

# A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados



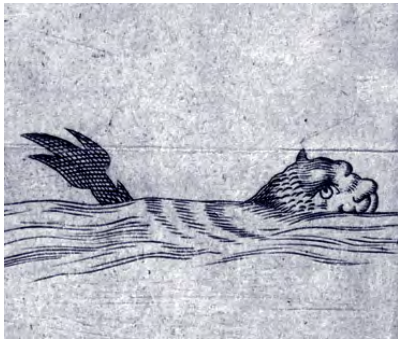
Richard Ligon

Originally Published in London, 1657

Edited by David Chan Smith (2014)

Wilfrid Laurier University

edition **5**



## Copyright Information

This revision edited by David Chan Smith, June 26, 2014

Full text keyboarded and encoded by Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (2003-2004) from Wing L2075

Images used by permission of Harvard University Libraries

This e-book may be freely reproduced, electronically or otherwise, but not used for commercial purposes.



## Editorial Notes

- This edition is based on the text of 1657 (Wing L2075) and includes images from the 1673 edition.
- Throughout the text you will find numbers inside square brackets: [1]. These numbers indicate the page numbers in the original edition.
- The 1657 edition contains a “table” at the end of the text describing the content. This table has been moved forward to the front of this edition as a table of contents to make the text more accessible. The headings from the table have also been inserted into the text at the appropriate paragraphs as an aid to readers.

### How do I cite this edition?

Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, ed. David Smith (e-text, 2014, 5th edition).



## Foreword and Acknowledgements

This e-book was produced for teachers and undergraduate students interested in the early modern Caribbean. From personal use of the text in teaching, it became apparent to me that a more accessible version was needed to open up the book to a wider audience of undergraduates. It is not intended to serve as an authoritative edition for scholarly research.

This project is also in the public domain: students and teachers are free to reproduce and use the text in their classrooms.

Many people have made possible this e-book and its experiment in collaborative editing. Two organizations welcomed and encouraged new methods in the digital humanities and by doing so made this project possible:

Special thanks are due to the Text Creation Partnership who graciously permitted the reproduction of their keyboarded text. Rebecca Welzenbach, Ari Friedlander and Paul Schaffner facilitated this project and were tremendously helpful.

Lisa DeCesare and Donald Pfister at Harvard University kindly approved the reproduction of images from the copy of the *True and Exact History* at the The Economic Botany Libraries of Oakes Ames and aided in the preparation of the digital scans.

Amy Milne-Smith and Jerome Handler offered helpful advice, suggestions, and especially corrections. Ann Blair's advice and support has been invaluable in guiding this project to completion.

Special thanks are due to Laura Coady who painstakingly proofed the copy and researched obscure footnotes. Her footnote contributions are marked with {LC}.





# Richard Ligon's Travels, c. 1647





## Brief Introduction

**R**ichard Ligon (c. 1585–1662), connoisseur of aristocratic life, Atlantic traveller, and failed investor died in 1662. Were it not for his *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, his search for redemption in the English colonial world of the 1640s would be forgotten. Yet this text, published in 1657 and reprinted in 1673, remains one of our best descriptions of the seventeenth-century English Caribbean.<sup>1</sup> Ligon is our guide to a world of strange plants and new peoples, arriving in the Caribbean at the beginning of a period of significant change. While he lived on Barbados from 1647-1650 and civil war raged in England, Ligon witnessed a colonial society transformed by the large-scale production of sugar. The initiative of the colonists who developed these plantations had brought them into contact with many other parts of the Atlantic world and Ligon’s text takes us farther afield than Barbados to reveal the richness of these interconnections. Dutch, Portuguese, Africans and Native Americans come and go across his pages exchanging information, ideas, and goods. Yet as the *History* reveals, exploitation often supplanted exchange in their relationships. The development of the sugar economy on Barbados dramatically increased the planters’ demands for African slave labor from Dutch and then English traders, leading to the island’s transformation into a slave society ruled by an elite group of wealthy planters - “the plantocracy.” Ligon tells us something of this change and of slave society in particular: his curiosity leads him into conversations and inquiries with many Africans,

---

1 Other accounts include Thomas Dalby, *An Historicall Account of the Rise and Growth of the West India Colonies* (London, 1690); John Davies, *The History of the Caribby Islands*, (London, 1666); Edward Lyttleton, *The Groans of the Plantations* (London, 1688); Nicholas Foster, *A Briefe Relation of the Late Horrid Rebellion in Barbados* (London, 1650); Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands of Madeira, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christopher and Jamaica...*, 2 vols. (London, 1701-1725); V.T. Harlow ed. *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623-1667* (London, 1925, reprinted 1967); *Some Memoirs of the First Settlement of Barbados and the Caribbee Islands* (Barbados, 1741). Other important records are collected in *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623-1667*, ed. V.T. Harlow (London, 1925, repr. 1967). For a more detailed list, see Jerome Handler, *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History: 1627-1834* (1971), pp. 1-105 and the addenda, which are available [here](#).

free and unfree. While his observations often echo the commonplace prejudices of his time, they also provide glimpses into the lives of Africans in the Atlantic world and European thinking about other peoples.

While he is a sympathetic guide -- curious, alert, often humane, and clearly a charming man -- the reader is left to ponder whether his narrative participates in the systems of exploitation that Ligon describes. Is the *History* a guidebook for the imperial entrepreneur seeking his fortune or simply a candid natural history?<sup>2</sup> Is it, as historians have recently argued, a critique of planter society?<sup>3</sup> But much of the *History* provides its readers with the basic, practical information needed to set up in the business of sugar cultivation: how to establish capital by trading to planters, layouts of the buildings of a sugar refinery, and information on its operation. We are told of the commercially desirable plants that can be grown, and of the dangers that colonists face from the weather, workers and unhealthy diseases. We are introduced ultimately not just to a world of exotic wonders in the pages of the *History*, but of information about a business built on slavery. These discussions of profit and loss lead us to question Ligon's attitude towards the slave society developing on Barbados and the opportunities offered by sugar cultivation: is Ligon uneasy about the society he chronicles? Does he criticize its workings and question its morality?

## Richard Ligon: Background to Barbados

Ligon travelled to Barbados because he “found my selfe a stranger in my owne Country, and therefore resolv'd to lay hold on the first opportunity that might conv[e] me to any other part of the World.” He had failed financially and politically after choosing the losing side in the English civil wars (1642-1649) and presumably he left England in part to restore his fortunes. His comments occasionally display the snobbery and sensitivity to slights of the formerly privileged, and Ligon travelled into exile in Barbados partly to escape his sense of marginalization in England. He had come from a comfortable, if not wealthy, background in the south-west of England. The son of Thomas Ligon of Elstone, Wiltshire and Frances Dennis, the young Ligon appears to have been well connected to richer friends and family

---

2 Richard Lioi discusses the text as “first of all, a natural history...” in “Delight Is a Slave to Dominion : Awakening to Empire with Richard Ligon,” in Ivo Kamps et. al (eds), *Early modern ecostudies : from Florentine codex to Shakespeare* (Basingstoke, 2008), pp. 219-33.

3 Susan Scott Parrish, “Richard Ligon and the Atlantic Science of Commonwealths,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 67:2 (2010), pp. 209-248, at 241-242; Lioi, “Delight is a Slave to Dominion,” p. 224.

members.<sup>4</sup> He had access to the royal court and in the *History* he recalls observing the queen and court masques. But he was a follower rather than a leader, attached to more socially elevated patrons. It was one of these associations, with the Killigrew family, that led to his troubles. Through them he became connected to a scheme to drain marshy semi-flooded “fen” land in Lincolnshire in eastern England. The fens, which extended over nearly fifteen hundred square miles, were rich agricultural land suitable for arable or pasture once they were drained. Beginning at the end of the sixteenth-century investors began to undertake schemes to drain and transform the fens. Ligon was among these “undertakers” during the 1630s and participated in one of the largest of these developments, known as the Lindsey Level after its principal promoter, the Earl of Lindsey.<sup>5</sup> Yet these projects faced many obstacles and the reclamation of the fens took centuries to complete. Investors and their hydraulic technology struggled to overcome the fury of seasonally flooding rivers. Local inhabitants resented the undertakers as interlopers who changed the patterns of their settlements and often took their lands from them. As a result, fen drainage frequently occasioned fierce disputes.

In the case of the Lindsey Level, the conflict burst into the open in the 1640s when royal government was strained by war and distracted by parliamentary demands. Ligon wrote in May 1640 to his business partner Sir William Killigrew that “Whilst the waters were up [the local inhabitants] cut our banks and drowned our inclosures, to our great damage ... the country [people] go on still to do us what mischief they may... we who have houses are threatened to have them fired or pulled down.”<sup>6</sup> These complaints were followed in May 1642 by a petition to parliament declaring that Ligon and his associates “have been turned out of their possessions... by a riotous multitude of people.”<sup>7</sup> The commoners had evicted Ligon and his partners from their drained land, leaving him to turn to the government to restore his property. Yet in that same year he made another decision that would cause his life as a minor English gentleman to dissolve even further.

In 1642 England divided into a civil war pitting the followers of Charles I

---

4 Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Ligon, Richard (c.1585–1662),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74579>].

5 H.C. Darby, *The Draining of the Fens* (Cambridge, 1956); Keith Lindley, *Fenland Riots and the English Revolution* (London, 1982). *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I* (London, 1858, reprinted 1967), vol. 27, p. 54. The National Archives (“TNA”), Kew, England, SP 16/482, f. 110..

6 *Calendar of State Papers Domestic, Charles I*, vol. 27, p. 111. The National Archives, Kew England, SP 16/452, f. 102.

7 House of Lords Record Office, London, England, HL/PO/JO/10/1/122 .

against those of the “Long Parliament.”<sup>8</sup> With England at war, Ligon was unable to assert his claims against the commoners who had dispossessed him -- either because of the disarray or disinterest of parliament and the royal government. In choosing to follow the king in the civil war, Ligon also chose loyally, but unwisely. In 1649 the king was executed by the victorious parliamentarians, and the royalist cause all but lost until the Restoration of 1660. Ligon ended the war on the defeated side.

By 1649 Ligon had already lost his own freedom. Parliamentary forces had captured him at Exeter when the royalist garrison there surrendered in April 1646 after a gruelling siege. As with all royalists who were captured by parliament, Ligon was liable to pay fines and penalties for his resistance. After his surrender at Exeter he made an appearance before the parliamentary committee that fined royalists, the Committee for Compositions, in October 1646.<sup>9</sup> He appeared again in 1651 and was fined 1/6<sup>th</sup> the value of his lands. This relatively small amount implied that his part in the royalist armies was considered minor and his offence against parliament not worthy of more significant punishment. Perhaps more revealingly, the small sum of the fine itself, 2 pounds, 10 shillings, suggests that Ligon’s financial condition had become desperate. In 1650 he had, in fact, reported to the committee that he had “no estate but lands in the fens, co[unty] Lincoln[shire]. . .”

It was perhaps to leave the chaos of civil war – Ligon’s wistful desire for peace occasionally intrudes into the narrative of the *History* – and to restore his shattered fortune that he left England in June 1647 in a small fleet of two ships, the *Achilles* and the *Nonesuch*. The exact circumstances of his departure are unknown (though he had relatives who travelled to the Americas) there are hints as to the purpose of his exile in his narrative.<sup>10</sup> He departed the Downs, an area off the coast of Kent in eastern England in the company of Thomas Modyford. Modyford had also served the royalist cause, leaving behind his career as a lawyer to receive a commission as a colonel under Charles I. Presumably Ligon knew Modyford from Exeter where they were both captured and together they left England for exile in the Caribbean. If Ligon was the man of service following in the train of others, Modyford was the adventurer and imperial entrepreneur who found opportunity and made his fortune from sugar

---

8 The Long Parliament was elected in 1640 and remained in existence, in one form or another, until its formal dissolution in 1660. After the execution of Charles I in 1649, members of the Long Parliament formed the government.

9 *Calendar of the Proceedings of the Committee for Compounding*, part 2, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green, (London, 1891), p. 1536.

10 These relatives included Ferdinando Gorges, a leading investor in overseas ventures who founded the colony of Maine. Stevenson, “Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire,” p. 286.



in the Caribbean. Modyford's success combined with political ambition and he rose to prominence as the governor of Barbados (1660) and then Jamaica (1664-1671). In Jamaica he achieved wealth as one of the leading planters and notoriety as the protector of the pirates who used Port Royal as their base to launch attacks against Dutch and Spanish shipping.<sup>11</sup>

Ligon's relationship with Modyford was circumscribed by financial considerations from the outset of the voyage. He remained with Modyford in Barbados on behalf of Thomas Kendall, a London merchant, in case Modyford "should miscarry the voyage." Kendall was Modyford's brother-in-law, and had amassed his wealth through shrewd dealings during the 1650s in the East India trade. Through timely acquisition of shares in plantations in Barbados and Jamaica, Kendall enriched himself from the sugar boom.<sup>12</sup> Ligon was present to protect Kendall's investment in the case of the untimely demise of Modyford. He remained throughout his sojourn on Barbados, and recounts how he lay in Modyford's house during the sickness that sent him from the island.

But in the beginning neither Jamaica nor Barbados was their intended destination. Ligon reveals that their hope of profit lay in *Antigua*, which had been settled by the English in 1632. Their course brought them south to the Cape Verde islands near Africa as they rode the prevailing winds and crossed westwards to the Caribbean at a lower latitude.<sup>13</sup> The ship owners also had financial considerations in addition to the practical for the route: a voyage south presented an opportunity to trade for slaves in Africa and to increase the profits of the trip. Ligon's journey participated in part of the so-called "triangle trade," or the use of European money and goods to purchase slaves in Africa, sell them in the Caribbean, and then return to Europe with colonial products. In reality the extensive Atlantic trade was more complex than this model suggests, involving a great deal of intra-colonial trade between, for example, the Caribbean and the English colonies in the American northeast.

After passing by the Madeira and Canary Islands, and resupplying on Cape Verde, the ships crossed the Atlantic making for Antigua. Chance, however, intervened when the *Nonesuch* sank and took with it the migrants' tools for settlement. By

---

11 Nuala Zahedieh, "Modyford, Sir Thomas, first baronet (c.1620–1679)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18871>]

12 "Thomas Kendall," in *The House of Commons, 1660-1690*, ed. Basil Henning (London, 1983).

13 Atlantic winds move in a circular pattern and sailing ships were forced to sail south from England in order to catch the "trade winds" across the ocean. The "westerlies," winds at more northern latitudes, returned sailing ships to England.

September 1647 when Ligon and his fellow travellers neared Barbados, the most easterly of the English islands in the Caribbean, conditions had become increasingly desperate. Close quarters and poor food had encouraged disease to spread on the *Achilles*. In search of supplies and a healthier environment to recuperate, the settlers decided to land on Barbados. Though Ligon and his companions' intention was to move on after a short time, the opportunity was lost when their ship returned to Africa to trade for slaves and additional profits.

It was not immediately apparent that the timing of their arrival was fortunate, and they disembarked to escape disease onboard to discover that a pestilence (yellow fever) was causing widespread mortality in Bridgetown, the major settlement of Barbados. But they also came ashore near the beginning of the “sugar revolution” on the island: an opportunity that both Modyford and Ligon would seek to exploit with markedly different success.

## Barbados and the “Sugar Revolution”

**T**he extensive cultivation of sugar cane on the island began in the 1640s.<sup>14</sup> Growers had moved sugar cane for centuries before reaching Barbados. Spreading from south Asia into the Mediterranean during the early Middle Ages, sugar cane moved along the trade networks created by the expansion of the Islamic world during the eighth-century. Europeans encountered sugar cane cultivation during the crusades in the eleventh and twelfth-centuries as they invaded the eastern Mediterranean and pushed towards Jerusalem.<sup>15</sup> They took the plant to Cyprus and then cultivation spread westwards into the Atlantic.<sup>16</sup> Spanish and Portuguese settlers brought sugar cane to the Canary and Madeira islands, which were important re-supply points for voyages south to Africa and eventually Asia in the fifteenth-century. These islands were well-sited for cultivating the crop: they had good climates for growing sugar cane and were more defensible than the Mediterranean, which was coming under the domination of Muslim states. As sugar cane cultivation spread into the Atlantic, the composition of its labor force changed, involving increasing numbers of unfree laborers and slaves. Finally and fitfully, cultivation was brought to the Americas by the Spanish

---

14 Russell Menard writes that “As early as 1645, 40 percent of the island was planted in sugar.” Russell Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville, 2006), p. 67.

15 Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 3-8.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 18-28.

and Portuguese. Attempts to grow sugar cane were made by Columbus and the Spanish throughout the sixteenth-century. However, it was the Portuguese in Brazil who first succeeded in producing large volumes of sugar in the Americas as early as the 1540s.<sup>17</sup> Portuguese access to slave markets in Africa provided them with a sizeable (if sometimes unsteady) supply of labor for their new plantations in Brazil. Their widespread use of slave labor in Brazil signalled the continuing dependence on bound labor for the production of sugar as the plantation economy moved from the Mediterranean.

How the English came by the knowledge and materials to grow sugar cane has been variously ascribed to the Dutch, African slaves from Iberian colonies, and to English initiative.<sup>18</sup> Increasingly it seems clear that the financing and support for this expansion came from English sources on the island and in London.<sup>19</sup> Ligon's text, when carefully read, reveals the influence of English investment in the growth of the island's sugar industry, and suggests that trading relationships between the Dutch in Brazil and the English might have facilitated the transfer of the crop and the knowledge to grow it.<sup>20</sup> Ligon was, after all the representative of a major London merchant who was investing in the Caribbean through his agent Modyford. Ligon explains that the planters had obtained the sugar cane plants from Brazil, which was under Dutch control from 1630-1654, and had experimented with refining sugar over time : “[by new directions from Brasil, sometimes by strangers, and now and then by their own people...](#)” Through this eclectic approach of trial-and-error and consultation with the Dutch, Ligon reports that “[about the time I left the Iland, which was in 1650 they were much better'd...](#)” The planters, Ligon continued, had recently uncovered the secret of refining white sugar, the most desired form. However the technology reached the island, it was through the entrepreneurial efforts of James Drax and other planters that

---

17 Curtin, *Rise and Fall*, p. 26

18 A contemporary claim that Dutch capital financed the sugar industry on Barbados is found in an account by John Scott, British Library Sloane MS 3662, f. 59v. Scott attributes the first planting of sugar to James Holdip and James Drax: “the sugar cane had been had from Brazile... and was first planted by one Colonell Holdup, who was the first that made sugar in Barbados, but it came to little untill the great industry and more thriveing genius of Sir James Drax engaged in that great worke who brough[t] Collonell Holdups essay, to soe great perfection....” Sloane MS, f. 60r. Richard Sheridan suggests that Henry Powell brought sugar cane to the island in 1627. Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and slavery: an economic history of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Baltimore, 1974), p. 129.

19 John McCusker and Russell Menard, “A New Perspective on the Barbadian ‘Sugar Revolution’,” in Stuart Schwartz (ed.), *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680* (Chapel Hill, 2004), pp. 289-330.

20 Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, pp. 52-66; Puckrein, *Little England*, pp. 65.

the crop was successfully nurtured.

Sugar transformed Barbados: its economy, labor structure, and culture. Beginning in 1627 when it was first settled by the English, the inhabitants had experimented with various crops, including indigo, cotton, and tobacco, to produce profits.<sup>21</sup> Recent research has demonstrated how these commodities led to small growth booms and that tobacco was the island's principal crop in the late 1630s. But late in the decade the European market became oversupplied with tobacco and prices fell: the Barbadian crop, being of poorer quality than its Spanish competitors, was squeezed.<sup>22</sup> Barbadian farmers turned increasingly to cotton and then to sugar, and it was the latter crop that provided the way to sustained growth. By the 1680s most of the small island was under cultivation. Barbados had become a monoculture economy dependent on a single staple crop.

Sugar cane was difficult to grow. The crop required strenuous work under the hot tropical sun to plant, weed and harvest the stalks. Though the labor was hard and unpleasant, the planters required ever more laborers as time passed and more land came under cultivation. The plantation economy also demanded that this work force be disciplined and carefully coordinated. Sugar cane spoils within hours after it is cut and must immediately be taken to the sugar mill for refining.

The search for a large labor force that would work under oppressive conditions preoccupied the planters. Slavery on Barbados pre-existed the sugar revolution, but it was sugar production that generated the largest demand for unfree laborers.<sup>23</sup> While the planters initially looked to English, Irish and Scots to serve in the fields as indentured servants the supply was not enough to meet the demand.<sup>24</sup> White migration to Barbados began to fall off around mid-century as opportunities improved in Britain for those who might otherwise leave and other colonies became more attractive destinations for those who migrated. Increasingly from the 1640s onwards, the planters

---

21 For a discussion of this "first export boom," see Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, pp. 11-27, and Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados 1627-1660* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 88-112.

22 Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, pp. 11-28.

23 Ibid., pp. 29-31.

24 Indentured servants typically agreed to serve a master for five or seven years in return for passage to the Americas and "freedom dues." Indentured servants were often treated poorly. For information on the history of Irish indentured servants, see Hilary McD. Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot': Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644-1713," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 47:4 (1990), pp. 503-22.

began to rely on slaves to fill their demand for labor, and as the century progressed, Barbados became a “slave society” or a population that was predominately made up of slaves. Over time this economic model became increasingly racialized with white planters and overseers exploiting a numerically larger underclass of black slaves.<sup>25</sup>

## Barbados and Self-Government

**A**s the planters became masters over others, they sought control over their own political affairs. From the 1630s onwards the Barbadian planters increasingly asserted their political autonomy (though not independence) from England and English interests. These efforts culminated in the establishment of a representative assembly (1639) and the transformation of the colony into a crown colony (1663-1664). Perhaps it was a natural desire for self-government or perhaps their familiarity with control over others that made them conscious of their own freedoms.<sup>26</sup> The development was not unusual in the English Atlantic world as colonists tended in the American mainland colonies, in particular, to assert their right to self-government and management of internal affairs.<sup>27</sup> From the perspective of the colonists, they had carved out their homes and plantations in the wilderness by dint of hard labor. They were entitled to their liberty from distant London and from political and economy interests that might act contrary to their welfare.

Their claims brought them into conflict with the rights of those based in England who had first invested in the colonies and the English government’s authority to oversee its budding colonial empire. English colonial ventures during the seventeenth-century had a mostly haphazard beginning. Individual investors, known as proprietors, or corporations of investors founded colonies for different reasons. Religious minorities persecuted in England found refuge in Providence Island, Massachusetts Bay, Plymouth Plantation, and Maryland. By contrast, the hope of exploiting American riches motivated investors and settlers in the Virginia Company

---

25 Hilary McD. Beckles, “Rebels and Reactionaries: The Political Responses of White Labourers to Planter-Class Hegemony in Seventeenth-Century Barbados,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 15 (1981), pp. 1-19.

26 This is the thesis of Carla Pestana. For a discussion of the claims of self-determination by the colonists, see *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640-1661* (Cambridge MA, 2007), pp. 157-212.

27 The clearest statement of this dynamic is Jack Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (New York, 1986).



(1606) that established Jamestown (1607) the first permanent English settlement in the Americas.

The English government incentivized these early investors by granting to them significant latitude and powers in the administration of their colony. Such powers needed to be extensive: establishing a colony meant the “planting” of a new society with law courts, churches, distributions of land and so forth. Typically these settlements were patterned along English models: place names were taken from towns and areas that settlers were familiar with or which honored English elites (“Jamestown” is named after King James I), and parishes and courts were erected along English lines.

Driven by varied motives, backed by separate (though often having overlapping investors) corporations and proprietors, and encountering a range of conditions, English colonists developed settlements with distinct demographics, laws and cultures. While more affluent, religiously minded Puritans travelled to Massachusetts Bay, those who sought worldly fortune looked instead to Virginia or the Caribbean. As the colonies established themselves and became independent of their companies or proprietors for financing they increasingly sought self-government through representative assemblies such as the Virginia House of Burgesses (1619). As proprietary and corporate control diminished, the English government found itself more directly involved in colonial development as when corporations failed (such as the Virginia Company in 1624) or through the appointment of royal governors. As the trend towards self-government developed, the colonists watched as England descended into civil war in 1642.

Barbados had begun as a proprietary colony. Its settlement was the result of the investment of the Courteens, a London-based, but originally Dutch merchant family, who chanced the colony’s settlement in 1627.<sup>28</sup> The Courteens dispatched a group of settlers from England led by Captain Henry Powell. They found Barbados emptied of its indigenous peoples – the Caribs – and instead filled with large numbers of pigs that had been left by passing sailors. The Courteen’s settlement was successful, but not unchallenged, since they had failed to obtain a patent for colonization from the king. A leading courtier, James Hay, Earl of Carlisle, saw an opportunity and in July 1627 obtained a patent from James I granting to him the right to settle the Caribee Islands. Though it would later be disputed whether this grant included Barbados,

---

28 Vincent Harlow offers a narrative of the island’s early settlement, *A History of Barbados: 1625-1685* (Oxford, 1925); Gary Puckrein, *Little England: Plantation Society and Anglo-Barbadian Politics, 1627-1700* (New York, 1984), pp. 3-39. A more recent narrative is Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, pp. 13-57.

Carlisle was ultimately successful in defending his claim and passing it to his son.<sup>29</sup> Yet the local colonists chafed at control by either proprietor and took advantage of political circumstances to establish a representative assembly in 1639 that obtained full legislative powers in 1641.<sup>30</sup> Each of the eleven parishes into which the island was divided elected two members to serve in the Assembly.

Barbados, under the leadership of governor Philip Bell, determined to remain neutral in the civil wars that began in England in 1642. The colonists sent accommodating replies to both parliament and king. This accommodation reflected a hardy instinct for survival and the colonists expanded their trade with the Dutch as supplies from England became intermittent.<sup>31</sup> These connections with the Dutch have been the subject of much speculation by historians, an earlier generation suggesting that it was Dutch money that funded the “sugar revolution.” Dutch involvement in Barbadian affairs had been long-standing. It was recorded that in 1627 during the first settlement of the island, Henry Powell travelled to Essequibo, a Dutch settlement in Guyana. There he renewed contact with its governor, Adrian Groenewegen, whom he had known from previous service together in the employ of the Spanish. Groenewegen was sent to Guyana as an agent of a merchant firm and successfully traded with the Native Americans. It is possible that this company was the Dutch arm of the Courteen trading empire, and that Powell’s contact with the colony was more than simply fortuitous, but rather planned in advance.<sup>32</sup> Groenewegen was extremely helpful to Powell, providing him access to seeds and food, and a “family” of about forty Arawak Indians who were indigenous to the Caribbean region. They were convinced to settle in Barbados and teach the English how to grow the unfamiliar crops.<sup>33</sup> The English on Barbados later enslaved these immigrants and they were not freed until 1655.<sup>34</sup> Ligon provides information on their lives and society on Barbados, and some historians have suggested that the poignant story of Yarico was a metaphor for the betrayal of the

---

29 Harlow, *History of Barbados*, pp. 8-24.

30 Ibid., p. 25.

31 Ibid., pp. 37-38.

32 For the theory that Groenewegen was the agent of the same Dutch trading interests as Powell (and speculation that they had served together in a Courteen vessel chartered by the Spanish), see George Edmundson, “The Dutch in Western Guiana,” *English Historical Review* 16:64 (1901), pp. 655-672.

33 Thomas Scott describes how “the Indians fell to planting after their arrivall at Barbados, and all things grew well...” British Library, Sloane MS 3662; see Sloane MS 2441, f. 6r.

34 Harlow, *History of Barbados*, p. 6. Puckrein, *Little England*, pp. 114-115.

Arawaks.<sup>35</sup> Further evidence of Native American settlement is found on the map that Ligon produced of Barbados showing an Arawak near the center of the island, holding a bow and wearing a crown: nearby is the caption “Sabymingoe his canoe 35 foot longe.”<sup>36</sup>

The colonists avoidance of civil war enabled them to concentrate both on securing continued supplies and access to market through Dutch and English shipping, and to continue to grow their plantations and personal fortunes. Yet soon after Ligon departed the island, supporters of King Charles II led by the Walrond family declared the island for the king. Francis Lord Willoughby was appointed governor by Charles II and arrived in 1650, having obtained a lease of the proprietorship of the island from the Earl of Carlisle. The response of the English Commonwealth, now firmly in power after the execution of Charles I in 1649, was to dispatch a military expedition under General George Ayscue in 1651 to punish the Barbadians and reclaim the island. Ayscue was eventually successful in defeating Willoughby, but only because of the timely defection of Barbadians to the parliamentary cause, especially the forces under the command of Thomas Modyford.

That same year, in another move to assert its authority over the colonial empire, the English parliament passed the first of the Navigation Acts (1651).<sup>37</sup> The act restrained planters from selling their sugar and other products to non-English merchants. The sugar trade would from that time onward be monopolized by English traders with the product taken to England and then trans-shipped to Europe. The act was clearly in England’s interest rather than the colonies and asserted the principle that the colonies existed for England’s benefit. Colonial interests deeply resented the act and believed that they could obtain better prices by shopping their sugar to a wide variety of European merchants, rather than passing it through middle-men in London.<sup>38</sup> Resistance to the Navigation Act through smuggling and attempts to have the acts repealed and “freedom of trade” re-established continued throughout the century. Yet as Jack Greene has argued, the Navigation Act and its subsequent re-enactments were statements of the English parliament’s authority over the external trade and activities

---

35 Susan Scott Parrish, “Atlantic Science of Commonwealths,” pp. 241-242.

36 More information on Amerindians in Barbados is found in [Jerome Handler](#), “Aspects of Amerindian Ethnography in 17th Century Barbados,” *Caribbean Studies*, 9:4 (1970), pp. 50-72.

37 “An Act for increase of Shipping, and Encouragement of the Navigation of this Nation.,” *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, eds. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait (1911), pp. 559–62.

38 Puckrein, *Little England*, p. 127. Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, pp. 202-212.

of the colonies.<sup>39</sup> Through the Navigation Acts England was able to assert its power to regulate the trade of its nascent Atlantic empire.

## Aesthetics and Appetite

Into this tumultuous world Ligon sailed and his text records his experiences and observations during three important years in the English Atlantic (1647-1650). Ligon's *History* can be considered many things: the exploration of a curious traveller, a serious natural and ethnographic history, or a commentary on the political disturbances of his times. But much of the book is taken up with the business of making money off of sugar at a time when, as Susan Parrish observes, Jamaica was being established as a sugar colony and a possible investment.<sup>40</sup> George Walshe, in the seventeenth-century version of a book endorsement, comments in his introduction to the text, "you [Ligon] shew therein £3000 pounds will clear." Ligon describes fortunes already made in Barbados, such as that of James Drax who began on the island with "a stock not exceeding £300 sterling."<sup>41</sup> Through industry and knowledge, Drax had already greatly enriched himself and aimed "to purchase an estate, of tenne thousand pound land yearly." Two things are essential for success: the settler must be industrious, since this was not a country for the lazy, and Ligon's text, which will provide the knowledge and information that the entrepreneur needs to succeed.<sup>42</sup> The *History* advises imperial entrepreneurs how to exploit an economic opportunity and pursue a "vast profit."<sup>43</sup> The *History* often reads as a practical manual filled with precise, meaningful details: Ligon reminds his readers, for instance, to bring along black ribbon for mourning because of the high mortality on the island.<sup>44</sup> More significantly, Ligon also provides a plan on how to raise sufficient capital to join the sugar economy, to manage a plantation efficiently and profitably, and even how to build a sturdy house.<sup>45</sup> But the text is also careful in its due diligence, warning potential entrepreneurs of the risks involved in venturing into an unfamiliar, Atlantic world: enormous profits can be

---

39 Greene, *Peripheries and Center*, pp. 13-20.

40 Susan Scott Parrish, "Atlantic Science," p. 220.

41 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 146.

42 Ibid., pp. 161, 163-165.

43 Ibid., p. 6.

44 Ibid., p. 164.

45 Ibid., pp. 70, 154-155.

made in Barbados because the risks are so high. It was perhaps for this reason that the Caribbean had attracted men such as Modyford and Ligon who had nothing to lose.

If at times Ligon is explicit about the facts and figures of making money on the frontier, he is also too cosmopolitan to make his book entirely about the practicalities of profit and loss. He aims for polish and a literary voice. Ligon was, as the text notes, an artist. One of the most important themes of the *History* is aesthetics: beauty and form are important to Ligon.<sup>46</sup> The relationship in the text between aesthetic appreciation and practicality is sometimes set in tension, as in Ligon's description of the approach of the *Achilles* to Barbados. The captain of the ship intended to hurry to shore because of the shortage of food, yet the passengers urged him to delay their arrival on Barbados so that they might more carefully observe the island's beauty.<sup>47</sup> This preoccupation with aesthetics takes at least two forms: it influences how he thinks about the *History* as a book, and how he judges the people and places that he encounters.

One of the central metaphors of the *History* is that the text is a work of art - a text-painting.<sup>48</sup> This text-painting has illustrations, of course, and these images likely reveal Ligon's own talent as an artist, an activity that he refers to throughout the text. Ligon writes that he initially sought to paint scenes from the island to provide his readers with a better appreciation of life there, and it seems likely that he was the creator of the copperplates that grace the book, or at least the images that inspired them. If he did not succeed in creating an extensive set of images of life on Barbados (at least none are known to survive outside of the book), his text-painting provides a stand-in. Like any good work of art, the reader or viewer can improve themselves through an appreciation of the *History*. Ligon plays on this notion that admiration of the beautiful can enrich: for through the text the reader can acquire great wealth.

Within the text Ligon's interpretation of the world around him is often structured by aesthetic principles. Susan Parrish has explored this connection in relation to Ligon's political theory: healthy political systems were characterized by order and

---

46 Stevenson believes that this aesthetic sense was conditioned by Ligon's experience at the Stuart court. Stevenson, "Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire," p. 290.

47 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 41.

48 Nicholas Canny, "The Representation of Slaves and Slavery in the Writing of the Natural History of the West Indies During the Early Modern Centuries: French and English Contributions Compared," in Wim Klooster ed., *Migration, Trade, and Slavery in an Expanding World: Essays in Honor of Pieter Emmer* (Leiden, 2009), p. 218.



harmony.<sup>49</sup> Beauty is often gauged by reference to the authority of others and their canons of beauty, such as Albrecht Dürer. In making these references, Ligon displays not only his learning and cosmopolitan knowledge, but at times self-consciously admits the limits of conventional knowledge. For example, if the classical writer Vitruvius, who was famous for establishing a categorization of architectural pillars, had known of the palmetto tree then he “[would have chang’d all his deckings and garnishings of Pillars, according to the form of \[the palmetto\].](#)”

Ligon found beauty not only in places and people, but in living itself. He was a connoisseur of the good life of the gentleman. He was himself something of a “bon vivant” schooled in the arts and the art of living well, and was identified as a “gentleman” in legal documents.<sup>50</sup> The life of the gentleman, for Ligon, had its own aesthetic, its own form of beauty and elegance and one which he describes when he comes to discuss the planters on Barbados. Foremost, the gentleman was defined by his separation from manual labor. The gentleman governed, judged, and exercised hospitality so that he might live a beautiful life. Through the gentleman’s consumption and celebration of plenty he marked himself as separate from the laboring classes under him and from whom he extracted his profits (in the case of planter society the profit was from the sale of commodities rather than rents). Ligon aspired to this idealized lifestyle of the gentleman, celebrating the arts of the hunt and hospitality, and taking pride in displaying his gourmand’s knowledge of cooking. His writing describes how the privileged existence of the English gentleman was translated into the Barbadian context.<sup>51</sup> Yet in doing so Ligon was responding to the stereotype, then current, of the Barbadian planter as crude and money-loving, ruling through force and violence over his unfree laborers.<sup>52</sup> The parallel between the planter and the landed English squire could not be assumed, but Ligon demonstrates to his contemporary readers that Drax, Walrond and the other planters could be gentlemen too.

Yet for all his claims to the gentlemanly life, Ligon’s role on the island remains obscure. As the agent of a London interest and a man of culture and education, he was welcomed into the homes of the planters. But otherwise the reader must pay close attention to discover details about Ligon’s life on the island. He seems to have

---

49 Susan Parrish, “Atlantic Science,” p. 223.

50 See, for example, his witnessing of various legal documents: Devon Record Office, DD.43183, DD.43184, and DD.43520.

51 Gragg discusses planter life in *Englishmen Transplanted*, pp. 152-181; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 263-299.

52 Pestana, *The English Atlantic*, p. 206.

been resident with Modyford for “a while.”<sup>53</sup> But he was also employed in other jobs on behalf of the planters. At one point he is proposed as an agent of the planters to recruit musicians from England.<sup>54</sup> He claims to have overseen “publique works,” though he does not describe the projects he directed.<sup>55</sup> On the island he also seems to have practiced his drawing and designed at least twenty houses - two of which were actually built.<sup>56</sup> But otherwise we know little of Ligon’s work on the island. Despite warning that Barbados was not for the lazy, Ligon’s own time there seems to have been spent mostly in observation – though he occasionally has oversight of others – and consumption.

In fact, appetite figures prominently in the narrative.<sup>57</sup> At points, this preoccupation is obvious as when Ligon enumerates plants and animals that can be eaten. But there are other moments, as when he describes at length the eating of fish from the sea on the voyage south, recounts various feasts from Cape Verde to Barbados that he attended, reveals his culinary talents with discussions on the proper dressing of animals, and explains the best way to kill turtles. Even his seemingly benign description of the fauna and flora of the Atlantic world lead into discussions of edibility. These lengthy botanical asides reveal which foods and plants will give health and possibly also profit, and also which foods will kill. For hand-in-hand with expounding on food, Ligon warns against the danger of poisons from unfamiliar plants and animals. The reader is warned of the danger of the cassava root, the threat of poisonous plants to livestock, the infection of the water near Bridgetown, and offered a discussion of poisonous trees and plants. Appetite can also lead to other misfortunes. Ligon includes an episode that is almost formulaic in exploration texts of the mid-seventeenth century: cannibalism among a hungry, sea-faring crew, which he later implies is invented as a joke on the reader.<sup>58</sup>

Though it contributes many insights into the status of European ethnographic and scientific thinking, the *History* can be read to explore how appetites – for wealth, spices and sugar – drove European expansion. The pursuit of direct routes to spices by Iberian and then Dutch traders is the best known part of that story, but new contacts

---

53 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 43.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 160.

55 *Ibid.*, p. 78.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 70.

57 Lioi argues this is to exaggerate the “natural abundance” of the island. Lioi, “Delight is a Slave to Dominion,” pp. 224-226.

58 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 178.

with Africa, Asia and America led to a swirl of novel plants, crops, and delights reaching Europe. Chocolate, coffee, tea, the potato, and sugar are the best known and perhaps the most culturally significant. The historian Alfred Crosby has termed this movement of plants, animals and diseases the “Columbian exchange.”<sup>59</sup> Ligon’s modern reader is prompted to reflect on how the history of exploitation and empire is linked to the history of food and appetites. The European desire for these crops led to the free and forced migrations of millions of people, wars, and the erection of the plantation complex in the Caribbean and the Americas.

### *The True and Exact History* **and its Themes**

**W**hile a consideration of aesthetics and appetites helps to explicate the *History*, historians have read the text for information on at least three problems: first, what was the early history of Barbados, especially as it relates to the sugar industry and its establishment? Second, what does Ligon reveal about contemporary attitudes towards race, politics and the social order? Ligon’s fascination with Africans and his investigation of their culture and persons makes his account a valuable indicator of English attitudes towards other peoples and the limits of their understanding. Ligon’s typicality is a point of debate: was he more open-minded than other Englishmen of his period? He believed that Africans should be Christianized, but faced opposition from planters that he encountered. Does this make him more sympathetic to the plight of the slaves? Yet throughout the text he never seems to doubt the legitimacy of the slave system. For all his praise of African individuals, he nonetheless repeats negative cultural stereotypes, such as black timidity and treacherousness. Lastly, does the *History*, taken up as it is with so much consideration of fauna and flora, contribute insights into the development of early modern European botany and science? Throughout the *History*, Ligon puts his learning on show with references to classical texts and a confident familiarity with early modern architecture and botany. Alongside many of his contemporaries who wrote about the “wonders” and novel plants and animals of the Americas, he is fascinated both by the workings of nature and by the relationship of nature to human society. He seeks to pass on his insights to the reader. Can we glean valuable moral lessons about the workings of human society from his description of ants? Does his observation that greater fish eat smaller fish have significance for government and social responsibility? The very language of Ligon’s text is imbued with authority. To use Anthony Pagden’s term, the

---

59 Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT, 1972).

*History* is “autoptic” asserting the priority of the direct observations of the traveller over received wisdom.<sup>60</sup> Ligon repeatedly informs his readers of the specific sources of his information, sometimes distinguishing what he knows from personal experience and from a second-hand account. The text is authoritative not because it unthinkingly repeats classical or established truisms about the world, its peoples or plants. Columbus’ discoveries had demonstrated that much of this classical knowledge, derived from ancient texts, was deficient. Instead, authority is established by the traveller abroad through his or her direct experience of the “new world” and its phenomena. For example, Ligon designs a home that will take into account the environmental conditions unique to the tropics and so provide a building that will be wholesome for its inhabitants.

## The Early History of Barbados

Ligon’s history of Barbados is one of the earliest accounts of the island that we have, and he recounts how the colony was settled by the Courteens, how it was organized politically, and how the colonists experimented with different commodities before achieving economic self-sufficiency. But while Ligon reveals many important details about the island’s economy -- at the time he wrote the island traded in indigo, cotton, tobacco, ginger and fustick, and there was a shortage of meat -- it is to his discussion of sugar that most historians turn.

Ligon claims that, “Some of the most industrious men, having gotten Plants from Fernambock, a place in Brasill, and made tryall of them at the Barbadoes; and finding them to grow, they planted more and more...” Sugar, as mentioned previously, posed a series of technical challenges involving the growing of the cane from which the juice was extracted and the refining of the juice itself. Upon his arrival in 1647, Ligon was told that sugar making was new on the island, but by 1650 had developed by trial and experimentation: “they were much better’d; for then they had the skill to know when the Canes were ripe, which was not, till they were fifteen months old; and before, they gathered them at twelve, which was a main disadvantage to the making good Sugar; ... Besides, they were grown greater proficients, both in boyling and curing them, and had learnt the knowledge of making them white...” This last, the refining of white sugar, was a technical achievement that especially impressed Ligon. He credits English advances in cane cultivation to an exchange of knowledge between the planters and the Dutch in Brazil in a murky passage that suggests that the Dutch deliberately

---

60 Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World* (New Haven, 1998), pp. 51-87.

sought to develop another production center for sugar: “by new directions from Brasil, sometimes by strangers, and now and then by their own people, (who being covetous of the knowledge of a thing, which so much concerned them in their particulars, and for the generall good of the whole Iland) were content sometimes to make a voyage thither, to improve their knowledge in a thing they so much desired.” Elsewhere Ligon notes that it was a Courteen ship returning from Fernambock that first came across Barbados.<sup>61</sup> This evidence suggests that the Courteens had a trade already established with Brazil that might have encouraged the transmission of knowledge to cultivate sugar. A vast trade network tied the Caribbean plantation to the slavers and provisioners of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, the slave forts of Africa, and the markets of Europe.<sup>62</sup> These networks were connected into a globalized commerce as America silver was used to purchase products from Asia that were then sold in Europe. Yet trade was more than merely the movement of commodities: through the same capillaries through which sugar flowed, so too did people, ideas, and and the capital to purchase boilers and slaves. The plantation was a point in this network that pooled capital, demanded labor, and produced commodities.

The plantation economy with its reliance on slave labor to achieve its outputs was new in the seventeenth-century English experience. Before Barbados there had been an English slave colony on Providence Island in the 1630s and certainly slaves were present or available from early periods in many of the colonies, including Barbados.<sup>63</sup> Ligon’s thoughts on the significance and morality of slavery reflect both an acceptance of the institution of slavery and an ambivalence about the denigration of black Africans. Through English writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries praised their homeland where they claimed that “the law always favors liberty,” they were familiar with the institution both as it was actually practiced in North Africa at the time and by other Europeans in the Americas, and from authoritative writings. Justifications for slavery could be found in many texts, including the writings of Aristotle who wrote that some people were “natural slaves,” and the Bible, which contains numerous examples of slave-owning. Europeans, including the English,

---

61 This ship was captained by John Powell, the brother of Henry Powell.

62 Several texts have continued to explore these interconnections, see Kristen Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit* (Athens, 2012); Linda Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband: CuraCao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Athens, 2012); Christian Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York University, 2011).

63 The history of Providence Island is discussed by Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Providence Island 1630-1641: the Other Puritan Colony* (Cambridge, 1995).



were themselves reduced to slavery either through war or capture by Muslim states and pirates in the Mediterranean. Ransom expeditions were sometimes sent to free Christians, and in the seventeenth-century efforts were made to control and capture the vast slave mart of Salé (in modern Morocco).<sup>64</sup> Throughout parts of Africa slavery was practised and for centuries there had been a trade route that linked the supply of sub-Saharan slaves and gold to the great Arab capitals of Cairo and Damascus. Craving labor for their plantation enterprises, Europeans, beginning with the Portuguese and eventually including the Spanish, English and Dutch, reoriented this trade to the Atlantic. By doing so, they began an immense migration that carried nearly eleven million people away from Africa.<sup>65</sup>

Slavery as it was practised in the English Atlantic was characterized by extreme brutality and was increasingly a closed system with little chance of freedom for the slave. Unlike many other slave systems, including some other European systems, a slave and their descendents were trapped in the system for life with only the remotest hope of emancipation. As time passed, avenues for slaves to achieve their freedom were closed off, so that by the end of the seventeenth century even slaves who converted to Christianity could not be freed by their conversion. Only in 1772 did English courts concede that a slave who was brought to England (where slavery was not legally recognized) was freed.<sup>66</sup> The hereditary character of slavery, typically through the maternal line, relegated children to the same status as their mother. Moreover, slaves were debased to the status of property or “chattel,” and their masters given, in practice, complete control over them. Law codes were drafted to police the conduct of slaves, and support the power of their masters. Among the most influential was the Barbadian code that was imitated in other colonies, including Jamaica.<sup>67</sup> Finally, and perhaps most significantly, English slave regimes in the Americas were increasingly racialized. If in the earliest stages of the plantation economy it was possible that white indentured laborers tended the fields alongside black slaves, over time the racial character of the plantation’s labor organization became more pronounced. Whites were planters, masters, and overseers, and field labor was undertaken by blacks. Around this separation of labor

---

64 Gerald Aylmer, “Slavery under Charles II: the Mediterranean and Tangier,” *English Historical Review* 114 (1999), pp. 378-88.

65 For numerical and other information on the trans-Atlantic slave trade, see [The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](#). For an excellent scholarly survey see David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (Cambridge, 2007).

66 [Somerset’s Case \(1772\)](#).

67 Alan Watson, *Slave Law in the Americas* (Athens, 1989).

grew up racist discourses that attempted to naturalize the subservient position of blacks. It was claimed that blacks were marked by the “Curse of Ham” to be servants or they were likened by white contemporaries to animals best suited to laboring in the fields.<sup>68</sup>

When Ligon visited the island in 1647 he did so at a stage of its transition to this highly racialized regime. There were two broad conditions of “unfreedom” that exist on the Barbados. Many field laborers were still indentured servants, an arrangement suited to the labor demands of the Atlantic colonies and the expense of transportation. Poor persons in England, Scotland or Ireland who sought passage to the colonies but were unable to pay could contract with the ship captain through an indenture. In return for transportation, the individual agreed to work for a fixed number of years (often 5-7). Upon completion of their term, they would be released from their indenture and possibly, depending on the terms of the contract, receive “freedom dues,” such as land, animals, or a small payment. These dues were intended to prepare the servant to setup their own farmstead or even plantation and continue the process of populating the colony. Yet Ligon, among others, observes that the treatment of white servants by the planters was even worse than slaves. He writes that “I have seen an Overseer beat a Servant with a cane about the head, till the blood has followed, for a fault that is not worth the speaking of; and yet he must have patience, or worse will follow. Truly, I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another.” The planters viewed the servants as laborers only for a time, and sought to extract the maximum labor for their outlay.<sup>69</sup>

The servants, for their part, resented their treatment and Ligon writes that upon his arrival an uprising of Irish servants had just been thwarted. Only the betrayal by one of their number had prevented the servants from rebelling to overthrow their masters. The laws that protected the social order and ensured that masters ruled and servants and slaves obeyed insisted on brutal punishment: eighteen of the conspirators were executed.<sup>70</sup> Ligon blamed cruel masters for the rebellion: “And yet some cruell Masters will provoke their Servants so, by extream ill usage, and often and cruell beating them, as they grow desperate, and so joyne together to revenge themselves upon them.”

The second condition of “unfreedom” and the most studied, was life-long,

---

68 The literature on the “curse” is extensive, but see David Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Princeton, 2003), and Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 54:1 (1997), pp. 103-142.

69 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 71.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

hereditary slavery. Ligon writes that slaves were obtained in battle in Africa and then resold to European traders, or through the sale of children, servants and even wives. The planters kept their slaves in obedience through three means: the denial of weapons, the use of terror to keep them “awe,” and because “They are fetch’d from severall parts of Africa, who speake severall languages, and by that means, one of them understands not another...” The slaves were purchased in the market and selected on the basis of physical qualities and their origins in Africa. English slave-owners developed a range of stereotypes about different African peoples, believing some to be more hard-working or less likely to revolt than others. Their goal in selecting from a variety of backgrounds was to keep the slaves divided by language and culture. The cycle of the week for the slave and servant was dominated by work: “Christians, and slaves” toiled in the fields for ten hours every day excepting Sundays.<sup>71</sup>

## Ligon and Human Bondage

Ligon’s own thinking about the slave society whose formation he was witnessing remains unclear. For instance, did he think slavery was wrong or that the planters were brutal? Is the *History* a veiled criticism of planter society, the view generally held by the most recent historiography?<sup>72</sup> Does Ligon believe, as one historian has argued, that “Barbados is a place afflicted with extreme social disorder”?<sup>73</sup> At one point Ligon acknowledges the violence inherent in the plantation system when he writes, “For the sense of feeling, it can be applyed but two waies, either in doing or suffering; the poor Negres and Christian servants, finde it perfectly upon their heads and shoulders, by the hands of their severe Overseers; so that little pleasure is given the sense, by this coercive kind of feeling...” At another point he observes that servants and slaves labored so strenuously that this had led to a “decay of their spirits.”<sup>74</sup> We learn that servants and slaves eat the bodies of diseased cattle, because meat was in such short supply on the island. Yet when Ligon tells the story of Africans who commit suicide in the hopes that their souls might return to Africa, he does so not as an example of the desperation felt by the slaves. Instead the story is used as an example of their errors of belief and an opportunity for a European (in this case Colonel Walrond) to correct his slaves. One of the most pressing questions that emerges from a reading of the *History* is

---

71 Ibid., p. 49.

72 Stevenson, “Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire,” pp. 301-308.

73 Susan Scott Parish, “Richard Ligon and the Atlantic Science of Commonwealths,” p. 223.

74 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 68.

the extent to which Ligon understands the motivations of the slaves and the brutality of the system that he was describing. Although Ligon complains of the treatment accorded servants by “cruel masters,” he adds that “But, as discreeter and better natur’d men have come to rule there, the servants lives have been much bettered; for now, most of the servants lie in Hamocks, and in warm rooms, and when they come in wet, have shift of shirts and drawers, which is all the cloths they were, and are fed with bone meat twice or thrice a week.”

Ligon describes the planters, as, “Loving, friendly, and hospitable one to another...” The planters, despite their reputation in England as opportunists, are represented at their most ideal in the description of Colonel Walrond. Walrond, we are told, was conscientious in promoting the health of his servants: “Collonell Walrond seeing his servants when they came home, toyled with their labour, and wet through with their sweating, thought that shifting of their linnen not sufficient refreshing, nor warmth for their bodies, their pores being much opened by their sweating; and therefore resolved to send into England for rug-Gownes, such as poor people wear in Hospitalls, that so when they had shifted themselves, they might put on those Gowns, and lie down and rest them in their Hamocks...” Walrond was mindful not only of the pursuit of profit (he is among the best plantation managers on the island), but also the need to maintain the necessary gentlemanly lifestyle of leisure and delight, “For, he being a Gentleman, that had been bred with much freedome, liberty, and plenty, in England, could not set his mind so earnestly upon his profit, as to forget his accustomed lawfull pleasures, but would have his Table well furnish’d, with all sorts of good meat the Land and Sea afforded.”

Modern readers will find the enslaving of other humans by the planters reprehensible. Ligon’s own attitude seems less critical. The *History*, it has already been argued, explicitly prompts its readers to consider how they can benefit from the plantation economy - how they could perhaps one day lead the life of the planter-gentleman. He does not seem to believe that the slave-master relationship was entirely built on violence. Rather, suggests that this relationship could be informed by reciprocity and “paternalism”: that slaves and servants surrendered their freedom and obeyed their master in return for protection and care. The master, in fact, should treat his servants and slaves well, managing them so as to cultivate their “love.” Ligon provides the example of Colonel Walrond who treats his servants with kindness so that they “love him” and prevent danger to the plantation: “But this care and charity of Collonell Walrond’s, lost him nothing in the conclusion; for, he got such love of his servants, as they thought all too little they could do for him.” Indeed, Ligon believed that slaves could also be exceptionally dedicated to the preservation of their master’s

property, and he describes seeing some beating a spreading fire with their feet to put it out: “And I have seen some Negres so earnest to stop this fire, as with their naked feet to tread, and with their naked bodies to tumble, and roll upon it; so little they regard their own smart or safety, in respect of their Masters benefit.” Key to Ligon’s understanding of the master-servant/slave relationship, as historians have recognized, was the notion of “reciprocity.”<sup>75</sup> One possibility is that Ligon attempted to interpret planter society, with its violent labor regime and extreme profit orientation, through a traditional set of values derived from paternalistic ideas. These paternalistic ideas were later used on the American mainland to justify slave-owning, and they derived from English beliefs that landowners should take care of their workers and servants like a father protects and disciplines his children.<sup>76</sup>

## Reciprocity and the Plantation

The idea of reciprocity is found in Ligon’s most explicitly political statement. At the moment of his first sighting of Barbados Ligon observes in nature the pattern of a well-governed commonwealth. Admiring with wonder the tall trees on Barbados and their vernal splendor, Ligon notes that they depend for their life and growth on the “earth and roots.” The trees reciprocate, “in gratitude,” shade and protection from the sun. This principle of reciprocation was a commonplace of early modern English political thought. Yet Ligon also engages the political theory of Thomas Hobbes when he likens the political commonwealth to a “Leviathan.”<sup>77</sup> Hobbes had used this biblical image of the immense sea-beast to describe the unity of all the individual members of a commonwealth into a single political body. This political body was the Leviathan, an immense and irresistible power. The image of this political body was not new to Hobbes, and traditional English political theory had often likened individuals and their social classes to members of a larger body. Each part of the body functioned to help the whole, just as organs and appendages of the natural body made survival possible for the entire organism. The model implied that each person had their allotted place but were dependent on each other: kings ruled, but farmers fed them. Reciprocation and harmony among parts was key to

---

75 Stevenson, “Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire,” p. 306.

76 Ibid., pp. 306-308.

77 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* (London, 1651). (The [frontispiece](#) of *Leviathan* portrays the “body politic” of the commonwealth).

the success of the political organism. The rulers or head of the body were expected to provide “prudent and carefull protection” and to oversee the ruled, to “secure them from harmes...” In return, the ruled offered “[faithfull obedience, to serve them in all just Commands.](#)” Obedience was returned for protection, and the whole body politic was bound together “[mutually in love.](#)” Ligon’s reference to Leviathan perhaps evinces a yearning of England’s lost political stability and the idea that all members of the commonwealth should cooperate rather than wage bloody civil war. Historians have also considered the extent to which Ligon’s passing reference to “Leviathan” signals an engagement with Thomas Hobbes’ political philosophy.<sup>78</sup>

Was the plantation rationalized by Ligon as another system where reciprocity operated to justify unequal power relations? Ligon is aware of the often subtle resistance of the island’s unfree laborers, noting that many planters had lost property through fire possibly through the “wilfulness” of servants.<sup>79</sup> Yet the cause is often compartmentalized to the cruelties of a single master. Laborers resist because they are treated poorly, not because they come to resent their unfree status. Ultimately, Ligon seems to pose the question: is resistance the consequence of poor plantation management or the repulsion of slaves and servants at their unfree condition?

Ligon reveals no sentimentality about the selling of life when he re-tells the story of the sale of the slave [Honor](#). Instead he provides a humorous interlude illustrating the importance of hard work.<sup>80</sup> Such a perspective leads Ligon to praise the planters who prosper from their industry and from their command of the labor of others. In contrast to the “lazy” Honor, they operate at the productive end of the labor spectrum. Keeping their slaves laboring and obedient are characteristics that make planters praiseworthy. Ligon writes that, “[I can name a Planter there, that feeds daily two hundred mouths, and keeps them in such order, as there are no mutinies amongst them and yet of severall nations. All these are to be employed in their severall abilities, so as no one be idle.](#)”

---

78 Susan Scott Parrish, “Richard Ligon and the Atlantic Science of Commonwealths,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd Series, 67:2 (2010), pp. 209-248; Stevenson, “Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire,” p. 304.

79 For contemporary accounts of these uprisings in [Early English Books Online](#), see Nicholas Foster, *A Briefe Relation of the late Horrid Rebellion in Barbados* (London, 1650), Wing E1388, and *Great Newes from Barbados: A True and Faithfull Account of the Grand Conspiracy of the Negroes against the English, and the Happy Discovery of the Same* (London, 1676), Wing G1733. 77; see also Jerome Handler, “Slave Revolts and Conspiracies in Seventeenth-Century Barbados,” in *Nieuwe West-Indische Gids / New West Indian Guide* 56 (1982), pp. 5–42.

80 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 91 .



Central to this achievement was the economic organization of the plantation: the operation of a large plantation was impressive to an early modern European. Ligon came from a world frequently visited by famine and want. With the exception of shipyards (usually among the largest industrial enterprises in a state), the economic system's industrial capacity was largely centered on small workshops and piecemeal production. Although agriculture had been transformed over the preceding century to become more efficient, even large land-owners rented out much of their land to tenant farmers in England. The large business enterprises designed to pool capital and split liability that existed were limited to merchant firms that were often short-lived: the idea of the private, profit-oriented corporation was still in its infancy. In this world where economic enterprise was typically of a limited scale and famine still recurred every few years, the ability of a planter to feed and co-ordinate several hundred workers was unusual.

Ligon does not suggest that the plantation system should be overthrown: in fact, he condemns those who seek to undermine it. His values are evident when he discusses the warning by the slave Sambo of a rebellion. The plotting of the rebellious slaves is labelled "treachery," while Sambo's betrayal of his fellow slaves and collaboration is interpreted as loyalty. Sambo is praised as "[ingenious, as honest, and as good a natured poor soul, as ever wore black, or eat green.](#)" Ligon never pauses to consider why the slaves might be justified in their resistance or whether the institution of slavery itself might be wrong or unjust. Instead, his interpretation reveals his rejection of rebellion and his preoccupation with maintaining the labor system. Slaves, such as Sambo, are expected to behave loyally.

What are Ligon's criticisms of the plantation system? Where the planters are remiss is their failure to allow Christian conversion among their slaves. The planters resist conversion because they believe that it will manumit or free their slaves. It was generally assumed during the period that one Christian could not hold another in slavery, and one of the justifications for slavery was that holding heathens in subjection was legitimate. Over time, statutes in the slave colonies barred converted slaves from obtaining their freedom. Objecting to their opposition to conversion, Ligon comes closest to criticizing the planters, though not, planter society itself:

[My contemplation being only this, that since those men dwelling in that place professing the names of Christians, and denying to preach to those poor ignorant harmless souls the Negroes, the doctrine of Christ Crucified, which might convert many of them to his worship, he himself has set up his own Crosse, to reproach these men, who rather than they](#)

will loose the hold they have of them as slaves, will deny them the benefit and blessing of being Christians...

At another point in the text Ligon observes how human greed can overcome morality. The story of Yarico, the Indian maiden who rescued a shipwrecked Englishman who was about to be killed by her people, passed from Ligon into European literature and drama.<sup>81</sup> It was poignant: Yarico falls in love and rescues a European. The episode echoes the rescue of John Smith by Pocahontas. Leaving her people to accompany him, Yarico is abandoned by the European and sold into slavery: “for her love, [she] lost her liberty.” The passage immediately follows a discussion of Indian falsehood and deviousness, and was perhaps Ligon’s way of suggesting that such behavior was universal among humans – Christian and heathen alike. In his telling of the story of Yarico and his complaint that the planters will not permit the Christianization of their slaves, he momentarily acknowledges the workings of self-interest and the powerful monetary incentives that the slave economy created.

The *History’s* moral tension does not include those facts that modern readers find reprehensible: the institution of slavery itself or the daily violence inflicted on the slaves. Rather Ligon occasionally interrogates how the pursuit of wealth undermines traditional duties and values. For example, he reveals that planters seeking to maximize their gains fully employed their laborers in the fields. Their allocation of labor meant that they had no workers to improve their homes, which were consequently of poor quality.<sup>82</sup> His observation is subtle, but suggests that Ligon is alert to the ways in which greed can overcome good judgement, such as the construction of a high quality home or the Christian duty to convert the heathen. Similarly the betrayal of Yarico exposes how monetary gain can undermine even basic obligations, such as the debt of gratitude owed to a rescuer. One of the most interesting opportunities for study of the *History* is to relate Ligon’s frame of values to the plantation economy: does he believe, for instance, that the plantation is morally corrosive? Does the plantation economy undermine traditional values and Christian ideals? Does he accept the plantation economy as a whole, but recognize how its incentives can corrupt human behavior?

---

81 Discussions of the history of the story and examples of its use include *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race and Slavery in the New World: an Inkle and Yarico Reader*, ed. Frank Felsenstein (Baltimore, 1999).

82 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 70.

## The Ethnographic Dimension

Ligon's observations in the *History* also contribute to our understanding of the prejudices of Englishmen of the period towards other people. Historians have hotly debated whether the English viewed blacks negatively even before they encountered them on trading and slaving missions.<sup>83</sup> Did the English, for example, have a "color prejudice" against non-white persons? Ligon's adopts the Portuguese term, "negroes" or "blacks" to describe the Africans he encounters suggesting that he viewed them as a single group defined by their skin-color. He makes little attempt to distinguish among African cultures though he is aware that the slaves are themselves from diverse backgrounds and unable to understand each other's languages. Instead he offers seemingly conflicting judgments about the Africans he encounters. On the one hand he is fascinated and even smitten by Padre Vago's mistress. He uses his meeting with her to test whether blacks have white or off-white teeth. In his description of her the mistress is likened to Anne, the queen of England.<sup>84</sup> Her maiden companions are represented positively as modest and chaste, in contrast to Ligon's self-admitted lust for them. Yet ominously he seems to project his own impulses onto them, declaring that they "commit rapes upon our affection."

Aesthetically Ligon declares that male Africans are "well-formed" according to Dürer's rules of proportion, while females are not. Blacks, in general, can be "handsome" and the sight of them pleasing, as when Ligon exclaims, "tis a lovely sight to see a hundred handsome Negroes, men and women, with every one a grasse-green bunch of these fruits on their heads ... all comming in a train one after another, the black and green so well becomming one another." Yet Ligon also declares that "negro bodies" have none of the "sweetest savours" and pollute the waters that they bath in.

Ligon represents Africans as simple. They are satisfied with little: "They are happy people, whom so little contents. Very good servants, if they be not spoyled by the English." They have an innocence perhaps related to their simplicity – Ligon writes that they are sexually restrained: "Chast they are as any people under the Sun; for, when

---

83 Kim Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY, 1995); P.E.H. Hair, "Attitudes to Africans in English Primary Sources on Guinea up to 1650," *History in Africa*, 26 (1999), pp. 43-68; April Lee Hatfield, "A 'very wary people in their bargaining' or 'very good merchandise': english traders' views of free and enslaved Africans, 1550-1650," *Slavery and Abolition* (2004), 25:3, pp. 1-17. The classic account of English attitudes, though much debated, is Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill, 2012).

84 Another interpretation of the mistress of Padre Vago is Stevenson, "Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire," p. 300.

the men and women are together naked, they never cast their eyes towards the parts that ought to be covered...” Despite their simplicity, or perhaps because of it, they are also frequently cunning and cowardly when faced with violence. Yet violence is also a means of conditioning their behavior. As evidence that coercion should at times be preferred to reason, Ligon offers a story revealing the mistakenness of African beliefs. He reports that an African slave will hang his wife if she gives birth to twins. He then recounts how a planter threatened to do the same to his own slave if he hanged his wife. The lesson that Ligon draws from this anecdote is: “This threatning wrought more with him [the slave], then all the reasons of Philosophy that could be given him...” Violence can thus have more effect on the slave than reasoning, and Ligon repeats this claim elsewhere: “They are a people of a timerous and fearfull disposition, and consequently bloody, when they finde advantages. If any of them commit a fault, give him present punishment, but do not threaten him; for if you do, it is an even lay, he will go and hang himselfe, to avoid the punishment.”

Yet savage and violent though Africans may be in his portrayal, they nonetheless have potential to “improve.” Ligon ascribes to Africans whom he has met the noble qualities of restraint and dignity, and a capacity to be educated and trained. They have a grasp of divinity, even if they are not organized in their religious practice: “Religion they know none; yet most of them acknowledge a God.” Their vague grasp of “true” Christian beliefs is revealed when Ligon explains that Africans believe in a resurrection, as did Christians of the period, and the return of the spirit after death to its homeland. Yet the African understanding of resurrection and the migration of the spirit diverges from Christian doctrine and leads them into error. Ligon explains that African slaves commit suicide hoping to return to their homes across the ocean. In response to this behavior, Ligon offers the example of Colonel Walrond, who places the bodies of his dead slaves in public view to prove that there is no return to Africa.

There are at least two explanations for the ambivalence that seems to inform Ligon’s description of Africans. As recent historiography has argued, English reports of Africans are highly influenced by the context in which the meeting took place. In Ligon’s case, this context depends on whether they were wealthy, Europeanized hosts on the Cape Verde Islands or impoverished slaves on Barbados.<sup>85</sup> A second explanation is that Ligon holds prejudices about Africans as a group that often break down when he encounters and engages with individuals. This suggests that Ligon believed that Africans could be bettered through exposure to Europeans. For example, as a group, he describes Africans as being without “Letters and Numbers, which is the soul of all businesse that is acted by Mortalls, upon the Globe of this World.” Yet Ligon assures

---

85 Hatfield, “A ‘very wary people in their bargaining,’” p. 3.

his readers that there were many individuals among “these people” who had qualities that Europeans would recognize as positive:

Though there be a marke set upon these people, which will hardly ever be wip'd off, as of their cruelties when they have advantages, and of their fearfulness and falsnesse; yet no rule so generall but hath his acception: for I beleive, and I have strong motives to cause me to bee of that perswasion, that there are as honest, faithfull, and conscionable people amongst them, as amongst those of Europe, or any other part of the world.

This distinction between individuals and Africans as a group is again revealed during Ligon's discussion of Africans brought up by Europeans and imbued with some of their culture: “Some of them, who have been bred up amongst the Portugalls, have some extraordinary qualities, which the others have not; as singing and fencing. I have seen some of these Portugall Negres, at Collonell James Draxes, play at Rapier and Dagger very skilfully, with their Stookados, their Imbrocados, and their Passes.” Here Ligon implicitly acknowledges the fact that many Africans had become familiar with European culture through contact with Spanish and Portuguese traders. Portugal in particular had nearly two centuries of contact with the African mainland before Ligon wrote. Those parts of Africa whose peoples had had extensive contact with Iberians, such as Angola, had groups who had taken up Christianity, Iberian names, and European customs. These “Atlantic creoles” might find themselves voluntarily or involuntarily migrating into the larger Atlantic world.<sup>86</sup>

As Ligon meets African individuals, he focuses on these positive qualities, such as the attractiveness and dignified bearing of Padre Vago's mistress or the behavior of some slaves who beat out plantation fires with their feet in order to protect their master's property. He relates the story of teaching Macow the theorbo and declares that Africans are capable of learning the arts (though elsewhere we are told that they are not as crafty as the “Indians”).<sup>87</sup> He admires their music, dance and wrestling. At least one African

---

86 For an extensive discussion of “creolization” and African influence on the shaping of the early modern Atlantic world, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), and Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660* (Cambridge, 2007). Robin Law and Kristin Mann, “West Africa in the Atlantic Community: the Case of the Slave Coast,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 56:2 (1999), pp. 307-334.

87 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 85.

seems to gain Ligon's admiration: Sambo. Sambo's revelation of a plot by a group of slaves to sabotage a plantation's boiling house demonstrates individual virtue even though Africans as a group incline to treachery. Sambo, as a sign of his devotedness to his planter master, refuses a reward for revealing the plot, an action that Ligon judges "might have beseem'd the best Christians." Ligon summarizes his judgment about Africans – as a group he is suspicious of them, but his inquiries have revealed that there are many fine individuals: "Let others have what opinion they please, yet I am of this believe; that there are to be found amongst them, some who are as morally honest, as Conscionable, as humble, as loving to their friends, and as loyall to their Masters, as any that live under the sunne, & one reason they have to be so, is, they set no great value upon their lives..."

## Ligon and Natural Science

Alongside the *History's* ethnographic observations are Ligon's inquiries into the natural world. The inclusion of content that we would consider both cultural and natural was common to the genre of travel writing, and Ligon adds to this both a deep curiosity about natural phenomenon, an appreciation for the beauty of the tropical world around him, and a background in the arts and sciences. He was foremost a student of art and architecture, but his learning is extensive, if at times superficial, taking in both the classics of Vitruvius and Pliny and contemporary writers of the new sciences such as Sir Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes. The Atlantic world that Ligon sails into is a world filled with the new and the wondrous that he reports with a keen sense of observation. Moreover, he transforms his observations into advice: whether he is recommending the breeding of pigs to the planters (which leads to the producing of larger pigs), or writing the *History*.<sup>88</sup>

His text reveals his interest in many of the new technologies that had made European expansion possible. He is fascinated by nautical instruments and discusses their use extensively. He applies mathematics to problems of business and calculating proportion, and relies upon the information of Captain Swann, a surveyor, to report the size of Barbados. He is also filled with awe by the natural world around him -- by the "new" that Europeans had encountered as they left the familiar homes. The night sky of the southern latitudes, for instance, captivates him with its strange constellations. He is receptive to the beauty around him and suggests that knowledge of the Americas contests assumptions about the natural world received through classical texts such as Vitruvius.

---

88 Ibid., p. 38.



Nature is not separate from human society in Ligon's understanding, reflecting an assumption about knowledge of the period. Knowledge was universally joined, so that religion, ethics, architecture, natural science, and so forth overlapped and contained a common wisdom. At its highest this common wisdom represents God's plan implicit throughout nature and human society. Consequently, the forms of nature, society and divinity were related and interpenetrated.<sup>89</sup> For example, the bonano reveals a shape like Christ on the cross. The consuming of lesser fish by greater proves the rule that the powerful will oppress the weaker. The natural world teaches other lessons and Ligon is a willing observer, studying the work of ants consuming a cockroach. From his experimentation with these ants he offers the lesson that individuals may perish so that the good of the whole society might benefit: when he lures the ants with a bowl of sugar, many of them must die so that a bridge can be created with their bodies and the other ants collect the sugar.

Likewise in the process of colonization, many Europeans perished while some survived. Ligon's concern over tropical poisons and diseases was well-placed, since he knew from first-hand experience that many Europeans did not survive the crossing or died soon after their arrival in the Americas. This process, known as "seasoning," was the result of the exposure to a different climate and disease environment. Europeans had different interpretations, believing that some bodies were simply better suited to different latitudes. This theory, developed in antiquity, was not value-neutral. Some writers, for instance, supposed that Africans were ideal slaves in the tropics because their bodies were better acclimated to the scorching heat. Similarly, Ligon warns that bodies used to colder climates are weakened in the tropics.<sup>90</sup>

The *History* reveals Ligon's preoccupation with disease and decay. He was, after all, surrounded by it as he wrote: the Upper Bench Prison was notoriously unhealthy, and disease appears as a focal point in the narrative at least twice in the *History*: both upon his arrival in Barbados when "the living were hardly able to bury the dead," and upon his departure when Ligon himself was fighting an illness. He attributes disease not to germs -- germ theory was not yet understood -- but instead to poor diets, the "distempers" of people, and the growth of disease at sea in the cramped quarters of ships. Appealing to commonplace medical ideas, Ligon asserts that disease is mostly caused by an imbalance in the body and he at times alludes to humoral theory. Humoral theory was first postulated by the ancient Greek writers and systematized by

---

89 On the parallelism between human society and the natural world, see Stevenson, "Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire," p. 291.

90 Ligon, *True and Exact History*, p. 51.

Galen (fl. 2nd century BCE) Subsequently it formed the core of early modern medical theory. The idea that the health of the body was governed by four “humors” – blood, bile, black bile, and phlegm. The humors must be kept in balance, for an abundance or lack of any one humor would lead to ill health. Exposure to too much heat or the overconsumption of alcohol could lead to an imbalance. Indeed, Ligon frequently mentions the heat of the island. The temperature causes metal to rust quickly and Europeans to suffer poor health.

## Ligon’s Final Years

Ligon describes his own encounter with grave illness when he lay in Modyford’s house, near death: “[that he saw me dead without any appearance of life, three several times, not as in sounding but dying fits, and yet recover’d at last.](#)” Helped by Modyford and Walrond, Ligon was able to recover slowly. Specifically why he chose to leave the island, he does not say other than he embarked in April 1650, but his illness seems to have played the critical role. He was, he writes nearly delirious, and the crossing back to England proved violent and unsettled. The ship encountered a storm and a mistake by the Portuguese helmsman, misunderstanding a (presumably) English instruction, led to the destruction of the ship’s sails. Stranded at sea, the passengers and crew become increasingly panicky. Talk of cannibalism was muttered, but the ship was saved by a passenger, described as a virgin, who rethreaded the sails.

The writing of the *History* and Ligon’s life after his return to England in 1650 are obscure and it has generally been assumed that he was imprisoned for debt soon after his arrival and wrote the *History* in prison. The evidence is spare, but with the aid of a pamphlet that Ligon wrote to defend himself in a lawsuit we can begin to unravel his subsequent story.<sup>91</sup> At least until 1652 he was staying with William Killigrew at Lady Strafford’s (Killigrew’s mother) house in London. Although claiming that he was impoverished (though at one point he acknowledges that William Killigrew owed him £52), the immediate financial threat to Ligon was a debt for which he had stood surety (liable for the debt of another). This debt of £1500 was owed by Henry Killigrew, Ligon’s old business partner. When Henry died, he had made a provision for Ligon to pay the debt through the income from a property held in trust. After the repayment, the proceeds of the trust would then be conveyed to Henry’s wife Jane. However, if Ligon is to be believed, Jane was embittered over the losses she had sustained over her own investments in the fens and sought to possess Henry’s entire estate. Her intent was

---

91 Richard Lygon, *Severall Circumstances to prove that Mistress Jane Berkeley and Sir William Killigrew have Combined Together...* (London, 1653), Wing L3560.

to maximize her gain by reducing the debts she needed to pay. The result was several years of legal wrangling between Ligon, Jane, and her ally the treacherous William Killigrew. Jane sought to trick Ligon into releasing his trust and allowing the income to be returned to her, but Ligon refused and instead sued her in the court of Chancery over her machinations.<sup>92</sup> By August 1652 Ligon had run out of money and was soon after arrested for his debts, possibly at the instigation of Jane and William. His letter to Brian Duppa, written from the Upper Bench Prison is dated July 12, 1653, and his pamphlet defending his name appears to have been published in March 1654 from prison.<sup>93</sup>

Yet before his imprisonment he had already been attempting to record his observations of Barbados. In the prefatory letter to his patron, Brian Duppa, Bishop of Salisbury, in the *History* Ligon notes that in 1651 he sent a private correspondence about the island to Duppa.<sup>94</sup> Presumably this text formed the foundation, if not the majority of the text, of the later work, though the reference to Thomas Hobbes suggests that the text was still being drafted after 1651. Duppa, Ligon tells us, urged him to publish it, “for the common benefit of those, who intend to spend their times, and venture their fortunes upon such undertakings...” Yet wanting of funds, Ligon could not publish his book. Meanwhile, however, he began to undertake drawings of the island and its vegetation, presumably the inspiration for those copperplates that were included in the final, printed book. Ligon suggests that these early paintings were purchased by Duppa, which led him to begin to paint more ambitious pieces of the life on the island. He was “designing a piece of Landscape, and one of Story, wherein I meant to expresse the postures of the Negres, in their severall kinds of Sports and Labours...” when his painting was interrupted by his imprisonment. His confinement and limited resources led him “to expresse my designes in Black and White...” The book was drafted by July 1653 when Ligon presented it to Duppa.<sup>95</sup> How much of the *History* was written before or during his imprisonment is difficult to discern. Yet it seems that the production of most of the images and probably the majority of the text was completed before his jailing.

Ligon’s imprisonment was mercifully brief, and he was released under the

---

92 The National Archives, Kew, England; Court of Chancery, C 10/46/116.

93 The pamphlet is marked and dated in a contemporary hand to March 18, 1653 (old style dating). The title of the pamphlet indicates that “I lye now in prison.” Lygon, *Severall Circumstances*.

94 Ligon’s [letter to Duppa](#) in 1653, included in *The History*, claimed that the draft text “has layne in the dark this two years.”

95 As acknowledged by Duppa, *The Letter of the Bishop of Sar*.

provisions of a statute passed in October 1653 for the aid of “Creditors and Poor Prisoners.”<sup>96</sup> It was not until 1657 that *The History* was finally published by Humphrey Moseley. Ligon’s final years were spent in poverty and dependent on the charity of his family, especially his cousin, Edward Berkeley. In July 1659 when he drafted his will, Ligon claimed that he owed “greate sommes of money to several persons ... at present I am noe wayes able to pay nor to give my selfe such necessites as may keepe me from cold or hunger without the charitie of my deare friend and cousin Edward Berkly...”<sup>97</sup> All that remained to Ligon was his claim on the 543 acres of fenland that rioters had seized from him, and this land he left to Berkeley in order to pay his debts. Ligon appears to have lived in Pill, Somerset until his death in 1662.<sup>98</sup>

---

96     [“An Act for the relief of Creditors and Poor Prisoners,”](#) *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660* (1911), pp. 753-764.

97     The National Archives, Kew, England, PROB 11/308 f. 105r

98     Karen Ordahl Kupperman, ‘Ligon, Richard (c.1585–1662)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74579>]



## Selected Further Reading

### Other Editions

Ligon, Richard. 2011. *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*. Ed. Karen Ordahl Kupperman. Hackett Publishing Co.

### Early Modern Britain, Surveys

Coward, Barry. *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1714*. 4th ed. Longman, 2011

Kishlansky, Mark. *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603-1714*. Penguin, 1997

Lockyer, Roger. *Tudor and Stuart Britain: 1485-1714*. 3rd ed. Longman, 2005

### The Early Modern Atlantic World, Surveys

Armitage, David, and Michael Braddick, eds. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. 2nd ed. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Benjamin, Thomas. *The Atlantic World: Europeans, Africans, Indians and Their Shared History, 1400-1900*. Cambridge University Press. 2009

Egerton, Douglas R., Alison Games, et al. *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400-1888*. Harlan Davidson, 2007.

Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 1998

Thornton, John. *A Cultural History of the Atlantic World, 1250-1820*. Cambridge University Press, 2012

## Early Modern Barbados and the Caribbean

Block, Kristen. *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit*. University of Georgia Press, 2012

Beckles, Hilary McD. *A History of Barbados : From Amerindian Settlement to the Nation-State*. Cambridge University Press, 1990

Gragg, Larry Dale. *Englishmen Transplanted : the English Colonization of Barbados, 1627-1660*. Oxford University Press, 2003

Handler, Jerome S. *A Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834*. 1972

———. *Supplement to a Guide to Source Materials for the Study of Barbados History, 1627-1834*. 1991

Harlow, Vincent Todd. *A History of Barbados, 1625-1688*. Oxford University Press, 1926

Koot, Christian. *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713*. New York University Press, 2011

Puckrein, Gary. *Little England : Plantation Society and Anglo-Barbadian Politics, 1627-1700*. New York University Press, 1984

Williams, Eric. *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean 1492-1969*. Vintage, 1984

## Richard Ligon

Ligon, W. D. *The Ligon Family and Connections*. 1947

Lioi, Anthony. “Delight Is a Slave to Dominion : Awakening to Empire with Richard Ligon’s *History*.” In *Early Modern Ecostudies : from Florentine Codex to Shakespeare*. Ed. Hallock, Thomas et al., 219–33. Palgrave Macmillan, 2008



Parrish, Susan Scott. "Richard Ligon and the Atlantic Science of Commonwealths." *William and Mary Quarterly* 67 (2) 2010: 209–48.

Stevenson, Jane. "Richard Ligon and the Theatre of Empire." In *Shaping the Stuart World, 1603-1714 : the Atlantic Connection*. Eds. Williamson, Arthur H.; Macinnes, Allan, 285–310. Brill, 2005

## **Atlantic Slavery**

Beckles, Hilary McD. *Natural Rebels : A Social History of Enslaved Black Women in Barbados*. Rutgers University Press, 1989

———. "The Concept of 'White Slavery' in the English Caribbean During the Early Seventeenth Century." In *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*. Ed. Staves, Susan; Brewer, John, 572–84. Routledge, 1995

———. "Freedom Without Liberty : Free Blacks in the Barbados Slave System." In *Slavery Without Sugar : Diversity in Caribbean Economy and Society Since the 17th Century*. Ed. Shepherd, Verene, 199–223. University Press of Florida, 2002

Berlin, Ira. *Many Thousands Gone : the First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998

Eltis, David. *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas*. Cambridge University Press, 2000

Gragg, Larry. "'To Procure Negroes' : the English Slave Trade to Barbados, 1627-60." *Slavery & Abolition* 16 (1) 1995: 65–84.

Handler, Jerome S. "Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados." *Slavery & Abolition* 19 (1) 1998: 129–41.

Handler, Jerome S, and John T Pohlmann. "Slave Manumissions and Freedmen in Seventeenth-Century Barbados." *William and Mary Quarterly* 41 (3) 1984: 390–408.

Jordan, Winthrop. *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812*, 2nd ed. The University of North Carolina Press, 2012

Lovejoy, Paul. *Transformations in slavery: a history of slavery in Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 2011

Candido, Mariana. *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and its Hinterland*. Cambridge University Press, 2013

Petley, Christer. “New Perspectives on Slavery and Emancipation in the British Caribbean.” *Historical Journal* 54 (3) 2011: 855–880.

Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery*. University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

### **Sugar and the Plantation Complex**

Curtin, Philip D. *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex : Essays in Atlantic History*. Cambridge, 1990

Dunn, Richard. *Sugar and Slaves : The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. University of North Carolina Press, 1972

Handler, Jerome S. “Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in Barbados.” *Slavery & Abolition* 19 (1) 1998: 129–41.

McCusker, John J, and Russell R Menard. “The Sugar Industry in the Seventeenth Century : a New Perspective on the Barbadian ‘Sugar Revolution’.” In *Tropical Babels : Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680*. Ed. Schwartz, Stuart B., 289–330. University of North Carolina Press, 2004

Menard, Russell R. *Sweet Negotiations : Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*. University of Virginia Press, 2006

Mintz, Stanley. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in the Modern World*. New Edition. Penguin, 1986.

Parker, Matthew. *The Sugar Barons: Family, Corruption, Empire, and War in the West Indies*. Walker & Company, 2011

Schwartz, Stuart B. *Tropical Babylons : Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680*. University of North Carolina Press, 2004

Sheridan, Richard. *Sugar and Slavery : An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974

Thompson, Peter. "Henry Drax's Instructions on the Management of a Seventeenth-Century Barbadian Sugar Plantation." *William and Mary Quarterly* 66 (3) 2009: 565–604.

## Websites

Visit the British Library's [Caribbean Histories Revealed](#) for an overview of the region's history and to examine original historical documents.

The [William Clements Library](#) hosts an online exhibit on the sugar trade in the Atlantic with references to primary source material related to consumption and commerce.

Learn about the slave trade with detailed statistical evidence and information about individual voyages at the authoritative [Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database](#).

The [International Slavery Museum](#) has information on the lives of slaves in the Caribbean and archaeological evidence.

Visual sources on Africa, the slave trade, and the experience of slaves in the Americas can be found at this website on the [Atlantic Slave Trade](#).

[Documenting the American South](#) makes available numerous North American slave narratives and material on slavery and abolition. This site also holds a wide variety of visual material.

Send Us Your Comments and Corrections on this e-Text

[www.davidchansmith.net/edits](http://www.davidchansmith.net/edits)





For more information on this map see the British Library online exhibition [here](#).

A TRUE & EXACT  
**HISTORY**  
OF THE ISLAND OF  
**BARBADOS**

Illustrated with a mapp of the island, as also the principall trees and plants there, set forth in their due proportions and shapes, drawne out by their severall and respective scales

Together with the ingenio that makes the sugar, with the plots of the severall houses, roomes, and other places that are used in the whole processe of sugar-making viz, the Grinding-room, the Boyling-room, the Filling-room, the Curing-house, Still-house, and Furnaces; All cut in Copper

---

**by Richard Ligon Gent.**

---

London  
Printed for Humphrey Moseley, at the Prince's Armes  
in St. Paul's Church-yard: 1657



# To my most Honoured, and highly esteemed Friend, Dr BRIAN DUPPA, Ld Bp of SALISBURIE.<sup>1</sup>

Honour'd Sir,

THE first and last time you gave me the favour to kisse your hands, since my return from the Southern and Western parts of the World, you were pleased to make some enquiries of me, concerning the Iland of Barbados, a place you much desired to be satisfied in: But, by reason my stay was but short, I could give you but a sleight and scant relation, of the many particulars you were desirous to be informed in; so that for the present, I rather poynted at, then gave a home-satisfaction, to what was most fit to be known, of the Beauties and Riches of that place. Whereupon you were pleased to impose on me a task, (very unfit for me to undertake, being one altogether unlettered) to deliver in writing, the sum of all I knew, concerning that Iland.<sup>2</sup> Though I were sufficiently conscious of mine own inabilities; yet, my obedience to your commands, led me on, to give you a private satisfaction, in a thing you so earnestly desired, which was all I aimed at: But, upon perusall of it, you were pleased to give me a far greater encouragement, then I expected, with your allowance for the publishing of it, for the common benefit of those, who intend to spend their times, and venture their fortunes upon such undertakings so that I wanted but means or friends, for the putting it forth; but, those two being absent, it has layne in the dark this two years. You were then likewise pleased, to cast your eyes upon some pieces of Limning,<sup>3</sup> which I had done since my return, (by my memory only) of the Trees, Plants, and Fruits, which I had seen growing upon that place; things in themselves of infinite beauty, but losing much of their life and lustre, by my ill handling; yet, you were pleased to afford them an

---

1 Brian Duppa (1588-1662) was the bishop of Salisbury (1641) and later bishop of Winchester (1660). Duppa was a royalist during the English civil wars and Revolution (1642-1660) deeply committed to the cause of Charles I. He tended to the royal family's spiritual needs during the war, and served as a mentor to the young Charles II. In his time he was known for his piety and moderation in religious matters during a period of heated church disputes.

2 Duppa's relationship to Ligon is unknown outside of this text, though Ligon identifies Duppa as his patron. Since modesty was considered a praiseworthy value in the period, learned authors frequently claimed that they were asked or directed to write their texts by others.

3 "painting," though could mean watercolor painting specifically



approbation, beyond their value, which gave me an ambition, to do somewhat in that kinde, more like a Master; and to that purpose, was designing a piece of Landscape, and one of Story, wherein I meant to expresse the postures of the Negres, in their severall kinds of Sports and Labours; and with it, the beauties of the Vegetables, that do adorn that place, in the highest perfection I could: But presently after, being cast into Prison, I was deprived both of light and loneliness, two main helpers in that Art;<sup>4</sup> and so being disabled to discern or judge of Colours, I was compelled to expresse my designs in Black and White: So that now you will finde exposed to your view, a piece of wild Grottesco, or loose extravagant Drolorie,<sup>5</sup> rather than a Regular piece of Story or Landscape.

Rough drawn, and unproportionably stell'd, though it be, I here present it; which, though it be but as a Drop to the Ocean, or a Mite<sup>6</sup> to the treasury of your Knowledge; yet, in obedience to your commands, which have a powerfull operation on me, I could do no lesse then give you an account of what I had done, how weak and unperfect soever. And so begging pardon for the faults committed, both in the Language, and ill contrivance of my Discourse, I humbly take my leave, and rest.

Honoured Sir, Your most humble Servant: R. LIGON.

Upper Bench Prison,<sup>7</sup> July 12th 1653.

---

4 Ligon was imprisoned in 1652 and not released until October 1653 by operation of the *Act for Relief of Creditors and Poor Prisoners* (see *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, eds. C.H. Firth and R.S. Rait, London, 1911, pp. 753-764). He had stood surety for the debts of Sir Henry Killigrew who had died. Though claiming that lands put aside to pay the debt had been fraudently detained from him by Killigrew's heirs, Ligon was imprisoned by creditors when he could not pay the debts. It was not unusual in this period for creditors to imprison their debtors who did not have the means to pay, and there were few recourses for these unfortunate prisoners until they could pay their debts. Ligon describes the controversy that led to his imprisonment in more detail in a pamphlet entitled *Several Circumstances to prove that Mrs Jane Berkeley and Sir William Killigrew have combined together to defraud me of an estate left unto me by Henry Killigrew esq; for payment of his debts, for which I lye now in prison* (London, 1654)

5 "Grottesco" was a style of art characterized by the intertwining of human figures with plants, garlands, and animals in highly decorative arrangements. It was not unusual during the period to represent traveller's accounts as "view's," "maps," or "plots" of other places. The written narrative was meant to open up the sight of reader to the distant landscape or peoples. Ligon underscores that his treatise is a work of art relating humans with their landscape of plants and animals.

6 a tiny insect, such as a tick

7 The prison of the Upper Bench Court, which before and after the English Revolution (1649-

# The Letter of the Bishop of Sar.<sup>8</sup> to me then in Prison, after he had perused my Book.

SIR,

YOU can best tell, with what pleasure you past over your Voyage to the Barbadoes: But, whatsoever it was, your dangers at Sea, and your long sicknesse on Land, had been enough to sour it, had not the condition of the times made any place more acceptable, than your Native Country. But, the pleasure which you have given me, in reading this Narrative, is without all these mixtures: For, without any hardship at all, I have in a few daies gone the same voyage, view'd the Iland, weigh'd all the Commodities and Incommodities of it; and all this with so much pleasure, that I cannot, without great injustice, forbear telling you, that though I have read formerly many Relations of other parts of the World, I never yet met with so exact a piece, as this of yours.<sup>9</sup> Your diligence hath been great in so short a time, to make these Observations; but, your expressions of them are such, as shew, that no ingenious Art hath scap't<sup>10</sup> you. You say, that in your younger time, you acquainted your selfe with Musick and Painting; and had you not said so, the reading of this Book would have made me say it for you; for, it is so Musically made up, and all the descriptions so Drawn to the life, that I know no Painting beyond it. And for the question you put to me, whether you should publish it or no, I desire you would make no doubt of it; for first, I know none that hath written of this Argument before; and next, I am perswaded, that having read this Description of yours, none that come after will venture upon it. Only, I have one request to you, that your kindnesse to me, (who without any designe, gave you the occasion of doing it) may not lead you into such an insufferable error, as to choose me out as a fit person to inscribe it to, who am so much in the shade, that I must not own my selfe. I am willing to believe, that though Honour be at this time at a very low Ebb, and, by the

---

1660) was known as the King's Bench court, was a court of common law that dealt in a wide range of civil and criminal matters. Originally a court hearing pleas of the crown, its jurisdiction evolved in the sixteenth century to consider matters of debt and contract.

8 "New Sarum"; the town of Salisbury was also called New Sarum, since the original, ancient settlement nearby was named (Old) Sarum.

9 The idea that the reader accompanies the author on an imaginative voyage to the new places of discovery was another topos or narrative device of early modern travel texts.

10 "escaped"

iniquity of the times, is much false within the Banks; yet, the Channell is not so drie, but you may meet there with some Noble person, that may with more advantage, take you and your Book into the same Cock-boat<sup>11</sup> with him, and keep you this Winter both from cold and hunger. And therefore, in great earnestnesse I desire you, to look over your Catalogue of Friends; and, though you cannot finde one that loves you better, yet, to make choice of him, that can protect you better. And so with my prayers for you, that your afflictions here may be so managed by you, as to lead you to Joyes hereafter, I rest.

Your most affectionate Friend, Br. Sar.  
Richmond, Septemb. 5th. 1653.

---

11 A very small boat tied to a larger sailing craft and used for excursions to the shore.

# To my much Honoured and Ingenuous Cousin, Mr Richard Ligon, upon his Relation of his Voyage to the Barbadoes

Since you vouchsafe me sight, I needs must fall,  
To actuall sin 'gainst your Originall,  
Should I not more then tacitely expresse  
It's worth, as well as mine owne thankfulnessse.  
Omissive duties, and committed facts  
In man, you know, an equall guilt contracts.  
And (though your judge should know the severall Arts,  
Both what the Colledge and the Court imparts:  
And Jurates<sup>12</sup> ought to be like the twelve Signes,<sup>13</sup>  
Such Asterismes,<sup>14</sup> where Sol himselfe confines)<sup>15</sup>  
A common Suffrage nerethelesse may aim,  
(Not to give verdict) but the gift proclaim.  
That judgment let me enter. They indite,  
That here's vast profit, mixt with high delight;  
That what's suppos'd a Narrative, will be  
To him that reads, a Naturall History.<sup>16</sup>  
For in that Horison, your pen doth misse,  
Nor Heaven, Earth, Sea, nor ought that in them is.  
Not a new Star can scape your Observation,  
Nor the least Insect passe your Contemplation.  
Nor use you shortnesse, nor prolixity;  
But first describe, then speak its property.  
Me thinks, as Pliny,<sup>17</sup> you are their Relator;

---

12 here “judges”

13 the zodiac

14 a group of stars, such as a constellation

15 The sun moves through the zodiacal constellations over the year.

16 Natural history is the study of animals and plants: aspects of Ligon's *True and Exact History*, such as his discussion of plants, are natural history.

17 Pliny the Elder (23-79 C.E.) was a Roman who wrote *The Natural History*, a wide ranging study

And are as Adam too, their Nomenclator.<sup>18</sup>  
 For, to your Insects, Birds, and Vegetives,  
 You give not known, but due Appellatives.<sup>19</sup>  
 Their rich descriptions, when you paint, I see  
 Colours so lively, and such Symmetry:  
 But that I've seen the hand, that guides the quill,  
 A Pencill use, 'twere scarce in Limning<sup>20</sup> skill.  
 And when you descant richly, thus, I see  
 Compos'd in severall parts, and all agree,  
 How Chords and Discords too, you do devise,  
 From Sympathies, and from Antipathies.  
 Your Fuges and Poynts into a Canon twine,<sup>21</sup>  
 All true to th' Ground, that is your main designe:  
 And all Concentring to so sweet an Ayre,  
 Would ravish Philomels,<sup>22</sup> make Swans despair.  
 Your skill above fam'd Orpheus<sup>23</sup> I advance,  
 Since thus your Creatures Play, his did but Dance.  
 To such as only seek their benefit,  
 You do infallibly discover it:  
 You shew therein, £3000<sup>24</sup> will clear

---

of human and natural phenomena that included consideration of zoology, botany and anthropology. The text was much cited in the medieval and early modern periods.

18 a reference to Genesis 2:19 and Adam's naming of the animals

19 "descriptive name"

20 "painting"

21 a musical metaphor

22 A pun: Philomela was both a Grecian princess who was raped and mutilated by King Tereus of Thrace, and also a musical instrument ("philomel").

23 Orpheus was a legendary figure in ancient Greece famed for his wondrous musical gifts. It was reputed that the god Apollo taught him to play the lyre, a stringed instrument. Devastated by her death, Orpheus ventured into the underworld to recover his deceased wife Eurydice and used his music to charm even the gods of the dead.

24 The pound sterling (£) is a unit of currency that was traditionally made from 92.5% pure silver (.925, which is still the standard for sterling silver). The silver content, as with most pre-modern currency, was frequently debased with other metals. One pound sterling equals 20 "shillings" or 240 "pence."

No lesse then £7000 a year.  
 And that not in a jugling Chymick<sup>25</sup> sense,  
 But drawn from reason and experience.  
 The Scite<sup>26</sup>, Clime, Food, the Customs, Laws, and Trade,  
 To each inquisitor is open laid.  
 Your Georgick<sup>27</sup> strain seemes to extract the marrow  
 Of Marcus, Cato, Columel, and Varro;<sup>28</sup>  
 As if that there you had the growth and age  
 Of a Palmeto,<sup>29</sup> to improve each page  
 And with so great an art and industry,  
 As if you'd studied nought but Husbandry.  
 When of your Vegetives you make relation,  
 You rather make than speak of a Plantation,  
 Your leaves affording shape, taste, and delight  
 To th'Sense, the fruit gives to the Appetite.  
 If Pythagorean<sup>30</sup> Doctrine were Divine,  
 I would be transmigrated to your Pine.<sup>31</sup>  
 The Cane or Mine, (that makes that Spot of ground  
 As rich, as any 'twixt the Poles is found)  
 Is here so full and happily exprest:  
 You Candy that, which does preserve the rest:  
 And its Ingenio<sup>32</sup> seemes to be a Lecture  
 (As 'tis describ'd) o'th Art of Architecture.

---

25 “counterfeit” or “false”

26 “sight”

27 The *Georgics* of the Roman writer Virgil (70-19 BCE) were poems on agriculture and the country life.

28 Marcus Tullius Cicero, Marcus Porcius Cato, Lucius Columella, and Marcus Varro were leading classical Roman authors (some of whom also wrote treatises on the countryside and agriculture).

29 “The saw palmetto” is a type of palm plant notable for its very long life (a single plant can live for several hundred years).

30 Referring to Pythagoras' belief in the “transmigration of souls” or the idea that the soul was reincarnated into human, animal or plant form.

31 “pineapple”

32 Refers generally to sugar works, but can also mean the rollers that squeezed the juice from the sugar cane.



The Texture of the whole you've move so nice,  
 Your fine spun thread, warpt, wooft with Artifice.  
 It seemes a Landscape inrich Tapestry,  
 Embroidered with Natures Novelty,  
 Attireing all in such a lovely Dresse,  
 Rich, Genuine, and full of Courtlinesse:  
 That as Great Brittain sometimes I have seen,  
 So you've Barbadoes drawn just like a Queen.  
 GEORGE WALSHE.

## A True and Exact History of the Iland of Barbadoes

A TABLE, Of the severall things mentioned in this HISTORY.<sup>33</sup>

### Contents

A View of Porto Sancto, Madera's, and Desertes.....	15
A view of Bonavista, Isle of May and Palma.....	16
Hunting and Hawking at Sea.....	17
Shark and Pilot fish.....	19
Carvil, a fish that sails.....	21
Observations upon the Ship's way, as also the treachery of Bernardo, a Portugall.....	22
The first sight of the Iland of Saint Jago.....	24
Description of the Bay there, which they call the Pry.....	25
The Padre Vadago's house and entertainment.....	26
There are seven Ilands more, which are neighbours to this.....	38

---

<sup>33</sup> In the edition of 1657, this table appears at the end of the text. It has been brought forward to make the text more accessible to the modern reader.

The first sight of the Barbadoes.....	41
The Iland first discovered by a ship of Sir William Curteen's.....	45
The Scituation of the Iland.....	47
The extent and length of daies.....	50
Temperature of the aire.....	51
How watered.....	51
Bread and drink.....	53
Severall sorts of meat.....	58
The manner of killing a Turtle.....	62
Victualls brought from forraign parts.....	63
A Feast of an inland Plantation.....	64
The like of a Plantation neer the Sea.....	66
Commodities exported and imported.....	67
What materialls grow on the Iland, fit to build with.....	68
The number and nature of the Inhabitants.....	71
A combination among the Servants, to kill their Masters.....	74
Reasons why the Negres can plot no Massacres upon their Masters.....	75
Negres pastime upon Sundaies, and their aptnesse to learne Arts.....	77
Observations upon the shapes of the Negres.....	81
A plot of some Negres, to burn the Ingenio, and the plot discovered by some of their own Country-men, who were honest and noble.....	84
Observations upon the Indians.....	85
Somwhat of the Planters themselves.....	87
Tame Beasts, which are of great use to the planters.....	88
Birds of all sorts.....	92
Animalls and Insects.....	94
Crabs that come and dwell upon the Land.....	99

Severall Trees growing upon the Iland, and first of the poysonous trees and plants.....	100
Severall kinds of Fruit-trees.....	104
Trees of mixt kinds.....	109
Timber trees of severall kinds.....	110
The Palmeto Royall described.....	112
Plants that bear fruit.....	119
The Pine described.....	124
Sugar Canes, with the manner of planting, growth, time of ripenesse, with the whole processe of Sugar-making, both Muscavadoes and Whites.....	134
The manner of distilling the skimings of the Coppers, of which we make the strong drink, which the planters call kill-devill.....	143
An estimate of the value of the Sugar made upon this Iland, in twenty months.....	145
The Withs described.....	149
Caves, and the description of their largenesse.....	150
English Herbs and Rootes.....	152
Strength of the Iland by Nature to Sea-ward.....	153
How Governed, and how Divided.....	154
No Mines in this Iland.....	155
The ill contrivance of the Planters houses, as we found them, when first we came there.....	156
Directions for better buildings.....	156
A survey of the pleasures and profits, commodities and incommodities, sicknesse and healthfulnesse, of this Iland, ballanced with those of England.....	159
The beauties of the Heavens, and how much they transcend those of farther distances from the Lane.....	161

- The voluptuous nor lazy persons are not fit to inhabit on this Iland.....164
- The value of a Plantation Stock't, of five hundred acres of Land, whereof two hundred for Canes, to be sold for £14000.....165
- How this purchase of £14000 by providence and good husbandry, may be made with £3000.....165
- The yearly revenue of this Plantation, being once set in an orderly course, will amount unto £8866.....170
- An Estimate of the expence, that will issue out yearly to keep this Plantation in good order, as you first received it, which we will presuppose to be compleatly furnished with all things.....170
- The account ballanced, the yearly Revenue will amount unto £7516 19 s.....172
- An Objection answered, how it comes to passe, that Plantations of so great a yearly value, can be purchased with so little mony.....175
- Somewhat of the Diseases of the Country, as also of the Physitians.....177
- An incomparable medicine for the stone.....177
- Plunquet, a great Pirate, took a ship in one of the Bayes. I Embarked, and set sail for England, the fifteenth of Aprill, 1650.....178
- The abuses of the Captains and Masters of ships, that promise large provision of Victuall and Drink to their passengers; and when they need it most, fail them grossely.....179
- A storme at Sea, out of which we were delivered (under God) by a little Virgin, being a passenger in the Ship.....180

**H**aving been Censur'd by some (whose Judgements I cannot controll, and therefore am glad to allow) for my weakenesse and Indiscretion, that having never made prooffe of the Sea's operation, and the severall faces that watry Element puts on, and the changes and chances that happen there, from Smooth to Rough, from Rough to Raging Seas, and High going Billowes, (which are killing to some Constitutions<sup>34</sup>;) should in the last Scene of my life, undertake to run so long a Risco<sup>35</sup> from England to the Barbadoes; And truly I should without their help conclude my selfe guilty of that Censure, had I not the refuge of an old proverb to fly to, which is, (Need makes the old wife trot)<sup>36</sup> for having lost (by a Barbarous Riot) all that I had gotten by the painfull travells and cares of my youth; by which meanes I was stript and rifled of all I had, left destitute of a subsistance, and brought to such an Exigent,<sup>37</sup> as I must famish or fly; and looking about for friends, who are the best supporters in so staggering a condition, found none, or very few, whom griefs and afflictions had not deprest, or worne out, Banishment absented, or Death devour'd; so that in stead of these neere and Native comforters, I found my selfe a stranger in my owne Country, and therefore resolv'd to lay hold on the first opportunity that might conv[e]y me to any other part of the World, how far distant soever, rather then abide here. I continued not many weekes in this expectation, when a friend, as willing to shift his ground as I, gave me an Overture which I accepted, and so upon the sixteenth day of June 1647 we embark'd in the Downes, on the good Ship called the Achilles; a vessell of 350 tunnes the Mr. Thomas Crowder of London; and no sooner were we all aboard, but we presently weighed Anchor, and put to Sea; in so cold weather as at that time of the yeere, I have not felt the like; and continued so till wee came to Falmouth Harbour: where wee put in, and rested for a night; but in our passage thither, were very uncertaine upon what Coast wee were, by reason of the unsteadinesse of the windes, and cloudinesse of the weather; so that I perceived more troubles and [2] doubts in the Seamen in that short passage, than in all the voyage after. But, the weather clearing up, the Master and Mates drew out severall plots<sup>38</sup> and Landscapes: which they had formerly taken upon the Coast of France and England, (which are of great use in the narrow Seas,) by which they were well assured where they were; for there they seldome

---

34 "bodies."

35 "a risk"

36 a proverb also found in France and Italy: the pursuit of necessities makes even the old hurry

37 An exigent was a judicial summons to appear before a court. Since "exigent" can also mean being in a state of urgent need Ligon is here making a pun.

38 "maps"

use Loggline, or Backstaffe,<sup>39</sup> but attend onely the Tides Compasse, and Card;<sup>40</sup> nor is there any use of other directors in so narrow a roome. We were (as I remember) about 10. dayes sayling to Falmouth, and had with us a small ship of about 180 tunnes, called the Nonesuch<sup>41</sup>; of which Captaine Middleton<sup>42</sup> was owner, a very good seaman, and a Planter in Barbados: but himselfe then remaining in London.

The next day we put to Sea, and continued our course to the South-west, (with somewhat a Scant wind,) partly to avoid the high going Billowes of the Bay of Biskey:<sup>43</sup> but chiefly to stand aloofe from Pirats and Pickarones:<sup>44</sup> which are very frequent upon the Coasts of Spaine, and Barbarie<sup>45</sup>; and as we past along, I perceiv'd a difference in the way of our Ships: for in slack windes, our consort the None-such would runne us out of sight in foure or five houres sayle; but in strong and stiffe windes, wee did the like with her. So that I gues<sup>46</sup> the larger the sayles, the swifter the waye; provided, they were alike built in the modell of their keeles, but I leave that to be resolved by the Seamen, or that Admirable Architect of Moving-Horses, Mr. Pett.<sup>47</sup>

---

39 a type of quadrant used to determine altitudes

40 “sea chart”

41 “no such thing”

42 Captain Thomas Middleton (d. 1672) had commercial investments throughout the British Atlantic world, including in New England, Antigua, and Barbados. On Barbados he was a leading planter and business associate of James Drax. Sympathetic to the parliamentary cause, he refused to join with royalists on Barbados in 1651 (Harlow, *History of Barbados*, p. 66). During the Restoration he served as a naval official, including an appointment to the Navy Board (1667).

43 “Bay of Biscay”

44 from “pickeering” or raiding for plunder.

45 The Barbary Coast in North Africa, including the modern day countries of Tunisia, Algeria and Libya was a major base for pirates.

46 “guessed”

47 The Petts were a family of shipwrights, descended from Peter Pett (d. 1589) who helped reform the Elizabethan navy.



## A View of Porto Sancto, Madera's, and Desertes<sup>48</sup>

About the Latitude of 45. degrees, wee met with a Ship comming from Guinny,<sup>49</sup> but bound for London; the Captains name was Blague, a very civill Gentleman who halde<sup>50</sup> us, came aboard us, and invited divers Gentlemen that were there aboard his ship: which was a Friggot<sup>51</sup> of about 400. tunnes, her loading Gold and Elephants teeth<sup>52</sup>; the Man was exceeding civill to us, and gave to every Gentleman of our Company, a present of such rarities as he brought from Guinny, and Binny. We stayed together almost a whole day, the weather being very calme, and almost no wind at all; in the evening, a fresh breese began to blow, which serv'd us both in our severall wayes, and so saluting each other with our ordinance<sup>53</sup> wee took leave.

About this time, our Consort the None-such parted with us, she directly for the Carribby Ilands,<sup>54</sup> we for St. Jago, one of the Ilands of Cape Verd<sup>55</sup>; where wee were to trade for Negros, Horses, and Cattell; which we were to sell at the Barbados. So, keeping our course about 80. Leagues from the Coast of Spaine and Barbarie, the first land wee discovered, was the Ile of Porto Santo<sup>56</sup>; which lyeth in 33. degrees to the Noreward; which wee left of our Larboard<sup>57</sup> side: When presently after, we had sight of the Maderas, which we sayld close by, and had a full view of the place; so Rocky, and Mountainous, and the ground so miserably burnt with the Sun, as we could perceive no part of it either Hill or Valley, that had the least appearance of green, nor any tree bigger then a small Hathorne and very few of those. Between this and three inconsiderable Ilands called the Desertes, which appeared to us like the tops of large buildings; no unevennesse or risings and fallings, but levell as the toppe of a large

---

48 Headings have been introduced into the text from the “table” in the original edition.

49 The African coast along Guinea in Africa. This area was the major center for the English slave trade during this period.

50 Probably “hailed”

51 “frigate”

52 “ivory”

53 “cannon”

54 “the Caribbean islands”

55 “Cape Verde Islands”

56 one of the Madeira islands in the North Atlantic controlled by Portugal

57 an archaic term for “port side” (i.e. the left side of a ship).

Church or Barne; but burnt worse then the other, so that instead of the fresh and lively greenes, other Countreys put on at this time of the yeare: these were [3] apparell'd with Russets, or at best Phyliamorts.<sup>58</sup> But it fell out that this yeere the summer was there hotter then usually, and the Sea men that were with us, gave us to understand, that they never had seen it so burnt as now, and that the Leeward part of it was, at other times, exceeding fruitfull and pleasant, abounding with all sorts of excellent fruits, Corne, Wine, Oyle, and the best Sugars; with Horses, Cattell, Sheep, Goates, Hogges, Poultry; of all sorts, and the best sorts of Sea-fish. These Ilands lye neere 33. degrees to the Noreward.

### A view of Bonavista, Isle of May and Palma<sup>59</sup>

**H**aving past between these (leaving the Maderas on of our Starboard side) wee found a constant trade-wind to carry us to the Southward, When the next Iland that came in our view, was Bona Vista; but at such a distance, as we could hardly discerne colours, but the generall Landscape of the hills seemed to one very beautifull, gently rising and falling, without Rockes or high precipices.

This Iland is famous, for excellent Salt, and for Horses, which in one property, excell all that ever I have seene; their hooves being to that degree of hardnesse, and toughnesse, that we ride them at the Barbados, downe sharp and steepie Rocks, without shooes; and no Goates goe surer upon the sides of Rockes and Hills then they; and many of them very strong and clean limb'd.

This Iland, wee left ten Leagues, or thereabouts on our Larboard side, and next to it, the Ile of May; famous for store of excellent Salt.

The last of those Ilands was Palma; a land so high, as after wee first discovered it; which was in the morning; wee thought to have reacht it that night, but found our selves farre short of it, next morning, though wee had a full gaile all that night: so much is the eye deceived in Land which lyes high. This Iland is about 28 degrees to the Noreward, and from it to the Iles of Cape Verd about 13 degrees a long way to bee silent, for there is no land between and therefore I purpose to entertaine you with some Sea delights; for there is no place so void and empty, where some lawfull pleasure is not to bee had, for a man that hath a free heart, and a good Conscience.

---

58 a brownish-yellow color

59 the Canary Islands off the coast of Africa; The Spanish had conquered the Canaries in the 15th century defeating and extirpating their native inhabitants, the Guanches.

## Hunting and Hawking at Sea

**B**ut these Sea-pleasures are so mixt with Cruelties, as the trouble of the one, abates much the delight of the other, for here wee see the great ones, eate up the little ones, as they doe at Land, and with as little remorse; yet laying that consideration aside the Chase affords some pleasure to the eyes: for some kinds of fishes shew themselves above water, for a long while together. I have seen 20 Porpisces<sup>60</sup> very large of that kinde, Crosse the Prow of our Ship, one behind another in so steady and constant a course, in chase of some other fishes; as I have seen a kennell of large Hounds, in Windsor Forrest, in the chase of a Stag; one following another directly in a track; and the onely difference I finde is, these doe not spend their mouthes,<sup>61</sup> but what they want in that is supplied by the goodnesse of their noses; for they never are at a fault, but goe constantly on. The Dolphins likewise pursue the flying Fish, forcing them to leave their knowne watry Elements, and flye to an unknowne one, where they meet with as mercillesse enemies; for there are birds that attend the rising of those fishes; and if they bee within distance, seldome fayle to make them their owne. These birds, and no other but of their kinde, love to straggle so far from land; so that it may be doubted, whether [4] the sea may not bee counted their naturall home; for wee see them 500 leagues from any land, at Sun setting; and so it is not possible they should recover land that night; and on the waves they cannot rest, without great hazzard. I have seen them sometimes light, and sit upon the waves, but with such Caution: for feare of being taken in by a fish, as her rest is very unsafe; unlesse when she is covered by the nights dark wings. This Bird, is a kinde of sea Hawke, somewhat bigger then a Lanner,<sup>62</sup> and of that colour; but of a far freer wing, and of a longer continuance; and when she is weary, she finds resting places, if the Seas be Calme; for then the Turtles lye and sleep upon the waves, for a long time together; and upon their backs they sit, and sleep securely; and there, mute, prune, and oyl their feathers; rouse, and doe all their Offices of nature, and have roome enough for all, for some of those Turtles are a yeard<sup>63</sup> broad in the back: wee took one with our long Boate, as he lay sleeping on the water, whose body afforded all the Gentlemen, and Officers of the Ship, a very plentifull meal; and was the best meat wee tasted, all the time wee were at Sea. There are of these kinds

---

60 “porpoise,” a smaller relative of the dolphin

61 A Shakespearian expression found in *Venus and Adonis*, 695; *Troilus and Cressida*, v, i, 95-96; and *Henry V*, ii, iv 69-71. Here it means “not barking.”

62 a falcon species

63 “yard”

of Fishes but two sorts, that continue in the mayne; the Loggerhead Turtle, and the Hawkes bill Turtle, of which sorts, the latter is the best, and of that kind ours was that wee took. There is a third kind, called the Green Turtle which are of a lesser Magnitude, but far excelling the other two, in wholesomnesse, and Rarenesse of taste; but of them hereafter for I have no mind to part so leightly, with the forenamed Birds of prey: For having been bred a Faulconer in my youth, I cannot but admire the admirable swiftnesse of wing these birds make. They mount sometimes upon the trayne,<sup>64</sup> to so loftie a pitch: as, if a Faucon were there, Shee might be allowed a double Cancellere<sup>65</sup> in her stooping to her game: they doe it at one entire downe come.<sup>66</sup> Her ordinary flying for her own pleasure, and not for prey is commonly more free then the best Haggard<sup>67</sup> Faulcon, that I have ever seen; but the continuance of it makes it the more admirable. At the times they grow hungry, they attend the Dolphins, who are their Spaniels; and where they perceive the water to move, they know they are in Chase, of the flying fish; and being neere them, they rise like Coveys<sup>68</sup> of Partridges by 12 and 16 in a Covey, and flye as far as young Partridges, that are farkers,<sup>69</sup> and in their flight these birds make them their quarry.

These frightened fishes, sometimes in the night have crost our ship, and being stopt by the shroudes, have falne downe; and with their bodies we have baited hookes, and taken their pursuers the Dolphins; which we have found very excellent meat, being drest by a good hand, with Wine, Spice, and sweet herbs, which we never wanted. So here we have excellent hauking, no [f]eare of losing our hauke, by going out at Cheik,<sup>70</sup> or to a village to Poult,<sup>71</sup> and yet eate of the quarrie, and sometimes of the Spaniells, which is an advantage the best falconers misse at Land. As for the hunting here, we only see the Chase, but suffer the hounds to flesh themselves upon the quarrie, or it

---

64 “the quarry”; the “train” is a bird that is used for practice to train the hawk or falcon.

65 A term in falconry describing when the hawk or falcon makes a turn during a steep dive to seize its prey.

66 The bird dives directly from a very high height to attack the “train.” A falcon would bank and turn as it descended from a similar height before it assaulted its quarry.

67 “wild”

68 “flock”

69 partridges that do not have mates

70 “go out at check” means that the hawk pursues any bird, rather than focusing on the target game.

71 “to catch chickens”

may be, a royall fish, such a one as may fill a dish to furnish Neptunes table, & by that meanes we are cosen'd of our quarry. So that as I ever thought on Land, I find the same at Sea, Hawking to be the better sport. I had almost forgot, to tell what kind of fish this flying fish is, which is [5] the cause of such excellent sport, both in himselfe and others, he is just like a Pilchard,<sup>72</sup> but his fins larger, both in breadth & length, & as long as they are wett, so long he flyes; and for their mortall enemies the birds, they continue with us from 33. degrees til we come to 15. and then leave us.

At which time and place, another kinde undertakes us, not much bigger then a Castrill;<sup>73</sup> and as near that colour as may bee, but of another manner of flying: for these flye close to the water, and turne about every wave; so that wee often lose sight of them, by interposing of the waves, and think somtimes that a wave has overwhelmed her. The pleasure she gives the eye, is by the giddinesse of her flying, and often seems to be lost: and yet (contrary to our expectation) appears againe. But I will trouble you no longer with the inhabitants of the Plyant Aire, but dive into the Deep, to try what pleasure that Element affords to give you delight.

## Shark and Pilot fish

**T**here is a Fish called a Sharke, which as he is a common enemy to Saylers and all others that venture, in Calmes, to commit their naked bodies to the sea (for he often bites off Legs, sometimes Armes, and now and then swallows the whole body, if the Fish bee great): So when the Saylers take them, they use them accordingly. Sometimes by putting out their eyes, and throwing them over bord; sometimes by mangling and cutting their bodies, finns, and tayles, making them a prey to others, who were mercilesse Tyrants themselves; And in this kind of justice they are very Accurate.

Many of these fishes we took; some by striking with harping Irons, some with Fishgigs,<sup>74</sup> some with hookes; and amongst the rest, one very large, which followed the Ship foure houres, before wee went about to take him; and perceived before him, a little Fish which they call the Pilot Fish; This little guide of his, swims sometimes a yeard before him, sometimes more or lesse, at his pleasure; and in his greatest-adversity often cleaves to him, and like a deare friend, stickes [c]losest when hee needs him most:

---

72 “sardine”

73 “kestrel”

74 a type of harpoon

for when he is taken, this little fish, never fayles to fasten himselfe to his head, or some part neere that, and resolves to dye with him. The experience of this wee found not only in this great fish, but in all the rest wee had formerly taken, for wee never took the one without the other. And the Engine<sup>75</sup> wee took this great Sharke with, was a large Hook, baited with a piece of Beef; which he received into his mouth, his belly being turned upwards, for his mouth being short of his snout a good deale, he could not take it conveniently, his back being upward, by reason his snout drove the line afore it, but as soon as wee perceived the baite to be swallowed, we gave a sudden pull, which fastned the hook so, as we were sure the weight of his body would not teare it out, Wee drew him up, and laid him in the Wast<sup>76</sup> of the Ship, where none durst abide, but the Seamen who dare doe any thing.

Wee had aboard divers mastive Dogges,<sup>77</sup> and amongst them, one so large and fierce, as I have seldome seen any like him; this Dogge flew to him with the greatest Courage that might be, but could take no hold of him, by reason of his large roundnesse and sliminesse; but if by chance he got hold of one of his [f]innes, the Sharke would throw him from [s]ide to side of the Ship, as if he had been nothing; and doubtlesse if he had encountred him in his own Element, the Sea, he would have made quick work with him.

[6] Divers of this kind wee took, but none so large; he was about 16 foot long, and 10 foot about the middle. Other fishes were took, as the Bonito, the Spanish Maquerell, the Albucore, Dolphin, &c. which wee found excellent meate, but especially the Albucore, which is a fish of such a shape, as it pleased me much to look on. Those wee took were not much above a yard long, with forked tayles, the gristles very firme and strong, and the body neer that, no bigger then a mans wrist; but suddenly growing upward to such a greatnesse, as I have seldome seen any like him, and so strong withall, as a sayler a very strong man, holding one of them fast by the gill, when this fish mov'd but his taylor to get loose, gave such a spring, as he had like to have put his arme out of joynt. These kind of fishes, in a cleare Sunshine evening, delight themselves and us, by trying which of them can leap highest above water, so that tis a pretty pastime, to see fishes so large, and gloriously colour'd, shew themselves so far above their naturall Element, whose shapes and colours gave such variety. But this sport we saw not often.

---

75 “instrument”

76 The “waist” describes the middle of the deck of a ship between the fore and main masts.

77 Mastiffs were used by Europeans abroad for hunting and as war dogs against indigenous peoples (especially by the Spanish).



## Carvil, a fish that sails

I will trouble you no more, with mentioning the variety of shapes and colours of fishes, till I come to St. Jago; onely one, and that a very small one; for his body is not much bigger then a large Pomegranate, and yet his faculties are such, as may draw more eyes to look on him and more mindes to consider him, then the Vast Whale: for though it be true, that his<sup>78</sup> large body, appearing above the surface of the water being in calmes a smooth leavell superficies,<sup>79</sup> and suddenly appearing, is one of the strangest and most monstrous sights that can be in nature; (and the more admirable, when he is incounted by his two mortall enemies, the Sword and Theshal<sup>80</sup> fishes. For to shake them off, he leapes more then his owne length, above water, and in his fall, beats the sea with such violence, as the froth and foame is seen a quarter of an houre after, White, as when tis beaten by a strong West wind against a Rock; and at other times, spouts out the water in great quantities; the height of an ordinary Steeple.) Yet this great master-piece of Nature, is not in my opinion so full of wonder, nor doth raise the consideration to such a height: as this little fish the Carvill, who can when he pleases, enjoy himselfe with his neighbour fishes, under water;<sup>81</sup> And when he putts on a resolution to trie his fortune in another Element, the Ayer, he riseth to the top of the sea, let the billow go never so high, and there without the help of a sayler, Raises up his maine Mast, spreads his sayles, which he makes of his own sinewes, fits his Rudder and Ballast, and begins his voyage; But to what Coast he is bound, or what trafique he intends, himselfe and He that made him onely can tell. Fishes there are none to prey on, nor flies, and therefore tis not for food he travailes; I have seen them 500 leagues from any land, if his voyage be to any Port, he must have a long time and much patience to get thither; if to sea, hee's there already; in one thing he hath the advantage of any ship that ever sayled: for he can go neerer the wind by a poynt, then the most yare<sup>82</sup> Friggot<sup>83</sup> that ever was built. Which shewes how farre Nature can exceed Art. Another advantage he has, that in the greatest Tempest, he never feares drowning.

---

78 i.e. the whale.

79 “surface”

80 “thresher shark”

81 Referring to the argonaut, a type of octopus with thin shells used to trap air at the surface and to permit the animal to float with ease. Classical authors often likened the shells of the argonaut to sails.

82 “maneuverable” or “quick”

83 “frigate”

Compass, nor Card he needs not, for he is never out of his way; whether then his voyage be for pleasure or profit we are yet to seeke. [7]

## Observations upon the Ship's way, as also the treachery of Bernardo, a Portugall

**B**ut before wee arive at our next Harbour, St Jago,<sup>84</sup> one of the Iles of Cape Verd, and now revolted from the King of Spayne, to the Portugall;<sup>85</sup> Let me tell you, one little observation I made of the Ships way; which in slacke windes, and darke nights, wee saw nothing under water, but darkenes but in stiffe windes, and strong gayles, wee saw perfectly the keele of the Ship; and fishes playing underneath, as lighted by a torch, and yet the nights of equall darkenes. Which put me in mind of a poynt of Philosophy I had heard discourst of, among the Learned; That in the Ayer, Rough hard bodies, meeting with one another, by violent stroakes, Rarifie the Ayer, so as to make fire.<sup>86</sup> So here, the ship being of a hard substance, and in a violent motion, meeting with the strong resistance of the waves: (who though they bee not hard, yet they are rough, by reason of their saltnes,) doe cause a light, though no fire, and I may gesse, that that light would bee fire, were it not quencht by the sea, in the instant it is made; which in his owne Element, hath the greater power and predominancie.

But before wee came to St Jago, wee were to have visited a small Iland called Soll; by the intreatie of a Portugall wee carried with us, whose name was Bernardo Mendes de Sousa; who pretended, to have a great part of the Iland (if not the whole) to bee his owne; but for that, it lay somewhat out of our waye, and wee could not recover it, by reason the winde was Crosse; and partly for that wee were enformed by some of the Saylers, who told us it was uninhabited by any, but Goats, Dogs, and the like; and wee guest, hee would (out of a vaine glorie) shew us something that he Call'd his. But the Master, who well knew the Condition of the place, would not lose so much tyme to no purpose. Which gave some discontentment to the Portugall, which hee exprest in his Countenance, by a sullen dogged looke, till wee came to St Jago. But that was but a whetstone, to sharpen a worse humour hee was big with; for though our Merchants

---

84 "Santiago," the largest island in the Cape Verde archipelago.

85 Portugal was united to the Spanish crown in 1580, but fought a war of independence from 1640-1668. Cape Verde ultimately came under control of the Portuguese crown.

86 Rubbing two objects together to make fire through friction

redeem'd him out of prison in London, intending him a Mayne director in the whole voyage; whose Credulous eares hee highly abused, by telling them, That the Padre Vagado (Chiefe Governour of St Jago) was his brother, and that by the power hee had with him, to lay all trade open, for Negroes, Horses, and Cattle, which were there Contrabanded goods; By which perswasion, they gave him the power and Command of the ship and goods. But hee intended nothing lesse then the performance of that trust, but instead of it, meant to make prey of both, and of our Liberties, and probably lives to boote, if wee had not bin verie wary of him.

The first thing wee perceiv'd in him, was a strange looke hee put on, when wee came nere the Iland; which caused us to suspect some great and bad designe hee was bent on, (for being Iolly and very good Companie all the voyage, to change his Countenance when wee were nere the place where wee hop'd to enjoy our selves with happinesse and Contentment, was a presage of some evill intent to bee put in practice, which howerly wee expected; and were all at gaze what part of it was first to bee acted; which hee (more speedily then hee needed) discovered, and it was thus.

Our water, being a good part spent in our passage thither, and wee being to make new and large provisions for the remaynder of our [8] Voyage, carrying horses and Cattle with us: which wee were to take in there; hee Commanded the Master by the power he had over him, to send a shoare all the emptie Caske hee had aboard; with intent to detayne them; and so make us comply, by little and little to his ends. But the Master absolutely denied the Landing our great Caske, but told him he would send our quarter Caskes, in our long boate, and so by making often returnes, to fill our Pipes & Buts.<sup>87</sup> But finding himself at a losse in this designe, thought good to keepe us from any water at all; and so appointed our men, to dig in the valley under the Padres house, where he was well assured no Springs of water were to be found. But some of our men, who spoke good Spanish, by their enquiries heard, That there was a very good well on the other side of the hill, under the Castle, and were brought to the sight of it by some of the Country people; Which when he perceiv'd we had knowledge of, he was much out of Countenance, and used his best eloquence to make us beleeve he had never heard of that Well.

So finding that this practice would not serve his turne, he tryed another: and that was was to command our Master, to carrie a shoare, that part of the Cargosone<sup>88</sup> that was consign'd for that place, which was Cloath, Bayes, Stuffes of severall kindes, Linen Cloath, Hats with broad brims, such as Spaniards use to weare, and were made

---

87 “barrels”

88 “cargo,” archaic.

in London purposely to put off there, and these goods being valued, when they were receiv'd at Land, there should be a returne made, in Horses, and Cattle. But as we had Cause to suspect him for the Cask, so wee had for the Cargo, and so return'd him this answer, that we would not land any of our goods, without receiving the like valew in Cattle; and so by parcells to receive the one, and deliver the other.

On which message, we sent the Purser of our ship, that spoke good Spanish; But Bernardo, being vext to the height that his Plot was discovered, kept him prisoner. We sent another to demand him which was like wise detayned, then we sent 3 or 4 more and some of the soldiers of the Castle gave fire upon them, Soe that wee resolv'd to weigh Anchor and put to Sea for a weeke or tenne dayes and returne in the night (the weather being darke and fitt for our purpose) and surprise the Padres house with 50 Musketeers which we could muster verie well of the Gentlemen and other passengers in the ship, and some of the Saylers, and take the Padre Vagago, and Bernardo Mendes de Sousa, and carrie them to the Barbados. But the Padre not knowing of this designe in Bernardo, sent to us a verie kind message inviting himselfe aboard our ship, receiving hostages from us, and soe upon treatie with him aboard, settled a trade, and got our prisoners releast; whereupon we were invited to his house or rather his Rocke, for it was most part of it form'd in a Rocke, with a steep and verie high precipice.

But I am mislead into this digression by this wicked Portugall, whose unlucky Countenance before we came to the Iland, gave me the occasion to say somewhat of him, and his miscariage in the Iland, before I came at it.

## The first sight of the Iland of Saint Jago

**B**ut when we came within sight of it, it appeared to us full of high & steep Rocks, (the highest of which were meere stone, without any soyle at all) and they of so great a height, as we seldome saw the tops, whilst we lay before it; being interposed by mists, and Clouds: which rise and darken the skie in the time of the Turnado.<sup>89</sup> But the day [9] we had the first sight of it, being very cleare; and we being at a competent distance, had a perfect view of it). But those of the second altitude, appear'd not so white, but had a grayish colour, as if covered with light and sandy earth. But the lowest of those, seem'd rather Hills, than Rockes; but yet so russet, as we were in doubt whether grasse did ever grow on them. But when we came within distance of discerning colours perfectly; wee expected the vallies, as it opened to us,

---

<sup>89</sup> “Tornado,” referring to hurricane season in the Caribbean (roughly June to November). The term could also apply to any major storm or tornado.

would have afforded our eyes a richer prospect, with more variety of colours, but we found very little or no amendment, onely the trees of Coconuts, with some other that were large and beautiful, whose tops (giving amply proportionable shadowes to their roots) held their greenesse and were extreame beautifull. But the time of our stay there, being the Turnado, when the sunne (being in his returne from the Tropique of Cancer, to that of Capricorne, to visit and refresh the Southern world,) became Zenith to the inhabitants of that part of the world; which is about the beginning of August: At which time the raines fall in abundance, and is accompted winter, to those parts where the Zenith is, and we staying there 19 or 20 dayes, (the raine falling a good part of that time,) wee perceived the valleys to put on new liveries: so fresh, so full of various greens, intermixt with flowers of severall kinds, some growing on stalkes, some on trees, so full of varietie, of the most beautifull colours, as if nature had made choyce of that place to shew her Master piece. So that, having feasted our eyes with this delighted object, we desired to try whether their smel was as pleasant and odoriferous, as their beauty was admirable; and to satisfie our selves of this curiosity, would willingly have gone a shoare but wee were advised to stay a little, till we were better assured of our Portugall Bernardo. Which stay, gave us time to take a view of the Harbour or Bay, which they call the Pry, and is about a league over from land to land. And, as I guesst, somewhat more; from the poynts of land, to the bottome; and, as we enter, we leave a small Iland on our Larboard side.

## Description of the Bay there, which they call the Pry

**T**his Bay or Pry, lies to the Leeward of the Iland; by reason whereof we found so great, so insufferable heate, as you will hardly imagine that bodyes comming out of cold Climates, could indure such scorching without being suffocated.

I had in a Cabinet two pieces of hard waxe, in the hold of the ship both mel[t]ed and clave together; and the Cement of that Cabinet, that was made to hold the Inke, melted and became flat.

So that finding the Ayer so torridly hot, I thought good to make triall of the water; and I leapt into the sea, which appeared to my sense no more colder than the Ayer; than the Queens bath (at Ba[t]he)<sup>90</sup> is hotter in June here in England.

---

90 A town in south-west England known since Roman times for its hot springs and baths.

## The Padre Vadago's house and entertainment

**A**t the bottome, or inward part of the Pry, there appeared to us, a faire round rising hill, neere halfe the bredth of the Pry, not much unlike the How at Pl[y]mouth, with a valley on either side; And on the brow of the Hill towards the right hand, a very high and steep precipice of a rocke; in which stood the house of the Padre Vagado, fixt on the top of the rocke. A house fit enough for such a Master; for though he were the chiefe Commander of the Iland: yet by his port and house he kept he was more like a Hermite then a Governour. His familie consisting of a Mollotto<sup>91</sup> of his own getting, three Negroes, a Fidler, and a Wench. [10] Himselfe a man grave enough to be wise, but certainly of no great learning; for upon the differences between Bernardo and us, Colonel Modiford writ him a letter in Latin, which he did his best endeavour to answer but fell the two bowes short substance and language, and though his Quarrell were to us, yet he revenged himselfe on Priscian, whose head he broke 3 or 4 times in his letter.<sup>92</sup>

The first time we saw him, was at his own house, by his own invitation: to which almost inaccessible habitation, when we had climed with infinite difficulty; and indeed so painfull and violent was our motion: (our leggs finding the motion of elevation, much more violent then of distention,) as we were almost scalded within, and the torrid heat of the Sun, being then our Zenith, did so scald us without, as we were in fitter condition to be fricased<sup>93</sup> for the Padres dinner, then to eat any dinner our selves.

Being painfully and pipeing hot, arriv'd at this exalted mansion; we found none to entertaine us but Bernardo; whose countenance was not so well reconcil'd to himselfe, as to give us a hearty welcome. He told us that the Padre was gone forth about some affaires of the Iland, but would returne time enough to dinner. And whilst we were staying there, expecting his comming, we thought good not to be idle, for the structure of that Fabricke, did not minister to our eyes much of delight. Onely that it had a faier prospect to sea. So we walkt along upon that round hill, enquiring what we could of the place; and were inform'd that there had been formerly a very stately Town, beautified with faire buildings, and streets so contrived, as to make the best use of such a prospect; But burnt and demolisht by Sr. Francis Drake,<sup>94</sup> in the time of the warres,

---

91 “mulatto”; a person with mixed white and black ancestry.

92 Priscian composed a Latin grammar in the 6th century that was the standard work on the rules of the language during the Middle Ages. Ligon is criticizing Padre Vagado for writing in crude Latin.

93 “cooked”

94 Drake raided Santiago in November 1585.



between Queen Elizabeth, and the King of Spaine, which made us give more reverence to the place; for that some of our Countrey men had there sacrificed their lives for the Honour of our Nation.<sup>95</sup>

About the houre that our stomacks told us, it was full high time to pay Nature her due, we lookt about us, and perceived at a good distance, a horse comming towards us, with a man on his back, as hard as his heels could carry him; and within a very little time, made a sudden stop at the Padres house, from whose backe (being taken by two Negroes,) was set on the ground a great fat man, with a gowne on his back, his face not so black as to be counted a Mollotto, yet I believe full out as black as the Knight of the Sunne;<sup>96</sup> his eyes blacker if possible, and so far sunk into his head, as with a large pinne you might have prick't them out in the nappe of his necke. Upon his a lighting we perceived him very much discomposed, for the pace he rid, was not his usuall manner of riding, as by our enquiry afterwards we understood; and that he very seldom rid at all, but his business having held him over long, caus'd him to take horse, who intended to come a foot; and being m[ou]nted, (and he none of the best horsemen,) was made subject to the wil of his horse; which being a Barbe, & very swift of foot, comming towards the place where he was kept, ranne with such violence, as it was a wonder his burthen had not been cast by the way; for the Horse having a bit in his mouth, and the stirrops being extreame short, as the manner of their riding there is, if he had ever checkt him with the bridle, that he had been put to bound, he had undoubtedly layd him on the ground. But the rider that thought [11] of nothing more, then holding fast by the pummell with both handes, was miraculously preserv'd.

In this great discomposure, he was taken off by two Negroes, and set on his owne legs: but in such a trance, as for some minutes, he was not in a Condition to speake to us: So sensible an impression had the feare of falling made in him. But being at last come to himselfe, he made his addresse to us, and in his language bid us welcome, begining to excuse his too long stay: to redeeme which fault, he had put himselfe in such a hazard, as in his whole life he had not knowne the like. We answered, that it argued a great respect and civilitie to us, that he would expose his gravitie, which was accustomed to a moderate pace, to such a swiftnes of motion, as

---

95 Sir Francis Drake (1540-1596) was the leading “sea-dog” or naval raider of the Elizabethan period. Considered a pirate by the Spanish, he was a hero to the English for his daring attacks on Spanish shipping and towns. These raids captured a legendary amount of silver and subsequent English privateers sought to emulate Drake’s success.

96 Possibly a reference to the Knight of the Sun who is the hero of the sixteenth-century chivalric romance *Espejo de Caballerias*. The romance was translated into English from c. 1582 to 1599 as *The Mirrour of Knighthood... wherein is shewed the worthinesse of the Knight of the Sunne...*

might in any kinde indanger his health, or hazard his person. But he being a man much reserv'd, and slow of language, said no more; but brought us into his house; which was upon a Levell at the entrance, but the other side of the Rooms a steep precipice, and some of the roomes like galleries-such as are in the meanest<sup>97</sup> Innes upon London-way. There were not in the house above 4 roomes, besides two galleries and a Kitchin; and those all on a flower; and the flowers of earth, not so much as made Levell, nor soe even as to deserve sweeping; and the most of them were justly dealt withall: for they had no more then they deserv'd, both above and below; for the Cobwebs serv'd for hangings, and frying pans and gred-irons for pictures.

By this equipage, you may guesse what the trading is of this Iland, when the Governour is thus accoutred; but by and by, a Cloath was layde, of Calico,<sup>98</sup> with 4 or 5 Napkins of the same, to serve a dozen men. The first Course was set on the table, usherd in by the Padre himselfe, (Bernardo, the Mollotto, and Negroes following after,) with every one a dish of fruite, 6 in all; the first was Milons, Plantines the second, the third Bonanos, the 4 of Guavers,<sup>99</sup> the 5 of Prickled Peares, the 6 the Custard Apple: but to fill up the table, and make the feast yet more sumptuous, the Padre sent his Mollotto, into his own Chamber, for a dish which he reserv'd for the Close of all the rest; Three Pines<sup>100</sup> in a dish, which were the first that ever I had seene, and as farre beyond the best fruite that growes in England, as the best Abricot<sup>101</sup> is beyond the worst Slow or Crab.

Having well refresht our selves with these excellent fruites, we dranke a glasse or two of Red Sack;<sup>102</sup> a kinde of wine growing in the Maderas; verie strong, but not verie pleasant; for in this Iland, there is made noe wine at all; nor as I thinke any of grapes, so neere the Line<sup>103</sup> upon Ilands in all the world. Having made an end of our fruite, the dishes were taken away, and another Course fetcht in; which was of flesh, fish, and sallets; the sallets being first plac't upon the table which I tooke great heed of, being all Novelties to me, but the best and most favourie herbs that ever I tasted, verie well season'd with salt, Oyle, and the best vinagre. Severall sorts we had, but not mixt,

---

97 "poorest"

98 "cotton"

99 fruit from the guava tree

100 "pineapples"

101 "apricot"

102 "red wine"

103 "the equator"

but in severall dishes, all strange, and all excellent The first dish of flesh, was a leg of young sturke, or a wilde Calfe, of a yeare old; which was of the Colour of stags flesh, and tasted very like it, full of Nerves and sinewes, strong meat and very well Condited: boyld tender, and the sauce of savorie herbes, with Spanish Vinagre. Turkyes and Hens we had roasted; a gigget of young goate, fish in abundance of severall [12] kindes, whose names I have forgotten, Snappers, grey and red; Cavallos, Carpions, &c: with others of rare colours and shapes, too many to be named in this leafe; some fried in oyle, and eaten hot, some souc't, some marinated: of all these we tasted, and were much delighted.

Dinner being neere halfe done, (the Padre, Bernardo, and the other black attendants, waiting on us;) in comes an old fellow, whose complexion was raised out of the red Sack; for neare that Colour it was: his head and beard milke white, his Countenance bold and Cheerfull, a Lute in his hand, and plaide us for a Noveltie, The Passame sares galiard;<sup>104</sup> a tune in great esteeme, in Harry the fourths dayes; for when Sir John Fal[s]taff makes his Amours to Mistresse Doll Tear-sheet, Sneake and his Companie,<sup>105</sup> the admired fiddlers of that age, playes this tune, which put a thought into my head, that if time and tune be the Composites of Musicke, what a long time this tune had in sayling from England to this place. But we being sufficiently satisfied with this kind of harmonie, desired a song; which he performed in as Antique a manner; both favouring much of Antiquitie; no Graces, double relishes, Trillos, Groppos, or Piano Forte's, but plaine as a packstaffe;<sup>106</sup> his Lute too, was but of tenne strings, and that was in fashion in King Davids<sup>107</sup> dayes; soe that the raritie of this Antique piece, pleas'd me beyond measure.

Dinner being ended, and the Padre well neere wearie of his wayting, we rose, and made roome for better Companie; for now the Padre, and his blacke mistresse were to take their turnes; A Negro of the greatest beautie and majestie together: that ever I saw in one woman. Her stature large, and excellently shap't, well favour'd, full eye'd, & admirably grac't; she wore on her head a roll of green taffatie, strip't with white and

---

104 The galliard was a type of dance popular in the early modern period, and Ligon is referring to the passameasure galliard, a variant of the dance. See John H. Long, "Sneak's 'Noyse' Heard Again?" *The Musical Quarterly* 44:1 (1958), pp. 76-81.

105 Sir John Falstaff is a comedic character in William Shakespeare's plays (*Henry IV* parts 1 and 2, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*; mentioned in *Henry V*). Sneak and Doll Tearsheet (a prostitute) are characters from *Henry IV* (part 2).

106 a traveller's staff used to hold a pack

107 Referring to the biblical King David who was also a musician (and often portrayed in art of the period with a lute or harp).

Philiamort, made up in manner of a Turban; and over that a sleight vayle, which she tooke off at pleasure. On her bodie next her linen, a Peticoaate of Orange Tawny and Skye Colour; not done with Straite stripes, but wav'd; and upon that a mantle of purple silke, ingrayld with straw Colour. This Man[t]le was large, and tyed with a knot of verie broad black Ribbon, with a rich Jewell on her right shoulder, which came under her left arme, and so hung loose and carelesly, almost to the ground. On her Legs, she wore buskins of wetched<sup>108</sup> Silke, deckt with Silver lace, and Fringe; Her shooes, of white Leather, lac't with skie colour; and pinkt between those laces. In her eares, she wore Large Pendants, about her n[e]ck; and on her armes, fayre Pearles. But her eyes were her richest Jewells: for they were the largest, and most orientall, that I have ever seene.

Seing all these perfections in her onely at passage, but not yet heard her Speake; I was resolv'd after dinner, to make an Essay<sup>109</sup> what a present of rich silver silke and gold Ribbon would doe, to perswade her to open her lips: Partly out of a Curiositie, to see whether her teeth were exactly white, and cleane, as I hop'd they were; for 'tis a generall opinion, that all Negroes have white teeth; but that is a Common error, for the black and white, being so neere together, they set off on another with the greater advantage. But looke neerer to them, and you shall find those teeth, which at a distance appear'd rarely white, are yellow and foul. This knowledge wrought this Curiositie in me, but it was not the mayne end of my enquirie; for there was now, but one thing more, to set her off in my opinion, the rarest black [13] swanne that I had ever seen, and that was her language, & gracefull delivery of that, which was to unite and confirme a perfection in all the rest. And to that end I took a Gentleman that spoke good Spanish with me, and awaited her comming out, which was with far greater majesty, and gracefulness, then I have seen Queen Anne, descend from the Chaire of State, to dance the Measures with a Baron of England, at a Maske in the Banquetting house.<sup>110</sup> And truly, had her followers and friends, with other perquisits (that ought to be the attendants on such a state and beautie) wayted on her, I had made a stop, and gone no farther. But finding her but slightly attended, and considering she was but the Padres Mistres, & therefore the more accessible, I made my addresses to her, by my interpreter; & told her, I had some Trifles made by the people of England, which for their value were not worthy her acceptance, yet for their Novelty, they might be of some esteem, such having bin worn by the great Queens of Europe, & intreated her to vouchsafe to receive them. She with

---

108 “light blue”

109 “assay”, i.e. to test

110 The Banqueting House was part of the royal Palace of Whitehall in London used for festivities and court entertainments. Completed in 1622, it is the only part of the palace that remains standing.

much gravity, and reserv'dness, opened the paper; but when she lookt on them, the Colours pleased her so, as she put her gravity into the loveliest smile that I have ever seen. And then shewed her rowes of pearls, so clean, white, Orient,<sup>111</sup> and well shaped, as Neptunes Court was never pav'd with such as these; & to shew whether was whiter, or more Orient, those or the whites of her eyes, she turn'd them up, & gave me such a look, as was a sufficient return for a far greater present, and withall wisht, I would think of somewhat wherein she might pleasure me, and I should finde her both ready and willing.<sup>112</sup> And so with a gracefull bow of her neck, she took her way towards her own house; which was not above a stones cast from the Padres. Other addresses were not to be made, without the dislike of the Padre, for they are there as jealous of their Mistrisses, as the Italians of their wives.

In the afternoon we took leave, and went aboard; where we remained three or four days; about which time, some passengers of the ship, who had no great store of linnen for shift, desired leave to go ashoare and took divers women along with them, to wash their linnen. But (it seem'd) the Portugalls, and Negroes too, found them handsome and fit for their turnes, and were a little Rude, I cannot say Ravisht them; for the Major part of them, being taken from Bridewell,<sup>113</sup> Turnboule street,<sup>114</sup> and such like places of education, were better natur'd then to suffer such violence; yet complaints were made, when they came aboard, both of such abuses, and stealing their linnen.<sup>115</sup>

But such a praise they gave of the place, as we all were desirous to see it: for, after the Raine, every day gave an increase to the beauty of the place, by the budding out of new fruits and flowers.

This was the valley on the left side of the Hill, more spacious and beautifull by much than that on the right hand, where the Padre dwelt. The next day, a dozen Gentlemen of our company, resolv'd to go and see this so much admired valley, and when our Saylers with their long boat went to fetch water, (as dayly they did,) we went

---

111 Here used to mean "bright." The Orient was associated both with the dawn and the highest (i.e. whitest) quality of pearls.

112 probably a sexual innuendo

113 The Bridewell was a house of correction in London. Originating in a sixteenth-century grant from the crown to the City of London, the Bridewell was intended to house orphans and to reform female convicts through labor and discipline. Later the term "Bridewell" became synonymous with "prison" as other penal institutions were developed along the same model.

114 Today known as Turnmill Street, Turnbull Street was a byword for a place of disrepute and crime in London. Shakespeare mentions the street in this context in *Henry IV*, part II, Act III, Scene II.

115 "clothes," probably here suggesting underwear.

along with them: and landed there, in as high going Billows,<sup>116</sup> as I have ever seen, so near the land. Much adoe we had, to be carried to land though on men's backs, and yet the grapple came as near the shoare as they durst bring it, for bulging against the bottome.

No sooner were we landed, but the Captaine of the Castle, with one souldier with him; came towards us, with a slow formall pace; [14] who desired to speake with one of us alone. Colonel Modiford,<sup>117</sup> being the chiefe man in the Company, went with an Interpreter to meet him; and being at the distance of speech, desired to know his pleasure; which he told him was this. That he understood divers of our women had bin ashore, the day before; and received some injury, from the people of the Iland, and that it was conceiv'd, we were come Arm'd to take revenge on those that did the affront. He therefore advised us, either to make speedy returne to the boate that brought us: or to send back our swords and pistols, and commit our selves to his protection; and if one of those were not presently put in act, we should in a very short time have all our throats Cut.

We told him we had no intention of revenge for any wrong done, and that the only cause of our landing, was to see the beauty of the place we had heard so much Commended, by our people that were ashore, of which they had given a very large testimony, both of the pleasantness and fruitfulness of it, and that our visit was out of love, both to the place and people. But for sending our weapons back to the boate, we desired his pardon; for this reason, that the Billows going so very high at that time, we could not send them to the boat without being dipt in the Sea water, which would spoyle them; and the most of them, being rich swords, and pistols, we were loath to have their beauty covered with rust, which the salt water would be the occasion of. We desired rather, that he would Command a souldier of his, to stay with a man of ours, and keep them safe, till our returne; which he being content to doe, we committed our selves to his protection, who put a guard upon us of 10 Souldiers, part Portugalls part

---

116 "waves"

117 Thomas Modiford (c. 1620-1679) fought for Charles I during the English civil wars, but was captured when Exeter fell to parliamentary forces. It was rumored that he had had a hand in betraying Exeter to the besieging army. He was allowed to depart for the Caribbean where he purchased a sugar plantation in Barbados. He quickly made a fortune, having arrived at the beginning of the sugar boom, and in 1660 he was briefly appointed governor of Barbados. His prospects rose higher in 1664 when he was transferred to Jamaica as governor and successfully colluded with privateers there to help Port Royal become the buccaneer capital of the Indies. Over time his anti-Spanish policy began to run counter to the interests of the English crown and he was recalled to London and imprisoned in 1674. Though released in 1675 he lost his political office along with much royal favor. Yet having established significant plantations on Jamaica, he remained one its wealthiest inhabitants up to his death in 1679.



Negroes; the most part of either kind, as proper men as I have seen, and as handsomely cloathed.

Their garments made with much Art, and all seem'd to be done by the Tayler; the Coverings for their heads, were not unlike Helmits; of blew and white strip't silke, some tawny, and yellow, others of other sorts of Colours; but all of one fashion, their doublets close to their bodies, with Cassocks,<sup>118</sup> made of the fashion of the Kings guard: loose sleeves, which came to their elbowes; but large and gathered so as to sit loose from their armes; with foure large skirts, reaching down to the middle of their thighs; but these of a different colour from their suits, their breeches indifferently large, coming down below the knee; and the upper part, so wrought with Whalebones within, as to keep them hollow, from touching their backs; to avoid heat, which they were much troubled with; upon their leggs, buskins of the colour of their suits, yet some made a difference: their shooes Colour'd for the most part; some white, but very few blacke. Their weapons, as Swords, Pistols, Muskets, Pikes, and Partisans, kept very bright, and worne comelily and gracefully; which argued a decencie in the Commander, as their awfull respect did of his austeritie.

Being now under a Guard, we marcht into this valley, one of the delightfulest places that I have ever seen, for besides the high and loftie trees, as the Palmeto, Royall, Coco, Cedar, Locust, Masticke, Mangrave Bully, Redwood, Pickled yellow wood, Cassia, Fistula, Calibash, Cherry, Figgtree, whose body is large inough for timber, Cittrons, Custard apple, Guaver, Macow, Cipres, Oranges, Limons, Lymes, Pomegranat, Aotto, Prickled apple, Prickled peare, Papa, these and more may be accounted wood: and yet a [15] good part of them bearing excellent fruit; But then there are of a lesser sort, that beare the rarest fruit; whose bodyes cannot be accompted wood, as the Plantine, Pine, Bonano, Milon, water Milon, &c. and some few grapes, but those inconsiderable, by reason they can never make wine: because they have no winter, and so by that meanes, they can never ripe together, but one is green, another ripe, another rotten, which reason will ever hold, that no wine can be made on Ilands, where there is no winter: or within twenty degrees of the line on either side. I have heard that wine is made in the East Indies, within lesse then fifteen Degrees; but tis of the Palme tree; out of whose body, they draw both wine and oyle; which wine will not keep above a day, but no wine of grapes, for the reasons afore said, Other kinds of trees, we found good to smell to, as Mirtle, Jesaman, Tamarisk, with a tree somewhat of that bignesse, bearing a very beautifull flower. The first halfe next the stalke, of a deep yellow or gold colour; the other halfe, being the larger, of a rich Scarlet: shap'd like a Carnation, & when the flowers fall off, there grows a Cod, with 7 or 8 seeds

---

118 a type of coat

in it, divers of which, we carried to the Barbados, and planted there: and they grew and multiplied abundantly, and they call them there, the St. Jago flower, which is a beautifull, but no sweet flower.

From these woods of pleasant trees, we saw flying divers birds, some one way, some another, of the fairest, and most beautifull colours, that can be imagined in Nature: others whose Colours and shapes come short of these, did so excell in sweetnesse, and loudness of voyce, as our Nightingal[e]s in England, are short of them, in either of those two properties; but in variety of tunes, our birds are beyond them, for in that they are defective.

In this valley of pleasure, adorn'd as you have heard, we march't with our Guard, faire and softly, near a quarter of a mile; before we came to the much praised fountaine; from whence we fetcht our water. The circle whereof, was about 60 foot, the Diameter about 20 from the ground to the top of the Well, (which was of freestone,) 3 foot and a halfe; from thence within, downe to the surface of the water, about 15 foot. The spring it selfe, not so much to be praised for the excellency of the taste, though cleare inough, as for the Nymphs that repaire thither. For whilst we stayed there seeing the Saylers full their Casks; and withall Contemplating the glory of the place: there appeared to our view, many pretie young Negro Virgins, playing about the Well. But amongst those; two, that came downe with either of them a naturall Pitcher, a Calibash<sup>119</sup> upon their arme, to fetch water from this fountaine. Creatures, of such shapes, as would have puzzelld Albert Durer,<sup>120</sup> the great Mr of Proportion, but to have imitated; and Tition, or Andrea de Sarta,<sup>121</sup> for softnes of muscles, and Curiositie of Colouring, though with a studied diligence; and a love both to the partie and the worke. To expresse all the perfections of Nature, and Parts, these Virgins were owners of, would aske a more skillfull pen, or pencill then mine; Sure I am, though all were excellent, their motions were the highest, and that is a beautie no painter can expresse, and therefore my pen may well be silent; yet a word or two, would not be amisse, to expresse the difference between these, and those of high Africa; as of Morcoco, Guinny, Binny, Cutchow, Angola, Aethiopia, and Mauritania, or those that dwell nere the River [16] of Gambia, who are thick lipt, short nos[e]d, and commonly low foreheads. But these, are compos'd of such features, as would marre the judgment of the best Paynters, to undertake to

---

119 The calabash is a fruit from the calabash tree that when hollowed out can be used as a pitcher (as here), or cups and bowls.

120 Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) was a German artist who was among the leading figures of the "Northern Renaissance." He also wrote treatises on proportion and geometry.

121 Tiziano Vecelli (1488-1576), known as Titian, and Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530) were painters during the Italian Renaissance.

mend. Wanton, as the soyle that bred them, sweet as the fruites they fed on; for being come so neere, as their motions, and graces might perfectly be discern'd, I guest that Nature could not, without help of Art, frame such accomplit beauties not onely of colours, and favour, but of motion too, which is the highest part of beautie. If dancing had bin in fashion in this Iland, I might have been perswaded, that they had bin taught those motions, by some who had studied that Art. But considering the Padre's Musique to be the best the Iland afforded, I could not but cast away that thought, and attribute all to pure nature; Innocent, as youthfull, their ages about 15. Seing their beauties so fresh and youthfull, withall the perfections I have named, I thought good to trie, whether the uttering of their language, would be as sweet and harmonious, as their other partes were comely. And by the helpe of a Gentleman that spoke Portugall, I accosted them; and began to praise their beauties, shapes, and manner of dressings; which was extreamly prettie. Their haire not shorne as the Negroes in the places I have named, close to their heads; nor in quarters, and mases, as they use to weare it, which is ridiculous to all that see them, but themselves: But in a due proportion of length, so as having their shortenings by the naturall Curles, they appeared as wiers, and artificiall dressings to their faces. On the sides of their Cheeks, they plat little of it, of purpose to tie small Ribbon; or some small beads, of white Amber, or blew bugle, sometimes of the rare flowers that grow there; Their eares hung with Pendants, their necks and armes adorn'd with bracelets of Counterfeit pearles, and blew bugle; such as the Portugalls bestow on them, for these are free Negroes, and weare upon the small of one of their legs, the badge of their freedome; which is a small peece of silver, or tinne, as big as the stale of a spoone; which comes round about the leg: and by reason of the smoothnes, and lightnes, is no impediment to their going. Their cloathes, were petticoates<sup>122</sup> of Strip't silk, next to their linen, which reach to their midle leg: and upon that a mantle, of blew taffitie, tied with a Ribbon on the right shoulder: which coming under the left arme, hung downe carelesly somewhat lower then the petticoate, so as a great part of the naturall beautie, of their backes and necks before, lay open to the view, their breast round, firme, and beautifully shaped.

Upon my addresses to them, they appeard a little disturb'd; and whispered to one another, but had not the Confidence to speake aloud I had in my hat, a piece of silver and silke Ribbon, which I perceiv'd their well shap't eyes, often to dart at; but their modesties would not give them Confidence to aske. I tooke it out, and divided it between them, which they accepted with much alacritie;<sup>123</sup> and in returne, dranke

---

122 a type of skirt

123 alacrity

to one another my health in the liquor of the pure fountaine, which I perceiv'd by their wanton smiles, and jesticulations, and casting their eyes towards me: when they thought they had exprest enough they would take in their Countenances, and put themselves in the modestest postures that could be, but we having brought a Cafe of bottles, of English spirits, with us; I cald for some, and drunke a health to them, in a small dramme cup; and gave it to one [17] of them; which they smelt to, and finding it too strong for their temper, pour'd some of it into one of their Calibashes: and put to it as much water, as would temper it to their palats; they dranke againe, but all this would not give them the Confidence to speake, but, in mute language, and extream prety motions, shewed, they wanted neither wit nor discretion, to make an answer. But it seem'd, it was not the fashion there, for young Maides to speak to strangers, in so publick a place.

I thought I had been sufficiently arm'd with the perfections I found in the Padre's Mistresse, as to be free from the darts of any other Beauty of that place, and in so short a time: But I found the difference between young fresh Beauties, and those that are made up with the addition of State and Majesty: For though they counsell and perswade our Loves; yet, young Beauties force, and so commit rapes upon our affections. In summe, had not my heart been fixed fast in my breast, and dwelt there above sixty years, and therefore loath to leave his long kept habitation, I had undoubtedly left it between them for a Legacy.<sup>124</sup> For, so equall were there Beauties, and my Love, as it was not, nor could be, particular to either.

I have heard it a question disputed, whether if a Horse, being plac'd at an equall distance, between two bottles of hey, equally good; and his appetite being equally fix'd upon either: Whether that Horse must not necessarily starve. For, if he feed on either, it must argue, that his appetite was more fixt on that; or else, that bottle was better than the other. Otherwise, what should move him to chose one before the other?

In this posture was I, with my two Mistresses; or rather, my two halves of one Mistresse: for, had they been conjoyned, and so made one, the poynt of my Love had met there; but, being divided, and my affection not forked, it was impossible to fix, but in one Centre.

In this doubtfull condition, I took my leave, with an assurance, that I should never finde two such parallel Paragons,<sup>125</sup> in my whole search through the World: And the reason of their so great likenesse and lustre, was, they were Sisters and Twins; as I was after informed by a Hermite, that came often to visit us, when we came on land, as

---

124 A legacy is a bequest or grant found in a will.

125 examples of the highest virtue or quality

we often did, and not far off from his Cell.

But you will think it strange, that a man of my age and gravity, should have so much to do with Beauty and Love: But I have three arguments to protect me. The first is, I have in my younger dayes, been much inclined to Painting, in which Art, colour, favour, and shape is exercised; and these Beauties, being a proper subject of all these perfections, (being in themselves perfect) I could not but consider them with a studied diligence.

Next, I had been long at Sea, without setting foot on any Land; and that hath a property, to make all Land-objects beautifull; and these being in the highest degree paramount, could not but surprise my fancy. Besides, the place being extream beautifull and lovely, could not but secretly harbour in it the Spirit of Love, a passion not to be governed. And therefore I hope, you will pardon my wilde extravagancy.

But the main reason of this flying out, is, I had little else to say: for the Iland, being a place of very little or no traffick, could not afford [18] much of discourse. Cattle they have very good, and large, which they sell at very easy rates; and likewise Horses, of excellent shapes and mettle; but they are contrabanded goods, and whosoever deales in them, (without speciall license) forfeits both Ship and Goods, if they have power to compell them.

But I believe, they have not, being partly informed by the Hermite, who came often to us, to hear newes, and beg somewhat of us; which being obtained, he would not stick to impart somewhat of the weaknesse of the Iland, that would have cost him dear, if it had been known to the Padre. And some of that which he enformed us, was, that the Forts, and Block-houses, on either side the Prye, on which we saw the appearance of Ordnances, good store, and large; but we understood by him, that those Forts were neither regular, nor the Guns Brasse or Iron, but such as Henry the Eighth took Bulloyne<sup>126</sup> with; and this we found by experience to be true: For, upon our first difference with Barnardo, and the Padre, we weyed Anchor, and removed our selves out of the distance of the Castle, which stood in the bottom of the Prye; and expected to have been shot at from those Forts and Block-houses, but saw no fire given; and if they had been furnish'd with such Artillery as would have reach'd us, we should certainly have heard from them.

We also enquired of our Intelligencer, the Hermite, what Trades or Manufactures were practised there; but were answered, that they were few, and inconsiderable; Sugar, Sweet-meats, and Coco-nuts, being the greatest trade they had. Yet by the Padres leave, we carried away with us 50 head of Cattle, and 8 Horses, which Barnardo made us pay double for; the usuall price being 25 s. a piece, for which he made us pay 50 s.

---

126 Henry VIII captured Boulogne in northern France in 1544.

and for Horses, 10 £ a piece, which others have had for £4 or £5. But he was content, we should rate our commodities accordingly, and so we were no great losers by the exchange.

Having dispatch'd our businesse, we got leave to go ashoar, upon the little Iland, at the entrance of the Prye, there to cut and pull grasse, for our Horses and Cattle, which we made up into hay; a work quickly done, where so much Sun-shine was our helper. It being perfectly dried, we stowed it in the ship, which was our last work, and so wayed Anchor, and hoysed Saile, steering our course for the Barbadoes, leaving Bernardo (according to his own desire) behinde us; having but 2 Degrees to the southward to varie, in the running of 620 Leagues<sup>127</sup> Westward. St. Jago lying in 15. and the Barbadoes in 13 Degrees and 30 Minutes, to the Northward of the Line.

## There are seven Ilands more, which are neighbours to this

**T**here are seven more Ilands, which are called the Ilands of Cape Verd: viz. S. Michaels, St. Vincents, St. Anthonies, St. Lucia, Bravo, Fogo, and Soll: Some of which are much larger, but none so considerable, as this of St. Jago. As we lay at Anchor in the entrance of the Prye, we perceived at Sun-set, between the Sun and us, the Iland called Fogo; which was at such a distance, as none of us could discern it all the day, till that houre; and then the Iland interposing between the Sun and us, we saw it perfectly, shap'd like the neather half of a Sugar loafe, the upper half being cut off even; and in the midst of the top of that, a smoak and fire rising out, from which we guesst it took its name.

About the tenth of August, we put out to Sea; and as we sayled, we [19] left the Iland of our Starbord-side, and did not part with the sight of it, till we discern'd a little Town, near to the shoar, which, we were told, was the best in the Iland, and a place meant for the chief Port, for all Traffick in the Iland; but by means of a great mischiefe, that Ships were subject to in that Harbour, it was almost totally deserted: For the Sea there, was so rocky in the bottome, and those rocks so thick together, and sharp withall, as they cut the Cables off neer to the Anchor, and so the Anchor often left in the bottom. There was a Dutchman that lay there but three daies, and in that little stay, lost two Anchors. From this Iland to the Barbadoes, we account 620 Leagues; which, by reason of the constancy of the Windes, which blow seldome in any other point, than

---

127 A league is 3 miles.



Nore-east and By-east, they have usually sayled it in 16 or 17 daies. But we, for that it was the time of Tornado, when the windes chop about into the South, were somewhat retarded in our passage, and made it twenty two daies ere we came thither; and many have made it a far longer time. For, in the time of Tornado, the clouds interpose so thick, and darken the skie so much, as we are not able to make an observation for a fortnight together; and so being doubtfull of our Latitude, dare not make the best use of our Sayles and way, for fear of slipping by the Island; and being past it, can hardly beat it up again, without putting out into the Main, and so by painfull traverses, recover our selves to the Eastward of the Iland, and then fall back again, by the due Latitude upon it, at 13 Degrees and 30 Minutes.

Besides this paines, and losse of time, when we misse the Iland, we many times run hazards, by falling upon the Leeward Ilands, in the night, of which the Bay of Merixo is well stor'd.

In this long reach, (which may be call'd a voyage it selfe) I had only two things to make the way seem short; the one was Pleasure, the other Businesse; that of Pleasure, was, to view the Heavens, and the beauty of them, which were objects of so great glory, as the Inhabitants of the World, from 40 Degrees to either Pole, can never be witness of. And this happens at the time, when the Turnado is with those of that Latitude, where we were. For the clouds being exhal'd in great quantities, some thick and grosse, some thin and aeriall, and being hurl'd and roll'd about with great and lesser curles, the Sun then and there being far brighter, then with us here in England, caused such glorious colours to rest upon those Clouds, as 'tis not possible to be believed, by him that hath not seen it, nor can imagination frame so great a beauty: And the reason is, the neernesse and propinquity<sup>128</sup> of the place we are in, which makes us see the glory of the Sun, and of those Stars too, which move in that Horizon, much more perfectly, then at a further distance. The proof of this I found, by looking on the Stars, that appear large and bright to us in England, which being seen there, do not only lose much of their light, but of their magnitude. For instance; There is [a] little Star, called Auriga,<sup>129</sup> neer the Charles Wain,<sup>130</sup> which in England I have seen very perfectly, in bright nights; but at that distance, I could never see it in the clearest night, though I have often attempted it. And upon my return to England, I found it as I left it; which argues, that it was no decay or impediment in my sight, that made me lose it, but only

---

128 “close proximity”

129 Auriga is a constellation representing a charioteer. Ligon is referring to Capella, a star (actually four stars) in the constellation, which is the third brightest star in the northern hemisphere.

130 The star formation or asterism known as the “Big Dipper.”

the distance of place. I deny not, but a better sight then mine, may see this Star Auriga at the Barbadoes; but then, so good a sight may see it more perfectly in England than I can; and so the comparison holds. But another [20] reason, to prove the Celestiall Bodies brighter at neerer distance, is, That the Moon being neer the Full, (at which time it gives a plentifull light) I have observed in the night, (the Sun having been set two hours, or thereabouts) and at such a time, as the Clouds being in a fit Position, to reflect the beams which the Moon then gives, to the place where you are, you shall see a perfect Rain-bow in the night. But this does not happen at all times, though there be Clouds, for the beams to rest on; but only to such as are in an angle, where these beams reflect, and meet in a just point.

Divers new Constellations we found, to the Southward, which in our Horizon are never seen; and amongst them, one, which we call the Cruseros,<sup>131</sup> which is made up of foure Stars, which stand almost square, or rather like the clawes of a Birds foot; and the Sea-men told us, that two of them point at the South Pole, as the Painters of the Charles Wain, do to the North Star. But the South Pole cannot be seen by us, that come from the Northern parts, till we be under the Line, and then we see both North and South; as we do the Sun in morning and evening, at six and six. And thus much for Pleasure.

Now for Businesse, it was only this: To inform my selfe, the best I could, of the account the Master and his Mates kept, of the Ships way, both for Compasse, Card, and Logline, together with the observations at noon, by that excellent and usefull Instrument, the Back-staffe,<sup>132</sup> by which we know to a mile, the Latitude we are in; and if we had an Instrument, to finde out the Longitude as perfectly, every man might guid[e] a Ship, that could but keep an account.<sup>133</sup>

To the knowledge of this great secret, of the Ships Course, divers Gentlemen of our company applyed themselves very diligently; for the Master was not froward, to communicate his skill to all that were of his Messe. And to such a proficiency we were grown, as to lay a wager with the Boat-swain, a very good Seaman, upon the first sight of the Iland of Barbadoes. He laid, we should not see it till the afternoon, or late in the evening. We, that we should make it before noon. Whether it were chance, or our skilfulnesse, I know not, but we won the wager, which was a couple of very fat Hens,

---

131 The Southern Cross is an asterism or pattern of stars located within the constellation Crux in the southern hemisphere.

132 a type of quadrant

133 Astrolabes and quadrants were used to calculate a ship's latitude, but sailors were unable to reliably calculate longitude until the invention of the marine chronographer in the eighteenth century.

which we caused to be drest, and eat them in sight of the Iland, with a double joy: first, that we had won the wager; next, that we were grown so neer our wished Harbour.

## The first sight of the Barbadoes

**B**eing now come in sight of this happy Iland, the neerer we came, the more beautifull it appeared to our eyes; for that being in it selfe extreemly beautifull, was best discern'd, and best judg'd of, when our eyes became full Masters of the object. There we saw the high, large, and lofty Trees, with their spreading Branches, and flourishing tops, seem'd to be beholding to the earth and roots, that gave them such plenty of sap for their nourishment, as to grow to that perfection of beauty and largenesse. Whilst they, in gratitude, return their cool shade, to secure and shelter them from the Suns heat, which, without it, would scorch and drie away. So that bounty and goodnesse in the one, and gratefulnesse in the other, serve to make up this beauty, which otherwise would lie empty & waste. And truly these vegetatives, may teach both the sensible and reasonable Creatures, what it is that makes up wealth, beauty, and all harmony in that Leviathan, a well governed Common-wealth:<sup>134</sup> Where the Mighty men, and Rulers of the earth, by their prudent and carefull protection, secure them from harmes; whilst they retribute [21] their paynes, and faithfull obedience, to serve them in all just Commands. And both these, interchangeably and mutually in love, which is the Cord that bindes up all imperfect Harmonie. And where these are wanting, the roots dry, and leaves fall away, and a generall decay, and devastation ensues. Witnessse the woefull experience of these sad times we live in.

Being now come to the distance of two or three leagues, my first observation was, the forme of the Iland in generall, which is highest in the middle; by which commodity of situation, the inhabitants within, have these advantages; a free prospect to sea, and a reception of pure refreshing ayer, and breezes that come from thence; the plantations overlooking one another so; as the most inland parts, are not bard nor restrained the liberties of their view to sea, by those that dwell between them and it. For as we past along neer the shoare, the plantations appear'd to us one above another: like severall stories in stately buildings, which afforded us a large proportion of delight. So that we begg'd of the Master, to take down those of his sayles, that gave

---

134 Thomas Hobbes published *Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil* in 1651. *Leviathan* was a controversial work of political theory that explored the contractual basis of human societies. The “leviathan” is the immensity of the whole society, which is greater than any single member.

the ship the greatest motion, that we might not be depriv'd on a sudden, of a sight we all were so much pleased with But our Cattle and Horses (who were under hatches; and therefore no partners of this object) having devoured all their fodder, and were now ready to come to that necessity, as the next thing to be thought on, was to plane deale boards, and feed them with the shavings; Which deadly hunger, caused such lowing and bellowing of the poor Cattle, as their cry stopped the Masters eares, so as the smoothest, and most perswasive language, we could use: could not force a passage, but with all the haste he could, put into Carlils Bay; which is the best in the Iland, where we found riding at Anchor, good ships, with boates playing two and fro, with Sayles and Oates, which carried commodities from place to place: so quick stirring, and numerous: as I have seen it below the bridge at London.

Yet notwithstanding all this appearance of trade, the Inhabitants of the Ilands, and shipping two were so grievously visited with the plague, (or as killing a disease,) <sup>135</sup> that before a month was expired after our Arivall, the living were hardly able to bury the dead. Whether it were brought thither in shipping: (for in long voyages, diseases grow at Sea, and takes away many passengers, and those diseases prove contagious,) or by the distempers of the people of the Iland: who by the ill dyet they keep, and drinking strong waters, bring diseases upon themselves, was not certainly known. <sup>136</sup> But I have this reason to beleve the latter: because for one woman that dyed, there were tenne men; and the men were the greater deboystes. <sup>137</sup>

In this sad time, we arriv'd in the Iland; and it was a doubt whether this disease, or famine threatned most; There being a generall scarcity of Victuals throughout the whole Iland.

Our intention at first, was not to stay long there, but onely to sell our goods, Cattle, and Horses; and so away to Antigoa; <sup>138</sup> where we intended to plant: but the ships being (for the most part) infected with this disease, and our selves being unprovided of handes for a new plantation (by reason of the miscarying of a ship, which set ou[t] before us from Plimouth, a month before, with men victuals, and all utensell's fitted for a plantation), we were compelled to stay longer in the [22] Iland than we attended. Besides, the ship we came in, was consigned to another part in

---

135 probably yellow fever

136 Ligon is writing before the advent of modern germ theory, and disease was often conceptualized as an internal imbalance caused by diet, environment, or other factors.

137 “deboise,” i.e. “debauched”

138 “Antigua”

Africa, called Cutchew,<sup>139</sup> to trade for Negroes.

But during the time of our stay there, we made enquires of some small plantation to rest us on, til the times became better, and fitter for our remove; with intent to make use of those few hands we had, to settle that, till we had supplies, and new directions from England.

And so upon discourse with some of the most knowing men of the Iland, we found that it was farre better, for a man that had money, goods, or Credit, to purchase a plantation there ready furnisht, and stockt with Servants, Slaves, Horses, Cattle, Assinigoes,<sup>140</sup> Camels, &c. with a sugar worke, and an Ingenio:<sup>141</sup> than to begin upon a place, where land is to be had for nothing, but a triviall Rent, and to indure all hardships, and a tedious expectation, of what profit or pleasure may arise, in many yeers patience: and that, not to be expected, without large and frequent supplies from England; and yet fare, and labour hard. This knowledge, was a spurre to set on Colonel Modiford, who had both goods and credit, to make enquiry for such a purchase, which in very few dayes he lighted on; making a visit to the Governor Mr. Phillip Bell,<sup>142</sup> met there with Major William Hilliard, an eminent planter of the Iland, and a Councillor, who had been long there, and was now desirous to sucke in some of the sweet ayre of England: And glad to find a man likely to performe with him, took him home to his house, and began to treat with him, for halfe the plantation upon which he lived; which had in it 500 Acres of Land, with a faire dwelling house, an Ingenio plac't in a roome of 400 foot square; a boyling house, filling roome, Cisterns, and Still-house; with a Carding house, of 100 foot long, and 40 foot broad; with stables, Smiths forge, and rooms to lay provisions, of Corne, and Bonavist;<sup>143</sup> Houses for Negroes and Indian slaves, with 96 Negroes, and three Indian women, with their Children; 28 Christians, 45 Cattle for worke, 8 Milch Cowes, a dosen Horses and Mares, 16 Assinigoes.

---

139 Cacheu in Guinea-Bissau was a major Portuguese slave trading center.

140 “asses,” i.e. donkeys

141 Refers generally to sugar works, but can also mean the rollers that squeezed the juice from the sugar cane.

142 Philip Bell c. 1590-c. 1650 was an adventurer who became governor of Bermuda in 1627. After also leading the short-lived Providence Island colony off the coast of Central America, Bell arrived in Barbados in 1641 having been appointed its governor. He proceeded to introduce administrative and legal reforms that restructured the island’s government and expanded the power of the local assembly, which began to initiate and pass legislation. His policy of neutrality during the struggle between the royalists and parliamentarians was upset in 1650 when royalists were able to seize control of government and forced Bell to depart. See introduction, pp. x-xi.

143 An antiquated term for the hyacinth bean {LC}

After a Months treaty, the bargaine was concluded, and Colonel Modiford was to pay for the Moity of this plantation, £7000; to be payed, £1000 in hand, the rest £2000 a time, at sixe and sixe months, and Colonel Modiford to receive the profit of halfe the plantation as it rose, keeping the account together, both of the expence and profit.

In this plantation of 500 acres of land, there was employed for sugar somewhat more then 200 acres; above 80 acres for pasture, 120 for wood, 30 for Tobacco, 5 for Ginger, as many for Cotton wool, and 70 acres for provisions; viz. Corne, Potatoes, Plantines, Cassavie, and Bonavist; some few acres of which for fruite; viz. Pines, Plantines, Milions, Bonanoes, Gnavers Water Milions, Oranges; Limons, Limes, &c. most of these onely for the table.

Upon this plantation I lived with these two partners a while, But with Colonel Modiford three years; for the other went for England, and left Colonel Modiford to manage the employment alone; and I to give what assistance I could for the benefit of both: which I did, partly at their requests, and partly at the instance of Mr. Thomas Kendall, who reposed much confidence in me, in case Colonel Modiford should miscarry in the Voyage.

[23] I only speak thus much, that you may perceive, I had time enough to improve my selfe, in the knowledge of the managment of a Plantation of this bulk; and therefore, you may give the more credit in what I am to say, concerning the profit and value of this Plantation, which I intend as a Scale, for those that go upon the like; or to varie it to greater or lesse proportions, at their pleasure. And indeed, I wanted no tut[o] ridge, in the learning this mystery; for, to do him right, I hold Collonell Modiford as able, to undertake and perform such a charge, as any I know. And therefore I might (according to my ability) be able to say something, which I will, as briefly as I can, deliver to you, in such plain language as I have.

But before I come to say any thing of the Iland, as it wa[s] when I arrived there, I will beg leave, to deliver you a word or two, what hath been told me by the most ancient Planters, that we found there, and what they had by tradition from their Predecessors. For, few or none of them that first set foot there, were now living.



## The Iland first discovered by a ship of Sir William Curteen's

**A**bout the year a Ship of Sir William Curteens, returning from Fernambock in Brasill,<sup>144</sup> being driven by foul weather upon this coast, chanc'd to fall upon this Iland, which is not far out of the way, being the most windwardly Iland of all the [C]arribbies, ([T]obago only excepted;) and Anchoring before it, stayed some time, to informe themselves of the nature of the place; which they found by tryalls in severall parts, to be so overgrown with Wood, as there could be found no Champions, or Sa[v]annas for men to dwell in; nor found they any beasts to inhabit there, only Hogs, and those in abundance:<sup>145</sup> the Portugalls having long before, put some ashoar for breed, in case they should at any time be driven by foul weather, to be cast upon the Iland, they might there finde fresh meat, to serve them upon such an extremity: And the fruits and roots that grew there, afforded them so great plenty of food, as they multiplied abundantly. So that the Natives of the leeward Ilands, that were at the distance of sight, comming thither in their Cannoas, and Periagos,<sup>146</sup> and finding such Game to hunt, as these hogs, and the flesh so sweet and excellent in tast, they came often thither a hunting, and stayed sometimes a month together, and so returned again at pleasure, leaving behinde them certain tokens of their being there, which were, Pots, of severall sizes, in which they boyled their meat, made of clay, so finely tempered, and turned with such art, as I have not seen any like them, for finenesse of mettle, and curiosity of turning, in England. This information I received from the Planters in Barbadoes. But being here a Prisoner, in the Upper Bench Prison, my chance was to meet with an antient Captain, and one of those that first landed on the Iland; and had the managing of a good part of the Iland, under William late Earle of Pembrok, before my Lord of Carlile begg'd it of King James.<sup>147</sup> This Captain Canon (for so was

---

144 Pernambuco in Brazil. The Dutch seized parts of Brazil from the Portuguese from 1630. In the Treaty of the Hague (1661) the territory was returned to Portugal.

145 Sailors would often leave pigs on islands to fend for themselves and reproduce. This seeding of animals created a supply of food for other passing sailors. Yet pigs are voracious feeders and without native predators to limit their numbers they often decimated the local ecosystem.

146 “piragua”; a type of dugout canoe.

147 The English first settled Barbados in 1627 when a group led by Henry Powell arrived. They were funded by the Courteens, a wealthy merchant family. However, the Earl of Carlisle, a Scottish nobleman, took advantage of the Courteens' failure to obtain a royal grant to the island by securing his own. Though Powell and the Courteens' sought to protect their claim to the island, Carlisle was able

his name) inform'd me for certain, that this was a grosse mistake in the Planters, and that no Indians ever came there: But those Pots were brought by the Negres, which they fetcht from Angola, and some other parts of Africa; and that he had seen them make of them at Angola, with the greatest art that may be.<sup>148</sup> Though I am willing to believe this Captain, who delivered upon his knowledge, that the Negres brought some Pots thither, and very finely and artificially made; yet, it does not hinder any man from believing, [24] that the Indians brought some too; and who knowes, which were the most exactly made. For, 'tis certain, that from some part of the Iland, you may see (in a clear day) St. Vincents perfectly: And if we can see them, why may not they see us; and they will certainly venture to any place they see, so far as they know they can reach before night, setting out very early in the morning. But I leave you to credit which of these you please, either, or both.

But I have a great inclination to believe, the Indians have been there, for this reason, that the Iland of St. Vincents, lying in the same Climate with this of [B]arbado[e]s, the Clay may be of the same nature and qualitie; and they, having the skill to bring their Clay to so fine a temp[er], as to burn and not break, may shew us the way, to temper ours of the Barbadoes so, as we may make Bricks to burn, without chopping or cracking; which those of Angola, being far off, and it may be, their Clay of different temper, cannot help us in. And it is no hard matter, to procure an Indian or two, to come from that Iland, and give us direction, which would be of infinite use and advantage, to our buildings in Barbadoes.<sup>149</sup> But this digression must not lead me out of the way of my businesse.

This discovery being made, and advice given to their friends in England, other Ships were sent, with men, provisions, and working tooles, to cut down the Woods, and clear the ground, so as they might plant provisions to keep them alive, which, till then, they found but straglingly amongst the Woods. But having clear'd some part of it, they planted Potatoes, Plat[a]nes, and Mayes, with some other fruites; which, with the Hogs-flesh they found, serv'd only to keep life and soul together. And their supplies from England comming so slow, and so uncertainly, they were often driven to great extremities: And the Tobacco that grew there, so earthy and worthlesse, as it could give them little or no return from England, or else-where; so that for a while they lingred

---

successfully to assert his claim and become the island's proprietor (see introduction).

148 Portugal established slave trading posts in Angola in the late fifteenth century and was deeply involved in the politics of its kingdoms of Ndongo, Kongo, and Lunda. The Portuguese eventually expanded inland through territorial acquisition in the seventeenth-century.

149 Both Native Americans and slaves were important transmitters of information as they circulated across the boundaries of the European colonies.

on in a lamentable condition.<sup>150</sup> For, the Woods were so thick and most of the Trees so large and massie, as they were not to be falne with so few hands; and when they were laid along, the branches were so thick and boysterous, as required more help, and those strong and active men, to lop and remove them off the ground. At the time we came first there, we found both Potatoes, Maies, and Bona[no]s, planted between the boughes, the Trees lying along upon the ground; so far short was the ground then of being clear'd. Yet, we found Indico<sup>151</sup> planted, and so well ordered, as it sold in London at very good rates; and their Cotten wool, and Fustick wood, prov'd very good and staple commodities. So that having these foure sorts of goods to traffick with, some ships were invited (in hope of gain by that trade) to come and visit them, bringing for exchange, such commodities as they wanted, working Tools, Iron, Steel, Cloaths, Shirts, and Drawers, Hose and Shoes, Hats, and more Hands. So that beginning to taste the sweet of this Trade, they se[t] themselves hard to work, and lived in much better condition.

But when the Canes, had been planted three or four years, they found that to be the main Plant, to improve the value of the whole Iland: And so, bent all their endeavours to advance their knowledge in the planting, and making Sugar: Which knowledge, though they studied hard, was long a learning. But I will forbear to say any thing [25] of that, till I bring in the Plants; where you shall finde not only the colour, shape, and qualitie of this Plant, but the worth and value of it, together the whole processe of the great work of Sugar-making, which is the thing I mainly aime at: But, in my way to that, I will give you a sleight description or view, of the Iland in generall: and first, of the Scituation,<sup>152</sup>

## The Scituation of the Iland

**I**t were a crime, not to believe, but that you are well verst in the knowledge of all parts of the known habitable world; and I shall seem impertinent; if I go about to inform you of the scituation of this Iland. But, because there have been some disputes between Seamen, whether it lie in bare 13 Degrees, or in 13 Degrees and 30 Minutes, I shall easily be led by the most voices, of the most able Seamen, to give for granted, that Carlile Bay, which is the Harbour where most of them put in, is 13

*The  
Scituation*

150 Virginia was the major tobacco growing region for the English, though Virginian tobacco was often contrasted unfavorably with “sweeter” Spanish tobacco grown in their colonies in the Caribbean.

151 “indigo,” is a plant used to produce a blue-violet colored dye

152 “situation”

Degrees and 30 Minutes from the Line, to the Northern Latitude.

This Bay is, without exception, the best in the Iland, and is somewhat more then a league over; and from the points of Land to the bottom of the Bay, is twice as much.

Upon the most inward part of the Bay, stands the Town, which is about the bignesse of Hou[n]slo,<sup>153</sup> and is called the Bridge; for that a long Bridge was made at first over a little nook of the Sea, which was rather a Bog then Sea.

A Town ill scituate; for if they had considered health, as they did conveniency, they would never have set it there; or, if they had any intention at first, to have built a Town there, they could not have been so improvident, as not to forsee the main inconveniences that must ensue, by making choice of so unhealthy a place to live in. But, one house being set up, another was erected, and so a third, and a fourth, till at last it came to take the name of a Town; Divers Store-houses being there built, to stow their goods in, for their convenience, being neer the Harbour. But the main oversight was, to build their Town upon so unwholsome a place. For, the ground being somewhat lower within the Land, than the Sea-banks are, the spring-Tides flow over, and there remains, making a great part of that flat, a kinde of Bog or Morasse,<sup>154</sup> which vents out so loathsome a savour, as cannot but breed ill blood, and is (no doubt) the occasion of much sicknesse to those that live there.

At the time of our arrivall, and a month or two after, the sicknesse raign'd so extreamply, as the living could hardly bury the dead; and for that this place was neer to them, they threw the dead carcasses into the bog, which infected so the water, as divers that drunk of it were absolutely poysoned, and dyed in few houres after; but others, taking warning by their harmes, forbare to taste any more of it.

The ground on either side the Bay, (but chiefly that to the Eastward) is much firmer, and lies higher; and, I believe, they will in time, remove the Town upon that ground, for their habitations, though they suffer the Store-houses to remain where they are, for their convenience. But the other scituation, may be made with some charge as convenient as that, and abundantly more healthfull.

Three Bayes there are more of note in this Iland; one, to the Eastward of this, which they call Austin's Bay, not in commemoration of any Saint, but of a wilde mad drunken fellow, whose lewd and extravagant [26] carriage, made him infamous in the Iland; and his Plantation standing neer this Bay, it was called by his name. The other two are to the West of Carlile Bay; and the first is called Mackfields Bay, the other Spikes Bay; but neither of these three are environ'd with Land, as Carlile Bay is: but

---

153 a small town outside of London

154 "morass"; muddy or swampy ground

being to the Leeward of the Iland, and good Anchorage, they seldome are in danger; unlesse in the time of Turnado, when the wind turnes about to the South; and then, if they be not well [m]oor'd, they are subject to fall foul on one another, and sometimes driven aground. For, the Leeward part of the Iland being rather shelvie<sup>155</sup> then rockie, they seldome or never are cast away.

The length and breadth of this Iland, I must deliver you only upon trust; for, I could not go my selfe about it, being full of other businesse, but I had some speech with the antientest, and most knowing Surveyer there, one Captain Swann, who told me, that he once took an exact plot of the whole Iland, but it was commanded out of his hands by the then Governour, Sir Henry Huncks, who carried it into England since which time, neither himselfe, nor any other, to his knowledge, had taken any; nor did he believe, there was any extant.<sup>156</sup> I desired him yet that he would rub up his memory, and take a little paines in the survey of his Papers, to try what could be found out there, that might give me some light in the extent of the Iland, which he promised to do; and within a while after, told me, that he had found by some Papers, that lay scattered in his Study, the length of it; but for the breadth, it was very uncertain, by reason of the nooks and corners that reach'd out into the Sea, so that it must of necessity be broad in some places, and narrow in others. I desired then to know, how many miles the broadest, and how few the narrowest parts might be. He told me, that he guest, the broadest place could not be above seventeen miles, nor the narrowest under twelve; and that the length, he was assured, was twenty eight miles. Out of these uncertain grounds, it was a hard matter to conclude upon any certainties; and therefore the evenest way I can go, is, upon a Medium, between twelve and seventeen; and, I will be as modest as I can in my computation; and take but 14. which is lesse then the Medium, and multiply 14. which is supposed to be the breadth, by 28. which is assured to be the length, and they make 392 square miles in the Iland.<sup>157</sup> Beyond this, my enquiries could not reach, and therefore was compell'd to make my estimate upon this bare Supposition. But, for the forme of the Superficies of the Iland, I am utterly ignorant; and for the Upright, I have given it you in my first view of the Iland, that it rises highest in the middle.

*The  
Extent*

---

155 with sandbanks or shelves

156 Sir Henry Huncks was briefly governor of Barbados from 1640-1641 until the arrival of Philip Bell. He returned to England to fight for the royalist cause in the civil wars.

157 In actuality Barbados is 166 square miles in size.

## The extent and length of daies

*The  
Length of  
Daies*

When the Sun is in the Aequinoctiall,<sup>158</sup> or within 10 Degrees of either side, we finde little change in the daies length; for at six and six the Sun rises and sets: but when he is neer the Tropick of Capricorn, and is 37 Degrees from us, we finde a difference; for then, the day is somewhat shorter, and we perceive that shortning, to begin about the end of October; the Crepusculum<sup>159</sup> being then not much longer then at other times, which is not halfe the length, as 'tis with us in England.

At the time of new Moon, we finde both her Corners equally high, when the Sun is neer us; but when it is at the distance of 37 Degrees to the Southward, we finde some difference; for then it hangs not so equall, but one end is higher then the other, by reason of the position we are in.

*Tempera-  
ture of the  
Ayre*

[27] Eight months of the year, the weather is very hot, yet not so scalding, but that servants, both Christians, and slaves, labour and travell tenne hours in a day.

As the Sunne rises, there ri[s]e with him coole breezes of wind, and the higher and hotter the sunne shines, the stronger and cooler the breezes are, and blow alwaies from the Nore East, and by East, except in the time of the Turnado: And then it sometimes chops about into the South, for an hour or two, and then returnes againe to the same poynt where it was. The other foure months it is not so hot, but is neer the temper of the aire in England, in the middle of May, and though in the hot seasons we sweat much, yet we doe not finde that faintnesse, that we finde here, in the end of July, or beginning of August. With this great heat, there is such a moysture, as must of necessity cause the ayre to be very unwholsome.

We are seldome drye or thirsty, unlesse we overheat our bodyes with extraordinary labour, or drinking strong drinks; as of our English spirits, which we carry over, of french Brandy, or the drinke of the Iland, which is made of the skimmings of the Coppers, that boyle the Sugar, which they call kill-Divell.<sup>160</sup> And though some of these be needfull if they be used with temper; yet the immoderate use of them, over-heats the body, which causes Costivenesse,<sup>161</sup> and Tortions in the bowels; which is a disease very frequent there; and hardly cur'd, and of which many have dyed, but certainly, strong drinks are very requisit, where so much heat is; for the spirits

---

158 the period during the year around the equinox (when the length of day and night is nearly equal)

159 “twilight”

160 “rum”

161 “constipation”



being exhausted with much sweating, the inner parts are left cold and faint, and shall need comforting, and reviving. Besides, our bodies having bin used to colder Clymates, finde a debility, and a great fayling in the vigour, and sprightliness we have in colder Climats; our blood too, is thinner and paler than in our own Countreys. Nor is the meat so well relisht as in England; but flat and insipid, the hogges flesh onely excepted, which is indeed the best of that kinde that I thinke is in the world.

Our Horses and Cattle seldome drinke, and when they do, it is in very small quantities; except such as have their bodies over heated with working.

## Temperature of the aire

**T**his moysture of the ayre, causes all our knives, etweese,<sup>162</sup> keyes, needles, swords, and ammunition, to rust; and that in an instant for take your knife to the grindstone, and grind away all the rust; which done, wipe it dry, and put it up into your sheath, and so into your pocket, and in a very little time, draw it out; and you shall find it beginning to rust all over; which in more time, will eate deep into the steele, and spoyle the blade. Our locks too, that are not often made use of, will rust in the wards, and so become uselesse, and Clocks, and Watches will seldome or never go true; and all this occasion'd by the moystnesse of the Ayre. And this we found at sea: for before we came neere this Iland, we perceiv'd a kind of weather, which is neither raine nor mist, and continued with us sometimes four or five dayes together, which the seamen call a Heysey weather,<sup>163</sup> and rises to such a height, as though the sunne shine out bright, yet we cannot see his body, till nine a clock in the morning, nor after three in the afternoone. And we see the skie over our heads cleare: a close and very unhealthull weather, and no pleasure at all in it.

[28] This great heat and moysture together, is certainly the occasion that the trees and plants grow to such vast height, and largenesse as they are.

## How watered

**T**here is nothing in this Iland so much wanting, as Springs and Rivers of water; *How watered* there being but very few, and those very smal & inconsiderable. I know but only one River, and that may rather be term'd a Lake, then a River; The

---

162 a case for needles and other small items {LC}

163 “hazy,” possibly “fog.”

Springs that runne into it, are never able to fill it, they are so small; outfall to Sea it has none; but at spring tides, the Sea comes in and fills it; and at Nepe tides, it cannot runne out againe, the sea-banks being higher than it. But some of it issues out through the Sands, and leaves behind it a mixt water, of fresh and salt: at the time the tide comes in, it brings with it some fishes, which are content to remaine there; being better pleased to live in this mixt water, then in the Salt. Colonel Humphrey Walrond, who is owner of the land of both sides, and therefore of it; has told me, that he has taken fishes there, as bigge as Salmons, which have been overgrown with fat, as you have seen Porpisces; but extreemely sweet and firme.

But it has not been often, that such fish, or any other, have bin taken in that place, by reason the whole Lake is filled with trees and roots.

So that no Net can be drawn, nor any Hook laid; for they will wind the lines about the roots, and so get away; or the lines break in pulling up, being fastned to the roots.

This River, or Lake, reaches not within the Land above twelve score yards, or a flight shot at most;<sup>164</sup> and there is no part of it so broad, but you may cast a Coyte over it.

The spring tides there, seldome rise above four or five foot upright: there come from the sea into these small bibling rivolets, little Lobsters, but wanting the great clawes afore, which are the sweetest and fullest of fish, that I have seen; Chicester Lobsters are not to be compared to them.

But the water which the people of this Iland most relye upon, is raine water; which they keep in ponds, that have descents of ground to them, so that what falls on other ground, may runne thither. And the place in which the Pond is set, must be low, and claye in the bottome: or if it be not naturally of Clay, it must be made so. For if it finde any Leake to the rocky part, it gets between those clifts, and sinks in an instant. About the end of December, these ponds are fill'd; and with the help it hath by the weekly showers that fall, they continue so, yet sometimes they feele a want. This pond water, they use upon all occasions, and to all purposes; to boyle their meat, to make their drink, to wash their linnen, for it will beare soape. But one thing seem'd to me a little loathsome, and that was the Negroes washing themselves in the Ponds, in hot weather; whose bodies have none of the sweetest savours.<sup>165</sup> But the planters are pleased to say, that the Sunne with his virtuall heat, drawes up all noysome vapours, and so the waters become rarified, and pure againe. But it was a great satisfaction to me, that a

---

164 as far as the shot of an arrow from a bow

165 i.e. their bodies smell badly.

little Rivulet was neere us, from whence we fetcht dayly, as much as served us, both for meat, and drink.

In these ponds, I have never seen any small fish, fry, or any thing that lives or moves in it, except some flies that fall into it; but the water [29] is clear and well tasted. And because their Cattle shall not be in danger of miring or drowning, the best Husbands raile in a part of the Pond, where it is of a competent depth, for the water to stand, and pave that in the bottom with stone; and so the Cattle neither raise the mud, nor sink in with their feet; and so the water comes clear to them.

Water they save likewise from their houses, by gutters at the eves, which carrie it down to cisterns. And the water which is kept there, being within the limits of their houses, many of which are built in manner of Fortifications, and have Lines, Bulwarks, and Ba[s]tians<sup>166</sup> to defend themselves, in case there should be any uproar or commotion in the Iland, either by the Christian servants, or Negre slaves; serves them for drink whilst they are besieged; as also, to throw down upon the naked bodies of the Negres, scalding hot; which is as good a defence against their underminings, as any other weapons.

If any tumult or disorder be in the Iland, the next neighbour to it, discharges a Musket, which gives the Alarum to the whole Iland; for, upon the report of that, the next shoots, and so the next, and next, till it go through the Iland: Upon which warning, they make ready.

## Bread and drink

**B**read, which is accounted the staffe, or main supporter of mans life, has not here that full taste it has in England; but yet they account it nourishing and strengthening. It is made of the root of a small tree or shrub, which they call Cassavie;<sup>167</sup> the manner of his growth I will let alone, till I come to speak of Trees and Plants in generall.

*Meat and  
Drink for  
Supporta-  
tion of  
Life*

His root only, which we are now to consider, (because our bread is made of it) is large and round, like the body of a small Still or retort; and as we gather it, we cut sticks that grow neerest to it, of the same tree, which we put into the ground, and they grow. And as we gather, we plant. This root, before it come to be eaten, suffers a strange conversion; for, being an absolute poyson when 'tis gathered, by good ordering, comes to be wholesome and nourishing; and the manner of doing it, is this: They wash the

---

166 fortifications

167 “cassava”

outside of the root clean, and lean it against a Wheel, whose sole is about a foot broad, and covered with Latine, made rough like a large Grater. The Wheel to be turned about with a foot, as a Cutler turns his Wheel. And as it grates the root, it falls down in a large Trough, which is the receiver appointed for that purpose. This root thus grated, is as rank poyson, as can be made by the art of an Apothecary, of the most venomous simples he can put together: but being put into a strong piece of double Canvas, or Sackcloth, and prest hard, that all the juice be squeezed out, and then opened upon a cloath, and dried in the Sun, 'tis ready to make bread. And thus 'tis done.

They have a piece of Iron, which I guesse is cast round, the diameter of which, is about twenty inches, a little hollowed in the middle, not unlike the mould that the Spectacle makers grinde their glasses on, but not so much concave as that; about halfe an inch thick at the brim or verge, but thicker towards the middle, with three feet like a pot, about six inches high, that fire may be underneath. To such a temper they heat this Pone, (as they call it) as to bake, but not burn. When 'tis made thus hot, the Indians, whom we trust to make it, because they are best acquainted with it, cast the meal upon the Pone, the whole breadth of it, and put it down with their hands, [30] and it will presently stick together: And when they think that side almost enough, with a thing like a Battle-dore, they turn the other; and so turn and re-turn it so often, till it be enough, which is presently done. So they lay this Cake upon a flat board, and make another, and so another, till they have made enough for the whole Family. This bread they made, when we came first there, as thick as a pancake; but after that, they grew to a higher degree of curiosity, and made it as thin as a wafer, and yet purely white and crispe, as a new made wafer. Salt they never use in it, which I wonder at; for the bread being tastesse of it selfe, they should give it some little seasoning. There is no way it eats so well, as in milk, and there it tastes like Almonds. They offer to make Pie-crust, but very few attain to the skill of that; for, as you work it up with your hand, or roll it out with a roller, it will alwaies crackle and chop, so that it will not be raised to hold any liquor, neither with, nor without, butter or eggs.

But after many tryalls, and as often failings, at last, I learnt the secret of an Indian woman, who shew'd me the right way of it, and that was, by searsing it very fine, (and it will fall out as fine, as the finest wheat-flower in England) if not finer. Yet, this is not all the secret, for all this will not cure the cracking. But this is the main skill of the businesse: Set water on the fire in a skillet, and put to it as much of this fine flower, as will temper it to the thicknesse of starch or pap; and let it boyl a little, keeping it stirring with a slice; and mix this with the masse of flower you mean to make into pye-crust, which being very well mingled, and wrought together, you may add what cost you will of butter and eggs, and it will rise and stand nere as well as our past

in England.

But those that have not Cows, & cannot make butter upon the place, but must make use of such as is brought from England or Holland, were better leave it out, & be content to eat their pie-crust drie. Yet I make a main difference, between butter that is brought from either of those places, in respect of the times it is brought. For, if a ship set out from England in November, and that ship arrive at the Barbadoes at the middle, or neer the end of December, when the Sun is at the farthest distance, the butter may come thither in very good condition; and being set in cool places, may retain the taste for a while: But, if the ship set out in Spring or Summer, that brings this butter, it is not then to be endured, it is so restie and loathsome. Nor can Cheese be brought from thence without spoyle, at that time of the year, except you put it in oyle. Neither are Candles to be brought, for the whole barrell will stick together in one lump, and stinck so profoundly, as neither Rats nor mice will come neer them, much lesse eat of them. For which reason, the Planters, who are much troubled with this annoyance, as also, for that these candles cannot be taken out of the barrell whole, nor will stand in the candlestick without drooping, and hanging down; they burn for the most part wax lights, which they make themselves, of wax they fetch from Africa, and have it at a reasonable rate, there being no Bees in the Barbadoes.

But I am too apt to flie out in extravagant digressions; for, the thing I went to speak of, was bread only, and the severall kinds of it; and having said as much of the bread of Cassavie as I know, I will give you one word of another kinde of bread they make, which is a [31] mixt sort of bread, and is made of the flower of Mayes<sup>168</sup> and Cassavie mixt together; for the Maies it selfe will make no bread, it is so extream heavy and lumpish: But these two being mixt, they make it into large Cakes, two inches thick; and that, in my opinion, tastes the likest to English bread of any.

But the Negres use the Mayes another way, which is, toasting the ears of it at the fire, and so eating it warm off the eare. And we have a way, to feed our Christian servants with this Maies, which is, by pounding it in a large Morter, and boyling it in water, to the thicnesse of Frumentie;<sup>169</sup> and so put in a Tray such a quantity, as wil serve a messe of seven or eight people; give it them cold, and scarce afford them salt with it. This we call Lob-lollie. But the Negres, when they come to be fed with this, are much discontented, and crie out, O! O! no more Lob-lob.

The third sort of bread we use, is only Potatoes, which are chosen out of the dryest and largest they can chose: And at the time we first came, there was little else

---

168 “maize”; corn

169 “frumenty” is a food prepared by boiling wheat in milk.

used, at many good Planters Tables in the Iland. And these are all the sorts of bread that I know growing upon the place.

*Drink of  
Mobbie*

The next thing that comes in order, is Drink, which being made of severall materialls, afford more variety in the description. The first, and that which is most used in the Iland, is Mobbie, a drink made of Potatoes, and thus done. Put the Potatoes into a tub of water, and, with a broom, stir them up and down, till they are washt clean; then take them out, and put them into a large iron or brasse pot, such as you boyl beefe in, in England; and put to them as much water, as will only cover a quarter part of them; and cover the top of the pot with a piece of thick canvas doubled, or such cloth as sacks are made with, covering it close, that the steam go not out. Then make a little fire underneath, so much only as will cause these roots to stew; and when they are soft, take them out, and with your hands, squeeze, break, and mash them very small, in fair water; letting them stay there, till the water has drawn and suckt out all the spirit of the roots, which will be done in an houre or two. Then put the liquor and roots into a large wollen bag, like a jelly-bag, poynted at the bottom; and let it run through that, into a Jar, and within two hours it will begin to work. Cover it, and let it stand till the next day, and then 'tis fit to be drunk. And as you will have it stronger or smaller, put in greater or lesser quantities of roots; some make it so strong, as to be drunk with small quantities But the drink it selfe, being temperately made, does not at all flie up into the head, but is a sprightly thirst-quickning drink. If it be put up in small casks, as Rundlets, or Firkins,<sup>170</sup> it will last foure or five daies good, and drink much more sprightly then out of the Jar. I cannot liken it to any thing so neer, as Rhenish-wine in the Must;<sup>171</sup> but it is short of it in the strength of the spirit, and finenesse of the tast.

There are two severall layers, in which these roots grow; one makes the skins of the Potatoes white, the other red: And where the red roots grow, the Mobbie will be red like Claret-wine; the other white.

Though this be the drink most generally used in the Iland, yet I cannot commend the wholsomnesse of it for, the most part of the [32] roots have a moyst quality in them, and are the cause of Hydropicke humours.<sup>172</sup> Mr. Phillip Bell, then the Governour of the Iland told me that when he was Governour of the Ile of Providence, that there chanc'd some Spaniards to land there, and tasting of this drinke, wondred that any of those that continually drinke it were alive; so unwholsome and Hydropicke he conceived this drinke to be.

---

170 “casks”

171 Wine from the Rhine region in Germany colloquially referred to as “hock.”

172 i.e. swollen with water.



*Perino*

Another drinke they have which is accounted much wholesomer, though not altogether so pleasant, and that is Perino; a drink which the Indians make for their own drinking, and is made of the Cassavy root, which I told you is a strong poyson; and this they cause their old wives, who have a small remainder of teeth to chew and spit out into water, (for the better breaking and macerating of the root). This juyce in three or four hours will worke, and purge it selfe of the poysonous quality.

Having shewed, you in the making of Bread, that the moysture being prest out, which is accounted the poysonous quality that root has, by drying and baking, it is made usefull and wholsome, and now having the juyce and root both used, and both these put into water, which is moyst, I know not which way to reconcile these direct contraryes, but this; that the poyson of the old womens breath and teeth having been tainted with many severall poxes, (a disease common amongst them, though they have many and the best cures for it,)<sup>173</sup> are such opposites to the poyson of the Cassavie, as they bend their forces so vehemently one against another, as they both spend their poysonous qualities in that conflict; and so the relict of them both, becomes lesse unwholsome; and the water, which is in it selfe pure, casts out the remainder of the ill qualities they leave behind: which is manifested by the extraordinary working, which is farre beyond that of Beere, Wine, or Sider with us in Europe. This drink will keep a month or two, being put into barrels, and tastes the likest to English beere of any drink we have there.

Grippo is a third sort of drinke, but few make it well; it was never my chance to taste it, which made me the lesse curious to enquire after it. *Grippo*

Punch is a fourth sort, & of that I have drunke; it is made of water & sugar put together, which in tenne dayes standing will be very strong, and fit for labourers. *Punch*

A fifth, is made of wilde Plumbs, which grow here in great abundance, upon very large trees, which being prest, and strayned, give a very sharpe, and Poynant flavor; but there is not much of it made, because of the trouble of making it, and they are not there very indulgent to their palats. *Plum-drinke*

But the drinke of the Plantine, is farre beyond all these; gathering them full ripe, and in the height of their sweetnesse, we pill off the skin, and mash them in water well boyl'd; and after we have let them stay there a night, we straine it, and bottle it up, and in a week drink it; and it is very strong and pleasant drinke, but it is to be drunk but sparingly, for it is much stronger then Sack,<sup>174</sup> and is apt to mount up into the head. *Plantine drinke*

---

173 A number of diseases were described as poxes, though the term frequently referred to syphilis. Syphilis is believed to have been a disease introduced to Europe from the Americas.

174 a fortified wine such as sherry

The seaventh sort of drink is that we make of the skimming of sugar, which is infinitely strong, but not very pleasant in taste; it is common, and therefore the lesse esteem'd; the value of it is halfe a Crown a [33] gallon, the people drink much of it, indeed too much; for it often layes them asleep on the ground, and that is accounted a very unwholsome lodging.

*Beveridge* The eighth sort of drink is Beveridge, made of spring water, white sugar, and juyce of Orenge, and this is not onely pleasant but wholsome.

The last and best sort of drinke that this Iland or the world affords, is the incomparable wine of Pines; And is certainly the Nectar which the Gods drunke; for on earth there is none like it; and that is made of the pure juyce of the fruit it selfe, without commixture of water, or any other creature, having in it selfe, a naturall compound of all tastes excellent, that the world can yield. This drink is too pure to keep long; in three or four dayes it will be fine; 'tis made by pressing the fruite and straying the liquor, and it is kept in bottles.

Having given you a taste of the Bread, and Drinke this Iland affords, which will serve any mans palate, that is not over curious; I could tell you what we have of both sorts that is brought to us from other parts of the world; as Biskets, both fine and coorse, Barrels of meale close put up; which comes to us very sweet from England, and Holland; of which we make Bread, Pye-crust, and Puddings. And for drink good English Beer, French and Spanish Wines, with others, some from the Maderas, some from Fiial, one of the Ilands of Asores;<sup>175</sup> So we cannot justly complaine of want, either of bread or drink, and, from England, spirits, some of Anniseeds, some of Mint, some of Wormwood, &c. And from France, Brandy, which is extreame strong, but accounted very wholsome.

## Severall sorts of meat

*Meat of all kinds.*

**H**aving given you a just account, as neere as my memory will serve of the bread and drinke of this Iland: The next thing is the severall sortes of meat we have there; and because Hogges flesh is the most generall meat, and indeed the best the Iland affords, I will begin with that, which is (without question) as good, as any can be of that kind: for their feeding being as good, as can grow any where, the flesh must needs be answerable; fruit, the nuts of Locust, Pompions of a rare kind, almost as sweet as Millions, the bodies of the Plantines, and Bonanoes, Sugar-canes, and Mayes, being their dayly food.

---

175 "Faial" is an island in the Azores.

When we came first upon the Iland, I perceiv'd the sties they made to hold them, were trees, with the ends lying crosse upon one another, and the inclosure they made, was not large enough to hold the numbers of Hogges were in them, with convenient distance to play and stirre themselves for their health, and pleasure; so that they were in a manner pesterd, and choakt up, with their own stinke, which is sure the most noysome of any other beast, and by reason of the Suns heat much worse; I have smelt the stinke of one of those sties downe the wind, neer a mile, through all the wood: and the crowding and thrusting them so close together, was certainly the cause of their want of health, which much hindred their growth; So that they were neither so large, nor their flesh so sweet, as when they were wild, and at their own liberty, and choyce of feeding.

For I have heard Major Hilliard say: that at their first comming there, they found Hogges, that one of them weighed (the intrals being taken out, and the head off) 400 weight. And now at the time of [34] my being there, the most sort of those, that were in ours and our neighbours styes, were hardly so big as the ordinary swine in England. So finding this decay in their growth, by stowing them too close together, I advised Collonell Modiford to make a larger sty, and to wall it about with stone; which he did, and made it a mile about, so that it was rather a Park than a Sty; and set it on the side of a drie Hill, the greatest part Rock, with a competent Pond of water in the bottom; and plac'd it between his two Plantations, that from either, food might be brought, and cast over to them, with great convenience: And made several divisions in the Park, for the Soves with Pigg, with little houses standing shelving, that their foulness by gutters might fall away, and they lie drie; Other divisions for the Barrow-Hoggs, and some for Boars.

This good ordering caused them to grow so large and fat, as they wanted very little of their largnesse when they were wilde. They are the sweetest flesh of that kinde, that ever I tasted, and the lovlies to look on in a dish, either boyl'd, roasted, or bak'd: With a little help of art. I will deceive a very good palate, with a shoulder of it for Mutton, or a leg for Veal, taking off the skin, with which they were wont to make minc't Pies, seasoning it with salt, cloves, and mace, and some sweet herbs minc't. And being bak'd, and taken out of the Oven, opening the lid, put in a dramme-cup of kill-devill; and being stirr'd together, set it on the Table; and that they call'd a Calvesfoot pie; and, till I knew what it was made of, I thought it very good meat. When I came first upon the Iland, I found the Pork drest the plain waies of boyling, roasting, and sometimes baking: But I gave them some tastes of my Cookery, in hashing, and fricaseing this flesh; and they all were much taken with it; and in a week, every one was practising the art of Cookery. And indeed, no flesh tasts so well in Collops, Hashes, or

Fricases, as this. And when I bak't it, I alwaies laid a Side of a young Goat underneath, and a side of a Shot (which is a young Hog of a quarter old) a top. And this, well seasoned, and well bak'd, is as good meat, as the best Pasty of Fallow-Deer,<sup>176</sup> that ever I tasted.

In the coolest time of the year, I have made an essay to powder it, and hang it up for Bacon: But there is such losse in't, as 'tis very ill husbandry to practise it; for, it must be cut through in so many places, to let the salt in, as when 'tis to be drest, much goes to waste. And therefore I made no more attempts that way. But a little corning with salt, makes this flesh very savoury, either boyled or roasted.

About Christmas, we kill a Boar, and of the sides of it, make three or four collers of Brawne; for then the weather is so cool, as, with some art, it may be kept sweet a week: and to make the souc't drink give it the speedier and quicker seasoning, we make it of Mobbie, with store of Salt, Limons, and Lymes, sliced in it, with some Nutmeg, which gives it an excellent flaver.

Beef, we have very seldome any, that feeds upon the soyle of this place, except it be of Gods killing, (as they tearme it); for very few are kill'd there by mens hands; it were too ill husbandry, for they cost too dear, and they cannot be spared from their work, which they must advance by all the means they can. Such a Planter as Collonell James Drax<sup>177</sup> (who lives like a Prince) may kill now and then one; [35] but very few in the Iland did so when I was there.

The next to Swines-flesh<sup>178</sup> in goodnesse, are Turkies, large, fat, and full of gravie. Next to them, Pullen or Donghill-foule and last of all, Muscovia-Ducks,<sup>179</sup> which being larded with the fat of this Porke, (being seasoned with pepper and salt) are an excellent bak'd-meat. All these, with their Eggs and Chickens, we eat.

Turtle-Doves the have of two sorts, and both very good meat; but there is a sort of Pidgeons, which come from the leeward Ilands at one time of the year, and it is in September; and stay till Christmas be past, and then return again: But very many of them nere make returnes, to tell newes of the good fruit they found there: For, they are so fat, and of such excellent tastes, as many foulers kill them with guns, upon the trees; and some of them are so fat, as their weight with the fall, causes them to burst

---

176 a type of deer common in England

177 James Drax was among the earliest and most successful sugar planters. Sometimes credited with beginning the Barbadian sugar revolution, he quickly developed one of the largest fortunes on the island.

178 "pig flesh"

179 a duck native to the Americas (the name is a misnomer)

in pieces. They are good roasted, boylld, or bak'd, but best cut in halves, and stewed; to which Cookery, there needs no liquor, for their own gravie will abundantly serve to stew them.

Rabbets we have, but tame ones, and they have but faint tastes, more like a Chicken than a Rabbet.

And though they have divers other Birds, which I will not forget to recount in their due times, and place; yet, none for food for the Table, which is the businesse I tend at this present. Other flesh-meat, I do not remember.

Now for fish, though the Iland stands as all Ilands do, invironed with the Sea, (and therefore is not like to be unfurnish't of that provision) yet, the Planters are so good husbands, and tend their profits so much, as they will not spare a Negres absence so long, as to go to the Bridge and fetch it. And the Fishermen seeing their fish lie upon their hands, and stink, (which it will do in lesse then six hours) forbear to go to Sea to take it; only so much as they can have present vent for, at the Taverns at the Bridge; and thither the Planters come, when they have a minde to feast themselves with fish, to Mr. Jobsons, or Joan Fullers, where they have it well drest; for they were both my Pupills. Butter they seldome have, that will beat thick; but in stead of that, we are fain to use vinegar and spice, and much of it fryed in oyle, and eaten hot; and some marinated, and souc't in pickle, and eaten cold. Collonell Humphrey Walrond has the advantage of all the Planters in the Iland, for, having a Plantation neer the Sea, he hath of his own a Saine<sup>180</sup> to catch fish withall, which his own servants and slaves put out to Sea, and, twice or thrice a week, bring home all sorts of such small and great fishes, as are neer the shoar; amongst which, some are very large, and excellently well tasted. For, he being a Gentleman, that had been bred with much freedome, liberty, and plenty, in England, could not set his mind so earnestly upon his profit, as to forget his accustomed lawfull pleasures, but would have his Table well furnish'd, with all sorts of good meat the Land and Sea afforded; and as freely bid his friends welcome to it. And I, as the poorest of his friends, in a lingring sicknesse, and neer death, found such a charity with him, as I shall never forget to pay my thanks for, to the last hour of my life; and I shall account it as a a great happinesse, (if ever it fall in the compasse of my power) to be servicable to him or his, as any thing that can befall me in the world.

[36] Amongst other fishes that were taken by his Saine, (as the Snappers, red and grey, Cavallos, Maquerells, Mulletts, Cony-fish, with divers others, firme and excellent sweet fish) he took four, that were about a yard long at the least, all at one draught, and, to that length, bigger grown then Salmonds, of the rarest colour that ever I beheld;

---

180 A "seine" net is used to capture fish. At least two fishermen hold either end of the weighted, fence-like net to encircle and capture schools of fish.

from the back-finne, which is the middle of the fish, to the end of the tail, the purest grasse-green that ever I saw, and as shining as Satine: but the finns and tai[l] daped or spotted with as pure a hair-colour,<sup>181</sup> and from the back-finn to the head, pure hair colour-daped with green; the scales as big for the most part, as a halfe-crown piece of silver. This fish is no fish of prey, but lives by what he finds in the bottom of the Sea, as I perceived by what was in his maw. An excellent sweet fish; I dressed them severall waies, and all proved excellent. There is one fish wanting to this Iland, whose kindes are very frequent upon most of the Charibby and Lucaick-Ilands;<sup>182</sup> and that is the green Turtle, which is the best food the Sea affords, and the greatest store of them; but I have seen very few of that kind in the Barbadoes, and those neither fat nor kindly; and the reason is, there are no shelves nor sands to lay their eggs, or to ayre themselves on: For, these fishes delight to be on the sands, and can remain there twelve hours, all the time the Tyde is out; and then suffer themselves to be carried away by the return of the next Tide. They take infinite numbers of them, by turning them on their backs with staves, where they lie till they are fetcht away. A large Turtle will have in her bodie halfe a bushell of eggs, which she laies in the sand, and that being warm, they are hatcht in the heat.

## The manner of killing a Turtle

**W**hen you are to kill one of these fishes, the manner is, to lay him on his back on a table, and when he sees you come with a knife in your hand to kill him, he vapours out the grievousest sighes, that ever you heard any creature make, and sheds as large tears as a Stag, that has a far greater body, and larger eyes. He has a joynt or crevis, about an inch within the utmost edge of his shell, which goes round about his body, from his head to his tail, on his belly-side; into which joynt or crevis, you put your knife, beginning at the hea[d], and so rip up that side, and then do as much to the other; then lifting up his belly, which we call his Calipee, we lay open all his bowells, and taking them out, come next to his heart, which has three distinct poynts, but all meet above where the fat is; and if you take it out, and lay it in a dish, it will stir and pant ten hours after the fish is dead. Sure, there is no creature on the Earth, nor in the Seas, that enjoyes life with so much sweetnesse and delight, as this poor fish the Turtle; nor none more delicate in taste, and more nourishing, then he.

---

181 Possibly referring to the color brown.

182 “Caribby” and “Lucayan” islands; The Lucayan Archipelago includes the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos islands.



Next to the flesh and fish this Iland affords, 'tis fit to consider what *Quelquechoses*<sup>183</sup> there are to be found, that may serve to furnish out a Table of such Viands,<sup>184</sup> as are there to be had; which are eggs severall waies, viz pocht, and laid upon sippits of bread, soakt in butter and juice of limes, and sugar, with plumpt currens strewed upon them, and cloves, mace, and cinamon beaten, strewed on that, with a little salt. Eggs boyl'd and roasted, fryed with Collops, of the fat of Pork well powdered. Buttered eggs, an Amulet of eggs, with the juice of Limes and sugar, a Froize, and a Tansey; Custards, as good as any at my Lord Mayors Table; Chees-cakes, Puffes, second Porrage, which [37] is creame boyl'd to a height, with yelke<sup>185</sup> of egges, and season'd with sugar, and spice, Jelly which we make of the flesh of young piggs, calves feet, and a cocke, and is excellent good, but must presently be eaten for it will not last. Creame alone, and some done severall wayes, of which there is great varietie, having Lymons, Lymes, and Oranges readie at hand; and some wherein we put Plantines, Gnavers and Bonanoes, stew'd, or preserv'd with sugar, and the same fruits also preserv'd and put in dishes by themselves, without Creame; and for a whetstone, to pull on a cup of wine, we have dryed Neats<sup>186</sup> tongues, brought from new and old England; and from Holland, Westfalia bacon, and Caviare; as also pickl'd Herring, and Maquerell, which we have from new England, and from Virginia Botargo<sup>187</sup> of which sort I have eaten the best at Colonel Draxes that ever I tasted.

The fruits that this Iland affords, I have already named, and therefore it will be needlesse to name them twice; you may take your choyce, whether you will have them set on the Table before or after meat; they use as they doe in Italie, to eate them before meat.

## Victualls brought from forraign parts

**T**he victualls brought from forraine parts are these, Beef which we have from Holland, from Old & New England, Virginia, and some from Russia; and yet comes to us sweet. Porke from all these places, with the most sorts of salt fish; as Ling, Haberdine, Cod, poor-John, pickled Marquerels, pickled Herrings, all

---

183 Literally “somethings” in French, here meaning trifles.

184 “foods”

185 “yolk”

186 cow or ox tongue

187 a type of roe (fish eggs)

very good. Sturgeon from New England, but so ill Cookt, as 'tis hardly to be eaten; for they want the skill both of boyling & seasoning it; they first overboyle it, & next over salt it, & so the fish being over tender by boyling, the salt frets and eats upon it all the way; for when we come to open it, being carried farre from the Bridge, & shaken in the carriage: there is scarce a whole peece, but the Sturgeon and pickle all in a mash, & so vehemently salt, as I could never eate any of it, but at Colonel Wallronds plantation it is lesse broken.

Pickled Turtle, we have from the Leeward Ilands, but so uncleanly ordered, as we could hardly finde in our hearts to eate it; for they gather the Salt and Sand together, for haste, upon the Iland where it is taken up, as; though we wash it never so wel, yet the grit cracks in our teeth; it has a taste being salted, almost as ill as puffins, which we have from the Iles of Silly,<sup>188</sup> but this kind of food, is onely for servants; sometimes the Negroes get a little, but seldome the one or the other did eate any bone meat, at our first comming thither.

## A Feast of an inland Plantation

**B**ut now at my comming away from thence, it was much better'd, for by the care and good Husbandry of the Planters, there was greater plenty, both of the victuals they were wont to eate, as Potatoes, Bonavist,<sup>189</sup> Loblolly, as also of the bone meat, viz. Porke, salt Fish; and powder'd beefe, which came thither by sea, from forraine parts, in so much as the Negroes were allowed each man two Maquerels a weeke and every woman one; which were given out to them on Saturday in the evening, after they had their allowance of Plantines, which was every one a large bunch, or two little ones, to serve them for a weeks provision; and if any cattle dyed by mischance, or by any disease: the servants eat the bodies, and the Negroes the skinnes, head, and intrails which was divided amongst them by the overseers; or if any horse, then the whole bodies of them were distributed amongst the Negroes, and that they thought a high feast, with which, never poor soules were more contented; and the drinke to the servants with this dyet, [38] nothing but Mobbie, and sometimes a little Beveridge; but the Negroes nothing but faire water. And now I think, I have given you a just account of the victuals that feeds the Masters, the servants, and the slaves of this Iland: and now you see the provision the Iland affords, give me leave to shew you what feasts they can

---

188 The Isles of Scilly are a group of islands off the coast of Cornwall in England with a large population of puffins (a seabird).

189 An antiquated term for the hyacinth bean {LC}

(when they will) make for their friends, upon their Plantations, which that I may the better doe, I will make two bills of fare; the one for an Inland Plantation, the other for a Plantation neer the sea, of such meat and such plenty of that, as I have seen and eaten of, at either of those Plantations; And for the Inland Plantation, I will make choyce of Colonel James Draxes, at whose Table I have found well drest, these following meates; for the first Course whereof there hath been two messes of meat and both equally good, and this feast is alwayes when he kills a beef, which he feeds extreamely fat, giving him a dozen acres of Bonavist to go loose in, and due times of watering.<sup>190</sup>

First then (because beefe being the greatest rarity in the Iland, especially such as this is) I will begin with it, and of that sort there are these dishes at either messe, a Rompe boyl'd, a Chine roasted,<sup>191</sup> a large piece of the brest roasted, the Cheeks bak'd, of which is a dish to either messe, the tongue and part of the tripes minc't for Pyes, season'd with sweet Herbs finely mi[n]c't, suet, Spice and Currans; the legges, pallets and other ingredients for an Olio Podrido<sup>192</sup> to either messe, a dish of Marrow bones, so here are 14 dishes at the Table and all of beef: and this he intends as the great Regalio, to which he invites his fellow planters; who having well eaten of it, the dishes are taken away, and another Course brought in, which is a Potato pudding, a dish of Scots Collips of a legge of Porke, as good as any in the world, a fricacy of the same, a dish of boyl'd Chickens, a shoulder of a young Goate drest with his bloud and tyme, a Kid with a pudding in his belly, a sucking pig, which is there the fattest whitest & sweetest in the world, with the Poynant sauce of the brains, salt, sage, and Nutmeg done with Claret wine, a shoulder of mutton which is there a rare dish, a Pasty of the side of a young Goate, and a side of a fat young Shot upon it, well season'd with Pepper and salt, and with some Nutmeg, a loyne of Veale, to which there wants no sauce being so well furnisht with Oranges, Lymons, and Lymes, three young Turkeys in a dish, two Capons, of which sort I have seen some extream large and very fat, two henns with egges in a dish, four Ducklings, eight Turtle doves, and three Rabbets; and for cold bak't meats, two Muscovie Ducks larded, and season'd well with pepper and salt: and these being taken off the Table, another course is set on, and that is of Westphalia or Spanish bacon, dried Neats Tongues, Botargo, pickled Oysters, Caviare, Anchoves Olives, and (intermixt with these) Custards, Creams, some alone, some with preserves of Plantines, Bonano Gnavers, put in, and those preserv'd alone by themselves, Cheese-

---

190 a type of bean probably native to Asia, but mentioned in several accounts of Barbados

191 cuts of beef, including the “chine” or backbone and side loins, and the rump cut (round steak)

192 “olla podrida”; a Spanish stew made from an often idiosyncratic variety of vegetables and meats.

cakes, Puffes, which are to be made with English flower, and bread; for the Cassavie will not serve for this kind of Cookerie; sometimes Tansies, sometimes Froizes, or Amulets, and for fruite, Plantines, Bonanoes, Gnavers, Milions, prickled Peare, Anchove Peare, prickled Apple, Custard Apple, water Milions, and Pines worth all that went before. To this meat you seldome faile of this drink, Mobbie, Beveridge, Brandy, kill-Divell, Drink of the Plantine, Claret wine, White wine, and Renish wine, [39] Sherry, Canary, Red sack, wine of Fiall, with all Spirits that come from England; and with all this, you shall finde as cheerfull a look, and as hearty a welcome, as any man can give to his best friends. And so much for a Feast of an inland Plantation.

## The like of a Plantation neer the Sea

**N**ow for a Plantation neer the Sea, which shall be Collonell Walrond's, he being the best seated for a Feast, of any I know: I must say this, that though he be wanting in the first Course, which is Beefe; yet, it will be plentifully supplied in the last, which is Fish; and that the other wants. And though Collonell Walrond, have not that infinite store of the provisions Collonell Drax abounds in; yet, he is not wanting in all the kinds he has, unlesse it be Sheep, Goats, and Beefe, and so for all the sorts of meats, that are in my Bill of Fare, in Collonell Drax his Feast, you shall finde the same in Collonell Walronds, except these three, and these are supplied with all these sorts of fish I shall name, to wit, Mulletts, Maquerells, Parrat fish, Snappers, red and gray, Cavallos, Terbums, Crabs, Lobsters, and Cony fish, with divers sorts more, for which we have no names. And having these rare kinds of fishes, 'twere a vain superfluity, to make use of all those dishes I have named before, but only such as shall serve to fill up the Table; and when he has the ordering it, you must expect to have it excellent; his fancy and contrivance of a Feast, being as far beyond any mans there, as the place where he dwells is better scituate, for such a purpose. And his Land touching the Sea, his House being not halfe a quarter of a mile from it, and not interposed by any unlevell ground, all rarities that are brought to the Iland, from any part of the world, are taken up, brought to him, and stowed in his Cellars, in two hours time, and that in the night; as, Wine, of all kinds, Oyl, Olives, Capers, Sturgeon, Neats tongues, Anchoves, Caviare, Botargo, with all sorts of salted meats, both flesh and fish for his Family; as, Beefe, Pork, English Pease, Ling, Haberdine, Cod, poor John,<sup>193</sup> and Jerkin Beef, which is huffed, and slasht through, hung up and dryed in the Sun; no salt at all put to it. And thus ordered in Hispaniola, as hot a place as Barbadoes, and

---

193 an inexpensive dried fish

yet it will keep longer then powdred Beefe, and is as drie as Stock-fish, and just such meat for flesh, as that is for fish, and as little nourishment in it; but it fills the belly, and serves the turne, where no other meat is. Though some of these may be brought to the inland Plantations well conditioned; yet, the Wines cannot possibly come good; for the wayes are such, as no Carts can passe; and to bring up a But of Sack, or a Hogshead of any other Wine, upon Negres backs, will very hardly be done in a night, so long a time it requires, to hand it up and down the Gullies; and if it be carried in the day-time, the Sun will heat and taint it, so as it will lose much of his spirit and pure taste; and if it be drawn out in bottles at the Bridge, the spirits flie away in the drawing, and you shall finde a very great difference in the taste and quicknesse of it. Oyle will endure the carriage better then Wine, but over much heat will abate something of the purity, and excellent taste it has naturally. And for Olives, 'tis well known, that jogging in the carriage causes them to bruise one another; and some of them being bruised, will grow rotten, and infect the rest. So that Wine, Oyle and Olives, cannot possibly be brought to such Plantations, as are eight or ten miles from the Bridge; and from thence, the most part of these commodities are to be fetch'd. So that you may [40] imagine, what advantage Collonell Walrond has, of any inland Plantation, having these materialls, which are the main Regalia's in a Feast, and his own contrivance to boot, besides all I have formerly nam'd, concerning raw and preserv'd fruits, with all the other Quelquechoses. And thus much I thought good to say for the honour of the Iland, which is no more then truth; because I have heard it sleighted by some, that seem'd to know much of it.

## Commodities exported and imported

**A**bout a hundred sail of Ships yearly visit this Iland, and receive, during the time of their stay in the Harbours, for their sustenance, the native Victualls growing in the Iland, such as I have already named; besides what they carry away, and what is carried away by Planters of the Ile, that visit other parts of the world. The commodities this Iland trades in, are Indico,<sup>194</sup> Cotten-wool, Tobacco, Suger, Ginger, and Fustick-wood.

The Commodities these Ships bring to this Iland, are, Servants and Slaves, both men and women; Horses, Cattle, Assinigoes, Camells, Utensills for boyling Sugar, as, Coppers, Taches, Goudges, and Sockets; all manner of working tooles for Tradesmen, as, Carpenters, Joyners, Smiths, Masons, Mill-wrights, Wheel-wrights, Tinkers,

*Com-  
modities  
Exported*

*Com-  
modities  
Imported*

Coopers, &c. Iron, Steel, Lead, Brasse, Pewter, Cloth of all kinds, both Linnen and Wollen; Stuffs, Hatts, Hose, Shoos, Gloves, Swords, knives, Locks, Keys, &c. Victualls of all kinds, that will endure the Sea, in so long a voyage. Olives, Capers, Anchoves, salted Flesh and Fish, pickled Maquerells and Herrings, Wine of all sorts, and the boon Beer, d' Angleterre.

## What materialls grow on the Iland, fit to build with

*What Buildings are found at our first comming upon the Iland*

I had it in my thought before I came there, what kinde of Buildings would be fit for a Country, that was so much troubled with heat, as I have heard this was; & did expect to find thick walls, high roofes, and deep cellers; but found neither the one nor the other, but clean contrary; timber houses, with low roofes, so low, as for the most part of them, I could hardly stand upright with my hat on, and no cellars at all: besides, another course they took, which was more wonder to me than all that; which was, stopping, or barring out the winde, which should give them the greatest comfort, when they were neer stifled with heat. For, the winde blowing alwaies one way, which was Eastwardly, they should have made all the openings they could to the East, thereby to let in the cool breezes, to refresh them when the heat of the day came. But they, clean contrary, closed up all their houses to the East, and opened all to the West; so that in the afternoones, when the Sun came to the West, those little low roofed rooms were like Stoves, or heated Ovens. And truly, in a very hot day, it might raise a doubt, whether so much heat without, and so much tobacco and kill-devill within, might not set the house a fire; for these three ingredients are strong motives to provoke it, and they were ever there.

But at last I found by them, the reasons of this strange preposterous manner of building, which was grounded upon the weakest and silliest foundation that could be: For they alledged, that at the times of rain, which was very often, the wind drave the rain in at their windowes so fast, as the houses within were much annoyed with it; for having no glasse to keep it out, they could seldome sit or lie drie; and so being constrained to keep out the ayer on that side, for fear of letting in the water, would open the West ends of their houses so [41] wide, (as was beyond the proportion of windows to repair that want) and so let in the fire; not considering at all, that there was such a thing as shutters for windowes to keep out the rain that hurt them, and let in the winde to refresh them, and do them good at their pleasure. But this was a consideration laid aside by all, or the most part of the meaner sort of Planters. But at last I found the true reason, was their poverty and indigence, which wanted the means to make



such conveniences; and so, being compelled by that, had rather suffer painfully, and patiently abide this inconvenience, than sell or part with any of their goods, to prevent so great a mischief: So loath poor people are to part with that, which is their next immediate help, to support them in their great want of sustenance. For, at that lock they often were, and some good Planters too, that far'd very hard, when we came first into the Iland. So that hard labour, and want of victualls, had so much deprest their spirits, as they were come to a declining and yielding condition. Nor can this be called slothfulness or sluggishness in them, as some will have it, but a decay of their spirits, by long and tedious hard labour, sleight feeding, and ill lodging, which is able to wear out and quell the best spirit of the world.

The Locust is a tree of such a growth, both for length and bignesse, as may serve for beams in a very large room: I have seen many of them, whose straight bodies are above fifty foot high, the diameter of the stem or body, three foot and halfe. The timber of this tree is a hard close substance, heavie, but firme, and not apt to bend, somewhat hard for tooles to cut; brittle, but lasting. Mastick, not altogether so large as he, but of a tougher substance, and not accounted so brittle. The Bully-tree wants something of the largnesse of these, but in his other qualities goes beyond either; for, he is full out as lasting, and as strong, but not so heavie, nor so hard for tooles to work. The Redwood and prickled yellow wood, good for posts or beams, and are lighter then the Locust; both are accounted very lasting, and good for building. The Cedar is, without controul, the best of all; but by reason it works smoth, and looks beautifull, we use it most in Wainscot, Tables, and Stooles. Other timber we have, as the Iron-wood,<sup>195</sup> and another sort, which are excellent good to endure wet and drie; and of those we make Shingles, which being such a kinde of wood, as will not warpe nor rive, are the best coverings for a house that can be, full out as good as Tiles, and lie lighter upon the Rafters.

*What  
materialls  
grow  
on the  
Illand fit  
to build  
with,  
which  
may be  
call'd the  
Elements  
of Archi-  
tecture.  
And first,  
for timber*

We have two sorts of Stone, and either will serve indifferently well in building: The one we finde on sides of small Hills, and it lies as ours do in England, in Quarries; but they are very small, rough, and ill shaped, some of them porous, like Honey combes; but being burnt, they make excellent Lyme, the whitest and firmest when 'tis drie, that I have seen; and by the help of this, we make the better shift with our ill shap't stone; for this lime bindes it fast together, and keeps it firm to endure the weather. Other Stone we have, which we find in great Rocks, and massie pieces in the ground; but so soft, as with your finger you may bore a hole into it; and this softness gives us the means of cutting it with two-handed sawes, which being hard, we could not so easily do, and the easinesse causes the expedition; for by that, we the more speedily fit it for our walls, taking a just bredth [42] of the walls, and cutting it

*Stone fit  
for Build-  
ing*

195 a catch-all term for a number of trees that produce hardwoods

accordingly; so that we need very little hewing. This stone, as we cutt it in the quarry, is no harder then ordinary mortar, but being set out in the weather, by pieces as we cut it, growes indifferently hard, and is able to beare all the weight that lyes on it, and the longer it lies, the harder it growes. Many essayes we made, whilst I was there, for the making and burning of bricks, but never could attaine to the perfection of it; and the reason was, the over fatnesse of the clay, which would alwaies crackle and break, when it felt the great heat of the fire in the Clampe; and by no meanes could we find the true temper of it, though we made often trialls. There was an ingenious Jew upon the Iland, whose name was Solomon, that undertook to teach the making of it; yet for all that, when it came to the touch his wisdom failed, and we were deceived in our expectation, I doubt not but there is a way of tempering, to make it farre better then ours in England; for the pots which we finde in the Iland, wherein the Indians boyl'd their Porke, were of the same kind of Clay, and they were the best and finest temper'd ware of earth that ever I saw. If we could find the true temper of it, a great advantage might be made to the Iland; for the ayre being moyst, the stones often sweat, and by their moysture rot the timbers they touch, which to prevent we cover the ends of our beams and girders with boards, pitch on both sides, but the walls being made of bricks, or but lin'd with brick, would be much the wholesomer; and besides keep our wainescot from rotting. Hangings we dare not use, for being spoyld by Ants, and eaten by the Cockroaches, and Rats, yet some of the planters that meant to handsome their houses, were minded to send for gilt leather, and hang their rooms with that, which they were more then perswaded those vermine would not eat; and in that resolution I left them.

Carpenters, and Masons, were newly come upon the Iland, and some of these very great Masters in their Art: and such as could draw a plot, and pursue the designe they framed with great diligence, and beautifie the tops of their doores, windowes, and Chimney peeces, very pretily; but not many of those nor is it needfull that there should be many, for though the Planters talke of building houses, and wish them up, yet when they weigh the want of those handes in their sugar worke, that must be employed in their building, they fall backe, and put on their considering caps. I drew out at least twenty plots when I came first into the Ilands which they all lik't well inough, and yet but two of them us'd, one by Captaine Middleton, and one by Captaine Standfast, and those were the two best houses, I left finisht in the Iland when I came away. Cellars I would not make under ground, unlesse the house be set on the side of a Hill; for though the ayre be moyst above, yet I found it by experience much moyster under ground; so that no moyst thing can be set there, but it will in a very short time grow mouldy, and rotten; and if for coolnesse you think to keep any raw flesh, it will much

sooner taint there, then being hung up in a garret, where the sun continually shines upon it. Nay the pipe-staves hoops, and heads of barrells, and hogsheds, will grow mouldy and rotten: Pavements and foundations of bricks would much help this with glasse windowes, to keep out the ayre.

If I were to build a house for my selfe in that place, I would have [43] a third part of my building to be of an East and West line, and the other two thirds to crosse that, at the West end: in a North and South line, and this latter to be a story higher than that of the East and West line, so that at four a clocke in the afternoone, the higher buildings will begin to shade the other, and so afford more and more shade to my East and West building till night; and not only to the house, but to all the walks that I make on either side that building, and then I would raise my foundation of that part of my house wherein my best roomes were three foot above ground; leaving it hollow underneath for Ventiducts, which I would have come into every room in the house, and by that means you shall feele the cool breese all the day, & in the evening, when they slacken, a coole shade from my North & South building, both which are great refreshings, in hot Countryes: and according to this Modell, I drew many plots, of severall sises and Contrivances, but they did not or would not understand them: at last I grew wearie of casting stones against the wind, and so gave over.

## The number and nature of the Inhabitants

It were somewhat difficult, to give you an exact account, of the number of persons upon the Iland; there being such store of shipping that brings passengers dayly to the place, but it has been conjectur'd, by those that are long acquainted, and best seen in the knowledge of the Iland, that there are not lesse then 50 thousand soules, besides Negroes; and some of them who began upon small fortunes, are now risen to very great and vast estates.

*The number and nature of the inhabitants*

The Iland is divided into three sorts of men, viz. Masters, Servants, and slaves. The slaves and their posterity, being subject to their Masters for ever, are kept and preserv'd with greater care then the servants, who are theirs but for five yeers, according to the law of the Iland.<sup>196</sup> So that for the time, the servants have the worsers lives, for they are put to very hard labour, ill lodging, and their dyet very sleight. When we came

---

196 Indentured servants signed contracts prior to their departure from England agreeing to serve for a period of time (usually 4-7 years). Their masters, in return, paid for their passage and in some colonies, "freedom dues" of land and clothing after their term of service. These freedom dues were intended to help the former servant establish their own farm or plantation and to populate the colony.

first on the Iland, some Planters themselves did not eat bone meat, above twice a weeke: the rest of the seven dayes, Potatoes, Loblolly, and Bonavist.<sup>197</sup> But the servants no bone meat at all, unlesse an Oxe dyed: and then they were feasted, as long as that lasted, And till they had planted good store of Plantines, the Negroes were fed with this kind of food; but most of it Bonavist, and Loblolly, with some eares of Mayes toasted, which food (especially Loblolly) gave them much discontent: But when they had Plantines enough to serve them, they were heard no more to complaine; for 'tis a food they take great delight in, and their manner of dressing and eating it, is this: 'tis gathered for them (somewhat before it be ripe, for so they desire to have it,) upon Saturday, by the keeper of the Plantine grove; who is an able Negro, and knowes well the number of those that are to be fed with this fruite; and as he gathers, layes them all together, till they fetch them away, which is about five a clock in the after noon, for that day they breake off worke sooner by an houre: partly for this purpose, and partly for that the fire in the furnaces is to be put out, and the Ingenio and the roomes made cleane; beside; they are to wash, shave and trim themselves against Sunday. But 'tis a lovely sight to see a hundred handsome Negroes, men and women, with every one a grasse-green bunch of these fruits [44] on their heads, every bunch twice as big as their heads, all comming in a train one after another, the black and green so well becomming one another. Having brought this fruit home to their own houses, and pilling off the skin of so much as they will use, they boyl it in water, making it into balls, and so they eat it. One bunch a week is a Negres allowance. To this, no bread nor drink, but water. Their lodging at night a board, with nothing under, nor any thing a top of them. They are happy people, whom so little contents. Very good servants, if they be not spoyled by the English. But more of them hereafter.

As for the usage of the Servants, it is much as the Master is, mercifull or cruell; Those that are mercifull, treat their Servants well, both in their meat, drink, and lodging, and give them such work, as is not unfit for Christians to do. But if the Masters be cruell, the Servants have very wearisome and miserable lives. Upon the arrival of any ship, that brings servants to the Iland, the Planters go aboard; and having bought such of them as they like, send them with a guide to his Plantation; and being come, commands them instantly to make their Cabins, which they not knowing how to do, are to be advised by other or their servants, that are their seniors; but, if they be churlish, and will not shew them, or if materialls be wanting, to make them Cabins, then they are to lie on the ground that night. These Cabins are to be made of sticks, withs, and Plantine leaves, under some little shade that may keep the rain off; Their suppers being a few Potatoes for meat, and water or Mobbie for drink. The next day

---

197 a type of vine

they are rung out with a Bell to work, at six a clock in the morning, with a severe Overseer to command them, till the Bell ring again, which is at eleven a clock; and then they return, and are set to dinner, either with a messe of Lob-lollie, Bonavist, or Potatoes. At one a clock, they are rung out again to the field, there to work till six, and then home again, to a supper of the same. And if it chance to rain, and wet them through, they have no shift, but must lie so all night. If they put off their cloths, the cold of the night will strike into them; and if they be not strong men, this ill lodging will put them into a sicknesse: if they complain, they are beaten by the Overseer; if they resist, their time is doubled. I have seen an Overseer beat a Servant with a cane about the head, till the blood has followed, for a fault that is not worth the speaking of; and yet he must have patience, or worse will follow. Truly, I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants, as I did not think one Christian could have done to another. But, as discreeter and better natur'd men have come to rule there, the servants lives have been much bettered; for now, most of the servants lie in Hamocks, and in warm rooms, and when they come in wet, have shift of shirts and drawers, which is all the cloths they were, and are fed with bone meat twice or thrice a week. Collonell Walrond seeing his servants when they came home, toyled with their labour, and wet through with their sweating, thought that shifting of their linnen not sufficient refreshing, nor warmth for their bodies, their pores being much opened by their sweating; and therefore resolved to send into England for rug-Gownes, such as poor people wear in Hospitalls, that so when [45] they had shifted themselves, they might put on those Gowns, and lie down and rest them in their Hamocks: For the Hamocks being but thin, and they having nothing on but shirts and drawers, when they awak'd out of their sleeps, they found themselves very cold; and a cold taken there, is harder to be recovered, than in England, by how much the body is infeeble by the great toyle, and the Sun's heat, which cannot but very much exhaust the spirits of bodies unaccustomed to it. But this care and charity of Collonell Walrond's, lost him nothing in the conclusion; for, he got such love of his servants, as they thought all too little they could do for him; and the love of the servants there, is of much concernment to the Masters, not only in their diligent and painfull labour, but in fore seeing and preventing mischiefes that often happen, by the carelesnesse and slothfulnesse of retchlesse servants; sometimes by laying fire so negligently, as whole lands of Canes and Houses too, are burnt down and consumed, to the utter ruine and undoing of their Masters: For, the materialls there being all combustibile, and apt to take fire, a little oversight, as the fire of a Tobacco-pipe, being knockt out against a drie stump of a tree, has set it on fire, and the wind fanning that fire, if a land of Canes be but neer, and they once take fire, all that are down the winde will be burnt up. Water there is none to quench it, or if it were, a hundred Negres

with buckets were not able to do it; so violent and spreading a fire this is, and such a noise it makes, as if two Armies, with a thousand shot of either side, were continually giving fire, every knot of every Cane, giving as great a report as a Pistoll. So that there is no way to stop the going on of this flame, but by cutting down and removing all the Canes that grow before it, for the breadth of twenty or thirty foot down the winde, and there the Negres to stand and beat out the fire, as it creeps upon the ground, where the Canes are cut down. And I have seen some Negres so earnest to stop this fire, as with their naked feet to tread, and with their naked bodies to tumble, and roll upon it; so little they regard their own smart or safety, in respect of their Masters benefit. The year before I came away, there were two eminent Planters in the Iland, that with such an accident as this, lost at least £10000 sterling, in the value of the Canes that were burnt; the one, Mr. James Holduppe,<sup>198</sup> the other, Mr. Constantine Silvester: And the latter had not only his Canes, but his house burnt down to the ground. This, and much more mischief has been done, by the negligence and wilfulnesse of servants. And yet some cruell Masters will provoke their Servants so, by extream ill usage, and often and cruell beating them, as they grow desperate, and so joyne together to revenge themselves upon them.

### A combination among the Servants, to kill their Masters

**A** little before I came from thence, there was such a combination amongst them, as the like was never seen there before. Their sufferings being grown to a great height, & their daily complainings to one another (of the intolerable burdens they labour'd under) being spread throughout the Iland; at the last, some amongst them, whose spirits were not able to endure such slavery, resolved to break through it, or die in the act; and so conspired with some others of their acquaintance, whose sufferings were equall, if not above theirs; and [46] their spirits no way inferiour, resolved to draw as many of the discontented party into this plot, as possibly they could; and those of this perswasion, were the greatest numbers of servants in the Iland. So that a day was appointed to fall upon their Masters, and cut all their throats, and by that means, to make themselves not only freemen, but Masters of the Iland. And so closely was this plot carried, as no discovery was made, till the day before they were to put it in act: And then one of them, either by the failing of his courage, or some new obligation from the love of his Master, revealed this long plotted conspiracy; and so by this timely advertisement, the Masters were saved: Justice Hethersall (whose servant this was) sending Letters to all his friends, and they to theirs, and so one to another,

---

198 Colonel James Holdip was among the first sugar planters on the island.



till they were all secured; and, by examination, found out the greatest part of them; whereof eighteen of the principall men in the conspiracy, and they the first leaders and contrivers of the plot, were put to death, for example to the rest. And the reason why they made examples of so many, was, they found these so haughty in their resolutions, and so incorrigible, as they were like enough to become actors in a second plot; and so they thought good to secure them; and for the rest, to have a speciall eye over them.

## Reasons why the Negres can plot no Massacres upon their Masters

**I**t has been accounted a strange thing, that the Negres, being more then double the numbers of the Christians that are there, and they accounted a bloody people, where they think they have power or advantages; and the more bloody, by how much they are more fearfull than others: that these should not commit some horrid massacre upon the Christians, thereby to enfranchise themselves, and become Masters of the Iland. But there are three reasons that take away this wonder; the one is, They are not suffered to touch or handle any weapons: The other, That they are held in such awe and slavery, as they are fearfull to appear in any daring act; and seeing the mustering of our men, and hearing their Gun-shot, (than which nothing is more terrible to them) their spirits are subjugated to so low a condition, as they dare not look up to any bold attempt. Besides these, there is a third reason, which stops all designes of that kind, and that is, They are fetch'd from severall parts of Africa, who speake severall languages, and by that means, one of them understands not another: For, some of them are fetch'd from Guinny and Binny, some from Cutchew, some from Angola, and some from the River of Gambria. And in some of these places where petty Kingdomes are, they sell their Subjects, and such as they take in Battle, whom they make slaves; and some mean men sell their Servants, their Children, and sometimes their Wives; and think all good traffick, for such commodities as our Merchants sends them.

*Negres.*

When they are brought to us, the Planters buy them out of the Ship, where they find them stark naked, and therefore can not be deceived in any outward infirmity. They choose them as they do Horses in a Market; the strongest, youthfulest, and most beautifull, yield the greatest prices. Thirty pound sterling is a price for the best man Negre; and twenty five, twenty six, or twenty seven pound for a Woman; the Children are at easier rates. And we buy them so, as [47] the sexes may be equall; for, if they have more men then women, the men who are unmarried will come to their Masters, and complain, that they cannot live without Wives, and desire him, they may have Wives.

And he tells them, that the next ship that comes, he will buy them Wives, which satisfies them for the present; and so they expect the good time: which the Master performing with them, the bravest fellow is to choose first, and so in order, as they are in place; and every one of them knowes his better, and gives him the precedence, as Cowes do one another, in passing through a narrow gate; for, the most of them are as neer beasts as may be, setting their souls aside. Religion they know none; yet most of them acknowledge a God, as appears by their motions and gestures: For, if one of them do another wrong, and he cannot revenge himselfe, he looks up to Heaven for vengeance, and holds up both his hands, as if the power must come from thence, that must do him right. Chast they are as any people under the Sun; for, when the men and women are together naked, they never cast their eyes towards the parts that ought to be covered; and those amongst us, that have Breeches and Petticoats, I never saw so much as a kisse, or embrace, or a wanton giance with their eyes between them. Jealous they are of their Wives, and hold it for a great injury and scorn, if another man make the least courtship to his Wife. And if any of their Wives have two Children at a birth, they conclude her false to his Bed, and so no more adoe but hang her. We had an excellent Negre in the Plantation, whose name was Macow, and was our chiefe Musitian;<sup>199</sup> a very valiant man, and was keeper of our Plantine-groave. This Negres Wife was brought to bed of two Children, and her Husband, as their manner is, had provided a cord to hang her. But the Overseer finding what he was about to do, enformed the Master of it, who sent for Macow, to disswade him from this cruell act, of murdering his Wife, and used all perswasions that possibly he could, to let him see, that such double births are in Nature, and that divers presidents were to be found amongst us of the like; so that we rather praised our Wives, for their fertility, than blamed them for their falsenesse. But this prevailed little with him, upon whom custome had taken so deep an impression; but resolved, the next thing he did, should be to hang her. Which when the Master perceived, and that the ignorance of the man, should take away the life of the woman, who was innocent of the crime her Husband condemned her for, told him plainly, that if he hang'd her, he himselfe should be hang'd by her, upon the same bough; and therefore wish'd him to consider what he did. This threatning wrought more with him, then all the reasons of Philosophy that could be given him; and so let her alone; but he never car'd much for her afterward, but chose another which he lik'd better. For the Planters there deny not a slave, that is a brave fellow, and one that has extraordinary qualities, two or three Wives, and above that number they seldome go: But no woman is allowed above one Husband.

At the time the wife is to be brought a bed, her husband removes his board,

---

199 “musician”

(which is his bed) to another room (for many severall divisions they have, in their little houses,) and none above sixe foot square). [48] And leaves his wife to God, and her good fortune, in the room, and upon the board alone, and calls a neighbour to come to her, who gives little help to her deliverie, but when the child is borne, (which she calls her Pickaninnie) she helps to make a little fire nere her feet and that serves instead of Possets, Broaths, and Caudles.<sup>200</sup> In a fortnight, this woman is at worke with her Pickaninny at her back, as merry a soule as any is there: If the overseer be discreet, shee is suffer'd to rest her selfe a little more then ordinary; but if not, shee is compelled to doe as others doe. Times they have of suckling their Children in the fields, and refreshing themselves; and good reason, for they carry burdens on their backs; and yet work too. Some women, whose Pickaninnies are three yeers old, will, as they worke at weeding, which is a stooping worke, suffer the hee Pickaninnie, to sit astride upon their backs, like St. George<sup>201</sup> a horse back; and there spurre his mother with his heeles, and sings and crows on her backe, clapping his hands, as if he meant to flye; which the mother is so pleas'd with, as shee continues her painfull stooping posture, longer then she would doe, rather than discompose her Joviall Pickaninnie of his pleasure, so glad she is to see him merry. The worke which the women doe, is most of it weeding, a stooping and painfull worke; at noon and night they are call'd home by the ring of a Bell, where they have two hours time for their repast at noone; and at night, they rest from sixe, till sixe a Clock next morning.

## Negres pastime upon Sundaies, and their aptnesse to learne Arts

**O**n Sunday they rest, and have the whole day at their pleasure; and the most of them use it as a day of rest and pleasure; but some of them who will make benefit of that dayes liberty, goe where the Mangrove<sup>202</sup> trees grow, and gather the barke of which they make ropes, which they trucke away for other Commodity, as shirts and drawers.

In the afternoons on Sundayes, they have their musicke, which is of kettle

---

200 Posset is a hot milk drink curdled with an alcohol such as rum; caudle is a mixture of gruel and liquor given to the sick.

201 the patron saint of England who is usually depicted on horseback defeating a dragon

202 “mangrove”

drums, and those of severall sises;<sup>203</sup> upon the smallest the best musitian playes, and the other come in as Chorasses:<sup>204</sup> the drum all men know, has but one tone; and therefore varietie of tunes have little to doe in this musick; and yet so strangely they varie their time, as 'tis a pleasure to the most curious eares, and it was to me one of the strangest noyses that ever I heard made of one tone; and if they had the varietie of tune, which gives the greater scope in musick, as they have of time, they would doe wonders in that Art. And if I had not fal[le]n sicke before my comming away, at least seven months in one sickness, I had given them some hints of tunes, which being understood, would have serv'd as a great addition to their harmonie; for time without tune, is not an eighth part of the science of Musick.

I found Macow very apt for it of himselfe, and one day comming into the house, (which none of the Negroes use to doe, unlesse an Officer, as he was,) he found me playing on a Theorbo,<sup>205</sup> and sinking to it which he hearkened very attentively to; and when I had done took the Theorbo in his hand, and strooke one string, stopping it by degrees upon every fret, and finding the notes to varie, till it came to the body of the instrument; and that the neerer the body of the instrument [49] he stopt, the smaller or higher the sound was, which he found was by the shortning of the string, considered with himselfe, how he might make some triall of this experiment upon such an instrument as he could come by; having no hope ever to have any instrument of this kind to practise on. In a day or two after, walking in the Plantine grove, to refresh me in that cool shade, and to delight my selfe with the sight of those plants, which are so beautifull, as though they left a fresh impression in me when I parted with them, yet upon a review, something is discern'd in their beautie more then I remembered at parting: which caused me to make often repair thither; I found this Negro (whose office it was to attend there) being the keeper of that grove, sitting on the ground, and before him a piece of large timber, upon which he had laid crosse, sixe Billets, and having a handsaw and a hatchet by him, would cut the billets by little and little, till he had brought them to the tunes, he would fit them to; for the shorter they were, the higher the Notes which he tryed by knocking upon the ends of them with a sticke, which he had in his hand. When I found him at it, I took the stick out of his hand, and tried the sound, finding the sixe billets to have sixe distinct notes, one above another, which put me in a wonder, how he of himselfe, should without teaching doe so much. I then shewed him the difference between flats and sharpes, which he presently apprehended,

---

203 “sizes”

204 “choruses”

205 a type of lute

as between Fa, and Mi and he would have cut two more billets to those tunes, but I had then no time to see it done, and so left him to his own enquiries. I say this much to let you see that some of these people are capable of learning Arts.

Another, of another kinde of speculation I found; but more ingenious then he: and this man with three or foure more, were to attend mee into the woods, to cut Church wayes, for I was imployed sometimes upon publique works; and those men were excellent Axe-men, and because there were many gullies in the way, which were impassable, and by that means I was compell'd to make traverses, up and down in the wood; and was by that in danger to misse of the poynt to which I was to make my passage to the Church, and therefore was faine to take a Compasse with me, which was a Circumferenter, to make my traverses the more exact, and indeed without which, it could not be done, setting up the Circumferenter, and observing the Needle:<sup>206</sup> This Negre Sambo comes to me, and seeing the needle wag, desired to know the reason of its stirring, and whether it were alive: I told him no, but it stood upon a poynt, and for a while it would stir, but by and by stand still, which he observ'd and found it to be true.

The next question was, why it stood one way, & would not remove to any other poynt, I told him that it would stand no way but North and South, and upon that shew'd him the foure Cardinall poynts of the compass, East, West, North, South, which he presently learnt by heart, and promis'd me never to forget it. His last question was, why it would stand North, I gave this reason, because of the huge Rocks of Loadstone<sup>207</sup> that were in the North part of the world, which had a quality to draw Iron to it; and this Needle being of Iron, and toucht with a Loadstone, it would alwaies stand that way.

[50] This point of Philosophy was a little too hard for him, and so he stood in a strange muse; which to put him out of, I bad him reach his ax, and put it neer to the Compasse, and remove it about; and as he did so, the Needle turned with it, which put him in the greatest admiration that ever I saw a man, and so quite gave over his questions, and desired me, that he might be made a Christian; for, he thought to be a Christian, was to be endued with all those knowledges he wanted.

---

206 on the compass

207 Loadstone is a form of magnetized iron that was used as magnets or in compasses.

## The Planters will not allow their Slaves to be Christians.

**I** promised to do my best endeavour; and when I came home, spoke to the Master of the Plantation, and told him, that poor Sambo desired much to be a Christian. But his answer was, That the people of that Iland were governed by the Lawes of England, and by those Lawes, we could not make a Christian a Slave.<sup>208</sup> I told him, my request was far different from that, for I desired him to make a Slave a Christian. His answer was, That it was true, there was a great difference in that: But, being once a Christian, he could no more account him a Slave, and so lose the hold they had of them as Slaves, by making them Christians; and by that means should open such a gap, as all the Planters in the Iland would curse him. So I was struck mute, and poor Sambo kept out of the Church; as ingenious, as honest, and as good a natured poor soul, as ever wore black, or eat green.

On Sundaies in the afternoon, their Musick plaies, and to dancing they go, the men by themselves, and the women by themselves, no mixt dancing. Their motions are rather what they aim at, than what they do; and by that means, transgresse the lesse upon the Sunday; their hands having more of motion than their feet, & their heads more than their hands. They may dance a whole day, and ne[v]er heat themselves; yet, now and then, one of the activest amongst them will leap bolt upright, and fall in his place again, but without cutting a capre. When they have danc'd an houre or two, the men fall to wrastle, (the Musick playing all the while) and their manner of wrastling is, to stand like two Cocks, with heads as low as their hipps; and thrusting their heads one against another, hoping to catch one another by the leg, which sometimes they do: But if both parties be weary, and that they cannot get that advantage, then they raise their heads, by pressing hard one against another, and so having nothing to take hold of but their bare flesh, they close, and grasp one another about the middle, and have one another in the hug, and then a fair fall is given on the back. And thus two or three couples of them are engaged at once, for an houre together, the women looking on: for when the men begin to wrastle, the women leave of their dancing, and come to be spectatours of the sport.

When any of them die, they dig a grave, and at evening they bury him, clapping and wringing their hands, and making a dolefull sound with their voyces. They are a people of a timerous and fearfull disposition, and consequently bloody, when they finde advantages. If any of them commit a fault, give him present punishment, but do not

---

208 By the time of Ligon's writing it was commonly believed that the law of England did not permit Christians to be held as slaves.



threaten him; for if you do, it is an even lay, he will go and hang himselfe, to avoid the punishment.

[51] What their other opinions are in matter of Religion, I know not; but certainly, they are not altogether of the sect of the Sadduces:<sup>209</sup> For, they believe a Resurrection, and that they shall go into their own Country again, and have their youth renewed. And lodging this opinion in their hearts, they make it an ordinary practice, upon any great fright, or threatning of their Masters, to hang them selves.

But Collonell Walrond having lost three or foure of his best Negres this way, and in a very little time, caused one of their heads to be cut off, and set upon a pole a dozen foot high; and having done that, caused all his Negres to come forth, and march round about this head, and bid them look on it, whether this were not the head of such an one that hang'd himselfe. Which they acknowledging, he then told them, That they were in a main errour, in thinking they went into their own Countries, after they were dead; for, this mans head was here, as they all were witnesses of; and how was it possible, the body could go without a head. Being convinc'd by this sad, yet lively spectacle, they changed their opinions; and after that, no more hanged themselves.

When they are sick, there are two remedies that cure them; the one, an outward, the other, an inward medicine. The outward medicine is a thing they call Negre-oyle, and 'tis made in Barbary, yellow it is as Bees wax, but soft as butter. When they feel themselves ill, they call for some of that, and annoint their bodies, as their breasts, bellies, and sides, and in two daies they are perfectly well. But this does the greatest cures upon such, as have bruises or strains in their bodies. The inward medicine is taken, when they find any weakness or decay in their spirits and stomacks, and then a dram or two of kill-devill revives and comforts them much.

## Observations upon the shapes of the Negres

I have been very strict, in observing the shapes of these people; and for the men, they are very well timber'd, that is, broad between the shoulders, full breasted, well filleted, and clean leg'd, and may hold good with Albert Durers<sup>210</sup> rules, who allows twice the length of the head, to the breadth of the shoulders; and twice the length of the face, to the breadth of the hipps, and according to this rule these men are shap'd. But the women not; for the same great Master of Proportions, allows to

---

209 Prominent from the 2nd century BCE into the 1st century CE, the Sadduces were a sect of Jews who denied the resurrection of the body.

210 “Albrecht Dürer”

each woman, twice the length of the face to the breadth of the shoulders, and twice the length of her own head to the breadth of the hips. And in that, these women are faulty; for I have seen very few of them, whose hips have been broader then their shoulders, unlesse they have been very fat. The young Maides have ordinarily very large breasts, which stand strutting out so hard and firm, as no leaping, jumping, or stirring, will cause them to shake any more, then the brawnes of their armes. But when they come to be old, and have had five or six Children, their breasts hang down below their navells, so that when they stoop at their common work of weeding, they hang almost down to the ground, that at a distance, you would think they had six legs: And the reason of this is, they tie the cloaths about their Children's backs, which comes upon their breasts, which by pressing very hard, causes them to hang down to that length. Their [52] Children, when they are first born, have the palmes of their hands and the soles of their feet, of a whitish colour, and the sight of their eyes of a blewish colour, not unlike the eyes of a young Kitling;<sup>211</sup> but, as they grow older, they become black.<sup>212</sup>

Their way of reckoning their ages, or any other notable accident they would remember, is by the Moon; and so accounting from the time of their Childrens births, the time they were brought out of their own Country, or the time of their being taken Prisoners, by some Prince or Potentate of their own Country, or any other notorious accidents, that they are resolved to remember, they account by the Moon; as, so many Moons since one of these, and so many Moons since another; and this account they keep as long as they can: But if any of them live long, their Arithmetick failes them, and then they are at a dead fault, and so give over the chase, wanting the skill to hunt counter. For what can poor people do, that are without Letters and Numbers, which is the soul of all businesse that is acted by Mortalls, upon the Globe of this World.

Some of them, who have been bred up amongst the Portugalls, have some extraordinary qualities, which the others have not; as singing and fencing. I have seen some of these Portugall Negres, at Collonell James Draxes, play at Rapier and Dagger very skilfully, with their Stookados, their Imbrocados, and their Passes:<sup>213</sup> And at single Rapier too, after the manner of Charanza, with such comelinesse; as, if the skill had been wanting, the motions would have pleased you; but they were skilfull too, which I perceived by their binding with their points, and nimble and subtle avoidings with their bodies, and the advantages the strongest man had in the close, which the other

---

211 "a kitten"

212 One theory of "blackness" held by Europeans was that people were born white but blackened due to environmental influences, such as the heat of the sun.

213 These are names of moves in fencing.

avoided by the nimbleness and skilfulness of his motion. For, in this Science, I had bin so well vers'd in my youth, as I was now able to be a competent Judge. Upon their first appearance upon the Stage, they march towards one another, with a slow majestick pace, and a bold commanding look, as if they meant both to conquer; and coming neer together, they shake hands, and embrace one another, with a cheerfull look. But their retreat is much quicker then their advance, and, being at first distance, change their countenance, and put themselves into their posture; and so after a passe or two, retire, and then to't again: And when they have done their play, they embrace, shake hands, and putting on their smoother countenances, give their respects to their Master, and so go off. For their Singing, I cannot much commend that, having heard so good in Europe; but for their voices, I have heard many of them very loud and sweet.

Excellent Swimmers and Divers they are, both men and women. Collonell Drax (who was not so strict an observer of Sundaies, as to deny himselfe lawfull recreations) would sometimes, to shew me sport, upon that day in the afternoon, send for one of the Muscovia Ducks,<sup>214</sup> and have her put into his largest Pond, and calling for some of his best swimming Negres, commanded them to swim and take this Duck; but forbad them to dive, for if they were not bar'd that play, they would rise up under the Duck, and take her as she swome, or meet her in her diving, and so the sport would have too quick an end. [53] But that play being forbidden, the duck would make them good sport for they are stronger ducks, and better Divers by farre then ours: and in this chase, there was much of pleasure, to see the various swimings of the Negroes; some the ordinarie wayes, upon their bellies, some on their backs, some by striking out their right legge and left arme, and then turning on the other side, and changing both their legge and arme, which is a stronger and swifter way of swimming, then any of the others: and while we were seeing this sport, and observing the diversities, of their swimings, a Negro maid, who was not there at the beginning of the sport; and therefore heard nothing of the forbidding them to dive, put off her peticoate behind a bush, that was at one end of the Pond, and closely sunk down into the water, and at one diving got to the Duck, pul'd her under water, & went back againe the same way she came to the bush, all at one dive. We all thought the Duck had div'd: and expected her appearance above water, but nothing could be seen, till the subtilty was discovered, by a Christian that saw her go in, and so the duck was taken from her. But the trick being so finely and so closely done, I begg'd that the Duck might be given her againe, which was granted, and the young girle much pleased.

Though there be a marke set upon these people, which will hardly ever be wip'd

---

214 "Muscovy Duck".

off,<sup>215</sup> as of their cruelties when they have advantages, and of their fearfulness and falsnesse; yet no rule so generall but hath his acception: for I beleive, and I have strong motives to cause me to bee of that perswasion, that there are as honest, faithfull, and conscionable people amongst them, as amongst those of Europe, or any other part of the world.

## A plot of some Negres, to burn the Ingenio, and the plot discovered by some of their own Country-men, who were honest and noble

**A** hint of this, I will give you in a lively example; and it was in a time when Victuals were scarce, and Plantins were not then so frequently planted, as to afford them enough. So that some of the high spirited and turbulent amongst them, began to mutinie, and had a plot, secretly to be reveng'd on their Master, and one or two of these were Firemen that made the fires in the furnaces,<sup>216</sup> who were never without store of drie wood by them. These villains, were resolved to make fire to such part of the boyling house, as they were sure would fire the rest, and so burn all, and yet seem ignorant of the fact, as a thing done by accident. But this plot was discovered, by some of the others who hated mischiefe, as much as they lov'd it; and so traduc't<sup>217</sup> them to their Master, and brought in so many witnesses against them, as they were forc't to confesse, what they meant should have been put in act the next night: so giving them condigne punishment, the Master gave order to the overseer that the rest should have a dayes liberty to themselves and their wives, to doe what they would; and withall to allow them a double proportion of victual for three dayes, both which they refus'd: which we all wonder'd at knowing well how much they lov'd their liberties, and their meat, having been lately pincht of the one, and not having overmuch of the other; and therefore being doubtfull what their meaning was in this, suspecting some discontent

---

215 Possibly a reference to the connection of Africans to the biblical curse of Ham. The basis of the story is told in Genesis 9:20-27 and the history of its elaboration to justify discrimination against Africans is told in Benjamin Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Early Modern Periods," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 54:1 (1997), pp. 103-142.

216 The furnances heated the metal cauldrons in which the cane juice was gradually reduced to sugar and molasses.

217 "revealed"

amongst them, sent for three or foure of the best of them, and desir'd to know why they refus'd this favour that was offer'd them, but [54] receiv'd such an answer: as we little expected; for they told us, it was not sullenesse, or slighting the gratuitie their Master bestow'd on them, but they would not accept any thing as a recompence for doing that which became them in their duties to due, nor would they have him think, it was hope of reward, that made them to accuse their fellow servants, but an act of Justice, which they thought themselves bound in duty to doe, and they thought themselves sufficiently rewarded in the Act. The substance of this, in such language as they had, they delivered, and poor Sambo was the Orator; by whose example the others were led both in the discovery of the Plot, and refuseall of the gratuitie. And withall they said, that if it pleas'd their Master, at any time, to bestow a voluntary boone upon them, be it never so slight, they would willingly and thankfully accept it: & this act might have beseem'd the best Christians, though some of them were denied Christianity; when they earnestly sought it. Let others have what opinion they please, yet I am of this believe; that there are to be found amongst them, some who are as morally honest, as Conscionable, as humble, as loving to their friends, and as loyall to their Masters, as any that live under the sunne, & one reason they have to be so, is, they set no great value upon their lives: And this is all I can remember concerning the Negroes, except of their games, which I could never learne, because they wanted language to teach me.

## Observations upon the Indians

**A**s for the Indians, we have but few, and those fetcht from other Countries; some from the neighbouring Ilands, some from the Maine,<sup>218</sup> which we make slaves: the women who are better verst in ordering the Cassavie and making bread, then the Negroes, we imploye for that purpose, as also for making Mobbie: the men we use for footmen, and killing of fish which they are good at; with their own bowes and arrows they will go out; and in a dayes time, kill as much fish, as will serve a family of a dozen persons, two or three daies, if you can keep the fish so long. They are very active men, and apt to learne any thing, sooner then the Negroes; and as different from them in shape, almost as in colour; the men very broad shoulder'd, deep breasted, with large heads, and their faces almost three square, broad about the eyes and temples, and sharpe at the chinne, their skins some of them brown, some a bright Bay, they are much craftier, and subtiler then the Negroes; and in their nature falsere; but in their bodies more active, their women have very small breasts, and have more

---

218 i.e. the mainland of Central and South America.

of the shape of the Europeans then the Negroes, their haire black and long, a great part whereof hangs downe upon their backs, as low as their hanches, with a large lock hanging over either brest, which seldome or never curls: cloaths they scorne to weare, especially if they be well shap't; a girdle they use of tape, covered with little smooth shels of fishes, white, and from their flanke of one side, to their flank on the other side, a fringe of blew Bugle; which hangs so low as to cover their privities.<sup>219</sup> We had an Indian woman, a slave in the house, who was of excellent shape and colour, for it was a pure bright bay;<sup>220</sup> small brests, with the nipls of a porphyrie<sup>221</sup> colour, this woman would not be woo'd by any means to weare Cloaths. Shee chanc't to be with Child, by a Christian servant, and lodging in the Indian house, amongst other [55] women of her own Country, where the Christian servants, both men and women came; and being very great, and that her time was come to be delivered, loath to fall in labour before the men, walk'd down to a Wood, in which was a Pond of water, and there by the side of the Pond, brought her selfe a bed; and presently washing her Child in some of the water of the Pond, lap'd it up in such rags, as she had begg'd of the Christians; and in three hours time came home, with her Childe in her armes, a lusty Boy, frolick and lively.

This Indian dwelling neer the Sea-coast, upon the Main, an English ship put in to a Bay, and sent some of her men a shoar, to try what victualls or water they could finde, for in some distresse they were: But the Indians perceiving them to go up so far into the Country, as they were sure they could not make a safe retreat, intercepted them in their return, and fell upon them, chasing them into a Wood, and being dispersed there, some were taken, and some kill'd: but a young man amongst them stragling from the rest, was met by this Indian Maid, who upon the first sight fell in love with him, and hid him close from her Countrymen (the Indians) in a Cave, and there fed him, till they could safely go down to the shoar, where the ship lay at anchor, expecting the return of their friends. But at last, seeing them upon the shoar, sent the long-Boat for them, took them aboard, and brought them away. But the youth, when he came ashoar in the Barbadoes, forgot the kindnesse of the poor maid, that had ventured her life for his safety, and sold her for a slave, who was as free born as he: And so poor Yarico for her love, lost her liberty.<sup>222</sup>

---

219 “blue Bugle”; bugle are beads sewn onto a dress

220 referring to her color; The word was usually used to describe a reddish-brown horse.

221 “purple” from porphyry, a composite rock of a purplish or reddish color.

222 Subsequent English writers developed the story of Yarico in plays and literature. For its history, see *English Trader, Indian maid : Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World : an Inkle*



## Somewhat of the Planters themselves

**N**ow for the Masters, I have yet said but little, nor am able to say halfe of what they deserve. They are men of great abilities and parts, otherwise they could not go through, with such great works as they undertake; the managing of one of their Plantations, being a work of such a latitude, as will require a very good head-peece, to put in order, and continue it so.

I can name a Planter there, that feeds daily two hundred mouths, and keeps them in such order, as there are no mutinies amongst them and yet of severall nations. All these are to be employed in their severall abilities, so as no one be idle. The first work to be considered, is Weeding, for unlesse that be done, all else (and the Planter too) will be undone; and if that be neglected but a little time, it will be a hard matter to recover it again, so fast will the weeds grow there. But the ground being kept clean, 'tis fit to bear any thing that Country will afford. After weeding comes Planting, and they account two seasons in the year best, and that is, May and November; but Canes are to be planted at all times, that they may come in, one field after another; otherwise, the work will stand still. And commonly they have in a field that is planted together, at one time ten or a dozen acres. This work of planting and weeding, the Master himselfe is to see done; unlesse he have a very trusty and able Overseer; and without such a one, he will have too much to do. The next thing he is to consider, is the Ingenio, and what belongs to that; as, the Ingenio it selfe, which is the *Primum Mobile*<sup>223</sup> of the whole work, the Boyling-house, with the Coppers and Furnaces, the Filling room, the Still-house, [56] and Cureing-house; and in all these, there are great casualties. If any thing in the Rollers, as the Goudges, Sockets, Sweeps, Cogs, or Braytrees, be at fault, the whole work stands still; or in the Boyling-house, if the Frame which holds the Coppers, (and is made of Clinkers, fastned with plaister of Paris) if by the violence of the heat from the Furnaces, these Frames crack or break, there is a stop in the work, till that be mended. Or if any of the Coppers have a mischance, and be burnt, a new one must presently be had, or there is a stay in the work. Or if the mouths of the Furnaces, (which are made of a sort of stone, which we have from England, and we call it there, high gate stone) if that, by the violence of the fire, be softned, that it moulder away, there must new be provided, and laid in with much art, or it will not

---

*and Yarico Reader*, ed. Frank Felsenstein (Baltimore, 1999).

223 “first mover,” an allusion to the classical model of the universe found in Plato and developed by later neo-Platonist writers. At the center of the universe there was an unmoving first mover (god) who sparked motion in the planets and stars.

be. Or if the barrs of Iron, which are in the flowre of the Furnace, when they are red hot, (as continually they are) the fire-man, throw great shides<sup>224</sup> of wood in the mouths of the Furnaces, hard and carelesly, the weight of those logs, will bend or break those barrs, (though strongly made) and there is no repairing them, without the work stand still; for all these depend upon one another, as wheels in a Clock. Or if the Stills be at fault, the kill-devill cannot be made. But the main impediment and stop of all, is the losse of our Cattle, and amongst them, there are such diseases, as I have known in one Plantation, thirty that have died in two daies. And I have heard, that a Planter, an eminent man there, that clear'd a dozen acres of ground, and rail'd it about for pasture, with intention, as soon as the grasse was growne to a great height, to put in his working Oxen; which accordingly he did, and in one night fifty of them dyed; so that such a losse as this, is able to undo a Planter, that is not very well grounded. What it is that breeds these diseases, we cannot finde, unlesse some of the Plants have a poysonous quality; nor have we yet found out cures for these diseases; Chickens guts being the best remedy was then known, and those being chopt or minc't, and given them in a horn, with some liquor mixt to moisten it, was thought the best remedy; yet it recovered very few. Our Horses too have killing diseases amongst them, and some of them have been recovered by Glisters,<sup>225</sup> which we give them in pipes, or large seringes made of wood, for the same purpose. For, the common diseases, both of Cattle and Horses, are obstructions and bindings in their bowells; and so lingring a disease it is, to those that recover, as they are almost worn to nothing before they get well. So that if any of these stops continue long, or the Cattle cannot be recruited in a reasonable time, the work is at a stand; and by that means, the Canes grow over ripe, and will in a very short time have their juice dried up, and will not be worth the grinding.

## Tame Beasts, which are of great use to the planters

**N**ow to recruit these Cattle, Horses, Camells, and Assinigos,<sup>226</sup> who are all lyable to these mischances and decaies, Merchants must be consulted, ships provided, and a competent Cargo of goods adventured, to make new voyages to forraigne parts, to supply those losses; and when that is done, the casualties at Sea are to be considered, and those happen severall waies, either by shipwrack, piracy, or fire. A Master of a ship, and a man accounted both able, stout, and honest, having

---

224 large pieces of wood, such as planks or blocks, used for fires

225 “clyster,” i.e. an enema

226 “asses”

[57] transported goods of severall kinds, from England to a part of Africa, the River of Gambia, and had there exchanged his Commodities for Negres, which was that he intended to make his voyage of, caused them all to be shipt, and did not, as the manner is, shackle one to another, and make them sure; but having an opinion of their honesty and faithfulness to him, as they had promised; and he being a credulous man, and himselfe good natur'd and mercifull, suffered them to go loose, and they being double the number of those in the ship, found their advantages, got weapons in their hands, and fell upon the Saylers, knocking them on the heads, and cutting their throats so fast, as the Master found they were all lost, out of any possibility of saving; and so went down into the Hold, and blew all up with himselfe; and this was before they got out of the River. These, and severall other waies there will happen, that extreemly retard the work of Suger-making.

Now let us consider how many things there are to be thought on, that go to the actuating this great work, and how many cares to prevent the mischances, that are incident to the retarding, if not the frustrating of the whole work; and you will finde them wise and provident men, that go on and prosper in a work, that depends upon so many contingents.

This I say, to stop those mens mouths, that lie here, at home, and expect great profit in their adventures, and never consider, through what difficulty, industry, and paines it is acquired And thus much I thought good to say, of the abilities of the Planters.

The next thing is, of their natures and dispositions, which I found compliable in a high degree to all vertues, that those of the best sort of Gentlemen call Excellent; as, Civilly in treating of Strangers, with communicating to them any thing within the compasse of their knowledge, that might be beneficiall to them, in any undertaking amongst them, and assisting them in it, giving them harbour for themselves and servants. And if their intentions were to buy Plantations, to make diligent inquiries for such as they desired, and to drive the bargain as neer the winde for their advantages, as possibly they could, and to put themselves in some travells, in setling the businesse: Or, if that could not do them service, to recommend them to any friend they had, that lay more fit and convenient for their purpose. Loving, friendly, and hospitable one to another; and though they are of severall Perswasions, yet, their discretions ordered every thing so well, as there never were any fallings out between them: which to prevent, some of them of the better sort, made a Law amongst themselves, that whosoever nam'd the word Roundhead or Cavalier,<sup>227</sup> should give to all those that heard him, a Shot and

---

227 The opposing parties during the English civil wars. "Roundheads" were parliamentarians who fought the "cavaliers" or royalists.

a Turkey, to be eaten at his house that made the forfeiture; which sometimes was done purposely, that they might enjoy the company of one another; and sometimes this Shot and this Turkey would draw on a dozen dishes more, if company were accordingly: So frank, so loving, and so good natur'd were these Gentlemen one to another; and to expresse their affections yet higher, they had particular names one to another, as, Neighbour, Friend, Brother, Sister So that I perceived nothing wanting, that might make [58] up a firme and lasting friendship amongst them; though after I came away, it was otherwise.

Sports and exercises they never us'd any, as Bowling, Shooting, Hunting, or Hawking; for indeed there are no places fit for the two first exercises, the Countrey being so Rocky, uneven and full of stumps of trees: and for the other two, they want game; for there are no kind of wild beasts in the Iland, nor any foule fit to hawk at; besides the Country is so woody, as there is no Champion<sup>228</sup> to flye in; Pheasants, Partridges, Heathpoults, Quailles, or Rayles, never set foot upon this ground, unlesse they were brought there; and if so, they never liv'd and for Hawkes, I never saw but two, and those the merriest stirrers that ever I saw flye; the one of them was in an evening just at sunne setting, which is the time the Bats rise, and so are to a good height; and at a downecome, this Barbary faulcon took one of them and carried it away.

*Tame  
beasts  
that are  
living on  
the Iland.  
Camels.*

If I shall begin with the largest first I must name Camells, and these are very usefull beasts, but very few will live upon the Iland: divers have had them brought over, but few know how to diet them. Captaine Higginbotham had foure or five, which were of excellent use, not only of carrying down sugar to the bridge, but of bringing from thence hogsheads of Wine, Beer, or Vinegar, which horses cannot do, nor can Carts pass for Gullies, and Negroes cannot carry it, for the reasons afore mentioned; a good Camell will carry 1600 l.<sup>229</sup> weight, and go the surest of any beast.

*Horses.*

We have from severall parts of the world, England, Holland, Bonavista, the Iles of Cape Verd, Virginia, New England, and some from one of the Leeward Ilands in the Carribbies call'd Currissa,<sup>230</sup> besides some we breed and very strong and good mettled, bold and fit to charge on: these horses we use either for the Ingenio, or the Saddle, seldom or never for carrying sugar, the gullies being so steep.

*Oxen,  
Bulls, and  
Cowes.*

We have from the severall places I have nam'd, but chiefly Bulls, from the Ile of May, and Bonavista; which are Cattell, being well taught, will work the orderliest that I have seen any. With these, we have Cowes, and some of them we use for the Payle,

228 i.e. open, flat plains.

229 “pounds”

230 “Curaçao”

and some for the Ingenio, some we breed, and have speedier increase then in Europe, for here a Calfe will bring a Calfe in fourteen months; and if it were not for the diseases that take away our Cattell, we should not need to fetch any from forraine parts.

Are here of exceeding great use in the Iland, in carrying our sugars down to the bridge which by reason of the gullies, the Horses cannot doe: besides when the great raines fall the wayes are so deep, and full of roots, as when a horse puts in his legge between two roots, he can hardly pull it out againe, having a great weight on his back; and if he fall, 'tis hard lifting him up. Whereas the Assinigoes pick and choose their way, and sometimes choose out little wayes in the wood, such as they know are fit for them to passe, which horses cannot doe, because the wayes are too narrow for them, or if they were not, they would want much the wit of the Assinigoes, to pick and choose their way. And if by chance the Assinigoes fall, two Negroes are able to help him up, and we seldome use more then two, for assistance to the [59] Christian that has the charge of the carriages. One of these Assinigoes will carry 150 weight of sugar; some of the strongest 200 weight; our Planters have been very desirous if it were possible to get Mules there, for they would be of excellent use, in carrying their sugars, and working in the Ingenio; but they had got none when I was there, but they were making trialls, either to get some of those, or some large Horse Assinigoes, to breed with the Mares of that Country.

We have here in abundance, but not wild or loose, for if they were they would do more harme then their bodies are worth; they are enclos'd, and every man knows his own, those that reare them to sell, do commonly sell them for a groat a pound; weighing them alive; sometimes six pence if flesh be deere. There was a Planter in the Iland, that came to his neighbour and said to him: Neighbour I hear you have lately bought good store of servants, out of the last ship that came from England, and I heare withall, that you want provisions, I have great want of a woman servant; and would be glad to make an exchange; If you will let me have some of your womans flesh, you shall have some of my hoggs flesh; so the price was set a groat a pound for the hogges flesh, and sixe pence for the Womans flesh. The scales were set up, and the Planter had a Maid that was extream fat, lasie, and good for nothing Her name was Honor; The man brought a great fat sow, and put it in one scale: and Honor was put in the other, but when he saw how much the Maid outwayed his Sow: he broke off the bargaine, and would not go on: though such a case as this, may seldome happen, yet 'tis an ordinary thing there, to sell their servants to one another for the time they have to serve; and in exchange, receive any commodities that are in the Iland; I have said as much already of the largeness weight and goodnesse of these hogs as is needful, and therefore I shall need no more.

*Sheepe.* We have here, but very few; and those do not like well the pasture, being very unfit for them; a soure tough and saplesse grasse, and some poysonous plant they find, which breeds diseases amongst them, and so they dye away, they never are fat, and we thought a while the reason had been, their too much heate with their wool, and so got them often shorne; but that would not cure them, yet the Ews bear alwayes two Lambs, their flesh when we tried any of them, had a very faint taste, so that I do not think they are fit to be bred or kept in that Countrey: other sheep we have there, which are brought from Guinny and Binny, and those have haire growing on them, instead of wool; and liker Goates then sheep, yet their flesh is tasted more like mutton then the other.

*Goates.* We have in greater plenty, and they prosper farre better then the sheep, and I find little difference in the taste of their flesh, and the Goats here; they live for the most part in the woods, sometimes in the pasture, but are alwaies inclosed in a fence, that they do not trespass upon their neighbours ground; for whosoever finds Hog or Goat of his neighbours, either in his Canes, Corne, Potatoes, Bonavist, or Plantines, may by the lawes of the Iland shoot him through with a Gun, and kill him; but then he must presently send to the owner, to let him know where he is. [60]

## Birds of all sorts

*Birds.* **T**he Birds of this place (setting two aside) are hardly worth the pains of describing; yet, in order, as I did the Beasts, I will set them down. The biggest is a direct Bussard, but somewhat lesse then our grey Bussards in England, somewhat swifter of wing; and the only good they do, is, sometimes to kill the Rats. The next to him in bignesse, is the larger Turtle Dove, and of them, there is great store in the Iland: 'tis a much handsomer bird, both in shape and colour, then ours in England, and is very good meat. Next to her is the lesser Turtle, a far finer bird then she, but of a contrary shape; for this is of the shape of a Partridge, but her plumidge gray, and a red brown under the wings; a pretier bird I do not know, of so few glorious colours; her tune like the other. The next is a bird like a Thrush, of a melancholly look, her feathers never smooth, but alwaies ruffled, as if she were muing, her head down, her shoulders up, as if her neck were broke. This bird has for three or four notes, the loudest and sweetest, that ever I heard; if she had variety, certainly no bird could go beyond her; she lookes alwaies, as if she were sick or melancholly.

Another there is, not much unlike a Wren, but big as a Thrush; and this is a merry and jolly, as the other is sad; and as she sits on a stick, jets, and lifts up her train,



looking with so earnest and merry a countenance, as if she would invite you to come to her, and will sit till you come very neer her. This bird I never heard sing. The next [is a] Black-bird, with white eyes, and that so ill becomes her, as she is accounted an unhandsome bird; her voice harsh, somewhat like our Jay in England; they go in great flocks, and are harmefull birds, for they are great devourers of corn, and blossomes of trees, and the Planters wish them destroyed, though they know not which way. They are a kinde of Stares, for they walk, and do not hop as other birds. One thing I observe in these birds, which I never saw in any but them, and that is, when they flie, they put their train into severall postures; one while they keep it straight, as other birds; sometimes they turn it edge-waies, as the tail of a fish, and by and by put it three square, with the covering feather a top, and the sides downwards. The next is of the colour of a Feldefare, but the head seemes too big for her body, and for that reason they call her a Counsellor; her flying is extream wanton; and for her tune, 'tis such as I have not heard any like her, not for the sweetnesse, but the strangenesse of it; for she performes that with her voice, that no instrument can play, nor no voice sing, but hers; and that is, quarter notes, her song being composed of five tones, and every one a quarter of a note higher then other. Mr. John Coprario, a rare composer of Musick, and my dear friend, told me once, that he was studying a curiosity in musick, that no man had ever attempted to do; and that was, of quarter notes; but he not being able to go through with it, gave it over: But if he had liv'd to have gone with me to the Barbadoes, this bird should have taught him. Under this size, there are none considerable; Sparrowes, Haysocks, Finches, yellow Hamers, Titnies, and divers others of that sort, for which I have no names. But the last and strangest of all, is, that which we call the huming Bird, much lesse then a Wren, not [61] much bigger then a humble Bee, her body long, her wings small and sharp, of a sullen sad green, no pleasant colours on her; her manner of feeding is, just as a Bee, putting her bill into a blossome or a flower, tastes as lightly as a Bee, never sitting, but purring with her wings, all the time she staies with the flower; and the motion of her wings are as nimble and swift, as a Bee: We have no way to take her, but by shooting sand out of a gun at her, which mazes her for the present, that you may take her up; but there is no way to keep her alive, her feeding being such, as none can give her but her selfe. Now for the Birds that live upon the outward verge of the Iland, I have not much to say. Sometimes Teals come to our Ponds, three or four couple together, but never go away; for when we see them, we take a gun, and comming neer, shoot them, and the report of the gun frights, and makes those that are alive flie away, and fetch one turn, and come back to see their fellowes dead, and alight to them, and so we shoot and shoot again till all be kill'd; for they will alwaies come back to see their dead friends. The like we do with those birds we call

Oxen and Kine, which come to us in like manner. Small Swallowes we have now and then, but somewhat different from ours in colour.

But there is a Bird they call, a Man of war,<sup>231</sup> and he is much bigger than a Heron, and flies out to Sea upon discoveries, (for they never light upon the Sea) to see what ships are comming to the Iland; and when they return, the Ilanders look out, and say, A ship is comming, and finde it true. I have seen one of them, as high as I could look, to meet us twenty leagues from land; and some others, almost as big as Ducks, that in an evening came in a flock of twenty, or there about, and they made divers turnes about the ship, a little before Sun-setting; and when it grew dark, they lighted upon the ribs of the ship, and with little nooses of packthred, the saylers caught them; they were very fat and good.

Though the Bat be no Bird, yet she flies with wings, and alwaies a little before Sunsetting, at which time they come out of holes, chimneys, and hollow trees, and will raise them to a great height, feeding themselves with flies that they finde in the aire, at that time of the evening.

## Animalls and Insects

*Of lesser  
Animals  
and  
Insects.*

**H**aving done with Beasts and Birds, we will enquire what other lesser Animalls or Insects there are upon the Iland, of which, Snakes are the chiefe, because the largest; and I have seen some of those a yard and a halfe long. The only harme they do, is to our Pigeon houses, and milk-panns; so that if we leave any hole in the bottom of the house, where they can come in, they will get to the nests, and devour the young Pigeons, if they be not over big. And yet 'tis strange to see, what great morsells they will swallow; slide they will up against a wall, if it be but perpendicular; but if it be declining outward, they cannot get up, but will fall back ten foot high, if they be hindred by any stooping of the wall; for which reason we make jetties, neer the top of such roomes, as we will keep them out of; they have climbed six foot high upon the outside of a wall, come in at a window, down on the inside, skim our milk-pannes, and away again: Till we took one of them there, we knew not by what means our pannes were thus [62] skim'd. They never sting any body, nor is there any venomous beast in the Iland. The next to these are Scorpions, of which, some of them are as big as Ratts, smooth, aud coloured like a Snake, somewhat blewer, their bellies inclining to yellow, very nimble and quick to avoid their pursuers: yet, the Snakes will now and

---

231 The Magnificent Frigatebird has an large wingspan (80-90 inches) that enables it to travel over water for days without landing.

then take them, between whom there is a great conflict, before the quarrell be decided; for, the Scorpions that are large, are very strong, and will maintain the fight sometimes halfe an houre; I have seen them wrastle together a good part of that time: But in conclusion, the Snakes get the better, and devour the other. These Scorpions were never known to hurt man or beast. Toads or Frogs we have none.

Lizards we had in great plenty, but the Cats kill them so fast in the houses, as they are much lessened in their number. This little Animal loves much to be where men are, and are delighted to stand and gaze in their faces, and hearken to their discourse. These with us, I think, are different from those of Europe; the bodies of ours are about four inches long, the tail neer as much, headed not much unlike a Snake; their colour, when they are pleased, a pure grasse-green on the back, blewish toward the side, and yellowish on the belly; four leggs, and those very nimble: When they see at distance some of their own kinde, that they are angry with they swell a little bigger, and change their colour, from green to russet or hair-colour, which abates much of their beauty; for, their green is very pleasant and beautifull: Cold they are as Frogs. Next to these are Cockroches, a creature of the bignesse and shape of a Beetle; but of a pure hair-colour, which would set him off the better, if he had not an ugly wabbling gate, but that makes him unhandsome. He appears in the evening when 'tis dark, and will, when he pleases, flie to your bed, when he findes you sleeping, and bite your skin, till he fetch blood, if you do not wake; and if you take a Candle to search for him, he shifts away and hides himselfe, as the Purneses do in Italy. The Negres, who have thick skins, and by reason of their hard labour, sleep soundly at night, are bitten so, as far as the breadth of both your hands together, their skins are rac't, as if it were done with a currie-comb. Next to these tormentors, are Musketos,<sup>232</sup> who bite and sting worse then the Gnats and Stouts, that sting Cattle in England, (and are commonly felt in marish ground). And next to them Meriwings, and they are of so small a size, and so thin and aereall, as you can hardly discern them, but by the noise of their wings, which is like a small bugle horn, at a great distance: Where they sting, there will rise a little knob, as big as a pease, and last so a whole day; the mark will not be gone in twenty four hours. Caterpillars we have sometimes in abundance, and they do very great harme; for, they light upon the leaves of our Potatoes, which we call Slips, and eat them all away, and come so low, as to eat of the Root too: And the only remedy we have, is, to drive a flock of Turkeys into the place where they are, and they will devour them. The harmes these vermine do us, is double; first, in the slips, which is the food we give our Horses, and is cast into the rack; and in our Potatoes, being the root of these slips, which we our selves feed upon.

[63] Flies we have of so many kindes, (from two inches long with the great

---

232 "mosquitos"

hornes, which we keep in boxes, and are shewed by John Tredescan<sup>233</sup> amongst his rarities) to the least Atome, as it would be a weary work to set them down; as also the sudden production of them, from Nothing to Maggets, from Maggets to Flies; and there is not only a race of all these kindes, that go on in a generation, but upon new occasions, new kindes; as, after a great downfall of rain, when the ground has been extreemly moistned; and softned with the water, I have walk'd out upon a drie walk (which I made my selfe) in an evening, and there came about me an army of such flies, as I had never seen before, nor after; and they rose, as I conceived, out of the earth: They were as big bodied as Bees, but far larger wings; harme they did us none, but only lighted on us; their colour between ash-colour and purple.

The next of these moving little Animalls are Ants, or Pismires, and those are but of a small sise, but great in industry; and that which gives them means to attain to their ends, is, they have all one soul.<sup>234</sup> If I should say, they are here or there, I should do them wrong; for they are every where, under ground, where any hollow or loose earth is, amongst the roots of trees, upon the bodies, branches, leaves, and fruit of all trees, in all places without the houses and within, upon the sides, walls, windowes, and roofes without; and on the floores, side-walls, sealings, and windowes within; tables, cupbords, beds, stooles, all are covered with them, so that they are a kind of Ubiquitaries.<sup>235</sup> The Cockroaches are their mortall enemies, and though they are not able to do them any mischief, being living, (by reason they are far stronger and mightier then a hundred of them, & if they should force any one of them with multitudes, he has the liberty of his wings to make his escape) yet, when they finde him dead, they will divide him amongst them into Atomes; and to that purpose, they carry him home to their houses or nests. We sometimes kill a Cockroach, and throw him on the ground, and mark what they will do with him; his body is bigger then a hundred of them, and yet they will finde the means to take hold of him, and lift him up; and having him above ground, away

---

233 John Tradescant the younger (c. 1608-1662) was a noted botanist of the period who served as Charles I's head gardener. He came to his trade through family connections as he was the son of John Tradescant the elder (d. 1638) a successful botanist and collector of plants and insects. Both Tradescant's travelled widely as they built their collections. The elder Tradescant visited the continent repeatedly and used his political connections to involve the government's network of ship captains and ambassadors to gather specimens from abroad. Contemporaries commented on the significance of Tradescant's collection and visited him for viewings at his museum in Lambeth. His son inherited his father's collection and augmented it by venturing further afield to Virginia at least three times. The collection was eventually donated to the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford University.

234 The belief that colonies of ants, and also hives of bees, were all one soul was a commonplace of pre-modern botany.

235 "things which are everywhere"

they carry him, and some go by as ready assistants, if any be weary; and some are the Officers that lead and shew the way to the hole into which he must passe; and if the Van carriers perceive, that the body of the Cockroach lies crosse, and will not passe through the hole, or arch, through which they mean to carry him, order is given, and the body turned endwise, and this done a foot before they come to the hole, and that without any stop or stay; and this is observable, that they never pull contrary waies.

Those that are curious, and will prevent their comming on their Tables, Cupbords, or Beds, have little hollowes of timber, fill'd with water, for the feet of these to stand in; but all this will not serve their turne; for they will some of them, goe up to the ceiling, and let themselves fall upon the teasters of the Beds, Cupbords, and Tables.

To prevent them from comming on our shelves where our meat [64] is kept, we hang them to the rooffe by ropes, and tarre those roapes, and the roofes over them, as also the strings of our Hamacks,<sup>236</sup> for which reason we avoid them better in Hamacks then in beds.

Sometimes when we try conclusions<sup>237</sup> upon them; we take the Carpet off the Table, and shake it, so that all the Ants drop off, and rub down the leggs and feet of those tables, (which stood not in water) and having done so: we lay on the Carpet againe, and set upon it a Sallet dish, or Trencher,<sup>238</sup> with suger in it, which some of them in the room will presently smell, and make towards it as fast as they can, which is a long journey; for he must begin at the foot of the table, and come as high as the inside of the Carpet, and so go down to the bottome and up of the outside of the Carpet, before he gets on the table, and then to the sugar, which he smels to; and having found it, returns againe the same way, without taking any for his paines, and enformes all his friends of this bootie; who come in thousands, and tenne thousands, and in an instant, fetch it all away; and when they are thickest upon the table, clap a large book, (or any thing fit for that purpose) upon them, so hard as to kill all that are under it, and when you have done so, take away the book, and leave them to themselves, but a quarter of an houre, and when you come againe, you shall find all those bodies carried away. Other trials we make of their Ingenuity, as this. Take a Pewter dish, and fill it halfe full of water, into which put a little Gally pot fill'd with Sugar, and the Ants will presently find it, and come upon the Table; but when they

---

236 “hammocks”

237 “experiments”

238 The “trencher” was originally a piece of bread cut lengthwise on which food could be served. Eventually the trencher evolved into a serving dish made of wood, porcelain or other material in a rectangular shape. Trencher bread was sometimes given to the poor as alms after use.

perceive it environ'd with water, they try about the brims of the dish, where the Gally pot is nearest, and there the most venturous amongst them, commits him selfe to the water, though he be conscious how ill a swimmer he is, and is drown'd in the adventure: the next is not warn'd by his example, but ventures too; and is alike drown'd: and many more, so that there is a small foundation of their bodies to venture on; and then they come faster then ever, and so make a bridge of their own bodies, for their friends to passe on; neglecting their lives for the good of the publique; for before they make an end, they will make way for the rest, and become Masters of the Prize; I had a little white sugar which I desired to keep from them, and was devising which way to doe it, and I knockt a Nayle in the beam of the roome, and fastned to it a brown thread, at the lower end of which thread, I tyed a large shell of a fish; which being hollow I put the sugar in; and lockt the door, thinking it safe; but when I returned, I found three quarters of my sugar gone, and the Ants in abundance, ascending and descending, like the Angels on Jacobs Ladder,<sup>239</sup> as I have seen it painted, so that I found no place safe, from these more then busie Creatures.

Another sorts of Ants there are, but nothing so numerous or harmfull as the other, but larger by farre; these build great nests, as bigge as Bee hives, against a wall, or a tree, of Clay and Lome, sometimes within doors, and in it severall little Mansions, such as Bees make for themselves, but nothing so curious; these the Cockroaches and Lizards meet withall, way-laying them neere their nests, and feed upon them: which to prevent they make from thence, many and severall [65] galleries that reach some of them sixe or seaven yards severall waies, of the same earth they doe their nests; so that for such a distance as that, they are not to be perceiv'd, by any of their enemies, and commonly, their Avenues go out amongst leaves, or mosse, or some other Covert, that they may not be perceiv'd; but the most of these are in the woods; for we have destroyed their nests, and their galleries within doors so often, as they are weary of building, and so quit the house, I can say nothing of these, but that they are the quickest at their work of building, of any little Creatures that ever I saw. Spiders we have, the beautifullest and largest that I have seen, and the most curious in their webs; they are not at all Poysonous.

One sort more of these harmefull Animals there are, which we call Chegoes,<sup>240</sup> and these are so little that you would hardly think them able to doe any harme at all, and yet these will do more mischief then the Ants, and if they were as numerous as harmefull, there were no induring of them; they are of a shape, not much unlike a

---

239 a reference to the biblical story of Jacob's ladder found in Genesis 28:10-19

240 a type of flea that burrows into the foot



Louse, but no bigger then a mite that breeds in cheese, his colour blewish: an Indian has laid one of them, on a sheet of white paper, and with my spectacles on I could hardly discern him; yet this very little Enemy, can and will do much mischief to mankind. This vermine will get thorough your Stocken,<sup>241</sup> and in a pore of your skinne, in some part of your feet, commonly under the nayl of your toes, and there make a habitation to lay his off spring, as bigge as a small Tare, or the bagge of a Bee, which will cause you to go very lame, and put you to much smarting paine. The Indian women have the best skill to take them out, which they do by putting in, a small poynted Pinn, or Needle, at the hole where he came in, and winding the poynt about the bagge loosen him from the flesh, and so take him out. He is of a blewish colour, and is seene through the skinne, but the Negroes whose skinns are of that colour (or neer it) are in ill case, for they cannot finde where they are; by which meanes they are many of them very lame: some of these Chegoes are poysonous, and after they are taken out, the Orifice in which they lay, will fester and rankle for a fortnight after they are gone. I have had tenne taken out of my feet in a morning, by the most unfortunate Yarico an Indian woman.

Some kind of Animals more there are in the woods, which because I never saw I cannot speak their formes: some of them I guesse are no bigger than Crickets; they lye all day in holes and hollow trees, and as soon as the Sun is downe, they begin their tunes, which are neither singing nor crying, but the shrillest voyces that ever I heard: nothing can be so neerely resembl'd to it, as the mouths of a pack of small beagles at a distance; and so lively, and chirping the noyse is, as nothing can be more delightfull to the eares, if there were not too much of it, for the musick hath no intermission till morning, and then all is husht.

## Crabs that come and dwell upon the Land

I had forgotten amongst my fishes to mention Crabs; but because this kind of them live upon the land, I might very well overslip them and now bring them in, amongst these Animals: they are small Crabs, such as women sell by dozens in baskets in the streets, and of that colour raw and alive, as these are boyl'd, which is of a reddish colour. [66] These Crabs are comming from the Sea all the year long, (except in March) they hide themselves in holes, and in houses, and sometimes in hollow trees; and into every part of the Iland they come, sometimes we meet them going up stairs in the night, sometimes in our low rooms, sometimes in our Gardens, where they eat

---

241 “stocking”

the berbs. We hold them not good meat: But the Negres will often upon Sundaies go a Crabbing, and think them very great dainties when they are boyled. These Crabs in March come all out of their holes, and march down towards the Sea in such multitudes, as to cover a great part of the ground where they go, and no hedge, wall, or house can stop them, but they will over. As we ride, our Horses tread on them, they are so thick on the ground. And they have this sense, to go the nearest way to the Sea, from the place where they are, and nothing can stop or stay them, but death. 'Tis the time I guesse they go to breed.

## Severall Trees growing upon the Iland, and first of the poysonous trees and plants

*Trees.* **H**aving past through all the reasonable and sensitives<sup>242</sup> Creatures of this Iland, I come now to say somewhat of the Vegetables, as of Trees: and of those there are such infinite varieties, as to mention all, were to loose my selfe in a wood; for, it were impossible for any one in the time I stayed there, (though he studied nothing else) to give an account of the particulars. And therefore I will onely mention such, as for beauty or use, are of most and greatest esteem in the Iland.

*Physick Nut.* And for that there is none of more use than the Physick-Nut,<sup>243</sup> I will begin first with that, which though the name seem to promise health, yet, it has poyson lodg'd secretly within, and that poyson may bring health,<sup>244</sup> being physically applyed, and in fit times and seasons. The reason why I think it poysonous, is, because Cattle will not brouse, nor feed on the leaves, nor willingly come neer the shade. This tree will grow to be eighteen foot high, but we have a way to employ it; as for beauty and use, there are none such in the Iland. This tree (which is of the height as I have told you) has many springs, of four, five, and six foot long; we lop them one after another, and as we take off the branches, cut stakes of them, about foure foot and a halfe long, and stick them in the ground an inch deep, and no more, close to one another in the manner of

---

242 Aristotle wrote that the soul had different capacities: the sensitive (having to do with sensation), the vegetative (related to reproduction and development), and the rational (concerned with reason and thought). Animals had sensitive and vegetative aspects of the soul, while only humans had all three. See Aristotle, *On the Soul*.

243 Several poisonous compounds are found in the *Jatropha* plant and it is not edible.

244 "Physick" being related to "physician."

Paliffadoes;<sup>245</sup> and so, with a rail of either side, to keep them even, and here and there a spur or braket on either side, to keep them steady for a month; by which time, they will not only gather roots to strengthen them, and hold them up, but leaves to cover their tops, and so even and smooth they fall, as to cover the tops of themselves, at least two foot and a halfe downward: and will in a month more, be so firmly rooted in the earth, as you may remove your railes and brakets, to assist those that are planted after them, in other places. These leaves being large, smooth, and beautifully shap't, and of a full green, appear to your eyes like so much green Satin, hang'd on a rail or line, so even and so smooth they hang naturally.

The stems will grow apace, but more in their bignesse then their height, (for you may if you please, keep them at this height, by cutting off the tops) and in a while they will not only touch, but imbody [67] themselves one into another; and then they become as strong and usefull a fence, as any can be made, so close, as to keep in Conies, and keep out Rats; for, neither Cattle nor Vermine love to come neer it. And as it is a beautifull and usefull fence, for Gardens and Orchards, and to keep in Conies, Turkies, Muscovia Ducks, and Dung-hill foul, that cannot flie over, (having one wing clipt) so it serves us for singular use, in fencing about all our Pastures, or what other ground we would enclose: For, our fences being all made of fal[le]n trees, with the ends laid crosse one upon another, and many of those trees such wood, as were apt to rot and decay, by extream moisture, and violent heat; and the Planters having found the most of them were rotten and decayed, and to make new fences of that kind impossible, by reason the timbers and trees that grew very neer that place, were employed in making those fences, (for as they made them, the timber stood in their way, and no more adoe but cut them down, and lay them in their places without further removing) and removes of so great trees as they were, not to be done with few and weak hands: So that they were come to a great strait, and knew not which way, nor how, to renew these fences; some of the Pastures having no lesse then three thousand two hundred sixty eight trees to encompass them. At last, they thought upon this way, of making new fences, which is the most commodious that can be imagined. And so they gather'd all the Physick-nuts they could, and sowed them, and made large Nurseries of them, which as soon as they grew to any strength, they remov'd, and planted them so, as making a sleight hedge between the old fence and the Pasture, that Cattle might not tread them down, being young and tender, they planted them between; and in four years time they grew so strong, as they were of sufficient ability to defend themselves, and became a very sufficient fence to keep in or out the strongest Bulls in the Pasture. And then, all the wood of the old fence being drie, and fit for the Furnaces, was cut in short pieces,

---

245 “pallisades”

cleft, and sent home by the Assinigos; and part was gathered together, and made into Charcoals, for fewell<sup>246</sup> at home, and for the Smiths Forge, for we have there no Sea-coales.<sup>247</sup> Besides this, there is another use of this Plant, and that is Physicall: Take five of the kernells, and eat them in a morning fasting, and they are a Vomit and Purge; but the body must be strong that takes so many: three will serve a body that is easie to work on: I my selfe took five of them, and they gave me twelve vomits, and above twenty stooles, which was too great an evacuation in a hot Country, where the body is weak, and the spirits exhausted by continuall sweating.

But I saw a stronger man there take them before me, and they wrought moderately with him; but, finding a weaker constitution to work on, they had the more powerfull operation.

This Nut, as it growes on the tree, is like a white Pear-plumb, and of a yellowish colour, with a pulpe on it, as much as a Plumb; but that being taken off, there remains a stone, of a blackish colour, and within that, a kernell, and in that kernell, in the parting it in two halves, as our Hazle nuts in England, will part in the middle longwise, you shall finde a thin filme, which lookes of a faint Carnation, [68] which colour is easily discerned, the rest of the kernell being so perfectly white; Take out that filme, and you may eat the nut safely, without any operation at all, and 'tis as sweet, as a Jordan-Almond. This filme is perfectly discern'd, when the nut is new gathered; but I have look'd on them which have been longer kept, after I brought them into England, and I finde the Carnation colour quite gone, but the kernell retaines still his operation, both in Vomit and Purge.

The leaves are shap'd not much unlike a Vine leafe, but thrice as big, and much thicker, and fuller green.

*Poyson  
tree.*

The poysoned tree, though I cannot commend for her vertues, yet for her beauties I can. She is almost as large every way as the Locust, but not of that manner of growing; her leaves full out as large and beautifull, as the Lawrells, and so like, as not to be known assunder. The people that have lived long there, say, 'tis not wholesome to be under the shade of this tree. The fellers, as they cut them down, are very carefull of their eyes; and those that have Cipers, put it over their faces; for if any of the sap flie into their eyes, they become blinde for a month. A Negre had two Horses to walke, which were left with him by two Gentlemen; and the Horses beginning to fight, the Negre was afeard, and let them go; and they running into the wood together, struck at one another, and their heeles hitting some young trees of this kind, struck the

---

246 "fuel"

247 coal from underwater seams that the sea has washed ashore

poysonous juice into one anothers eyes, and so their blindnesse parted the fray, and they were both led home stone blind, and continued so a month, all the hair and skin pilling off their faces. Yet, of this timber we make all, or the most part, of the Pots we cure our Sugar in; for, being sawed, and the boards dried in the Sun, the poyson vapours out.

And as this tree's poyson is in her sap, so the Mantonell's<sup>248</sup> is in her fruit, which they account as high a poyson, as that of the Cassavie. The fruit is like an apple John, and 'tis said to be one of those poysons, wherewith the Indian Caniballs invenome their Arrowes.

And now I have nam'd the Cassavie, 'tis fit it come in the rank of poysons, *Cassavie.* though with good ordering it makes bread. 'Tis rather a shrub then a tree, the sprigs, few of them bigger then a broom-staffe, crooked and ill shap'd; but no matter for that, for the leaves are so thick, as to cover them; and they grow in tufts or bunches, and ever an odd one, as, 5. 7. 9. or 11. every leafe an inch broad, and six or seven inches long; dark green, and turning backward from the foreside. Their Roots I have set down already, their bignesse, and manner of growth, with the use of them.

Coloquintida is as beautifull a fruit, as any you can see, of the bignesse of an *Coloquin-  
tida.* Ostrages<sup>249</sup> egge; a fruit of so ill a taste, as a spoonfull of the liquor mars a whole pot of pottage; the rinde smooth, with various greens, interlac'd with murries, yellowes, and faint carnations.

Next to this shall be the Cassia fistula,<sup>250</sup> which is a tree that will grow the most, *Cassia-  
fistula.* in the least time, of any that ever I knew: I set one of the seeds, (which is but a small seed) and in a yeers time, it grew to be eight foot high, and as large and big in the stem, as an ordinary Ratoon you walk withall: The leaf of this tree is like that of an Ash, but much longer, and of a darker colour; the fruit, when 'tis ripe, just of [69] the colour of a black pudding, and shap'd as like, but longer. I have seen of them above 16 inches long; the pulp of it is purgative, and a great cooler of the reins.

Now because we will have all, or as many of the poysonous and Physicall trees *The  
poysoned  
Cane.* and plants together as we can, that they may not trouble another leafe, we will put in a plant amongst the trees, and that is so like a sugar Cane as hardly to be discern'd, the one from the other: and this Plant hath this quality, that whosoever chews it, and sucks

---

248 The manchineel tree, which is indigenous to the Americas, is poisonous and its sap was used by the Carib Indians to tip their arrows. Its fruit can be mistaken for a small apple. On its use by Amerindians, see Jerome Handler, "[Aspects of Amerindian Ethnography](#)," p. 56.

249 "ostrich"

250 The "Golden Shower Tree" was originally from Asia and imported by Spanish settlers. It was in demand in Europe for its medicinal benefits as a purgative.

in any of the juyce, will have his tongue, mouth, and throat, so swell'd as to take away the faculty of speech for two dayes, and no remedy that I know but patience.

*Tamarine.* Tamarine<sup>251</sup> trees were but newly planted in the Iland, at the time I came away, and the Palme tree (so much admir'd for her two rare vertues of Oyle and Wine) was newly begun to be planted, the plant being brought us from the East Indies, but the Wine she brings may rather be called a pleasant drink, then to assume the name of Wine: 'tis thus gather'd, they cut the bark in such a part of the tree, where a bottle may fitly be plac't, and the liquor being received into this bottle, it wil keep very good for a day and no longer but is a very delicious kind of liquor.

## Severall kinds of Fruit-trees

*Fruit trees.*

**T**he poysonous trees and plants being past over: 'tis now fit to mention such as will make amends, and put our mouths in taste, but not too suddenly to fall upon the best, I will begin with the most contemptible fruits which are in the Iland, the Fig tree and Cherry-tree, which have savory names, but in their natures neither usefull, nor well tasted. The Fig tree being very large, but beares a small fruit, and those of so meane a condition, as I never saw any one eate of them, and the leaves not at all of the shape of our Fig leaves, nor the fifth part so large, the body of the tree I have seen as large as; an ordinary Elme here in England.

*Figge tree.*

*The Cherry tree.*

The Cherry tree is not altogether so large, the fruit as useless and insipid: but the colour something resembling a Cherry, and the shape not much unlike; which caused the planters to call it by that name.

The next to these shall be fruites, rather for sauce then meat, to whet our appetites to those that follow after; and these are the Citrons, Oranges, Lymons, Lyme.

The Citron is a small tree, though she beare a great fruit; and so ill matcht they are, as the fruit pulls it down to the ground, and most of the fruit touches, and beares upon the ground; the stalk of a dark colour, the leafe shap't like that of the Limon, but of a very dark green: these fruits we had in great abundance, when first we came there, but were all cast away, by reason we had none but Muscavado suger, and that is not fit to preserve with; besides there were very few then that had the skill to do them.

*Orange.*

The Orange trees do not prosper here, nor are the fruits so kindly as those of Bermudos: large they are and full of juice, but not so delicious as those of that Iland; besides they are very full of seeds, and their rinds neither so deep, and pure an Orange

---

251 "Tamarind tree"



Tawny, nor so thick, and therefore not so fit to preserve: the trees seldome last above seven years in their prime, and then decay.

[70] The Limon tree is much better shap't and larger, but this fruit is but here and there, stragling in the Iland. I have seen some of the fruit large, and very full of juice, with a fragrant smell: the leaves both of these and the Orange trees, I shall not need to mention being so well known in England.

*Limon.*

The Lime tree is like a thick Hollybush in England, and as full of prickles: if you make a hedge of them, about your house, 'tis sufficient prooffe against the Negres; whose naked bodies cannot possible enter it, and it is an extraordinary sure fence against Cattell; it commonly growes seven or eight foot high, extreably thick of leaves and fruit, and of prickles; the leaves not unlike those of a Limon tree, the fruit so like as not to be discerned, at the distance of three yeards, but only that 'tis less, but in the taste of the rinde and juice, extreably different, much fitter for sauce then the Limon, but not so good to eate alone.

*Lime-tree*

The Prickled apple, growes on a tree extreably thick leav'd, and those leaves large, and of a deep green, shap't not much unlike the leafe of a Wallnut tree in England: this fruit is shap't like the heart of an Oxe, and much about that bigness; a faint green on the outside, with many prickles on it, the tast very like a musty Limon.

*Prickled  
apple.*

The next in order, shall be the Prickled peare, much purer in taste and better form'd; the fruit being not unlike in shape to a Greenfield-peare, and of a faint green, intermixt with some yellow neare the stalk; but the body of a mixt red, partly Crimson, partly Stammell, with prickled spots of yellow, the end of it growing somewhat larger then the middle, at which end, is a round spot of a murrey<sup>252</sup> colour, the bredth of an inch, and circular with a Centre in the middle, and a small circle about it, and from that circle within, lines drawn to the utmost of that round Murrey spot, with faint circles betweene the small circle and the largest, upon that Murrey spot.

*Prickled  
Peare.*

These lines and circles, of a colour no more different in lightnesse from the murry, then only to be discerned, and a little yellower colour.

The Pomegranate is a beautifull tree the leaves small, with a green mixt with Olive colour, the blossome large, well shap't, and of a pure Scarlet colour; the fruit not so large there, as those we have from Spaine. The young trees being set in rowes, and planted thick make a very good hedge, being clipt eeven a top with Garden shears. The fruit is very well known to you and therefore I shall need say nothing of that, and these are all the remarkable fruits that grow on trees, and are proper to this Iland, that I can remember, though I believe there are many more.

*Pome-  
granate.*





The Prickled Peare

page . 70.



The Blossom of  
the Pomegranate



The Papa<sup>253</sup> is but a small tree, her bark of a faint willow colour, her leaves large, and of the shape of the Physick nut tree, but of the colour of her own bark, the branches grow out four or five of one height, and spread almost levell from the place where they bud out; to the ends of the branches, and about two foot higher, such other branches spreading in the same manner, and if the tree grow to a greater height then ordinary, a story or two more of these bowes: the top handsomely [71] form'd to the branches, the fruit somewhat bigger then Turnips, growing close to the body of the tree, where the branches grow, and are somewhat a fainter Willow, then either the body, branches, or leaves. The tree, though it may be accounted wood, yet the softest that yet I ever saw; for, with my knife, I can cut down a tree as big as a mans leg at one chop. The fruit we boyl, and serve it up with powdred pork, as we do turnips in England; but the turnip is far the more savoury fruit. *Papa.*

The Gnaver<sup>254</sup> growes on a Tree, bodied and leav'd like a Cherry-tree, but the leaves somewhat larger and stiffer; the fruit of the bignesse of a small Limon, and neer that colour, onely the upper end somewhat blunter then the Limon; the rinde about the thickness of the rinde of a Limon, but soft, and of a delicate taste; it holds within a pulpie substance, full of small seeds, like a fig, some of them white within, and some of a stammell colour. These seeds have this property, that when they have past through the body, wheresoever they are laid down, they grow. A Planter, & an eminent man in the Iland, seeing his Daughter by chance about her naturall businesse, call'd to her: Plant even, Daughter, plant even. She answered: If you do not like 'em, remove 'em, Father, remove 'em. These fruites have different tastes, some rank, some sweet; so that one would give a reason of this variety, which was, according to the severall constitutions they had past through, some having a milder, some a stronger savour. *Gnaver.*

This tree doth much harm in our Plantations; for the Cattle eating of them, let fall their loads every where, and so they grow in aburdance, and do much harm to the Pastures, and much pains and labour is taken to destroy them. They are the best fruites preserv'd of any, the seeds being taken out, and the rinde only preserved.

I have been told by some Planters in the Iland, that Coco-trees grow there, and they are such men as I give credit to, but I never saw any; yet, I may venture to tell what shapes they bear, having been well acquainted with them at the Iland of St. Jago, where there grew very many of them. They seldome are above 80. or 90 foot high, some a 100. The branches of these come out in severall parts of the tree, leaving spaces between the heights; but the greatest quantity is at top, and that top alwaies stoops a *Coco.*

---

253 “pawpaw tree”

254 “guava”

little; but the Nuts grow where the lower boughes break out.

These Nuts are of severall sises, the most of them as big as a large foot-ball, with a green skin without, and between that and the shell, a pulpy substance, which when it is drie, is like the rinde of the Mangrave tree, of which they make roaps, or (to bring the resemblance a little neerer) like hemp kurds. This Nut-shell is neer half an inch thick, which we commonly cut at one end, a hole as big as a thirty shilling piece, and we finde the shell full of a clear and pure tasted liquor, very delicious, but not very wholsome. This shell is lin'd within with a substance as thick as it selfe, a white colour, and tastes sweeter then the best french Walnut, and of that softnesse. The colour of the leaves of this tree, are like the Olive leaves.

*Custard  
Apple.*

The Custard apple growes on a tree full of branches and large leaves, and is a lively and lusty tree to look on; the fruit, when 'tis [72] ripe, as big as the largest Pomewater, but just of the colour of a Warden. When 'tis ripe, we gather it, and keep it one day, and then it is fit to be eaten. We cut a hole at the lesser end, (that it may stand the firmer in the dish) so big, as that a spoon may go in with ease, and with the spoon eat it. Never was excellent Custard more like it selfe, then this to it; only this addition, which make it transcend all Custards that art can make, though of naturall ingredients; and that is, a fruity taste, which makes it strange and admirable. Many seeds there are in it, but so smooth, as you may put them out of your mouth with some pleasure.

*Anchovie-  
Pear.*

'Twas never my luck to see any of those trees, that bear the Anchovie-Pears, nor to taste of the fruit, and therefore can give you no account of that tree; only to let you know, that there is such a tree in the Iland.

*Trees  
of mixt  
kinds.  
Macow.*

The Macow is one of the strangest trees, the Iland affords; the body and branches being stuck all over with prickles, of the finest formes that I have seen.

They are black as jet, or Ebony polish'd; the sises, from one to seven inches long, sharp at the point, with proportionable increasings, from that part where it growes to the tree or bough, and wav'd, as I have seen some swords, from the point to the hilts, the finest naturall pick teeth that can grow. I brought a large bundle with me, but had them pickt out of my Box by the way. This tree is about the largenesse of an ordinary Willow, the leaves of that colour and shape, but extreemly stiffe and hard.

It bears at top a large tuffe of fruit, which we call Apples, but they are not a fruit to be eaten; their colour as their leaves, willow-green, and just such for shape as the Cyprus tree bears. Sure, Nature found this tree to some great purpose, she is so arm'd; for neither man nor beast can touch her, without being wounded. She is well shap'd, her body straight, her branches well proportion'd, her top round.

Next to this in colour are Date-trees, but the leaves somewhat longer. The shape of this tree I cannot give you, having never seen any old enough to bear the name of a tree, but sprigs rising from the root, at least ten foot high. *Date Trees.*

## Trees of mixt kinds

**T**he Mangrove<sup>255</sup> is a tree of such note, as she must not be forgotten; for, though she be not of the tall and lusty sort of trees, yet, she is of great extent; for, there drops from her limbs a kinde of Gum, which hangs together one drop after another, till it touch the ground, and then takes root, and makes an addition to the tree. So that if all these may be said to be one and the same tree we may say, that a Mangrove tree may very well hide a troop of Horse. The bark of this tree being well ordered, will make very strong roaps, and the Indians make it as fine as flax, and spin it into fine thred, whereof they make Hamocks, and divers other things they wear: and I have heard, the linnen they wear is made of this bark, as also their chaires and stooles. *Mangrove.*

The Calibash<sup>256</sup> tree bears leaves of the fullest and richest green, of any that I know, and the greatest plenty of leaves; her fruit not for food, it is for the most part as big as that of the Coco, round as a ball, [73] green as the leaves of the same tree, smooth and shining, and their manner of growing is so close to the body, and the largest of the boughes, as to touch them so, that till it be pull'd or cut off, we cannot perceive any stalk it has. Of this round ball, we make dishes, bowls and caps; for, being hollow within, as the Coco-nut, we employ them for severall uses, as they are of different sises; some for dishes, some for cups, some for basons, and some of the largest to carry water in, as we do Goards, with handles a top, as that of a kettle, for they are smoother, and much stronger then they. These look very beautifully on the tree, and to me the more beautifull, by how much they were the more strange; for, by their firm and close touching the trees, without any appearance of stalks, they seem to cleave, rather then grow to the trees. *Calabash.*

One, and but one tree in this Iland have I seen, that bears an English name, and that is the Bay tree, whose leaves are so aromattick, as three or four of them will amply supply the place of Cloves, Mace, and Cinamon, in dressing any dish of meat where that is required. It differs nothing in shape or colour from ours in England. *Bay tree.*

---

255 “mangrove tree”

256 “calabash”

## Timber trees of severall kinds.

*Timber  
Trees.*

**T**he Cedar is without question the most usefull timber in the Iland; for being strong, lasting, and not very heavy, 'tis good for building; but by reason of the smoothnesse and fairnesse of the grain, there is much of it us'd in Wainscots, Chairs, Stooles, and other Utensils within dores; but, as they grow, I never saw any of them beautifully shap'd, the leaves just like those of the Ash in England, but somewhat bigger.

*Mastick.*

The Mastick<sup>257</sup> is a tree very tall, but the body slender, and therefore Nature hath provided means to support her; for, she has spurs or brackets above seven foot from the ground, which are fixt or engrafted in the body; and some of the spurs reach out from the tree to the root, so broad, as that tables have been made of a round form, above three foot and a halfe diameter. Some trees have two, some three of these spurrs. This tree has commonly a double top, one side being somewhat higher then the other. The fruit is like none of the rest, 'tis of a stammell colour, and has neither skin nor stone; but it is more like a Cancre then a Fruit, and is accounted unwholsom, and therefore no man tastes it: 'tis, I believe, the seed of the tree, for we see none other. The leaves of this tree grow of such a height, as till they fall down, we can give no judgment of them. The timber of of this tree is rank'd amongst the fourth sort, three being better then it. I have seen the bodies of these trees neer sixty foot high.

*Bully.*

The Bully tree is lesse then the Mastick, and bears a fruit like a Bullis in England; her body streight, and well shap't; her branches proportionable, her timber excellent and lasting.

*Redwood.*

Redwood is a handsome tree, but not so loftie as the Mastick, excellent timber to work, for it is not so hard as some others, which is the cause they seldome break their tooles in working it, and that is the reason the work-men commend it above others. 'Tis a midling tree for sise, the body about two foot and a halfe diameter.

*Prickled  
yellow-  
wood.*

This is accounted as good as the Red-wood in all respects, and [74] is a strong and lasting timber, good for building, and for all uses within doors.

*Iron  
wood.*

Iron wood<sup>258</sup> is called so, for the extream hardnesse; and with that hardnesse it has such a heavinesse, as they seldome use it in building; besides, the workmen complain that it breaks all their tools. 'Tis good for any use without doores, for neither Sun nor rain can any waies mollifie it. 'Tis much used for Coggs to the Rollers.

---

257 The mastic tree is a hardwood tree found in the Caribbean.

258 a catch-all term for a number of trees that produce hardwoods



Lignum vitae<sup>259</sup> they use now and then for the same purpose, when the other is away; but having no bowling in that Country, little is used: They send it commonly for England, where we employ it to severall uses; as, for making Bowles, Cabinets, Tables, and Tablemen. *Lignum vitae.*

The Locust is a tree, not unfitly to be resembled to a Tuscan Pillar,<sup>260</sup> plain, massie, and rurall, like a well lim'd labourer; for, the burden it bears being heavy and ponderous, ought to have a body proportionably built, to bear so great a weight. That rare Architect, Vitruvius, taking a pattern from Trees, to make his most exact Pillars, rejects the wreathed, vined, and figured Columnes; and that Columna Atticurges, mentioned by himselfe, to have been a squared Pillar;<sup>261</sup> and those that are swell'd in the middle, as if sick of a Tympany<sup>262</sup> or Dropsie;<sup>263</sup> and chuses rather the straightest, most exact, and best sis'd to bear the burthen that lies on them. So, looking on these trees, and finding them so exactly to answer in proportion to the Tuscan Pillars, I could not but make the resemblance the other way: For, Pillars cannot be more like Trees, then these Trees are like Tuscan Pillars, as he describes them. I have seen a Locust (and not one, but many) that hath been four foot diameter in the body, neer the root, and for fifty foot high has lessened so proportionably, as if it had taken pattern by the antient Remainders, which Philander<sup>264</sup> was so precise in measuring, which is a third part of the whole shaft upward, and is accounted as the most gracefull diminution. The head to this body is so proportionable, as you cannot say, 'tis too heavy or too leight; the branches large, the sprigs, leaves, and nuts so thick, as to stop all eye-sight from passing through, and so eeven at top, as you would think you might walk upon it, and

*Locust.*


---

259 A tree that produces an extremely dense and hard timber favored by carpenters. The resin was also used in pre-modern medicine to treat coughs and other maladies.

260 “Tuscan column”; a very simple design of column with little ornamentation

261 Vitruvius (c. 80-70 BCE- c. 15-20 CE), a Roman military engineer and architect, was admired in Ligon's time for his work on architecture (*De Architectura*). Read by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and other leading artists of the European Renaissance, Vitruvius' work provided theoretical ideas about the purpose of architecture and landscaping, their forms, and their relationship with nature. Vitruvius in his *De Architectura* describes the three classical orders of columns (Doric, Ionian and Cortinthian). During his discussion he relates how Greek architects modelled their columns on the wooden buildings and poles that they were replacing.

262 the collection of excessive gas in the intestines, sometimes the result of a blockage

263 “Edema,” a condition in which fluids collect under the skin and in cavities in the body.

264 Guillaume Philander (1505-1565) was a French architect who edited and annotated Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. His edition was one of the first scholarly readings of the text during the early modern period.

not sink in. The Nuts are for the most part three inches and a halfe long, and about two inches broad, and somewhat more then an inch thick; the shell somewhat thicker then a halfe crown piece, of a russet Umbre, or hair colour; the leaves bigger than those that grow upon the Ash in England: I shall not mention the timber, having given it in my Buildings. The Kernells are three or four in every nut, and between those, a kinde of light pulpie substance, such as is in a Hazle-nut, before the kernell be grown to the full bignesse: In times of great famine there, the poor people have eaten them for sustenance: But, of all tastes, I do not like them.

*Bastard-Locust.* Another Locust there is, which they call the bastard-Locust.<sup>265</sup> This lookes fair, but will not last.

*Palmeto the lesse.* There is a tree called the Palmeto, growing neer the Sea-coast, which being a sandy light ground, does not afford that substance of mould, to make a large tree; nor shall you finde in that low part of the Iland, any considerable trees fit for building, which is a main want and hinderance to them that would build there; for, there is no means to [75] transport any from the high lands, by reason of the unpassableness of the wayes; the body of this tree I have seen about 45 or 50 foot high, the Diameter seldome above 15 or 16 inches, the rind of a pure ash colour, full of wrinkles, the leaves about two foot and a halfe long, in bunches, just as if you took twenty large flaggs, with their flat sides together, and tied them at the broader ends. With these bunches they thatch houses, laying every bunch by himselfe on the lathes, somewhat to overhang one another, as tiles do. This is a very close kind of thatch, keeps dry and is very lasting, and looking up to them on the inside of the room, they are the prettiest becomming figures that I have seen of that kind, these leaves grow out no where but at the tops of the trees.

## The Palmeto Royall described

*Palmeto Royall.*

**A**nother kind of Palmeto there is, which as it has an addition to the name, has likewise an addition to the nature: for I beleive there is not a more Royall or Magnificent tree growing on the earth, for beauty and largeness, not to be paralell'd; and excels, so abundantly in those two properties and perfections, all the rest, as if you had ever seen her, you could not chuse but fall in love with her; I'm sure I was extreemly much, and upon good and Antique Authority: For if Xerxes<sup>266</sup> strange

---

265 the African locust-tree

266 Xerxes was a fifth century BCE king of Persia. According to Herodotus (*The Histories*, 7.31) and other ancient writers, he so admired a platanus (plane-tree) tree that he had it decorated with gold

Lydian love the Plantane tree, was lov'd for her age, why may not I love this for her largeness? I beleive there are more women lov'd for their largeness then their age, if they have beauty for an addition, as this has; and therefore I am resolv'd in that poynt, to go along with the multitude, who run very much that way: but how to set her out in her true shape and colour, without a Pencill, would aske a better Pen then mine; yet I will deliver her dimensions as neer truth as I can, and for her beauty much will arise out of that. But first I will beg leave of you to shew her in her Infancy, which is about tenne or twelve years old, at which time she is about seventeen foot high, her body and her branches, and that part which touches the ground, not unlike an Inkhorne, which I have seen turn'd in Ivory, round at the bottome and bellied like that part which holds the Inke; and the stem or body of the tree, growing less, as that part which holds the Pens, but turn'd by a more skilfull workman; and some of this body, part tawny, part purple, with rings of white and green mixt, that go about her; and these rings at sixe inches distance. This stem, to be about sixe foot and a halfe high, upon which growes the bottome of the stalks, thinne as leaves of Parchment, enwrapping one another so close as to make a continued stem, of the same bigness, for two foot and a halfe above the other, every one of those filmes or skins, bearing a stalk, which lessens so insensibly, from the skinne to the poynt as none but the greater former of all beauty can make the like.

These stalks or branches, are of severall lengths, those that are the most inward, are the highest; and every one of those stalks adorn'd with leaves, beginning a little from the filmes to the poynt, and all these leaves like Cylinders, sharp at either end, and biggest in the middle: that part of the stem which is the enwrappings of the filmes of a pure grasse green, shining as parchment dyed green, and slickt with a slick-stone, and all the branches with the leaves, of a full grass green spreading every way, and the highest of them eight foot above [76] the green stem, the other in order to make a well shap't Top, to so beautifull a stem. The branches sprout forth from the middle, or intrinsick part of the tree, one at once; and that wrapt up so close as tis rather like a Pike then a branch with leaves, and that Pike alwayes bends toward the East; but being opened by the Suns heat spreads the leaves abroad, at which time the outmost or eldest branch or sprig below withers and hangs down, and pulls with it the filme that beares it, and so both it and the filme which holds it up turne of a ruslet colour and hang down like a dead leafe, till the wind blowes them off; by which time the Pike above is become a branch, with all its leaves opened; then comes forth another Pike, and then the next outmost branch and filme below, falls away as the former, and so the tree growes so much hig[h]er as that branch took roome, and so a pike and a





The Yonge

Palmeto Royall

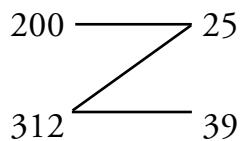
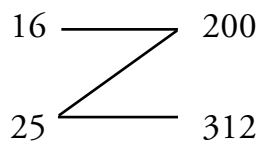


dead leafe, a pike and a dead leafe, till she be advanc't to her full height which will not be till 100 years be accomplished: about thirty or forty years old, she will bear fruit, but long before that time, changes her shape, her belly being lessened partly by the multiplicity of roots, she shoots down into the earth (nature foreseeing how great a weight they were to beare, and how great a stress they were to suffer, when the winds take hold of so large a head, as they were to be crown'd with) and partly by thrusting out sustenance and substance, to raise and advance the stem or body (for out of this belly which is the storehouse of all this good it comes) so that now she becomes taper, with no more lessning then a well shap't arrow, and full out as straight, her body then being of a bright Ash colour, with some dapples of green, the filmes a top retaining their smoothness and greenness, only a little variation in the shape, & that is a little swelling neer the place that touches the stem or body, not much unlike an Urinall, so that the swelling that was in the body, is now raised up to the filmes or skinns above. But at this age, the branches stand not so upright, as when the tree was in her minority, but has as great beauty in the stooping and declension, as she had in the rising of her branches, when her youth thrusts them forth with greater violence and vigour, and yet they had then some little stooping neer the poynts. And now there is an addition to her beauty by two green studds, or supporters, that rise out of her sides, neer the place where the filmes joyne to the tree, and they are about three foot long, small at the place from whence they grow, but bigger upwards, purely green and not unlike the Iron that Glasiers use to melt their Sawder with.

One growes on one side of the tree, the other on the other side, and between these two of the same height, on either side the tree, a bush upon which the fruit growes, which are of the bigness of large French grapes, some green, some yellow, some purple, and when they come to be purple, they are ripe, and in a while fall down, and then they yellow becomes purple, and the green yellow; and so take their turnes, till the tree gives over bearing. These fruits we can hardly come by being of so great a height, nor is it any great matter: for the taste is not pleasant; but the Hoggs find them very agreeable to their palats for those that eat of them grow suddenly fat. I have seen an Negre with two short ropes clyme the tree, and gather the fruit, about this [77] time, she is 80 foot high, and continues that forme, without variation; only as she growes older, so taller and larger; and has alwaies green, yellow, and purple fruit, succeeding one another; whether there be blossomes, I know not, for I never went so high as to look. This sort of trees I have seen of all sises, from ten, to two hundred foot high; and I have been told by some of the antient Planters, that when they came first upon the Iland, they have seen some of them three hundred foot high: And some

reasons I have to perswade me to believe it; for, amongst those that I have seen growing, which I have guest to be two hundred foot high, the bodies of which I measured, and found to be but sixteen inches diameter. And I once found in a wood, a tree lying, which seem'd to have been long fallen; for, the young wood was so grown about her, as standing at one end, I could not see the other: But, having a couple of Negres with me, that were axe-men, I caused them to cut away the wood that grew about the tree, that I might come to the other end, which I thought would never be done, she was so long, and yet a great part of her cut off, and carried away. I measured the diameter of her stem, and found it to be 25 inches.

Now if we go by the rule of Three, and say, If 16 inches diamiter make 200 foot high, what shall 25 inches? And by this rule we shall prove her to be 312 foot high. But the branches of this tree were all carried away, so that I could see none of them. But I have measured a branch of one of those trees of 200 foot high, and found it 25 foot



long. So then, by the same Rule: If 200 foot high bear a branch of 25 foot long, what shall a Tree of 312 foot high do? And I see by the same Rule, it appears to be 39 foot long And one of these trees, after she comes to bear fruit, will have no lesse then 20 branches at once, (but many more in her nonage) and halfe of them hold this length. I have seen a branch of one of these small trees of 200 foot high, fallen down, and blown from the tree in the falling, twenty paces off, which has made me admire from whence it should come: For, the tree being of so great a height, the branches lose much of their bignesse and length by their distance: But, lying on the ground, where we can take the just measure, we find what they are. And it is an admirable thing, to see the form of this spring of branch, which is not above two inches broad where it joynes to the film, and is lessening of the breadth from that end to the point, which is twenty five foot long, so insensible, as it is not possible to discern where the diminution is. So smooth, so eeven, so firme and tough, as though it be not wood, 'tis much stronger, and ables to endure the weather, or any kinde of bending. The leaves that grow upon this stalk, are



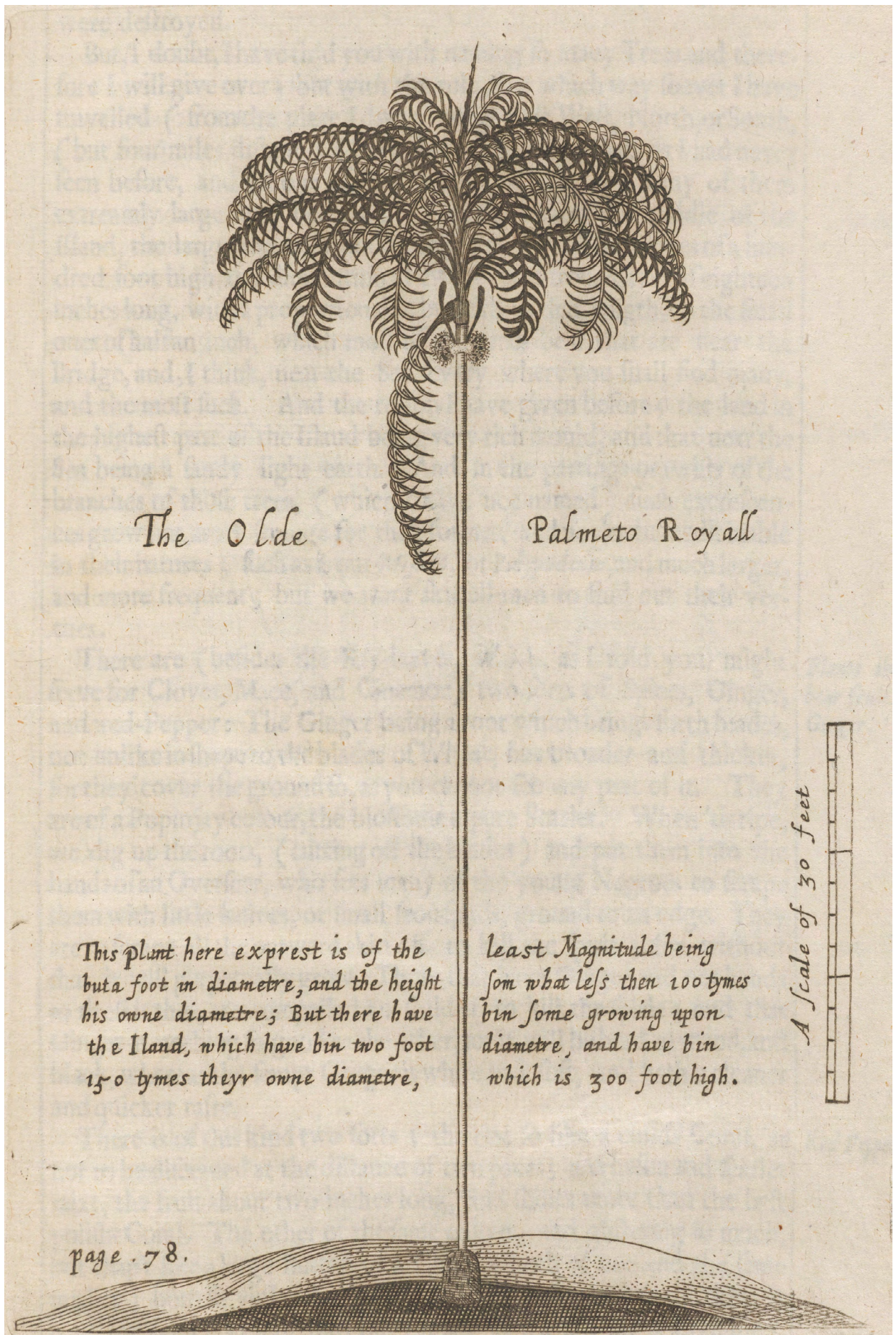
The Olde

Palmeto Royall

This plant here exprest is of the  
but a foot in diametre, and the height  
his owne diametre; But there have  
the Iland, which have bin two foot  
150 tymes theyr owne diametre,

least Magnitude being  
som what less then 100 tymes  
bin some growing upon  
diametre, and have bin  
which is 300 foot high.

A Scale of 30 feet





all of [78] them (unlesse towards the points) two foot long; that part which touches the stalk, small, but strong enough to bear the leafe, and has a little short stalk, to which the leafe growes, which leafe is as exactly form'd as the stalk, growing by degrees, to make two inches broad in the middle, and losing that breadth insensibly to the point. These leaves are thin, but tough enough, to endure the strongest winde that blowes, without being broken, and not above four inches distant one from another; which multiplicity of leaves, makes the beauty of the tree the fuller. About the time this tree parts with her belly, & growes to a slender kind of shape, she drawes up amongst her roots some of the soyle that bred her, about two foot higher than the levell of ground that is neer it; and by reason it is held in by an infinity of small roots, that come from the body, it there remains firm, and falls not down; the outside of this earth is about a foot round about, broader than the diameter of the tree; so that if the diameter of the tree be a foot, the diameter of this earth is three foot at top, but somewhat more below; for the sides are not so steep, as to hold one breadth above and below. If this earth were beautifull, smooth, and large enough, it might be called the Pedistall to that Corinthian Pillar,<sup>267</sup> the Palmeto Royall. But what is wanting in the Pedistall, is supplied in the dimensions of the Pillar; for, the Corinthian Pillar is allowed for length but nine of her own diameters, and this will not aske leave to take 150. which makes her the more beautifull, since the strength she hath, is able to support the weight she bears: And for the Architrave, Frize, and Cornise,<sup>268</sup> they are not to be compar'd with the beauty of the head of this Pillar, together with the fruit & supporters. And I believe, if Vitruvius himself had ever bin where this Pillar grew, he would have chang'd all his deckings and garnishings of Pillars, according to the form of this. And though the Corinthian Pillar be a Columne lasciviously deckt, like a Curtesan, and therein participating (as all inventions do) of the place where they were first born; (Corinth having been without controversy, one of the wantonnest Townes in the world) yet, this wants nothing of her beauty, and yet is chaste, which makes her the more admirable, and the more worthy to be prised. One thing more I have to say of this tree, which is not onely the root that brings forth all this beauty, but the root of much admiration and wonder; that, being a tree of that height, bearing a top of so vast an extent, as from the point of the branches of one side, to the point of the stalk on the other side, to be 78 foot, upon which, the winde cannot but have a main power and force; yet, I never saw any of them blown down, nor any root of this tree bigger then a Swans quill: but there are many of them,

---

267 “Corinthian column”; a design of column known for acanthus leaves and other elaborate ornamentation on its capitals (tops).

268 architectural terms

and they fasten themselves in the Rocks, which hold them very firm. The wood of this tree is so extream hard, and tough withall, as most of the axes that are employed to fell them, are broken in the work; and they are well enough serv'd, for cutting down such beauty. The use our Planters made of them at first comming, before they knew how to make shingles, was, to saw the bodies of these trees to such lengths, as might reach from the ridge pole, to the Eves of the house; for, they were hollow, and then sawing them long-wise, there were two concaves, which they laid together, setting the hollow sides [79] upward; and where they close, one to cover them, with the hollow side downward, and so the whole house over. And this was the use they made of the bodies of these Trees, for which, very many of them were destroyed.

But, I doubt, I have tir'd you with naming so many trees, and therefore I will give over; but, with this rule, that which way soever I have travelled, (from the place I dwelt) either East, West, North, or South, (but four miles distant) I have still found trees, such as I had never seen before, and not one of those I have named, and many of them extreamly large and beautifull. And the neerer the middle of the Iland, the larger the trees, and the leaves: so that from trees of a hundred foot high, to a diminution of twenty; and from leaves of eighteen inches long, with a proportionable breadth to that length, to the smal ones of halfe an inch, which most of the trees bear that are neer the Bridge, and, I think, neer the Sea, every where you shall finde many, and the most such. And the reason I have given before; the land in the highest part of the Iland, being very rich mould, and that neer the Sea being a sandy light earth. And in the partings or twists of the branches of those trees, (which I have not named) such excrescences grow out, as are strange for their formes, and no doubt medicinable in their natures; such as is our Misleto, or Polypodium, and much larger, and more frequent; but we want skilfull men, to find out their vertues.

## Plants that bear fruit

**T**here are (besides the Bay-leaves, which, as I told you, might serve for Cloves, Mace, and Cinamon) two sorts of spices, Ginger, and red-Pepper: The Ginger being a root which brings forth blades, not unlike in shape to the blades of Wheat, but broader and thicker, for they cover the ground so, as you cannot see any part of it. They are of a popinjay<sup>269</sup> colour, the blossome a pure scarlet. When 'tis ripe we dig up the roots, (cutting off the blades) and put them into the hands of an Overseer, who sets many of the young Negres to scrape them, with little knives, or

*Plants  
that bear  
fruit.  
Ginger.*

---

269 A popinjay often refers to a parrot and its coloration. Here Ligon means a "deep green."

small iron spuds, ground to an edge. They are to scrape all the outward skin off, to kill the spirit; for, without that, it will perpetually grow. Those that have Ginger, and not hands to dresse it thus, are compell'd to scald it, to kill the spirit; and that Ginger is nothing so good as the other, for it will be hard as wood, and black; whereas the scrypt Ginger is white and soft, and has a cleaner and quicker taste.

*Red  
Pepper*

There is of this kinde two sorts, the one so like a childs Corall,<sup>270</sup> as not to be discerned at the distance of two paces; a crimson and scarlet mixt, the fruit about three inches long, and shines more then the best polisht Corall. The other, of the same colour, and glistering as much, but shap't like a large button of a Cloak; both of one and the same quality; both so violently strong, as when we break but the skin, it sends out such a vapour into our lungs, as we fall all a coughing, which lasts a quarter of an hour after the fruit is removed; but, as long as we are garbling it, we never give over. This Spice the Spaniards love, and will have it in all their meat, that they intend to have picant;<sup>271</sup> for a greater Hough goo<sup>272</sup> is not in the world. Garlick is faint and cool to it. It growes on a little shrub, no bigger then a Goosbery-bush.

*Cucumber.*

[80] Having inflam'd this leafe with a burning heat, it is, fit to apply a Cooler, lest it fall on fire; and that is such a one, as is cold in the third degree, a Cucumber; of which kind we have excellent good, from the beginning of November to the end of February; but after that, the weather growes too hot. They serve as Sallets cold, with Oyle, Vinegar, and Pepper; and hot, being stewed, or fryed, of which we make Sawce for Mutton, Pork, Turkeyes, or Muscovia Ducks. Geese I never saw but two in the Iland, and those were at the Governours house.

*Millions.*

Millions<sup>273</sup> we have likewise for those foure months; but before or after, the weather is too hot. They are for the most part larger than here in England. I have seen them cut four inches thick; they eat moister then here they do, which makes them the lesse wholesome. We take no other care (after the seeds are put into the ground) but to weed them. I have seen of them sixteen inches long.

*Water  
Million.*

The Water Millon there, is one of the goodliest fruites that growes. I have seen of them, big as a Cloakbag, with a suit of clothes in it; purely green, engrayl'd with straw colour; And so wanton Nature is, in disposing those figures, as though they be upon all parts of the fruit; yet, they vary and flow so infinitely, as no inch of square or circle is to be found upon the rinde, that is like one another, and the whole rinde as smooth

---

270 a teething toy for infants that was often made from coral {LC}

271 “spicy”

272 possibly meaning that the the food is so spicy the eater is left “panting good” (literally) {LC}

273 “melons”

as polisht glasse. Where they put out upon the ground, there they lie; for the Vine they grow by, has not strength to remove them. This fruit within is not unlike an Apple for colour; but for taste, not like any fruit I know in England, waterish, and wallowish; yet the people there eat strange quantities of it, two or three pieces, big, as if cut round about a twelve-penny loafe, an inch thick: They hold it rarely cooling to the body, and excellent for the stone.<sup>274</sup> The seeds are of themselves so strong a Purple, as to dye that part of the fruit it touches, of the same colour; and till they do so, the fruit is not full ripe: They account the largest, best. Extreemly full of seeds they are, which in the eating slip out with such ease, as they are not at all troublesome.

Grapes we have in the Iland, and they are indifferently well tasted, but they are never ripe together; some may be pickt out to make Wine, but it will be so small a quantity, as it will not be worth the while. There is alwaies some green, some ripe, some rotten grapes in the bunch. *Grapes.*

Though the Plantine bear not the most delitious fruit that growes on this Iland; yet, for that she is of great use, and beauty too, and for many other rarities that she excells other Plants in, I shall endeavour to do her right in my description. And first, for the manner of planting; we put a root into the ground, six inches deep, and in a very short time, there will comeforth three or four sprouts, whereof one has the precedence, and holds that advantage, (as the prime Hawke does in an Ayery). And as this sprout growes, it springs from the intrinsick part of the stem, and the out-leaves hang down and rot; but still new ones come within, and rise up as the Palmeto does, like a a pike, which opened with the Sun, becomes a leafe; and about the time it comes to be eight or ten foot high, the pikes, (and consequently [81] the leaves) will be of their full bignesse, and so (as others grow) continue that bignesse, till the last sprout come forth; which is the soul of the Plant, and will never be a leafe, but is the stem upon which the fruit must grow. About the time the leaves come to their full bignesse, they rot no more, but continue in their full beauty; a rich green, with stripes of yellow so intermixt, as hardly to be discerned where they are. These leaves are the most of them above six foot long, and two foot broad; smooth, shining, and stiffe as a Lawrell leafe; and from the middle of the leaf to the end, such a fall, as a feather has, in a well shap't plume. But, as all these leaves came out in a pike, so that pike ever bends a little towards the East, though as soon as it becomes a a leafe, chuses any point of the Compasse to leane to; and so in a due proportion, hangs round about the stem. At the time it comes to be of the full height, the uppermost leaves will be fifteen or sixteen foot high, and then you shall perceive the stem upon which the fruit must grow, more then a foot higher than the rest, with a green bunch at top; which bunch has such a

---

274 “kidney stones”







weight, as to make it stoop by degrees, till it be but seven foot from the ground; and then the green leaves which held the blossome in, open, and shew the blossome it selfe, which is of a pure purple, and as big as the heart of a Stag, and of that shape, with the point downwards, and so continues, without opening the leaves, till it be ready to fall off; and when it falls, pulls with it above a foot of the stalk that held it, which is covered with yellow blossomes. This purple blossome, when it fell, I guesse to be a pound weight, besides the stalk it took along with it. After this is fallen, the fruit growes out from that end which remained; and as it growes, turnes up towards the stalk that bears it, much like a Grapple, that holds the long-Boat of a Ship; or, as a dozen large fish-hooks tied together, turning up severall waies; each turning up of that fruit being seven or eight inches long, and as bigg as a large Battoon you walk with. In six months, this Plant will be grown, and this fruit ripe, which is a pleasant, wholesome, and nourishing fruit, yellow, when 'tis ripe: But the Negres chuse to have it green, for they eat it boyl'd, and it is the only food they live upon. Our manner of eating it, is, when it is full ripe, take off the skin, which will come off with much ease, and then the fruit looks yellow, with a froath upon it, but the fruit firme. When it is gathered, we cut down the Plant, and give it to the Hogs, for it will never bear more. The body of this plant is soft, skin within skin, like an Onyon, and between the skins, water issues forth as you cut it. In three months, another sprout will come to bear, and so another, and another, for ever; for, we never plant twice. Groaves we make of these plants, of twenty acres of ground, and plant them at such distances, and in such rowes, as you do Cherry-trees in Kent, so that we walk under the leaves, as under the Arches in St. Faith's Church under Pauls, free from sun and rain.

The wilde Plantine growes much as the other does, but the leaves not so broad, and more upright, the fruit not to be eaten; of a scarlet colour, and almost three square. I know no use of this fruit or leaves, but to look on.

The Bonano<sup>275</sup> differs nothing from the Plantine, in the body and [82] leaves but only this, that the leaves are somewhat lesse, and the bodie has here and there some blackish spots, the blossome no bigger then a large bud of a Rose; of a faint purple, and Ash colour mixt, the stalk that bears it, adorn'd with small blossomes, of severall colours; when they fall off, there comes out the fruit, which does not turne back as the Plantines do, but stand outright like a bunch of puddings, all neere of a length, and each of them between four and five inches long. This fruit is of a sweeter taste then the Plantine; and for that reason the Negroes will not meddle with them, nor with any fruit

---

275 “the banana tree”

that has a sweet taste; but we find them as good to stew, or preserve as the Plantine, and will looke and taste more like Quince.<sup>276</sup> This tree wants little of the beauty of the Plantine, as she appears upon the ground, in her full growth; and though her fruit be not so usefull a food for the belly, as that of the Plantine, yet she has somewhat to delight the eyes, which the other wants, and that is the picture of Christ upon the Crosse; so lively exprest, as no Limner<sup>277</sup> can do it (with one colour) more exactly; and this is seen, when you cut the fruit just crosse as you do the root of Ferne, to find a spread Eagle: but this is much more perfect, the head hanging down, the armes extended to the full length, with some little elevation; and the feet cross one upon another.

This I will speak as an Artist; let a very excellent Limner, paint a Crucifix, only with one colour, in limning; and let his touches be as sharp, and as masterly as he pleases, the figure no bigger then this, which is about an inch long, and remove that picture at such a distance from the eye, as to loose some of the Curiosity, and dainty touches of the work, so as the outmost stels, or profile of the figure, may be perfectly discern'd, and at such a distance; the figure in the fruit of the Bonano, shall seem as perfect as it: much may be said upon this subject by better wits and abler souls then mine: My contemplation being only this, that since those men dwelling in that place professing the names of Christians, and denying to preach to those poor ignorant harmless souls the Negroes, the doctrine of Christ Crucified, which might convert many of them to his worship, he himselfe has set up his own Crosse, to reproach these men, who rather then they will loose the hold they have of them as slaves, will deny them the benefit and blessing of being Christians. Otherwise why is this figure set up, for these to look on, that never heard of Christ, and God never made any thing useless or in vaine.

## The Pine described

*Pine.* **N**ow to close up all that can be said of fruits, I must name the Pine;<sup>278</sup> for in that single name; all that is excellent in a superlative degree; for beauty and taste, is totally and summarily included: and if it were here to speak for it selfe, it would save me much labour, and do it selfe much right. 'Tis true, that it takes up double the time the Plantine does, in bringing forth the fruit for tis a full year

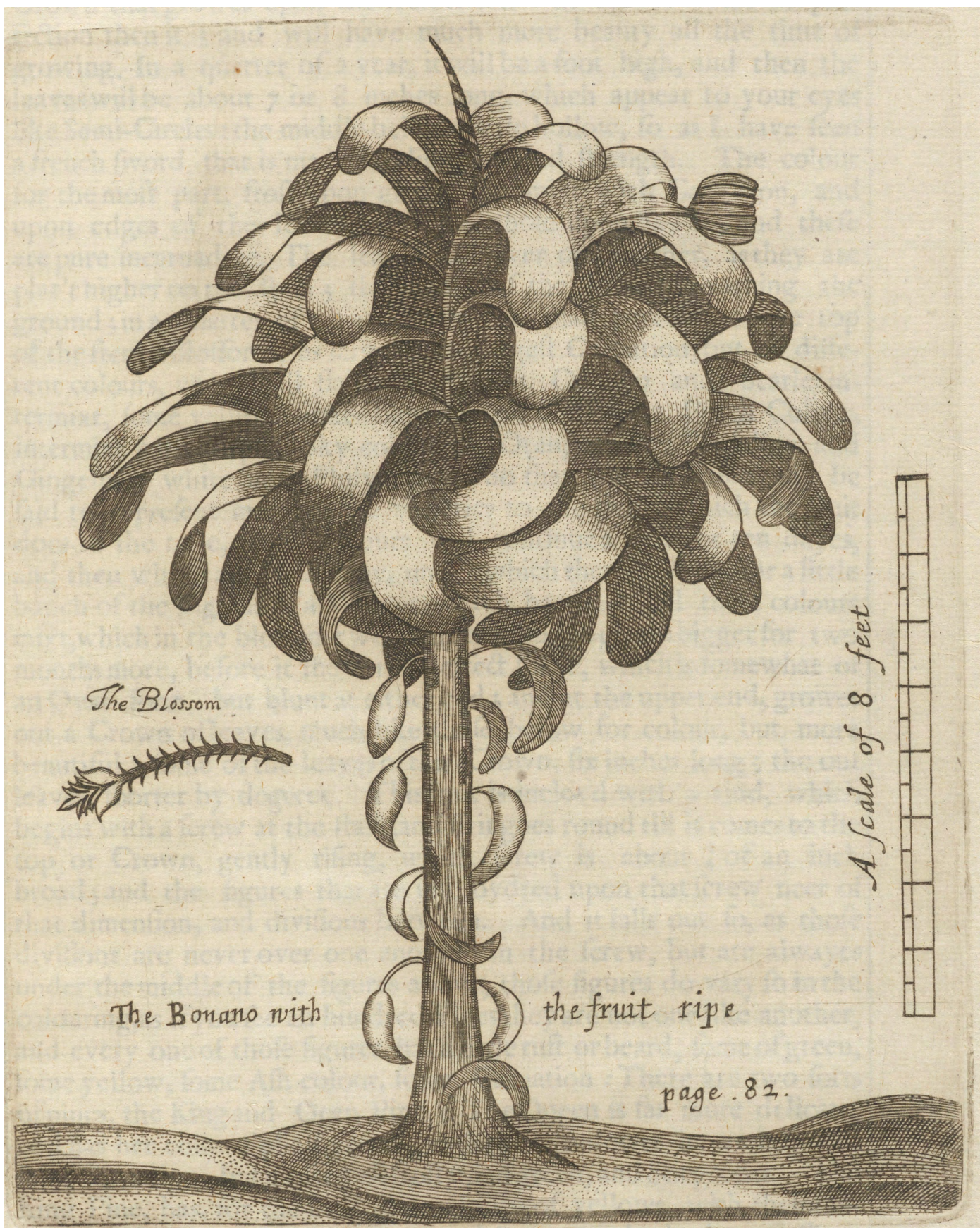
---

276 a small, fruit-bearing tree

277 "a painter"

278 "the pineapple"





The Blossom



A scale of 8 feet



The Bonano with

the fruit ripe

page . 82 .



before it be ripe, but when it comes to be eaten, nothing of rare taste can be thought on that is not there; nor is it imaginable, that so full a Harmony of tastes can be raised, out of so many parts, and all distinguishable. But before I come to say any thing of that, I will give you some little hints of her shape, and manner of growth, which though I must acknowledge [83] my selfe to be down-right lame, in the expression; yet rather then you shall lose all, I will indeavour to represent some of her beauties, in such faint expressions as I have. A Slip taken from the body of this plant, and set in the ground, will not presently take root, but the Crown that growes upon the fruit it selfe will sooner come to perfection then it; and will have much more beauty all the time of growing. In a quarter of a year, it will be a foot high, and then the leaves will be about 7 or 8 inches long, which appeare to your eyes like Semi-Circles: the middle being a little hollow, so as I have seen a french sword, that is made for lightness and strength. The colour for the most part, frost upon green, intermixt with Carnation, and upon the edges of the leaves, teeth like those upon Sawes; and these are pure incarnadine.<sup>279</sup> The leaves fall over one another, as they are plac't higher on the stem; the poynts of the lowest, touching the ground; in a quarter of a year more, you shall perceive on the top of the stem a Blossome, as large as the largest Carnation, but of different colours, very small flakes, Carnation, Crimson and Scarlet, intermixt, some yellow, some blew leaves, and some Peach Colour, intermixt with Purple, Sky colour, and Orange tawny, Gridaline,<sup>280</sup> and Gingeline,<sup>281</sup> white and Philyamort. So that the Blossome may be said to represent many of the varieties to the sight, which the fruit does to the taste, these colours, will continue a week or tenne dayes, and then wither and fall away, under which there will appear, a little bunch of the bigness of a Wallnut; which has in it, all these colours mixt, which in the blossome were disperst; and so grows bigger for two months more, before it shews the perfect shape; which is somewhat of an Ovall forme; but blunt at either end; and at the upper end, growes out a Crown of leaves, much like those below for colour, but more beautifull; some of the leaves of this Crown, six inches long; the out leaves, shorter by degrees. This fruit is inclos'd with a rind, which begins with a screw at the stalk, and so goes round till it comes to the top, or Crown, gently rising, which screw is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch broad; and the figures, that are imbrodred upon that screw neer of that dimension, and divisions between. And it falls out so, as those divisions, are never over one another in the screw, but are always under the middle of the figures above, those figures do vary so in the colouring as if you see an

---

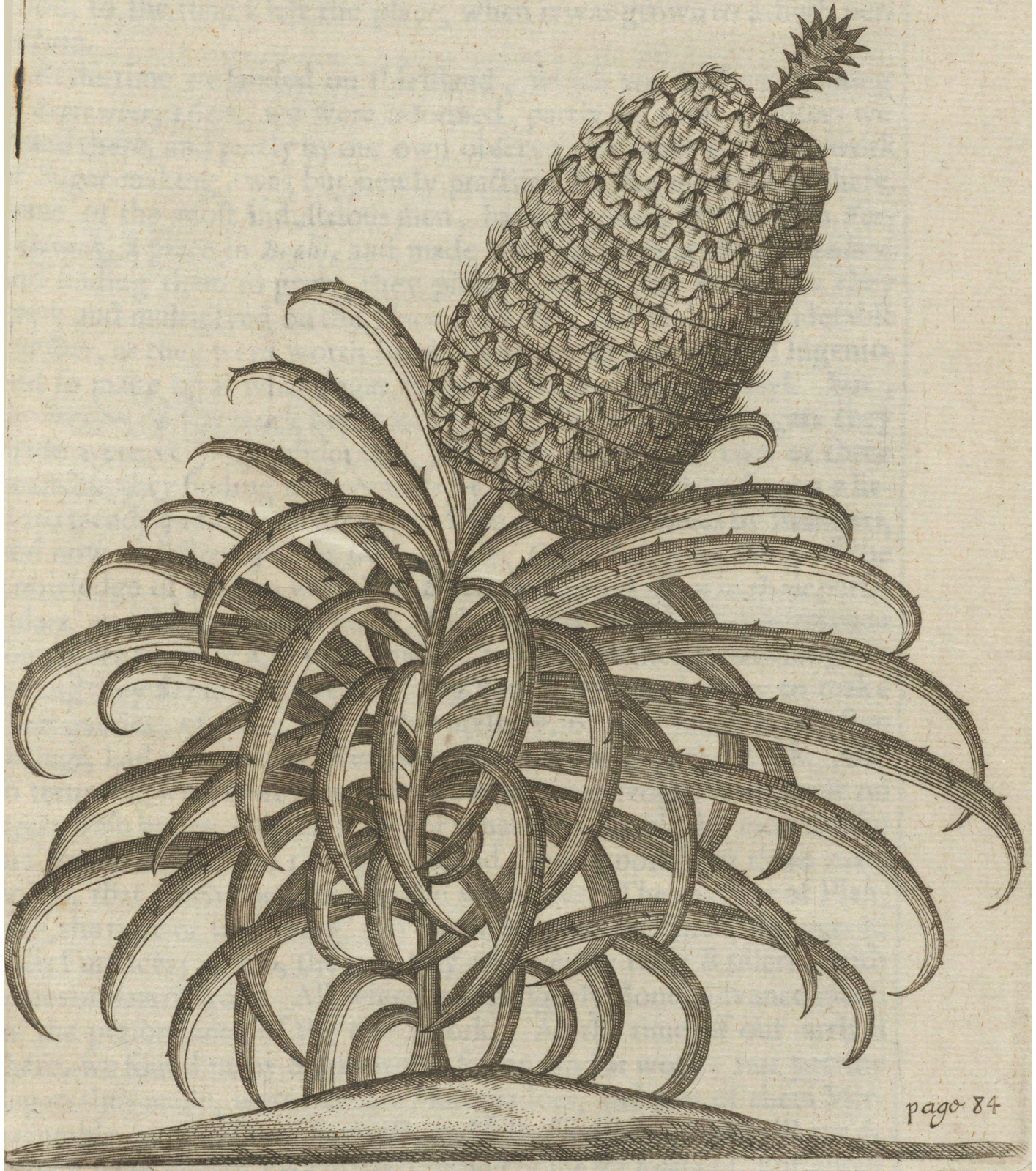
279 a red or pinkish colour

280 light purple

281 pale red or ginger



*The Queen Pine.*



page 84



hundred Pines, they are not one like another and every one of those figures, has a little tuft or beard, some of green some yellow, some Ash colour some Carnation. There are two sorts of Pines, the King and Queen Pine: The Queen is farre more delicate, and has her colours of all greens, with their shadowes intermixt, with faint Carnations, but most of all frost upon green, and Sea greens. The King Pine, has for the most part, all sorts of yellows, with their shadowes intermixt with grass greens, and is commonly the larger Pine. I have seen some of them 14 inches long, and six inches in the diametre; they never grow to be above four foot high, but the most of them having heavy bodies, and slender stalks, leane down and rest upon the ground. Some there are, that stand upright, and have coming out of the stem, below, some sprouts of their own kind, that leave fruits which jet out from the stem a little, and then rise upright I [84] have seen a dozen of these, round about the prime fruit, but not so high as the bottom of that, and the whole Plant together, shewes like a Father in the middle, and a dosen Children round about him; and all those will take their turnes to be ripe, and all very good. When this fruit is grown to a ripenesse, you shall perceive it by the smell, which is as far beyond the smell of our choisest fruits of Europe, as the taste is beyond theirs. When we gather them, we leave some of the stalk to take hold by; and when we come to eat them, we first cut off the crown, and send that out to be planted; and then with a knife, pare off the rinde, which is so beautifull, as it grieves us to rob the fruit of such an ornament; nor would we do it, but to enjoy the pretious substance it contains; like a Thiefe, that breakes a beautifull Cabinet, which he would forbear to do, but for the treasure he expects to finde within. The rinde being taken off, we lay the fruit in a dish, and cut it in slices, halfe an inch thick; and as the knife goes in, there issues out of the pores of the fruit, a liquor, cleer as Rock-water, neer about six spoonfulls, which is eaten with a spoon; and as you taste it, you finde it in a high degree delicious, but so milde, as you can distinguish no taste all; but when you bite a piece of the fruit, it is so violently sharp, as you would think it would fetch all the skin off your mouth; but, before your tongue have made a second triall upon your palat, you shall perceive such a sweetnesse to follow, as perfectly to cure that vigorous sharpnesse; and between these two extreams, of sharp and sweet, lies the relish and flaver of all fruits that are excellent; and those tastes will change and flow so fast upon your palat, as your fancy can hardly keep way with them, to distinguish the one from the other: and this at least to a tenth examination, for so long the Eccho will last. This fruit within, is neer of the colour of an Abricot not full ripe, and eates crispe and short as that does; but it is full of pores, and those of such formes and colours, as 'tis a very beautifull sight to look on, and invites the appetite beyond measure. Of this fruit you may eat plentifully, without any danger of surfeting I have had many thoughts, which way this fruit might be brought



## *An Index to the Platforme or Superficies of an Ingenio, that grinds or squeezes the Sugar*

A The ground-plat, upon which the Posts or Pillars stand, that bear up the house, or the Intercoluniation between those Pillars.

B The Pillars or Posts themselves.

C The wall between the Mill-house and Boyling-house.

D The Circle or Circumference, where the Horses and Cattle go, which draw the Rollers about.

E The Sweeps, to which the Horses and Cattle are fastned, that draw about the Rollers,

F The Frame of the Ingenio.

G The Brackets or Butteresses, that support that Frame.

H The Dore, that goes down stairs to the Boyling-house.

I The Cistern, into which the Liquor runs from the Ingenio, immediatly after it is ground, and is carried in a Pipe under ground to this Cistern, where it remains not above a day at most.

K The Cistern that holds the Temper, which is a Liquor made with ashes, steeped in water, and is no other than the Lye we wash withall in England. This Temper, we straw in the three last Coppers, as the Sugar boyles, without which, it would never Corn, or be any thing but a Syrope; but the salt and tartarousnesse of this Temper, causes it to turn, as Milk does, when any soure or sharp liquor is put into it; and a very small quantity does the work.

L The Boyling-house,.

The five black Rounds are the Coppers, in which the Sugar is boyled, of which, the largest is called the Clarifying Copper, and the least, the Tatch.

M The Cooling Cistern, which the Sugar is put into, presently after it is taken off the fire, and there kept till it be Milk-warm; and then it is to be put into Pots made of boards, sixteen inches square above, and so grow taper to a point downward; the Pot is commonly about thirty inches long, and will hold thirty or thirty five pounds of Sugar.

N The Dore of the Filling-room.

O The Room it selfe, into which the Pots are set, being fild, till the Sugar grow cold and hard, which will be in two daies and two nights, and then they are carried away to the Cureing-house.

P The tops of the Pots, of sixteen inches square, and stand between two stantions of timber, which are girded together in severall places, with wood or iron, and are thirteen or fourteen inches assunders; so that the tops of the Pots being sixteen inches, cannot slip between, but are held up four foot from the ground.

Q The Frame where the Coppers stand, which is raised above the flowre or levell of the room, about a foot and a halfe, and is made of Dutch Bricks, which they call Klinkers, and plaister of Paris. And besides the Coppers, there are made small Gutters, which convey the skimmings of the three lesser Coppers, down to the Still-house, whereof the strong Spirit is made, which they call kill-devill, and the skimmings of the two greater Coppers are conveyed another way, as worthlesse and good for nothing.

R The Dore that goes down the stairs to the fire-room, where the Furnaces are, which cause the Coppers to boyl; and though they cannot be exprest here, by reason they are under the Coppers; yet, I have made small semi-circles, to let you see where they are, behinde the partition-wall, which divides the fire-room from the boyling-house; which wall goes to the top of the house, and is mark'd with the Letter (c) as the other walls are.

S A little Gutter made in the wall, from the Cistern that holds the first Liquor, to the clarifying Copper, and from thence is conveyed to the other Coppers, with Ladles that hold a gallon a piece, by the hands of Negres that attend that work day and night, shifting both Negres and Cattle every four hours, who also convey the skimmings of the three lesser Coppers down to the Still-house, there to be twice distill'd; the first time it comes over the helme, it is but small, and is called Low-wines; but the second time, it comes off the strongest Spirit or Liquor that is potable.

T All Windowes.

U The Fire-room, where the Furnaces are, that make the Coppers boyl.

W The Still-house.

X The Cistern that holds the skimmings, till it begin to be soure, till when, it will not come over the helme.

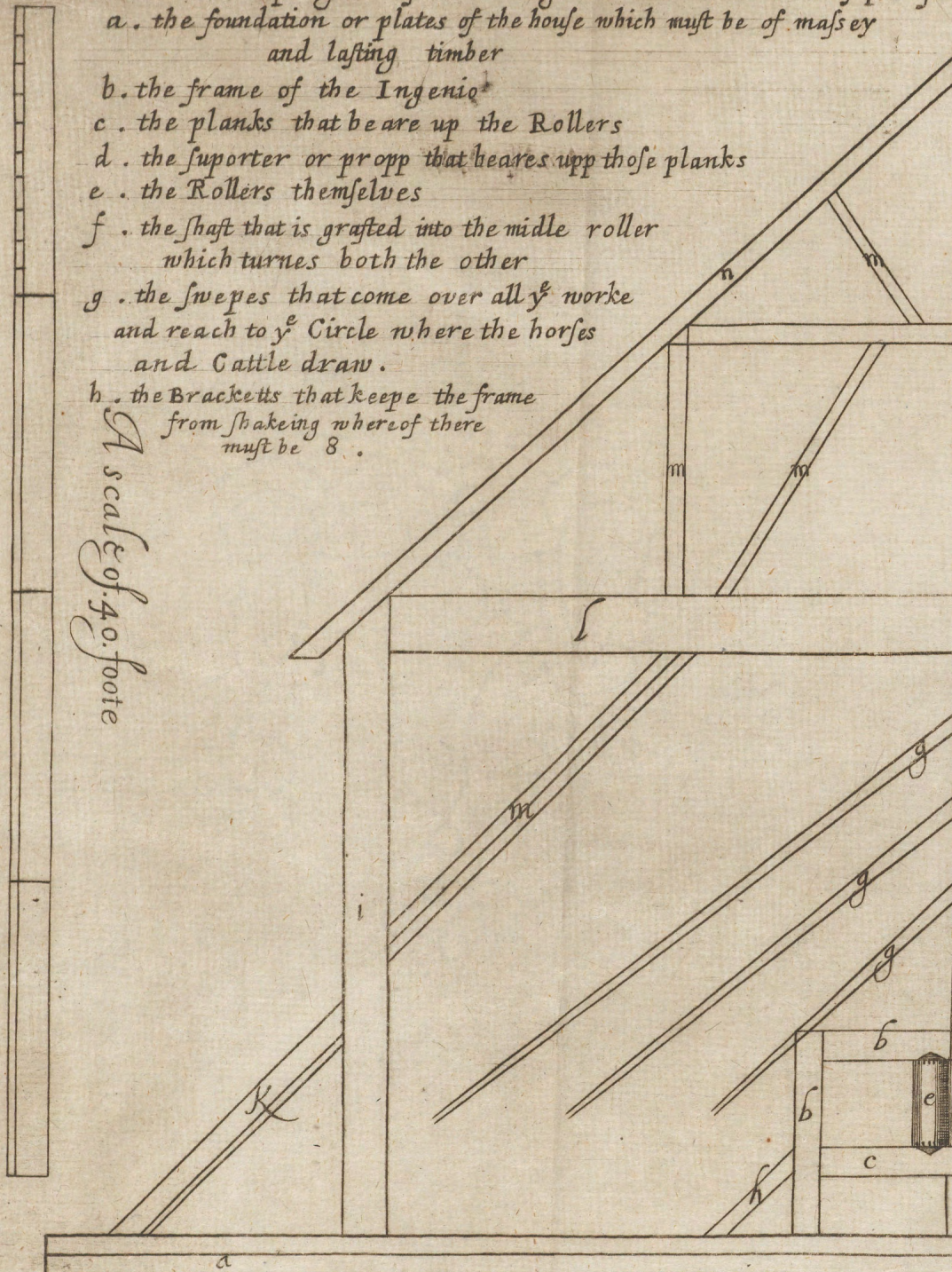
Y The two Stills in the Still-house.

Z The Semi-circles, that shew where about the Furnaces stand.

The upright of the Ingenio or Mill that squeeze

- a. the foundation or plates of the house which must be of massy  
and lasting timber
- b. the frame of the Ingenio
- c. the planks that beare up the Rollers
- d. the supporter or propp that beares upp those planks
- e. the Rollers themselves
- f. the shaft that is grafted into the middle roller  
which turnes both the other
- g. the sweepes that come over all y<sup>e</sup> worke  
and reach to y<sup>e</sup> Circle where the horses  
and Cattle draw.
- h. the Bracketts that keepe the frame  
from shakeing whereof there  
must be 8.

A scale of 40. foote





s or grinds the Sugar Canes

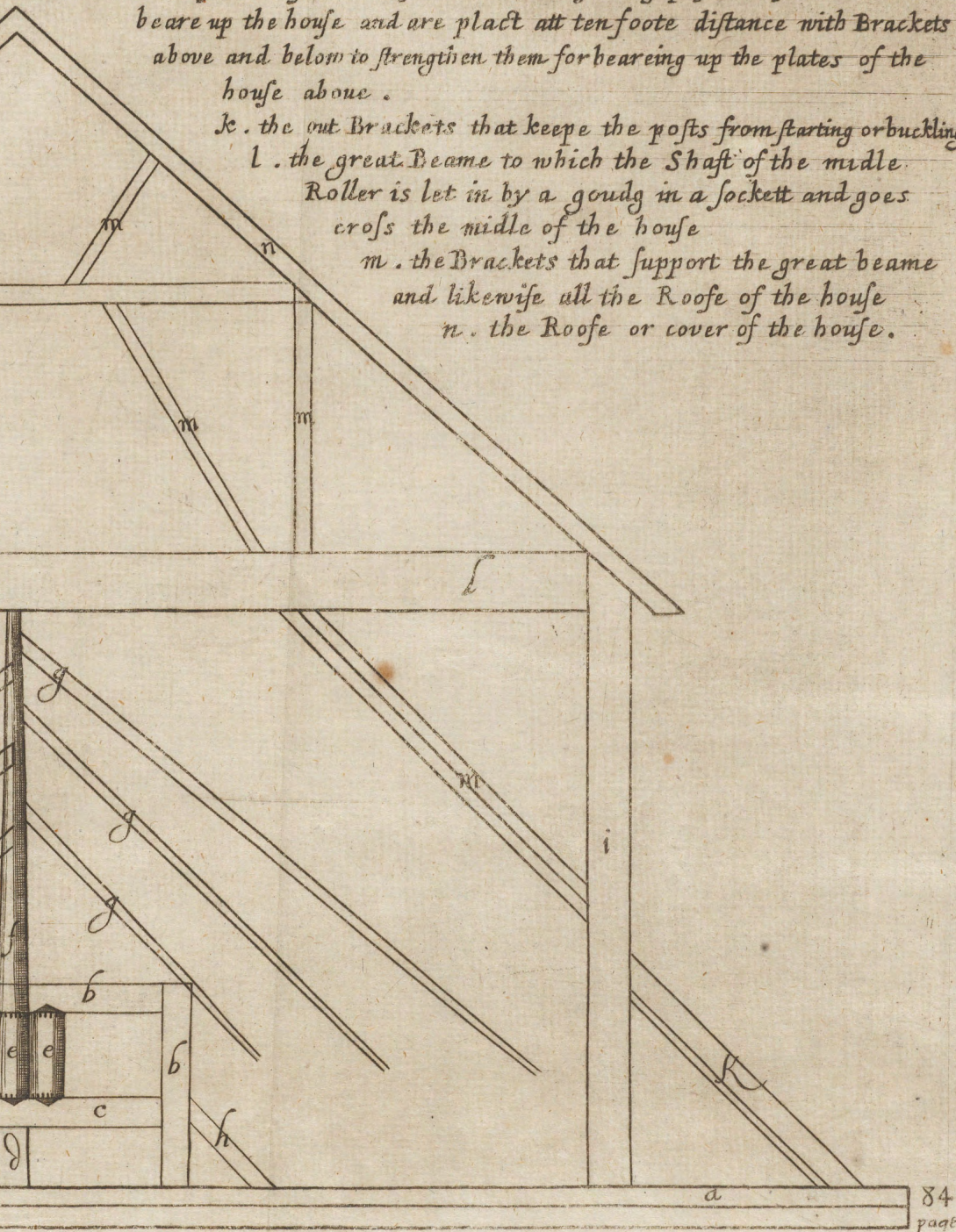
i . the sides of the house which are strong posts or studs which beare up the house and are plac't att tenfoote distance with Brackets above and below to strengthen them for beareing up the plates of the house above .

k . the out Brackets that keepe the posts from starting orbuckling

l . the great Beame to which the Shaft of the middle Roller is let in by a gould in a sockett and goes cross the middle of the house

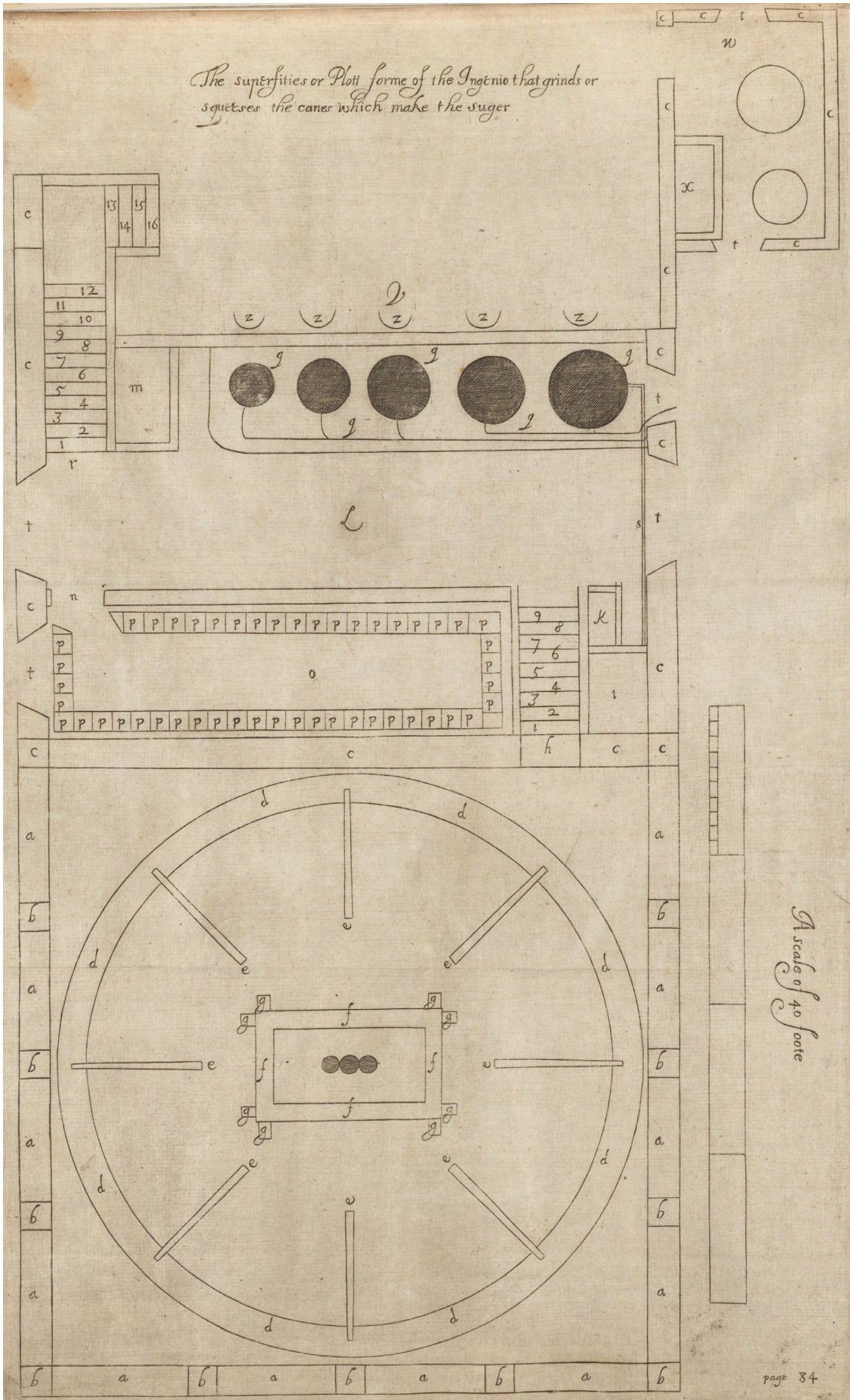
m . the Brackets that support the great beame and likewise all the Roofe of the house

n . the Roofe or cover of the house .





The superficies or Platt forme of the Ingenio that grinds or  
squeezes the canes which make the suger

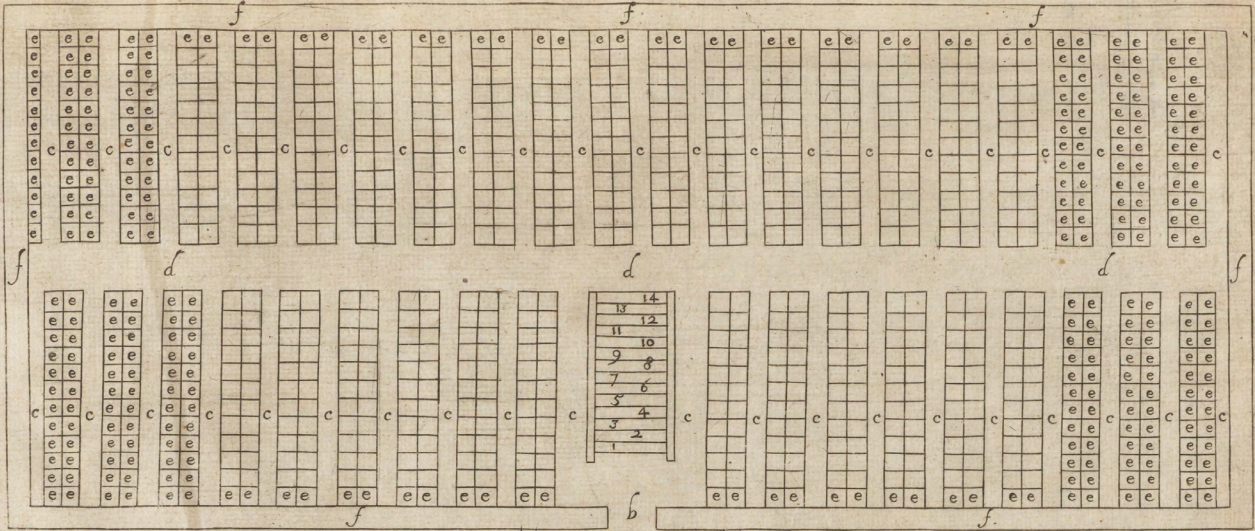


A scale of 40 foote



The first Storie of the Curing house where the potts stand which hold the Sugar and is 8.foote 2 inches from the ground having 14. steps to rise of 7. inches to a stepp .

In this Storie is 94 potts and they use to have another Storie above this which will hold above 600. potts more

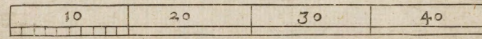


The Index of the Curing house .

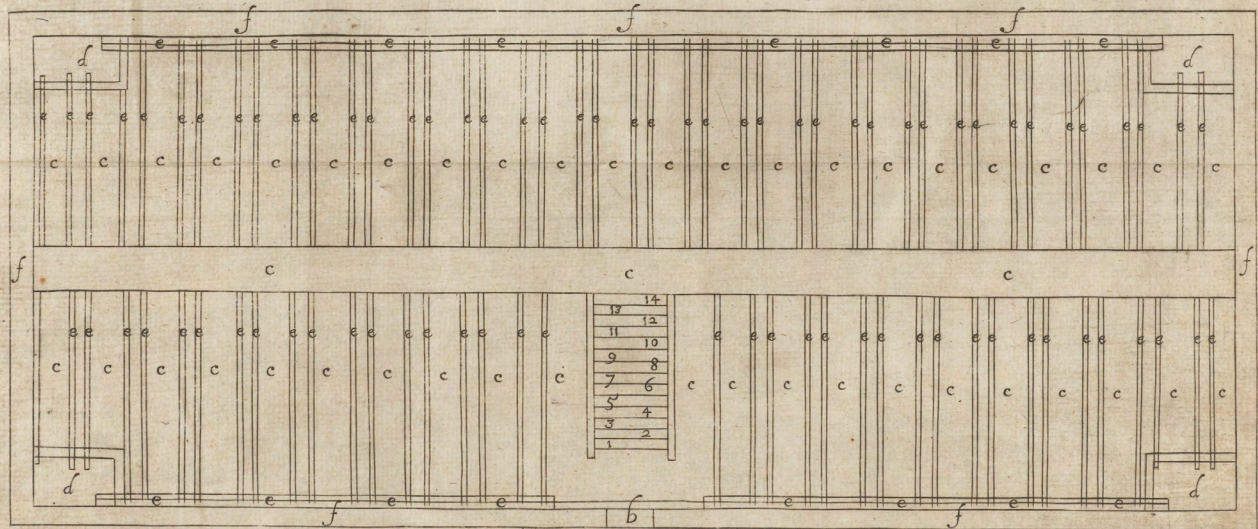
- a. the roome where they knock out the suger when it is cured, or made into whites, and is called the knocking roome ; when they knock it out for muscavados, they finde the middle of the pott well coloured, but the upper and nether parts, of a browner colour the topp frothy and light, the bottom verie browne and full of Molasses, both which they sett aside to be boyl'd againe with the Molasses in the Cisterns of which they make Penneles, which though it be a worse kinde of suger in the spending yet you will hardly know it from the second sort of Muscove suger
- b. the two dores

- c. the passages betweene the potts upon the flour above
- d. the great passage in the middle of the roome from end to end
- e. the topps of the potts which are .16. inches square and hang betweene stantions of timber borne up by verie strong and Massey studs or posts, and girded or bract together with Iron plates or wood, the length of the potts are 2.6. or 2.8. inches long made taper downward, and hold about .30. pound of suger .
- f. the walls of the roome which is 100. foot long and 40. foot broad e nithin, they have some tymes a

a Scale of 40.foote



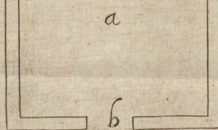
The ground roome of the Curing house of the place where the gutters by w.<sup>ch</sup> convey<sup>e</sup> Molasses to y<sup>e</sup> Cisterns



The Index to the ground roome .

- a. the knocking roome .
- b. the dores
- c. the vacutie betweene the gutters
- d. the Cisterns of which there are .4. which hold the Molasses till they boyle it which comonly they doe one day in a weeke .

- e. all the gutters that convey the Molasses donne to the Cisterns .
- f. the walls of the roome which are to be accounted two foot thick, there are seldome any windows in the Curing house, for the moist ayer is an enemy to the cure of the suger rather bring pawns of well kindled coales into the roome especially in moist and raynie wether . page 84





into England, but cannot satisfie my selfe in any; preserv'd it cannot be, whole; for, the rinde is so firm and tough, as no Sugar can enter in; and if you divide it in pieces, (the fruit being full of pores) all the pure taste will boyle out. 'Tis true, that the Dutch preserve them at Fernambock,<sup>282</sup> and send them home; but they are such as are young, and their rinde soft and tender: But those never came to their full taste, nor can we know by the taste of them, what the others are. From the Bermudoes,<sup>283</sup> some have been brought hither in their full ripenesse and perfection, where there has been a quick passage, and the fruites taken in the nick of time; but, that happens very seldome. But, that they should be brought from the Barbadoes, is impossible, by reason of the severall Climates between. We brought in the ship seventeen of severall growths, but all rotten, before we came halfe the way.

## Sugar Canes, with the manner of planting, growth, time of ripenesse, with the whole processe of Sugar-making, both Muscavadoes and Whites

*Sugar Canes, with the manner of planting; of their growth, time of ripenesse, with the whole process of Sugar-making.*

**T**hough I have said as much as is fit, and no more than truth, of the beauty and taste of these formentioned Trees and Plants, beyond which, the Sun with his masculine force cannot beget, nor the teeming Earth bear; all which are proper and peculiar to the Iland; for [85] they were planted there by the great Gardiner of the World. Yet, there is one brought thither as a stranger, from beyond the Line,<sup>284</sup> which has a property beyond them all; and that is the Sugar-Cane, which though it has but one single taste, yet, that full sweetness has such a benign faculty, as to preserve all the rest from corruption, which, without it, would taint and become rotten; and not only the fruits of this Iland, but of the world, which is a speciall preheminece due to this Plant, above all others, that the earth or world can boast of. And that I may the

---

282 Pernambuco in Brazil. The Dutch seized parts of Brazil from the Portuguese from 1630. In the Treaty of the Hague (1661) the territory was returned to Portugal.

283 Bermuda

284 Since European sugar-cane came from the Mediterranean, the "Line" here probably refers to the line of demarcation granting to Spain nearly all of the "New World" and the remainder to the Portuguese. This line was established by papal bull in the 15th century and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494). Other European powers resisted claims to Spanish dominion in the Americas and interloped. The Spanish viewed them as illegal trespassors liable to arrest or execution, hence the expression "no peace beyond the line."

more fully and amply set her off, I will give you all the observations I made, from my first arrivall on the Iland, when planting there, was but in its infancy, and but faintly understood, to the time I left the place, when it was grown to a high perfection.

At the time we landed on this Iland, which was in the beginning of September, 1647 we were informed, partly by those Planters we found there, and partly by our own observations, that the great work of Sugar-making, was but newly practised by the inhabitants there. Some of the most industrious men, having gotten Plants from Fernambock, a place in Brasill, and made tryall of them at the Barbadoes; and finding them to grow, they planted more and more, as they grew and multiplyed on the place, till they had such a considerable number, as they were worth the while to set up a very small Ingenio, and so make tryall what Sugar could be made upon that soyl. But, the secrets of the work being not well understood, the Sugars they made were very inconsiderable, and little worth, for two or three years. But they finding their errours by their daily practice, began a little to mend; and, by new directions from Brasil, sometimes by strangers, and now and then by their own people, (who being covetous of the knowledge of a thing, which so much concerned them in their particulars, and for the generall good of the whole Iland) were content sometimes to make a voyage thither, to improve their knowledge in a thing they so much desired. Being now made much abler to make their queries, of the secrets of that mystery, by how much their often failings, had put them to often stops and nonplusses in the work.<sup>285</sup> And so returning with more Plants, and better Knowledge, they went on upon fresh hopes, but still short, of what they should be more skilfull in: for, at our arrivall there, we found them ignorant in three main points, that much conduced to the work; viz. The manner of Planting, the time of Gathering, and the right placing of their Coppers in their Furnaces; as also, the true way of covering their Rollers, with plates or Bars of Iron: All which being rightly done, advance much in the performance of the main work. At the time of our arrivall there, we found many Sugar-works set up, and at work; but yet the Sugars they made, were but bare Muscavadoes, and few of them Merchantable commodities; so moist, and full of molosses, and so ill cur'd, as they were hardly worth the bringing home for England. But about the time I left the Iland, which was in 1650 they were much better'd; for then they had the skill to know when the Canes were ripe, which was not, till they were fifteen months old; and before, they gathered them at twelve, which was a main disadvantage to the making [86] good Sugar; for, the liquor wanting of the sweetnesse it ought to have, caused the Sugars to be lean, and unfit to keep. Besides, they were grown greater proficient, both in boyling and curing them, and had learnt the knowledge of making them white, such as you call Lump

---

285 See intro p. vii.

Sugars here in England; but not so excellent as those they make in Brasill, nor is there any likelihood they can ever make such: the land there being better, and lying in a Continent, must needs have constanter and steadier weather, and the Aire much drier and purer, than it can be in so small an Iland, as that of Barbadoes. And now, seeing this commodity, Sugar, hath gotten so much the start of all the rest of those, that were held the staple Commodities of the Iland, and so much over-top't them, as they are for the most part sleighted and neglected. And, for that few in England know the trouble and care of making it, I think it convenient, in the first place, to acquaint you, as far as my memory will serve, with the whole processe of the work of Sugar-making, which is now grown the soul of Trade in this Iland. And leaving to trouble you and my self, with relating the errours our Predecessors so long wandred in, I will in briefe set down the right and best way they practised, when I left the Iland, which, I think, will admit of no greater or farther improvement.

But, before I will begin with that, I will let you see, how much the land there hath been advanc'd in the profit, since the work of Sugar began, to the time of our landing there, which was not above five or six years: For, before the work began, this Plantation of Major Hilliards, of five hundred acres, could have been purchased for four hundred pound sterling; and now the halfe of this Plantation, with the halfe of the Stock upon it, was sold for seven thousand pound sterling and it is evident, that all the land there, which has been imployed to that work, hath found the like improvment. And, I believe, when the small Plantations in poor mens hands, of ten, twenty, or thirty acres, which are too small to lay to that work, be bought up by great men, and put together, into Plantations of five, six, or seven hundred acres, that two thirds of the Iland will be fit for Plantations of Sugar, which will make it one of the richest Spots of earth under the Sun.

And now, since I have put my selfe upon this Discovery, I think it fit to let you know the nature of the Plant, the right way of planting it, the manner of growth, the time of growing to ripenesse, the manner of cutting, bringing home, the place where to lay them, being brought home, the time they may lie there, without spoile, the manner of grinding or squeezing them, the conveyance of the liquor to the Cisterns, how long it may stay there without harme, the manner of boyling and skimming, with the conveyance of the skimmings into the Cisterns, in the Still-house, the manner of distilling it, which makes the strongest Spirits that men can drink, with the temper to be put in; what the temper is, the time of cooling the Sugar before it be put into the Pots; the time it staies in the Cureing house, before it be good Muscavado Sugar. And last, the making of it into Whites, which we call Lump-Sugar.

First then, it is fit to set down, what manner of place is to be chosen, [87] to

set this Sugar-work, or Ingenio, upon; and it must be the brow of a small hill, that hath within the compasse of eighty foot, twelve foot descent, viz. from the grinding place, which is the highest ground, and stands upon a flat, to the Still house, and that by these descents: From the grinding place to the boyling house, four foot and a halfe, from thence to the fire-room, seven foot and a halfe; and some little descent to the Still house. And the reason of these descents are these; the top of the Cistern, into which the first liquor runs, is, and must be, somewhat lower than the Pipe that conveys it, and that is a little under ground. Then, the liquor which runs from that Cistern must vent it selfe at the bottom, otherwise it cannot run all out; and that Cistern is two foot and a halfe deep: and so, running upon a little descent, to the clarifying Copper, which is a foot and a halfe above the flowre of the Boyling house, (and so is the whole Frame, where all the Coppers stand); it must of necessity fall out, that the flowre of the Boyling house must be below the flowre of the Mill house, four foot and a halfe. Then admit the largest Copper be a foot and a halfe deep, the bottom of the Copper will be lower then the flowre of the Boyling-house, by a foot; the bottom of the Furnaces must be three foot below the Coppers; and the holes under the Furnaces, into which the ashes fall, is three foot below the bottom of the Furnaces: A little more fall is required to the Still-house, and so the account is made up. Upon what place the Sugar-work is to be set, I have drawn two Plots, that expresse more than language can do, to which I refer you. And so I have done with the Ingenio, and now to the work I promised, which I shall be briefe in.

When I first arrived upon the Iland, it was in my purpose, to observe their severall manners of planting and husbandily there; and because this Plant was of greatest value and esteem, I desired first the knowledge of it. I saw by the growth, as well as by what I had been told, that it was a strong and lusty Plant, and so vigorous, as where it grew, to forbid all Weeds to grow very neer it; so thirstily it suck't the earth for nourishment, to maintain its own health and gallantry.

But the Planters, though they knew this to be true, yet, by their manner of Planting, did not rightly pursue their own knowledge; for their manner was, to dig small holes, at three foot distance, or there about, and put in the Plants endwise, with a little stooping, so that each Plant brought not forth above three or foure sprouts at the most, and they being all fastned to one root, when they grew large, tall, and heavy, and stormes of winde and rain came, (and those raines there, fall with much violence and weight) the rootes were loosened and the Canes lodged, and so became rotten, and unfit for service in making good Sugar. And besides, the roots being far assunder, weedes grew up between, and worse then all weedes, Withs, which are of a stronger growth then the Canes, and do much mischief where they are; for, they winde about

them, and pull them down to the ground, as disdainig to see a prouder Plant than themselves. But experience taught us, that this way of planting was most pernicious, and therefore were resolved to try another, which is, without question, the best, and that [88] is, by digging a small trench of six-inches broad, and as much deep, in a straight line, the whole length of the land you mean to plant, laying the earth on one side the trench as you make it; then lay two Canes along the bottom of the trench, one by another, and so continue them the whole length of the trench, to the lands end, and cover them with the earth you laid by; and at two foot distance, another of the same, and so a third, and fourth, till you have finish'd all the land you intend to plant at that time: For, you must not plant too much at once, but have it to grow ripe successively, that your work may come in order, to keep you still doing; for, if it should be ripe altogether, you are not able to work it so; and then for want of cutting, they would rot, and grow to losse: By planting it thus along, two together, every knot will have a sprout, and so a particular root, and by the means of that, be the more firmer fixt in the ground, and the better able to endure the winde and weather, and by their thick growing together, be the stronger to support one another. By that time they have been in the ground a month, you shall perceive them to appear, like a land of green Wheat in England, that is high enough to hide a Hare; and in a month more, two foot high at least. But upon the first months growth, those that are carefull, and the best husbands, command their Overseers to search, if any weeds have taken root, and destroy them, or if any of the Plants fail, and supply them; for where the Plants are wanting, weeds will grow; for, the ground is too vertuous to be idle. Or, if any Withs grow in those vacant places, they will spread very far, and do much harm, pulling down all the Canes they can reach to. If this husbandry be not used when the Canes are young, it will be too late to finde a remedy; for, when they are grown to a height, the blades will become rough and sharp in the sides, and so cut the skins of the Negres, as the blood will follow; for their bodies, leggs, and feet, being unclothed and bare, cannot enter the Canes without smart and losse of blood, which they will not endure. Besides, if the Overseers stay too long, before they repair these void places, by new Plants, they will never be ripe together, which is a very great harm to the whole field, for which there is but one remedy, and that almost as ill as the disease, which is, by burning the whole field, by which they lose all the time they have grown: But the roots continuing secure from the fire, there arises a new spring altogether; so that to repair this losse of time, they have only this recompence, which is, by burning an army of the main enemies to their profit, Rats, which do infinite harm in the Iland, by gnawing the Canes, which presently after will rot, and become unservicable in the work of Sugar. And that they may do this justice the more severely, they begin to make their fire at the out-sides



of that land of Canes they mean to burn, and so drive them to the middle, where at last the fire comes, and burnes them all; and this great execution they put often in practice, without Assises or Sessions; for, there are not so great enemies to the Canes, as these Vermine; as also to the Houses, where they lay up their stores of Corn and other provisions; and likewise in dwelling houses for their victualls. For, when the great down-falls of rain come, which is in November and December, and in the time of the Turnado, [89] they leave the field, and shelter themselves in the dwelling houses where they do much mischief.

The Canes with their tops or blades, doe commonly grow to be eight foot high; the Canes themselves, are commonly five or six foot, (I have seen some double that length but 'tis but seldome) the bodyes of them, about an inch diametre, the knots about five or six inches distant one from another, many times three or four inches, some more, some lesse, for there is no certaine rule for that; the colour of the blades, and tops, pure grass green; but the Canes themselves, when they are ripe of a deep Popinjay;<sup>286</sup> and then they yeeld the greater quantity, and fuller, and sweeter juyce. The manner of cutting them is with little hand-bills, about sixe inches from the ground; at which time they divide the tops, from the Canes, which they do with the same bills, at one stroake; and then holding the Canes by the upper end: they strip off all the blades that grow by the sides of the Canes, which tops and blades, are bound up in faggots, and put into Carts, to carry home; for without these, our Horses and Cattle are not able to work, the pasture being so extreame harsh and sapless, but with these they are very well nourisht, and kept in heart. The Canes we likewise binde up in faggots, at the same time, and those are commonly brought home upon the backs of Assinigoes, and we use the fashion of Devonshire, in that kind of Husbandry, (for there we learnt it) which is small pack-saddles, and crookes, which serve our purposes very fitly, laying upon each Crook a faggot and one a top, so that each Assinigo carries his three faggots; and being accustomed to go between the field and the place where they are to unload, will of themselves make their returnes, without a guide; So understanding this little beast is in performing his duty. The place where they unload, is a little platforme of ground, which is contiguous to the Mill-house, which they call a Barbycu;<sup>287</sup> about 30 foot long, and 10 foot broad; done about with a double rayle, to keep the Canes from falling out of that room; where one, or two, or more, (who have other work to do in the Mill house,) when they see the Assinigoes comming, and make a stop there, are ready to unloade them, and so turning them back againe, they go immediately to the

---

286 A popinjay often refers to a parrot and its coloration. Here Ligon means a “deep green.”

287 “barbecue”

field, there to take in fresh loading; so that they may not unfitly be compar'd to Bees; the one fetching home honey, the other sugar: being laid on the Barbycu, we work them out cleane, and leave none to grow stale, for if they should be more then two dayes old, the juyce will grow sower, and then they will not be fit to worke, for their soureness will infect the rest; The longest time they stay, after they are cut, to the time of grinding, is from Saturday evening, to Munday morning, at one or two a clock; and the necessity of Sunday comming between, (upon which we do not work) causes us to stay so long, which otherwise we would not doe. The manner of grinding them, is this, the Horses and Cattle being put to their tackle: they go about, and by their force turne (by the sweeps) the middle roller; which being Cog'd to the other two, at both ends, turne them about; and they all three, turning upon their Centres, which are of Brass and Steele go very easily of themselves, and so easie, as a mans taking hold, of one of the sweeps, with his hand will turne all the rollers about with much ease. But when the Canes are put in between [90] the rollers, it is a good draught for five Oxen or Horses; a Negre puts in the Canes of one side, and the rollers draw them through to the other side, where another Negre stands, and receives them; and returns them back on the other side of the middle roller, which draws the other way. So that having past twice through, that is forth and back, it is conceived all the juyce is prest out; yet the Spaniards have a press, after both the former grindings, to press out the remainder of the liquor, but they having but small works in Spaine, make the most of it, whilst we having far greater quantities, are loath to be at that trouble. The Canes having past to and againe, there are young Negre girles, that carry them away, and lay them on a heap, at the distance of six score paces or thereabouts; where they make a large hill, if the worke have continued long: under the rollers, there is a receiver, as big as a large Tray; into which the liquor falls, and stayes not there, but runs under ground in a pipe or gutter of lead, cover'd over close, which pipe or gutter, carries it into the Cistern, which is fixt neer the staires, as you go down from the Mill-house to the boyling house. But it must not remaine in that Cisterne above one day, lest it grow sower; from thence it is to passe through a gutter, (fixt to the wall) to the Clarifying Copper, as there is occasion to use it, and as the work goes on, and as it Clarifies in the first Copper, and the skumme rises, it is conveyed away by a passage, or gutter for that purpose; as also of the second Copper, both which skimmings, are not esteem'd worth the labour of stilling; because the skum is dirtie and grosse: But the skimmings of the other three Coppers, are conveyed down to the Still-house, there to remaine in the Cisterns, till it be a little sower, for till then it will not come over the helme. This liquor is remov'd, as it is refin'd, from one Copper to another, and the more Coppers it passeth through, the finer

and purer it is, being continually drawn up, and keel'd<sup>288</sup> by ladles, and skim'd by skimmers, in the Negres hands, till at last it comes to the tach,<sup>289</sup> where it must have much labour, in keeling and stirring, and as it boyles, there is thrown into the four last Coppers, a liquor made of water and Withs which they call Temper, without which, the Sugar would continue a Clammy substance and never kerne.<sup>290</sup> The quantities they put in are small, but being of a tart quality it turnes the ripeness and clamminesse of the Sugar to cruddle and separate: which you will find, by taking out some drops of it, to Candy, and suddenly to grow hard; and then it has inough of the fire. Upon which Essay they presently poure two spoonfulls of Sallet Oyle<sup>291</sup> into the tach, and then immediately it gives over to bubble or rise. So after much keeling, they take it out of the tach, by the ladles they use there, and put it into ladles that are of greater receipt, with two handles, and by them remove it into the cooling Cisterne, neer the stayers that goes to the fire roome: But as they remove the last part of the liquor out of the tach, they do it with all the celerity they can; and suddenly cast in cold water, to coole the Copper from burning, for the fire in the furnace, continues still in the same heat: and so when that water is removed out againe by the Ladles, they are in the same degree carefull, and quick, as soon as the last Ladle full is taken out, to throw in some of the [91] liquor of the next Copper to keep the tach from burning, and so fill it up out of the next, and that out of the third, and that out of the fourth, and that out of the Clarifying Copper, and so from the Cistern, and so from the Mill-house or Ingenio. And so the work goes on, from Munday morning at one a clock, till Saturday night, (at which time the fire in the Furnaces are put out) all houres of the day and night, with fresh supplies of Men, Horses, and Cattle. The Liquor being come to such a coolnesse, as it is fit to be put into the Pots, they bring them neer the Cooler, and stopping first the sharp end of the Pot (which is the bottom) with Plantine leaves, (and the passage there no bigger, then a mans finger will go in at) they fill the Pot, and set it between the stantions, in the filling room, where it staies till it be thorough cold, which will be in two daies and two nights; and then if the Sugar be good, knock upon it with the knuckle of your finger, as you would do upon an earthen pot, to trie whether it be whole, and it will give a sound; but if the Sugar be very ill, it will neither be very hard, nor give any sound. It is then to be removed into the Cureing house, and set between stantions there: But first, the stopples are to be pull'd out of the bottom of the pots,

---

288 “turned over”

289 the sixth and final copper

290 “granulate” or turn into granulated sugar.

291 “salad oil”

that the Molosses may vent it selfe at that hole, and so drop down upon a gutter of board, hollowed in the middle, which conveyeth the Molosses from one to another, till it be come into the Cisterns, of which there is commonly foure, at either corner one; and there remains, till it rise to a good quantity, and then they boyl it again, and of that they make Peneles, a kinde of Sugar somewhat inferiour to the Muscavado; but yet will sweeten indifferently well, and some of it very well coloured. The pots being thus opened at the bottoms, the Molosses drops out, but so slowly, as hardly to vent it selfe in a month in which time, the Sugar ought to be well cur'de; and therefore they thought fit, to thrust a spike of wood in at the bottom, that should reach to the top, hoping by that means, to make way for the Molosses to have the speedier passage: But they found little amendment in the purging, and the reason was this, the spike as it went in, prest the Sugar so hard, as it stopt all pores of passage for the Molosses. So finding no good to come of this, they devis'd another way, and that was by making an augure of Iron, which instrument cuts his way, without pressing the Sugar, and by that means the Molosses had a free passage, without any obstruction at all. And so the Sugar was well cur'd in a month. As for the manner of using it, after it is cur'd, you shall finde it set down in my Index, to the plot of the Cureing house. And this is the whole processe of making the Muscavado-Sugar, whereof some is better, and some worse, as the Canes are; for, ill Canes can never make good Sugar.

I call those ill, that are gathered either before or after the time of such ripenesse, or are eaten by Rats, and so consequently rotten, or pull'd down by Withes, or lodg'd by foule weather, either of which, will serve to spoil such Sugar as is made of them. At the time they expect it should be well cur'd, they take the pots from the stantions in the Curing-house, and bring them to the knocking room, which you shall finde upon the plot of the cureing house; and turning it upside [92]down, they knock the pot hard against the ground, and the Sugar comes whole out, as a bullet out of a mold; and when it is out, you may perceive three sorts of colours in the pot, the tops somewhat brownish, and of a frothy light substance; the bottom of a much darker colour, but heavy, grosse, moist, and full of molosses; both which they out away, and reserve to be boyl'd again, with the molosses for peneles: The middle part, which is more then two thirds of the whole pot, and lookes of a bright colour, drie and sweet, they lay by it selfe, and send it down daily upon the backs of Assinigoes and Camells, in leather baggs, with a tarr'd cloth over, to their Store-houses at the Bridge, there to be put in Caskes and Chests, to be ship't away for England, or any other parts of the World, where the best market is. Though this care be taken, and this course used, by the best husbands, and those that respect their credits, as, Collonell James Drax, Collonell Walrond, Mr. Raynes, and some others that I know there; yet, the greater number,

when they knock out their Sugars, let all go together, both bottom and top, and so let the better bear out the worse. But, when they come to the Merchant to be sold, they will not give above 3 £ 10 s. for the one; and for the other, above 6 £ 4 s. And those that use this care, have such credit with the Buyer, as they scarce open the Cask to make a tryall; so well they are assured of the goodnesse of the Sugars they make; as, of Collonell James Drax, Collonell Walrond, Mr. Raines, and some others in the Iland that I know.

I have yet said nothing of making white Sugars, but that is much quicker said than done: For, though the Muscavado Sugar, require but a months time to make it so, after it is boyl'd; yet, the Whites require four months, and it is only this. Take clay, and temper it with water, to the thickness of Frumenty, or Pease-pottage, and poure it on the top of the Muscavado Sugar, as it stands in the pot, in the Cureing-house, and there let it remain four months; and if the clay crack and open, that the aire come in, close it up with some of the same, either with your hand, or a small Trowell. And when you knock open these pots, you shall finde a difference, both in the colour and goodnesse, of the top and bottom, being but to such a degree, as may be rank'd with Muscavadoes; but the middle, perfect White, and excellent Lump-Sugar, the best of which will sell in London for 20 pence a pound.

I do not remember I have left unsaid any thing, that conduces to the work of Sugar-making, unlesse it be, sometimes after great rains, (which moisten the aire more then ordinary) to lay it out upon fair daies in the Sun, upon cloaths, or in the knocking room, and sometimes to bring in pans of coals, well kindled, into the Cureing-house. If I have omitted any thing here, you shall finde it supplied in the Indexes of my Plots.

## The manner of distilling the skimings of the Coppers, of which we make the strong drink, which the planters call kill-devill

**A**s for distilling the skimmings, which run down to the Still-house, from the three lesser Coppers, it is only this: After it has remained in the Cisterns, which my plot shewes you in the Still-house, till it be a little soure, (for till then, the Spirits will not rise in the Still) the first Spirit that comes off, is a small Liquor, which we call [93] low-Wines, which Liquor we put into the Still and draw it off a gain; and of that comes so strong a Spirit, as a candle being brought to a near distance, to the



bung<sup>292</sup> of a Hogshead or But, where it is kept, the spirits will flie to it, and taking hold of it bring the fire down to the vessell, and set all a fire, which immediately breakes the vessell, and becomes a flame, burning all about it that is combustible matter.

We lost an excellent Negre by such an accident, who bringing a Jar of this Spirit, from the Still-house, to the Drink-room, in the night, not knowing the force of the liquor he carried, brought the candle somewhat neerer than he ought, that he might the better see how to put it into the Funnell, which conveyed it into the Butt. But the Spirit being stirr'd by that motion, flew out, and got hold of the flame of the Candle, and so set all on fire, and burnt the poor Negre to death, who was an excellent servant. And if he had in the instant of firing, clapt his hand upon the bung; all had been saved; but he that knew not that cure, lost the whole vessell of Spirits, and his life to boot. So that upon this misadventure, a strict command was given, that none of those Spirits should be brought to the Drink-room ever after in the night, nor no fire or candle ever to come in there.

This drink, though it had the ill hap to kill one Negre, yet it has had the vertue to cure many; for when they are ill, with taking cold, (which often they are) and very well they may, having nothing under them in the night but a board, upon which they lie, nor any thing to cover them: And though the daies be hot, the nights are cold, and that change cannot but work upon their bodies, though they be hardy people. Besides, comming home hot and sweating in the evening, sitting or lying down, must needs be the occasion of taking cold, and sometimes breeds sicknesses amongst them, which when they feel, they complain to the Apothecary of the Plantation, which we call Doctor, and he gives them every one a dram cup of this Spirit, and that is a present cure. And as this drink is of great use, to cure and refresh the poor Negres, whom we ought to have a speciall care of, by the labour of whose hands, our profit is brought in; so is it helpfull to our Christian Servants too; for, when their spirits are exhausted, by their hard labour, and sweating in the Sun, ten hours every day, they find their stomacks debilitated, and much weakned in their vigour every way, a dram or two of this Spirit, is a great comfort and refreshing to them. This drink is also a commodity of good value in the Plantation; for we send it down to the Bridge, and there put it off to those that retail it. Some they sell to the Ships, and is transported into forraign parts, and drunk by the way. Some they sell to such Planters, as have no Sugar-works of their owne, yet drink excessively of it, for they buy it at easie rates; halfe a crown a gallon was the price, the time that I was there; but they were then purposing to raise the price to a deerer rate. They make weekly, as long as they work, of such a Plantation as this 30 £ sterling, besides what is drunk by their servants and slaves.

---

292 a stopper or its hole in a cask

## An estimate of the value of the Sugar made upon this Iland, in twenty months

**A**nd now for a close of this work of Sugar, I will let you see, by way [94] of estimate, to what a Revenue this Iland is raised; and, in my opinion, not improbable. If you will be pleased to look back to the extent of the Iland, you shall find, by taking a medium of the length and breadth of it, that there is contained in the Iland 392 square miles;

28
14
-----
112
28
-----
392

out of which we will substract a third part, which is the most remote part of the Iland from the Bridge, where all, or the most part of Trade is, which by many deep and steep Gullies interposing, the passage is in a manner stop'd: besides, the Land there is not so rich and fit to bear Canes as the other; but may be very usefull for planting provisions of Corn, Yeams, Bonavista, Cassavie, Potatoes; and likewise of Fruites, as, Oranges, Limons, Lymes, Plantines, Bonanoes; as also, for breeding Hoggs, Sheep, Goats, Cattle, and Poultry, to furnish the rest of the Iland, that want those Commodities. For which reasons, we will substract a third part from 392. and that is 130. and so the remaining  $\frac{2}{3}$  is 262 square miles;

392
130 $\frac{2}{3}$ 130
-----
262

the greatest part of which may be laid to Sugar-works, and some to be allowed and set out for small Plantations, which are not able to raise a Sugar-work or set up an Ingenio, by reason of the paucity of acres, being not above twenty, thirty, or forty acres in a Plantation; but these will be fit to bear Tobacco, Ginger, Cotten-wool, Maies, Yeames, and Potatoes; as also for breeding Hoggs. But most of these will in short time, be bought up by great men, and laid together, into Plantations of five, six, and seven hundred acres. And then we may make our computation thus, viz. A mile

square will contain 640 acres of land, and here we see is 262 acres,<sup>293</sup> being 2/3 of the Iland. So then, we multiply 262. by 640. and the product will amount unto 167680. Now we will put the case, that some of those men that have small Plantations, will not sell them, but keep them for provisions, which they may live plentifully upon; for those provisions they raise, will sell at good rates; for which use, we will set out thirty thousand acres. So then we substract 30000 acres from 167680, and there will remain 137680 acres, to be for Sugar-works; out of which, 2/3 may be planted with Canes, the other 1/3 for Wood, Pasture, and Provisions, which must support the Plantations, according to the scale of Collonell Modiford's Plantation, as I [95]

640	
262	
-----	
1280	
3840	27536
1280	27536
-----	-----
167680	55072
30000	
-----	
137680	

said before. Now these two fifts are, as you see 55072 acres, and an acre of good Canes will yield 4000 pound weight of Sugar, and none will yield lesse then 2000 weight; but we will take a Medium, and rest upon 3000 weight, upon which we will make our computation, and set our price upon the Sugar, according to the lowest rates, which shall be 3 pence per pound, as it is Muscavado, to be sold upon the Iland, at the Bridge. In fifteen months the Canes will be ripe, and in a month more, they will be

---

293 This should read "miles"

				55072	
				375	
				-----	
				275360	
				385504	
				165216	
				-----	
				2065200	
				2065200	
				-----	
				4130400	
				1032600	
				-----	
				3097800	
				3097800	
				-----	
				6195600	

				10	£375
				55072	£2065200

well cur'd, and ready to be cast up, and stowed in the Ware-house. So here, we make our computation upon the place, and say, 3000 threepences is £37 10 s. ten acres of which is £375 sterling. So then we say, if 10 acres of Canes will produce £375 what shall 55072. which is the number of acres contained upon the  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the land, allotted for Sugar Plantations, upon which the Canes must grow: and by the Rule of 3. we finde, that it amounts to 2665200. in sixteen months: Now add four months more to the time of cureing, and making it into whites, which is that we call Lump-Sugar in England, and then the price will be doubled to 4130400 out of which we will abate  $\frac{1}{4}$  for waste, and what is cut off from the tops and bottoms of the pots, which will be good Muscavadoes;<sup>294</sup> but we will abate for that, and waste  $\frac{1}{4}$  which is 1032600. and that we will subtract from 4130400 and there remains 3097800. which is the totall of the revenue [96] of Sugars, that grow on the Barbadoes for twenty months, and accounted there, upon the Iland, at the Bridge. But if you will run the Hazards of the Sea, as all Marchants doe, and bring it for England, it will sell in London, for 12 d. the pound, and so 'tis doubled againe; and then it will amount to 6195600 and in two months time more it will be in England. Now you see what a vast Revenew this little spot of ground can produce in 22 months time; And so I have done with this plant, onely one touch more, to conclude with all; as Musitians, that first play a

---

294 a less refined, dark brown sugar

Preludium,<sup>295</sup> next a Lesson, and then a Saraband;<sup>296</sup> which is the life and spirit of all the rest. So having played you a short Preludium,<sup>297</sup> to this long and tedious lesson of Sugar and Sugar-making, I do think fit to give you a Saraband, with my best Touches at last; which shall be only this, that as this plant has a faculty, to preserve all fruits, that grow in the world, from corruption and putrifaction; So it has a vertue, being rightly applyed, to preserve us men in our healths and fortunes too. Doctor Butler<sup>298</sup> one of the most learned and famous Physitians that this Nation, or the world ever bred, was wont to say that

If Sugar can preserve both Peares and Plumbs,  
Why can it not preserve as well our Lungs?

And that it might work the same effect on himselfe, he alwayes dranke in his Claret wine, great store of the best refin'd Sugar, and also prescribed it severall wayes to his Patients, for Colds, Coughs, and Catarrs;<sup>299</sup> which are diseases, that reign much in cold Climats, especially in Ilands, where the Ayre is moyster then in Continents; and so much for our Health.

Now for our fortunes, they are not only preserv'd, but made by the powerfull operation of this plant.

Colonell James Drax, whose beginning upon that Iland, was founded upon a stock not exceeding £300 sterling, has raised his fortune to such a height, as I have heard him say, that he would not look towards England, with a purpose to remaine there, the rest of his life, till he were able to purchase an estate, of tenne thousand pound land yearly; which he hop'd in few years to accomplish, with what he was then owner of; and all by this plant of Sugar. Colonell Thomas Modiford, has often told me, that he had taken a Resolution to himselfe, not to set his face for England, till he made his voyage, and imployment there, worth him a hundred thousand pounds sterling; and all by this Sugar plant. And these, were men of as piercing sights, and profound

---

295 an introductory piece of music

296 music for a slow, formal Spanish dance of the same name

297 “introduction”

298 William Butler (1535-1618) was a physician in Cambridge who was known for his unorthodox and sometimes successful treatments. Butler's fame was such that he eventually served both James I and his son Henry during his final illness.

299 Sometimes used to describe the common cold, but also the mucous discharge that is one of this disease's principal symptoms.



judgments, as any I have known in that way of management. Now if such Estates as these, may be raised, by the well ordering this plant, by Industrious and painfull men, why may not such estates, by carefull keeping, and orderly and moderate expending, be preserv'd, in their posterities, to the tenth Generation; and all by the sweet Negotiation of Sugar?

## The Withs described

**O**ne Vegetable we have on the Iland, which will neither become the name of a Tree, nor a Plant; and that is a Withe; which is in some respect, the harmefullest weed that can grow; for it pulls downe all that it can reach to, Canes, and all other small plants, it makes nothing [97] of; if it be suffer'd to look up in a Garden, it will wind about all Herbs and Plants that have stalks, pull them down and destroy them; or if it find the way into any Orchard, it will clime up by the bodies of the trees, into the branches, and there inwrap them so, as to draw them (as it were) into a purse, (for out of the maine stalk, hundreds of smal sprigs will grow;) and if any other tree be so neer as to touch it, it will find the way to it, and pull the tops of them together, and utterly disfigure the trees, and hinder the growth of the fruit; and if you cut the maine stalk below, neer the root in hope to kill it, the moysture above in the branches, will thrust down a vine into the ground, and get a new root: Nay this is not all the mischief, for it will reach the highest timber, and involve and enwrap so the branches, as to hinder their growths, and many times fasten one tree to another, that one shall hinder the growth of another. A couple of Colonel Draxes Axemen, were felling a tree, and about the time it began to bend, that they perceiv'd which way it would fall, got cleare on the other side, and thought themselves safe: But this being fastned to another, by strong withes, pull'd a great branch of that tree after it, which fell upon the fellers, and bruised them so, as they hardly scap'd with their lives. Cleere a passage of tenne foot broad, that goes between a wood and a land of Canes overnight, and come next morning, and you shall find the way crost all over with Withs, and got neere the Canes; So that if you had left your visit till the next day, they had gotten into the Canes, and then it would be too late to help; for when they are mixt with them, you cannot destroy the one without the other, for wheresoever they touch ground they get new roots, and so creep into every place, and as they go pull down all. These harmefull Withs, have, with all these vices, some virtues. They serve for all uses, where roaps or cords are required, as for binding our Wood and Canes into faggots, or what else roapes are needfull for; and without them we were in ill condition, for we have not

any wood fit to make hoops for hogsheds, barrels, tubbs, or what not; and we can have them of what length and bignesse we please, and they are for that use very good.

Severall kinds of these Withs there are, some that beare fruit, somewhat bigger then the Cod of a Beane, which being divided longwise with a sharp knife, you shall perceive the most various and beautifullest Colours that can be, and so well matcht, as to make up a very great beauty.

Fell a dosen acres of wood, going on in a straight line, and when the ground is cleered, the side of that wood you left standing, will be likewise in the same strait line, and in a few years these Withs will mount, to the tops of the trees, which are for the most part, eighty or 100. foot high, and from that top to the ground, on the outside of the wood, all will be cover'd with leaves, and those are broad, green, and shining, so that if you be absent from the place two or three years, and look to find a wood, you find a faire green Curtaine, 300 paces long, and 80 foot high, which is as pretty a *deceptio visus*,<sup>300</sup> as you can find any where and this is one of the pleasantest Vistos<sup>301</sup> in the Iland, the same things are done in the mouths or entrances of Caves, where [98] you shall find a Cave large enough to hold 500 men, and the mouth of it, cover'd with a green curtaine, 40 foot high, and 200 foot long; and so close a Curtaine it is (the vines being wrapt and interwove one into another) as without putting it aside, you can hardly have light to read by.

## Caves, and the description of their largenesse

**T**hese Caves are very frequent in the Iland, and of severall dimensions, some small, others extreamly large and Capacious: The runaway Negres, often shelter themselves in these Coverts, for a long time and in the night range abroad the Countrey, and steale Pigs, Plantins, Potatoes, and Pullin, and bring it there; and feast all day, upon what they stole the night before; and the nights being darke, and their bodies black, they scape undiscern'd.

There is nothing in that Countrey, so usefull as Liam Hounds,<sup>302</sup> to find out these theeves. I have gone into divers of those Caves, to trye what kind of ayre is to be found there; and have felt it so close, and moyst with all, as my breath was neer stopt; and I doe beleive, if I should remaine there but one night, I should never come out

---

300 “an illusion”

301 “vistas”

302 Liam hounds (“leash hound”) were blood hounds used for the tracking of game. A number of modern dogs are descended from them, including the Bavarian and Hanoverian scent hounds.

again.

I have often wondred, why such vast Caves and Rocks should not afford some springs of water; the ayre which touches them, being so very moyst; for we see in England, where Rocks are, Springs of water issue out; and sometimes (when wet weather is) the moysture hangs upon the Rocks in drops, and so runns down and finds a way to vent it selfe, into small bibling Springs; But here it does not so, though the Ayre be much moyster than in England; But certainly the reason is the extraordinary drinesse, and spunginesse of the stone; which sucks up all moysture that touches it; and yet it is never satisfied.

I had it in my thoughts, to make an Essay,<sup>303</sup> what Sir Francis Bacons experiment solitarie, touching the making of Artificiall Springs would doe;<sup>304</sup> but troughs of that stone, being of so dry and spungy a quality, would never have been fit for it, besides we have no brakes<sup>305</sup> growing there, which is one of the materials us'd in that experiment.

Another sort of Withs we have, but they are made of the gum of trees, which falls from the boughes, drop after drop, one hanging by another, till they touch ground; from whence they receive some nourishment, which gives them power to grow larger, and if it happen that three or four of them, come down so nere one another as to touch and the wind twist them together, they appeare so like ropes, as they cannot be discern'd five paces off, whether it be a rope or a withe. I have seen of these of severall sises, from the smallest whip cord to the greatest Cable of the Soveraine;<sup>306</sup> and the most of those timber trees I have named, has them; some four, some five, some halfe a dozen, hanging down like Bell ropes, from the branches to the ground, which was a sight of much rarity to me at first comming.

Aloes we have growing here, very good, and 'tis a beautifull plant; the leaves *Aloes.* four inches broad,  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick, and about a foot and a halfe long; with prickles on each side, and the last sprout which rises up in the middle, beares yellow flowres, one above another, and those flowres are higher then any of the leaves, by two foot; These thick [99] leaves we take, and cut them through, and out of them issue the Aloes, which we set in the Sun, and that will rarifie it, and make it fit to keep. But it is the

---

303 probably "assay"

304 Francis Bacon (1561-1626) was a leading English lawyer, politician, and early scientist. Bacon's contribution to the experimental method placed him in the forefront of the development of natural philosophy and scientific inquiry. His discussion of the making of artificial springs is found in his *Sylva Sylvarum*, century 1, 25.

305 "ferns"

306 The ships cables of the Sovereign of the Seas, one of the largest ships of the royal navy.

first comming which we save; for, if we let it run too long, the second running will be much worse; but, before that comes, we throw away the leafe. The leaves of this Plant, (which we call *semper vivens* in England, and growes neer the fire in Kitchens, hung up to a beam, with an oyl'd clout about the root) with the inner bark of Elder, and some other ingredients, boyl'd in Sallet-oyle, is the best medicine in the world for a burn or a scald, being presently applyed; and for that the medicine is beyond all that ever was, for that cure, I will set it down, and 'tis this.

Take *Semper vivens*,<sup>307</sup> Plantine leaves, and the green rinde of Elder, of each alike quantity, and boyl them in Sallet-oyle, so much as will draw out all that tincture by boyling; then strain the Oyle well out, and put it on the fire again, and put to it a small quantity of spirit of Wine, and so much yellow Wax, as will bring it to the consistence of a Liniment.

One other Plant we have, and that is the Sensible plant, which closes the leavs upon any touch with your hand, or that end of your staff by which you hold, and in a little time will open again.

## English Herbs and Rootes

*Flowers.*

**T**here are very few Flowers in the Iland, and none of them sweet; as, the white Lilly, which growes in the woods, and is much a fairer flower then ours; as also a red Lilly, of the same bignesse; but neither of them sweet. The St. Jago flower is very beautifull, but of a nauseous savour. One more we have, and that must not be forgotten for the rarity, because it opens, when all else close, when the Sun goes down; and for that reason we call it, the flower of the Moon: It growes in great tuffs, the leaves almost in the form of a Heart, the point turning back, the flower somewhat bigger then a Primrose, but of the purest purple that ever I beheld. When this flower falls off, the seed appears, which is black, with an eye of purple; shap'd, and of the sise of a small button, so finely wrought, and tough withall, as it might serve very well to trim a suit of apparell.

I know no herbs naturally growing in the Iland, that have not been brought thither from other parts, but Purcelane;<sup>308</sup> and that growes so universally, as the over-much plenty makes it disesteemed; and we destroy it as a Weed that cumbers the ground.

Rosemary, Time, Winter Savory, sweet Marjerom, pot Marjerom, Parsley,

---

307 probably referring to the aloe plant

308 "purslane"

Penniroyall, Camomile, Sage, Tansie, Lavender, Lavender-Cotten, Garlick, Onyons, Colworts, Cabbage, Turnips, Redishes, Marigolds, Lettice, Taragon, Southernwood. All these I carried with me in seeds, and all grew and prospered well. Leek-Seed I had, which appeared to me very fresh and good; but it never came up. Rose trees we have, but they never bear flowers.

*English  
Herbes  
and Roots.*

There is a Root, of which some of the Negres brought the Seeds, and planted there, and they grew: 'Tis a very large Root, drie, and well tasted; the manner of planting it is, to make little hills, as big as Mole-hills, and plant the seed a top, and as soon as it puts forth the stalks they turn down to the ground, on either side, and then as they touch it, they thrust up a stalk, not unlike an Asparagus, but of a [100] purple colour. These being gathered, and eaten as a Sallet, with oyle, vinegar, and salt, will serve an ordinary pallet, where no better is to be had: But the root truly is very good meat, boyl'd with powdred pork, and eaten with butter, vinegar, and pepper. Most of these roots are as large, as three of the biggest Turnips we have in England. We carried divers of them to Sea, for our provision, which stood us in good stead, and would have serv'd us plentifully in our great want of victualls; but the Rats (of which we had infinite numbers aboard) rob'd us of the most part.

## Strength of the Iland by Nature to Sea-ward

**T**hat part of the Iland which lies to the windeward, and is part East, part North, the stormes and stiffe windes comming from those points, have so wash'd away all earthly substance, as there remains nothing but steep Rocks; and the Sea being very deep on that side, the Anchors will hardly touch the bottom, though the Cables be long; so that what Ship soever rides on that side, comes at her owne perill. Contrarily, if any Ship be under Sail, on the Leeward side, and goes but so far out, as to lose the shelter of the Iland, it is certain to be carried away down to the leeward Ilands, and then it will be a very hard work to beat it up again, without putting out into the Main. So that there can hardly be any safe landing, but where the Harbours and Baies are, which lie to the Southwest; and those places are so defensible by Nature, as with small costs, they may be very strongly fortified. But they have been much neglected by the Proprietor, for which reason, (and some others) the Planters refused to call him by that name. There was a Gentleman in the Iland, who pretended to be a Souldier, and an Ingeneer,<sup>309</sup> that undertook to fortifie all the landing places, and to furnish them with such store of Artillery, as should be sufficient to defend them; provided, he might

*Captain  
Burrows.*

309 The text in the original notes that this refers to "Captain Burrows."



have the Excise paid to him for seven years, which was promised by the Governour and Assembly. Whereupon he went to work, and made such a Fort, as when abler Ingeneers came upon the Iland, they found to be most pernicious; for, commanding all the Harbour, and not of strength to defend it selfe, if it were taken by an enemy, might do much harm to the land-ward. So that at my coming from thence, they were pulling it down, and instead of it, to make Trenches, and Rampiers, with Pallisadoes, Horn-works, Curtains, and Counter-scarfes; and having left a very good Fortification of standing wood, round about the Iland, near the Sea, these were thought as much as needed for their defence, against the landing of any forraign Forces, and for their strength within.

*Strength  
of the  
Iland  
within  
land.*

They built three Forts, one for a Magazine, to lay their Amonition, and Powder in; the other two, to make their retreats upon all occasions. At my coming from thence, they were able to muster ten thousand Foot, as good men, and as resolute, as any in the world, and a thousand good Horse; and this was the strength of the Iland about the time I came away.

## How Governed, and how Divided

*How  
Governed  
& how  
Divided.*

**T**hey Govern there by the Lawes of England, for all Criminall, Civill, Martiall, Ecclesiasticall, and Maritime affairs.

This Law is administred by a Governour, and ten of his Councill, four Courts of ordinary Justice, in Civill causes, which divide the land [101] in four Circuits; Justices of Peace, Constables, Churchwardens, and Tithing-men: five Sessions in the year, for tryall of Criminall causes, and all Appeals from inferiour Courts, in Civill causes. And when the Governour pleases to call an Assembly, for the supream Court of all, for the last Appeales, for making new Lawes, and abolishing old, according to occasion, in nature of the Parliament of England, and accordingly consists of the Governour, as Supream, his Councill, in nature of the Peers, and two Burgesses chosen by every Parish for the rest. The Iland is divided into eleven Parishes No Tithes paid to the Minister, but a yearly allowance of a pound of Tobacco, upon an acre of every mans land, besides certain Church-duties, of Mariages, Christenings, and Burialls.

A standing Commission there was also, for punishing Adultery and Fornication, though rarely put in execution.

Something would be said concerning the seasons of the year; but it is little, & therefore wil be the least troublesome. Four months in the year, the weather is colder then the other eight, & those are November, December, January, & February; yet they

are hotter than with us in May. There is no generall Fall of the leafe, every Tree having a particular fall to himself; as if two Locusts stands at the distance of a stones cast, they have not their falls at one time; one Locust will let fall the leaves in January, another in March, a third in July, a fourth in September; and so all months one kinde of Trees, having their severall times of falling: But if any month falls more leaves then other, 'tis February; for so in my nicest observation I found it. The leaves we finde fallen under the trees, being the most of them large and stiffe, when they were growing, and having many veines, which go from the middle stalk, to the uppermost extent of the leafe, when the thin part of the leafe is rotten and consum'd, those veines appear like Anatomies, with the strangest works and beautifullest formes that I have seen, fit to be kept as a rarity, in the Cabinets of the greatest Princes. As also the Negres heads, which we finde in the sands, and they are about two inches long, with a forehead, eyes, nose, mouth, chin, and part of the neck; I cannot perceive any root by which they grow, but find them alwaies loose in the sand; nor is it a fruit that falls from any tree, for then we should finde it growing; black it is as jet, but from whence it comes, no man knowes.

## No Mines in this Iland

**M**ines there are none in this Iland, not so much as of Coal, for which reason, *Mines.* we preserve our Woods as much as we can. We finde flowing out of a Rock, in one part of the Iland, an unctuous substance, somewhat like Tarre, which is thought to have many vertues yet unknown; but is already discovered, to be excellent good to stop a flux, by drinking it; but, by annointing, for all aches and bruises; and so subtle it is, as being put into the palm of the hand, and rub'd there, it will work through the back.

Another gummy substance there is, black, and hard as pitch, and is used as pitch; 'tis called Mountjack.<sup>310</sup>

---

310 a type of asphalt

## The ill contrivance of the Planters houses, as we found them, when first we came there

**H**aving given you in my Bills of Fare, a particular of such Viands, as this Iland afforded, for supportation of life, and somewhat for delight too, as far as concerns the Table; yet, what are you the better [102] for all this, when you must be scorch't up from morning till night with the torrid heat of the sunne; So as in that twelve hours, you hardly can finde two, in which you can enjoy your selfe with contentment. Or how can you expect to find heat, or warmth in your stomach, to digest that meat, when the sunne hath exhausted your heat and spirits so, to your outer parts, as you are chill'd and numb'd within? For which reason, you are compell'd to take such remedies, as are almost as ill as the disease; liquors so strong, as to take away the breath as it goes down, and red pepper for spice, which wants little of the heat of a fire-coale; and all these will hardly draw in the heat, which the sun draws out; and part of this deficiency is occasioned by the improvidence, or inconsideration of the Inhabitants, who build their dwellings, rather like stoves, then houses; for the most of them, are made of timber, low roof keeping out the wind, letting in the sun, when they have means to have it otherwise; for I will undertake to contrive a house so, as no one shall have just cause to complaine of any excessive heat; and that which gives this great remedy, shall bring with it the greatest beauty that can be look't on. The Palmetoes, which being plac't (as I will give you directions in my plot) in convenient order, shall interpose so between the sun and house, as to keep it continually in the shade; and to have that shade at such a distance, as very little heat shall be felt, in any time of the day: For shades that are made by the highest trees, are undoubtedly the coolest, and freshest, by reason it keeps the heat farthest off. Besides this, there are many advantages to be made, in the contrivance of the house; for I see the Planters there, never consider which way they build their houses, so they get them up; which is the cause that many of them, are so insufferably hot, as neither themselves, nor any other, can remaine in them without sweltring.

*[Most of this Paragraph is mentioned before.]*

## Directions for better buildings

**F**irst then, we will consider what the errours are in their contrivances, that we may be the better able to shew the best way to mend them; A single house that is built long-wise, and upon a North and South line, has these disadvantages: the sun shines upon the East side-walls from six a clock till eight, so as the beams rest

flat upon that side, for two hours. And the beames resting upon a flat or oblique line (as that is,) gives a greater heate, then upon a diagonall, which glaunces the beams aside. As a tennis ball, strook against the side walls of the Court, glauncing, hits with lesse force, then when it feels the full resistance of the end wall, where tis met with a flat oblique line: So the Sun beames, the more directly they are oppos'd by any flat body, the more violently they burne. This side-wall being warm'd; the sun gets higher, and shines hotter, and then the rafters become the oblique line, which is thinner, and lesse able to resist the beames; and the covering being shingles, receives the heat quicker, and remains it longer, than tiles would do, so that for the whole forenoon, that side of the rooffe, receives as much heat, as the sun can give, and so passes over to the other side, giving it so much the more in the afternoon, as is increast by warming the house and Aire all the morning before, and so the Oven being heat[ed] on both sides, what can you expect, but that those [103] within, should be sufficiently baked: and so much the more, for that the wind is kept out, that should come to cool it, by shutting up all passages, that may let it in, which they alwayes doe, for feare the raine come with it; and letting in the sun at the West end, where and when, it shines hottest. Therefore this kind of building is most pernicious to those that love their health, which is the comfort of their lives: but you will say, that a double house will lessen much of this heat, by reason that the West side is not visited by the sun in the morning nor the East in the afternoon; I doe confesse that to be some little remedy, but not much, for the double roofes being open to the sun, in oblique lines, a great part of the forenoon; and being reflected from one side to another, when it comes to the Meridian (and before and after, at least two hours,) with the scorching heat it gives to the gutter, which is between them, and is in the middle of the house from end to end, will so warme the East side of the house, as all the shade it has in the afternoon will not cool it, nor make it habitable; and then you may guesse in what a temper the West side is.

Whereas, if you build your house upon an East and West line, you have these advantages, that in the morning, the sun never shines in or neere an oblique line, (which is upon the East end of your house,) above two hours, and that is from six to eight a clock; and as much in the afternoon, and not all that time neither; and upon the rooffe it can never shine in an oblique line, but glancing on both sides, cast off the heat very much; I do confesse that I love a double house, much better then a single, but if it have a double cover, that is, two gable ends, and a gutter between, though it be built up an East and West line: yet the sun (which must lye upon it all the heat of the day) will so multiply the heat, by reflecting the beames from inside to inside, and so violently upon the gutter, from both, which you know must be in the middle of the house, from end to end, as you shall feele that heat above, too sensibly in the ground stories

below, though your sieling be a foot thick, and your stories sixteen foot high. Therefore if I build a double house, I must order it so, as to have the division between either room of a strong wall, or of Dorique<sup>311</sup> Pillers Archt from one to another; and, in each intercolumniation, a square stud of stone, for the better strengthening and supporting of the Arches above; for I would have the roomes Archt over with stone, and the innermost poynts of the Arches, to rest upon the Pillars, and the whole house to be cover'd with Couples and Rafters, and upon that shingles, the Ridge Pole of the house: running along over the Pillars so that the covering is to serve both Arches, that covers your rooms: by which meanes there is but one Gable end, which will glance off the scorching beames of the sun of either side, as, with the help of the Arches underneath, there will be little heat felt in the roomes below. But then a maine care must be had, to the side walls, that the girders be strong, and very well Dove-tayld, one into another, upon the Dorique pillars, or partition walls; and well erampt with Iron, or else the rafters being of that length, will thrust out the side walls by reason the Arches will hinder the Couples, from coming so low as to keep the rafters steady, from opening at the bottom. For prevention [104] of this great mischiefe, it will be very needfull, to have strong Butteresses without, and those being plac't just against the Couples, will be of main concern to the side-walls. If you make the breadth of your house fifty foot, allowing two foot to the partition, and two foot to either of the side-walls above, (but more below) which is six foot in all, you will have remaining forty four foot, which being equally divided, will afford twenty two foot for the breadth of either room; you may for the length allow what you please. But this I speak by permission, and not by direction. But, I will send you a Plot with this, and an Index annexed to it, of such a house as I would build for pleasure and convenience, if I were to live there, and had mony enough to bestow; and I believe, with such conveniences and advantages, for shade and coolnesse, as few people in those Western parts, have studied, or ever thought on.

---

311 “Doric”; a type of architectural style developed in ancient Greece. Doric columns are still commonly used in buildings.



A survey of the pleasures and profits, commodities and incommodities, sicknesse and healthfulnesse, of this Iland, ballanced with those of England.

**A**nd now I have as neer as I can, delivered the sum of all I know of the Iland of Barbadoes, both for Pleasures and Profits, Commodities and Incommodities, Sicknesse and Healthfulnesse. So that it may be expected what I can say, to perswade or dissuade any, that have a desire to go and live there. But before I give a full answer to that, I must enquire and be enformed, of what disposition the party is, that hath this designe; If it be such a one as loves the pleasures of Europe, (or particularly of England) and the great varieties of those, let him never come there; for they are things he shall be sure to misse. But, if he can finde in himselfe a willingnesse, to change the pleasures which he enjoyed in a Temperate, for such as he shall finde in a Torrid Zone, he may light upon some that will give him an exchange, with some advantage.

And for the pleasures of England, let us consider what they are, that we may be the better able to judge, how far they are consistent with the Climate of Barbadoes, and what gainers or losers they will be by the exchange, that make the adventure; and by the knowledge and well weighing of that, invite or deter those, that are the great lovers and admirers of those delights, to come there, or stay away.

And amongst the sports and recreations that the people of England exercise most for their healths, without doers, they are Coursing, Hunting, and Hawking.

And for the Greyhound, though he be compleat in all his shapes that are accounted excellent, headed like a Snake, neckt like a Drake, back't like a Beam, sided like a Breme, tail'd like a Rat, footed like a Cat, deep breasted, with large philllets and gaskins, excellently winded, with all else may style him perfect, and of a right race: Yet, what of all this, if the Country afford no Game to course at; or if there were, that would amount to nothing; for, in the running of twelve score yards, they will either bruise their bodies against stumps of trees, or break their necks down the steep falls of Gullies, which are there too common.

And for the Huntsman and his Hounds, they will finde themselves at a dead fault, before they begin; for, upon this soyle, no Stag, with his lofty well shap't head, and active body, has ever set his nimble feet; and Herds of Vallow Deer, were never put to make a stand upon [105] this ground; the nimble Roe-Buck, nor the subtle Fox, the Badger, Otter, or the fearfull Hare, have ever run their Mases in these Woods. And then, what use of Hounds?

Onely one kinde are usefull here, and those are Liam Hounds, to guide us to the

runaway Negres, who, as I told you, harbour themselves in Woods and Caves, living upon pillage for many months together.

And for the Faulconer, though his Hawk have reach'd such excellencies, as may exalt her praise as high, as her wings can raise her body; yet, she must be taken down to a bare Lure. And the painfull and skilfull Faulconer, who has applied himselfe solely to the humour of the brave Bird he carries, who must be courted as a Mistresse, be she never so froward, and like a coy Mistresse, will take check at any thing, when her liberty gives her license; and though by a painfull and studied diligence, he have reclaimed her so, as to flie at what, and when, and where, and how she is directed; and she, by her own practice and observation, has learnt to know, which Spaniell lies, and which tells truth, that accordingly she may sleight the one, and regard the other; and with this, has all other qualities that are excellent, in so noble and heroick a Bird: Yet, this painfull diligence in the Faulconer, this rare perfection in the Hawk, will be of little use, where there is neither Champion<sup>312</sup> to flie in, Brookes to flie over, nor Game to flie at. No mountie<sup>313</sup> at a Hieron,<sup>314</sup> to cause the lusty Jerfaulcon<sup>315</sup> to raise her to a losse of her self, from the eyes of her Keeper, till by many dangerous thorows, she binde with her Quarrie, and both come tumbling down together. No teem of Ducks, or bunch of Teales, to cause the high flying Haggard make her stooping, and strike her Quarrie dead. And for the Ostringer, though his well-man'd Goshawk, or her bold mate the Tarcell, draw a Covert nere so well; yet, no Eye of Phesants will spring, or porch in these woods.

The Eagle and the Sacre sure, here ever misse their prey.

Since Bustard and the Barnacle, are never in the way.

No Tarcel drawes a Covert here, no Lanner sits at mark;

No Merline flies a Partridge neer, no Hobbie dares a Lark.

Another pleasure, the better sort of the people of England take delight in, which, in my opinion, may be rather call'd a toyle then a pleasure, and that is Race-Horses, forcing poor beasts beyond their power, who were given us for our moderate use. These exercises are too violent for hot Countries, and therefore we will forget them.

Shooting and Bowling may very well be used here; but at Butts onely, and in

---

312 “open country”

313 “rising” or “pursuit upwards”

314 “heron”; falcons were often used to hunt herons in Europe

315 “Gryfalcon”; the largest falcon species

Bares, or close Allies, for the turfe here will never be fine enough for a Green, nor the ground soft enough, for an Arrow to fall on. Amongst all the sports without dores,<sup>316</sup> that are used in England, these two are onely sufferable in the Barbadoes. But for the sports within the house, they may all be used there, as, all sorts of Gaming, viz. Chesse, Tables, Cards, Dice, Shovel-abord, Billiards; and some kinds of Dances, but none of those that are laborious, as high and [106] loftie Capers, with Turnes above ground;<sup>317</sup> these are too violent for hot Countries.

Some other kindes of pleasures they have in England, which are not so fully enjoyed in the Barbadoes, as, smooth Champion to walk or ride on, with variety of Landscapes, at severall distances; all there being hem'd in with Wood, and those trees so tall and lofty, as to hinder and bar the view so much, as (upon a levell or plain) no Horison<sup>318</sup> can be seen. But upon the sides of Hills, which look toward the Sea, your eye may range as far that way, as the globicall roundnesse of that watry Element will give way to; but that once seen, the eye is satisfied, and variety in that object there is none; for no shipping passe that way, but such as arive at the Iland.<sup>319</sup> 'Tis true, that Woods made up of such beautifull Trees as grow there, are pleasant things to look on, and afford a very plentifull delight to the eyes; but when you are so enclos'd, as hardly to look out, you will finde too quick and too full a satiety in that pleasure. But as the Woods are cut down, the Landscapes will appear at farther distances.

## The beauties of the Heavens, and how much they transcend those of farther distances from the Lane

**N**ow for the beauty of the Heavens, they are as far transcending all we ever saw in England, or elsewhere 40 Degrees without the Line, on either side, as the land-objects of the Barbadoes are short of ours in Europe. So he that can content himselfe with the beauties of the Heavens, may there be sufficiently satisfied. But we Mortalls, that till and love the earth, because our selves are made up of the same mold, take pleasure sometimes to look downward, upon the fruites and effects of our

---

316 “outdoors”

317 “Capers” and “turnes” refer to leaping and jumping while dancing.

318 “horizon”

319 This is due to the east-west direction of the trade winds that blow across Barbados. English ships called on Barbados first as they entered the Caribbean from Africa along the trade winds. They then continued to follow the prevailing winds westward into the Caribbean.

own labours; and when we finde them thrive by the blessings of the great Creator, we look up to give thanks, where we finde so great a glory, as to put us into astonishment and admiration.

Now for the smelling sense, though we have the blossomes of the Orange, Limon, Lyme, Cittron, Pomgranate, with the smell of that admirable fruit the Pine, and others: yet when we consider the infinite variety of the Flowers of England, both for beauty and savour, there is no comparison between them; and the flowers there, are very few in number, and in smell, not to be allowed in competition with ours of England: For, since the differences between the Houses of York and Lancaster have been laid aside, no red nor white Rose have grown there;<sup>320</sup> but the Lillies have taken up the quarrell, and strive in as high a contest there, as the Roses have done in England; for, they are the fairest and purest, that I have ever seen, both red and white, but no sweet smell. He that could transplant the flowers of England to the Barbadoes, would do a rare work, but I fear to little purpose: For, though the virtuall beams of the Sun, give growth and life to all the Plants and Flowers it shines on; yet, the influence is at severall distances, and so the productions varie; some flowers must be warmed, some toasted, and some almost scalded; and to transpose these, and set them in contrary places, were to strive against nature. 'Tis true, that the Herbs of England grow and thrive there, by reason they are stronger, and better able to endure that change; but Flowers, that are of a more tender, nature, will not endure so great heat as they finde there. But to repair this sense, some will say, that Perfumes brought out of Europe, will plentifully supply us: But that will not at all avail [107] us, for what with the heat and moisture of the aire, it is all drawn out, as by my own experience I found it to be most true, though I lapp'd them close up in papers; and put them in drawers of a Cabinet, where no aire could finde passage, they were so close and for Pastills,<sup>321</sup> they lost both their smell and taste.

As for Musick, and such sounds as please the ear, they wish some supplies may come from England, both for Instruments and voyces, to delight that sense, that sometimes when they are tir'd out with their labour, they may have some refreshment by their ears; and to that end, they had a purpose to send for the Musick, that were wont to play at the Black Fryars,<sup>322</sup> and to allow them a competent salary, to make them live as happily there, as they had done in England: And had not extream

---

320 Referring to the episodic dynastic war in England known as the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485).

321 "pastille"; a paste that can be burnt to scent the air

322 a playhouse in London that was closed in 1642 with the commencement of civil war and torn down in 1655

weaknesse, by a miserable long sicknesse, made me uncapable of my undertaking, they had employed me in the businesse, as the likeliest to prevail with those men, whose persons and qualities were well known to me in England. And though I found at Barbadoes some, who had musicall mindes; yet, I found others, whose souls were so fixed upon, and so riveted to the earth, and the profits that arise out of it, as their souls were lifted no higher; and those men think and have been heard to say, that three whip Sawes, going all at once in a Frame or Pit, is the best and sweetest musick that can enter their ears; and to hear a Cow of their own low, or an Assinigo bray no sound can please them better. But these mens souls were never lifted up so high, as to hear the musick of the Sphears,<sup>323</sup> nor to be judges of that Science, as 'tis practised here on earth; and therefore we will leave them to their own earthly delights.

For the sense of feeling, it can be applyed but two waies, either in doing or suffering; the poor Negres and Christian servants, finde it perfectly upon their heads and shoulders, by the hands of their severe Overseers; so that little pleasure is given the sense, by this coercive kind of feeling, more then a plaister for a broken Pate;<sup>324</sup> but, this is but a passive kinde of feeling: But take it in the highest, and most active way it can be applyed, which is upon the skins of women, and they are so sweaty and clammy, as the hand cannot passe over, without being glued & dmented in the passage or motion; and by that means, little pleasure is given to, or received by the agent or the patient: and therefore if this sense be neither pleased in doing nor suffering, we may decline it as uselesse in a Country, where down of Swans, or wool of Beaver is wanting.

Now for the sense of Tasting, I do confesse, it receives a more home satisfaction, then all the rest, by reason of the fruites that grow there; so that the Epicure cannot be deceived, if he take a long journey to please his palate, finding all excellent tastes the world has, comprehended in one single fruit, the Pine. And would not any Prince be content to reduce his base coyne, into Ingots of pure gold. And so much shall serve touching the Barbadoes.

---

323 Ancient astronomers believed that the “music of the spheres” was a music created by the movement and interaction of the celestial spheres that composed the heavens and into which the sun, stars and planets were embedded. This “music” was not necessarily audible, but represented the mathematical perfection that organized the universe and that was also represented in music.

324 “head”; a “plaister for a broken Pate” refers to a plaster used to treat a headache.



## The voluptuous nor lazy persons are not fit to inhabit on this Iland

**S**ome men I have known in England, whose bodies are so strong and able to endure cold, as no weather fits them so well as frost and snow; such Iron bodies would be fit for a Plantation in Russia: For, there is no tracing Hares under the Line, nor sliding on the Ice under either [108] Tropick. Others there are that have heard of the pleasures of Barbadoes, but are loath to leave the pleasures of England behind them. These are of a sluggish humour, and are altogether unfit for so noble an undertaking; but if any such shall happen to come there, he shall be transmitted to the innumerable Armie of Pismires, and Ants, to sting him with such a reproof, as he shall with himselfe any where rather than amongst them. So much is a sluggard detested in a Countrey, where Industry and Activity is to be exercised. The Dwarfe may come there, and twice a year vie in competition with the Giant: for set them both together upon a levell superficies, and at noone, you shall not know by their shadowes who is the tallest man.<sup>325</sup>

The Voluptuous man, who thinks the day not long enough for him to take his pleasure. Nor the sleepe man who thinks the longest night too short for him to dreame out his delights, are not fit to repose and solace themselves upon this Iland; for in the whole compasse of the Zodiacke, they shall neither find St. Barnabies day, or St. Lucies night,<sup>326</sup> the Sun running an even course, is there an indifferent Arbiter of the differences which are between those two Saints, and like a just and cleere sighted Judge, reconciles those extrems to a Medium, of 12 and 12 houres, which equality of time is utterly inconsistent to the humours and dispositions of these men.

But I speak this, to such as have their fancies so Aereall, and refin'd as not to be pleased with ordinary delight; but think to build and settle a felicity here: above the ordinary levell of mankind. Such spirits, are too volatile to fixe on businesse; and therefore I will leave them out, as useless in this Common-wealth. But such as are made of middle earth: and can be content to wave those pleasures, which stand as Blocks, and Portcullises, in their way; and are indeed, the main Remoras<sup>327</sup> in their passage to their profits. Such may here find moderate delights, with moderate labour, and those taken

---

325 Since Barbados is so close to the equator neither dwarf nor giant will cast much of a shadow (the sun being nearly directly overhead).

326 These two feast days, June 11 and December 13, were the summer and winter solstices (longest day and night of the year) under the Julian calendar.

327 i.e. live off another (as remoras do sharks and whales).

moderately will conduce much to their healths, and they that have industry, to imploy that well, may make it the Ladder to clyme to a high degree, of Wealth and opulencie, in this sweet Negotiation of Sugar, provided they have a competent stock to begin with; such I mean as may settle them in a Sugar-work, and lesse then £14000 sterling, will not do that: in a Plantation of 500 acres of land, with a proportionable stock of Servants, Slaves, Horses, Camels, Cattle, Assinigoes, with an Ingenio, and all other houseing, thereunto belonging; such as I have formerly nam'd.

The value of a Plantation Stock't, of five hundred acres of Land, whereof two hundred for Canes, to be sold for £14000

**B**ut one wil say, why should any man that has £14000 in his purse, need to runne so long a Risco,<sup>328</sup> as from hence to the Barbadoes: when he may live with ease and plenty at home; to such a one I answer, that every drone can sit and eate the Honey of his own Hive: But he that can by his own Industry, and activity, (having youth and strength to friends,) raise his fortune, from a small beginning to a very great one, and in his passage to that, doe good to the publike, and be charitable to the poor, and this to be accomplished in a few years, deserves much more commendation and applause. And shall find his bread, gotten by his painfull and honest labour and industry, eate [109] sweeter by much, than his that onely minds his ease, and his belly.

How this purchase of £14000 by providence and good husbandry, may be made with £3000

**N**ow having said this much, I hold it my duty, to give what directions I can, to further any one that shall go about to improve his stock, in this way of Adventure; and if he please to hearken to my directions, he shall find they are no Impossibilities, upon which I ground my Computations: the greatest will be, to find a friend for a Correspondent, that can be really honest, faithful and Industrious, and having arriv'd at that happinesse, (which is the chieftest,) all the rest will be easie; and I shall let you see that without the help of Magick or Inchantment, this great

---

328 "risk"

Purchase of £14000 will be made with £3000 stock, and thus to be ordered.

One thousand pound, is enough to venture at first, because we that are here in England, know not what commodities they want most in the Barbadoes, and to send a great Cargo of unnecessary things, were to have them lye upon our hands to losse. This £1000, I would have thus laid out: £100 in Linnen Cloth, as Canvas and Kentings, which you may buy here in London, of French Marchants, at reasonable rates; and you may hire poor Journy-men Taylers, here in the Citty, that will for very small wages, make that Canvas into Drawers, and Petticoats, for men and women Negres. And part of the Canvas, and the whole of the Kentings,<sup>329</sup> for shirts and drawers for the Christian men Servants, and smocks and peticoates for the women. Some other sorts of Linnen, as Holland or Dowlace, will be there very usefull, for shirts and smocks for the Planters themselves, with their Wives and Children. One hundred pounds more, I would have bestow'd, part on wollen cloath, both fine and coorse, part on Devonshire Carsies,<sup>330</sup> and other fashionable stufes, such as will well endure wearing. Upon Monmoth Capps I would have bestowed £25 you may bespeak them there in Wales, and have them sent up to London, by the waynes at easie rates. Forty pound I think fit to bestow on Irish Ruggs such as are made at Killkennie, and Irish stockings, and these are to be had at St. James's faire at Bristow; the stockings are to be worne in the day, by the Christian servants, the Ruggs to cast about them when they come home at night, sweating and wearied, with their labour; to lap about them, when they rest themselves on their Hamacks at night, than which nothing is more needfull, for the reasons I have formerly given. And these may either be shipt at Bristow, if a ship be ready bound for Barbadoes, or sent to London by waynes which is a cheap way of conveyance. Fifty pound I wish may be bestowed on shooes, and some bootes, to be made at Northampton and sent to London in dry fatts,<sup>331</sup> by Carts; but a speciall care must be taken, that they may be made large, for they will shrink very much when they come into hot Climats. They are to be made of severall sises, for men women and children; they must be kept dry and close, or else the moistnesse of the Ayre will cause them to mould. Gloves will sell well there, and I would have of all kinds, and all sises, that are thinne; but the most usefull, are those of tann'd leather, for they will wash and not shrink in the wetting, and weare very long and soople;<sup>332</sup> you may provide your selfe of these, at Evill, Ilemister and Ilchester, in Somerset-shire; at reasonable rates. Fifteen pound I [110] would bestow

---

329 a linen cloth

330 “kerseys”; a type of woolen cloth

331 “a barrel,” related to “vat.”

332 “supple”

in these Commodities. In fashionable Hats and Bands, both black and coloured, of severall sises and qualities, I would have thirty pounds bestowed. Black Ribbon for mourning, is much worn there, by reason their mortality is greater; and therefore upon that commodity I would bestow twenty pound; and as much in Coloured, of severall sises and colours. For Silkes and Sattins, with gold and silver-Lace, we will leave that alone, till we have better advice; for they are casuall Commodities.

Having now made provision for the back, it is fit to consider the belly, which having no ears, is fitter to be done for, then talkt to; and therefore we will do the best we can, to fill it with such provisions, as will best brook the Sea, and hot Climates: Such are Beefe, well pickled, and well conditioned, in which I would bestow £100 in Pork £50, in Pease for the voyage, £10 in Fish, as Ling, Haberdine, Green-fish, and Stock-fish, £40 in Bisket for the voyage, £10 Cases of Spirits, £40 Wine, £150 Strong Beer, £50 Oyle, Olive £30, Butter £30. And Candles must not be forgotten, because they light us to our suppers, and our beds.

The next thing to be thought on, is Utensills, and working Toolles, such are whip-Sawes, two-handed Sawes, hand-Sawes, Files of severall sises and shapes; Axes, for felling and for hewing; Hatchets, that will fit Carpenters, Joyners, and Coopers; Chisells, but no Mallets, for the wood is harder there to make them: Adzes, of severall sises, Pick-axes, and Mat-hooks; Howes of all sises, but chiefly small ones, to be used with one hand, for with them, the small Negres weed the ground: Plains, Gouges, and Augurs of all sises; hand-Bills, for the Negres to cut the Canes; drawing-Knives, for Joyners. Upon these Utensills I would bestow £60. Upon Iron, Steel, and small Iron pots, for the Negres to boyl their meat, I would bestow £40. And those are to be had in Southsex<sup>333</sup> very cheap, and sent to London in Carts, at time of year, when the waies are drie and hard. Nailes of all sorts, with Hooks, Hinges, and Cramps of Iron; and they are to be had at Bromigham in Staffordshire, much cheaper then in London. And upon that Commodity I would bestow £30. In Sowes<sup>334</sup> of Lead £20, in Powder and Shot £20. If you can get Servants to go with you, they will turn to good accompt, but chiefly if they be Trades-men, as, Carpenters, Joyners, Masons, Smiths, Paviers, and Coopers. The Ballast of the Ship, as also of all Ships that trade there, I would have of Sea-coales, well chosen, for it is a commodity was much wanting when I was there, and will be every day more and more, as the Wood decays: The value I would have bestowed on that, is £50 which will buy 45 Chauldron, or more, according to the burthen of the Ship. And now upon the whole, I have outstript my computation £145 but there

---

333 “Sussex”; an English county

334 “bars”

will be no losse in that; for, I doubt not, (if it please God to give a blessing to our endeavours) but in twelve or fourteen months, to sell the goods, and double the Cargo; and, if you can stay to make the best of your Market, you may make three for one.

This Cargo, well got together, I could wish to be ship't in good order, about the beginning of November, and then by the grace of God, [111] the Ship may arrive at the Barbadoes (if she make no stay by the way) about the middle of December; and it is an ordinary course to sail thither in six weeks: Comming thither in that cool time of the year, your Victualls will be in good condition to be removed into a Store-house, which your Correspondent (who, I account, goes along with it) must provide as speedily as he can, before the Sun makes his return from the Southern Tropick; for then the weather will grow hot, and some of your Goods, as, Butter, Oyle, Candles, and all your Liquors, will take harme in the remove.

The Goods being stowed in a Ware house, or Ware houses, your Correspondent must reserve a handsome room for a Shop, where his servants must attend; for then his Customers will come about him, and he must be carefull whom he trusts; for, as there are some good, so there are many bad pay-masters; for which reason, he must provide himselfe of a Horse, and ride into the Country to get acquaintance; and halfe a dosen good acquaintance, will be able to enform him, how the pulse beats of all the rest: As also by enquiries, he will finde, what prices the Goods bear, which he carries with him, and sell them accordingly; and what valews Sugars bear, that he be not deceived in that Commodity, wherein there is very great care to be had, in taking none but what is very good and Merchantable, and in keeping it drie in good Casks, that no wet or moist aire come to it; and so as he makes his exchanges, and receives in his Sugars, or what other commodities he trades for, they lie ready to send away for England, as he findes occasion, the delivering of the one, making room for the other; for Ships will be every month, some or other, comming for England. If he can transport all his goods, raised upon the Cargo, in eighteen months, it will be very well. This Cargo being doubled at the Barbadoes, that returned back, will produce at least 50 percent. And then your Cargo, which was £1145 at setting out, and being doubled there to £2290 will be at your return for England £3435 of which I will allow for freight, [112] and all other charges £335 so there remaines to account £3100 clear. By which time, I will take for granted, that your Correspondent has bargained, and gone through for a Plantation, which we will presuppose to be of five hundred acres, Stock't as I have formetly laid down (for we must fix upon one, that our computations may be accordingly) if it be more or lesse, the price must be answerable, and the Produce accordingly. And therefore as we began, we will make this our scale, that £14000 is to be paid, for a Plantation of 500 acres Stock't. Before this time, I doubt not, but he is also grown so well verst in the



traffick of the Iland, as to give you advice, what Commodities are fittest for your next Cargo; and according to that instruction, you are to provide, and to come your selfe along with it.

By this time, I hope, your remaining £1855 by good employment in England, is raised to £2000. So then you have £5100 to put into a new Cargo, which I would not have you venture in one Bottom. But if it please God, that no ill chance happen, that Cargo of £5100 having then time enough to make your best Market, may very wel double, and £1000 over; which £1000 I will allow to go out for freight, and all other charges. So then, your Cargo of £5100 being but doubled, will amount unto £10200. But this Cargo being large, will require three years time to sell; so that if you make your bargain for £14000 to be paid for this Plantation, you will be allowed three daies of payment; the first shall be of £4000 to be paid in a year after you are settled in your Plantation; £5000 more at the end of the year following, and £5000 at the end of the year then next following. And no man will doubt such payment, that sees a visible Cargo upon the Iland of £10200 and the produce of the Plantation to boot. Now you see which way this purchase is made up, viz. £4000 the first payment, £5000 the second, and so there remains upon your Cargo £1200 towards payment of the last £5000 and by that time, the profit of your Plantation will raise that with advantage; and then you have your Plantation clear, and freed of all debts. And we will account at the lowest rate, that if two hundred acres of your five hundred, be planted with Canes, and every Acre bear but three thousand weight of Sugar, valuing the Sugar but at three pence per pound, which is thirty seven pound ten shillings every acre, then two hundred acres will produce £7500 in sixteen months; that is, fifteen months for the Canes to grow and be ripe, and a month to Cure the Sugar that is made.

But if you stay four months longer, your Muscavado Sugar, which I valued at three pence per pound, will be Whites, and then the price will be doubled, and that you see is £15000. Out of which we will abate  $\frac{1}{4}$  part for waste, and for the tops and bottomes of the Pots,

		15000
		3750
		-----
32		
15000	(3750	11250
<del>4444</del>		2400
		-----
		13650

which may be rank'd with the Muscavadoes, and that is £3750 and then there remains £11250 to which we will add the value of the Drink, that is made of the skimmings, at

£120 per month, which in twenty months comes to £2400 and then the whole revenue will amount unto £13650 in twenty months. But this profit must come successively in, as the Sugars are made, and they work all the year, except in November and December, when the great downfalls of rain come: and if they pave the waies, between the Canes, for the Slids<sup>335</sup> and Assinigoes to passe, they may work then too; for, little else hinders them, but the unpassableness of the waies.

The yearly revenue of this Plantation, being once set in an orderly course, will amount unto £8866

So then you see, that upon the venturing, and well husbanding of £300 stock, you are settled in a revenue of £682 a month, of which months we will account 13 in a year, so that after your work is set in order, and that you will account the yearly revenue, you will finde it £8866 per Annum.

An Estimate of the expence, that will issue out yearly to keep this Plantation in good order, as you first received it, which we will presuppose to be compleatly furnished with all things

Now let us consider, what the certain charge will be yearly, to [113] keep the Plantation in the condition we receive it, which we will suppose to be compleatly furnished, with all that is necessary thereunto: And first, of all manner of houseing, as convenient dwelling houses, the Mill-house, or Grinding-house where the sugar is prest out; the boyling-house, with five sufficient Coppers for boyling, and one or two for cooling, with all Utensills, that belong to the Mill, and boyling-house the filling room, with stantions; the Still-house with two sufficient Stills, and receivers to hold the drinke, with Cisterns to all these rooms, for holding liquor, and temper; the Cureing house fill'd with stantions, two stories high, and commonly in it seventeen or eighteen hundred pots for cureing; the Smiths forge, with room to lay coales, Iron, and steele; the Carpenter, and Joyners houses, where they lodge and

---

335 “slides” drawn by asses

lay their tools, and much of their fine worke; with sufficient store-houses, to lay such provision as we receive from forraine parts, as Beefe, Pork, Fish, Turtle; and also to keep our drink which is made of the sugar, to the repairing of all which, the premises with the Appurtenances, we will allow no lesse then £500 per Annum.

To this, there is yet more to be added: for though we breed both Negres, Horses, and Cattle; yet that increase, will not supply the moderate decayes which we finde in all those; especially in our Horses and Cattell, therefore we will allow for that £500 per Annum.

The next thing we are to consider is, the feeding of our servants and slaves, over and above the provisions which the Plantations beare, and that will be no great matter, for they are not often fed with bone-meat; But we will allow to the Christian servants, (which are not above thirty in number,) foure barrels of Beefe, and as much of Porke yearly, with two barrels of salt Fish, and 500 poore-Johns, which we have from New England, foure barrels of Turtle, and as many of pickled Makerels, and two of Herrings, for the Negres; all which I have computed, and finde they will amount unto £100, or there abouts; besides the fruit which will be no great matter; for you must be sure to have a Factor, both at New England and Virginia, to provide you of all Commodities those places afford, that are usefull to your plantation; or else your charge will be treble. As from New England, Beefe, Porke, Fish, of all sorts, dried and pickled; from Virginia live-Cattle, Beefe and Tobacco; for theirs at Barbadoes is the worst I think that growes in the world; And for Cattle, no place lyes neerer to provide themselves, and the Virginians cannot have a better market to sell them; for an Oxe of £5 pound price at Virginia, will yield £25 there.

But to go on with our computation: for as we have given order for feeding our people, so we must for their cloathing; and first for the Christians, which we will account to be thirty in number whereof  $\frac{2}{3}$  shall be men, and  $\frac{1}{3}$  women, that we may make our computation the more exact; and for the men, (which are twenty in number,) we will allow one for the supream Overseer, who is to receive and give directions, to all the subordinate Overseers, which we allow to [114] be five more; and those he appoynts to go out with severall Gangs, some tenne, some twenty, more or lesse, according to the ability of the overseer hee so imployes; and these are to go out upon severall Employments, as he gives them directions, some to weed, some to plant, some to fall wood, some to cleave it, some to saw it into boards, some to fetch home, some to cut Canes, others to attend the Ingenio, Boyling-house, Still-house, and Cureing-house; some for Harvest, to cut the Maies, (of which we have three Crops every yeare,) others to gather Provisions, of Bonavist, Maies, Yeames, Potatoes, Cassavie, and dresse it at fit times for their dinners and suppers, for the Christian servants; the Negres always

dressing their own meat themselves, in their little Pots, which is only Plantines, boyl'd or roasted, and some eares of Maies toasted, at the fire; and now and then a Makerell a piece, or two Herrings.

The Prime Overseer may very well deserve Fifty pounds Per Annum, or the value in such Commodities as he likes, that are growing upon the Plantation; for he is a man that the master may allow sometimes to sit at his own Table, and therefore must be clad accordingly. The other five of the Overseers, are to be accounted in the ranke of Servants, whose freedome is not yet purchased, by their five years service, according to the custome of the Iland. And for their cloathing, they shall be allowed three shirts together, to every man for shifts, which will very well last halfe a year, and then as many more. And the like proportion for drawers, and for shooes, every month a paire, that is twelve paire a year; six paire of stockings yeerly, and three Monmouth Capps, and for Sundayes, a doublet of Canvas, and a plaine band of Holland. [115]

The account ballanced, the yearly Revenue will amount unto £7516 19 s.

*An Account of Expences issuing out yearly for Cloathing, for the Christian Servants, both Men and Women, with the Wages of the principall Overseer, which shall be £50 sterling, or the value in such Goods as grow upon the Plantation.*

To the five subordinate Overseers, for each mans cloathing.

	£	s.	d.
Six shirts, at 4 s. a piece	1	04	0
Six pair of Drawers, at 2 s.	0	12	0
Twelve pair of shoes, at 3 s.	1	16	0
Six pair of Linnen or Irish stockings, at 20 d.	0	10	0
Three Monmouth Caps, at 4 s.	0	12	0
Two doublets of Canvas, and six Holland bands	0	15	0
Sum totall for each man	5	9	0
Sum totall for the five Overseers	27	5	0

To the fourteen common servants.

	£	s.	d.
Six shirts to each man	1	04	0
Six pair of drawers to each man	0	12	0
Twelve pair of shoes, at 3 s.	1	16	0
Three Monmouth caps, at 4 s.	0	12	0
Sum totall to each man	4	04	0
Sum totall, of the fourteen servants by the year	58	16	0

Now for the ten women servants, we will dispose of them, thus: Four to attend in the house, and those to be allowed, as followeth in the first Columne, viz.

The four that attend in the house to each of them

	£	s.	d.
Six smocks, at 4 s. a piece	1	04	0
Three petticoats, at 6 s.	0	18	0
Three wastcoats, at 3 s.	0	09	0
Six coifes or caps, at 18 d. a piece	0	09	0
Twelve pair of shoes, at 3 s.	1	16	0
Sum is	4	16	0
Sum totall of the four women that attend in the house	19	4	0

The other six that weed, and do the common work abroad yearly.

	£	s.	d.
Four smocks, at 4 s. a piece	0	16	0
Three petticoats, at 5 s. a piece	0	15	0
Four coifs, at 12 d. a piece	0	04	0
Twelve pair of shoes, at 3 s.	1	16	0
Sum is	3	11	0
Sum totall of the six common women servants	21	06	0



Thirty Rug Gownes for these thirty servants, to cast about them when they come home hot and wearied, from their work, and to sleep in a nights, in their Hamocks, at 25 s. a Gown or mantle. 37 10 0

Now for the Negres, which we will account to be a hundred of both Sexes, we will divide them equally; The fifty men shall be allowed yearly but three pair of Canvas drawers a piece, which at 2 s. a pair, is 6 s.

The women shall be allowed but two petticoats a piece yearly, at 4 s. a piece, which is 8 s. yearly.

So the yearly charge of the fifty men Negres, is	15	00	0
And of the women	20	00	0
Sum is	35	00	0

[116]

Now to sum up all, and draw to a conclusion, we will account, that for the repairing dilapidations, and decayes in the houseing, and all Utensills belonging thereunto,

	£	s.	d.
We will allow yearly to issue out of the Profits, that arise upon the Plantation	500	00	00

As also for the moderate decayes of our Negres, Horses, and Cattle, notwithstanding all our Recruits by breeding all those kinds	500	00	00
---	-----	----	----

For forraign provisions of victualls for our servants and some of our slaves, we will allow yearly	100	00	00
---	-----	----	----

For wages to our principall Overseer yearly	50	00	00
---	----	----	----

By the Abstract of the charge of Cloathing the five subordinate Overseers yearly.	27	05	00
--	----	----	----

By the Abstract of Clothing, the remaining 14 men-servants yearly	58	16	00
---	----	----	----

By the Abstract of Cloathing four women servants that attend in the house	19	04	00
--	----	----	----

By the Abstract of the remaining six women-servants, that do the common work abroad in the fields.	21	06	00
The charge of thirty Rug Gowns for these thirty servants	37	10	00
By the abstract of the cloathing of fifty men-Negres	15	00	00
By the abstract for the cloathing of fifty women-Negres	20	00	00
Sum totall of the expences is	1349	01	00
Sum totall of the yearly profits of the Plantation	8866	00	00
So the clear profit of this Plantation of 500 acres of land amounts to yearly	7516	19	00

A large Revenue for so small a sum as £14000 to purchase, where the Seller does not receive two years value by £1000 and upwards; and yet gives daies of payment.

## An Objection answered, how it comes to passe, that Plantations of so great a yearly value, can be purchased with so little mony

I have been believed in all, or the most part, of my former descriptions and computations, concerning this Iland, and the waies to attain the profits that are there to be gathered; but when I come to this point, no man gives me credit, the businesse seeming impossible, that any understanding man, that is owner of a Plantation of this value, should sell it for so inconsiderable a sum: and I do not at all [117] blame the incredulity of these persons; for, if experience had not taught me the contrary, I should undoubtedly be of their perswasion. But lest I should, by an over-weening opinion, hope, that my experience (which is only to my selfe) should mislead any man besides his reason, which every knowing man ought to be guided and governed by, I will without straying or forcing a reason, deliver a plain and naked

truth, in as plain language, as is fitting such a subject, which I doubt not but will persuade much in the businesse.

'Tis a known truth there, that no man has attained to such a fortune as this, upon a small beginning, that has not met with many rubs and obstacles in his way, and sometimes fallings back, let his pains and industry be what it will: I call those fallings back, when either by fire, which often happens there; or death of Cattle, which is as frequent as the other; or by losses at Sea, which sometimes will happen, of which I can bring lively instances: If either of these misfortunes fall, it stands in an equall ballance, whether ever that man recover, upon whom these misfortunes fall: But, if two of these happen together, or one in the neck of another, there is great odds to be laid, that he never shall be able to redeem himselfe, from an inevitable ruine; For, if fire happen, his stock is consumed, and sometimes his house; if his Cattle die, the work stands still, and with either of these, his credit falls; so as if he be not well friended, he never can entertain a hope to rise again.

These toyls of body and minde, and these misfortunes together, will deprese and wear out the blest spirits in the world, and will cause them to think, what a happie thing it is, to spend the remainder of their lives in rest and quiet in their own Countries. And I do believe, there are few of them, whose mindes are not overballanc'd with avarice and lucre, that would not be glad to sell good penni-worths, to settle themselves quietly in England. Besides the casualties which I have named, there is yet one of neerer Concern then all the rest, and that is, their own healths, than which, nothing is more to be valued; for, sicknesses are there more grievous, and mortality greater by far, than in England, and these diseases many times contagious: And if a rich man, either by his own ill diet or distemper, or by infection, fall into such a sicknesse, he will finde there a plentifull want of such remedies, as are to be found in England. Other reasons, and strong ones, they have, that induce them to hanker after their own Country, and those are, to enjoy the company of their old friends, and to raise up families to themselves, with a Sum which they have acquired by their toyle and industry, and often hazards of their lives, whose beginnings were slight and inconsiderable; and what can be a greater comfort, both to themselves, and their friends, then such an enjoyment. But I speak not this to discourage any man, that has a mind to improve his Estate, by adventuring upon such a Purchase; for, though the Planter, by long and tedious pain and industry, have worn out his life, in the acquist of his fortune; yet, the Buyer, by his purchase, is so well and happily seated, as he need endure no such hardships, but may go on in the managing his businesse, with much ease, and some pleasure; and in a dosen years, return back with a [118] very plentifull fortune, and may carry with him from England, better remedies for his health, then

they, who for a long time had neither means to provide, nor mony to purchase it; for, though some Simples<sup>336</sup> grow there, that are more proper for the bodies of the Natives, than any we can bring from forraigne parts, and no doubt would be so for our bodies too, if wee knew the true use of them; yet wanting that knowledge, we are faine to make use of our own.

## Somewhat of the Diseases of the Country, as also of the Physitians

**B**ut when able and skilfull Physitians shall come, whose knowledge can make the right experiment and use of the vertues of those simples that grow there, they will no doubt finde them more efficacious, and prevalent to their healths, then those they bring from forraigne parts. For certainly every Climate produces Simples more proper to cure the diseases that are bred there, than those that are transported from any other part of the world: such care the great Physitian to mankind takes for our convenience.

Somewhat I have said of the diseases that raige in Generall in this Iland, but have falne on no particuler, though I have felt the power and Tyranny of it upon mine own body, as much as any man that has past through it to death, though it pleased the mercifull God to raise me up againe: for I have it to shew under the hand of Colonell Thomas Modiford in whose house I lay sick, that he saw me dead without any appearance of life, three several times, not as in sounding but dying fits, and yet recover'd at last.

## An incomparable medicine for the stone

**T**o tell the tedious particulars of my sicknesse, and the severall drenches our Ignorant Quacksalvers<sup>337</sup> there gave me, will prove but a troublesome relation, and therefore I am willing to decline it: Only this much, that it began with a Fever, and as it is the custome of that disease there to cause Bindings, Costivenesse, and consequently Gripings, and Tortion in the Bowels, so it far'd with me, that for a fortnight together had not the least evacuation by Seige, which put me to such Torment as in all that time I have not slept; and want of that, wore me out to such a weaknesse,

---

336 a plant that can be used as a medicinal ingredient

337 “fake healers”

as I was not then in a condition to take any remedy at all. This excessive heat within begat a new torment within me, the Stone;<sup>338</sup> which stopt my passage so as in foureteen dayes together no drop of water came from me; But contrary to my expectation, God Almighty sent me a Remedie for that, and such a one as all the whole world cannot afford the like: for in ten hours after I tooke it, I found my selfe not onely eas'd, but perfectly cur'd of that Torment, at least for the present, for it not only broke, but brought away all the Stones and gravell that stopt my passage, so that my water came as freely from me as ever, and carried before it such quantities of broken stones and gravell, as in my whole life I have not seen the like. About three weeks or a month after this, I became in the same distresse and felt the like Torment, whereupon I took the same medicine; which gave me the same help. Now if it did thus to a body so worne out as mine, where Nature was so decay'd as it could operate little to the cure; what will this medicine doe, when it meets with such Organs as can contribute mainly to assist it? But I give the reader but a sooty relation of my [119] Maladies, and indeed very unfit for his eares, yet when I shal prescribe the remedy, which may happen to concerne him, I may hope to make him amends: for truly my touching upon the disease, was but to usher in the cure, which shall follow close after, and 'tis briefly thus. Take the Pisle of a green Turtle, which lives in the Sea, dry it with a moderate heat, pound it in a Morter to powder, and take of this as much as wil lye upon a shilling, in Beere or the like, Ale or White wine, and in a very short time it will doe the cure. If this secret had bin known in Europe but a dosen years since, no doubt we had bin well stor'd with it by this time, for 'tis to be had both at the Charibby and Lucayicke Ilands,<sup>339</sup> where these fishes abound.

Plunquet, a great Pirate, took a ship in one of the Bayes.  
I Embarked, and set sail for England, the fifteenth of  
Aprill, 1650.

**Y**et so slow was my recovery of the maine sicknesse and my relapses so frequent, as I was ever and anon, looking out to meet my familiar Companion Death; my Memory and Intellect suffering the same decayes with my body, for I could hardly give an account of 2/3 of the time I was sick; but as my health increast, they

---

338 a kidney stone in Ligon's urinary tract or bladder

339 "Caribby" and "Lucayan" islands; The Lucayan Archipelago includes the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos islands.



return'd. In three months more, I was able to ride down to the Bridge, where finding a ship bound for England, I agreed for my passage and dyet by the way; and (as the manner of all Masters of ships is,) he made me large promises, of plentiful provisions aboard, as Beefe, Porke, Pease Fish, Oyle, Bisket, Beere, and some Wine; This Ship had bin fifteen months out of England, and had traded at Guinny and Binny for Gold and Elephants teeth, but those commodities taking up but little room, the Captaine made the Barbadoes in his way home, intending to take in his full lading of Sugar, and such other commodities as that Iland afforded; and so being ready to set sayle, my selfe and divers other Gentlemen embarkt, upon the fiftteenth of April 1650, at twelve a clock at night; which time our Master made choyce of, that he might the better passe undescri'd by a well known Pirate, that had for many dayes layne hovering about the Iland, to take any ships that traded for London, by vertue of a Commission as he pretended, from the Marquesse of Ormond.<sup>340</sup> This Pirate was an Irish man, his name Plunquet, a man bold enough: but had the character of being more mercilesse and cruell, then became a valiant man.

The abuses of the Captains and Masters of ships, that promise large provision of Victuall and Drink to their passengers; and when they need it most, fail them grossely

**T**o confirme the first part of his character; he took a ship in one of the Habours of the Iland, out of which he furnisht himselfe with such things as he wanted, but left the carcasse of the vessell, to floate at large. He had there a Frigot of about 500 Tunns, and a small vessell to wayte on her, but the night cover'd us from being disdiscern'd by him, and so we came safely off the Iland. About a fortnight after we had bin at sea, our Master complain'd, that his men had abus'd him, and (for some commodities usefull to themselves) had truckt away the greatest part of his Bisket; So that instead of bread, we were serv'd with the sweepings and dust of the bread roome, which caused a generall complaint of all the passengers but no remedy: our Pease must now supply that want, which with some Physicall perswasion of the Master, that it was as hearty and binding as bread, we rested satisfied, with this Motto, Patience upon

---

340 James Butler (1610-1688), eventually Duke of Ormond, was the leading Irish supporter of Charles I during the civil wars. He was eventually defeated in 1650 by Oliver Cromwell and fled to join Charles II's court in exile in France.

force. The next thing wanting, was Fish, an excellent food at Sea; and the want of that troubled us much, yet the [120] same remedy must serve as for the other, Patience.

## A storme at Sea, out of which we were delivered (under God) by a little Virgin, being a passenger in the Ship

**T**he next thing wanting was Porke; and the last Beere, which put as clean out of all Patience; So that now our staple food of the Ship, was onely Beeffe, a few Pease, and for drink water that had bin fifteen months out of England; finding how ill we were accommodated, we desir'd the Master to put in at Fiall, One of the Ilands of Azores,<sup>341</sup> a little to refresh our selves, which Iland was not much out of our way, but the Master loath to be at the charge of re-victualling, and losse of time; refus'd to hearken to us, and being a request much to his disadvantage, slighted us and went on, till he was past recovery of those Ilands, and then a violent storme took us, and in that storme a sad accident, which happened by meanes of a Portugall, who being a Sea-man, and trusted at the Helm, who though he have a compasse before him, yet is mainly guided by the quarter Master that Conns the ship above, upon the quarter deck; whose directions the Portugall mistooke, being not well verst in the English tongue, and so steer'd the Ship, so neer the winde, that she came upon her staves, which caused such a fluttering of the sayles, against the Masts, (the winde being extreame violent) as they tore all in peeces, Nor was there any other sayles in the ship, all being spent in the long voyage to Guinny; nor any thread in the ship, to mend them, so that now the Master (though too late) began to repent him of not taking our Counsell to goe to Fiall.

But how to redeeme us out of this certaine ruine, neither the Master, nor his Mates could tell; for though the winds blew never so faire, we lay still at Hull; and to make use of the Tide, in the Maine, was altogether vaine and hopelesse. Our victualls too, being at a very low Ebbe, could not last us many dayes. So that all that were in the ship, both Sea-men and Passengers, were gazing one upon another, what to doe when our small remainder of provision came to an end. But the Sea-men, who were the greater number, resolv'd, the Passengers should be drest and eaten, before any of them should goe to the Pot;<sup>342</sup> And so the next thing to be thought on was, which of

---

341 The Azores, a Portuguese colony near the center of the Atlantic ocean.

342 Stories of cannibalism were part of the genre of the traveler's tale and a reminder of the dangers Europeans faced abroad not only due to running out of supplies, but from moral degeneration.

the Passengers should dye first, for they were all design'd to be eaten; So they resolved upon the fattest and healthfullest first, as likely to be the best meat, and so the next, and next, as they eate Cherries, the best first. In this Election I thought my selfe secure, for my body being nothing but a bagg-full of Hydroptique humours,<sup>343</sup> they knew not which way to dresse me, but I should dissolve and come to nothing in the Cooking; At last the Cooper took me into his consideration, and said that if they would hearken to him, there might be yet some use made of me; and that was in his opinion the best; that seeing my body was not of a consistence to satisfie their hunger, it might serve to quench their thirst. So I saying a short Prayer against drought and thirst, remain'd in expectation of my doome with the rest; So merry these kinde of men can make themselves, in the midst of dangers, who are so accustomed to them; And certainly those men, whose lives are so [121] frequently exposed to such hazards, do not set that value upon them as others, who live in a quiet security; yet, when they put themselves upon any noble action, they will sell their lives at such a rate, as none shall out-bid them; and the custome of these hazards, makes them more valiant then other men; and those amongst them, that do found their courage upon honest grounds, are certainly valiant in a high perfection.

At last, a little Virgin, who was a passenger in the Ship, stood up upon the quarter deck, like a she-Worthy, and said, that if they would be rul'd by her, she would not only be the contriver, but the acter of our deliverance. At whose speech, we all gave a strict attention, as ready to contribute our help to all she commanded; which was, that the Ship-Carpenter should make her a Distaffe and Spindle, and the Saylers combe out some of the Occome:<sup>344</sup> with which instruments and materialls, she doubted not, but to make such a quantity of thread, as to repair our then uselesse Sailes; which accordingly she did, and by her vertue (under God) we held our lives.

Though such an accident as this, and such a deliverance, deserve a gratefull commemoration; yet, this is not all the use we are to make of it, somewhat more may be considered, that may prevent dangers for the future; and that is, the great abuse of Captaines and Masters of Ships, who promise to their Passengers, such plenty of victualls, as may serve them the whole voyage: But, before they be halfe way, either pinch them of a great part, or give them that which is nastie and unwholsome. And therefore I could wish every man, that is to go a long voyage, to carry a reserve of his own, of such viands, as will last, and to put that up safe; for, if it be not under lock and key, they are never the neer; for, the Saylers will as certainly take it, as you trust

---

343 “swollen with water”

344 threads from the hemp rope used onboard ships

it to their honesties: Complaine to the Master, and you finde no remedy. One thing I have observed, let a Sayler steal any part of the Ships provision, he shall be sure to have severe punishment; but, if from a Passenger, though it concern him never so neerly, his remedy is to be laughed at. These enormities are fit to be complained on at the Trinity-house,<sup>345</sup> that some redresse may be had; for, the abuses are grievous.

Out of this danger at Sea, it has pleased the God of all mercy to deliver me, as also from a grievous and tedious sicknesse on land, in a strange Country; For which, may his holy Name be eternally blessed and praised, for ever and ever.

I am now cast in Prison, by the subtle practices of some, whom I have formerly called Friends: But the eternall and mercifull God has been pleased to visit and comfort me, and to raise me up such friends, as have kept me from cold and hunger, whose charities in an Age, where cruelties and tyrannies are exercised in so high a measure, may be accounted a prodigie. But, I doubt not of my release out of this restraint, by the power of him, [122] who is able to do all in all. For, as David said to Saul, that God, who had delivered him out of the paw of the Lion, and out of the paw of the Bear, would deliver him from that uncircumcised Philistine, Goliath of Gath:<sup>346</sup> So may I now say; that God, which has delivered me from a sicknesse to death, on land, and from shipwrack and hazards at Sea, will also deliver me from this uncircumcised Philistine, the Upper Bench, than which, the burning fire of a Feavour, nor the raging waves of the Sea, are more formidable: But, we have seen and suffered greater things. And when the great Leveller of the world, Death, shall run his progresse, all Estates will be laid even.

*Mors Sceptra Ligonibus aequat.*<sup>347</sup>

FINIS.

---

345 A corporation established in 1514 to oversee the welfare of English seamen. Trinity House maintained harbor pilots, lighthouses, and oversaw charity for crippled sailors. The corporation also included a court with jurisdiction over a number of maritime issues.

346 The story of David slaying the giant Goliath is told in 1 Samuel 17. Jews were circumcised as a sign of their covenant with God.

347 “Death makes both sceptre and spade equal.” i.e. the greatest and the least will suffer death and so be made equal. Note the pun on “Ligon,” with “ligonibus.”