

In Demerara we have an experienced agricultural chemist, Dr. Shier, retained by the Colony, who has already effected much good by his experiments and reports. Barbados has the advantage of Dr. Davy, a relative of the distinguished Sir Humphrey Davy. Trinidad is not far behind-hand; for some time past very able treatises on sugar manufacture have appeared in the local journals, and we have the pleasure of publishing in our present number a valuable paper on the improvements necessary in sugar-mills, by Dr. Mitchell. Jamaica is availing itself of the services of a trained and practical chemist, in the person of Mr. Churchill; and many of her island writers, Mr. Thomas Hennay, Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. Cargill, and others, have published most valuable treatises on sugar cultivation and manufacture, to which we have given hitherto wanting. Dr. Evans therefore comes to their aid at a most seasonable juncture, and a more competent guide and instructor they could not have. He is, moreover, we are glad to find, a staunch advocate of Colonial interests. Thus, speaking of the Sugar Duties' Act, he says—

"The object of the Sugar Duties' Act of 1846, is the immediate reduction of duties upon all foreign sugars and their prospective equalisation in a very ^{large} ^{scale} the sugars indiscriminately, whether of British or foreign growth, or the produce of free or slave labour. This Act professes to be based upon the principles of free trade, but its details show that it is very far from being so. It removes all protection from sugars, the produce of British possessions; but it has not removed one single restriction imposed upon the grower. These may be stated to be as follow:—

"1st. Restrictions imposed upon the obtaining an increase of labour by immigration.

"The price of labour forms indubitably, the most considerable item in the disbursements of a sugar estate in the British West Indies; the planter, therefore, naturally regards it as the chief obstacle to his competition with his foreign rival. In the Spanish West Indian Colonies, and in Brazil, not only does slavery exist, but, in spite of all our efforts to check it, the slave trade continues. These of themselves, it might be supposed, would be formidable advantages on the side of the sugar planter in those countries. But they are not the only ones he possesses. If he choose to employ free labour, he can obtain it where he pleases; he can import it under any flag; he is not restricted by any Passenger Act; and he can enter into arrangements, by contract or otherwise, with the parties offering their services, either in the country whence they come, or in that where they are brought, without limitation of time. From these causes the Spanish planter could import labourers under a British flag, in an English vessel, at an ultimate cost of probably half that which is now paid in our own Colonies.

"2nd. Restrictions on the use of adequate means to obtain both a larger amount of extract, and also one of better quality than is now effected.

"Until a very recent period the planter was not permitted, in consequence of the fiscal regulations then in force, to import into this country sugar of a quality superior to that known as Muscovado.

"It is to this cause that we must attribute the imperfect mode of manufacture at present practised in the Colonies; for how can we expect to find improvement when such effectual means are enforced to prevent it? Although the duties attached to sugars of different qualities have been greatly reduced, they have not been equalised; and a very considerable protection is still kept up in favour of the refiner. This system of taxation is in the highest degree injudicious; for, to quote part of an address from M. Peligot to Admiral Duperré, formerly minister of state for the French Colonies, 'it has been demonstrated, that the sugar which pre-exists in the cane is white, and it is always so obtained when a part of it has not been destroyed. That the proportion which is obtained is consequently greater the less dark it is in colour.' And he asks, 'What ought to be thought of a legislative measure which imposes upon industry the exorbitant obligation of producing at the same time, what is bad in quality and small in quantity, and which places a barrier before one of those things which the laws ought most to respect, progressive amelioration!'

"3rd. Restrictions on the importation of the raw material (that is cane-juice in a state of inspissation) for manufacture in this country.

"The Planter contends, 'that he ought to be permitted to bring home his cane-juice in the form of a concrete, on the payment the cion of such a duty as will be commensurate with that at present attached to sugar and molasses; or, that he should be allowed to manufacture it in bond, paying upon his extracts the duties fixed for sugars of corresponding qualities.'