Also the somnolent chant of the engines—*do-do, hey! do-do, hey!*—lulls to sleep.

Toward evening the glaucous sea tint vanishes—the water becomes blue. It is full of great flashes, as of seams opening and reclosing over a white surface. It spits spray in a ceaseless drizzle. Sometimes it reaches up and slaps the side of the steamer with a sound as of a great naked hand. The viewless breath waxes boisterous. Swinging ends of cordage crack like whips. There is an immense humming that drowns speech—a humming made up of many sounds: whining of pulleys, whistling of riggings, flapping and fluttering of canvas,

roar of nettings in the wind. And this sonorous medley, ever growing louder, has rhythm—a *crescendo* and *diminuendo* timed by the steamer's regular swinging: like a great voice crying out, "Whoh-oh-oh! whoh-oh-oh!" We are nearing the life-centres of winds and currents. One can hardly walk on deck against the ever-increasing breath—yet now the whole world is blue, not the least cloud is visible; and the perfect transparency and voidness about us make the immense power of this invisible medium seem something ghostly and awful. The log, at every revolution, whines exactly like a little puppy; one can hear it, through all the roar, full forty feet away.

It is nearly sunset. Across the whole circle of the Day we have been steaming south. Now the horizon is gold-green. All about the falling sun this gold-green light takes vast expansion. Right on the edge of the sea is a tall gracious ship, sailing sunsetward. Catching the vapory fire, she seems to become a phantom—a ship of gold mist; all her spars and sails are luminous, and look like things seen in dreams.

Crimsoning more and more, the sun drops to the sea. The phantom ship approaches him, touches the curve of his glowing face, sails right athwart it! Oh, the spectral splendor of that vision! The whole great ship in full sail instantly makes an acute silhouette against the monstrous disk; rests there in the very middle of the vermilion sun. His face crimson high above her topmasts—broadens far beyond helm and bowsprit. Against this weird magnificence her whole shape changes color; hull, masts, and sails turn black—a greenish-black.

Sun and ship vanish together in another minute. Violet the night comes; and the rigging of the foremast cuts a cross upon the face of a full-moon.

II.

Morning: the second day. The sea is an extraordinary blue—looks to me something like violet ink. Close by the ship, where the foam-clouds are, it is beautifully mottled—looks like blue marble with exquisite veinings and nebulousities. Tepid wind and cottony white clouds—cirri climbing up over the edge of the sea all around. The sky is still pale blue, and the horizon is full of a whitish haze.

A nice old French gentleman from Guadeloupe presumes to say this is not blue water; he declares it greenish (*verdâtre*). Because I cannot discern the green he tells me I do not yet know what blue water is. *Attendez un peu!*

The sky tone deepens as the sun ascends—deepens deliciously. The warm wind proves soporific. I drop asleep with the blue light in my face—the strong, bright blue of the noonday sky. As I doze it seems to burn like a cold fire right through my eyelids. Waking up with a start, I fancy that everything is turning blue, myself included. "Do you not call this the real tropical blue?" I cry to my French fellow-traveller. "*Mon Dieu! non,*" he exclaims, as in astonishment at the question; "this is not blue!" What on earth can be his idea of blue, I wonder.

Clots of sargasso float by—light yellow sea-weed. We are nearing the Sargasso Sea, entering the path of the trade-winds. There is a long ground-swell; the steamer rocks and rolls. And the tumbling water always seems to me to be growing bluer. But my friend from Guadeloupe says that this color "which I call blue" is only darkness—only the shadow of prodigious depth.

Nothing now but blue sky and what I persist in calling blue sea. The clouds have melted away in the bright glow. There is no sign of life in the azure gulf above, nor in the abyss beneath; there are no wings or fins to be seen. Toward evening, under the slanting gold light, the color of the sea deepens into ultramarine. Then the sun sinks down behind a bank of copper-colored cloud.

III.

Morning of the third day. Same mild, warm wind. Bright blue sky, with some very thin clouds in the horizon, like puffs of steam. The glow of the sea light through the open ports of my cabin makes them seem filled with thick blue glass. It is becoming too warm for New York clothing.

Certainly the sea has become much bluer. It gives one the idea of liquefied sky; the foam might be formed of cirrus clouds compressed, so extravagantly white it looks to-day, like snow in the sun. Nevertheless the old gentleman from Guadeloupe still maintains this is not the true blue of the tropics.

The sky does not deepen its hue to-day—it brightens it; the blue glows as if it were taking fire throughout. Perhaps the sea may deepen its hue; I do not believe it can take more luminous color without being set aflame. I ask the ship's doctor whether it is really true that the West Indian waters are any bluer than these. He looks a moment at the sea, and replies, "Oh yes!" There is such a tone of surprise in his "oh" as might indicate that I had asked a very foolish question, and his look seems to express doubt whether I am quite in earnest. I think, nevertheless, that this water is extravagantly, nonsensically blue.

I read for an hour or two, fall asleep in the chair, wake up suddenly, look at the sea—and yell! This sea is absolutely ridiculous—absurdly, impossibly blue. The painter who should try to paint it would be denounced as a lunatic. Yet it is transparent; the foam-clouds, as they sink down, turn sky-blue—a sky-blue which now looks white by contrast with the strange and violent splendor of the sea color. It seems as if one were looking into an immeasurable dyeing vat, or as though the whole ocean had been thickened with indigo. To say this is a mere reflection of the sky is nonsense—the sky is too pale by a hundred shades for that. This must be the natural color of the water—a blazing azure, unutterably magnificent, impossible to describe.

The French passenger from Guadeloupe observes that the sea is "beginning to become blue."

IV.

And the fourth day. One awakens unspeakably lazy: this must be the West Indian languor. Same sky, with a few more bright clouds than yesterday—always the warm wind blowing. There is a long swell. Under this trade-breeze, warm like a human breath, the ocean seems to pulse—to rise and fall as with a vast inspiration and expiration. Alternately its blue circle lifts and falls before us and behind us; we rise very high, we sink very low, but always with a slow, long motion. Nevertheless the water *looks* smooth, perfectly smooth; the billowings which lift us cannot be seen; it is because the summits of these swells are mile-broad, too broad to be discerned from the level of our deck.

Ten A.M.—Under the sun the sea is a flaming, dazzling lapis-lazuli. My French friend from Guadeloupe kindly confesses this is *almost* the color of tropical water. Weeds floating by, a little below the surface, are azured. But the Guadeloupe gentleman says he has seen water still more blue. I am sorry; I cannot believe him.

Mid-day.—The splendor of the sky is weird. No clouds above—nothing but blue fire. Up from the warm deep color of the sea circle, the edge of the heaven burns as if bathed in greenish flame. The swaying circle of the resplendent sea seems to flash its jewel-color to the zenith.

Clothing feels now almost too heavy to endure; and the warm wind brings a languor with it as of temptation. One feels an irresistible desire to drowse on deck; the rushing speech of waves, the long rocking of the ship, the lukewarm caress of the wind, urge to slumber, but the light is too vast to permit of sleep. Its blue power compels wakefulness. And the brain is wearied at last by this duplicated azure splendor of sky and sea. How gratefully comes the evening to us, with its violet glooms and promises of coolness!

All this sensuous blending of warmth and force in winds and waters more and more suggests an idea of the spiritualism of elements, a sense of world-life. In all these soft sleepy swayings, these caresses of wind and sobbing of waters, Nature seems to confess some passionate mood. Passengers converse of pleasant, tempting things, tropical fruits, tropical beverages, tropical mountain breezes, tropical women. It is a time for dreams—those day-dreams that come gently as a mist, with ghostly realization of hopes, desires, ambitions. Men sailing to the mines of Guiana dream of gold.

The wind seems to grow continually warmer; the spray feels warm like blood. Awnings have to be clewed up, and wind-sails taken in; still, there are no white-caps, only the enormous swells, too broad to see, as the ocean falls and rises like the motion of a dreamer's breast.

The sunset comes with a great burning yellow glow, fading up through faint greens to lose itself in violet light; there is no gloaming. The days have already become much shorter.

Through the open ports, as we lie down to sleep, comes a great whispering—the

whispering of the seas: sounds as of articulate speech under the breath, as of women telling secrets.

V.

Fifth day out. Trade-winds from the southeast; a huge tumbling of mountain-purple waves; the steamer careens under a full spread of canvas. There is a sense of spring in the wind to-day; something that makes one think of the burgeoning of Northern woods when the naked trees first cover themselves with a mist of tender green; something that recalls the first bird songs, the first climbings of sap to sun, and gives a sense of vital plenitude.

Evening fills the west with aureate woolly clouds—the wool of the Fleece of Gold. Then Hesperus beams like another moon, and the stars burn very brightly. Still the ship bends under the even pressure of the warm wind in her sails, and her wake becomes a trail of fire. Immense sparks dash up through it continually, like an effervescence of the flame, and queer broad clouds of pale fire swirl by. Far out, where the water is black as pitch, there are no lights: it seems as if the steamer were only grinding out sparks with her keel, striking fire with her propeller.

VI.

Sixth day out. Wind tepid and still stronger, but sky very clear. An indigo sea, with beautiful white-caps. The ocean color is deepening; it is very rich now, but I think less wonderful than before; it is an opulent pansy hue. Close by the ship it looks black-blue—the color that bewitches in certain Celtic eyes.

There is a feverishness in the air; the heat is growing heavy; the least exertion provokes perspiration; below-decks the air is like the air of an oven. Above-deck, however, the effect of all this light and heat is not wholly disagreeable: one feels that vast elemental powers are near at hand, and that the blood is already aware of their approach.

All day the pure sky, the deepening of sea color, the lukewarm wind. Then comes a superb sunset. There is a painting in the west wrought of cloud-colors; a dream of high carmine cliffs and rocks outlying in a green sea which lashes their bases with a foam of gold.

Even after dark the touch of the wind has the warmth of flesh. There is no moon; the sea circle is black as Acheron;

and our phosphor wake reappears quivering across it, seeming to reach back to the very horizon. It is brighter to-night; looks like another Milky-Way, with points breaking through it like stars in a nebula. From our prow, ripples rimmed with fire keep fleeing away to right and left into the night, brightening as they run; then vanishing suddenly, as if they had passed over a precipice. Crests of swells seem to burst into showers of sparks, and great patches of spume catch flame, smoulder through, and disappear. The Southern Cross is visible, sloping backward and sideways, as if propped against the vault of the sky; it is not readily discovered by the unfamiliarized eye; it is only after it has been well pointed out to you that you discern its position. Then you find it is only the *suggestion* of a cross: four stars set almost quadrangularly, some brighter than others.

For two days there has been little conversation on board. It may be due in part to the somnolent influence of the warm wind, in part to the ceaseless booming of waters and roar of rigging, which drown men's voices. But I fancy it is much more due to the impressions of space and depth and vastness; the impressions of sea and sky, which compel something akin to awe. Faces wear a serious, meditative expression; one feels as averse to loud speech as if in some tremendous temple.

VII.

Morning over the Caribbean Sea—a calm, extremely dark blue sea. There are lands in sight—high lands, with sharp, peaked, unfamiliar outlines.

We passed other lands in the darkness; they no doubt resembled the shapes towering up around us now; for these are evidently volcanic creations—jagged, coned, truncated, eccentric. Far off they first looked a very pale gray; now, as the light increases, they change hue a little, showing misty greens and smoky blues. They rise very sharply from the sea to great heights, the highest point always with a cloud upon it; they thrust out singular long spurs, push up mountain shapes that have an odd scooped-out look. Some, extremely far away, seem, as they catch the sun, to be made of gold vapor; others have a madderish tone: these are colors of cloud. The closer we approach them, the more do tints of green make themselves visible. Purplish or bluish masses



MÉTISSE TYPE.

of coast slowly develop green surfaces; folds and wrinkles of land turn brightly verdant. Still the color gleams as through a thin fog.

The first tropical visitor has just boarded our ship: a wonderful fly, shaped like

a common fly, but at least five times larger. His body is a beautiful shining black; his wings seem ribbed and jointed with silver; his head is jewel-green, with exquisitely cut emeralds for eyes.

Islands pass and disappear behind us.



SACATRA TYPES—ALMOST PURE NEGRO.

The sun has now risen well; the sky is a rich blue, and the tardy moon still hangs in it. Lilac tones show through the water. In the south there are a few straggling small white clouds, like a long flight of birds. A great gray mountain shape looms up before us. We are steaming on Santa Cruz.

The island has a true volcanic outline, sharp and high; the cliffs sheer down almost perpendicularly. The shape is still vapory, varying in coloring from purplish to bright gray; but wherever peaks and spurs fully catch the sun, they edge themselves with a beautiful green glow, while interlying ravines seem filled with foggy blue.

As we approach, the shadowed heights change to a greenish-blue; sunlighted surfaces come out still more luminously green. Glens and sheltered valleys still hold blues and grays, but points fairly illuminated by the solar glow show just such a fiery green as burns in the plumage of certain humming-birds. And just as the lustrous colors of these birds shift according to changes of light, so the island shifts colors here and there—from emerald to blue, and blue to gray. But now we are near: it shows us a lovely heaping of high emerald hills in front, with a further coast line very low and long and verdant, fringed with a white beach, and tufted with spidery palm-crests. Immediately opposite, other palms are poised; their trunks look like pillars of unpolished silver, their leaves like imitations of immense feathers cast in bronze.

The water of the harbor is transparent and pale green. One can see many fish,

and some small sharks. Snow-white butterflies are fluttering about us in the blue air. Naked black boys are bathing on the beach: they swim well, but will not venture out far because of the sharks. A boat puts off to bring colored girls on board. They are tall and not uncomely, although very dark; they coax us with all sorts of endearing words to purchase bay-rum, fruits, Florida-water. We go ashore in boats. The water of the harbor has a slightly fetid odor.

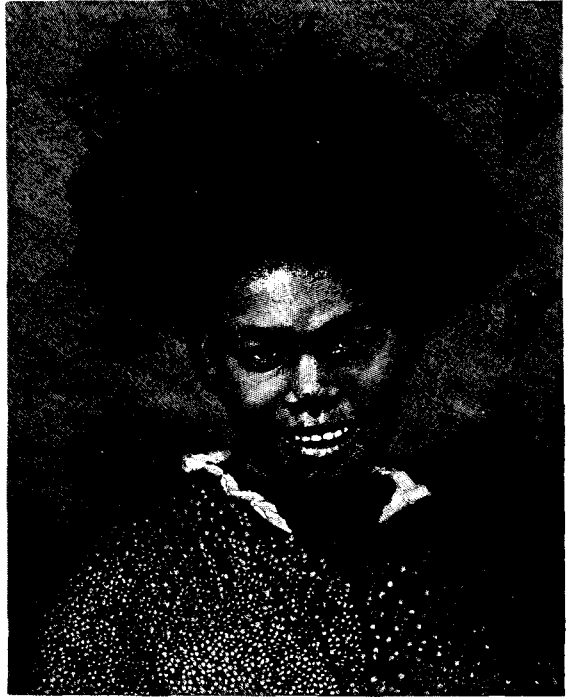
VIII.

Viewed from the bay, under the green shadow of the volcanic hills overlooking it, Frederiksted has the appearance of a beautiful Spanish town, with its Romanesque piazzas, churches, many arched buildings peeping through breaks in a line of mahogany, bread-fruit, mango, tamarind, and palm trees, an irregular mass of at least fifty different tints of green, from a fiery emerald to a sombre bluish-green. But on entering the streets the illusion of beauty passes: you find yourself in a crumbling, rotting colonial town, with buildings only two stories high. The lower part, of arched Spanish design, is usually of lava rock or of brick, painted a light warm yellow; the upper stories are most commonly left unpainted, and are rudely constructed of light timber. There are many heavy arcades and courts—*patios*—opening on the streets with large archways. Lava blocks have been used in paving as well as in building, and more than one of the narrow streets, as it slopes up the hill through the fierce light, is seen to cut its way through craggy masses of volcanic stone.

But all the buildings look dilapidated; the stucco and paint are falling or peeling everywhere; there are fissures in the walls, crumbling façades, tumbling roofs. The first stories, built with a solidity worthy of an earthquake region, seem ridiculously heavy by contrast with the frail wooden superstructures above. The reason is that this city of Frederiksted was burned and sacked during a negro revolt in 1878. The Spanish basements resisted the fire astonishingly well, and it was found necessary to rebuild only the second stories of the buildings; but the work was done cheaply and flimsily, not massively and enduringly, as it had been done by the first builders. Decay is already visible.

There is great wealth of verdure. Cabbage and cocoa palms overlook all the streets, bending above almost every structure, whether hut or public building; everywhere you see the splitted green of huge banana leaves. In the court-yards you may occasionally catch sight of some splendid palm with silver-gray stem so barred as to look jointed, like the body of an annelid.

In the market-place—a broad paved square crossed by two rows of tamarind-trees, and bounded on one side by a Spanish piazza—you can study a spectacle of singular and savage picturesqueness. There are no benches, no stalls, no booths; the dealers stand, sit, or squat upon the ground, under the sun, or upon the steps of the neighboring arcade. Their wares are piled up at their feet for the most part. Some few possess tiny tables, but usually the eatables are simply laid on the dusty ground, or heaped upon the steps of the piazza: reddish-yellow mangoes that look like great apples squeezed out of shape, bunches of bananas, pyramids of bright green cocoa-nuts, immense golden-green oranges, and various vegetables and other fruits—some very small, some monstrous—of which I do not learn the names. It is no use to ask questions. The black dealers speak no tongue comprehensible outside of the Antilles: it is



YOUNG MULATTRESS.

a negro-English that sounds like some African tongue, a rolling current of vowels and consonants pouring so rapidly that no inexperienced ear can detach one solitary intelligible word. A friendly planter, coming up, enabled me to learn one phrase.

“Massa, youwancocknerfoobuy?” (Master, do you want to buy a cocoa-nut?)

The market is quite crowded, full of bright color under the tremendous noon light. Buyers and dealers are generally of an absolute black; very few yellow or brown people are visible in the gathering. The greater number present are women; they are very simply, almost savagely, garbed, only a skirt or petticoat, over which is worn a sort of calico short dress which scarcely descends two inches below the hips, and is confined about the waist with a belt or a string. The skirt bells out like the skirt of a dancer, leaving the feet and bare legs well exposed, and the head is covered with a white handkerchief twisted so as to look like a turban. Multitudes of these barelegged black women are walking past us, carrying bundles or baskets upon their heads, and smoking very long cigars.



CAPRESSE TYPE, MARTINIQUE.

They are all short and thick-set, and walk with surprising erectness, and with long, firm steps, carrying the bosom well forward. Their limbs are thick and finely rounded. Whether walking or standing, their poise is admirable—might be called graceful were it not for the absence of real grace of form in such compact, powerful little figures. All wear brightly colored cottonade stuffs; and the general effect of the costume in a large gathering is very agreeable, the dominant hues being pink, white, and blue. Half the women are smoking long, thin rolls of tobacco. All chatter loudly, speaking their English jargon with a pitch of voice totally unlike the English timbre: it sounds as if some one were trying to pronounce English rapidly according to French pronunciation and pitch of voice.

These green oranges have a delicious perfume and an amazing juiciness. Peel-

ing one of them is sufficient to perfume the skin of the hands for the rest of the day, however often one may choose to use soap and water. We smoke Porto Rico cigars, and drink West Indian lemonades strongly flavored with rum. The tobacco has a rich, sweet taste; the rum is velvety, sugary, with a pleasant, soothing effect: both have a delicious aroma. There is a pleasurable originality about the flavor of these products—a uniqueness which certifies irrefutably to their naïf purity: something as opulent and frank as the juices and odors of tropical fruits and flowers.

The streets leading from the plaza glare terribly in the strong sunlight; the ground, almost dead-white, dazzles the eyes. There are few comely faces visible—in the streets all are black who pass; but through open shop doors one occasionally catches glimpses of a comely quadroon face, with immense black eyes—a face yellow like a ripe banana.

It is now after mid-day.

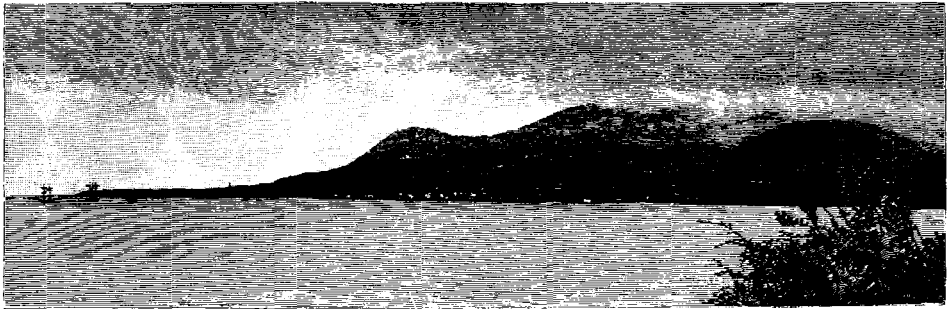
Looking up to the hills, or along sloping streets toward the shore, wonderful variations of foliage-color meet the eye: gold-greens, sap-greens, bluish and metallic greens of many tints, reddish-greens, yellowish-greens. The cane fields are broad sheets of beautiful gold-green; and nearly as bright are the masses of *pomme-cannelle* frondescence, the groves of lemon and orange, while tamarinds and mahoganies are heavily sombre. Everywhere palm-crests soar above the wood lines, and tremble with a metallic shimmering in the blue light. Up through a ponderous thickness of tamarind rises the spire of the church; a skeleton of open stonework, without glasses or lattices or shutters of any sort for its naked apertures: it is all open to the winds of heaven; it seems to be gasping with all its granite mouths for breath, panting in this azure heat. In the bay the water looks greener than ever: it is so clear that the light

passes under every boat and ship to the very bottom: the vessels cast only very thin green shadows—so transparent that fish can be distinctly seen passing through from sunlight to sunlight.

The sunset offers a splendid spectacle of pure color; there is only an immense glow in the west—a lemon-colored blaze; but where it melts into the blue there is an exquisite green light. We leave to-morrow.

Morning. The green hills are looming in a bluish vapor; the long faint yellow slope of beach to the left of the town, under the mangoes and tamarinds,

We move slowly out of the harbor, then swiftly toward the southeast. The island seems to turn slowly half round; then to retreat from us. Across our way appears a long band of green light, reaching over the sea like a thin protraction of color from the extended spur of verdure in which the western end of the island terminates. That is a sunken reef, and a dangerous one. Lying high upon it, in very sharp relief against the blue light, is a wrecked vessel on her beam ends, the carcass of a brig. Her decks have been broken in; the roofs of her cabins are gone; her masts are splintered off short; her empty



BASSE-TERRE, ST. KIT'S.

is already thronged with bathers—all men or boys, and all naked: black, brown, yellow, and white. The white bathers are Danish soldiers from the barracks; the Northern brightness of their skins forms an almost startling contrast with the rich deep colors of the nature about them, and with the dark complexions of the natives. Some very slender, graceful brown lads are bathing with them—lightly built as deer: these are probably creoles. The black bathers are clumsy-looking, and have astonishingly long legs. Then little boys come down, leading horses; they strip, leap naked on the animals' backs, and ride into the sea—yelling, screaming, splashing in the morning light. Some are a fine rich brown color, like old bronze. Nothing could be more statuesque than the unconscious attitudes of these bronze bodies in leaping, wrestling, running, pitching shells. Their simple grace is in admirable harmony with the graces of nature's green creations about them—rhymes faultlessly with perfect self-balance of the palms that poise along the shore.

Boom! and a thunder-rolling of echoes.

hold yawns naked to the sun; all her upper parts have taken a yellowish-white color—the color of sun-bleached bone.

Behind us, the mountains still float back. Their shining green has changed to a less vivid hue; they are taking bluish tones here and there; but their outlines are still sharp, and along their high soft slopes there are white specklings, which are villages and towns. These white specks diminish swiftly, dwindle to the dimensions of salt grains, finally vanish. Then the island grows uniformly bluish; it becomes cloudy, vague as a dream of mountains; it turns at last gray as smoke, and then melts into the horizon light like a mirage.

Another yellow sunset, made sinister by extraordinarily black, dense, fantastic shapes of cloud. Night darkens; and again the Southern Cross glimmers before our prow; and the two Milky-Ways reveal themselves—that of the Cosmos, and that ghostlier one which stretches far back over the black deep behind us. This alternately broadens and narrows at regular intervals, concomitantly with the rhythmical swing of the steamer. Before us the bows spout

fire; behind us there is a flaming and roaring as of Phlegethon. And the voices of wind and sea become so loud that we cannot talk to one another, cannot make our words heard even by shouting.

IX.

Early morning: the eighth day. Moored in another blue harbor, a great semi-circular basin, bounded by a high billowing of hills, all green from the fringe of yellow beach up to their loftiest clouded summit. The land has that up-tossed look which tells of a volcanic origin. There are curiously scalloped hills, which, though emerald from base to crest, still retain all the physiognomy of volcanoes: their ribbed sides must be lava under that verdure. Out of sight westward, in successions of bright green, pale green, bluish-green, and vapory gray, stretches a long chain of crater shapes. Truncated, jagged, or rounded, all these elevations are inter-united by thin curving hollows of land as by filaments—very low valleys. And as they grade away in color, through distance, from burning bright green to palest gray, the hill chains take a curious segmented, jointed appearance, like insect forms, enormous ant-bodies. This is St. Kitt's.

We row ashore over a tossing dark blue water, and leaving the long wharf, pass under a great arch and over a sort of bridge, into the town of Basse-Terre, through a concourse of brown and black people.

It is tropical-looking, very tropical-looking; but far more sombre than Frederiksted. There are palms everywhere, cocoa, fan, and cabbage palms; many bread-fruit trees, tamarinds, bananas, enormous Indian-fig trees, mangoes, and unfamiliar things the negroes call by incomprehensible names—"sap-saps," "dhool-dhools." But there is less color, less reflection of light, than in Santa Cruz; there is less quaintness: no Spanish buildings, no canary-colored arcades. All the narrow streets are gray or neutral-tinted; the ground has a dark ashen tone. Most of the dwellings are timber, resting on brick props, or elevated upon blocks of lava rock. It seems almost as if some volcanic breath from the enormous and always clouded mountain overlooking the town had begrimed everything, darkening even the colors of vegetation.

The population is not picturesque. The dresses are modern, commonplace; the

tints of the women's attire are dull. Browns and sombre blues and grays are commoner than pinks, yellows, and blues. Occasionally you observe a fine half-breed type—some tall brown girl walking by with a swaying grace like that of a sloop at sea; but such spectacles are not frequent. Most of those you meet are black or a blackish-brown. Many stores are kept by yellow men with intensely black hair and eyes—men who do not smile. These are Portuguese. There are some few fine buildings; but the most pleasing sight the little town can offer the visitor is the pretty Botanical Garden, with its banyans and its palms, its monstrous lilies and extraordinary fruit trees, and its beautiful little fountain. From some of these trees a peculiar tillandsia streams down, much like our Spanish-moss; but it is black.

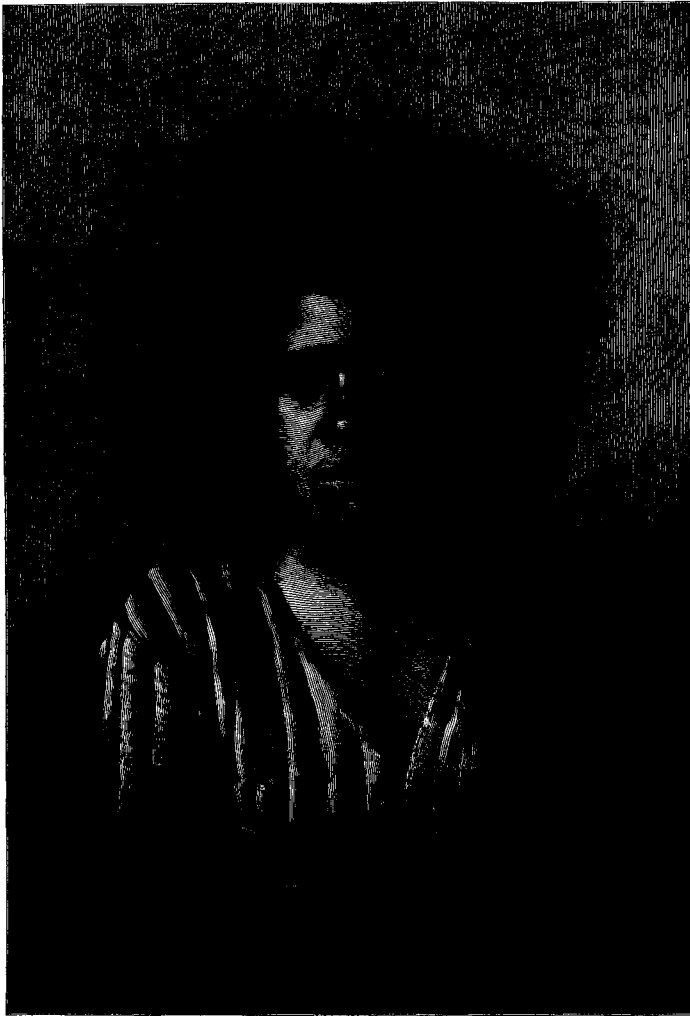
As we move away southwardly the receding outlines of the island look more and more volcanic: a chain of hills and cones, all very green, and connected by strips of valley land so low that the edge of the sea circle on the other side of the island can be seen through the gaps. We steam past truncated hills, past heights that have the look of the stumps of peaks cut half down—ancient fire mouths choked now by tropical verdure.

Southward, above and beyond the deep green chain, tower other volcanic forms, very far away, and so pale gray as to seem like clouds. Those are the heights of Nevis—another creation of the subterranean fires.

It draws nearer, floats steadily into definition: three summits; the loftiest, with clouds packed high upon, still seems to smoke; the second highest displays the most symmetrical crater form I have yet seen; the third is dim between. All are still grayish-blue or gray. Gradually through the blues break long bright gleams of green.

As we steam closer, the island becomes all verdant, all green from flood to sky; the great dead crater shows its immense wreath of perennial green. On the lower slopes little settlements are sprinkled in white, red, and brown: houses, wind-mills, sugar factories, high chimneys, are distinguishable; cane plantations unfold gold-green surfaces.

We pass away. The island does not seem to sink behind us, but to become a ghost. All its outlines grow vapory.



CAPRESSE TYPE, FORT-DE-FRANCE, MARTINIQUE.

For a little while it continues green; but it is a hazy, spectral green, as of colored vapor. The sea to-day looks almost black; the southwest wind has filled the day with luminous mist, and the phantom of Nevis melts in the vast glow, dissolves utterly. Once more we are out of sight of land, in the centre of a blue-black circle of sea. The water-line cuts blackly against the immense light of the horizon—a huge white glory that flames up very high before it fades and melts into the eternal blue.

X.

Then a high white shape like a cloud appears before us on the purplish dark

edge of the sea. The cloud-shape enlarges, heightens, without changing contour. It is not a cloud, but an island. Its outlines begin to sharpen, with faintest pencillings of color. Shadow valleys appear, spectral hollows, phantom slopes of pallid blue or green. The apparition is so like a mirage that it is difficult to persuade one's self one is looking at real land, that it is not a dream. It seems to have shaped itself all suddenly out of the glowing haze. We pass many miles beyond it, and it vanishes into mist again.

Another and a larger ghost; but we steam straight upon it, until it materializes into an unmistakable reality—Montserrat. It bears a recognizable family

likeness to the islands we have already visited or passed—similar abrupt bright green crater shapes linked together by similar low valleys. About its highest summit also hovers a flock of clouds. At the base of the vast hill spreads out the little white and red town, besprinkled with palms. The single salute of our cannon is answered by a hundred reverberations—a stupendous broadside volley of echoes. Then comes a grand sunset—a fervid orange splendor, shading up starward into delicate roses and greens. Black boatmen come astern and quarrel furiously for the privilege of carrying one passenger ashore. They speak the same fantastic, incomprehensible jargon which astonished us at Santa Cruz and at St. Kitt's; and as they scream and shriek, gesticulating against the sunset light, their half-naked silhouettes provoke unpleasant fancies: they resemble huge black apes.

Under steam and sail we are making south again, with a warm wind blowing southeast—a wind very moist, very powerful, and soporific. Facing it, one feels almost cool, but the moment one is sheltered from it, profuse perspiration bursts out. The ship rocks over immense swells; night falls very blackly; and there are surprising displays of phosphorescence.

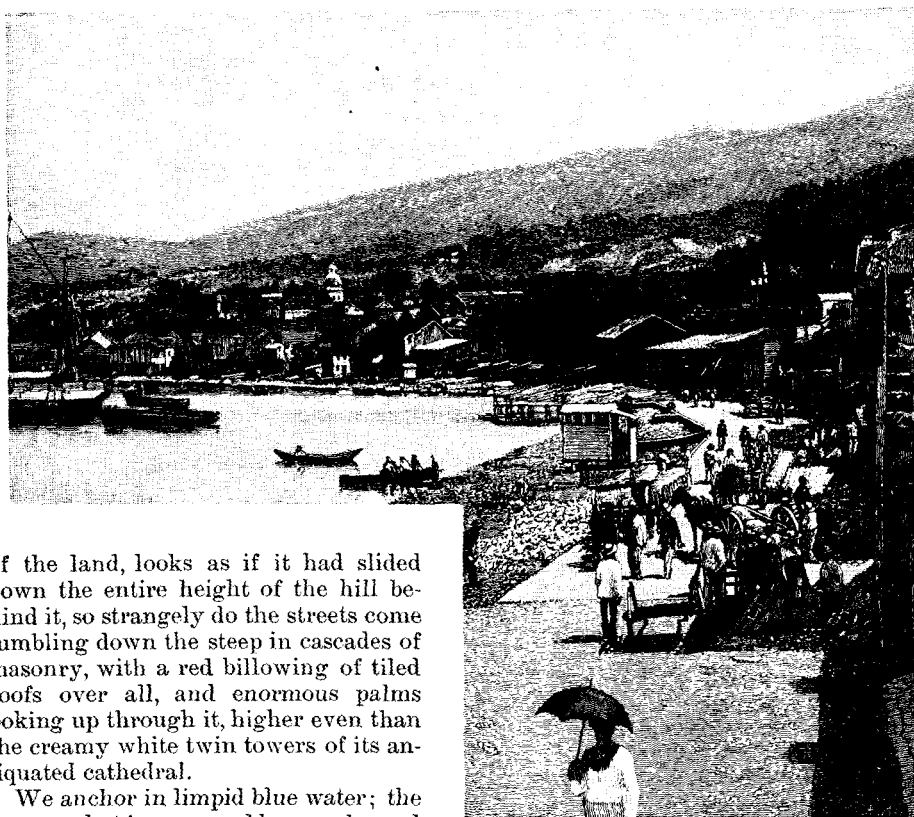
XI.

Morning: a gold sunrise. The wind has fallen. It is a great warm caress. The sea is deep indigo, the sky a cloudless and tender blue. Martinique looms before us. At first it appears all gray, a vapory gray; then it becomes bluish-gray; then all green.

It is another of the beautiful volcanic family; it owns the same hill shapes with which we have already become acquainted; its uppermost height is hooded with the familiar cloud; we see the same gold-yellow plains, the same wonderful varieties of verdancy, the same long green spurs reaching out into the sea—doubtless formed by old lava torrents. But all this is now repeated for us more imposingly, more grandiosely; it is wrought upon a larger scale than anything we have yet seen. The semicircular sweep of the harbor, dominated by the eternally veiled summit of the huge Mont Pelée (misnamed, since it is green to the very clouds), from which the land slopes down on either hand to the sea by gigantic undulations, is one of the fairest sights that human eye can gaze upon. Thus viewed, the whole island shape is a mass of blazing green, with streaks or shadows of darker green here and there—glooms of forest hollows or hovering shadows of cloud. The city of St. Pierre, on the *é*ge



NEGRO BOYS DIVING FOR PENNIES.



ST. PIERRE, MARTINIQUE, FROM THE LANDING.

of the land, looks as if it had slid down the entire height of the hill behind it, so strangely do the streets come tumbling down the steep in cascades of masonry, with a red billowing of tiled roofs over all, and enormous palms poking up through it, higher even than the creamy white twin towers of its antiquated cathedral.

We anchor in limpid blue water; the cannon-shot is answered by a prolonged thunder-clapping of mountain echoes.

Then from the shore a strange flotilla bears down upon us. There is one boat, two or three canoes; but the bulk of the craft are simply white wooden frames—flat-bottomed structures made from shipping-cases or lard-boxes, with triangular ends. In all of these sit naked boys—boys between ten and fourteen years of age—varying in color from a fine clear yellow to a deep reddish-brown or chocolate tint. They row with two little square flat pieces of wood for paddles, clutched in each hand, and these lid-shaped things are dipped into the water on either side with absolute precision, in perfect time, all the pairs of little naked arms seeming moved by a single impulse. There is much unconscious grace in this paddling, as well as consummate skill. Then all about the ship these ridiculous little boats begin to describe circles, crossing and intercrossing so closely as almost to bring them into collision, yet never touching. The boys have simply come out to dive for coins they expect passengers to fling to them. All are chattering creole, laugh-

ing, and screaming shrilly; every eye, quick and bright as a bird's, watches the faces of the passengers on deck. "Tention-là!" shriek a dozen sopranis: some passenger's hand has descended into a money pocket, and all are on the alert. Through the air, twirling and glittering, tumbles an English shilling, and drops into the deep water beyond the little fleet. Instantly all the lads leap, scramble, topple head-foremost, out of their little tubs, and dive in pursuit. In the blue water their lithe figures look perfectly red, all but the soles of their upturned feet, which show quite white. Almost immediately they all rise again; one holds up at arm's-length above the water the recovered coin, and then puts it into his mouth for safe-keeping. Coin after coin is thrown in, and as speedily brought up; a shower of small silver follows, and not a piece is lost. These lads move through the water without apparent effort, with the suppleness of fishes. Most are decidedly fine-



SUGAR LANDING AT ST. PIERRE.

looking boys, with admirably rounded limbs, delicately formed extremities. The best diver and swiftest swimmer, however, is a lemon-colored lad; his face is rather commonplace, but his slim figure has the fluent grace of an antique bronze.

We are ashore in St. Pierre, the quaintest, queerest, and the prettiest withal among the West Indian cities: all stone-built and stone-flagged, with very narrow streets, wooden awnings, iron balconies, and peaked roofs of red tile pierced by gabled dormers. Most of the buildings are painted in a clear pale yellow tone, which contrasts delightfully with the burning blue ribbon of tropical sky above; and no street is absolutely level. Nearly all of them climb hills, descend into hollows, curve, twist, describe sudden and amazing angles. There is everywhere a continuous chant of running water, pouring through the deep gutters contrived between the paved thoroughfare and the absurd little sidewalks varying in width from one to three feet. The architecture is very old: it is seventeenth-century probably; and it reminds one a great deal

of that characterizing the antiquated French quarter of New Orleans. But one must imagine New Orleans idealized by artistic conception, made intensely tropical, and projected audaciously upon the side of a huge volcanic hill. All the tints, the forms, the vistas, would seem to have been especially selected or designed for aquarelle studies, just to please the whim of some extravagant artist. No ruin was ever more picturesque than these living streets in their perfect solidity and undilapidated quaintness. The windows are frameless openings without glass; some have iron bars; all have heavy wooden shutters with movable slats, through which light and air can enter as through Venetian blinds. These are usually painted green or bright bluish-gray.

So steep are the streets, descending to the harbor by flights of old mossy stone steps, that, looking down them to the azure water, you have the sensation of gazing from a cliff. From certain openings in the main street—the Rue Victor Hugo—you can get something like a bird's-eye

view of all the harbor with all its shipping. The roofs of the street below are under your feet, and other streets are rising behind you afar up to meet the mountain roads. They climb at an almost precipitous angle, occasionally breaking into steep stairs of lava rock, all grass-tufted and moss-lined.

have walls three feet in thickness. On one street, facing the sea, they are even heavier, and slope outward like ramparts, so that the perpendicular recesses of windows and doors have the appearance of being opened between buttresses. It may have been partly as a precaution against earthquakes, and partly for the sake of



RUE VICTOR HUGO (FORMERLY GRANDE RUE), ST. PIERRE, MARTINIQUE.

The town has a look of extraordinary solidity: it is a creation of crag; looks almost as if it had been hewn out of one mountain fragment, instead of having been constructed stone by stone. Although commonly consisting of two stories and an attic only, the dwellings

coolness, that the early colonial architects built thus, giving to the stony city a physiognomy so impressively in harmony with its name, the name of the Saint of the Rock.

And everywhere rushes mountain water, cool and crystal clear, washing the

streets. Every few squares you come to some fountain flinging its silver column to the sun, or showering diamond-bright spray over a group of brazen swans or black bronze Tritons. Those Tritons on the Place Bertin you will not readily forget; their torsos might have been modelled from the forms of the same sinewy ebon men who toil there all day tirelessly in the heat, rolling hogsheads of sugar, puncheons of molasses, casks of rum. And very frequently you see little fountains contrived in the stone walls that border the mountain roads or that enclose the parks—glittering threads of water falling from lion lips of stone. Some mountain torrent, skilfully divided into a thousand

and right with the jagged strip of gentian-blue heaven overhead. Charming also it is to watch the cross streets climbing upward right into the burning green of the tropical mountain forest. On the lower side of the main thoroughfare they open in wonderful bursts of blue—warm blue of horizon and sea. The steps by which the cross streets descend toward the bay are black with age, and slightly mossed close to the wall on either side. They are almost alarmingly steep. You could easily fall from the upper thoroughfare into the lower one by a single stumble. From the Grande Rue you will notice, as you look toward the water through these openings, that the sea-line cuts across each blue space just at the level of the upper story of the house on the lower street corner. Sometimes, a hundred feet below, you see a ship resting in the azure aperture, seemingly suspended there in sky-color, floating in blue light. And everywhere and always, through sunshine or shadow, comes to you the scent of the city, the characteristic odor of St. Pierre, a pleasant smell that reminds you in some indefinable way of the *taste* of asparagus—a compound odor suggesting the intermingling also of sugar and garlic in those strange tropical dishes which creoles love.



MULATRESS WITH TURBAN.

streams, is thus perpetually purifying the city, feeding its fountains, and cooling its courts.

Picturesqueness and color: these are the particular and the unrivalled charms of St. Pierre. Following the Grande Rue, which traverses the town through all its curving length, undulating over hill slopes and into hollows, and over stone bridges in the most amazing way, you are more and more enchanted by the contrast of the yellow-glowing walls to left

XII.

A population fantastic, astonishing—a population of the Arabian Nights. As the general tone of the town is yellow, so is the general tint of the people yellow, in the interblending of all the hues characterizing *griffone*, *mulâtresse*, *métisse*, *mes-sive*, *chabine*, *capresse*, quadroon—a general effect of rich brownish-yellow. You are in a population of half-breeds, the finest mixed race of the Antilles.

Tall, supple, straight as palms, these colored women and men impress you powerfully by their dignity of carriage and easy elegance of motion. They walk without any swinging of the shoulders; the perfectly set torso seems to remain rigid; yet the step is a long, full stride, and the whole weight is poised springily on the very tip of the barefoot. All, or nearly all, are without shoes: the passing of all these hundreds of naked feet makes a great whispering sound over the burning pavements.

But what produces the most novel impression on the stranger is the singularity and brilliancy of the women's costumes. They were developed at least a hundred

years ago by a curious sumptuary law, regulating the dress of slaves and colored people of free condition, a law which allowed considerable liberty as to material and tint, prescribing only form. But these fashions suggest the Orient; they offer beautiful audacities of color contrasts; and the coiffure, above all, is so strikingly Eastern that you cannot help wondering whether it was not first introduced into the colony by some Mohammedan negro slave. It is simply an immense Madras handkerchief, which is folded about the head with admirable art, like a turban; one bright end, pushed through at the top in front, being left sticking up like a plume. Then this turban, always full of bright canary-color, is fastened with great golden or silver brooches, one in front and one at either side. As for the remainder of the dress, it is simple enough: an embroidered, low-cut chemise with sleeves; a skirt or *jupe*, quite short in front and very long behind, but caught up and fastened in front below the breasts so as to bring the hem everywhere to a level with the end of the long chemise; and finally a *foulard*, or silken kerchief, thrown over the shoulders. These *jupes* and *foulards*, however, are exquisite in pattern and color: bright crimson, bright yellow, bright blue, bright green, lilac, violet, rose, sometimes mingled together in plaidings, or checkerings, or stripings; black with orange, sky-blue with purple. And whatever be the colors of the turban, which vary astonishingly, the brighter parts must be yellow—brilliant, flashing yellow: the turban is certain to possess yellow stripes or yellow squares. To this display add the effect of costly and curious jewelry: immense ear-rings, each pendant being formed of five gold cylinders joined together (cylinders sometimes two inches long and an inch at least in circumfer-



ITINERANT PASTRY-SELLER.

ence); a necklace of double, triple, quadruple, or quintuple rows of large hollow gold beads (sometimes smooth, but generally graven), the wonderful *collier-choux*. Now this glowing jewelry is not a mere imitation of pure metal; the ear-rings are worth 175 francs a pair; the necklace of a Martinique quadroon may cost 500 or even 1000 francs. It may be the gift of her lover, her *doudoux*; but such articles are usually purchased on time, by small payments which may continue regularly for several years.

Many are less richly and brightly attired; the greater number of the women carrying burdens on their heads—peddling vegetables, cakes, fruits, or ready-cooked food from door to door—usually wear a single plain robe, very long be-

hind, but always gathered up about the waist so as to sit close to the figure, and leave the lower limbs partly bare and perfectly free. All day they can walk up and down hill, without shoes, carrying loads of from 100 to 200 pounds on their turbaned heads, under the fierce sun. Everything is borne on the head; I have seen a piano—a grand piano!—carried on the heads of six men. With the women, the burden is very seldom steadied by the hand. The head remains perfectly motionless; only the quick, black, dancing eyes flash into every window and doorway to watch for a customer's signal. And the creole street cries, uttered in a far-reaching, high, clear key, sonorous as if blown through a silver trumpet, intercross and blend and produce random harmonies that are really very sweet to hear.

"*Ça qui vlé bel mangot!—ça qui vlé!*" Her basket of huge mangoes must weigh fully one hundred and fifty pounds. "*Ça qui vlé escargots!—ça qui vlé!*" Call her, if you like snails. "*Ça qui vlé bel avocat!*" The alligator-pear—cuts and tastes like beautiful green cheese. "*Ça qui vlé cana'ds!*" "*Ça qui vlé cha'-bon!*" "*Ça qui vlé di pain au beurre!*" Ducks; charcoal; pretty little loaves, about the size of big cucumbers.

"*Ça qui vlé fromassé!*" For "*fromassé*" read *pharmacie*: she deals in creole roots and herbs, and all the leaves that make tisanes.

"*Ça qui vlé médicaments!*" Do not imagine this one is selling drugs. "*Médicaments*" in creole simply signifies a pair of overalls—working-men's trousers.

"*Hé! zenfants-là! en deho!*" Run out to meet her, little children, if you like the sweet rice cakes. "*Hé! gens pa' enho', gens pa' enbas, gens di galétas—moin ni bel gououôis poisson!*" Ho! people upstairs, people down-stairs, and all ye good folks who dwell in the attics, know that she has very big and very beautiful fish to sell! "*Hé! ça qui vlé manger yonne?*" Those are "*akras*"—flat yellow-brown cakes, made of pounded codfish or beans, or both, seasoned with pepper and fried in butter. And then comes the pastry-seller, black as ebony, but dressed all in white, and white-aproned and white-capped, like a French cook, and chanting in a voice like a clarinet:

"C'est l'ouvrier de la pâtisserie qui passe,
Qui té na veillé pou' gagner son existence!"

The quaint stores bordering both sides of the street bear no names and no signs over their huge arched doors: you must look well inside to know what business is being done. Even then you will scarcely be able to satisfy yourself as to the nature of the commerce; for they are selling gridirons and frying-pans in the dry-goods stores, holy images and rosaries in the notion stores, sweet-cakes and confectionery in the crockery stores, coffee and stationery in the millinery stores, cigars and tobacco in the china stores, cravats and laces and ribbons in the jewelry stores, sugar and guava jelly in the tobacco stores! But of all the objects exposed for sale the most delightful to look at is a doll, the famous Martinique *poupée*. It is a mulatto doll, attired with exquisite tact in the holiday costume of the women of St. Pierre; it bears the brodered chemise, the tastefully arranged and richly colored *jupe*, the gorgeous silk *foulard*, the marvellous ear-rings of five gold cylinders, the *collier-choux* (triple or quadruple), the charming yellow-banded Madras turban. It is too artistic for a toy: it is a perfect costume model, a perfect miniature of Martinique fashions, to the smallest details of arrangement and of colors.

These costume-colors—always relieved by brilliant yellow stripings or checkerings—have an indescribable luminousness, a really magical power of relieving and bringing out the fine warm tints of this tropical flesh. Such are the hues of those regal costumes which Nature gives unto her nearest of kin and her dearest, to her honey-lovers, to her insects—*these are wasp-colors!** And only Nature could have taught such faultless comprehension of powers and harmonies among colors, such knowledge of chromatic witchcrafts and chromatic laws.

This evening Mont Pelée is more heavily coiffed than usual. Of purple and lilac cloud the coiffure is—a veritable turban, a magnificent Madras! Mont Pelée to-day is in *costume de fête*—like a quadroon attired for a baptism or a ball—and in her phantom head-dress the young moon glimmers for a brooch.

* The fact may not have ever occurred to the child-minds of these strange people, yet there is a singular creole expression which suggested the phrase to me. In the patois, "*pouend' guêpe*" (to catch a wasp) signifies making love to a pretty colored girl.



*"With Jockey
to the Fair"*



WAS on the morn of sweet May-day,
When nature painted all things gay,
Taught birds to sing and lambs to play,
And deck'd the meadows fair.
Young Jockey early in the morn
Arose and tripped it o'er the lawn.
His Sunday coat the youth put on;
For Jenny had vowed away to run
With Jockey to the fair.