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 system 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 despatch 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 cane-holes, by the labour of one able man, three boys, and eight oxen, with the common single-wheeled plough. The ploughshare 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 eighteen or twenty inches is left between each trench, on which the mould 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 twenty acres is holed with one plough, and with great ease, in thirteen days. The plants are afterwards placed in the trench as in the common method where manual labour alone is employed.”@@1

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 been previously cut for sugar are called *ratoons ;* the first yearly returns from their roots are called *first ratoons,* the second year’s growth *second ratoons.*

Mr Edwards informs us, that the manure generally used is a compost, formed, 1st, of the vegetable ashes drawn from the fires of the boiling and still-houses ; 2dly, feculencies discharged from the still-house, mixed up with rubbish of buildings, white-lime, &c. ; 3dly, refuse, or field-trash, *i*. *e.* the decayed leaves and stems of the cane, so called in contradistinction to cane-trash, reserved for fuel ; 4∙thly, dung, obtained from the horse and mule stables, and from moveable pens, or small enclosures made by posts and rails, occasionally shifted upon the lands intended to be planted, and into which the cattle are turned at night; 5thly, good mould, collected from gullies and other waste places, and thrown into the cattle-pens.

The sugar-cane is liable to be destroyed by monkeys, rats, and insects. The upland plantations suffer greatly from monkeys. These creatures, which now abound in

the mountainous parts of St Christopher’s, were first brought thither by the French, when they possessed half that island. They come down from the rocks in silent parties by night, and having posted sentinels to give the alarm if any thing approaches, they destroy incredible quantities of the cane, by their gambols as well as their greediness. It is in vain to set traps for these creatures, however baited ; and the only way to protect the plantation, and destroy them, is to set a numerous watch, well armed with fowling-pieces, and fur­nished with dogs. The negroes will perform this service cheerfully, for they are very fond of monkeys as food. Father Labat affirms they are very delicious, but the white inhabitants of St Christophers never eat them.

The low-land plantations suffer as much by rats as those on the mountains do from monkeys ; but the rats, no more than the monkeys, are natives of the place. They came with the shipping from Europe, and breed in the ground under loose rocks and bushes : the field negroes cat them greedi­ly, and they are said to be publicly sold in the markets at Jamaica. To free the plantations from these vermin, the breed of wild cats should be encouraged, and snakes suffer­ed to multiply unmolested ; they may also be poisoned with arsenic, and the rasped root of the cassava made into pel­lets, and plentifully scattered over the grounds. This prac­tice is however dangerous ; for as the rats, when thus poi­soned, become exceedingly thirsty, they run in droves to the neighbouring streams, which they poison as they drink, and the cattle grazing on the banks of these polluted waters have frequently perished by drinking after them. It is safer therefore to make the pellets of flour, kneaded with the juice of the nightshade, the scent of which will drive them away though they will not eat it. There is an East Indian animal called *mungoes,* which bears a natural antipathy to rats; and if this animal was introduced into our sugar islands, it would probably extirpate the whole race of these noxious vermin. The *formica omnivora* of Linnaeus, the carnivo­rous ant, which is called in Jamaica the *raffle's ant,* would soon clear a sugar-plantation of rats.

The sugar-cane is also subject to a disease which no fore­sight can obviate, and for which human wisdom has hither­to in vain attempted to find a remedy. This disease is called the *blast,* and is occasioned by a species of *aphis.* When this happens, the fine, broad, green blades become sickly, dry, and withered; they soon afterwards appear stain­ed in spots ; and if these spots are carefully examined, they will be found to contain innumerable eggs of an insect like a bug, which are soon quickened, and cover the plants with the vermin. The juice of the canes thus affected becomes sour, and no future shoot issues from the joints. Ants also concur with the bugs to spoil the plantation, and against these evils it is hard to find a remedy.

The crops of sugar-canes do not ripen precisely at the same period in all the colonies. In the Danish, Spanish, and Dutch settlements, they begin in January, and conti­nue till October. This method does not imply any fixed season for the maturity of the sugar-cane. The plant, how­ever, like others, must have its progress ; and it has been justly observed to be in flower in the months of November and December. From the custom which these nations have adopted of continuing to gather their crops for ten months without intermission, it must necessarily follow that they cut some canes which are not ripe enough, and others which are too ripe, and then the fruit has not the requisite quali­ties. The time of gathering them should be at a fixed sea­son, and probably the months of March and April are the fittest for it ; because all the sweet fruits are ripe at that time, while the sour ones do not arrive at a state of matu­rity till the months of July and August

The English cut their canes in March and April ; but

@@@1 Edwards's History of the West Indies, vol. ii.