

work of their wives, of whom each man could have as many as he chose, the number varying from two to half-a-dozen, sometimes more. The men were idle, not lazy, a distinction well brought out by Washington Irving in his "Rip Van Winkle," whom he describes as doing no useful work, but wandering for days in pursuit of game, carrying a heavy fowling-piece, a burden greater than would have been required in the discharge of his proper duties; and this was the case with the Maroons. The regulations for their control, and by which their wanderings could have been restrained within due limits, were not enforced. They kept up a constant intercourse with the plantation slaves, forming temporary marriages with them, for the marriage tie sat lightly on them, the children of these marriages becoming slaves, following the condition of the mother. Proud of their freedom, regarding the slaves as inferior, no discipline enforced, they went about at their own sweet will, an idle, vagabond community, and when an attempt was made to control them the inevitable result followed, the long indulgence had done its work and no restraint was possible. Examples of this are easily to be found in families and in communities who regard themselves as on a much higher plane of intellect and civilization than the free blacks of Jamaica.

From the signing of the last treaty more than half a century (fifty-six years) had passed without an outbreak by the Maroons. Cudjoe and his generation had passed away; another generation had followed. Of all the Maroons who were alive in 1795, when the final struggle began, it is probable that not one had done an honest day's work, labour of all kinds being left to the women. It is possible that a few may have been industrious, but it is extremely improbable. Their position was peculiar; they did nothing; they amused themselves; they strutted about, black Apollos, uncontrolled; they looked down with ineffable contempt on the negro slaves, who were compelled to work and were subject to being flogged at the caprice of a slave driver; the slaves in turn looked up to them as superior beings. Under these circumstances it needed but a slight cause to bring about a fresh conflict between them and the power which had abnegated its functions and let authority slip out of its grasp. The pretext was found in the case of two worthless vagabonds, despised by the Maroons themselves, who, charged with felony, were tried, found guilty and flogged, as a white man would have been under similar circumstances. The punishment was not in itself objected to, but the executioner of it was, a recaptured negro slave kept in prison to flog the slaves brought there for punishment. Maddened by resentment at what they considered an insult, and still further incensed by the jeers of the slaves, who taunted them with having been subjected to the same treatment as themselves, the younger men, contrary to the advice of their seniors, sent a defiance to government and prepared for a struggle. Probably, however, owing to the counsels of the more cool-headed among