by the time they arc cut the field is loaded with unripe suckers inſtead of sugar-canes. A January plant, however, commonly turns out well ; but canes planted very late in the ſpring, though they have the benefit of the May rains, ſel­dom anſwer expectation ; for they generally come in unſeaſonably, and throw the enſuing crops out of regular rota­tion. They are therefore frequently cut before they are ripe ; or if the autumnal ſeaſons ſet in early, are cut in wet weather, which has probably occaſioned them to ſpring a- freſh ; in either case the effect is the ſame : The juice is un­concocted, and all the sap being in motion, the root is de­prived of its natural nouriſhment, to the great injury of the ratoon. The chief objection to a fall plant is this, that the canes become rank and top heavy, at a period when vio­lent rains and high winds are expected, and are therefore frequently lodged before they are fit to be cut.

The ſugar-cane is propagated by the top-ſhoots, which are cut from the tops of the old canes. The uſual method of planting in the West Indies is this : The quantity of land intended to be planted, being cleared of weeds and other incumbrances, is firſt divided into ſeveral plats of cer­tain dimenſions, commonly from 15 to 20 acres each ; the ſpaces between each plat or diviſion are left wide enough for roads, for the conveniency of carting, and are called *inter­vals.* Each plat is then ſubdivided, by means of a line and wooden pegs, into ſmall ſquares of about three feet and a half. Sometimes indeed the ſquares are a foot larger ; but this circumſtance makes but little difference. The negroes are then placed in a row in the firſt line, one to a ſquare, and directed to dig out with their hoes the ſeveral ſquares, commonly to the depth of five or six inches. The mold which is dug up being formed into a bank at the lower side, the excavation or cane-hole ſeldom exceeds 15 inches in width at the bottom, and two feet and a half at the top. The negroes then fall back to the next line, and proceed as before. Thus the ſeveral ſquares between each line are formed into a trench of much the ſame dimenſions with that which is made by the plough. An able negro will dig from 100 to 120 of theſe holes for his day’s work of ten hours ; but if the land has been previouſly ploughed and lain fallow, the ſame negro will dig nearly double the num­ber in the ſame time @@(c).

The cane-holes or trench being now completed, whether by the plough or by the hoe, and the cuttings ſelected for planting, which are commonly the tops of the canes that have been ground for ſugar (each cutting containing five or six gems), two of them are ſufficient for a cane hole of the dimenſions deſcribed. Theſe, being placed longitudinally in the bottom of the hole, are covered with mold about two inches deep ; the rest of the bank being intended for future uſe. In 12 or 14 days the young ſprouts begin to appear ; and as ſoon as they rise a few inches above the ground, they are, or ought to be, carefully cleared of weeds, and furniſhed with an addition of mold from the banks. This is uſually performed by the hand. At the end of four or five months the banks are wholly levelled, and the ſpaces between the rows carefully hoe-ploughed. Frequent clean­ings, while the canes are young, are indeed ſo eſſentially neceſſary, that no other merit in an overſeer can compenſate for the want of attention in this particular. A careful ma­nager will remove at the ſame time all the lateral shoots or suckers that ſpring up after the canes begin to joint, as they ſeldom come to maturity, and draw nourishment from the original plants.

“ In the cultivation of other lands, in Jamaica eſpecially (says Mr Edwards, the elegant hiſtorian of the West Indies, whole ſuperior excellence has induced us frequently to refer to him in the course of this article), the plough has been introduced of late years, and in ſome few cales to great ad­vantage ; but it is not every soil or ſituation that will admit the uſe of the plough ; ſome lands being much too ſtony, and others too ſteep ; and I am sorry I have occasion to re­mark, that a practice commonly prevails in Jamaica, on pro­perties where this auxiliary is uſed, which would exhaust the fineſt lands in the world. It is that of ploughing, then croſs-ploughing, round-ridging, and harrowing the ſame lands from year to year, or at leaſt every other year, with­out affording manure : accordingly it is found that this me­thod is utterly deſtructive of the ratoon or second growth, and altogether ruinous. It is indeed aſtoniſhing that any planter of common reading or obſervation ſhould be paſſive under ſo pernicious a syſtem. Some gentlemen, however, of late manage better : their practice is to break up ſtiff and clayey land, by one or two ploughings, early in the ſpring, and give it a ſummer’s fallow. In the autumn following, being then mellow and more eaſily worked, it is holed and planted by manual labour after the old method, which has been already deſcribed.@@ But in truth, the only advantage­ous fyſtem of ploughing in the West Indies is to confine it to the ſimple operation of holing, which may certainly be performed with much greater facility and diſpatch by the plough than by the hoe ; and the relief which, in the caſe of ſtiff and dry soils, is thus given to the negroes, exceeds all eſtimation, in the mind of a humane and provident own­er. On this ſubject I ſpeak from practical knowledge. At a plantation of my own, the greateſt part of the land which is annually planted is neatly and ſufficiently laid into cane­holes, by the labour of one able man, three boys, and eight oxen, with the common ſingle-wheeled plough. The plough- ſhare indeed is ſomewhat wider than uſual ; but this is the only difference, and the method of ploughing is the ſimpleſt poſſible. By returning the plough back along the furrow, the turf is alternately thrown to the right and to the left, forming a trench ſeven inches deep, about two feet and a half wide at the top, and one foot wide at the bottom. A ſpace of 18 or 20 inches is left between each trench, on which the mold being thrown by the ſhare, the banks are properly formed, and the holing is complete. Thus the land is not exhauſted by being too much expoſed to the ſun ; and in this manner a field of 20 acres is holed with one plough, and with great eaſe, in 13 days. The plants are afterwards placed in the trench as in the common me­thod, where manual labour alone is employed.

In moſt parts of the West Indies it is uſual to hole and plant a certain proportion of the cane-land, commonly one- third in annual rotation. Canes of the firſt year’s growth are called *plant canes,* as has been already obſerved The ſprouts that ſpring from the roots of the canes that have

@@@[mu] Edward's History of the West Indies, vol. ii.

@@@(C) As the negroes work at this business very unequally, according to their different degrees of bodily strength, it is sometimes the practice to put two negroes to a single square; but if the land has not had the previous assistance of the plough, it commonly requires the labour of 50 able negroes for 13 days to hole 20 acres. In Jamaica, some gentlemen, to ease their own slaves, have this laborious part of the planting-business performed by job-work. The usual price for holing and planting is L. 6 currency per acre (equal to L. 4, 7s. Sterling). The cost of falling and clearing heavy wood-land is commonly as much more.