

reporters have a case on hand that will last a week. The two most degrading vices of human nature—lust and avarice—were at the bottom of the whole affair, and as Stokes is wealthy and *Mrs Mansfield* supposed to have received not a little money and other valuables from the deceased Fisk, it is probable that Stokes will be regarded as an instrument of vengeance in the hands of Providence and so escape the hanging “by the neck until he is dead,” which he so richly merits.

LITERARY NOTICES.

LETTS'S POCKET DIARY AND ALMANAC FOR 1872. London, Eng.: Letts, Son & Co., (limited), New Cross, E. C., 1871.

This valuable pocket diary is already well-known and very highly appreciated in Great Britain and Ireland, and is rapidly finding favour in the Colonies. It contains a copious calendar and a vast amount of information, together with ample space for recording memoranda of the daily transactions throughout the year. The same firm publishes an *Illustrated Monthly Circular of Novelties*, of especial value to importers, which they send to all merchants or others free on receipt of one year's postage.

ANECDOTES OF A LIFE ON THE OCEAN; being a portion of the experiences of twenty-seven years' service in many parts of the world, by David Cowans. Montreal, 1871.

This is a handsomely got-up duodecimo of about two hundred pages. The binding is tasteful, and the reading matter very entertaining. In a series of brief stories Capt. Cowans relates some of the most remarkable of his adventures at sea, all of which are calculated to interest and amuse those whose lives are mainly spent on *terra firma*. The style is most unpretending but easy and enjoyable. We are sure that all who invest in Capt. Cowans' "Anecdotes" will find them pleasant reading. They furnish a diversion to the wearied mind after the toils of the day are over, and that is more than we can say of many of the publications of the day. We hope the Captain will meet with a large sale for his entertaining little work.

NASSAU AS A WINTER RETREAT.

(Continued from Nov. 25th.)

It has become a well established custom, at the present time, for physicians to recommend a change of climate for all patients affected with pulmonary diseases; and occasionally, also, for those troubled with rheumatic and nervous tendencies. As all these diseases are aggravated by the cold and damp of our northern winters, it is at this season especially that a change is desirable. And as they are all, more or less, ameliorated by the genial warmth and dryness of summer, it is evident that a southern climate, where the winter resembles our summer, is the most desirable. Moreover, as it is necessary to avoid all sudden and extreme changes of temperature, and in the degree of humidity, an equable and moderately moist atmosphere must be sought.

Such a climate, as that here indicated, unfortunately cannot be found on any inhabited and civilized part of the continent of North America. The nearest approach to it is on the South-Eastern coast of the peninsula of Florida. But it cannot be made available, as there are here none of the conveniences of civilized life; and, consequently, no accommodation for invalids. There are few inhabitants of any kind, and, indeed, hardly any means of getting there. But this place will doubtless soon be settled by the Americans with the view of making it a winter resort for invalids.

In the meantime people are anxiously inquiring for some suitable climate in which to spend the winter; and are running hither and thither all over the continent in quest of this desideratum, while purposely neglecting, merely because it happens to be under the much-hated British rule, a place in the immediate vicinity of that before mentioned, and which enjoys a much superior climate. We allude to the Bahama Islands, of which a short account was given a few weeks ago in these columns.

The following extract, from a recent and reliable work on Florida, will show the inferiority of its climate to that of the Bahamas as a winter resort for invalids and valetudinarians:

"No part of the State (Florida) is entirely free from frosts. In Jacksonville they occur about once a week during the month of January, while at Miami they happen only once in several years. Now and then a severe frost occurs, which destroys the orange groves far to the south. One such in 1767 destroyed all the orange trees at Fernandina and St. Augustine; another in 1835 cut them down as far south as New Smyrna; in Dec., 1856, ice was noted on the Miami river; and in Dec., 1868, there was such an unprecedented cold snap that Lake Griffin, in the Upper Oklawaha, bore ice one-and-a-half inches thick. The orange crop was destroyed as far up the St. John as Enterprise, and most of the trees ruined." And, again, the same work says:—"The prevailing diseases are of miasmatic origin. Dysentery of mild type, pneumonia and diarrhoea are occasional visitors; but the most common enemy to health is the swamp poison. Intermittent and remittent fevers are common along the fresh-water streams. On the sea-coast they are rare, and after the month of October they usually disappear; but in the summer and early autumn they are very prevalent in some portions of the State."

When it is considered that these diseases are almost unknown in the Bahamas, we recognise one great climatic superiority in this fact; for even the lightest attack of fever and ague can destroy the pleasure and annul the benefits of a winter's tour.

And a voyage to the tropical regions is, in many respects, more interesting than a passage across the Atlantic to Europe. Though, as we go south, we leave behind us the present forms of civilization, and observe society as it existed a century ago, yet many novelties present themselves which are never experienced during a trip to Europe. The changes in the climate and in the forms of vegetation are alone sufficient to impress us with the idea that we have arrived in a new world; and cannot be realized in the mind, but must be experienced to be appreciated.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION

of the Bahamas extends from the 20th to the 27th degree of North latitude; and from the 72nd to the 79th degree of West longitude. The islands do not cover the whole of this area, but extend in a wide and irregular chain from its North-Western to its South-Eastern limits. Their number has been variously estimated at from five to six hundred; but if every little island and rock were counted, the number would be swelled to many thousands. Of these, however, only fourteen are of any considerable size—all the others being too small and too barren to be of any consequence. One of the larger islands, called St. Salvador, (or Cat Island) was the first land discovered by Columbus on his first voyage across the Atlantic.

THE GEOLOGICAL FORMATION

of the islands is, throughout the whole group, of the same character. A soft calcareous rock, composed of corals, shells, madrepores, and other *debris* of animal life, is the substance of which the entire number of islands is composed. There is no soil on them, except a little vegetable mould here and there in the valleys. Notwithstanding the absence of soil, however, the islands are covered with large trees, and literally overrun with tangled brushwood, wild vines, &c., so great is the vegetative power of nature in the tropics. The rock is so soft that the roots of trees, shrubs, and even vegetables and flower plants force their way through it with as much apparent ease as they would through the finest and lightest soil. It is so porous that the sea water permeates it the entire length and breadth of the largest of the islands, and rests at the same level as the surrounding ocean; while the rain water, falling from the clouds, percolates through the rock and rests or floats on the system of the salt water of the sea, rising and falling with the tides of the latter. Being lighter than the salt water, it does not mix with it, and is thus preserved pure and fresh. This rock forms an excellent material for building purposes. Though so soft, when first taken from the quarries, that it may be scraped away with the finger nail, it hardens by exposure to the air, and becomes quite equal to ordinary limestone for similar purposes. It is usually worked with saws and chisels, and apparently with as much ease and readiness as if it were only chalk. Most of the houses on the islands are built of this stone, and really look pretty and substantial. By moonlight they appear as white as snow, and strangers have often been deceived into the belief that they were constructed of white marble.

THE SOIL AND CROPS.

As before mentioned, there is but little soil, and that little consists only of a light vegetable mould, rich, but of course soon exhausted. Most of the vegetables of the temperate zones can be cultivated with success during the dry season; and all the vegetables and delicious fruits of the tropics at all seasons.

The principal fruits produced for exportation are the orange, lemon, pine-apple, banana, and plantain. Thousands of dozens of pine-apples are annually exported to the United States; and a large number also find their way to the English market. But for all this there is no regular system of cultivation pursued; and the islands have a neglected and desolate appearance. A pine-apple field (or as there called, a pinery) resembles, more than anything else, a dried up swamp covered with long, rank, broad-bladed grass. There are no fences to mark its boundaries; no ditches to drain it of superfluous water; no roads or paths to traverse it in any direction; and, in consequence, it soon overspreads its original limits, and encroaches upon the neighbouring grounds. Whether this is an advantage to the owner, or otherwise, depends upon the temper and disposition of his neighbour.

The orange and lemon trees are equally neglected. They are never supplied with manure, nor watered during a drought; and as for pruning, it seems never to be thought of by these model horticulturists. The same remarks apply to the banana and plantain; the only attention shown to these being to cut down the main stem of the plant after it has borne fruit, its place being soon supplied by one of the many shoots which are continually springing up around the parent stem. This young shoot bears fruit in about nine months, and is then cut down in its turn to make way for another. This goes on for years without any change in the process, or any attempt to improve the quality of the fruit, or increase the quantity yielded. It must, however, be acknowledged in justification of this negligence, that all these fruits are produced in such abundance as to render unnecessary any attempts to increase the yield.

Formerly a considerable quantity of sugar and molasses was produced, but since the emancipation of the slaves, this branch of industry failed to prove remunerative, and was abandoned until very lately, when some very fine sugar, the result of free labour, has been produced at a cost which leaves a sufficient margin for profit. It is to be hoped that these attempts to revive this branch of industry will be successful; as the islands appear to be impoverished by the excess of their importations over their exportations. A gentleman from Chicago, Illinois, who spent last winter in Nassau, has suggested that the olive-tree might be cultivated with great advantage in these islands; and in a number of letters published in the local papers, has shown that the necessary conditions of climate, soil, and proximity to the American market, are sufficient to justify all attempts in this direction.

INHABITANTS.

The Bahamas were first settled by the Spaniards shortly after their discovery by Columbus in 1492. They were at that time densely peopled by a mild and inoffensive race of Indians; but these were soon shipped off to work in the mines of Peru and Mexico. In 1629 the island of New Providence was colonized by the English; but in 1641 they were driven off by the Spaniards. In 1666 the English again colonized New Providence, which remained in their possession until 1703, when they were expelled by the French and Spaniards, and their plantations destroyed. The islands now became a rendezvous for pirates, whose depredations in these and adjoining seas were at length suppressed by the British navy, and the outlaws reduced to order. In 1776 they were attacked by an American naval squadron; and in 1781 were again occupied by the Spaniards, but since 1783 they have been in the possession of England. The pirates, when subdued, gradually became wreckers; and even at the present day, many of this class are descended directly from those bold outlaws.

But the white people are now gradually abandoning this occupation to the black and coloured races; or, perhaps, it would be nearer the truth to say that they are being crowded out by the number of the latter who resort to this precarious mode of earning a living.

These islands received a considerable addition to their population about the close of the American Revolution. Many of the old loyalists of the Southern States, disdaining to live under "Yankee Government," sold out their estates in the South, emigrated to these islands, and there established themselves as planters, raising sugar-cane, cotton, tobacco, coffee, &c. As these families were wealthy and well educated, they gradually gave a better tone to society; and the finest people to be met with in the islands, at the present day, are the descendants of these aristocrats. Among this class there exists the strongest desire,—amounting almost to an ambition,—to give their children a thorough education at some of the English Universities. They will make the greatest sacrifices to attain this object. They have also a strong desire to inculcate in the hearts and minds of their offspring those elevated and chivalrous views of life which belong to the past rather than to the present utilitarian age.

SLAVERY.

The precise date at which this curse was first introduced into the islands is not easily obtainable; but the writer found in the Recorder's Office at Nassau, the names of black persons who existed in a state of slavery more than a hundred years ago. All this is now happily done away with since the "Emancipation Bill" declared the doom of slavery. But it must be acknowledged that the negro did not rise to the dignity of his new position. Freed from the lash of the overseer, he now refuses all steady labour, though quite willing to do an odd job now and then. He is averse to all continuous work, and no sooner receives his first week's wages than he quits his employment, and idles about until his money is all spent, and he can neither beg, borrow, nor steal anything to satisfy the cravings of nature, when he reluctantly seeks his employer and begs to be re-engaged, promising all kinds of reformation, but only to repeat the programme, until his master refuses any longer to engage him. There are some honourable exceptions to this rule, but the great majority act as above stated; and between these extremes there is every grade of industry and idleness. When removed from the example and influence of the white man, and left to his own devices, he relapses gradually into a state of semi-barbarism; and unless some more vigorous efforts are made for his reclamation than at present, there is danger that these islands may, at no distant day, become so many smaller editions of that "bone of contention" Hayti.

COMMERCE.

The exports are confined to fruits, salt, sponges, turtles, conch shells, dye woods, and woods for cabinet purposes. The imports consist of such articles as are required for the use and convenience of the colonists,—as flour, grain, groceries, canned meats, and meats in ice, salt fish, &c., with dry goods, hardware, &c., &c.

CLIMATE.

We now come to the most interesting part of the subject. A comparison has been previously instituted between these islands and the peninsula of Florida, showing some of the advantages of the former in respect to climate; and though much of what follows may seem to be merely a repetition of the facts before given, the reader must remember that it is necessary to compare all the conditions of each climate with those of the other in order to form a conclusion regarding their respective merits.

It must here be observed that the question is considered solely with reference to pulmonary diseases. Mention will be made presently of other complaints which are likewise benefited by southern climates; but at present our remarks will be confined to their adaptedness to pulmonary affections. Even within these narrow limits there is much room for careful consideration, before the patient decides where he shall spend his winter. One climate will not answer all cases of even the same complaint. The patient should remember that the climate best suited to his case will be that which exhibits in the highest degree that condition of the weather which affords him most relief when at home; therefore, if he feel most comfortable and easy during clear, dry, bracing weather, he should seek that climate which most fulfils these conditions. During the summer months any of the highlands or mountains will answer; and during the winter months the uplands of South Carolina or Georgia will prove to be admirably adapted to his case. But, should he, on the contrary, experience most relief when the atmosphere is warm and moderately humid, he will find those conditions existing, more or less, on the east and south-east coasts of Florida. Should his case, however, demand the utmost equability of temperature, then is there no place where he can be more certain to find what he seeks than among the Bahama Islands.

The essential differences between the climate of the Peninsula of Florida and the Bahamas, consist first, in the higher average winter temperature of the latter; secondly, in its greater equability of temperature; and thirdly, in its somewhat less amount of sensible humidity. Some other conditions, having their influences, will be also mentioned; but at present we shall confine ourselves to the three above named. The mean temperature of the winter months compared is as follows:

Nassau—Nov. 73°; Dec. 71°; Jan. 70°; Feb. 71°; Mar. 73°; Apr. 75°.

Florida—Nov. 64°; Dec. 57°; Jan. 57°; Feb. 60°; Mar. 63°; Apr. 69°.

The Town of Nassau is the only place in the Bahamas at which reliable observations have been taken; and the figures given above answer for all the middle and Northern islands. The Southern islands are two or three degrees warmer. The figures given for Florida are from the "Army Meteorological Observations," taken at Saint Augustine, and are thoroughly reliable.

It will be noticed that the greatest difference of temperature is in the months of December and January, amounting to 13° and 14° degrees; while the least difference is in April. The difference between the two climates is very slight in the summer months.

The three months of Dec., Jan. and Feb. are decidedly too cold in Florida to prove beneficial in pulmonary affections. The dampness of the air renders it, at these low mean tem-