

SOURIRE.

(Lines suggested by an incident in Ouida's novel, "Pascarel.")

She only smiled; but by her laughing lips—
Twin flowers wherefrom Love subtle sweetness sips,
(Seeing them, a rose declined in envious death),
Lithe, lovely, laden with their balmy breath—
A wordless fate was fixed for me, beguiled:
She only smiled.

As men remember in their dying hour
Some silent lute, a long-since faded flower,
Or dear delight of dim departed days,
Wherein they trod life's labyrinthine ways;
I shall remember with heart undefiled:
She only smiled.

Death will no horrors hold if he but mask
His visage in that smile; 'tis all I ask.
If dreamless rest there be, I shall not know
Whether she ever saw I loved her so.
The slavery of sleep seems passing mild:
She only smiled.

GWYN ARAUN.

THE SUNNY SOUTH.

I.

People of even a slightly imaginative temperament, who have lived for the most part in a northern climate such as ours, probably find no field on which the imagination lingers with more delight than upon the marvels of a tropical country. After spending an hour in a rich conservatory, where the thermometer is kept up to 80 or 90 degrees by an artificial imitation of a tropical sun, where the air is heavy with the richest perfumes from the fruit and blossoms of orange, peach and lemon, and from the most luxuriant vines and flowers of every description, one is led, for the time being, to think of what must be the oppressiveness to us who have breathed the pure, free northern air, of being suddenly transported into such a climate, with no chance of escape. The heaviness of the atmosphere would be stifling at first, yet sweet as though laden with the rich odor of wine, the plants and foliage would stand forth like staring monsters, while the sands that fringe the windless sea would seem a bed of fire on which we would hesitate to plant the naked foot. It has been my fortune to receive at intervals items of correspondence from one so transplanted. The hope that they prove of interest has led me to recall some of them. As actual experience of every day life, and so distinct from set narrative, they may correct imagination, or if it be true that truth is often stranger than fiction, may incite it. The source from which I receive my information is the West Indian Island of Trinidad, and the colony of British Guiana. During his stay in Trinidad, my correspondent relates a little incident as an example of what is always liable to occur to fresh arrivals. A party of two or three besides himself were enjoying a morning ride, the morning and evening being the only time of the day in which such exercise can be indulged in with safety, owing to the heat of the sun. After having proceeded for some distance, chatting on the way, they resolved to rest their ponies in the shade of some trees which appeared on a rising slope before them. One of the number, seeing what looked like beautiful, sweet oranges hanging on the branches, climbed one of the trees, plucked some fruit and began to eat. The ejaculations and facial contortions which followed furnished considerable amusement for the rest, who knew that the fruit was wild and exceedingly bitter. And, in the matter of fruit, the fact is, contrary to what we might naturally suppose, we are better off than the people of Guiana. Much of the fruit is so insipid and

becomes so quickly wilted, that it is almost worthless, though this may be partly due to a nausea on the part of the taster. The supply of vegetables is better as the prices are correspondingly higher, though not so much as in meats. Such imported articles as potatoes lose almost all their taste, and their place is supplied by yams, cascada, and the ordinary vegetables used as "greens," which are quite common. The lemon is extensively used, and the effect of having branches, laden with fruit, waving in at your open window as you awake in the morning must be pleasant indeed. What an elysium to the residence man would that climate be where it is impossible to keep for "hach" on the following morning, the remains of a roast for dinner. This would, however, be counterbalanced by the rather novel procedure of supping butter from a tin dish, for in some such receptacle must it be held to prevent its departure. The scientist would have to deposit his specimens in alcohol at once, or catch new fish each day.

The social life of the people of Georgetown is modelled on that of European cities. The white population is much mixed, consisting of adventurers from almost every land under the sun, besides wealthy merchants, planters and traders. The thrift of the Northern climate is practically unknown. Those filling offices from the Imperial Government with light duties and good salaries attached to them, often take the lead in extravagance and fast living. The ball-rooms are crowded, for all indulge in dancing as a matter of course at all seasons of the year, for one month is much the same as another, and the wonder is that they can dance so much without melting. Lawn tennis is the favourite out-door amusement, though the Coolies can play foot-ball at noon-day, and what is more, enjoy it. Betting and gambling at races is very common. No doubt that has something to do with the pressure that is often felt in money matters, though at a race or fair there seems to be always plenty, even when there is none anywhere else. During the last two years there has been very severe depression in the sugar trade, owing to the damage caused by the heavy floods at the rainy season, and other causes. Growing sugar-cane is the staple industry. Men have sunk thousands of pounds in estates, and being forced at last to give them up, are not only reduced to poverty but are unfitted and enervated for business of other kinds, at least in another climate. The position of such is worse than that of the Irish tenant.

The best newspapers are *The Argosy* and *The Daily Chronicle* of Georgetown. The subscription rate is \$12.00 per annum for a four-page daily. This is but one item showing the high cost of living generally, the ordinary rate for board being \$40.00 per month. The matter in the papers is well arranged, and contains articles from the best English magazines. The reports of the law courts are in many instances most amusing, and the punishments inflicted very summary. The offences are for the most part committed by the negroes, such as assaults, wife-beating, stabbing, abusive language, etc. The cuts illustrative of "funny" items surpass in ugliness even those that are sometimes given in our own dailies. The editorials involve Imperial politics relative to the appointment of the Governors, the Irish question, &c., as well as local subjects, such as the drainage of the West coast, the discussions of which are paralleled by our much-vexed question of the water-works investigation.

At the rear of the estates the forest is alive with parrots, monkeys and other game. I suppose a reader of Darwin, or indeed anyone, would hesitate at shooting a monkey lest, in its dying moments, like Cassandra, ἀντι φωνῆς φράζῃ καρβάνω χερί, "its outlandish motions should serve as voice to speak its thoughts."

Reptiles, though numerous, seldom make themselves offensive by their obtrusiveness, though on one occasion a poisonous black snake found its way into church during service, causing uneasiness among the ladies present, until it was dispatched by the boldest Coolie members of the congregation, and worship again resumed. The church itself, and the Coolie population who till the estates, present further peculiarities.

T. A. G.