BLACK ROADWAYS

A STUDY OF JAMAICAN FOLK LIFE

BY

MARTHA WARREN BECKWITH

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MAMMY FORBES, THE HEALER

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FOREWORD

Between the summers of 1919 and 1924 I made four visits to the island of Jamaica in the British West Indies with the purpose of coming into direct contact with the life and thought of the Negro peasant population of the country districts. With this aim in view I spent long hours in peasant homes listening to songs and stories; made several expeditions to the free Maroon settlements of Accompong and Moore Town; attended Sunday School picnics where ring-games were in progress, John Canoe performances at Christmas time, a revival meeting and a wake at Lacovia, a morning service at Mammy Forbes's balm-yard; and sought an interview with the healer, Bedward, during the excited period of the Christmas holidays preceding his predicted ascent into heaven and the ending of white rule in Jamaica.

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At first little was to be had besides the actual literary art of the folk—their stories, games, riddles, songs, and proverbs—but these in very rich abundance. The children used to offer them by the roadside hopeful of the penny eventually offered for a new riddle or the threepence for a song. Later, when the confidence of the people had been won and my own knowledge widened, I could question them about beliefs and customs. To three such informants I am especially indebted—to Wilfrid Bonito of Richmond, St. Mary (but brought up in Mandeville), Simon Falconer in the Santa Cruz Mountains in St. Elizabeth, and George Parkes, also of Mandeville in Manchester. All three were intelligent small settlers who owned or managed a piece of land, brought up a

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family, and took an active but skeptical interest in the wisdom of the "bush people," at the same time admitting firm belief in the spirit world. They recognized some hocus-pocus among men but respected the ghosts. Parkes, the blind man, used to look forward to my visits. As a sailor he had traveled even as far as the African coast and later had served ably as sheriff in Mandeville. Even now he made his way daily alone to his "cultivation" some three miles out of town, where he once showed me the proper method of planting a yam hill. All three men knew my purpose and talked freely, Wilfrid introducing me as a lady who "want to know about bush medicine and old-time story and duppy and all such kind a t'ing—not to do any harm; so you got anyt'ing for her?"

The approach to the confidence of the Negro peasant is won through the ruling class, to whom the folk look for initiative and whose introduction they always respect. To all those who made my way easy by their courtesy and hospitality let me here record thanks. That I leave them unnamed is due not to forgetfulness, but to the host of such indebtednesses to no one of which I would seem inattentive. To them is due whatever insight I have gained into the inner life of the folk, and it is for them to solve the problems arising out of the facts here described.

From my predecessors in the field I have tried to derive every possible benefit and in each case to acknowledge such indebtedness. Local authorities like Belisario, Banbury, Palache, are accessible in the excellent library for the West Indies brought together under the direction of Professor Frank Cundall, and housed in the building of the Jamaica Institute in Kingston. Others have been

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found in the libraries of Harvard University and of the City of New York. For the courtesies extended to me by the officers of these institutions I here record grateful thanks. Hickeringill is the only authority I have listed without myself weighing the value of his account. Probably other names could be added to advantage. I have intentionally omitted merely disputative writers and those who describe Jamaica as known to the ruling class alone. Of modern books I have not mentioned books of travel, however delightful and informing in themselves, although including some of the best from older sources. Two books of fiction, Montagnac's little-known book of sketches and De Lisser's *Jane*, I have thought worth including because of the true picture they give of the folk life of today. Among local authorities, Professor Cundall and Mr. Walter Jekyll have made scientific contributions to Jamaican folklore, and all of Mr. De Lisser's books are valuable for their sympathetic insight into the life of the people. Among old writers, Long, Edwards, and the admirable Dr. Sloane are indispensable, and there are many lesser writers like Leslie whose special interest lies in depicting the folk life. Monk Lewis's journal from his own plantation in Westmoreland presents a truthful picture of life in the early nineteenth century before emancipation, from the pen of a trained writer genuinely interested in the people he wrote about. Beckford is far too ornate, but his direct observations are excellently lucid. Of later writers Rampini is an interested, Gosse a trained and competent observer. To all these writers I am incalculably indebted for the light they throw upon folk custom.

It is necessary to deny here any effort to make a complete study of social life and religious thought among the

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whole colored population of Jamaica. What I have gathered is emphatically exclusive of the sophisticated colored people who ridicule or censure the superstitions of the blacks and move among the better classes on the island theoretically upon an equality with the whites. Their children attend the same private schools, their younger set the same social functions, the more intelligent take an active part in the judicial, legislative, and administrative machinery of the island. The British have an admirable quality of working side by side with the colored man and at the same time preserving their class and racial distinction. The material here gathered represents the peasant class—the great majority of the folk, although hardly the most ignorant, whose poverty prevents their adoption of British standards. It is emphatically folklore, not the lore of the colored man. But its rhythmic melancholy or rollic, its shrewd wisdom, as even its superstition, penetrate the life and thought of white and colored alike of the literate classes, and leave an impress upon their speech, attitude, emotion.

The Jamaica Negro is superstitious. He believes with all his might in the spirit world, sometimes to his degradation but at times also to his supreme exaltation. Hence the effect of a record like this may be to overwhelm the mind with a mass of irrelevancies under which is lost any true view of the Negro's generally quite practical wisdom. Even superstition may, in the spirit of play and in lack of other emotional outlet, flower into forms rendered grotesque by a hunger for aesthetic excitement. Much descends to the African through Mohammedan contacts, and all lore in Jamaica today is colored by the social and religious teaching of the white race which has ruled the island for almost

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three hundred years.

It is this very island isolation and the opportunity it gives for study of the influence upon a backward race of contact with more developed peoples that lends such interest to a close knowledge of folk life in Jamaica as it exists today. Not African or Indian, east or west; not Spanish or British, it is a blend of all these into a fresh product reflecting the material background of the sunny fertile island itself and the mixed culture of those alien races who have come to call it home. Distinguishable, too, from every other American group in each particular art—speech, song, life itself, and the complex emotional life of the spirit world in which it moves—all this is individually Jamaican, so that our own Negroes hold themselves a little aloof from the Jamaican as "more awesome" than their countrymen.

This is not the whole story of acculturation. But with the more difficult and in many ways more important analysis of the sophisticated Negro blend in Jamaica this study is not concerned. In every case where a sophisticated and a backward race meet, the problem lies not with the folk who absorb and re-create but with the upper classes who absorb and imitate.

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Chapter I

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

Like the sheet of paper which legend says Columbus crushed in his hand to show the king of Spain the contour of his new possession, Jamaica lies today a long crumpled island in the Caribbean, 140 miles from east to west, and ranging in breadth from 22 to 49 miles as the crow flies. The sea laps its shores so gently that in places along the coast scarcely a step divides beach from roadway, which a stout growth of mangrove protects from encroaching waters, and at several points along the railway on the north coast one can toss a pebble from the car window into the blue Caribbean.

Lying as it does entirely within the north tropic, the island nevertheless commands a temperature varying with the height. At the east end the mass of the Blue Mountains rises to 7,000 feet, and the whole inner surface lifts into cool plateau or sharp mountain ridge and valley throughout the entire length of the island. Where the soil affords drainage, rivers so-called make a way to the sea; other areas are seamed or potted by torrential rains and the quick weathering of a loose limestone foundation. Rainfall varies from thirty inches on the dry plains about Kingston to a hundred inches across the mountains to the northeast; in the mountainous parts of the central plateau the fall is from seventy-five to ninety-five inches. The climate is accordingly charming in winter anywhere on the island; in the summer, comfortable at an elevation, tolerable on the breezy seacoast, but cruel to dwellers on the fertile savannahs who cannot seek the hills.

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Owing to this diversity in temperature and rainfall as well as to differences in soil, particular products are limited to well-marked areas. From Savannah-la-Mar at the extreme west of the island around to St. Ann's Bay north runs the great sugar belt which poured wealth into the pockets of absentee owners of sugar estates in the days when rum and sugar were king in Jamaica. Another important sugar area occurs on the savannahs of Clarendon, St. Catherine, and St. Thomas on the southeast. From St. Ann's Bay eastward as far as Morant stretches the banana and cocoanut-growing area, which also follows the railway across St. Mary into Kingston in the east and patches into the sugar area about Lucea and Montego Bay in the far west. Christiana in Manchester is the center of ginger cultivation, which extends through the hilly interior of St. Elizabeth and Clarendon where the soil is suitable for its propagation. These three are today the principal exports of the island. Other products have a more restricted area. The best coffee is grown in the Blue Mountains. Citrous fruits flourish in Manchester. Pimento grows wild through St. Elizabeth and St. Ann. Logwood for dyeing is cut on the estates of the southwest. In the central parishes are the most important pens for stock-raising, although fancy herds of Indian cattle have made the Westmoreland hill pastures famous.

The history of the island has been for almost three hundred years one of uninterrupted British control, and its population today of more than 94 per cent of black and colored is staunchly loyal. Although it was with the object of preserving the remnants of the Indian race that the Emperor Charles V of Spain in 1517 grant-

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ed to certain persons a patent to supply over 4,000 Negroes annually to the islands of Cuba, Jamaica, and Porto Rico, when the British in 1656 took Jamaica over from the Spanish the Indians are said to have been already practically exterminated. It is possible that Indian features survive in the ruddy complexions and high cheek bones of some old families of isolated valleys in the Pedro Plains on the south coast of St. Elizabeth, in whose caverns the remnants of the race longest held out against the white invader. The marked type of face noticeable in Ballard Valley has been so described to me. Others detect Indian features in the free Maroons of Moore Town back of Port Antonio, but neither of these groups has been actually studied. Nor is it possible today, since emancipation has brought about the free mixture of peoples from different parts of the island, to separate those Negro groups which writers distinguished in old slave days.

The first African slaves were brought into England in 1440. According to Phillippo's statement, between 1655 and 1805 there were 850,000 slaves imported from Africa to the West Indies. The method was for the European slaver to pay a "customs" to the African king, who then allowed him to trade with African slave merchants on the coast, these in turn trading with others in the interior. The country thus covered extended from Senegambia on the north to the Congo on the south. Writers describe the Mandingoes of Senegambia and the windward coast as lighter in color than the ordinary African and without Negroid features—"of better intelligence," says Long (hence often put to trades), with a "high spirit" and "a tolerable share of fidelity," but also with a reputation for viciousness such as often

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results when a backward race comes into contact with a sophisticated one. Mohammedan by religion, some of the Mandingo slaves could read Arabic. The ablest of all the Africans brought to Jamaica seem to have been the Kromanti from the Gold Coast. "Firm in body and mind, fierce, active and undisciplined in nature," they were, as potential leaders of revolt, rejected by the planters of our own South and by the Spanish and French colonies, but accepted in Jamaica, where their tradition survives today in scraps of song and speech and a reputation for magic among the isolated Maroon settlements on the island. The trickster hero of the animal tales, the spider Anansi, is a kind of culture god from this part of the Gold Coast. From further east came the Eboes and Whidahs, said to have resembled each other in culture—both practising circumcision, worshiping reptiles, and making sacrifices of human beings in their religion. Phillippo describes the Eboes as yellow in color with out-thrust lower jaw. The "Eboe drum" seems to be today connected with sorcery. The Whidahs were on the whole regarded as well-disposed and orderly, accustomed to agriculture in their own country and amenable to law. As workmen, however, the duller-witted Congo Negroes from the Slave Coast were highly prized for their steadiness and docility. Even today the term "Congo" refers to one who is the butt of his fellows. Old writers also tell of a shipload of so-called "Malay" slaves from Madagascar who were wrecked on the coast and later joined the Maroon settlements in the mountains. But differences of race or culture which were in earlier days distinguishable among isolated groups rapidly vanished when, after 1834, the freedom of the island was open to the whole population. The present

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study therefore must consider the black peasantry as a homogeneous people.

The old convention in the West Indies gave to the child of the "fourth generation of union with a white in successive generations" a legal right to rank with the white. According to Long, the Spanish table of color passed from black to mulatto, terceroon, quadroon, mustee, white. Lewis gives the succession in Jamaica in his day as mulatto, quadroon, mustee, musteefino. The child of a musteefino by a white (some writers say of a quadroon) had the right to be called "English, free of taint." Naturally such cases were not too frequent; much more common was the reversion to the so-called sambo by the marriage of a colored with a black. Today there is a preference for preserving a clear strain, and the number of those who record themselves in the census as colored—or brown, in popular parlance—is decreasing. In 1921 the census showed a population of over 800,000, of whom about 1.68 per cent registered white, 73.43 per cent black, and some 18 per cent colored. Besides these there is a small percentage of Chinese who keep shop successfully on the island but do not mix with the population, and a more important group of East Indians, called "coolies," first imported to work on the estates in 1842 to meet the labor shortage resulting from the abolition of slavery. Marriage into this group, especially for an educated colored girl, is not unknown, and it may be that these people have affected Jamaican folk thought more than can at present be asserted. An older colonization scheme for securing white labor has left a few villages of German peasants in the hills of Westmoreland, said to mix little with the Negroes. Nor must it be forgotten that of the earliest Brit-

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ish colonists on the island most were drawn from a vagrant if not criminal class of Scotch and Irish who must have brought their own superstitions with them. Later the laws which obliged estate owners to employ a fixed proportion of white workers introduced a class little above the slave himself in freedom of action.

Aside from this forced system of colonization, the Scotch have been among the most successful British settlers. At one time it was computed that a third of the whites were of Scotch descent. Very early a group of Spanish Jews colonized the island, and their descendants are important and prosperous members of established trading companies and leaders in the intellectual life of the colony. From America are said to have come the leaders of those dissenting groups to whom the ruling class points as the source of certain hysterical waves of religious or political excitement which have from time to time swept over the island. French refugees flocked to the island after the rebellion in Haiti, and many of the blacks remain as permanent residents and are looked upon with some awe by the natives as leaders in taste and in the arts of magic.

Since the abolition of slavery much has been done to extend participation in the government to the educated colored population. English is taught in the public schools by trained colored teachers generally under white supervision. In the church of England black and white worship together, in some cases under a colored clergyman. The administration of British law in courts presided over by the influential whites on the island has appealed to the Negro love of display and disputation and perfected a sense of order. Man, woman, or child can travel alone without fear from one end of the island

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to the other. "Wish you safe travel, missus," was the graceful greeting of the folk, and a collector's taste for visiting in "the bush," however eccentric it might seem to my white hosts and hostesses, was never challenged as indiscreet.

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*Full titles and facts of publication are given in the list of References at the end of this volume.

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Chapter II

THE SMALL SETTLER

A very large number of Jamaica Negroes are small settlers who own a patch or two of land upon which they build a house and raise ground provisions for their own use and for sale in the market, besides planting fruit trees and occasionally a hardwood tree for a future inheritance. The house plot is called the yard, the field piece is the ground or cultivation. "Gone a ground," say the folk of their man who has gone to his field piece; the old name "polinck," quoted by Long, is not heard today. Such "grounds" honeycomb the most unlikely hillsides between the better lands which have been absorbed into the large estates, and there utilize rich pockets of earth which often yield amazingly to cultivation. De Lisser estimated at 100,000 the number of such peasant proprietors on the island.

The Indians, according to Bridges, made their houses of wild cane bound to posts by means of withes, which they called *boschichi*. The Negroes make what is known as a "ground house" in a similar way and sometimes live in such altogether, but with the addition of plaster. Wilfrid's house was built out of seasoned bamboo cut when it was partly ripe and would harden, not rot, with age. He set up the frame and tied the poles firmly together with "China wis," then wattled the sides closely with strips of bamboo and plastered the whole, outside and in, with a mixture of red earth and wood ashes, smoothing it neatly and whitewashing the surface. The roof he thatched with a kind of high bunch grass called

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guinea grass (*Panicum jumentorum*), introduced from Africa, it is said, with a cage of finches, and today one of the most valuable grasses for stock on the island. It is a very sweet grass with a blade from three to four feet in length and a stem ten or twelve feet high. The fence he twisted out of supple-jack. He thus utilized altogether local material. The bamboo he had to buy from some neighboring estate; wild coffee, sweetwood, whitewood, or candlewood might have served the same purpose. Had he lived on the south side of the island he would have used the thatch palm for his roof, which lasts a lifetime; the guinea grass needs renewing about every five years. For the whitewash he had but to dig out a bank where the soft limestone came near the surface.

Stewart more than a hundred years ago described such a house as follows:

> The houses of the negroes are in general comfortable. They are built with hard wood posts, wattled and plastered, and either roofed with shingles (wood split and dressed into the shape of slates, and used as a substitute for them), or thatched with the top of the sugar cane, or, if at a short distance from the woods, with the mountain thatch. This latter when neatly plaited, forms a very handsome roof; and is of so durable a nature, that, like the English thatching-reed, it will last for upwards of half a century. The furniture of this dwelling which usually consists of three apartments, is a small table, two or three chairs or stools, a small cupboard, furnished with a few articles of crockery ware, some wooden bowls and calabashes, a water-jar, a wooden mortar for pounding their Indian corn, and various other articles. The beds are seldom more than wooden frames spread with a mat and blankets.

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The more common house type today is one built upon a foundation of stone and mortar raised two or three feet from the ground. Upon this are laid sills cut and squared from the forest, for which bullet tree, broadleaf, wild tamarind, and a tree called "proan" are selected. Posts are then set into the sills two feet six inches apart and fastened with pins of bullet wood at the top to plates three inches thick, upon which rest the rafters. These must be set closer for a shingled than for a zinc roof. Laths are nailed on for a zinc roof; boards form the "sauket" for the shingled. Zinc roofing, although it must be imported, is a good deal used because it is easy to handle, durable, and makes a good rain catch. Shingles are bought of men who live near the forest and make a special business of trimming them, as described by Stewart, out of the cedar tree, broadleaf, sweetwood, and Santa Maria. For the board flooring, breadnut, tamarind, broadleaf, mahoe, or bullet tree may be chosen. The walls of the house are of wood or more commonly of a filling of stone covered with lime and earth neatly plastered and whitewashed, known as "Spanish wall." The dimensions of such a house, Parkes says, are 30 feet by 17 feet for a house of ordinary size, containing two rooms and a hall; 20 feet by 17 feet for one room and hall. Barclay gives the proportion of 28 feet by 17 feet as the common size for a house of three or four rooms.

About the house yard is set a wattled fence (live wattles are no longer to be seen, so far as my observation goes), or a "takada" (take-care-there) of close-set bamboo or of some other wood, carrying five rails. Live trees are still sometimes left standing or planted to form posts, cedar being, Parkes says, "easiest to grow," but

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II. A HOUSE OF WATTLES

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"hog-plum," sugarplum, and the smooth red birch tree being also common. The prickly hedge of pinguin, a wild cactus plant like a sprangling pineapple, is still commonly to be seen.

In Kingston and to some extent in the smaller towns, it is customary to set up a range of low buildings one room deep and rent the rooms singly to the working people. The servants in a private home or the unmarried employees on an estate are thus housed.

In those parts of the island which depend entirely upon rain water, as in the Manchester Mountains or Browns Town, a tank is an important addition to the household economy. Two kinds of tank are in use, the square and the "kick and buck." The first is used when the rain water is to be caught and drained from the roof; the "kick and buck"—a name derived from the method of finishing—when it is to be collected by means of a drain or "catchment," as it is called, and thence conveyed into the tank. The "kick and buck" is generally smaller than the square tank and is cheaper of construction. After the hole is dug, a plaster made of equal quantities of red earth and lime mixed dry and stirred until sticky is applied to the dampened sides of the tank, and two men with heavy mallets, one to hold and one to pound, beat it in hard and level and smooth it with a trowel. About the top of the tank they build an edge of squared stones and mortar about three feet above the ground. For this work a mason must be employed. A mason also is needed to finish the bottom, after marl and whitestone (the common limestone or "bruk stone" used in mending roads) have first been rammed down with mallets. This the mason paves off smooth with mortar and white lime, then polishes with a mixture of

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marl and cement so that no water can soak through, the whole finish reaching a depth of one foot in a small tank, but varying in thickness porportionately to the size of the tank. The same finish is applied to the catchment, which is made like a barbecue, only that the floor slopes toward the tank, one side of which it surrounds, and a vent is left in the raised edge to conduct the water.

The square tank is generally larger and, except for the digging, requires the work of a mason. The walls are built up with stone tightened with small stones and mortar exactly as in putting up a "Spanish" house wall, except that larger stones are used. The bottom is treated like that of the "kick and buck," but made thicker to carry a larger body of water, and the sides are smoothed, cemented, and polished like the bottom, the finish being carried up over the edge. A tank of this kind is estimated to cost about twice as much as the "kick and buck" of the same dimensions.

About Mandeville, at least, the making of the lime-kiln and firing it for the lime for whitewash is a ceremonious occasion. One man alone cannot do this. Sometimes he has a party of twenty for whom he must furnish a feast of dried fish, bread, and rum, sometimes cooked food also. Parkes says the wood is cut six feet long and laid about in a ring piled eight feet high with a space left in the center for a chimney, about which straight sticks are set up on end to form the funnel. Thomas Cole of the Santa Cruz Mountains gave the dimensions of the funnel as 3 feet and of the pile as 15 feet in diameter and 6 feet high, using preferably fiddlewood, and "ricky-rocky" as wood. Marsden says:

A flat piece of ground is chosen by the overseer in a proper place, and two or three rows of thick pieces of wood form the

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foundation of a circular pile; branches and leaves are strewed above these, then a layer of limestone and so on alternately, tapering to the top, and leaving here and there a piece of wood jutting out by way of ladder to mount the pile.

The stone is packed on top of the wood, and leaves and branches are heaped over it. Fire is then thrown down the funnel and the pile left to burn all night, after which the hot stone must be left to weather into quicklime. In May a number of these conical heaps were to be seen about Mandeville, but I do not know if their building is a seasonal affair. It is considered proper for every house-owner to whitewash his house at Christmas time, but I doubt if any but the more energetic fulfill this obligation.

Almost every Negro house is surrounded by a beautiful group of such fruit trees as mango, avocado pear, ackee, jack-fruit, naseberry, sweet- and soursops, star apple, coffee, banana, and cocoanut, besides the citrous fruits—orange, grapefruit, citron, and lime. Long says, "The negroes are possessed with an opinion of the good or bad qualities of particular trees when planted near any habitation, as to the effects their neighborhood may occasion to the inhabitants." My repeated inquiries brought very little of this belief to light today. All whom I questioned agreed that fruit trees were good about a house with the exception of the pawpaw, which takes the richness from the soil or the strength from the householders themselves. "Never tie a horse to a pawpaw tree," Parkes affirmed. The "night jessamy," too, if planted near a house will "reduce you" he said, but this idea is not general.

Some folklore connected with house-building still survives. Before beginning to build, Wilfrid killed a fowl

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and poured its blood out with rum upon the ground. The headman at Burnt Ground first made a feast of chicken and rum upon the spot where he was going to build. The custom is to make the front and back doors exactly opposite each other, the front door facing to the sunset and the back door to the sunrise. If an addition is made to the house after it is built some one of the family will die, but this may be averted by promising the addition to the house at the time of building. Any change of this kind in the household habit is felt to be disastrous. A white man who was planning to put a second story to his house was expostulated with by a friendly Negro—"Mas' Eddie, you not fe leave downstairs fe go upstairs."

No small settler need go hungry in Jamaica. His greatest problem is that of making enough ready money for such things as he must buy, especially for the salt codfish or herring or meat which he cooks as a relish with vegetable food. As a substitute he may use an edible fungus called "junjo" which grows abundantly on the trunks of cotton and fig trees and in damp places. In Browne's day (1789) this was "washed, pounded and boiled with beef in our soups," but today it is little valued: "You po' fe meat, you nyam [eat] junjo," says the proverb. Salt cod cooked with the fruit of the ackee or with its substitute, the sosuma berry, is a favorite breakfast dish even upon the tables of the whites. So is the favorite West Indian "pepper pot," a kind of vegetable soup composed of a leaf or two of cabbage, callalu, young chocho vine (a kind of cucumber), pumpkin, broad and sugar beans, tomato and okra, boiled with salt beef or pork and flavored with red peppers such as grow in every peasant's yard. For drink the settler grows his

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own coffee or cocoa. The cocoa is prepared previously by cracking off the outer pod, parching the beans (thirty or more in a pod) over the fire, cleaning off the skin, and then pounding the white kernels in a mortar until they "begin to fat," that is, to exude oil. The paste is then scraped out and rolled into a ball or stick with the hand and set in the sun to dry. For flavor, the epicure adds a dash of grated nutmeg or cinnamon bark from his own trees, sweetening the drink with juice of sugar cane from his own patch, ground in a hand mill. Cream he extracts from the grated meat of a cocoanut. Oil for frying his food comes from soaking this meat in water and skimming off the pure oil that floats on the top.

"Bread kind" is the name given to all such vegetables as are used as staples, like yam, coco, sweet potato, and plantain. Of these, yam is by far the most important. What potato is to the Irish peasant, yam is to the Jamaican; but he has a very much larger choice of foods with which to vary his diet. As the Negro prefers hard food to soft, the yellow or "afoo" yam is the favorite and next to this the yam called the "negro." The whites prefer the soft, meally white yam which matures slowly, generally coming in about Christmas time, and which may, like our own potatoes, be kept six months after digging as against a few days for the yellow and a few weeks for the "negro." The Marzella is the largest yam in size, but somewhat coarse and poor eating. At an agricultural fair at Spalding, I saw a Marzella of grotesque shape weighing 150 pounds, and I am told that 200 is not unknown. A sweet potato is reported which exactly filled a half barrel. But such size is induced by excessive manuring merely for exhibition purposes and does not produce an edible tuber. Ordinary yams weigh

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from one to ten pounds, though they may attain to twenty-five or thirty.

To prepare a yam field, the ground must be cleared, holes dug, and the earth molded up with manure. The cuttings for planting are taken off the head with eyes like a potato, three such cuttings being commonly planted in each hill. The hill is covered with trash to keep it cool, and peas are planted about it to attract the snails and prevent them from attacking the yam. As soon as the vines start they must be provided with poles to run on. The longer the pole the longer the vine and the larger the tuber, and the danger of hurricane is so great that white yams are often planted to run over old trees which are firm set. The edible part of the yam is not the head, but a tuber which grows out from the head. This matures in from seven to twelve months according to kind and locality, and it may be kept for a long time in the earth. A good provider will never dig all his yams at once but leave perhaps one in a hill to four to provide against hard times. A second crop, called the foot, will grow from the same planting, but the second growth is not so good as the first.

Other varieties of yam which occur in Jamaica gardens are the Trinidad, Guinea, Lucea, and St. Vincent, all named after the localities with which they are associated; others are named for their shape, like the "Pompon," which bears "big and round." Folk names are common; "Come-here-fe-help-we" Wilfrid called the St. Vincent because it keeps so long in the earth and propagates itself by seed, so that one planting will sometimes perpetuate itself for fifteen years and serve the people in hard times. The yampe is a delicate root of hard yam whose vine twists from left to right instead

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of from right to left like the ordinary yam vine. No crop is more attractive than a field of yellow yam, its glossy, pointed leaves twined counter-clockwise about evenly set poles, and no crop in the blossoming season is sweeter with perfume.

Next to yam in importance of the tubrous vegetables is the coco, variously known as *eddo* or *tanya* in the West Indies, and as *taro* and *kalo* in the Polynesian islands. It is planted much like the yam and yields, like the yam, an edible tuber. The *baddoo* or *toaya* is a variety in which, as in Polynesia, the head is the part eaten. One year after planting, the first "breaking" is ready, but the head may be moled up for nine months more for a second breaking, and eight months later the whole is pulled up for cuttings and the rubbish fed to the pigs. The great variety of names attached to the coco in different localities suggests that both nomenclature and variety have a local range. Wilfrid in St. Mary's grew the hard "Duke," or "Commander," very popular with the Negro, the "Sally" and "Minty" and the "Green 'talk," named for its vivid green stalk. In Mandeville were enumerated the "Lef' Hand" as the hardest, the "Jeremy" as the biggest, and the "White Stalk," "Too Good," "Sinket," and "Burban" (Burbank), each with its own peculiar merit. The coco is an extremely decorative plant, with its great green heart-shaped leaves like an immense calla lily's. It is often planted as an alternate in a young banana cultivation, or in a cocoa or coffee walk. In St. Mary's parish one may see a cocoanut grove shading a field of banana or cocoa, and these trees in turn shading alternate rows of coco plants.

Equally wide are the varieties of sweet potato. According to a Mandeville informant, the "Lewis Daley"

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is long and big; the "Sarey," round and red; the "Stewart," white "right through"; "Prison Farm," white outside and pink inside; "Police" is a round potato "with peg-peg all over"; "Costa Rica" is a white potato; "Scissors Tail" (named from the shape of the leaf) bears a whole bunch of tubers.

Plantain is an old staple of the West Indies, brought, Marsden says, from the Canaries. Because of their preference for hard food over soft, the Jamaica Negroes eat both plantains and breadfruit green by choice, either boiled or roasted. The plantain they often grind into meal. Wilfrid named the "Horse," "Maiden," and "Tiger" varieties of plantain. Horse is the common, Maiden a smaller variety, and Tiger is named from the stripes on the young stalk.

Peas and beans in great variety make a handsome showing at an agricultural fair and form a ground staple beloved by the Jamaica Negro. Red kidney beans, called "pidgeon peas" by the Negro and used in the famous dish locally known as red pea soup, are often set out in alternate rows with corn to make a cover for the ground, or with sweet potatoes, since they harvest in nine weeks—by the time the potato vines are grown. They are popular with the Negro, Long says, because easy to grow. The Gungo or Congo peas grow not on a vine, but on a high shrub which spreads at the top and bears yellow flowers. It is perennial, requiring replanting in from two to five years, according to locality, and may take a ground crop of sweet potatoes. The peas, which look like large shot of a light grey color, bear in November, and the crop lasts about three months. Another popular crop is a small red bean no bigger than a couple of pinheads, used for the familiar "rice and

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peas" of the Jamaica Negro. Other varieties named today are "Cockstone," "Cow," "Full-mouth," "Sugar," and "Bannabis" (Banner bean), the last two mentioned by Marsden. "Time neber too long fe Bannabis bear bean," says an old-time proverb inculcating the rewards of patience, a virtue of which the Negro is by no means destitute. Rampini names "Red Miss Kelly," "Black Betty," "Cockle's Increase," and "Sorrow for Poor."

Corn is planted from four to six grains in a hole. After six weeks, the roots are cleaned of young grass and moled. In six months from the time of planting it is ready to harvest. The corn ears are spread on a barbecue to dry and then shelled with sticks and carried to the market in bags, those to be used for the next planting being tied together and hung up for drying. Beckford describes cultivations in which corn and coco are planted in rows as alternates with plantains. Holes are set in lines ten or twelve feet apart and one large or two small plants put to each hole. The corn was ripe in five months, the coco fingers in seven or eight months, and the heads not for ten or twelve. The plantain took from eleven to fifteen months to ripen. Marsden (1788) speaks of the "great" and "guinea" corn, the first planted between cane rows in April and reaped in June, the guinea reaped at Christmas.

Corn meal is the staple for a number of popular dishes. "Dumplings" are made by breaking the young ears before they are quite dry in the field and mixing the grated meal with white flour. "Pop," the approved dish for the sick or for delicate children, is made by boiling the grated corn and mixing it with milk and sugar. For "hominy," the dry corn is soaked in a lye of ashes and

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water, then beaten in a mortar to remove the husk, and boiled and eaten with milk and sugar. "Brown George" is parched dry corn beaten fine in a mortar and eaten with sugar and salt. "Funga" is a mixture of corn meal and flour boiled in a pot with okra. *The Jamaica Cookery Book* adds "rough cakes made with corn meal and flour—a gill of salt and a little butter and lard—fresh pepper freely used," called "Stamp-and-go" because the country people buy them for a trifle at the wayside shops with a bit of bread when they travel; and "Duckanoo," a corn meal pudding baked in a plantain leaf.

Cassava, which seems to be indigenous or introduced by the Indians into Jamaica, forms a staple starch food for the dry southside parishes of the middle district. Large fields are prepared by weeding and holing, and sticks of cassava cut about twelve inches in length are set in. A year later, in dry parts, the crop is ready to cut (but Peart of Mandeville says sweet cassava must be cut in seven or eight months), and a gang of workers is employed for the purpose. They pull each stalk by the root and carefully cut away the bearings, which grow out like rootlets sometimes six or eight to a stalk. Some bearings are the size of a man's arm, others only that of a hand. One exhibited at a fair, which weighed 56 pounds, "was a talking among all the cultivators."

Ogilby, writing in 1671 of his observations in Jamaica and the other West India islands, says:

> The ancient inhabitants used two sorts of bread, the one made of stamped roots and the other of corn, which is reaped thrice every year, and grown with such success, that one pint sown yields two hundred.
>
> They had a strange way to make their cazari cakes of the root Juca, which keeps good a year. They first pressed out the

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IV. BRINGING HOME CASSAVA FROM THE FIELD

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juice with great weights, which if drunk raw, occasions sudden death, but, boiled, is palatable and good.

The preparation of the cassava is sufficiently laborious. Each piece must be scraped and grated and the hard part next the root discarded. As the popular riddle of the cassava-grater runs: "Me fader hab a whole patch of cassava; one white-belly rat eat it off." If starch is to be prepared, the meal is mixed well with water and the whole strained through a towel held between two persons. The water which drains through is left for an hour or two to settle, then poured away leaving the starch. By this process even if the root of bitter cassava is used (the juice of which, as Ogilby observed, "occasions sudden death"), the poison will be poured away with the juice, and the "trash" which remains in the towel may be used in various ways for food. Spread out in the breeze for two hours, then mixed with salt and baked, it is called "pot bammie." Or it may be dried for several days, then beaten in a mortar, sifted, and mixed with flour to make dumpling. But for the choicest dish of all, the cherished "bammie," the starch must not be washed out at all. The grated cassava is put into a "cutacoo," or long, flat basket, shaped like a wall pocket and woven of thatch. This receptacle is kept over night in a press extemporized out of a couple of boards, the lower of which rests on a pile of stones, the upper fitting at one end into the hollow of some tree, and weighed down by a rock. Old writers describe exactly the same device. In the morning the meal is taken out of the pocket, beaten, and sifted. The flour thus formed is mixed with salt and water and baked and turned like a flapjack on a hot griddle (called an iron). The edges are cut "round like a wheel" with an iron

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hook. The Negroes are extravagantly fond of this delicacy. No choicer offering can be made to an exile to the wet north side of the island, where cassava is not grown, than a package of homemade "bammie" from the drier south.

Coffee grows well in the high parts of Jamaica which have enough but not too much rainfall, and most small settlers in these localities have a coffee walk, large or small, the fruit of which they prepare for market. The first fruit which ripens in August is called "Burn Side," because only one side shows red, and is harvested for home consumption. From September to December, or later on the north side of the island, the berries are fully ripe. The three processes of pulping, drying, and fanning or cleaning are performed with more or less complicated mechanism according to the size and importance of the industry. I have seen a community pulping machine, consisting of a large wooden wheel turned by mule power, which moves horizontally about a circular trough into which the berries are poured and where they are crushed under the rim of the wheel, while water pours in to wash away the pulp. Hand-turned frames are also made, shaped like a box, with handles on each side which turn a wooden roller to crush the beans, a funnel at the top, and a seive at the bottom, through which the grains fall after the pulp is washed away at the side. For domestic use a small mill, something like a coffee mill, is employed. The berries are put through the pulper several times until they are as free as possible from the pulp, then washed by hand in a can of clean water and spread on a barbecue to dry. They must be taken up at night and dried by day, turned each day first on one side and then on the other until they are thoroughly

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dry, then packed away in bags for marketing. A few days before marketing they are heated for one or two days, then put into a mortar and pounded until the trash is beaten off, and fanned to blow it away. On large estates a fanner is provided for this process. The grains are finally picked over clean by hand before selling in the market, where they may bring from *6d.* to *2s.* a quart.

The Jamaica Negro is fond of sugar and generally grows a small patch of sugar cane for home consumption, which he grinds in a small hand mill. Many small settlers plant a large patch of cane and construct a mill which does not differ much today from that described by Peter Marsden in 1788, with octagonal roof, a main roller of cabbage tree and two other rollers turning upon cogs, the whole worked by mules or horses, with a boy on the shaft to drive who "sang day and night." The mills I saw in the cockpits had the crusher in the open and the boiling done under the conical roof, nor did the boy sing day and night; only the noisy creaking of the wooden rollers as the forlorn animal made its round told of the neighborhood of one of these primitive sugar factories. One man feeds in the cut cane while the mule swings around the circle. The juice flows through a gutter set beneath the rollers and thence into a barrel. When the barrel is full, the juice is strained and a little lime water, more or less according to the season, thrown in to temper it. In a dry season the juice will crystallize quickly, but in a wet season more lime must be used to prevent its turning into a spongy mass known as "tie teeth." While the juice is boiling, someone must keep it constantly turning with a long ladle to watch its progress, and skim it to remove the impurities which rise

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to the surface. This scum is called the "dundar," a term used by Marsden, who limits it to the skimming of the two first coppers, called "St. Hild." Another man attends to feeding the fire. The boiling usually takes several hours. When the juice sugars, the fire is drawn out from under the pots and the hot sugar ladled into kerosene cans or into little clay forms about the size of a pint can, according to the form in which it is to be marketed. It is estimated that nine kerosene cans of juice go to make one can of sugar. Each can holds sixty-four pounds of sugar and sells at from 10*s*. to 16*s*., of which 1*s*. 6*d*. must be paid for the hire of the mule. About six of these cans are turned out in a day.

There is little difference except in color between the two kinds of ginger grown in Jamaica, the white and the blue. Good ginger grounds require a black loam, hence the cultivation is limited to the high midland sections, where it is the chief industry; but as the crop quickly wears out the soil, either fertilizers or rotation of crops must be resorted to. Ogilby writes:

> Since the Spaniards planted ginger on Jamaica, it hath grown there in great abundance. The male plant (for it is divided into male and female) hath generally bigger leaves than the female; the stalks, which are without knots, have more leaves upwards than downwards, and spread along the earth, still taking root anew; when the leaves wither, then the ginger is commonly ripe, but it hath not that poignancy whilst green as when dry'd.

One planting yields two crops, the second or rattoon crop springing from the old stock which is left in the ground. The buds must be left in the ground for a year after planting. They are dug from January to March and carried to the ginger house where gangs of women

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provided with knives peel off the skin and spread out the ginger to dry on wooden frames. This work is done at night to the accompaniment of song. The ginger when ready for market looks like heavy branching coral and sells from 3*d.* to 1*s.* a pound.

The pimento or allspice berry grows upon a handsome glossy-leaved laurel tree native to Jamaica, and furnishes a marketable product with very little outlay except to keep the trees clear of undergrowth. Bridges says that in his day St. Ann parish supplied "three-fourths of the pimento which is consumed throughout the world." The berries ripen from July to October and are harvested by breaking off the fresh limbs from the tree and picking off the berries into baskets. They must then be dried on the barbecue like coffee, kept from rain, and constantly turned until the seed can be heard to shake inside the husk. Then they are cleaned by fanning, the people using one hand for fanning, while with the other they shake the berries about in a tray or bowl. Last, they must be picked over by hand to remove all sticks. The highest price paid is 3*d.* a pound; often it sells for only a farthing.

Both ginger and pimento are pleasant crops to harvest because of the rich spicy smell that accompanies every part of the process, however tiresome. The pimento tree itself wafts a fragrance said to be inimical to ticks and such evil vermin. Another exquisitely odoriferous harvest is that of the logwood estates, which in blossoming season smell sweeter than isles of spice and attract swarms of bees to a harvest which yields to the bee farm in February its choicest honey—clear amber and white, as compared with the dark mango honey which comes in April or later. The wood of logwood is

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marketable for dyestuff. The annotto bean also yields a dye valuable to commerce and is among the marketable products of the small settler, at about 1*s.* a pound. "Best prices paid for coffee, ginger, honey, wax, cocoa, annotto, goat-skins, pimento, kola nuts, cassava starch, sarsaparilla," I read in a notice affixed to a provision store on the south side of the island.

Of the folklore of planting my records are rather suggestive of its direction than complete in detail. The moon plays an active part in planting customs. Cassava must not be planted "to catch the moon," or it will be stocky without growing tubers, hence it should be set out in the dark of the moon or just before full moon so that the roots will not start until the moon begins to wane. Yam, sweet potatoes, and cabbage, on the other hand, should be planted five to seven days before full moon so that "they may start to root and catch the full and we get good return." Plantain and banana also are set out "to meet the moon." "Dig up suckers and wait upon the moon," says Falconer. Several informants assured me that the difference between the dark and the light varieties of yampe (which are variable species) depended upon whether the tuber was planted on a dark night or during moonlight. In some cases my informants gave rationalistic reasons for moon taboos, which sometimes even contradicted the sympathetic magic of the moon. Wilfrid of St. Mary's thinks that peas and sweet potatoes should be planted on a dark night so that the worms will not find them, and Falconer would plant corn then to protect it from the rats, unless it is to be planted on burned ground where the rats can't find it.

Planting customs tend to emphasize odd days of

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the month, especially the fifteenth: "February 15 and March 15 are beautiful days to plant corn, or August 15 and September 15," says Falconer of Malvern, who would always plant on the odd days. Parkes of Mandeville named the eighth, fifteenth, or twenty-second for planting, especially in March. May seems to be a poor planting month. Falconer says the crab runs in that month, and white yams planted in May will bear "no bigger than a crab's foot." Other informants agreed that coco planted in May will show soft scaly bumps called "yaw bumps."

Much lore attaches to the pumpkin, which is a very old favorite in Negro provision grounds. To keep the plant from running to vine and to persuade it to go about its business of bearing fruit and of bearing gourds with meat instead of a "heavy inside" called "pumpkin guts," imitative magic is employed. If a person walks about too much after or before planting pumpkin seed, the vine will also run about over the ground without bearing anything. The thing to do is to plant the first thing in the morning before eating or drinking and, after planting, to sit down quietly for an hour and do nothing at all, or "sit down flat, fold up your legs, and put a stone on your head." If the vine still seems inclined to run, send a pregnant woman out to tread upon it; she must "catch the vine and turn it up and down and walk upon it." If you point toward young pumpkins when they are coming out, they will drop off the vine; instead, gesture with the clenched fist.

Before planting peas, cook rice and peas and eat them at the field for luck in planting. When a man plants a new field it will give him luck if his wife runs about it naked at seven o'clock at night. To keep a neighbor

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from casting a "grudgeful eye" at a fine field crop, plant the horse-eye bean (*Dolichos ensiformis*, according to Gosse), also called "cut-eye bean," at the top and bottom of the field and bury a physic nut in the field, or plant it all along the side of the field and put some into a gourd and hide the gourd in the field. For should a neighbor grudge you your crop, he can wither it by going to the field early while the dew is on the ground and walking through it until his trousers are wringing wet, then wringing out the water over the fire. Fire here seems to play a magical part, just as in the interdictions mentioned by one of Cundall's informants against roasting yam lest it injure the vine, or roasting breadfruit with the heart left in lest the tree bear smaller fruit.[1]

[1]The notes on food and agriculture were printed as Part 2 of *Notes on Jamaican Ethnobotany*.

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Chapter III

FISHING, TRAPPING, STOCK-RAISING

Sea fishing is carried on to a considerable extent in Jamaica, especially on the south side of the island from Alligator Pond to Savannah-la-Mar. Long affirms that the Negroes of the Congo and of the Gold Coast are expert fishermen and excel in making canoes. But there is little to be seen of fish craft today in Jamaica; "everything is done the easiest way."

Canoes are dug out of cottonwood trees, the size depending upon the size of the tree. Cottonwoods rise to a very great height before branching (Long says sometimes to eighty or a hundred feet), and the wood is soft and spongy. Before felling a tree a propitiatory offering of rum must be poured at its roots "to pay the old one," a precaution perhaps encouraged by the exaction of a similar dram to quiet the superstitious apprehension of the men who do the felling. When the trunk has been trimmed, it is hollowed out with an axe rather than by burning, for the people seem to dread the use of fire. An ingenious device employed to mark the limit of the gouging is to drive small pegs of hard wood (usually bullet) at intervals into the soft trunk, so that as the wood is cut away they mark the point—about two inches from the surface—at which the cutting must cease.

The finished canoe is generally given a coat of black paint. Its fittings are of the simplest. Oars are used, not paddles. A piece of wood "shaped like a tomb" is nailed to the halyards and pierced in two places to hold

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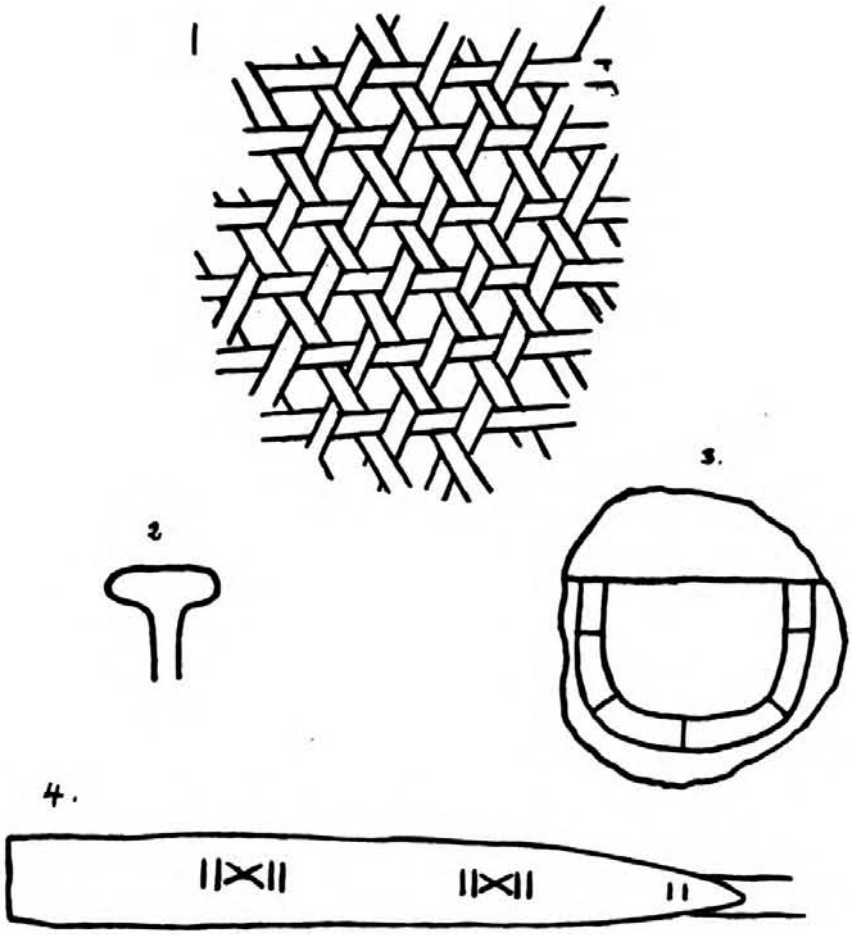

1. Mesh used for fish pots.
2. Top of steering paddle.
3. Cross section of tree trunk showing construction of canoe.
4. Oar blade showing method of tying.

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the loops of rope which take the place of tholepins. Bigelow in 1850 saw this same device used and also the method of tying the blade of the oar to the loom or handle by piercing three sets of holes in each and sewing the two together with hand-twisted cord. The shaping of loom and blade is often of the roughest. The short paddle used for steering is either cut in one piece or has a short crosspiece nailed to the end of the handle. Sometimes a spritsail is provided.

The fish pot in use today is of the common double box pattern. Gosse describes the mesh of a single box shape he saw near Bluefields as made of "strips of very tough wood torn off about an inch wide and no thicker than card-board, interwoven much like the cane bottom of a chair," and the same mesh is seen today, especially on the top and bottom of the trap, although chicken wire is fast taking its place. It resembles the diagonally locked open checker-mat of the Carib Indians pictured on page 322 of Roth's monograph on the arts and crafts of the Guiana Indians in the 38th Report of the Bureau of Ethnology. For bait, fresh fish is less often used than decaying oranges, breadfruit, coco head and herring; otherwise the big fish will break the pot in their eagerness to snatch the bait.

Fishing forms described by old writers I did not see used, but they may still be employed. Rampini distinguishes two methods of fishing, one the "palenka" or long line fishing with 1650 hooks attached to a single line, the other "bateau" fishing. Beckford draws a fine picture of fresh-water fishing for mullet or "calapavre," practised from February to April when the rivers are low. The river is first dammed and fish pots deposited to catch such fish as escape, then a seine is launched

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in the deeper parts of the river while divers make ready to drive back or catch in hands or teeth the fish which try to escape; others are ready with spears to stab them from above. Long says that fish poison was used to stupefy the fish, sometimes branches of dogwood being thrown into a pool for this purpose. Seine-fishing is still employed in some bays. The seines are made 300 feet long, either of imported twine or of native cord twisted out of trumpet bark. A catch of fish in Jamaica is never more than enough to supply domestic demands.

Fish caught at Little Pedro as listed by Henry James Eliot, a fisherman from Ballards Valley, include those varieties caught in pots and on the towing line. Pot fish are jackfish of the "goggle-eye," "horse-eye," and "skip" varieties; yellowtails of the "maiden" (small) and "drop" (large); snappers; mullet, especially the "queen" mullet; silk of the red "sun-silk" and the black varieties; pangie; parrot; goat and Caesar. On the towing line are caught "ocean" and "hard bone" jack; king; mackerel; ocean piper; grupper; "pot-cover"; "angel"; "Tom squirrel"; bonito; dolphin and barracouta. There is no fishing with a seine at Little Pedro, but a seine is used at Alligator Pond to catch cobbler; "cavally" (Gosse thinks from the Spanish *cavalho*) and "hard bone" jack; snit; drummer and "mungala" drummer; cat; "cutlass" and "machete"; shad, and even sharks and sea cows. Many of these varieties are listed by Gosse, Stewart, and Marsden.

Turtle-spearing is still carried on at night in the marshes of the Black River by setting fire to the long grass and driving the turtles to take refuge in the water; and fresh lobsters, crab meat, and turtle soup are common delicacies on a creole table. Fishing is the common

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occupation of many seacoast villages. At Alligator Pond the boats go out five days of the week, at Little Pedro on four. On the dry Pedro plains it is only by selling their sea products that the inhabitants manage to live. The fishermen sell their wares on the beach, and the vendors hasten with them to the largest settlement with the fish disposed in trays upon their heads or carried in a cutacoo or side pocket suspended about the neck. In undershirt and drawers they trot up the mountain slopes of Santa Cruz or Manchester nineteen miles to the town. For a fish horn they may carry a conch shell which they blow as they run. I have seen fish vendors from Alligator Pond selling sea products in the markets of Christiana, which must be some thirty miles from the sea.

Sea life and sea products seem to enter almost not at all into the imaginative life of the Negro, but this judgment may be due to the fact that it was in the hill towns and not on the coast that most of my observations were made. There is no question, however, that in this respect Jamaican thought differs sharply from the Polynesian, for example, whose art is, like its life, amphibian. Few folk tales have a background of sea life, nor do I recall a riddle or a song that turns upon it. Mr. Cundall lists only six proverbs out of 737 which refer to fish or fishing. Sea creatures seldom appear as actors in Jamaican animal stories, nor do superstitions play about sea life such as give interest and mystery to certain birds, insects, and animals. I once heard a song chanted by a passer-by—I think a girl—on the street of a hill town, which ran—

> I do not want to go down to the sea,
> For the sea is so wide and the sea is so deep!

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VI. WAITING FOR THE FISHING BOATS AT ALLIGATOR POND

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Over and over she crooned her lonely reflection to a chantlike melody. So far as I know, those mysteries of the spirit world in Jamaica which lave themselves in watery places are reserved for pools and rivers. The mind of the African Jamaican remains congenitally continental, nor has it ever played with the darker illusions of the sea which bore him hither.

Of folklore of the sea my records are almost destitute. Fishermen wear one gold earring in order to sharpen the sight. Eliot of Ballards Valley had a saying that "fishermen put two knives together in the form of a cross to prevent rain from falling," and that "when a star shoots toward the north fishermen look for stormy weather." Wednesday is regarded as a lucky day for fishing, especially if the fisherman happens to be born on that day. One of Cundall's informants says if you are going hunting or fishing and anybody asks you to bring him "one," he spoils your luck.

Of game there is very little left wild on the island, but the Negroes sometimes vary their diet by bird-trapping, and many valuable birds of the pigeon tribe have been almost exterminated by this practice. The ringdove was in old days a famous table delicacy, and today the whitewing, pea dove, baldpate, whitebelly, "hopping Dick," quail, and partridge are the chief birds hunted. Traps are used for their capture, at least for the smaller birds.

The most complex of these trapping methods is the *calaban*, made like a rustic flowerpot. Four sticks of equal size are laid in the form of a square varying in size according to the size of the bird to be caught, and bound at the corners with cords which cross inside the square diagonally and into which the successive layers

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of sticks are woven until the whole is built up into a four-sided conical cap. To set the trap, it is lightly tilted upon the point of a stick which rests upon the center of the raised side and attached to which is a string extending under the trap where food is scattered. As the bird pecks at the food, the string is twitched and the cage falls. The *springe* and *chokie* are placed upon a branch to which a bird is likely to come for fruit. The *springe* is made with a piece of pliable stick which catches the bird when it puts its head through to eat the fruit. The *chokie* or "breakneck" employs a string for the same purpose. The small branches are first broken away from about the fruit, leaving a single perch for the bird's approach. One end of the cord is held in the hand of the concealed trapper and the other arranged in a loop where the bird will put its head through to eat. Bird lime made of fustic or cashew gum is employed in similar fashion. A lump of it is stuck at the end of a stick, which is then thrust through the fruit so as to form a tempting perch for the bird that comes to peck the fruit.

As to the domestication of animals, the small settler has little experience. Few such families own any animal besides the dog as guardian of the house, the donkey to carry produce to market, the goat for milk and meat, or perhaps a hog for the more thrifty. The pens, as stock farms are called in Jamaica, are altogether in the hands of large owners. Many families find employment on the pens, but I obtained very little specific information about folk belief as applied to the art of stock-raising.

Horse-racing is still the favorite sport of the wealthy pen-owners, a sport which is reflected also in the life of

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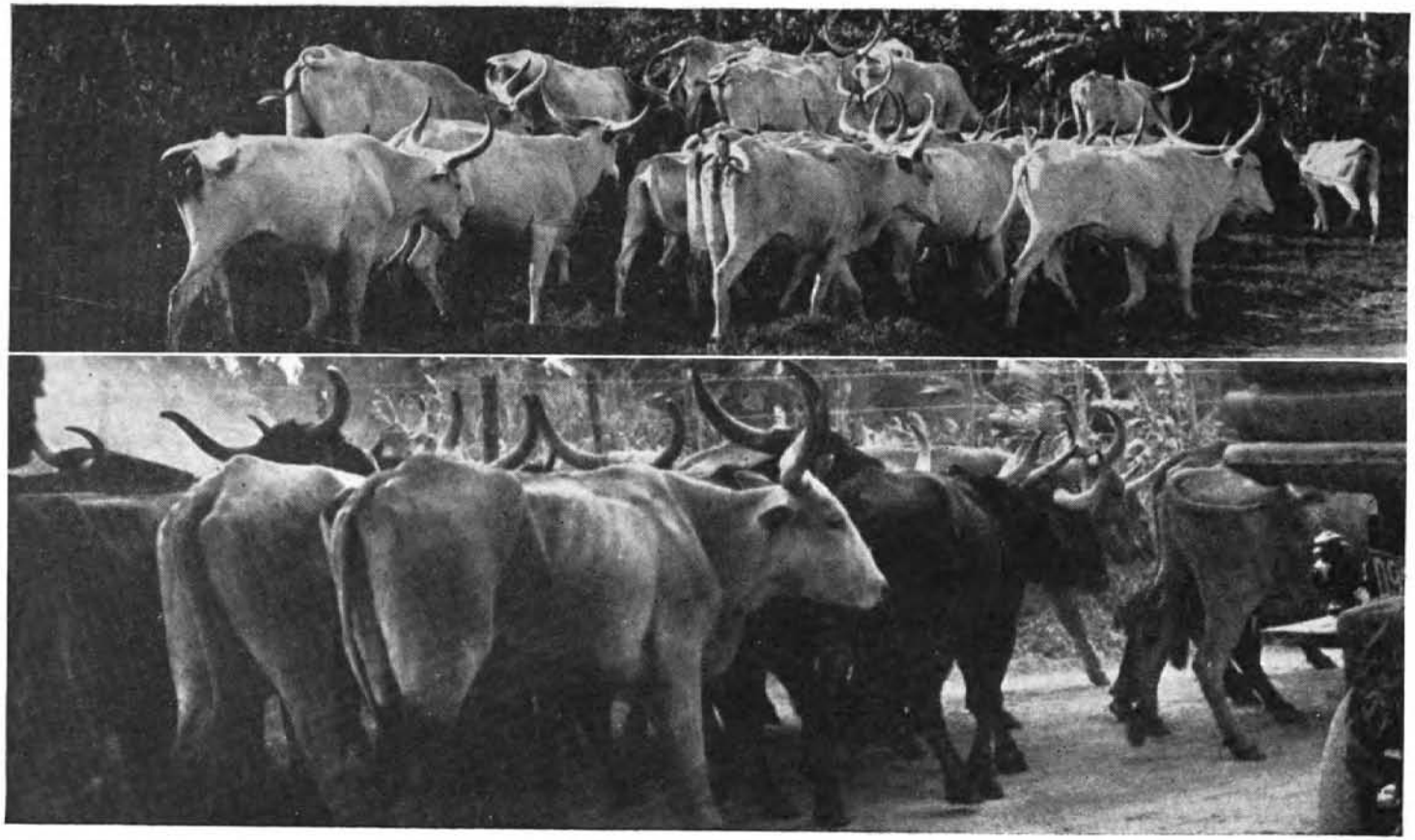

VII. INDIAN CATTLE

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the folk at the annual parish fairs where prizes are offered for horse, mule, and donkey competitions, as well as in the great meets where only the pens breeding race horses actually compete, but to which resorts the whole population within reach of the race course. From 1824 to 1840, Pepper Pen in St. Elizabeth is said to have had "the largest racing stud in the world" (that is, the Jamaica world), with a hundred thoroughbred English mares and seven English sires. It is asserted by the loyal jockeys that racers from its stud were sold into England and won on the great English courses. Other pen-owners with smaller studs were equally able trainers. The story goes that Watt of Friendship used to keep his yearlings for a day without water and then, stationing himself by the watering trough to watch their gait as they came up to drink, he picked out those fit for training.

Races were held twice a year on the Kingston course. There was a two-mile run; after the first half the horses were rubbed down, and the three leaders ran the second mile which decided the race. Each of the jockeys wore the colors of the pen for which he was riding: those from Pepper Pen were in red with blue sleeves; those from Harmony Hall, St. Ann, in blue and white. The celebrated Miss Sarah Salmon Manning, who owned her own stud and was regarded any man's equal in judging a horse, put her jockeys into crimson.

Betting was high, and even white men have acknowledged their indebtedness to the mysterious powers of the "French woman" who occupied (or perhaps still occupies) a house backing upon the Kingston race course. The tips she gave to her customers are said to have invariably picked upon the winning horse. But

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the Negroes had other means of betting on the winner besides application to a medium. Falconer assured me that there were several ways by which a man could stay at home and predict the event of the race. Two men might name two grains of peas for two of the horses. One would take one pea, the other party to the bet the other, and three days before the race they would plant them at the same instant. The first pea to sprout on the fourth day (that is, the day of the race) was the winner. Or they might name two bottles of equal size and on the day of the race fill them with water and one say: "Come on, now, and we throw [empty] the water and the first one that is dry, that is the winner." Or the two betters would select two plantain trunks, name them, and, on the night before the race, go out in the dark and make a cut with the machete as high as they could reach. In the morning the trunk that showed the highest mark named the winner. Finally, "old-time people say that if you look at the clouds as they lie along the horizon in the early morning between four and five—not later—you will see the color in the clouds worn by the jockey who rides the winning horse." An old jockey from Pepper Pen corroborated this statement, and I think he believed it.

One of Cundall's informants gives further a receipt for preventing a horse from winning the race. Collect dirt from its hoof, wrap it up with asafoetida in a cloth, tie it with the "wild slip" plant, and put it under a stone or other heavy weight. But if the owner has taken the precaution to collect the dirt first and throw it away, the charm will not work.

So far as I could find out, there is little interest in the stars or other heavenly bodies among Jamaicans.

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A few African riddles concern themselves with the stars and the moon, and a few beliefs of rather unusual character have grown up about them. All of those I heard came from Falconer.

In starting on a journey, you should look for the "first runner star" in the morning about half past two to three; shut one eye and "bring it into two stars." If the point to the east twinkles when you look at it in this way, it is unlucky to start, but if not, you will have a prosperous journey.

If you see stars thick at night, the sun will be hot the next day.

It is unlucky to say that you see a star shoot—say you see a "a cow run" or some other animal move. If a star shoots toward the north, there will be a storm from the north—"great wind and weather."

Seven stars "come out in May and scatter in June." It is these stars that cause the heat, and they are called "clot of blood." The old sign says that if a male sees the sign first, many men will die during the year; if a female, many women, and if an animal sees it first it will be a hard year for the animals. Hence the animals from January to May sleep with their heads turned toward the east because they don't want to see the stars; in May they turn their heads right back to the sea. Falconer says he believes this to be a "positive fact" because he has himself marked the habit among the animals.

Beliefs about the days of the week I think derived, like the traditions already quoted, from European sources; perhaps English rhymes account for some of them. I have these from Wilfrid or other informants from St. Mary. Monday is the right day to start on a

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journey because you should "never let Sunday catch you on your travel." But Monday is not so lucky a day as Tuesday to go out to look for work; should a man fail to get work on one Tuesday, he will not try again until the Tuesday following. No one will pay out money on Monday. Monday is also an unlucky day for marriage; the two will "quarrel till they part" if they marry on Monday. Saturday is also unlucky, for the husband is sure to die. Says Wilfrid, "That I book down; I know that is fact." Wednesday and Sunday are the best days for marriage. Thursday and Friday are the best days to clip your hair.

A few beliefs about special days are also current. If on Good Friday morning at twelve o'clock you break an egg and turn the white into a glass without the yolk, it will turn red. Or if at the same hour, you go to a physic nut tree (castor oil bean) and stick a penknife into it, the juice that comes out will be blood. Virginia Stewart, a Pukkumerian, tried this, and "it really was blood."

Plant fruit trees on Christmas day, for they will then bear heavily.

If on New Year's morning you fill a glass with foaming soapsuds and place it outside your door, at twelve o'clock it will "show you your destiny," but I do not know exactly in what form. If you spread a white cloth under a fig tree on New Year's morning and put two glasses there, at twelve o'clock at night the fig tree blossom will fall into one of the glasses, and two white men will come and throw down a diamond and go away. If you go up on a hill on New Year's morning you will see the sun dance. One informant says that what one does on New Year's day one will do every other day of the year.

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Chapter IV

THE MARKET

Exchange in Jamaica is carried on by means of open markets held in the larger villages of each parish, sometimes not more than three miles apart, and open on fixed days, generally a small market on Wednesday and a large one on Saturday. In Kingston several markets are open daily, although Saturday is the great market day when the people of the hill villages send in their produce and stock up for the week-end.

The market occupies a fixed enclosure in some central place in the village, walled to prevent free entrance and provided with covered booths, at least for the meat stalls and sometimes for the whole enclosure, with a water supply and a corner for tethering the donkeys. It is owned by the parochial board, which rents it out to a private individual for a fixed sum a year. He engages to keep it clean and to regulate its conduct, and in return collects an admission fee of one penny for a load carried in on the head, threepence for a donkey-load. The stalls are rented according to the value of the article sold. In Maggotty, St. Elizabeth (the name dates from Slaney's map of 1678), the market is held in the back yard of a large provision-shop, and entrance is free except that each vendor is expected to give a yam or a coco or some other bit of his produce to the man who cleans the yard. Here stalls for mutton rent for threepence, pork for sixpence, and beef for a shilling.

Sellers and buyers sometimes travel great distances to attend a market where their own products are in

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demand or where they can supply themselves with provisions which are scarce at home. At the Maggotty market, ground provisions are cheap because they are supplied by the industrious small settlers who come from seven miles back in the cockpit country; hence buyers from the dry Pedro plains travel as far as twenty-four miles to supply the markets at home. All night long the procession moves toward the market, silently or with song, driving the loaded donkeys. Those who get in early drop down beside their donkeys to sleep until morning, when they take advantage of an early sale to start back with a load to sell in another market. Others in their festive clothes remain for the day, dickering with this one and that and getting the sweet taste of cosmopolitan life and gaiety before returning to take up again the round of the week in the country.

In the market, stations are taken in an orderly way so that each kind of ware has its own locality and each vendor his place. Women vend the produce of their gardens temptingly arranged in neat bunches within a single large basket or wooden tray, or spread out before them in neat piles on the floor, each vendor's display a green grocer's shop in miniature. At Mandeville, where many whites come to buy, there are green vegetables such as lettuce heads, little rolls of string beans and bunches of radishes and onions, heaps of lima beans, tomatoes often of great size and excellent flavor, carrots, turnips, and eggplants. The vendors of these things have also eggs to sell at a shilling a dozen. There are little bunches of thyme and mint and sage for flavoring, and small round strawberry tomatoes valued for a relish and grown in every well-appointed yard. Staple

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vegetables of the "bread kind" are always to be had, and a pumpkin or fruits in their season—pears, mangoes, and pineapples in the summer; citrous fruits in the winter; and in the spring, purple or green star-apples, warty soursop, a dish of brown naseberries so highly valued under the name of "sapodilla" throughout the West Indies, or a basket of that curious, indigenous fruit of the cashew nut (said to grow "with its seed outside"), a long droop of red or yellow, acrid to the taste but palatable in preserve, at whose extremity hangs the little pear-shaped nut in a hard shell. This must be roasted before extracting the soft delicate cashew nut of commerce. In the spring also, when the ackee are ripe, there are baskets of this brilliant red fruit yawning open to show the glossy black seeds against the pale yellow pulp. Nothing in Jamaica gardens moves the admiration more than this African tree, its brilliant red droops hanging in clusters among the glossy green leaves, in which state the fruit carries a poison that disappears only when it is ripened so as to split open in the sun; hence the Jamaica riddle:

Me fader send me to pick out a wife; tell me to tek only those that smile, fe those that do not smile wi' kill me.

In another part of the market there are golden-red corn shelled into bags, the common red kidney bean, and gungo peas; and where East Indians live there is rice sold by a pretty delicate-skinned woman with a gold ornament thrust into the side of her nose, and her neck and wrist loaded with silver chains and bangles of fine workmanship. All these wares are measured out by the quart, pint, or half-pint in the same way as the white starch of arrowroot or cassava. On the south side of the island, where cassava is grown, every market has

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VIII. SELLING BEANS AND HOMEMADE STRAINERS IN THE MARKET

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its row of old women, with trays on their knees or at open stalls, selling flat white "bammie" cakes as big as a plate, folded up in white napkins as protection from the dust. Also sold by measure is the black native sugar brought down from the hills in kerosene cans slung across a donkey's back and peddled in the market at a shilling a quart. It is thus that the sugar-makers from the cockpits supply it. Clarendon vendors bring their sugar to market hardened into small cakes and packed into bales stuffed with banana trash, and these sell for fourpence a cake. Near the entrance to the market there is a tempting display of pulled pink and white peppermint sticks called "John Barley"; cocoanut cakes called, if cut, "chopped devil," if grated, "grata brule"; trays of buns and spiced cakes wrapped in napkins; bottles of homemade ginger beer; and cakes like our fudge made of native sugar and ginger, besides jewelry to beguile the purchaser who arrives with full pockets or the vendor who leaves with the price of his wares still unspent.

Besides the meat stalls there may be fish stalls where dried fish hangs. Fried fish prepared at home for market is sold out of covered trays, as well as tripe and pigs' feet, which are a favorite relish of the people. Tobacco vendors take up a good position, sure of their trade. The cured leaf, often of excellent quality, is wound into rope of two sizes called "jackass rope" and is sold by measure. Rope itself is also to be found in the market, although rope-making is a less specialized industry. It is twisted out of trumpet bark, or from the bark of a tree called "burn nose"; from mahoe bark, or the outside husk of the cocoanut, or thatch, called "silver straw." That of the trumpet bark is the best,

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thatch rope perhaps the least valuable. To braid the rope, select a smooth part of the bark and strip it down from the top, cutting it off smooth at the bottom. The outer bark must then be stripped off, leaving the inner, and this inner bark is hung up for three days to dry, letting the dew also fall upon and soften it. Take three strands together, loop one end into a "nose," and tie it with a cord against a tree; then braid it down, at the same time twisting each strand deftly as the braiding continues. When finished, the looped end is called the "nose."

Other articles of domestic manufacture such as are useful in the economy of the household have also a place in the market. Brooms of thatch or of the coarse parts of the "jippi joppa" palm leaves after the finer portions have been split off for weaving; wooden trays shaped like meat-chopping trays; starch-sifters plaited out of narrow strands of thatch, the ends of which are deftly inserted and fastened into the pliable bands of fig wood which form the rim; little round doormats braided out of banana trash; pannier-protectors for the donkeys, of the same trash, stitched flat with twine, and sleeping-mats put together with the same material and technic; panniers themselves occasionally, although these are less often seen in the market. Nor have I ever seen there the flat trays of native wood, rectangular in shape, with flaring rim, usually without a cover, in which the more punctilious in the country districts still carry poised upon their heads the spoils of sea or garden, the bread from the bakeshop, and the breakfast they are taking to their man at work in the shop. Water-carriers, too, are hardly to be got in the market. I suppose they are too bulky for the occasional need.

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In old days the calabash and the great clay jar called "panya" (Spanish) were the common receptacles, with a gourd for a carrier poised upon the head by means of a ring-shaped pad of banana trash or handkerchief called a "cotta." Long says that some of these gourds held from thirty to forty quarts. They are got from a smaller variety of the calabash tree in which the fruit grows along the branches instead of from the trunk like the larger product. The "tooktook" bears a size halfway between. Today the kerosene can is the common carrier. I have seen children of eight or ten carrying such cans of water on their heads from the brook. The gasolene drum lately introduced is locally distinguished from the kerosene as the "jo pan" or "drum-pan." Dealers in cocoanuts display not only the ripe nut for sale, or a tray full of water cocoanuts cut young before the liquid has formed into meat, but also brushes cut from the husks, of a rich brown color, smooth and soft as velvet, which are used in every well-regulated Jamaica household to polish the finished wood floors after they have first been cleaned with a wash of Seville orange juice. Or the husk may be shredded to make rope or to use for brushes or to stuff beds (called *kaiya*). Earthen bowls, hand-turned and covered with a rude glaze, are always to be had in the Kingston market, but they are more rare in the hills where the old-time "yabba" is being supplanted by tinware. The pail-shaped tin which constitutes the ordinary cooking vessel is called a "bu'n pan" from the black look it gets after being over the fire, and the common name for a silk hat is a "bu'n pan hat" just as we would say "stovepipe," and the English, "chimney-pot." Tinware, drygoods in the shape of cloth and no-

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tions, and jewelry, belts, mirrors, and other articles of dress or of adornment, occupy a conspicuous place in the modern market. In Mandeville an entire covered booth is given up to this and the tobacco trade. Hides are sometimes sold, and such livestock as are commonly owned by the people, that is, goats, pigs, chickens, and donkeys.

Hats and baskets are always displayed at the Saturday market. It is in basketry as also in wood work that the Jamaica Negroes show most technical skill, for these people must be classed as primarily a basket-weaving rather than a pottery-making folk. Their baskets are made to carry heavy loads and are woven with remarkable evenness and firmness. The modern commercializing of the industry has developed some new technics and brought some new materials into use but has tended to the deterioration of old patterns. In early days two technics developed according to the material used, and these still persist. Round baskets are made of a withe called "basket hook" treated like wattling, for which wild cane or fine strips of bamboo can be substituted to make in the one case a more perishable basket, in the other a stronger. Two shapes are common in this technic, the open bowl-shaped field basket, with a firm rim of withe or bamboo caught over at intervals with the hook; or the covered basket, large at the bottom and narrowing toward the top, with a cover and generally with handles either applied like loops at the sides or brought over the top like a carrying basket. Both these shapes may be of very large size and are in ordinary use for crop gathering and transporting. The square baskets are plaited close and flat out of strips of prepared thatch, for which cocoanut or screw pine

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may be substituted. Three shapes are common. The "bankra" is a ground provision basket, about eight to ten inches square at the bottom and eleven to thirteen inches in height, fitted with a close cover and a double handle, very neatly made of two strips of withe overbound with thatch and sewed to the bottom about four inches apart, then brought together up the side to form a double thickness which bows well up from the cover. It is the lightest and most convenient of baskets for one not skilled in head balance, and as enduring as time. An attractive pattern is worked into it of a darker palm or of strands dyed orange with annotto or brown with logwood. The "hang-'pon-me," also of thatch, is a square pocket hung from the neck. The cutacoo is of a coarse weave and shaped like a wall pocket with the strands running diagonally instead of squarely across it. A sewed basket technic has developed with the development of the "jippi joppa" palm industry, and very pretty "lady" baskets are made for a girl's trips to the city, but they are too delicate to be employed in field labor.

Some of the price values quoted at the market show a survival of old usage. The following table contains names still in use today:

Bit, 4½*d.* or 9 cents.
Four bits, 1*s.* 6*d.* or 36 cents.
Mac-and-thruppence, 1*s.* 3*d.* or 30 cents.
Quattie, 1½*d.* or 3 cents.
Gill, 3 farthings or 1½ cents.

In Stewart's day still other terms were common:

Joe (a Portuguese coin in gold), £5 10*s.*
Half Joe, or *Johannes*, £2 15*s.*

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Macaroni (an American coin), 25 cents
Spanish dollar, 6*s*. 8*d*.

Leslie lists also:

Ryal, 7½*d*.
Pieces of eight, 6*s*. 3*d*.
Pistole, 28 ryals or £1 3*s*. 9*d*.
Doubloon, 2 pistoles or £2 7*s*. 6*d*.

At times when money is plentiful and prices high, much coin changes hands at the market and provision stores; when the market is low, barter is employed, but always in terms of money value. The chorus of a "hard time" song runs:

Annotto can't sell, the price is unfair,
Pimento a blossom and drop.
Hard time, hard time,
Hard time a carry the day.
Hard time, hard time,
For they won't put cramouchin' [grudging] away.

The sellers in the market do not cry their wares; they save their breath for bargaining. But the street vendors of Kingston, the "higglers" or "cadgers" as they are called, have each their own musical cry which rises and falls with a peculiar inflection, generally with an upward turn at the end.

Those who sell ground provisions cry: "Buy yo' white yam! buy yo' yellow yam! buy yo' green banana!" or "Black an' white coco gwine pas'," or in the pear and mango season as they pass up and down in the streets—"Nice black mango gwine pas', three dozen fe quattie!" or "Ripe peer fe breakfas'—ripe peer!" this last cry referring to a favorite breakfast dish of the Negro which consists in avocado pear with a bam-

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X. THE MILK[PEDDLER

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mie and a bit of salt fish eaten together like a club sandwich.

"'Tarch, tarch, a washerwoman's 'tarch!" cries the starch-seller.

"Cocay-watah! cocay-watah!" cries the girl with a tray of young cocoanuts husked and opened at the head for drinking. Boys go about in mule carts with great loads of them, trimmed but uncut, from which she replenishes her stock. The top is struck off with a blow of the machete, and after the water is drunk, a little spoon is cut out of a bit of the shell to scrape out the soft inside jelly which clings to the cocoanut shell.

"Hot patties an' crus'!" cry the sellers of bread and cakes.

"Wood aroun', me lady, wood aroun'!" calls the man who goes about with little fagots of wood for the fire.

"Coal! co-al! coal!" the second call a note or two lower than the first and last. This is the man who peddles small bags of coal in a cart.

"Fi-ish! fi-ish!" cries the fisherman with a dropping note. He carries lobster, too, and often fresh-water shrimps, called *jonga*, from the mountain streams back of Kingston, a delicacy not to be had in the market.

"Ho-ys-tah! ho-ys-tah!" cry the vendors of the famous "oysters that grow on trees," the small but well-flavored oysters which cling to the trunk of the mangrove trees that stand out in the water of many bays along the coast.

"Ho-i'! ho-i'!" is the early morning cry of the cocoanut-oil sellers, who come around before the fires are built and peddle oil for frying the breakfast.

"No wine pin'! no ale pin'! no soda water bottles!"

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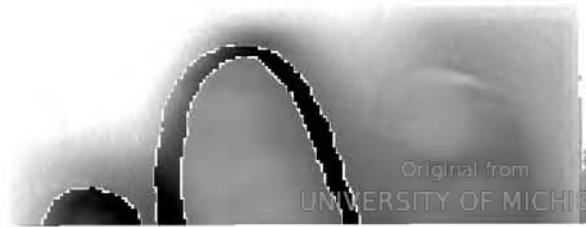
The vendor of soft drinks sometimes carries them in a tray on his head, but the handsomer outfits are in the shape of double-shelved pushcarts glowing with liquids of bright blue and crimson. At Montego Bay the soft drink manufacturer uses the native "brown Albion" sugar and beats in a white of egg when it is boiled down into syrup, coloring with strawberry or raspberry from the shop, and Sloane (1707) gives the same prescription. Wilfrid says a very good bottled market drink at Highgate is made with "China wis" boiled with a piece of logwood to make a red color, a drink which in Sloane's day was also popular. The wood of an astringent withe called chewstick (because it is commonly used for cleaning the teeth) is used to bring a soft drink to a head. Both sarsaparilla and ginger are used for domestic drinks. Peart of Mandeville says that both China and "brial wis" are to be beaten up with the sarsaparilla, the mixture strained, and a little rum put in to keep it from sliming—about one pint to five quarts.

"Han-y he-egg!" cry the egg vendors, or "Booby he-egg! booby he-egg! bwoil an' raw, booby he-egg!" These pretty brown spotted booby eggs, about half the size of a hen's egg, are a favorite breakfast dish with a bit of salt which the vendor also carries in her basket. The yolk when cooked is salmon-pink, and the egg tastes a little like a duck's egg. They come from the islands off the Palisades where the birds nest, and are gathered in season by a contractor and sold to the women, who hawk them in the streets. These vendors take up their stand on a back street where their positions are well known. I have bought them of such hawkers in Kingston early in June.



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Chapter V

THE FAMILY

Childbirth among Jamaica Negroes is not associated with an aristocracy based on family; each child is merely a fresh link in the chain woven of economic necessity which binds together the family fortune. There is on the whole a strong sense of family, and a folk interest in terms of relationship. Every man is "brother" to every other, and every old woman is "nana" (grannie) or "auntie." Literary invention plays upon chains of relationship, as in the "animal talk" story which tells how the fowl attracts attention to its morning egg-laying:

> Little bit a somet'ing
> Me tek tell auntie,
> Auntie tek tell i' cousin,
> Cousin tek tell uncle,
> Uncle tek tell i' bruder,
> Till it become one *big* somet'ing.

In Jamaica households the father is emphatically the head authority. It is true that the respect paid to the old, which writers have justly observed in Jamaican folk life, seems to be due rather to an age relationship than to one of blood, and a writer says that "shipmate" is the most endearing term one man can use of another. Nevertheless, among the superstitious it is always the family spirits who protect individuals against evil, family protection thus abiding even beyond the grave and so preserving a sense of solidarity with the living.

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XI. WILFRID AND HIS FAMILY

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At the birth of a child the district midwife may be called in. She is a paid appointee of the government to serve on such occasions. Besides the government salary (said to be fifteen shillings a week in Mandeville), she gets from those families who are able to pay it a fee from four to twelve shillings for her attendance. The two women of this profession with whom I talked seemed practical (though superstitious) and kindly. They knew something about herb medicines as household remedies and were firm believers in the effects resulting from the disposition of the navel cord of the infant, of the afterbirth, and of the caul when present.

The navel cord must on no account be allowed to fall on the floor, or the child will be unable to control its urine. It must not be left about for the rats to nibble, lest the child's life be endangered. The mother must guard it carefully and, from three days to a year from the time of birth, must bury it in the ground and plant a young tree over the spot, which henceforth becomes the property of the child and is called his "navel-string tree." If one injures the tree one must pay the owner for it. If the property upon which it is planted changes hands, a new tree is started from a seed or shoot of the old tree. Formerly the idea was that the tree remained the property of the individual no matter if the land passed into other hands, and writers cite instances of cases of theft tried in the court which were found to turn upon this claim. Thus the tree is a symbol early connected with an infant's career. One of Cundall's informants says that "if one dreams of trees shooting, an infant will be born soon who will have a happy life."

I could not discover that any further ceremony attached to the planting of the navel tree or that the tree

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was believed to be connected with the life of the child. It is used rather as a symbol to the child of property and its returns. A cocoanut is generally selected because it is "the only one you can depend upon" to grow and to bring in money. Old Hannah French said:

> It is to put them [children] in mind that they are to begin to study just as you studied for them, to be careful in everything. That is the beginning of life, to pride themselves in everything. If they know that it belongs to them, they learn to sell and make money for themselves—learn to be careful [saving]. Some think [otherwise] the child will fret and quarrel and say the parent gives him nothing. It is a birthmark to show him [the child] that it is the beginning of his life and he must take care of it. After you christen him you show him [the tree] again. He has to give to the church. He takes some of the fruit of the tree to give this money.

The tree, then, set at the beginning of life, has a much deeper meaning in the Negro mind than the mere "life tree" of our fairy tales. It is the basis of the idea of property and introduces the child to his economic education. The navel cord seems, however, to be an object suitable for working magic. A digging song given me by Falconer runs:

> Bammie baker, oh, man, beware,
> Beware of the cord around your navel!
> Tom Peter give you the cord,
> He say you mus' carry in the tray
> Then bammie will sell.
> Then beware, bammie baker, beware,
> Content people say,
> Beware o' the cord around your navel!

This means that "Tom Peter," an Obeah Man, has

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told the bammie-seller to carry a navel cord in his basket in order to insure the sale of his cakes.

The afterbirth or "bed" must be carefully buried under the house or in some place where it will not be disturbed by animals, and stones piled upon it, lest the mother suffer. One midwife affirmed that she was attending a case in which the mother, after the successful birth of the child, began to suffer intense pain. Looking out of the window, the attendant discovered that the afterbirth had been carelessly thrown out and was being tossed about by a pig.

The caul is also connected with sympathetic magic of a healing, rather than an injurious kind. It should be removed and carefully parched over a hot brick and a bit put into the baby's tea to prevent convulsions due to the irritation of a ghost. Pieces of it are also sold to other mothers in the neighborhood who are troubled with restless babies. Banbury says it should be sewed up in a black ribbon together with strong-smelling drugs to ward off spirits. A baby born with a caul has the power to see duppies without the duppies' harming him. Parkes was born with a caul and attributed his frequent visions of ghosts to this circumstance.

The momentous time in an infant's life arrives on the ninth day after birth, when for the first time he is taken out of doors. During the first nine days the mother eats only soft food, like arrowroot, bread, and milk. On the ninth day, a bath is prepared for the child, a little rum thrown into it, and each member of the family must throw in a bit of silver "for the eyesight," or "for luck." To ward off evil spirits, indigo blue is added to the bath and the forehead marked with a blue cross. The mother also has a bath, and the midwife

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offers a prayer before bringing the baby out into the air. Negro nurses of white children have been observed to place the cross at the back of the neck of their charges, where it will not be observed by the skeptical white mothers.

The child is generally weaned at nine months of age, but sometimes not for a year and six months. No special interest attaches to this event.

The child is early brought into relation with the established church. The christening occurs at from one to six months of age, sometimes later. It is an important ceremony, since an unchristened baby "any ghost can carry away," and, as some think the unbaptized become "wandering spirits" and "belong to the heathen people" (and the ghost of a heathen is "the baddest ghost in life"), it is evident that the Christian rite should if possible be administered early. But no duppy can hurt a person born a twin, especially when the twins are of opposite sex. The English church in Jamaica never hesitates to christen a child because of illegitimate birth. It makes a charge of two shillings for the christening rite and appoints a special time for its observance—in Mandeville on the first Thursday of each month, but it may also take place on the Sabbath. Sometimes it is followed by a christening party with wine, cake, and tea. The office of godfather or godmother for this ceremony does not place any future responsibility upon the persons selected for the office. Sometimes one of the godparents will take the child for his own after it has reached an age when it is no further trouble to bring up, and in this case the child may never notice the parents again after he is grown. Quite commonly, when the child meets a godparent on the

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road and greets him by title, he will get a shilling from his godparent.

According to an old custom recorded from the African Gold Coast, every child receives at birth a name depending on the day of the week on which it is born. The suffix *ba* distinguishes the names of females, which, except in one case, regularly omit the prefix *Coo*, *Coa*, or *Cooa*, with which the male name begins. Gosse analyzes the names as they appear in Jamaica as follows:

Sunday	Quashe	(Cooa-she)	Quasheba	(Coa-she-ba)
Monday	Cudjo	(Coo-jo)	Juba	([Coo]-jo-ba)
Tuesday	Cubena	(Coo-bena)	Benaba	([Coo]-bena-ba)
Wednesday	Quaco	(Cooa-co)	Cooba	([Coo]-co-ba)
Thursday	Quao	(Cooa-o)	Abba	([Coo]-a-ba)
Friday	Cuffee	(Coo-fee)	Fee-ba	([Coo]-fee-ba)
Saturday	Quamin	(Cooa-min)	Mimba	([Coo]-mim-ba)

These names are generally known, but I could not discover that they were actually used today. Old Hannah French said the sorcerer employed them in "setting obeah." They are played with in literary composition or in teasing competitions, and it would seem as if the hesitation of some to have their "birth name" known had no other motive than a dislike of nicknames. The name in common use is the English name given at christening. Negroes are very sensitive to the sound of names and adopt the prettiest and most sonorous they can find for their children, irrespective of source. There seems to be no tradition for keeping a name in a family, hence no names become obviously favored. Besides these birth and christening names, nicknames are given which generally grow out of some incident. A man named Mackensie, who was kicked by a mule, got the nickname of "Matty Mule." So many Jamaica

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folk tales turn, like our own Rumpelstilzkin, upon the discovery of a hidden name that I feel sure closer investigation would reveal more traces of old African belief in sympathetic magic connected with the name. An old writer cites an amusing incident of a Negro convert who let himself be baptized with a Christian name and then waxed indignant when he found he would still be expected to pay debts contracted under the old name. He took quite literally the symbolic "death" of the "old man" and the putting on of the "new."

Very little incidental folklore has been recorded about the infancy of the child, and I found almost no current beliefs except those already recorded. It is true that whoever sees the baby's first tooth will not dare to mention it without at the same time giving a piece of silver with the words: "Here's for your teeth!" else the tooth will rot. If a woman fails to get what she wants during pregnancy and scratches herself in any part of the body, the child will show a mark on the same part. A child born during leap year will be very sensible. Infants understand the language of animals. Cundall says that moles on the child's body are indicative of character. A mole on the lip means a lying tongue; on the leg, love of travel; on the neck, wealth according to one writer, hanging according to another. White marks on the finger nails bring good luck or riches. Large ears prophesy riches, small ears poverty. Open teeth denote lechery. Certain acts of the young are also fatal. He who eats out of the pot will never grow a beard; scraping the finger nails predicts poverty; one who steals an egg will keep on stealing until he dies.

Infancy ends at from three to four years when the

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child begins to take his place in the household and to share its mature responsibilities. He is taught not to steal, not to carry tales, especially not to show disrespect to others. At five years he begins to help in such light labor as sweeping the yard, picking coffee (especially the "rot-cut" which is not fit for market), in pulling fresh food for the rabbits and guinea pigs, and finding feed for the pigs. The boy will follow the parents to the provision ground, where he weeds and runs errands. At about nine years of age he begins to work a little garden of his own and "try for himself," and he looks after the flower garden at home. In general, he follows the older members of the family and shares their tasks in miniature. Whatever money he earns goes to the parents; he has no money to handle for himself. This is true also of the child trained to follow the beggar's trade. In the meantime he may attend the government or church school, attendance upon which is expected of him up to the age of fourteen, but not compulsory. At the age of fourteen or fifteen, "those that take up manly upon themselves" work on their own account, giving something to the parents but keeping also a part for themselves. Or they may be apprenticed to a trade, in which case the parent must advance to the master journeyman part of the price of training and pay the rest at the end of the term. Five pounds is the usual price. The first year the apprentice earns nothing but may receive a shilling or two from his master from time to time. By the second year he is able really to help the man and is entitled to a quarter of what the job makes upon which he works. After three years he is a journeyman himself and may set up his own shop. These terms are not fixed by law but vary

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with the individual. The trades open to him are those of the carpenter, mason, shoemaker, cabinetmaker, blacksmith, cooper, engineer, mechanic, tailor, tanner, baker, tinsmith, goldsmith, watchmaker, or apothecary. He may be apprenticed to a doctor, a dentist, or a lawyer. To teach he must get a college training. Throughout his course he must take care to treat his master with respect, or the master will give him only a general knowledge of his trade and keep back those little arts which make the expert tradesman.

It is very difficult for a lad whose parents are unable to pay for the necessary training to better himself, for the blacks rarely give money to one another; they will give food willingly, but hardly money. Once gone out to work for themselves, children are supposed to send back an allowance of money to the parents as long as they live. There is, of course, no compulsion upon them to do this other than family feeling, but the parents do their best to create in the children a sense of this obligation by being kind and generous with them when they are young. In a large family, although some will no doubt forget their parents when they are old, there will be a few who remember and care for them as long as they live.

Girls generally marry at eighteen, men from twenty-two upwards. It is considered a good match for cousins to marry—"Cousins boil good soup," says the proverb. But second cousins should not think of such an alliance; that is, the children of brothers and sisters may marry freely, but not the children of such unions.

Girls are taught at home to wash, sew, and cook; the mother does not leave them to themselves. At about twelve the children, both boys and girls, begin to go

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to dances with their elders, and at seventeen they have their own dances. During the courting period the man is expected to spend money on the girl. Said Wilfrid of his first inamorata, "Seventeen pound, fifteen shillings, six pence I spend on dat gal, an' she tek it an' gone to anoder man! But I don' min' because I get a better gal now." Much as in other civilizations, it is the girl's business to be on the lookout for a man who will support her in return for her favors and set up a house for her to keep for him. But she does not necessarily insist that the affair become legalized by a church marriage. She, as much as the man, and perhaps more than he, hesitates to be bound thus irrevocably, especially as the law forces the man to provide a fixed allowance for illegitimate children. Moreover, if she is faithful to her lover, she suffers no disrespect from her neighbors. As De Lisser says, the legitimatizing of a marriage relation by a church wedding distinctly raises the social prestige of the pair, but there is no social obloquy attached to concubinage and considerable advantage to be gained thereby, for if the relation proves unhappy, the two can part without formality. In old days it was the custom to tear a handkerchief in two as guarantee of divorcement—"each took a half and went his way," says Long, who mentions the "cotta" in connection with this usage. Some writers think Long means here the ring of banana trash laid upon the head to support burdens, but I think he is speaking of the handkerchief or turban which is used in the same way. When it is said, therefore, that 62 per cent of all children born of Negro parentage in Jamaica are illegitimate, statistics should distinguish between those born of parents who are living as married folk without the cere-

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mony, and those who come into the world as a result of mere vagrant passion where no household life is established.

A church marriage is celebrated with all the circumstance of an English wedding. The bridegroom (always spoken of as "the bride") must wear a new suit, the girl a white dress, veil, and flowers, and there is if possible a carriage and pair to carry the couple away from the church door. The wedding breakfast is laid in a booth erected for the purpose and shaded with cocoanut leaves. There is a marvelous cake built in tiers and cut by the bride, and wine with which to drink to the health of the couple in a series of toasts serious or comic, but as overlaid with symbolism as the occasion itself with ceremony. The other refreshment offered depends upon the circumstances of the couple and the conditions upon which the breakfast is given. Often the party stays for the afternoon, playing games and singing songs, or there may be a dance given in the evening. All this the Negro, with his quick appreciation for and mimicry of form and show, borrows bodily from old English custom, and I do not detect a single African idea creeping in to color the traditional observance.

The incidental folklore of love and marriage, too, as set down by Cundall's informants, suggest a strictly European origin. If a man turns down his hat when he lays it on a bed or table he will lead a single life. If a girl sits on the table she will never marry. If a man finds another man calling upon the girl he is courting, he should hang his own hat higher than his rival's. Gifts between lovers are important. A knife or pair of scissors cuts love "unless a pin is bent." A bead is unlucky, for if it breaks, the love will break also. An umbrella

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is lucky "for when you open it you open love, when you close it you shut up love." A girl should never give away a handkerchief without putting in a bent pin, lest love fade, or give a man a necktie, lest friendship break. Sewing for the man is also fatal, and should lovers offer money to each other they will soon separate. To test love, light a knotted thread, and should the flame pass several knots the love is strong. A man's necktie or a girl's stocking awry means amorous thoughts from a lover. The man with a widower's peak, that is with the hair growing down in a peak over the forehead, will be twice married. Signs for the marriage day are equally familiar. It is unlucky to marry in May. Wednesday is considered the luckiest day for a marriage, and the hours 8:00 A.M., 12 M., and 4:00 P.M., the most propitious; nowadays, Sunday at 8:00 A.M. is "best of all." Saturday is unlucky, as the husband will be sure to die. Monday is also insecure, for husband and wife will "quarrel till they die." It is also tempting fate to marry on your birthday. Rain on the marriage day augurs an unhappy, sunshine a happy marriage. If the bridegroom forgets the ring or the bride after marriage takes off or loses the ring, the marriage will be unhappy.

Much closer to the African feeling are the love charms and love tests which relate to certain herbs well known to dealers in sorcery. One of Cundall's informers writes, "If a branch of a certain yellow weed [no doubt the *cuscuta* or 'love weed,' a parasite common along Jamaica hedges] grows when thrown upon a bush, it shows that the person whose mind you are seeking is getting to love you more and more."

Nowhere is the feeling of "the man's house his own castle" stronger than with the Negro peasant. A couple

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who live together, even when the ceremony is neglected, like to set up their own establishment. Neighbors may run back and forth without ceremony, but etiquette demands that a stranger obtain permission before paying a visit; even a friend, when the visit is at all ceremonious, should notify his host beforehand of his intention so that due preparation may be made. It is not good form to take a person unaware or to approach the back door or to act in any way which shall arouse the suspicion of spying upon his daily habits. "I come to buy milk, not to count cows," is the proverbial disavowal. "Ask leave if you want to come in," runs an old song, and a proverb says, "Stranger no fe walk a back do'." According to another proverb, "Howdy come from do'," which means that it is bad manners for the house-owner to speak until he is first addressed by his visitor, a rule which is strictly observed. To enforce the etiquette of privacy under living conditions in which one yard attaches closely to another—only a narrow footpath is left between as passageway through the bush from one public road to another—most householders keep a watchdog, and "Mind your dog!" is the visitor's most common greeting.

A good many incidental sayings relate to the daily life in the household which cannot be directly traced to spiritism. Some of the more interesting of these which Cundall quotes are as follows. Of a broom the saying is, "Don't take an old broom from one house to another," and to dismiss an unwelcome visitor, "Leave a broom behind the door and sprinkle salt on it." You will "lose your friend" if you cut sugar cane while the friend holds one end, or break it across your knee, or if you comb your hair at night. Stepping across dirty

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water or sewing dirty clothes or finding a louse on your head (if it is generally clean) brings illness. Flinging about a chair while tidying the room or walking on spilled salt brings a quarrel in the family. Wiping away perspiration with your hand will wipe away your luck. Breaking a promise made over running water leads to misfortune. If you mend your clothes upon yourself, "people will lie about you and trample on you." Peeling an orange by chance without breaking the skin augurs a new suit of clothes. Sneezing is good luck to a woman if her first-born is of the same sex as the sneezer; bad luck if of the opposite sex. Dreaming of gold means success; of silver, disappointment; to dream of a nestful of eggs means riches; new boots, a "new intended"; fire, "confusion."

There is nothing very novel about most of the body signs listed by Cundall, but they seem to be commonly known to the people. The "dancing of the right eye" means laughter, of the left, tears. If the right hand itches, you will get money; if the left, you will spend it. If your right ear burns, good is being spoken of you; if the left, evil. The right ear rings for good news, the left for bad. If your nose itches you will "kiss a fool"; if the soles of your feet, you will go on a journey; if your knee, you will change your bed (move your domicile); if your elbow, "soon another will shake your hand." A sudden and startling movement of the heart means that you are being spoken of. "When a thrill passes through a person's body, an insect is crossing the place where he will be buried."

If we may believe the Negroes themselves, envy, jealousy, and spite are the leading emotions which control social life. All the outside graces which make Negro

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intercourse so attractive to the casual observer cover a caution vigilant to disarm suspicion or resentment. The Negroes are sudden and vehement in vituperation. They are extraordinarily litigious and run easily to court with their grievances, where cases of defamation and tongue-lashing are as common as those of petty thieving—more so than of actual assault—and are as patiently considered by the court, composed as it is of the best class of resident whites on the island. Negroes are quick to take offense, and they work not only thus openly but in secret ways to effect their revenge. "The black people are cruel to each other," was the emphatic and unsolicited assertion of more than one Negro informant. Another said: "Black people do not help each other as the white people do." They are "grudgeful" of another's prosperity and seek to harm one who has in any way excited their envy. "That is the reason they are so poor," added the speaker. Instances of this attitude of mind will be found common enough in the study of obeah in Jamaica, but the emotional reaction itself must be first recognized if we are to put more than a half credulous faith in the absolute reality of the resort to witchcraft by the Negro of the bush for the regulation of his relations with his fellows. An unpopular man, unless he is powerful enough to ignore the hate of his fellows, would do well to leave a neighborhood. "If Mr. Go-'way no come, Mr. Deat' come," is the common saying.

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Chapter VI

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

All the acts connected with the burial of the dead are based upon a belief in the contaminating power of death and particularly in the continued animation of the dead and his power to return and disturb the living, unless precautions are taken to inter him properly. Hence fear keeps alive today much of the folklore which surrounds the rites for the dead.

To prepare the body, two men wash it, "working one on each side from the head down to the feet and both keeping together." Should they come back toward the head "the dead will laugh." Cundall's informants say that should either of them touch the back with water the ghost will haunt him later complaining of the cold. The corpse is dressed in white—a man's in a suit of white flannel or duck, a woman's in a shroud of white muslin. Cundall's informants say that in sewing the grave clothes no knots should be made in the thread or the ghost will return. Care must be taken to cut out or sew up the pockets in a man's suit, lest the ghost come back with its pockets full of stones and harm the living. All buttons must be cut off and the clothes sewed or pinned together. After dressing the corpse, two or more persons take it up and lay it back three times before placing it in the coffin. Banbury says the head must be to the west and the feet to the east during the lifting. Cundall's informant says that while devotional exercises are conducted the coffin stands upon two chairs. Throughout these offices the

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corpse will frown "when attended by one it doesn't like" and "put on a pleasing countenance" for one it likes.

To prevent the dead from returning to haunt the family or to harm some member of it, no member of the family must neglect to bid the dead farewell, and friends flock to the house to perform the same office. Phillippo says of native burials that "no sooner did the spirit depart than friends and relatives made wild and frantic gestures, beat drums and sang songs," and that on the way to the grave the coffin was supported on the heads of two bearers, a white flag was carried, and the procession moved to the house of each friend or relative to "take leave." Today, according to Cundall's informants, each member of the family comes to the side of the coffin and says a few words to the dead, and every child is lifted and passed over the coffin while its name is spoken. Tears must not fall upon the body or the ghost will return to the mourner. A person who has quarreled with the dead man should on no account come to make peace with him when he is dying, even if he is summoned to come, for the dying man may be merely "humbugging, and intend to take revenge when he is dead"; but, "If you have passed him by, his ghost must always pass you by and cannot harm you." "Make peace when you are hearty, not when you are going to die," says Wilfrid. Those connected with the dead or with the last offices to the dead should take special precautions against the ghost's return. Before the coffin is carried out of the yard a bereaved wife or husband should put on a "guard" of a large square of black cloth with a white cross marked upon it with chalk, and should wear this for four or five months.

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So the barber who shaved the corpse must carry his razor as a guard against the ghost. The carpenter who fetched the boards for the coffin must cross each one with a piece of chalk, else as he carries the boards (or the coffin) upon his head the spirit will ride on them and weight them down; and in general he should always carry his ruler or a piece of chalk against a ghost's approach, for as long as he carries them the ghost is afraid of him, but if he once forgets them the ghost will do him harm. "A ghost will never trouble a carpenter or a tailor because they carry a rule," says one of Cundall's informants.

A certain number of practices quoted from Cundall depend upon the fear of contamination from the dead. One should not kiss the dead, or his teeth will rot. A person with sores should not stand upon grave dirt or enter the room where there is a dead body without marking a ring with indigo blue about the sore, lest the wound become worse: "As the body rots the flesh will rot also." Some believe that a man's yam heads will rot as his body rots. In sewing the grave clothes care must be taken not to cut the thread with the teeth or they will rot. A baker should not enter the room where there is a corpse if he has set his bread to rise, for if he does so the leaven will not work. Knives, pipe, and tobacco should be put into the coffin "for the future use of the dead," says Cundall's informant, but there may be here also the fear of contamination to the living. It is evident in all these prohibitions that everything is to be done to prevent such a contamination of the living by the dead, either by a kind of sympathetic magic in which the actual physical change taking place in the body of the corpse is believed to be shared by objects

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associated with him and to be communicable by contact, or by the actual return of the ghost of the dead to avenge the wrongs done him in life.

It is believed that the dead will return and "ride" (as in a nightmare) one who has done him harm. "No black man dies a natural death," says an old resident of the island, and all the evidence to be gathered from the people themselves corroborates this statement. The Jamaica Negro is firmly convinced that every death which occurs before the allotted span of life is completed is due not to natural causes but to the work of an evil spirit sent by some enemy. When the suspicion of foul play is strong, the family will suggest to the corpse the names of this one and that one who may have injured him, and concealing a sharp knife, a razor, or a shilling in his clothing, will say, "Go do your work!" Or they will wrap up a bit of broomweed in a white cloth and say, "Go sweep the yard clean!" a saying which is meant to include the whole household of the murderer in the ghostly vengeance. One of Cundall's informants writes, "If they believe that the person is killed by someone, they will dress him in black for burial, put boots upon his feet, arm him with a knife and a horse-whip, and put a spur upon one of his boots to ride and kill the killer when he rises from the dead." A wake game evidently based upon this idea, after calling one of the players back into the circle from which he has been excluded while each of the other players takes a secret name, uses the following dialogue:

Jack! Jack!
Sir! sir!
When you coming home?
Tomorrow evening.

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What will you ride?
Whip and spur.
What [will you carry] in your left?
Bow and arrow.
Whom do you want to carry you home?

and if "Jack" guesses any name correctly, the owner of the name must bring Jack in riding upon his back. The folklore of such ghostly vengeance does not leave the "murderer" unprotected. If he drinks or burns some of the blood of his victim or secures "the first coffin shaving and the first portion of the sod turned up by the gravedigger" when the corpse is buried, the ghost is powerless to "ride" him when it rises from the grave.

The burial should take place early in the morning or from five to six in the evening, never in the middle of the day. In the warm climate of the West Indies it follows almost immediately upon death. Care must be taken that the dead receive no indignity during the journey to the grave. The body must be carried out feet first "just as a man walks," and by the front door; "if you take him out the back way you will never keep him out of the house." Should one meet a coffin one should, according to one of Cundall's informants, return some distance with it; according to another, step aside and break a fresh branch and cast it behind to prevent the ghost's following; a third writes, "take off your hat or you will be sure to see a ghost." It is dangerous to look through a crack or crevice at a dead body. If a person stoops down and looks between his legs at an approaching coffin he will see the ghost sitting on the coffin lid and can tell whether it is a male or female who is dead; but this is also a dangerous thing

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to do, because the ghost may break his neck. Wilfrid tried it when he was a child and really did see the spirit, but it didn't harm him. "Perhaps," he said, "it knew I was a little boy—didn't know much." A very old belief refers to the habit of collecting bad debts on the way to the grave, the coffin by its weight or by striking against something on the way indicating where these debts lie. Long says that the coffin becomes heavy before the door of one who has injured the dead, and such a one must pay the corpse before it moves on. If the murderer helps bear the coffin it will be impossible to move it. The same thing happens if the bearers attempt to take it for burial to a place where it does not wish to be laid. Wilfrid knew of a case in which a Manchester man did not want to be buried at his own place but at his sister's, and it took some hours to reach the grave.

The digging of the grave is not entrusted to one man or to an odd number, but to from four to six men. "The first chop the gravedigger gives he takes a drink of rum," says Wilfrid. In old days a cock was killed at the grave and the blood sprinkled over it. The grave must be dug to lie east and west, and the body must be placed to face the sunrise: "if it faces the west some say it is not yet dead." In filling in the grave, says Long, the diggers must stand with their backs to the grave and throw the mold in backwards between their legs until the coffin is covered, in order to prevent the ghost from following them home, and this custom prevails today among the more ignorant. Wilfrid says that calabash trees are often planted one at the head and one at the foot to mark the grave (and Barclay also notes this custom), but Wilfrid would not admit that their pres-

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ence had any significance. True, the calabashes when ripe will fall and break; "you can never get a calabash off a grave." But crotans are also used to mark the place, and "some plant sweet roses all over the grave."

When a dead man's ghost has come back to "ride" the living and it is desirable to "plant him" so that he cannot again return, certain expedients are used to "keep the ghost down," the most common of which is to plant "pidgeon peas" on the grave, for as the roots grow downward this will prevent the ghost from taking the opposite direction. At the west end of the island they boil the peas because, as the peas cannot shoot out of the ground, so the ghost must remain in the ground: the peas "keep him down." In Mandeville it is the cut-eye bean that is used to plant down the ghost. Another expedient described by one of Cundall's informants is to cut down a tree and invert its head in the grave. Falconer says the people in the bush take three grains of peas, tie them up in a piece of new calico, and, going to the grave a couple of minutes before the time of day at which the man died, they dig a hole, bury the bundle, and say, "You 'tan' deh wid dis."

Other precautions are taken at the house to guard against the return of the spirit to his old home. As soon as the body is taken out of the house, the room must be thoroughly swept, an observance called "sweeping out the dead." The water in which the body was bathed, which has been placed under the bed while the body was in the room, must be carried and emptied with all refuse into the grave; some say it must be thrown after the coffin as it leaves the house. Any looking-glass in the room should be covered in order that the reflection

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of no living person may be cast upon it, else the person will pine away. Some say that water and a light must be left in the room for nine nights and the room left unchanged, but the water must be carefully emptied each morning. Others say on no account leave any water in the room. Some place water and even food at the grave. After the proper interval, it is well to rearrange the room, putting the head of the bed in a different position, whitewashing the walls, and even changing the position of the door, so that when the ghost returns, it will think it has come to the wrong house. Other precautions are taken like burning rosemary, scattering rice, or using any of the methods to free the house of ghosts which are enumerated in the next chapter.

The Jamaica Negroes believe that for nine nights after death the ghost rises out of the grave and returns to its familiar haunts. Says one of Cundall's informants: "On the last night he visits all his relatives and associates, overlooks all that are his, and then departs altogether." Others say that he "rises on the third day after burial and returns to the house, which he finally leaves on the ninth night," or that he rises in three days and "will go about and take the shadow of all things he possessed during life." "After a person has been dead three days," says another, "it is believed that a cloud of smoke will rise out of the grave which becomes the 'duppy.'" The idea of the three days' interval is evidently derived from Christian teaching, that of the "nine nights" is not so clear. During this period every relative and friend gathers at the house of the dead to entertain the ghost, welcome his return, and speed him back to the grave. The idea seems to be that

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should the ghost mark one absentee he might later harm the recreant member. All "nine nights" are celebrated to some extent in the eastern end of the island, the ninth night is that demanding principal vigilance. In the west the "big wake" is held the day after the burial and is sometimes repeated for three days, the ninth night being the occasion merely of a "big singing."

This festival of the wake or "set-up" seems to have grown out of the burial ceremony at the grave, as it is described by old writers, at which a cock is sacrificed with dance and song to the "odious sound of the Gumbay," and a frantic display of grief is followed by mirth and feasting. "Like a festival," says Long of the Negro funeral. "After the interment of a corpse they always dance and sing dolefully," says Peter Marsden. Phillippo speaks of a "night of riot" and the sacrifice of fowls at the grave; Rampini, of the sacrifice of a white cock, of a feast, and of such games as "hide and seek," "hot bran well buttered," "thread the needle," "beg you little water." In earlier days, Gardner says, "one or more Negroes played upon the goomba, and another at intervals blew a horn made of a conch shell; another took the solo part or recitative of a wild funeral wail, usually having reference to the return of the departed to Africa [a belief common to old slave days rather than to the present day]; while a party sitting in a circle, gave the chorus." Kromanti Negroes, according to Edwards, celebrate an anniversary of the dead in similar fashion:

> Each family has a tutelar saint who is supposed to have been originally a human being like one of themselves and the first founder of their family; at the funeral anniversary the whole number of his descendants assemble around his grave,

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and the oldest man, after offering up praises to Accompong, Assarci, Ipboa, and their titular deity, sacrifices a cock or goat by cutting its throat and shedding the blood upon the grave. Every head of an household of the family next sacrifices a cock, or other animal, in like manner, and as soon as all those who are able to bring sacrifices have made their oblations, the animals which have been killed are dressed, and a great festival follows.

Leslie in 1740 writes of the Negro method of burial:

When one is carried out to his Grave, he is attended with a vast Multitude, who conduct his Corps in something of a ludicrous Manner: They sing all the Way, and they also bear it on their Shoulders, make a Feint of stopping at every Door they pass, and pretend, that if the deceast Person had received any Injury, the Corps moves toward that House, and that they can't avoid letting it fall to the Ground when before the Door. When they come to the Grave, which is generally made in some Savannah or Plain, they lay down the Coffin, or whatever the Body happens to be wrapt up in; and if he be one whose Circumstances could allow it (or if he be generally liked, the Negroes contribute among themselves) they sacrifice a Hog. The nearest Relation kills it, the Intrails are buried, the four Quarters are divided, and a kind of Soup made, which is brought in a Calabash or Gourd, and, after waving it three times, it is set down, then the Body is put in the Ground; all the while they are covering it with Earth, the attendants scream out in a terrible Manner, which is not the Effect of Grief but of Joy; they beat on their wodden Drums, and the Women with their Rattles make a hideous Noise. After the Grave is filled up they place the Soup which they had prepared at the Head, and a Bottle of rum at the Feet. In the mean Time, cool Drink (which is made of the Lignum Vitae bark or whatever else they can afford) is distributed amongst those who are present; the one half of the hog is burnt while they are drinking, and the other is

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left to any Person who pleases to take it; they return to Town or the Plantation singing after their Manner, and so the Ceremony ends.

In Leslie's day the Papaw Negroes "generally believed there are two Gods, a good and a bad One; the first they call Naskew in the Papaw language, and the other Timnew." He writes:

When a Negro is near about to expire, his Fellow-Slaves kiss him, wish him a good Journey, and send their hearty Recommendations to their Relatives in *Guiney*. They make no Lamentation, but with a great deal of Joy inter his Body, firmly believing he is gone home and is happy.

It is such a festival, I think, which the modern wake derives from. In the case of sudden death it is still informed with emotion, not for the soul of the dead starting upon its return to its native land, but for the ghost of the dead as an avenging agent in the lives of the living. "To please the dead" is the object of the wake among the more intelligent who still keep up the practice, but many no doubt feel that the ghost would never rest easy in his grave unless certain traditional rites were performed. De Lisser says, "If this leave-taking should be neglected, the wraith of the dead person would constantly hover near her last earthly residence, and be a source of discomfort and even serious danger to its living occupants."

The manner of the wake differs in various localities. Instead of the African dances there are Moody and Sankey hymns—not church hymns, because the English church frowns upon the wake on account of the license to which the all-night revel is likely to lead, and reproves its members for attending such occasions. "Roll, Jordan, Roll" and "Clash the Cymbals" are

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good wake hymns. In a well conducted wake, these religious exercises will last until after twelve o'clock. After this comes the supper, which takes the place of the African feast. I do not think that wakes today ever countenance animal sacrifice, although one of Cundall's informants says that the people believe if an animal dies a human being does not need to die, and the idea of propitiation must still be strong. There are still beliefs affirmed in certain signs about the body of the dead, like dying with the eyes open and the failure of the corpse to stiffen a few hours after death signifying that another member of the family is to die. Wilfrid says some people go back to look at the grave a few days after the burial, and if the mold has sunk in, they will not fill it up again until someone in the district has died, otherwise a member of the same family will die. The animal sacrifice seems to be a sop thrown to the contaminating power of the rotting corpse, rather than to any materialistic idea of the ghost.

De Lisser gives a good description of a Kingston wake feast which consisted of sprats fried in cotton-seed oil, large slices of bread, picked salt fish and pepper colored with annotto and fried in oil, together with bananas and oranges and a variety of native drinks—coffee, chocolate with cocoanut milk, ginger wine, and rum. Wilfrid says, "Friends come to sing at night on the night of a death. For this night the house people furnish hot chocolate and six shillings' worth of bread, enough for each guest to have two slices. The burial takes place the next day. The people begin to come about seven and are going and coming until twelve. They build a booth outside the house for the company. They make the coffin, and all those

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who dig the grave or make the coffin are served at breakfast. The house people boil yam and rice and fowl and pork and salt fish; there must be plenty of rum, too, sometimes fifteen shillings' worth. That feast will cost two pounds. They lay a table and everybody comes to the feast who has made the coffin or dug the grave. Again on the ninth night after a death there is a night of singing and entertainment. At one o'clock tea is served and bread in the same quantity as before. No one goes home until four or five o'clock, some not until seven."

In leaving a wake a person should never announce his intention, lest the dead hear him and follow him home; he should merely touch on the sleeve those who are to accompany him. Martial dancing at the grave, as described by Edwards and Phillippo, is today represented by the games with which the men and boys exercise themselves during the latter part of the night. De Lisser says, "tales are told, games played, wrestling matches between adventurous youths and ardent damsels take place." Dancing is not generally considered good form at a wake, but in a back district near Port Antonio I observed posted at a cross roads an invitation to a "ninth night—with dancing," each of the guests to bring his own food.

It is evident that in all these observances the ghost of the dead is supposed to be present and to be pleased and appeased by the honor done him. In some wake customs there seems to be an explicit effort to cheat the ghost and send him back to the grave from which he came. If he finds the district merry he will think he has made a mistake, or if he finds himself regarded as dead he will himself accept the community verdict.

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In St. Elizabeth they beat the floor with stones on the night before and after the burial and strew rice. The beating of the gombay drum is a familiar accompaniment of death. In the Santa Cruz Mountains they build a bonfire, about which the men and boys play games while the women and girls stand by watching the sport. The occasion is called the "Bakinny" or "Back in i' [the grave]," as I believe.

John Salmon, him dead an' done,
John Salmon, him dead, oh!

they sing to the endless rhythm of the stone-pounding game, and they play many athletic games such as "Riding down the rocky road," "Hill and gully riding," "Thread the needle," with their old English suggestion of the journey into the other world, or sing songs of insult to the dead, like this one from a lad at Elgin:

Go down in the ground
  Dig one sulky yam.
When you get it down
  Carry him give him room.
Lick him with a stick,
  Get up, you brute, blue-foot brute!
Go down a pond say meet Uncle Joe,
  Mackerel Joe, herring Joe.

Other games seem to be merely to let off the emotional exuberance of the occasion; some say "to keep awake," for it is very rude (and probably dangerous) to sleep at a wake. They "dance Calimbe" in an antic caper upon a pair of sticks held horizontally by two other players. They "pass the ball" or the candle in old English fashion and play other games which require mental rather than muscular agility, such as riddle

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guessing and "Cardinal's cap." Also the wake is today the chief occasion for the recital of the traditional tales called "Anansi stories," handed on to the whites through the medium of the old Nana who entertained her young charges thereby.

One last service remains for the proper burial of the dead, the "tombing" ceremony, which took place in old days a month after burial, especially when a bereaved husband or wife wished to remarry, but which today allows a somewhat longer interval. Wilfrid calls this "the last house you get." The object is completely to cover the grave with an additional mound of earth, or, if the family is wealthy enough or the ghost one to be feared in the community, with masonry. As the soil is so porous in the southwest, six months is the shortest time within which it is safe to tomb a grave with masonry, lest the mold sink and the work have to be done over again, nor is remarriage considered proper within less than a year. In Long's day a feast with song and dance went with the "covering," and today, if the bereaved person has money, he will hold a "tomb dance" in the evening for his friends and kill a goat or hog for the feast.

Omens of death believed in by Jamaica Negroes differ in no way from European patterns and are most likely taken directly from the whites, at the same time that they agree with African lines of thought because the pattern has been applied to native superstitions.

Certain dreams are ominous; to dream of a tooth, a new-born infant, a wedding, a new house, the falling down or division of an old house, or the breaking of a green bush is a sign of death, not necessarily to the dreamer, but to some one of the family or neighborhood.

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The unusual crying of animals or of birds or insects of ill omen is a presage of death; the howling of a dog or the unusual mewing of a cat when a person is ill, the lowing of cows or bulls, the cry of the screech owl three times near a house, the peculiar shriek-like cry of the "mountain witch" (*Geotrygon versicolor*, Lafresnay), the rattle of the cuckoo or "old man bird" (*Hyetornis pluvialis*, Gmelin), which also sounds when rain is in the air, the persistent cooing of the ground dove (*Chaemepelia passerina jamaicensis*, Maynard), the crying at night of the pond coot, the screeching of a cricket in or near the house, or the unusual cackling of fowls, as in the early morning or when going on or coming off the roost—all these are feared as omens of death. If a cock crows inside the house it is ominous; if a hen crows, its throat should be cut at once. Cundall's informant writes of the lowing of cattle: "If cows surround a bull lowing sadly while the bull ploughs the earth with its horns, it is an omen of death," and in Mandeville I found that particular animals, called "talking cows," were supposed to give the sign. Parkes cited a big Indian bull on the Brumelia property which always gave warning when someone in the district was going to die. He also believed in the sign of the screech owl, pointing out that a few nights after he had mentioned it to me, an owl had flown past the house crying, "Creech! creech! creech!" and that night someone had died in the hospital which directly fronted his house. One of Cundall's informants gives as formula to avert misfortune under such circumstances the words "Pepper and salt to your mammy!" whatever that may mean. Probably it is one of those insults by which evil spirits are shamed into abandoning human

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abodes, for I think there is no doubt that in all these cases of animal warnings the idea is that the creature is not merely what it looks to be, but a messenger of evil out of the spirit world. Either that or the supposition, common among spiritists of higher culture, that animals and little children see the approach of spirits who hover about at death, and give this unmistakable sign of their knowledge.

Of similar import is the belief that the approach of certain creatures to human habitations or their peculiar action near a dwelling is a presage of death. It is a sign of death in Jamaica if ants take to a house; if a partridge flies into a yard; if blackbirds assemble in large numbers where they are not commonly seen, or if on flying over a house one of them lights upon the roof; if a bat or bird flies into the house or a firefly lights under the bed—although some say these last are mere signs of a visitor. Suggestion plays an active part in these signs. If a bug drops dead before a person, it is a sign of misfortune. Crows flying at twilight or in "funeral procession" are ominous. If a hog roots the yard or a dog persistently digs a hole, a grave will soon be dug for some member of the family. If rats nibble the clothes or any part of the body, news will come of the death of a dear one.

It is in some such unusual incident that a soul just passed makes sign of its presence. If one is eating and a bit of food falls, a dead relative has knocked it out for himself. If a wineglass standing on a table breaks of itself, or a green branch suddenly breaks from a tree without apparent cause, or a sudden shower falls out of a clear sky and as suddenly ceases, or if a loud knock sounds on the door or roof, some one dear to the family

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has just died.

Other acts are to be avoided lest they pay the penalty of death in the immediate family. Never add to a house or cut down an old tree. Never place two lights on a table. If you plant the seed of a "mammy plant" or of a pumpkin vine, a relative will die, says one of Cundall's informants. If two persons say the same thing together they will die together.

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Chapter VII

THE SPIRIT WORLD

The spirits of the dead are believed to haunt the living. They come to him in dream, a mode of appearance called "dream to me," or in waking vision, spoken of as "show himself to me," or they may be present (even though invisible) in and about the house or on the road at night. They are called "duppies," a word which Banbury says comes from "door peep," but I do not know on what authority he bases this fanciful etymology. The term "jumbies" is more common in other parts of the West Indies than in Jamaica. The duppy is commonly regarded as a mischievous spirit, because, although good spirits also come back to earth "to make holiday," as some say, only a bad spirit is "facey" enough to show himself to you. Hence you may be pretty sure if you see a duppy that he is able to do you mischief, unless you are properly guarded against him, and you may suffer mischief even from friendly spirits if you anger them. One of Cundall's informants enumerates the powers for harm of a duppy as "stoning, poisoning, beating, burning, drowning, and setting a house on fire."

The habits of duppies are well established, according to those who have the power of seeing them. A person born with a caul has this power to see duppies without their harming him, although some say the faculty can be removed by wrapping up a piece of the caul in black ribbon and keeping it as a "guard." Duppies cannot hurt twins either, especially when they are of

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opposite sex, though I do not know whether such persons have also the seeing eye. If you rub your eyes with the eyewater from a dog's eye, or even look over your left shoulder, you may see duppies.

Duppies live in the roots of cottonwood trees and bamboo thickets and feed upon bamboo root, "fig" leaves, and the gourd-like fruit of a vine called "duppy pumpkin." The fig tree is parasitic in its growth. It attaches itself to the trunk of some tree in the shape of a "poor weakly climbing plant" and sends rootlets downward which root themselves in the earth and feed the fig until it grows into a sturdy tree, mingling its foliage with the other, or, in cases where it has clutched a tree less vigorous than the cottonwood, sometimes completely surrounding and usurping the place of the other. "The creole in the clutch of the Scotsman," say the natives of the fig and its host. The cottonwood is characterized by curious branch-like roots above the ground. Lurking in the great chambers formed by these cotton tree roots, or in bamboo clumps, live the ghosts, and they come out from seven in the evening to five in the morning and at twelve o'clock at midday, appearing in some dreary place especially in the neighborhood of these trees. Parkes, who was born with a caul and may be considered an expert in ghosts, as he has no fear of them, has often seen them riding in the mango walks with their faces turned to the horse's tail. They are likely to appear in white with their heads bound up just as they were put into the grave, but they may also show themselves looking exactly as they did in life, and in this case it is sometimes hard to distinguish them from a living person; but by looking carefully you will see that their feet do not touch the

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ground. Some say that they put up their feet high in walking, like a horse. Also the way they have of disappearing suddenly proves them to be ghosts, and when they speak it is in a high falsetto voice. Duppies have also the power to take animal form, and in this shape they may appear to man. You may pass one of these animal duppies in walking and then see the same one again far down the road.

Other methods of testing an apparition are mentioned by Cundall's informants. Show a duppy a firestick, and he will laugh. Cursing will drive away a good spirit and calling the name of God, an evil one; but some say the evil duppy will vanish only at the name of Jesus Christ. If you say "Jesus the name high over all," a good duppy will "help you say it," and an evil one will run away.

Cundall's informants say if a dog whines or if it howls at night a duppy is near. If a jalousie drops suddenly at night there is a duppy in the house, according to the superstitious, but some say "a visitor is coming." A spider web across the face, especially at night, is the sign of a duppy's presence, and when you feel a hot wave of air as you walk, you know you are passing the place where a ghost slept the night before, the artificial heat of a fire seeming to be irrevocably associated in the Negro mind with the doings of the duppy world. In these cases the duppy's presence is known merely by sign; he doesn't show himself. Most of my informants are satisfied of the presence of duppies when they "feel as if there was something troublesome about at night." It seems to them more "natural" that the duppy should be there than that he shouldn't. Hence many precautions must be taken to avoid harm from

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these restless spirits.

Care must be taken in throwing out water at night to warn the family spirits who may be near. "Mind yourselves, me family," or "good people," they cry, or, "Anybody fe we move!" Never fling stones about at twelve o'clock noon or at night when ghosts are abroad. Never sit at the threshold of a door at such hours or "duppies will walk over and injure you," and never sit or stand so as to leave no passage at the door. Throw out some punch on Christmas night for the duppies of the family and leave water in the house every night for them to drink. Save a cutting of the negro yam for the dead when it is dug. Do not throw a match on the floor at night after lighting your pipe, lest the duppy get hold of it and "do you harm." Never speak at once of seeing a duppy, or the duppy will hurt you. This fear of speaking of duppies I found in some cases persistent when I had a company started telling ghost stories, for there was likely to be one of the number who reproved such levity and led the talk into other channels. Before entering an uninhabited house, say something to warn the spirits who may be present. It is dangerous to talk or whistle at night, lest the ghost "steal your voice." If you walk with a dog at night never let him follow you, "or the ghosts will knock you down." If people speak too much in praise of a horse or mule, it is likely to pine away, and one should avoid voicing admiration of a young child.

If you observe all proper precaution, duppies cannot really do you harm unless they have been "put upon you," and this is the work of the Obeah Man. But since you do not know what mischief they have been incited to, it is wise to carry a "guard" of some kind

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to "run duppy" if it is inclined to follow you. All Negroes who are superstitious take such a precaution. Several have shown me the string or ribbon of black worn about the neck which is the simplest possible protection one can wear to ward off the duppy. Originally, I think, it must have held an amulet such as I have described in another chapter. Parkes advised tying to it a bit of camphor, garlic, and asafoetida sewed up in black cloth. Musk powder is good, says Wilfrid, but if you begin to use it, like the carpenter's rule and chalk and the tailor's tapeline, "if you forget it once the duppy is sure to catch you." The headman at Burnt Ground wore turkey red as a guard at night, but Parkes thinks duppies like red, are sometimes seen in it themselves, and follow it when they see it, but "take themselves away" for blue. According to Parkes, thin black cloth will drive them away, but they follow red, white, and thick black like broadcloth. In the Leeward Islands, Udal says a string of "jumbi beads" is worn, which are red seeds with black spots. In traveling alone on the road at night Parkes used to fill his pocket with rice before starting out, and if a duppy followed him he would throw it behind his back. Another effectual check to a pursuing duppy is to mark a cross in the road and stick a penknife into it and leave it there without turning back. In the morning, says one of Cundall's informants, you will find an insect dead beside it. If you have no penknife, says Wilfrid, draw off a shoe and leave it. Or turn your jacket inside out or put on your cap the wrong way. Or you may draw a hair from the middle of your head and put it into your mouth, or take three grains of gravel out of the river (if you walk beside a stream), throw two back

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into the river, and put the third under your tongue. The ghost may also be shamed into leaving you. A man troubled by a ghost following him should open his trouser front, leaving one button, and a woman should throw her skirt over her head.

If a duppy calls to you, answering him instantly will ward off trouble. Before he speaks your name three times you must answer, "Yes, yes, yes!" and "Cut him out," otherwise he may "take away the sound of your voice" or induce fits. If you feel a strange blowing on the ear, put up your hand trumpet-shape and call the name of the person you believe is calling you, and "whether in Kingston or Colon or America," if he is the one calling you he will stop.

To keep away troublesome spirits from the house at night, sprinkle sand or throw rice, grain, or pebbles outside the door for the duppies to count before entering. "They will try to count them but can never count beyond three," says one of Cundall's informants. An X marked on the ground or on the door, or a horseshoe nailed to the house is also useful, or an open glass may be set on the doorstep. Cracking a whip with the left hand is also practised to rid a neighborhood of duppies. One of the drivers at Burnt Ground was an adept at this practice because he was left-handed. Cundall's informants say that the first stroke of a whip must be with the left hand, else the duppy will paralyze your arm, but after that you may use the right. A tarred whip is also efficacious.

Another method, and probably the most successful, is to burn something in the house to keep away duppies, especially something that has a strong odor. Horn is very efficacious. Certain herbs smoked in a pipe or

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burned in a pan so as to make a smoke, or rubbed over the body, especially over the face and the back of the neck, are commonly used at night when something seems to be abroad in the house. "Rosemary" (*Croton linearis*, Jacq.), parrot or spiritweed (*Eryngium foetidum*, L.), worm weed, called in Kromanti talk "see-me-contract" (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*, L.), guinea weed (*Letineria alliacea*, L.), and a water marigold called by my informant "water weed" (*Medilia gracilis*), are all used for this purpose, and all except the last are evidently selected for their strong odor; the last may have this characteristic also when heated.

Nowadays it is customary to use a mixture for burning, such as that proposed by one of Cundall's informants, of cow's hoof and horn, sulphur, bluestone, duck ant's nest, etc. Another says "rosemary and cow dung." "To shoot duppy," says another, load the gun with salt, bluestone, and sulphur as well as shot. In Richmond, St. Mary, they gave me the following prescription "from the doctor's shop" to drive away ghosts: Take 3*d*. each of frankincense and myrrh and 2*d*. of asafoetida, throw on a little cold water and shake until it turns white, then add 3*d*. hadrow, 3*d*. oil of life, 3*d*. oil of nohel, 6*d*. oil of cassia, 6*d*. oil of juniper, 6*d*. oil of death, 3*d*. oil of concha, 3*d*. oil of Murray, some Dead Man's Drops, 6*d*. oil of turn-back, 3*d*. oil of carry-on, 6*d*. oil of tarry." In Mandeville the recipe ran: "oil of rignum, oil of amber, oil of sweet spirit of ointment, oil of rose, oil of broom, oil of turn-back, oil of dead man's skin, oil of dead man's blood, oil of apempe." At the Richmond drug store I made some inquiries, to the evident perturbation of the chemist, who assured me that they gave the people who asked for these

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drugs "nothing which would harm them." That is, in the process of civilization the folk have transferred to the tinctures of the chemist the same beliefs which they formerly applied to the efficacy of herbs and of such objects as grave dirt, which were associated with death.

You may hear the duppies walking at night, creak, creak, creak, but they can do a man no harm unless they have been "put upon him." In this case, there are always friendly spirits among the ghosts of a man's household who can be counted upon to protect him. It is very hard to get a good ghost story from a Negro, but this one I had from an old headman on the Flamstead estate is a fair example of the warfare supposed to be waged between spirits of good and evil:

There was a gentleman living at Good Hope named Mr. Taylor—Good Hope massa—and he had a servant named Robert Walker. One day Mr. Taylor went away to Wilfred Hall and left Robert Walker alone. While he was sleeping at night he heard two somebodies, a man and a woman, come into the pantry. The man whistled a tune [which the old man repeated]; the woman was singing "Tramping down and we tramping yet." He [Walker] peeped out but didn't see them. When he went back the man whistled [the same tune], and the woman sang "Tramping down and we tramping yet." He ran out, and they ran out of the yard and ran down the valley road. Went back and lay down. Came again, same thing; the man ran up the bush and the woman ran down the road.

And a woman came to him in appearance of his wife and said: "Walker, get up quick and follow me; put on your best clothes, Mr. Taylor wants you at Wilfred Hall." He got up, put on his suit of black, dressed himself nicely. It was a Saturday night. Put on his boots, took his jacket over

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his arm. I saw the man myself and saw his actions that day. Wife said—it was the duppy, you know—"Come on, now, follow me." And the woman turned him from Good Hope down Dallas. The woman ran and said, "Run, Walker, run! run, Walker, run! run, Walker, run!" She got down to Dallas, was going down to the Fall. The light came now, about seven o'clock Sunday morning. When he got down to Butcher Pass, he met up a crowd of dead people, and it was a fight between this woman and all the dead people. It was his family protecting him, and they turned him back [or he would have fallen over the Fall, as I gathered].

We see him come up Flamstead to one Mr. Clough's yard, and they gave him some tea. The woman told him not to drink it. The woman drank the tea but the tea was in the same place. No one saw the tea but himself. She said, "Come, Walker, come!" and they ran down the mountain, and when he came to Prince Hole leading round to Good Hope again, he met up the same crowd of people. An old lady out of the crowd took Walker and poked him into a stone hole and said, "You stay there!" and there was a fight between the woman and this crowd now.

Then everybody began to take notice that there was something the matter with Walker. All went down to Prince Hole to rescue him—saw stones flinging about but saw nobody, only stones flinging. However, they rescued Walker and took him away to Good Hope. And they got a smart man called duppy-catcher and he put him [that is, the duppy] in a bottle, and when we saw the bottle we saw a sort of fly in the bottle. And Walker got better.

This is a live story; I saw it with my eyes—can't doubt it; only doubt a story I hear, that is a dead story.

The multiplication of objects and acts used to guard against spirits means an absorbing interest in the spirit world and a diversity of associations connected with it, each of which has left its coloring upon the technic

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of protection. Long says the Negroes of Jamaica used to wear the teeth of wildcats and eat their flesh to preserve long life, and this practice must probably be thought of as a "guard" (like the rabbit's foot of American Negroes), just as the Maroon Negroes during the war with the whites took to wearing the teeth of their enemies as a protection against being hit in battle.

The philosophy of the ghost sometimes depends upon the belief that every man is accompanied by two duppies, a good and a bad, or "a trickify one," as Wilfrid says. Some say that in sleep the good one stays by a man and the tricky one goes out walking; until it comes back the man cannot wake. When a man goes on a journey, the tricky one should precede him. If it falls behind him, it is likely to harm him. One of Cundall's informants says, "If you are walking along a road through a wood and hear a noise as of something cracking you should look back, for there are two duppies following you, a good one and a bad one, and the good one is trying to attract your attention, and if you look back it shows you are the good one's friend, and no harm will come to you." Another advises you to go away quickly from a place if you hear a twig crack behind you; according to Wilfrid it would seem to be your own attendant spirit who is playing you the trick. Sometimes this same tricky spirit will worry a man as in a nightmare. At death it is this tricky spirit which remains behind at the grave. Some (the Adventists) say that it walks for forty days, because Christ walked this earth for forty days after his death, and then goes down into the earth. There seems to be an idea that this tricky spirit is to be identified with the shadow.

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Wilfrid says it is not safe for a man to "play with his shadow" or the shadow will play with him all night and prevent sleep, and the attempts of the Obeah Man to bottle a man's shadow in order to "set a duppy" would suggest the same connection. It seemed to puzzle Wilfrid to think where the shadow of the tree went when the tree was felled. It had been something, it was now gone, hence it must still be somewhere. "It's not the soul" [that makes the duppy], said old Hannah, caretaker at Butler's, "for the soul goes to heaven, and it's not the body, for we know that goes away into the earth, but it's the shadow."

I found that some persons believed in a realm of duppies lying below the earth arranged much as the lots lie in a graveyard, where the duppies carried on the same occupations and bore the same relations to each other as on earth: "those who had been leaders of a gang here are leaders in the underworld." Sam Thompson showed me a sketch of this world as he had drawn it into his notebook just as he saw it in a dream, one duppy holding a whip and the rest hard at work. But I do not know how nearly universal this idea is.

The most malignant duppies, according to one of Cundall's informants, are "a ghost with a rope around his neck;" "Rolling-calf" (probably in the same category); "a Chinese or Coolie [East Indian] ghost" (some say also the ghost of an unbaptized infant); two pickney duppies (probably the "Whooping boy" and "Long-bubby Susan" of another writer); and the "Three-foot Horse." Three-foot Horse gallops through the moonlight faster than any living steed, and its breath is fatal to anyone upon whom it falls, but on dark nights or under the shadow of a tree one is safe from attack.

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Whooping-boy rides Three-foot Horse, whooping like a human being and dancing on the twigs in the woods. Long-bubby Susan is characterized by breasts which touch the ground and which she throws over her shoulders when attacked. I heard nothing about these three duppies, unless Susan is to be identified with Old Hige, the skin-changing witch of Banbury, or the vampire women of the West Indies whom Udal describes, and the Loogaroo (*Loup garoux*) of Bell. In Granada, Bell says, "diablenesses" are women in the mountains with one human and one hoofed foot who lead men astray, as also women who ride a mule with feet in air and head down. Old Hige is still a menace to infants in Jamaica, and it is from fear of her visit that they are guarded by a blue cross on the ninth night after birth and that a cross is put on the door of dwellings, or grain is strewn before the door. But I do not think her name carries otherwise much fear with it. She is the skin-changing witch of European folk tale, and the story is commonly told of the child who watches the witch slip out of her skin and, while she is away, burns or peppers it so that she cannot resume it again on her return. The lively recital of the hag's consternation, her cry of "'Kin, you no know me?" never fails to win a roar of merriment from the delighted audience. Equally uproarious mirth accompanies the recital of her way of counting when grain or rice is scattered at the door or an X marked on the sill—"One, two, t'ree, an' deh a da!" she reiterates, because, since she can never count beyond the number "three" and has then to go back and repeat the reckoning, the tale is never told. Why the poor old thing has to count at all is part of the mystery.

An even more popular duppy than Old Hige is Roll-

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ing-calf, who is a very bad duppy indeed to meet. "Rolling" is the West Indian term for "roaming," I am informed; the Negroes speak of "rolling 'round the town." The apparition appears, according to Parkes, in the form of a hornless goat, black, white, or spotted, with a collar about its neck to which is attached a short chain that drags upon the ground. Its eyes are red and at night look like blazing fires. Its tail, unlike a goat's, curls over its back. The front feet are shaped, one like a horse's hoof and the other like a human foot; the back feet are goat-shaped, and the creature leaves a bad smell like that of a goat. Banbury says the Rolling-calf may take the form of various animals such as cat, dog, hog, goat, horse, or bull, but the most dangerous is the brindled cat, and he adds that it has power to grow from the size of a cat or dog to that of a horse or bull. I suspect Parkes was giving me a composite of Three-foot Horse and Rolling-calf when he said that if you meet one at night and succeed in frightening it away you must instantly leave the spot, for the creature will gallop away, then return to the same spot, and if it finds you there will "blow bad breath upon you." To frighten away this objectionable monster, Rampini suggests sticking an open knife into the ground, and Banbury says, "Flog it with a whip held in the right hand or with a tarred whip." Unlike Three-foot Horse, Rolling-calf is afraid of the moon. Witty tales are told of its discomfiture. One Rolling-calf which fled from the moon and fell into the brook complained, "A don' mind the wet a wet, but de 'prain a 'prain me foot!" Another begged the moon, "Do [please], me good man, no go fall dun pa me, no go wak unda me a de holy night!" Whatever the origin of the

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Rolling-calf, it is looked upon today as the animal form assumed by especially dangerous duppies. Obeah Men often become Rolling-calves and they "set" Rolling-calves upon people. Murderers and butchers and I know not how many other reprobates become Rolling-calves when they die, and go to live not only at the roots of cottonwood trees and in clumps of bamboos but also in caves and deserted houses, whence they emerge at night to follow sugar wains because of their fondness for molasses, or to break into cattle pens.

There is another sort of supernatural being in Jamaica well known to Parkes and described by other authorities such as Bell and Banbury, which can hardly be classed among the duppies because they are not thought of as ghosts of the dead. They are the Mermaids, or "Fair Maids" as the old name has it, who live in deep holes in the rivers and comb their long black hair at midday on its banks. In the famous obeah case at Demerara, the Obeah Man was said to have a Fair Maid in his basket, but I do not know if the Fair Maid of Demerara is like that of Jamaica, and I have never heard of Mermaids being employed by Obeah Men in Jamaica, although Banbury says the Myal Men used to perform the myal dance at the pools where they lived and to take them offerings of food. He says the fish of the place where they lived were sacred, citing Chester Castle in Hanover as one such place; that if a man saw a Mermaid before she saw him he was doomed; and that oxen used to be sacrificed to the "rubba muma" (river mama) here in Jamaica just as, in Grenada, according to Bell, dances are performed and sacrifices of a white goat, a black cock, and silver money are made to the water-being called Mamadjo who cures

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disease, especially that West Indian form of leprosy called "yaws." There is a "blue hole" near Lucea in Jamaica where the Spaniards are supposed to have sunk "a table of gold" and then murdered a man whose ghost was set to guard it, so that no one has been able to draw it out since. Banbury says a yoke of oxen were drawn into the hole in a vain attempt to haul out the table of gold. This tale is still current, but I do not think it has any connection with the Mermaids. These beings, Parkes says, live in deep pools away from where people pass. There may be more than one in a pool, but they all look alike. The waters were made for them, and if you were to catch one the rivers would dry up. They have never been human but are the beings of these bodies of water. He denies that they are worshiped by any ritual whatever, for they can do nothing for people. They cannot talk, and they disappear the moment one sees them. He himself saw one sitting on a rock at "Queen hole" near St. Ann's Bay, a wide pool in the banana walk where the Llandovery River runs through the property of that name. "From ancient times it had been living there with two others." It had brown skin and long hair down to the waist. In a moment it disappeared, and that is how he knew it was a Fair Maid. Mermaids live in other rivers of Jamaica—one in Black River at a place called "Grasman" on the right hand side going from Balaclava to Santa Cruz; one in the Rio Grande in Portland near Port Antonio; two in Westmoreland, one in the Great River where it runs through a bamboo walk at Chettlewood (in a hole eighty fathoms deep), and another in the Cabaritta; and one lives in the Rio Cobra at a place called Camena near Spanish Town. These are

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all the localities which Parkes can remember in Jamaica where Fair Maids are known to dwell.

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Chapter VIII

OBEAH

We have seen that all Jamaica Negroes believe in a spirit world. Many think that there are mischievous spirits who have the power to take animal shape and go about making themselves troublesome to men; these they say are the ghosts of evil men. Even the ghosts of good men, whose souls the Christian religion teaches them to look upon as happy in heaven, may come back to their friends on earth "to keep holiday," and may at any time be hovering about the house where they have lived on earth. There is a general inclination today to associate these hauntings with the "shadow" of the dead which lingers about the grave and which, if properly solicited, may be persuaded to take a part in human affairs. This "shadow," which is the duppy, may be tempted out of the grave by a member of the dead man's family and "set" upon some one against whom the exorcisor has a grudge, or it may be made to perform other services to his advantage. The practice of this power over the shadow world is called obeah, and the so-called obeah religion depends upon the belief that such spirits may be employed to work harm to the living or may be called off from such mischief. "Working" obeah means to "set" a duppy for some one; "pulling" obeah means to extract the obeah set by another.

Early writers derive the term obeah from the Egyptian word *ob*, which means a serpent. There is no objection to this etymology except the fact that it throws

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no light upon the real meaning of obeah to the Negro mind. Edwards, describing the Kromanti religion, says that besides worshiping Accompong, Assarci, and Ibboa, gods of the heavens, the earth, and the sea, they worship Obboney, "a malicious deity who pervades heaven, earth and sea; he is the author of all evil, and when his displeasure is signified by the infliction of pestilential disorders or otherwise, nothing will divert his anger but human sacrifices; which are selected from captives taken in war, or, if there be none present, then from their slaves." Obeah is, I take it, Obboney. There is a tendency among the skeptical today to admit the powers of the Obeah Man but to ascribe them to the Devil, so exchanging pagan for Christian folklore. I recall that Wilfrid offered this solution. In the French island, voodoo is worked instead of obeah. Bell speaks of "Criboes" in Grenada. In Jamaica, "goozoo" is equivalent to obeah; you may say "working goozoo" as well as "working obeah." I do not find, however, any ruling character or spirit of evil in Edwards' sense of the word in the modern idea of obeah. If it was ever present in the shape of a serpent or *ob* or Obboney, it is entirely in abeyance today, for not the least evidence can I adduce from the first- or second-hand informers except a line in an old Negro alphabet which runs "G is for Goozoo, every niggah pupa [every negro's father]." When I called this line to the attention of an intelligent Negro school-teacher, he admitted that he had noticed it, but I was left with the impression that the parallel with our own concept of the Devil was due rather to the alphabet-maker than to the Negro's general conception. Whatever emotional interest arises from impersonating a spirit who *is* the obeah expresses itself

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today in identifying that spirit with the dead who walk, and I think this credulity arises from the fact that the obeah doctrine overlies not only the Negro's strong feeling for the contaminating power of rotting objects, especially of the rotting corpse, but also his perplexity, which we have already recognized, about the shadow. Such is the curious figurative turn of the Negro mind that an analogy lives as a fact. Obeah is merely sympathetic magic.

Practically we know that obeah comes from Africa and is taught by the powerful Juju and other secret societies there, which dress up their members as pretended spirits and drum and parade and make the credulous believe that its members are dead men who have been revived by the power of the Juju medicine. But nobody is going to believe a thing unless it agrees with his general way of thinking about life. Here in Jamaica I am afraid the chief hold the doctrine has upon its followers is the same as that which so long satisfied the medieval mind with the picture of hell, that is, the opportunity it affords them of satisfying the emotions of envy and revenge which play so large a part in their everyday life. Many of these people are "heathen" still, and obeah is the religion of the shadow world, the religion of fear, suspicion, and revenge.

To cope successfully with the shadow world requires special faculties and a special initiation. A man thus equipped to deal with spirits is called an Obeah Man. There are Obeah Women too, who have the same power and are similarly employed. Parkes says the "French women" have the most wisdom of all and are the most to be feared. Although anyone may "set" obeah for another, he will go to an authorized dealer in obeah

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to get the proper formula; and to "take off" a duppy set by another, an Obeah Man or Woman must be employed. It is this unique power of the Obeah Man to control the spirit world which is the source of his extraordinary influence in a Negro community. The Obeah Man first persuades a man that someone is "working obeah" upon him, and then he offers to "take it off" for a consideration.

Today it is customary to look upon an Obeah Man as a crafty knave who practises upon the credulity of the more ignorant to enrich himself, or as a wicked one who may be bought to perform secret murder by means of his knowledge of deadly herbs. A writer in *Folk-lore* some years ago, summarizing a pamphlet by Inspector Thomas of the Jamaica constabulary called "Something about Obeah," divides professional Obeah Men into two classes. The first class, "generally African by birth" are dirty, ignorant, and deformed in some way—with a lame foot or a wall eye, for example—who accept a small fee for their services. The second class, well-dressed, intelligent, dapper, who make a pretense of "duppy-catching," do nothing without a large fee. The first class seem really to believe in themselves. The second are conscious of their own fraud. The first class are perhaps self-hypnotized and often exhibit senile dementia concealed under a show of profound authority. Edwards describes them as men "whose hoary heads and somewhat peculiarly harsh and forbidding in their aspect, together with some skill in plants of the medicinal and poisonous species, have qualified them for successful imposition upon the weak and credulous."

It is true that as the Negroes become better educated

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and more intelligent, the spiritist beliefs (upon which obeah practices depend today) lose their hold upon the mind; hence a larger and larger number of obeah practitioners become such for mercenary reasons or for the opportunity the trade gives them to satisfy sensual desires. But the fact that the trade remains lucrative proves the persistence of the belief, and there is no reason to suppose that the practitioner is in every case more intelligent than the great mass of the people who employ his skill.

Banbury says an Obeah Man "seldom looks you in the face," and carries a bancra (basket), bag, or wallet to hold his "things"; "if these are burned he can do nothing and usually gets off his head." Naturally the Obeah Man who is a pure fraud often simulates the look of the other. Parkes says that men who "deal in spirits" wear a red flannel shirt, or a crosspiece of red under their ordinary clothes, and generally gold earrings. Not all men who wear earrings are Obeah Men; fishermen, for example, generally wear one earring. The gold is said to "brighten their eyes to see ghosts," but also a gold earring is put on to improve the natural sight.

The real Obeah Man, says Wilfrid, must kill one of his own family—it may be an infant. Wilfrid did not say so, but I suppose in this way the Obeah Man secures the duppy who acts as his "familiar" or "control."

Obeah Men always work by means of particular objects which they employ like a fetish or charm.

"Set obeah" means to lay a charm to do a person harm; "work for me" means to use the obeah charm to do a person good. Any Obeah Man can work both

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ways, but some distinguish the "doctor" as the man who "pulls" duppies, the Obeah Man as the one who "sets" or "plants" them. It is upon this belief in the power of the Obeah Man to "work" upon particular objects to produce particular results that his influence depends. Although the more intelligent Negroes recognize the fraud in particular cases, they nevertheless believe in the power itself.

The Obeah Man's "things" are the materials which he uses to "set" obeah. It is obvious that the objects suggested to him for this purpose are such as are associated with the dead, such as little carved coffins, bones (especially of an animal or an infant), teeth, blood, and grave dirt. Rampini says if an Obeah Man throws grave dirt at anyone he will die. Grave dirt is drunk with blood and water by the Kromanti Negroes in order to make an oath inviolable, and Banbury says a murderer may be detected by such a drink, which will cause his belly to swell, just as he may be detected by letting some one dance with the coffin lid on his head until it falls off in front of the guilty man. Long cites the custom of cursing a thief by strewing earth from a newly dug grave upon a public road so that he may become "crumpled and trampled under foot like the soil of a public road." Wilfrid says that when a grave is prepared for "tombing," a little earth, taken from the top, bottom, and middle and moistened with a dash of rum, may be kept as a guard, and we have seen how a murderer may protect himself from ghostly retaliation by securing the first sod turned in digging the grave of his victim.

Objects associated with animals of ill omen also furnish good magic for the Obeah Man. Feathers and beaks

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of birds, horns, hoofs, and hair of animals and their bones or shells of insects are among the objects found in the Obeah Man's bundle, as well as dried herbs and seeds and dried parts of animals. Falconer related an amusing story which he heard from a member of the West Indian regiment in "Serlion," West Africa, of the obeah sold in that part of the world. It was in the form of a powder called *fanga*. This they "parcel out into a little leaf" which the bush people buy, not for money but for "wood-seed." Some of the men of the regiment were out walking with an interpreter when they met the obeah sellers, and the soldiers, lacking the native currency, forced a purchase for money. "Little blinkie [fire flies] head and wing and shell-shell, that's what the Obeah Men sell to the country people," ended Falconer with indignation; "the one who has the most wood-seed gets the most obeah!"

Edwards describes the obeah paraphernalia of an old African woman over eighty years of age, who in 1775 terrorized the slaves on a whole plantation until her practice was discovered and her cabin destroyed. He writes of "the whole inside of the roof (which was of thatch) and every crevice of the walls stuck with the implements of her trade, consisting of rags, feathers, bones of cats, and a thousand other articles." In a round earthen pot were "a prodigious quantity of round balls of earth or clay of various dimensions, large and small, whitened on the outside and variously compounded, some with hair and rags, or feathers of all sorts, and strongly bound with twine; others blended with the upper section of the skulls of cats, or stuck round with cat's teeth and claws, or with human or dog's teeth, and some glass beads of different colors;

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there were also a great many egg-shells filled with a viscous or gummy substance—and many little bags stuffed with a variety of articles."

The belief is very common that the Obeah Man can "work" upon coin so that it can draw away money. If you take from a man a coin which has been so worked upon and put it with your own money, it will have "the power of extracting the other moneys into his pocket." A bright, well-educated colored girl employed as a bookkeeper, when she found her account running short a few pounds each month, believed someone was "working obeah" upon the coin she received, and instead of looking about for the thief she took pains as soon as the money was handed to her to exchange it for bills or for other coin in order to escape the contamination. Careful people put corn grains with their coin and carry a few kernels in their pocket. Gravel serves the same purpose, or "loath [load] stones" from the doctor's shop, or lime juice squeezed over the coin. If someone asks you to lend him money, says Parkes, either give him coppers or give it to him freely without expecting return, for if you ask him for it again he will be angry and work obeah upon the coin he gives you. It is only silver coin that is dangerous; coppers are harmless.

Pinsticking is a common means of working obeah. One of Cundall's informants says the Obeah Man can furnish pins which will induce deep sleep. If you make a *cotta* (a carrying pad for the head), stick two obeah pins into it, and put it under a person's head, he will sleep until you awake him. Old Mercilla Hopkins of Browns Town related that "when Mary Gulla was dying, all her friends went to see her. She told them they must stand from the door and let her sins come

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in. And they must look beneath the bed and see some pins and needles; they must bring them within view. So now in every wicked act she had a part she must confess. A little boy fell off his horse in the race course, and she confessed that she did it. But she couldn't see the Lord's face, and she said her soul was lost."

Other objects besides coin and pins are worked upon by the Obeah Man and sold either as obeah guards or to "set" for a man, either to "change his mind toward you"—called "tu'n him yeye [eye]"—or, if you have a grudge toward him, to do him harm. A modern guard consists in four padlocks, one for each corner of the house. These will sell for two pounds, with charge of two pounds more for the keys. "That is going on today," says Falconer. Mirrors are a common adjunct for obeah uses. They are worn by Obeah Men sewed upon the turban to give "foresight," just as the old obeah workers used gold earrings. Sometimes the Obeah Man makes a client set up at his back door a piece of looking-glass which has been so treated that if anyone looks into it he is rendered harmless. If a guest comes to the door who is suspected of treachery, the host calls him around to the back door, and the moment he sees himself reflected in the glass, "he done! can't do any harm."

Obeah bundles are commonly used in the active practice of sorcery, and these obeah charms are invariably made up by the Obeah Men and sold at a high price. An Obeah Man is very commonly engaged when a lawsuit is pending in order to secure a successful verdict or, in cases when a man fears he is to be discharged or wants higher wages, "to turn the mind" of his employer. Falconer knew a man of about forty, "quite a healthy-looking man," who went to law with his

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brother-in-law about a piece of land and was persuaded by a friend to make sure of winning his case by consulting an Obeah Man. The two men accordingly visited the practitioner carrying rum and three eggs, and after paying down three pounds as fee, were taken into a little dark room where the obeah was kept and given a small parcel corded tightly. Each took an egg in the left hand and threw it into the corner of the room; the Obeah Man sprinkled some rum about and then told his client to carry the packet home in his left hand thrust into his jacket pocket, to go straight home without stopping, to reach there before sundown, and not to let the rain fall upon him on the way. The man ran all the way, but it rained, and he got wet. He took a chill, and in nine days he was a dead man. "De t'ing what he give him say rain no fe wet him, sundown no fe ketch him till he get home, dat is de obeah. So him dead now upon de land. What him wrap up in a paper was nonsense!" concluded Falconer.

This explanation is very significant. It is the spoken word, the curse of the song, to which the special magic clings in all beliefs about obeah practice. However one may discredit the power for sorcery in the object itself, there remains fear of the accompanying taboo.

The bundle prepared by the Obeah Man is often directed to be "buried" for its victim. This is spoken of as "bury a fe you." Very few even intelligent Negroes like to touch a bundle which has been thus "planted" for obeah purposes. The foreman of the public works at Port Antonio saw one of the men come up to his office, dig a hole stealthily, and bury something there. He called to one of the employees to dig it up, but this man had also seen it set and refused to touch it. The

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foreman himself was afraid to handle it. They asked a boy to take it up, but when he learned who had put it there he refused. Finally they called in a man from the street, and he unearthed a napkin in which some seeds were folded up. The man who buried it confessed that he had tried by this means to make the foreman give him money that he had not earned.

A lawsuit was on between a colored man of good family and a number of black families who had settled upon the land he had just bought, and who now found that their title was illegal. The blacks, finding that the cases were likely to go against them, tried to set obeah for their enemy. One night the man's wife had a vivid dream in which she saw a number of blacks digging and one old woman, whom she recognized as a friend of her husband, with her hand to her face weeping. When she awoke she told her dream and her husband laughed at her. That morning, observing that a post which stood directly facing the window of his room had been disturbed in the night, he ordered the place examined. A long bottle was found containing some of his own hair and finger nails and the bones of the pigeons he was accustomed to eat for his breakfast. He burned the whole contents and won the lawsuit brought by the first complainant. Later another bottle of similar character was found buried. The day came for the final lawsuit. He must have been himself aware of the quarter at which opposition was to be expected, for he awakened in the middle of the night with the words in his ears—"Start at once!" He obeyed the voice, wakened his coachman, and set out. There were two crossroads in opposite directions, at either of which he could turn into the direct road for the town where

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the court was to be held. But the horses "turned of themselves" into a third road which made a long detour and brought him to the court just as it opened at nine in the morning. In the meantime a party of blacks had been awaiting him with sharpened machetes (cutting knives) at either crossroads to prevent his getting through to town. It is likely that the man himself as well as the coachman suspected such an attempt on the part of the excited disputants and that the voice and the turning of the horses were an unacknowledged response to this suspicion. The story ends pleasantly, for, once assured of the legal title to the land, the new owner allowed the blacks to keep their old homes and live upon the land, employed them when he wanted labor, and became their best friend. All mourned for him when he was dead.

In the case just cited, it is evident that parts of the person if procurable are valuable in setting obeah for anyone. Hair makes a very dangerous obeah. It is supposed to enter the body and to be of a nature to tangle the spirit and so make a man helpless. An instance was related to me where a roll of hair thrown into the waste-jar by a guest in arranging her hair so demoralized a part-Negro woman of the better class that she was induced to pay a visit to an obeah doctor. Black thread is of the same character. During the quarrel over the lawsuit described above, one of the blacks made an image of wood to represent the enemy (whose name was Samuel Blair) and wound it with a whole reel of black thread, at the same time winding the name into the charm by repeating it as rapidly as possible as she wound. "Sammie Blair, Sammie Blair, Sammie Blair," she intoned. "Fas'er! fas'er!" urged the spec-

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tators. "Sammie Bl'r! Sam'i Bl'r!" hurried the enchantress, as she quickened the movement of her hand.

However incredible it may seem to us that a whole people can be made to believe in a power which can change not only men's health and material fortunes but their minds—make an inconstant lover ardent, an employer well-disposed toward a man, a judge favorable to his case at court—or can pursue with revenge a thief or a murderer, we must realize that the whole structure built up by the Obeah Men rests upon the basis of very ancient beliefs in the relation between man and natural objects. The Negro, for example, has, according to Cundall's informants, a number of curious notions in regard to the sympathetic magic connected with fire. Spitting in the fire causes the saliva to dry up; throwing milk into the fire makes the cow go dry. Burning a person's dung gives intestinal pains. Burning certain clothing will take off the skin of the owner. Old Hannah knew a handsome woman whose face was scarred in this way by someone with a grudge against her. One of Cundall's informants says that peeling an orange in the vicinity of sugar works diminishes the quantity of sugar and that the "removal of the fire sticks from side to side while boiling oil diminishes the amount of oil." And it must be recalled that if you show a fire stick to a strange visitor, if he is a duppy in disguise he will laugh.

Among herbs there are certain weeds which you can employ to change a man's mind. If a man is angry with you, rub up "temper-bush" (*Amyris* —) and box him with it, and his mind will become friendly toward you. The cut-eye bean planted with a crop changes the grudging eye to friendliness. Another weed, which

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Wilfrid called "Madame Fate," if tucked together with two kinds of grass called Bahama and Apimpe (*Eleusine indica*) into the belt of a man who feels disposed to work, will make him indolent and indisposed to labor, or you may bury them in the ground with the same result. There is a withe which has small pods "hanging to it like a thread" which a man will wind about his neck if he has "crick-neck," and if another asks, "What is the matter with you?" he will pick off a pod and throw it at the questioner, who will then have the stiff neck himself. To detect a thief, hold two sticks of broomweed (*Malvastrum coromandelianum*) which have been first dipped in lye, one on each side of a man's neck, and say,

> By Saint Peter, by Saint Paul,
> By the living God of all,

and if he is a thief the weed will grow around his neck and choke him to death.

Plant life is alive with spirit power. All the herbs used to "drive duppy" are so used because of the relation believed to exist between them and the activities of human life. The beliefs Long mentions relating to the effect of certain trees planted about the house must have been fostered by such a sense of relationship. The tradition of mystery that still hangs over the cottonwood tree is a part of it. Supernatural influences are abroad in the world, and these plants are the form in which they appear to man.

And if plant life is so useful for exorcism how much more is animal life! Certain animals have come to be regarded as more likely to be duppies in disguise than others, and these are, of course, the creatures with

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which the Obeah Man deals. Edwards complains of the cruelty the Negroes show toward animals, and I am afraid they are not much improved in the ways of pity today. It may be that the fear with which they are taught to regard the animal world is in part responsible for this callousness. "Never to ill-treat a sheep," says Wilfrid, "because Christ bore him in his arms. A sheep is never an obeah animal, but there are seven devils in a hog."

Beast life is not largely represented in Jamaica, and there are no wild beasts in the forest. The monkeys have long since disappeared. There are none left of the camels which Long says were at one time imported for carrying rum and sugar to market and which proved a failure on the hilly island. The wild hogs which furnished the principal product for export long after the Spanish were driven out by the English are so scarce now in the mountains that even the Maroon settlements scarcely hunt them longer. The wild cattle and horses that roamed the savannahs are replaced by domestic animals of imported pedigree. Small rodents, it is true, are all too common, and the mongoose is a suspected animal, as the modern popular two-step called "Slide, Mongoose" well illustrates; but one does not hear much about rats and mice in obeah doings, although there are a certain number of tales about "Br'er Rat" among the animal stories. In Lacovia it is said that the mice which run up and down the big cottonwood tree in the graveyard are the duppies of the dead. Cats seem to have been in old days most suspected (like the witch's cat in European folklore), but today puss has fewer enemies, and the he-goat, the grey hog, and the lowing cow are the beasts one hears most about in obeah

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practice.

One of Cundall's informants says, "If you throw up a cat and it comes down on its two front feet you will die like a dog," and it is to be recalled how useful the teeth of wildcats used to be considered as "guards" and how dangerous was a Rolling-calf in the shape of a brindled cat. Banbury couples cats with snakes as the animals most often "set" by Obeah Men. Mrs. Peart says "a black cat is the greatest luck in a house, and sometimes people wear an artificial one."

If a horse gallops about a pasture and refuses to be caught, it shows that the animal is being ridden by a duppy: "Horse commence a tek too much a him own exercise, danger no far from him," says the proverb. To catch such a horse, Wilfrid says, stick a penknife into the bit of mud it has thrown off with its hoof, and the horse will stand still trembling, but after you have put the rope on him you must go back and pull up the knife, or the horse will die. "Shut the penknife halfway," says one of Cundall's informants.

The lowing cow, like the whining dog, is feared as a harbinger of evil. I am told in illustration of the Negro's cruelty to animals that sometimes Negroes will cut out a cow's tongue and leave the animal to die unsuspected of its owner, and it is possible this practice has some connection with the fear of the "talking cow," "Cow read dem law in a dem belly," says the proverb, and "A no fe want a tongue mek cow can't talk"; and the quietly ruminating cow is looked upon by the Negro, not merely as the type of the silent wise man but as one who keeps the secrets of the duppy world. Nor is the dog exactly the friendly protector to man that we regard him. The Negro's dog slinks

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about as if ashamed of himself and is always held suspect.

Among fowl, the white cock, the "sensay," and the "peel-neck" are ominous. The "sensay" is the West Indian name for the "frizzled" or ruffled breed of fowls with feathers standing out in reversed direction. They seem to be particularly common in West Indian fowl yards. "Keep sensay fowl fe pick obeah," is the saying; and this means that if one "plants" obeah, the ruffled fowl will "dig it out." "If you promise sensay fowl anyt'ing, him wi' look fe it," is a saying which warns one to keep one's promises in an obeah transaction. This fear of the ruffled fowl is not peculiar to Jamaica. One writer tells of a "cenci cock" brought by an Obeah Man from Martinique to the Virgin Islands and there sacrificed in order to find hidden treasure. Old-time people in Jamaica say if anybody bites you, take the down of a sensay fowl and rub it over the place, and the biter's teeth will rot.

The eggs of a sensay or of a peel-neck chicken, like those of certain birds of ill omen, are employed by the Obeah Man. I am told that those who keep such fowls in their henyard have great difficulty in gathering any of their eggs before they are stolen by the Negroes, presumably for obeah purposes. The egg, says Banbury, is "the embodiment of obeah," and I am told that even a Christian and highly intelligent colored person will tremble with fear at sight of an egg which he thinks has been "set" for him. Monk Lewis records such a case on his estate at Cornwall. One of Cundall's informers says that if a youth steals eggs, he will always be a thief; and Banbury quotes the belief that to punish an egg thief you have but to throw the egg

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into the sea, and "same fashion de sea da rowl, as so you belly bottom da rowl." Some say dreaming of a nest full of hen's eggs is lucky: it means money.

Rampini says the Negroes believe that cocks crow thrice at night—once at ten o'clock, once at one, and once at four in the morning. We have already seen that the unusual cackling of fowls is ominous, and there are a good many signs relating to fowls in Cundall's notes. When fowls put their heads together—kissing, some call it—visitors are coming, and the sex of the fowls determines that of the visitors. If cocks crow in the early part of the night "ships are near"; if near to the door, "hasty news."

Certain wild birds are looked upon as objects of mystery. If you break the egg of Gi'-me-me-bit, the Cuban nighthawk (*Chordeiles minor gundlachii*, Laurence), you will have trouble: "You will break every other egg," says Cundall's informant. The saying is, "Pick up Gi'-me-bit egg you tek up trouble, lay it down you lay down you' luck." The Obeah Man alone can use this egg to put obeah on another, for he alone knows how to break it so as to bring out sores all over the other's body. Other ominous birds are the cuckoo or rain bird (*Hyetornis pluvialis*, Gmelin), peculiar to Jamaica and known as the "old man bird"; the crested quail dove or blue dove (*Geotrygon versicolor*, Lafresnaye), a monotypic bird also peculiar to Jamaica called the "mountain witch"; two other members of the pigeon family called whitebelly (*Leptotila jamaicensis jamaicensis*, Linne), and ground dove (*Chaemepelia passerina jamaicensis*, Maynard); and the nighthawk, called potoo (*Nyctibius griseus jamaicensis*, Gmelin), also peculiar to Jamaica. "Ground doves

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that inhabit particular spots are duppies," says one of Cundall's informants. The turkey buzzard and the white owl are also birds wrapped in mystery. Gosse gives a very full account of their habits. The beautiful little streamer-tailed humming birds that flit about every flower garden in Jamaica, with their whirr like the sound of a distant airplane (*Aithurus scitulus*, Brewster and Bangs, and *Aithurus polytmus*, Linne, as the black and yellow-billed are distinguished), are also something other than mere flecks of bird life. They go by the name of "doctor bird," and the saying is, "Doctor bird cunnie bird, hard bird fe kill." So of the grey hog the saying runs, "Grey hog a de hardest hog fe dead," but I never heard of a humming bird's being employed for obeah. Perhaps even an Obeah Man sees something incongruous between "setting" duppies and this vibrating flash of beauty.

Reptiles have a particularly bad name as vehicles for duppy setting. The snake is the "baddest of all," anyone will affirm, but as there are seldom to be found snakes in Jamaica today this takes one back in the history of obeah to the days of *ob*, to the voodoo, and the Obeah Man of the past who carried "a staff carved with snakes or with a human head on the handle, a cabalistic book and a stuffed snake." In the past, Banbury says, snakes used to be "set" by the Obeah Man, and the fear of them seems to have been not ungrounded, for, though ordinarily harmless, cases are reported of their coiling about an animal or even a Negro. The fact that the yellow snake in Jamaica eats eggs and sleeps in hollows of fig and cotton trees is perhaps one reason for the fear of eggs and of the duppy-haunted precincts of the cotton tree.

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XIII. A DUCK ANT'S NEST IN A COFFEE WALK

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Today the toad or frog and the lizard, particularly the green lizard, are the common tools of the Obeah Man. Green lizards frequent cottonwood and mango trees. "Do not knock a green lizard that lives in a graveyard, for he is a duppy and will hurt you," says one of Cundall's informants. Nobody will hurt a lizard of whatever species or a toad that comes into the house, for to do so "will not be good for you." If a lizard drops upon a woman it is a sign that she will bear a child.

Insects in the house are attended to, like the firefly, the cricket, and the moth. If a large black beetle flies in and lights on the floor, then flies off, you will have good news; if it remains, the news will be bad. To kill a spider is bad luck: "you will always break crockeries," writes one of Cundall's informants. "To catch a scorpion, say the Lord's prayer and he will stop." Duck ants are feared as duppies. "If ants take to a house it is a sign of death," says one of Cundall's informants. Gosse and Senior both describe at length the nests built in huge masses in the crutch of a tree by these curious insects, and their occasional raids upon a house. I saw the trail across a sitting-room ceiling of one of these visiting colonies. The start had been made somewhere under the rafters and a perfectly straight tunnel dug across the ceiling and down the wall, throwing up a mound of sawdust as the digging progressed. No matter how many times the trail was knocked away the route was resumed. Senior says the only way to rid a house of the pest is to "dig a hole nearly through the top" of the nest and "insert a quantity of arsenic and white sugar."

Finally, in glancing through the pages of Cundall's informants it is clear that the few weather signs quoted

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in Jamaica are generally animal signs. The cry of the croaking lizard, the flying of cockroaches, the flight of swallows in large numbers—these signs are familiar to black and white alike. But the playing of a hog "with trash in its mouth" or "the vomiting of a hog in the early morning" also betokens rain, and if a cock after a shower flies to a raised place and crows, "the weather will slack." Wilfrid says that a flock of white crows following the river stream, or of teal or duck is a sign of rain in dry weather.

Instances of the belief in this obeah power of animals are very frequent. A certain colored clergyman who had been having trouble with his neighbors lent his yard man money to buy a sensay cock from an Obeah Man who was being sent to jail, and the cock was put into a coop in his yard pending payment. Suddenly the neighbors began to bring him presents; when the cock was removed the gifts ceased. The same man shot a hog that was being persistently allowed to root in the graveyard. Soon after, he contracted typhoid and was removed to a more healthy parish. The story went that he "kill one goat-kid a graveyard an' de ghost tek him." A woman from Montego Bay fell ill of a disease of a syphilitic nature and consulted an Obeah Woman in Kingston. The woman, whom she had never seen before, called her at once by name and recalled to her a day when, as she was quarreling with a woman on the street, she had stepped upon a dead bullfrog lying beside the gutter. This was the cause of her trouble—the woman had "set" it for her. The sick woman recalled the incident perfectly, but how could a stranger know anything about it unless she had "foresight?" She believed in her adviser implicitly, and

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when she remained uncured accepted the Obeah Woman's excuse that if she had had more money to give, she could have been cured.

In Montego Bay a house on the coast was threatened in a hurricane. Neighbors came to the assistance of the old woman and her children who lived there, but the woman insisted that an old trunk must first be rescued. The family were in consequence all drowned, and when the trunk was forced open there was found a bullfrog with a ribbon tied about its neck. I have heard of a baker who was suspected of keeping a mongoose "to lick his bread and make it sell well"; of a shopkeeper in the country who, having lost some money, kept a ground dove in his pocket to get it back, and another who had a pet pigeon which he kept for a similar purpose. Any unusual pet is, in fact, suspected of being kept for obeah purposes and often is in reality harbored for this reason alone.

The Obeah Man is constantly appealed to, says Edwards, not only "for the cure of disorders, obtaining revenge for injuries, the conciliation of favor," but also for "the discovery and punishment of the thief and adulterer and the prediction of future events." I have no data in regard to the adulterer, but the application of guards to a provision ground and devices to detect and punish a thief are still employed, although in many cases the man who employs them must be, like Falconer who gave me most of my information on this subject, aware of the fraud he is practising in imposing upon the credulity of the thief.

Through Manchester there is a belief that a thief who enters a man's field can be made to stay and work until the owner comes and gives him a flogging. The

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art is called "stand there" and depends upon impersonating the presence of a duppy. Falconer says, "You build you a hut in your ground. You build up a bed in there, you make up your fire, you put on water, you look for food, put it down there—no fresh kind, only salt. When the thief comes now, the duppy that you left there takes him to the hut and says, 'Now you must stand there!' Every time he starts to go home he can't go. When he is hungry he cooks his food, he lies down to sleep. Then ground massa comes—never goes near him, goes outside, hides, and says, 'You have everything you want to eat and drink. Weed grass, do my work till time I am ready to set you free.' In ten or twelve days he comes and sets him free. To work the duppy, get a piece of chain, tie it on your foot, and go about the hut [at night] singing: 'You stan' deh till me ready to let you go!' He will think it is duppy and do it."

Falconer told me a number of such "follies" which he had picked up during a long experience as an independent cultivator. One he learned "down Pedro way" was the manufacture of a small coffin which he pretended to be the habitation of a duppy. He said, "I whitewashed it and I took it in the ground and placed it on a scaffold and put thatch over it to prevent rain from beating off the whitewash. And I got tar and blacked a piece of white cloth and put it on a tall stick and tied it to the scaffold. And everybody believed that was my plan to kill the thief—I made them believe that the flag would stay steady when a thief was in the ground."

Another similar trick he learned from "an old black nager" who was a friend of his uncle. He killed insects

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and filled a gourd, then corked up the hole and half buried the gourd in the ground where it could not be seen. Then "I talked my words that I would make Car'n crow [carrion crow] come and tell me when a thief was there. When I was away from the ground I opened the gourd, and the crows flew to get at it [smelling the insects] and couldn't manage it, so they lighted on all the trees in my ground. When I went to the ground I corked up the gourd and kept down the smell and told the crows, 'go away for I am in place,' and all of them went away."

The Obeah Man will often prepare a bundle to hang in a conspicuous place in the field, according to Bell and other early writers. Falconer saw a field of corn guarded by a cloth "written over in a strange language." An old man at the field warned him and the white man with him "if you go into the ground to steal corn you will never find pass to come out until the master of the ground comes." The white man went in and broke a stalk of corn, and "nothing stopped him in the ground yet," said Falconer, by which result he concluded that "nager is short of understanding." An Obeah Man once offered, at the price of a pound or two, to bait a rat trap for him which he was to set under the bed to spring whenever a thief was in his ground. The trap was promised to catch the thief "before nine days," but, said Falconer, "If the rat trap flew until today you wouldn't catch a thief! They say if you owe money you won't get the thief."

Another device he had tried with success was that of setting up a scarecrow by dressing a banana trunk with hat and jacket to look like a man standing up all night to watch the ground. But for the success of this

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trick it is necessary to get up early every morning and strip the trunk before daylight. A desperate remedy is that of burying poisoned pegs with a warning that such are in the field. I have seen such warnings posted beside provision fields, and Falconer said he had seen the pegs used. His uncle at Belview taught him how to prepare them. "I got a wood that I call conto—short name is lightwood—such as old people make torches of, and I make pegs with points like a needle. And I got a piece of soft board and bored the board with a gimlet—a small gimlet—and I set the pegs by rows. I might make ten pieces of board, which will contain about fifty pegs. I got a poisonous thing by the name of 'dumb-cane,' mixed with it a poisonous weed by the name of nightshade and a piece of copper—a poisonous copper. You grate the copper and you get the juice of the dumb-cane and the juice of the nightshade and put all into a bottle and soak all the pegs in there. Take the hair from your head, split the peg point, put a small bit of the hair in the point of the peg, using a little gum; after that, screw the peg with a knife round and round. Place the boards about the chosen food, covered with earth and trash. If a thief steps on one [peg] he will fall and catch his side or his hand and he never gets over it. We really did catch a thief—has to wear shoe-pattern till today. So we set a notice 'Beware of peg in this ground' and never set the peg—he will believe it is there; for it is a cruel trick."

It is evident that these last devices appeal to the natural fears of the thief rather than to his superstition. "Old-time people" resort to darker methods of detection. The plant called wangla is believed to have

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obeah power. So have certain other plants. Wangla should be planted in the provision ground and the seeds carefully gathered. If a thief robs the field and you can find a fresh footstep, take up the earth carefully in a leaf, measure it with a spoon, and put "four-thirds" as much wangla seed with it and put the whole into a pot upon the fire. Call the name of the person you think is the thief and if you are right, as many "bumps" will appear on his foot as there are seeds that "pop," or "his skin will strip off," says Cundall's informant; another says he will die. Falconer says the only thing that can save him is to have previously eaten some of the wangla seed. Banbury says if one burns wangla with pepper and salt in a road which a thief passes, it will give the thief Jamaica leprosy, called "cocobay." Beating the wangla planted in the field as you call the thief's name is also effective in bringing out swellings on his leg. Flog prickly pear in the same fashion, says one of Cundall's informants, and the thief "will split up and die just as the beaten plant splits up." Plant guinea yam with a short stick, says another, and put a silver threepence in the sod; when it sprouts, flog off the leaves. But do not let them fall on you, or your own body will swell. "Pain-cocoa" and "China-cane" may be treated in the same fashion. Falconer described more in detail the technic of this device. He would bore a hole through the money and tie it to the vine and make a switch of three different weeds—broomweed, rosemary, willow—and lay it beside the vine. When the owner finds his ground robbed, he beats the plant, at the same time calling three times, "Na-me-do! Na-me-do! Na-me-do!" followed by the name of the supposed thief, adding the curse—"Never

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you better till you dead!" As soon as he calls the name of the man who committed the theft, the money disappears, and the guilty person will never again be free from pain. Falconer saw this thing done "down Leeds way," and many people believe in it. The same method of exorcism may be applied to a duck ant's nest in the field. Put a piece of silver into the nest and say, "I pay you to do your work," and it is a common belief that the thief's foot will swell in imitation of the duck ant's nest on the limb of a tree. Another device is to boil with your own pot water the pot water of all the persons you suspect, putting in a silver piece, and "as it boils the thief begins to swell." Or throw into the sea some refuse from the stolen plants, and "as the sea rolls, so will his intestines." Or "go to a graveyard at twelve o'clock at night and push a walking stick into one of the graves. Say what is your request and take the stick to the robbed field and stick it up in it."

The advantage of the methods just described is that they carry their own punishment with them. Modern planters are sometimes satisfied merely to detect the thief. Falconer knew an Obeah Man who got a piece of board, fastened it on a stick, put a small looking-glass on top, and drew a chalk mark about the glass. When anyone lost something and came to him to learn the name of the thief, he pretended to be able to tell it by looking into the glass. But he was a fraud, for as the man called the names of those he suspected, on the eighth he would say, "Oh, that's the one!" This was Sammy Look-up, and "he was sentenced to prison with 'cat in and cat out' for nine months." "Old-time stories" contain other standardized tests. A person who has eaten stolen food cannot jump over the fire

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three times without falling into the fire, or pass through water without drowning. The whites are quick to use the belief in such magic to devise fresh "follies." A matron in an institution missed some articles of value. She called all the girls together and gave them each a match, bidding them sleep on it that night and bring it to her in the morning, assuring them that the thief's match would grow longer during the night. When the girls brought back their matches, she easily picked out the thief as the girl who had broken off her match end.

Bell describes methods of identifying a thief by key divination and by opening a book at random and pointing to words with a pin, thus spelling out the name. Cundall's informant says the Bible is used for this purpose with the conjuration "By St. Peter, by St. Paul," and adds divination with a gold ring suspended by a hair in a glass of water and by means of a "curious kind of smoke which when it rises goes to the house of the thief." Among the more intelligent of the people none of these devices has much effect; it is only the ignorant who still use them and those who are described as "old-time people."

Obeah practitioners may act as doctors to cure the sick. Either they may visit the patient in his home, or they may keep what is called a balm-yard, where the patient is brought to be cured. In this case they may be consulted by appointment in their own home. They generally have some knowledge of herb medicine and may prescribe very sensibly for the sick man, but the dishonest or insane among them use the most fantastic methods to impress the patient. One of Cundall's informants describes the performance of an illit-

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erate healer who marked on paper with a pencil or hung up strips of white calico and pretended to see "the duppy appear upon them like the image from a magic lantern upon the screen." He would cry, "Wet up the calico, Lord," and direct the people to make all sorts of motions and beat them if they did not perform these acts to suit him. For "balm" he "beats the patient with wet calico and rams the abdomen with clenched fists." If his audience disturbs him he "jumps out and swears."

The theory of the obeah practitioner is (says Banbury) that bottled or tied up obeah has the power of transferring itself into the body of the victim without his knowing it until he experiences pain. The consequence is that any pain which will not yield to ordinary diagnosis is pronounced to be the result of obeah and must accordingly be "pulled" by the obeah man. A price is demanded for the service "to pay the duppy," and this must always be paid in advance. In case of failure, the doctor can always say that the duppy did not get enough money. Banbury describes how the Obeah Man prepares the object beforehand which he pretends to find buried in the ground or in the body of the patient. To locate the duppy he consults his familiar, which resides in a fetish object or "amber," marks a circle on the floor, sticks in knives and forks, and pours ashes and water over the spot, then taking cottonwood leaves in his hands he digs out the objects which have been set for his patient and burns them or treats them with lime juice and ashes, the ferment of which, when they are thrown together, proves to the company the power of his duppy. If the duppy is in the body of the patient he pretends to locate it by means of chalk marks, and after consulting the amber

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he makes a cut in the patient's body, sucks it, and shows an object—generally an insect or reptile—which he has previously concealed unobserved in mouth or hand.

Falconer described the following performance at which he was present: The doctor had been summoned to the girl's home. He sent everyone out of the room and then took a number of vials containing such drugs as drive away spirits and sprinkled them all about the room saying, "'Tan' deh till I come!" Next, he went out and scalded some rice, a little of which he took in his hand and placed on a plate—"five little parcel right round." Then he ordered a sensay fowl to be killed, caught the blood in a small glass that he carried with him, and dropped a little of the blood upon each heap of rice. Placing a pint bottle in the middle of the plate, he broke an egg and dropped the white on one side and the yolk on the other, then he took a piece of the shell in his left hand and threw it against the bottle, which shook. Instantly he clapped the other half of the shell over the bottle mouth and called for help to hold it down. He sprinkled over it more liquid from his bottles and corked it up with a good tight cork and melted a piece of "black stuff" right down over it and tied over it a piece of new calico. "Dat's de end of de duppy," he announced when he had sent a man to tie a stone to it and sink it in a stream where it might never be seen. The girl immediately got up and walked, but the next day she was just as ill as ever, and the family consulted a physician, who applied a blister and gave her some medicine which in five days led to her recovery—"quite all right until she marry," Wilfrid concluded.

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It is perhaps the old trick of the ferment created by squeezing lime juice on ashes which has given to a lime so important a place in the Negro mind as a means of "running duppy." Vinegar was used in a similar manner in former days and enjoyed a similar reputation. The bottle-catching trick is popularly performed by showing the spectators an empty bottle and then deftly exchanging it for one filled with smoke to create the illusion of a duppy, or even more commonly for one containing reptiles or insects. Another method is to put the patient into a bath and drop into the water the creature which the practitioner then pretends to have exorcised out of the patient's own body.

In the case cited by Falconer, the blood of a fowl was used to "feed" the duppy. De Lisser saw near Kingston, some years ago, a goat sacrificed to take a duppy from a young girl who was ill. One of Cundall's informants prescribes sitting on a Bible and jumping over the fire three times, then sprinkling a goat's or other animal's blood on the fire, and all present eating the flesh. In this way the troublesome ghost is supposed to be disposed of. I do not know of any record in Jamaica where human blood has been demanded for such a sacrifice, as it certainly is sometimes demanded in the voodoo rites of healing, and as sporadic cases are reported from other colonies. In the famous case tried in the court of Demerara on June 7, 1918, six men—four East Indians (or coolies) and two Negroes—were condemned to death for putting a little white child to death in obeah practices. The men were afraid of losing their position. The Obeah Man (who had a "Fair Maid" in his basket) told them he could change

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the mind of their employer for them if they would furnish certain parts of a white child's body for him to work with—"no black man pickney, no coolie man pickney, but a white man pickney." The kidnapped child was found with her eyes gouged out (but possibly by birds), and at certain points in line with the place where the employer sat at table, tacks were found driven which were supposed to have been treated with the hair and other parts of the dead child. The cause for the murder seems in the reading paltry, but the coolies' fear of losing their work must have been exceedingly strong. "It is for life," they told each other. In the Cuban records of child murder for obeah practices, the cause seems to be also not one of hatred or revenge but of belief in the curative power of certain parts of the body in cases of persistent illness.

In the case which appeared in the *Daily Gleaner* of Kingston, Jamaica, November 27, 1922, of the finding of the body of a Cuban child who had been missing since November 6, with her forehead crushed in by a blow and the heart and lungs extracted through a wound under the left armpit, the organs are supposed to have been eaten and the blood used as a bath in a voodoo cure for a sick patient. Udal says the voodoos bury bodies in a stupor and then dig them up again and resuscitate them to secure the organs useful in cures.

But the superstition that lends itself to child murder and animal sacrifice, though sad enough, is not so malignant as that which seeks through obeah practices to avenge a grudge by the death of the victim. The Obeah Man is perhaps oftenest sought by one who nurses a grudge and wishes revenge. At this Obeah Man's yard there may be three flags—white, red, and

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black. The client chooses the white one if he wishes merely to "turn down somebody can't come to nothing," the red one for blood, the black for murder. He bargains for the price and lays down his money; the Obeah Man must now perfect the "plan." Suppose he wants to get land from a man; the Obeah Man will give him a candle and an egg. He must go at night to the line between the pieces of land under dispute and break the egg, and if he wants also to kill the man he will light the candle. The man cannot go beyond the point where he breaks the egg; the candle will kill the man—burn out the life. Bell says that the candles in the churches lighted as prayers for saints are interpreted by the people as practices against the life of an enemy. Suppose you want to spoil a man's crop. The Obeah Man will take grave dirt, garlic, asafoetida, animals' teeth such as horse or hog, horse hair, and blueing mixed with water, catch the shadow of a duppy and put it into the bottle, add certain oils from the doctor's shop, and cork it up tight. This must be buried in some secret place in the cultivation or in the pass leading to it. A man whose crop fails ascribes the result inevitably to obeah.

To "put a shadow on a thing" means that the shadow, ghost, or duppy is put upon it to work for you and bring you luck. To secure the duppy you should go to a graveyard at night and visit the grave of some friend or some member of your family, preferably your mother. Take an egg, rice, and rum, and mash the egg at the grave. The duppy will come up and feed upon the egg and the food which you bring; thus you pay him to help you. To call up a ghost to set him upon another, Sam Thompson recommended the following method:

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Get two wide-mouthed bottles of proof rum (alcohol) and a bunch of spiritweed tied to a stick, and go naked to the grave at night. At twelve o'clock you go to the gravehead, put the rum at the head, strike one, two, three strokes with the spiritweed, and say: "So-and-so, come an' mek a tell you wha' fe do." Repeat this at the foot. Then "guard the head" and take up the bottle, guard the foot and take up the bottle, and tell the ghost what you want of it. He will start upon his errand, but you must not look behind you until you get home, and you must say no word to anyone until daylight, else he will attack you instead of the person you have sent him after—"come back 'pon you same way." Old Hannah in the cockpit country said that a lad she knew got angry with another for meddling with his lobster pots. The Obeah Man told him how to call up his father's ghost to set upon the other, but did not properly warn the lad not to touch the pots himself. The ghost accordingly followed his own son and could hardly be called off. In Westmoreland a similar method is employed, but the beating of the grave is done with calabash switches.

The question is often discussed in Jamaica whether the many cases in which the victims of an obeah curse seem to die of fear may not really be explained as secret poisoning. The knowledge of poisonous herbs is well known to those who are versed in "bush medicine," an art in which the Obeah Man is bound to perfect himself. Ordinary poisons and their remedy are known to all but the most ignorant. Banbury says that the Obeah Man soaks the undergarments of his victim in poisonous decoctions and introduces maggots bred in bitter cassava, the juice of which is deadly poison.

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Peart refused to grow this valuable food plant in his ground piece lest he be accused of poisoning by his neighbors, and himself always kept a nut of the antidote vine in the house in case of poison. The juice of the bitter cassava caught under the finger nail is said to be sufficient to cause death, and there are other subtle ways of using these natural poisons which cause them to act so slowly upon the system that the victim wastes away without knowing what is the matter with him or how to combat the evil. Marsden says: "The general name with the Negroes for these poisons is obea, which is frequently given to one another upon any slight cause; they do it in secret and keep it so, nor is the person who administered it often found out." Here Marsden goes so far as to say that obeah *is* poison, and skeptical Negroes today say the same thing. Mr. Beckford Davis, as quoted by Rampini, in evidence given before the Royal Commission, defines obeah as the "art of poisoning combined with the art of imposing upon the credulity of ignorant people by a pretense of witchcraft."

There are, however, very curious cases described by the whites themselves, in which the evidence seems to preclude actual poisoning and the coincidence appears too close for the merely fortuitous. A careful examination of each case might check errors in the facts as stated, but until this examination is made it cannot be proved that fear and fear alone does not actually cause death in some instances. In one case "which made a talking among all the people," an old Obeah Woman of Westmoreland paid a visit to an Obeah Man of her acquaintance without the usual formality of announcing the visit beforehand. He looked

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upon her as a spy and cursed her "never to go out of her house again." The woman took to her bed, grew ill, and died shortly afterwards. An old Obeah Woman whom a white man had caused to be sent to prison cursed his Negro workman who had assisted in the arrest with death within three months and the master with death within the year after her release. On the day from which the curse took date the two were setting out a circle of trees about the yard, and the white man, recalling the incident, jested with the idea that at least their duppies could come back to enjoy the shade when the trees were grown. Three months later the boy suffered a violent chill and died a few days afterwards in the hospital, and exactly within the period predicted the master, too, succumbed to a heart trouble that had long afflicted him and died after some weeks of intense pain, during which he had believed himself tormented by ghosts: "I wish they would get through with me!" he had muttered. The story was told me by his widow, herself a white woman. Edwards reports an obeah case on a plantation in the year 1775 in which over one hundred slaves died through the obeah of a single old woman whose hut was found filled with the material for setting obeah. He describes the symptoms of an obeah case as follows: The man "presently falls into a decline, under the incessant horror of impending calamities. The slightest painful sensation in the head, the bowels, or any other part, any casual loss or hurt, confirms his apprehensions, and he believes himself the devoted victim of an invisible and irresistible agency. Sleep, appetite, and cheerfulness forsake him, his strength decays, his disturbed imagination is haunted without respite, his features

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wear the settled gloom of despondency; dirt, or any other unwholesome substance, becomes his only food, he contracts a morbid habit of body, and gradually sinks into the grave." Sam Thompson put the same thing a little more simply: "You may be in good condition and they bury something for you. You begin to creep, begin to creep, go naked. The spirit will argue with you in your mind. You go to a doctor [obeah doctor], and he says something is buried for you, it may be a nail, it may be a toad, it may be a fly, it may be anything."

By whatever natural means the Obeah Man may achieve his ends, there is no doubt whatever as to the faith of the Negroes in his spiritual power. Banbury says a man will "steal, murder, commit rape, and excuse himself by saying 'dem put him so.'" Barrenness and abortion are laid to obeah. One of the strongest arguments against the honesty of the Obeah Man is the fact that he actually does excite a man to crime as a condition laid down by the spirit to make his obeah work. Banbury says that women are often persuaded to give up their virtue to the Obeah Man for the same reason, and I have heard of cases where the influence exerted by the Obeah Man has led to the breaking up of a family, the prostitution of the wife, and the putting of the husband to all sorts of loathsome tasks, such as actually eating the rags which the Obeah Man wore bound about his foot. The fear of the curse of obeah must be strong indeed when such cases are quoted from reliable sources today.

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Chapter IX

THE MYAL PEOPLE

Various religious sects have flourished from time to time in Jamaica who claimed the power to remove the spells of obeah, but always through counterspells of their own based upon the same idea of spirit possession. It is easy to see therefore that they have only served to increase the confusion of mind of those whom they pretend to aid, and that, under the same incentives of greed and lust, they may lend themselves to the same arts as the Obeah Men in duping the credulous. The earliest of these sects is that of the Myal Men.

Myalism seems to be directly African in origin. So far as we know, it began in Jamaica in a secret society composed of men who claimed invulnerability to weapons, and power even to raise the dead. To prove this last claim, they used to give public performances at which men were supposed to dance themselves to death and were then revived. Long, writing in 1774, thinks a stupor was produced by means of a cold infusion of callalu (an *amaranthus* cooked commonly as greens but poisonous in infusion), which could be dissipated by applying lime juice and vinegar as restoratives. Monk Lewis witnessed a myal dance in 1818, which he describes as follows:

> He [the practitioner] sprinkles various powders over the devoted victim, blows upon him, and dances round him, obliges him to drink a liquor prepared for the occasion, and finally the sorcerer and his assistants seize him and whirl him rapidly

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round and round till the man loses his senses, and falls on the ground to all appearance and the belief of the spectators a perfect corpse. The chief Myal-man then utters loud shrieks, rushes out of the house with wild and frantic gestures and conceals himself in some neighboring wood. At the end of two or three hours he returns with a large bundle of herbs, from some of which he squeezes the juice into the mouth of the dead person; with others he anoints his eyes and stains the tips of his fingers, accompanying the ceremony with a great variety of grotesque actions, and chanting all the while something between a song and a howl, while the assistants hand in hand dance slowly round them in a circle, stamping the ground loudly with their feet to keep time with his chant. A considerable time elapses before the desired effect is produced, but at length the corpse gradually recovers animation, rises from the ground perfectly recovered, and the Myal dance concludes.

There is no doubt that the Myal Men often believed themselves really invulnerable. Edwards says the Kromanti rebellion in 1760 was instigated by men who sold medicine to make men invulnerable, and Long tells of a leader who stood up fearlessly and allowed himself to be shot in the same faith. But even if a member doubted the exact nature of the claim, he was pledged to guard the secrets of the fraternity, according to Phillippo, in a bowl of blood and water mingled with grave dirt and gunpowder.

Myal Men of today make no such difficult pretensions. There is danger for a miracle worker when popular belief sets against him, as illustrated by an ironic incident, quoted by Chandler in 1740, of an unsuccessful practitioner who was bound hand and foot and left at the edge of a pond so that his eventual drowning could not be laid to any man's charge. Banbury says of the myal art, "Its mysteries and operations

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consist in the communication with spirits or 'deaths,'" the peculiar activity of the Myal Man being to find and free the "shadows" of the living which have been stolen by means of obeah and nailed to the trunk of a cottonwood tree; for unless such a shadow is released, its owner pines away and dies.

A Myal Man is called a "fore-eyed man" because he alone has the power to see where the shadow is nailed or the obeah buried. He has this power through a talisman which he has received from the spirits or "deaths," during the course of the myal dance. Originally this talisman was in the form of an amber bead; it may today be represented by a glass marble such as the Myal Man of Lacovia owned. Says White, "When you dance the Myal, if Death loves you and you deal with him, he will give you one . . . you must keep it nice—keep it clean in a little thread bag," and in taking it out to use, pour rum over it. A second talisman which Death presents in the dance is a bunch of herbs called "jiggey," probably the same as in Monk Lewis's description. The dancer goes off into the bush and returns with the herbs in his hand which Death has given him.

The first thing to do therefore in case of a mysterious illness which does not respond at once to common remedies, is to consult the Myal Man in order to find the stolen shadow. This located, the doctor and patient assemble at the tree, the patient dressed in white with a large handkerchief wound about his head and the myal people also wearing white cloths over their shoulders. They parade about the tree with singing and drumming and pelt it with eggs, fowl, and other offerings in order to persuade the duppies to give up the shadow. Finally, a white basin of water is held up, and as soon

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as the released soul falls into it, a cover is clapped over, and some one runs home with the captured soul and restores it to its owner by binding about his head a cloth dipped in the water. So valuable were the Myal Man's services in Banbury's day, that although a simple matter of obeah could be "pulled" for four shillings, six dollars was the price to "catch a shadow."

The Maroon Myal Man, James White, told me that not all cottonwood trees are "dealt with" in myalism, but only those particular trees which have been planted over a grave. Such trees are called "worship cotton trees" and may well be regarded as tombs of the dead. Jamaica Negroes fear any cottonwood and will not cut it without a propitiatory offering of rum. Banbury says they believe that at night the cotton trees move about and assemble together. According to Ellis, the West Coast Africans make offerings to an evil spirit inhabiting the cottonwood trees called Sasabonsum. An Irish woman who had interested herself in Negro superstitions assured me that myal itself was the spirit of this tree, but I am disposed to think that this idea is not the prevalent one in Jamaica today as is that of Sasabonsum among the Africans of the West Coast. The cult of the dead is strongly imposed upon the worship of the cottonwood, and the animistic idea of a tree spirit is less defined than that of a ghost of the dead harboring in its branches. Cotton trees in graveyards are particularly feared, and mice or lizards that live in their branches are regarded as duppies of the dead.

The Myal Man may go to the cottonwood tree therefore exactly as the Obeah Man goes to the graveyard. Parkes says that when a Myal Man sets a duppy, he goes alone to a cottonwood with an offering of rice,

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chicken, and rum, and cuts marks on the tree with his machete or pocketknife in the shape of circles or crosses which he alone can interpret; then he beats one stone upon another and sings "in an unknown tongue." Here the Myal Man has ceased to be a "doctor" in a beneficent sense and has begun to use the direct methods for soul-catching of his antagonist, the Obeah Man, but distinguished by a particular technic in which the spirit of the cottonwood tree plays a part.

Some myal practitioners, however, do not "deal with" cotton trees. Banbury says that in old days the myal dance used to be performed for the "river mother," accompanied by offerings of food. These are probably the worshipers who carry a "Fair Maid" in their baskets. Some Myal Men hold the dance today at a cottonwood tree, others in a graveyard, others at the home of the sick person they are trying to heal. They may prove the spirit possession by means of extraordinary feats of climbing. Said old Forbes, "The Myal Man and the Queen fly up on the house-top or into a tree—climb so you wouldn't believe a man could do that; anything to deceive the people."

When the songs and dance begin, the spirits always come, but only at night, and only by the initiated into the myal order can they actually be seen. "You must dash the rum," White says, "spirits love rum! The spirits will lead you up into a mango tree and show you everything; in sickness show you what kind of herbs to get for bath and tea to cure the sickness and where the obeah is buried." In White's words, the spirits are induced to "tend the sickness."

Elmira Barrows knew the myal people well. She had been a member of a band who held meetings in Port-

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land parish in a dimly lighted booth for the purpose of summoning spirits. They sang, danced, and clapped their hands, and when the spirits rode upon their shoulders they shook all over and cried, "Hol', me boy!"

But the true Myal Man, she intimated, does not "work" in a meeting. He dances, sings, and drums about a cotton tree:

He carries a sheppon [big covered pail] and the ghosts fall down from the tree and he catches them and brings them. He sees clear away. If the police is coming he will sit down and wait for him, invite him in and give him food and rum; but on his way out [to the road] his horse will fall and bruise him. The Myal man can bring evil to pass. Them is a wonderful people!

Old Fifee Bogle was one. He lived in St. Mary, at Woodside. He wore wheels in his ears.

Bogle was the man that caught Bomshee. Bomshee was an evil spirit that was with a girl like a besetting something. She would cry out sometimes as if some one were striking her, and she couldn't see something in front of her. If the rain was coming the evil spirit called Bomshee would pick up the clothes [spread outside to dry] and bring them in. He had another name as a man—call him Mr. Baker then he loved you! If you said, "Where is Bomshee?" he would take up rock stone and smash everything you got, but if you said, "Mr. Baker," oh, my! then he was well-pleased with you and would do you no harm in the yard. You might put a pot on the fire and if you lived near the pasture Bomshee would pick up dung and fill up the pot. If you cursed he would do worse.

Bogle caught Bomshee twelve o'clock out of a cotton tree. He stood by the tree and did all kinds of queer talk and beat the drum. Bomshee deh 'pon tree looking. Bogle sang—

De mon i ka sen seh. . .
Somet'ing deh a top 'tan' deh a look down 'pon me.

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Then Bomshee came down from the tree. Bogle caught him. Bogle was a wonderful man!

These are exactly the words Elmira Barrows used, although I have manipulated her tenses, and I echoed Elmira's murmur of admiration for the astute Bogle, than whom no psychoanalyst could have handled the case more effectively.

The crudest method of summoning duppies is to form a circle about the tree and each one beat the earth with a stone in rhythm to a song. This goes on in remote country districts today; it is practised at wakes, and any group of children will show how it is done. The Myal Man in the cockpits, however, claimed that two drums were required for the dance, a big drum called *bon* or *panya* played with sticks, and a gombay played with the fingers. These two instruments, each with its own beat, sustain the curious rhythm of the myal songs and are further supported by "shakeys," held in a hand of each dancer and consisting in a gourd fastened to the end of a stick and filled with the shot-like seed of the wild canna or with small stones. Such a rattle is often reported from Africa as an accompaniment of war or medicine dances.

As for the gombay, I think it is this instrument which is supposed to draw into itself the spirit or "death" of the myal dance. Puckett says that "Li Grand Zombi" was the mysterious power which "guarded and overshadowed" the voodoo worship of the serpent.[1] In Virginia, according to Puckett, "'Gombre-work' means the work of conjuring. It seems therefore to be equivalent to the Jamaican word obeah." Two of the three

[1]Newbell Niles Puckett, *Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro*. Chapel Hill, 1926.

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gombay drums I saw in St. Elizabeth were owned by Myal Men, and the third was in the possession of the Maroons, but White said he had made it. All were of the same pattern and quite different from Valentine's gombay at Port Antonio or from the gombay in Belisario's drawing in 1835, which looks like a box hung about the neck with a skin fastened over it; nor was Miss Roberts, who prints an excellent drawing from the Lacovia gombay now in the Natural History Museum of New York, able to trace the pattern to an African original. Yet all gombays alike are played with the fingers with the peculiar rhythm of the myal songs, and seem to be related to the practice of obeah.

This statement must be made with reservations in the case of Belisario's drawing. The first notice we have of the gombay in old writers is in connection with the mummings, parades, and dances which used to be celebrated during the Christmas holidays by the Negro slaves on the plantations and by the town Negroes, with a competitive splendor to which masters and mistresses lent their aid with contributions for the feast and the loan of plate and jewelry. During the three days' festival, companies of mummers and dancers went about the streets to collect money for the final feast. Bands of girls paraded, led by a "queen" and "ma'am," each band dressed alike in a particular color and carrying parasols by night as well as by day. In the early nineteenth century, when these parades reached their height, the "Reds" and the "Blues" were distinguished for their allegiance to English army or Scotch navy, and competition ran so high that a tussle was likely to follow a chance meeting. Companies of "actor boys" performed for money, called *Kookoo*, according to

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Belisario, from the chorus they sang imitating the sound of an empty stomach. Animal maskers paraded, disguised with the head of ox or horse. Most interesting of all, a masked dancer appeared wearing on his head a gayly decorated model of a houseboat and accompanied by musicians (one playing the gombay) and by dancing girls carrying rattles. This figure went by the name of John Canoe.

According to Sloane, the principal dancers at Christmas festivals in the old days used to "tie cows' tails to their rumps." The earliest mention we have of the John Canoe figure is in Long, who reports that very early a man wearing "a mask with boar's tusks and carrying a wooden sword, went from place to place shouting 'John Connu' accompanied by drunken women who refreshed him from time to time with anised water." In 1769 new masks appeared, and the Eboes, Papaws, and other tribes had on each plantation "their respective Connus, male and female, who were dressed in a very laughable style." The houseboat is reported much later and may be a pattern derived from Mohammedan tomb dances such as those reported by Westermarck from Morocco, or those of the elaborate Shiite Muharram festival like the so-called "Hussay," so elaborately celebrated by East Indian laborers on Jamaican estates today.

With emancipation came the decay of this great folk festival. The "Reds" and the "Blues" are today forgotten, although their rivalries still live in song. But in some remote districts traces still survive of the old mummings. The oxhead has been forbidden because of the fear it inspired, but I saw two excellent and quite terrible horsehead maskers who danced to

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XIV. THE JOHN CANOE DANCE

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the music of accompanying musicians. In one case these consisted in two drummers and a flutist (who piped delightfully) together with a musician who played a scraping instrument made of an animal's jawbone dried in the smoke until the teeth rattled, and played by drawing a stick across it. The old actor boys are represented by companies of masqueraders (also known as "John Canoes"), who pattern their costumes out of English fancy-dress catalogues and perform a monotonous pantomimic dance without words, in which king, queen, and prince seem to act as principals, just as they used to do in the old "doctor play" with a Shakesperian setting which two not aged men dictated to me in different localities from their memories of earlier days. And John Canoe companies led by a John Canoe dancer carrying a model of a house still survive in St. Elizabeth and St. Mary, and I am told also in the far western parishes.

In St. Elizabeth, although this is stoutly denied for other districts, the dance is definitely connected with obeah practices. White says that before "building" the house-shaped structure worn in the dance, a feast must be given consisting of goat's meat boiled without salt, together with plenty of rum. As the building progresses, other feasts are given. On the night before it is brought out in public, it is taken to the cemetery, and there the songs and dances are rehearsed in order to "catch the spirit of the dead," which henceforth accompanies the dancer until, after a few weeks of merriment during which performances are given for money at the great houses and at village crossroads, it is broken up entirely. For "as long as it stays in the house the spirit will follow it."

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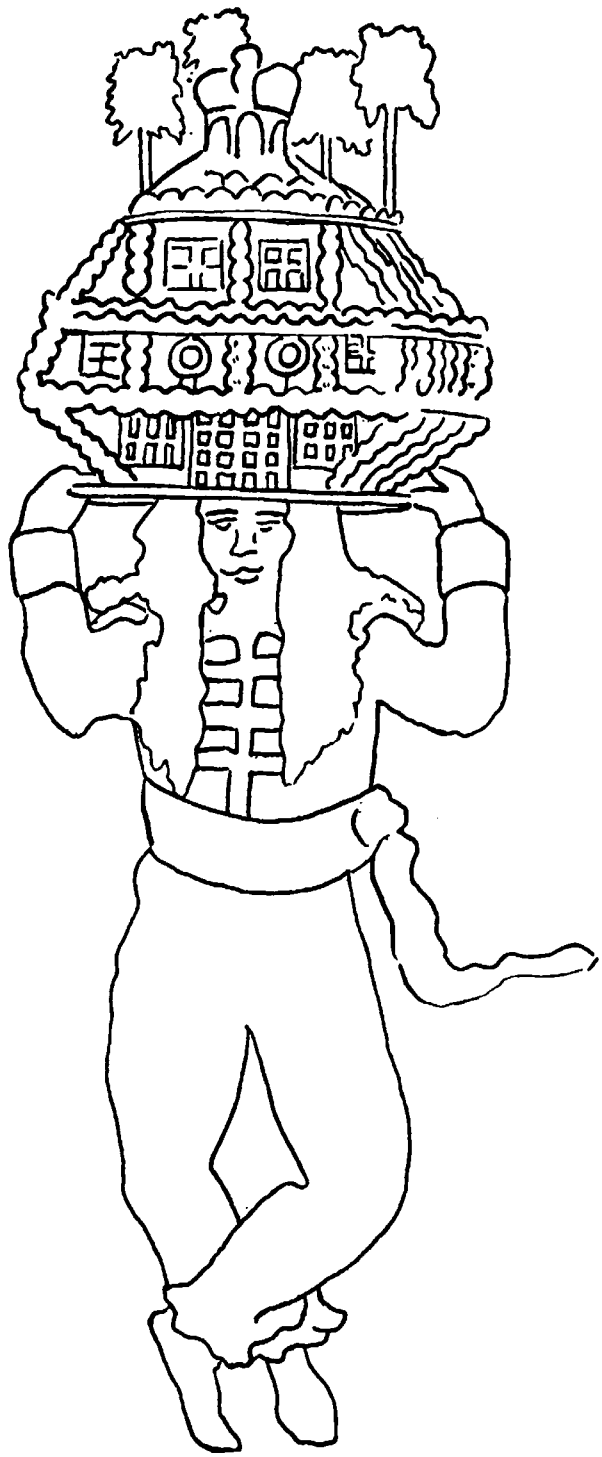

XV. A JOHN CANOE DANCER ABOUT 1837

A TRACING FROM BELISARIO'S *Sketches of Character*

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XVI. AN ACTOR BOY OF ABOUT 1837

A TRACING FROM BELISARIO'S *Sketches of Character*

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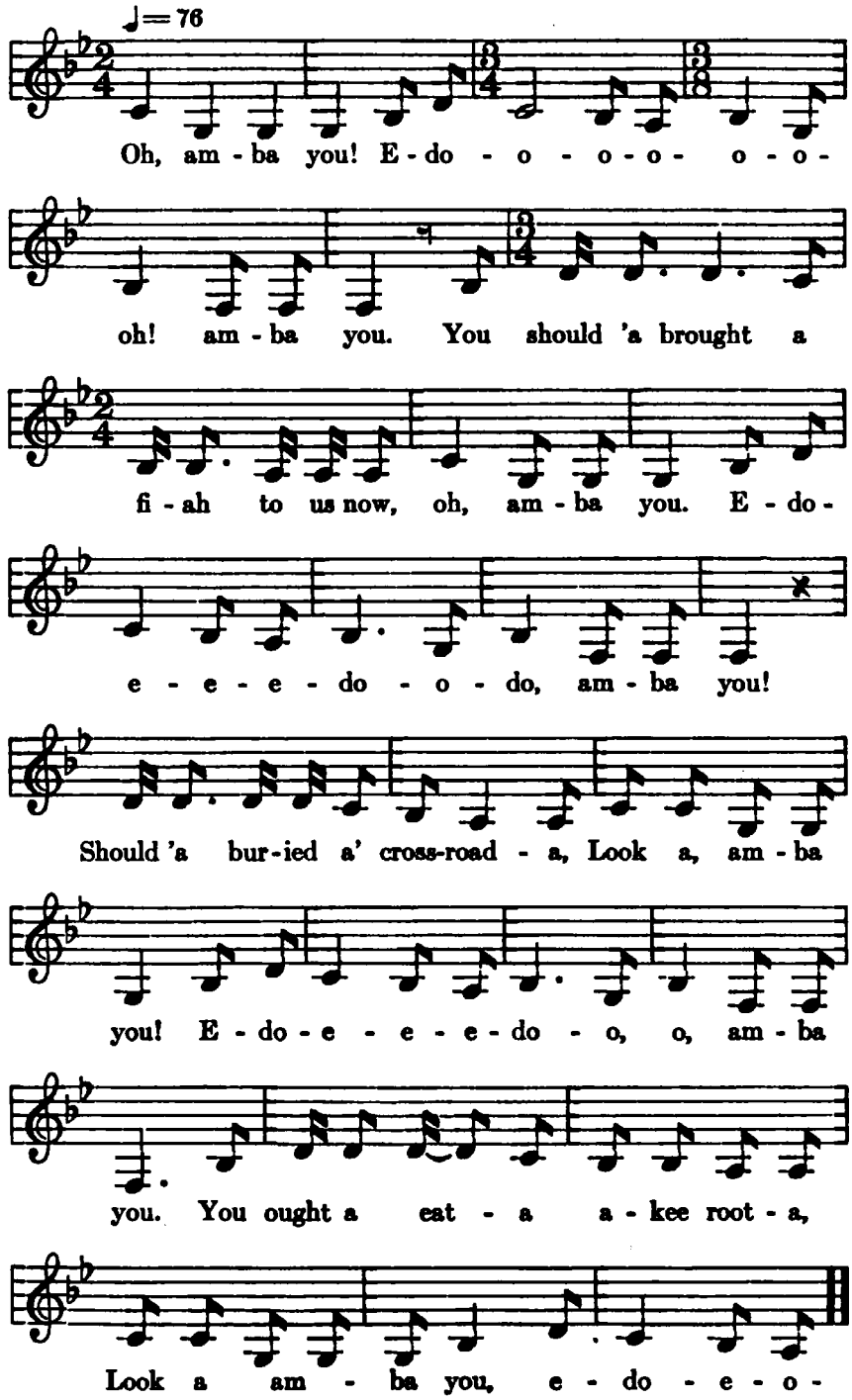
The Amber Song (as sung at Lacovia)



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Not only were the instruments which I saw used in the John Canoe performance identical with those accompanying the myal dance, but the songs also were equivalent, either in rhythm or in the very words themselves. Some, like "Death do [please] know me" and "Morning star deh come" and the lively "Oh, me ambah! . . . Pull i' me ambah, jiggey!" employ the very phraseology of the Myal Man's art. "Now the spirits come trooping, massah!" cried old Forbes, proud to exhibit the myal songs he knew. Others are in the form of personal satire. "Jane Barnes," who sponges on her neighbors for soap and blueing when she goes to the river to wash clothes; Bosey Cooper's woman, who courts another man because Bosey is too poor to buy her fine clothes; Lady Dixon, who changes her mind too often in choosing a suitor—all these girls are held up to public censure in satirical song. Some songs must be traditional, for they make use of terminology current in old slave days. Some are songs composed for the recent war. Others voice an individual despair. "Poor Ramsey," who finds himself the black sheep of his district, laments:

Buddy William, you see wha' country turn 'roun 'pon me, poor Ramsey? Den a wi' go 'way yere, fe nigger mout' ee. Fe you see how worl' an' country turn 'roun 'pon me, poor Ramsey.

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Udal

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Chapter X

THE REVIVALISTS

The myal people recognized the action of certain plants upon the human frame and built up an actual body of knowledge about herb medicines which was of real service in curing the sick; they also experimented with poison and did men to death by the use of deadly herbs. But far from ascribing these effects of health, sickness, or of death itself to natural causes, they taught the doctrine of a body of animate ghosts employed in the dangerous practice of shadow-catching, whom they alone had the skill to tame and conciliate. The ritual of conciliation they found in African tree worship. They employed dance and song, also of African pattern, and exhibited such fetish objects as the amber and jiggey as instruments of intercommunication with the spirit world. Their secrets were preserved by means of an oath drunk in blood and the use of unknown tongues which only the initiated had the power to interpret. They made use of prophecy and the phenomena of hysteria to produce the phantasy of superhuman possession. In all these ritual ways, the myal people corresponded exactly with the West African medicine men and their secret societies as described by Ellis, Miss Kingsley, and others. The methods familiar to the Obeah Men of today in Jamaica—the circles and crosses they draw, the obeah they "plant" or "pull," the "guards" they prepare, the exorcism of the ghost at the grave— all these are part and parcel of the myal practice.

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But another supernatural element besides that taught by West African religion has entered into the obeah practices as they persist today, and that is the teaching of Christianity. The second religious sect which has arisen for the ostensible purpose of defeating the charms of the Obeah Men by the exercise of more potent supernatural forces is that of the so-called Revivalists. Banbury says that about 1842 a wave of myalism swept St. James, Westmoreland, and Hanover. Beginning at Newman Hall, in Saint James parish, "'Angel men' believing the end of the world was coming, gathered together to pull all the obeahs and catch the shadows from the cotton trees. They practiced abstinence and sang songs with religious phraseology." Among the songs they sang was also the "Amba do know me, oh!" of myal practitioners.

The Revivalists are said to date from the great revival of 1860, under the influence of the religious enthusiasm of that period, but they appear in reality a great deal earlier, and I see no reason to doubt that they were directly influenced by the myal "angels," led by Christian enthusiasts who had received their inspiration in the free churches. Long, in 1774, observes that the Negroes are more susceptible to the religious instruction of such systems as have "abundance of zest and gesticulation," and Williams in his "Tour" makes himself merry at the expense of a Negro ranter with more zeal than wisdom who joined his company. On the whole the English planters in Jamaica did not teach their slaves formal religion. Only when, during uprisings of the blacks, a leader claimed obeah power, did they see to it that Christian rites should secure to their own men a "stronger obeah"

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XVII. A REVIVALIST GATHERING IN WESTMORELAND

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than the rioters possessed. Phillippo says that in 1800 there were only twenty churches on the island. He writes that "at the conclusion of the war with America, some [Negroes] who had been imported from that continent, mysteriously blending together important truths and extravagant puerilities, assumed the office of teachers and preachers, disseminating far and wide their pernicious follies," and he goes on to describe some of these "puerilities." "Dreams and visions constituted fundamental articles of their creed. Some supernatural revelations were regarded as indispensable to qualify for admission to the full privileges of their community. Candidates were required indeed to dream a certain number of dreams before they were received to membership, the subjects of which were given them by their teacher." Events described in the Bible story they imitated literally; some persons wandered in search of the Savior "professedly after the manner of John the Baptist"; at Christmas time they went out into the bush in groups "to see the angels"; they anointed their sick with oil. It was natural for them to associate with the objects used in Christian religion a sense of the supernatural quite apart from their actual uses; hence a preacher always held a Bible, although he might hold it upside down; and we have seen how the obeah people use a Bible today, much as the Myal Men employ the amber, as a kind of fetish for discovering villainy. The Revivalists are the direct descendants of such objective interpreters of Christian teaching as Phillippo describes, organized to strive, not against sin, but against the obeah power of their rivals through their own gift of communication with the spirit world.

There is an allusion in Rampini in 1873 to "singing

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meetings" held during revivals in "leafy booths" at night, and De Lisser describes very fully a Revivalist meeting held in a back street in Kingston a good many years ago. Today, he thinks, the influence of the Revivalists is on the wane. But their bands are still common enough in remote districts. They march and drum and sing dressed in white, and hold meetings at night, sometimes in a covered booth or, perhaps in imitation of the Salvation Army, in some open spot on the countryside. They declare war against obeah and claim the power to see and cast out duppies. Those who wear white are the "workers" at the meeting, that is, they are persons who have received a vision and are consequently endowed with "fore sight." They are ready to put themselves into a hypnoidal condition to receive communications from the spirits whom they worship which will enable them to administer the proper herbs in cases of sickness or to discover where obeah is buried for anyone. The women who thus become active Revivalists are called mammies, the men, soldiers. They are led by a "captain" and a principal mammy, often called shepherd and shepherdess, who in turn may be directed by a head captain and mammy for a large district.

These meetings go on hour by hour until late into the night. A Scotch clergyman told me that he once followed the sound of the drum to such a meeting and found two or three of the women quite insensible and foaming at the mouth. He had to strike them smartly to get them out of the hypnoidal condition into which their emotion had thrown them. It is said that the excitement aroused at these meetings works itself off in sex indulgence, but I do not know any facts about this.

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Certainly the insane asylum harbors a good many cases of ex-converts suffering from religious mania. A white physician of long acquaintance with the Negro temperament says that the emotional instability of the Negroes, in spite of an impassive exterior which deceives the observer into praising their self-control, would be almost unbelievable to an Anglo-Saxon.

In Lacovia, St. Elizabeth, I visited a Revivalist meeting held in a permanent booth set up in a yard some distance back from the main street of the village. The booth was well lighted by lanterns; there were a few chairs and benches, and at the side where the leaders were grouped stood a table covered with a white cloth on which lay a Bible, a glass of water, and a bunch of red and white roses. The leader was a soldierly-looking colored man named Granville, dressed in the costume of an officer of the Salvation Army except that he wore a white turban. Near him stood Margaret Williston, the leading mammy, a stout handsome woman of thirty-five, wearing a large white turban and a bib-apron across which was drawn a green shoulder sash marked with the figures 66 on the front. She carried upright in her hand a rod of supplejack twisted into a loop at the end much like the shepherd's crook borne in front of the officiating clergyman in the English church—or was it the twist of Ob, the coiled snake? Only a few other persons present wore the turban and carried the rod. The exercises differed in no way from those of an ordinary prayer meeting in a free congregation; that is, there were singing and prayer and some words of exhortation. But the manner of the singing was noticeable. A Moody and Sankey tune was begun, accompanied by the beat of the drum; after a bit it fell into

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a dizzying repetition of set phrases over and over again while the audience and the workers rocked their bodies in time to its rhythm. This was done by raising first one foot and then the other, at the same time lifting the arms and letting the body sway into line with the planted foot. Those who carried rods swayed them up and down with the rocking motion. Once Margaret Williston began to breathe with a short sharp intake that sounded like the bark of a dog, an exercise which is called "trooping" and which, if persisted in, will produce in the worker that semiconscious condition so favorable to the communications of spirits, and hence so coveted at a really successful Revivalist meeting. Margaret, however, on this occasion fully recovered herself and soon led in prayer. At another time she bowed halfway to the ground, and once she revolved completely around. Such movements are considered by no means indecorous but are rather prescribed indications of fullness of spirit. There was complete orderliness at the meeting, as at all Negro gatherings which I have visited. The very melodious and pleading voice with which the Revivalist prayers and exhortations were uttered and the beauty of the biblical phrases of which they were composed, as if poured out from a full receptacle in a stream of intercession, rendered them dignified and moving. I never heard at any of these popular meetings those absurdities of invocation which are so often quoted from our own Negro pulpits. Perhaps I was merely fortunate, or perhaps familiarity with the ritual of the established church—for most Revivalists are good church members—has established a standard for the outpouring of the spirit in Jamaica. For evidently the gift for prayer, like the trooping and

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the bowing, has a direct value in establishing a claim to inspiration; the tongue-tied man could hardly be of use in the serious business of driving duppies.

Margaret seemed pleased to give me the story of her religious experience, which she repeated in a rapid singsong as if she were accustomed to its recital in a general meeting. In writing it down I do not alter her words, although sometimes the order is changed because some of the facts came out in answer to questions.

I was not a great student. I left school in the first book. And after that I got spiritual at twenty-five. The Mammy was from Westmoreland. When there was shouting, I felt that I was almost shut out of the gate of heaven and I closed my eyes and I said, "Lord, if it is thy wish that I be separated, let it be thy will." And I dreamt that I saw an angel, and he bids me get a Bible and a Sankey and a rod with a double fold and a lantern which I'm to light on my journey.

I didn't know to pray until I got the Spirit, and the Spirit teaches me to pray and sends me on the highways and the hedges to bid others to come and to tell what a sweet Savior I found. Jesus is Savior in need and Savior indeed. There is not a friend like the loving Savior.

The angel which I saw had a bunch of flowers in his hand, white for peace. He bid me get a large turban. He bid me get one larger, but I can't afford it—to make it five yards. He bid me make an apron in white. The sash of green with the number 66 means your shout. You stamp sixty-six times with your foot. Some have a sash of other colors, some a sash without apron. All who carry the wand have a sash, but not all wear the apron. The turban is red or white. The red turban means that you don't feel to work.

Sometimes [at the meetings] as I am in the Spirit, the Bible drops and falls open at a chapter, and I read and read. I feel to pray, and there isn't any chance to pray at the time, and I

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bow to squeeze the prayer-key. When you are in the spirit, you feel that the world is going around and you turn without you want to turn. When the Spirit overflows within you, you have to shout and shout and shout. You have to shout with joy. When you feel that you can't shout with your voice any more—feel as if it were shut down and locked—then you cease shouting.

Sometimes when a brother or sister is going to depart [die] I feel a fullness within me, I have to speak up, I don't get any ease. But I don't know who it is. If I had the chance to know who the person was, I would go and kneel and make him prepared.

Mrs. Williston, although the principal mammy of this congregation, had by no means reached the height of Revivalist aspiration. She had attained the gift of prophecy but not that of healing. And she admitted subordination to the leading mammy of that district who lived in Manchester.

Only one other revival meeting have I observed personally, and this was by accident when a band from the district called Retirement, in the cockpit country, happened to come together at a turn of the road just below the house where I was staying. As we sat in the dark on the upper porch the worshipers were entirely unaware of our presence. A few lanterns cast too dim a light for us to see anything, but we could plainly hear the words of the songs and even those of the prayers and exhortations, and the "trooping" sound was almost continuous.

Afterwards the leader of the meeting gave me the story of the visions by which he passed from conviction to conversion and by virtue of which he came to be the recognized captain of the band, a post which he was obliged to share with an associate "because he

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owns the drum." He explained that some converts of the Salvation Army join these bands because there is no regular organization of the Army except in Kingston and Spanish Town, but they have not the same power as the true Revivalists. To the true Revivalist, "the Lord gives power to see what is going to happen"; to some few he gives further the "power of healing." He himself had only the first power, that of prophecy: "I know when a person is going to die in a district; I don't tell the person himself, but the family; the person always dies when the word comes."

It is impossible not to observe how large a part such "dreams" as Phillippo describes still play in the making of a Revivalist, and this must often be due to the sanction of the prophetic Scriptures. Just as the visions of the prophets have entered into our own Negro religious minstrelsy, so they have been absorbed into the religious experience of the Jamaica Revivalist. The "Isaiahs" live at the settlement called Try-see, situated on a hilltop eight miles out of Browns Town in St. Ann, and are largely composed of the descendants of one of those early Revivalists of whose literal imitations of Bible characters Phillippo complains. Edward Alexander, the first Isaiah, was converted "just after emancipation" and had predicted the revival of 1860. His son and successor, James, himself now an old man, believed implicitly that he also was inspired by the prophet Isaiah. In early days, I was told, the Isaiahs worshiped in the open with a stone as an altar, where they sacrificed goats (no doubt to the ghost of the prophet), but they were taken in hand by the Baptist minister of Browns Town and have now a tasteful church of English pattern and a well-kept churchyard

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where stand the original stones of the old Isaiah worship; and the conduct of their services, although the turbans and crooked rods of the leading members and the rocking and reiteration in the singing suggested Revivalist methods, proceeded with great decorum. Their evangelistic meetings in the neighboring countryside are always conducted by day. In the story of his experience, Alexander laid claim to prophetic power and to the knowledge of healing. He said that it was told him "in the spirit" when one was to die, and "the spirit" also revealed what medicine he should use for healing. The story of his call as told in his own words is as follows:

It is exactly forty-one years since I was converted. I was called by the spirit of God. As I was called, I was down on my back in one place in the room eleven months. I couldn't come out at all, only lying in one place, the spirit taken away from me and I learning the mystery of God.

Then one day I got Psalms CXVI. Then I rose and came outside the door and saw my two little boys there, and I stayed from eight in the morning until four o'clock. After that I went back to my bed and lay down. And after I lay down, in the night, I was taken away in the spirit to Browns Town. I didn't walk 'pon the earth; I flew in the air to Browns Town, I and the Master in the spirit. And when I got to Browns Town, I saw the Master. And he had a little book, and he spread it upon the earth, and I couldn't see. And he read out of it, "Parson Clark, your time is up on earth." And I saw a beautiful vessel waiting for him. And then he read and he read out of that book. I couldn't understand, and he said, "No, indeed, for it is Latin and parable; but I will speak plain that you may understand." And when he spoke, I saw the foundation of the house move off. And he said to me, "It is finished with Parson Clark." And the foundation of Browns Town groaned.

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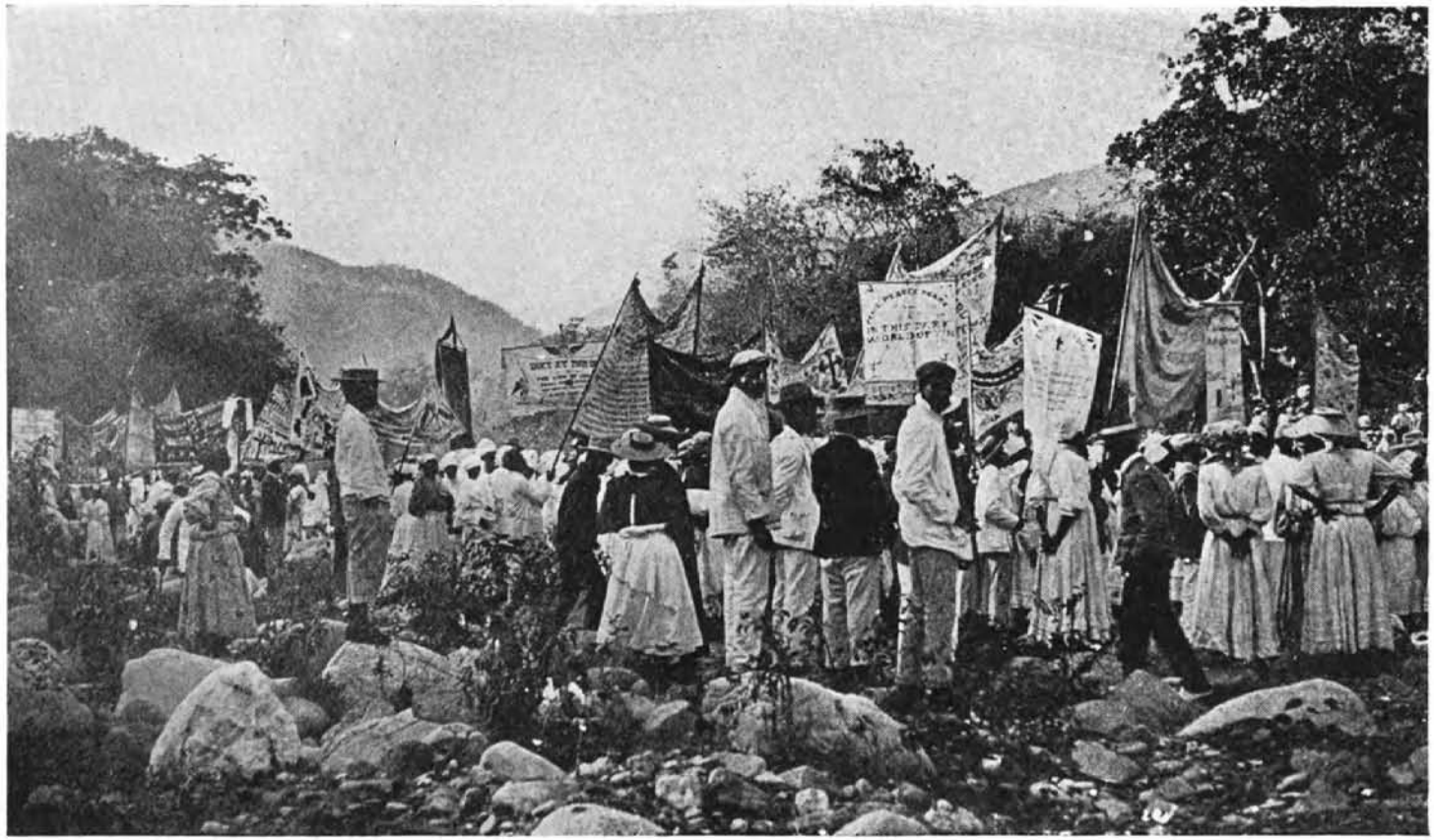

XVIII. THE PROCESSION TO THE HEALING STREAM OF AUGUST TOWN

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And when we rose, he brought me to the church in Try-see and we didn't come 'pon the earth. And we saw a number of children like sheep. And he said, "Now take charge of these sheep and mind them for me." And a number of these children lay down in one place, and some were away off. And I said, "Some of these sheep are very trespass." And he said, "You desire to bind these trespass sheep with cords, and the cords are the word of God." And I said, "Sir, when it becomes dark, how shall I see to mind those sheep from the Lion and the Wolf—from the Devil and Satan?" And he burst out with a great light which passed to the four corners of the world. Then the Master departed and I saw him no more.

In comparing many such accounts it is striking to see how often the gift of healing claimed by the Revivalist is associated with the flowing of water. The "healing stream" is the literal source of health to the sick, and many individuals who have attained reputation as leaders of Revivalist bands have made much of the healing waters of some stream or spring in the neighborhood. I am told that Mother Knott, who started her Revivalist work at Corn Hill, St. Mary, about thirty years ago, when she established herself at Black Hill in Portland, had water brought from a little stream at Corn Hill to fill the tank where she practised healing.

It was about the idea of baptism in the healing stream of the Mona River that the most remarkable of these prophetic groups in Jamaica, the cult called Bedwardite, centered. Bedward was born in 1859 and spent his youth on the Mona estate, where he "committed every sin but that of murder," but was nevertheless known as a good workman. He traveled to Colon, there received his vision, and returned to Jamaica, where he was appointed successor to the prophet of August

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Town, a man named Woods who had come from America, made his home in a stone hole, and obtained a following through the conviction he had aroused of his prophetic powers. Bedward at the beginning of his public ministry in August Town dispensed the healing water to two hundred people, of whom, says his biographer, only seven had the faith to take it as "medicine," and these seven were instantly cured. In 1894 the cornerstone was laid at August Town of the "Jamaica Baptist Free Church," an attractive building of stone, which became the established home of "Bedwardism," with "camps" for affiliated congregations in other parts of the island. Bedward was ordained Bishop of this church with the title of Shepherd, and there were, besides, two pastors, twenty-four elders, and seventy-two evangelists, after the pattern of the Apostolic church, as well as "station guards" and "Mothers," after the Revivalist pattern.

It was on the morning of December 26, 1920, that I visited Bedward at August Town. This was a critical time for the Bedwardists because their leader had predicted his own ascension into heaven on the last day of December of that very year, the destruction of the whites, and the reign of Bedwardism upon earth. The faithful were, I think, expected to accompany their leader into heaven, for they were all selling or giving away their property and gathering in response to his call into August Town. In Kingston the wildest rumors were afloat. Even the intelligent whites believed that something out of the ordinary was about to happen; they, too, were hypnotized by the man's enormous conviction. Many thought he would steal away out of the country with the wealth he had won from the

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XIX. CHURCH AND COTTAGE AT AUGUST TOWN

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credulous; some feared a Negro uprising. Even the educated colored people were not without interest; one wistfully spoke of another Christmas day and of another prophet who was to the wise foolishness but whom the common people had heard gladly. The Negro entertainer on the Flamstead estate on Christmas day, enumerating the marked events of his life, said to me, "I remember the St. Thomas rebellion [in 1865] and the revival in 1860. It was taken up by the whole world. Now today there is Bedward." The Kingston *Gleaner* wrote under large headlines:

> Yesterday there was great excitement at the Railway. Every train brought in a large number of people, men, women and children all bound for August Town. But they come from Colon as well, on a steamer travelling across seas to see their 'Lord of August Town' ascend. In King Street all tram-cars travelling to Hope Gardens were besieged by men, women and children, some infants in arms, others hardly able to help themselves, but they were all bundling in with their clothes, baskets and fowls. All have sold out to come up and see the Lord and Master do the disappearing trick. There are still more to come.

Bedward had at this time changed his title from that of Shepherd and announced himself the very incarnation of Christ. He was to be addressed as "Lord." He pressed this point with a touch of asperity: "I myself am Jesus Christ; I was crucified," he insisted. In conversation, his grievance against the whites came out. Several times he had requested that his own pastors be licensed to perform the marriage ceremony in order that the fees should come into the hands of his own church. This privilege had at last been definitely denied him, and he had accordingly decided to bring the world to an end. He showed me his black hands and told me

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how in the new heaven and the new earth they were to be as white as my own. He was a large fine-looking Negro with the rapt brightness on his face of a visionary clouded by the peevishness of accustomed tyranny. I looked into his face in vain for any trace of an impostor.

All was gently, even reasonably spoken except for that moment of pettishness about his identity with the Lord. He spoke like a man who says a thing over until the repetition itself fastens conviction upon him. Far from being, as the scoffers say, a scheming pretender battening upon the credulity of his followers, he was himself the most duped among them. He was a dreamer, now so far gone in senility—he must have been about sixty-two years of age—as to have dreamed the impossible.

He spoke with great simplicity of the symbolism of his church rites—the candle as a symbol of the Trinity, the fast days for the purification of the soul in the spiritual life as of clothes in the secular. He said, "The tallow is like God; the wick within the tallow is like Christ in the bosom of the father; the flame is the Holy Ghost who came from the Father and the Son." And of the fasts, "A day for washing, a day for drying and starching, a day for ironing; so the heart is made clean by the fasts."

That this view of Bedward is correct was later proved by the events of the fateful thirty-first. He must have done absurd things those last days. It is said that he had a woman tied to a tree all day learning to fly and reproached her that her faith was after all insufficient. On the morning of the day predicted for the ascent, he took a chair and stationed himself in the yard in full

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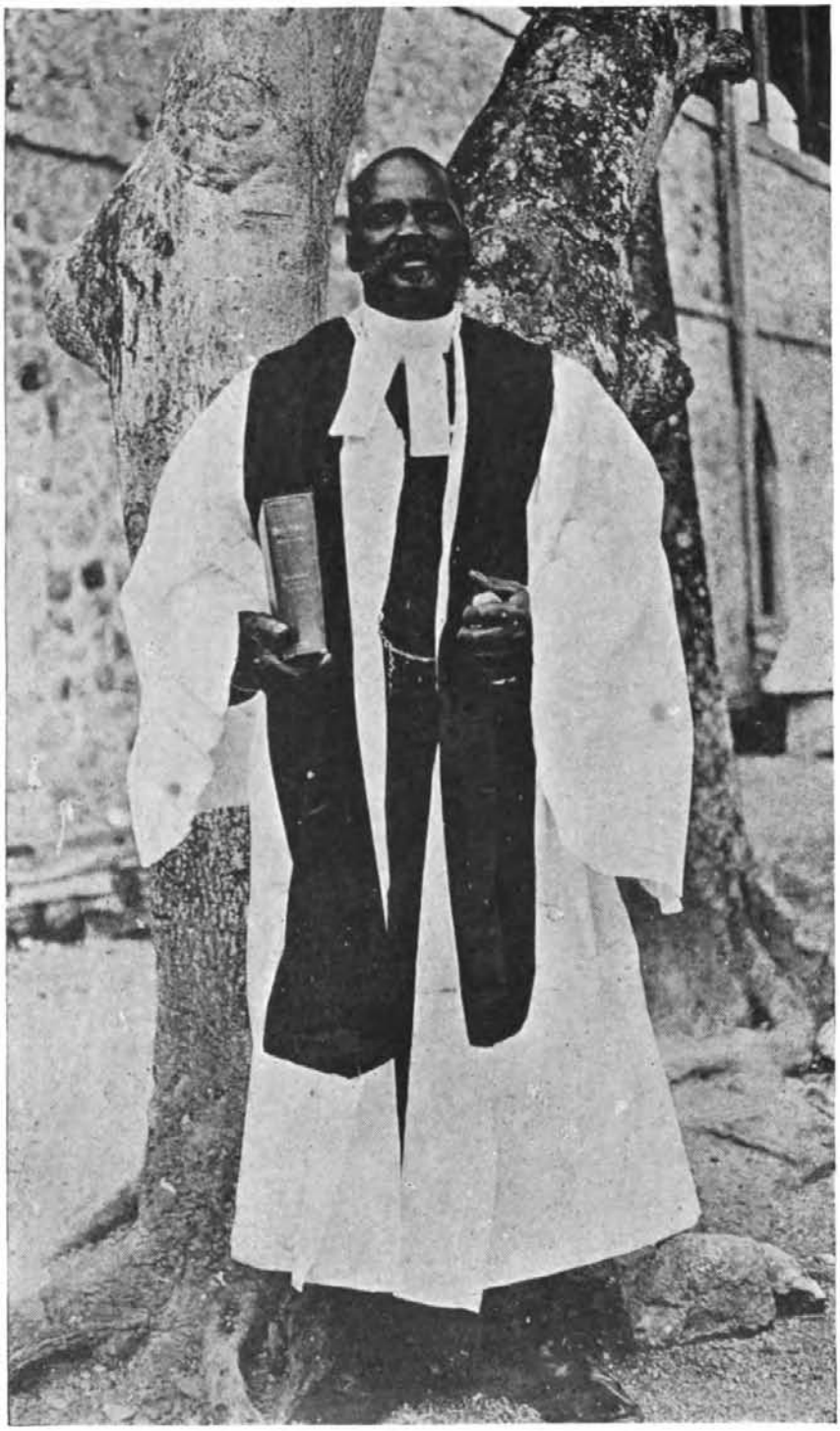

XX. BEDWARD, THE SHEPHERD OF AUGUST TOWN

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view of his followers, who grouped about him dressed in their fast-day clothes of white. As the hours passed and nothing happened, he told them that the event had been postponed. From time to time he set another date. Still many remained faithful. In May he determined to make a public demonstration of his claims. On the march into Kingston, the government seized the opportunity to arrest the leaders for vagrancy, consign Bedward to the insane asylum, and disperse the prophet's following.

In some respects even more remarkable than the Bedward movement in Jamaica, although far less spectacular, is the work of the Revivalist healer known as Mammy Forbes, who keeps a balm-yard in the dry savannah above Alligator Pond (between Manchester and St. Elizabeth) and also practises at regular times near Lacovia. Falconer, who condemns all Revivalists as persons who deceive the people for the sake of making money, made an exception of Mammy Forbes; she did much good with her knowledge of healing herbs, he thought, and "never tells them to do anything bad." Within a fenced enclosure not far from her own home is erected a neat wooden chapel, together with a long building where the worshipers gather to break their fast, and one or two outbuildings. The yard in front of the chapel is set with poles bearing banners of white cloth printed with scripture texts. Attached to the right of the chapel a close board fence with an ornately arched gate, cut to resemble angel wings, encloses a space about the size of a room, and this is cleared to bedrock, and washed, like the fence itself, a dazzling white. Here a well is to burst forth, according to a vis-

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ion. "You will dig a well?" I asked. "No, it is to burst out of itself."

My visit was made upon one of the four days of the week when Mammy Forbes holds service in the chapel. It was about ten in the morning, and the crowd of worshipers already gathered made room for us at the end of a bench facing the altar. The interior resembled an English chapel in miniature, very tasteful in effect, with natural woodwork rubbed smooth and left unpainted. Across the front of the altar stretched a wooden screen, facing which sat a bevy of girls dressed in white and wearing white turbans. A dignified looking middle-aged man in white gown and turban stood at the left to conduct the singing. This was Mammy Forbes's husband. For the moment Mammy herself was hidden from me by the interposition of a beam, but gradually I became aware of a large, dark, benignant face under a spreading white turban trimmed with natural white flowers, and of an ample bust and shoulders clothed in white, as she bent above us from the center of the raised wooden screen. The songs were from Moody and Sankey, but there was no drumming or rocking, nor was there anything in the service that differed much from our own. The Mammy made, in fact, a very good little talk indeed of a simple kind and prayed fervently. At the end of the service she and the girls formed a procession and sprinkled the aisles of the church and the spring enclosure, and then everybody flocked out into the yard. This sprinkling was the only indication of "duppy driving" visible in the service, but there were a number of smooth canes thrust into the rafters within hand-reach which Falconer says are employed to beat any person who comes to the Mammy with an

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XXI. A PROCESSION OF "MAMMIES" AT MAMMY FORBES' BALM-YARD

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evil spirit. I suppose the banners bearing Bible texts are also for the entanglement of the duppy; at least they were so used by another Manchester Revivalist with whose methods Falconer was familiar.

This man Bennet had practised first at Leeds but was then at Newton, according to Falconer, who once actually saw Bennet catch a duppy—one David Chadwick, a dead boatman from Lacovia. It seems that David "was looking out for some one and he came underneath the banner and couldn't get out again, and Bennet caught him and shut him up in his Bible and talked with him." I transcribe the exact words in which Falconer described Bennet's methods:

Bennet was a Revivalist. He could cure plenty of people in great sickness and speak plenty of unknown tongues. When anyone goes to him who he says has a duppy, he gets into great power, jumps and speaks tongues. And he keeps meeting every morning at five o'clock, says when he beats the drum it will spoil any obeah that is coming. He gets a piece of calico and writes out texts from the Bible upon them and hangs them up like banners, and when anyone comes to him that has an evil spirit he dances from banner to banner, says he brings the duppy under the right banner. He has the Bible in one hand and a rod and a small flag in the other. As he passes under the right banner, he shuts the Bible and says he shuts up the duppy into the Bible. He talks with the duppy now, hears what he says and tells him his name. Takes him to the bath now and bathes him; the soldiers bathe him, laying the Bible upon his head. Meanwhile the patient repeats the psalm after the leader until he is done bathing.

If an evil person should come who works obeah to kill people and harm animals and so on, then Bennet gets into the power and talks unknown tongues and calls all the soldiers, and they dance round the person and everyone gives

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him a blow with his rod. When that is done, they get a glass and fill it and make him drop two and sixpence into it. Bennet tastes the water and makes him taste it too. And he makes him sit down at the table and open the Bible with the flag and the rod in his hand, and everyone that he has harmed gives him a blow. Then he tries the case for two and sixpence. When he is done, he tells him plainly in the whole meeting what he has done to this one and that one. He must not leave the meeting until the end, and the last thing he must repeat after Bennet "The Lord is my Shepherd."

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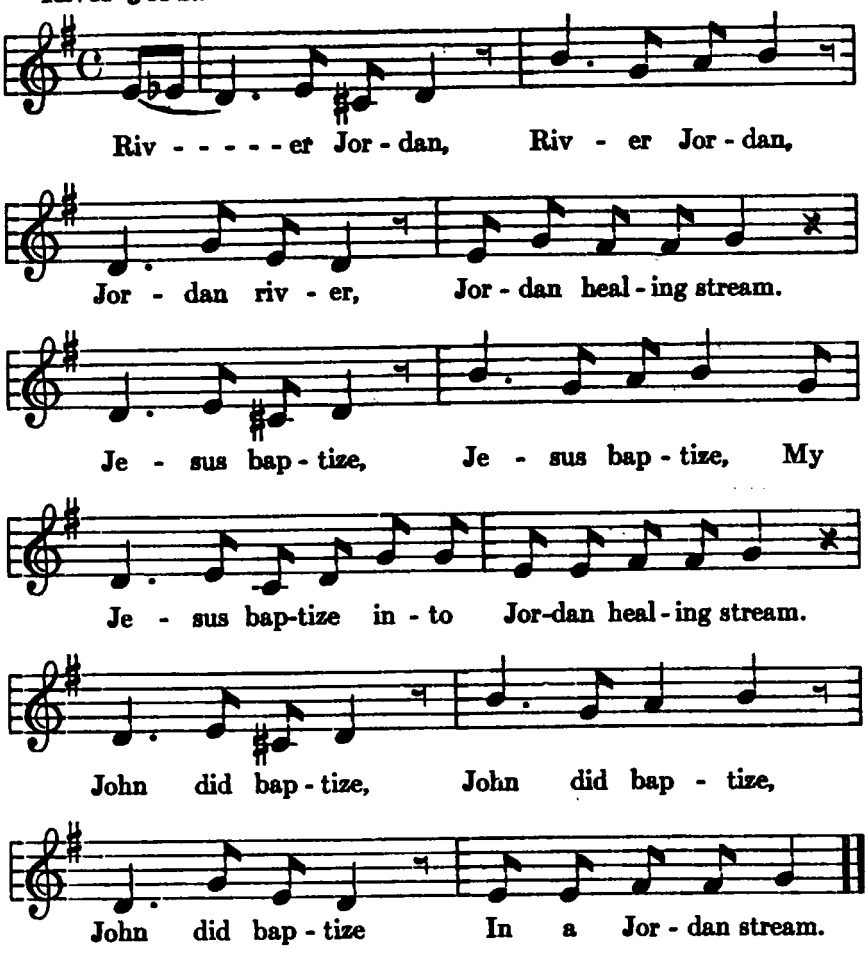
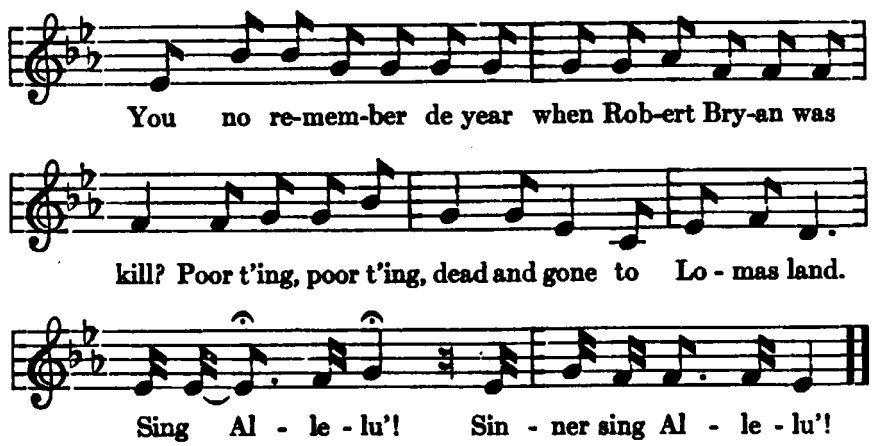
(Transcribed by E. Harold Geer from phonographic records)

River Jordan



Lomas Land



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Chapter XI

THE PUKKUMERIANS

Revivalist and Obeah Man unite in the particular religious cult known as the Pukkumerian. The name is used in derision, say the followers of this cult; for they are really Revivalists like all the rest. "Pick-them-here" I venture to suggest as the etymology of the appellation; that is, "Dig here for the buried obeah," because of the claim this cult makes to prophetic powers in detecting buried obeah.

In the banana-growing country and in the remote districts of the very wild and broken parish of St. Mary, right back through the hills of St. Catherine, the people are more backward than in the more open parishes of the south, where wide savannahs and high plateaus were early cleared and occupied by the whites, and where there has hence been more contact between black and white. It is in this wild back country given over to the real "people of the bush" that the Pukkumerians have their home.

The Pukkumerian leaders are called "governors" or "shepherds." Each shepherd has attached to himself a good-looking young woman (not his wife) who acts as his confederate under the name of "governess" or sometimes "shepherdess." The two have a secret code of speech which the spirits are supposed to speak when they appear at a meeting, the words spoken in frenzy by one being interpreted by the other according to the formula. One couple I visited used the letters of the alphabet, and this was "a mystery which God

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does not give away"; another spoke something which might have been a Spanish jargon; the Maroons of course use the Kromanti in the same way. All these secret languages take their authority directly from the "unknown tongues" of Pentecost.

The Pukkumerians hold their meetings near a graveyard, and it is to the ghosts of their own membership that they appeal when spirits are summoned to a meeting. The summoning of the ghosts may happen at an open or at a closed meeting according to the object for which they are called; the mode of summoning is the same in either case. If a "grudge meeting" is called, that is, "if you want something to happen to someone," only the "working officers" of the band attend. "They jump and dance and sing and talk in a secret language because the spirits do not talk our language." If a member has died, his shadow may be summoned for the errand of mischief. One of the dancers falls down as if dead and the spirit talks to him. He gets up and tells what the spirit has said, then he goes by a private way to the graveyard and pays the dead: "Whatever the dead asks for, that he is paid." In an open meeting, "when the ghost comes they stretch out as if dead and the ghost talks to them"; nobody hears but the person in the trance. After the ghost leaves he comes out of the trance and tells everything the ghost says. Perhaps the ghost may say that something is buried for a person. The ghost shows where it is buried. "If something is buried for a person it can't stay, for the good spirits show it." Both bad and good spirits come together to a meeting; both may be living together, "for as a man is in life so is his spirit in death."

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A "good" meeting is one characterized by the presence of spirits. When no one gets sufficiently worked up to bring spirits to the meeting the gathering is considered something of a failure and the presence in the group suspected of someone who prevents them from "working." "If someone carries a cut lime in his pocket the ghosts can't work." Or someone may get a "hog-meat string [a kind of withe], tie knots in it, call the shepherd's and governess's names, and put it down on the ground or shove it into his pocket; then the spirits can't work." In this case, the good spirits reveal the trick, and if the man who is disturbing the meeting has the temerity to remain, the leaders beat him or "run him out of the meeting"; if he has gone away, they remove the charm, "sprinkle the place with water and trample it down."

It is possible that the turban is differently knotted and the color different and that the dance itself varies when the dances for the grudge meeting are held, but I did not get definite information on this point or on the question whether different songs are sung at the grudge meeting, although I think this may be the case. My first-hand observations were too limited to speak with assurance of this matter.

I first heard of the Pukkumerians in Browns Town, where bands had been known to appear from time to time, but the heart of their activities was reported to be in the neighborhood of Richmond, St. Mary, a little village on the railroad almost entirely settled by colored people, although the valuable estates in the district are owned and cultivated by the whites. Wilfrid acted as my guide to the yard of Mr. Mighty, one of the younger workers in the district but "stronger"

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than most, according to his own testimony. We turned off the main road at Cane Heap and followed a muddy footpath between a succession of unfenced yards until we came to the brink of an abrupt valley. Mighty's house stood in the center of the lot. On a level plot just below the house was erected a rectangular booth, of which the frame alone was then standing; on another occasion I saw it covered with cocoanut boughs in preparation for a meeting. Above the house on a higher rise Wilfrid pointed out to me the graveyard, planted with crotons. Mighty himself had gone across the valley to help with the laying out of a man who had just died in the district, and when he appeared he was evidently laboring under strong excitement, not, I think, induced by alcohol. For a moment I was myself terrified by his peremptory manner and absorbed self-control. He was a powerful-looking man of forty with a black face and heavy jaw, and the governess was a very good-looking girl with dignified carriage.

Mighty did not object to talking about himself, for such testimony is one of the regular exercises of an experience meeting. His occupation was that of a cultivator. At the age of eighteen he had got the spirit from God after attending an evening meeting. That night in his sleep he said, "I was enjoying myself with the hymns and singing and shouting with my family around me." From that time he had attached himself to the Revivalists although it was only four years ago that he became a shepherd. He taught and preached "in the spirit." "I feel to dance and sing," he said, "but I got a mind and I use my knowledge of weeds," and he went on to tell how in a dream he had seen a white man beckon to him across a valley, and although someone

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held him back he had come across and stood beside him. I take it that he referred, in his excited condition, to the circumstance of my visit. I think the man's emotional nature had been so wrought upon by the religious orgies to which he had accustomed himself that he really was sincere in his claim to a special inspiration, and that he played no tricks but merely imitated the practices of other Pukkumerians, his own confused mind transferring natural experiences into supernatural, just as his own lively emotion carried him out of himself in dance and song. Wilfrid had a very lively respect for this man's gifts of divination but thought it must be the devil who inspired him. He had once made a remarkable prophecy about the drowning of a horse and a mule, which happened afterwards just as he had said. "How could he have known that?" demanded Wilfrid.

The other Pukkumerian shepherd to whom Wilfrid introduced me was a quite different character. Sam Thompson was an oldish man with a simple but cunning manner which showed that he was already losing his mental grip, and as he was afterwards arrested for obeah and in defense cited my visit as a "consultation," I think I am entirely justified in recording that the man was an undoubted fraud, fully aware that he was playing tricks, and, although possibly in a confused, half-senile fashion, that he was employing them to cheat the people and get their money. Nevertheless the woman who was his confederate gave me much information about herb medicines, and when a neighbor came to the house for a bit of clean rag for binding about a sore, it was instantly forthcoming. We reached his yard after a stiff climb up and down ridges past flowering yam

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cultivations to a crutch on the side of the valley close to the footpath but closed in by trees. Although I detected no graveyard, a large thatched booth was erected just in front of the tiny dwelling, the posts of which were set with a few animal skulls. Thompson and the girl were perfectly ready to entertain me with an imitation of the Pukkumerian dance, one singing and beating a tambourine while the other performed, and they laughed heartily over the comical figure that each cut in the dance when pretending to stagger under the possession of a spirit.

Some of the songs which they used for calling up the spirits I asked them to sing into the phonograph for me, and this amused them greatly. Many of these songs employed purely biblical phraseology like

> The Bible is the key to open sinners' hearts.

and

> John did baptize, John did baptize
> John did baptize into Jordan's healing stream,

but some had specific reference to the summoning of the dead. In the following song, for example, it was explained that the good spirits of former shepherds—named Taylor, Nugent, Wyant—are called to come to the meeting:

> Rain, oh, rain, a fall over Gooby, *heavy rain fall*
> Call Shepherd Taylor to come bear me over Jordan,
> *Heavy rain fall,*
> What a heavy rain a fall over Gooby!
> Call Shepherd Nugent to come bear me over Jordan,
> Call Shepherd Wyant to come bear me over Jordan,
> *Fall, rain, fall, what a heavy rain fall!*

Another song, but I do not know when sung, ran:

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Dry bone gone fe me, dry bone gone
Dry bone gone down the gully road.
Wang go wang, fe go wang go wang
Fe go wang go wang down the gully road.

When me dry bone come, when me dry bone come,
Dry bone come down the gully road,
Wang go wang, fe go wang go wang,
Fe go wang go wang down the gully road.

Thompson called the land of the dead "Lomas land," and it was he who showed me that curious drawing of the underworld which was laid out with plots for each ghost like a graveyard, the ghosts themselves working under the whip of the ruling class just as they had worked in life. One of his songs runs:

You no remember de year Robert Bryan was kill?
Poor t'ing, poor t'ing, dead and gone to Lomas land!
Sing allelu', sinner, sing allelu'!

Absurd, yes, the "Pick-them-here" religion where Revivalist and Myal Man virtually blend in obeah; but inexpressibly sad, too, this groping among the ghosts of the other world for an explanation of both ecstasy and pain; this culling among graves those narcotic herbs which are scattered by nature over the earth to give visions to mortals, and beloved sleep, but which may also bring sickness, pain, and death.

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XXII. A PUKKUMERIAN DANCER RAISING THE SPIRITS: A REHEARSAL

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Chapter XII

THE MAROONS

Colonel Henry Rowe of the Accompong Maroons narrated that when the white men came to Jamaica they found the Maroons there before them; the Maroons had therefore "always been free and were the earliest settlers on the island." History, however, tells a more circumstantial story.

The word "Maroon" is derived by Cundall from the Spanish *Cimarron*, "wild, untamed," and the first use of the name he ascribes to the year 1628 when, in *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, the "Symerons" are spoken of as a "black people which about eighty years past fled from the Spanish their masters." Early writers speak of them as "wild men," and on an old map, dated 1678, which Cundall prints, the region of the central cockpits, now Maroon territory, is already marked "The Banditti—Spanish quarters," indicating that from the time of the conquest of the island from Spain in 1656 the English had been unable to bring into subjection the colony of free blacks in the interior districts. Ogilby writes (1671) of "a most pleasant, rich and fertile part of the country, abounding with cattel and excellent savannahs," where "the negroes settled that revolted from the Spaniards, who are endeavoring to make some plantations of tobacco and provisions, and with them are settled some few English who have divers walks of cacao." Little by little these free people were pushed farther back into the wilder and less coveted portions of the island, where they were

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joined by runaway slaves from the plantations, probably in large part of the Kromanti stock to whom the Maroons today refer their traditions.

The same movement which took from them the richer and more arable land also intrenched them in an almost impregnable position against assault, so that the problem of the "wild Negroes" early became a troublesome one for the colonists. It was only after years of desultory fighting in which the losses fell almost entirely against the English forces that the Maroon leaders, Accompong, Johnny, and Quao, signed with Governor Trelawney in 1739 the treaty still in force which reserves to the Maroons a great tract of fifteen hundred acres in the St. Elizabeth and Trelawney cockpits (only a hundred acres of which Dallas says are actually fit for cultivation) and smaller tracts in other parts of the island, together with local jurisdiction over their own affairs. In return they promised perpetual league with the whites in case of war and the return in the future of runaway slaves to their masters. Slaves already with the Maroons, however, had the privilege of choosing for themselves whether to remain with the Maroons or return to their white masters. In this way the Maroons became the natural friends of the whites and the enemies of the enslaved of their own race, a distinction which they jealously guard today. They look upon the alliance as a distinct pledge of superiority over the other Negroes, and although emancipation has broken down all race barriers so far as intermarriage is concerned, they jealously guard the privacy of their social group. Thus they form in some respects a secret society which excludes all non-Maroons from entrance within the settlement unaccompanied by a white man or a Ma-

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roon and which preserves certain so-called Kromanti customs as a proof of their African pride of blood. Colonel Rowe of Accompong related to me that the pact arranged by Trelawney was drunk in old Kromanti fashion by the leaders' on both sides cutting their arms and letting their blood flow into a bowl whose contents was mixed with rum; but historians do not mention this ceremony, observing merely that "confidence being established on both sides, the parties intermixed, exchanging hats and other tokens of congratulations."

However celebrated, the pact thus formed between the whites and the Maroon Negroes has been loyally kept for the most part by the Maroons themselves. It was called into play during the late war, when the Moore Town Maroons at first refused to enlist for service overseas, alleging that if the enemy should land on the island and advance upon Maroon territory, they, the Maroons, could so disguise themselves in vines and "bush" along the roadside, as easily to shoot the invaders in the back as they passed. It was only when the nature of Zeppelin air raids was described to them that their ancient methods of warfare seemed to them for the first time inadequate. The story goes that when the leaders surrendered, at the time of the first Maroon war, one captain was still in the field, and a captured horn man being ordered to announce the fact of the surrender to the invisible enemy, as soon as the call reached them "each Maroon cut with his machete the bush under which he lay," thus exposing the whole band "arranged in order."

At the last uprising on the island—that of 1865 in the eastern parishes—it was the prompt response of the Moore Town Maroons that saved the day for the

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English. A lively account of this event from an Accompong Maroon narrated that "Pa Bogle and Garden were in St. Thomas in the east. Pa Bogle was a black man. He refused to pay the people and the minister went to talk to him and he cut out his [the minister's] tongue. So the parson sent to the governor and the governor sent to Missus Queen—whether Queen Mary or Queen Victoria I don't remember—and they sent for the Maroons. The Accompong Maroons didn't get the letter. Moore Town Maroons got it. Moore Town Maroons, they [are] harsh, especially one named Old Brisco —that was the baddest of all. First they killed Bogle—shove the bayonet right through him! Killed Garden too. After that they killed out the whole district—leave nothing but one old woman and a ram goat and one rooster cock!"

An earlier uprising of the Trelawney Maroons themselves in the late eighteenth century, which ended in 1795 with the exile of the larger part of the western colony, admittedly arose through the dissatisfaction of the Maroons over an infringement of their treaty rights and the failure of the Governor to meet their discontent in any conciliatory spirit; and the exile that followed was carried out in direct contradiction of the terms of the peace signed with the surrendering rebels by the British officer in command. This was the second time that bloodhounds were introduced into Jamaica. Historians say that they had been employed in 1660 after the defeat of the Spaniards, and the mere terror induced by their second appearance brought about a speedy surrender without the risk which might have been involved in letting them loose upon a desperate people who carried firearms. In his very readable *His-*

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tory of the Maroons by a contemporary of this period, Dallas, acting as apologist for his friend Colonel Quarrel, originator and executor of the scheme, describes in glowing terms the formal reception when "the wild and formidable appearance" of both dogs and chasseurs—the dogs with their rattling chains making ferociously at every object and forcibly dragging on the chasseurs who could hardly restrain them—so impressed General Walpole that, although obliged himself to beat a hasty retreat lest the dogs leap upon his own horses, he nevertheless gallantly expressed himself as "well pleased with the review."

The whole adventure of the energetic Colonel reads more like a popular romance than like flesh and blood experience of the late eighteenth century. In spite of the sometimes over-scrupulous rhetoric employed to justify his hero, Dallas is a good raconteur. He describes in detail how Quarrel set sail for Cuba in a schooner manned by four British seamen, twelve Curacoa Negroes, and eighteen Spanish renegades who indulged daily in knifing bouts and, at the first absence of the Colonel, attempted mutiny. Spain was at the time under treaty of peace with England, both countries being engaged in war with France. At Trinidad the boat was delayed by interminable diplomacy to await a small fleet of transports (bearing the King's duties), for which the British boat might serve as escort. At one passage where there was danger of grounding, the Colonel gave orders that the first pilot to run them aground was to be hanged, and his own boat made the passage above six feet four inches of water. At one time he raked with shot an armed vessel before she was discovered to be Spanish rather than French. At the

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port of Batabano the Colonel left ship for the overland route to Havana, accompanied by a train of two hundred mules bearing the King's duties. For days he lay sick of fever, stretched on a bed made of cowhide fastened to four posts, and ministered to by the lovely Marquise de Felippo et St. Jago. At Havana he was to meet a fresh obstacle. Passports for dogs, yes, but not for the chasseurs to accompany them. In vain the Colonel pleaded that without these the dogs were useless. Eventually a permit for six trainers was signed, whereupon Quarrel despatched pay for the whole number. Impatient now to be off, he was detained in Havana first by a bullfight and next for the formulation by the government of a request for help by its British allies in erecting lighthouses. At Besucal there was a dance for the Spanish chasseurs led off by the Marquise, at which, says the historian, the Colonel's "good humor and address supplied the place of gestic lore." Finally at Batabano the Colonel encountered an almost fatal obstacle in the person of an incorruptible official who detained his visitor while he sent off for fresh instructions. To set the stage for an escape required all the Colonel's wit. Dallas relates with complacency how he engaged a fellow-prisoner to ply his host with wine and even left his riding coat in order to allay suspicion. The night was chilly; once his horse stumbled and threw him. At the landing the dogs had to be carried in men's arms two hundred yards, scratching and howling, before they could be deposited in the boats which were to take them to the ship. Once off, it was easy to outrun the two coast guards who pursued them, but that night the pilots ran the ship aground, a storm came up, and for three days the schooner pounded up and down

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while pandemonium reigned on board. Some of the dogs got loose and attacked the cattle taken on to provide the dogs with food for the voyage. When calm fell, the pious Spaniards who had "prayed audibly" during the storm, insisted upon going ashore at Trinidad to offer thanks to St. Anthony for their safety, and only an unfavorable wind prevented this act of piety. Off Falmouth the schooner sighted a French privateer and gallantly gave chase, only to run the gauntlet of British guns into Montego Bay, where she was mistaken for the very cruiser she had been pursuing. The event has been already noticed.

Dallas furnishes a precise description of the dogs themselves and of the men who followed the hardy profession of chasseur in the Spanish Colony. The dogs he pictures as large-sized, stronger and heavier than the ordinary hound, with erect ears (usually cropped), nose rather pointed but widening very much towards the after part of the jaw, and a tough skin thick enough to endure the blows by which they were trained not to kill the object they were after but to hold it at bay and seize it only in case of resistance.

The trainers Dallas describes as "a very hardy, abstemious race of men whose activity no negro on earth can elude." They were swarthy, not large but rather "taut like well-twisted rope," with "the lively faces of passionate hunters," and they dressed in a checked shirt without collar, wide checked trousers, a thatch hat, a leather belt, and shoes either of untanned leather or preferably of raw hide. Each trainer kept three dogs with two of which he hunted. One or two small dogs accompanied the hunt as "finders" to start the scent. A dog was always kept chained and muzzled until he

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was taken out to hunt, when a strong cotton rope was slipped on and attached to the belt of the trainer until the scent was started. Then rope and collar were slipped off and wound about the waist of the trainer, who followed his dog, machete in hand to cut away the brush.

Old writers devote much attention to the Maroons of Jamaica. Dallas commends their superior strength, symmetry, and intelligence as distinct from the shorter, yellower, and more Negroid blacks from the lower Congo. Edwards says, "Their demeanor is lofty, their walk firm, and their persons erect. Every motion displays a combination of strength and agility. The muscles (neither hidden nor depressed by clothing) are very prominent and strongly marked. Their sight withal is wonderfully acute and their hearing remarkably quick." He notes as symptoms of a depraved taste a preference for "new rum fresh from the still" and for "rotten beef." The men hunted, the women did the gardening, even to the clearing of a new ground by ringing each tree with fire. Jerked hog was the favorite dish, together with ring-tailed pigeon and land crab. Vegetables were cultivated in the fertile patches. Houses were "built in scattered fashion upon the ridges so as to escape the wash of torrential rains," exactly as they are to be seen today in Moore Town or the Cockpits. When a girl was of age to marry she "had hog killed for her," that is, she was exhibited in the matrimonial market at a feast where hog was the main dish, although other delicacies were also abundant. In case of a chief, marriage was shared with more than one wife; but no jealousy was aroused, for if a man gave a present to one wife he gave the same to the others. Each wife had her own property. The husband lived

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with each wife two days in turn, leaving her free at other times to attend to her garden and carry its produce to market. In 1749 Long estimates the number of Maroons to be 273 men, 211 women, 88 boys, and 92 girls, numbering 664 in all.

The Maroons today represent a kind of secret society isolated from other blacks not only politically but by the tradition of mystery with which they continue to surround themselves. This is particularly true of Moore Town back of Port Antonio, but it holds good also for the other three settlements still on the island—Charles Town, whose families mix with Moore Town Maroons, Scot's Hall in the hills of St. Mary, and Accompong in the Cockpits of St. Elizabeth. Maroon Town farther north in Trelawney, and Nanny Town in the ridges back of Moore Town have been abandoned. Maroon family names—Reed, Wright, Rowe in the west, and Valentine and Searchwell in the east—are recognized from one settlement to the other.

No Negro unaccompanied by a Maroon or a white man dares to enter a Maroon settlement, and my guide at Richmond even refused to accompany me under any circumstances to the settlement at Scot's Hall. The Maroons know "stronger obeah" than any other group; they are more cunning in herb magic; they command a secret tongue (the so-called Kromanti), and they know old songs in this speech "strong enough to bewitch anybody"; they employ old arts which deal with spirits. I was told that the Accompong Maroons had a doll figure called "Yumma" which was brought out and washed and dressed annually at Christmas time and which represented old Nanny, "Queen" of the Maroons, at the time of their first treaty with the

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whites. Rowe said that no bullets could touch their men during the conflict because old Nanny stood with her back to the enemy and, attracting all the balls to herself, caught them between her thighs just as boys sometimes catch a ball.

In Moore Town at Christmas time I am told one may still see the festival described by Gardner, when all gather about a fire at night and drum and sing while individuals spring into the circle and perform dances. Old songs are sung in so-called Kromanti, those I heard consisting in a few lines of recitative, then a few rapid speech syllables, and a shout, hence exceedingly difficult to get by phonograph. Valentine, the Maroon who acted as my guide to Moore Town, could hardly be persuaded to give me a translation. Finally he gave me some words for a "new war song" as:

> We are in war who fight for our country,
> War! bring the explosive, let us kill the enemy,
> Good-evening!

whose dictated syllables ran—

> Ke re wan ke, *eh eh eh eh bar me o*
> Kin ke ne wang kwa ke *eh eh eh bar me o*
> Ho tuck o de me du hin!

and which exhibits the common Jamaican refrain pattern. Valentine's wife (not a Maroon) sang me a song used "when the kettle will not boil." On the other hand his Maroon neighbor violently opposed my taking any Maroon songs on the phonograph. A fine old Maroon woman who had once served in one of the best families on the island entertained me cordially with "tea-meeting songs" but refused to speak of the "days of darkness" and even reproved the girls when they

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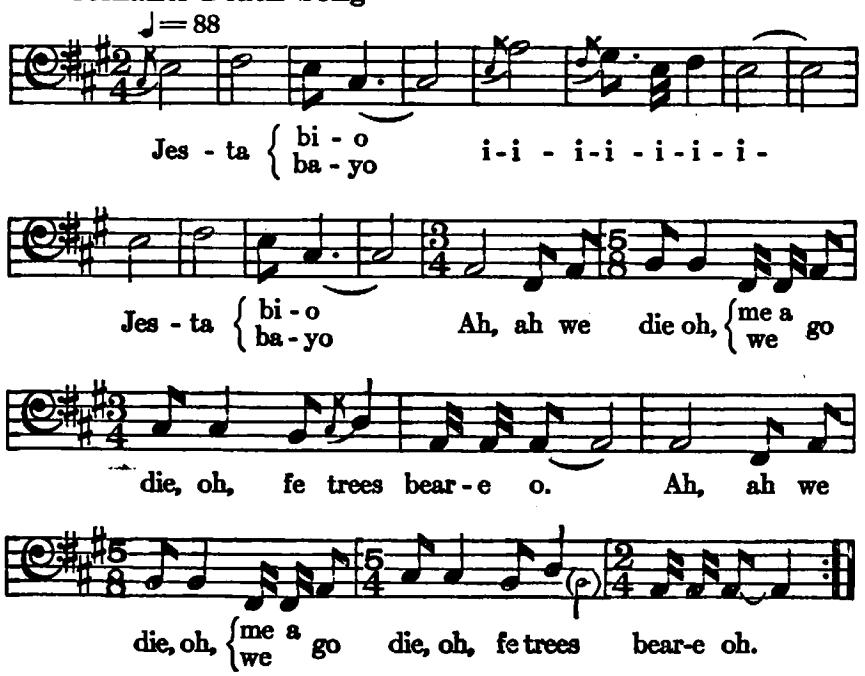
danced a *shayshay*. However, I learned from Valentine that there were three classes of Kromanti songs, the "jawbone," of a comparatively mild variety; the "new war songs," of stronger power; and the "old war songs" most powerful of all. In Moore Town they still send signals to each other by drumbeats. The story runs that a captive Maroon working at a blacksmith's anvil saw some of his fellows landing from a boat and hammered out a warning. In Accompong the "horn man" calls out the name of the dead through a conch, and everyone listens to the signal. The whole body form a procession and march to the melody of a strangely wild and beautiful death song, an excellent record of which Miss Roberts has preserved.

(Recorded by Helen H. Roberts)

Kromanti Death Song



Horn, drum, and lute are the musical instruments of the old-time Maroon. Valentine said the horn was

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called *abong*—"just like saying ah-h!" and also *kiaka*, but a third and secret name he would not divulge. It was the same with the drum, which is called gombay, but he refused to tell its secret name. Although also played with the fingers, it was shaped not at all like the Accompong gombay, but was long and narrow like an East Indian drum. The "bass," which I had no opportunity of seeing, he described as made by fastening two steel wires to a long board and played by two persons, one of whom touched the strings with his hands while the other, seated opposite, beat upon a gourd. A crossbow was until lately in use, and I gathered from a pantomimic gesture that its arrowpoint was tipped with poison.

In Port Antonio the Moore Town Maroons were described to me as "hardy and independent with great keenness for money," and in physical appearance "tall in stature with very black faces and sharp, non-Negroid features." The town occupies a pit-like valley near the base of the John Crow Mountains above Port Antonio, to which seaport a good road is laid for trucking bananas. An English church and a government schoolhouse stand on this side of the bridge, which crosses a clear-flowing tributary of the Rio Grande famous for a fresh-water mussel called *bossu*, out of which is composed a favorite soup) into true Maroon territory. Here a little group of shops constitute the nucleus of the settlement. The homes climb along the ridges, the provision grounds and banana cultivations (worked today entirely by the men, lying out of sight up the valley.

The settlement at Accompong is less accessible. A bridle-trail leads ever upward past groves of cocoanut and banana and patches of sugar cane, until at length

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a gateway opens upon the Maroons' reservation. Still upward on the hilltop lies the village, backed north by the Trelawney forests and fronting south a splendid sweep of ranges to the sea. Levels are broken by sudden pits which serve for the storage of rain water. The highest and largest level is known as the "parade ground," where the whipping post used to stand. Below lie the church (Scotch Presbyterian) and the schoolhouse.

I witnessed here a village fete day which began with a double wedding at the church (presided over by the white missionary pastor), with veil, gloves, and ring, and a wedding breakfast in a leafy booth, where toasts were drunk with wine and an architectural wedding cake was cut by the bride. Later the Colonel donned ceremonial suit of white duck, and the whole population turned out, the horn man with his conch in front, the rest following in pairs to the tune of a lively marching song. On the parade ground it was pretty to see elderly dames and young girls joining in the old English dances, withered little old women carrying off the palm for stately grace. They took hands at the far end of the level and advanced dancing and singing up its entire length. Afterwards the men played athletic games. They might have been Elizabethans or at latest eighteenth-century Englishmen at a folk holiday. Many of their songs indeed are composed out of snatches of balladry transformed into the peculiar repetitive style common to native Jamaican singing.

Many of these people came to the old estate house three miles below Accompong, vacant save for a caretaker, and there told me Anansi stories and sang songs of a haunting melody. Picturesquely perched upon the edge of an abrupt semicircular valley, the house looked

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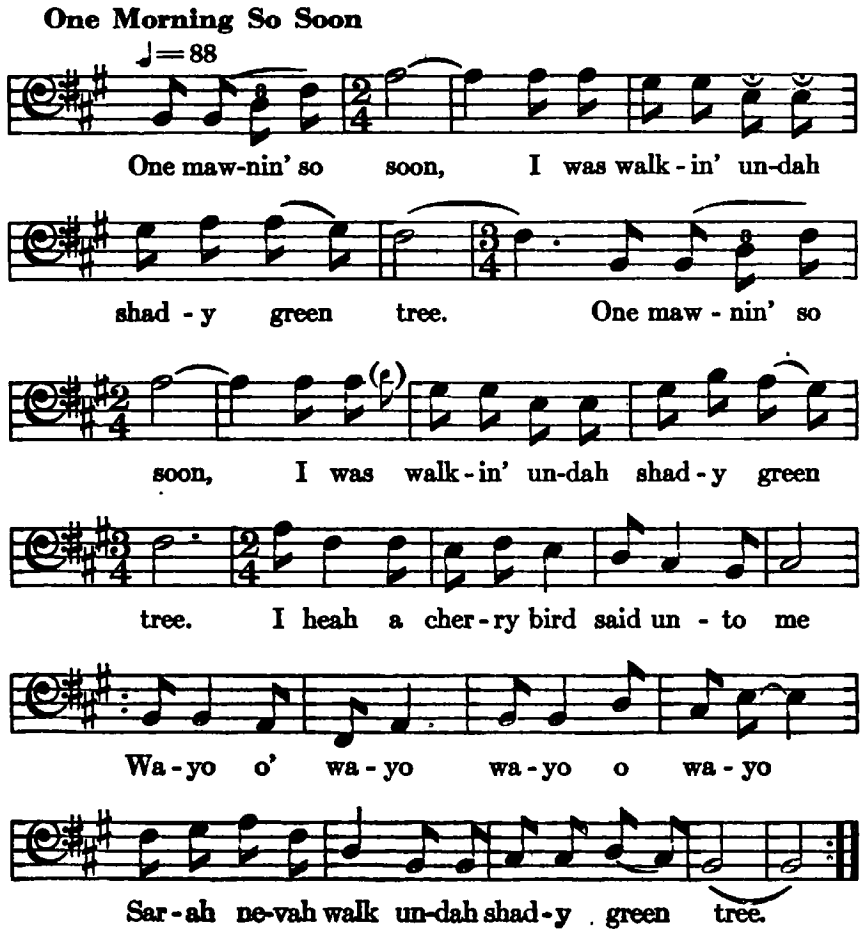
over wave upon wave of mountain range toward the sea. The aromatic pimento drying on the barbecues; the flocks of tiny paroquets that came toward evening to feed upon the berries; the croaking lizards in the

(Recorded by Helen H. Roberts)



rafters or calling from the trees at night; the crack of a whip in the early morning echoing from the roadway across the valley where a cart labored; the swift violent thunderstorms that descend in the afternoon, darkening for a half hour the brilliant sun; the blackness in

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which we all sat, with the jalousies drawn while the deluge fell and the folk sang because it was too dark for dictating stories; at evening in the big empty hall the black overseer impersonating the "play-acting" dialogue of an old "doctor play"—all these things belong to unforgettable memories of Harmony Hall.

These Maroons are hardy, intelligent, and in the old English sense aristocratic. They guard too jealously their old privileges and do not listen yet to the younger men who want to make an end of degrading superstitions. But their stories and songs are the best that I heard in Jamaica, and their folk art has a grace and spirit rarely to be found in any folk group.

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Chapter XIII

FOLK ART

The Jamaica Negro gives emotional expression to his inner life through the medium of voice and motion. He does not model or carve or attempt decoration in any but the simplest patterns. But he does dance and sing and relate wonder stories and tales of cunning and uproarious mirth. His loquacity and wit in speech are employed in the popular art of riddling; in sententious sayings which pass into proverbs; in lies, love letters, and toasts; and his mobile sense for acting and impersonation has developed an oral literature of imitative animal talk and an immense number of dramatic improvisations to be produced on wake nights or at local festivities. He has a multitude of old English song games which are danced by the children on the schoolhouse green and by the older folk at Sunday School picnics and holiday gatherings, and into which he infuses the zest and freshness of his own African wit and sense of rhythm.

This easy loquacity of the Jamaican and his picturesque phrasing give charm to his intercourse as they also impart edge to his tantrums. He has a penchant for naming. Certain plants are called after their uses—"Heal-it-and-draw," "See-me-contract," and "Search-me-heart"—names referred to as "Kromanti talk." "Baby-puzzle" is fed as tea to the new-born child; a vine called "Bat-wing" or "Duck-foot" has web-shaped leaves. Place names and nicknames often perpetuate a pun, as the settlement called "Try-see" of the Isaiahs;

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or they may interpret the sound of a foreign appellative, like a place on the north side of the island, called "Red Guava," said to be a corruption of the Spanish *Oro agua.*

Going in and out among the folk one hears such turns of speech as "Come a little yedda" for "further" or "nearer," and "A worra you da say?" for "What are you saying?" "Far enough but not too far" is a common answer to an enquiry as to the length of the road and implies some distance yet to travel. "Walk good, me love," says one to another setting out on a journey, and "Wish you good journey, missus," they used to say, Elizabethan fashion, in speeding me onward. A quick pun born of the moment is not uncommon. An old story is often repeated of the Negro slave who, hearing of the efforts made for emancipation by its great advocate in England, expressed his confidence that if Wilberforce could not gain from Parliament freedom for the slave he "will by force." When Lord Burnham visited the island a few years ago he was greatly amused to hear a lad on the street say on the occasion of a bad fire in Kingston, "If dem bring Bu'n'em come heah, what mus' expect but bu'n'em?"

Among a people to whom the pun in a name or the utterance of a pithy saying carries almost the determining character of Fate, the proverb or familiar saying attains a rich and distinctive development. Almost a thousand such sayings exclusive of variants have already been recorded from the lips of the folk, and fresh ones are coining daily. Some have a merely local spread, and others are known all over the island. Often quoted is the answer of a slave roused from a nap by the words, "Dont you know massa is calling you?" who replied,

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"Sleep hab no massa!" a spontaneous saying that has passed into a proverb. More studied compositions are attempted by the young wits of a district, the older entertainers generally contenting themselves with drawing upon a well-stocked memory. Such proverbs are quoted as guides in the ordinary affairs of life. They have a homely and vigorous phrasing more pithy than elegant. "What maggot do befo' dog get sore yeye [eye]?" says one who has lost a temporary source of income. "If fe him stomach no sick, wha' you deh vomit fe?" means emphatically "Mind your own business," or, literally, "Don't vomit when another man is sick." "No pull out you inside gi' stranger, tek trash stuff yourself," implies the folly of giving to another and leaving yourself in want. Or, as an expression of the philosophy of capitalist versus proletarian, "Rockstone a riber bottom neber know sun hot." Many a proverb conceals a veiled threat. Such a metaphor is a common weapon of the weak against the strong. "Cashew neber bear guava" means "You will get what you deserve." "A no ebery day rain come light" means "Some day I shall get my revenge." "Fire deh behin' man, sometime him t'ink a cool breeze," like "Lizard neber know whe' him deh till him find himself in a puss mout,'" implies retribution to follow, however long delayed. So "Seben year neber too long fe wash 'peckle off a guinea hen back," and the famous "No cuss alligator 'long mout' till you cross riber." A variety of analogies often plays about the same idea. The Aesopian moral of the sick lion is rendered, "Bull ol', dem tek plantain bark tie him," or "When Tiger get ol', every dog bark a'ter him," or "Cottontree fa' down, nanny goat jump ober it."

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In all these cases the abstract idea is expressed in terms of a concrete analogy drawn from the daily life of the folk and from objects in nature with which they are familiar. The interpretation may differ in different localities, but the form remains fixed. Often the analogy disguises a riddling meaning which only familiarity with usage can determine. The art differs therefore from that employed in the folk riddle only by expressing in the terms of the comparison an observation upon life rather than a mere object of everyday experience.

The propounding of riddles is a common pastime at social gatherings. The riddle regularly opens with a formula corrupted from an old English rhyme—

> Riddle me riddle
> Guess me this riddle, and perhaps not,

and often sets the stage for the analogy by means of one or the other of two popular patterns—"Going up to town" or "My father has in his yard," shortened to "My father has." Such a riddle takes a longer rhythmical swing than one in which the analogy is directly expressed, for example, the popular analogy for the umbrella—"Me father have a house stand upon one post"—as compared with the universally familiar antithesis, "Rope run, horse stand up," for the pumpkin on its vine. Riddles of observation are very common. "My father has a flock of sheep; touch one, all the rest die," describes the sensitive plant; "Going up to town all cry, coming home they are silent," describes the sound of feet in the damp of the early morning as compared with the hot dry afternoon. Almost always the comparison involves personification, and naming is popular. "Send boy to fetch doctor, doctor come before boy," is explained as a boy, sent up a tree after a

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water cocoanut, who throws down the cocoanut before descending himself. "John Red-man tickle John Black-man till he laugh 'pooka pooka'" alludes to the kettle singing over the fire.

A common penalty in forfeit games involves the telling of three riddles or three "lies." Examples of this last form of wit are easy to obtain from any frequenter of wakes or tea-meetings where mental dexterity is at a premium. One may say,

Last night I was going to Mandeville and when I catch to Pepper I forgot me face upon table in yard,

or,

Last night I stay at home and hear a mosquito turn a bammie at Potsdam,

or,

Pa and I went to work ground, took a gourdie of water, hung it on the tree. Duck eat the gourdie, leave the water hung on tree.

Still another group amusement is the imitation in speech of animal cries. Such so-called animal talk is often reported from African fields, perhaps representing the breakdown into sport of an outworn belief in the claim by sorcerers to a knowledge of the language of beasts. The "cling-cling" or blackbird sings,

Black pan tumble down, ping, ping, ping, ping,
Pick tick off a cow, ting, ting, ting, ting.

Pigeon says,

Coo, co-o, I beg you piece o' pork, I beg you piece o' pork, ngr-r-r!

Hawk sings,

Hark! hark! hark! pin-ya! pin-ya!

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Potoo (owl) cries,

Ah, who-o? ah, who-o-o?

until the frightened darkey answers, "A me, Quaco, a go 'long wid de demijohn o' rum."
Turkey says,

We poor people, people, people walk barefooted!

Gobbler cries,

Keep up! keep up! you will soon get it!

Swabe of Mandeville, who gave me these calls, performed the pigeon, the turkey, and the gobbler to an applauding audience with perfect imitation of each bird's characteristic action in calling. Pretty dialogues also occur in which the song of the mocking bird (called "nightingale" in Jamaica) is interpreted. One runs:

You see me leg? you see me leg? sickness! sickness!
B'y! b'y! b'y! b'y! [boy]
Sah! sah!
You see de cow?
Yes, sah.
Whe' deh?
See 'em yah!
Ca' em come.
Yes, sah.
Oh, ho! tu-we! oh, ho! tu-we! tu-we!

Another,

Jeannot! Jeannot! Jeannot!
Buy yo' meat, buy yo' meat.
Carry come, carry come, carry come.
Can't carry, can't carry, can't carry, can't carry.
Draw i', draw i', draw i'.
Too heavy, too heavy, too heavy.
Salt i', salt i', salt i', salt i', salt i'.

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Such forms of folk wit develop under the pressure of social competition as part of the entertainment at group gatherings. The great occasions for merrymaking are at weddings, at funerals, and during the special festivals of the Christmas and New Year season and (a holiday today going out of fashion) of Emancipation Day on August 2. Dancing parties may be given at any time in private homes, and these are always accompanied by a certain formality. All-day picnics are held in midsummer and all-night "tea-meetings" either then or more often at the New Year. A single entertainer gives this party, to which admission is charged. At one end of the leaf-covered booth erected for the occasion, a platform is constructed on which sits the "chairman" who is chosen to preside. Benches for the onlookers range about three sides. The girls attend in new frocks, wearing ribbons and other ornaments all of a prearranged color. After a succession of formal toasts and set dances, the "queen" selected for the occasion is unveiled by the highest bidder for that privilege, and there is an elaborate cake to be sold in slices or sometimes small cakes in fancy patterns (called "show bread" or "crown bread"). After this the night wears through with riddles, games, stories, or other forms of amusement. In Mandeville there is no queen, but the men vie with one another in presenting the girls with "thruppence worth of crown bread," to which the lady is supposed to make some such witty acknowledgment as "I will not eat it, I will not drink it, but I will send it to England to buy a belt to put about my wissy-wassy waist," or "to get a pair of shoes to wear to church, and instead of the shoes crying 'Ne' pass! ne' pass!' they will cry 'Love! love!'"

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Jamaican song has a peculiar style which, so far as my experience goes, distinguishes it readily from any Afro-American folk music developed in this country. In many ways its background has differed from our own. Something depends upon the African Kromanti stock, the tradition of whose influence yet survives; much upon Spanish contacts. The predominance of the English church music is to be felt in the intoning effect of the more serious reflective song; the Jamaican will not class revival songs based upon Moody and Sankey tunes as "church music." Within the last hundred years, too, East Indian melodies must have become familiar.

Except for the lack of rhyme, poetic style is less readily distinguishable. Directly narrative song does not exist in Jamaica. Songs composed upon an epic basis are so allusive and elliptical in character as to be intelligible only to one who knows the story. The composer seizes upon the situation involved therein and by repetitive increments stresses its dominant emotion. It is as if he carried on a dialogue with the actors in the story, permitting them a single reiteration and himself the office of chorus, as the representative of a sympathetic but regulative society. This method is illustrated when an English ballad is made over into Jamaican song. For example, the familiar ballad of "Little Musgrove" reappears in a popular song which runs:

Lie still, my pretty young man,
Lie still, my pretty young man,
Lie still, my pretty young man,
As my father driving his sheep
All them making a deal of noise.
Who is there goes away,

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Who is there goes away,
Who is there goes away,
It's a murder will be there
It's a murder will be there.

Thus the native song is normally composed of a reflective solo in prose or recitative which is improvised or "composed" for the occasion, and a popular chorus in which all join, generally accompanied by action performed in unison. In a completed song this chorus is represented by a single line (what Jekyll calls the "bobbin") which is tossed into the song again and again to bind together its not very coherent parts. Sometimes an effect is produced satisfying to our own ear, like the charming

Carry me ackee go a Solas market,
Not a quattie would sell
Lord! not a light, not a bite,
Not a quattie would sell
Not a light, not a bite,
What a Saturday night!

Ordinarily we must trust to appreciation of the irony, whimsical or philosophic rather than tragic, with which some homely incident is woven into song. The uneasiness of crowns is the theme of this song (from which the chorus is lost):

Dunbar plant a white cane,
White cane grow to doubloon,
Doubloon will buy me a long coat,
Long coat will hit me at my knee pan.
Humbug it! Dunbar, humbug it!

In a little domestic tragedy in which a woman weeps for her man who has been locked up in jail pending trial, the recitative runs:

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Susan a bawl
Wid dem baby in dem han',
Say "Quaco won' come!"
How Quaco fe come?
Fo' dem hab him in a sheckle
Tie han' an' foot.
Susan hab fe bawl
Fe nine days more,
Till we go to sergeant major
Fe gi' him bail.
Den Susan may 'top bawl,
'Top, Susan, fe bawl,

out of which the chorus selects the leading theme:

Quaco won' come!
Susan a bawl say
"*Quaco won' come*!
You have a bawl, Susan,
You have a bawl, Susan.

Work songs are a good example of this kind of composition, especially the digging songs, sung in chorus when a group come together to prepare a field for planting. The women tend the fire while one chosen as cook prepares the breakfast in a common pot. The men line up at one end of the field resting upon their hoes and facing the song leader, who stands at some distance down the field. A familiar chorus is chosen, upon which the song leader then proceeds to extemporize a rambling tale centering about the incident commemorated in the chorus. At the proper moment the whole line take up the song and sweep down the field shouting the chorus over and over in rhythmical unison and keeping time with the stroke of the hoe until, the spurt over, they rest again upon their hoes, and the leader

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takes up the thread of story. One dictated song ran as nearly like this as I could get it down:

Solo: You write a letter send to the government, and the government write a letter send to the sergeant to come here wid handcuff for prisoner deh, for

Chorus: John, John buy one corn piece,
Potoo [owl or nighthawk, a bird of ill omen] dine dere.

Solo: Then he sell the corn piece to the next man; so when this man go in corn piece, this Potoo won't 'low the man to cut the corn, for

Chorus: John, John buy one corn piece,
Potoo dine dere.

Another song and chorus from St. Mary, sung to the tune of "Somebody dying eb'ry day," was said to be composed by the workers on the railway in that parish to commemorate a tragedy in "number nine tunnel."

Ten poun' hammer kill John Henry,
Somebody dying ebery day
Tek de hammer and give it to de worker,
Somebody dying ebery day
Number nine tunnel, I will not work dere,
Somebody dying ebery day.
St. Mary mountain is a fruitful mountain,
Somebody dying ebery day
When me go home me will tell me mother,
Somebody dying ebery day
Me no born yah [here], me come from yondah,
Somebody dying ebery day.

A song composed in the cockpit country at the time of the extension of the railroad from Porus to Montego Bay which broke the isolation of that section from the rest of the island, consisted of disconnected reflections recited rather than sung and a chorus in which all joined, sung to a very pleasing melody, as follows:

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1. From Kingston to Porus extension combine, it's solid wood and iron!

Chorus: We shall be glad when the train comes down
Over the hills and mountains.
We shall be glad when the train comes down
Over the rocky mountains.

2. The cotton tree on the top of Balaclava tunnel is like a queen's crown!

Chorus: We shall be glad, etc.

3. When the track reaches Montego Bay, what will become of the poor trainmen (how will those who have been laying the road make a living)? They will t'ief and be sent to the workhouse!

Chorus: We shall be glad, etc.

It has seemed to me in more recent visits that the spirit of group song was passing out of Jamaican folk life. The men more often clear ground silently, the women at their washing by the brook are either voiceless or if caught singing betray self-consciousness. The loading of boats is carried on without the rhythmic song which used to lighten labor. In old days satirical song served as a castigator of social delinquencies more effectual than the law. Individual lyric must longer survive. Its place comes very early in the emotional life of the folk. At least in St. Elizabeth it is the custom for a child to compose a secret song which is thereafter his own play song for times of solitude. A Jamaican version of the Bull-husband tale alludes to this custom. When the little brother who has surprised the magic transformation song from the bull-man begins to hum it at a family gathering and the bull-husband objects, the family say, "Oh! let him alone, that is only his lit-

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tle play song!" or words to that effect. Never shall I forget the passion of pride in the tone of one small composer when he refused the money we had offered for his secret song. "My song is worth more than a thrupence!" he said, but he belonged to the capitalist class in his district and not to the humbler proletariat. Thus from childhood the folk are accustomed in their moments of lonely reflection to shape their philosophy into song.

I do not know that poetry is ever attempted in Jamaica without the accompaniment of music. Instrumental music is also generally accompanied by song. I have spoken of the survival, often for purposes of magic, of the conch horn, the "bon" and gombay drums, the gourd rattle, and the jawbone vibrator. Common accompaniments of song are still the guitar and tambourine. The flute is the only instrument which carries a melody independent of the voice.

Its history is very old in Jamaica. Patrick Browne says of the native flutes made of hollowed trumpet vine stalks, "I have not been displeased with their sound." Following a trail in the bush one day I heard ahead a few delicate notes falling into a kind of tune and met a child playing upon such a native instrument. The Jamaican flute which I own is made of the stalk of a trumpet vine cut twelve inches long and hollowed. One end is plugged and a hole for the mouth cut at the side, the other remains open, and six holes, cut less than an inch apart, are played upon by the fingers. Judging by the scorched color about the edge, I should say that the holes must have been burned out with a hot iron. A brown ring less than an inch wide finishes each end for decoration. Another modern flute now in the Nat-

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ural History Museum is polished to a rich mahogany with cocoanut oil and rum. Beckford describes the Kromanti flutes as larger in size and accompanied by the rhythm of a rattle. He says:

> Caramantee flutes are made from the porous branches of the trumpet tree, a yard in length, nearly the thickness of the upper part of a bassoon; they have generally three holes at the bottom; are held, in point of direction, like the hautboy; and while the right hand stops the holes, in the left is shaken by one of the party a hollow ball that is filled with pebbles.

The music so produced he characterizes as "the most melancholy that I ever remember to have heard," the high notes "uncommonly wild, but yet sweet," and the lower, "deep, majestic, impressive."

Of stringed instruments the simplest described by early writers is the Whidah "bender," a late form of which is perhaps described by Marsden as "a bow with two or three wires which they struck with a stick." Beckford says:

> The bender is an instrument upon which the Whydow Negroes, I believe, in particular excel. It is made of a bent stick, the ends of which are restrained in this direction by a slip of dried grass; the upper part of which is gently compressed between the lips, and to which the breath gives a soft and pleasing vibration; and the other end is graduated by a slender stick that beats upon the nerve, if I may so express it, and confines the actual activities of the sound, and these together produce a trembling, a querulous, and a delightful harmony.

The banjo or "merry-wang" must have been of Spanish introduction but imitated by the folk with the materials at their command. Edwards calls it "an imperfect kind of violoncello but played on by the fingers like a guitar." Long describes it as a

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rustic guitar of four strings made with a calabash; a slice of which being taken off, a dried bladder or skin, is spread across the largest section; and this is fastened to a handle, which they take great pains in ornamenting with a sort of rude carved work and ribbands.

Finally Sloane, writing as early as 1700, describes

several sorts of instruments in imitation of Lutes, made of small gourds fitted with Necks strung with Horse hairs or the peeled Stalks of climbing Plants or Withs. These Instruments are sometimes made of hollowed timber covered with Parchment or other Skin wetted, having a Bow for its Neck, the Strings ty'd longer or shorter as they would alter their sound.

Drum and rattle are the instruments which touch nearest to the chord of original Negro emotion. "When I hear the sound of the drum, my heart is merry," said old Gracie of Lacovia, and by this she meant no feeling of uproarious mirth but that liberation of the spirit within the bounds of a regularized personality which is the gift of art to the individual. Sloane in 1700 describes "Drums made of a piece of a hollow tree, covered on one end with any green skin, and stretched with Thols or Pins," an instrument forbidden on the plantations because used for war in Africa. This must be the gombay of the sorcerer. Frequently time was kept merely by beating upon a board with a stick or with hands upon the mouth of an empty gourd or jar. Gourd rattles, Sloane tells us, were used as fetishes by the Indians of the Mosquito coast, who mingled with the Jamaica Negroes of his day. They were made of calabashes with small stones inside and a stick inset. The Indians adorned them with feathers and "planted" them among their houses. Such an object was called *maraca*. After "feeding" for thirteen or fourteen days

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it would cause roots to grow and would "answer questions."

Stewart says:

The negroes have few amusements nor have they much time to devote to amusement! Plays, as they call them, is their principal and favorite one. This is an assemblage of both sexes, who form a ring round a male and female dancer, who perform to the music of their drums, and the songs of the other females of the party, one alternate going over the song, which her companions repeat in chorus. Both the singers and dancers show the exactest precision as to time and measure. This rude music is usually accompanied by a kind of rattles, being small calabashes filled with the black hard seed of a plant which the negroes call Indian shot, or with the seed of the wild liquorice. Nigh at hand, this music is harsh and clamorous; at a distance, however, it has a not unpleasing sound. When two dancers have fatigued themselves pretty well, a second couple enter the ring, and thus the amusement continues. So fond are the negroes of this amusement that they will continue for nights and days enjoying it.

Some writers describe such dances as dramatic impersonations of a love episode. Many speak of their erotic character. Sloane says that "their songs [when they danced on feast days] are all bawdy or tending that way." Edwards calls the dances "in the highest degree licentious"; so does Phillippo, who describes a dance which consisted in "stamping the feet, accompanied by various contortions of the body, with strange and indecent attitudes." At one point "head erect or inclined forward, elbows fixed, pointing from side to side, hands nearly united in front, and lower extremities held firm, the whole person moved without raising the feet from the ground," or "making the head and limbs fixed postures they writhed and turned the

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body upon its own axis slowly advancing toward each other or retreating to the other part of the circumference." Marsden writes, "Every Saturday night the Negroes indulge in dancing . . . They put themselves into strange postures and shake their hips and great breasts, their feet beating time remarkably quick; two of them generally dance together, and sometimes do not move six inches from the same place." The dances here described are no doubt movements of the *shay-shay*, that erotic dance to jazz music which is supposed to have originated in Africa but which De Lisser thinks derived from a Spanish dance called *mento*, *bamboula*, or *chica* and which "consists of slow movements of the body, and the point of perfection is reached when, as in Haiti, the dancer never allows the upper part of the body to move as she writhes or shuffles over the ground." The name De Lisser would derive from the French *chassé*. The *shayshay* is danced with a single partner and always to song. A great many Jamaican songs set to jazz music are originally improvised shay-shays, generally satirical, and often conveying an erotic meaning concealed in symbol. The better-bred Negroes do not dance the *shayshay*, but imitate the English in waltz, two-step, and quadrille. Some stately old English steps like the polka are known by the older women. Of possibly African survivals danced among the folk one can see individual exhibitions. A servant girl in Westmoreland did a very pretty clog which she called "spotting," and some young men in the Pedro Plains exhibited some remarkable muscular feats to the rhythm of music. The whole subject deserves much more careful study.

It is in story-telling that the folk best exercise their

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powers of artistic production. Dance, song, and dramatic impersonation here find free scope.

The earliest recorder of the narrative art in Jamaica is Monk Lewis. One of the stories written into his journal more than a hundred years ago is told in almost identical form today. This was a borrowed story; two others closer to the native experience still survive in part. Lewis found two classes of stories common in his day—"wonder tales," in which the supernatural element prevailed, and "nager tricks," in which some stupid fellow served as the butt of his fellows. In one form is expressed the tragic element in folk feeling, in the other the comic. Today the last class scarcely survives other than in an occasional noodle story told of a "Congo nager," like that of the slave who, sent to bring home a clock from the repair shop, kicked it to pieces because it persisted in striking, or of the Congo man who, seeing that the tree he was chopping was about to fall upon his head, adjusted his cotta to break the blow. Of the first class many fine survivals are related today, although modern European or East Indian tales are fast taking the place of the old tales of magic based upon the belief of the folk. Lewis remarks how this kind of story is characterized by the snatch of song upon which the tale turns and for which the action itself often serves as mere background for the repeated intervals of song. Thus the narrative bears to the song a relation corresponding to the song leader's recitative to the work chorus, or, as in our own ballads, the narrative to dialogue or refrain. Sometimes the song takes the form of a mere nonsense refrain, as in the case of the magic song by which the bull-husband effects his transformation; sometimes it voices a call, lament, command,

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which shows incremental variation in accordance with the dramatic progress of the story. To the weird effect of this song, with its haunting melody, is added the awe of the supernatural; it is as an instrument of magic that the song finds place in the action, before whose tragic compulsion human volition is helpless. As a romantic element it is used to invoke aid from some member of the family group or from a lover; more tragically it voices the forces of the supernatural world. In one story when a boy breaks the taboo which his mother when living has imposed against setting traps on Sunday, her spirit creeps into the trap in the form of a snake, which, under repeated compulsion, he is obliged to take home and cut up, then build up the fire, put on the pot, lay the table, draw up a chair, and eat the fatal food. After this he is further instructed to dig his grave, make his coffin, and take to his bed, or whatever else the ingenuity of the recounter of the cantefable can devise to prolong the gathering doom. Competitive magic is expressed in song, as in the story of the witch who sings a magic song as she chops against the tree in which her victim has taken refuge, while he bears the tree up with a counter formula. Again it may be used, as in one of Lewis's recitals, to prolong the tension in the execution of some retributive fate. His story is based upon the belief that water will rise and cover anyone attempting to cross who is guilty of thieving, but it is not always clear whether the song is sung as a lament by the victim or as a means of magic compulsion by the avenger. A quaintly immoral story from the cockpits shows the natural indignation of "Massa Jesus" against the lad whose charms have betrayed his wife into forgetting to take in his clean clothes from the yard before rain fell.

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"And Massa Jesus said dat de wife tell him dat Sammy de Comferee is prettier 'an him dat made him." Hence Sammy is condemned to climb a red-hot rod where, under the magical influence of song, he gradually melts away to a heap of fat. "An' all de pretty men dat come into de worl' get some of Sammy de Comferee's fat, but all de ugly ones don't get none." Again a magic song, learned by stealth, betrays the fish lover into the hands of his enemies—in Grimm, in a similar tale of the elf lover, the call is made by striking against a rock. In the Jamaican wolf and kid story it is a song that opens the door to "the prettiest girl in and around that country." Old Conch sings a magic song that causes timber to "pick up himself and mek one leap in two mile." Song induces the dumb child to speak. By means of a magic song the bird monster is vanquished. A bird in the tree betrays the murder of the girl in the well, but this is a European story, as are also the song sung by the murdered wife who returns at night to suckle her child, and that by which the bride in the Beauty and the Beast story recalls herself to her lost husband.

This last story illustrates two important characteristics of Jamaican story-telling. The ingenuity of the Negro in rationalizing a situation whose symbolism is foreign to him is to be observed when the true wife achieves the washing test for the symbolic "three drops of blood" with which the husband's shirt was stained at his departure: "Well, den, only cut a lime an' queeze it pon de t'ree drops a blood an' wash off!" It is this immediate visualization of the action which fills the stories with local allusions true to native experience. When Cinderella is summoned from the house by the persistency of the prince, she sits down on a grocery

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box to try on the slipper. In the second place it is significant that the wife is supposed to recall herself to the memory of her husband through the pronouncing of his secret name, "for nobody knew that his name was Bull-of-all-the-land.'" Stories based on the secret name theme—of which our "Rumpelstilzkin" is the unique European example—are fairly common in Jamaica. This happens because in West Africa the belief in the influence upon a man's life of the secret name is still as active as ever—a belief recorded back in early Egyptian times. The wife keeps the secret sacred, and words in common use which happen to correspond with the name must be replaced by others. In Hawaii a man fears the discoverer of the secret name because its knowledge proves another's command of a stronger god than his own. Probably the African idea is similar. In Jamaica "Grandy Do-and-do" refuses food to her servant unless the girl can call her name; "Brar Able" falls and breaks his neck when he hears his secret name in song; girls agree to marry anyone who can guess their secret name; not the boy who destroys, but the boy who can call the name of a monster is rewarded; a man retains a food supply from his family through knowledge of its name; the mention in counting of a number identical with the queen's name causes death.

During the recital of these cantefables the audience sometimes joins in the song. Or a comic story may end in a song of rejoicing to which the audience gets up and dances, but I think this is less common than formerly; I heard such forms only from very old narrators and generally accompanying an animal rather than a wonder tale.

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Now that the old "nager trick" tale is dead, the animal tale, of which Lewis knew nothing, has taken its place for witty comedy. Most of these stories center about the figure of the spider, Anansi, from whom indeed the whole art of composition is named. Anansi is a little bald-headed man with a falsetto voice and a cringing manner in presence of his superiors, who lives by his wits and treats outrageously anyone upon whom he has the chance to impose his superior cunning. He is a famous fiddler and something of a magician. In some stories he has the form of a man, in others that of a spider, and in still others his transformation into a spider at the moment of supreme danger is pointed to as the explanation of spiders and their habits at the present day. He has a wife and a family of children who share his exploits, notably a quick-witted son who eventually outdoes his father. The name Tacoomah, said to distinguish another form of spider from the true Anansi, is applied sometimes to his wife or to the quick-witted son, but more often to a neighbor, his accomplice in strategy, and butt of his knaveries. "Tiger" is the dull-witted bully whose misfortunes at the hands of the quicker-witted Anansi are always applauded. But not always does the trickster thus preserve the sympathy of his group. There are some story-tellers who, like the immortal Uncle Remus, revel in the idea that "Anansi trick them all; nobody can trick Anansi, only Brar Death!" In a very great number of tales, however, retributive justice intervenes, and Anansi himself falls into the pit he has digged for another. He fools the domestic animals, but Goat or Monkey or Dog, more astute than others, refuses his trap. Tiger and Monkey, with Assono (a huge unknown), are the only

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actors in the story not local to the island. Parrot, Blackbird (as Cling-cling), Ground dove, and some domestic fowls appear; of insects, Duck ant, "But-but" (butterfly), Tumble-bug; of reptiles, Snake, Lizard, Turtle and Old Conch the Snail; Cat, Dog, and Rat have a group of stories to themselves, and Cock and Cockroach appear as protagonists. A good many European trickster stories not primarily animal tales have been worked into the animal cycle with Anansi as substitute for the legitimate hero.

The rendering of such stories is exceedingly dramatic and lively. Stories as taken down from dictation are only a conventionalized record of what really happens when a clown-like lad stands in the midst of the circle at night after the work of the day is ended, and with pantomime and change of intonation proceeds to act out rather than narrate the witty happenings of the story in a dialect completely unintelligible to the stranger. Only a word here and there assures him that he is listening to an English folk rendering. This is the modern story method. A single plot or incident is told, and there the story ends, often embellished (when a song does not conclude the recital) with a familiar proverb or an explanatory ending, according to the taste of the narrator for moralizing or for natural philosophy. Occasionally an old-time narrator will string one adventure upon another without any special coherence, but on the whole the single plot is universal. Almost everyone seemed able to try his hand at a story, but in every district there were narrators especially able who had the reputation of entertainers and who knew the most and the best stories. Especially in the Cockpits old tales

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were told me by the Maroons that I did not hear elsewhere on the island. There was, however, no esoteric hoarding of a story form, and hence the same story was told in very much the same way all over the island.

The tales of magic in Jamaica respond to a definite belief in the supernatural powers which determine the action of the story. The "nager tricks" record the stupidities of the less quickly assimilative in meeting new conditions of life; they are such real if exaggerated incidents as occur in any close community sharing an artificial environment. Has the animal tale any relation to folk belief and to the life of the folk? There is no doubt that the animal stories are often told with a distinct sense in the mind of the narrator of the animal form. "Horse fling up him tail over him back gallop go," says one narrator; another paused to explain, "Anansi was a man in this story." Like the spirits of the supernatural underworld, these actors in the animal stories have the power of form-changing. They live lives like those of human beings on earth and so measure their wit against the strong and crafty. Is there any relation in the mind of the folk between this animal world in which Anansi moves with his fellows and that underworld of shadows in which the dead live in a manner corresponding to their life on earth? Anansi himself takes his origin from the spider god of the Gold Coast, where Spider acts as hero to the Tschi-speaking natives, corresponding to Turtle of the Ewe-speaking people and Rabbit of the farther coast. He is thought of as a magician. A kind of religious awe attaches to him. It is regarded as "not good" to tell Anansi stories (the term includes the whole range of folk composition, including song or riddle) before dark or

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on Sunday. Such recitals are especially connected in the minds of the folk with gatherings for the dead. An old-time pen-keeper on a remote estate in Westmoreland even asserted that Anansi was "headman" in the underworld, but I do not think this idea is common. Nevertheless, the animals which occur in the stories belong also to beliefs about the form-changing powers of the dead. Old tales of witch and sorcerer convey an emotional excitement which shows the realistic imagination under the spell of real mysteries of the spirit world. I believe that actually an underplay of reality has given to the comic situations of the animal stories their audacious wit and lifelikeness—that audiences, or at least individuals, really believe themselves sharing in the happenings of this underworld; that the belief in a ghost world filled with the shape-shifting dead, which plays so strong a part in the obeah faith of the present day, expresses itself also in the popularity of the animal folk tale as it took shape in the magic wonder tales of the past.

It is impossible to conclude this study without some observations upon the future of folk life in Jamaica. The knowledge of the belief of the folk and especially of its outer expression in life and art, while it leaves much to deplore, also gives encouragement for the future. We find a lively, imitative race with a strong practical philosophy and native wit. Especially we observe that genius for outer form which goes to the making of a harmonious social life and to its dramatic rendering in song and art as a means for stabilizing the inner passions. Much has been done to encourage that sense of order through the imposition of British law and British social and religious patterns. More must, how-

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ever, be done to bring the great mass of the folk out of their present social isolation into a more robust and wholesome way of thinking and living.

At present the native folk ways are losing their hold on the people. Poverty since the war has become a more pitiful reality to the masses, however the opportunities for the more able may have improved, because the prices of foreign commodities have risen out of proportion to those of the folk products or of wages for the small earner. The supply is always too great to force a commensurate market price. The comparative ease with which a man can raise his own food puts him at a disadvantage in competitive foreign markets. Furthermore the standard of value has been completely demoralized since the war, first by the immense fluctuations in the market, which dropped from the height of dizzy opulence to the level of destitution, and second by the influx during the period of the blockade of American tourists with their easy way of throwing money about so as to awaken disproportionate expectations among the ignorant masses. On the other hand the practice of the ruling classes to keep down folk prices to the folk level instead of stimulating excellence by paying commensurate prices may be equally demoralizing.

Besides their poverty, another cause for the restlessness of the folk is to be found in the withdrawal of the whites and the educated colored from interest in their sports and pastimes. Thus left without the stimulus of an aristocratic sponsorship such as used to cheer on the parades and dramatic performances of the old days, the people, especially the young, lose respect for their old activities. Some seek an outlet in

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the school dances and athletics after the English pattern, which the more intelligent of the native schoolteachers encourage among their pupils. Others less fortunate turn to the emotional outlet of religious orgies or to the airing of social antagonisms in the law courts. It may be said for the poverty of the folk that what the Obeah Man leaves, the lawyer exacts. Even the improving conditions of education, while opening the way for a few able, leave the great masses bookless with no means of satisfying any possibly awakened curiosity. Too much cannot be said in praise of the work of the church among the folk; but the church itself stops at spiritual enlightenment; it does not take responsibility for the material order. I have seen the wealthy colored mistresses of an estate pride themselves upon the large sum their church was contributing to foreign missions while their own laborers were emaciated and in rags.

It is a common habit to lay all such outward signs of poverty to the shiftlessness of the folk who know better than they do. This accusation is no doubt entirely justified. The black is shiftless and allows his house and water supply to go to ruin through pure inertia. This is also true of many an educated Jamaican of the better classes. I lodged some weeks at a country hotel of good reputation for which all the bath water had to be drawn from the common village drinking-pool and that for drinking brought bottled from the town twelve miles distant, merely because the colored owner had neglected to repair the pipes which should have fed the admirably constructed tank during the rainy season. The same carelessness leads the folk to carry water on their heads from a source of supply

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miles from home rather than to provide for such an emergency by means of a little labor.

The British doctrine of individual liberty hesitates to apply paternalism to the problems of folk shiftlessness and the degeneration of healthy popular entertainment. But the institution in each district of orchestras, competitive chorus singing, dramatic companies, and daytime dancing on the open green would do more to wipe out obeah than all the court proceedings on the calendar. It is necessary that not only a few picked athletes, a chosen group of girl scouts be trained in healthy activity, but that the whole community participate in such amusements as are peculiarly adapted to their racial genius. It is essential that the upper class sponsor such activities. It is also possible that the inertia against thrift might be met by means of such paternal regulations. The appointing of festival days for each district during which all repairs to houses and tanks and the putting in order of yards and fences were to be attended to, with proper provision for inspection, prizes, bands, and feasting, might in the course of time produce a spirit of eager and healthy competition among the folk as a whole which would result in a new sense of coöperation and a new love for household dignity. Possibly the sums gathered in the churches for foreign missions might for a time be well devoted to such a cause. Enthusiastic and tireless and wise leadership should be in the hands of trained social workers under government employ. The native respect for the government and for the white ruling class is a healthy sign in this little island group of African immigrants which augurs well for its ultimate solidifying upon a higher plane of gen-

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uine folk culture.

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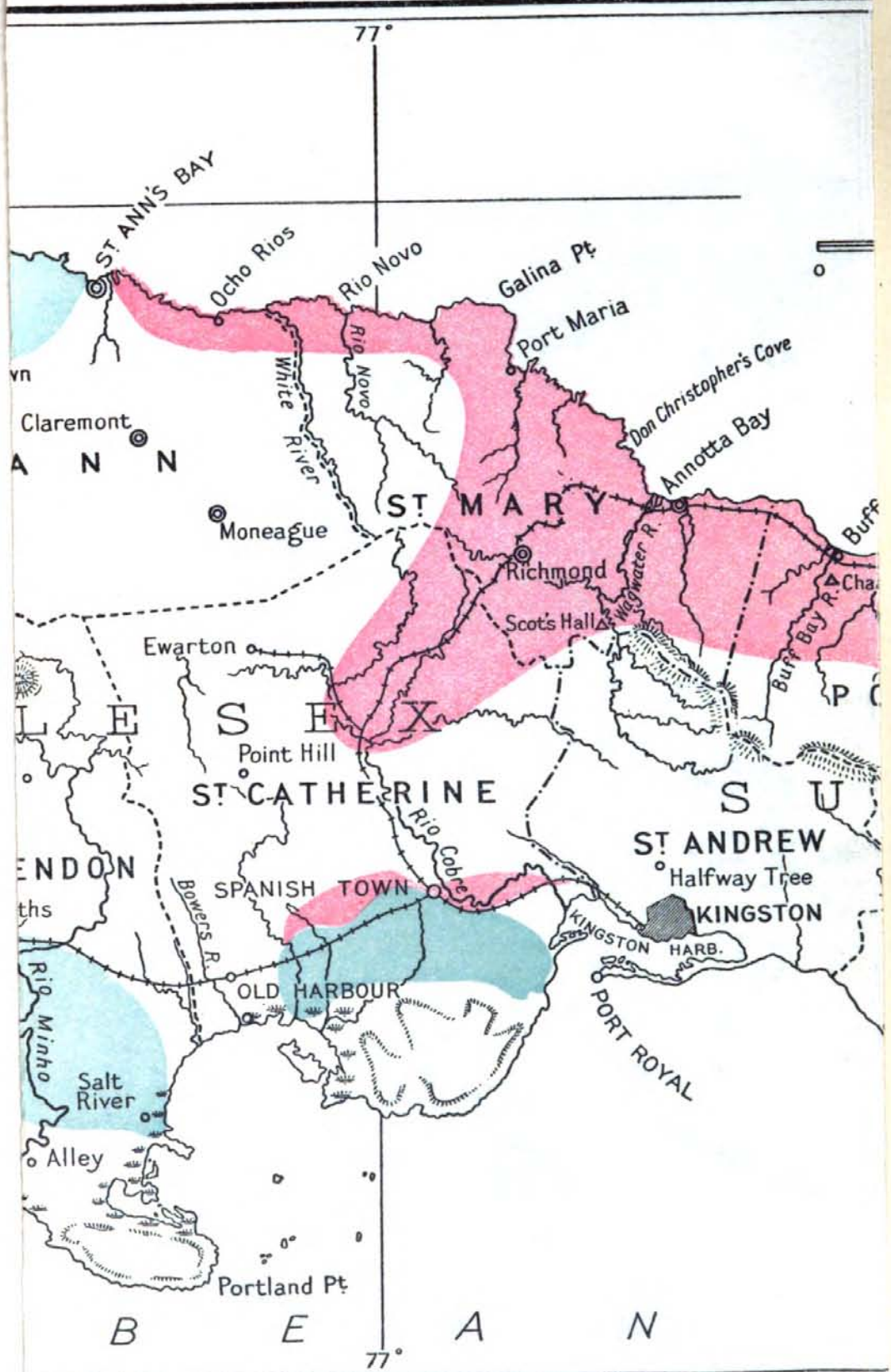

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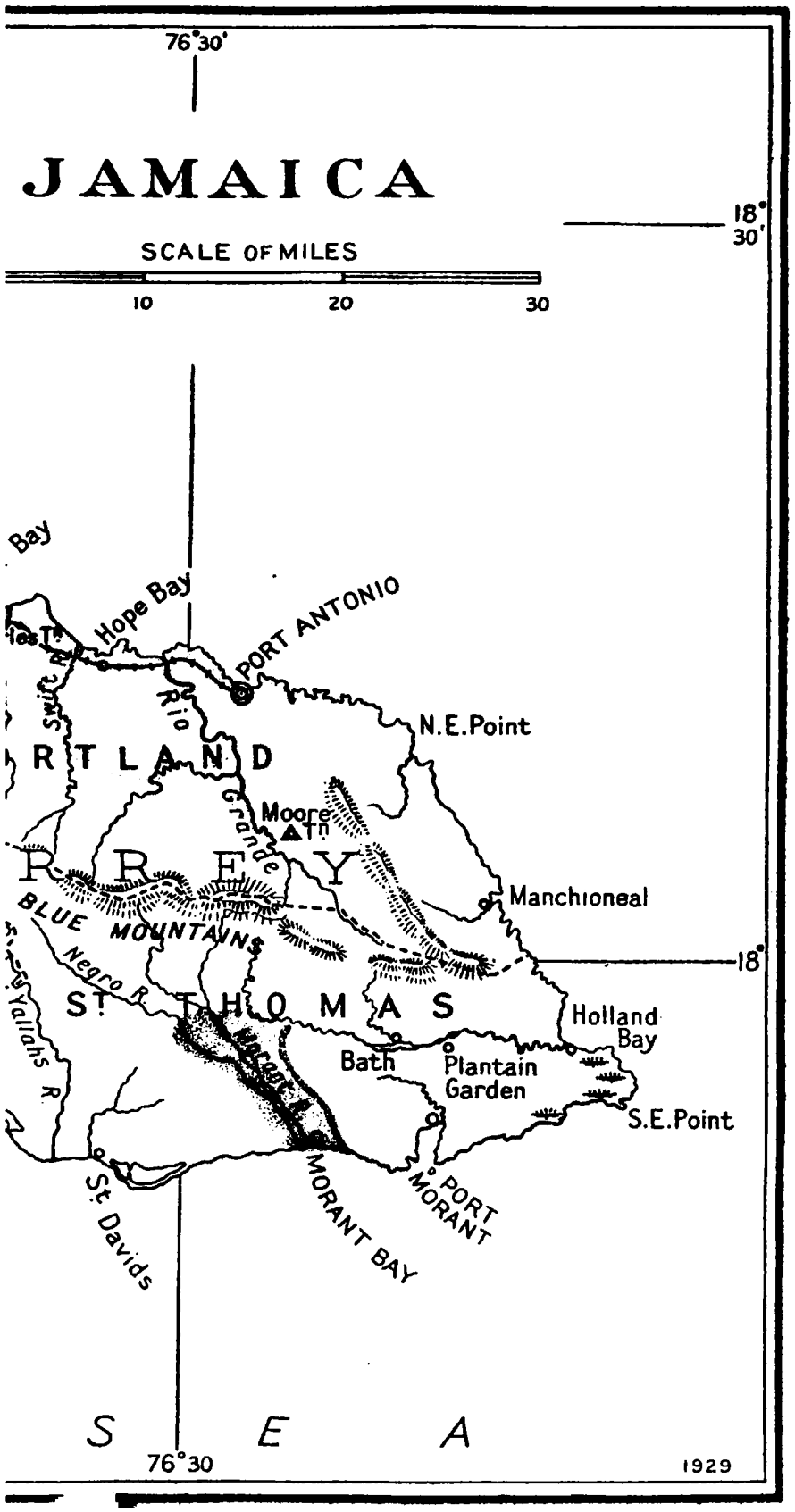

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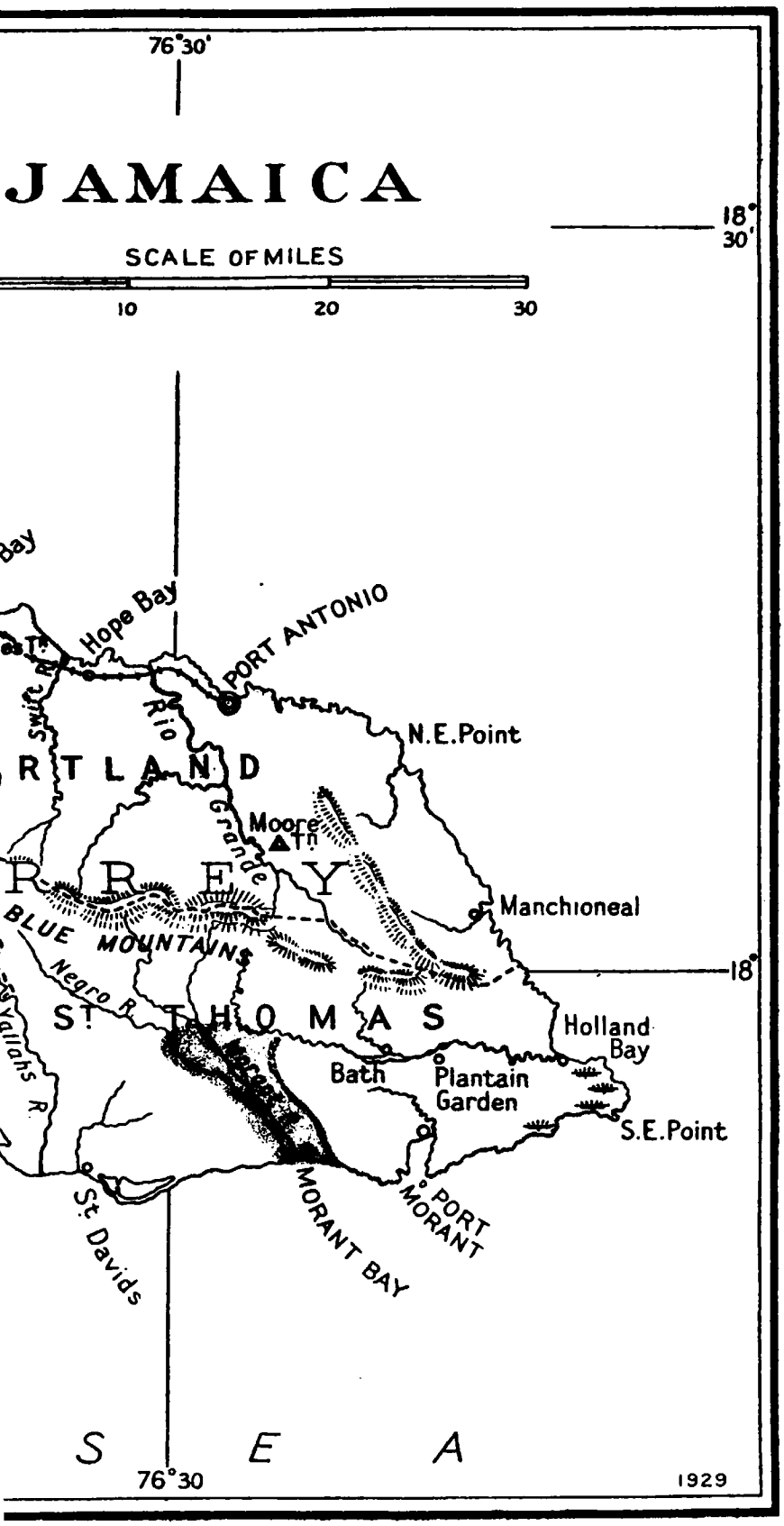

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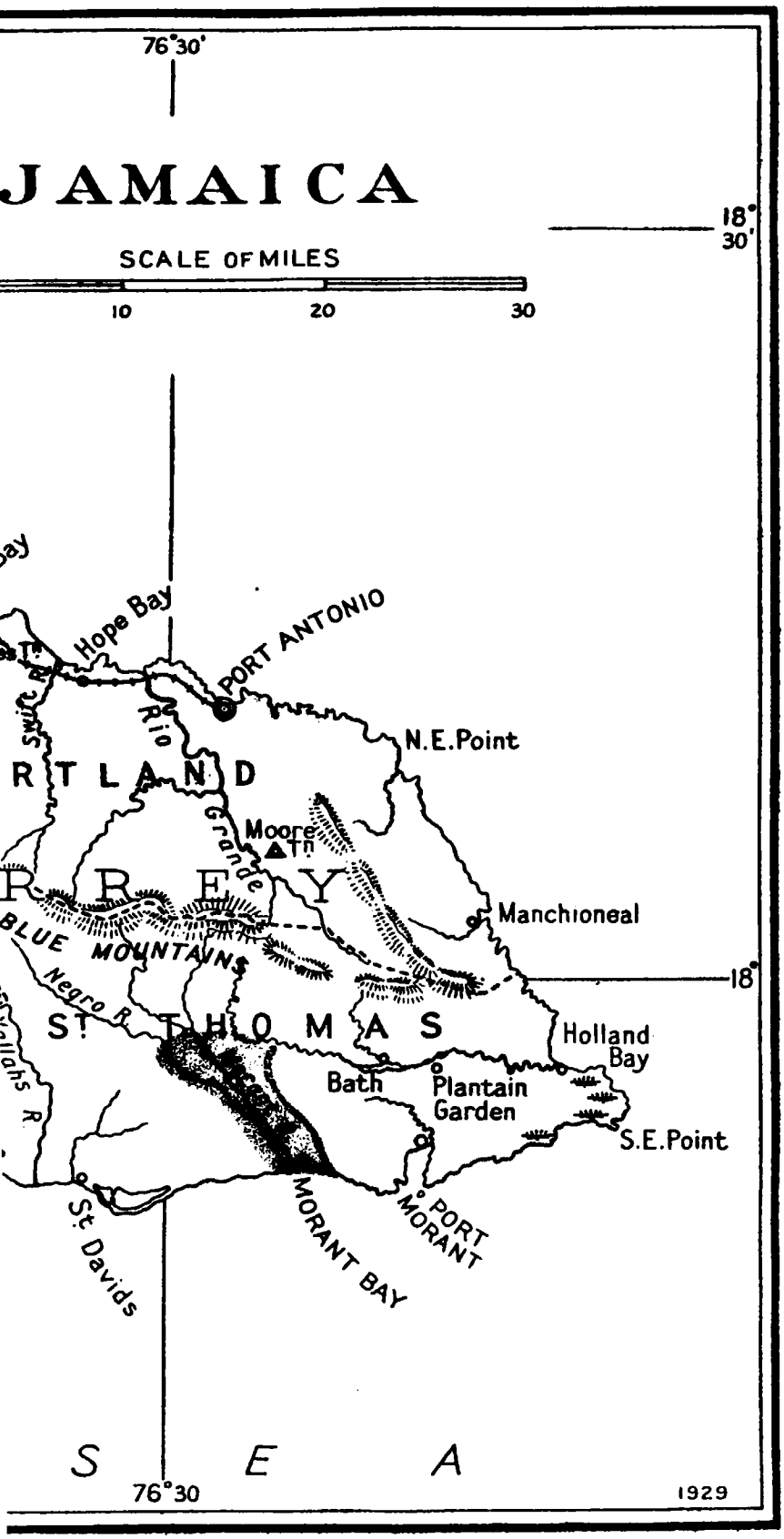

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