

CONTENTS.

Introduction		Page
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Part the First.

Chap.		Page
I.	On Negro Slaves	33
II.	On the Seasoning of Negroes	51
III.	On Diet	86
IV.	On Clothing	129
V.	On Lodging	132
VI.	On Breeding	151
VII.	On Labour	175
VIII.	On Discipline	197
IX.	On Religion	213

Part the Second.

	Page		Page
On the Sick	231	Measles	329
On the Hospital	252	Sore Eyes	333
Disorders of the Bowels	266	Rheumatism	337
Colic or Belly ach	267	Mal D'Estomach	340
Diarrhoea or Purging	277	Dropsey	348
Dysentery or Bloody-flux	287	Locked Jaw	359
Fevers	300	Tooth-ach	363
Simple Fever	303	Coughs	367
Intermittent Fever	305	Pulmonary Consumption	
Inflammatory Fever	308		369
Putrid Sore Throat	312	Hooping Cough	372
Inflammatory Sore Throat	317	Gravel	375
Small Pox	318	Obstructions	378
Cow Pox	325	Fluor Albus	381
		Leprosy	384

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Elephantiasis	387	Falling-down of the	
Worms	388	Womb	434
Ascarides	389	Ulcers	436
Long Round Worms	390	Burns and Scalds	445
Tape Worm	396	Pregnant Women	447
Guinea Worms	399	Abortion	450
Chigoes	402	Child-bed	453
Venereal Disease	406	New-born Infants	457
Virulent Gonorrhœa	406	The Thrush	459
Yaws	412	Colics	460
Tubbos	424	Purgings	461
Itch	427	Teething	462
Ringworms	430	Food	464
Shingles	431	Appendix	465
Ruptures	432		

CORRIGENDA.

Page 15, line 15, for legislator read legislatures, and for island read islands.

- 22, — 12, for powers read pains.
- 29, — 22, for on read in.
- 97, — 6, for as read no.
- 102, — 7, for labour on them read labour them.
- 108, — 17, for the read their.
- 155, — 1, *delete* an evil.
- 156, — 23, for gestations read gestation.
- 181, — 17, for discrete read discreet.
- 213, — 9, for petulant read petulant.
- 312, — 1, for not read next.

leapole, had not facilitated spreading of evils and
oppressions and brought about the present
calamities which now exist among the slaves and
which have rendered the land valueless.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Breeding of Negroes.

IT is very certain, that the negroes who are born and reared in the sugar colonies, bear no proportion to those who die there: hence, in order to prevent the depopulation that would otherwise take place, a demand arises for recruits from the continent of Africa, from whence a great number are annually drafted for the consumption of the islands. This circumstance has afforded matter of concern to many good men, whose humanity revolted from a system of commerce, which depopulates one part of the world for the aggrandizement of the other, and whose efforts for its suppression, have been exerted with no common zeal.

It has been asserted, that this facility of obtain-

ing slaves by purchase, hath had the bad effect of rendering the West-India Planters less attentive to their increase by procreation, than they otherwise would have been, if they had had their own stock only to depend upon; and that it was with them a matter of calculation, whether it were not cheaper to buy new negroes, than to wait their tardy generation, through all the stages of pregnancy, and infancy, at an expense more than equal to their value, when arrived at any degree of maturity for labour.

So far as this charge goes, I know not that it hath been altogether without foundation; as I preserve a faithful remembrance of the subject, having been agitated in companies where I was present, and that the weight of argument was thought to preponderate greatly in favour of the mode-of purchase.

It is therefore more than probable, that practice was regulated by that conviction, and that we were less anxious than we ought to have been, for the increasing of our gangs by breeding; but I hope we have not merited the reproaches with which we have been loaded, of having used our endeavours to prevent it. But, whatever might have been the indifference of men to this subject formerly, it certainly is no longer so, for calculation very clearly

coincides with duty, and tells us, that it is much cheaper to breed than to purchase; the price of new negroes being three times as great as it was forty years ago, and a possibility existing, that we may be finally excluded from that source of supply.

This decrease of negro slaves in the islands, has partly arisen from their destructive occupations in an unhealthy climate, and so far the evil admits of no remedy; but there are also other causes contributing to it in no small degree, which may be obviated. These are,

1. The lesser number of imported females.
2. Their sterility.
3. Their frequent abortions.
4. The great number of infants who die soon after their birth.

It has been usual for purchasers to give a preference of males to females, from many motives, but principally from their being less subject to indisposition, and from the variety of services on a plantation, which are not to be executed but by masculine vigour. In order, therefore, to meet this demand, the traders have generally assorted their cargoes in the proportion of three males to two females. Now, I think it cannot reasonably be denied, that

women are at least as necessary to propagation as men. Nay, a French writer, who has favoured the public with a supplement to Rousseau's social contract, has asserted, that they are much more so; for he lays it down as a rule, that in a society of ten thousand women, and ten thousand men, no more children will be born, than if there had been only one-fifth part of the males, which he supposes to be a proportion fully competent to every purpose of generation. Of this position I should have entertained a doubt, had not my assent been extorted by the confidence with which it was delivered; and, by a knowledge of such strange things having happened in that kingdom, that every thing may be credited as possible. But, taking it for granted, that no such sturdy powers reside in the males of any other country, and no such facilities in the females, I shall only advise, that were a planter has not his due proportion of women, he should procure them, that each may be accommodated according to the ordinance of nature, and not be under the necessity of trespassing on his neighbour; though it will be difficult to fix their desires to their respective plantations, and prevent them from wandering after novelties abroad.

The next point to be attended to is, to prevent

their sterility, which is an evil not to be done entirely; for negro women have ardent constitutions, which dispose them to be liberal of their favours; and it has been found by experience, that they who resign themselves to the indiscriminate caresses of men, are seldom very prolific; therefore, you must expect that there will be many of your female slaves, who will contribute but little to the population of your estate.

As to that barrenness which arises from the obstruction of their periodical discharges, it may frequently be removed by the regimen, and medical means, hereafter to be treated of, in a chapter set apart for that subject; though, I believe, it will be found, that without any other means than the general ones recommended with respect to diet, Lodgings, and labour, your negroes will be preserved in a state of fecundity, that will enable them to present you with a sufficient number of annual recruits, to repair the mortality of your gang.

But you are not only deprived of the fruit of your negroes, by their inability to conceive, but also by their abortions after having conceived; frequently accidental, and sometimes spontaneous, being solicited by art.

Accidental abortions arise, either from internal

weakness, or external injury. If from the first of these causes, the constitution must be strengthened by nourishing diet, the cold bath, and steel and bitters, in small quantities, and very moderate labour.

External injuries are to be prevented, by not suffering them to carry heavy loads any where, but particularly in descending steep and slippery hills after rain, or to over work themselves.

Abortions, excited by the art of the negro herself, arise from her considering pregnancy as an evil, and children as incumbrances ; therefore, in order to obviate the one, and to get rid of the other, they endeavour to obtain a miscarriage, either by such violences as they know to be generally effectual, or by some of the simples of the country, which are possessed of forcible powers of expulsion.

That pregnancy occasions great inconveniences, there is no doubt, even to persons whose happier circumstances enable them to palliate its rigours, by every means which affluence can supply ; but, to a labouring slave, the evil admits no indulgences of the kind. During the first months of gestations, her stomach is harrassed with sickness, and in the latter stages of it, the weight and pressure of the child

disables her from moving without uneasiness and difficulty. Upheld by no consolation, animated by no hope, her nine-months of torment issue in the production of a being, doomed, like herself, to the rigours of eternal servitude, and aggravating, by its claims on maternal support, the weight of her own evils.

These considerations ought to have more weight than they are usually allowed to possess. If the effects of pregnancy cannot be altogether avoided, they may be prevented from oppressing the mind of the negro, so as to incite her to the criminal attempt of expelling her burden, by the possession of present indulgencies, and the prospect of future remuneration. It would be unadvisable, even with respect to the negro herself, to exempt her totally from labour; for, by a moderate use of it, her health will be preserved, and her mind kept freer from painful reflections; but she should be favoured with occasional remissions of it, particularly when she throws herself into the sick-house. Pregnant women are not to be incessantly goaded to their work; and that which is required of them, should be of a lighter kind than what they usually perform.

Six weeks, or two months, before the expected time of delivery, they should be put among the

grass gang, to bring a few bundles of grass, or vines, for the use of the stock. To the last hour they should be kept in motion, though for their own profit, for their service to the estate will be very little; but, as they will present themselves several times in a day with the little negroes, you will see that they are employed, and in such a manner, as cannot possibly injure them.

This exemption from labour will be looked upon by your negroes as some indemnity for their sufferings, and the hope of those indulgencies which they are to experience when they are mothers, will probably render them desirous to become so.

If a miscarriage should be threatened, which you will know by the negro complaining of a violent pain in the loins, and the bottom of the belly, and sometimes by a loss of blood, a still more certain indication of approaching mischief, you will immediately order her to a retired room of the sick house, and, to prevent the threatened consequences, have recourse to the means recommended in the chapter on abortion.

When the time of labour approaches, you are to see that they are provided with proper child-bed linen; and if they have it not themselves, you must supply it from a store, which you should always

keep at hand for that purpose. You should also satisfy yourself that they have a dry lodging, and proper coverings, to defend them from the cold while they are lying-in. This, like many other points of their treatment, hath been but too much neglected, and a negro, in ordinary travail, was but little more thought of than a cat in the same circumstances.

When the pains of labour come on, they will require the service of the midwife, one of which you ought to have of your own, as no estate should be without one. Any elderly, sensible, prudent woman, who has borne children, may easily be instructed in the art of delivering others. A few lessons from any gentleman of the faculty, or even from one of her own sex, will qualify her sufficiently for your purpose; the principal part of what she has to learn being, not to attempt too much, and to demand other assistance, when the presentation of the child is not according to nature. In forty-nine times out of fifty, no other assistance will be required; for few are the cases where nature is not the midwife; but in those of seeming difficulty, men of science must be early resorted to; for the life of a negro is not to be hazarded, in the hope of nature

accomplishing her own task, though it is more than probable she will ultimately do so. For this reason, and that you may not be tempted from motives of economy, to withhold assistance until it is too late to be effectual; you had better engage the medical attendant of your estate to take your midwifery cares also by the year; which he will do for a small augmentation of salary, provided he is only to be called in cases pronounced of emergency, by the midwife. Her vanity will prevent his being called too often, though she should be admonished of the danger of delay, and threatened with punishment, if any accident should happen through her neglect.

During labour, no rum, or wine, or any thing that is heating, should be given, on any pretence, unless the doctor advises it; the only proper nourishment, at that time, being a little panada, or gruel. The patient must be ordered, not to exhaust herself with violent exertions, to hasten the operations of nature, but to let her have her own course, and to resign to her efforts.

As soon as the negro is delivered, and every thing done that her situation requires, the child must be next attended to; and a tub of water, from

the sea, if it can conveniently be procured, if not, of any other water, being at hand for the purpose, the child, unless weakness, or any other circumstance forbids, must be immediately plunged into it, over head and ears, and withdrawn instantly.

This may appear a harsh and hazardous process to persons accustomed to the softer treatment of ordinary life ; and is, in fact, so great a deviation from the rule which nature seems to have prescribed, that nothing but experience of its effects could justify my recommending it as I do, most warmly, not only from my own practice of thirty years, but also from that of many others, whom I have known in the West Indies, and the immemorial usage of many tribes in savage life, from whom the hint was probably first derived.

It is notorious to every one, to whom the subject is familiar, that a great many negro children die within the first twelve or fourteen days after their birth, of what is called the jawfall ; a cruel malady on most estates ; but on some it has proved so fatal, that few, in consequence of it, survive that period, though every means which science seemed to dictate, were resorted to, to prevent it.*

* Mr. Chisholm, an eminent practitioner of Jamaica, rated the number who die of the jawfall at one fourth. Mr. An-

This phenomenon has been ascribed to various causes; particularly to the access of cold air to the navel string, and the retention of the meconium, as it is called, or that viscous humour which lines the stomach and bowels of new-born infants. It is of little use to speculate on this point; but certain it is that neither an attention to the navel, nor a timely evacuation of the bowels alone, though that is highly proper, will be found sufficient to prevent the jawfall. The only thing from which I have experienced any signal service, is the dipping above recommended, which has proved so very effectual with me, and others, who have made trial of its effects, and the instances of its failing, (as a preventive before the disorder has made its appearance, for, after it, nothing will do,) are so few, as to be comprised in four or five cases during the space of thirty years. I do not say that they

will not be found to prevail with others.

Mr. Anderson, of Saint Ann's Parish, concurs in the same opinion, though Mr. Quiers, a gentleman of long and extensive practice in the parishes of St. John and St. Thomas, in the Vale, in the same island, stated, that he did not think the jawfall, or tetanus, a common disorder among the infants of his quarter. It merits inquiry, from what local causes, if any, this disorder appears so frequently on some estates, and so rarely on others.

Vide the reports of the committee of council, article, Jamaica, Appendix.

may not possibly have been more numerous; but my memory does not furnish me with a recollection of them; and this I know, that they were so rare, that when a child was born, I suffered but small apprehensions for its fate from that otherwise terrible disorder. It is true, indeed, that I neglected no other means that have been deemed necessary, such as a due regard to the navel, and the bowels, which I purge with a tea-spoonful of castor oil, or two drachms of manna, on the second day; and if that does not operate sufficiently, I order the dose to be repeated the following day. The children ought not only to be dipped soon after they come into the world, but also every other day, when particular indisposition does not render it improper. The good effects of this practice, which I most earnestly recommend my readers to adopt, is inconceivable. I am almost sanguine enough to expect from it, that so many children will be rescued from the first perils of infancy, as to lessen not a little the depopulation complained of.

As soon as the mother has rested, and recovered from the fatigues of her labour, the child should be put to the breast; nature disposes it to suck, and we should pursue her indication.

Fortunately, the dangers of child-bed are not very great in warm climates ; much less so certainly than in the colder ones. Negroes are seldom attacked with child-bed fevers, and recover rapidly, even when all, which prudence seems to prescribe, are neglected to be observed. However, the fourth or fifth day after delivery, the mother should be gently purged, with a table spoonful of castor oil, or an ounce of manna dissolved in warm water ; and she should not be required to return to the field until a month after that period. As to her confinement to the house during that time, that you are not to expect her to submit to, nor indeed ought you to require it, nature working her own purposes, by shorter and more efficacious means, than officious man, who traverses all her operations, is willing to admit ; perhaps she might return to her labour much earlier, but upon the principle of her being entitled to indulgence, a month at least must be allowed to recruit her strength and spirits, and when she does go to the field, you must put her into one of the weaker gangs, and work her gently, until she is perfectly re-established in her former vigour.

It hath been usual to allow the mothers to carry

their children to the field, that they may retire occasionally to suckle them. The practice is bad, for the following reasons, which respect the child.

They are exposed to inconveniences from their compression at the back of their mothers, in going to, and returning from the field, also to the sun, wind, and rain, when there ; for it is seldom they are protected by any sufficient defence ; and it is idle to urge, as some have done, in justification of this practice, that negroes reared in that way are more hardy than others, who are more carefully nursed ; for it is bad policy to encounter a risk of death in order to fortify the body. Infancy, at least, is not the season to attempt it ; for the constitutions of children are not to be formed in the first or second year after they are brought into the world. Their powers of resisting the inclemencies of the elements, and the toils of the field must be acquired by their own exertions, at a later period of life.

The practice is bad also with respect to the interest of the master ; for the mothers frequently lose a great deal of time. Under a pretence of giving suck to their children, they step aside from their labour, every now and then, and stay so long as to lose near the half of every day. You will therefore do

well to abolish this practice as soon as possible ; as I did long ago, much to my benefit, and the advantage of my gang ; for I find my children the healthier for it, and that more work is done by the mothers who, for that reason, resisted the reform as much as they could, though a little use reconciled them to it.

The negro women being prohibited from taking their children into the field, you must have, in the centre of your negro houses, one of larger dimensions than the rest, and proportioned to the size of the estate ; if built of stone, so much the better, for the purpose of a nursery, to receive all your negro children, from the end of the first month of their birth, until they are old enough to begin to do some work, and to be incorporated among your grass-gang.

To this nursery, which must be supplied with a range of trays, or shallow boxes, elevated on a platform a few inches from the ground, to prevent the infants from rolling down, you must have them all conducted every morning and noon, when the mothers go to the field, and there placed under the care of one or more very sensible and trust-worthy old women, the feeblest of them, and such as are superanuated for field labour, will answer this pur-

pose better than any other, as they are more attentive to their charge, and less apt to go abroad in pursuit of amusement, than the younger part of the sex. Their business must be, to place the infants in their cradles, to keep them clean, to feed them with spoon-meat when they require it, and to exercise them from time to time, though, following the indications of nature, the best exercise will be rolling about the floor. As to the children who are able to walk, and that they will soon do from their own exertions, they may be allowed to amuse themselves at play, either in the house, or out of it; but they should not go out of the nurses sight, and, in order that they may always be kept within it, the nursery should be encompassed at such a distance, as to include an area of fifty or sixty feet square, with paling, four or five feet high, beyond which they should not be allowed to ramble. By this means they are less exposed to accidents, and your negro houses better preserved from fire, of which they are frequently the occasion.

But though the mothers are not to be permitted to carry their infants into the field, they are nevertheless to be allowed time to suckle them at home; therefore, you must indulge them with an hour of grace, after the other negroes are turned out in the

morning, and one hour at breakfast, which will be sufficient, to allow them to repair to the nursery to give suck to their children. At noon they will require no particular indulgence in point of time ; as they are, instead of it, to be exempted from picking grass, both at noon and at night, as long as they continue to be nurses.

In the absence of the mothers, the cravings of the children are to be appeased with a little pap or penada ; for which purpose, a quantity of bread, flour, and sugar, proportioned to the number of children, is to be distributed two or three times a week to the nurses, who are to feed them with a spoon.

That you may keep a strict eye upon the nurses, so as to prevent them, either from misappropriating the provisions allowed for the infants, or from neglecting them in any other respect, it would be proper for you now and then to look into the nursery, that you may be convinced they are duly employed.

To preserve children in health, through all the variations of weather, and to strengthen their bodies, I have found nothing more efficacious than the cold-bath. The dipping, recommended at the birth, should be continued when the infants get into the nursery, and all the time they remain there, though

they are not to be permitted to continue in the water very long at a time.

When any of the children are indisposed, it is the duty of the nurse to apprise you of it immediately, and they are to be specially charged so to do, that proper means may be taken to remove their complaints. If they are found to be very ill, they should be taken from the nursery into the sick-house, to be more immediately under your own eye, and the mothers must be kept from the field to attend them.

Negroes are universally fond of suckling their children for a long time. If you permit them, they will extend it to the third year; and if they experience the indulgencies I have been contending for, they certainly will not be more inclined to abridge the time. Their motives for this are, habit, an idea of its necessity, the desire of being spared at their labour, or perhaps the avoiding of another pregnancy; but from which ever of these motives, they do it, your business is to counteract their designs, and to oblige them to wean their children as soon as they have attained their fourteenth or sixteenth month, which is long enough to fortify their mouths with the instruments required for a more substantial diet, than the one they have hitherto received. If you

neglect to do this, you not only lose some of the mothers labour, but you prevent their breeding so soon as they otherwise would do, in all probability.

In order to wean the infants, it will be advisable for you to begin by directing the nurse to keep the child from the mother, both night and day: therefore the time which you have hitherto allowed her in the morning, and at breakfast, must be discontinued. However, as she is the mother of a child, she is still entitled to an indulgence, to prevent her from thinking her offspring an incumbrance, and to render her more anxious, if not to preserve them, (nature having done her business very effectually in that respect,) at least, to increase their number as much as possible. For many mothers, who are very fond of their children when once they have brought them into the world, would yet very gladly avoid having them; therefore, they must have a little incentive to reconcile them to that also. With this view, every additional child must bring its particular reward to the mother. For the first, she should be excused the picking of grass; for the second, you should allow her a whole day every other week, more than the rest of the gang; for the third, one day every week; and so on progressively for every additional child she shall present you

with ; observing, at the same time, that these exemptions and indulgences are to continue no longer than the life of each child respectively ; for, upon the death of any one of them before it leaves the nursery, the benefit derived to the mother from its existence, ought to cease, and that for an obvious reason. Policy should be made to supply the place of instinct, where that is deficient, and to co-operate with it when otherwise.

Whenever any of your women have produced six children, who live long enough to be incorporated with the grass-gang, no farther field labour should be required of them. I make no mention of unqualified freedom, as that indulgence will be fully equivalent to it, for their purpose, and the situation of the children would be too unequal, if any were born after the manumission of the mother. Under the present system of negro management, instances seldom occur of so numerous a progeny ; but if they were to be rewarded in the progression above recommended, I have no doubt of their occurring very frequently ; for negroes are generally prolific enough, and commence at an early period. The example of two or three negroes on an estate, who have thus bred themselves into freedom, would have a

wonderful effect in exciting the endeavours of others, to obtain the same reward.

That the feeding of the children may not operate as a tax upon the mothers, it will be incumbent on you to assist them with an allowance, equal to four or five pints weekly for every child, from the time of its being weaned, until it is drafted from the nursery into the grass gang; after which it should be increased, where you have not ground enough for them to cultivate in provisions on their own account. When you have ground, the allowance may be discontinued altogether, as children of that age will be very well able to give their mother an assistance equal to their own consumption; and the sooner they are initiated into the habit of working for their own subsistance the better. In their progress through life, nothing will be more useful to them.

On the withdrawing of the children from the nursery, those who have attended them there, and by whose care and attention they have been reared so far into life, will have some claim to a recompence. I would propose, that a compleat dress, of a jacket, shift, wrapper, and petticoat, should be given to the nurse for every child that she dismisses to the

field. If there are more nurses than one, the reward should be assigned to them alternately, and, as in that case, many children will be turned out every year, each nurse will think herself handsomely rewarded for her trouble, and will, of course, undergo it more cheerfully in future.

It must be evident that such a gratuity, though trifling to the proprietor, will have a good effect on the nurses, in rendering them more attentive to the discharge of their duty; and that the exemptions in favour of the mothers, will dispose them to do theirs also for the increase of their family.

The motives for attending to the rearing of creoles, are numerous and urgent; but I content myself with those derived from principles of economy; for while they are in their infancy, the expense bestowed upon them passes off so insensibly, as not to be felt. Your gang is thus recruited without perceptible disbursement. It does not require more than five or six years before they are capable of labour; little indeed at that tender age, yet sufficient to defray the expenses of their own support. In their adult age, they become invaluable, as it is from that class of negroes that you generally draw your domestics, drivers, boilers, and tradesmen of every description; and it is upon them that

you must principally depend for the work of your plantation. But, for a moment, lay interest aside, and ascend to a higher motive. Contemplate a creation, to which your cares have been so instrumental! Does opulence possess any delight comparable to it?