

bowls, upon the promenade of the battlement, which thus was made a spacious bowling saloon.

An aid-de-camp of the governor waited upon Colonel Hughes, with an invitation for him and suite to a ball to be given that evening, which having been accepted, we proceeded at the appointed time, in a body, to the Hotel and Cafe du Grand Monarque, to make our toilette. The bar of this cafe is superintended by a Queen of Sheba, in silver spectacles, who, assisted by her four amiable daughters, presides with great dignity over the concoction of punch and other refreshing drinks. While discussing the merits of a cool lemonade, we adjourned by invitation to a wedding, just then being celebrated in a neighboring house, where we were received with much civility and distinction. The bride, of course was blooming and budding. Thence we repaired to the governor's mansion, in the grand plaza, where the ball was soon graced by all the beauty and wealth of the city. We could not help remarking that, although the city and its ramparts were fast mouldering to decay, yet the sparkling eyes of the senoritas, with Cupid's bow figured on each lip, gave no evidence of decay in its inhabitants.

The following morning, at daylight, we proceeded to Mandingo Bay, arriving about noon at one of the centre islands. This bay is said to contain 113 islands, which are held in the sole possession of the Mandingo Indians, who do not permit the residence therein of any human being, not of their own tribe and lineage, very little is known of their history, and as they themselves are either non-communicative or ignorant, and, as it is believed, keep no record of anything, their origin may perhaps never be discovered. They live among themselves, some occupying the islands—some the main land—but all firmly united as a band, obeying one chief, or "old man," who is believed to be endowed by God with all wisdom, might, and power. The government is patriarchal. The "old man" is the spiritual adviser, as well as chief judge in temporal affairs. He is powerful in mind and body, and all his faculties are evergreen. God endows him with peculiar health. He is acknowledged and regarded by his people as the vice regent of God, and all his orders are obeyed. He is also the great medicine—the cure-all. In cases of sickness or infirmity, they apply to him, and whether relief is obtained or not, the applicants are contented. Colonel Hughes propounded the question, "Upon whom does the office of 'old man' descend at the decease of the present 'old man'?" The reply was "To the next oldest man of the tribe."

Col. Hughes—Suppose the successor should not be endowed with the same qualities of intelligence?

Reply—That cannot be; for when the mantle descends, the Great Spirit imbues that mind with all knowledge. The "old man" sates everything.

The main land has seldom, if ever, been approached by foreigners, and nothing is known of it. The islands, presenting one of those geological changes by which the surface of the earth has been modified, are the result of those surprising productions of nature, the zoophites. These coral islands are as beautiful as nature can make them. Under the clear blue water, a variety of forms, of singular and fantastic shape, are glowing with vivid tints of every shade, between green,

purple, brown, and white, equalling in beauty, and excelling in grandeur, the most favorite parterre of the curious florist. The surface of these islands (at first emerging from the sea, are slightly covered with sands, to which has been added the soil accumulated from the feathers and dung of birds of prey, with leaves and branches of trees washed ashore,) is composed of the lightest mould imaginable. The produce is the cocoa nut tree, which is particularly adapted to all soils, whether sandy, rich, or rocky. The blessings which are conveyed to man by this single production of nature (the cocoa nut tree) are incalculable. It grows in a stately column from thirty to fifty feet in height, crowned by a verdant capital of waving branches, covered with long spiral leaves. Under this foliage, bunches of blossoms, clusters of green fruit, and others advanced to maturity, appear in mingled beauty. The trunk furnishes beams and rafters for houses; the leaves make an excellent thatch, as well as good umbrellas, mats for the floor, and brooms; while the finest fibres can be woven into fine carpeting. The covering of the young fruit is very curious, resembling a piece of thick cloth in a conical form, as close and firm as if it came from the loom. The nuts contain a delicious milk, and a kernel sweeter than the almond, which, when dried, furnishes an abundance of oil, and after the oil is extracted the remains feed cattle and poultry, and make a good manure. Arrack, vinegar, and sugar are also made from this tree. The shell of the nut furnishes cups, ladles, and other domestic utensils; while the husk is of the utmost importance; it is manufactured into ropes and cordage of every kind, from the smallest twine to the largest cables, and which are said to be far more durable than those of hemp. Then, what a blessing is the cocoa nut tree!

Before reaching the entrance of the bay, some twenty miles from land, we descried a fleet of canoes under sail, managed with a skill that equals the best Whitehall boatmen, and on bearing down, found them to contain Mandingo Indians, upon fishing excursions. We shipped one canoe with its two Indians, much to the chagrin of the occupants of the others, who kept up a furious jabbering in their unknown tongue. We afterwards learned that the furious talker was a chief presumptive, which, if known at the time, we would have taken him on board.

No pen can describe the exquisite feelings of serene delight that possessed the soul upon approaching these islands. The pictures of early youth, so elaborated in our toy-books, when the young brain takes the first and most lasting impression, were here spread before us. The solitary island, enbosomed in the blue ocean—the straight, stern and wavy branches of the trees, brought back to memory those by-gone days of innocence and truth.

We cast anchor near the shore of Campbell's Island. No men were visible; a knot of women and children were seen half-hiding behind the trees. Four of our party landed, who were received by the women and children in ominous silence, which produced some anxiety for personal safety; all fear, however, was dispelled upon the arrival of Campbell, who, speaking a few words of English, bade us welcome. He was very attentive, and presented one of the party with a splendid bow and quiver of arrows. Under his guid-

ance we visited the interior of the houses; Campbell's daughter lay sick of a fever; all the household gods were ranged in due order under the head of her hammock, and upon an altar in front, the incense of cayenne and balsam wood perpetually ascended. Our good surgeon prescribed for her, much to the gratification of her father.

The women do not possess one single captivating charm. Their stature is not over five feet, heads large and face broad, with a gold ring or triangle through the nose, huge square shoulders, no waist, all body; their legs, exposed from the knees, are encircled by fanciful bracelets of beads, making deep indentations; one above the ankle, one above and below the calf, and one above the knee. The protrusion of flesh between these bracelets, produces pity in the minds of the beholders. Yet it was remarked, that even this was a far less prejudicial practice than that which our American dames formerly indulged in, viz: the practice of encircling their lovely waists in whalebone compressions—a habit now happily abandoned by all the fashionable beauties.

The men are short and stumpy, not over five feet six inches on an average, thick and square built, and are capable of enduring great fatigue. Their heads are remarkably large and round, features prominent, with all the physiognomy of the Jew. They have a plurality of wives, according to their means.

They permit no communication with foreigners, and the woman so offending is stoned to death. It is a part of their religious creed to keep their race pure and unadulterated. They profess to have a restorative for the organs of reproduction, the effects of which, upon administration, will last for eight years. Our surgeon fortunately obtained some of the remedy, which has been pronounced part and parcel of the body of the turtle.

A question arose as to whether this people be not descendents of one of the lost tribes of Israel?

Upon our arrival, Col. Hughes distinctly avowed the purpose of his visit, viz: to make a journey overland to the Pacific; but he was referred to the "old man," who alone could give a reply. The "old man" was accordingly sent for, and on the third day he made his appearance. In the meantime, we had ample opportunities of talking with the natives, and some of our conversations eventuated to our great amusement.

It is difficult to decide whether they are supremely ignorant or excessively cunning. They are careful in answering questions in regard to their country, and are jealous of all foreigners. They have never submitted to any foreign government, and although they are within the bounds of the New Granadian government, they pay no tribute nor admit of any allegiance whatever. We formed some pleasant and amusing acquaintance among the head men, who speak a few words of English, taken up from the crews of vessels that occasionally visit to trade. Mr. John Bull, Mr. Tom Campbell, Mr. Tom Bat, Mr. Tim Baggs, Mr. Toby Dot, &c., &c. proved themselves very complaisant in partaking of the hospitalities of the Orus.

In course of a cross examination, made with a view to get some clue to their early history, the following question was asked:—"Who lived here 400 or 500 years ago?" The reply was, "Tim's father." This reply disturbed the gravity of all who heard it