higheſt degree to ſuppose, that they would plant ſugar- canes, and at the ſame time put hogs aſhore to deſtroy them.

‘‘ Neither had the Spaniards any motive for beſtowing this plant on iſlands which they conſidered as of no kind of importance, except for the purpoſe that has been men­tioned ; and to ſuppoſe that the Charaibes might have cul­tivated, after their departure, a production of which they knew nothing, betrays a total ignorance of the Indian diſpoſition and character.

" But (continues Rabat) we have ſurer teſtimony, and ſuch as proves, beyond all contradiction, that the ſugar-cane is the natural production of America. For, beſides the evi­dence of Francis Ximines, who, in a Treatiſe on American Plants, printed at Mexico, asserts, that the ſugar-cane grows without cultivation, and to an extraordinary ſize, on the banks of the river Plate, we are aſſured by Jean de Lery, a Proteſtant miniſter, who was chaplain in 1556 to the Dutch garriſon in the fort of Coligny, on the river Janei­ro, that he himſelf found ſugar-canes in great abundance in many places on the banks of that river, and in ſituations ne­ver viſited by the Portugueſe. Father Hennepen and other voyagers bear teſtimony in like manner to the growth of the cane near the mouth of the Miſſiſſippi ; and Jean de Laet to its ſpontaneous production in the iſland of St Vin­cent. It is not for the plant itſelf, therefore, but for the ſecret of making ſugar from it, that the West Indies are in­debted to the Spaniards and Portugueſe ; and theſe to the nations of the eaſt.”

Such is the reaſoning of Labat, which the learned Lasitau has pronounced incontrovertible ; and it is greatly strengthened by recent discoveries, the ſugar-cane having been found in many of the iſlands of the Pacific Ocean by our late illuſtrious navigator Captain Cook.

The ſugar-cane, or ſaccharum officinarum of botaniſts, is a jointed reed, commonly measuring(the flag part not included) from three feet and a half to ſeven feet in height, but ſometimes rising to 12 feet. When ripe it is of a fine ſtraw co­lour inclining to yellow, producing leaves or blades, the edges of which are finely and ſharply ſerrated, and termina­ting in an arrow decorated with a panicle. The joints in one ſtalk are from 40 to 60 in number, and the ſtalks riling from one root are ſometimes very numerous. The young ſhoot aſcends from the earth like the point of an arrow ; the ſhaſt of which ſoon breaks, and the two firſt leaves, which had been incloſed within a quadruple (heath of seminal leaves, rise to a conſiderable height @@(b). See Plate CCCCLXXXVI. M is the arrow and N the lower part with the root.

As the cane is a rank ſucculent plant, it muſt require a strong deep ſoil to bring it to perfection, perhaps indeed no soil can be too rich for this purpoſe. The ſoil which ex­perience has found to be moſt favourable to the cultivation of it in the West Indies is the dark grey loam of St Chriſtopher’s, which is ſo light and porous as to be penetrable by the ſlighteſt application of the hoe. The under ſtratum is gravel from 8 to 12 inches deep. Canes planted in par­ticular ſpots in this iſland have been known to yield 8000 pounds of Muſcovado ſugar from a ſingle acre. The ave­rage produce of the iſland for a ſeries of years has been 16,000 hogsheads of 16 cwt, which is one-half only of the whole cane-land, or 8500 acres. When annually cut, it gives nearly two hogsheads of 16 cwt. per acre for the whole of the land in ripe canes.

Next to the ashy loam of St Chriſtopher’s is the ſoil which in Jamaica is called *brick-mold;* not as reſembling a brick in colour, but as containing ſuch a due mixture of clay and sand as is suppoſed to render it well adapted for the uſe of the kiln. It is a deep, warm, and mellow, hazel earth, eaſily worked; and though its ſurface ſoon grows dry after rain, the under ſtratum retains a conſiderable degree of rnoiſture in the drieſt weather ; with this advantage too, that even in the wetteſt ſeaſon it ſeldom requires trenching. Plant caries, by which is meant canes of the firſt growth, have been known in very fine ſeaſons to yield two tons and a half oſ ſugar per acre. After this may be reckoned the black mold of ſeveral varieties.@@ The beſt is the deep black earth of Barbadoes, Antigua, and ſome other of the wind­ward iſlands ; but there is a ſpecies of this mold in Jamaica that is but little, if any thing inferior to it, which abounds with limeſtone and flint on a ſubſtratum of ſoapy marle. Black mold on clay is more common ; bnt as the mold is ge­nerally ſhallow, and the clay ſtiff and retentive of water, this laſt sort of land requires great labour, both in ploughing and trenching, to render it profitable. When manured and properly pulverized, it becomes very productive. It is unneceſſary to attempt a minute deſcription of all the other ſoils which are found in theſe iſlands. There is, howcver, a peculiar sort of land on the north side of Jamaica, chiefly in the pariſh of Trelawney, that cannot be paſſed over un­noticed, not only on account of its ſcarcity but its value ; few ſoils producing finer ſugars, or ſuch *as anſwer ſo well in the pan ;* an expreſſion ſignifying a greater return of refined ſugar than common. The land alluded to is generally of a red colour; the ſhades of which, however, vary conſiderably from a deep chocolate to a rich scarlet; in ſome places it approaches to a bright yellow, but it is everywhere remark­able, when firſt turned up, for a gloſſy or ſhining ſurface, and if wetted ſtains the fingers like paint.

As in every climate there is a ſeaſon more favourable for vegetation than others, it is of great importance that plants for ſeed be committed to the ground at the commencement of this ſeaſon. As the cane requires a great deal of moiſture to bring it to maturity, the propereſt ſeaſon for plant­ing it is in the months of September and October, when the autumnal rains commence, that it may be ſufficiently luxu­riant to ſhade the ground before the dry weather ſets in. Thus the root is kept moiſt, and the crop is ripe for the mill in the beginning of the enſuing year. Canes planted in the month of November, or later in the ſeaſon, lose the advantage of the autumnal rains ; and it often happens that dry weather in the beginning of the enſuing year retards their vegetation until the vernal or May rains ſet in, when they ſprout both at the roots and the joints ; ſo that

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

@@@(b) “A field of canes, when standing, in the month of November, when it is in arrow or full bloſſom (ſays Mr Beck­ford in his deſcriptive Account of the Iſland of Jamaica), is one of the moſt beautiful productions that the pen or pencil can poſſibly deſcribe. It in common riſes from three to eight feet or more in height ; a difference of growth that very strongly marks the difference of ſoil or the varieties of culture. It is when ripe of a bright and golden yellow ; and where obvious to the ſun, is in many parts very beautifully ſtreaked with red : the top is of a darkish green ; but the more dry it becomes, from either an excess of ripeneſs or a continuance oſ drought, of a ruſſet yellow, with long and narrow leaves depending ; from the centre of which ſhoots up an arrow like a ſilver wand from two to six feet in height; and from the ſummits of which grows out a plume of white feathers, which are delicately fringed with a lilac dye ; and indeed is, in its appearance, not much unlike the tuft that adorns this particular and elegant tree.”