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LITERATURE.

HISTORY OF THE BRITISH COLONIES.

By R. Montgomery Martin, F. S. S. vol. II.—*The West Indies*. London: Cochran & M'Crone.

Concluded.

The pitch supplied by the bituminous lake of Trinidad has been converted to a very extraordinary, though useful purpose.

"The pitch of the lake has been adopted for the improvement of the roads, particularly in the fertile district of Naparima, where it was brought for the purpose, from La Brea. In the wet season the roads at Naparima are almost impassible in those parts where there has been no application of the pitch; but where the pitch has been applied, which is the case for several miles in North Naparima; there is a hard surface formed, which makes transport comparatively easy, both from the support afforded and the little friction of the hardened pitch."

Montserrat supplies us with the following amusing story, which we do not remember to have heard before:

"Montserrat had Irish colonists for its early settlers, and the negroes to this day have the Connaught brogue curiously and ludicrously engrafted on the African jargon. It is said that a Connaught man, on arriving at Montserrat, was, to his astonishment, hailed in vernacular Irish by a negro from one of the first boats, that came along side—'Thunder and turf' exclaimed Pat, 'how long have you been here?' 'Three months,' answered Quashy. 'Three months? and so black already!!! *Hanum a Diaoul,*' says Pat, thinking Quashy a de-davant countryman, 'I'll not stay among ye;' and in a few hours the Connaught man was on his return, with a white skin, to the Emerald Isle."

Mr. Martin dwells at great length on the advantages that Honduras offers to an emigrant, and strenuously recommends its colonization. The emigration question is too important for us to omit any thing by which it may be elucidated.

"I cannot conclude this Chapter without expressing my regret, that such an important settlement as Honduras, should have been so long neglected at home. It is valuable not only in a political but in a commercial aspect: inasmuch as it opens to our trade new regions and countries, while its rich and fertile lands await only the skillful handiwork of the British emigrant to pour forth the abundance of life. The eloquent annalist of Jamaica, writing within the last two or three years, says, "it is but within the last two or few months that the town of Peten, situated 260 miles west of Balize, at the head of its magnificent river,

has been exposed to speculation, or even to our acquaintance. A road is now open, and a lively intercourse with the British merchants has arisen here. Fleets of Indian pinnaces repair almost weekly to Balize, and return loaded with articles of British manufacture. Peten, formerly the capital of the Izaac Indians, was one of the last conquests of the Spaniards in 1679. It stands on an island in the centre of the extensive freshwater lake Itza, in lat. 16 N., long. 91, 16, W. Within fifty miles of it the enterprising spirit of the British settler has already extended the search for mahogany; and what may not be expected from a people so industrious, so judicious, and so persevering? The Itza is 26 leagues in circumference, and its pure waters, to the depth of 30 fathoms, produce the most excellent fish. The islands of Sepet, Galves, Bixet, and Coju, lie scattered over its surface, and afforded a delicious retreat to 10,000 inhabitants, who form part of the new republic of central America within the spiritual jurisdiction of the Mexican diocese of Yucatan. The fertile soil yields two harvests in the year, producing maize, chieppa pepper, balsam, vanilla, cotton, indigo, cocoa, cochineal, brazil wood, and the most exquisite fruits in wasteful abundance. Several navigable rivers flowing thence are lost in the Great Pacific, and suggest an easy communication with the British limits. Within ten leagues of the shores of the Itza lake, commences the ridge of the Alabaster Mountains, on whose surface glitter in vast profusion the green, the brown, and the variegated jaspers, while the forests are filled with wild and monstrous beasts, the Equus Bifulcus, or Chinese horse, and with tigers and lions of a degenerate breed. Roads diverge in all directions from this favoured spot and afford an easy communication with a free channel for British merchandize to San Antonio, to Chichana, San Benito, Tabasco, and even Campeachy; while throughout the whole country the most stupendous timbers are abundant. The most valuable drugs, balsams, and aromatic plants grow wild; and the achiote, amber, copal, dragon's blood, mastio and analeigo are every where to be gathered."

We shall not enter with our author into an examination of the defects, real or supposed, in our colonial policy; his principle, that "the full benefit of Colonies can only be experienced when their trade approximates as closely as possible to a coasting commerce, freed from fiscal exactions, and legislative decrees," is certainly correct; but its application under present circumstances seems hardly possible.

FRIENDSHIP'S OFFERING.—A respectable melange of prose and poetry, among which John Clare and Barry Cornwall are conspicuous. We copy a dirge, extremely beautiful, and which might well be substituted in public ceremonies for that barbarous stanza—

"Affliction sore long time I bore," &c.

*Strew boughs—strew flowers
Through all the hours,
On you young tomb—
Unblown, unfaded,
Unloved, unknown:
Here beauty sleepeth, beneath a stone;
Once how fair—but now degraded!
Hither she came—alone—alone,
From the South Sea bowers,
Where summer dowers
The world with bloom.
Mingle with music the strange perfume!
Let the tears of the hours
Now fall like rain,
And freshen the flowers
Again, again!
The sweetness they borrow
Shall ne'er be vain,
While human sorrow
Is falling in showers,
That yield no comfort to human pain!*

Description of Sir Walter Scott, by James Hogg.—"Sir Walter Scott was the best formed man I ever saw, and laying his weak limb out of the question, a perfect model of a man for gigantic strength. The muscles of his arm were prodigious. I remember one day, long ago—I think it was at some national dinner in Omon's Hotel—that at a certain time of the night, a number of the heroes differed prodigiously with regard to their various degrees of muscular strength. A general measurement took place around the shoulders and chest, and I as a particular judge in these matters, was fixed on as a measurer and umpire. Scott, who never threw cold water on any fun, submitted to be measured with the rest. He measured most round the chest, and to their great chagrin, I was next to him, and very little short. But when I came to examine his arms, Sir Walter had double the muscular power of mine, and very nearly so of every man's who was there; I declare that from the elbow to the shoulders, they felt as if they had the strength of an ox.—*Fraser's Magazine*.

NATURAL HISTORY.—Famboldt says, that naturalists already know 68,000 species of plants; 44,000 insects; 2,500 fishes; 700 reptiles; 4,000 birds; and 500 mammiferæ. In Europe alone there exist nearly 80 mammiferæ, 400 birds, and 30 reptiles.