

less tropical sky; but as he wends his upward way among the interlacing hills, and in the shade of bamboo clusters and over-arching trees, he feels as if suddenly transferred to another land and inspired with new life.

But the lowlands themselves exhibit strange scenic contrasts. When protracted drought appears to have nearly annihilated vegetation, and Guinea-grass for horses and cattle (as hay is unknown) has to be brought from the contiguous or distant hills, let us suppose that a rainy season, May or October, sets in, such an excessively rainy season as was formerly frequent, but did not occur in the place of our own residence more than twice in seven years. Now we have gathering clouds, livid lightning, and pealing or crashing thunder, as if the world's storm forces were concentrated in Jamaica; night and day, for several days in succession, the waters come down in sheets or as if emptied from innumerable buckets; the streets become deep and rapid streams; the rivers overflow their banks and sweep away cottages and bridges; and then again, the rains suddenly cease, the sun shines out with unclouded light and intense heat, vegetation revives with great rapidity and vigour, and tracts of land, that erewhile seemed nothing but clay and dust, become green and gay with luxuriant grass and bright yellow flowers. The change seems marvellous and magical. It is after such droughts and rains that bilious fever chiefly prevails, that medical men are constantly out, and that death sometimes gathers an abundant harvest.

The chief agricultural produce of the plains is the sugar-cane; and those estates that lie close to the hills and climb their gentlest acclivities, so as to catch the mountain rain, are often flourishing and remunerative, while other sugar estates are parched and languishing. The value of sugar estates depends on situation and soil, and on facilities for the cheap and speedy shipment of sugar and rum, such as good roads and contiguous harbours. The main low land roads are good, but many of the mountain roads are little better than goat-tracks.

The mountains of Jamaica are fitting scenes for poetry and song. The man of feeling and intelligence, as he traverses them, sees nature under a thousand aspects, and frequently experiences a new pleasure. Sometimes rivers or river-beds are crossed with