



- Trinidad: its Leper Home.

CONSTANT change of scene and of character is one of the charms of a visit to the West Indies. Thus, Barbados, the first port of call, is somewhat flat though serenely beautiful, while Trinidad is rugged and grandly picturesque. The run between the two islands is only of a few hours' duration, and it is a not unwelcome contrast to find, instead of the clear, blue waters of the former place, and its smiling landscape, a sea which tells, by its color, of the rushing rapids of the Orinoco, and broken, high land, covered with stern-looking shrub. The sail through one of the narrowest of the Bocas was made in still water, at daybreak. And we passed many a snugly built white cottage, sheltered in the various bays which lie at the foot of the hills on the approach to Port of Spain. The old navigators doubtless had satisfactory reasons for fixing on this particular place for the chief port of the island, and, happily, the question need not be discussed by me. But, as an outside opinion, it may be remarked that a harbor which does not permit large ships to lie within three miles of its wharf, is not quite so convenient as it might be. However, this deficiency is somewhat atoned for by the rapidity with which the work of discharging is done by the lighters, Trinidad being in this respect before Barbados. The men who row you ashore take their character from the country. Neither themselves nor their boats are so clean or quick as those at the first-mentioned island. The casual visitor must not be disappointed should he have the ill-luck to visit the Blue Basin—one of the two show places of the island—in the dry season. But it is probably a better thing to do even then than to devote an entire day to journeying further south, on a stuffy little boat, for the purpose of seeing the famous Pitch Lake, a region of muddy looking matter containing a very strong suggestion of sulphur and the Prince of Darkness.

It is a long drive, though by no means uninteresting one, to the Blue Basin, for the road runs, through a considerable part, past a coolie village where the hideous aspect of the male inhabitants is somewhat compensated for by the soft, shimmering colors of the draperies worn by the women, who, in the manner of adjusting their Yam-Shaks, as well as in the coloring, have quite an Oriental appearance. Through long avenues of palms, of cocoa trees, of mangoes, and past much of our own familiar branches,

we drive along fairly good but rather dusty roads. A large wooden cross, on the way, tells the tale of a priest done to death in days gone by for attempting to shield a helpless girl from the clutches of a rich negro planter. At last we reach, as we think, the Blue Basin. We have heard nothing but the Blue Basin since we left Barbados. Its beauty has been extolled to the skies, we have neglected other sights for this especial one; sign post after sign post has indicated, for the last half hour, the approach to the beautiful Blue Basin. At last, somewhat to our dismay, the carriage stops at the end of the last road is reached. We had, so far, labored under the fond delusion that we could drive right within view of this wonderful waterfall. But no! we must alight and walk a quarter of a mile at least.

This is blow number one. A second shock to the system is experienced when we discover that we have to climb a steep, narrow, uneven path, which winds round and round the mountain side. The sun is exactly above our heads. It burns and scorches fiercely enough, even at this time of the year, and the clayey soil, moistened by a sharp shower or two, emits a disagreeable, moist heat which entirely deprives us of every particle of energy we have left. However, patience, be it natural or acquired, is a necessity to the traveller, as well as a comfort to him. It surmounts all things, even a scorching hillside in Trinidad. Having ascended quite the promised quarter of a mile, we conclude that our journey so far is over. But the troop of children who herald us, and chatter in Portuguese as they chew the freshly gathered mango, inform us that we have still further to go, and so we proceed, now down hill, and anon across rivulets and boulders.

At last, on a cleft of the rock opposite, we espy a little body of water which quietly trickles down and drips into a hollow below. The water comes a distance of some nine miles, and I can quite imagine that, when the flow is great, it forms a very pretty sight indeed. The "basin" is truly named, for, little though the water be in it during the dry season, what there is is decidedly blue. But there are dozens of prettier falls in England and Switzerland, while such scenes are to be met with by the hundred in New Zealand. The Blue Basin would doubtless be a delightful spot for a picnic party for the resident of Port of Spain. Those who have travelled, unless they have plenty of time on their hands, may leave it alone without very much loss, unless they



THE COCAL, TRINIDAD.