

duty it is, in conjunction with the Minister, to watch over the *material* interests of religion—to see that monies voted for the repair of Churches, School-Houses, &c., are properly expended. These gentlemen, however, are chosen merely from their outward respectability, and are, as the case may be, of high church, low church, or no church at all. The Minister is also, *ex officio*, President of the Board of Health, and of the Board of Guardians of the Poor,—functions which cannot be discharged in a large and populous parish without a considerable amount of labour and trouble. Hence you will perceive that our hands are always sufficiently full of business.

Perhaps I should have given you, before now, my impressions of the general features of the country. The contrast between the physical features of Nova Scotia and those of British Guiana is certainly very great. Where I a painter, I might dwell at some length upon this subject, as there is here abundance of scope for delineations of this kind; but I have scarcely seen enough of the colony yet to justify such a portraiture. In some respects New Amsterdam reminds me of Charlottetown, P.E. Island. The two harbours have many points of resemblance, as viewed from the town. The landscape around is of the same character also; there is the same stillness and repose; and every tree and shrub seems to have grown up undisturbed by the gale; and in beauty and richness of verdure there is likewise a close similarity, as well as in the flatness and general level nature of the country. As for animated nature, we have plenty at least of the feathered varieties; but few or none of them excel even the unmusical tribes of Nova Scotia. We are wakened every morning by a yellowbreasted aspirant for musical honours, about the size of a robin, which emits a note or two as it restlessly flutters from twig to twig, chirping something very like the scotch name—"Hector Reith—Hector Reith!" One evening shortly after my arrival here, I was aroused from a reverie by hearing the melodious notes of a veritable black bird proceeding from a neighbouring tree. At first I thought I must be mistaken, but understood afterwards that, many years ago, a number of those birds had been brought to the colony and set at liberty. As yet, I have never seen a parrot but in a cage, nor a monkey without a chain. In fact, I am very little of a scientific naturalist, and except when a bird flies into my room, and attracts my notice by abortive attempts to get out again, I pay no attention to any of the class. I am principally interested in the musquitoes which seem to have a strong attachment for myself and family. My ideas of duty, however, are scarcely so expansive as those of the famous saint of old, who thought that the injunction to "preach the gospel to every creature," included even the fishes, and therefore went to the seaside and declaimed to the

sinny inhabitants upon the connexion between the Old and New Testaments.

A learned Divine of the present age has written an excellent and very popular work in answer to the question "Is it possible to make the best of both worlds?" I agree with his conclusions so far at least as to believe that the material interests of a country are deserving of some degree of attention even on the part of the missionary or minister of religion. Providence has endowed this country, which is well entitled to the name of "the magnificent province" with great natural capabilities. There is not a spot in the world more capable of producing, in proportion, almost any product of the tropics. With an extent of surface of 75,000 square miles, or 48 millions of acres, a soil of almost unequalled depth and richness, vegetation of the most luxuriant character, and considerable facilities for communication by water, and to some extent by rail, there seems to be no limit to its powers, and but one drawback—the scarcity of labour. This rich alluvial soil spreads along a seaboard of 250 miles, and runs inland to the distance of 30 miles; but of this extensive territory only about 60,000 acres, are presently under cultivation, and these supply sugar to England at the rate of about a ton per acre yearly. Demerara sugars hold a position second to none for refining purposes, either in the British or American markets, and the specimens of them exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1855 were honoured by the award of a first class silver medal. But for British Guiana, some years ago, was not dependent on the production of sugar. In the beginning of the century cotton was the principal staple. In 1803 the colonies of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice shipped about 70,000 bales of cotton. About 1810 an Imperial Act of Parliament removed protection on British produced cotton, leaving it still on sugar and coffee; the small amount of available labour immediately left the unprotected for the protected articles, and some 300 estates were abandoned. The quality of Demerara cotton is recognised as only second to that of Sea Island. A similar fate befel the growth of coffee, of which Guiana in 1830 shipped about 10,000,000 lbs., but of which she does not now grow enough for her own consumption. The colony having been deprived of those two branches of industry, turned its attention to rice, but of this article only one shipment was made. This was in 1854 when for want of hands great part of the crop rotted on the ground. There are tens of thousands of acres admirably adapted for this crop, but labour cannot be obtained. For the growth of anything that may be required, all that the colony asks is reasonable facilities for obtaining labour,—which I trust we may soon obtain.

The second of July last was a great day among the Coolies in this part of the

colony. They collected in great numbers from all parts around New Amsterdam for the purpose of holding a grand religious festival, the exact nature of which I was unable to ascertain, some giving one explanation of it and others another. Having previously prepared a number of pagodas or pyramid-shaped—houses, not unlike in form to the sugar ornaments placed on the top of a bride's cake, and made out of light bamboo cane, they came into town, men, women and children, all dressed for the occasion. These houses, or whatever they may be called, were of various sizes, some larger and some smaller (15, 20 and 30 feet in height) and were supported on the shoulders of men, by means of two long poles which ran along both sides of the structure. There was considerable taste displayed both in their graceful forms, and in the arrangement of the colours, no two being altogether alike, and yet bearing a general resemblance to each other. Though some of them were of considerable size, they appeared to be very light, being merely composed of colored paper bespangled with gold tinsel, stretched upon a frame work of bamboo, the colour being of every hue and arranged in genuine Asiatic style. The lowest story of each house, which was of course the largest, seemed to be the *sanctuary* where the Deity was enshrined. The entrance was open, and something about the size of a child a year or two old, muffled up in calicoes, appeared within; but it was difficult for a spectator to see what like it was. After the true pagan fashion, this Deity was made of *clay*, "the workmanship of their own hands"; and it was this *clay* God that, in the midst of a civilised and christian community, they had this day met to honour! Every now and then the procession stopped for a little, when young women came forward, and threw up handfuls of rice,—probably as an offering to their idol, who, they doubtless supposed, had furnished them with the staff of life.

As they proceeded slowly along, their numbers were swelled by the black population who appeared to enter warmly into the festivities. The mixed mass of Coolies and negroes, forming a motley throng of all ages, was quite picturesque. A man with a long rod having knobs at both ends, went in advance, moving about with great rapidity and twirling his stick very adroitly, shifting it from hand to hand as quick as thought, and thus keeping off the crowd who would otherwise have obstructed the procession. He was followed by another man with a sword in each hand, whose motions were equally rapid and graceful, and who brandished his weapons in grand style, looking very fierce at any one who did not instantly give way. Meanwhile, the drums were not idle, but added their discordant din to the noise of the throng, ever and anon rending the air with shouts, and calling upon the name of their God.