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THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE WEST INDIAN PLANTOCRACY IN ENGLISH POETRY AND DRAMA, 1740 - 1850

by

© DOROTHY MINCHIN-COMM

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE WEST INDIAN PLANTOCRACY IN ENGLISH POETRY AND DRAMA, 1740-1850, submitted by DOROTHY MINCHIN-COMM in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

The difficulties of the white man and the black living side by side are diverse. The problem, as reflected in literature, has been widely explored from the standpoint of the American Negro and the plantocracy of the southern United States, but the West Indies have been almost wholly ignored in this respect. Yet the rise and fall of the American planter-class was but a reflection of movements and events which transpired in Britain and her Caribbean colonies at least eighty years earlier. While the United States operated her slave system autonomously from the last quarter of the eighteenth century onward, the West Indies were still tied to the Mother Country by bonds which were very close, often painfully so. Matters pertaining to West Indian slavery and its relation to Britain's material prosperity became affairs of passionate and vital concern to every Englishman, from the members of the Cabinet down to the local sugar dealers and their customers.

The ideologies of romanticism were a severe rebuke to Britain's colonial practices, and from the 1770's until the climax was reached in the Emancipation Act of 1833 the "West India Question" gathered momentum, drawing in its train a host of struggling colonials and parliamentarians as well as dedicated humanitarians and fanatics. If the poet (and dramatist) does indeed "hold up a mirror to life," then some legitimate questions may be asked. How is the West India controversy reflected in the English literature of the period which witnessed the height of political, commercial, and humanitarian interest in the Caribbean? What influences molded the viewpoints of the writers who took up these colonial

themes? To what extent does the literary discussion of the problem parallel its sociological and political development? Does the literary campaign influence the problem?

The materials of this enquiry are drawn primarily from British poetry and drama, with supporting references in expository writing. Space does not permit an examination of West Indian themes in prose fiction and journals. The selection of works for discussion, however, must be considered illustrative rather than exhaustive. Most major romantic writers treated emancipation--and hence the West Indies--as only an "occasional" theme, and the propagandistic intentions and limited abilities of the other writers kept the quality of the literature at a generally pedestrian level. The works are considered as social documents reflecting the attitudes of Englishmen not only to West Indian Negroes but also to their fellow countrymen who had undergone the mysterious, but very real, process of "Creolization." They are also shown as specific literary forms which, by means of distinctive techniques, transpose the real flesh-and-blood planters and slaves into "characters." Although these creations were supposed to be honest portrayals of their originals, in reality they were the products of European imagination, compounded of European literary traditions and anthropology. The literary distortions grew out of the Noble Savage cult and preoccupation with the sentimental, the picturesque and the picaresque.

Certain prescribed things which could be said about the West Indians and their islands evolved rather quickly. The formula included several recurrent and paradoxical themes and motifs: the Creole, avaricious, dissipated or benevolent; the Negro, tragic or comic; the islands, death-

ridden or treasure-filled. The writer's choice of viewpoints from among these possibilities was subject to how he felt about humanitarianism and colonialism; whether he wrote during the initial heat of abolition or during the waning days of emancipation; and whether or not he personally possessed a West India fortune. After the 1830's, as the pressures of the propaganda campaign relaxed and as the natural reaction to the excesses of sentimentalism set in, the West Indians either became objects of satire or were consigned to a cultural, political and economic limbo from which they were not to emerge until the twentieth century.

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THE CHANGING CONCEPTS OF THE WEST INDIAN PLANTOCRACY IN ENGLISH POETRY AND DRAMA, 1740-1850

INTRODUCTION

Any discussion of the West Indies between 1740 and 1850 is inevitably bound up with the rise and culmination of the English abolition and emancipation movements of that period. The same century also encompasses the zenith and nadir of the colonies' material fortunes. Britain felt the literary, social, and economic impact of these events deeply. Since virtually all of the many Negroes who reached England arrived there with their West Indian owners, English commentators on the anti-slavery question were able to draw their conclusions from what they observed of their colonial guests. They could also document their findings from a vast quantity of tractarian and travel literature of the West Indian colonies, reliable and otherwise. It will be useful at the beginning of this study to survey briefly the social, economic, and philosophic influences which were brought to bear upon the creation of the literary Negro and Creole, as well as the portrayal of their Caribbean home.

1. An examination of the West Indies in this period would be invalid without some attention to colonization itself, that tremendous process by which the world was discovered and exploited. The abolition and emancipation phases of the anti-slavery movement correspond roughly with the decline of Britain's first colonial empire in the Americas at the end of the eighteenth century and the ascendancy of her second empire

in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and the Far East in the early nineteenth century. The first empire was controlled by mercantilism which featured the trade in slaves and sugar, and the second saw the rise of industrialism and democratic ideas. During the period of transition between the two it seemed that the destruction of the old world had advanced far ahead of the construction of a new one. Mankind seemed to be held together only by the belief in freedom which was expressed in the watchwords of romanticism: naturalism, political liberalism, social idealism, and humanitarianism.[1] Our concern here is primarily with the last of these movements.

The conquests of the empire-builders included voyages of discovery, the quest for gold, the acquisition of spices, the spoils and expansion of trade, the establishment of religious missions, and the emigration of adventurers and dissenters. The actual forces of colonization were not so much governments and states as they were the hundreds of thousands of individual pioneers and colonists, the élite and the outcasts of Europe. Before this outburst of surplus energy the primitive, decaying, or stagnant societies of the non-European world cracked or collapsed. The colonial situation in the West Indies was marked by five typical characteristics: the colour line and racialism, political dependency and paternalism, economic exploitation, a low standard of social services, and a lack of social contact between natives and the ruling caste.[2] The differences between advanced and backward peoples were accentuated, and the domination of the masses by the minority was implied. Nevertheless, one might say that, in a sense, colonization was neither criminal nor beneficent. It was rather the painful birth of the modern

world. In the case of the West Indies, however, slavery collided with romantic ideals and created premature unrest.

2. The literature of romanticism inspired the growth of the humanitarian spirit at the same time that it reflected it. The quality of benevolence became both a battleground for philosophers and a source of inspirational beauties for poets of sensibility. Slavery, of course, was one of the primary elements upon which humanitarian sentimentalism fed. From the Renaissance to the eighteenth-century beginnings of the humanitarian movement men were primarily concerned with augmenting pleasures, but from that time to the present people ostensibly have been more concerned with diminishing the sum of evils in the world--that is, with reform. The abolition movement is of interest not only in its obvious impact upon the West Indies but also as a demonstration of the effectiveness of Britain's first nation-wide propaganda campaign. Practical humanitarianism was, of course, largely the concern of minor literati, and their work is of more social and political value than literary. Out of it, nonetheless, emerge certain stock characters and themes which spread into a wide area of English literature.

Although the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade was initiated by the Quakers in the late seventeenth century, slavery did not become a problem of public conscience until nearly a hundred years later. The first phase of the movement was highlighted by such events as the legal battles of Granville Sharp in behalf of stranded Negroes in England in 1767 and 1772, the organization of the Abolition Society in 1787, the exhaustive investigations of Thomas Clarkson, the parliamentary agi-

tation of William Wilberforce, and the project of the Clapham sect in the Sierra Leone colony. The slavery question was fought through the periodical press by spokesmen for the West Indian proprietors as well as the abolitionists, and the themes were taken up by poets, dramatists and novelists.

From the inception of the movement certain recurring ideas formed the basis for the dialogue between philanthropists and slave owners. These reflected the prevailing philosophical and anthropological notions of the eighteenth century and were based on clear-cut moral and economic "justifications": that slavery existed in all ages and all countries (with Biblical sanctions, some said); that the slave trade was necessary to the civilizing and Christianizing of Africa; that slavery was indigenous to Africa where war and criminal activity furnished slaves for the trade; that the abolition of the slave trade by one nation alone would not benefit Africa; and that the Negroes were better off than English peasants and factory workers, their punishments being no more severe than those used on British sailors and schoolboys. The anti-abolitionists also had other forceful arguments at their disposal. It was assumed that Europeans could not perform heavy physical labour in the West Indian climate where intemperance and fevers regularly swept off thousands of inhabitants. The decline in the birth-rate among the slaves made the importation of Negroes necessary to keep up the stock already on hand. Obsolete methods of agriculture also called for vast quantities of slaves to cultivate the sugar. And finally, the colonials declared that all matters pertaining to slave management, including abolition, belonged to the colonial legislatures. They felt that the British parliament was

too much influenced by uninformed philanthropic interests. In support of all of these assumptions, apologists for the plantocracy never tired of painting sunny pictures of the felicity of the Negroes on the West Indian plantations and of the excellence of their material state. One might even begin to wonder why they did not crave the boon of slavery for themselves. But most of the planters, it should be said in all fairness, were moved by a very real fear of losing their "lawful" property rather than by the vicious love of slavery which the abolition zealots attributed to them.

Prevailing conservatism caused reforms to languish between 1793 and 1830. Nevertheless, the bill for the abolition of the slave trade did pass in 1807. Various ameliorative measures struggled through parliament also, and evangelical missionary activity increased in the next two decades. With the agitation for parliamentary reform in the late 1820's the emancipationists took advantage of the new liberalizing tendencies to saturate the country with publications and addresses. Apart from doctrinaire fiction, however, this escalation is not particularly noticeable in other creative writing. Most propagandistic writers had drained their sentimental resources in the pre-abolition movement of the eighteenth century, and by the 1830's writers were beginning either to satirize the whole West Indian situation or to seek novel, romantic, and non-propagandistic images in the Caribbean scene.

3. Moral and ethical issues have usually found a place among material considerations only with difficulty. For many decades it was the proverbial riches of the Indies which blinded men to the evils of the slave system. Hence, the seduction of wealth is a strong undercurrent running

through all the pre-emancipation history of the West Indies, and it gave rise to colourful, even spectacular, characters who lent themselves readily to literary development. Gold is peculiar stuff, a happy marriage between matter and idea, and mankind has ever used it as the ultimate measure of values. Myths of the Golden Age have prevailed in both pagan and Christian traditions, and the progressive notion of Utopia is linked with the same golden dream which is founded upon man's most optimistic hopes and desires. The accumulating legends of golden kingdoms caused sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europeans to swarm over the Caribbean lands in search of El Dorado in what is perhaps the greatest epic of human folly and self-delusion the world has seen. By the eighteenth century El Dorado had passed into its proper realm of fantasy. While some adventurers sought more substantial golden kingdoms in Australia, California, and the Klondike, others perceived that the true wealth of the West Indies lay among the perspiring Negroes in the sugarcane fields rather than in the fabulous possessions and mystical rites of a shadowy Indian chieftain coated with gold dust and living somewhere in the plateaus of South America. Thus the West Indies became a commercial El Dorado.

The West India trade was soon a well established triangle with a West-to-East movement of bullion and later sugar. Then there was an East-to-West movement of industrial goods with the slave trade as a sub-circuit. To the sons of the Enlightenment, Britain's colonial empire and overseas trade, at whatever price, was a source of pride. It had freed Britain from social and political superstitions and had broken British insularity. Mercantilism was the peaceful revolution whereby

Britain built her self-sufficient commercial and colonial empire. The system operated successfully until the colonies began to realize that they were valued solely in proportion to their contribution to a favourable balance of trade and that they were actually a complementary part of the Old World factory system. Then revolutions were inevitable.

The gold quest in the hands of pedestrian merchants was, of course, much less exciting than it had been with the conquistadors, but still it did not lack a certain sensationalism which appealed to dramatists and novelists. In the static, hierarchical society of the eighteenth century the flamboyant colonial was inevitably conspicuous. Nabobs and sugar planters were upstarts who had risen to an unsuitable degree of prosperity, for there has always been something slightly reprehensible about the upward struggle of the nouveaux riche. Actually a West India proprietor, contending with hurricanes, crop failures, taxes, pirates, and slave insurrections was a plodder in comparison with his counterpart, the East Indian Nabob. Since both flaunted their wealth about England, however, the image of extravagance stuck, and the entrée of these magnificent fools into polite society was invariably impressive. East and West Indians were luridly linked together in the public mind because it mattered little to the English aristocrat whether the purse-proud barbarian who would supplant him at Westminster, St. James and Bath came from the East or the West. Aping these colonials, Englishmen laid out huge sums for houses, furniture, equipages, gardens, and objets d'art. The anti-colonial extravaganza expressed itself in social ostracism and accusations of crudeness and bad manners. Under these circumstances, it was easy for philanthropists to overlook the horrors of the

factory system in full swing at home and point to the exotic evils practiced in the colonies.

These flashy colonials were, of course, only a part of the backwash of imperialism and the inevitable result of the flood of conquest and commerce. Their taste for ostentation and unrestrained behaviour and their fondness for entertainment and hospitality were inherent in the colonial milieu. The tedium of their years exiled in a small circle of acquaintances took its toll. Pomp was an essential ingredient of disciplined government on the plantation, and the chief diversions in life came in the form of the gaming table, the bottle, and slave girls. When the planter had to adjust to English society again, he compensated for his uncertainties by throwing up a sensational, glittering facade. A West Indian's exaggerated claims of fortune were his stock in trade and were always maintained even in the face of massive losses on the sugar market.

4. Next to the fact of West Indian slavery itself, absenteeism was the most distinctive feature of the West Indian plantocracy. Edward Littleton, a seventeenth-century Barbadian agent, said: "By a kind of magnetic force England draws to it all that is good in the plantations. It is the center to which all things tend. . . . Our hearts are here, wherever our bodies be."[3]

There were several reasons for the planters' disinclination to live continuously in the West Indies. The notable lack of cultured society and entertainment, which was a consequence as well as a cause of absenteeism, tempted colonials to send their children back to England for education and thus strengthened emotional ties with the Mother Country. The Journal of Lady Nugent, wife of one of the governors of Jamaica, gives us one of our best contemporary pictures of this colonial social scene.[4] Although she

endeavoured to keep herself spiritually and intellectually alive with her reading and writing, she was overwhelmed by the barrenness of Jamaican society, and she longed to return to England to a more normal domestic life. Increasingly she noted the lack of personal and social relationships and recognized that happiness was impossible in an arid society totally geared to one purpose, that of making money. She wrote, "I feel that all of the pages of my life are wiped out." Few of these sensitive colonials, however, recognized the ironic cycle which caused the wealth of the Indies to support the genteel coterie in England which in turn cultivated their capacity to feel repulsion at the brutalization of Creole society.

Among other unattractive features of colonial life were the health hazards of the climate, the economic pressures of capitalized agriculture, the constant menace of war, the frequency of hurricanes and other natural disasters, and the unpleasantness of living in a slave society based on coercion, with the consequent threat of slave insurrections. Bryan Edwards once described a West Indian property as "a species of lottery . . . [which] gives birth to a spirit of adventure and enterprise, and awakens extravagant hopes and expectations."[5] Under these circumstances, colonial administration was too often left to incompetent, corrupt officials because the absentees fulfilled none of the obligations of citizenship and were essentially parasites feeding off the wealth of the Indies.[6]

Society in the West Indies was a four-story structure: European whites, Creole whites,[7] persons of mixed blood, and Negroes (Creole and African, freemen and slaves).[8] Within each stratum there were rivalries and cross-currents which created a very complex social structure. Between the end of the seventeenth century with its period of colonial

pioneering and the coming of the missionaries in force at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the West Indian social scene was one of rather general debauchery. The pleasures of the tropics were neither wholesome nor innocent. In the swift, brilliant, restless light of the Indies there was little inclination for leisurely, sentimental, evangelical religion. Even though death carried away a phenomenal number of people, there was little time for introspection or self-denial. In such an un-English environment, it is not surprising that the transformation from Englishman to Creole was rapid, dramatic and complete. Trapped in the anxieties of their business responsibilities, the planters sought by means of display and extravagance to disguise the actual facts of their uncertain lives. Moreover, a slave society has ever been a most fertile soil in which to cultivate dissipated tastes. The characters of Creole planters and their families were first drawn by historians[9] and then stereotyped by imaginative writers. Out of this social and economic milieu came the literary Creole.

For the survival of white society in the Indies, it was necessary to maintain a certain ratio of whites to Africans. Of the several ineffective schemes for introducing a stable, white middle class into the islands the system of indentured servitude was the most widely practiced.[10] This prevailing seventeenth-century custom of inveigling indentured "white slaves" into the colonies[11] effectively postponed feelings of sympathy for Negro slaves. The unenviable situation of the white artisan and craftsman was scarcely surpassed by the miseries of Negro slaves. Vagabonds are unfortunately prevented from attaining the honour of a martyrdom--a recognition which many of these enforced emigrants richly deserved. The ava-

lanche of white servants and penal transportees in the colonies was, nevertheless, far from being an unmixed blessing, and colonials soon found the African slave system preferable. The characters of many emigrants to the colonies were so unsavoury that the West Indies became a kind of moral dumping ground.[12] Large numbers of rogues and vagabonds who had simply lost their souls trying to keep their bodies together had caused the West Indies to become anathema in the minds of many Englishmen. These "poor whites" remained at the bottom of the scale of white Creole society and were frequently estate overseers and bookkeepers. While a few of the more ambitious did attain to sugar fortunes, the majority drifted into the blending masses of Creole society from which emerged a new element, the free people of colour.

5. Miscegenation was an embarrassing, unplanned by-product of the slave system which dramatically changed the pattern of West Indian society and had repercussions in Europe. As has often been the case, women were the means of bridging the gulf between the classes. This adulteration of blackness and/or whiteness produced a tension between the inevitable social problems and the undeniable aesthetic appeal of the blend. By the nineteenth century the mulatto, at least the fair female one, proved beyond question the romantic charms of brown beauty, despite her nebulous social position. Leigh Hunt, himself a member of a West Indian planter family, crystallized her delicate image in "Twilight Accused and Defended":

> Our gentle dusky friend [Twilight . . . is] the mildest and most unpresuming of the Hours, meek, yet genial withal, like some loving Mestizo or Quadroon, something between fair and dark, or dusk and dusker, who, by her sweet middle

> tone between merit and want of pretension, and by having nothing to arrogate, and much to be prized, charms the amorous heart of some contemplative West Indian, who is tired out between the flare of his whiter favourites, and the undiscerning presumption of his black.[13]

Romantic literature has capitalized upon the sex appeal of racial differences, and far-away princesses have always been psychologically important in this respect. It was not until well into the nineteenth century, however, that writers exploited the plight of the mulatto heroines and their attendant social problems. Morally the effect of the whole slave system was to create pride rather than shame in the women in their role as mistresses and bearers of children. The mental make-up of the people of colour proved to be quite different from that of the Negroes. In a society based on assumptions of white supremacy where the colour black had become synonymous with slavery, the mulattoes tried to dissociate themselves from the Negro community. Thus the already complex hierarchical society of the Caribbean became further complicated by the stratification of colour.[14] A consideration of the literary impact of the dark complexion might begin with King Solomon's rustic bride, pause with William Dunbar's "Of Ane Blackamoor" (ca. 1509), and move on to Shakespeare's "dark lady" of the sonnets and the Moorish heroes of the plays. In such a study it could be shown that by the time of the Elizabethans most of the physical and mental characteristics which prefigured the modern, plebian stereotype Negro had been established--his woolly hair, rolling eyes, thick lips, ignorance, lasciviousness, and laziness.

The usual attitude of English writers faced with the aesthetic problems posed by the blackness and physical appearance of the Negro

was that his true beauty was spiritual rather than physical. The African's patience and faithfulness in servitude, for instance, contrasted markedly with his white master's viciousness and vindictiveness. The contrast between "soul blackness" and "skin blackness" was thoroughly exploited by abolition writers.

Although from ancient times climatic theories of human society have been closely associated with various racial theories, Negrophobia is actually a comparatively modern phenomenon. Classical accounts of the African are divided between his mysterious, exotic qualities and his shocking, degrading features which merely demonstrated the gulf between the primitive and civilized worlds. It was the perennial emphasis of Christianity on the unity of mankind which helped prevent an earlier development of the hard-core race consciousness which was to mark the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It stressed the availability of salvation for souls despite bodily differences. Hence, missionary activity, or at least the recommendation of it, was an early concomitant of exploration and colonization. By the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries it was being affirmed that it was the heathenism of Negroes and Indians, not their race, which was the basis of their enslavement. Eighteenth-century rationalists, who believed that education and environment would produce a reasonable and intelligent being, generally favoured the idea of the potential intelligence and virtue of the Negro. Racial differences then had to be attributed to climate.[15] As the theory of evolution in the nineteenth century stimulated study and measurements of racial differences, racism began to harden. Few anthropologists dared consider, much less advocate, the possibility

that there are no hierarchies of race, for the new theory of Teutonic origins, the cult of Aryanism, and other dogmas were rapidly gathering force.

6. We may now consider the four basic romantic traditions upon which literary works concerning the Indies were based: the Noble Savage, the sentimental, the picturesque, and the picaresque. The initial problem of the abolitionist writers was to help the Negro find a higher rung on the cosmic ladder than he had previously occupied. He could benefit by the widely-agitated doctrine of natural rights only if he could be shown to be a human being, for he had frequently been described as a member of a sub-human species. His status could be raised by fitting him into the tradition of the Noble Savage.

The Noble Savage was born and bred in a philosophical climate where Nature was the norm of innocence, simplicity, and spontaneity. He was the child of a union between these intellectual theories and the actual voyages of travellers. He also embodied the problems involved in the contact of the civilized with the savage mind. Primitivistic ideas, of course, have thrived best among those who had little to do with flesh-and-blood savages, and until the early nineteenth century discrepancies between the accounts of travellers and the exotic non-Caucasians of the arts were more or less unquestioned. The Noble Savage was the vehicle of at least four ideas inherent in romantic naturalism. Being ignorant of book-learning, he was a natural repository of original genius and poetry. Living under the benign influence of natural scenery rather than in the evil civilization of cities, he was able to attain a kind of vegetable

goodness. His religion of nature explained the dichotomy of Christian virtues practiced by a pagan, a motif seized upon by abolitionists for contrasting Negro nobility and "Christian" oppression. Last, the savage enjoyed the pleasures of free and unsophisticated love and displayed a charming, child-like unconventionality. The American Indian was the aristocrat among Noble Savages. His scorn of civilization, his lively sense of gratitude, his natural mysticism, dignity, oratorical ability, hospitality, and courage were all impressive, while his blood-thirstiness provided satisfying thrills. The Carib Indian in the West Indies shared a fair portion of the adulation bestowed on the North American Indians, and Rousseau even considered him the actual original of the Noble Savage.[16] The South Sea islander made a slighter but more amiable Noble Savage. The Noble Polynesian with his aura of freer love than is possible in our own civilization was interesting to prude and libertine alike. Finally, came the Noble Negro, a late-comer to the club of Noble Savages. Unlike the literary Creole, he was the product of his philosophical rather than social environment. Although he was more closely associated with humanitarianism than with primitivism, he borrowed many of his attractive characteristics from the latter tradition. About 1770 the primitivistic idealization of the Negro began to grow quite naturally out of the discussion of his intellectual and moral capacities which attended the abolition agitation. The romanticists laboured to ensure that the Negro, embellished with extravagantly noble characteristics, came to be seen as a victim--the image essential to humanitarian interests. He was given instincts and emotions which permitted him a great range of passions. He was shown to be not only a human being but also a creature capable of most refined feelings. He was

ultimately endowed with the gentle qualities of filial reverence, respect for the aged, compassion for the unfortunate, benevolence, hospitality, and romantic love. By this time, of course, he bore little resemblance to the warlike West African tribesman who was his original. The Noble Negro and his brothers of the cult were faithful servants tailored to fit British complacency. They encouraged a certain smugness based on imperialistic ideals which remained untarnished far into the nineteenth century. Today, however, in an age of the decline of faith in Britannia, these splendid barbarians are seen as complicated figures demonstrating the difficulties and problems of a conflict of cultures.

Sentimentalism came as a reaction to Restoration cynicism, and it was marked by an over-emphasis on the goodness of humanity. Into this phase of eighteenth-century sensibility the Negro, and even on occasion his master, stepped with ease. Among the conventional sentimental personalities within the tradition were the innocent girl betrayed, the wife abused, the lovers victimized, the profligate repentant, and the virtuous indigent translated to wealth and security. Here the suffering Negro found much fellowship while the wicked planter had a great variety of foils to point up his sins and opportunities to augment his holdings. The second basic characteristic of sentimentalism was its over-indulgence of emotion. The reader was instructed through his feelings rather than his intellect, and he was committed to an artificial, illogical, and exaggerated wallowing in emotion. Love was a prominent ingredient of the genre, and it followed an obstacle course all of the way. Death was submissively accepted, but not with the final triumph of great tragedy. Finally, the language of the genre was trite and full of didactic sentiments. Needless to say, with

all of these possibilities open, the writers of the anti-slavery movement tangled sentimentalism inextricably into their work. Indeed, its elements seemed to be custom-made for the West Indian situation. In verse the slave's "lone tear" begins to flow before the first stanza is completed, in fiction the dissipated Creole becomes a candidate for repentance upon his first appearance, and in drama the most heroic African can be reduced to a sodden mass of emotions within the first act. The sentimental writers who treated the Negro as an individual were, of course, far too concerned with his sufferings to take a completely rational view of slavery. The enraged colonials, likewise caught up in the toils of sentimentalism, tried to reply in kind by portraying benevolent planters and self-sacrificing West Indian heiresses.

The picturesque was an intermediate position between sublimity and beauty into which West Indian culture fitted conveniently. Poets like James Grainger attempted the mode as early as the mid-eighteenth century, and even the dullest of historians sought, in their own way, to satisfy English curiosity regarding the strange sights and sounds of the Caribbean landscape. Although the Negro frequently played a decorative and exotic role on stage, he seldom did so elsewhere. So great was the slave's sentimental appeal, that only an occasional writer dealt with him merely as a picturesque figure without saddling him with the burdens of bondage. Occasionally the landscape of the islands could be appreciated calmly. This taste for the "natural" was ultimately perverted into Gothicism and other deviant modes in the later romantic movement. After emancipation the sentimentalization of West Indian themes eventually reversed itself and became satire. This tendency may be observed in all genres.

In contrast to the suffering slave and the wicked planter, the

principal exhibits of West Indian sentimentalism, the Caribbean offered a highly anti-sentimental feature. The Indies were thoroughly explored by writers of the picaresque, for they provided a new setting with convincing authenticity where strange and violent things might happen. The conventionalities of chivalry having become quite threadbare, the de-idealized knight-errant might find an expression for his vigorous individuality as a buccaneer, a pirate, or even as an impoverished sailor or bookkeeper. He operated in a rugged, active, competitive world peopled with merchants, treasure hunters, slaves and Indians. Where better could the picaroon pursue his endless wanderings up and down the social strata, assume new roles, and suffer peaks and plunges of fortune than in the West Indies? There too were languishing Creole ladies and lovely female mulattoes, suitable recipients of such shallow romantic loves as he was capable of feeling. The picaresque received its fullest treatment in prose fiction; illegitimate theater adopted its spectacular elements; but verse-writers studiously ignored the mode because it conflicted with sentimental humanitarianism.

Lack of space in this study prohibits a parallel analysis of West Indian themes in prose fiction, essays and journals. (For a brief summary of this area see Appendix IV.) As we turn now to English poets and dramatists, we shall examine the ways in which they manipulated the characters of the literary West Indians (black, brown, and white) and modified the concepts of the islands which provided their background. These writers served either the abolitionists or the colonials, and in so doing they gave an artistic dimension to the long and inexpressibly dreary anti-slavery debate which lasted for more than fifty years. While the characters and land-

scapes which they created conformed to well-established romantic traditions and literary genres, they also bore distinctively West Indian "trademarks." The great flood of West Indian-oriented literature which was poured out upon the reading and theater-going public testifies to the relevancy of the subject during the period under consideration.

I

LEGENDS OF THE WEST INDIES

Certain uniquely West Indian tales flourished during the eighteenth-century. Although they faded away with the decline of the Noble Savage cult, in their time they exhibited a broad spectrum of important West Indian motifs. In them may be traced in microcosm the evolution of themes which will be examined in more variety and detail in the succeeding chapters of this study on English poetry and drama. The legends are concerned primarily with the character of the Noble Negro, with Creole planters and humanitarians appearing only incidentally. The first four tales are distinctly the white man's creations, and as such their fortunes correlate with those of European humanitarian ideas. They concern Oroonoko, Inkle and Yarico, the Lovers of St. Christophers, and Quashi. From their historical beginnings, they passed into classic literary forms. Then they were swept along in the rising tide of sentimentalism. Finally, they were molded into forms useful to the anti-slavery cause. The fifth story, of Three-Fingered Jack, has its roots set so deeply in the African heritage of the West Indian Negro that it serves as an exemplar of that type of ageless folk tale which is indigenous to all countries.

But even the vigorous, ethnic image of this daring Negro outlaw was not to escape the sentimentalizing process of the abolition movement.

A. Oroonoko

The story of Oroonoko is basic to any consideration of the development of the Noble Negro. Supposedly originating in a historical episode of the reign of Charles II, he made his literary debut as Mrs. Aphra Behn's royal slave, in Oroonoko (1678). From his princely African birth, through the vicissitudes of capture and slavery, and on to his heroic death, Oroonoko exemplifies the entire career of the serious literary Negro. The metamorphosis of this single tale demonstrates the African's changing fortune between the heights of Restoration heroics and the lowlands of sentimental humanitarianism at the end of the eighteenth century. The tragic plot of the story is as follows:

> Oroonoko is an African prince sold into slavery in the English colony of Surinam in South America. He is proud, not only of his noble lineage, but also of his moral superiority to his brutal slave-masters. Moreover, he is heart-broken at having been separated from his young wife, Imoinda. The King of Angola, Oroonoko's own father, had wanted to add her to his harem, and when he found that she was married to Oroonoko, in his rage he either killed her or sent her away--Oroonoko is uncertain of her fate. During the course of the story he discovers that Imoinda is a slave in the same Surinam colony as himself and that she is being pursued by the Lieutenant-Governor who has no honourable intentions. This state of affairs touches Oroonoko with noble anger in a way in which his own slavery had not, and he leads his fellow slaves in a revolt, aided by his faithful companion Aboan. The insurrection ends in defeat and makes the prince, from fear of a worse fate, first kill his wife and then attempt to take his own life. The treachery of the Governor is successful over the the efforts of certain sympathetic Englishmen to save the couple.

Neither Mrs. Behn's hero nor heroine, however, is actually a Negro, for she was a European with European ideals. They are rather exotic, ideal

embodiments of beauty, constancy, and virtue--with their Negroid characteristics carefully purged away. Her work, nonetheless, advances beyond the Incas and Aztecs of Davenant, Howard, and Dryden, as a demonstration of understanding foreign types.

Eighteen years later the dramatist Thomas Southerne produced a mixed play based on the novel, freely admitting the source of his drama. In the Dedication he says:

> I have often wonder'd that she [Mrs. Behn] would bury her favourite hero in a novel when she might have reviv'd him in the scene. She thought either that no actor could represent him; or she could not bear him represented: And I believe the last, when I remember that I have heard from a friend of hers, that she always told his story, more feelingly than she writ it.[1]

Southerne modified Mrs. Behn's generous attitudes on the colour question. In the novel, Imoinda is portrayed as "the beautiful black Venus of our young Mars," and she is "as charming in her person as he, and of delicate virtues. I have seen a hundred White Men sighing after her, and make a thousand Vows at her Feet, all in vain and unsuccessful." In Southerne's day, however, it was still much too early to propagate the idea that "black is beautiful," so he changed Imoinda from a Negress to a mulatto, presumably on the assumption that white colonists would <u>not</u> be prone to sigh after a black slave girl. Such girls were to be reserved for comic effects on stage for decades to come. The racial differences of the lovers also enabled Southerne to imitate Shakespeare, sponsor of Othello the noblest of Moors. Oroonoko declares that "honest Black/ Disdains to change its Colour" (I, ii), but his Shakespearean tones only render him still less a true Negro.

In keeping with "the present Humour of the Town," the playwright

added a prose sub-plot which takes up at least two-fifths of the play and runs well into the final act. These tawdry comic sections become important to this study because they are concerned with some basic Creole problems of the plantation. They involve indigent fortune-hunters, a wealthy widow with a West India inheritance, a lustful governor, and a single humanitarian planter set amid a callous, grasping herd of slave-dealers. The comic plot is at once a return to the Elizabethan love of variety and a forecast of stage "Creolisms" yet to come:

> Two sisters, Charlot and Lucy Welldon, have lately come to Surinam because they have found that when they have reached the advanced age of twenty-one, they are no longer sought by the London beaus. Charlot, in masculine attire, makes love to the rich and lascivious old Mrs. Lackitt, a six-months' widow, securing first for her sister Lucy the hand and inheritance of Mrs. Lackitt's booby son, Daniel. To consummate her marriage with Mrs. Lackitt, Charlot sends in her friend Jack Stanmore. Charlot herself is really in love with Jack's brother, whom she finally succeeds in capturing. Much of the fun revolves about the ignorant love-making of the half-wit boy, Daniel, his later inability to satisfy the too-insistent nuptial demands of Lucy, and her abuse of him in public.

Ideologically, it is the money-bond between the two plots which might be said to tie them together. The "traders in human flesh" in the tragic plot are as vitally concerned with fortune-building as the characters are in the comic one. Still, a gulf is fixed between the trivialities of the comic characters and the life-and-death concerns of Oroonoko. The two plots are essentially two plays, carried on side by side. The sub-plot touches the main once when the Widow and Captain Driver quarrel over the apportionment of slaves. It does so again in a contrived encounter in the last act when the ladies and Stanmore appear as a twittering crowd of petty do-gooders suddenly determined to sustain Oroonoko's cause by petitioning the Governor for the royal slave's release. Oroonoko's

antagonist, of course, is this same composite white community and the system for which it stands. As a Noble Savage he opposes a savage noble, the Governor, and loses. The new world never really breaks into the old, and even the raiding Indians are defeated. Southerne and Mrs. Behn both characterize the crassness of the plantocracy. These Surinam Creoles laugh at appalling things, issues which are rightfully the subjects of tragedy, but Southerne explains them away and thereby devitalizes the rather obvious humanitarianism inherent in the story.

Mrs. Behn was attracted to this tale of a suffering Negro perhaps by its novelty, but she does not stress the humanitarian implications of her theme as strongly as she would have if she had lived a hundred years later. She does, nevertheless, emphasize them more than we would expect from a writer of her time. The whole question of Oroonoko's relation to slavery is an interesting one. In spite of the fact that these earliest treatments of the subject reveal concern with the welfare of the individual and a recognition of the degrading influences of slavery, they can hardly be called abolitionist works. Both Aphra Behn and Southerne accept slavery as a legitimate business which has simply gotten out of hand in this case. Captain Driver, the slave trader, is a brute and villain, and Blandford and Stanmore feel horror at his capture of Oroonoko. Still, they oppose him because of the prince's rank, not because of any conception of the wrongness of slavery. Blandford remarks:

> . . . Most of 'em know no better.
> They were born so and only change their masters.
> But a prince born only to command, betrayed and sold!
> My heart drops blood for him (I, ii).

Planter Blandford, of course, has unquestionable philanthropic instincts,

and today he would no doubt be a white liberal in the civil rights movement. But, like others since his day, he promises more than he can perform, for he lacks an adequate constituency. Admirable as his sentiments may be, he is concerned wholly with Oroonoko and Imoinda. Nowhere in the play is there an advocate for the herd described by the planters at the "buccaneer's" [that is, Driver's] slave sale. On that occasion one experienced proprietor explains to a newcomer the problems inherent in slave-ownership:

> Plague on 'em, a parcel of lazy, obstinate, untractable pagans;--half of 'em are so sulky, when they first come, that they won't eat their victuals when it's set before 'em, and a christian may beat 'em 'till he drops down, before he can make 'em eat, if they han't a mind to it. . . . Ay, in truth, a christian colony has a bad time of it, that is forc'd to deal in this cursed heathen commodity: Here every time a ship comes in, my money goes for a great raw-boned negro fellow, that has the impudence to think he is my fellow-creature, with as much right to liberty as I have . . . or, for a young wench, who will howl night and day after a brat or a lover, forsooth. (I, i, 2-3).

The royal lovers are carefully dissociated from this vulgar group. Indeed, it is to our infinite regret that we discover that Oroonoko himself had sold his fellow countrymen to Driver before his capture. He admits that

> If we are slaves, they did not make us slaves;
> But bought us in an honest way of trade:
> As we have done before 'em, bought and sold
> Many a wretch, and never thought it wrong (III, ii, 122-125).

The slave trader and the Governor are despicable because of their cruelty and deception, not because of their slave-dealing. Commerce of this kind, we must understand, is still intrinsically honourable.

This failure to identify with <u>all</u> suffering blacks, not just "abus'd princes," continued far into the eighteenth century, for it was a long road

from the classic "Great Chain of Being" to the concept of the universal brotherhood of man. In fact, one has ample reason to suspect that the transition is not yet complete even today. In the midst of rising abolition agitation, however, it became necessary that a slave-trading African should evince at least some qualms for the "av'rice" which had enslaved his mind. An abolition poem, "The African Boy" (1796), for example, tells of an African prince, lately arrived in England. When questioned, he confesses that the gold watch he carries was bought by the sale of a "blooming Negro Boy":

> From country, friends, and parents torn.
> His tender limbs in chains confin'd,
> I saw him o'er the billows borne,
> And mark'd his agony of mind:
> But still to gain this simple toy,
> I gave away the Negro Boy.
>
> In isles that deck the western wave,
> I doom'd the hopeless youth to dwell;
> A poor forlorn insulted slave,
> A beast that Christians buy and sell: . . .
>
> But he who walks upon the wind,
> Whose voice in thunders heard on high,
> Who doth the raging tempest bind,
> Or wing the light'ning thro' the sky,
> In his own time will soon destroy
> The oppressors of the Negro Boy.[2]

While this slave-trading prince eagerly looks forward to Providence's stepping in and destroying the institution of slavery, he still seems to anticipate no personal judgement for his part in it. Thus, as late as 1796, he is able to retain a certain royal Oroonokoan immunity.

For both novelist and playwright, Oroonoko and Imoinda operate within the literary confines of heroic love, a convention which was to undergo the increasing strains of sentimentalism. A further comparison of the play and the novel, however, reveals the beginnings of the humani-

zation of persons and events which was necessary to Oroonoko's future sentimental usefulness. The prince's character is a curious mingling of the heroic and the pathetic, even though he remains a prodigy of intelligence, courage, and strength. Mrs. Behn's prince is rampantly heroic, and a good deal of this carries over into the play where Oroonoko moves constantly in an aura of lordly dignity and haughty scorn among the villainous white men. He frequently speaks blank verse in the midst of others' prose. He is invincible in battle and single-handedly drives off the attacking tribe of Indians.[3] His proud, fiery spirit is described by the slave master even before his first stage appearance.

> He's the devil of a fellow, I can tell you! A prince every inch of him: You [Blandford] have paid dear enough for him, for all the good he'll do you: I was forc'd to clap him in irons, and did not think the ship safe neither (I, ii, 11).

And he raves in the best heroic vein:

> Dig up this earth, tear, tear her bowels out,
> To make a grave, deep as the center down,
> To swallow wide, and bury us together (V, iv, 288-290).

His wrath is terrible:

> Ha! thou hast rouz'd
> The lion in his den; he stalks abroad,
> The wide forest trembles at his roar (III, ii, 226-228).

He soliloquizes at length on the familiar heroic theme of love versus honour,[4] although the play lacks the flowery love-episodes of Mrs. Behn's novel:

> To honour bound! and yet a slave to love!
> I am distracted by their rival powers,
> And both will be obey'd. O great revenge!
> Thou raiser, and restorer of fall'n fame!
> Let me not be unworthy of thy aid,
> For stopping in thy course: I still am thine
> But can't forget I am Imoinda's too. . . .
>
> Love, love will be
> My first ambition, and my fame the next (V, iv, 1-19).

Oroonoko's apostrophic address is tediously extravagant, and one is inclined to wish with the reviewer cited in the Critical Review that he would refrain from such outbursts of "unnatural and risible bombast." But noble heroism is not easily discarded. As another reviewer in the same article remarked:

> When Oroonoko's passion swells into metaphor, there is a grandeur and propriety in the figure . . . that strikes forcibly on our hearts: we are hurried away with the sublimity of the idea, which will not permit us to attend to the dogmas of frivolous and frigid criticism.[5]

With such votes of confidence as this, Oroonoko ranted on through the century, always being modified, until he blended with the melodramatic and sentimental Negroes of the age of abolition.

Love, the humanizing agent, clearly rules Southerne's play. The thought of Imoinda makes Oroonoko surrender to the Governor whereas honour would have bidden him continue the struggle. But his love is not torn by inner conflicts; it is moved by external fate. This is not the love of a heroic super-man, for it reduces to a kind of sentimental softness as Oroonoko domestically considers his dilemma:

> Methinks I see the babe, with infant hands,
> Pleading for life, and begging to be born:
> Shall I forbid his birth; deny him light?
> And make the womb the dungeon of his death?
> His bleeding mother his sad monument . . .
> No, my Imoinda! I will venture all
> To save thee, and that little innocent (IV, ii).

There is, indeed, a certain smugness about him. When Aboan describes the horrors of the slaves' sufferings, he simply says "I pity 'em,/ And wish I could with honesty do more" (III, ii, 148-149). It is only when he realizes that his unborn child will also be a slave that he leads the Negroes into the unsuccessful rebellion. Having seen Hawksworth's adapta-

tion of Oroonoko in 1817, William Hazlitt describes this moment of truth:

> He starts and the manner in which he utters the ejaculation 'Hah!' at the world of thought which is thus shewn to him, like a precipice at his feet, resembles the first sound that breaks from a thunder-cloud, or the hollow roar of a wild beast, roused from its lair by hunger and the scent of blood. . . . This gallant vindicator of himself and his countrymen fails in his enterprise, through the treachery and cowardice of those whom he attempts to set free, but 'who were by nature slaves!' The story of this servile war is not without a parallel elsewhere: it reads 'a great moral lesson' to Europe, only changing black into white.[6]

The fact that Oroonoko rebels in spite of the generous treatment of Blandford is significant, and it makes an important comment on slavery as an institution.[7]

Oroonoko's fortunes fluctuate between hope and despair, but finally the Governor's perfidy causes the tragic ending for the "star-crossed" lovers. In the death scene Southerne makes a rather extravagant bid for pity with many parting kisses, irresolutions, and so forth. At the climax, the spotless, victimized Imoinda offers to die, Oroonoko having already conceived of death as being the only "security for all our fears" (V, iv, 119). When he has killed her, he immediately dispatches himself in decisive, heroic style. A modern reader seeing, perhaps, that the exalted heights of heroic tragedy are missing, is left with the vague feeling that there ought to be some more commonsense solution to the problem, for Southerne has made his appeals on the sentimental, not heroic, level.

In fact, all of the horror of Oroonoko's death is considerably tinged with pathos. His good qualities in the novel are very consciously contrasted with the evil of the "Christians" who enslave him, but his stoic defiance becomes, in the play, a noble melancholy. Mrs. Behn's heroic figure, in other words, is dragged down and hacked to pieces (with painful

Plate I

The Death of Imoinda ("This dagger will instruct you." V, iv). Frontispiece to Thomas Southerne's tragedy "Oroonoko" (1699), in The British Theater (London, 1808), Vol. VII.

Huntington Library, San Marino, California.



realism) by a swarm of Lilliputians. He is defeated by more than just the planters. In other respects also Southerne emphasizes humanity rather than the exotic and the horrible. The grisly details of the death of Mrs. Behn's Oroonoko are transferred to the mutilated Aboan, the hero's companion and confidant in the play. Also, the eight-day vigil over the decaying corpse of Imoinda is condensed into the single, dramatic stabbing scene. The character of the traitor Hottman is new with Southerne, and that Negro fathers a long line of spiritually inferior Negroes in English literature. Since there was already too much evidence to the contrary, not <u>all</u> blacks could be cast as Noble Savages. The character of the black traitor then is an early adjustment to this fact; the comic Negro is another.

Since character motivation in both the play and the novel is largely external, men are simply good or bad. Nor do good and evil struggle for possession of a man's soul. Therefore there is little possibility for either character improvement or deterioration. These assurances made the Oroonoko situation most suitable to humanitarian usages where a sharp demarcation between good and evil, black and white, could be irrevocably made. Only later in the romantic period would it be possible for a slave-oriented white man to mend his ways or for a Negro to commit villainies. Such are the means by which Mrs. Behn's heroic royal slave was groomed for his sentimental role in verse and drama.

This pattern of black characterization established by Aphra Behn and Thomas Southerne became a "recurring decimal" for more than a century. As we have seen, the basic outline called for a Noble African of royal ancestry; a sentimental heroine (colour ranging from black to white); the

separation of the lovers in Africa; a coarse, lustful white man hounding the heroine; a noble black companion or advisor to the principals; a rebellious defence of honour; and a stoical endurance of torture and death. Certain variations could be played upon these themes, and ultimately even a comic ending could replace the tragic.

The original play "Oroonoko" was popular for some eighty years, through at least 275 performances.[8] In 1749 Dr. Dodd had his Prince of Annamboe weep over the tragedy of the African prince whose trials so nearly resembled his own. John Whaley had similarly celebrated a young lady he saw at the theater in 1732:

> At Fate's approach whilst Oroonoko Groans,
> Imoinda's Fate, undaunted at his own:
> Dropping a gen'rous Tear Lucretia Sighs,
> And views the Heroe with Imoinda's Eyes.
> When the Prince strikes who envy's not the Deed?
> To be so Wept, who wou'd not wish to Bleed?[9]

A complete study of the Oroonoko legend would undoubtedly reveal that the Prince has left his mark in many, many places.

To Mrs. Behn also must be attributed the first fictional treatment of the West Indian landscape. She succeeds in a description of the Surinam plantations which is sometimes almost photographic in detail. This West Indian local colour is lost in Southerne, however, and remains dormant until James Grainger attempts to give the Caribbean landscape literary status in his long poem, The Sugar Cane (1764). Descriptions of tropical scenery abounded in eighteenth-century travel literature, but the imaginative use of it was to develop slowly. Mrs. Behn also opened the doors to "pseudo-Africa" where abolition poets were to make numerous voyages of discovery. The realism of her plantations is set against the exotic Moorish trappings of the Koromantyn court which, with

its intrigues and tawdry elegance, bears a close resemblance to the court of Charles II--if it were transplanted into the tropics and populated by cavaliers and fops in black skins.

A very strong Oroonokoan strain can be traced in at least a dozen dramas, to say nothing of the Prince's image to be found in abolition verse. In 1698 a "heroic tragedy" entitled "Victorious Love" appeared briefly at Drury Lane.[10] The teen-age author, William Walker, dedicated it to one of the Lords of the Admiralty whom he commended for having (in the island where he was appointed governor) "Civiliz'd the People, Grafted good Breeding on this unpolish't stock, Refin'd their Principles in Religion, Policy and Manners, and by [his] own most Instructive Example made 'em indeed Humane." This dedication celebrates Britain's civilizing role and contains most of the ammunition which colonists were later to use in defence of the slave system. Actually, the play is very inferior to "Oroonoko" and is only superficially like it in that it features an African court with the Emperor interfering in the love-life of the young people.

Southerne's much-maligned comic sub-plot was revived in "The Sexes Mis-Match'd" (1741).[11] The author of this farce anticipated the suggestion of a reviewer in Gentleman's Magazine in 1752 who said that

> If a manager should be afraid of seeing a thin house for want of something ludicrous, a farce composed out of the . . . under-plot might answer his purpose, and make the audience laugh after the tragedy.[12]

The shift of scene from Surinam to Gibraltar eradicates most of the West Indian colonial significance, but not quite all. The comic role of Kate, the heroine's blackamoor maid, is the chief echo of the plantations. She is put into her mistress's bed to test the intentions of the French-

educated libertine, Thomas Frolick. When he discovers the ruse, he reacts "normally":

> O! defend me; the Devil, the Devil, Fiends and Furies. . . . I am bubbled, abus'd most damnably; but be thou Devil, or his Dam, I'll give thee a wak'ning; here's a Curry for thy Morocco Hide (jolts her roughly).[13]

The poor black girl is permitted only one speech, but it reveals the limits of both her real-life and stage potential for the year 1741:

> O! O! O! I'm Bruis'd into Mummy, a little Spice, and I'm fitted to pot up for Venison. I'll lye no more with your Sweetheart, if he huggs this way, let him hugg you Mistress (I, 188).

Maria comforts her abused Negress by promising her a new petticoat. In general the farce follows Southerne quite closely, particularly in the scenes featuring the booby Ben. The Widow Longfort is wealthy in quite an expansive way, but she lacks the supporting evidence of plantations and slaves. This deficiency diminishes some of her impact on the fortune-hunters. At least it must have done so in the eyes of playgoers who had seen "Oroonoko." "The Sexes Mismatch'd" appears to be almost the only effort to salvage "the low wit and dull obscenity" of Southerne's sub-plot.

John Hawkesworth, friend of Dr. Johnson and drama critic for Gentleman's Magazine, bowdlerized "Oroonoko" and gave it its major revision.[14] He excised the disturbing widow-plot altogether, and chopped up and versified Southerne's prose. He also added two new characters. The first of these "universal Friends of Mankind" is Heartwell, the President of the Council who breaks into moral homilies at the least provocation. The second is Maria, sister of the lieutenant governor, who is engaged to Blandford. Oroonoko is essentially unaffected by the slight humanitarian element injected into this revision, and he continues to be a

royal Noble Savage who happens to be black. Maria and Blandford initiate the popular "abolition debate." As a sentimental heroine, she cannot be convinced of the justification of slavery with all of its imperialistic overtones. Blandford argues the question with her because he has complete faith in Oroonoko's excellence as a preventive to revolt. He does admit, however, that he wishes there were some avenue to colonial prosperity other than that of slavery:

> It were, indeed, well to be wished, some
> More humane Expedient would be found,
> For the Cultivation of our Lands--And yet,
> There are, who say this Practice carries Mercy,
> Rather than Marks of an unfeeling Stamp--
> Since in th' Wars, they wage, each with the other--
> Were not this Channel of commercial Intercourse
> Kept open, th' Pris'ners taken would exchange
> This Slavery, for cruel, and tormenting Deaths (IV).[15]

But Maria alone can empathize with the slaves' condition which will breed rebellion, black princes notwithstanding:

> Reasoning will not weigh with those, who feel
> Th' Oppression--nor stop their warm Impatience
> To purchase Freedom, with their Master's Blood (IV).

Then the humanitarian sentiments are undercut by such passages as that showing Hawkesworth's band of West Indian slaves singing:

> Come, let us be gay, to repine is in vain,
> When our loss we forget, what we lose we retain;
> Our toils with the day are all ended at last;
> Let us drown in the present all thoughts of the past,
> All the future commit to the Powers above;
> Come, give us a smile as an earnest of love.

But the poor Negroes are unable to live up to their own rather advanced metaphysics, for at last they find that bondage stifles all pleasure. Love and joy "must both be free, for both disdain/ The sounding scourge and galling chain." Britain's sponsorship of the slave trade <u>is</u> seriously, although briefly, called into question by Imoinda:

> I have heard, Maria, the Isle which gave thee Birth,
> Is mark'd for hospitable Deeds, humane
> Benevolence, extended Charities--
> With ev'ry social Virtue--Is't possible?
> A Nation thus distinguish'd, by the Ties,
> Of soft Humanity, shou'd give its Sanction,
> To its dependant States, to exercise,
> This more than savage Rights, of thus disposing
> Like th' marketable Brute, their Fellow-Creatures' Blood?
> Whose equal Rectitude of fair Proportion--
> Their strong Intelligence--their Aptitude,
> In Reason's Rules, loudly, nay, terribly pronounce,
> They stand the equal Work of Reason's God (IV).

Maria admits that this is a just "charge too closely urg'd," but she is still sure that the "sage Rulers" of her parent country "could furnish forth/ Fit Argument; and with Humanity,/ Conjoin'd, to authorize" the act. When she avoids further discussion by taking Imoinda off to show her trousseau, Britannia emerges triumphant. Heartwell appeals to the hypocritical governor's pride and civic virtue without success, and finally shifts his attention to the administration of colonial government in a homily:

> How circumspect should be the Choice of these,
> Deputed by a State, t' administer
> In distant Colonies, that Equity
> Itself distributes, by impartial Laws.
> Graciously purposing, such shou'd extend
> Their Influence, to Each Dominion,
> From which it claims Allegiance. But, alas!
> How oft the Substitutes, by plausible,
> And subtle Conduct cover'd demonstrate
> More, th' insatiate Ravagers of Man,
> Than his protecting Guardian, and Support.
> Such is the fell Destroyer we deplore (V, i).

In other words, the system is acceptable, but the occasional man proves insufficient.

In the same year, 1760, Francis Gentleman produced an adaptation, "Oroonoko, or, The Royal Slave: a Tragedy, altered from Southerne."[16] For some curious reason it was dedicated to James Boswell who was an

avowed supporter of the slave system. Gentleman's play was acted with some success in Edinburgh. In 1767 an anonymous adaptation, "The Royal Captive: a New Tragedy altered from Southerne's Oroonoko," appeared at the Haymarket, apparently for a one-night stand only.

With the crescendo of anti-slavery writing in 1788, it is no surprise to find Oroonoko taking a curtain call. He was introduced to Manchester by J. Ferriar in "The Prince of Angola, a Tragedy; altered from the play Oroonoko, and adapted to the Circumstances of the Present time." The "circumstances of the present time" were the efforts that had been put forth in Manchester to abolish the African slave trade, and the piece was unabashedly turned into a tirade against slavery. When Gentleman's Magazine recognized the abolitionistic purpose of the play, it gave the work a cautious review:

> How far [this play], and the other exertions for restoring freedom to the enslaved Africans, may meet with success, must be left to the wisdom of the Legislature, and to time, to decide; for great care must be taken, that, under the specious name of Humanity, as already of Liberty, too great sacrifices of national polity and interest be not made.[17]

In the same year the story of Prince Cymbello appeared in William Roscoe's poem Wrongs of Africa (1788),[18] and that fiery rebel owes much to the royal slave of Surinam. The Prince is a pupil of the holy man Matomba and lives in the forest as a chief and an idyllic lover. When he is kidnapped by "white receivers," he infuses his glowing spirit into the crowd of slaves aboard the ship. In the rebellion he succeeds in stabbing the captain before the bullets mow the mutinied Negroes down. In a flash of lightning he sees his beloved Kazia. She is shot as he takes her in his arms, but he is too exalted to die by an unworthy white man's bullet. Instead, he stabs himself and falls beside Kazia on the deck.

Oroonoko was reincarnated on stage in the 1790's in two highly sentimental plays. William Hutchinson's "The Princess of Zanfara" (1792)[19] was dedicated to the "Society Instituted in the Year 1787, for the purpose of Effecting an Abolition of the Slave Trade," and consequently its propagandistic purpose was no secret. In her tearful musings by the fountain in the governor's grove, the captive Laura (née Jacqueena) spends almost as much time bemoaning slavery as she does her lost love, Manzara. She calls Christianity into question, even as many Englishmen were beginning to do:

> Were they not Christians that on Niger's flood,
> On board their dreadful bark, receiv'd the lost
> Jacqueena? . . .
> Are they not Christians, who, in all this land,
> Make the poor Africans perform the task
> Of beasts; not barely to sustain the toil,
> But to endure the torture; and with stripes,
> With nakedness and hunger, to lie down,
> Stall'd worse than beasts, to rankle in their sores? (I).

Then to Amelia, the governor's daughter who is also confounded by "the vile prejudice which clogs the wheel of partial justice," Laura recounts the story of her capture. The tale is in the tradition of Imoinda, and the two girls, black and white, weep into the fountain together. Amelia's lover Antonio is an officer on a slave ship, but she urges him to join the Abolition Society. He artfully brings forth all the standard anti-abolitionist arguments: slavery is an economic necessity, Negroes are an inferior form of creation, it is impractical to send the Negroes back to Africa, they are better off having the opportunity to embrace the white man's civilization and religion, and, in any event, sudden emancipation is unthinkable. But the "vast sin" upon which the slave trade rests still horrifies Amelia's sensibilities, and she determines to set Laura free.

Meanwhile, Pembroke the trader describes the arrival of a new consignment of slaves:

> New cargoes crowd our shores, and on the beach
> The squalid multitudes are pouring forth,
> From over-loaded ships, which, like the curse
> Of vile Pandora's box, bring forth disease,
> With misery, and pallid want,
> Crippled and maim'd, whose ulcerating sores
> Cling to the canker'd chains, that rankle deep,
> And seek the bone (I, 11).

Antonio insists that the slaves are healthy, young, and vigorous and that Pembroke is only trying to "hurt the merchant's credit and his wares." Act II introduces Calaban, the monstrous "carcase man" and captain of the vessel. There is also Horatio, the business-like planter who rejoices over "the glorious voyage" which has brought 1,500 "sturdy knaves" to port. Finally Prince Manzara appears in Oroonokoan splendour, making a kind of Zoroastrian invocation to Light (II). The next Act is taken up with the attempt of the lascivious governor to seduce Laura and with the conversion of Antonio who has now been quite overcome by the magnificence of the Prince. The latter tells Amelia:

> I am become your pious convert now,
> And entertain a judgment that's so fix'd
> Concerning those poor wretches we enslave,
> That I have vow'd, no effort of my life
> Shall be refus'd to remedy their ills (III, 35).

Manzara vindicates himself before the colonial senate and proves his royal lineage. The governor repents of his designs upon Laura, and promises to send the two freed slaves to England, the bastion of liberty. With the lovers united we begin to anticipate a happy ending, but Laura, after a skirmish with the lustful Calaban, has by now poisoned herself. Freedom comes too late, and she dies in the Prince's arms. Unlike Oroonoko his literary progenitor, Manzara may not die; he has work to do. After

having arranged for Laura's "decent embalmment," he sets sail for Africa where he will

> . . . erect on high
> A monument, that shall command the hearts
> Of our posterity (whilst man exists)
> To an abhorence of the Trade in Slaves.

And this time the strains of "Rule Britannia" are nowhere to be heard. Although Hutchinson's play makes a giant step forward in the dissemination of humanitarian sentiments, it is actually the fate of only the royal lovers which is at stake. In this respect the Oroonoko legend is unmodified, for not a word is said in behalf of the other 1,499 slaves who arrived in the colony on the same ship with Manzara.

In 1799 Kotzebue's "The Negro Slaves" (1796)[20] was translated into English and dedicated to William Wilberforce. Its avowed aim of exposing plantation atrocities added little, of course, to its literary excellence. John, a rich planter of Jamaica, operates the estate inherited from his benevolent father. His newly-arrived younger brother William is horrified by the proceedings on the family plantation. That English-bred young gentleman simply cannot eat, sleep, nor even drink his coffee with its slave-made sugar. Two female slaves demonstrate the split-image of the black slave-girl of drama: Lilli, the comic, dancing and carefree figure; and Ada, the Imoinda type. Old Truro, a manumitted Negro (a late innovation), is their counsellor. The scenes featuring the two brothers are a series of debates on the slave question. They cover such items as the discipline of slaves, the licentious liberties of the master, the futility of trying to civilize people who are basically beasts, and the impossibility of cultivating sugar cane without slave labour. Needless to say, the brothers

disagree on every point. Act II is a montage of anecdotes of the overseer's atrocities and of Negro sufferings and loyalties. By the third act Planter John has unsuccessfully tried to posses himself of the virtuous Ada. At the tantalizing moment of reunion with her lover Zamco she is told that she can save his life only by giving herself to John. Although the philanthropic William has offered half his fortune to redeem Ada, his brother is adamant. The Negro lovers prepare for the obvious solution to the crisis--death. They surreptitiously secure a knife, and Zamco encourages Ada:

> Have you not more trust in the faith of our fathers? Have you forgot that our soul flies back with the last sigh to its native country? There we shall walk in the cool shades of ever-blooming palm trees; there the spirit of my unborn child will meet me smiling.

In alluding thus to the African belief in transmigration to an idyllic homeland, Kotzebue utilizes one of the most popular abolition motifs of the day, one which will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

The last two scenes present the reader with a choice of conclusions, one tragic and the other comic. In the first, Zamco, in the manner of Oroonoko, stabs Ada, who says "Thanks! it gives me no pain," as she dies without agonies. The hero then loses his mind (a pathetic rather than tragic event) and stabs himself while William denounces John: "Curse upon thee, murderer." In the second, William arrives to announce that he has bought the freedom of Zamco and Ada with half of his fortune, and he joins in the general joyful weeping which follows. Although the reader might be tempted to contemplate a third ending in which the knife would be used on John, the idea was not practical. Even the most abolition-minded playwrights of the eighteenth Century did not dare to go so far as to portray the murder of a planter by a slave.

That would involve realities of the West Indies upon which colonial theater-goers would not care to dwell.

By the end of the century, the Oroonoko theme had become uniformly serious and humanitarian. The 1808 edition of even Southerne's original play in British Theatre was expurgated. Mrs. Inchbald, the editor, objected to "the repulsive qualities of some of the [comic] characters," therefore she deleted nearly all of them. Only the Widow appears among the planters at the slave sale, and she is bent on business rather than matrimony.[21]

With the new illegitimate drama, however, we return to the composite of comic and serious elements in the Oroonoko legend. Thomas Morton's melodrama, "The Slave" (1816),[22] is set in Surinam and has the good comic sub-plot of Miss Von Frump, Sam Sharpset, and Fogrum (all Creoles) which provides relief from the horrendous agonies of Zelinda, a beautiful quadroon slave. After she becomes a Christian, she insists upon legal marriage, although her lover Clifton, a white army captain, tends to adhere to Creole mores and requires some coaching in morality. She is pursued through the play by Lindenberg who is a despicable, lustful Dutchman and a "slave of passion." Although fragments of the plot are taken from various sources, the most obvious is Oroonoko. The slave Gambia is a tower of physical strength who feels, unlike the original Royal Slave, that he deserves his fate because he has dealt in slaves back in Africa. He does penance by sacrificing his interest in Zelinda and by saving her life as well as those of Clifton and their child. The several points which are made about slavery are significant of the times. There is a David-Jonathan attachment between

Gambia and Clifton, a black man and a white. The corrupt planter, Lindenberg, tries to forestall the emancipation of Zelinda with several legal road blocks, but he fails. The heroine's natural noble savagery is now considerably illuminated by her Christianity. Also, the races are freely mixed. In the final song in honour of "Freedom's Isle" to which the beleaguered couple escape, Zelinda's part is a frank bid for acceptance as a "free person of colour." She represents an increasingly important segment of society in the Indies as well as in emigrant groups going to England.[23]

In conclusion we may say that Aphra Behn set the pace for a literary West Indian life which would remain basically unchanged until clear-eyed, hard-headed twentieth-century novelists should take over the field. Perhaps her most important contribution was the concept of the noble, princely Negro which the Oroonoko legend gave to English literature. It served humanitarian purposes throughout the abolition and emancipation campaigns, and when that need was fulfilled it disappeared in its more obvious forms. The grandeur of Oroonoko and all of the rest of "Guinea's captive kings," however, has never really been lost from the West Indian scene. Although the name of Oroonoko may now be virtually unknown, contemporary writers of the Caribbean can still sometimes perceive the shadowy person of the Royal Slave looking through the eyes of the modern West Indian peasant. Philip Sherlock's sonnet, "Jamaican Fisherman," is but one expression of this carry-over:

> Across the sand I saw a black man stride
> To fetch his fishing gear and broken things,
> And silently that splendid body cried
> Its proud descent from ancient chiefs and kings,
> Across the sand I saw him naked stride;

Sang his black body in the sun's white light
The velvet coolness of dark forests wide,
The blackness of the jungle's starless night.
He stood beside the old canoe which lay
Upon the beach; swept up within his arms
The broken nets and careless lounged away
Towards his wretched hut. . . .
Nor knew how fiercely spoke his body then
Of ancient wealth and savage regal men.[24]

B. Inkle and Yarico

With the coming of the eighteenth century there was a new ring of authenticity in the writings of travellers, and the advancement in scientific and philosophic thought was beginning to foster a new interest in the primitive and his culture. It remained for the stay-at-home poets and philosophers to mold these factual accounts into idyllic and romantically appealing forms. The tale of Inkle and Yarico demonstrates this process of evolution in a West Indian theme, one with its historical roots lying in the seventeenth century. The story is second only to Oroonoko in its importance to West Indian tradition. Historian Richard Ligon first gave it to the European world in his True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes (1657), ten years before Mrs. Behn introduced Oroonoko to English literature. Ligon's account of the real Yarico is the simple picture of an Indian woman who once lived on the mainland of North America:

> We had an Indian woman, a slave in the house, who was of excellent shape and colour, for it was a pure bright bay. . . . This woman would not be woo'd by any means to wear Cloaths. She chanc'd to be with Child, by a Christian servant, and lodging in the Indian house, amongst other women of her own Country, where the Christian servants, both men and women came; and being very great, and that her time was come to be delivered, loath to fall in labour before the men, walk'd down to a Wood, in which was a Pond of water,[25] and there by

> the side of the Pond, brought herself abed; and presently washing her Child in some of the water of the Pond, lap'd it up in such rags, as she had begg'd of the Christians; and in three hours time came home, with her Child in her arms, a lusty Boy, frolick and lively.
>
> This Indian dwelling near the Sea-coast, upon the Main, an English ship put into a Bay, and sent some of her men a shoar, to try what victuals or water they could find, for in some distress they were: But the Indians perceiving them to go up so far into the Country, as they were sure they could not make a safe retreat, intercepted them in their return, and fell upon them, chasing them into a Wood, and being dispersed there, some were taken, and some kill'd: but a young man amongst them stragling from the rest, was met by this Indian Maid, who upon the first sight fell in love with him, and hid him close from her Country-men (the Indians) in a Cave, and there fed him till they could safely go down to the shoar, where the ship lay at anchor, expecting the return of their friends. But at last, seeing them upon the shoar, sent the long-Boat for them, took them aboard, and brought them away. But the youth, when he came ashoar in the Barbadoes, forgot the kindness of the poor maid, that had ventured her life for his safety, and sold her for a slave, who was as free born as he; And so poor Yarico for her love, lost her liberty.[26]

Ligon mentions Yarico only once more in his History. Referring to the "Chegoes" which tormented him in Barbadoes, he says: "I have had tenne taken out of my feet in a morning by the most unfortunate Yarico, an Indian woman."[27] But even at this lowly task, Yarico must have retained her dignity; Ligon makes her a perfect lady, except that she would wear no clothes. Historically nothing more is told of her. Since it is unknown whether she was highborn or not, her noble traits must have been of the common heritage of her race. The many poets and dramatists who have erected for Yarico monuments in prose and verse, however, have not perpetuated the memory of the real Yarico. As in the case of Oroonoko, they have simply documented their own tastes.

In 1711 Richard Steele brought Yarico forth in a form which invited popular admiration much more readily than if she had remained buried

in the pages of Ligon's History. The essayist not only names Ligon's youth, but also has him take the same voyage that Ligon himself had taken to the Indies. He wastes no word of scorn on him:

> Mr. Thomas Inkle of London, aged 20 Years, embarked in the Downs on the good Ship called the Achilles, bound for the West-Indies, on the 16th of June 1647, in order to improve his Fortune by Trade and Merchandize. Our Adventurer was the Son of an eminent Citizen, who had taken particular Care to instill into his Mind an early Love of Gain, by making him a perfect Master of Numbers, and consequently giving him a quick View of Loss and Advantage, and preventing the natural Impulses of his Passions, by Prepossession towards his Interests.[28]

Inkle's subsequent behaviour is thus very easily explained. The youth is a natural product, albeit in an extreme form, of the mercantilism by which Britain controlled her Caribbean empire.

Many picturesque details of the story, which were to be retold many times over, were initiated by Steele. Inkle's physical charms (the "ruddy Vigour in his Countenance, Strength in his Limbs" and the "Ringlets of fair Hair loosely flowing on his Shoulders") were sufficient to turn the head of any girl, to say nothing of a simple Indian. Moreover, the interest in this confrontation of civilization and savagery is mutual: "If the European was highly Charmed with the Limbs, Features, and wild Graces of the Naked American; the American was no less taken with the Dress, Complexion and Shape of an European, covered from Head to Foot." Then there is the fruit and brook-water with which Yarico serves Inkle; the gifts she gives him from her other lovers; her ornaments of "Shells, Bugles and Bredes;" her fascination with his hair; the cave adorned with "the spotted Skins of Beasts and . . . Party-coloured Feathers of Fowls;" their idyllic life in the forest, sleeping "amidst the Falls of Waters, and Melody of Nightin-

gales;" and Inkle's promises of silk dresses and coaches if she would follow him to his country.

Steele gives Inkle a very specific reason for selling Yarico; he wished to make up for the many days of interest he had lost on his money during his sojourn in the woods. When she pleaded that she was with child by him, "he only made use of that Information, to rise in his Demands upon the Purchasers." Steele finds it poetically just that the perfidious Inkle, not Ligon's anonymous "Christian servant," should be the father of her child.

The roles of Inkle and Yarico changed through the succeeding years. Inkle was given a brother, a servant, good and evil counsellors, and a betrothed (who in turn had a father and a maidservant). His crime was occasionally extenuated by his father's poverty or illness. The slave-dealer and the Barbadian planter-master assumed more concrete forms. Yarico was provided with a father, a son, a brother, and a maid. In about forty-five original European works on the theme, she assumed several different personalities, arousing interest in France[29] and especially in Germany.[30] In England the legend ran through a long and serious stream of lyric poetry. Though monotonously unoriginal, the poems are deeply felt. Unlike her German counterpart, the English Yarico is a passive creature, pleading in vain for pity and suffering in Indian dignity but not in Indian silence. She is usually steadfast in her love for her betrayer. This ignoble conduct of their countryman made a deep impression upon English lovers of fair play, and they revelled in heroic descriptions of the pathos of Yarico's situation. The English poems group themselves into two varieties--the narratives and the epistles, with sentiment prevailing in both.

William Pattison's twenty-two line fragment, "Yarico to Inkle; An Epistle" (1728)[31] appears to be the first poetic version of the legend. Yarico refuses to accuse the "dear, faithless Man" of being the source of her griefs. Although she stresses the promises that were made, she blames Fate:

> Then will I mourn my Fate's severe Decree,
> Nor charge a Guilt so black, so base on Thee;
> For O! I know, ah no! I knew, thy Mind
> Soft as the Dove, and as the Turtle kind. . . .
> How have I heard thee paint the faithfull'st Pair,
> Describe their Bliss, and e'en their Raptures share!
> Then have thy Lips, with sweet Transition swore
> Thy Love more lasting, and thy Passion more!
> And what, is Truth, if Signs like these deceive!
> Signs! that might win the wariest to believe.

"The Story of Inkle and Yarico from the 11th Spectator" (1734)[32] emphasizes the satire on commercialism. Inkle sells Yarico because he is "born too near the northern pole,/ Which chill'd each virtue in his frozen soul!" His insatiate love of gain is admired by on-looking Barbadians:

> He thrust her from him, with remorseless hand,
> For her condition rais'd his first demand.
> Pleas'd with success he cheerfully returns,
> While hapless Yarico in bondage mourns.
> The merchants all the prudent youth admire,
> That could, so young, a trading soul acquire (258).

We should note that in this version Yarico is clearly identified as a "Negro virgin." Since the Indian fared so much better than the Negro in travelogues and in the effusions of noble savagery, there was a lingering reluctance to exhibit Yarico as a Negro. Although this identification became essential with the growing demands of humanitarianism, many molders of the legend attempted an ambivalent attitude in which Yarico was at once an Indian and a Negro.

The anonymous "Yarico to Inkle, an Epistle" (1736)[33] is much too long, but it became a popularly accepted "standard" version of the legend. Many images from Steele's account are elaborated in mediocre verse. Yarico appeals to Inkle to save her for the sake of his own fame, if not for the causes of justice and love:

> . . . The living story of my woe
> Shall follow, and exclaim where e'er you go;
> Mankind will shun you, and the blasting tongue
> Shall hoot the monster as you pass along: . . .
> In vain for business you'll again repair:
> My wrongs shall find you and revenge you there (23-24).

The author of this poem seems to recognize that he is working with a subject suitable for heroic treatment and that he is also molding the materials of a sentimental folk epic:

> And if in distant years some hapless maid,
> Shall be by faithless, barbarous man betray'd;--
> Condemn'd in sharpest misery to rove--
> Unbless'd with hope, still curs'd with fatal love;
> One to whom life and liberty he owes;
> From whose fond kindness every blessing flows,
> Then shall the just comparison be made
> So trusted Yarico, and was betrayed (14).

Nevertheless, the poem in its original form lacked one essential element of the Noble Negro and Oroonokoan tradition. J. Anketell revised it while in Trinity College, Dublin, in 1771 and inserted a twelve-line passage to supply the deficiency. Yarico's humanitarian appeal increased appreciably when it was discovered that she was of royal birth:

> What tho' the burning sun's discol'ring rays
> Have shadow'd with a browner dye my face,
> Yet was I thought most lovely to the sight,
> The virgin's envy, and the youth's delight.
> Nor was my birth unequal to my fame,
> I from a race of sov'reign princes came;
> My love the noblest of the youthful train,
> With warm persuasion pleaded to obtain:

Alas! unheeded all their vows I heard,
Nor knew a tender wish 'till you appear'd;
Subdu'd, I yielded up to you alone,
Decreed the slave of love to be undone.[34]

In 1738 two poems were "attempted in verse" by Frances Seymour, Duchess of Somerset. Compared with its predecessors, "The Story of Inkle and Yarrico, a Most Moving Tale from the Spectator," suffers from indefiniteness of setting. Inkle is cast upon some barbarian shore occupied by cannibals and tigers, and the virgin who saves him is both Negro and Indian. They escape to another unnamed barbarian shore ruled by planters. With this prevailing vagueness the Countess dims the embarrassing fact that Inkle was an Englishman. Apparently feeling that Yarico had had short shrift in the first poem, the Duchess followed with "An Epistle from Yarrico to Inkle, after he had left her in Slavery" (1738). Now another innovation appears. Yarico has been converted under the instruction of "a hoary Christian Priest," and she looks to the rewards of heaven. By the same token, she reminds the "dear, faithless Youth" of the pit prepared for "perjur'd men."

John Winstanley's "Yarico's Epistle to Inkle" (about 1742)[35] is less pictorial than its forerunners. Since the poet was an admirer of the cult of noble savagery, his 160 verses are more reflective than narrative. Yarico emerges neither tragically constant nor heroically impassioned. She resolves to endure her fate and servitude with a noble but rather colourless dignity.

In Stephen Duck's moral tale of 1753, "Inkle" and "Yarico" become "Avaro" and "Amanda."[36] The poet apparently believed that the more mercantile name of "Avaro" better clarified the young villain's character than

the somewhat obscure "Inkle."[37] Clearly anyone was at liberty to add new items of fact to the tale, subject only to the approval of the reader. Duck elaborates on the notion that Avaro's entire problem stems from his education. He seldom read "moral law," and he spent his nights learning "all the rules of interest, loss, and gain" while other youths went to plays and masquerades. He also dabbled in astronomy and hearkened to his father's materialistic injunctions:

> He that has Gold, is pow'rful as a king,
> Has valour, virtue, wisdom, ev'rything! . . .
> Should the merchant's life your fancy please,
> Be bold, and bravely venture on the seas;
> Many by merchandize have gain'd renown,
> And made the Indies wealth become their own (213).

A violent storm breaks upon Avaro's West India-bound vessel, and he is cast upon an unidentified "Indian isle." He eludes the "crafty natives" and escapes into the woods. "All night in tears the pensive merchant lay" revamping his astrological beliefs, and in the morning the Indian princess Amanda comes. She is "smit with the beauty of the god-like man," and he apparently actually <u>sees</u> a woman for the first time:

> With equal joy Avaro now survey'd
> The native graces of the Negro maid:
> He view'd her arms, with various ribbands bound;
> Her downy head, with painted feathers crown'd;
> With bredes, and lucid shells, in circles strung,
> Which shone refulgent, as they round her hung (217).

Steele's familiar items are again elaborated in exaggerated verse, including Avaro's promises of silks and "gilded houses" drawn by horses. Thus "he daily vows" and she "daily is deceiv'd." Inkle/Avaro is now accused of malice aforethought, not just a momentary succumbing to temptation.

One night Amanda dreams that her lover takes her to "a distant isle" where she has one of the first visions of slavery to be found in the legend. There

> . . . horrors reign, and comforts never smile;
> Thick brakes and brambles choak'd the dreary coast,
> The only product which the land could boast;
> Till a dejected servile race arose,
> With gloomy sadness brooding on their brows.
> This crowd promiscuous, with incessant toil,
> Or rooted up the sod, or plough'd the soil.
> How each perform'd his task, a tyrant view'd;
> And sternly shook his whip, and menac'd as he stood.
> Sometimes, to shun the direful lash, they fled
> Th' insulting lord pursu'd with greater speed: . . .
> Each to his wonted task, he drove again,
> And made me mix among the servile train (221).

With his enticements Avaro stems "the briny torrent [which] flows adown her cheeks," and they escape. Once arrived in Barbados Avaro is overwhelmed by the sight of gold changing hands among the planters on the wharf, and he is discontented with the thought of going home with nothing more than "a doating Negro's heart." The last sixty-three lines of the poem are for the satisfaction of those who always wanted to know what happened to Inkle. He sails away, leaving Yarico in loud lamentation on the wharf.

He is well pleased with his gold until a frightful storm breaks, and "the giddy ship on circling eddies rides,/ Toss'd, and re-toss'd, the sport of winds and tides." Avaro, of course, is the Jonah-like figure for whom the punitive storm has been sent, and guilty thoughts quite properly distract his mind. He falls overboard from the stern of the vessel, and we conclude that Providence has meted out his reward. Then he shows up promptly "on a lonely isle,/ Where human feet ne'er print the baleful soil." Although the "conscious hell within his bosom" works him into a frenzy, he is too cowardly to commit suicide. Nature then must preside over his death:

> To pierce his trembling heart he thrice essay'd,
> And thrice his coward arm deny'd its aid.

> Meanwhile, a howling wolf, with hunger press'd,
> Leap'd on the wretch, and seiz'd him by the breast:
> Tore out his heart, and lick't the purple flood;
> For earth refus'd to drink the villain's blood (230).

Edward Jerningham maintains Yarico's violent passion through 234 lines of fervid poetry in "Yarico to Inkle, an Epistle" (1766).[38] Although she gives a Christian rendering of good for evil by wishing Inkle "ev'ry Bliss" his God can confer upon him, her betrayed love seems ready at any moment to turn to hatred. At the end of the poem she does indeed return to her pagan gods rather than to the comforts and fears of the Christian religion. Yarico here is a rather materialistic Noble Savage who appeals to her rank for escape from the ignominy of common slavery:

> Must I the Shafts of Infamy sustain?
> To Slav'ry's purposes my Infant train?
> To catch the Glances of his haughty Lord?
> Attend obedient at the festive Board?
> From Hands unscepter'd take the scornful Blow?

She is now clearly Negro, "a Nubian dame," her princely father having been "snatch'd . . . from his regal Seat" Oroonoko-fashion. In the "roseate Bow'r" which she prepares for Inkle, Yarico even declares her love by her unalterable Negroid features:

> . . . While the Stream of Life is giv'n to flow,
> And sable Hue o'erspread this youthful Brow;
> Or curl untaught by Art this woolly Hair,
> So long, so long to me shalt thou be dear (16).

Some fifty lines are devoted to the unborn child which is the "too fatal proof" of their pleasures and of her betrayal. In despair Yarico turns to her sun-god and vows suicide, for only death will liberate her and her child from "Slavr'y's Laws." Although this intention sounds very like the "dying Negro" theme which was to be so thoroughly exploited in 1780's, Jerningham fails to capitalize on one related and

distinctive Negro motif. At the beginning of the poem Yarico requests the single boon of being allowed to return home to her forest bower, but in her closing address to her pagan gods and in her suicide statement, she seems to have no expectation of going to the African's paradisaic home after death.

The fate of Inkle and Yarico was commemorated in song as well as story. Poems became particularly numerous in the 1790's, the decade during which America too began to take an interest in the subject. We shall consider two songs by way of illustration. Both of these lyrics pre-suppose on the part of the public an acquaintance with the story of Inkle and Yarico, and no attempt is made to elaborate the situation. Considering the sentimentality of the period, the poems are as naive as could be expected and have some of the characteristics of the folk song. The first appeared in Lady's Magazine, "Epistle from Yarico to Inkle" (1782).[39]

Far from ungrateful Inkle's flight
I pass the lonely hours;
No more I wander with delight,
In those sequester'd bowers.

Thy image haunts my pensive breast
That heaves full oft a sigh;
Ne'er will this bosom be at rest
Till Yarico shall die.

Then farewell Inkle, faithless swain,
Thy loss I'll still deplore;
And of thy broken vows complain,
Till Yarico's no more.

The second one raises an appealing question, given the shallow quality of much of English society. Could any white woman love as Yarico had loved?

When night spreads her shadow around,
I will watch with delight on thy rest;
I will soften thy bed on the ground,
And thy cheek shall be lodg'd on my breast.

Love heeds not the storm nor the rain;
On me let their fury descend,
This bosom shall never complain
While it shelters the life of a friend.

O tell me what tears thee away?
To a fair one, ah! wouldst thou depart?
Alas! to thy Yarico say
What maiden will love like this heart?

Though resolv'd not my sorrows to hear;
Though resolv'd from a mourner to fly;
The ocean shall bear thee a tear,
And the winds shall convey thee a sigh.[40]

In 1802 the customary pattern of Yarico's appeals was broken by an exchange of poetic correspondence between Inkle and Yarico. W. Smith of Southwark and John Webb of Haverhill took up the burden in the pages of Lady's Magazine. The first letter is from the penitent Inkle who is languishing in an English jail, consumed with gloomy recollections and self-accusations. To climax a series of disasters at sea, his intended English bride has now rejected him, saying:

. . . Ungrateful wretch begone!
Stone is thy bosom--poison is thy tongue!
Unknown to thee is pure affections beam:
Thy unborn infant and thy wife redeem.
Tho' jetty dye attraction may conceal,
A heart she has--a heart that knows to feel.[41]

This poem is one of Inkle's very few opportunities to speak for himself. The second letter is from Yarico who has received Inkle's epistle with mingled feelings of renewed resentment and irrepressible love. Although her master is cruel, she is resolved to live on for the sake of that "rosy charmer," her infant boy.[42] Inkle replies promptly in a letter made up almost entirely of self-accusations. He longs to share Yarico's slavery and to press little Inkle to his bosom.[43] Yarico has the last word in the fourth letter. Having been converted at the death-bed of a dying Christian,

she is no longer deluded by the promised land of Indians. She can now point the forgiven Inkle to the hope of meeting her in heaven.[44] With this information Messers. Smith and Webb seem to have exhausted their apocryphal resources, and this poetic addendum to the legend ends.

After the turn of the nineteenth century, the theme seems to have lost its allure. Although two picturesque poets of the West Indies allude to the Inkle and Yarico legend, it is mainly as a literary curiosity. Chapman's description of Barbados would have been incomplete, for instance, without reference to that island's most famous legend. He paints the Indian beauty in native colours and with a new romantic flair:

> A bright-limbed Hebe of the ancient wood,
> A shape to love in holy solitude;
> Whose eyes, quick-rolling, seemed to dance in dew;
> Whose laugh was music, and whose footstep flew:
> A brighter Venus of a darker hue
> Than sculptor e'er designed, or painter drew.
> Her rounded arms--her bosom's graceful swell--
> Her twinkling ankles, with her wreaths of shell--
> Her limbs' proportion, and their wavy line,
> Instinct with beauty, breathing and divine--
> Her glorious form, complete in every part,
> Shewed Nature's triumph over colder art.[45]

Deluded into becoming the white man's bride, the "Indian Dryad" has left father, mother, sister, and baby brother to follow him. But she finds the white man's honour to be "an empty sound," and she is left to sicken and die. Chapman does not give her a single complaining word to say, but he spends more than thirty lines on her physical and spiritual beauties. No doubt he felt that if he was to bring Yarico before the public again he would have to do so for artistic reasons only, her humanitarian possibilities having long since been dissipated.

In The Cruise (1835), a literary-geographical survey of the West Indian archipelago, Robert Nugent Dunbar predicts with a certainty which history has certainly not justified that Barbados will forever be notorious because of the affair:

> Barbadoes! from thine annals blot one page!
> No fouler blackens history:--the wrongs
> Of Yarico shall ring through every age;
> And, long as sympathy to man belongs,
> The nations shall proclaim them in new tongues.
> Would that indignant England could disclaim
> That son, most abject 'mid degraded throngs!
> The climax of all perfidy and shame,
> Base avarice and guilt, centres in Inkle's name.[46]

Nevertheless, of all of the well-known eighteenth-century themes, the Inkle and Yarico legend is undoubtedly one of the most widely forgotten.

Since the English development of the legend proceeded largely in verse, we find only two important dramas on the subject, a tragedy and a comedy.[47] They both develop the Creole side of the story which is missing in the poetic versions. Weddell's three-act tragedy "Incle and Yarico" (1742) adds a large number of characters and events and transfers the scene from Barbados to the greater slave-island of Jamaica. Incle appears at immediate disadvantage. First, he betrays cowardly fears during the shipwreck which casts everyone ashore, and then he soliloquizes on Violetta, the girl he has ruined in England. The first two Acts follow the customary lines in the delineation of Noble Indians and the couple's forest retreat, but Act III tosses the reader into lusty Creole society. "The Sailor's Rendezvous in Jamaica" is undoubtedly based on a Port Royal tavern. It is presided over by a vulgar landlady, Carroty Kate, who complains of the trials of her occupation:

> There's no-body in my House at present, but the Crew of the Spendthrift, Captain Toper: they've been here above six Weeks; and truly, at this time o' Year, I'd rather see them put to Sea, and get Money, than lie here spending it,--when they have none in their Pockets-- (III, i).

Kate's enquiries into the progress of the slave trading reveal still other hard-line Creole attitudes:

> LANDLADY. How fairs the Captain? Has he any Passengers? What Slaves has he got? He has brought them to a brave Market.
>
> SECOND SAILOR. We've 400 Slaves; and for Passengers, only a young Merchant we took up, who had been ship-wreck'd, and a Gentlewoman that came off with him, whom he calls a Princess.
>
> LANDLADY. Ha! another Princess!--If she be sold, there is such Pleasure in being waited on by a Slave of Quality, that I am determined to have her for my own Maid. I hope some of you have been kind to her,--you understand me.--She'll be worth purchasing if she's in a fair way to bring a young one to Town.
>
> FIRST SAILOR. Yes, yes; she's big enough, I assure you; but I don't know for certain she will be sold. . . . If she be dispos'd of, Tom is half resolv'd upon buying her himself, for his lawful Bride.
>
> LANDLADY. Tom have her! What! Tom have a Heathen in a Christian Country? That Shift, indeed, may do well enough in a strait; but, surely you have more Value for your own Country-women (III, i).

Although the two sailors speculate on the possibility of Incle's remaining true to Yarico and keeping his "Salt-Water Promises," from experience they know that "the Love that is ready to scorch a Man up on the main Sea, never fails to sheer off on sight of Land" (III, i).

The Captain urges Incle to sell Yarico in what turns out to be a further satire on Christianity as well as Oroonokooism:

> INCLE. This purpos'd Sale bears heavy on my Heart. Were she baptiz'd, how black would be the Act?

CAPTAIN. That's true, indeed; but to Idolaters
No Vows have Pow'r to bind.--Were we to heed
The Cries of Virgins, or the loud Complaint
Of Slaves, who boast their Birth, Traffic would soon
Curse the Effects of coward Lenity (III, i, 46).

'Twere a new thing, to weigh a Slave's Distress
In the same Scale with ours.--We who are us'd
To hear them boast their Birth, rave, and pronounce
Destruction on their Owners, are not mov'd
With Tales of Royalty (IV, i).

A speech of one of the merchants also indicates the prevalence of this heroic-royalty theme which is a clear-cut link with the Oroonoko legend and also a mockery of it:

. . . 'Tis no new thing with us
To hear the Tales of Heroes, Kings, and Potentates,
In Chains; these mighty Men all bluster for a while,
All rave, and strut majestic; 'till, by Force
Of the triumphant Lash, their vaunting Boasts'
Are chang'd to due Submission.--Ev'n at this Hour,
I have employ'd, within one single Field,
Two Heirs presumptive to despotic Thrones,
Three Brothers to a King, and a Commander
Who shook the sable World;--he, at the first,
Groan'd loudly at his Change, supurn'd at his Driver,
And scare'd myself by his tremendous Roar;
But in a Month, by Starving, and hard Labour,
The loud-mouth'd Victor, as he call'd himself,
From thund'ring out Perdition on us all,
Fell into suppliant Tears; and now, with Patience
Stoops to that Yoke which once he scorn'd to bear (III, i).

When one prospective buyer is impressed with the quality and circumstances of Yarico, he concedes that it is well that the lot of the "poor Gentlewoman" has "fall'n 'mong us [kind] Christians!" Incle advises Yarico that the transaction is for her own good:

. . . Nature has parted us
Wide by Creation, by Religion more--
I must not marry you,--they both forbid it. . . .
That Gentleman . . . will be your sole Director (III, i).

Weddel puts into Yarico's mouth the impossible eloquence of his own emo-

tion and imagines her still under the spell of love for Incle. The callous merchant then offers the planter a bonus, even though he stands in no need of his good will:

> The common Price you give, shall be her Purchase.--
> And, to engage your Favour, as a Present
> Accept the Child she goes with (III, i).

When the deal is concluded, the captain and merchants commend Incle for not "casting himself away upon a Slave," now that he has survived shipwreck and reached land after all. Still, even Incle has to admit "'twas a heavy Task."

The hard class lines are further emphasized when the planter's son Amyntor recognizes Yarico's uniqueness to such an extent that his father fears he will fall in love with her--a gentleman with "higher Views in Life" certainly cannot wed a slave:

> Although my Life has been employ'd among
> The Groans of sighing Slaves, in her Affliction
> Something appears beyond a common Suffering:
> For, through the Rage of Anguish and Despair
> Is seen, the tender Softness of a Mind
> Too great to bear Adversity, from him
> Whose Study should have been her Happiness (III, ii).

At last Incle has leisure to soliloquize on the two ruined women in his life. If he stays in Jamaica, he is free from Violetta's sufferings, but the trials of Yarico may be "too much," and "something like Tenderness" invades his heart. He is not permitted time for a choice, however, for the planter's son arrives to announce that Yarico has perished in the canefields calling upon the name of Incle, and Honorius lands from England to avenge the wrongs of Violetta who has died in shame. In a delirium of regret the reprehensible Englishman begs to be led "to the abus'd Remains of injur'd Innocence" (III, v). There he is mortally

wounded in the ensuing combat with Honorius, and two 'murders' are avenged at one stroke. The play ends with admonitions for any "giddy Youth, whom Love inspires" to call upon virtue to curb his desires (III, vi).

The introduction of the character of Violetta at the beginning and end of the tragedy serves only to reinforce Incle's trait of libertinism. The young man is no longer a gentleman of good natural impulse who has been misled by his avaricious father; he is a villain in his own right. Like others of his countrymen, Weddell is embarrassed by Incle's national origin. In the Preface he says:

> The story has Truth in its basis, is well-known and affecting, but indeed has this Disadvantage, that the perfidious Incle is an Englishman and his disinterested and generous Preserver a native Black. Howsoever disagreeable this may be, methinks it should not prejudice the Minds of wise People, and fond of Liberty, . . . [who do not] think the casual Tincture of the skin differing from the European Hue alienates any from the indubitable Right they are naturally entitled to, as Fellow Creatures. (42-44).

Although the refined and virtuous Yarico does serve as a foil to the coarse, grasping whites, there is still no necessity for Weddell at this early date to make any apology for the institution of slavery. The suffering of Yarico and the villainy of Incle are strictly personal matters, even as the suffering of Oroonoko and Imoinda had no broad application in the earlier forms of that legend.

George Colman's opera, "Inkle and Yarico" (1787),[48] treats the anecdote in a gay, almost trivial fashion and assumes all of the liberties which an opera enjoys. Inkle and his servant Trudge are lost in a vaguely delineated "American forest" which abounds with lions, leopards, and black cannibals. Trudge, the "poor white" in the Indies, lacks all colonizing instincts. His type was rather extensively used on the stage as we shall

discover in Chapter I V of this study. Here Trudge heartily regrets his overseas adventure:

> What would I give, now, to be perched upon a high stool, with our brown desk squeezed into the pit of my stomach--scribbling away an old parchment--But all my red ink will be spilt by an old black pin of a negro.

The song he sings could be the theme song of many another Englishman who for various reasons found himself on the wrong side of the Atlantic:

> A voyage over seas had not entered my head,
> Had I known but on which side to butter my bread,
> Heigho! sure I--for hunger must die!
> I've sail'd like a booby; come here in a squall,
> Where, alas! there's no bread to be butter'd at all!
> Oho! I'm a terrible booby!
> Oh, what a sad booby am I! (I, ii).

There is again some confusion about the racial background of the two savages. Yarico is "a good comely copper . . . like a Wedgwood teapot" while her attendant Wowski is definitely black. The forest existence of the two couples is punctuated with several sentimental songs. Costumed in feathers and shells, confiding her primitive dreams to the sophisticated audience or later singing her pathetic song reminding Inkle of their love in the forest, Yarico would certainly not be unimpressive.

When the couple arrives in Barbados, Inkle is confronted with the choice of keeping his promises or of seizing an opportunity to mend his fortune by marrying the daughter of the governor, who had already been promised to him. Since he is now both socially and financially embarrassed, he takes the practical course. When he announces imminent separation to Yarico, there is a striking confrontation of the European mind bent on expediency and the Noble Savage mind loyal to the highest virtues. Inkle tries to turn Yarico over to her new master, Sir Christopher, who ironical-

ly <u>is</u> the governor himself:

> YARICO. Oh do not--do not leave me!
>
> INKLE. Why, simple girl! I'm labouring for your good. My interest, here, is nothing: I can do nothing from myself, you are ignorant of our country's customs. I must give way to men more powerful, who will not have me with you. But see, my Yarico, ever anxious for your welfare, I've found a kind, good person who will protect you. . . .
>
> YARICO. Just as I sheltered you [you may protect me]. Take me to yonder mountain, where I see no smoke from tall, high houses, filled with your cruel countrymen. None of your princes, there, will come to take me from you. And should they stray that way, we'll find a lurking place, just like my own poor cave; where many a day I sat beside you, and blessed the chance that brought you to it--that I might save your life (III, iii).

The governor is horrified at this revelation of Inkle's perfidy:

> SIR CHRISTOPHER. His life! Zounds! my blood boils at the scoundrel's ingratitude!
>
> YARICO. Come, come, let's go. I always feared these cities. Let's fly and seek the woods; and there we'll wander hand in hand together. No cares shall vex us then--We'll let the day glide by in idleness; and you shall sit in the shade, and watch the sun-beam playing on the brook, while I sing the song that pleases you. . . .
>
> INKLE. Hear me, Yarico. My countrymen and yours differ as much in minds as in complexions. We were not born to live in woods and caves--to seek subsistence by pursuing beasts--We christians, girl, hunt money; a thing unknown to you--But, here, 'tis money which brings us ease, plenty, command, power, every thing; and, of course, happiness. You are the bar to my attaining this; therefore 'tis necessary for my good--. . . if you are seen with me, I shall lose all.
>
> YARICO. I gave up all for you--my friends--my country: all that was dear to me; and still grown dearer since you sheltered there.--All, all, was left for you--and were it now to do again--again I'd cross the seas, and follow you, all the world over (III, iii).

As Inkle shakes her off, Sir Christopher turns upon him in a rage, rebuking his inhumanity, ingratitude, and dishonour. The governor's display

of contempt and passion is in the best Creolian vein and is made attractive by his admirable sense of values. He is certainly morally and ethically superior to the average planter.

The loyalty of Trudge to his "thick-lip'd, flat-nosed, squabby, dumpling dowdy" serves as a foil to Inkle's opportunism. His simple constancy not only underlines the disgraceful ease with which Inkle sells Yarico, but also points up the civilized vices of the Barbadian planters. Like Weddell's sailors, the planters believe Trudge's attachment to be only that of a "shipboard romance." One says: "We have a hundred such cases just after a voyage; but they never last long on land. It is amazing how constant a young man is in a ship." Trudge's dogged faithfulness practically excommunicates him from island society:

> PLANTER. She's your slave, I take it?
>
> TRUDGE. Yes; and I'm her humble servant, I take it.
>
> PLANTER. Aye, aye, natural enough at sea.--But at home how much do you value her?
>
> TRUDGE. Just as much as she has saved me--My own life.
>
> PLANTER. Pahaw! you mean to sell her?
>
> TRUDGE. (Staring) Zounds! what a devil of a fellow. Sell Wows!--my poor, dear, dingy wife!
>
> PLANTER. Come, come, I've heard your story from the ship.--Don't let's haggle; I'll bid as fair as any trader amongst us. . . . Your wife, indeed! Why, she's no christian!
>
> TRUDGE. No; but I am; so I shall do as I'd be done by: and, if you were a good one yourself, you'd know, that fellow-feeling for a poor body, who wants your help, is the noblest mark of our religion. . . .
>
> PLANTER. Hey-day! the booby's in love with her! Why, sure friend, you would not live here with a black?

> TRUDGE. Plague on't; there it is. I shall be laughed out of my honesty, here. . . . I may feel a little queer, perhaps, at showing her face--but, damn me, if ever I do anything to make me asham'd of showing my own.
>
> PLANTER. Why, I tell you, her very complexion--
>
> TRUDGE. Rot her complexion--I'll tell you what, Mr. Fair-trader, if your head and heart were to change places, I've a notion you'd be as black in the face as an ink-bottle.
>
> PLANTER. Pshaw! the fellow's a fool--a rude rascal--he ought to be sent back to the savages again. He's not fit to live among us christians (III, i).

The governor rejoices to discover that his daughter has just saved the situation by eloping with the gallant young Captain Campley. Inkle is quickly brought to terms with himself when he finds that he has sold Yarico to the father of his ex-betrothed. He admits his dastardly conduct, blames everything upon his false education, and reforms instantly. Yarico forgives all, and the governor assumes responsibility for Trudge and Wowski. Trudge announces happily "My fortune's fair, tho' black's my wife," and the play ends with song and dance. Patty, the chambermaid who had had designs on Trudge, however, expresses the basic feminine colonial prejudice when she says:

> Men are grown absurd,
> Thus taking black for white!
> To hug and kiss a dingy miss
> Will hardly suit an age like this.

Although Colman avoided the serious questions of suffering, tragic guilt, and retribution, the opera was still used as a critique of Negro slavery. Mrs. Inchbald commends the play for being a "bright forerunner of the alleviations of the hardships of slavery," apparently overlooking the fact that it was first performed in 1787 near the height of abolition

activity.[49] Colman wove into the legend several staples of the West Indian scene: the victimized Negro and/or Indian, the comic Negro, the evil white, and the comic white.

In the course of the century, Yarico undergoes changes in keeping with advancing humanitarian thought. She becomes first an abused, sentimental heroine, and then she embraces Christianity which becomes a palliative to her suffering and elevates her primitive excellences. Inkle changes less. He is consistently wicked, and he has the choice of either a wretched death or a life of guilt-ridden misery. Only Colman permits him the privilege of repentance and reconciliation. (This measure, of course, was standard sentimental stage procedure.) The best that the poets could offer him was reunion in heaven.

Through all of these modifications, however, the Inkle and Yarico legend had little anti-slavery impact. It is anti-mercantile, if anything, and is a parable of the lust for gold. True, the sufferings of Yarico lead either to suicide or to Christian submission and are developed concurrently with the late eighteenth-century "dying Negro" tradition, but it is still the vile avarice of Inkle which is the crux of the story. The fact that a West Indian story could pass through the eighteenth century <u>without</u> being transformed into real anti-slavery literature is an indication of how impressive a villain Inkle actually is. The legend developed elaborately through the century, but what it gained in breadth it lost in depth, and no amount of sentimental padding actually improved upon Richard Steele's clean-cut classic.

C. The Lovers of St. Christophers

Joseph Addison introduced another West Indian legend to the English public through the Spectator, but it did not attract as much attention as Steele's Inkle and Yarico. This failure to attain full literary stature is rather surprising since the Negroes are of unquestionable nobility and many of the other basic ingredients for popularity also seem to be present. Nevertheless, the story did undergo at least two modifications. Each one is significant of its times.

The original presentation is a straightforward telling of the tale which is used to illustrate Addison's premise that "an Human Soul without Education [is] like Marble in a Quarry." Although "savage emotions" are admirable, he finds them improved when they are "swayed by Reason":

> When one hears of Negroes, who upon the Death of their Masters, or upon changing their Service, hang themselves upon the next Tree, as it frequently happens in our American plantations, who can forbear admiring their Fidelity, though it expresses itself in so dreadful a manner? What might not that Savage Greatness of Soul which appears in these poor Wretches on many Occasions, be raised to, were it rightly cultivated?[50]

Addison declares that the "wild Tragedy" he records actually happened on the island of St. Christophers twelve years previously. The Negroes concerned were all slaves of "a Gentleman who is now in England":

> This Gentleman among his Negroes had a young Woman, who was look'd upon as a most extraordinary Beauty by those of her own Complexion. He had at the same time two young Fellows who were likewise Negroes and Slaves, remarkable for the Comeliness of their Persons, and for the Friendship which they bore to one another. It unfortunately happened that both of them fell in love with the Female Negro above mentioned, who would have been very glad to have taken either of them for her Husband, provided they could agree between

> themselves which should be the Man. But they were both so passionately in Love with her, that neither of them could think of giving her up to his Rival; and at the same time were so true to one another, that neither of them would think of gaining her without his Friend's Consent. . . .
>
> After a long Struggle between Love and Friendship, Truth and Jealousy, they one Day took a Walk together into a Wood, carrying their Mistress along with them: Where, after abundance of Lamentations, they stabbed her to the Heart, of which she immediately died. A Slave who was at his Work not far from the Place where this astonishing Piece of Cruelty was committed, hearing the Shrieks of the dying Person, ran to see what was the Occasion of them. He there discovered the Woman lying dead upon the Ground, with the two Negroes on each side of her, kissing the dead Corps, weeping over it, and beating their Breasts in the utmost Agonies of Grief and Despair. He immediately ran to the English Family with the News of what he has seen; who upon coming to the Place saw the Woman dead, and the two Negroes expiring by her with Wounds they had given themselves.[51]

The essayist relates the story to demonstrate "what strange Disorders are bred in the minds of those Men whose Passions are not regulated by Virtue, and disciplined by Reason." Yet, the barbarous action proceeds from "a Temper of Mind which might have produced very noble Fruits, had it been informed and guided by a suitable Education." Addison obviously requires some modification of the new primitivism.

Samuel Pratt uses the story as an illustration of Negro honour and friendship in his long anti-slavery poem, Humanity: or, the Rights of Nature (1788).[52] Even though the tale is encumbered with a great weight of poetic diction, the three Negroes assume more individuality than Addison had given them. The two lovers, Zebron and Zabor, are the most handsome of "the jetty race." What Addison was content to let go as "the Comeliness of their persons" is now elaborated in a series of tropical similes describing their beauties. Their friendship is sufficient to soften their fate, and "slaves tho' they were, ev'n Slav'ry had its charms." This statement

was undoubtedly the highest tribute that a rabid abolitionist like Pratt could pay to the excellence of their relationship. The question of what happens to honour when love takes over is, of course, another revival of the old Restoration theme. The solution of the two Negroes to the problem is all their own, however, and it out-distances even the most imaginative of Restoration tragedians.

Although by 1788 it had become poetically respectable to praise Negroid beauty, Pratt (like Addison) is careful to show that this estimate of the lady's charms lies in the opinion of her black lovers and not necessarily in the eye of the white man:

> . . . Sable Zelia triumph's o'er their hearts:
> Her skin of Ebony bestow'd a grace,
> That far outshone an alabaster face,
> So thought the youths, with equal truth inspir'd.

Zebron and Zabor react to Zelia's charms with characteristic West Indian vigour--that is

> With all their passion, [which] their climate fir'd;
> Each scorn'd to ravish, each refus'd to yield,
> And Love and Friendship both maintain'd the field,
> Devouring torments spread the mutual flame,
> But still their friendship, still their love the same.

Whenever the "beauteous ZELIA" appears, the two lovers "melt to mutual tears." At the end, they <u>follow</u> Zelia into the woods rather than "carrying their Mistress along with them," as Addison had had them do. Pratt still adheres, however, to the original "abundance of Lamentations" in the original account:

> The wand'ring Maid too fatal in her charms,
> Now snatch'd to Zebron's now to Zabor's arms:
> The fondest vows that ever Lovers swore,
> The deepest groans that ever heav'd they pour.

After the stabbing, the two Negroes "then raise the poignards streaming

in her blood,/ And with their own augment the crimson flood" (II, 80). Pratt deletes Addison's account of the slave's working in the nearby field and his running to inform the "English Family with the News of what he had seen." The sentimental poet believed, no doubt, that the principal parties had to savour this climactic moment alone in the woods. The crass planter's household was not worthy to share it.

In the anonymous dramatic poem "The African Lovers" (1800),[53] the story undergoes further romanticizing. The scene is no longer in St. Christophers but is now in the vague, new-world setting of "Columbia, mart of wealth to ev'ry land." The Negro youths, who "in former ages dwelt," are now named Kimor and Maraton. They live and move in a lush woods, each spending his time "weeping his fellow's suff'rings as his own." At this point it is quite unclear as to what the sufferings are, since there is no mention of love, bondage or plantation labour. One day in their pastoral wanderings they discover the "damsel" Louisa lying beside a brook. She likewise seems to have no material responsibilities. Her Negroid beauty is now celebrated without reservation:

> Beauty sat smiling on her jetty face,
> Her form might with the straightest cocoa vie;
> And, as she mov'd, shone forth with ev'ry grace
> That wins the heart, and captivates the eye.

The Negroes are smitten with the black Venus, especially as she is found in such Edenic surroundings, and the poem is enveloped in great swaths of sentimental landscape. Worshipping at the lady's shrine, the lovers cry:

> Thy breath more scented than the new-blown rose,
> And balmy lips, the buzzing bees invite;
> The glossy hue, that far transcends the sloes,
> How fine a contrast with those teeth so white! (772).

For days afterwards, these youths wander through the woods like lost souls

or lie in their "humble shed," within the sound of "the horrors of the foaming deep." Still, "their friendship was prefer'd to love." Louisa spends her days in her woodland retreat grieving equally for both heroes. In the end, however, the Negroes carry out their purpose expeditiously enough:

> Quick from the covert of the neighb'ring grove
> To which the maid her sorrows would impart,
> The youths rush forth, thrice clasp her whom they love,
> Then plunge a dagger in the charmer's heart (772).

Maraton's comment seems rather gratuitous, considering the circumstances: "She's gone; ah! me, she yields her hapless life!" (773).

Whereas readers for almost a century had supposed that the slaying of the sable beauty was simply the honourable settlement of an irreconcilable love situation, they now discover that Louisa is happily delivered from slavery! This is the first mention of bondage:

> Far from the realms of Slavery she's gone,
> Joyous to seek and share those happy plains
> Where gentler Fates no more extort a groan,
> No more a sigh--for nought but gladness reigns (773).

The conventional tropical rainstorm breaks as Kimor hails "the groves of bliss" where ". . . no controul,/ No tyrant's horrid frown, the sign of woe,/ Can freeze the freeborn current of the soul." Speech-making done, the lovers stab themselves, and the three slaves lie together "beneath that aged willow's trembling shade,/ Which ev'ry eye drips down the dewy tear." Just how the three lovers settle their affairs when they all arrive in paradise is not explained, but death has still been advantageous for they have escaped slavery.

"The African Lovers" is a forced effort to use the love-sick Negroes for abolition purposes, because at the end of the eighteenth century

poets could conceive of scarcely any other employment for them. The poet in this case also seems to have an unusual quantity of romantic natural scenery which he had to set down somewhere. Whatever the poem may lack in literary quality, it still shows the end result of a legend's following through the line of humanitarian development, which was the way which nearly all West Indian tales were bound to go. The anguish of the two worthy lovers as they are torn between love and friendship is, of course, no innovation,[54] but the solution of these St. Kitts Negroes differs from its European precedents in that death is distributed equitably to all parties alike. Where could one find a more fervid and conclusive resolution of the age-old problem than in the West Indies where the climate supposedly predestined the "children of the sun" to live passionately and recklessly?

D. Quashi

Quashi is a Noble Negro who appears rather late in the eighteenth century. Although he never attained the legendary stature of Oroonoko or Yarico, there are still elements in his story which made the retelling of it useful for propagandistic purposes. The theme is the attachment of a slave to his master and the betrayal of that friendship. As Captain Marjoribanks points out in a footnote in his Essay on Slavery (1792), Creole ladies were often attended not only by Negroes but also by mulattoes and quadroons with whom they had grown up and to whom they were often embarrassingly "near relations."[55] The same held true for Creole boys and their slave-companions. This association was a colonial variation on the traditional David-and-Jonathan friendships of literature,

and the black-white, slave-master elements added considerably to the complications of the relationship.

Quashi's story is first told in James Ramsay's Essay on the Treatment . . . of African Slaves (1784).[56] On the whole, Ramsay does not praise the Negro character, therefore his sympathetic account of Quashi is unusually interesting:

> Quashi was brought up in the family with his master as his play-fellow from his childhood. Being a lad of towardly parts, he rose to be driver, or black-observer under his master, when the plantation fell to him by succession. . . . He had no separate interests of his own, and when his master was from home, he redoubled his diligence, that his affairs might receive no injury in his absence. In short, here was the most delicate, yet most strong, and seemingly indissoluble tie that could bind master and slave together (249).

But the master "was inexorable when a fault was committed," and as a result of a disciplinary affair on the estate Quashi, the "under-overseer," was unjustly blamed and "threatened with the ignominious punishment of the cartwhip." Ramsay says that the Negroes take extraordinary pride in the glossy smoothness of their black skins and go to as much effort to avoid the scars of the whip as an Englishman would to escape the gallows:[57]

> It is not uncommon for a sober, good negroe to stab himself mortally because some boy-overseer has flogged him for what he reckoned a trifle, or for his caprice, or threatened him with a flogging when he thought he did not deserve it (250).

So Quashi, to "save the glossy honours of his skin," ran away. His only resort then was to the common practice of going to one of his master's friends whom he would beg to accompany him home to mediate in the case. Quashi planned to take advantage of the good humour at a family anniversary to press his suit, but before a diplomatic meeting could be arranged, Quashi and his master met by accident in the field. The Negro ran; the white man pursued:

> They fell together, and wrestled for the mastery, for Quashi also was a stout man, and the elevation of his mind added vigour to his arm. At last, after a severe struggle, in which each had been several times uppermost, Quashi got fairly seated on his master's breast. . . . He then drew out a sharp knife and while the other lay in dreadful expectation, helpless, and sinking into himself, he thus addressed him: 'Master, I was bred up with you from a child. I was your play-mate when a boy. I have loved you as myself. Your interest has been my study. I am innocent of the cause of your suspicion. Had I been guilty, my attachment to you might have pleaded for me; yet you have condemned me to a punishment of which I must ever have borne the disgraceful marks.' With these words he drew the knife with all his strength across his own throat, and fell down dead without a groan on his master bathing him with his blood.--Such greatness of mind is rare to be found in low life in any country.[58]

In 1788 Quashi was celebrated in two anti-slavery poems. Samuel Pratt describes him as "an hero of the Negro line" in Humanity. The story is basically unchanged here except for the fact that Quashi deliberately seeks the confrontation with his master:

> The faithful QUA-SHI with his master bred
> The same their mansion and the same their bed,
> Together us'd in infant times to play,
> Their friendship strengthen'd in life's riper day;
> The slave was trusty and the lord was kind,
> To QUA-SHI's care the property assign'd,
> His labours clos'd, he took the transient rest,
> Then chid the Sun yet loit'ring in the East;
> Ere peep'd the dawn his daily toils he sought,
> And daily wealth to his lov'd lord he brought.
> Envy at length a poisn'd arrow drew,
> Which wing'd with mischief to the master flew,
> Of dire neglect the accusation came,
> And low, the sentence past for QUA-SHI's shame,
> A public punishment was now decree'd,
> And the next Morn was QUA-SHI doom'd to bleed;
> The injur'd Slave with shudd'ring horror heard,
> And at deep midnight sought his barbarous lord,
> Then wrought to agony, these words address'd,
> The poignard trembling at his Master's breast.

After a powerful speech of recrimination, the Negro suddenly turns the weapon upon himself:

'Thus Tyrant, thus, thy fury I defy,
Live Thou in Shame, while I in honour die.'
He spoke--the Poignard sluic'd the crimson flood,
And bath'd the Master in the Servant's blood (II, 75-76).

In "Slavery" (1788) Hannah More makes a positive effort to turn Quashi into a legendary figure, but she fears that in a backward place like the West Indies his excellences will go unacclaimed:

No Muse, O Qua-shi! shall thy deeds relate,
No statue snatch thee from oblivious fate!
For thou wast born where never gentle Muse
On Valour's grave the flow'rs of Genius strews;
And thou wast born where no recording page
Plucks the fair deed from Time's devouring rage.
Had Fortune plac'd thee on some happier coast,
Where polish'd souls heroic virtue boast,
To thee, who sought'st a voluntary grave,
Th' uninjur'd honours of thy name to save,
Whose generous arm thy barbarous Master spar'd,
Altars had smok'd, and temples had been rear'd (6-7).

Although the motif of the loyal slave betrayed by his master reappears in fiction,[59] Quashi himself arrived too late on the scene to establish himself as a legend before the fires of abolition had begun to subside. Had he been a contemporary of Oroonoko, however, who can tell to what fame he might have attained.

E. Obeah and the Legend of Three-Fingered Jack

Caribbean folklore and witchcraft constitute an extensive study in themselves.[60] Space here permits the survey of the career of but one West Indian folk-hero, Three-Fingered Jack, Obeahman of Jamaica. Although the practice of witchcraft is as old as the history of mankind, a renewed interest in it was one facet of romanticism. While the plantation situation tended to erase many of the Negro's native marks, his superstitions remained. African witchcraft as practiced by West Indian

slaves had both a sociological and a literary attraction for Englishmen.[61]

In Jamaica today Obeah, a form of witchcraft imported from West Africa, is still an island-wide manifestation. It is said to have been almost universally practiced on every estate having non-Creole Negroes and to have been used in every slave rebellion in the island. Obeah was able to survive because it was a verbal tradition and was therefore difficult to detect. In the midst of acute poverty and slavery this witchcraft was a force which promised to overcome the ills of life. Above all, it was a slave possession beyond the power and knowledge of the white man.

The Negro in slavery could not organize in a social sense. Instead, he had to fit into the pattern of the estate. Since the slaves had no entrée into ordinary legal processes, Obeah became a popular means of justice and revenge. Dr. Benjamin Moseley in his Treatise on Sugar (1800)[62] gave Englishmen one of their first clinical descriptions of the cult:

> Obi, for the purposes of bewitching people, or consuming them by lingering illness, is made of grave-dirt, hair, teeth of sharks, and other creatures, blood, feathers, egg-shells, images of wax, the hearts of birds and some potent roots, weeds and bushes of which Europeans are at this time ignorant. . . . Certain mixtures of these ingredients are burnt, or buried very deep in the ground; or hung up in a chimney; or laid under the threshold of the door of the party, to suffer; with incantations songs or curses, performed at midnight, regarding the aspects of the moon (183).

The "Obi" derives, Moseley says, from "ob" meaning a demon or spirit of divination and magic. He traces the science of Obeah among the Africans and back to Egyptians and Chaldeans. He notes also that it was Obeah, or at least the suspicion of it, which sparked the famed witch-hunt of Salem, Massachusetts (1692).[63] As a practicing physician in Jamaica, Moseley found no treatment for Obi-induced complaints:

> The victims of this nefarious art, among the negroes in the West Indies, are more numerous than is generally known. No humanity of the master, nor skill in medicine, can relieve a negro, labouring under the influence of Obi. He will surely die; and of a disease that answers no description in nofology (193).

Although some eighteenth-century historians registered skepticism as to the authenticity of such spiritualistic and astrological activity, many laws were promulgated against it. Moseley points out the futility of such legislation:

> Laws have been made in the West Indies to punish this obian practice with death; but they have had no effect. Laws constructed in the West Indies, can never suppress the effect of ideas, the origin of which is in the centre of Africa (193).

It was to the advantage of the Obeahman to veil his incantations in mystery so that fear prevented the slaves from betraying him.[64] The reluctance of the Negroes to expose Obeahmen made it almost impossible for practitioners to be brought to justice. When a case did come to court, a conviction was virtually unattainable for lack of reliable evidence. Such slave trials aroused curiosity in England, especially in the pre-emancipation decade when there was widespread discussion on the Negro's moral abilities, real and potential.[65] Although few enlightened Englishmen troubled themselves with personal belief, West Indian witchcraft provided attractive elements for relay in Gothic tales and occult adventures.

The slightest physical pain or discomfort usually convinced the West Indian slave that he was the victim of some invisible and irresistible agency. He would send for the Obeahman to discover the cause of his sickness and to determine whether or not it was mortal. The oracle would identify the person who was to blame for the malady, and the patient

could then pay to have an Obi set for his enemy. Obeahmen rendered a large assortment of services which were of two varieties. The first man was the type which in England used to be known as the "black wizard." People resorting to him could obtain revenge for injuries and insults and assistance in discovering thieves, adulterers, and so forth. They might also gain favours and receive predictions of future events. The second type, or "white wizard," specialized in medicinal rather than poisonous plants and cured physical disorders. He was "an Obeah man to cure" rather than to kill. Perhaps one of the Obeahman's most comforting services was his ability to protect the superstitious slave population from "duppies."[66]

The first writers of the Indies gave slave witchcraft close, analytical study. Like Moseley, Dr. James Grainger had occasion to observe Obi-induced illnesses in the course of his medical rounds on the plantations of St. Christophers. His description of the baffling symptoms is a case study in eighteenth-century psychosomatic medicine:

> They [the patients] mope, love silence, every friend avoid;
> They inly pine, all aliment reject
> Or insufficient for nutrition take:
> Their features droop, a sickly yellowish hue
> Their skin deforms, their strength and beauty fly.
> Then comes the feverish fiend, with fiery eyes,
> Whom drowth, convulsions, and whom death surround,
> Fatal attendants! if some subtle slave
> (Such Obia-men are styled) do not engage
> To save the wretch by antidote or spell.[67]

With meticulous detail Grainger describes the ingredients of "these wonder-working charms":

> Fern root cut small, and tied with many a knot,
> Old teeth extracted from a white man's skull;
> A lizard's skeleton, a serpent's head,
> These mix'd with salt, and water from the spring
> Are in a phial pour'd; o'er these the leach
> Mutters strange jargon, and wild circles forms (LIX).

An Obi might serve a dual purpose:

> Of this [Obi] possess'd, each Negro deems himself
> Secure from poison; for to poison they
> Are infamously prone: and arm'd with this,
> Their sable country demons they defy,
> Who fearful haunt at the midnight hour [that is, duppies],
> To work them mischief. This, diseases fly;
> Diseases follow: such its wondrous power!
> This o'er the threshold of their cottage hung,
> No thieves break in; or, if they dare to steal,
> Their feet in blotches, which admit no cure,
> Burst loathsome out; but should its own filch,
> As slaves were ever of the pilfering kind,
> This from detection screens;--so conjurers swear.[68]

Both men and women practiced Obeah, and there was apparently no distinction between the spiritual powers of the sexes. In either case, the practitioner of Obeah was never an ordinary individual but was a natural leader who would have made his mark in any profession. The oldest and most crafty Africans usually gained the most professional confidence and devotion, and they often had a peculiarly harsh and diabolic aspect to increase reverence for their position. John Singleton describes an old hag of an Obeahwoman who was called in to treat a patient whose symptoms had baffled the "true physician":

> With sapient face she handled ev'ry part;
> Till, fixing on the seat of the disease,
> She mumbled to herself some uncouth words,
> The myst'ry of her trade, and close apply'd
> Her parched lips, by suction to extract
> The cause of the complaint. Strange antick tricks
> She play'd; now sat, now rose; then on her knees,
> And now erect again, she labour'd on
> To charm, intice, or force, the cursed fiend,
> That lurk'd within, to quit his wicked hold.
> At length her pray'rs were heard; her art prevail'd;
> And from the affected part there issued forth
> (Such is the pow'r of suction tow'rds some cures!)
> Sometimes a pebble, then a horse's tooth,
> With many a crooked pin, and rusty nail. . . .
> For these strange things, extracted with vast pain
> Out of the writhing patient's tortur'd flesh,

> Left not a wound behind to mark the place
> From whence they issued.[69]

The astonished doctor, we are told, seized "the ugly witch" by the throat, and "out flew all her magazine of stores:/ Teeth, pebbles, nails and pins, her tools of trade." What happened to the patient, we never learn.

Singleton concludes his description with the suggestion that the "ermin'd monarch" may be as easily gulled as the "tattered slave." Coleridge developed this assumption in "The Three Graves" (1797-1809). Influenced by Bryan Edwards' account,[70] Coleridge made much more complex use of the exotic Obeah motif than did his lesser contemporaries. The sexton's tale concerns a jealous, vengeful woman whose curses blight the lives of a daughter Ellen, together with her husband Edward and her friend Mary. An abysmal depression falls upon the young people. Eventually Edward, distraught by the two neurotic women, loses his own reason. Coleridge works out the psychological effects of a West Indian superstition in a familiar English setting, and all three victims of the wicked mother reveal distinctly Obeahan symptoms.

At least four abolition poets used their awareness of Obeah for propagandistic purposes, showing it to be a weapon in the hands of the slaves. Samuel Pratt in Humanity (1788) describes the distinctive means of retaliation at the disposal of the abused slave. He does not mention witchcraft, but the implications of it are clearly present:

> Oft spreads his tortur'd slave the secret snare,
> And hurls his master in the last despair,
> Far from his couch the balmy slumber flies,
> And from his slave unnumber'd poisons rise,
> He knew to pest the herd, to blast the soil
> Perish the blossom, and the harvest spoil;
> To mix the baneful juice, the fatal flower,
> That sudden kills, that boasts a mining power,

He knows to scatter unsuspected fate,
While circling mischiefs on his vengeance wait (II, 87).

William Shepherd's "The Negro Incantation" (1797)[71] portrays the Obeahan prelude to a slave rebellion. The poem opens with prayer of Congo the wizard to satanic powers. The second stanza describes the effect of his mysteries upon the expectant crowd. The rites bode no good for the white man:

. . . The moon
Riding in her highest noon
Now beam'd upon the sable crowd,
Now vanish'd in the thickening cloud.
'Twas silence all--with frantic look,
His spells the hoary wizard took:
Bending o'er the quiv'ring flame,
Convulsion shook his giant frame.
Close and now close the shuddering captives throng,
With breath repress'd, and straining eye, they wait--
When midst the plantains bursts the awful song,
The words of mystic might, that seal their tyrants' fate (51).

The third stanza delineates the standard ingredients of the Obi:

Haste! the magic shreds prepare.
Thus the white man's corse we tear.
Lo! feathers from the raven's plume,
That croaks our proud oppressor's doom,
Now to aid the potent spell,
Crush we next the brittle shell--
Fearful omen to the foe,
Look! the blanched bones we throw.
From mouldering graves we stole this hallow'd earth,
Which mix'd with blood, winds up the mystic charm;
Wide yawns the grave for all of northern birth,
And soon shall smoke with blood each sable warrior's arm.

In the last stanza thunder and lightning break over the rebel slaves, and Congo commissions them, now armed with Obi, to go forth to insurrection:

. . . With silent foot and slow,
[Go]and sudden strike the deadly blow:
Your foes, the palmy shade beneath,
Lie lock'd in sleep--their sleep is death!

> Go! let the memory of the smarting thong
> Outplead the pity that would prompt to save;
> Go! let the oppressor's contumelious wrong,
> Twice nerve the hero's arm, and make the coward brave.

Thomas Campbell in "The Pleasures of Hope" (1799) personifies Obi as the evil spirit of Africa, "since the Negroes of the West Indies derived their belief in this malignant, magical power from Africa."[72] Like his predecessors, James Montgomery also saw Obeah as the slave's means of evening the score. In the third book of The West Indies (1809) he warns Europeans against regarding Negro witchcraft casually. In St. Domingo (the modern-day home of Voodoo) "Hayti's barbarian hunters" had been "led by Charib ghosts" to successful rebellion, and Englishmen might be well advised:

> Tremble, Britannia! while thine islands tell,
> Th' appalling mysteries of Obi's spell;
> The wild Maroons, impregnable and free,
> Among the mountain-holds of liberty . . .[73]

Three-Fingered Jack is the most celebrated of all Obeahmen. He was the leader of a supposed band of runaway robbers in the Blue Mountains of Jamaica and was the terror of blacks and whites alike. He attained prominence on stage and in fiction. His earliest known description is given by Dr. Moseley. In that sympathetic account Jack appears as a kind of savage Robin Hood:

> He had neither accomplice, nor associate. There were a few runaway negroes in the woods near Mount Lebanus, the place of his retreat; but he had crossed their foreheads with some of the magic in his horn, and they could not betray him. But he trusted no one. He scorned assistance. . . . He robbed alone, fought his battles alone; and always killed his pursuers. By his magic, he was not only the dread of the negroes, but there were many white people who believed he was possessed of some supernatural power. In hot climates females marry very young; and often with great disparity of age. Here Jack was the author of many troubles . . . and

> every conjugal mishap was laid at the door of Jack's malific spell of tying the point, on the wedding day. God knows, poor Jack had sins enough of his own to carry, without loading him with the sins of others. He would sooner have made a Mcdean cauldron for the whole island, than disturb one Lady's happiness . . . and, though he had a mortal hatred to white men, he was never known to hurt a child, or abuse a woman. But even Jack was born to die.[74]

Moseley records the proclamations of Governor Dalling, dated December 12, 1780, and January 13, 1781. Freedom and £100 were promised to the Negro who would bring in Jack, dead or alive. Quashee and Sam, two slaves of Scots Hall, Maroon Town, undertook the assignment. Before setting out on the expedition Quashee changed his name to "James Reeder" and had himself christened so that he could make use of the white man's "magic." These two stalwarts were accompanied by "a little boy, a proper spirit, and a good shot," who in later versions is identified as Tuckey. It is Tuckey who always has the honour of delivering the death-dealing shot into Jack's belly. Thus Jack succumbed to the white man's "obi" and was slain on January 27, 1781. The Negroes brought his Obi to the doctor who describes the contents of the bag:

> His Obi consisted of the end of a goat's horn, filled with a compound of grave dirt, ashes, the blood of a black cat, and human fat; all mixed into a kind of paste. A cat's foot, a dried toad, a pig's tail, a slip of virginal parchment of kid's skin, with characters marked in blood on it, were also in his Obian bag (197).

During the 1790's when public interest was first aroused by Three-Fingered Jack, the parallel character of Makendal appeared very briefly on the scene.[75] He is a noble St. Domingo Negro whose love for the Congo Negress Samba is thwarted by the attentions of a white overseer who punishes him without cause. He escapes to the mountains and becomes a witch-doctor whose "image" is the terror of the whole country. Whenever he is

desirous of getting rid of someone, black or white, he engages a pedlar to carry poisoned food to sell to the victim. The wizard is distracted from his hatred of the white colony when he discovers that Samba has fixed her affections upon "Senegal Zami" who is "beautiful in shape as the Apollo of the Belvidere, and full of spirit and courage" (37). Samba is a black Venus entirely his equal:

> Her figure was elegant, and in her motions, which were graceful and nimble, she resembled the tender and flexible reed, agitated by the freshening breeze. Her sparkling eyes, half concealed by long eye lids, shot forth killing glances; the whiteness of her teeth exceeded that of snow, and her complexion, as black as ebony, still added to her incomparable charms (77).

The Negro lovers enjoy six months of pagan bliss, and the author seems to feel no responsibility for pressing Christian marriage upon them. Unaware of Makendal's romantic interest, Zami is a zealous partisan of the witchdoctor, until he discovers that the death of Samba is being plotted. Then, before he can save her, she is poisoned. Unlike Jack Mansong Makendal does not honour women. Zami performs the "Quashee" office of personally fighting and capturing Makendal and turning him over to the justice of the whites. The wizard's death at the stake has distinctively Haitian Voodoo overtones. He declares that the fire will respect his body and that instead of dying he will only change his form and will remain in the island as "a large gnat, a bird, or a serpent, to protect his nation" (79). Zami, content in his revenge, commits suicide and hastens off to rejoin Samba in the spirit world.

The appeal of the real, flesh-and-blood Three-Fingered Jack proved to be much more constant than that of his fictional counterpart, and by 1800 he was already a legend. At the time, of course, his exploits were still real enough, for he had been dead only nineteen years.

He made his first stage appearance in John Fawcett's "serio-pantomime," "Obi; or, Three-Finger'd Jack" (1800).[76] This exotic personage out of West Indian folk-lore was a natural subject for the new spectacular drama. In Act I two Negro women at work on the sugar plantation sing a duet which forecasts the Negro minstrelsy to come. The griefs of slavery seem to be considerably ameliorated for them, and it becomes immediately evident that this is no abolition piece:

FIRST WOMAN. The White Man come and brings his gold
The Slatee meet him in the Bay,
And Oh! poor Negro, then be sold
From home poor Negro sail away.

SECOND WOMAN. O! it be very sad to see
Poor Negro Chile and father part!
But if white man kind Massa be
He heal the worries in Negroes heart.

CHORUS. Good Massa we find
Sing tingaring, sing terry
When Buckra very kind
Then Negro heart merry,
Sing tingaring, sing tingaring
Sing tingaring, sing terry (I, i).

An amiable Overseer announces the birthday celebration of Rosa, the planter's daughter. It is an occasion which exhibits the benevolence of Planter Chapman as well as the contented devotion of the Negroes to the Creole family. On the eve of the wedding Jack carries Rosa's fiancé off to the robbers' cave which is presided over by a hideous Obeahwoman, Gorget.

Act II opens with the preparations of Quashee, Sam, and Tuckey to search for Jack. They are joined by Rosa who is determined to retrieve her Captain. Her dressing as a boy recalls the famed lady-pirates of the Caribbean.[77] The proclamation is posted in Kingston, Quashee and Sam are blessed by a clergyman, and then they lead a "Grand

Procession of Slaves" in what seems a somewhat premature celebration. A "Negro Ball, Song and Chorus" follow:

CHORUS. We Negro men and women meet
To dance and sing and drink and eat,--
With a yam too, too--
And when we come to Negro Ball
One funny great man be Master of all
'Tis merry Jon kanoo.[78]
Quashee now he Christen'd be
Tick, tick tack, with a Tick a Tack,
And to-morrow Sam and he
They go kill Three-finger'd Jack.
Now we dance, we sing and eat
Yam Too Too with a yam Too--
Massa he poor Negro treat,
Give grand Ball of Jon kanoo.

ALL. We Negro Men, &c.

CHORUS. Jack he did good Captain wound--
Shoot him shoulder hurt him back
If by Quashee, Jack be found
Then good by Three-finger'd Jack.
Jack have Charm in Obi bag
Tom cat foot, Pig Tail, duck beak,
Quashee tear de charm to rag,
Make Three-finger'd Jack to Squeak.

ALL. We Negro Men, &c. (II, vi).

A storm and a considerable amount of "pussyfooting" around the rocks heighten the tension while the search for Jack goes on. After Tuckey delivers the final shot, Jack is dragged off stage. Immediately Quashee and Sam enter from another door bearing the Obeahman's head and the hand respectively. The robbers and Gorget, who are much discomfited over the loss of their leader, are promptly rounded up by a band of soldiers. Thus the cleansing of the Blue Mountains is complete. "The Scene then changes to an Illumination and another grand procession of Negroes and Soldiers" going up to Government House and carrying Jack's head and three-fingered hand in a bucket of rum. Fawcett provides an imperialistic song for them all to sing:

Wander now, to and fro,
Cross the wide Savannah go;
Now no fright Negro know,
  Tang a rong, tan tan, &c.
Beat big drum--Have fine Flag;--
Bring good news to Kingston Town!
No fear Jack's Obi Bag--
  Quashee knock him down, o!

Oh! thro' the Dale, and over Hill,
The Negro now may go--
For Charm be broke and Jack be kill--
  'Twas Quashee give the blow.

(Overseer)

Here we see villainy
Brought by Law, to short duration
And may all Traitors fall
By British Proclamation.

(Chorus)

And let us Sing
  God Save the King, &c. (II, viii).

For dramatic reasons Fawcett does not make Jack the "loner" that Moseley describes. Rather, he presents him as the capable and revered leader of a robber band. After the manner of many other pantomimes the drama magnifies the glories of the British administration in delivering Jamaica from the hand of such a monster as Three-Fingered Jack. Even the outlaw himself pales into insignificance in this imperialistic light.

Almost contemporaneously with Fawcett's pantomime there appeared William Burdett's prose account, Life and Exploits of Mansong, Commonly Called Three-Finger'd Jack, the Terror of Jamaica (1800).[79] Burdett assumed (no doubt correctly) that there would be a "general public curiosity about the Hero of the pantomime." Hence, he undertook a historical sketch. The account provides an ample background for Jack's rebellion. He is seen first as a valiant African prince engaged in tribal wars. Then he is defeated and sold into West Indian slavery. After eighteen months

of hard labour and lashings, he is consumed with a passion for revenge, and he flees to the cave of Amalkir, an Obeahman of the Blue Mountains. Equipped with Obi to render him invulnerable to attacks by the whites, Jack plots an island-wide rebellion. Then, even as Oroonoko was deserted by his less idealistic followers, so Jack loses his fellow-insurrectionists; but he himself remains an outlaw.

Burdett cites numerous anecdotes of Jack's exploits which range from his loss of two fingers in his first encounter with Quashee to his acts of benevolence to unfortunate women. The account of Quashee, Sam, and Tuckey closely follows Moseley, but the bloody details of Jack's death are considerably magnified. The love interest of the story is fully developed with Rosa Chapman rescuing the good Captain Orford from Jack's cave in a melodramatic scene. Then they marry and settle down on a neighbouring estate.

Nevertheless, the story of Jack Mansong had not yet been drained of its most timely possibilities. Clearly, it needed to be taken up by someone of finer sensibilities than a scientifically-minded doctor, a frivolous, "illegitimate" dramatist, and a colonially-prejudiced historian. William Earle came forward with an elaborate prose version of the legend in his Letters (1804).[80] He perceives what any humanitarian could see in the story, and the letter-format becomes merely a thin veil for abolition propaganda. Quashee is no longer the saviour of the island; rather, Jack is a greatly wronged hero. The Chapmans and the Captain turn into grasping planters and a slave-trader respectively--all monsters of Creole wickedness. Only Harriet (that is, Rosa) remains a sentimental heroine. The work presented such an unfavourable picture of

Caribbean society that in its own time it was circulated by the anti-slavery group. Earle makes an open attempt to create a truly legendary and sentimental hero out of Jack. In the Advertisement he says:

> I have published these letters, which accidentally fell into my hands, with a view to commemorate the name of Jack, and place upon the list of heroes, one who, had he shone in a higher sphere, would have proved as bright a luminary as ever graced the Roman annals, or ever boldly asserted the rights of a Briton. His cause was great and noble, for to private wrongs he added the liberty of his countrymen, and stood alone a bold and daring defender of the Rights of Man.

Out of the "historical" persons in the legend Earle evolves the character types necessary to abolition fiction. The slave-trader Harrop has a long history of atrocities in the Middle Passage. Having brought Jack to Jamaica, however, he becomes "a very respectable man, who has left off the trade, has married the daughter of a rich planter [Harriet] and now lives very comfortably after the fatigues of an industrious life" (I, 7). Jack's mother, Amri, is a beautiful slave with the standard "suffering slave" tale to tell. She has vowed vengeance upon the European race for ever and has nurtured the same passion in her son. The entire fifth letter is devoted to Jack's indoctrination in the culture of hatred. The outlaw is here described in Oroonokoan terms:

> Jack had a soul, even in infancy, superior to such whining; he complained not of the daily labour heaped upon him, but of the tardiness of the time. He was of the most manly growth, nearly seven feet in height, and amazingly robust bred up to hardihood, his limbs were well shapen and athletic; he could endure the most laborious, toil and would with ease perform the office of any two negroes within the plantation. His face was rather long; his eyes black and fierce; his nose was not like the generality of blacks, squat and flat, but rather acquiline, and his skin remarkably clear. He discovered a great deal of expression in his countenance, and a very look of reproach from him would strike terror to his fellow slaves. He was now two and twenty years of age, and everything his fond but revengeful mother could wish him.[81]

Earle is at great pains to reveal further the innate nobility of Jack's soul by means of his soliloquies, his sentimental interviews with his mother, and with such blatant authorisms as: "Jack was a Man! Jack was a Hero!!" (VIII, 97). After Jack gets his Obi from Bashra, the Obeah-man who lives "in a cell near Mount Lebanus," he begins to incite slave rebellion. Once again he is too much of an idealist to recognize that not all of the slaves share his high-minded passion for personal revenge.

When he attacks Captain Harrop to avenge his abused mother Amri, he is captured, imprisoned, and lashed almost senseless. His death sentence is ghastly but to some degree historically valid:

> He was to be slung up by his waist, forty feet from the ground to a gallows, exposed to the sun's burning heat and to those noxious insects of the West-Indies, that infect the body even to putridity, for three days receiving no sustenance; on the fourth, he was to be taken down, and the soles of his feet seared, and under the armpits, then to receive five hundred lashes, have his heart and entrails burnt before him, to be quarter'd and his quarters hung in four several parts of the Island, to strike terror to the slaves (VIII, 88).

Jack hears this verdict with indifference. On the third day of captivity he escapes after killing his two guards (regretfully, we are told). He then finds Harrop, stuns him, and carries his body away to the Obeahman's "noisome cave." While undergoing persecution, Amri confidently tells her persecutors: " Jack's Obi will bring you to very nothingness" (VIII, 100).

Letters IX and X are devoted to Creole affairs. There is a detailed characterization of the odious Harrop and the sorrows of the heiress Harriet who is forced to marry him instead of his noble cousin, William Sebald. The next three letters celebrate the glorious exploits

Plate 2

"A Negro hung alive by the Ribs to a Gallows." Artist, Captain J. G. Stedman; engraver, William Blake. In Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam . . . from 1772 to 1777 (1796), I, 110.

Huntington Library



of Jack in his plantation raids, most of which are developed from Burdett's story. Earle also introduces Mahali and digresses "in lofty strains" on the fidelity and affection of the two valiant Africans. Letter XIV portrays Jack's last days and the happy conclusion of the love affair between William and Harriet. The final letter brings Jack's affairs to a hasty conclusion with the account of the attack by Quashee and company. But Jack's death is not wholly ignominious. It cannot be so for he is now the hero of an abolition piece:

> Thus died as great a man as ever graced the annals of history, basely murdered by the hirelings of Government. No doubt in the end Jack died deservedly--had he died like a man. But who worked his passion to a pitch? Who drove him to deeds of desperacy and cruelty? (XV, 168).

In transforming Jack Mansong from a fearsome, predatory Obeahman into a handsome, heroic Negro, William Earle was forced to draw upon the staples of black nobility: the destruction of African family life, the horrors of the slave ship, the beauty of Negro friendship, and the wickedness of white traders and planters. For sentimental appeal, Jack's woes could not be of national scope alone. Rather, they had to be reduced to an extremely personal grievance, that of his avenging of his parents, Makro and Amri. In this last version of the legend, Obeahman Jack, that romantic and exotic by-product of African culture, is forced to blend into the mainstream of English humanitarian literature.

* * *

The five West Indian legends discussed in this chapter have four features in common. First, all involve the confrontation of a noble, suffering Negro with the "system" as represented by cruel, hypocritical "Christians." Although the Negro lovers of St. Kitts mix less directly

with white civilization, their lofty loyalties and refined sensibilities still contrast ironically with stock Creole perfidy and lust. Second, with the exception perhaps of Oroonoko, each legend is traceable to a reasonably reliable historical source. From this point, the story first takes on a more or less artistic literary form and then moves on toward a fully romantic development at the turn of the nineteenth century. On the way, additional characters and events are added, and substitutions are made while the tale passes through several genres. Third, the increasing weight of the machinery of sentimentalism in the course of the journey is common to all. Some of the stories received much fuller development than others. With Oroonoko, for example, the transition "history" and romantic humanitarianism took well over a century; for Three-Fingered Jack less than two decades sufficed. Finally, all of the legends were turned to abolition purposes. (The Inkle and Yarico legend is the least affected in this respect.) This trend was inevitable, given the social and economic make-up of the basically West Indian story.

Although the legends have distinctive lives of their own, each one, at some stage of development, looks back to the heroic figure of Oroonoko for its delineation of Negro character. At the same time, they preview the themes and movements which are to be traced through the broader and more diverse reaches of late classical and early romantic English literature. The detailed examination of selected English poetry and drama in the following chapters will enlarge upon the trends and motifs already suggested in this analysis of West Indian legendary material.

II

THE SUFFERING NEGRO OF ABOLITION VERSE

Virtually all of the poetry of the West Indies is concerned directly or indirectly with the anti-slavery movement. For this reason the pieces are often narrowly occasional and are "false" in the worst sense of the word. Historical facts sometimes conflict with "poetic truths," and when that happens the less skilled poet must then rely heavily upon cumbrously splendid prosody. Now that we have come through two major revolutions in poetic diction (those of Wordsworth and T. S. Eliot), we usually find the labours of the eighteenth-century sentimentalist almost overwhelmingly dull. Moreover, his appeals to his readers' emotions alone rather than to their rational feelings of humanity make his verse both ethically and aesthetically hollow. Philosophically his work is a mélange of the evils of commerce, the degeneracy of European civilization, the doctrine of noble savagery, and the theory of natural rights. What emerges from the chaos is a pseudo-Negro and a pseudo-Africa. And, as we shall find in the next chapter there is also a pseudo-Creole and, to some extent, a pseudo-Caribbean landscape.

Since the propagandistic purposes of anti-slavery verse have been analyzed elsewhere,[1] it is the aim of this study to investigate the various West Indian themes, motifs, and characters which have arisen from the genre.

A. The Character of the Suffering Negro

The "distress'd" Negro slave is the most prominent personality emerging from the flood of abolition verse in the periodical press and elsewhere. His career which begins in idyllic Africa ends in the sordid West Indies. The elements involved in this transition are the substance of such an enormous mass of verse that the poems discussed in this chapter, long as it is, are still only illustrative of the type.

The stock character of the dying Negro deserves a preliminary survey which will include an examination of his dual personality. Being in the Noble Savage tradition, he is equal to any white man and superior to many, particularly to his barbarous white master. He suffers tortures, first on the slave ship and later from his brutal overseer in the cane-fields. As a result he seeks relief in suicide, usually by stabbing or drowning. Before quitting the world, however, he lapses into a dream of his former happiness in a land of wild innocence and freedom where he was at once a warrior, a noble chief, a hunter, and a lover. It was the slavers who interrupted this idyll with deception, butchery, and degradation, breaking all of his physical and spiritual ties. If he chooses to live, he must sink into the crushing toil and the humiliation of slavery. He has several stock responses to his injuries: he may complain pathetically (and ineffectually), he may be resentful and secretly rebellious, or he

may moralize upon his condition and that of his fellows. In actuality, of course, the "dying Negro" poets tell us far more about the white men who did the writing than they do about the Negroes who did the suffering.

The first noble inhabitants of the West Indies, the Caribs and Arawaks, may be disposed of rather summarily. So overpowering was the immediate concern for Negro slaves that the fate of the aboriginals who had perished in like manner before them was well nigh forgotten by the propagandists. Only the poets who gave a historical dimension to their West Indian themes included the Caribs. James Montgomery describes and tells the story of their extermination in the first book of The West Indies (1809). Apparently confusing the carnivorous Caribs with the gentle Arawaks, he finds that "these beauteous isles" were possessed by "a feeble race" who lived in "placid indolence, supinely blest." They lived from

> . . . age to age; like waves upon the tide
> Of stormless time, they calmly liv'd and dy'd.

Finally they perished under European bondage:

> Mingling their barren ashes with the soil
> Down to the dust the Charib-people pass'd,
> Like autumn foliage with'ring in the blast.

And thus they left "a blank among the works of God."[2] Matthew James Chapman's Barbadoes (1833)[3] is an effort to combine the past and present cultures of his island. He portrays a "native prince: the wild man of the wood" who is very unlike Montgomery's primitives. He describes him in the fierce "Lay of the Last Charib":

> The nut-brown warrior long has left the scene,
> And dim the traces where his step has been;
> Hunted from every spot he called his own,
> The Charib perished, and his race is gone.
> The latest lingered in some mountain-wild,
> Rejoiced to think he left behind no child-- . . .

"Of all my days the dearest are the last,
That brings oblivion of the fearful past;
That sets the eagle of his people free,
And ends the warriors of the isles in me. . . .

Our name has perished, and our race is run!
But vengeance light upon the tyrant-train,
That came with withering curses o'er the main; . . .
On the whole race let my last curses fall;
In slow, consuming tortures perish all!
No! let one live, upon this mountain-brow,
To curse their slayers--as I curse them now;
And when he falls upon his dying side,
In death remember how the Charib died! (519-520).

Complexion and historical details may differ, but Chapman's "last Carib" is to all intents and purposes the Noble Negro.

When unmoved by sincere abolition sentiments, early poets of the West Indies produced little by way of African nobility. Dr. James Grainger, in his long eulogy of the West Indies, The Sugar Cane (1764), simply recommends kindness to the slaves because it is materially profitable to keep one's property in efficient working order. The fourth book of his poem is a planter's handbook for the purchasing, the seasoning, and the management of African slaves. Thus, this first real poet of the West Indies contributed nothing to the cult of the suffering Negro for the obvious reason that he was a thoroughly "Creolized" planter.

Three years later John Singleton, inspired by Dr. Grainger, wrote his didactic poem, A General Description of the West-Indian Islands (1767).[4] He pays lip service to the Enlightenment and recommends humane treatment of Negroes, but a description of the natural beauties of Barbados is succeeded by the following prejudicial passage:

Know then, ye fair,
Among your plagues I count the negro race,
Savage by nature. Art essays in vain

> To mend their tempers, or to tune their souls
> In unison with ours: No doctrines touch
> Their callous senses; no instruction wakes
> Their drowsy faculties, nor bends their will,
> Perverse and obstinate, to reason's lure.
> Cruel and fierce, no admonitions tame
> The brutal disposition of their souls;
> Nor can "philosophy's sweet milk" e'er quench
> The flame that ever and anon springs up
> To curse their beings, and to torture ours (11. 393-405).

His treatment of Negro character is nonetheless curiously mixed, for in Book II he sympathetically describes "a native of rich Ebo's sunny coast" as the victim of

> . . . the steel-hearted sordid mariner
> [Who] shap'd out his wat'ry course for traffic vile,
> Commuting wares for baneful dust of gold;
> Or what is worse, made spoil of human flesh.
> Accursed method of procuring wealth!
> By loading free-born limbs with servile chains,
> And bart'ring for the image of his God. . . .
> Does the diff'rence of complexion give
> To man a property in man? (11. 627-635).

In Book III he describes the orgiastic revels of a slave's funeral in a picturesque vein. Then on the next page he portrays the noble self-restraint of a grief-stricken Negro who behaves like a natural stoic and noble son of nature:

> Ah me! how diff'rently th' untutored slave,
> To no philosophy indebted views
> The obsequies of his departed friend,
> And with his calm deportment puts to shame
> The boasted reason of the polish'd world:
> A moment dries his manly eye, untaught
> To melt at death, the necessary end
> Of all terrestrial beings. His creed, the voice
> Of nature, keeps him firm . . . (45, 1776 ed.).

The inconsistency of Singleton's position reveals the growing pressures of primitivism and noble savagery upon colonial views.

One of the most early and reasonably disinterested defenders of Negro sensibility is William Cowper in "Charity" (1781). For him the degenerating influences of slavery explained the discrepancy between the Noble African about whom abolition poets wrote and the perverse, vicious creatures sometimes found on the plantations:[5]

> But ah! what wish can prosper, or what pray'r
> For merchants, rich in cargoes and despair,
> Who drive a loathsome traffic, gage, and span,
> And buy, the muscles and the bones of man?
> The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
> All bonds of nature, in that moment end;
> And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
> A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
> The sable warrior, frantic with regret
> Of her he loves, and never can forget,
> Loses in tears the far receding shore,
> But not the thought that they must meet no more;
> Deprived of her and freedom at a blow.
> What has he left that he can yet forego?
> Yes, to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
> He feels his body's bondage in his mind;
> Puts off his gen'rous nature; and, to suit
> His manners with his fate, puts on the brute (137-162).

Other lesser poets also joined this lively debate of the 1780's. Samuel Pratt in Humanity; or, The Rights of Nature (1788) gives a complete "annotated" catalogue of primitive Negro[6] virtues, concluding:

> Oh! tyrant WHITE, forget awhile thy gold,
> And every virtue in thy BLACK behold,
> All that is honour'd, lov'd, or priz'd in thee,
> In thy scourg'd Negro blushing shalt thou see (II, 71).

Pratt then invites his white readers to try to match such natural nobility:

> "Thus Negro Virtues, Negro Frailties shine,
> Say, fairer Savage, do they yield to thine!"
> . . . Ah no! without thy cultivating arts,
> Worth, greatness, goodness, elevates their hearts,
> The tow'ring spirit in their bosoms move,
> They hate with vigour, as with force they love (II, 80-81).

Abolitionists knew instinctively that they had to counter persistent arguments relating to the Negro's "bestiality." Hannah More vigorously denounces the "illiberal thought which wou'd debase/ The native genius of the sable race":

> Does th' immortal principle within
> Change with the casual colour of a skin?
> Does matter govern spirit? or is mind
> Degraded by the form to which 'tis join'd?
> No: they have heads to think, and hearts to feel,
> And souls to act, with firm, tho' erring zeal;
> For they have keen affections, kind desires,
> Love strong as death, and active patriot fires;
> All the rude energy, the fervid flame,
> Of high-soul'd passion, and ingenuous shame:
> Strong, but luxuriant virtues boldly shoot
> From the wild vigour of a savage root.
> Nor weak their sense of honour's proud control;
> For pride is virtue in a Pagan soul;
> A sense of worth, a conscience of desert,
> A high, unbroken haughtiness of heart.[7]

In his Appeal to England (1789) Thomas Wilkinson became another spokesman for the potential refinements of the blacks:

> When I behold the negro's honest face
> Mark'd with the deepest lines that woe can trace;
> His straining limbs all foul with dust and sweat,
> His naked bosom panting with the heat;
> His sable loins descending purple stain,
> My heart is sick with sympathetic pain.
> Rear'd by indulgent ease in fragrant bow'rs
> With skins as soft, and nerves as fine as ours,
> How can they bear incessant toil to keep,
> Provisions scanty, and few hours for sleep?
> While still for home their broken spirits sigh;
> Alas, they cannot bear it--see they die! (16).

In a terse couplet in Essay on Slavery (1792), Captain Marjoribanks answers the prevailing supposition that Negroes are "of inferior kind" and without feelings:

> Happy for negroes were this doctrine true!
> Were feeling lost to them--or giv'n to you! (22).

One of Wordsworth's three sonnets dealing directly with the Negro concerns a black woman's nobility and delicacy of feeling. He was fascinated by a "white-robed Negro" woman whom he met in France. Her eyes burned with a "tropic fire" which belied her stoical mien. Though not a sonnet of the greatest poetic excellence, it makes the woman a symbol of her injured race, for Wordsworth believed in nationality as an instrument for the realization of humanity on the larger scale.[8]

James Montgomery in The West Indies (1809) finds that black nobility is nurtured in pseudo-Africa:

> In these romantic regions [Africa] men grow wild:
> Here dwells the Negro, nature's outcast child,
> Scorn'd by his brethren; but his mother's eye,
> That gazes on him from her warmest sky,
> Sees in his flexile limbs untutor'd grace,
> Power on his forehead, beauty in his face;
> Sees in his breast, where lawless passions rove,
> The heart of friendship and the home of love;
> Sees in his mind, where desolation reigns,
> Fierce as his clime, uncultur'd as his plains,
> A soil where virtue's fairest flowers might shoot,
> And trees of science bend with glorious fruit;
> Sees in his soul, involved with thickest night,
> An emanation of eternal light (II, 13).

Moreover, the Negro is in other ways a man--capable of learning, redeemed by Christ, and guilty of follies and crimes. In the third book the poet pictures the West Indian Negro degraded by slavery:

> The Negro, spoil'd of all that nature gave
> The freeborn man, thus shrunk into a slave;
> His passive limbs, to measur'd tasks confin'd,
> Obey'd the impulse of another mind;
> A silent, secret, terrible control,
> That ruled his sinews, and repress'd his soul (III, 28).

In Reverend Vardill's poetic fragment "The Spirit of Toussaint" (1814)[9] an African lover defends the refined feelings of his race, coarsened by oppression:

. . . Can Europe's slender zone
Clasp all that freedom, truth, and valour own?
O no! tho' Afric's burning clime denies
Locks of soft silk, and sapphire-seeming eyes,
Beneath their sable masks are fervid souls
Shine pure as those which freeze beneath the poles!
Their meagre av'rice blights their noblest fruit,
And the proud reas'ner sinks into a brute.
Unveil those frozen souls--they cannot prove
Such faith as ours, such death-defying love!
Not softer smiles your blue-ey'd daughters boast
Than the dark dames of Congo's golden coast--
Than thine, my Zayde! yet Europe's ruffians tore
Thy helpless beauty from our parent shore!
My child! my gem! (47)

The slave-speaker in "The Negro's Complaint" (1823)[10] concludes his address with a defence of the blacks' sensibilities:

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard, and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

"The degrading influences of slavery" was the abolition poets' reply to the anthropologists' charges of the Negro's sub-human abilities and his animality.

In spite of all of this great preoccupation with the sensitivity of slaves, one phase of Negro suffering remained only partially explored during the abolition period. Comparatively few writers, until very recent times, have chosen to deal explicitly and at length with the themes of lightness and darkness in Negro life. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that it received scant attention amid the almost total-white concerns of the more complacent eighteenth-century. This was an emotional side of the suffering slave's life which could not be dealt with in the

summary manner in which the slave trade might be abolished or a ruthless overseer might be prosecuted.

The Bible's central theme of good and evil is constantly represented by the symbolism of "black" and "white," "dark" and "light." The negative use of blackness consistently stands for sin, ignorance, wickedness, and evil. Against this tradition we have the long-standing assumption that the Anglo-Saxon civilization is the highest and noblest ever seen in the history of the human race. In view of these ideas, the salvation for the black man lay in his complete identification with his aggressor. Amid rising abolition agitation, William Blake revived an idea which had enjoyed popularity among the seventeenth century metaphysical poets, namely, that the soul is not prejudiced by the limitations of the body. "The Little Black Boy" (1789)[11] is unquestionably the best of the many poems in which the Negro speaks for himself, pleading for sympathy and understanding, not as a Noble Savage but as a human being. In the poem the child considers the meaning of his God-given colour in a serene mood of acceptance, encouraged by his mother's lesson of positive, outgoing tenderness. Of the white boy he says:

> I'll shade him from the heat, till he can bear
> To lean in joy upon our father's knee;
> And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
> And be like him, and he will then love me.

Like the other Songs of Innocence, this poem has a deep awareness of the evil of bitterness, separation, and negation, even when they claim the sanctions of heaven. Blake's perceptive and artistic treatment of the theme puts "The Little Black Boy" in a class on its own, at least for the abolition period.[12]

Charles Lamb's poem, "The Young Catechist" (1827)[13] exhibits the reverse side of the Blakean ideas on colour. Lamb included the poem in a letter to his Quaker friend Bernard Barton. He explained that it was written concerning an artist "who painted me lately . . . a blacka-moor praying; and not filling his canvas, stuffed his little girl aside of the blacky gaping at him unmeaningly; and then did not know what to call it":

> While this tawny Ethiop prayeth,
> Painter, who is she that stayeth
> By, with skin of whitest lustre;
> Sunny locks, a shining cluster;
> Saint-like seeming to direct him
> To the Power that must protect him?
> Is she of the heav'n born Three,
> Meek Hope, strong Faith, sweet Charity?
> Or some Cherub?
>
> They you mention
> Far transcend my weak invention.
> 'Tis a simple Christian child,
> Missionary young and mild,
> From her store of script'ral knowledge
> (Bible-taught without a college),
> Which by reading she could gather,
> Teaches him to say Our Father
> To the common Parent, who
> Colour not respects, nor hue.
> White and black in Him have part,
> Who looks not to the skin, but heart.

Although Lamb struggled with the paradox of blackness, torn between the sublime and the beautiful, he lacked real evangelistic zeal for the anti-slavery movement. He aptly described the gentle but ineffectual emotions felt by many Englishmen:

> In the Negro countenance you will often meet with strong traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness towards some of these faces--or rather masks--that have looked out kind upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls--these

> "images of God cut in ebony." But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them--because they are black.[14]

In both Blake's and Lamb's poems we find that the outlook imposed by the white society upon the black is neatly capsulated. The Negro's identifying external mask has been shaped mainly out of the myths and stereotypes which white society had to create for its own self-appeasement and which blacks accepted for their self-defence in a hostile white world. The flight from blackness and the craving to be white involved a more or less total acceptance of the white man's estimate of the black man and a more or less total rejection of self. This raising of "white" and debasing of "black" has prevailed through all time, and every white person has to some degree unconsciously imbibed it as nourishment for his self-esteem. Blake's little black boy and Lamb's praying blackamoor, meanwhile, could only yearn after whiteness, whether of character, soul, or of skin, and hope that by becoming "like" the white child, they might be loved. This unremitting search for whiteness aroused a strong counter-prejudice in an aggressive reassertion of blackness, and every black person has been called upon to reject or somehow deflect from himself the associations of evil and inferiority which are so powerfully attached to blackness. The Shulamite maiden summed it up concisely when she sang to the daughters of Jerusalem: "I am black <u>but</u> comely"[15]--and on that "but" hangs the whole substance of western prejudice. The aesthetic of blackness, however, was far too difficult a theme for the average abolition writer to probe, and it lay dormant while he described the obvious and more sensational physical injustices suffered by the Negro. Stage writers and humourists, however, were to take up the idea superficially in the

"blackamoor-washed-white" motif, as for instance in Henry Bates' opera of that title and in Thomas Hood's "The Black Job."

Beyond these broad outlines of the "suffering Negro" it is not possible to generalize, for two distinct types of slave now appear. This duality of characterization is apparently based not only on conflicting travel-writings but also upon the observable personality differences between the different African tribes. The aggressive-type Negro is usually a Koromantyn or Mandingo. The meticulous Dr. Grainger describes him:

> Yet, if thine own, thy children's life be dear,
> Buy not a Cormantee, though healthy, young.
> Of breed too generous for the servile field,
> They, born to freedom in their native land,
> Choose death before dishonourable bonds:
> Or, fired with vengeance, at the midnight hour,
> Sudden they seize thine unsuspecting watch,
> And thine own poniard bury in thy breast.[16]

The poet makes him into a magnificently heroic warrior. He bears his trials stoically and proudly but is likely to plot revenge. He traces his ancestry in a direct line back to Oroonoko, and he reacts with enraged pride to the indignities of West Indian slavery. In <u>An Essay on Slavery</u> (1792) Captain Marjoribanks also portrays the type:

> But Love and Passion ne'er had more controul
> Than o'er the African's hot, haughty soul.
> Oft, 'mongst your slaves, a once proud chief we find,
> Of dauntless courage, and exalted mind;
> His body cover'd with many a scar,
> Proofs of his prowess in the field of war;
> More keen his <u>mental</u> than <u>corporeal</u> pains,
> While his fierce <u>spirit</u> <u>feels</u> your lash and chains. . . .
> Resolv'd to perish by a hero's hand,
> He seeks in suicide his native land (23).

Obviously, however, not every black could be an Oroonoko and die in the glories of revolt and suicide. The second class Negro belongs to some of the less warlike tribes. He is easy-going and has a tendency to

indolence and to dreams of his languid, abundant life in pseudo-Africa.[17] He operates on a sufficiently low plane to have comic possibilities and is a blood-brother to the comic or "plantation" Negro of the stage. Marjoribanks also makes a poetic place for this Negro of a "gentler race and low degree" who sleeps in the sun, his life uncomplicated by either warfare or agriculture. The stoical mask which all Negroes could assume often made it impossible to be sure whether one had an Oroonoko or a plantation Negro with whom to deal:

> In dumb despair these helpless wretches pine,
> Yet are their feelings exquisitely fine!
> Think you the silent slave beholds, unmov'd,
> The rape committed on his best-beloved?
> With keenest pangs his am'rous heart is wrung,
> Rage fires his soul, tho' fear restrains his tongue (24-29).

It is in their potential for inciting rebellions--and hence in their tragic possibilities--that the two types of Negroes differ most markedly.

Rebellion, of course, breeds more cruelty. Even at a comparatively early point in the eighteenth century the outrageous inhumanities of the slave system were seen to foreshadow disaster. John Dyer's words in "The Fleece" (1757)[18] were prophetic of the slave uprisings which marked the end of the century:

> But let the man, whose rough tempestuous hours
> In this adventurous traffic are involved,
> With just humanity of heart pursue
> The gainful commerce: wickedness is blind:
> Their sable chieftains may in future times
> Burst their frail bounds, and vengeance execute
> Of cruel unrelenting pride of heart
> And avarice. There are ills to come of crimes (201-208).

William Cowper in "Charity" (1781) openly suggested revolt:

> . . . Slav'ry--virtue dreads it as her grave:
> Patience itself is meanness in a slave.[19]

Mrs. Anna Laetitia Barbauld also found slavery to be self destructive: "And injur'd Afric, by herself redrest,/ Darts her own serpents at her Tyrant's breast."[20] The savage events of the St. Domingo rebellion in 1791, however, served to temper somewhat such radical hopes on the part of the abolition poets.

Since the slave had no legal rights and since the fear of insurrection was very real, the barest suspicion of revolt was dealt with summarily in the plantations. Several writers took up the theme of slave discipline and execution. The last two sonnets in Southey's slave trade sequence have to do with rebellion and punishment. In the first one the poet portrays the mental processes which led the Negro to plunge his sword into "the hard heart of his inhuman lord."

> . . . In the midnight shade
> There came on him the intolerable thought
> Of every past delight,--his native grove,
> Friendship's best joys, and liberty and love,
> For ever lost. Such recollections wrought
> His brain to madness. Wherefore should he live
> Longer with abject patience to endure
> His wrongs and wretchedness, when hope can give
> No consolation, time can bring no cure?
> But justice for himself he yet could take,
> And life is then well given for vengeance' sake.[21]

The death sentence is, of course, inevitable. Since the Negro has nothing to lose in death itself, the whites, knowing this, make the death as torturous as possible. In Sonnet VI the slave is hanged:

> To all the birds of heaven, their living food!
> He groans not, though, awaked by that fierce sun
> New torturers live to drink their parent blood;
> He groans not, though the gorging vulture tear
> The quivering fibre. Hither look, O ye
> Who tore this man from peace and liberty! (68).

Two other poems describing the execution of rebel West Indian

slaves in the natural processes of "justice" may be mentioned. In both the poets question the humanity of the proceedings. The first by Bryan Edwards is entitled "The Negroe's Dying Speech on his being executed for Rebellion in the Island of Jamaica" (1777).[22] The heroic African chief is condemned for asserting those rights which "the God of nature gave." Captain Marjoribanks witnessed the execution of Azubal in Spanish Town, Jamaica, and "heard his horrid cries!/ Whilst with slow cruelty the furnace boils!" The slave was crazed by "agonizing mem'ry [which] drew/ The sweets that bless'd his Afric's shore."[23] It should be emphasized here again that the Negro rebel of literature could rarely, if ever, lay a hand upon the "sacred" person of his white master, although an overseer or bookkeeper might be expendable. The view of a British planter murdered by a black slave was far more realistic than English audiences cared to contemplate. This problem is more fully explored in the analysis of stage productions in Chapter IV.

The role played by memory in the behaviour of the slave is significant. It contributed to his belief in his immediate return to Africa[24] at death, and hence to his propensity for rebellion and suicide. In his theory of memory Thomas Campbell represents a large body of anti-slavery poets, including Southey, Marjoribanks, and even Bryan Edwards. In "The Pleasures of Hope" (1799)[25] he finds that Hope, not Memory, "actuates the efforts of genius." His poem appeared late in the abolition period, and it is a document describing the transition from the consolations of individual misery to needed social and political improvements. Into this philosophical maze wanders a Noble African, a little out of his time. His circumstances and death are traditional, but memories bring no comfort:

LO! once in triumph on his boundless plain,
The quiver'd chief of Congo lov'd to reign;
With fires proportion'd to his native sky,
Strength in his arm, and lightning in his eye;
Scour'd with wild feet his sun-illumin'd zone,
The spear, the lion, and the woods his own;
Or led the combat, bold without a plan,
An artless savage, but a fearless man!

The plunderer came:--alas! no glory smiles
For Congo's chief on yonder Indian isles;
For ever fallen! no son of Nature now,
With Freedom charter's on his manly brow!
Faint, bleeding, bound, he weeps the night away,
And, when the sea-wind wafts the dewless day,
Starts, with a bursting heart, for ever more
To curse the sun that lights their guilty shore!

The shrill horn blew; [that is, the shell] at that alarum knell
His guardian angel took a last farewell!
That funeral dirge to darkness hath resign'd
The fiery grandeur of a generous mind.
Poor fetter'd man! I hear thee whispering low
Unhallow'd vows to Guilt, the child of Woe.
Friendless thy heart; and, canst thou harbour there
A wish but death--a passion but despair? (27-28).

The anonymous poet of "The Negro" (1831)[26] eavesdrops on the soliloquizing of a West Indian slave:

Who sate him by a placid rivulet,
And thought of days when life was gaily fled;
Pictured each scene of by-gone happiness,
And coloured it with an unearthly light.

His recollections bring him no pleasure either as his soul hastens on to the reliefs of eternity:

Each grief seemed far more poignant than before;
He gazed in frenzied horror upon all:
Breath'd forth an execrating curse--and then,
Wrung by intense, by burning agony,
And with tremendous energy inspired,
His soul surpass'd the narrow obstacles
Which rose betwixt it and eternity,
And sought, in realms of happiness afar,
The joys denied him in this nether world.

Samuel Rogers' pleasant interpretation of the slave's recollec-

tion of his homeland differs radically from this established opinion. He explores at length "the pleasing melancholy" attending the revisiting of a familiar village.[27] After examining the Hartleian principle of association, he says that "when the first emotions of despair have subsided, and sorrow has softened into melancholy, she [Memory] amuses with a retrospect of innocent pleasure" (II, 25). West Indian slaves, he believes, are a case in point:

> From Guinea's coast pursue the lessening sail,
> And catch the sounds that sadden every gale,
> Tell, if thou canst, the sum of sorrows there;
> Mark the fixed gaze, the wild and frenzied glare,
> The racks of thought, and freezings of despair!
> But pause not then--beyond the western wave,
> Go, view the captive bartered as a slave!
> Crushed till his high heroic spirit bleeds,
> And from his nerveless frame indignantly recedes.
>
> Yet here, even here, with pleasures long resigned,
> Lo MEMORY bursts the twilight of the mind:
> Here dear delusion sooth his sinking soul,
> When the rude scourge assumes its base control;
> And o'er futurity's blank page diffuse
> The full reflection of their vivid hues.
> 'Tis but to die, and then, to weep no more,
> Then will he wake on Congo's distant shore;
> Beneath his plantain's ancient shade renew,
> The simple transports that with freedom flew;
> Catch the cool breeze that musky evening blows,
> And quaff the palm's rich nectar as it glows;
> The oral tale of elder time rehearse,
> And chant the rude traditionary verse;
> With those, the loved companions of his youth,
> When life was luxury, and friendship truth.
> . . . A world with MEMORY'S ceaseless sunshine blest,
> The home of happiness, an honest breast (29-30).

Rogers' sanguine view is unusual and virtually stands alone. The great preponderance of evidence points to a desperate Negro driven to revolt, or at best a stoical one resigned to fate--certainly not to a slave <u>comforted</u> by recollections of home.

The rebellious Negro (type one) appears consistently throughout the abolition period. The Negroes on the Middle Passage voyage described in Roscoe's "Wrongs of Africa" (1788) appear to have been Koromantyns to a man. The voyage gets under way calmly enough, but the captives are tense, "panting for revenge." Finally "they burst the opposing gratings" and pour onto the deck where bloody combat ensues. The slaves are "frantic and fierce, and maddening with their wrongs":

> . . . Thick they fell,
> But oft not unrevenged, for fastening close
> Upon the foe, some gained the vessel's side,
> And rushed together to a watery death;
> Whilst from the hold, emerging throngs
> Replaced the vanquished, and with hideous cries,
> Struck terror through the tyrants' chilling veins.[28]

In contrast, William Lisle Bowles' Negro of 1798 is of the second type. A dead slave, whose burial is imminent, departs with a commission from his friends who are proudly resigned to their fate:

> Tell our brethren, where ye meet,
> Thus we toil with weary feet;
> Yet tell them that Love's generous flame,
> In joy, in wretchedness the same,
> In distant worlds was ne'er forgot;
> And tell them that we murmur not;
> Tell them, though the pang will start,
> And drain the life-blood from the heart,--
> Tell them, generous shame forbids
> The tear to stain our burning lids![29]

Other dying Negroes rely more directly upon Providence for the equitable distribution of rewards. One Negro welcomes the tempest which brings him death for his tormentors will die also. He regards them with the confidence of a man to whom "revenge and dread triumph" has been given:

> Ye band of oppressors, yon vast mountain-wave,
> Now towering aloft to the skie,
> Is big with destruction, no efforts can save,
> Ye fiends how I smile when you die![30]

The "aged African" of "The Slave" (1832)[31] is an interesting composite character. We find him in the sublime setting of Jamaica's Blue Mountains, a spectral figure tailored to match his wild surroundings:

> He turn'd with flashing fierceness to the cliffs.
> I saw his spirit's flame blaze out in looks
> That would have scorch'd the tyrant to his core.
> He gave a groan so mournful and so deep,
> It thrill'd the rocks, vibrating through their caves.

He pours out his feelings in a soliloquy which centers on a return to Africa and the roving tribe of whom he had been chief. He anticipates his spirit-return to Africa, but he fears that those of his friends who have already gone on in death will not recognize him for what he once was. He is too emaciated by slavery:

> . . . You knew me when
> The lightning of my spears blasted the boars,
> All foaming on the ground. Alas for me!
> Transform'd to men are they; and I am now,
> Their hunted lion chain'd, and wounded sore.
> This skin, so polish'd once, had not a scar:
> The hungry tiger, in his flying rage,
> Could never spoil the lustre of its jet.
> Behold the scourge was more than tiger here (pointing
> to his back).

He ends as the "dews [fall] on his hoary locks." The scene vaguely calls to mind King Lear on the moors. We wait to see him commit suicide, but instead he stands there doggedly while

> The night came on with frowns and bodings red,
> And the Eternal seem'd in thickset clouds,
> His gleaming sword to brandish fearfully (141).

Here, apparently, is an attempt to combine the vengeful, heroic Negro with the one who is content to wait for his deliverance. Since this poem was written just prior to the time of emancipation, perhaps the poet believed that Parliament would ratify the Act before any more literary Negroes had

to destroy themselves. In any case, the defiant old man lives on awaiting justice from above. The motif of personal revenge is actually inconsistent with the stance of the Noble Negro. The Negro spirituals and other literature are free from it. In British abolition poetry, however, vengeance (direct or indirect) is a crucial part of the Negro character on both the heroic and plantation levels.

According to some pro-colonial poets, the more relaxed Negro of the second type was capable of adjusting fairly cheerfully to slavery. The black's inactivity and easy-going nature has, of course, long been seen as an innate group characteristic, but this behaviour is understandable. It is only natural that he should appear to be shockingly devoid of energetic and serious concern for those social, political and economic values in which he could not share. That apathy now has changed into open resentment, and there has simultaneously emerged a brand-new stereotype black of antisocial and insurrectionary violence--but that is another story.

The abolitionist poets proved to be quite capable of enlivening this basically docile Negro also. He frequently went through violent, noisy agonies, and courted death like his Koromantyn brother. His is a narrower view of the problem of slavery, however, and he has little comprehension of the enormity of the injustices involved. His energies are taken up with his desire for the avenging of personal wrongs. For this reason he seldom dares to offer open resistance, but is content to look ahead to Paradise to amend his earthly abuses. A colonial poet, Matthew Chapman, gives a picturesque view of some of these tame slaves in Barbadoes (1833):

> Lo! where the gang assembled wields the hoe,
> And each begins his own appointed row;
> Song and the jocund laugh are heard around--
> Quirk upon quirk, and ready jokes abound.
> The task allotted they with ease can do;
> No shapes of dread affright their steps pursue: . . .
> The gay troop laughs and revels in the sun,
> With mirth unwearied--till their work is done.[32]

During the midday heat these merry blacks seek the comforts of rest in the shade. Chapman enlarges upon the pleasantness of their situation and rebukes curious, visiting Englishmen for falsifying such pastoral West Indian scenes:

> The stranger, come to see the burning shame
> Of negro wrongs, forgets for what he came;
> He hears their merry laugh, their joyous strain,
> His sides are aching, yet he laughs again.
> He hears no groan, he hears no cruel lash,
> Their maddening mirth he sees no tyrant dash.
> But soon the stranger back to England goes--
> He talks of brands, a frightful scourge he shews;
> Shudders, whene'er is named the horrid isle,
> Where negroes never dance, and never smile,
> But groans and wailings ever vex the sky;--
> Plaudits resound, and cheers await the spy (524).

Boko is another African who, in his death agonies, fills the "winding vale" with "piercing shrieks of anguish."[33] His curses upon Avarice and his descriptions of his kidnapping are conventional enough, but his recollections of paradise are of a very domestic type:

> No more my native groves among,
> With jetty beauties shall I rove;
> Nor listen to the artless song,
> Attuned to nature and to love.
>
> No more beneath the plantaine's shade
> Shall Boko's breast with rapture swell
> What time his ever-faithful maid
> Her tender heart's soft sorrows tell.

The "sounding whip and clanking chain" disturb his rest more than anything else, but instead of seeking rebellion in the public interest of

his race he seeks personal suicide. In the romantically beautiful surroundings of the moonlit island woods, he draws his weapon:

> Too well he aim'd the deadly blow;--
> His parting spirit upward fled;--
> And as to earth his corse sunk low
> Dim night a deeper horror shed.

A less Gothic poem of the emancipation period is one in which a slave-father mourns that the spirit of his slave-born child must "from its birth . . . shrink,/ Beneath the proud one's eye," and that the child can never know the freedom of the hunter-warrior in Africa.[34] The suffering parent concludes his address on a note of resignation, not revenge:

> Yet welcome to the world my boy!
> For thou had'st brought thy father joy.
> If joy could reach him here;
> And still, even here, thine infant smile
> His ceaseless sorrows may beguile,
> His thankless labours cheer.

Indeed, the slave-father's determination to take what joys he can from life as he finds it is pathetic and non-heroic. His attitude is also strongly tinged with shades of the Negro minstrel character of the mid-nineteenth-century. In time we expect that he may even become sufficiently adjusted to his surroundings to participate in slave festivals. The love of dancing and entertainment which the father expresses is an important characteristic of the second Negro. Certainly, it is impossible to visualize Oroonoko and Imoinda joining the Negro festivals or making their love part of such a "community project" as a slave frolic.

That the slaves did indeed love carnivals and balls was indisputable, but only emancipation poets of the 1830's began to be bold enough to admit the fact. Chapman describes a Barbadian entertainment in its

picturesque surroundings:

> How beautiful the night! how sweetly fall
> Its shadows! 'tis the negro-festival.
> To the sound of flutes and drums they dancing come:
> Not sweeter nor more musical the hum
> Of falling waters to the drowsy ear,
> Than those far sounds the wings of Zephyr bear.
> They come, they come! and in their train advance
> Love, pleasure, joy, content, and esperance!
> Satins, and silks, and hosed legs they show;
> Rich streams of cane-distill'd nepenthe flow. . . .
> Lovers in pairs go dancing o'er the green,
> While Bacchus cheers them with his honest mien.
> Here may be seen the dance of Libya,
> While honour'd bands their native music play,--
> The deep-toned banjoe, to their ears divine,
> The noisy cymbal, and the tambourine (525-526).

Two years later Robert Dunbar in his pro-colonial travelogue, The Cruise (1835) also uses slave-merrymaking as proof that all is well with the plantocracy:

> Through the swart menial train wild pleasure reigns;
> (Philanthropy, believe the faithful tale!)
> The slave, responsive to his master's strains,
> Gives all his soul, which no rude cares assail,
> Down the full tide of revelry to sail.
> Without, with uncouth footstep, he displays
> His heart's gay sunshine, which no sorrows veil;
> And leads his black nymph, emulous of praise,
> With boundless glee elate through all the dance's maze.[35]

Fortunately for his own survival, the Negro had this capacity for pleasure. It was frequently regarded with suspicion by the planter who knew all too well that the holiday festivities of the blacks were sometimes seedbeds of rebellions. Dr. Grainger gives a prescription in the fourth book of The Sugar Cane where he describes a Negro festival which is both pleasurable and innocuous. Even the machinery of Grainger's verse does not destroy the picturesque effects:

> On festal days, or when their work is done,
> Permit thy slaves to lead the choral dance

> To the wild banshaw's [a rude guitar] melancholy sound.
> Responsive to the sound, head, feet, and frame
> Move awkwardly harmonious; hand in hand
> Now lock'd, the gay troop circularly wheels,
> And frisks and capers with intemperate joy.
> Halts the vast circle, all clap hands and sing;
> While those distinguish'd for their heels and air,
> Found in the centre, and fantastic twine.
> Meanwhile some stripling from the choral ring
> Trips forth; and, now ungallantly, bestows
> On her who nimblest hath the greensward beat,
> And whose flush'd beauties have inthrall'd his soul,
> A silver token of his fond applause.
> Anon they form in ranks; nor inexpert
> A thousand tuneful intricacies weave,
> Shaking their sable limbs; and oft a kiss
> Steal from their partners; who, with neck reclined,
> And sembled scorn, resent the ravish'd bliss. (IV, 142-143).

Grainger adds that by forbidding the "bacchanalian frenzy" which attends drinking and drumming, the planter can avoid the hazards of insurrections and the loss of slaves who would thus "their vigorous prime destroy."[36]

As a footnote to this collection of poems in which the white man first sought to understand and make restitution for the tragedy of the Negro, we should note the recurrent belief that England was the Mecca to which all blacks desired to go. The idea had a reasonable basis in fact, for many West Indian slaves did find their way to England with their absentee masters and mistresses,[37] and no doubt many discovered that the breathing of English air improved their situation materially over what they had experienced in the West Indian plantations.[38] "The Captive Negro's Song" (1829)[39] is devoted entirely to this imperialistic supposition:

> . . . [The] land of liberty,
> Whose sons are brave and fair,
> Where black and white alike are free
> As birds that skim the air.
> Could we but touch its happy shore,
> Oh, then we should be slaves no more.

We sleep and dream, before our eyes,
The lovely land appears,
We walk the smiling paradise,
Nor think of former tears.

As in all of the rest of the works using this theme, we find the viewpoint of a white man who forces his literary Negro to voice opinions which he imposes upon him. Dazzled by high-sounding abstractions on liberty, it was hard for a comfortably-situated Englishman to conceive of a West Indian slave who might not be attracted to the "noble, high, exalted land" by what he had seen of English usage on the plantations. The idea is a dogma of imperialism which appears in humanitarian works with annoying frequency. The West Indian Negro who made this transition from the plantations to England became a new character, literarily speaking. As a servant instead of a slave, he replaced the exotic Negro of the medieval and Oroonokoan traditions. He was much more than a mere sign of opulence. Having both comic and pathetic possibilities, he became increasingly popular in fiction and on the stage. Although he acquired greater realism through the nineteenth century, his basic roles changed little from his beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century. Needless to say, humanitarian versifiers of the day found comparatively little employment for the Negro servant while the far more potent image of the enslaved prince remained available.

Whatever attitudes may have preceded the dying Negro's final moments, whether he died of lashing, exhaustion, or a self-inflicted wound, his stoical resolution in face of crisis was constant. This quality is held in common by the first and second types of poetic Negroes as well as by the real-life slaves. To a great extent, Stoicism is one of the

Negro's primitive virtues which many writers found equal, if not superior, to philosophic fortitude or Christian resignation. With this asset, the suffering Negro serves as a foil to his passionate, vicious master. Byron remarked upon this racial characteristic in an eastern slave mart:

> A crowd of shivering slaves of every nation,
> And age, and sex, were in the market ranged;
> Each bevy with the merchant in his station:
> Poor creatures! their good looks were sadly changed.
> All save the blacks seem'd jaded with vexation,
> From friends, and home, and freedom far estranged;
> The negroes more philosophy display'd--
> Used to it, no doubt, as eels are to be flay'd.[40]

The suffering poetic Negro as seen by his white creator is a compound of several immutable elements. He constantly reiterates his life story, which is some form of the Oroonoko legend. It is coloured by various recurrent themes and motifs which will be discussed presently. His virtue is in conscious contrast to white wickedness. He seldom survives the end of an abolition poem, and frequently his sensational death scene occupies the entire work. His colour, as a matter of prejudice, receives little attention, for that investigation is left largely to fiction writers and dramatists. The endless enumerations of his genteel sensibilities are supposed to defend him against charges of bestiality. If he should be in any way unattractive, it is slavery which has made him so. Any variants in the basic pattern arise from the fact that the "dying Negro" is a split image: he may be aggressively heroic or passively domestic. In hands other than those of the sentimental humanitarians, the latter type will merge into the "comic Negro."

To feelings untuned to such undiluted sentimentalism, the poetic

Negro is not appealing. In looking back upon all of the sentimental, suffering Negroes of English poetry, we must admit that their combined sorrows together fail to move us as much as those of say a single Michael. In one sense, it would almost seem that this vast multitude of romantic Negroes bled and died in vain. Yet, what they lacked in aesthetic value they had in practical, for they were the backbone of the literary campaign for the liberation of West Indian slaves.

B. Spokesmen of Romanticism on Slavery and the Indies

After the high tide of British anti-slavery activity between 1787 and 1791 and even during it, many poets became weary of the agitation and turned to other themes. It is noteworthy, however, that nearly all of the major romantics had something to say on the subject--some more and some less. In no case does their comment represent their best work from an artistic standpoint because the necessities of propaganda have never at any time mixed well with the graces of the Muses.

We shall consider first the almost unknown twin poems of Dr. William Dodd in 1749--not because Dodd is a major voice of romanticism nor even because his was one of the most colourful careers ever achieved by an eighteenth-century clergyman, but because his anti-slavery work stood midway in the century, looking back to the heroism of Oroonoko and forward to the sentimental abolition verse of the 1780's and '90's. The first epistle, "The African Prince, When in England, 1749, to Zara at His Father's Court," appeared anonymously in Gentleman's Magazine.[41] Although highly sophisticated, the tale follows the regular pattern of the slave

lament. The prince is sent out on a diplomatic mission for his father, who commissions him upon his return to

> . . . assume my throne, and let thy yoke be light;
> From lands of freedom glorious precepts bring,
> And reign at once a father and a king (10).

Instead of reaching England where he might receive instruction in enlightened government, he is betrayed and sold into slavery. He becomes "a naked captive on a barb'rous coast" (in the Caribbean, presumably) where he toils "fainting beneath the sun's meridian heat,/ Rouz'd by the scourge, [and] the taunting jest. . ." (11). Thoughts of his beloved Zara enable his spirit to remain unbroken, but he cannot wish her with him where slavery would be passed on to his children: "Be mine alone th' accumulated woe,/ Nor let me propagate my curse below" (12). Enroute to England "the wretch, the sordid hypocrite, who sold/ His charge, an unsuspecting prince, for gold" dies. When the Prince arrives, his mournful tale arouses the interest of the king who promptly restores his freedom. The English monarch is more impressed, of course, by the fact that it is a <u>prince</u> who has been abused than anything else. The noble African's education begins immediately:

> Whate'er is great and gay around me shine,
> And all the splendor of a court is mine.
> Here knowledge too, by piety refin'd,
> Sheds a blest radiance o'er my bright'ning mind;
> From earth I travel upward to the sky,
> I learn to live, to reign, yet more, to die (12).

He studies "habits, buildings, trades, and polity" and attends plays which "mix delight with pain." Upon seeing the play 'Oroonoko," he is so moved that he is forced to leave the theater during its performance:

> O! Zara, here, a story like my own,
> With mimic skill, in borrow'd names, was shown;

> An Indian chief, like me, by fraud betray'd,
> And, partner in his woes, an Indian maid.
> I can't recall the scene, 'tis pain too great,
> And, if recall'd, should shudder to relate (13).

Unlike Oroonoko the Prince of Annamaboe can plan to return to his court and his love. He prays that "hostile barks" and storms will spare him that he may "evangelize" his race. Herein lies the new element that was to clothe the Noble Savage in garments of Christian humility, although it is not always clear in subsequent poems on the subject just how much of the suffering Negro's submission is Christian and how much is simply his anticipation of a pagan African paradise. Dodd's attitude on the question is ambivalent: slavery is evil, but the opportunities of English civilization are good. The companion piece, "Zara, at the Court of Annamaboe; to the African Prince, When in England," is an impassioned love lyric, with possible echoes of the Song of Solomon. Zara again emphasizes the princeliness of her lover and the horror of his enslavement:

> Hold, hold! Barbarians of the fiercest kind!
> Fear heaven's red lightning--'tis a prince ye bind;
> A prince, whom no indignities could hide;
> They knew, presumptuous! and the gods defy'd. (16).

The Africa to which Zara entreats the prince to return gives us a glimpse of the "pseudo-Africa " of which all suffering and dying Negroes dreamed:

> Come, come, my prince! my charmer! haste away;
> Come, come, I cry'd, thy Zara blames thy stay.
> For thee, the shrubs their richest sweets retain;
> For thee, new colours wait to paint the plain;
> For thee, cool breezes linger in the grove,
> The birds expect thee in the green alcove;
> 'Till thy return, the rills forget to fall,
> 'Till thy return, the sun, the soul of all-- (16).

Dodd's work came too early to be part of the main current of abolition writing, but it is an interesting precursor of it.

Fifteen years after the appearance of the Annamaboe poems, Dr. James Grainger published his long, didactic poem, The Sugar Cane (1764). The work is a unique, even if not brilliant, attempt to celebrate the West Indian islands and deals at considerable length with the condition of slaves in the sugar colonies. His rational appeal to the humanity of planters contains elements which were later to become semi-hysterical themes in the work of abolition poets. His work reveals the main outlines of the "dying Negro" tradition and the very ornate conception of African tribal life which often accompanied it:

> Yet, planter, let humanity prevail,
> Perhaps thy Negro, in his native land,
> Possess'd large fertile plains, and slaves, and herds:
> Perhaps, when'er he deign'd to walk abroad,
> The richest silks, from where the Indus rolls,
> His limbs invested in their gorgeous pleats.
> Perhaps he wails his wife, his children left
> To struggle with adversity: perhaps
> Fortune, in battle for his country fought,
> Gave him a captive to his deadliest foe:
> Perhaps, incautious, in his native fields,
> (On pleasurable scenes his mind intent)
> All as he wander'd from the neighbouring grove,
> Fell ambush dragg'd him to the hated main.
> Were they e'en sold for crimes; ye polish'd, say!
> Ye, to whom Learning opes her amplest page!
> Ye, whom the knowledge of a living God
> Should lead to virtue! Are ye free from crimes?
> Ah, pity, then, these uninstructed swains;
> And still let Mercy soften the decrees
> Of rigid Justice, with her lenient hand.[42]

Humanitarianism, however, is not Grainger's primary concern, and we shall consider his work in more detail in Chapter III.

Thomas Day is a "major spokesman" in the sense that his poem The Dying Negro (1773)[43] was the most influential of all the works in the "suffering Negro" genre. It appeared on the crest of a wave of humanitarian feeling and contained all the basic ingredients to be found in a long

succession of dying-Negro poems. Its realism and rejection of the seventeenth-century "classical Moor" type of Negro made it the manifesto of the anti-slavery movement. The title page shows an African standing, as Clarkson said, in "the most earnest address to Heaven, in the course of which, with the fatal dagger in his hand, he breaks forth in the following words: 'To you this unpolluted blood I pour,/ To you that spirit, which ye gave, restore.'"[44] The Advertisement explains the circumstances of the writing of the poem:

> The following Poem was occasioned by an article of news which appeared last week in the London papers, intimating that "a Black, who a few days before, ran away from his master, and got himself christened, with intent to marry his fellow-servant, a white woman, being taken, and sent on board the Captain's ship [a West-Indiaman] in the Thames; took an opportunity of shooting himself through the head."[45]

Thus the poetic campaign was launched and a vast assortment of African woes was "fitted to the lyre."[46] This poem will bear rather close scrutiny since it set the pace for so much verse-writing to follow.

Day's hero breathes out his soul to his mistress, a woman of remarkable sensibilities, considering that she was but a serving-maid. The Negro describes the impact made upon him by this idealized white woman who is far removed from the shrewd, comic serving-maid whom we meet elsewhere. Social pressure, of course, forbade his aspiring to a white woman of higher birth, so the servant had to be highly sentimentalized to fill her romantic role. Interestingly enough, nothing is said of his colour in this connection, only of his captivity:[47]

> Yet when my fortune cast my lot with thine,
> And bade beneath one roof our labours join,
> Surpriz'd I felt the tumults of my breast
> Lull'd by thy beauties, and subside to rest. . . .

Plate 3

The title page from Thomas Day's and Joseph Bicknell's *The Dying Negro* (1775).

Huntington Library

THE

DYING NEGRO,

A

POEM.



The THIRD EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged

LONDON

Printed for W. FLEXNEY, opposite Gray's-Inn-Gate, Holborn; J. WILKIE, St. Paul's Church-Yard, and J. ROBSON, in New Bond-Street.

M.DCC.LXXV.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

While on thy languid eyes I fondly gaze,
And tremble while I meet their azure rays,
O mildest virgin, thou did'st not despise
The humble homage of a captive's sighs.
By heav'n abandon'd and by man betray'd,
Each hope resign'd of comfort or of aid,
Thy gen'rous love could every sorrow end,
In thee I found a mistress and a friend (14-15).

In keeping with Pope's argument in the Essay on Man that every being is suited to his rank in creation, the dying Negro wonders: "Why did I, slave, beyond my lot aspire?" He knows all too well what awaits him in the West Indies:

And better in th' untimely grave to rot,
The world and all it's cruelties forgot,
Than dragg'd once more beyond the Western main,
To groan beneath some dastard planter's chain,
Where my poor countrymen in bondage wait,
The long enfranchisement of ling'ring fate.
Oh! my heart sinks, my dying eyes o'erflow,
When mem'ry paints the picture of their woe!
For I have seen them, where the dawn of day,
Rouz'd by the last, go forth their cheerless way,
And while their souls with shame and anguish burn,
Salute with groans unwelcome morn's return,
And, chiding every hour the slow-pac'd sun
Pursue their toils, till all his race was run,
Without one hope--to mitigate their pain--
One distant hope, their freedom to regain;
Then like the dull unpitied brutes repair
To stalls more wretched, and to coarser fare,
Thank Heav'n, one day of misery was o'er,
And sink to sleep, and wish to wake no more. . . .
A slow-consuming death I will not wait,
But snatch at least one sullen boon from fate (4-6).

In the fifth stanza he denounces the men who, moved by "impious avarice and pride," have denied him the privileges of both manhood and Christianity. He declares the innate nobility of his race:

What tho' the sun in his meridian blaze
On their scorch'd bodies dart his fiercest rays?
What tho' no rosy tints adorn their face,
No silken ringlets shine with flowing grace?

> Yet of etherial temper are their souls,
> And in their veins the tide of honour rolls;
> And valour kindles there the hero's flame,
> Contempt of death, and thirst of martial fame.
> And pity melts the sympathizing breast,
> Ah! fatal virtue!--for the brave distrest (8).

In an Edenic African idyll[48] he recalls his life as a hunter by "the streams of Gambia" and then curses the winds and tides which bore him away to slavery. He and his warriors were duped and kidnapped by the machinations of the slave traders, who imposed upon their African hospitality for nine days, lured them onto the ships, and then drugged them into insensibility. The traders were smooth villains:

> I mark'd the leader of a warlike train.
> Unlike his features to our swarthy race.
> And golden hair play'd round his ruddy face.
> While with insidious smile and lifted hand,
> He . . . accosts our unsuspecting band (9-10).

As the moment of death now nears, the Negro realizes that he will "unreveng'd . . . [and] unpitied die," and he cries out to the "Christian God" and the "God of Nature," craving that revenge might be his. He curses the outgoing ship and prays: "Be their's the torment of a ling'ring fate,/ Slow as thy justice, dreadful as my hate." The first version of the poem concluded on this vindictive note, but in 1775 an edition dedicated to Jean Jacques Rousseau added a concluding stanza in which the Negro has a prophetic vision of the future. He sees that an immediate and personal revenge, such as the annihilation of his tormentors, can not be his. But he has a vision of a time when Discord and War prevail, when Commerce is destroyed, when "earth and heav'n the monstrous race disowns," and when the "stern genius" of Africa sweeps all to "one common ruin, one promiscuous grave." Looking forward to the messianic birth of a great avenger

of his race, the black asks "no lazy pleasures to possess,/ No long eternity of happiness"--only a spot on "that sacred shore, where souls are free, and men oppress no more!" (22-24).

"The Dying Negro" aroused immediate interest among scattered humanitarians who seemed only to be waiting for a rallying call. An unpublished poem addressed "To the Author of a Poem just published, entitled, The Dying Negro," by one poet who was really "turned on," lashed out at the West Indians with enthusiasm:

> May all the Curses, which thy youth implores,
> With speedy Ruin reach West-Indian Shoars!
> Oh! may the Negroes, with an iron Rod,
> Avenge the Cause of NATURE, and of GOD!
> May they in happy Combination rise,
> Torture their Doom, or Liberty their Prise;
> Rush with resistless Fury on their Foes,
> By one great Effort expiate Afric's woes;
> Eager each Mark of Slavery to efface,
> Of their male Tyrants murder all the Race. . . .[49]

Day's pattern of the suffering Negro's dying by suicide pointed back to Oroonoko, of course, but now it had an added dimension of domesticity. Now there was room in the genre not only for chieftains perishing in the backwash of slave revolt and shattered heroic love, but also for ordinary Negroes escaping woes of a private, common-place variety. The two types would overlap in varying degrees and with varying success. Most poets deemed both heroic and sentimental elements essential to the attractiveness of the suffering Negro.

William Cowper's contributions to abolition literature, though brief, were more numerous than those of Thomas Day. In spite of his attacks of insanity which prevented his being truly popular with the reformers of the day, Cowper wrote prolifically on a variety of humanitarian

subjects: the industrious poor, missionary activities, legal reforms, pacifism, kindness to animals, and, of course, slavery. He conceived of God as "working ever on a social plan/ By various ties attach[-ing] man to man."[50] For these endeavours he received wide attention in the reviews, and even the critic who was offended at the "coarseness" of his expression and the "enthusiastic intolerance" of his devotional passages, had to commend "the sterling weight and sense of his observations."[51]

Cowper's anti-slavery ballads were proof that he could desert Homer for humanitarianism. He was most prominent in 1788 when religion, philosophy and literature were all concentrating their forces in an effort to interest the reason and feelings of the public in the cause of abolition. His most highly successful propaganda pieces were written in the spring of that year.[52] In a letter to Samuel Rose on March 29 he said:

> If you hear ballads sung in the streets on the hardships of negroes in the islands, they are probably mine. I was lately applied to for assistance in that way by a society of gentlemen, enlisted in that laudable service. . . . The subject, as a subject for song, did not strike me much, but the application was from a quarter that might command me, and the occasion itself . . . offered pleas that were irresistable.[53]

"The Negro's Complaint" (1788) is Cowper's best known and most effective anti-slave poem, being a compact and more artistic rendering of Thomas Day's ideas. Printed on the finest paper, neatly folded, and superscribed A Subject for Conversation at the Tea Table,[54] it received an enormous circulation. It was set to music and then translated in visual terms in Josiah Wedgwood's cameo.[55] This slave medallion shows a chained Negro in a posture of piteous entreaty, encircled by the slogan "Am I not a man and a brother?"[56] Clarkson describes the uses of the cameo:

Plate 4

The Wedgwood Slave Medallion of 1787-1788.

Josiah Wedgwood & Sons, Ltd.

Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, England.

> He [Josiah Wedgwood] produced a beautiful cameo, of a less size, of which the ground was a most delicate white, but the Negro who was seen imploring compassion in the middle of it, was in his own native colour. . . . Some [men] had them inlaid in gold on the lid of their snuff-boxes. Of the ladies, several wore them in bracelets, and others had them fitted up in an ornamental manner as pins for their hair. At length, the taste for wearing them became general; and thus fashion, which usually confines itself to worthless things, was seen for once in the honourable office of promoting the cause of justice, humanity and freedom.[57]

The original issue of 1787 was unmarked with the Wedgwood trademark, for it was probably good business not to disturb slave-owning customers unduly. Who is to say after all that this fashionable ornament did not do as much as anything addressed to the intelligence to keep abolition fresh in mind!

A Subject for Conversation was prefaced by various reflections on freedom and slavery, drawn from Cowper's other writings:

> Nature imprints upon what'er we see,
> That has a heart and life in it, BE FREE.
> The BEASTS are chartered-neither age nor force,
> Can quell the love of freedom in the horse.
> Canst thou then, honour'd with a christian name
> Buy what is WOMAN-BORN, and feel no shame?
> Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
> EXPEDIENCE as a warrant for the deed? . . .
> He, from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
> Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
> Considers ALL injustice with a frown,
> But MARKS the man who treads his fellow down. . . .
> Remember, Heav'n has an avenging rod;
> To SMITE THE POOR IS TREASON AGAINST GOD.[58]

While Cowper's religious bent led to many scattered references on liberty, his vision of the Negro's plight, fostered by his reading of travel books, was broad and consisted of much more than just passing allusions:

> My soul is sick, with every day's report
> Of wrong and outrage with which earth is filled.

> There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
> It does not feel for man; the natural bond
> Of Brotherhood is severed as a flax
> That falls assunder at the touch of fire.
> He finds his fellow guilty of a skin
> Not colored like his own; and, having power
> To enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause
> Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey. . .
> And, worse than all, and most to be deplored,
> As Human nature's broadest, foulest blot,
> Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
> With stripes, that Mercy, with a bleeding heart,
> Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.
> Then what is man? And what man, seeing this,
> And having human feelings, does not blush,
> And hang his head, to think himself a man?
> I would not have a slave to till my ground,
> To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
> And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
> That sinews bought and sold have ever earned. . .
> I had much rather be myself the slave,
> And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.

He concludes the passage with the widely advertized sentiment concerning the uniqueness of English air:

> We have no slaves at home.--Then why abroad? . . .
> Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
> Receive our air, that moment they are free;
> They touch our country, and their shackles fall.[59]

"The Negro's Complaint" is the pièce de résistance in this abolition compendium.[60] The reader is asked to envision the slave "jaded with excessive fatigue," but lying awake in sleepless apprehension. He launches into a monologue which embraces most of the themes of the abolition movement: although the body is enslaved, the mind cannot be subjugated; sensibility exists within a black skin as well as a white; sugar is to be had only by the pains of slaves; planters are themselves slaves to gold, and God uses the forces of nature to demolish colonial settlements. Since this poem was exceedingly popular and was central to the literary campaign, it merits full citation here:

The Negro's Complaint

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there one who reigns on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means which duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers--Wild tornadoes,
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer--No.

By our blood in Afric wasted,
Ere our necks receiv'd the chain;
By the mis'ries we have tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main;
By our suff'rings since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart;
All sustain'd by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart:

Deem our nation brutes no longer
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

In the same year, 1788, Cowper wrote a lively trio of anti-slavery poems. "The Morning Dream"[61] features the familiar personification of

Liberty sailing a slave ship to "a slave-cultur'd island" to do battle, in a rather Spenserian manner, with the monster Oppression, who with "a scourge hung with lashes . . . stood looking out for his prey/ From Africa's sorrowful shore" (11, 28-32). To Cowper this "dream-vision" presages Britain's freeing of her slaves. During the same week, he wrote "Sweet Meat has Sour Sauce; or, the Slave-Trader in the Dumps."[62] This ludicrous ballad is an ironic portrayal of a downcast slave trader who must sell his stock of "dainty regales." These consist of chains, padlocks, screws, and a "notable engine" which will open the Negro's jaws when he refuses to eat. To the lilting refrain, "Which nobody can deny, &c," the trader laments giving up an art which he has mastered with such care. The third poem is "Pity for Poor Africans."[63] It shows that few Englishmen can give up rum and sugar, even though they are moved by the slaves' "hardships . . . tortures, and groans." It also satirizes the common excuse that if England abolished the slave trade the rest of Europe would continue it. In other words, nothing would then accrue but a loss of commerce. Cowper uses the analogy of a boy who is urged by his companions to assist in robbing a poor neighbour's orchard. At first he tries to dissuade his companions, but seeing that his arguments had no effect and that his refusal to assist would not benefit the neighbour he finally joins in the robbery. The poet has a fine scorn for those who "shar'd the plunder, but pitied the man" (11. 21-44). Although Cowper's direct literary connection with the abolition movement was limited to a few months in 1788, the general tenor of his work amply proves his commitment to humanitarianism. But like other would-be reformers he was eventually disgusted by the unseemly enthusiasm of the propaganda campaign.

Hannah More is typical of the many followers of Cowper who began to write even before he left the field. Her lengthy Slavery: A Poem (1788)[64] is hastily done in weak verse. It opens with a conventional invocation to Liberty and secondarily to Southerne, "whose impassion'd refrain/ So oft has wak'd my languid Muse in vain!" (3):

> No individual griefs my bosom melt,
> For millions feel what Oroonoko felt:
> Fir'd by no single wrongs, the countless host
> I mourn, by rapine dragg'd from Afric's coast (4).

Miss More's Muse must have been far more sensitive than Southerne's, for certainly he was no abolitionist, and she has at last extended the range of sympathy from Oroonoko alone to the "millions." In the main, however, the poem merely demonstrates that Cowper had already covered the field rather fully. Some of her tenets are: the physical horrors of the slave trade; slavery brings about the degeneration of commerce; the "white savage" will be punished by God; the Negro race is not inhuman; and slavery in a land of liberty is inconsistent.

Robert Southey was respectable both in life and literary achievement, yet he failed to be either a great poet or a leader of opinion. Nevertheless, of all the Lake poets this obscure Bristol rhymester figures most largely in the pages of English journals and reviews. He was a consistent humanitarian and felt in himself the sufferings of others in a way which perhaps only Shelley came near sharing.[65] Although he sought reforms in a variety of areas (the army, prisons, and workhouses), the Negro cause was of particular concern to him. He gave the subject more extended comment than did most of his contemporaries, and his Poems Concerning the Slave Trade, which he wrote from Bristol in 1794, summarized the major motifs of abolition poetry.

In "The Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo" Southey digresses on a contrast between Africa, "to error, wretchedness and crimes resign'd," and Europe with her "barbarous dream of empire." The situation in the West Indies demonstrates "Europe's lasting shame" and the scene concludes with tributes to Wilberforce and Clarkson. "Verses . . . upon the Installation of Lord Grenville" (1810) was an occasional piece warning England of the retribution which must come and concluding with another spate of personal tributes to the abolitionists. Southey achieves a refreshing irony not unlike Cowper's in "The Dancing Bear, Recommended to the Advocates for the Slave Trade" (1799). He compares the fate of the Negro slave to that of a bear forced by his master to dance clumsily for the merriment of a callous crowd. Then politicians advise the bear on how to alleviate his anguish. They use some of the most cogent arguments of the English pro-slavery factions:

> . . . Thou art here
> Far happier than thy brother Bears who roam
> O'er trackless snow for food; . . . being born
> Inferior to thy leader, unto him
> Rightly belongs dominion. . . . Besides
> 'Tis wholesome for thy morals to be brought
> From savage climes into a civilized state, . . .
> Bear, Bear! it passes in the Parliament
> For excellent logic, this!

The broad humanitarianism of Wordsworth focused rather fleetingly on the Negro problem.[66] Conscious of the social problems inherent in commerce, he condemns the duplicity of England's attitude to slavery:

> Shall man assume a property in man? . . .
> Shame that our laws at distance still protect
> Enormities, which they at home reject!
> 'Slaves cannot breathe in England' -- yet that boast
> Is but a mockery! when from coast to coast,
> Though fettered slave be none, her floors and soil
> Groan underneath a weight of slavish toil.
> . . . A thirst so keen

Is ever urging on the vast machine
Of sleepless Labour.[67]

Wordsworth did not subscribe to Rousseau's doctrine of the "innocent savage" uncorrupted by the vices and artificialities of civilization, and this fact dimmed his vision of suffering African princes. Instead, his reading of the travel books led him to a more realistic account of "Primeval Nature's Child."[68] The Solitary of The Excursion finds a crude savage on the banks of the Mississippi:

> . . . That pure archetype of human greatness,
> I found him not. There, in his stead, appeared
> A creature, squalid, vengeful, and impure;
> Remorseless, and submissive to no law
> But superstitious fear, and abject sloth (III, 11. 950-954).

When the French Revolution manifestly failed to meet his expectations and as his vision of humanity came into clearer focus, Wordsworth turned more directly to anti-slavery interests, but his involvement was still cautious and gradual. Returning to England as a "patriot of the world," he found the country astir with anti-slavery agitation:

> . . . I found
> The general air still busy with the stir
> Of that first memorable onset made
> By a strong levy of humanity
> Upon the traffickers in Negro blood;
> Effort which, though defeated, had recalled
> To notice old forgotten principles (Prelude, X, 245-251).

At the time, however, he found it difficult to identify personally with the "novel heat of virtuous feeling" spreading through the nation:

> . . . For myself, I own
> That this particular strife had wanted power
> To rivet affections; nor did now
> Its unsuccessful issue much excite
> My sorrow; for I brought with me the faith
> That, if France prospered good men would not long
> Pay fruitless worship to humanity,

> And this most rotten branch of human shame,
> Object, so seemed it, of superfluous pains,
> Would fall together with its parent tree.[69]

While the social-verse writers around him were violetly exercising public feeling over the physical misfortunes of the West Indian Negroes, Wordsworth was tuned "to the still sad music of humanity" at another pitch, for he conceived of an inner and universal slavery.[70] Later in life Wordsworth lost faith in cultural progress through political revolutions; reforms had to begin in men's hearts and, to end cruelty, the cruel had to be converted. As he grew increasingly cool to the agitation, some of his friends mistook his later conservatism for recantation of his humanitarian views.[71] Yet, he never ceased to speak in terms of freedom, liberty, and man's "unconquerable mind." One could wish, of course, that Wordsworth had expressed his sentiments more freely, for then he would certainly have given us poetic flights equal or superior to anything done by his contemporaries.

Like Thomas Clarkson, Samuel Coleridge won a prize at Cambridge with an anti-slavery poem, "Greek Prize Ode on the Slave Trade" (1792).[72] Two years later he, Southey and Lovell conceived a plan for founding the ideal commonwealth, Pantisocracy, on the banks of the Susquehanna. The Young idealists gave lectures to raise money for the project. At least one of the orations was against the slave trade and bore an interesting prospectus:

> Tomorrow evening, June 16th, 1795, S. T. Coleridge, will deliver, (By particular desire), a lecture on the Slave Trade, and the duties that result from its continuance. To begin at eight o'clock, at the Assembly Coffee House, on the Quay. Admission One Shilling.[73]

France also moved Coleridge to eulogize freedom. The original version of "France: An Ode" (1798) contained a stanza on the African Slave Trade and the corrupt attitudes of British officialdom.[74] In the same year "Fears in Solitude" appeared, condemning slavery and denouncing the "vain, speech-mouthing, speech-reporting" habits of the English government while it continued to barter "freedom and the poor man's life for gold" on a market:

> From east to west
> A groan of accusation pierces Heaven!
> The wretched plead against us; multitudes
> Countless and vehement, the sons of God,
> Our brethren! Like a cloud that travels on,
> Steamed up from Cairo's swamps of pestilence,
> Even so, my countrymen! have we gone forth
> And borne to distant tribes slavery and pangs,
> And, deadlier far, our vices, whose deep taint
> With slow perdition murders the whole man,
> His body and his soul![75]

Invoking the "God of Nature" in "Ode to the Departing Year" (1796), Coleridge enumerates a catalogue of evils, climaxing the list with "Afric's wrongs, Strange, horrible, and foul!" Then, with a second glance at Parliament,[76] he concludes:

> . . . What deep guilt belongs
> To the deaf Synod, 'full of gifts and lies'" (ll. 80-102).

In time Coleridge lost the zeal with which he hailed "The Morning that struggles into Day,/ And Slavery's spectres shriek and vanish from the ray!"[77] and the abstemiousness with which he refrained from using sugar began to wane after the turn of the century. He came to the conclusion that the problem of politics was not to free men but to discipline them. To this end he abandoned democracy and its trappings. By 1811 he was mocking the "philanthropy trade" and criticizing Wilberforce

and Clarkson. Before Emancipation was complete he had wholly withdrawn from the movement.

For Byron the "soil-bound slaves,/ Who dig no land for tyrants but their graves" were symbolic of all kinds of oppression. Most of his slave scenes center in Mediterranean ports like the one in Don Juan (1818) where a group of Georgian, Russian, and Circassian slaves were "brought up for different purposes and passions." The day ended with the sale of "Twelve negresses from Nubia who brought a price/ Which the West Indian market scarce could bring" (IV, xcv). The poet contrasts Wilberforce, who "set free/ The Negroes, and is worth a million fighters," with Wellington, who "but enslaved the Whites" (XII, xx). He apostrophizes the great abolitionist, but because he is weary with the constant airing of the West India Question Byron gives the stanza a facetious ending:

> O Wilberforce! thou man of black renown,
> Whose merit none enough can sing or say,
> Thou hast struck one immense Colossus down,
> Thou moral Washington of Africa!
> But there's another little thing, I own,
> Which you should perpetrate some summer's day,
> And set the other half of earth to rights;
> You have freed the blacks--now pray shut up the whites
> (XIV, lxxxii).

Nevertheless, Byron's devotion to abolition cannot be denied. In "Detached Thoughts," a tirade against political slavery, he throws in a homely but heartfelt comment on Negro slavery:

> But there is no freedom even for masters, in the midst of slaves. It makes my blood boil to see the thing. I sometimes wish that I was the owner of Africa, to do at once what Wilberforce will do in time, viz., sweep slavery from her deserts, and look upon their first dance of their freedom.[78]

From this brief survey of humanitarianism among British romantic poets

three conclusions may be drawn. First, the major romantic writers all wrote extensively on liberty and slavery, but they treated the general principles without making many specific applications to the West Indian situation. The references of Negro slavery seem to be only reflections of the agitation of the times and are perhaps little more than an acquiescence to public concern. Nowhere among them is a "dying Negro" to be found, Oroonokoan or otherwise. It is to be regretted that no truly great romantic poem in either English or American literature celebrated the Negro cause.

Second, the abolition work of Day, Cowper and Southey was of significant topical importance, even though it was ephemeral from a literary standpoint. The sufferings of their dying slaves and their magnifying of the horrors of the slave trade no doubt had more influence on public opinion than all the wisdom of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley together on the subject. These men may be forgiven, however, for their disinclination to mingle with the vast unwashed multitudes who were vociferating loudly on West Indian themes. The aura of fanaticism and hysteria attending the movement was bound to repel most of England's major romantic poets who were basically introverted anyway. The poetry of the Indies then is fragmented and of a transitory nature. Still, it is a colourful, though minor, tributary of the stream of romantic sensibility.

C. Occasional Verse

Several of the poetic effusions relating to the West Indies were sparked by the major political events in the history of the abolition movement. The first was the organization of the Abolition Society in 1787, and the second was the passing of the Slave Trade Bill in 1807. Between these two dates there was a considerable amount of literary activity deploring the backwardness of laggard parliamentarians and expressing faith in Wilberforce during the time when his bill for abolition was being repeatedly rejected. The third event, of course, was the passing of the Emancipation Act in 1833. The apprenticeship period of the 1830's seems to have been of little concern to humanitarian poets who had by that time exhausted not only their own ingenuity but also the patience of the public.

(1) Organization of the Abolition Society (1787)

The organization of the Abolition Society inspired poems from two zealous but scarcely socially-equal citizens of Liverpool. They were William Roscoe, M. P. and banker, and Edward Rushton, sometime tavern-keeper and bookseller. As a realist Roscoe daily handled the affairs of townspeople whose wealth was founded upon slave trading, privateering, and smuggling. Then as an idealist he risked his livelihood and personal safety by championing the slave cause. His poetry cannot be viewed as the work of a man even moderately great, but it has value as a social document, above literary merit, and it is a crucial part of a great period in Liverpool history. He presented his poem "The Wrongs of Africa" (1787) to the Society just three weeks after its founding.[79] It met with immediate suc-

cess and the proceeds went into the abolition campaign. The poem's apostrophes, abstractions, and turgid language make it dreary reading, and its imagery is largely classical. Like most didactic poetry, it fails to be genuinely moving. Roscoe professes to invoke the Muse of Humanity rather than Sensibility:

> . . . [Sensibility sits] with watry eye
> Dropping over fancied woes her useless tear.
> Come though and weep with me substantial ills
> And execrate the wrongs . . . of Afric's sons (25).

He alternates between sallies against slave-traders and planters. Then he sandwiches in stories of Noble Negroes preserving their freedom by suicide, pictures of idyllic Africa, and refutations of pro-slavery arguments. In 1788 Roscoe and his friend Dr. James Currie, who had written the preface to "The Wrongs of Africa," brought out a popular ballad entitled "The African."[80] In it the hero Maraton, aboard the slave ship, mourns for his Adela. He recalls the suddenness with which the "man-hunter" sprang from the thicket and dragged him to the ship off the coast of Angola, "deaf to the shrieks of despair." He sees a vision of the murdered Adela gliding over the ocean and calling him to the grave. By jumping overboard and going to "the realms of the brave " he thwarts the white man's purposes.

Edward Rushton was also early in the abolition arena when he provided Thomas Clarkson with data from his slave-trading town and thereby earned the enmity of his neighbours. His West-Indian Eclogues (1787) were another poetic response to the Abolition Society. Although they are of comparatively slight literary merit, they are interesting because they bear the marks of Rushton's personal, first-hand experience in the West

Indies. A memoir describes one of the widely publicized episodes of his life. It is said that Rushton never told this story "without dropping a tear to the memory of Quamina":

> In one of his voyages to the West Indies, he had contracted an acquaintance with a black man, of the name of Quamina, whom he kindly taught to read. On some occasion he was dispatched to the shore with a boat's crew, of which Quamina was one. On its return to the ship, the boat was upset in the surf, and the sailors were soon swept by the billows from the keel, to which, in the first confusion, they had all adhered. In this extremity, Rushton swam towards a small water cask, which he saw floating at a distance. Quamina had gained this point of safety before him: and when the generous Negro saw that his friend was too much exhausted to reach the cask, he pushed it towards him--bade him good-bye,--and sank to rise no more.[81]

This story, of course, served the cause of Negro nobility admirably while it recommended benevolence to the white man. The tale was retold during the emancipation struggle of 1833 as evidence of the slaves' spiritual potentialities. An anonymous balladeer then capitalized on the sentimental possibilities of the situation:

> What groan is heard?--Yon white man see,
> --The humble negro's friend,
> Is faintly struggling on the lee,
> And sinking to his end.--
> "Haste--haste--and seize this buoyant cask,
> Quamina well can swim: . . .
> [But] he sank--the ooze of Ocean's bed
> Became Quamina's bier;
> But oft for him one white man shed
> Remembering pity's tear.[82]

Each of Rushton's four West Indian Eclogues is divided rather arbitrarily into two parts--the pastoral and the propagandistic.[83] The first opens with a description of a Jamaican sunrise:

> The Eastern clouds declare the coming day
> The din of reptiles slowly dies away
> The mountain-tops just glimmer on the eye
> And from their bulky sides the breezes fly

> The Ocean's margin beats the varied strand,
> Its hoarse, deep, murmurs reach the distant land (I).

Although much of Rushton's natural scenery is presented in eighteenth-century clichés, touches of realism still remain which could be supplied only from a personal acquaintance with the islands. Much "pseudo-plantation" verse, for instance, is marked by such conventions as the "plaintain groves," the shell horn which calls the slaves to labour, the fierceness of the noon-day heat, and the hurricanes. But Rushton has caught the insect-chorus of Caribbean nights, "the din of reptiles," and the daily shift of on- and off-shore winds. Into this scene come two slaves on their way to the cane field, one of them bearing the marks of lashing. They represent the two basic types of literary Negro: Jumba, the heroic African warrior; and Adoma, the gentle, domestic type who can adjust to servitude. Their rather convincing conversation enumerates the gross injustices and physical atrocities which have been perpetrated on the plantation. Jumba vows by his Guinea gods that he will gain revenge before he dies of his "festering gashes," and he urges Adoma to contemplate the satisfactions of rebellion and vengeance:

> Oh! 'twill be pleasant when we see them mourn,
> See the fell cup to their own lip return,
> View <u>their</u> pale faces prostrate on the ground,
> Their meagre bodies gape with many a wound;
> View with delight each agonizing grin,
> When melted wax is dropp'd upon <u>their</u> skin: . . . (5).

The second <u>Eclogue</u> portrays a tropical night scene, again with realistic detail. We note, for instance, the characteristic West Indian fear which attributes pestilence to the "night air." It is also notable that some thirteen years of blindness had made Rushton more sensitive to sound than to sight, and in his recollections of Jamaica, appeals to hearing predominate:

> The twinkling Orbs which pierce the gloom of night
> Now shine with more than European light.
> Slow from the vap'ury mountains comes the breeze,
> And on it's dewy wings sits pale disease,
> Rising from distant reefs and rocky shores,
> Where vex'd with recent gales old Ocean roars;
> Now up the slopes where spirit canes appear,
> A faint unvaried din assails the ear.
> The lurking reptiles now begin their rounds,
> And fill the air with shrill discordant sounds,
> And now with varied hum in search of prey,
> Unnumber'd insects wheel their airy way;
> There glowing fire that ["firefly," a species of beetle]
> seems borne upon the wing,
> And here the keen Mosquito darts his sting (7).

Jumba and Adoma resume their debate on the possibility of insurrection. The latter seeks some more practical, commonsense way out because he recalls too vividly the sufferings of the rebel Pedro who had been gibbetted alive and survived for six days. Jumba scorns his reluctance:

> Go, like a dog, and lick the white men's feet . . .
> Go, meanly bend,
> Court the pale butchers and betray thy friend (9).

Adoma protests his loyalty and declares that he does not fear death by drowning, or by the knife, cord, or bullet. He does not even fear the dread "manchineal,"[84] but he cannot face a lingering torture and ignominy like Pedro's. He suggests fleeing to the mountains where a near-African paradise might be enjoyed--"where wild hogs dwell, where lofty Cocoas grow,/ And boiling streams of purest waters flow." Jumba reminds him that the Maroons, committed to catching runaways, are there and that death is the only real escape. As the distraught Adoma turns into his hut where his woman prepares his rice, Jumba goes on in a flourish of heroism, determined not to die meekly.

Eclogue III is set at the midday hour, when "sable friends" may rest "beneath a Tam-rind's cool retreat." Despite the cloying effects of

poetic diction, Rushton manages to capture some of the stark brilliance of tropical noon in another detailed picture of Jamaica. His conventional "feather'd race" is made up of such local residents as the humming birds, the "useful Vultures" (now more familiarly known as John Crows), and pelicans. Other local colour features of the natural scene are the "speckled Lizards," "variegated flies," and the oxen-drawn wagons of sugar-cane:

> Now downward darts the fierce meridian ray,
> And nature pants amid'st the blaze of day,
> Though pitying Ocean, to her suff'rings kind,
> Fans her warm bosom with his eastern wind.
> Now the huge mountains charm the roving eye,
> Their verdant summits tow'ring to the sky.
> The cultur'd hill, the vale, the spreading plain,
> The distant sea worn beach, the ruffled main,
> The anchoring Bark o'erspread with awnings white,
> All now appear in robes of dazzling light.
> The feather'd race their gaudy plumes display,
> And sport, and flutter, 'midst the glowing day.
> The long bill'd, humming trives now hover round, [humming birds]
> And shew their tints where blossoms most abound.
> With eyes intent on earth, well pois'd in air,
> Now useful Vultures seek their fated fare,
> Where curls the wave, the Pelican on high,
> With beak enormous, and with piercing eye,
> If chance he sees a watry tenant rise,
> Now headlong drops and bears away his prize.
> Now variegated flies their pinions spread;
> And speckled Lizards start at ev'ry tread.
> Now oxen to the shore in pond'rous wains,
> Drag the rich produce of the juicy canes.
> Now wearied Negroes to their sheds repair,
> Or spreading tree, to take their scanty fare:
> Whose hour expir'd, the shell is heard to blow,
> And the sad tribe resume their daily woe (13-14).

Another pair of slaves appears in this scene. Congo is congenitally lazy. He recalls pseudo-Africa where he used to rest continually under the trees, surrounded by naked offspring and numerous capable wives. There he could watch the "Yams shoot up, and Cocoas lift their heads" without any of the onerous labours of cultivation. The more sensitive

Quamina (namesake of Rushton's real-life Negro friend), reports that Jumba's seditious speech of the previous day had been overheard and that he had been counted among "the morning's dead." Then he recites the case of Angola, an aged slave who had been flogged to death for having broken a water pot when he stumbled on the path up from the stream. The Negroes conclude by enjoining every possible curse upon "this pallid race." The slave-conversations are almost wholly devoid of any individuality in that they follow the conventional lines of abolition poetry. Propagandistic intent is obvious.

The last Eclogue opens with a midnight storm of near-hurricane proportions:

> With dreadful darkness, now the Isle is crown'd
> And the fierce northern tempest Howl'd around
> Loud roars the surf; the rocks return the roar,
> And liquid fire seems bursting on the shore.
> Swift darts the light'ning in fantastic guise,
> And bellowing thunder rolls along the skies.
> Convuls'd, the big black clouds drop sheets of rain, (20).

At this dread hour the lone Negro Loango mourns his absent love Quamva in a burst of savage eloquence. Having waited for her for three nights, he now works himself into a Byronic rage. He fears, indeed, he knows, that even now "the pale-fac'd villain," the slave driver, "riots on her charms." Driven by the force of thwarted personal love, he surpasses the merely heroic Jumba and becomes an Oroonokoan figure. He invokes the tempest to its disciplinary task as he commands the spirits of the air:

> Assemble all your winds, direct their flight,
> And hurl destruction on each cruel White:--
> Sweep canes, and mills, and houses to the ground,
> And scatter ruin, pain, and death around:--
> Reuse all your blasting fires, that lurk on high,
> And, 'midst his pleasures, let the plund'rer die!

Suddenly Loango is seized with the conviction "that woman's mind,/ Still changes like the Hurricane's fierce wind,/ Ranging from man to man." Perhaps Quamva is <u>enjoying</u> the blandishments of the white man and is now overcome with Creole grandeur:

> How if she like the White, his gaudy cloaths,
> His downy bed for pleasure and repose;
> His shrivel'd frame, his sickly pallid face;
> And finds a transport in his weak embrace.
> It may be so.--Oh! vengeance on her head,
> It is, it is:--She likes the Driver's bed.
> For this she stays (22).

Loango distractedly prays that snakes and centipedes may invade their sleep, for his love has rejected his mat upon the floor, his yam, and his plantain for the driver's luxuries. Even recollections of past joys with Quamva cannot counteract present bitterness, and to him their love becomes like the poisonous manchineel apple:

> . . . How beauteous to the sight,
> But ah! how deadly to the appetite!
> Such woman is, that loveliest of ills.

Now with the determination of an Othello, Loango decides to destroy the pair. He must die too, of course, for his honour will not permit him to endure "the white men's gibbeting alive,/ Their wiry tortures, and their ling'ring fires." In this final act of commitment as he approaches the driver's house he catches a vision of the waiting shores of Africa which will receive his spirit:

> Come, then, revenge!--the Deed will soon be o'er,
> And then Loango views his native shore. . .
> Come pointed blade;--the Tyrant's house is nigh:--
> And now for vengeance, death, and liberty!--

The next morning "beheld the mangled dead," and the spectacle is complete. Rushton took the precaution, however, of having only a <u>driver</u>, not a <u>planter</u>,

murdered. In this respect he observed a stage convention which supplied an overseer or bookkeeper to bear most of the major sins and punishments of white colonials.

In his Eclogues Rushton attempted to bring together two contrary views of the sugar colonies as the site for the worst horrors of slavery, and then as the home of picturesque landscapes. To achieve the first, he portrays an assortment of Negroes of both the first and second types. They either recount plantation atrocities or are the victims of them. The heroic and wronged Loango achieves, albeit on a small scale, the aspirations of nearly all the Negroes. But he does so without upsetting the rationale which called for white Creole supremacy. Rushton explains in a footnote that Loango's decision to kill both Quamva and the driver grew from "the desire of revenge [which] is an impetuous, a ruling passion, in the minds of these African slaves." This opinion is contrary to the abolitionist dogma that the suffering Negro (Type 2) is not vengeful. For his second purpose, Rushton takes up the natural descriptions inaugurated by Grainger (See Chapter III). Needless to say, the marriage of the two modes is not a particularly compatible one, except in the last Eclogue where the storm coincides with the climax of Loango's fury. It will be shown that until the fires of abolition burned low only the "sublime" elements of the West Indian scene (hurricanes, earthquakes and pestilences) were of use to the poets. The beautiful and the picturesque could not truly come into their own until the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century.

(2) Abolition of the Slave Trade (1808)

Wilberforce's Abolition Bill spent several years in the grist-mill of Parliament. Its rejection in April, 1791, disheartened many humanitarians. Mrs. Barbauld in her poem On the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade, 1791 voices futility and even resignation to the evil:

> The Muse too, soon awaked, with ready tongue
> At Mercy's shrine applausive peans rung;
> And Freedom's eager sons in vain foretold
> A new Astrean reign, an age of gold.

She carefully analyzes the forces which have thwarted the measure and have thus become the "seasoned tools of Avarice:"

> Each flimsy sophistry by turns they try;
> The plausive argument, the daring lie,
> The artful gloss, that moral sense confounds,
> Th' acknowledged thirst for gain. . . .
> . . . th' unfeeling sneer,
> Which sudden turns to stone the falling tear. . . .

She deplores the fact that even "in Britain's senate, Misery's pangs give birth/ To jests unseemly, and to horrid mirth." The central part of the poem is taken up with a harsh delineation of the character of Creoles and all of the painful, non-pastoral elements of the West Indian landscape. The work concludes with a tribute to Wilberforce who, "untir'd . . . in labour, and unmov'd . . . by scorn," remains heroic. His merit stands, "no greater and no less,/ Without, or with the varnish of success." The guilt lies with the British nation.

Also apropos of the Bill, an anonymous author published An Elegy, Occasioned by the Rejection of Mr. Wilberforce's Motion for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade.[85] He apologizes for his fervor in the matter and admits that while "the elegy cannot lay claim to information" he hopes

that it will supply "some small degree of entertainment." He describes the disappointment:

> The awful hour of anxious hope is o'er,
> And all the fond delusive prospects flee;
> My glowing fancy now shall paint no more
> Virtue restor'd, and the sun-burnt Afric free.
>
> Still shall our brethren of the darker dye
> Be torn from parents, friends, and native shore!
> Still shall their starting eyes the tears supply,
> Till the parch'd brain refuse the humid store.

The rest of the poem is taken up with a compliment to Wilberforce, a censure of the majority in the House of Commons, the speech of an aged Negro pleading for abolition of the trade only (not emancipation) and a denunciation of slave traders.

James Boswell's No Abolition of Slavery; or, the Universal Empire of Love: A Poem (1791) was also evoked by the 1791 discussion and ultimate rejection of the Wilberforce bill. It certainly was not an elegy of the event. Slavery, like the American Revolution, was an issue on which Boswell was directly and valiantly opposed to Dr. Johnson. He records Johnson's "Argument on the Cause of Joseph Knight, A Negro; who claimed and obtained his Freedom in Scotland, 1777.[86] Although he relayed the doctor's argument fairly on "this particular case wherein he was in the right," he remained unchanged in his own pro-slavery opinions.[87] Boswell also describes what must have been a rather entertaining occasion at Oxford when Dr. Johnson "in the company of some very grave men," drank a toast "to the next insurrection of the Negroes in the West Indies.[88] For some unexplained reason, however, Boswell was present at the founding dinner for the Anti-Slavery Society on May 22, 1787.[89]

In spite of the fact that some critics tend to dismiss No Abolition

of Slavery as a product of a senile mind, it seems to represent Boswell's settled opinion on the subject. It was published anonymously, but the Boswellian authorship seems to have been generally understood from the start. The poem as a whole is "Addressed to Miss _____ most pleasing of . . . [her] sex" and is dedicated to "the respectable body of West-India Planters and Merchants." It appears to have originally been simply an attack upon the Abolition Bill, but Boswell, wishing to address some lady, compares actual slavery to the subjection of love:

> Pernicious as th' effect would be,
> T' abolish negro slavery,
> Such partial freedom would be vain,
> Since Love's strong empire must remain.[90]

The far-fetched combination of a love letter and a political pamphlet has, of course, a decidedly incongruous effect. Boswell recommends that if the "noodles who rave for abolition" are offended by this poem, they should try to put themselves in the place of those whose estates are threatened. The description of Wilberforce may be taken as an example of his insults of the abolitionists:

> Go, W_____, with a narrow scull,
> Go home, and preach away at Hull,
> No longer to the Senate cackle
> In strains which suit the Tabernacle;
> I hate your little wittling sneer,
> Your pert and self-sufficient leer,
> Mischief to Trade sits on thy lip,
> Insects will gnaw the noblest ship;
> Go, W_____, be gone, for shame,
> Thou dwarf, with a big-sounding name (8).

He next characterizes the conduct of the Ministers in the matter, counselling Pitt on the guiding of "Britannia's ship" through the crisis (14). He ends his political digression with:

> Where have I wander'd? do I dream?
> Sure slaves of power are not my theme;
> But honest slaves, the sons of toil,
> Who cultivate the Planter's soil (17).

Still he does not tarry long with Negroes; he turns to the wretches on London streets, the chimney sweeps and the beggars who share half-eaten bones with the dogs. The poem concludes with a return to the analogy of love and slavery, as the poet craves the joy of labouring in the sun of the bright eyes of his mistress.

The impassioned language of Robert Southey's sequence of six sonnets on the slave trade (1794) was intended to influence the deliberations of Parliament on the Wilberforce Bill. The first describes the ruin of Africa where gorged vultures eating on the plains and the waters of the Niger carrying other bodies to sea for the "ravenous shark['s] . . . banquet." The poet calls to Africa to "repel . . . with fire and sword" the "godless crew" from the treacherous slave ship and to resist "Avarice, the white, cadaverous fiend." The second sonnet presents "the laden vessel" sailing in a fair breeze to the "clamors of the exulting crew" and the shrieks of the Negroes. It ends with a prayer to "the God of justice" that He may

> Whelm that cursed bark beneath the mountain-wave,
> And bless with liberty and death the Slave!

In Sonnet III we reach the West Indian plantations where the worn Negro lies in the "scorching sun" under the "mangling scourge" of the "inhuman driver." The fourth describes the "o'erwearied Slave" who, while "unrelenting owners sleep," wakes to weep--though he has maintained a stoical calm all day. He thus assumes a duo-character, embodying the heroic Negro and the sentimental Negro at the same time. He remembers past joys,

especially his African lover left on Niger's shore. Sonnet V brings insurrection, the inevitable result of so much physical and mental suffering. The last poem describes the ghastly punishment of the rebel slave. To the members of Parliament "who weigh with politic care/ The gain against the guilt," the poet says:

> . . . Beyond the grave
> There is another world: bear ye in mind,
> Ere your decree proclaims to all mankind
> The gain is worth the guilt, that there the Slave,
> Before the Eternal, "thunder-tongued shall plead
> Against the deep damnation of your deed."

James Grahame assumed the stance of the scornful Scotsman in his vigorous condemnation of another rejection of Wilberforce's bill in 1795:

> Of all thy foreign crimes, from pole to pole,
> None moves such indignation in my soul,
> Such hate, such deep abhorrence, as thy trade
> In human beings!

He describes the ghastliness of the slave ship, and then, carefully dissociating himself from the crime, he cries:

> "Yes, yes" your Commons said, "Let such things be,
> If OTHERS rob and murder, why not WE"?
> In the smoothed speech, and in the upraised hand,
> I hear the lash, I hear the fierce command;
> Each guilty nay ten thousand crimes decreed,
> And English mercy said, Let millions bleed."[91]

In the same year Southey wrote his "To the Genius of Africa" (1795). He appealed to the Genius not only "to brood/ Stern o'er the desert solitude,/ Where seas of sand heave their hot surges high," but also to heed the cries of the wretched mother when "the traders tear/ The suffering infant from her breast," and to visit "those cabins of despair;/ By the scourges blackened o'er,/ And stiff and hard with human gore." The poet is comforted that "avenging hurricanes" have had their way.

In the 1790's, after the French Revolution, poetic fervour declined. Occasional poets found fresh and more exciting themes, and the Muse of anti-slavery was chilled by long parliamentary indifference, an indisposition from which she never fully recovered. When the Abolition Bill did actually pass in 1807, it received comparatively modest literary acclamation. The most notable work was a deluxe commemorative volume commissioned by the publisher Bowyer, entitled Poems on the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1809) and edited by James Montgomery.[92] Montgomery was a minor romantic voice and the son of Moravian missionaries in Barbados. He was fully aware of the artistic difficulties in using "a subject which had become antiquated by frequent, minute, and disgusting exposure; . . . concerning which public feeling had been wearied into insensibility during twenty-three years of almost incessant discussion."[93] His poem The West Indies opens with an optimistic half-truth: "Thy chains are broken, Africa, be free!" Then it proceeds in heroic couplets through more than 1,100 lines, sketching the history of the islands, the advent of slavery, the misery of blacks, the callousness of Creoles, the work of missionaries and abolitionists, and finally forecasting the beginning of an era of general understanding and happiness for all. Bowyer's assignment appealed not only to Montgomery's philanthropic enthusiasm, which was his strength, but also to his own touching associations with the West Indies.[94] In his descriptive passages Montgomery was necessarily indebted to books rather than to his own observations. Even though his writing is more rhetoric than poetry, it still constitutes a well-conceived appeal to public sentiment.

James Grahame authored the second poem in Bowyer's collection, "Africa Delivered" in which he utilized most of the clichés of abolition

poetry. Numerous footnotes from Pinkard's Notes and Wilberforce's Letter on the Abolition of the Slave Trade document the atrocities which Grahame enumerates. The fourth section of the poem envisions the restoration of Africa's human rights and the emancipation of her spiritual and intellectual powers. The conclusion is made up of tributes to the great abolitionists. The writer of the third piece, A Poem, Occasioned by the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1806, was Elizabeth Benger, an enthusiastic bluestocking who struggled up from the trades-class to the literary circle of Mrs. Barbauld and Mrs. Inchbald. Her 850-line poem which invokes Granville Sharpe, the "Negro's advocate," is an attempt to show that the original superiority of the British character derived from the "purity and equity of its laws" and that slavery is incompatible with those laws.

Roscoe had celebrated the founding of the Abolition Society, so it was fitting that he should also speak on the occasion of the organization's first triumph. In his "Ode to May" he portrays the Genius of Britain seated on her "frowning shore," watching with joy as the merchant ships return to "pour at her seawash'd feet the Afric gold." Her joy is quickly abated when the spirits of Russell and Sidney pass, and she discovers that "the glitt'ring ore" is actually an "alloy of blood":

> Her cheeks were blanch'd with fear, and burnt with shame,
> Her eyes that spoke delight were turn'd to weep.
> With sterner voice she call'd on freedom's name,
> And wash'd her red hands in the oblivious deep! (99).

With "slavery's toiling reign" now concluded, Africa can rejoice:

> Afric hears the British voice,
> And her thousand realms rejoice!
> The sable myriads that abide
> By Niger's deep and boundless tide,
> And all the palm embower'd hosts

That wander on her tawny coasts,
With shouts of triumph fill their woods,
Their spicy vales, and sacred floods! (100).

Such general and universal rejoicing may appear presumptuous to us, considering the enslaved thousands still in the Indies, but in 1807 it represented a giant step forward.

Even Wordsworth rose to the occasion, and the third of his three sonnets on the Negro is addressed to his friend Clarkson at the climax of his career:

Clarkson! it was an obstinate hill to climb:
How toilsome--nay, how dire--it was, by thee
Is known; by none, perhaps, so feelingly:
But thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth that enterprise sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee.--O true yoke-fellow of Time,
Duty's intrepid liegeman, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The blood-stained Writing is for ever torn;
And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of humen kind![95]

(3) The Emancipation Act (1833)

The Emancipation Act called forth less literary activity than the 1807 Bill, the poets of the "dying negro" school having long since worn out their Muses. Only a few continued to feed the old clichés into the press once in a while. James Montgomery had stood at the mid-point in 1807, looking back to the campaign of 1788-89 and forward to ultimate complete emancipation. In 1834 he brought out Songs on the Abolition of Negro Slavery in the British Colonies, a collection of five lyrics which were designed for use with contemporary hymn tunes. The first, "The Rainbow," is the sign "of the passing storm."[96] The rhetorical question of the kneeling

black is transposed to: "I AM A MAN, a BROTHER now." The second praises the victory of Britannia who "went forth, in her beauty, her glory/ And slaves sprang to men at the sound of her voice." The third announces that "the plague-spot" has been purged from the nation. "Since the first dark vessel bore/ Afric's children, brokenhearted,/ To the Caribbean shore," millions have died, but those who remain are now "FREE-MEN of the LORD." The fourth song argues that since" God made all his creatures free;/ Life itself is liberty," and concludes with a prediction of a return to "primeval peace." The last describes the prayerful vigil of the Negro awaiting the dawn of Emancipation Day (August 1, 1834). He now looks for something sweeter than rest. At the moment of liberation he will join the chorus when "England, the Indies, and Africa sing, 'AMEN, HALLELUJAH!'"

To many people, however, Montgomery's hymns and other poems like them were a gross oversimplification of the act of emancipation. Politicians and poets alike recognized that slavery and its results could not be so neatly obliterated. In this connection, two late Wordsworthian sonnets may be examined. His two Dunolly sonnets, published on the eve of Emancipation, are possibly the aging romanticist's commentary on the occasion. "On Revisiting Dunolly Castle" is a memorial to the captive eagle now "impaved with rude fidelity/ Of art mosaic. . . . An eagle with stretched wings, but beamless eye." In the second poem, "The Dunolly Eagle," recollections of the poor bird remind the poet that "even so/ Doth man of brother man a creature make/ That clings to slavery for its own sad sake." In a similar vein, we recall that Byron's prisoner of Chillon also "regained his freedom with a sigh."

After several decades of first abolition and then emancipation

activity, it was inevitable that the excesses of those benevolent people should come under fire from the satirists and the new nineteenth-century humourists. The poetry of Thomas Hood (1799-1845) runs the entire gamut from romantic loveliness, through weirdness and horror, and wit and humour, to satiric protest and the championship of the oppressed. In the sparkle of his verbal play he reveals the humour of his time and milieu. The concluding phases of the West India Question called forth both prose and verse comment from him. His poem, "The Black Job" (1844)[97] is a satirical parable of the futility of much emancipation activity. The work is not anti-Negro, in spite of the fact that the Abolition Society as an organization and its members as individuals do not come off well. It is merely realistic. In the second stanza we find:

> A knot of very charitable men
> [Who] set up a Philanthropical Society,
> Professing on a certain plan,
> To benefit the race of man,
> And in particular that dark variety,
> Which some suppose inferior--as in vermin
> The sable is to ermine,
> As smut to flour, as coal to alabaster,
> As crows to swans, as soot to driven snow,
> As blacking, or as ink to 'milk below,'
> Or yet a better simile to show,
> As ragman's dolls to images in plaster! (373).

The aim of the organization is

> To rescue Afric's sable sons from fetters--
> To save their bodies from the burning shame
> Of branding with hot letters--
> Their shoulders from the cowhide's bloody strokes,
> Their necks from iron yokes?
> To end or mitigate the ills of slavery,
> The Planter's avarice, the Driver's knavery?
> To school the heathen Negroes and enlighten 'em,
> To polish up and brighten 'em,
> And make them worthy of eternal bliss (373-374).

In short, the Negroes "wanted washing! [But] not that slight ablution/

To which the skin of the White Man is liable." The reason was that it made "all Christians sad and shivery/ To think of millions of immortal souls/ Dwelling in bodies black as coals." After a long period of scrubbing, the Chairman had to admit in "his perennial speech" (to the African Institution?) that "the niggers did not bleach,/ As he had hoped." He trusted that even though he "could not promise perfect white" he might in time get them gray! More time and a vast amount of money was spent, but

> . . . the plaguy Negroes and their piccaninnies
> Were still the colour of the bird that caws--
> Only some very aged souls
> Showing a little gray upon their polls.

Eventually:

> What with everlasting wear and tear,
> The scrubbing-brushes hadn't got a hair--
> The brooms--mere stumps--would never serve again--
> The soap was gone, the flannels all in shreds,
> The towels worn to threads (376).

As the Hebrew prophet had pointed out centuries before, the blackamoors had been washed in vain. The emancipationists, however, did not give up easily. When the public protested further demands for money, the Chairman allayed their resentment with a new proposal:

> "Why!" said the Chairman, with an accent bland,
> And gentle waving of his dexter hand,
> "Why must we have more dross, and dirt, and dust,
> More filthy lucre, in a word, more gold--
> The why, sir, very easily is told,
> Because Humanity declares we must!
> We've scrubb'd the Negroes till we've nearly killed 'em,
> And finding that we cannot wash them white,
> But still their nigritude offends the sight,
> We mean to gild 'em!" (376).

As Hood's prose satires[98] also show, it is the folly and excesses of the philanthropists, not the nigritude of the blacks, which is lampooned. After all, Hood says in effect, why must all the earth be judged by white

standards. At the same time, of course, he fully appreciates the entertaining possibilities of the comic Negro. During these heady days of early Victorianism even the sacred emblem of the Wedgwood Negro came in for satire. This invasion of humour into the tear-washed precincts of abolition writing is a development in all genres of English literature dealing with the West Indian themes.

We find that occasional verse of the West Indies was set in a turbulent sea of political and humanitarian activity. The work of the Abolition Society and the efforts of Wilberforce and the later emancipators called forth responses from British poets small and great. The lesser responded because of their close involvement with current affairs. They published in the reviews and newspapers and had a natural propensity for propaganda and the sensational. The greater poets joined in because they recognized the slave question to be an adjunct to their broader concerns with the woes of humanity and with individual liberty.

D. Themes and Motifs of Abolition Verse

Lacking the originality of greater poets, the minor verse-writers developed certain motifs of slavery and the Indies. By imitating recurrent themes in tractarian literature and, to some extent, in the works of major poets, this swarm of more or less anonymous versifiers crystallized these images and ideas into clichés. Although they also very obviously drew inspiration from the contemplation of one another's work, this discussion makes no attempt to differentiate originals from imitators. We shall now survey twelve of these themes.

Plate 5

"Am I not a Man and a Brother?" A cartoon in Punch, or the London Charivari, VI (1844), 234.

Huntington Library



"AM I NOT A MAN AND A BROTHER?"

"The Anniversary Meeting was held yesterday at Exeter Hall. Lord Brougham was to have taken the Chair, but . . . the Secretary read an extract of a letter from Lord Brougham, dated 'Privy Council, May 16,' stating that 'My being here to preside over the business is necessary, to prevent public inconvenience.' (Cheers and hisses)" --Examiner.



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(1) Commerce

Foreign trade was hopelessly entangled with abolition. The poets aligned themselves on either of the two sides of the commerce question, depending upon the degree of Whiggishness in their makeup. The great economic value of slavery to England made practical Englishmen hesitate to accept the view of the Negro as a suffering Noble Savage. For at least two centuries the Indies were regarded as the source of immeasurable wealth--granted, of course, that these riches were often to be gained at rather high risks. The Englishman of stage and fiction who makes a fast West Indian fortune, however, does not seem to appear in poetry. The efforts of the abolition verse-writers to paint the colonies in the darkest possible hues did not allow for the pleasant possibility of making money there. It was more useful, of course, for them to regard foreign commerce as governed by the monster "Avarice."

The Liverpool reformer, William Roscoe, in "Mount Pleasant" (1777) condemned commerce because it flourished at the expense of Negro suffering.[99] Britain had made "the wealth of every clime her own" while she completely ignored the painful toils of "Afric's swarthy sons" in the "noontide heat." The poet asks why liberty and life have to be the price for goods when Africa's wealth, "her ivory and her granulated gold," could have served the purpose. At this point, of course, Roscoe is not considering the problem of a labour force on the plantations. In fact, he dismisses the products of the Indies peremptorily, suggesting a return to English insularity:

> [They] tempt our avarice, but increase our shame;
> The sickly palate touch with more delight,

Or swell the senseless riot of the night.--
--Blest were the days ere Foreign Climes were known.
Our wants contracted, and our wealth our own;
When Health could crown, and Innocence endear,
The temperate meal, that cost no eye a tear:
Our drink, the beverage of the crystal flood,
--Not madly purchased by a brother's blood--
Ere the wide-spreading ills of Trade began,
Or luxury trampled on the rights of Man (4-6).

In the first book of Humanity (1788) Samuel Pratt denounced the evils of commerce in much more radical terms. He was too angry even to look to his grammar:

Commerce! thou failest on a sanguine flood,
On a red sea of man's devoted blood!
Thy pompous robe, tho' gemm'd as India's store,
Proud, tho' it flows, is dy'd in human gore.
The tears of millions bathe thy fatal cane,
And half thy treasure springs from human pain,
And not an idol on thy altars shine
But human victims stain the crimson shrine! (14-15).

Whether or not James Grahame actually believed in a reversion to a rural society is uncertain, but in Africa Delivered (1809) he achieves dramatic effect by following the trend for denouncing commerce:

What hecatombs of human beings die
Upon thy altar, Commerce! Ages hence
Thy bloody superstition will arouse
The horror of mankind (III, 83).

For Shelley the Indies were the area "where kings first leagued against the rights of men,/ And priests first traded with the name of God." His Queen Mab (1812) utilizes several abolition motifs in his description of the connection between commerce and slavery:

. . . Slavery
Had crushed him [the Negro] to his country's blood-stained dust;
Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
Which all internal impulses destroying,
Make human will an article of trade;
Or he was changed with Christians for their gold,

> And dragged to distant isles, where to the sound
> Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does the work
> Of all-polluting luxury and wealth,
> Which doubly visits on the tyrants' heads
> The long-protracted fulness of their woe.
> Or he was led to legal butchery,
> To turn to worms beneath that burning sun. . .[100]

Other humanitarian poets sought to make a legitimate place for commerce within a benevolent scheme of things. Cowper commends commerce because it constitutes a part of God's "social plan," but he revises the blind, Whiggish glorification of trade:[101]

> Trade is the golden girdle of the globe. . .
> Each climate needs what other climes produce,
> And offers something to the gen'ral use; . . .
> This genial intercourse and mutual aid,
> Cheers what were else an universal shade.[102]

Neither does Elizabeth Benger find a rift between the Negro cause and commerce. Believing in the progress of society, she sees the primitive state of Africa as an initial, crude stage of civilization common to all nations in their infancy. She looks forward to a burgeoning of the arts and sciences in Africa, a change to be wrought by the civilizing influences of commerce, which is

> Lavish to give, but careless to defend,
> A true retainer, and perfidious friend;
> Fond but not faithful, gentle yet unkind, . . .
> Know, Commerce follows nature's social laws,
> As peace or charity her blessing draws--
> Still shall she bear from Afric's genial plains
> Their native wealth, though man untouch'd remains;
> She hides no dagger in her flowing vest,
> But frankly comes, caressing and carest:
> The fields rejoice beneath her gentle tread.[103]

Reverend Vardill's "Spirit of Toussaint" (1814) seeks a compromise in a work intended as a rebuke to the French public for its procrastination in abolishing the slave trade. The spirit of martyred Toussaint promises

that when oppression has ceased, honourable commerce can still bring to France "piles of gold;/ The canemellifluous and the balmy wine."

Back in the seventeenth century Edmund Waller in "The Battle of the Summer-Islands" had put his finger on the tender spot which made it so difficult for Englishmen to fit all the elements of commerce comfortably into a benevolent framework. He outlined the cycle of commerce whereby England's "coarser land" was able to taste of the bounties of the Indies.[104] The pleasures of sugar, rum, pineapple, coffee, or whatever it might be, were simply addictive. The zealots of abolition, aided by idealistic romanticists, were perhaps more strong-willed than their neighbours in this matter. Therefore they tried to arouse public conscience on this point by sending the grim figure of Avarice stalking through miles of abolition verse and tractarian prose.

Piracy may be considered an addendum to the theme of commerce. Although it was sometimes used along with the avenging elements of nature for the chastening of perverse West Indians, it received scant attention from the verse writers.[105] The derring-do of high-seas adventure came into its own on the stage and in picaresque fiction where it fitted most conveniently.

(2) The Sugar Controversy

Propagandistic and anti-commercial verse-writers throughout the agitation period, 1788-1833, drew effective arguments from the West Indian sugar industry which was the most spectacular phase of British foreign trade at the time. While reading the papers over their tea and coffee, the public were persistently reminded in dramatic appeals that what was sweetness for them had the bitterness of gall for the Negro. A modest,

middle-class Londoner might dissociate himself with comparative ease from the villains who bartered human flesh for gold in Guinea, from the wicked planters in Jamaica, and even from the glutted merchants in Liverpool, but an appeal which pointed directly to his own private, leisurely cup of cheer was not so easily dismissed. The anti-saccharists enjoyed a rather brief but spectacular heyday. Many grocers refused to deal in rum and sugar; ladies refused to serve West Indian sugar at parties; and some guests carried their own East-Indian sugar with them to ensure their integrity on this point when dining out. Still others abstained altogether.[106]

The poets were quick to probe this vulnerable point. In "The Slaves: An Elegy"[107] Robert Merry paints a graphic picture of the plantation where "drooping goes/ The Sable Herd of Human Kind" to "ply their labours in the sun,/ To feed the luxury of British Pride!" Ten lines later the beverage-drinking Briton must <u>really</u> feel the pangs of his hypocrisy:

> Are drops of blood the horrible manure
> That fills the luscious juice the teeming cane?
> And must our fellow creatures thus endure,
> For traffic vile, th' indignity of pain?
> Yes, their keen sorrows are the sweets we blend
> With the green bev'rage of our morning meal,
> The while to love <u>meek Mercy</u> WE pretend,
> Or for <u>fictitious ills</u> affect to feel.
> Yes, 'tis their anguish mantles in the bowl,
> Their sighs excite the Briton's drunken joy (59).

The poem concludes with the earnest injunction to promise the suffering Negro that "his wrongs bedew a Nation's Eye, . . . [and] Britannia <u>blushes for his wo</u>!" The next year Thomas Wilkinson, a Quaker friend and neighbour of Wordsworth and Coleridge, inquired whether "the sweets the pleasures of the board" were worth the Negro's sorrows--"<u>his all</u> the

pain, and all the pleasure thine!" Later in the poem Wilkinson reminds the reader that the flavour of his tea would indeed be spoiled if it were actually "mingled with tears and blood."[108]

At the height of the sugar controversy in 1788 Cowper questioned the wisdom of "all-creating Nature" for making the sugar cane so that it had to be fanned by sighs and watered by tears for the pleasure of iron-hearted masters who loll at their "jovial boards."[109] The spokesman in his "Pity for Poor Africans" knows that the miseries of the slaves are "almost enough to draw pity from stones." Then he concludes ironically:

> I pity them greatly, but I must be mum,
> For how could we do without sugar and rum?
> Especially sugar, so needful we see?
> What? give up our desserts, our coffee, and tea! (11.5-8).

Convincing as this poetic barb may have been, the fact remains that Cowper himself refused to give up rum and sugar. Like his friend John Newton he believed a sugar ban to be premature and likely to alienate moderate men.[110] In order to vindicate himself, he promptly inscribed a sonnet to William Wilberforce to show that his heart was in the right place, even if to some people's minds his stomach was not.[111]

In "The Dying African" (1791)[112] a cadaverous slave addresses English readers. With his "wither'd and feeble . . . toil-worn limbs" stretched on the ground and "his glistening eyes . . . dim," he gasps:

> Soft sons of luxury, I toil'd for you,
> To grace your feast, and swell your empty shew:
> The rich ingredients of your costly boards,
> Our sweat, our pangs, our misery affords:
> Think, think, amid your heaps of needless food
> How much is tainted with your brother's blood.

A year later Thomas Adney's slave, "a wretch forlorn" lamenting just before he casts himself into the Caribbean, says:

> Know, EUROPE, that the sweets you share,
> Are by the NEGRO'S blood refin'd;
> Blush that you riot on his care,
> Nor wish to ease his tortur'd mind.
> Then come, ye storms, ye whirlwinds rise,
> Let thunders speak the wrongs I feel;
> Let angry clouds obscure the skies,
> And howling winds my woes reveal![113]

In the same year the more gifted William Cowper once again took up the theme and gave it an ironic twist in an epigram. It turned out to be his final poetic expression of abolitionist sentiment:

> To purify their wine some people bleed
> A lamb into the barrel, and succeed;
> No nostrum, planters say, is half so good
> To make fine sugar, as a negro's blood.
> Now lambs and negroes both are harmless things,
> And thence perhaps this wond'rous virtue springs,
> 'Tis in the blood of innocence alone--
> Good cause why planters never try their own.[114]

Robert Southey touched on the sugar question in the third sonnet of his slave-trade sequence (1794) where, after a graphic portrayal of plantation atrocities, he says:

> . . . O ye who at your ease
> Sip the blood-sweetened beverage! thoughts like these
> Haply ye scorn.

But the poet thanks God that he is able to feel indignation for the sufferings of a "sable brother."

"Timothy Touchstone, Gent," was a sarcastic rhymster dedicated to the cause of abolition. In his two-canto poem, "Tea and Sugar, or, the Nabob and the Creole" (1792), he makes a ludicrous attack on both east and West India merchants, lashing the whole "Indian crew,/ That persecuting and revengeful few." These monsters obliterate "soft pity's genial balm" from the minds of Britons, for whom the poet portrays the horrors of the plantations:

Thus, is that sweet ingredient, SUGAR call'd,
Made by the sweat and blood of the enthrall'd;
Bitter their cup, alas! who make that sweet,
Poor Slaves! whose hearts, in sad affliction, beat; (16).

In his passionate discourse in Humanity (1788) Samuel Pratt damns the sugar cane in a series of sanguinary images:

Ah! luscious mischief, slave-creating cane,
Of every soft humanity the bane:
Thy venom'd sweet, whose soul-polluting art
Like some mask'd poison, eats into the heart,
Sweet tho' thou art, an aspic sting is thine,
And into shambles, Christians turn thy shrine:
Thou, like vile gold, from the embowel'd earth,
By avarice dragg'd reluctantly to birth,
To taste thy charm are groaning nations bound,
And half mankind in kindred blood are drown'd! (16).

The propagandistic value of the much-maligned cane continued on into the nineteenth century, even after many of the other motifs of abolition had been worn out. "The Negro's Complaint," a broadside ballad written to accompany an anti-slavery petition circulated in North Shields in 1823, denounced the offending plant:

Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant, for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards;
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets, your cane affords.

To James Montgomery the West Indian islands are "bowers of paradise" where cocoas, vines, orange-groves, myrtle and cedar grow, but into this Edenic setting, he introduces the enigmatic sugar cane:

An eastern plant, ingrafted on the soil,
Was till'd for ages with consuming toil;
No tree of knowledge, with forbidden fruit,
Death in the taste, and ruin at the root,
Yet in its growth were good and evil found,
It bless'd the planter, but it curs'd the ground;

While with vain wealth it gorg'd the master's hoard,
And spread with manna his luxurious board,
Its culture was perdition to the slave,
It sapp'd his life, and flourish'd on his grave (II, 11-12).

By 1833 most of the emotional appeal had been wrung out of the sugar question, and the whole West Indian situation was becoming overshadowed by the local problems of British industrialism. In keeping with the trend already observed, writers now tended to treat the former humanitarian concern with the satirical rather than the sentimental touch. At the height of the parliamentary debate on the Emancipation Bill, for instance, an anonymous versifier submitted "An Epistle of Condolence from a Slave-Lord to a Cotton-Lord" to the Times.[115] Although that sober newspaper prided itself from the first on its steady devotion to the news as distinct from padding, it was not averse to imaginative pieces. With grim humour the poem exposes the two sadists who forty years earlier would have been denounced in rabidly hysterical terms:[116]

Alas! my dear friend, what a state of affairs!
How unjustly we both are despoil'd of our rights!
Not a pound of black flesh shall I leave to my heirs,
Nor must you any more work to death little whites.

Both forced to submit to that general controller
Of king, Lords, and cotton-mills--Public Opinion:
No more shall you beat with a big billy-roller,
Nor I with the cart-whip assert my dominion.

Whereas, were we suffered to do as we please
With our Blacks and our Whites, as of yore we were let,
We might range them alternate, like harpsichord keys,
And between us thump out a good piebald duet.

But this fun is all over;--farewell to the zest
Which Slavery now lends to each tea-cup we sip;
Which makes still the cruellest coffee the best,
And that sugar the sweetest which smacks of the whip.

It will be convenient to note here that the sugar controversy was also fought through prose pamphlets. The anonymous No Rum!--No Sugar!

(1792) is a dialogue between Cushoo, a Negro lately arrived from Jamaica, and Mr. English, an honest Londoner who is trying to live up to his moral obligations as he sees them.[117] Cushoo relates his own story (the usual one) and applies much rhetorical pressure to make "Massa Buckra" leave off the use of rum and sugar, at least until the Abolition Bill is passed. The author documents Cushoo's arguments with plentiful quotations from anti-slavery tracts, and no personal names or places are disguised. Finally convinced that by using sugar he is an integral part of the long chain of abuse stretching from the slave factories in Guinea to the local grocer in London, Mr. English promises to "make the experiment" of abstainence and urges the Negro on to more proselytizing. Although the pamphlet is quite destitute of literary value, it does reveal the desire of the author to vary the uniform dullness of anti-slavery tracts with one small burst of creativity. More attractive is Thomas Hood's satire on the anti-saccharist movement, "Black, White, and Brown." Miss Morbid renounces "shugger" because she believes it to be capable of converting a "professing Christian into a practical Cannibal." She sets her face "against sugar rather than slavery " and martyrs her entire household. Her lazy Jamaican maid Dinah feels the deprivation most acutely and begins to steal the possessions of her benefactress. Her dimly illuminated mind is incapable of comprehending the moral issues. When under cross-questioning, she finally testifies: "What me 'teal him [money] for? Why, for sure, <u>to buy sugar</u>."[118]

(3) <u>Pseudo-Africa</u>

To the Negro in the West Indies, Africa became a mythical place of

his dreams, a veritable Arcadia where he had once lived in idyllic ease and to which he expected to return at death. Caribbean bondage was simply the transitory present, to be borne with or rebelled against according to the disposition of the Negro. The scarcity of eighteenth-century Negro writers, of course, makes it difficult to establish the extent to which this belief in transmigration was actually held among the slaves. Like the Noble Savage cult, it was probably largely the white man's invention. Certainly it was important to the humanitarian poets who sought to blur the line between the real and the ideal Africa by their creation of "pseudo-Africa."

James Thomson is apparently the earliest English poet to describe idyllic Africa. At the same time he cultivates the social tear and the social sigh of the new benevolism to a surprising degree. If Thomson had written at a time when the evils of the slave trade were more widely known, he might well have been the greatest poet of anti-slavery. In The Seasons (1730) we glimpse an Abyssinian-type splendour:

> Thou . . . mayst freely range
> From mead to mead bright with exalted flowers
> From Jasmine grove to grove; mayst wander gay
> Through palmy shades and aromatic woods
> That grace the plains, invest the peopled hills,
> And up the more than Alpine mountains wave.
> There on the breezy summit, spreading fair
> For many a league, or on stupendous rocks,
> That from the sun-redoubling valley lift
> Cool to the middle air their lawny tops,
> Where palaces and fanes and villas rise,
> And gardens smile around and cultured fields,
> And fountains gush, and careless herds and flocks
> Securely stray--a world within itself,
> Disdaining all assault.

In this classical setting "full-formed maids of Afric . . . lave in the Niger . . . their jetty limbs." Occasionally the lion comes down upon the

flocks and herds, but on the whole the pastoral scene is undisturbed--until the slave traders arrive.[119]

In another poem which comes too early for real abolition interest, Samuel Bowden celebrates pseudo-Africa in "Epitaph on a Negro Servant" (1754). The Negro who has "died at Governor Phipps's at Haywood, near Westbury" was favoured by a kind master.[120] The poem opens with some moralizing stanzas on Death as the great leveller, and the theme is couched in the Blakean philosophy of colour.[121] The servant looks on death and the afterlife from the same viewpoint as did the multitudes of Negroes who at the end of the century perished in the Caribbean canefields and/or in the poetry sections of British periodicals. The Africa envisioned here in Bowden's piece has overtones of Pope:

> Releas'd from servitude, and woe,
> Here all my toils are o'er,
> To some green island I shall go,
> And see my native shore.
>
> Tho' with reluctant mind I part,
> From my kind master here;
> Yet my old country has my heart,
> And liberty is dear.
>
> There in some shady, Indian grove,
> I shall forever stray;
> Or o'er the pathless mountain rove,
> And hunt for savage prey.

Thomas Chatterton's three African Eclogues (1770) are transitional. Although his characters are medievalized, they are more dramatic and powerful than those in most eighteenth-century humanitarian writing. The first poem, "Narva and Mored," is the story of two etherealy Negroid lovers who drown themselves in order to remain together in their African paradise; the second, "The Death of Nicou," reverts to a Negro tale with

the trappings of thirteenth-century chivalry; and the third, "Heccar and Gaira," characterizes a Negro chief lamenting the loss of his beautiful, dusky Cawna who with his children has been stolen away on a slave ship. But Chatterton's pseudo-Africa is more like Coleridge's Xanadu than Thomson's visionary land:

> On Tiber's banks, Tiber, whose waters glide
> In slow meanders down to Gaira's side . . .
> On Tiber's banks, where scarlet jasmines bloom,
> And purple vales shed a rich perfume;
> Where, when the sun is melting in his heat,
> The reeking tigers find a cool retreat,
> Bask in the sedges, lose the sultry beam,
> And wanton with their shadows in the stream;
> On Tiber's banks, by sacred priests revered,
> Where in the days of old a god appear'd.[122]

The Africans of the Eclogues are equally fantastic:

> Nicou, immortal in the sacred song,
> Held the red sword of war, and led the strong.
> From his own tribe the sable warriors came,
> Well tried in battle, and well known in fame.
> Nicou, descended from the god of war
> Who lived coeval with the morning star (17).

The Negresses are particularly exotic. One is a "sister to the mountain kind," dressed in flowers and having "glossy feature[s]" (19); Mored's black face is "soft as the moss where hissing adders dwell" (14); and Cawna, "decked in sable charms," is

> . . . the pride of Afric's sultry vales,
> Soft as the cooling murmur of the gales;
> Majestic as the many-coloured snake . . .
> Black as the glossy rocks . . .
> Swift as the arrow (27).

Chatterton's mixture, however, was too rich. It was manifestly impossible for a reader with his sensibilities so dazzled to keep his mind upon the humanitarian purposes of the poem. It took Thomas Day's "Dying Negro" three years later to bring the Africans back to earth where, in the

very real setting of the plantations, they could properly become objects of philanthropic interest.

Although the inhabitants of pseudo-Africa remained consistently Noble Savages, as the century wore on they lost much of the sophistication which Thomson and Chatterton originally attributed to them. The dreams of Adala in the first of the "American Eclogues" (1783), for instance, are far more domestic than those of her predecessors:

> To times long past my restless soul is led,
> Far, far beyond the azure hills to groves
> Of ruddy fruit, where beauty fearless roves--
> O blissful seats! O self-approving joys!
> Nature's plain dictates! ignorance of vice!
> O guiltless hours our cares and wants were few,
> No arts of luxury, or deceit, we knew;
> Our labour sport--to tend our cottage care,
> Or from the palm the luscious juice prepare;
> To sit, indulging love's delusive dream,
> And snare the silver tenants of the stream;
> Or (nobler toil) to aim the deadly blow,
> With dextrous art, against the spotted foe. . . .
> Our healthful sports a daily feast afford,
> And ev'n still found us at the social board.[123]

Another slave contrasts the joys of pseudo-Africa with his very real miseries in Jamaica:

> No more, alas! I bend the bow,
> My spear is changed to the hoe,
> And where the spotted pard-skin hung,
> A coarse inglorious garment's flung;
> Thy Slavery's whips, thy chains, are now for me,
> Curs'd fiend, instead of Liberty![124]

The Negro then dismisses the apparition of Slavery and entreats his African god Psaphon to bind Slavery in "those fetters she prepar'd for me" (456).

During the 1788-89 boom in abolition writing, there was considerable concentration on the excellences of idyllic Africa. In William Ros-

coe's "Wrongs of Africa" (1788) we find a "sable artist" carving ebony vessels and weaving cloth in an "idly industrious way" in that pastoral land from which the "Christian savages" wrenched the natives. For Samuel Pratt, Africa is a place of agricultural wonders:

> Peaceful and blest, where rich Bananas grew,
> And nature freshen'd as the sea-breeze blew,
> Where harvests smil'd without the aid of toil,
> And verdure gladden'd the exuberant soil,
> Where summer held so bountiful a sway,
> Scarce claim'd their year, the culture of a day,
> The plants at twilight trusted to the earth,
> And following morn sprang blooming into birth.[125]

The sun is at once the patron of all African joys and the bane of the West Indian plantations. Wilkinson's suffering Negro, for example, dies in a parched West Indian field while he recalls the beneficence of the "all-benignant sun" in Africa:

> Art thou that sun which warm'd my native plains,
> And cheers the spot where my lost love remains?
> Far other times when there I felt thy heat,
> My friends were round me, and my life was sweet,
> Spontaneous fruits my temp'rate meals supplied,
> My babes sat near me, and my tender bride!
> No bloody whip, no proud malignant scorn,
> Then usher'd in the smiling light of morn:
> Arm'd with his club, the loud and angry white,
> Came not, distressful, in my dreams by night.[126]

The companions of William Lisle Bowles' dying slave have one of the most detailed visions of idyllic Africa. The first stanza of their funeral oration promises him a restoration of material and social pleasures. Bowles achieves a little more artistry and realism than most of his fellow-labourers in the genre, and at least one quotation is merited here:

> Now thy long, long task is done,
> Swiftly, brother, wilt thou run,

Ere to-morrow's golden beam
Glitter on thy parent stream,
Swiftly the delights to share,
The feast of joy that waits thee there.
Swiftly, brother, wilt thou ride
O'er the long and stormy tide
Fleeter than the hurricane,
Till thou see'st those scenes again,
Where thy father's hut was reared,
Where thy mother's voice was heard;
Where thy infant brothers played
Beneath the fragrant citron shade;
Where through green savannahs wide
Cooling rivers silent glide,
Or the shrill cicalas sing
Ceaseless to their murmuring;
Where the dance, the festive song,
Of many a friend divided long,
Doomed through stranger lands to roam
Shall bid thy spirit welcome home.[127]

The second stanza promises renewal of the manly activities associated with his canoe, lance, horn, and, above all the delights of reunion with his "long-forsaken love."

One might say that when the pastoral beauties of pseudo-Africa were finally transferred to the West Indies in the nineteenth century, the sugar islands really "arrived" romantically speaking. As has already been noted, this transposition occurred only when abolition pressures abated.

It may be noted here that the use of dialect late in the eighteenth century also played a part in dissipating the classical effects of pseudo-Africanism. Allowing dying Negroes to speak in a false West Indian dialect was really to defeat one's "classical" and sentimental purposes at the same time. A Negro aboard a slave ship attempted the delineation of his home in these terms:

Dere we've room, and air, and freedom,
   Dere our little dwellings stand;
Families, and rice to feed 'em!
   Oh I weep for Negro land!

Joyful dere before de doors
   Play our children hand in hand;
Fresh de fields, and sweet de flow'rs,
   Green de hills, in Negro land.

Dere I often go when sleeping,
   See my kindred round me stand;
Hear 'em toke--den wak in weeping,
   Dat I've lost my Negro land.

Dere my black love arms were round me,
   De whole night! not like dis band,
Close dy held, but did not wound me;
   Oh! I die for Negro land![128]

Dialect was used with a slightly greater degree of success in Negro love songs. In "A Negro Love-Elegy" (1792)[129] Orra mourns the death of her warrior-lover Yancoo, slain in tribal battle. She is a Negress of the second order, therefore she does not die. Rather, she has the faith that "he no dead,--he still live here"--that is, in the African woods, and she draws on the traditional reserves of all sentimental heroines:

And so sometime me tink me die,
   My heart so sick he grieve me;
But in a lilly time me cry
   Good deal--and dat relieve me.

Thus she survives her trials. In "Azid; or, the Song of the Captive Negro" (1795)[130] the lovers, Mora and Azid, paint a dialect version of pseudo-Africa as they prepare for suicide:

No more for deck her head and hair,
   Me look in stream, bright gold to find;
Nor seek de field for flow'r so fair,
   Wid garland Mora hair to bind.
   "Far off de stream! I weeping say,
   "Far off de fields of Domahay." . . .

The use of dialect, right or otherwise, humanized the Noble Negro and balanced his dreams with reality. It also muddied up the waters of sentimental verse still further. Since many writers of the abolition period lacked first hand knowledge, they supposed that simply ungrammatical English was the speech of the West Indian plantations. True patois is really nowhere to be found (see Appendix I).

(4) Hospitality

The innate hospitality of the native African was widely publicized, especially since it pointed up the villainy of the white slave traders who repaid this kindness with kidnapping and slaughter. The hero of Thomas Adney's "The Slave, an Ode" (1792)[131] had welcomed "a host of wand'rers, fair and white" and given them "skins and fruit for bread." In return for this generosity, he and his tribesmen were made drunk at a feast, and carried aboard the slave ships.[132]

The characteristic of hospitality was more than a convention of idyllic Africa; it had real-life precedents. The episode which Mungo Park relates in his Travels (1799) outstripped all others and became the exemplar of Negro benignity. The traveller explains how after a day without food and with night coming on he rested under a tree. He expected to have to pass the night there in the rain storm which was approaching. Then,

> A woman, returning from the labours of the field, stopped to observe me, and perceiving that I was weary and dejected, inquired into my situation, which I briefly explained to her; whereupon, with looks of great compassion, she took up my saddle and bridle, and told me to follow her. Having conducted me into her hut, she lighted up a lamp, spread a mat on the floor, and told me I might remain there for the night. Finding that I was very hungry, she said she would procure me something to eat. She accordingly went out, and returned in a short time with a very fine fish; which having caused to be half-broiled upon some embers, she gave me for supper. The

Plate 6

Mungo Park and the hospitable Negress. In Poems on the Abolition of the Slave Trade (1809), by James Montgomery, James Grahame, and Elizabeth Benger. Illustration by R. Smirke in R. Bowyer's deluxe edition, 24.

Huntington Library





> rites of hospitality being thus performed towards a stranger in distress, my worthy benefactress (pointing to the mat, and telling me I might sleep there without apprehension) called to the female part of her family, who had stood gazing on me all the while in fixed astonishment, to resume their task of spinning cotton; in which they continued to employ themselves a great part of the night.[133]

The situation readily lent itself to song. Indeed, Park tells us that the women "lightened their labour by songs," one of which was composed about him:

> It was sung by one of the young women, the rest joining in a sort of chorus. The air was sweet and plaintive, and the words, literally translated, were these:--"The winds roared and the rains fell. The poor white man, faint and weary, came and sat under our tree. He has no mother to bring him milk; no wife to grind his corn." Chorus--"Let us pity the white man; no mother has he" etc., etc. . . . I was oppressed by such inexpected kindness; and sleep fled from my eyes. In the morning I presented my compassionate landlady with two of the four brass buttons which remained on my waistcoat; the only recompense I could make her.[134]

As the "ballad" material was transmuted from the folk to the literary stage, the story was refined. Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, who was sympathetic to the abolition movement, wrote an English "version" of the song of the African women:

> The loud wind roar'd; the rain fell fast;
> The White Man yielded to the blast:
> He sat him down, beneath our tree;
> For weary, sad, and faint was he;
>
> And ah, no wife or mother's care,
> For him, the milk or corn prepare:
> The White Man shall our pity share;
> Alas, no wife or mother's care,
> For him the milk or corn prepare.
>
> The storm is o'er; the tempest past;
> And Mercy's voice has hush'd the blast.
> The wind is heard in whispers low;
> The White Man, far away must go;--
> But ever in his heart will bear
> Remembrance of the Negro's care.

Go, White Man, go;--but with thee bear
The Negro's wish, the Negro's prayer;
Remembrance of the Negro's care.[135]

James Montgomery inserted still another version of the song into The West Indies as proof that the Negro loves "to greet the stranger at his board":

"The winds were roaring, and the White Man fled;
The rains of night descended on his head;
The poor White Man sat down beneath our tree,
Weary and faint, and far from home was he:
For him no mother fills with milk the bowl,
No wife prepares the bread to cheer his soul:
--Pity the poor White Man, who sought our tree,
No wife, no mother, and no home has he."
Thus sang the Negro's daughters;--once again
O that the poor White Man might hear that strain![136]

William Earle revamped the incident in his history of Three-Fingered Jack (1804). The fifth letter concludes with a song by the Negress Ora who sings of the good white man who saved her husband Sambo from the slatee (African merchant). The now-more-enlightened Ora does not offer free hospitality, but bargains with the white man:

Poor white man came to Ora's shore;
Where wild beast howl and lions roar;
He came, and faint beneath a tree,
Most pitious begg'd for charity.
Ah! poor white man, why didst thou roam?
Sad Ora pities thee,
Why leave thy friend, why leave thy home,
To deal with bad Slatee.

I'll give thee milk, I'll give thee corn,
I'll give thee Saphie[137] in the horn,
I'll shield thee from the venomed lake
And guard thee 'gainst the rattlesnake
If thou wilt bring me Sambo good,
Whom wicked Slatee sell;
Say ninety bars[138] and pass the wood,
For I love Sambo well.

Thus Mungo Park becomes a slave trader, and the hospitable Negress loses

her disinterested motives. Nevertheless, Ora is so overwhelmed by the white man's kindness that she apparently loses sight of Sambo. In what seems to be an imperialistic transfer of loyalties, she determines to

> . . . seek with white man other shore;
> With white man who beneath a tree
> Did ask of Ora charity.
> 'Twas white man cheer'd my aching heart,
> And Ora grateful be;
> Ah! white man we will never part;
> I'll tramp the world with thee (V, 68-69).

Ora's song works at cross-purposes with Earle's over-all intention of portraying the sufferings of Amri, the villainies of Harrop the slave-trader, and the justifiable revenge of Three-Fingered Jack. His drawing on the legend, however, indicates the prevailing popularity of the tale.

George Crabbe took up the theme in "Woman" (1807) and gave it still another turn. With him as with Earle much of the simplicity of the episode is lost, and the poem is coloured not only by humanitarianism but also by a distinct race consciousness.[139] His Negress sings:

> "What though so pale his haggard face,
> So sunk and sad his looks,"--she cries;
> And far unlike our nobler race,
> With crisped locks and rolling eyes:
> Yet misery marks him of our kind;
> We see him lost, alone, afraid;
> And pangs of body, griefs of mind,
> Pronounce him man and ask our aid.
>
> Perhaps in some far-distant shore,
> There are who in those forms delight;
> Whose milky features please them more,
> Than ours of jet thus burnish'd bright:
> Of such may be his weeping wife,
> Such children for their sire may call,
> And if we spare his ebbing life,
> Our kindness may preserve them all.[140]

The Mungo Park incident thus became legendary because it certified

kindliness on the part of the Negro, and in so doing it served to make the treachery and greed of the white slaver reprehensible.

(5) The Slave Trader

Labelled "Christian" with ironic frequency, the slave-trader is an essential and villainous element in the cycle of West Indian slavery. He matches and frequently surpasses the Creole in wickedness. Since such a juxtaposition of savage virtue and civilized vice in his confrontation with the Noble Negro offered opportunities for telling sarcasm, the condemnation of the slavers came fairly early in the century. James Thomson in "Liberty," a rather unsuccessful poem in 1735, considers the slaves far superior to their owners because the latter are the willing slaves of corruption and of avarice for the sake of wealth.[141] Joseph Warton in his "Ode to Liberty" (1746) apostrophized Liberty and celebrated the lamentations of "Guinea's captive kings . . . by Christian lords to labour sent/ Whipt like the dull, unfeeling ox." Warton's "The Dying Indian" also eulogizes a Noble Savage who is similarly victimized by "Christian cowards."[142]

Adala, in "American Eclogues," I (1783) paints a graphic picture of the arrival and departure of the slave traders:

> Can I forget? Ah me! the fatal day,
> When half the vale of peace was swept away!
> Th' affrighted maids in vain the Gods implore,
> And weeping view from far the happy shore;
> The frantic dames impatient ruffians seize,
> And infants shriek, and clasp their mothers' knees;
> With galling fetters soon their limbs are bound,
> And groans throughout the noisome bark resound.[143]

William Roscoe in "The Wrongs of Africa" (1787) states categorically that the Negro is superior to the villainous slave master:

> Inferior in degree, but in thy scorn
> Of every milder virtue, in the love
> Of rapine, and the quenchless thirst of gold,
> His [that is, the noble Negro's] more than equal (28-29).

Several lines later he draws an epic simile on the arrival of the slave traders:

> Dark, and portentous, as the sable cloud,
> That bears unseen contagion on its wings,
> And drops destruction on the race of man,
> Came the foul plague, that, brought from Europe, spread
> O'er Afric's peaceful shores; with sudden change
> Perverting good, to evil (32).

The enraged author of "An Elegy, occasioned by the Rejection of Mr. Wilberforce's Motion for the Abolition of the African Slave Trade" (1791) consoled himself with a scathing denunciation of the traders who, as usual, come in a poor second to the blacks whom they enslave:

> Ye brutal traffickers in human gore,
> Ye base mementos of your country's shame,
> Who never knew the pitying tear to pour,
> Or glow with sympathy's distinguish'd flame:
>
> Compare your conduct with the glorious zeal
> Oft by the sons of scorned Afric shown;
> Oft for the child's, or wife's, or friendship's weal,
> These <u>senseless brutes</u> will sacrifice their own. . . .
>
> Ye judge the feelings of the wretched Slave
> By those which animate your sordid breast;
> And, as ye never stretch'd an arm to save,
> Suppose they never Nature's throb confest.[144]

In his two poems against the slave trade the Quaker John Marriott brought a little imagination to bear on the subject. The first, "Philanthropy, an Ode" (1785), is a vision poem in which Philanthropy seeks to woo "Britannia's sons" from the service of Avarice with a conventional picture of the slave trading scene.[145] Eighteen years later with abolition still unachieved, Marriott wrote "Mialma" (1803), an unfinished

poetic fable in monotonous trimeter lines. The "untutored and wild" African girl lives in the lion country where her parents have fled to escape the "stealers of men." There she discovers Almor, likewise a refugee from the slavers, and they live in pristine innocence--a theme related to noble savagery and more fully explored by dramatic writers of the Indies.

Marriott (now in the nineteenth century) finds it necessary to apologize for the colour of these belated Noble Africans. Modelled along the lines of Yarico, Mialma is a refined child of nature "regardless of climate and hue." Even as blackberries and blackbirds are esteemed for qualities apart from their blackness, so the mention of "the tinge of a skin" is irrelevant: "For what is the chaff to the grain?/ Mialma was lovely within."[146] Once satisfied that a sensitive spirit can indeed abid "in a bosom of duskiest hue," the reader may now proceed to the main theme of the tale. Errida, the elf-child of Mialma and Almor, finds "a nest full of younglings" in the woods, and she removes the birds with the noblest of intentions: "She would feed them with all that was good,/ And daily fresh dainties procure" (80). Mialma disapproves of the project, however, and the child is permitted only one bird with which to experiment. She tends it with utmost devotion, but somehow it seems less attractive than it had been in its wild state, and moved by compassion she restores it to its nest. Here ends the fable, but the application intended by Marriott is obvious. The captive-bird motif looks forward to Archibald MacLaren's tragic comedy, "The Negro Slaves" (1799).[147]

James Field Stanfield vigorously attacked the Negro traffic in the three books of The Guinea Voyage (1789). His rather weak verse-writing

was complementary to his prose work of the previous year, Observations on a Guinea Voyage in a Series of Letters Addressed to Rev. Thomas Clarkson (1788). The first book characterizes the master of the slave ship and the merchants who recruit the crews. It closes with an apostrophe to British seamen urging them to avoid the slave trade. The second book describes the guardian genius of Africa arousing the demons of the climate to punish the approaching slavers, and these spirit forces, led by Death, scatter plagues among the traders. The third book details a childbirth[148] and murder on the voyage, along with morning and evening scenes in the Middle Passage, above and below deck. Arrival at the "guilty shores" of the colonies is followed by a sale by "scramble" and the subsequent separation of families. Propagandistic material concludes the work with an appeal for abolition of the slave trade; a prophetic view of a renewed Africa where science, the arts, trade and commerce flourish; and the usual tribute to British freedom.[149]

Samuel Pratt devotes the second book of Humanity (1788) to the slave trade. Although he opposes it, he holds the ill-treatment of the blacks to be more criminal than the traffic itself. In his enthusiasm for denouncing the "Christian savages" who bear the African tribes away from their homeland, however, he is betrayed into praising the mythical properties of pseudo-Africa. In 1797 the Negress Yamba describes the atrocities of the Middle Passage which are attributable to the "cursed thirst of gold" which the sadistic traders have:

> . . . Strait they bore me to the sea;
> Cramm'd me down a slave ship's hold,
> Where were hundreds stow'd with me.

Naked on the platform lying,
Now we cross the tumbling wave;
Shrieking, sick'ning, fainting, dying!
Deed of shame for Britons brave!

At the savage captain's beck,
Now like brutes they make us prance,
Smack the whip about the deck,
And in scorn they bid us dance.[150]

A by-product of the motif of the cruel slave trader was the possibility of the conversion of the demoralized villain. Southey exploited this established sentimental tradition in "The Sailor Who had Served in the Slave Trade" (1798), presenting his story in verse that "it might be made more public." Bearing a close resemblance in form and theme to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" of the same year, the ballad opens with a Christian minister discovering a sailor in a cow shed "in such anguish as may spring/ From deepest guilt alone." The man's part in the flogging and subsequent death of a woman aboard "a Guinea Man" drives him to the utmost extremity in prayer and repentance. The poem ends on the rather propagandistic hope that, as the minister joined him in his prayers, "some who read the dreadful tale/ Perhaps will aid with theirs."

Montgomery has essentially the last word on the slave merchant, since his West Indies (1809) celebrated the abolition of the trade. Although slave trading continued, fostered by other European nations, the vicious English slaver ceased to exist at the literary level (and to an admirable degree at the practical level also).[151] Montgomery dismisses the traders as "the spoilers of the west" and "fiends, usurping human form," who freighted their ships with a "felon-cargo" and manned them with a "daemon crew."[152] To the abolition verse writers the slave trader embodied

the most venomous concentration of evil in the whole spectrum of slave grievances. Even a dissolute Jamaican planter might safely be supposed to be nearer heaven than the monster from whom he purchased his slaves.

(6) Broken Ties

The slave was not only wrenched from the idyllic pleasures of Africa, but the whole social and spiritual fabric of his life was destroyed. Being a man of feeling, the Noble African could leave home and loved ones only with pangs of greatest agony.

In his long didactic poem "The Traveller" (1764) Oliver Goldsmith describes the patriotic loyalty all people feel for their homelands. His Negro rejoices in his country, a realistic Africa:

> The naked negro, panting at the line,
> Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
> Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
> And thanks his gods for all the good they gave.
> Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
> His first, best country ever is at home. (ll. 69-74).

Montgomery touches on the same point in the Prelude to the third book of The West Indies (1809). The love of country and of home, he says, has been the same in all ages and among all nations, from "China's garden-fields, and peopled floods" to "the gay Bermudas' isles,/ Where Spring with everlasting verdure smiles" to "Java's swamps of pestilence and wealth," and, of course, to "Albion's . . . beauteous Isle of Liberty." Miss Benger, in her abolition poem of the same year, also describes the strength of the Negro's attachment to his indigenous modes of life.

In the "American Eclogues" the slave Adala looks forward to the reunion death will bring him. He reverses the order of the scenes of parting when he was taken into slavery:

> And in my dreams the vale of peace appears
> And fleeting visions of my former life,
> My hoary sire I clasp, my long-lost wife,
> And oft I kiss my gentle babes in sleep,
> 'Till with the sounding whip I'm awak'd to weep.
> Lift high the scourge, my soul the rack disdains;
> I pant for freedom and my native plains! (I, 1044).

Another dying African describes how

> . . . The ruffians from my close embrace
> Dash'd my fond wife, and tore my clinging race;
> 'Twas then they spurn'd my parents from their knees,
> And scoffing dragg'd me to the whitening seas.[153]

Montgomery graphically describes the complete disruption of African society by the slavers:

> The weak, surpriz'd in nakedness and night;
> Subjects by mercenary despots sold!
> Victims of justice prostitute for gold;
> Brothers by brothers, friends by friends betray'd;
> Snar'd in her lover's arms the trusting maid;
> The faithful wife by her false lord estrang'd,
> For one wild cup of drunken bliss exchang'd;
> From the brute-mother's knee, the infant-boy,
> Kidnapp'd in slumber, barter'd for a toy;
> The father resting at his father's tree,
> Doom'd by the son to die beyond the sea.[154]

The author of "The Captive Negro" (1809) adds a sadistic note to the scene. As the "Christians" tore him from his bride and slew his baby, they laughed. In twenty years of slavery the captive has not forgotten, and memory as well as oppression "rack . . . the Negro's soul with pangs/ Far sharper than his body feels." Death is his only release.[155] Families which were not broken up in Africa were likely to suffer separation when they arrived in the Indies. Yamba describes the sale when she reaches "the destined shore:"

> Drove like cattle to a fair,
> See they sell them young and old;
> Child from mother too they tear,
> All for cursed thirst of gold.[156]

The Negress herself has lost her husband in Africa, and her baby has died on shipboard. James Grahame adds a few more realistic touches to the West Indian slave sale in "Africa Delivered" (1809):

> The crowded haven opens to the view,
> And soon within the pier the vessel lies.
> The remnants of the cargo are borne forth,
> And warehoused, till, with food and drugs vamped up,
> They're fitted for the market; then, led out,
> They prove the misery of a second sale;
> And those few ties of kindred, which by death
> Have not been severed, now at last are torn. . . .
> Dispersed, with eyes unlifted from the ground,
> They take their various ways, to various tasks condemned.
> Most part, with hoe in hand, fill up the ranks
> That in the cane-field toiled, by suffering thinned (III, 78).

The rending apart of families certainly did occur in Africa but was probably not nearly as widespread in the Indies as it would seem from the frequency with which the motif appears in abolition verse. The West Indian planters generally found it to their advantage to keep their Negroes contented. Ultimately laws were passed to forbid separation of families and to prohibit marriage between slaves of different estates. Nevertheless, the notion remained a useful one for sentimental verse-writers who filled their work with anguished Negroes mourning their losses. This stance was assumed in opposition to the numerous colonial apologists who declared the blacks to be wholly incapable of such familial devotion.

(7) The Slave Ship

The slave ship with all of its manifold horrors presented the poets with another useful symbol. James Thomson, who might well be classed as England's first humanitarian poet,[157] pauses in the description of a tropical storm in "Summer" (1727) to digress on the cruelties of the slave trade. The "wondrous waste of wealth" and her "shining ivory stores" mock

Africa's "ill-fated race." He recalls a time when "many a happy isle . . . yet undisturbed/ By Christian crimes and Europe's cruel sons" was free.[158] Then he presents a graphic picture of the shark following in the wake of the slave ship:

> Here dwells the direful shark. Lured by the scent
> Of steaming crowds, of rank disease and death,
> Behold! He rushing cuts the briny flood,
> Swift as the gale can bear the ship along,
> And, from the partners of that cruel trade,
> Which spoils unhappy Guinea of her sons,
> Demands his share of prey. . . . one death involves
> Tyrants and slaves; when straight, their mangled limbs
> Crashing at once, he dyes the purple seas
> With gore, and riots in the vengeful meal.[159]

Eighty years later the shark still attended the becalmed slave ship. James Grahame said in "Africa Delivered" (1809):

> . . . And ere the wind
> Began again to whisper through the shrouds,
> The living scarce were equal to the work
> Of burying the dead: the dying hear
> The frequent plunge, and clasp their hands in prayer
> That their appointed hour may be the next;
> Contending sharks, full many a fathom down,
> Are seen in act of tearing, limb from limb,
> The sinking corpse, that finds a living grave (II, 77).

By 1788 there was a mass of prose material to substantiate the terrors of the Middle Passage and occasional verse-writers drew on these tracts for imagery. Roscoe's slave ship in "The Wrongs of Africa" (1788) sails at dusk into both physical and spiritual night:

> Deep freighted now with human merchandise,
> The vessel quits the shore; prepared to meet
> The storms and dangers of the Atlantic main. . . .
> And all the bright and variegated scene,
> Of hills and groves, and lawns, and reed-built sheds,
> That oft had caught the prisoners' ardent eye,
> Now hopeless of escape, now gradual sunk
> To one dim hue. Amongst the sable tribes
> Soon spread the alarm; when sudden from the depths

> Of crowded holds, and loathsome caverns, rose
> One universal yell of dread despair,
> And anguish inexpressible; for now
> Hope's slender thread was broke. . . .
> . . . Bold, and fierce,
> On high indignant spirit, some their chains
> Shook menacing, and from their lowering eyes,
> Flashed earnest of the flame that burned within:
> Whilst groans, and loud laments, and scalding tears
> Marked the keen pangs of others.--Female shrieks,
> At intervals in dreadful concert heard,
> To wild distraction manly sorrow turned;
> And ineffectual, o'er their heedless limbs
> Was waved the wiry whip, that dropped with blood (49-50).

Wilkinson in his "Appeal to England" (1789) describes "the harden'd merchant, lur'd by lust of gold" branding the captives and packing them into the holds of his ship where

> In loathsome durance sweating side by side:
> Week after week they draw corrupted breath,
> Mid'st filth and fears, darkness, stench and death (14).

An anonymous poet in Gentleman's Magazine enlarges further on the situation. The Negro says he was forced

> . . . from heaven's fair light, and wholesome air,
> To close and noisome prisons of despair;--
> The sick and dying strew'd th' infected ground,
> And ceaseless groans were heard to murmur round.--
> Ah! would the thundering storm had burst to sweep
> The guilty vessel from the weltering deep!
> Joyful I'd leap'd upon the op'ning grave.--

As has already been noted earlier in this chapter, the occasional writer sometimes attempted Negro dialect, thereby introducing a comic element into the makeup of the dying Negro. One such attempt is "The African's Complaint on-Board a Slave Ship" (1793) which elaborates the sentimental theme in this "humourous" mode:

> Here in chains poor black man lying
> Put so tick dey on us stand,
> Ah! with heat and smells we're dying!
> 'Twas not dus in Negro land.

Like his more noble brethren, this slave looks forward to the African paradise:

> De bad traders stole and sold me,
> Den was put in iron band--
> When I'm dead dey cannot hold me
> Soon I'll be in black man land.[161]

Amelia Opie's Negro boy Zambo seeks relief from his heartless Jamaican master Trevannion. He tells Anna, the planter's daughter, of the day that he was snatched from his mother and taken into "de dark, dark ship." He tells his story, not in true patois (which could be moving) but in off-colour English:

> How glad me vas she did not see
> De heavy chain my body bear;
> Nor close, how close ye crowded be,
> Nor feel how bad, how sick de air! . . .[162]

Ebenezer Elliot in "Famine in a Slave Ship" (18--)[163] describes in spectral terms the becalming of the ship. It follows as judgment for the "white demons'" mistreatment of the blacks:

> They stood on the deck of the slave-freighted barque,
> All hopeless, all dying, while waited the shark;
> Sons, Fathers, and Mothers, who shriek'd as they press'd
> The infants that pined till they died on the breast--
> A crowd of sad mourners, who sigh'd to the gale,
> While on all their dark faces the darkness grew pale.
>
> White demons beheld them with curse and with frown,
> And cursed them, from morn till the darkness came down;
> And knew not compassion, but laugh'd at their pray'r,
> When they called on their God, or wept loud in despair;
> Till again rose the morn, and all hush'd was the wail,
> And on cheeks stark and cold the grim darkness was pale.
>
> Then the white heartless demons, with curse and with frown,
> Gave the dead to the deep, till the darkness came down:
> But the angel who blasteth, unheard and unseen,
> Bade the tyrants lie low where their victims had been:
> And down dropp'd the waves, and stone-still hung the sail,
> And black sank the dead, while more pale grew the pale (11-12).

The fierce, hot becalming under a "red firmament" is reminiscent of the plight of the Ancient Mariner's ship, except that no one remains to become a sadder and a wiser man. Instead, "they fed on each other, and drank of the sea,/ And wildly cursed God in their madness of glee!"

In his verses on Grenville in 1810 Southey is keenly aware of the innocence of British behaviour in the matter of the slave trade--after the passing of the bill. No longer are they connected with any of the sordid affairs aboard the slave ships:

> . . . The wrongs of Africa
> Cry out no more to draw a curse from Heaven
> On England;[164] for if still the trooping sharks
> Track by the scent of death the accursed ship
> Freighted with human anguish, in her wake
> Pursue the chase, crowd around her keel, and dart
> Toward the sound contending, when they hear
> The frequent carcass from her guilty deck
> Dash in the opening deep, no longer now
> The guilt shall rest on England.[165]

In "Similes for Two Political Characters of 1819" Shelley likens the disreputable politicians to an assortment of loathsome creatures, winged and four-footed. Into this heterogeneous company enter two familiar accessories of the slave trade:

> As a shark and dog-fish wait
> Under an Atlantic isle,
> For the negro-ship, whose freight
> Is the theme of their debate,
> Wrinkling their red gills the while. . .[166]

Thus, long after the first heat of the literary campaign had passed, the slave ship continued to be an impressive image, having left an indelible mark upon the minds of blacks and whites alike.

(8) Avenging Elements

When British lawmakers proved insensitive or even opposed to the abolition movement, the poets made their appeals to the "Genius of Africa." This godling who reigned through natural laws over the destiny of Africans assumed a rather clearly defined personality as early as 1764 in James Grainger's The Sugar Cane. In the fourth book the poet rests his long-wearied Muse and invokes the Genius of Africa who presides over an Arcadian paradise peopled by pseudo-natives:

> Genius of Afric! whether thou bestridest
> The castled elephant; or at the source
> (While howls the desert fearfully around)
> Of thine own Niger, sadly thou reclinest
> Thy temples shaded by the tremulous palm,
> Or quick papaw, whose top is necklaced round
> With numerous rows of party-coloured fruit:
> Or hear'st thou rather from the rock banks
> Of Rio Grande, or black Sanaga?
> Where dauntless thou the headlong torrent bravest
> In search of gold, to brede thy wooly locks,
> Or with bright ringlets, ornament thine ears,
> Thine arms and ankles. . . (IV, 119).

Nevertheless, Grainger does not regard natural disasters as weapons of the Genius. He describes the "Hurricane's all wasting wrath," the dreadful fiery calms, earthquakes and tidal waves simply as "Nature's agonizing pangs/[which] oft shake the astonished isles."[167] The climax of the "African Eclogue" (1784) comes when "the Gods [of Nature?] are rous'd" and thunder, lightning and earthquake descend simultaneously upon the slave ship which has been set afire by "a warlike chief" of an Oroonokoan cast. From their retreat in the mountains, the lovers salute these divine judgments which consume the guilty and guiltless alike.[168] The fact that the Negro's soul immediately enters the African paradise prevents this situation from appearing to be an injustice on the part of the avenging elements.

Southey's appeal "To the Genius of Africa" (1795) enumerates the many wrongs of Africa's children and rejoices that their protecting spirit has avenged them:

> And thou hast heard; and o'er their blood-fed plains
> Sent thine avenging hurricanes;
> And bade thy storms, with whirlwind roar,
> Dash their proud navies on the shore;
> And where their armies claimed the fight,
> Withered the warrior's might;
> And o'er the unholy host, with baneful breath,
> There, Genius! thou hast breathed the gales of death.[169]

The concept of the Genius of Africa was revived by Leigh Hunt in 1814 when the spirit made a stage appearance with great pageantry in the mask, "Descent of Liberty." That "sable Genius," contented with Liberty's promise to carry through emancipation, disappears into "the upper air" in the last act and returns to warmer lands.

Other Romantic writers who dispensed with the machinery of the Genius still appealed to physical nature to avenge the atrocities of slavery. Coleridge in "The Destiny of Nations" (1796) draws an epic simile based on the avenging-elements theme and also on the belief of Negroes that Death was a passport back to Africa:

> As when the mad Tornado bellows through
> The guilty islands of the western main,
> What time departing from their native shores.
> Eboe, or Koromantyn's plain of palms,
> The infuriate spirits of the murdered make
> Fierce merriment, and vengeance ask of Heaven (442-446).

In his sonnet "To Toussaint L'Ouverture" (1802) Wordsworth celebrates the unquenchable fire of faith in liberty in the pure-blooded African patriot of Santo Domingo who had capitulated to the forces of Napoleon. After resisting the edict for the re-establishment of slavery in the island, the rebel Negro was treacherously arrested and sent to Paris in June, 1802.

After ten months' imprisonment he died, only nine weeks after the publication of Wordsworth's tribute. The poet believed that Nature was a joint-agent with man in the struggle for freedom. This idea seems to be Wordsworth's modification of the avenging-elements motif:

> . . . Thou hast left behind
> Powers that will work for thee; air, earth and skies;
> There's not a breathing of the common wind
> That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

The notion of the punitive functions of Nature prevailed well into the nineteenth century and stimulated public interest in the eccentricities of West Indian weather. It was a particularly convenient weapon for the agitators of emancipation. "The Negro's Complaint" (1823), a broadside cover-page for an anti-slavery petition, spells out the meaning of the disasters clearly, but it has now become the act of God, not of the Genius of Africa. Moreover, Providence has deliberately chosen the hurricane-torn West Indies as the site for the outworking of the wicked experiment of slavery:

> Hark! he answers--wild tornadoes,
> Strewing yonder sea with wrecks;
> Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
> Are the voice, with which he speaks.
> He, forseeing what vexations
> Afric's sons should undergo,
> Fix'd their tyrants' habitations
> Where his whirlwinds answer--no.

The moralistic Montgomery, of course, shares this same view:

> Oft o'er the Eden-islands of the West,
> In floral pomp, and verdant beauty drest,
> Roll the dark clouds of his God's awaken'd ire;
> --Thunder and earthquake, whirlwind, flood and fire,
> Midst reeling mountains, and disparting plains,
> Tell the pale world,--"the God of vengeance reigns."[170]

Shelley, like Byron, finds the present world on the whole contemptibly bad, and tropical scenery does not betray him into admiration where he discovers spiritual ugliness. For him the area is at least deceptive if not vengeful:

> Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
> With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
> Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
> Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed
> Unnatural vegetation, where the land
> Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
> Was Man a nobler being.[171]

In 1829 Thomas Rose gathers up nearly all of the component parts of the "avenging elements" tradition in his lively (prose) account of Morambo and Zilla.[172] As a composite picture of several motifs, the work deserves some particular attention here. The benevolent Guinea chieftain and his wife barter with the Europeans for trinkets, receive the traders hospitably, and finally give the "king of the water-palace" and his crew a farewell feast. The sound of gunfire startles the dancing Africans, and they find themselves betrayed. Their village is put to flames, and they are seized and loaded with irons. Chained to the main-mast, Morambo rages "like a lion . . . in the toils of the hunger." He alternately curses the white man and calls upon the names of his god Orissa and of his wife Zilla. On the fourth day at sea Orissa hears, and "an ominous speck" in the sky explodes into a mighty storm:

> A rushing hurricane swept round the vessel tearing away her sails and cordage, and rocking her frightfully over the abyss which opened in the waters. The thunder roared in one continuous peal, and the lightnings seemed to strike through the ocean to the centre of the earth. Shrieks, groans, and exclamations of despair, and horrible imprecations of vengeance issued from the lower parts of the vessel, where the Africans were confined (539).

The traders decide to cast all of the slaves overboard to lighten the vessel. As the Negroes come up on deck, they accept their fate stoically:

> None struggled with his executioners, or uttered a prayer for mercy. In the pauses of the storm, the splash of their bodies falling into the ocean struck the ear, but nothing more was heard or seen of them (540).

When Zilla reaches the deck, she casts herself with a shriek into the arms of Morambo. The reunion of the royal lovers is marked by a bolt of lightning, apparently directly from the hand of Orissa. The ship bursts into flames; the hatches are closed to prevent the rest of the slaves from swamping the life-boat; and the captain and crew desert the vessel. Finally, the screams from below die away, and Morambo and Zilla alone remain amid the gathering flames. In this situation Zilla certainly lacks Imoinda's self-possession, but Morambo out-Oroonoko's Oroonoko:

> Morambo, still chained to the remnant of the shattered mast, stood like a statue. His folded arms enclosed Zilla. His eagle eye threw a wild indefinite glance over the dreadful scene. He was insensible alike to the tears, the caresses, the shrieks of his beloved (540).

The ship explodes in "a broad flame of light" which darts from the water to the very heavens, and the spirits of Morambo and Zilla are catapulted into the realms of Orissa. The boat crew suffer exposure and starvation and at last begin tossing one another overboard. Those survivors who reach shore are killed by natives. Rose assures us that the tale is memorialized by the Africans who celebrate the powerful Orissa who "stretched his arm to punish the perfidy of the white man, and avenge the wrongs of Morambo and Zilla" (541). The issue of the British slave trade having been long since settled, Rose was at noticeable leisure to concentrate on the artistic use of his materials.

Even in the final phase of the literary campaign of the 1830's the "avenging elements" theme still prevailed, but the motif now became

part of a more elaborate and more romanticized presentation. Speculation on nature and conscience as twin avengers of the Negro race gave rise to visions of terror in keeping not only with the emotional nature of the whole anti-slavery question but also with the romantic taste for the Gothic and the sublime. An unknown poet, impatient with the slow-moving wheels of parliamentary machinery, reverts to the image of the Genius in a passionate outburst. The objects of his visitation are now fully alive to conscience, and the primeval nature god now operates within a sophisticated moral context:

> Imagination paints his [God's] dread descent
> Robed in the terrors of Omnipotence;
> Millions of lightnings throng around his car,
> Each pressing forward, eager to begin
> The task of vengeance on the pitiless fiends
> Who rob thee [the Negro] of thy every gleam of bliss:
> Millions of thunderbolts in either hand,
> (All wildly chanting forth a dismal song,
> And grimly smiling at the monster's [planter's] fear,)
> He grasps, to launch destruction on their heads.
> Before--mad horror spreads her baleful breath,
> And quivering terror gripes the stoutest heart;
> The "undying serpent," conscience, rears her head,
> Thrilling their souls with tones of dissonance;
> While loud shouts of hellish ecstasy
> Seem sounding o'er all a dreadful knell![173]

An anonymous poem, "The Slave," capitalizes on the spectacular in West Indian scenery and on the sublime terrors of darkness at the same time. The corrective hurricanes become a natural part of the scene:

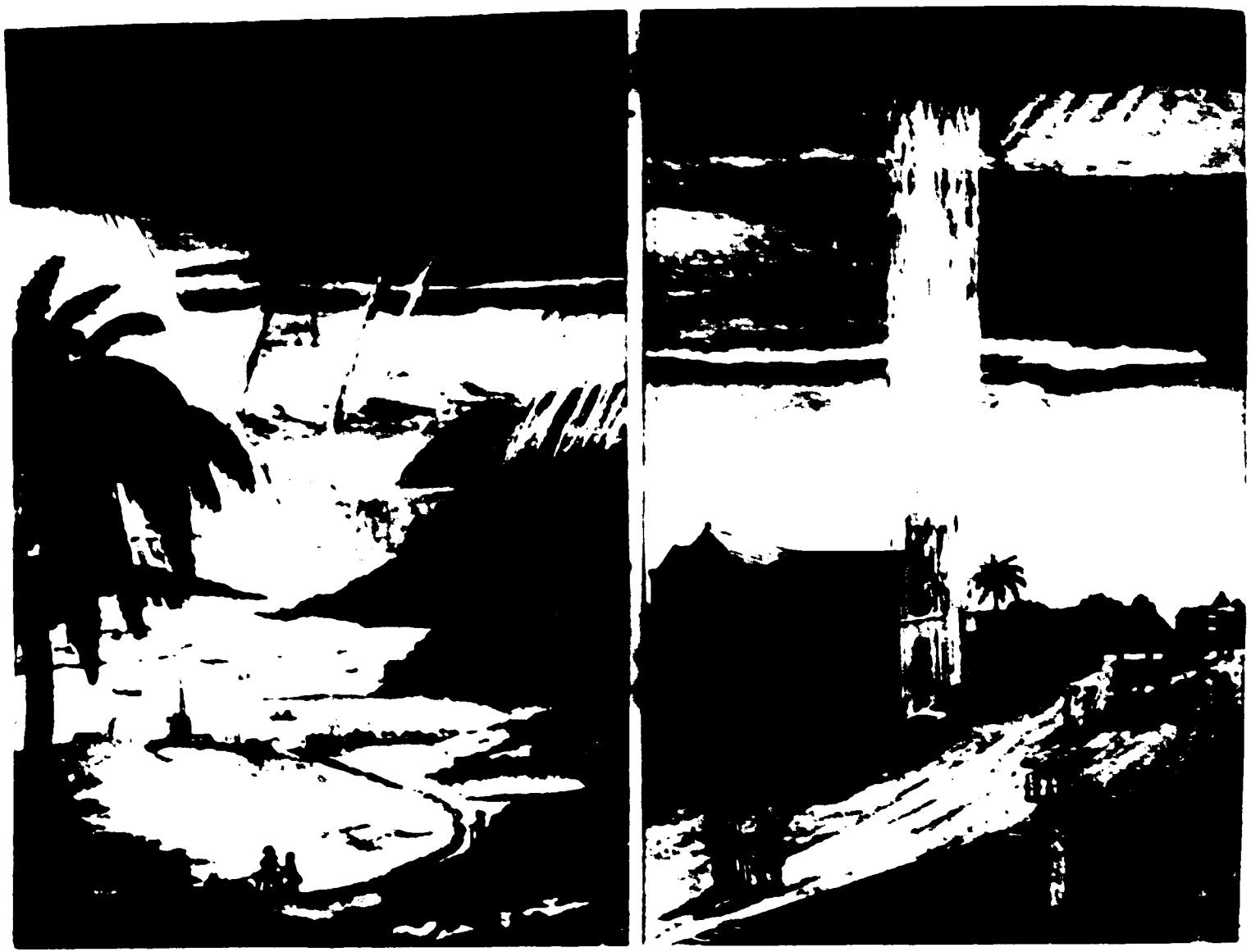
> The protests stern of faithful Providence,
> 'Gainst licensed cruelty and charter'd crime;
> So plain their import, that the world must know;
> For thickest darkness blazon'd with it rolls,
> While thunders speak it, and bolts of God
> Plough it in circles round Jamaica's brow.[174]

Pestilence and fever went hand-in-hand with hurricanes to punish the perpetrators of slavery. In "A Tale of Paraguay" (1825) Southey com-

Plate 7

"Waterspouts at St. Jago de la Vega in Jamaica", in Gentleman's Magazine, LIII (December, 1783), 985.

Huntington Library



Representations of Waterspouts at St. Jago
de la Vega in Jamaica



[illegible] of water pouts at St. Iago

[illegible] in Jamaica

mends Jenner, the discoverer of smallpox vaccine, for staying the plague which tyrannously "dissolved all natural bonds of man." The poet identifies the source of the disease:

> . . . Thy skill hast taught us how to tame
> One dire disease, . . . the lamentable pest
> Which Africa sent forth to scourge the West,
> As if in vengeance for her sable brood
> So many an age remorselessly opprest (Canto I, i).

Yellow-fever was an even more distinctively West Indian sickness. Moved perhaps by the loss of his own parents to the disease, Montgomery graphically describes the throes of a planter stricken with the fever:

> While to the tomb he sees his friend consign'd,
> Foreboding melancholy sinks his mind,
> Soon at his heart he feels the monster's fangs,
> They tear his vitals with convulsive pangs;
> The light is anguish to his eye, the air
> Sepulchral vapours laden with despair;
> Now frenzy-horrors rack his whirling brain,
> Tremendous pulses throb through every vein;
> The firm earth shrinks beneath his torture-bed,
> The sky in ruins rushes o'er his head;
> He rolls, he rages in consuming fires,
> Till nature spent with agony expires.[175]

Although it serves his argument well, we cannot quite agree with Southey's belief that "the pestilence abhorr'd/ Spares the poor slave, and smites the haughty lord." Herein lay a basic weakness in the avenging-elements theory. Hurricanes, earthquakes, and pestilence swept away master and slave, white and black, good and bad with impartiality. They had also decimated the Noble Caribs with the same ferocity with which they dealt with the minions of European civilization. The argument was, nonetheless, effective if proclaimed loudly enough and often enough.

Later poems on this theme managed to make the theory a little more plausible. We may examine one instance. "The Slave-Ship" (1832) seeks the

atmosphere of the "Ancient Mariner" and draws on the motifs of both disease and weather. We are assured (at this late date) that it is a Spanish ship which lies becalmed in the Atlantic under "the red and lurid sun," while

> Deep in the dark and fetid hold
> Six hundred wretches wept;
> They were slaves, that the cursed lust of gold
> From their native land had swept;
> And there they stood, the young and old,
> While a pestilence o'er them crept. . . .
>
> The morning came, and the sleepless crew
> Threw the hatchways open wide;--
> Then the sickening fumes of death up-flew,
> And spread on every side;--
> And, ere that eve, of the tyrant few,
> Full twenty souls had died.
>
> They died, the gaoler and the slave,--
> They died with the self-same pain,--
> They were equal then, for no cry could save
> Those who bound, or who wore, the chain;
> And the robber-white found a common grave
> With him of the negro-stain.

Eventually there remains alive only one old man, still wearing his chain but stalking up and down the ship with vengeful pride--"he laughed to think how Death had baulk'd/ The fetters and whip." During the night a storm breaks and sweeps the ship off course. The slave prays to his African god that the ship might never reach a "Christian realm"--real or spiritual. It is a realization of the traditional slave hope when the ship returns to Africa with its burden of death:

> [The Negro] smiled amidst the tempest's frown,
> He sang amidst its roar;
> His joy no fear of death could drown,--
> He was a slave no more.
> The helmless ship that night went down
> On Senegambia's shore![176]

Death is meted out equally to passengers and crew alike, with one important difference: the white men bear "the negro-stain" to their grave while the souls of the innocent captives are set at liberty on their home shore.

The "avenging-elements" theory has an ancient lineage, for it may be traced back to the Hebraic concept of a direct correlation between sin and disaster.[177] The horrors of the slave system combined with erratic West Indian meteorology and fatal tropical diseases in a tidy cause-and-effect situation. Abolition poets were quick to seize upon this tailor-made motif.

(9) Plantation Milieu

When he once arrived in the West Indies, the Negro offered unlimited possibilities to the abolition poet. No amount of protesting on the part of even the most respectable planters reduced the number of plantation atrocities which enthusiasts found to enlarge upon. One single cruelty exposed in print outweighed a whole lifetime of humane administration elsewhere. Single episodes recurred constantly and in various forms.

Mr. Gregory's two "American Eclogues" (1784) are among the earlier poetic treatises moving from the horrors of the slave trade to those of the slave society of the New World. In the first, "Morning; or, The Complaint," this "Gentleman of Liverpool" contrasts two planters. Narbal had heeded the Quaker injunction to free his slaves and had enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity while "gay his Savannah bloom[ed]." His Negro, Arcona, enjoys the blessings of family life and worships Narbal's God. On the other hand, Adala, the abused slave of his neighbour, wails his complaint to the pre-dawn

sky during a storm. That estate is "scorch'd up with heat, or moist with blood and tears." As the sun rises, Adala is torn between a Christian waiting "for justice on another shore" and a pagan "rushing down yon mountains' craggy steep/ [To] end all my sorrows in the sullen deep." He concludes his complaint with a curse upon "this pallid race whose hearts are bound in steel" and hopes that they may ultimately turn upon each other. Having destroyed themselves, they might then "wake t'eternal anguish in a future world."

The second eclogue, "Evening; or, The Fugitive," is a dialogue between the runaway Zamboia and the more fortunate Mombaze, two African friends who had been separated during a slave raid in Angola. Zamboia recounts his manifold miseries, beginning with the time when the slave-traders tortured and murdered his pregnant wife Melinda before his eyes. Mombaze, on the other hand, has found a "father, not a master" to employ him. The conversation concludes abruptly with the arrival of the "ruffian band" of slave-hunters who arrest "the hapless swain" [Zamboia] and "drag him to his fate." The exact setting of the two "Eclogues" is uncertain, but references to "Pennsylvania's . . . peaceful plains" and Quaker abolition of slavery connect the poems with continental America. Undoubtedly the two good planters are of Quaker persuasion, while the masters of Adala and Zamboia demonstrate all the viciousness of the West Indian-type of proprietor. Even though the "Eclogues" constitute a catalogue of slave-trade atrocities, the fact that there <u>are</u> two good and successful planters in the New World indicates the possibility of amelioration of the slaves' condition without commercial chaos. This viewpoint makes the poems rather unique in the range of abolition verse.[178]

The lash was the most widely publicized piece of plantation equipment. Regulations for its use or prohibition were the subject of long debates in and out of Parliament. It is only natural that propagandistic verse writers should take up the theme of the whip along with all of the rest of the plantation routines. Many English agitators assumed that slaves were called to duty by the lash rather than by the conch-shell horn described by the more picturesque-minded West Indians. Thomas Adney's slave says that he was bought by "a savage planter" who roused him every morning by the lash.[179] Another slave, dying in the canefield says:

> My hours of woe their weary course have run:
> Here my faint limbs have borne the bloody gash;
> Here have I sunk beneath the tyrant's lash:
> But still, while rolling on the parched land,
> I felt the tortures of his ruthless lash.[180]

"Timothy Touchstone's" rabid Tea and Sugar (1792) takes up where the lash leaves off and catalogues the tortures invented by "Creole mercy" for the control of the Negroes. The rhymster's list reads like a versified parliamentary report:

> And often, when the whip is laid aside,
> Some other curious torture is apply'd,
> Such as the Thumb-screw damned instrument,
> A most inhuman, horrid punishment:
> Oh! how I've seen an agonizing wretch,
> With every limb and nerve upon the stretch,
> Caus'd by th' exquisite pain he's made to feel,
> From cruel power and the force of steel.
> Or barbarous Mouth-piece--infernal wrong!
> A plate of iron pressing on the tongue,
> While bars enclose the head, its motions check,
> By padlock fast'ned on the victim's neck,
> Prevents the suff'rer, by imploring cries
> To that avenging God who rules the skies,
> To tell his case--or make his mis'ry known
> To mortal ear; to gentle pity prone:
> No! No! the cruelty is quite refin'd,
> It stops the first, great passage of the mind.

> Bibloes and heavy chains, their limbs confine,
> And Iron-rings, each ancle doth entwine.
> Round their bent necks, are massy collars plac'd,
> While, through each feature, misery is trac'd:
> Some, to these collars hang a galling chain,
> And where they're thought to give too little pain,
> A pond'rous weight, not less than fifty-six,
> West-Indian tyranny, doth soon prefix (13-15).

In addition to these physical abuses we find that the food given to the Negroes likewise helped ensure a declining slave population. Touchstone announces emphatically:

> Their food, if what they eat deserves the name,
> Englishmen, listen! Creoles, blush for shame!
> Consists of putrid-pork, or stinking fish,
> And Horse-beans constitute, their first, best dish (15).

Any thorough examination of these many literary references to plantation atrocities would, of course, be a long study complete in itself. Suffice to say here that the abolition poet who chose to utilize plantation practices to heighten the emotional impact of his work had ample source material on which to draw. In addition to parliamentary reports and surveys by the West India Commission, there was a vast amount of tractarian literature on the subject. During the heat of controversy beleaguered West Indians published letters in the newspapers justifying and explaining in detail the disciplinary measures they took with their slaves. Since these matters were general knowledge, it is not surprising to find that the average Englishman conceived of himself as thoroughly informed on West Indian affairs. He knew that the plantations were pits of iniquity.

(10) The Negro's Moral Nature

Abolition poets as well as other humanitarians were under a heavy obligation to disprove a basic assumption about the Negro which held that he was morally and intellectually inferior to the white man. Indeed, they carried noble savagery to its most moral heights.[181] The planters argued that it was only in removing the slaves from their barbaric land and bringing them into contact with civilized society and Christian belief that they could improve. Abolitionists replied that the degrading state of slavery more than off-set spiritual benefits. The government, as in the Canning Order of 1823, finally decreed that "ample provision . . . be made for the religious instruction of the Negroes" to prepare them for freedom. The dialogue was also closely related to the controversy between evangelical (generally pro-Negro) and Church of England (generally pro-planter) missionary activities in the Indies. In the midst of the debate the poets brought forth the converted Negro, rejoicing in his new-found blessings. But he proved to be a paradoxical figure.

The primitivistic idealization of the Negro had predisposed him to stoicism. That reserve militated against him because it made him appear incapable of feeling and understanding. The heroic, suffering Negro then had to be mellowed into the softer form of the Type 2 slave who would conceivably be receptive to Christian indoctrination. In this latter condition he could also be very articulate about his inner transformation. A pro-Creole poet of 1773 presented one of these "virtuous heathen" testifying to the spiritual benefits which his servitude had brought to him:

'Twas mercy brought me from my Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew.
Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
'Their colour is a diabolic dye.'
Remember, Christians, Negroes, black as Cain,
May be refin'd, and join th' angelic train.[182]

By the 1780's, however, it was more seemly to consider the evangelization of the Negroes as a necessary and beneficial side-effect of slavery, without exalting the slave trade itself as being an instrument of Providence. In "Charity" (1791) William Cowper insists upon the importance of the evangelical estimate of the worth of the Negro's soul. A sentimental regard for the Noble Savage, he finds, is not enough to admit freedom. Religious improvement must be the motive force in bringing about final abolition.

James Montgomery's Moravian background led him to devote much of the last book of The West Indies (1809) not just to eulogies of the great abolitionists, but also to the story of Moravian missions in the New World and to the benefits of missionary endeavour. The Negro in the Indies was "dead in spirit! [a] toil-degraded slave,/ Crush'd by the curse on Adam." But he heard the voice from heaven bidding him to "rise from shame on earth to glory in the skies" (38). The Christian Negro rejects his "daemon-Gods, in hideous forms," and he "wakes to life, he springs to liberty." The poet is careful to stress the missionaries' role in pointing the slaves to the better land but he does not develop the idea further. The missionary crises of the 1820's in Demerara, Jamaica, and elsewhere had not yet arisen and therefore this point had not yet become a public issue. Later Montgomery wrote "A Cry from South Africa" (1828) to celebrate the building of a chapel

at Cape Town for Negro slaves. Here he predicts that slavery must end by reason of its very nature:

> Let Mammon hold, while Mammon can,
> The bones and blood of living man;
> Let tyrants scorn, while tyrants dare,
> The shrieks and writhings of despair;
> An end will come--it will not wait,
> Bands, hooks, and scourges have their date.[183]

What really concerns the poet is the spiritual darkness to which the slaves are doomed, in spite of the fact that they have been "brought to light" in other ways, and he invokes Britain to send forth the gospel.

The evangelical missionary controversies of the 1820's led to a desire on the part of the planters to have the spiritual services of members of the clergy of the Established Church. This preference was not so much due to religious reasons as it was to the generally-held opinion that the latter would be less likely to provoke Negro unrest and to interfere in plantation affairs. Chapman in his long poem on Barbadoe includes a panegyric of the bishop of that island, Dr. Coleridge, and of other men of the cloth in the colony. Such a eulogy permitted a contrasting denuncia-tion of "abject sinners like Smith" and the "maudlin and murderous Method-ist[s]." Conventional abolition pieces occasionally underwent "missionary" editing. An 1820 edition of "The Sorrows of Yamba" (1797),[184] for instance, gave the poem a distinctly evangelistic complexion. Between the eighteenth and nineteenth stanzas another thirteen stanzas are interpolated. They describe the slave woman's encounter with an "English Missionary good" whom she met walking upon the beach with a "bible book in hand" (7). He soothed her with the admonition that it is the Christian's lot "to suffer here below." He pointed out her own evil ways and urged her to forgive her "Mas-

sa's sin." Yamba is "duly baptis'd" and reaches an advanced state of Christian development:

> Now I'll bless my cruel capture,
> (Hence I've known a Savior's name)
> Till my grief is turned to rapture,
> And I half forget the blame (9).

Another five stanzas are added to the conclusion of the original poem to announce the desirability of evangelism in Africa. While the first Yamba looks back to her African home hoping for freedom for her sons and an absence of Britons seeking their blood, the converted Yamba prays that if "some dear Missionary good" should chance to reach her distant home he might guide her husband's soul "to realms above."

For all his moral potentialities, however, we very rarely find a Negro actually noble enough to forgive his persecutors, an act which would be the ultimate manifestation of Christian commitment. Miss Holcroft's "The Negro" (1797) is therefore interesting as an expression of a slave with this advanced concept of the principle of forgiveness. His dying speech, as he lies mutilated under the lash, begins with the traditional story of his removal from Africa by the accursed "Christian race," but he remembers that "the Christians teach faith, hope and love," so he calls upon their God. Unmoved by their oppression, he says:

> While I a nobler course pursue,
> Yes, let me die as I would live!
> Yes, let me teach this Christian crew,
> The dying Negro can forgive.
>
> And if, indeed, that pow're be thine,
> O Christian God! in mercy move
> The people's hearts, by pow're divine,
> To justice, gentleness, and love.[185]

These two stanzas were inserted in the Holcroft original, perhaps by some

evangelical editor who felt that the moral point had not been sufficiently emphasized. Be that as it may, in this poem there is a slave exhibiting a very mature religious understanding, and he is especially remarkable for having appeared on the scene as early as 1797 before the question of religious training for Negroes had become a really crucial issue. We might also note, parenthetically, that when he holds this philosophy the Negro can have no relationship to Oroonoko.[186]

Although the portrayal of forgiving slaves would elevate the suffering Negro to towering heights of nobility, it at the same time would take some of the onus off the planters. If the Negroes actually reached a mental and spiritual condition where they could accept slavery in Christian charity, then the proprietors could continue their villanies with nothing more than the loss of their own private souls, a matter of no great concern, of course. But propagandistic poets were not prepared to allow this literary state of affairs to develop. This picture would not improve plantation routines. Thus we may account for the scarcity of forgiving Negroes. From the viewpoint of the abolitionists it was better that the slaves should live and die in submission, stoicism, or rebellion--anything rather than the spirit of Christian forgiveness.

(11) Death

The notion of death coming to deliver the suffering slave and to open the gates of an African paradise to his soul was closely related to the pseudo-African motif. Slave religion, unmodified, was a mixture of god-worship, magic and faith in spirits. These beliefs predisposed the Negroes to a number of superstitions, many of which were connected with natural phenomena such as thunder storms, lightning and earthquakes.

Their doctrine on the transmigration of the soul, however, is one of the most recurrent motifs we find. It occurs in reputedly historical accounts as well as in literary interpretations of the plantation.

A random survey of the conclusions of several poems concerning suffering Negroes stranded in the West Indies serves to illustrate this perpetual death-wish which white abolitionists imposed upon the slaves. The soliloquies[187] of the slaves reveal joyful anticipation of death and often express explicit faith in transmigration. One wretch casts himself off a cliff overlooking the Caribbean, hoping that his death might be one small blow for freedom.[188] Another says:

> De bad traders stole and sold me,
> Den was put in iron band--
> When I'm dead dey cannot hold me
> Soon I'll be in black man's land.[189]

Miss Holcroft introduces a whip-mutilated Negro:

> Transpierc'd with many a streaming wound,
> The Negro lay, invoking death:
> His blood o'erflow'd the reeking ground--
> He, gasping, drew his languid breath.

His end, of course, is perfectly predictable, and so is the moral tag:

> The suff'rer ceas'd, death chill'd his veins;
> His mangl'd limbs grew stiff and cold;
> Yet whips nor rack inflict the pains
> Men feel who barter Man for Gold.[190]

The Negress Yamba, exiled in the West Indies and parted from husband and child, courts her approaching death:

> In St. Lucia's distant isle,
> Still with Afric's love I burn;
> Parted many a thousand miles,
> Never, never to return. . . .
>
> And when Yamba sinks in death,
> This her latest pray'r may be;
> While she yields her parting breath,
> O! may Afric's land be free.[191]

William Lisle Bowles' "The Dying Slave" (1798) opens with a view of one of "Afric's injured sons" expiring in a canefield. His dramatic monologue, with his sable companions about him, is a vision of idyllic Africa and a hope for "the world's great comforter" who will bring about African freedom.[192]

In a footnote to his Essay on Slavery (1792) Captain Marjoribanks affirms: "I never conversed with any African Negro, who did not seem to consider death as a certain passport to Guinea."[193] Such a primitive notion of transmigration meshed in nicely with the Negro propensity for suicide. This expensive and provoking habit of slaves is one of the few acts common to both the ideal and the actual Negro.[194] Self-destruction became an effective resolution for almost any anti-slavery poem, because it pointed up the heroic character of the slave who preferred death to a life of slavery and dishonour. The suicide might be accomplished under dramatic, even sublime, circumstances. In the second part of Roscoe's "The Wrongs of Africa" (1788) contagion breaks out on board the slave ship, and the slaves are brought up on deck by groups of fifteen to be "aired." Suddenly one entire group throws itself into the sea. The slaves sink in their chains despite the fact that "Avarice flew to shield his treasure!" (63-64). Most literary slave-suicides, however, were more often just a private leaving of the real world of the Indies, by stabbing or drowning. They departed for the idyllic world of the spirit in Africa. Again, the death might be a "protracted suicide," resulting from years of physical abuse and broken spirits.

The paradise envisioned by Wilkinson's dying Negro, as he faints on the hot sand by his spade, is one unpeopled by Christians:

> Since landed here, nine ling'ring moons are past,
> Now death conveys me to my home at last;
> My heart is broke, my miseries all are o'er,
> I close my eyes on this detested shore;
> But closing go where happy blacks repair.
> These cruel Christians sure will not be there.[195]

Sentiment completely takes over in the death of another slave, as he concludes his recital of his miseries:

> With joy I haste to yield my vital breath;
> With joy I view the lifted hand of death;
> Soon shall my sufferings fly before his arm,
> And this torn heart shall taste th' eternal calm.
> . . . He spoke no more!
> His quiv'ring lips had lost their wonted pow'r!
> His eyes were fix'd! he feebly mov'd his head!
> His pulse no longer beat! his spirit fled![196]

Montgomery's picture of the dying Negro in 1809 also suggests the pagan hope of transmigration to Africa:

> Thus spurn'd, degraded, trampled and oppress'd,
> The negro-exile languish'd in the west,
> With nothing left of life but hated breath,
> And not a hope except the hope in death,
> To fly for ever from the creole-strand,
> And dwell a freeman in his father-land.[197]

In her ballad, "The Lucayan's Song" (1808),[198] Amelia Opie applies the longings of the "dying Negro" to his predecessor, the dying Carib. She bases her poem on Bryan Edwards' account of the Spaniards' capture of 40,000 Lucayans. The Indians were decoyed to the European vessels with the promise that they would go to the blissful land inhabited by their departed ancestors. Many of the Indians perished on the beaches of Hispaniola looking seaward in the direction of their beloved islands. The Indian slave grieves for Zama, his "beauteous wife," and his "prattling boy" according to the sentimental formula. From morning until night, "unheeding thirst, fatigue, or pain," he watches and has hallucinations of a

vessel coming to rescue him, of a Spaniard trying to detain him, and of Zama herself at last inviting him to the joys of death.

Nineteenth-century writers generally preferred to clothe the transmigration-to-Africa idea in a more Christian ideology.[199] We see this attempt in the anonymous "The Negro's Prayer" (1817). Although the slave begins as a sun-worshipper, he concludes on a Christian note:

> Fountain of Light, thou ever glorious Sun!
> When I on Earth my erring course have run,
> With some kind Comrades in the realms above
> Let me again be join'd in social Love!
> Let those I leave not always drag the chain,
> Not all, like me, still agonize in pain,
> Not all, like me, lost Liberty deplore,
> Till God, not man, shall guard the happy shore.[200]

An anonymous contributor from Glasgow begins his piece with a violent, heaven-sent tempest in which a slave ship sinks. The soliloquizing slave, the last alive on board, plans not on the traditional African paradise, but on a vague, but seemingly more Christian reward: "Dear shades of my parents I hasten to you,/ Now robed in the glories of heav'n."[201]

Almost invariably death is the Negro's only entrée into happiness. The lovers in the "African Eclogue" (1784), Bura and Zelma, are therefore somewhat unusual in that they remain alive, "in the flesh," to enjoy a return to pseudo-Africa. The anonymous Liverpool poet tells us that "o'er the poop two sable lovers glide" while the "sickly crew" lies in drunken slumber. They hail their "native strand" with pagan joy. The main body of the poem is a labourious dialogue between the pair. We get such staple fare as the slave trader's lustful designs on Zelma and Bura's desire to join the "warlike chief" who is even now in the act of burning the ship still anchored off the African coast. These details of the customary slave

story, of course, are thickly padded with descriptive passages celebrating idyllic Africa.[202] The rest of the Negroes who perish on the ship, however, do not join Bura and Zelma in spirit in the African meadows; rather the "Gods . . . take their souls to peace." This vagueness of destination is unusual in a pre-abolition poem.

The Negro's pleasurable expectations of death led naturally to literary curiosity about the funeral customs of slaves. John Singleton's picturesque West Indian sketches were among the first to dramatize the somewhat repulsive spectacle of a Negro funeral, pointing out the ironic contrasts. For the white man a funeral is a

> Distressful scene for melting hearts to view!
> The wife, disconsolate, her widow'd bed
> Bedew'd with tears forsakes; frantic she runs,
> Lamenting, to her lord's new-open'd grave,
> And, in a storm of passion, plunges in,
> Eager to share his fate, and be interr'd
> Alive with the dear object of her love.
> Or else the lover, prostrate on the turn
> Where all his joy's entomb'd, distracted raves: . . .
> Stopping th' impetuous torrent of his grief,
> That vents its piteous moan, by turns, in vows,
> In pray'rs, and passionate appeals to Heav'n.

For the Negro it is entirely different:

> Ah me! how diff'rently th' untutor'd slave,
> To no philosophy indebted, views
> The obsequies of his departed friend,
> And with his calm deportment puts to shame
> The boasted reason of the polish'd world:
> A moment dries his manly eye, untaught
> To melt at death, the necessary end
> Of all terrestrial things. His creed (the voice
> Of nature) keeps him firm, nay, gives him joy
> When he considers (so the sages teach
> Of Afric's sun-burnt realms) that the freed soul,
> Soon as it leaves its mortal coil behind,
> Transported to some distant world, is wrapt
> In bliss eternal. There the man begins
> With organs more refin'd, to live again,
> And taste such sweets as were deny'd him here,

> The sweets of liberty. Oh glorious name!
> Oh pow'rful soother of the suff'ring heart!
> That with thy spark divine can'st animate
> Unletter'd slaves to stretch their simple thoughts
> In search of thee, beyond this gloomy vale
> Of painful life, where all their piteous hours
> Drag heavily along in constant toil,
> In stripes, in tears, in hunger, or in chains: . . . (11. 418-518).

The funeral procession moves on: "Like gentle waves hundreds of sable heads float onwards." After "six ugly hags" have danced ceremonially, there is an oration by a "sable Archimages" who sprinkles a favourite liquor on the grave. Then the mourners, standing in a ring,begin frantic dancing:

> Thus do these sooty children of the sun,
> "Unused to the melting mood," perform
> Their fun'ral obsequies, and joyous chaunt,
> In concert full, the requiem of the dead;
> Wheeling in many a mazy round, they fill
> The jocund dance, and take a last farewell
> Of their departed friend, without a tear.[203]

In his "Ode on Seeing a Negro Funeral" (1807) Bryan Edwards describes the funeral of the Koromantee, Mahali. He mentions the dancing, jumping, and "many violent and frantick gestures and contortions,"[204] but he is more interested in the "heroick or martial cast" of their funeral songs. In addition, Singleton's "six ugly hags" become "youthful virgins. . ./ Daughters of injur'd Africk." Then "the sable train" moves stoically forward to the grave:

> No tear bedews their fixed eye:
> 'Tis now the Hero lives, they cry:--
> Releas'd from slav'ry's chain:
> Beyond the billow surge he flies,
> And joyful views his native skies,
> And long-lost bowers, again.

The African paradise becomes not only the place for idyllic rest but also for martial glory:

On Koromantyn's palmy soil,
Heroick deeds and martial toil
Shall fill each glorious day;
Love, fond and faithful, crown the nights
And bliss unbought, unmixed delights,
Past cruel wrongs repay.

Nor lordly pride's stern avarice there,
Alone shall nature's bounties share;
To all her children free.--
For thee the dulcet Reed shall spring,
His balmy bowl the Coco bring,
And Anana bloom for thee.[205]

James Grahame in "Africa Delivered" (1809) describes the reversal of values in which a slave mother is "full of sorrow to hear her newborn infant's cry" and in which funerals are scenes of rejoicing:[206]

But what a scene of joy surrounds the grave,
The breach through which the prisoner has escaped!
With songs they celebrate the joyful day!
To mirthful songs they beat the covering sod,
Then in a ring join hands and dance around (III, 82).

The holiday atmosphere of the slave funeral brought the rite under the same suspicion as Christmas and Easter festivals.[207] In actual practice the sentimental theme of death seems to have been subject to light treatment by the slaves themselves because of the joyous hope of transmigration. For the Englishman it was otherwise. For him the rationale of tragic death was the undebatable and irreversible destruction of something which has demonstrable or potential value here and now. The planters valued the slave's life for material reasons; the emancipationists, who were mainly religionists, evaluated the slave's soul at a high rate. In either case, the death of the slave was the climactic experience to which humanitarian appeal could be made. In abolition literature then the use of death for sentimental and pathetic effect is largely the white man's creation.

It should also be noted here that for the colonist the West Indies became the "white man's grave" with staggering frequency. This hazard contributed materially to the planters' apparently carefree view of death. In his post-emancipation description of the Indies, Richard Madden remarks of his residence in Jamaica:

> The stranger soon gets accustomed to the dropping off of acquaintances. He finds such events make little impression on the survivors; and men 'eat, drink, and be merry,' in proportion, it would seem, to the extent of the hazard that tomorrow they may die. It is surprising with what indifference the sudden removal of persons with whom we have been well acquainted, is regarded in countries like Jamaica. . . . I was lately absent from my residence about ten days, and, on my return, I heard of the death of three of my neighbours, whom I had left in health and spirits. . . . What surprised me was [that] . . . I scarcely heard their names ever mentioned again. . . . The tendency is natural to underate the importance of familiar events.[208]

This fact of colonial life explains much of certain flippant Creole attitudes.[209]

(12) The Prophetic Vision

While climatic theories of race prevailed, it was difficult to envision a Golden Age to come for Africa. James Thomson, for instance, believed tropical climate to be destructive of social sense. While his work is largely decorative and while he indulged his fancy in his African idyls, he still remained devoted to civilized Europe. He was capable of seeing a very different Africa than that to which literary "dying slaves" hoped to return:

> . . . The parent sun himself
> Seems o'er this world of slaves to tyrannize,
> And, with oppressive ray the roseate bloom
> Of beauty blasting, gives a gloomy hue
> And feature gross--or worse, to ruthless deeds,

> Mad jealousy, blind rage, and fell revenge
> Their fervid spirit fires. Love dwells not there,
> The soft regard, the tenderness of life,
> The heart-shed tear, the ineffable delight
> Of sweet humanity: these court the beam
> Of milder climes--in selfish fierce desire
> And the wild fury of voluptuous sense
> There lost. The very brute creation there
> This rage partakes, and burns with horrid fire.[210]

There was a painfully real Africa which was too often visible behind the brittle facade of pseudo-Africa. It could not be ignored.

Later poets ever optimistic, however, sought to make adjustment for Africa's wrongs by promising her all the benefits of the Enlightenment. James Grainger concludes the fourth book of The Sugar Cane with a vision of a Golden Era for the Negro race not only in Africa but also in the West Indies. The latter idea is a particularly bold one. Wilkinson concludes his "Appeal" (1789) with an address to the clergy, the colleges, the House of Commons, the King, and "ye British Dames," to use their influence for abolition.[211] He then points these benevolently-disposed people to a day of universal brotherhood, when useful arts will be developed, religion will be reformed, and the light of science will shine--all in Africa. Britons then should seize the opportunity to encourage "the arts of peace" there now:

> . . . Man is nature's delegated Lord;
> To lift his lot above the beasts that die,
> His God commission'd Justice from the sky,
> Humanity, and mild Religion down,
> His life to govern and his end to crown (24).

In 1809 James Montgomery's prophecy of the future forecast not only the day when "the Negro towering to the height of man" would be accepted within the pale of civilization, but also to the time when "the dusky race" should blend "their spousal currents into one" and enrich the blood of

Briton's veins, even as did the Romans, Saxons, Gauls and Danes.[212] At that time, the "sweet shores beneath the balmy west/ Again shall be the islands of the blest" (IV, 44). Africa with her wounds healed would enjoy the benefits of commerce and religion; the millenium would be ushered in and "Paradise restor'd" (IV, 46). The final section of James Grahame's "Africa Delivered" (1809) also looks forward to the restoration of Africa's human rights and the emancipation of the Negro's spiritual and intellectual powers.

Very few, if any, of the "dying Negro" poems could conclude on a hopeful note because they were concerned with the woes of a single death-bound individual. Nevertheless, a surprising number of longer abolition works did end on an up-beat. The vision of a millenial age for Africa tied in neatly with the satisfying imperialistic concept of the glorious role of England in the dissemination of freedom, government, science, the arts, and wealth all around the globe. This patriotic vision, however, lent itself more readily to the stage than to lyric poetry, as will be seen in Chapter IV of this study.

The abolition of the slave trade and the final emancipation of the Negro remain monuments to the enterprise and vision of men of letters and humanitarians working together. Their assurance of the ultimate triumph of good was the same as that which has buoyed up the faith of reformers in all ages. It was this absorbing social purpose, however, that prevented the emergence of "great" poetry on the subject. In fact, these twelve motifs which served propagandistic purposes so effectively became the clichés which frequently detracted from literary excellence. Although they recur

in drama and fiction, it is in verse-writing that they received their most persistent and concentrated treatment.

The bloated poetic diction of most of the work and the constant appeals to sentimentality and false sublimity quickly weary the twentieth-century reader. Nevertheless, these poets of abolition and the Indies have earned a place in literary study by reason of their historical contribution to a major phase of English romanticism--that is, humanitarianism.

III

THE POETS' VIEW OF THE PLANTER AND HIS ISLANDS

The image which was of primary interest to the poets was that of the suffering Noble Negro. We shall now find that their characterizations of the planter and the Caribbean islands were almost wholly negative up to the post-Emancipation period. The sentimental, reformed Creoles abounding in the moralistic prose fiction of the period are absent from the verse-writing, and the attempts at romanticizing the landscape which certain colonial poets made were off-set by the abolitionists. The latter generally used the vagaries of West Indian topography and climate as punitive measures against the slave proprietors. The ultimate romanticizing of the landscape took place in the informal prose sketches and travelogues of the early Victorian period.

A. The Creole, a National Scapegoat

Several striking "characters" of the West Indian Creole appeared at the height of abolition activity at the end of the eighteenth century. It was convenient for the poets to use the easy-going and sometimes erratic planter as a whipping boy. Although it may be argued that such portraits

are too prejudiced to be considered reasonable characterizations, nevertheless the verse writers confirmed in the mind of the Englishman a combination of traits which can only be classed as "Creolian."

The Quaker squire, Thomas Wilkinson gives us an early sketch of the Creole whom he had seen in England and about whose evil doings he had read. His planter is so loaded with sin that he must assuredly endure torments of conscience:

> The planter now beneath the morning beam,
> Degrading thought! drives forth his human team:
> Yokes the soft neck of many a weeping maid,
> And sable youth from native lawns betray'd.
> Hard is the toil amidst those sultry climes--
> Oh, spare the whipe for cattle and for crimes: . . .
> Thou man of wealth! whose chariot shakes the plain,
> Who deal'st in heart-achs, misery, and pain,
> I'll speak to thee; though thy face and actions cry
> "I live myself, and value not who die;
> Tell me no more what other hearts endure,
> For my heart achs not while my wealth's secure."
> Ah, thou art poor! the moment must arrive,
> [When thou must die]. . .[1]

It is noteworthy in this abolition poem of 1789 that the use of the lash is still tolerated "for crimes."

Anna Laetitia Barbauld also gives an extremely harsh picture of the Creole in her "Epistle to William Wilberforce" (1791). The planter is undone by the very slavery he has fostered:

> Each vice, to minds deprav'd by bondage known,
> With sure contagion fastens on his own:
> In sickly langours melts his nerveless frame,
> And blows to rage impetuous Passion's flame;
> Fermenting swift, the fiery venom gains
> The milky innocence of infant veins;
> There swells the stubborn will, damps learning's fire,
> The whirlwind wakes of uncontroul'd desire,
> Sears the young heart to images of woe,
> And blasts the buds of Virtue' as they blow (8-9).

Nor is her female Creole any more attractive.

> Lo! where reclin'd, pale Beauty courts the breeze,
> Diffus'd on sofas of voluptuous ease;
> With anxious awe, her meanial train around,
> Catch her faint whispers of half-utter'd sound;
> See her, in the monstrous fellowship, untie
> At once the Scythian, and the Sybarite:
> Blending repugnant vices, misally'd,
> Which frugal nature purpos'd to divide;
> See her, with indolence to fierceness join'd,
> Of body delicate, infirm of mind,
> With languid tones imperious mandates urge;
> With arm recumbent wield the household scourge;
> And with unruffled mien, and placid sounds,
> Contriving torture, and inflicting wounds (9-10).

Mrs. Barbauld's Creole portraits certainly bear little resemblance to Cumberland's genial West Indian and are more in line with the prose diatribes of Bage and Moreton.[2]

In 1791 Captain Marjoribanks produced an even more frenzied indictment of the Creole in his Essay on Slavery.[3] He "humbly inscribed" his verses "to planters, merchants, and others concerned in the management or sale of Negro slaves," but his humility ends with the title page. After covering the main philosophical tenets of the slavery question, he devotes most of his energy to the Creoles and their ingenious devices for torture and punishment.[4] The Captain finds that absentee proprietors are drawn from among the frauds, deserters, desperadoes, and vagabonds who make up the corps of plantation book-keepers and who have absolute control over the "subordinate, sad, sable crew." These rude, uncultivated men, so subject to "boist'rous passions," make "an independence" in the Indies and then hasten back to England:

> In mild Britannia many of you dwell,
> Where tortur'd slavery ne'er is heard to yell.
> You fly wherever luxury invites
> And dissipation crowns your days and nights;

Plate 8

"A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress." Artist, Captain J. G. Stedman; engraver, William Blake. In Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam . . . from 1772 to 1777 (1796), II, 56.

Huntington Library



"A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress"



"A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress"



"A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress"



"A Surinam Planter in his Morning Dress"

The dire reflection never meets your view,
What pangs, what bloodshed, buy those joys for you! (18)

Ostentation is followed by financial ruin and a return to the West Indies, where the corruption of local politics permits the renegades survival when all else fails. The Negroes, of course, pay the price for his extravagances:

At home in splendour [he] hurries to appear.
London, or Bath,[3] with lying fame resounds,
"A fresh Creole!--worth Fifty Thousand Pounds!"
Though ten he knows the limit of his store,
He must keep up the figure first he wore.
Thoughtless he riots in the gay career;
And finds himself half ruin'd in the year.
Duns grow importunate--and friends but cool;
Back to Jamaica comes the bankrupt fool.
First goes the Pen [Villa]; the Polink [farm for provisions and stock]; worse and worse

At last the sugar-work is put to nurse.
He strives with Jews and Marshals long--in vain--
Once thus involv'd, he ne'er gets clear again.
Worse ev'ry year his situation grows,
'Till in a prison, he concludes his woes'
Unless, perhaps, a seat at Council-board,
A sure protection should for life afford;
Or in the lower house enacting laws--
The law eluding faster than he draws.
But while he parries off from year to year,
The Negroes' sufferings are indeed severe!
For their vain lord the most supplies to raise,
Ill fed, hard work'd; they know no resting days!
Perhaps to greedy jobbers lent on hire,
Who from excess of toil their gain require; . . .
Or seiz'd by marshalls, and to market brought;
By various masters families are bought.
Amidst their unregarded sighs and tears,
The wife and husband fall to different shares (19-21).

The author of Tea and Sugar, or the Nabob and the Creole (1792) attacks both colonial classes (East and West) for enriching themselves by oppressing and inhumanely using the inhabitants in their respective fields of operation. He introduces the villain of the second canto immediately:

> Now in his native pride the CREOLE view,
> SLAVERY'S Prime Minister, of swarthy hue
> And sickly look; of various tints combin'd,
> A true epitome of a jaundic'd mind;
> By whom the plunder'd, from Old Afric's shore
> Are made to sweat, nay bleed through every pore;
> Whom every generous feeling hath defy'd
> To whom sweet, social love, is unally'd;
> Whose flinty heart, but more obdurate mind,
> No Woe can penetrate--No Virtue find (11-12).

The follies and villainies of Creoles never lost their appeal throughout the period. They not only served abolitionist purposes but also satisfied the public's interest in the morbid and the eccentric.[6]

Creole ladies are reserved for special denunciation. Their "strange inventions" for punishment surpass the best which the ingenuity of their husbands can create. Much of their vindictiveness stemmed from jealousy, which, it must be admitted, was not wholly unjustified, for many of their rivals in love were blood relatives:

> A jealous mistress finds a ready sham
> To give a handsome maid the sugar dram; [an equal mixture of rum and sugar]
> With her fair hands prepares the nauseous draught,
> And pours the scalding mixture down her throat;
> Closely confin'd for mad'ning nights and days,[7]
> Her burning thirst no liquid drop allays . . .
>
> What dreadful partings, for revenge's sake,
> Do furious females in a moment make!
> Their fav'rite maids, with whom from youth they grew
> As fine their shape, and scarce less fair their hue:
> For some slight error, some unlucky change;
> A tea-cup broken, or a lover's glance;
> Fell all the fury of their quenchless flame;
> And meet the punishment of pain and shame.
> The parent's, sister's, ev'ry tender tie--
> All are dissolv'd--and round the Isle they fly (16-17).[8]

Undoubtedly more than one of the Captain's fellow-soldiers from the Stony Hill barracks above Kingston had gone forth to woo a Creole beauty, but he had no hankering for a West India heiress; he knew the vixen too well:

> Can I behold yon mansion with a smile?
> Unwilling labour rear'd the splendid pile!

> Can all Lucinda's outward charms inspire
> A tender feeling, or a soft desire?
> When ev'ry gem the cruel creature wears
> Was bought by streams of blood, and floods of tears (27).

Marjoribanks apparently did not very judiciously keep his opinions to himself, for he tells us: "I have frequently had these, and the like knock-me-down [humanitarian] arguments dashed into my teeth:"

> Here a rough planter looks profoundly wise:
> "A pretty fellow this, indeed!" he cries.
> "What would your conduct be, I'd gladly know,
> Should Chance on you some hundred slaves bestow:
> Pray would you set the worthless rascals free?
> Or would you keep them--just the same as we?" (25).

For all his evangelistic zeal, the Captain does not answer this legitimate question. Being himself "an erring man," he even admits he could be corrupted by avarice. Yet the hypothesis would not make a wrong right. He also recognizes that as a militiaman in Jamaica he may be justly charged with helping "to bind the men he wishes free," but he declares that he is only doing his patriotic duty. Guilt lies with Britain's lawgivers! This was the identical argument which the planters themselves were using to explain the dilemma in which they found themselves.

A rollicking satire on Creole lust appears in A Short Journey in the West Indies.[9] For the year 1790 its humour is unusual. "The Simkiniad" thumps through four cantos portraying the amour of Simkin, a young Creole, and Elmeria, his "sable Goddess" of the Congo. The mock-heroic element appears immediately in the invocation:

> Sing, heavenly Muse! Old Homer's page
> Treats of a puff to Simkin's rage: . . .
> 'Twas for his slave the Grecian bray'd,
> And Simkin for a Congo maid" (I, 137).

The Negress is earthy and eager:

Her ebon skin, her country cuts,
Her bushy curles, and slender guts,
Her pouting lips, which Cupid's lurk in,
All join to set his blood a working. . . .
The black Elmeria too had snor'd,
And, snoring, dreamt she was ador'd
By one who came t' her all in white. . . . (I, 138).

"Elmeria, oh! how I love you!"
"Massa (says she) me lub you too,"
"But, ah! Elmeria, woe is I!
In Stella's chamber you must lie" (II, 143).

But the hero is frustrated by the prudishness of his sister Stella who owns Elmeria:

As the Sun rose, so did our Hero,
With thoughts as foul and black as Nero:
He fir'd his pipe with sulk most solemn,
And cock'd his feet against the column: . . .
"Curs'd be the day! thrice curs'd he said,
That mammy brought a girl to bed" (II, 140).

Yet Stella has now ordered Elmeria out of her chamber, because "she fling[s] about too much perfume," and Simkin not only gains his object but even finds a defender in his mother, Molbrinia, who is not to be outdone by the mother of Achilles:

"My son, she said, the girl's for thee,
"Tho', in exchange, I offer three,
"Let fairer nymphs my Simkin snarl at,
"My son shall have his jetty harlot" (IV).

The racy young Creole is, however, finally brought to judgment by his sister, and he makes amends by ordering Elmeria brutally whipped and then bathed in salt water. This horrible conclusion is a curiously apt abolitionistic turn to a basically humourous work.

Still preoccupied with Creole vice, the anonymous author of The Simkiniad also offers "The Devil's Auction"[10] as a compendium of sin in the tropics. In the infancy of the world, he says, hell was in the tropics,

and it was there "that the wicked tough old boy" held court. His bait for catching men consisted of "rich valued stones," fragrant trees and shrubs, and gold. Beneath the surface, however, was "black envy, malice, hatred." Having successfully betrayed mankind, old Nick repaired to a "roomier palace" where men-turned-devils could eventually come. It was agreed that "some trinkets to corrupt the minds" should be left behind, and "glib Belial" was appointed auctioneer. Among the goods offered for sale at this tropical "Vanity Fair" were commodities particularly suited to West Indian needs: "a deceitful Phiz," "the art of growing rich," good luck, the knack for bargaining, cattle whips, and so on. For these articles the planters, overseers, and Creole ladies exchanged modesty, truth, common sense, pity, and charity. With active trading all the way the sale concludes with Satan gloating over the "delicious fuel" gained for feeding the "joyous hellish fire." The hero of the allegory is a foreshadowing of C. S. Lewis's more sophisticated character of Screwtape.

Bryan Edwards treats Creole vice in more poetic terms in his celebration of "the Sable Venus" who is the idealization of feminine Negro beauty. His is the casual manner of the white colonial commentator. Venus is a combination of the idyllic African and "Monk" Lewis's "tropic Genius,"[11] touched with realistic references to the empire of love over which she presides in the West Indies. There the white men are her slaves. To the "sable Queen" Edwards says:

> The prating FRANK, the SPANIARD proud,
> The double SCOT, HIBERNIAN LORD,
> And sullen ENGLISH own
> The pleasing softeness of thy sway.[12]

Her ivory "car" is inlaid "with ev'ry shell of lively shade" and fitted

with a golden throne, coral footstool and amber wheels. She is attended by peacocks, ostriches, flying fish and dolphins. The tropical Venus yields little to the Florentine masterpiece:

> Her skin excell'd the raven plume
> Her breath the fragrant orange bloom,
> Her eye the tropick beam:
> Soft was her lip as silken down,
> And mild her look as ev'ning sun
> That gilds the COBRE stream [a Jamaican river].
>
> The loveliest limbs her form compose,
> Such as her sister VENUS chose,
> In FLORENCE, where she's seen;
> Both just alike, except the white,
> No difference, no--none at night,
> The beauteous dames between (35).

The arrival of this "fond ruler of the cripsed race" is hailed in Jamaica, although some more respectable Creole gentlemen in the welcoming party preferred to remain anonymous:

> PORT-ROYAL shouts were heard aloud,
> Gay St. IAGO sent a crowd,
> Grave KINGSTON not a few:
> No rabble rout,--I heard it said,
> Some great ones join'd the cavalcade--
> The Muse will not say who (35).

The worthy historian finds the Sable Venus embodied in some of his own favorite slaves:

> Do thou in gentle PHIBIA smile,
> In artful BENNEBA beguile,
> In wanton MIMBA pout;
> In sprightly CUBA'S eyes look gay,
> Or grave in sober QUASHEBA,
> I still shall find thee out (38).

Edwards' verses are a light but frank admission of one facet of black-white relationships in the West Indies, and they come as a pleasing diversion amid the welter of humanitarian poetry where men took themselves and everyone else in such deadly earnest.

The almost constant slander of the Creole in the abolition period was undercut by the disturbing fact that many a planter managed to live a pleasant and altogether enviable life which he concluded by dying peaceably in his own bed. Since this prosperity was hard to equate with justice for his often enumerated crimes, it was necessary to point out that at least in his last moments of life he must assuredly suffer the torments of the damned. Although this Faustian motif appeared quite regularly wherever the Creole raised his unholy hand to smite a slave, we shall take only James Montgomery's impassioned sketch of the planter in The West Indies as an exemplar. This poet predicts psychotic problems long before he reaches his deathbed agonies:

> Lives there a reptile baser than the slave?
> --Loathsome as death, corrupted as the grave,
> See the dull Creole at his pompous board,
> Attendant vassals cringing round their lord;
> Satiate with food, his heavy eyelids close,
> Voluptuous minions fan him to repose;
> Prone on the noonday couch he lolls in vain,
> Delirious slumbers rock his maudlin brain;
> He starts in horror from bewildering dreams,
> His bloodshot eye with fire and frenzy gleams,
> He stalks abroad; through all his wonted rounds,
> The Negro trembles, and the lash resounds,
> The cries of anguish, shrilling through the air,
> To distant fields his dread approach declare.
> Mark, as he passes, every head declin'd;
> Then slowly raised,--to curse him from behind.
> This is the veriest wretch on nature's face,
> Own'd by no country, spurn'd by every race;
> The tether'd tyrant of one narrow span,
> The bloated vampire of a living man;
> His frame,--a fungus form, of dunghill birth,
> That taints the air, and rots above the earth;
> His soul;--has he a soul, whose sensual breast
> Of selfish passions is a serpent's nest?
> Who follows headlong, ignorant and blind,
> The vague brute-instinct of an ideot mind;
> Whose heart, midst scenes of suffering senseless grown,
> E'en in his mother's lap was chill'd to stone;

Plate 9

"The Voyage of the Sable Venus from Angola to the West Indies." Sculpted by W. Grainger. In Bryan Edwards' History of the West Indies, 4th ed., II, 32.

Huntington Library

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> Whose torpid pulse no social feelings move;
> A stranger to the tenderness of love,
> His motley haram charms his gloating eye,
> Where ebony, brown, and olive beauties vie;
> His children, sprung alike from sloth and vice,
> Are born his slaves, and lov'd at market price:
> Has He a soul?--with his departing breath,
> A form shall hail him at the gates of death,
> The spectre Conscience,--shrieking through the gloom,
> "Man, we shall meet again beyond the tomb" (III, 29-31).

The idea of "spiritual vengeance" prevailed on into the nineteenth century. In 1814 the spirit of Toussaint appears to threaten the white man's conscience and to remind him of his death day:

> All but Fear and Shame [will] thy couch forsake,
> A voice like mine shall pierce thy death-cold ear,
> A form like mine thy sinking-eye-balls sear.
> Avenging scorpions round thy breast shall twine,
> And thy departing soul remember mine.[13]

Next to his cruelties his extravagance and vanity were among the Creole's most publicized characteristics. Richard Steele's anecdote of the two rival beauties is one of the earliest "creative" commentaries we have on the extreme foppishness which Creole society fostered.[14] The resentment and competition between Phillis and Brunetta were first the talk of London society. Animosity built up until "their Nights grew restless with Meditation of new Dresses to outvie each other, and inventing new Devices to recall Admirers who observed the Charms of the one rather than those of the other on the last Meeting." Finally, Phillis snared an eligible Barbadian bachelor:

> It happened, that Phillis one Day at public Prayers smote the Heart of a gay West-Indian, who appear'd in all the Colours which can affect an Eye that could not distinguish between being fine and tawdry. This American in a Summer-Island Suit was too shining and too gay to be resisted by Phillis, and too intent upon her Charms to be diverted by any of the laboured Attractions of Brunetta. Soon after . . . Phillis was carried to the Habitation of her Spouse in Barbadoes. . .

> [where she was] attended by numerous Slaves, fanned into Slumbers by successive Hands of them, and carried from Place to Place in all the Pomp of barbarous Magnificence.

To Brunetta this success was intolerable, and "she at last succeeded in her Design, and was taken to Wife by a Gentleman whose Estate was contiguous to that of her Enemy's Husband." Then with the conflict transferred to a colonial setting "these irreconcileable Beauties laboured to excel each other." The distance from the Paris and London centers of fashion was no deterrent to Creole love of display.[15] Phillis negotiated with a local merchant to let her have access to "all Goods for Apparel" when his next ship arrived, and she forthwith appeared "in a Brocade more gorgeous and costly than had ever before appeared in that Latitude." Thus challenged, Brunetta applied to the merchant's wife who procured for her a remnant of the same silk. She was then able to even up the account with Phillis in a conclusive way which no colonial belle could have countenanced for a moment:

> Brunetta was now prepared for the Insult, and came to a public Ball in a plain black Silk Mantua, attended by a beautiful Negro Girl in a Petticoat of the same Brocade with which Phillis was attired. This drew the Attention of the whole Company, upon which the unhappy Phillis swooned away, and was immediately convey'd to her House. As soon as she came to herself she fled from her Husband's House, went on board a Ship in the Road, and is now landed in inconsolable Despair at Plymouth.

The store of vanities belonging to Creole women was probably not much greater than that of their London counterparts.

Caribbeana (1731-1738) was for a few years the colonial's Gentleman's Magazine--an early flash of Barbadian belles-lettres which was not to be matched in West Indian journalism for many decades to come.[16] An anonymous Barbadian submitted two poems to Caribbeana in 1738, "The Barbados

Beauties" and "The Belles of Barbados." These tributes to Creole beauties show the influence of Pope's second Moral Essay, "Of the Characters of Women," which had been published three years earlier. The first poem includes the names of many prominent Creole families, and from the lavish praise given to the daughters of these houses emerge several conventional but still rather Creolian physical attributes: the "well-turn'd Shape" of Miss Gordon, the "pretty Languish" of Mrs. C---ly, the "luxuriant Eye" of Miss Ball, the musical abilities of Miss Bignal, and the "marble Skin" of Miss Malry. The poet concludes his fifty lines of compliments on a justifiable note of uncertainty:

> The Writer . . . is in doubt whether he ought rather to make an Apology to those Few of the Fair whom he has presumed to point out, or to the Many he has quite omitted; to the former for having said so little, and the latter for saying nothing.[17]

As it appeared three months later, the island bard would have done better never to have brought up the subject at all. Widespread complaints from over-looked females about the colony forced him into the writing of "The Belles of Barbados," a much longer and more elaborate effort in which many more local names were included. The harassed poet announced that he had omitted "the married Fair," deeming them to be "Diamonds of private Property," and he further protected himself by assuring the "Fair unsung" that if they had again been overlooked, it was only because his Muse was yet unacquainted with them while they shone like unknown "sparkling Comets." The "Barbadian Nymphs" who inspire the poet and "tune [his] golden lyre" are generally presented with the classical allusions of the day. In speaking of the enslaving powers of Love he drifts into a local simile with Shakespearean overtones:

> . . . We hug our Chain,
> And doat upon the Authors of our Pain;
> With eager Steps pursue, whene'er they fly,
> And fondly play with Darts by which we die;
> So Africk's raging Sons to Phoebus turn,
> Adore his Rays, and in adoring burn (295).

His third stanza which celebrated the new pre-eminence of colonial society was no doubt a comfort to the entire island of Barbados:

> Britain long reign'd pre-eminent in Charms,
> And British Eyes subdued, like British Arms;
> Till wide, at length, her Conquests spread, and far,
> She gain'd new Colonies--the Crop of War!
> Then peopled Places which her Valour won,
> Freezing in Snow, or broiling in the Sun.
> Soon the created Settlements grew strong,
> And greatly vied with those from whom they sprung;
> Dar'd with their Mother-Isle themselves compare,
> Their Sons now valiant, and their Daughters fair (294).

Being one of the oldest English colonies, Barbados was more advanced politically and socially than most of the other islands at this time (1740). The feeling of national identity evidenced in the prose and verse writings in Caribbeana was not to be matched elsewhere in the British Caribbean before the latter part of the century.[18] Meanwhile, in Jamaica the Creole belles of St. Jago de la Vega were not to be outdone by Barbadian beauties. The anonymous planter-poet of "The Pleasures of Jamaica" devotes the conclusion of his verses to a roster of island ladies:

> The well-drest nymphs in beauteous crowds resort,
> Such might add lustre to the British court:
> The trembling muse, struck with distant awe,
> So bright a circle scarce presumes to draw.[19]

Presumptuous or not, the poet eulogizes by name the "nymphs who adorn the shining ball." Among the names are familiar colonial connections of the island--Beckford, Portland, Philips, and Tryon. The resemblance of this listing of Creole women to that of the Barbadian versifier is unmistakable. Both poems appeared in 1738.

The Creoles were not entirely without their literary champions even at home. A few extenuating circumstances attended the make-up of Creole character. The emigration of Europeans to the Indies was frequently involuntary and unpleasant. There are several broadside ballads of the Restoration and early eighteenth-century on the subject of the kidnapping and selling of both men and women into slavery in Virginia and the West Indies. In them the "servants" complain of starvation, worn clothes, straw beds, and the privation of drinking water instead of beer. Women also had to take their turns "at Plow and Cart." There was a unanimous desire to return to England.[20]

Even the amassing or inheriting of an estate could be a dubious benefit. Susanna Blamire (1747-1794) describes in "The Nabob" the return of a colonial, thirty years absent, to his "ancient pile." The pathos of her poem touches on a tender point which apparently very few other poets at home ever thought to examine in connection with the flamboyant colonials. Their stereotyped, brash exteriors seemed to destroy the possibility that they might be possessed of such a refined and inward sensibility as nostalgia. Miss Blamire's nabob seeks a "weel-kenned face" within his "ivied tower," but, finding only his aged retainer Donald tottering about, he "closed the door, and sobbed aloud,/ To think of auld langsyne!" He then sought to revive his old life in the "gayest scenes" of the town and in the singing of the new songs, but to no avail. He tells his new neighbours with whom he can establish no rapport:

> When time has passed and seasons fled,
> Your hearts will feel like mine:
> And aye the sang will maist delight
> That minds ye o' langsyne![21]

Susanna Blamire's gentle old nabob is truly an anachronism on the eighteenth-century literary scene.

In Caribbeana a voyager to Barbados in 1720 voices his sentiments upon leaving England. He leaves the "vain Joys that Albion yields" for "Raptures in Monimia's Arms." The poem is simply a statement of longing for reunion with his Creole love, but it does reveal a joyful and positive anticipation of going to the Indies which is unusual.[22] Soame Jenyns wishes a coquette bon voyage on her going to the West Indies. She "scorns, in one small isle confin'd,/ To bound the conquests of her eyes," so

> From our cold climes to India's shore
> With cruel haste she wings her way,
> To scorch their sultry plains still more,
> And rob us of our only day.[23]

The poet predicts that when her love-conquests have vanquished all the Indies, then she must like "Philip's son" weep for more worlds to conquer. This flippant attitude to West Indian residence is unusual, outside of the writings of the planters themselves. They retain a more or less consistent loyalty to their island homes. Once a colonist made the commitment of becoming a Creole rather than an absentee, such a carefree attitude became a rather essential part of his mental make-up.

Since the greater proportion of verse written on the West Indies was in an abolitionist vein, we cannot expect to discover any truly "benevolent planters" in it. Poetry became so saturated with sentimentalism and the Noble Negro was so apt a hero for it that there was little room left for a white Creole in the field. Colonial interests tended to use the stage and the novel rather than verse-writing for their purposes.

Although it is difficult to find verse in favour of the Creoles

and although even at the best of times their vanities come to the surface, it is only fair to allow the planters to give an estimate of themselves. Dr. James Grainger of St. Christopher's had the first truly West Indian Muse, and for that reason he has earned a substantial place in this study. He was a controversial figure. His friend Dr. Johnson reviewed his tour de force, The Sugar Cane (1764), in the London Chronicle,[24] and pronounced some of his work "very well done." On the other hand Tobias Smollett, who himself had very close West Indian connections,[25] declared in the Critical Review that Grainger was only a man writing "for the wages of a journeyman mechanic."[26] Nevertheless, the doctor was a shrewd, sensible, well-informed man who had made himself master of his subject, the West Indies.

His long, instructive poem on sugar cane was written at such an early date that his giving the public a righteous planter was still both credible and acceptable. The doctor admitted that because of the "ill-judged avarice" of some proprietors, "solstitial beams/ Shot yellow deaths [yellow fever] on the devoted land" (the "avenging elements," in other words). But this behaviour, he claimed, was unusual for the British islands. After a discourse on the planting of myrtle hedges for shade, the poet and his Muse launch into a characterization of a good planter. It is the rags-to-riches dream of the hundreds of honest European immigrants who were forced to try their fortunes in the New World:

> Yes, good Montano; friend of man was he:
> Him persecution, virtue's deadliest foe,
> Drove, a lorn exile, from his native shore;
> From his green hills, where many a fleecy flock,
> Where many a heifer cropp'd their wholesome food;
> And many a swain, obedient to his rule,
> Him their loved master, their protector, own'd.
> Yet, from that paradise, to Indian wilds,

> To tropic suns, to fell barbaric hinds,
> A poor outcast, an alien, did he roam;
> His wife, the partner of his better hours,
> And one sweet infant, cheer'd his dismal way (I, 61-62).

Montano begins as a small tenant, apparently in St. Kitts. (The Jamaican plantations were mainly in the hands of large holders.) As he wields his hoe under "western Phoebus," his garden produces yams, cassava, tanies (a root vegetable), and soursop for his temperate needs, while commerce with ginger and tobacco brings wealth for buying "better land and slaves." Next he takes up the growing of cotton, cacao, and coffee. Because of his virtue he prospers, even "while drought kill'd his impious neighbor's grove."

> In time, a numerous gang of sturdy slaves,
> Well fed, well clothed, all emulous to gain
> Their master's smile, who treated them like men;
> Blacken'd his cane lands: which with vast increase
> Beyond the wish of avarice, paid his toil (65).

Furthermore his mules are spared from "cramps and sudden death," and his Negroes are seldom if ever sick.

> His gate stood wide to all; . . . the poor,
> Th' unfriended stranger, and the sickly shared
> His prompt munificence: no surly dog,
> Nor surlier Ethiop, their approach debarr'd (65).

His latter days are passed in tranquility. At last, having spent an afternoon in the tamarind-vista advising his "eldest hope" on the management of the estate and on the rewards of righteous living, he dies:

> . . . Ere the swift-wing'd zumba-dore
> The mountain desert started with his hum;
> Ere fire-flies trimm'd their vital lamps, and ere
> Dun Evening trod on rapid Twilight's heel,
> His knell was rung;
> And all the cane lands wept their father lost (66-67).

In this paragon we can discern hardly any of the features of the stock

Creole of either stage or fiction. His diligence, temperance, and humility are strange, and only his hospitality has a familiar ring. Montano appears to be only a flash in the pan, for the poets were not to portray his likeness again.

Grainger's "bad" planter, Avaro, appears in Book III, but he is not guilty of the usual Creole sins: extravagance, licentiousness, or intemperance. He is simply a fraudulent businessman, and only an unprincipled French planter. "False Gallia's sons, that hoe the ocean-isles," we are told, "mix with their sugar loads of worthless sand,/ Fraudful, their weight of sugar to increase." (Such guile, of course, is "far . . . from Britain's honest swains!") Of this one single alien opportunist the poet says:

> Fortune had crown'd Avaro's younger years
> With a vast tract of land, on which the cane
> Delighted grew, nor ask'd the toil of art.
> The sugar-bakers deem'd themselves secure
> Of mighty profit, could they buy his canes;
> For whiteness, hardness, to the leeward-crop,
> His muscovado gave. But, not content
> With this preeminence of honest gain,
> He baser sugars started in his casks;
> His own, by mixing sordid things, debased.
> One year the fraud succeeded; wealth immense
> Flowed in upon him, and he bless'd his wiles:
> The next, the brokers spurn'd th' adulterate mass,
> Both on the Avon and the banks of Thame (III, 110-111).

Landscape painting not characterization, however, is Grainger's forte, and we shall consider this feature of his work in the next section of this chapter.

Hoping not to "disgrace those climes" which Grainger had lately sung, John Singleton also sang of the West Indies. His estimate of West Indian life is mingled with only shallow pity for the slave, as we have

already seen.[27] In General Description (1767) he guardedly corrects his Creole neighbours. Like many other serious colonials, he deplored the absenteeism of his fellow Creoles. Having described the assets of Barbados, he advises West Indians with a lust for travel:

> Happy inhabitants of these bless'd climes,
> Did they but know their own delights to prize!
> Then peace would smile, and joy attend their steps;
> Nor would they envy European youths:
> Then would they rarely quit their native soil,
> To barter peace for equipage and state.
> Our northern follies let them wisely shun
> Our foibles 'scape; the vicious joys they yield
> (At midnight hour most sought) true joys destroy:
> As when they croud to join the giddy herd
> Of noble sharpers and polite buffoons,
> Knaves, fools, and sycophants together mix'd,
> By equal turns, the prayers and the prey: . . .
> Joy dwells not there, no pleasures enter in;
> True happiness from the detested group
> Flies with expanded wing. . . . (11. 196-218).

Young Creoles are counselled to avoid "the fatal snare,/ That spoils ye of your beauty and your health" and to "turn from such pernicious scenes" to the "sportive, harmless rites" which youths "throughout the far-fam'd western ind perform." The first book concludes with a description of a barbecue which is accompanied by the most virtuous love-making and most chaste dalliance among the young people. When the poem was published in England in 1777, Britons no doubt had some difficulty reconciling these blameless teenagers with the prodigal offspring of West Indians which were to be found about London and Bath.

Feeling unworthy to call upon celestial aid, Singleton in the second book invokes the "pow'rful genius of these fertile isles" to carry him through a digressive trip covering the Leeward Islands. The third and fourth books continue the picturesque travelogue, interspersed with

natural history and tales. Singleton finds the colonists in an altogether idyllic situation:

> Thou guardian angel of this western ind,
> Beneath the shadow of whose anxious wing
> The blest inhabitants of these fair climes
> Taste life's best comforts, unallay'd with pain,
> And, strangers to those various ills that waste
> Europe's sons, feel their soft hours glide on
> Indulgently in elegance and ease . . . (IV, 1-7).

Basking in the warmth of planters' hospitality, the poet appreciates not only a high degree of physical comfort but also a satisfying cultural life among them:

> To me another Paradise appear'd
> Gardens and palaces in mingled scenes
> Rose to my view, and each a villa seem'd
> Of some proud lord . . .
> Me thou receiv'd'st, with arms extended wide,
> And thro' a series of indulgent years
> Steep'd me in bliss complete; each day was crown'd
> With happiness, each night with soft repose. . . .
> Joyful I sat, and with the jovial group
> Of friends select, laugh'd the short hours away;
> Or, when by music's soft attractive pow'r
> Impell'd, we tun'd our instruments to joy,
> High roll'd the tides of social pleasure then (IV, 46).

Singleton's charges against the Creole ladies are comparatively mild. He is disturbed by their custom of giving their infants out to black wet-nurses because he considers the Negro race morally inferior and one of the "plagues" of the islands. He warns that the children

> . . . with the milky draught,
> The num'rous vices of the fost'ring slave
> Deep they imbibe, and with their life's support
> Draw in the latent principles of ill (IV, 415-418).

He suggests obliquely that Creole women may be unbecomingly vicious in their treatment of blacks. They should not teach their children to "wantonly indulge a savage joy/ To practice torments on the hapless slave."

They should also intercede to save Negroes from the vengeance of their planter husbands:

> Whene'er the wretch, stretch's on his parent, Earth,
> Or to the stake fast bound, his pain endures
> Of flaggelation dire, be far away,
> And, if you can't prevent, urge not his fate (IV, 445-448).

But Singleton's humanitarianism actually does not advance much further than this very elementary stage. Although he recommends humane treatment of the slave and in doing so indirectly condemns some of the Creole extravagances, one gets the impression that the poet is constantly aware of the very close proximity of his Barbadian friends and that he wishes, therefore, to fulfil his humanitarian duties with as little pain as possible:

> Whene'er the slave a venial crime commits,
> Th' hard'ning lash of public justice spare:
> With gentle hand a mild correction deal,
> For cruel treatment steels the stubborn mind,
> And frequent stripes a callous skin create.
> Think not I mean to banish from the land
> Correction's useful stroke; or that the wretch
> For heinous crimes unpunish'd shou'd remain:
> Yet to the fault the punishment adapt. . . .
> But, above all, no needful food with-hold,
> And, parsimonious, stint the toiling slave,
> Whilst you in pride and superfluity
> Wallow content, nor heed th' servant's wants. . . .
> Oft have I seen th' unthrifty master shine
> In gay magnificence, and pompous show,
> Whilst the poor slave, who labours to support
> The wild profusion of his costly joys, . . .
> For the bare life-sustaining morsel pines (IV, 571-580).

To the Creole men Singleton's Muse next speaks, "intent on Reformation's arduous task." For all their many pleasant ways these "sons of Caribbean lands" must here stand corrected by one of their ardent supporters. Although they ought to be aroused from their "destructive slumber" and "odious lethargy," it is their taste for "the false lure of Æthiopic charms" that concerns the poet primarily:[28]

Wherein consists their beauty or their grace?
Perhaps the dark complexion of the slave
The eye enjoys, and in an aspect foul
Wanton delights, enraptur'd to behold
Deformity of features, shape and soul;
Detested composition! made more vile
By th' unsightly fashion of their garbs:
Or does the sable miss then please you most,
When from her tender delicate embrace
A frouzy fragrance all around thee fumes?
Can such intice? For shame! the vice reform.
But above all, your marriage contracts keep,
Nor from the nuptial bed, at midnight hour,
With hasty steps depart, and leave forlorn
The pining fair, thro' the long night to sigh,
Torn with heart-rending jealousy and love!
O! strange infatuation of the soul!
Can youth and beauty claim no pow'r to please,
Nor virtuous love assert it's empire here?
Or, can the frightful Negro visage charm,
Thro' vague variety, or wanton lust,
Whilst the blind fool an angel's bosom quits,
To pillow in a fiend's unnat'ral arms,
Where the fond master oft succeeds his slave? (IV, 528-551).

Nor does Singleton find a liason with a fair mulatto any less repulsive:

Nor is the blame less just, as some may think
Tho' the low spark the tawny shou'd prefer
To shining jet: Alas! that tawny draws
Its copper hue from such an odious source,
As Heav'n ne'er pointed out to nobler souls,
Form'd to be blest with elegant desires,
And to communicate the virtuous joy
To objects truly worthy of their love (IV, 552-590).

Singleton was a dedicated apologist for the West Indies whose moralistic admonitions are indicative of the ills of colonial society. Because his work came two decades before the abolition turbulence, we may regard it as a more or less unexaggerated picture of Creole behaviour.

Grainger and Singleton preserved several Creole "folk tales" in the sentimental tradition.[29] These owe their West Indian distinctiveness primarily to their island settings and little else. "Bryan and Pereene: A West Indian Ballad"[30] of St. Christopher's proved to be one of the more

durable tales in that it received a nineteenth century parody. The ballad is sentimentally tragic, but the demise of the hero is highly unconventional with a distinctly tropical cast. Twenty-year-old Bryan has been "a long, long year, one month and day" in England where "ladies sought his hand." With rather un-Creolian faithfulness, he has not allowed his thoughts to stray from his Pereene, "the pride of Indian dames," and the embodiment of charms which "the old world never saw,/ Nor oft, I ween, the new." Upon the return of Bryan's ship Pereene, "in seagreen silk so neatly clad," hies down to the "palmy shore" to wave to him with the handkerchief he gave her as a parting token. Thus completely assured of her virtue, he joyfully leaps overboard and swims to the beach. But disaster strikes:

> Then through the white surf did she haste,
> To clasp her lovely swain;
> When, ah! a shark bit through his waist:
> His heart's blood dyed the main!
>
> He shriek'd; his half sprung from the wave,
> Streaming with purple gore,
> And soon it found a living grave,
> And, ah! was seen no more.

Pereene, naturally, dies away in the arms of her companions, and now her tomb is annually decked with "fair, fresh flowerets" each May morning by maidens who wish their lovers to be spared a like fate (a fairly unlikely eventuality.)

It is not surprising to find that as the early Victorian sense of humour and love of word play began to flourish, such a moist ballad as Grainger's sentimental tale of Bryan and Pereene should be travestied. Thomas Hood wrote his "Sally Simpkin's Lament, or, John Jones's Kit-catastrophe" in 1834.[31] He introduces the poem with a cartoon depicting a

swordfish-like shark and the severed body of Jones, captioned "Sea Consumption--Waisting Away." The verses consist of Jones's parting words to Sally, concluding with:

> Alas! death has a strange divorce
> Effected in the sea,
> It has divided me from you,
> And even me from me! . . .
>
> One half is here, the other half
> Is near Columbia placed:
> Oh! Sally, I have got the whole
> Atlantic for my waist.
>
> But now, adieu--a long adieu!
> I've solved death's awful riddle,
> And would say more, but I am doomed
> To break off in the middle!

Perhaps it is well that the dedicated Dr. Grainger did not live to see this parody on what he intended as a touching tale of the Creole love. He was also spared Hood's numerous other satires, both verbal and visual, on the West India Question. To the modern and non-sentimental reader, however, even the original account of the episode is not without its humour.

Matthew "Monk" Lewis found his Negroes fascinating rather than noble. In his relations with them we read the character of the good planter. His Journal is punctuated with verses memorializing his impressions of Jamaica during his residence there from 1815 to 1817. Although usually an absentee landlord, he was an amiable and humane one. His poem "Landing" (January 5, 1816) describes his feelings upon again reaching "Jamaica's burning beach" after two months at sea. He is pleased most of all with his welcome from one particular dusky beauty.[32]

> It [Love] beam'd on cheek of sable dye'
> No matter, since 't was woman's eye!

> Each phrase the tortured language broke;
> Enough for me--'t was <u>woman</u> spoke (69).

Although Lewis pays general homage to all women, the worst of whom he finds "possest/ of more virtues than of Men the best," he does not spell out the exact nature of his relationship with his slave women. And, lest some might think him a lascivious planter, he assures us that he is forty years old and that "No eager glance, no heighten'd dye/ Blush'd on my cheek, or fired mine eye" (68).

The day following his arrival in Jamaica was celebrated by the Negroes as a festival; they ate a couple of heifers, drank as much rum and sugar as they could hold, and were allowed all the noise and dancing they could create. Lewis had no qualms about his comfortable relationship with his Negroes:

> A dog grows attached to the person who feeds and makes much of him; and as they have never experienced as yet any but kind treatment from me personally, it would be against common sense and nature to suppose that my negroes do not feel kindly towards me (105).

Two weeks after his arrival one of his blacks, Peter, ran away with a "buckra girl" named Sally. When she had spent his money, she left him. He returned to the plantation begging forgiveness and reinstatement. Lewis recounts the episode in his rollicking, dialect verses entitled "The Runaway." There is no suggestion of punishment, and the beloved Massa only counsels him:

> "Well, boy, for this once I forgive you!--but mind!
> With the buckra girls you no more go away!
> Though fair without, they're foul within;
> Their heart is black, though white their skin.
> Then Peter, Peter with me stay;
> Peter no more run away!" (106).

Three months later Lewis was on his way back to England. His faithful

Plate 10

A satire on the apprentice system in "The Black and White Question," By Thomas Hood in Hood's Whimsicalities in Prose and Verse, with Original Illustrations by the Author (n.d.), 224.

Huntington Library



APPRENTICE ON LIKING.



APPRENTICE ON LIKING.

slave Yarra (whose "sable boy" he had cured of a disease) comes to see him off and wish him well:

> Poor Yarra comes to bid farewell,
> But Yarra's lips can never say it!
> Her swimming eyes--her bosom's swell--
> The debt she owes you, these must pay it.
> She ne'er can speak, though tears can start,
> Her grief, that fate so soon removes you;
> But One there is, who reads the heart,
> And well He knows how Yarra loves you! (197).

She thanks him for having left his "British pleasures" to come and "view our isle" and for crossing the wave "through care for Afric's sons and daughters." She also assures him: "Your wealth's not given by pain and grief,/ But hands that know, and hearts that love you" (198). Lewis is "the good planter" arriving, in residence, and in departing. He embodies in himself, he would have us know, the attainable virtues of the benevolent proprietor. And since there were so few to celebrate the West Indian planter, he was forced to characterize himself. This was a measure which lent his work a degree of authenticity.

In Barbadoes. A Poem (1833) Chapman describes the white society of his island as being characterized by the same virtues and vices as flourished at "home" in England. The Creoles are alive to love, and the dark-eyed damsels of the Indies are among the most beautiful daughters of Eve:

> Fair are the villas, trim the gardens round,
> Where oft in covert are the Graces found;
> Where bright-limbed beauty loiters oft and strays,
> And Love, insidious, many an ambush lays.

Although Chapman claims that he could sing of many happy homes graced by all the domestic virtues, he prefers to tell the tragic tale of Maria who "in her dawn of life,/ A blushing bride and fond devoted wife" came to

Barbados. When she was unable to give her husband a child,he became "sated of her charms" and neglected her. Meanwhile, Maria concentrated on the rearing and nurturing of "one young companion" who "shared her lone bed [and] her widowed hours beguiled." Upon reaching womanhood, however, the girl became the "wanton paramour" of Maria's husband. Upon discovering the affair, the victimized lady turned into a raving lunatic and was put away in a plantation cottage. In time she became a disfigured, toothless hag, her "fierce senseless eyes" flashing madness:

> There scarcely tended, scarce with food supplied,
> Music, observance, watchful care denied. . . .
> Torn from her chamber, from her husband's hall,
> Maria rages in that boarded stall!
> Unhappy one! the negro who goes by
> Shakes his crisped head, and gently heaves a sigh;
> The stranger wonders at the open shame,
> And stops to ask the screaming maniac's name.

Meanwhile, life went on at the Great House. The sight of carriages going by her door and through the garden stirred vague recollections in her distracted mind:

> Gay sounds are heard within the lighted halls;
> The listening leaves the melody enthrals;
> The calm'd zephyr pauses as he flies,
> And mingles with the strain his softest sighs;
> The wakened lizard leaves his bushy bed,
> Climbs to the lattice, and erects his head.
> Carriage on carriage passes by her door--
> She starts, she shrieks, and falls upon the floor. . . .
> A chord was struck, and answered; light was there--
> Such festive lights, such music in the air,
> When first by her beloved husband's side,
> She passed that lodge a blushing, blooming bride.

While it was Chapman's consistent purpose to defend the colonials,[33] the lust of Creole men could not be denied, therefore it colours even this sympathetic tale. Although the sufferings of Maria verify the patience and virtue of Creole ladies (as delineated by such spokesmen as historian

Bryan Edwards), the behaviour of her husband is deplorable and could do little to endear his kind to the public.

By 1835 with emancipation past the efforts to blacken the characters of slave-owners ended. To most intents and purposes the horse was dead, and people were content that the flaying should cease. At this time Robert Nugent Dunbar published his long, picturesque work describing "the isles of the Sun" he had loved in the days of his "golden youth" there. In The Cruise; or, A Prospect of the West Indian Archipelago he includes a Creole love song to Clara, a "transatlantic maiden." He celebrates her dramatic darkness and paleness. (The latter condition fifty years earlier had been described as "sickliness"):

> Sweet Clara, of the raven hair,
> The jetty eye, and graceful air,
> When last I left green Albion's strand,
> I thought not, in this torrid land,
> To look on any thing so fair
> As thou, that has the houri's hair.
>
> What though the tropic's tyrant heat
> With lilies strew the rose's seat,--
> The forehead's gems more brightly shine,
> The fairer in their transparent shrine;
> O'er the pure white, in sabler pride,
> The brows in jetty contrast glide;
> And conscious eye, and ebon fringe,
> Exult in their intenser tinge.
>
> Let blooming England's crimson touch
> Its charm on captive hearts imprint:
> It steals not to the soul as much
> As thy pure snow's ethereal tint.
> The clime, that pales thy tender cheek,
> Teaches thy starry eyes to speak;
> And fiercest suns can never strip
> The scarlet from the vermeil lip. . . .
>
> O! lovelier than the silver foam
> That mantles round thine island-home;
> Or crystal moon, that clothes by night
> Thy palmy bower with diamond light!

Like glossy sables lull'd to rest
On white Siberia's fleecy vest,
So on thy brow, serenely fair,
Lie the black braids of silken hair. . . .

Health laughs from cheeks of blushing glow,
But soul beams from the brow of snow;
The suns that blanch the ivory skin
Make Feeling's altars bright within;
And Sensibility's soft flower
Is nurtured by the fervid hour. . . .

Thus in a matter of some five decades the Creole lady turns from an insipid and vicious minx to a delicate creature of heavenly sensibilities. But she still spends her evenings at the dance, for we find that she has lost none of her traditional love of pleasure. "The freshening breath" of evening restores the languid Creoles, one and all. Outside the Great House each tree becomes "a lustrous living chandelier" with "insect-lamps" to light the gala occasion. The poet entreats Prudery not to criticize "the harmless passion of the island maid;/ all day secluded by a sword of flame . . ." (XXXIX) as she gives herself up to the night's entertainment:

In many a wide saloon the lamps are bright;--
Youth follows music through the mazy dance;--
And now the tropic daughter's keen delight
Plays in her smile, and flashes in her glance;
The listless days the joys of night enhance;
Rising from languid Noon's enerving dreams,
Earth's stars come forth with those of heaven's expanse
And the sky's lustres shed their diamond gleams
On fairy feet, that glance like their own twinkling beams (XXXVIII).

By the mid-nineteenth century the sins of the Creole had been transmuted into mere foibles.

On the whole we have found a much bolder and more direct invective on the planter in poetry than on stage. The reason for this difference is no doubt due to the fact that the versifier wrote from the safety of his closet rather than amid the front-line turbulence of the playhouse.

It is in prose fiction, however, that the Creoles come in for their most persistent analysis.

B. The West Indian Landscape

An appreciation of the romantic and aesthetic beauty in the West Indian landscape increased in proportion to the waning of anti-slavery activity. The Indies were so tainted with the corruption of slavery that it became almost impossible to discern aesthetic values there. Our search for descriptions of beauty (apart from scientific observations) in travel narratives prior to the nineteenth century is almost fruitless. Instead, we find rocky soil, impenetrable forests, insects, inedible fruit, mortal fevers, destructive hurricanes, and vexatious and brutal Negroes. Humanitarians simply could not conceive of the evils of bondage as co-existing with natural loveliness. What energy they expended on landscapes was devoted mainly to the idyllic beauties of Africa, whence the hapless slaves had been torn. Even many of those persons who by reason of personal residence in the Indies were forced to admit the charms of the Caribbean islands and the picturesqueness of life there diluted their reluctant praise with accounts of natural disasters which even the most loyal West Indian could not easily gainsay.

It is interesting to note that Christopher Columbus on his first voyage to Cuba at a time when Negro slavery was not a burden on the public conscience was able to describe the scenery in the most effusive terms in a letter to his King:

> The banks of the rivers are embellished with lofty palm trees, whose shade gives a delicious freshness to the air,

> and the birds and the flowers are uncommon and beautiful. I was so delighted with the scene, that I had almost come to the resolution of staying here for the remainder of my days; for believe me, Sire, these countries far surpass all the rest of the world in beauty and conveniency.[34]

Even in the seventeenth century while black slavery was yet in its infancy, Andrew Marvell and Edmund Waller were still able to sing cheerfully of the beauties of Bermuda--the best-known western island at the time. Andrew Marvell's "The Emigrants" (1681) celebrates the arrival of Sir George Somers and his shipwrecked colonists in the "remote Bermudas" in 1609. The scenery is described in both religious and idyllic terms:

> He lands us on a grassy stage,
> Safe from the storms and prelates' rage.
>
> He gave us this eternal spring
> Which here enamels everything,
> And sends the fowls to us in care,
> On daily visits through the air.
>
> He hangs in shades the orange bright,
> Like golden lamps in a green night; . . .
> And in these rocks for us did frame
> A temple where to sound his name.[35]

Waller's "The Battle of the Summer-Islands" (16--)[36] concerns an episode in which two whales were beached on the coast. The poet delays his story to devote the first canto to a description of the beauties and material advantages of Bermuda. With an eye to the pleasures of the table and the virtues of commerce which make these "precious fruits" available to Englishmen at home, Waller elaborates on the "huge lemons" and orange groves, "sweet palmitoes" for wine, figs which "unplanted through the fields do grow," birds' eggs from the rocks, melons, sweet grapes, "candy'd plantains, and the juicy pine." Beyond these are other natural resources also:

> Th' Hesperian garden boasts of none so fair:
> Where shining pearl, coral, and many a pound,
> On the rich shore, of amber-gris is found.
> The lofty cedar, which to heaven aspires,
> The Prince of trees! is fuel for their fires:
> The smoke, by which their loaded spits do turn,
> For incense might on sacred altars burn (71).

Moreover, in Bermuda one can approach as near to immortality as is possible within the limits of this mortal flesh:

> [Clothing] not for warmth, but ornament, is worn: . . .
> So sweet the air, so moderate the clime;
> None sickly lives, or dies before his time.
> Heaven sure has kept this spot of earth uncurst,
> To shew how all things were created first (71-72).

Carried away with his vision, the poet desires to leave his dull northern home and go where under the constant patronage of Phoebus his "hoarser throat" might develop into a melodious poetic voice:

> Oh! how I long my careless limbs to lay
> Under the plantain's shade; and all the day
> With amorous airs my fancy entertain;
> Invoke the Muses, and improve my vein!
> No passion there in my free breast should move,
> None but the sweet, and best of passions, love (72).

The colonial gentleman who wrote of "The Pleasures of Jamaica" in an "Epistle to his Friend in London,"[37] in 1738 was also spared the necessity of apologizing for the existence of slavery and thereby ruining his enjoyment of the pastoral life and idyllic landscape of the island. In reply to a friend who has enquired as to how he passes his time, "debarr'd the pleasures of the park and play," he enumerates the colonial joys which "are easy, natural and few." Among them are the quaffing of the "social bowl" which in turn combines with the "lively scene" to kindle fancy and "provoke the muse;" conversing on cane-growing and methods of getting treasure from the "Spanish mine;" welcoming the arrival of

ships from home; and taking a siesta in the midday heat. Having enlarged on the "nat'ral dainties which this Isle affords," he moves on to an examination of the landscape which exhibits elements of both the picturesque and the sublime:

> Each rural object gratifies the sight,
> And yields the mind an innocent delight;
> Greens of all shades the diff'rent plants adorn,
> Here the young cane, and there the growing corn
> In verdant pastures interspers'd between,
> The lowing herds, and bleating flocks are seen (158).

From his estate in what is now Kingston he sees "a vast ridge of circling mountains bound,/ Fair Liguanie." An early morning journey through St. Thomas and up the valley of the Rio Cobre provides other romantic delights, especially where the river

> . . . wantonly in loose meanders plays;
> Then forcing way 'twixt 2 vast mountains height,
> With pleasing horrors strikes th' amazed sight.
> The flood in constant view the trav'ler cools,
> And o'er a thousand rocks the torrent rolls;
> Forming from each a beautiful cascade,
> Whilst the high banks project a gloomy shade;
> Then washing rich Savannah in its way,
> It hastes with glad precipitance to sea (214).

Here the faithful Negro sees "his lord . . . and in his way endeavours how to please." This he can do by simply participating in the "pleasant . . . labours of the mill." The poet is well content with his sugar estate and has found in it the new El Dorado:

> So shall our wealth with wonder still be told,
> And sugar works preferr'd to mines of gold (158).

This early poem is refreshingly "non-defensive" and wholly free from abolition pressures.

Bryan Edwards also sings of Jamaica, "the beauteous isle and genial clime." As a young man he undertook to write a West Indian Georgic

in four books,[38] but when he was halfway through the second one he came to believe (correctly) that he "had undertaken a task to which his abilities were not competent." In spite of the fact that he was chained to eighteenth-century modes and although his treatment of his theme was commonplace, his poem is still a very early expression of that faith in tropical beauty which was to be fully exploited by Robert Dunbar. In his Advertisement to the first book Edwards says:

> The subject of [this poem] is as happily adapted for descriptive and didactic poetry, as any that can be imagined. The magnificent scale whereon natural objects in this part of the globe are in general formed, the beauty and novelty of the scene, could not fail to supply an able artist with many new, striking, and picturesque images" (216).

He finds the West Indian islands somehow free from the "foul infection," "dank woods," and "wild wastes" of the neighbouring lands of the conquistadors. In contrast he revels in the fragrant woods, "hills salubrious," and "valleys gay" of Jamaica. He envisions such pastoral delights as that of watching "Lybian maidens" sporting in the sea and "soft Ebo nymphs" lamenting their captivity Hebraically by the river Agualta (222). He also foreshadows the nineteenth-century romantics in his description of the daily cycle of the tropics, beginning with sunrise on the beach, passing to the languorous heat of midday and on to the sudden approach of night and the coming of the land-breeze and the fireflies. Nor does he omit tributes to the spirits of the departed Caribs. Although the verse is wholly undistinguished, it is interesting as a forecast of more fully developed "landscape" poetry to come.

As has already been noted, James Grainger was the first author to focus his undivided attention on the West Indies poetically, and in his

long, didactic poem The Sugar Cane we have the first important celebration of the island scene. As one critic put it, "he set himself to study the scenery of St. Kitt's, an epitome of all the scenery of the West Indies, like a man reading for a degree."[39] It is well to allow Grainger to explain his own purposes. In his Preface he declares that since "instructing the reader . . . is the nobler end of all poetry" didacticism is his principal aim. Yet he feels that there is "importance and novelty" in the subject and that he is able to "enrich poetry with many new and picturesque images." These images, he admits, "are the children of truth, not of genius; the result of experience, not the productions of fancy."[40] The work, therefore, is primarily a contribution to the literature of rural economy. Grainger finds a precedent for his "West India Georgic" in both Hesiod and Virgil, and he predates Robert Dunbar by some seventy years in his efforts to mold tropical scenery into poetic material. The subject of sugarcane, however, for all its pastoral possibilities, was difficult to contemplate poetically under the stresses of mercantilism and the rising agitation of abolition. As Johnson remarked to Boswell: "What could he make of a sugarcane? One might as well write the Parsley-bed, a poem, or the Cabbage Garden, a poem."[41] Grainger's literary friends were no doubt disposed to laugh, or at least smile, at many passages in the poem--and perhaps at the whole of it. Grainger consistently inculcates the treating of the slaves with kindness and on occasion even manifests an abhorrence for what he emphatically calls "heart-debasing slavery." He desires freedom, he says, for "man of every colour and of every clime" (IV, 126). Still abolition is not his concern, and the suffering Negro is therefore absent from his work.

The good doctor is seldom artistic for as many as half a dozen lines at a time, and passages on soil analysis and planting techniques are interspersed with flights of poetic fancy and medical lore. The transitions are rarely smooth, but his Muse, whom he invokes with tedious frequency, has carte-blanche and is capable of anything:

> Shall the Muse celebrate the dark deep mould,
> With dung or gravel mixed?
> Of composts shall the Muse descend to sing
> Nor soil her heavenly plumes? . . .
> Enough of composts, Muse. . . .
> There are, the Muse hath oft abhorrent seen,
> Who swallow dirt. . . .
> Or shall she sing, and not debase her lay,
> The pest peculiar to the Ethiop kind,
> The Yaws? -- . . .
> Fancy's rabid form,
> Joint-racking spasms, and cholic's pungent pang,
> Need the Muse tell? (I)

Above all the poet never loses his vision as a medical practitioner. For instance, the line "Not undelightful blooms the logwood hedge," is immediately followed by the necessities of the sickroom: "Whose wood to coction yields a precious balm,/ Specific in the flux!" Grainger is in no way unique in his interest in the indigenous remedies of the West Indies, except that other travelling physicians did not attempt to turn their findings into poetry. The Sugar Cane actually bears a sufficiently heavy burden of scientific lore to make it worth the serious study of both a student in the history of tropical medicine and a connoisseur of West Indian flora and fauna. Nor is this information always consigned to the secondary position of footnotes, numerous as they are. With the aid of his patient Muse the doctor prescribes in blank verse for "bloating dropsy," worms, and many other tropical ailments. Near the end of the work he gropes for yet more objects upon which to fasten his analytical-aesthetic

attention. "Perhaps of Indian gardens I could sing," he muses, for there are plants far "beyond what bloom'd on bless'd Phaeacia's isle." The attempt is even less successful than usual, and we get such incongruous lines as those in which he seeks to recount "the woodland honours" of the "lofty cassia" tree. "See," he cries enraptured, "what yellow flowers/ Dance in the gale, and scent the ambient air." But in the next line the withered soul of the scientist again surfaces to sonorously remind us that the "long pods, full fraught with nectar's sweets,/ Relieve the bowels from their lagging load" (IV, 138).

Even the most sympathetic reader cannot identify with the gusto with which Grainger sings of "the whisker'd vermin race," of monkeys, yellow flies, weeds, hurricanes, clams and earthquakes--to mention but a few items. His vehemence in his celebration of plantation activities frequently becomes ludicrous, as when he exclaims: "Thanks to the Almighty! in each pathway hedge rank cowitch grows!" And the pathetic fallacy of maudlin lines like "juice that longs to murmur down the spout," and "coppers that wish to feel warmth" is much too affected for modern taste. Nor can any amount of sublime endeavour conceal the flat, unmusical verse.

Still, for all his literary <u>faux pas</u> the good doctor of St. Kitts is not without his virtues, and it is too easy to allow his numerous poetic and structural offences to blind one to the real value of his natural descriptions which are based on a systematic minuteness of detail and observation. Many of his non-instructive passages are pleasing, and portray rural scenery which breathesof the tropics. His biographer Davenport remarked that it was "to be regretted that, instead of making his work didactic, he did not make it descriptive; in which case he might have omitted, or thrown

into the background, those circumstances which are the most offensive.[42] Had Grainger lived with Davenport in 1822, he might have done just that, but from where he stood in the 1760's he did very well to turn aside from his scientific and commercial concern with the islands to appreciate any of their aesthetically beautiful or picturesque features at all.

The green plantations of St. Kitts offered a rich beauty very unlike the more sober enclosures of England:

> With limes, with lemons, let the fences glow,
> Grateful to sense; now children of this clime
> And here and there let oranges erect
> Their shapely beauties, and perfume the sky.
> The acasse
> With which the sons of Jewry, stiff-neck'd race,
> Conjecture says, our God-Messiah crown'd;
> Soon shoots a thick impenetrable fence,
> Whose scent perfumes the night. The privet too,
> Whose white flowers rival the first drifts of snow
> On Grampia's piny hills.

To celebrate Nature's gentle moods, Grainger tries to capture the atmosphere of a secluded mountain spring in classical imagery:

> But chief, let fix'd Attention cast his eye
> On the capp'd mountain, whose high rocky verge
> The wild fig canopies, (vast woodland king,
> Beneath thy branching shade a banner'd host
> May lie in ambush!) and whose shaggy sides
> Trees shade, of endless green, enormous size,
> Wondrous in shape, to botany unknown,
> Old as the deluge.--There, in secret haunts,
> The watery sprites ope their liquid court;
> There, with the woodnymphs, link'd in festal band
> (Soft airs and Phoebus wing them to their arms),
> Hold amorous dalliance. Ah, may none profane,
> With fire or steel, their mystic privacy:
> For there their fluent offspring first see day,
> Coy infants sporting; silver-footed dew
> To bathe by night thy [the sugar cane's] sprouts in
> genial balm; . . . (52-53).

Nothing is so delightful in a tropical climate as a fall of rain. Grainger describes its cheering effects on soul and sense--but reminds us pe-

dantically that showers are preceded by mosquitoes and sand-flies which

> . . . seek the shelter'd roof,
> And with fell rage the stranger-guest assail,
> Nor spare the sportive child; from their retreats
> Cockroaches crawl displeasingly abroad:
> These, without pity let thy slaves destroy
> (Like Harpies they defile whate'er they touch) (I, 49-50).

The artistic features of the rain storm appear at last:

> Short sudden rains, from Ocean's ruffled bed,
> Driven by some momentary squalls, will oft
> With heavy bubbling drops, down fall;
> While yet the Sun in cloudless lustre shines;
> And draw their humid train o'er half the isle. . . .
> The speckled lizard to its hole retreats,
> And black crabs travel from the mountain down;
> Thy ducks their feathers prune; thy doves return,
> In faithful flocks, and on the neighbouring roof
> Perch frequent; where, with pleased attention, they
> Behold the deepening congregated clouds,
> With sadness, blot the azure vault of heaven.

This is all picturesque; and so are the images of rattling doors and windows, of housewives placing spouts and pails, and of some Negroes seeking the shade for shelter while others open up the water courses. Then comes a downpour of sublime proportions:

> . . . See, the drops,
> Which fell with slight aspersion, now descend
> In streams continuous on the laughing land. . . .
> [The rain] asume[s] more awful majesty, and pour[s]
> With force resistless down the channel'd rocks.
> The rocks, or split or hurried from their base,
> With trees, are whirl'd impetuous to the sea:
> Fluctuates the forest; the torn mountains roar:
> The main itself recoils for many a league,
> While its green face is changed to sordid brown. . . .
> A grateful freshness [then] every sense pervades: . . .
> The mute creation share the enlivening hour:
> Bounds the brisk kid, and wanton plays the lamb,
> The drooping plants revive; ten thousand blooms,
> . . . with their fragrant scents perfume the air (49-52).

Despite the enervating effects of his poetic diction Grainger captures much of the violence of Nature's greater upheavals, phenomena

universally associated with the Caribbean. Unlike the humanitarian portrayers of hurricanes and earthquakes, however, the doctor describes these disasters objectively without the usual punitive qualities associated with them. Having ascertained that his Muse is able "th' all wasting hurricane to ride," he advises the planter on securing his plantation against the coming storm and then describes with his customary attention to detail the prelude to the event:

> Breathless the royal palm-tree's airiest van;
> While, o'er the panting isle, the demon Heat
> High hurls his flaming brand; vast, distant waves
> The main drives furious in, and heaps the shore
> With strange productions: or, the blue serene
> Assumes a louring aspect, as the clouds
> Fly, wild-careering, through the vault of heaven;
> Then transient birds, of various kinds, frequent
> Each stagnant pool; some hover o'er thy roof;
> Then Eurus reigns no more; but each bold wind,
> By turns, usurps the empire of the air
> With quick inconstancy;
> Thy herds, as sapient of the coming storm. . .
> In troops associate; and, in cold sweats bathed,
> Wild-bellowing, eye the pole (II, 81).

Next come conflicting blasts of wind, divided by a ghastly calm:

> The North flies forth, and hurls the frighted air:
> Not all the brazen engineries of man,
> At once exploded, the wild burst surpass.
> Yet thunder, yoken with lightning and with rain,
> Water with fire, increase th' infernal din;
> Canes, shrubs, trees, huts are whirl'd aloft in air,--
> The wind is spent; and all the isle below
> Is hush[ed] as death!
> Soon issues forth the West, with sudden burst,
> The blasts more rapid, more resistless drives:
> Rushes the headlong sky; the city rocks; . . .
> Sullen the West withdraws his eager storms--
> Will not the tempest now his furies chain?
> Ah, no! . . . the South, sallying from his iron caves
> With mightier force, renews the aerial war;
> . . . See! yon lofty palm,
> Fair Nature's triumph, pride of Indian groves,
> Cleft by the sulphurous bold! . . . From every rock

Dashes the turbid torrent; through each street
A river foams, which sweeps, with untamed might,
Men, oxen, cane-lands to the billowy main.--
Pauses the wind.--Anon the savage East
Bids his wing'd tempests more relentless rave;
Now brighter, vaster coruscations flash;
Deepens the deluge; nearer thunders roll;
Earth trembles; Ocean reels, and, in her fangs,
Grim Desolation tears the shrieking isle (II, 82-83).

Grainger continues with pictures of the tropical calms, volcanoes, earthquakes, and tidal waves in more than a hundred lines of natural description which, to the reader's relief, is <u>almost</u> wholly free from didactic purpose (II, 83-85).

Grainger can also forsake the spectacular for the quietly romantic. When the labours of crop are over, and the sweaty, dangerous business of the mill is complete, he can savour the beauties of "a West India prospect" to the full:

See! there, what mills, like giants, raise their arms,
To quell the speeding gale! . . . What structures rise,
Neat though not lofty, pervious to the breeze;
With galleries, porches, or piazzas graced!
Nor not delightful are those reed-built huts,
On yonder hill, that front the rising Sun;
With plantanes, with bananas bosom'd deep,
That flutter in the wind. . . . No less charms the eye
That wild interminable waste of waves:
While on th' horizon's furthest verge are seen
Islands of different shape and different size;
While sail-clad ships, with their sweet produce fraught,
Swell on the straining sight; while near yon rock,
On which ten thousand wings with ceaseless clang
Their airies build, a waterspout descends,
And shakes mid ocean; and while there below
That town, embower'd in the different shade
Of tamarinds, panspans, and papaws, o'er which
A double Iris throws her painted arch,
Shows commerce toiling in each crowded street. (III, 113-114).

To this vision he adds the rural sounds of the islands:

What though no bird of song here charms the sense
With her wild minstrelsy; far, far beyond,

> Th' unnatural quavers of Hesperian throats!
> Though the chaste poet of the vernal woods,
> That shuns rude Folly's din, delight not here
> The listening eve; and though no herald lark
> Here leave his couch, high towering to descry
> Th' approach of dawn, and hail her with his song:
> Yet not unmusical the tinkling lapse
> Of yon cool argent rill, which Phoebus gilds
> With his first orient rays; yet musical
> Those buxom airs that through the plantanes play,
> And tear with wantonness their leafy scrolls;
> Yet not unmusical the wave's hoarse sound,
> That dashes, sullen, on the distant shore;
> Yet musical those little insects' hum,
> That hover round us, and to Reason's ear
> Deep, moral truths convey; while every beam
> Flings on them transient tints, which vary when
> They wave their purple plumes; yet musical
> The lovelorn cooing of the mountain dove,
> That woos to pleasing thoughtfulness the soul;
> But chief the breeze, that murmurs through yon canes,
> Enchants the ear with tunable delight. (III, 114-115).

Grainger's very real love for the Caribbean led him to live almost continuously at Basseterre in St. Kitts, where he practised medicine until he died of an epidemic fever in 1767. He had nothing but pity for absentees who, "while such fair scenes adorn these blissful isles, . . . spend their opulence in other climes." Book III concludes with a vigorous address to absentee Creoles and offers them a variety of practical reasons for living more upon their estates. The West Indies, he says, offer everything. For the politically ambitious there is the colonial senate; for the military man, the protection of his native islands; for the gourmet, a menu ranging from exotic pineapple to tender turtle and black crab; and for the "Man of Nature" a retreat from the "secret mazes" of Europe (III, 115-117). He invites West Indians to come home and "examine the properties of [all] things," a vocation which was certainly pursued by Grainger and his versatile Muse. Had the poet been a full time employee of the Basseterre Chamber of Commerce,

he could not have been more dedicated in his praise of the West Indies. The islands were so much maligned, both socially and physically, that such a favourable viewpoint of the colonies was to become an essential part of the planters' platform in the abolition conflict.

A sampling of verse in the last decade of the eighteenth century reveals the total inability of verse-writers to appreciate the West Indian landscape apart from its connection with the slavery issue. Thomas Wilkinson in his "Appeal to England" (1789) describes the reaction of the Negroes aboard the slave ship as they view the islands:

> And now the islands of the West arise,
> Once more around they cast their wishful eyes,
> Ah, lost for ever are the happy groves,
> The scenes where still returning mem'ry roves!
> But, to the dungeon'd wretch, depriv'd of air,
> The rudest clime, the roughest fields are fair.
> It gives a transient respite to his woe,
> In open air on solid ground to go (14-15).

In actual fact, of course, the Caribbean islands probably yield little to Africa in aesthetic satisfactions. In her "Epistle to William Wilberforce (1791) Mrs. Barbauld states categorically that the West Indian islands, despite their "palmy walks and spicy groves," lack all the benign pleasures of healthful rusticity. When she looks for such classical and pastoral attractions as the "milk-maid's song," the "hum of village talk," "blooming maids and frolic swains," and the other "mix'd sounds of cheerful labour," she finds instead that

> Shrieks and yells disturb the balmy air,
> Dumb sullen looks of woe announce despair,
> And angry eyes thro' dusky features glare.
> Far from the sounding lash the Muses fly,
> And sensual riot drowns each finer joy.[43]

"Elegy to the Island of Jamaica" (1794)[44] is an anonymous ballad which begins favourably enough:

Ah, Western Beauty! what are all thy charms,
Thy tropic suns, thy richly varied vales;
Thy sea, that zones thee with his lucid arms,
And gives thy ev'ning all his softest gales?

Thy moon's broad orb--thy vapour-vested night,
When Fancy masks thy scenes in wond'rous trance!
Paints in the rolling fog her novel sight,
And throws enchanted pictures o'er the glance?

The tamarind shades--thy bamboo groves,
Thy rich pimento's aromatic breeze;
Thy tall green turn where sober ground-doves rove,
Thy rough rock's head that waves his crest of trees?

Thy tiny humming-bird of emerald plume,
That broods her pearly eggs with fondling grief,
Hangs the nice nest beneath some small bough's gloom,
And roofs her elfin dwelling with a leaf?

But when the bard reaches the <u>fields</u> of Jamaica it is a different story:

. . . There SLAV'RY stalks along
Her robe of tissue of thick-woven chains;
Her hair stiff whips of many a knotted thong,
While to her face an iron mask she strains!

With this extravagant image the spell is broken, and the remaining six stanzas are a tirade against the slave trade and an appeal not to let "FUTURITY with blushes read,/ The British HEART forgot the <u>kneeling</u> SLAVE!"

At the climax of the Noble Savage cult there appeared an unusual poem, <u>The Hurricane: A Theosophical and Western Eclogue</u> (1796) by William Gilbert. One reviewer[45] identifies the author as being "born in the West Indies, and bred to the colonial bar," Later he moved to England where his work is said to have borne "evident marks of having been written under the influence of partial insanity." Not only had he "like many other literary men" been deranged by the French Revolution, says the reviewer, but he added "some mystical notions of his own, relative to providential retribution, and the causes of the rise and fall of nations. He was likewise

addicted to astrology." Since Gilbert warns us in his Preface that his work "comprehends a scope of design far beyond vulgar reach," it may be well to allow the reviewer to summarize his philosophic intent. In any case, space here would not permit us to allow Gilbert to explain his complicated machinery himself:

> The Hurricane . . . is an allegorical poem, founded on the singular hypothesis, that each of the continents of the globe has a mind of its own; a peculiar nature, influencing by emanation the disposition and intellect of its inhabitants. Each particular country, in the same manner, has a distinguishing mind, which constitutes its individuality, and gives a character to the whole of its history. . . . To this is added a belief in the excellence of savage compared with civilized life, and, consequently, in the proper superiority of America to the older parts of the globe (161).

In the inevitable conflict between the new and old worlds, the "American mind" would at last overthrow that of Europe, and remain finally predominant.[46] The story of the poem is allegorical; the figure of a hurricane in Antigua typifies the final conflict in which America would dominate Europe. The result is the annihilation of the artificial system of society. The unsophisticated state of being is represented by the young girl Elmira, whom the poet saves from the wreck of a vessel, in which her mother (the old system) perishes. So much for the novel garb in which Gilbert clothes his Noble Savage concept, but our concern is primarily with his treatment of the island landscape. Our reviewer finds: "his views of torrid scenery . . . of a piece with his subject; rich and glowing in all cases, and breathing alternately of the voluptuous calm and the awful turbulence of the regions he describes" (162).

Gilbert finds that the "social and romantic scene" of Antigua gives "the wing for amplest thought to range/ On all the mighty wonders

of the world!" The long mythological introduction finally moves into a naturalistic description of the island. Unlike most of his contemporaries who turned in the rather traditional direction of lofty mountains and cliffs over-hanging the sea, Gilbert spends most of his time on the beach (which is actually the only beauty spot on many of the smaller West Indian islands and cays). There he finds "the cool,/ Sequestered spot for bathing; or covered o'er/ With beauteous shells of every gaudy tinge,/ [Inviting] the mind, that springs to Nature's charms." And there he finds the wreck from which he rescues the innocent Elmira. It is also the sound of the roaring of the sea in certain caverns on the beach which announces the imminence of an Antiguan hurricane:

> These peaceful murmurs and these pure consults'
> Of nearing Bliss, speak thunder to the North.
> They give prognostic to the fear-worn ears
> Of list'ning usurpers of their fertile clime,
> In sounds unscanned, of pondered HURRICANES:
> When they remount on air triumphant, joined
> With dread auxiliars riding on the wave,
> And see their greatness--over pale Europe's
> Miniatures of winds! (12-13).

The thunder in the caverns is accompanied by a four-day calm in the "Indian Groves of aromatic breath,/ [And] spicy Thickets and . . . ample Flowers." He walks the "gravel banks with glittering shell-fish strew'd" and during the short "dubious twilight" contemplates as "the breeze cheqers the water with far-streaming light." But "the Calm; diamond-bright, pellucid, ether;/ The cavern murmuring to the troubled wave--/ Give note unerring of the big Fvent." On the fifth night as he strolls the beach, omens of the storm are overwhelmingly evident:

> . . . The setting sun
> Was dyed with crimson; and the full-orb'd moon,

> That palely rose above the dusky arch,
> Was deeply burr'd. Settl'd, encreasing, black,
> The jagged clouds, voluminous and deep,
> Scudded along the northern verge of ocean,
> And a long labouring swell hove the large
> Billow lifeless on the shore, while adverse clouds
> In dark battalia swiftly met in air. . . .
> The rising breeze far from the northward mov'd,
> Ruffling along, and blacken'd as it came;
> The affrighted plover from its blast retir'd;
> The lizard nestled in the watchman's hut,
> And heavy, awful gloom pour'd deep'ning on. . . .
> The tempest thickened; and the dark wind howl'd
> Encreasing horrors and sublimer blasts
> Heavy the deep-hung atmosphere along (21-22).

The second canto opens with the discovery and rescue of Elmira during the calm in the midst of the storm, and she is carried away in "an idle hammaque" borne by Negroes. Then the winds turn and blow on "Europe" with "unrelenting fury:"

> The rain, in spreading sheets, comes whelming down
> And forms a flood. Nor man, nor beast, nor house
> Unfounded on a rock, sustained the assault
> Of winds and rain: The lightnings flamed and roared
> The thunder in tremendous vollies deep:
> Now all the soul of Hurricane was poured,
> Infuriate raging with the waste of sea (34-35).

Meanwhile, Elmira is sheltered, and after the hurricane is over she emerges to enter upon her new life--the Old World forever behind her:

> . . . 'Twas all enchantment
> To her soul. The sun burst brilliant forth, and
> Welcom'd her; all the isle, the conquer'd ocean
> Lay before her: smaller isles attract her:
> Unknown diversities of landscape strike:
> The distant hills cite curiosity:
> Her God is in her heart, in love and bliss;
> And through the isle and air she lives (37).

On this beatific note the poem ends. The forcefulness of Gilbert's descriptions does credit to his powers of observation of his native island. Through the rambling complexity of his philosophic machinery, we find

emerging an elaboration of the familiar theme of hurricanes as avengers of the slave. While less ambitious poets had been content to allow the hurricanes to lay waste a few plantations and discommode a handful of exceptionally wicked planters, Gilbert magnified the motif into a sweeping destruction of the entire Old World order. Unquestionably Gilbert's pro-American viewpoint was disturbing to revolution-weary Englishmen.

Although James Montgomery's primary purpose in The West Indies (1809) was humanitarian, he clothes his natural descriptions of the islands in Edenic imagery. The Adam who enjoyed the sublime experience of discovering paradise was Columbus:

> His spirit brooded o'er th' Atlantic main;
> When, sudden as creation burst from nought,
> Sprang a new world through his stupendous thought,
> . . . While his mind explor'd
> Th' unveiling mystery, his heart ador'd;
> Where'er sublime imagination trod,
> He heard the voice, he saw the face, of God. . . .
> Not Adam, loosen'd from th' encumbering earth,
> Waked by the breath of God to instant birth,
> With sweeter, wilder wonder gaz'd around, . . .
> So felt Columbus when, divinely fair, . . .
> Th' Hesperian isles, from distance dimly blue,
> With gradual beauty open'd on his view.
> In that proud moment, his transported mind
> The morning and the evening worlds combin'd (I, 3-5).

Because of the unseemly behaviour of the "rabid race . . . steel'd to cruelty by lust of gold" which followed Columbus, the poet does not pursue the adventures of the conquistadors but rather devotes himself to "Charib martyrdoms, and negro-chains." Preliminary to this discussion, he finds that the very nature of the West Indian islands themselves bespeaks liberty:

> Amidst the heaven-reflecting oceans, smiles
> A constellation of Elysian isles;
> Fair as Orion when he mounts on high,

> Sparkling with midnight splendour from the sky:
> They bask beneath the sun's meridian rays,
> When not a shadow breaks the boundless blaze;
> The breath of ocean wanders through their vales
> In morning breezes and in evening gales;
> Earth from her lap perennial verdure pours,
> Ambrosial fruits, and amaranthine flowers;
> O'er the wild mountains and luxuriant plains,
> Nature in all the pomp of beauty reigns,
> In all the pride of freedom.--NATURE FREE
> Proclaims that Man was born for liberty (I, 6-7).

At the conclusion of The West Indies Montgomery's vision of the future brings the islands back to this pristine state of nature.

"Monk" Lewis included in his Journal at least four ballads celebrating natural tropical beauties. In the first, written at sea in 1815,[47] six stanzas picture the "tropic Genius" with his car attended by flying fish, "myriads of monsters who people the caves of ocean," sharks, crocodiles and whales. At his feet "lie bound/ The Ouragans, hush'd in sleep profound." The Genius himself cuts a brilliant Negroid figure:

> Of dark sea-blue is the mantle he wears;
> For a sceptre a plantain branch he bears;
> Pearls his sable arms surround,
> And his locks of wool with coral are crown'd.
>
> Perpetual sunbeams round him stream;
> His bronzed limbs shine with gold gleam!
> The spicy spray from his wheels that showers,
> Makes the sense ache with its odorous powers (31).

The last six stanzas are the prayer of an absentee planter to the "dark Genius" imploring that hurricanes should not "ravage and tear Jamaica's savannas" but rather that

> From thy locks on my harvest of sweets diffuse,
> Go swell my canes, refreshing dews;
> And kindly breathe, with cooling powers,
> Through my coffee walks and shaddock bowers.

Lewis also prays that he personally may be spared sunstroke and the "strange

diseases" of the climate, above all "the yellow Plague." Then, perhaps with some kind of uncanny premonition suitable to the creator of The Monk, the poem concludes with: "Was it but fancy? did He not frown,/ And in anger shake his coral crown?" Two-and-a-half years later, at sea in 1818, Lewis died of yellow fever under circumstances worthy of his own spectral imagination--just ten days out from Black River, Jamaica. Observers said that when the weights fell off as he was being buried at sea, his body was cast adrift, and the coffin disappeared in the direction of Jamaica.[48]

During the next five months Lewis wrote three poems based on creatures unique to the tropics, but each constituted a parable with a didactic moral tag at the end. "The Dolphin" describes the antics of the fish, starred with "emeralds, jacinths, sapphires" and all the "celestial tints." But the watchful spearman awaits him, and his bright "scales are doomed to gore." The "witty, rich, and gay" are reminded that they, like the sportive dolphin, will also one day be "dull--dark--dead:"[49]

> . . . On the yard-arm the harpooner sits,
> Strikes the boneta, or the shark insnares.
> The fringed urtica [Portuguese-man-of-war] spreads her
> purple form
> To catch the gale, and dances o'er the waves.
> Small winged fishes on the shrouds alight;
> And beauteous dolphins gently play'd around (I, 89).

"The Flying Fish" likewise portrays the fate of those who recklessly aspire beyond their bounds/ The "bright ocean-bird," empowered to enjoy both elements, sea and air, ends up with neither. He lies instead gasping on the deck where anyone may take him or lay him down as he chooses. This lesson is directed to the "fair maids of Britain," and although the moral is obvious the poet labours the point for eight stanzas. He next moralizes on the most popularly celebrated birds of the Indies in "The Humming Bird."

The slight narrative involves Zoe, a favourite "sable maid" whose "fragrant duty" is to gather flowers. While in the lime-walk she sees a humming bird at a white-blossomed orange plant, but "soon he finds his labour wasted;/ Bees have robb'd that orange bough." Then, scorning the rifled beauty, the humming bird tears the blossoms to pieces and turns to the "opening rose."[50] Zoe's mother advises her against the "wild youth [who] may charm and cheat thee,/ Sip thy sweets, and break his vow." But "Zoe heard and used the lesson/ Just as British daughters do." In spite of the heavy moral freight in Matthew Lewis's verses, he is noteworthy for having discovered romantic uses for tropical imagery even though he employed it for conventional moralistic purposes.

In 1832 one poet of the periodicals tried to establish the Jamaican landscape on a magnificent, sublime scale. In so doing he rather falsified nature for, like others, he sought a grandeur and sublimity in the islands which was hardly there, save in seascapes. In so doing these poets missed the natural features which <u>were</u> valid. The author of "The Slave"[51] watches the "drooping slaves,/ With aching stiffness," turn homeward from the "spicy groves and forests of the cane," and he feels the oppressive weight of slavery. He therefore seeks solitude in pseudo-heroic retreat:

> I ventured forth, in lonely upward way.
> Before me rose no velvet terrace green,
> But hills on hills, in grim tremendous pile;
> An awful monument where tempests write, . . .
> Ascending slow, with feet of climbing care,
> Where chasms open'd like the mouths of hell,
> And rugged columns seem'd the props of heaven,
> I gain'd, at length, wild nature's paths --rude steps
> By storms and whirlwinds fashion'd into stairs,
> Irregularly winding out of sight.

This background of the proportions of the Grand Canyon sets the stage

for an aged but heroic African whom we find in this remote spot. He reminisces on "dear lands and forms," long lost, then

> He turn'd with flashing fierceness to the cliffs.
> I saw his spirit's flame blaze out in looks
> That would have scorch'd the tyrant to his core.

There is nothing new in this slave's message; it is simply the old suffering-and-suicide theme. The highly romantic treatment of the landscape is, however, indicative of the times. Beginning with the 1830's there was a new and unmistakable appreciation of both the sublime and the beneficent features of tropical scenery regardless of whatever didactic purposes the poet might have in mind.

A Blackwood's reviewer describes the youthful Matthew Chapman as "an honour to his native Isle [Barbados]." For this planter-poet the discovery of Barbados by the English[52] was in itself a sublime, Adamic experience:

> Fair rose the morning on the bearded isle,
> And bright the welcome of her virgin smile;
> Sparkled the wave, and listening seem'd the wood,
> The happy birds were in their merriest mood,--
> When first her bay was dipp'd by English oar,
> And English shouts came cordial to the shore. . . .
> Sun, moon, and stars, look'd loving from above,
> And fond earth nursed them with a mother's love;
> While gardens grew from out the sylvan lair,
> Till a new England bloom'd in beauty here.[53]

Chapman's imagination portrays the island as a paradise which is pastoral and savage at the same time. The calm contrasts with nature's response to the corruption of civilization, that is, hurricanes and earthquakes. Most of his descriptive passages are moralistically conceived, but not within the framework of evangelicalism:[54]

> How beautiful is night! the glorious sky
> Is filled with countless gems--how silently

Kind Hesperus first trims his distant fire;
Then through the blue depths Cynthia leads her choir; . . .

This world is passing glorious; fit to be
The palace-home of Immortality!
And while the light of Heaven so softly smiles,
Why should not these, in truth, be Eden isles?
Sin! sin! that marred the world! creation groans;
The earth is weary of her weight of bones;
She cries out on us; she has never rest;
We tear and trample her all-nurturing breast.
The earthquake and the thunder speak in vain;
Famine, and plague, and death, come on amain;
We hear not: Conquest fans his blood wing,
And builds his throne on corses.

Anyone else other than a colonial would have denounced slavery as the basic cause for the denuding of the Eden isles of their original beauties. Chapman, of course, must speak vaguely of the evils of conquest so as to remain a faithful spokesman for the plantocracy. Later in the poem he sings happily of the jolly gangs of Negroes and the beauties of "the glad mill" pouring "down the liquid wealth . . . to the boilers."

"A Burial at Sea" is a poem in a series of Funereal Sketches in which the author strives for novel effects in his manipulation of scenery, atmosphere and symbol.[55] The poem opens with a realistic description of a small West Indian island, Anegada, the northernmost of the Antilles:

The island shore is flat and low,
Where wavelets ripple to and fro,
For, hid within the coral strand
That girdles round this narrow land,
So low, some curious wight erewhile
Had named the place the Drowned Isle:
Scarce seen, the seaman's watch a-lee
Lost its bright ridges in the sea,
Save when, as stirred the tropic air,
Stirred the wild war of surges there
That beat amain, like Age in grief,
Their hoary tresses on the reef;

Or save, as far as eye might reach,
The busy mangroves lined the beach,

And cast--a verdant fan at noon--
Their freshness down the bright lagoon (223).

Here at last is a poet willing to take the most typical West Indian scenery for what it is and mold it into poetic form. The second stanza is a night scene, and the island becomes "a darker line/ Where land and water intertwine." In closer perspective we see a low, black boat moving through the vapours, even as when in those islands "the grey marine . . . burst[s] upon some startled crew,/ Of Negro fisher's light canoe." In "a simple hammock at the side" of the boat is the body of an English youth who has died "in Freedom's cause." The last stanza explains the circumstances of his death in a dawn engagement with "a low, black stranger" (a pirate slaver). Not until the price of his life has been paid does "the red-cross flag . . . wave in triumph over Rescued slaves" (235). Although it is not great poetry, "A Burial at Sea" is a refreshingly new treatment of the British freedom and anti-slavery theme. The new atmosphere of the poem is achieved through experimental use of realistic features of island scenery combined with the sublime effects of darkness and death. Despite its propagandistic purposes the poem has unusual "mood interest."

There were other things which could be done in the 1830's with Caribbean landscape. In keeping with the tendencies to humour to be noted in every genre used for West Indian themes, a few writers like Richard Madden utilized the picturesque features for satirical purposes. His "Characteristics" (1835)[56] gets off to a light-headed start (with apologies to Byron):

Know you the land where pimentos and chilis
   Are emblems of tempers as hot as the clime,
Where the blaze of the sun quite bedevils the lilies,
   And bleaches the roses of youth in its prime?

> Know you the land of mosquitos and jiggers,
> Of Sambos unchain'd, and the uncombable niggers; . . .
> Where the climate is hot, and the nights may be cool,
> But the fevers are rife, and the churchyards are full (95).

The poem develops into a criticism of the post-emancipation scene and of the "saints" who had finally removed the Creole's liberty "to lick his nigger from morning to night." Jamaica is a land of wild extremes with the social scene reflecting the natural:

> . . . both buckras and blacks
> Are by fits and by starts either rigid or lax; . . .
> 'Tis the clime of the West! 'Tis the island of palms!
> 'Tis the region of strife, and the country of psalms! . . .
> 'Tis the home of our hopes for the African race;
> 'Tis the tomb of the system which brought us disgrace! (96).

More than sixty years after Grainger's first poetic examination of the Caribbean Robert Nugent Dunbar greets the beginning of the emancipation period, a new era in West Indian culture. His is the avowed purpose of capturing the "picturesque beauties and natural treasures" of that same scene.[57] He betrays no uncertainties about the timeliness and novelty of his work which is intended to point out a new store of poetical resource material in the West Indies. This endeavour had been at least vaguely suggested by John Wilson in his dramatic poem, "The Isle of Palms," of 1812.[58]

As a resident of the Antilles for many years Dunbar recorded his impressions in several volumes of verse. His first effort was The Cruise; or, A Prospect of the West Indian Archipelago: A Tropical Sketch . . . (1835). Like Montgomery and others before and after him, he was fascinated with the effect the Eden islands must have had upon the first Europeans who looked upon them. He therefore devoted one of his Spenserian stanzas[59] to Columbus:

Still are ye soft and brilliant, as when first
Upon the daring Genoan's raptured sight
In equinoctial loveliness you burst,
And overpaid his perils with delight;
When on your charms, with deathless verdure bright,
He gazed in ecstasy no tongue can paint,
Till the rich recompense of Toil's long night
Delicious seem'd as paradise to saint,
With the world's weary pilgrimage o'erspent and faint (IV, 3).

Although Dunbar's poetry is clogged with its machinery, it has frequent touches of both realism and romanticism. When he ventures forth at dawn in his cedar skiff, he resists the first impulse to swim, for "the shark, the tiger of the deep prowls." It is only inside the reef where "the far-stretch'd coral-reefs resound/ To hoarse waves frosting them with silver rain," that he can swim in safety. Indeed, it becomes a "divine ablution! antidote to heat!" At sunrise he pays tribute to the "gold deluge" and "universal blaze" of the tropical sun, but he is careful to point out that it is still more temperate than that sunlight which "blisters Africa." This "inverted" idea is one illustration of the idealizing of the Indies. His noontime idyll contains many pastoral and picturesque elements which had wholly escaped most poets of the previous century:

While all is hush'd beneath Noon's ardent hour,
Save one lone bird of long-entrancing note;
While humming-birds sit silent on the flower,
And dragon-flies in listless eddies float,
And the green lizard hides his speckled coat;--
Thou shalt ascend the mountain's woody height
By paths the spiral track of browsing goat,
Where mastic vault and cedar arch unite
To lend the noonday scene anticipated night. . . .

To the deep-listening ear, the midday calm
Is not a dead inanimate repose:
Though no rude sounds the music mood alarm,
Each bush and brake instinct with being glows,
And a low hum through all the woodland goes:
Unnumber'd creatures their mix'd vigils keep

With faint dull buzzings, that their haunts disclose,
A thousand still small notes pervade the steep--
The murmuring sound of Nature breathing in her sleep. . . .

White peasant-villages embower'd in trees,
And garden'd mansions, dot the wide-spread map;
While o'er them, to the east's undying breeze
The princely palm unfolds his feather'd cap;
Plenty lies cradled in the isle's soft lap;
Canes clothe with waving wealth the smiling land;
The rural powers their hands exulting clap;
Havens, with dark hulls speck'd, indent the strand,
And towns, and bristling forts, emboss the silver sand
(XX, XXII, XXIX, 15-17).

The first section of the poem concludes with several stanzas describing the night scene. One may be chosen as an illustration:

Nights of the tropics! o'er the ship's tall side
How I've enjoyed your exquisite delights!
Rich constellations, to the north denied,
Look down enchantment from their sapphire heights:
Beneath, the wave its fires fantastic lights;
And round, low clouds in antic shapes are blent:
Oft may I taste your charms, delicious nights!
Long, fresh, and cool,--by the Great Spirit sent
The faint earth to revive, with day's exhaustion spent (XLIV, 35).

The central section of The Cruise consists of a survey of the islands one by one. The journey follows the path of the sun but is somewhat retarded by copious historical, geographical, and literary notes, to say nothing of frequent lapses into apostrophe. Dunbar strives for individuality by labelling each island with a kind of identifying mark, mundane as it must sometimes be.[60] The cruise continues on north to "revolted and unfruitful Haiti" and finally to Jamaica and Cuba, the "last segment of the crescent." But the poem could not end this simply; two duties yet remain, a description of the elemental disasters of the Indies (earthquakes, thunder and lightning, and hurricanes) and a tribute to the humanitarian labours of "Imperial England." Emancipation had been achieved, however,

and the ratio is reversed. Since the anti-slavery sentiments occupy only one stanza out of the ninety-seven available, we might say that propagandism is now merely a "complimentary close" to a purely romantic view of the Caribbean.[61]

Dunbar's poetic interest in the West Indian landscape was the love of his life time.[62] He endeavoured to "keep alive in this unpoetical age" the "romance and beauty of the Tropics." In Indian Hours; or, Passion and Poetry of the Tropics (1839)[63] he defends his purpose by pointing out that the West Indian scene appeals to traditional interests in European art. Moreover, he finds in the peculiar vegetation and population of the tropics an appeal to traditional European notions of poetry and oriental luxury as had been seen in Renaissance Moors:

> . . . The very appearance . . . of the negroes and Indians, has a picturesque, oriental air about it, reminding one of the blacks, the Moors, and Nubian attendants of the east. . . . [And] their sleek, sun-dyed daughters are 'black, but comely,' . . . If the Old World be richer in historical recollections, the New is more pregnant with visions of the future. . . . The past is the East's--the future is the West's.[64]

Although Dunbar did not share Gilbert's revolutionary notions concerning the relationship between the New World and the Old, still this statement of confidence in America was expressive of a growing, forward-looking faith among at least a few colonials. In 1839, of course, it was still not yet evident that the West Indies would fail to break forth into prosperity, as her great neighbour to the north was doing. The golden dreams of both imperialists and emancipators would for a long time be futuristic.

West Indian themes in poetry called for either of two responses:

a dedication to abolition interests, pro and con, or an elaboration of the picturesque and romantic features of the Caribbean scene. The trend throughout the century of our study was a movement from the propagandistic concerns at the beginning of the period to a type of nature worship at the end of it. Only those poets who wrote outside of the realm of abolitionistic literary activity were able to feel an appreciation for natural beauty in the tropics.

The slavery issue was inseparable from West India themes which evolved in relation to the sugar colonies. It gave rise to a large quantity of occasional and transient poetry, written for immediate results in molding public opinion. These writers documented their poetic productions with data from tractarian and travel literature, from government reports, and from supposedly "eye-witness" accounts. They utilized all of the conventions of sentimental verse to which they added a number of West Indian motifs and images. These in turn became the stock equipment of anti-slavery poetry. In general these minor men of letters were extremists, incapable of taking an unprejudiced view of their subject. Few major romantic poets chose to be identified with these enthusiasts, preferring to make their scattered comments on the West Indian question subsidiary to their philosophic statements on individual liberty.

Out of this large body of verse emerged two "characters." The first was the innocent, suffering Negro who was either a heroic and tragic figure, tracing his ancestry back to Oroonoko and belonging to the Noble Savage cult, or a lesser pathetic individual who in other modes would eventually become a source of comedy. The second type was the Creole and his accomplice, the slave merchant. His shortcomings ranged from mild follies and

eccentricities to sordid vulgarity and wilful murder. Most of the literary energy of the anti-slavery movement was expended in the late eighteenth-century phase of the campaign. After the turn of the century, other problems demanded the attention of a public satiated with Negro woes. As the time of emancipation actually approached, the Negro became less heroic, the Creole less vicious, and the West Indian islands less sinister, at least in the minds of the propagandistic verse writers.

The work of James Grainger and, to some extent, that of John Singleton stands apart from the standard abolition works. These men were the first to discover the scenery of the West Indies to be a valid source of extended poetic "inspiration." Although their purposes were primarily didactic, they laid the groundwork for lyric poetry of the Caribbean to come. Despite the problems posed by the structure and ill-assorted content of The Sugar Cane, there are lyrical passages which forecast the "poetry of tropical landscape." It is noteworthy that Grainger is able to appreciate the natural beauties and picturesqueness of the Indies only because he finds no dying Negroes there. The Sugar Cane thus begins a secondary theme of West Indian interest which counterpoints the major humanitarian concerns of the period.

The ideas of Grainger finally received full romantic treatment in the poems of Robert Dunbar in the post-Emancipation period. The works of the latter might be considered early documents in a new "travel literature" which would eventually romanticize and pastoralize many forbidding regions of the world, transforming them and their inhabitants into tourist Meccas. Such places as Hawaii (where Captain Cook met his bloody death) and other

Polynesian retreats (peopled by flesh-and-blood headhunters roaming the jungle wastes) are other cases in point. By the same token, the West Indian islands ultimately shook off the blight of slavery and became once again the Eden isles, courtesy of nineteenth-century romantic writers and the twentieth-century tourist industry.

IV

THE STAGE NEGRO AND HIS MASTER

Literary interest in the West Indies, as we have seen, was at its height during the last quarter of the eighteenth-century and began to wane in the first two decades of the nineteenth. Many of the innovations of the new drama of this transitional period reflected the shift in overseas interests from the West Indies to other more promising colonies. Negroes, planters, and buccaneers were slowly superseded by Hindoos, Laplanders, and Turks. The cane fields were overshadowed by Gothic castles, and the Noble Indians were on occasion out-distanced by the aboriginals of Van Dieman's Land. As the century progressed, interest in the distant marts of trade was replaced by concern with Britain's local industrial scene with its rag pickers, drunkards, seamstresses, and bagmen. Even the violence of the emancipation struggle did not revive the literary eminence which the West Indies had enjoyed during its eighteenth-century sugar-boom. By the time the West Indian economy was ruined, it appears that the Caribbean had also been emotionally drained. The unprecedented activity in the decades immediately preceding the abolition of the slave trade had almost ground to a halt on the literary front.

Many of the dramas having West Indian significance belong to the new, minor theater which arose at the turn of the century (See Appendix III). In this busy, colourful world of popular theater we shall find several colonial motifs being explored. For the purposes of this study it will be convenient to examine both major and minor drama thematically without particular reference to the legitimacy of any given work.

A. The Comic Stance

The Negro's comic possibilities were first exploited between 1760 and 1780. The stock character of the Negro servant continued on through nineteenth-century English drama, however, until he blended with the American stage Negro. There he received his fullest treatment, beginning with the dramatizations of Uncle Tom's Cabin. Although the Negro slave in Isaac Bickerstaffe's comic opera, "The Padlock" (1768)[1] is not a certified West Indian, he merits attention here because it was in his person that the non-exotic plantation Negro first appeared on the English stage.

Mungo[2] is a profane clown of little authenticity, but by exhibiting most of the characteristics of the stock Negro servant he fathers the long line of realistic comic Negroes to appear in the next century. Mungo is a black in the European-oriented household of the wealthy, aging Don Diego, a resident of Salamanca. The action of the play turns on Diego's intentions to marry Leonora, his sixteen-year-old ward. He is thwarted by the endeavours of Leander, a progressive young university student. The young man secures the indispensable assistance of Mungo by playing on the Negro's love for music and by his open-hearted generosity. Leander describes his adventure:

Leander: I observed that when the family were gone to bed, he often came to air himself at yonder grate. You know I am no bad chanter, nor a very scurvey minstrel; so taking a guitar, clapping a black patch on my eye, and a swathe upon one of my legs, I soon scraped acquaintance with my friend Mungo. He adores my songs and sarabands, and taking me for a poor cripple, often repays me with a share of his allowance, which I accept, to avoid suspicion (I, ii).

Distrusting both public and private virtue, Old Diego departs on a "test journey." Before leaving he ensures everyone's integrity by padlocking his dependents in the house during his absence. In the third scene Mungo appears with his market hamper, grumbling and cursing his "old massa" who is always "sending me here and dere for one something to make me tire like a mule." Upon Diego's appearance he must, of course, do a quick about-face. In the conversation in which Diego delivers his parting instructions, Bickerstaff uses Negro dialect in one of the earliest stage attempts. But he has better success in portraying the arbitrariness of the slave-owner's nature and the long-suffering of the Negro:

Diego: What's that you are muttering, sirrah?

Mungo: Nothing, massa, only me say, you very good massa.

Diego: What do you leave your load there for?

Mungo: Massa, me lila tire.

Diego: Take it up, rascal.

Mungo: Yes, bless your heart, massa.

Diego: No, lay it down: now I think on't, come hither.

Mungo: What you say, massa?

Diego: Can you be honest?

Mungo: Me no savee, massa, you never ax me before.

Diego: Can you tell truth?

Mungo: What you give me, massa?

Diego: There's a pistreen for you; now tell me, do you know of any ill going on in my house?

Mungo: Ah, massa, a d--n deal.

Diego: How! that I'm stranger to?

Mungo: No, massa, you lick me every day with your rattan; I'm sure, massa, that's mischief enough for poor neger-man.

Diego: So, so.

Mungo: La! massa, how could you have a heart to lick poor neger-man, as you lick me last Thursday?

Diego: If you have not a mind I should chastise you now, hold your tongue. . . .

Mungo: You know, massa, me very good servant.

Diego: Then you will go on?

Mungo: And ought to be use kine--

Diego: If you utter another syllable--

Mungo: And I'm sure, massa, you can't deny but I worky worky. I dress a victuals, and run a errands, and wash a house, and make a beds, and scrub a shoes, and wait a table (I, iii).

Diego again beats the "perverse animal" and orders him to keep constant guard and "not to sleep a wink" until he returns. Upon his master's exit Mungo breaks into a song which strikes pathetic overtones and has humanitarian appeal:

Dear heart, what a terrible life am I led!
A dog has a better, that's shelter'd and fed:
Night and day 'tis de same,
My pains is dere game:
Me wish to do lord me was dead.
Whate'er's to be done,
Poor blacky must run;
Mungo here, Mungo dere,

Mungo every where;
Above and below;
Sirrah come, sirrah go;
Do so, and do so.
Oh! oh!
Me wish to de lord me was dead (I, iii).

Mungo is easily alienated from his duty to his absent master when Leander, addressing him as "your worship's honour," appears at the grate with "a bottle of delicious cordial" and strikes up a song he purportedly "learned in Barbery when I was a slave among the Moors." Leander's redundant tale of the barbarities of a villainous slave-owner intrigues not only Mungo but also the voluptuous old duenna Ursula who guards the fair Leonora. With the aid of these two servants Leander climbs the garden wall and gains entrance to the padlocked household. The presentation of a purse of gold to Ursula (Mungo insists upon a matching one) brings the youth into the presence of his love. Meanwhile, Mungo amuses himself with Leander's guitar, sings defiantly of his desire that "tied in his garters old Massa may swing," and then exits to the cellar (II, i).

In the final scene Leander and the two ladies are served supper by Mungo, whose stay in the cellar has rendered him brazenly jovial. Don Diego surprises the party and vents his fury on Mungo, ordering the slave to "go, lie down in [his] sty, and sleep." In the end, Diego is made to see wisdom, and the lovers are united. The hapless Mungo, however, is falsely accused of lewdness by Ursula, deserted by Leander, and punished by his master. For his vital services to the principals he is repaid with "bastinadoes for . . . drunkenness and infidelity" (II, ii). Although "The Padlock" opens up the Negro servant's comic possibilities, the question of his liberty and natural rights is glanced at only most casually.

Bickerstaff was a writer of consequence in the anti-slavery tradition and was far in advance of his times in having said so much in behalf of the Negro. Still it was not enough. There was a humanitarian postscript to "The Padlock." Thomas Clarkson in his History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade said that "a worthy Clergyman" composed an epilogue which was attached to the play "soon after it came out" and which "procured a good deal of feeling for the unfortunate sufferers, whose cause it was intended to serve." In it the clownish Mungo says:

> Thank you, my Massas! Have you laugh your fill?
> Then let me speak, nor take that freedom ill. . . .
> My tale in any place would force a tear,
> But calls for stronger, deeper feelings here;
> For whilst I tread the free-born British land,
> Whilst now before me crowded Britons stand;
> Vain, vain, that glorious privilege to me,
> I am a slave, when all things else are free.
> Yet I was born, as you are, no man's slave,
> And heir to all that lib'ral Nature gave;
> My thoughts can reason, and my limbs can move
> The same as yours; like yours my heart can love; . . .
> Comes freedom then from colour? blush with shame,
> And let strong nature's crimson mark your blame![3]

In 1774 Samuel Foote had his two "colonial" plays, "The Cozeners" and "The Patron," running concurrently with Isaac Bickerstaffe's "The Padlock."[4] In "The Cozeners" (1778)[5] the black girl, Marianne, is employed for highly unsentimental purposes.[6] Mrs. Fleece'em is a returned transportee from America who is in a perfidious partnership with the quack-lawyer Flaw. These opportunists take advantage of Mr. and Mrs. Aircastle, lately arrived from the country.[7] Mrs. Fleece'em puts her Negro slave Marianne to bed in a well-darkened room, and then offers her as "an Indian heiress" to Toby, the booby son of Mr. and Mrs. Aircastle. Her "sickness" is attributed to the change of climate, to sea-sickness, and to a

weakness of the eyes from "looking so long on nothing but water." In this setting Toby is invited to pay his respects. A highly farcical scene follows in which the bumbling youth becomes convinced by her speech that she is indeed a foreigner. He lays his presents beside the bed and holds her "lily white hand" in the dark. When he opens the bed curtains to discover that his mistress has "turned all of a sudden as black as a crow," he recoils in horror and flees, crying "Stop the black thing that is hard at my _____" (III, v). The disillusioned Aircastles return to their country seat, since "there are trees that won't bear transplanting; [because] they thrive best in their natural soil." One feels, nevertheless, that the sins of the Aircastles are punished with immoderate severity.[8]

Henry Bate's ill-fated comic opera, "The Blackamoor Wash'd White" (1776)[9] was performed for only three stormy nights, but it says much about Negro servants both in real life and on stage. Sir Oliver Oddfish is an erratic country squire who distrusts his servants and is about to replace them with blacks.[10] For no reason at all he discharges the innocent Robert Ogle as a "leering, powder-pated puppy" and gives him a highly derogatory character reference to take up to London (I, vi). In addition to this problem, he ranges about his moat-encircled estate in search of any "puppy sent by the Devil to come in pursuit of [his] Wife or . . . Daughter." In this connection he suspects the intentions of his nephew Grenville and his university friend Frederick. They are probably "a pair of fiery blooded dogs [who] would not mind Swimming over the mote like a Couple of Foxes, and carrying them [his women] off like Green Geese upon their backs" (I, i). Indeed, Grenville <u>is</u> about to introduce Frederick into the very presence of Julia, the heiress. He will be disguised as a blackamoor. Jerry is a pre-

Plate 11

Mungo, the comic Negro. Frontispiece of Isaac Bickerstaffe's comic opera, "The Padlock" (1768). In Cumberland's British Theater (London, 1826), III.

Huntington Library



THE PADLOCK

Mungo. Let me, whgn my heart a sinking
Hear de sweet guitar a clinking.
Act II, i.



cocious servant of the household and the sole remaining Caucasian on the staff. He resents Sir Oliver's policies and bemoans the times "which are turn'd topsey turvey, that white English men should give place to foreign Blacks!" He sings an incendiary ballad clearly reflecting servant-class attitudes to Indians, both West and East:

> Must a Christian man's son born and bred up,
> By a Negar be flung in disgrace,--
> Be asham'd for to hold his poor head up,
> 'Ca'se as how he has got a white face?
> --No, never mind, little Jerry,
> Let you honest heart be merry;
> British boys will still be right,
> Till they prove that black is white!
>
> M'hap the nabob, that brought the poor creature
> From his father, and mother, and all,
> Is himself of a blackamoor nature,
> Dark within as the tribe of Bengal.
> --So never mind it, little Jerry,
> Let your honest heart be merry;
> British boys will still be right,
> Till they prove that black is white! (I, vi).

A virtual race riot followed the first singing of this song. Hoping to avoid the hissing and uproar of the first night, the theater managers deleted the words "wash'd white" from the billing for the second night. Hopkins reports that the farce went off well until some drunk gentlemen broke in and

> jumped out of the Stage Box upon the Stage [and] immediately Several out of the Pit and Boxes follow'd and Some blows ensued and I thought they would have pull'd the House down. This lasted about half an hour and then it all grew quiet and we finished the Farce.[11]

In Act II Frederick carries off his Negro role with skill. Grenville has given him an admirable "character" in a note which he writes to his uncle:

> The bearer whose name is Amoroso I have procured for you with some difficulty of his master:--make much of him as you prize your own Interest: I have long known the Goodness of his heart,--and you need not be surpriz'd if you soon find his warmest affections centre in your Family, an attachment that will prove his fidelity:--I have habited him in compliment to the Ladies. . .[12]

In the garden "Amoroso" takes his lute like a good Negro and sings a favourite song to Julia. By means of this performance she recognizes his true identity. In the next scene the faithful Jerry finds his mistress "billing with that Raven" and threatens to inform Sir Oliver that a "nest of Black-a-moor devils [is] hatch'd under his Roof." Although Frederick is then forced to reveal his identity to Jerry, his convincing dialect prevents the master of the castle from discovering the hoax. When Sir Oliver has been cured of the sin of jealousy and suspicion, there comes the final moment of revelation. Grenville describes "the Senate Scene of Othello" which includes "the Moor and his fair Desdemona! and lo! the venerable Gull Brabantio" (II, iii). Sir Oliver is staggered by the thought that Julia wishes to marry the black Amoroso and repents his rash domestic arrangements: "Curse on my old stupid pate for taking such an Athiop under my Roof--this comes of his playing on the Lute and being page to the Princess Humiski!--yes, yes, he has humm'd me to a fine purpose."

When Frederick removes his Negroid disguise, the old man comes to his senses and finishes up at last as the "man of feeling" that he really is. He recalls his discharged servants, blesses Frederick and Julia, and appoints Grenville deputy Governor, giving him the keys to the drawbridge. Had the irate Londoners heard the play out to its conclusion, Bate's reinstatement of the English servants might have mollified them. As it was, the opera was essentially a failure, in spite of the fact that it reveals

a valid viewpoint on the problem of West Indian slaves as domestics in England.

Wherever the problem of the Negro's colour was raised, the prophet Jeremiah's rhetorical question, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" (Jeremiah 13:23) was a popular frame of reference. While Henry Bates' opera and Thomas Hood's poem "The Black Job" gave the motif its most extensive elaboration, the image re-appeared as a minor element in nearly all genres. William Macready's farce, "The Irishman in London" (1792)[13] may be examined as one exemplar.

The main plot is based on the various stratagems employed by the scheming footman, Edward,[14] in his efforts to deliver a letter from his master, Captain Seymour, to Miss Caroline Frost. The lady is the daughter of an old gentleman lately returned from the West Indies where he had jealously guarded her from the importunities of the Captain. He plans to marry her to William Patrick O'Brien Colloony, an obtuse native of the Emerald Isle who is reputedly possessed of a large fortune. From these Creole interests we move to the secondary plot which concerns the affairs of Murtoch Delany, servant to Colloony, and Cubba, Caroline's devoted Negro maid. The former is the conventional comic stage Irishman and the latter a simple-minded soul who falls in love with him. In their interview which proceeds in reasonably convincing dialect, the Irishman makes light of the black girl's adherence to the Noble African tradition:

> Murtoch: Your father a king?
>
> Cubba: Iss.
>
> Murtoch: Oh! it's king of the Morice-dancers she means; ay, ay, that fellow had a black face--I saw him yesterday.

Cubba: No, no; him live at de Gold Coast.

Murtoch: Where?

Cubba: At de Gold Coast (II, i, 26).

Cubba confesses her romantic interest in Murtoch but is also aware of certain improprieties. Nevertheless she is willing to settle for the arrangement accepted by her sisters in the West Indies, devotion on her part and convenience on the white man's part:

> Cubba: Me love a you dearly--but me no want you love me, dat be very wrong--your face white, me poor negro--me only tell you make me easy, den me pray for you be happy.

Believing himself to be irresistible, Murtoch can afford to have some compassion upon the adoring Cubba. His sentiments reflect the racial prejudices of his time:

> Murtoch: . . . I wish she was not sooty. Who knows, may be the journey [to Ireland] may bleach her. Troth, it's a shame your mistress never found out that fellow that advertises to whiten ladies' hands and faces, the limping Jew--he'd make you as fair as a daisy. Och! if you had even a bit of the violent soap, honey!
>
> Cubba: No matter my colour, if me do right. Good black face be happier den bad white.
>
> Murtoch: Troth, and I believe she may be the daughter of a king, for she has the mind of a prince. If her face was but as white as her heart, she'd be a wife for a pope (II, i, 26).

Black faces in London were naturally a greater social handicap than in the Indies. Alliances formed overseas seldom became awkward until the white man contemplated going home.

John Haines' pictorial drama, "The Life of a Woman; or, The Curate's Daughter" (1840),[15] at the far end of our period, portrays a Negro servant in a situation little improved over that of Bickerstaffe's

Mungo, despite the fact that by Haines' day slavery was legally abolished. The farce is based on Hogarth's more boldly titled paintings, "The Whore's Progress" (1794-1799) [sic.]. Of particular interest to this study is the scene which is a realization of the second picture in which the black servant Pompey enters the bedchamber with his teakettle.[16] He is abused by his mistress, Dorcas Downey, and her customer, the rich Jew Malachi Benledi. Dorcas knocks the little Negro down, and he roars out with the pain of his scalded foot. When the Jew is gone, Dorcas again vents her rage on poor Pompey:

> You little black beast take that--and that--you'll see when you shouldn't, will you? there--and there--I'll beat you white you Nigger--I will--there--there--(beats him all round the stage--he crying out "Murder massa--help--massa--missee--help"--thrashes him off and follows (II, iii, 35-36).

One might expect to discover that Dorcas is a Creole bred on the plantations, but the hapless Pompey has only the misfortune of attending a courtesan, as did so many of his real-life brethren.

We shall digress a little further here on the prevalence of West Indian Negroes in England. Since the absentee West Indian frequently brought his Negro servants home to England with him, blacks were by no means uncommon in London and elsewhere in the British Isles.[17] This situation permitted writers to use Negro characters in familiar, realistic settings and to avoid slipping into the extravagances which so often attended efforts to portray the plantations and tropical islands. The villainous Moor or exotic Negro of the Renaissance had been replaced by the Noble African. He had in turn given way to the ordinary black man whose function was more far-reaching than merely that of a symbol of terror or opulence. The comic servant emerged from plantation life in a role which has changed little, except for increasingly greater realism. In true life the

French continued to be preferred as personal attendants in England because of their reputedly subordinate dispositions and fashionable tastes, but the Negroes were also highly favoured as domestic servants. They were cheap, familiar companions who bore the vestigial remains of noble savagery and therefore savoured some of the primal "goodness of nature." They were also capable of almost feudal devotion to the persons of their masters. At the same time they retained enough of their exotic charms to be satisfying as status symbols.[18] Among the marks of their servitude in England were their pompous classical names and the wearing of silver collars. The complaints most frequently brought against them were their tendency to run away and charges of drunkenness and lechery. And, as we have already seen, they also posed a threat to the English domestics of whom there was already an adequate supply.

A West Indian Negro makes a single but significant appearance in the last scene of Isaac Jackman's farce, "The Divorce" (1781).[19] Sambo is the slave of Sir Harry Triffle, and his aims present the reverse side of the problem in the Inkle and Yarico legend in which a white man deserts his dusky mistress. Having taken up civilized English tastes, he now wishes to be rid of his black wife. He seeks the counsel of the crafty lawyer Quitam on the matter:

Quitam: Ah, Sambo, how do you do?

Sambo: Pretty well, I tank you, Massa--me want a little of your advice, Massa.

Quitam: You! what advice can you want, Sambo?

Sambo: Why, Massa, me want to be divorced.

Quitam: Divorced!

Plate 12

"The Harlot's Progress," Plate 2, by William Hogarth (1794-1799).

Huntington Library



Sambo: Yes, Massa--me want to marry a pretty white woman.

Quitam: You do! Timothy, hand me my cane--I'll break this scoundrel's sooty noddle for him.

Sambo: Pretty white woman, Massa--and here I have brought you my year's wages--ten guinea. (Gives him a purse)

Quitam: Here, Timothy; you may lay by the cane.--So then, Sambo, you want to be in the fashionable world, I see?

Sambo: Oh, yes, Massa, I should like to be a Man of Fashion, of all tings.

Quitam: Well, well, I'll look into the Black Act, and see what can be done for you.

Sambo: Tank'e, Massa; (going) how long do you tink, Massa, it will be, before I can turn away my old wife?

Quitam: Call in a week, Sambo, and I'll tell you.--Timothy, shew the black Gentleman downstairs.

The attorney is amazed by Sambo's request, for "the blacks in this country have no money, and there's no being divorced without money." Yet, shark that he is, Quitam cannot resist taking advantage of even as unlikely a case as Sambo's. Charmed by some of the "dear creatures" (the serving maids about him) the Negro creates a highly farcical counterpoint to the conjugal warfare of his master Sir Harry with Lady Harriet, as well as to the ill-starred marriage of their aunt Mrs. Anniseed to the pseudo-French gentleman, Dogberry.

The comic Negro, not untouched by pathos, appeared in two interesting harlequinades separated by almost twenty years. William Bates' "pantomimical entertainment" entitled "Harlequin Mungo" (1788) incorporates several colonial features into the stock form of the English harlequinade (see Appendix III). The scene is set vaguely in the West Indies, and Act I offers a picturesque view of an island at sunset. A slave ship arrives,

full of jolly sailors singing nautical songs, and there is a procession of slaves. The slave sale begins immediately with the captain's cry of:

> Oyes, oyes, oyes.
> Come, Planters, you who wish to purchase prizes,
> Be quick in buying, e'er the market rises.
> My Slaves are healthy, youthful, and well-made;
> I'll deal with honour, tho' with Knaves I trade.

A brisk trade ensues with the planters purchasing Negroes for a variety of purposes, many quite apart from the labours of the cane fields:

> Woman: Dear Captain, have you got a stout young man,
> With breadth of shoulders, he will suit my plan:
> I only want a husband kept in awe;
> Who beats me ev'ry day, nor fears the law.
>
> Captain: Here's one that's 5-feet-6, quite straight and boney.
>
> Woman: He'll do my business, pray what's the money?
>
> Captain: For thirty pounds he's yours, a strapping blade:
>
> Woman: He's just the thing for me, the bargain's made.
>
> Old Man: Captain, I want a handy Guinea Pig,
> To brush my cloaths, my shoes, and comb my wig;
> Handy at all things, must at table wait;
> He cannot do too much--too little eat:
>
> Captain: Then take my word, I recommend yon elf,
> Mahogany, come forth and shew yourself;
> He'll live on yams, and sleep upon the ground,
> A fine fresh youth--and yours for twenty pounds.
>
> Old Man: Humph, twenty pounds! a swinging price I swear,
> They well may say Mahogany is dear;
> His features please me much, so there's the cash,
> If he serves well, he need not fear the lash.
>
> Justice: Good Captain, have you in your dingy tribe,
> A black Amanuensis--or a Scribe:
> Quick at his pen, drawing out a warrant,
> To serve informers, or commit a vagrant:
> One that can read to me the law in fact,
>
> Captain: Here's one within the meaning of the act,
> Can inform, commit, and is very very black--

Justice: Then him I'll have, me thinks his charcoal mazard,
of blushing, sure will never run the hazard;
Pray what's his price?

Captain: For thirty pounds
You've him and every virtue he owns. (Justice gives money)

Justice: Come, follow me, and Custos Rotulorum,
Shall introduce your Blackship to the Quorum (I, 7-9).

Such slap-stick comedy on this theme must have been irritating to sensitive people seriously concerned with the abolition movement in spite of the fact that it did expose the foibles of the planters.

The slave Mungo has been completely by-passed in these transactions, even though he has been offered to several buyers. Upon the intercession of his daughter Columbine, Pantaloon finally buys him at a reduced price. He is taken to the plantation house with great ceremony by the Clown, who upon discovering a lesser creature than himself orders Mungo to hold a parasol over his head. In Scene iii we find Mungo and other slaves at their tasks in the sugar mill supervised by the Clown, whip in hand. When the moon rises, the plantation bell strikes, and the slaves leave work to sing, dance, and smoke cigars in a pleasant fashion which would have been gratifying to all West Indians in the theater audience. Mungo, however, remains heroically disconsolate and plans to commit suicide. At this point the wizard appears, transforms him into Harlequin, presents him with the enchanted sword. Thus the potentially tragic Negro turns instantly comic. From this point onward the pantomime conforms to the long-established pattern of the commedia dell'arte, and Mungo and the plantation trappings disappear.[20] The West Indian setting simply fulfilled the requirement that the opening scene of the harlequinade be new and that it take up some well-known topic of interest.

In 1807 another "grand comic pantomime" appeared anonymously at Drury Lane. Now on the eve of the passing of the Abolition Bill, it utilized the comic material for humanitarian purposes. The initial setting of "A Description of Furibond; or, Harlequin Negro"[21] is on the Jamaican plantation of Sir Peevish Antique (Pantaloon), a celebrated antiquary. Having visited his plantations and settled his affairs, he is about to return to England, absentee-fashion. His baggage is carried to the ship by the usual contingent of song-singing sailors. Wearing "a very high straw hat," the Clown takes a ludicrously regretful leave of his black amour, the female servant who is being left in charge of the great house. Furibond is an enchanter who lives in a neighbouring "castle." He has repeatedly solicited the hand of Columbine, daughter of Sir Peevish (the stock Creole heiress), but she has consistently rejected his suit. Now he arrives and is enraged to find that the planter and his family have already embarked for England. He calls up his familiar spirit, Maligno, who promises to aid him in his resolution to capture Columbine.

Peevish's slave-driver is next seen chastising a slave who has stopped to rest with his basket. This scene, of course, is a "comic" representation of one of the unfortunate results of absenteeism. When other slaves attempt to seize him, they and the driver are frightened off by a large serpent. They try unsuccessfully to kill it and then run away. The rescued slave cherishes the snake in his bosom and puts it into his basket where it transforms into a large passion flower out of which arises the Good Fairy Benigna. She addresses him as "a son of humanity" and promises for his kindness to give him the reward of his choice. First, the Slave complains of his black complexion, but upon contemplating a "trans-

parency" of Narcissus admiring himself in the pool, he decides that his "manly nature" must be content with "the beauties of the mind." Next, he considers power and ambition but is repulsed by a view of "a Tyrant trampling on a subject." Finally, he sees Harlequin "dispensing comfort to the opprest with grief,/ Heaven's instrument of general relief." The slave expresses great raptures at the sight, and Benigna transforms him into Harlequin, bestowing the magic sword upon him (I, 5-9).

Harlequin's first act is to supplicate the Fairy for the emancipation of "Poor Afric's children [who] sigh for liberty," but Benigna indicates that that task is reserved for Britons. At that moment Britannia, with her lion, "descends from the Skies," and the Genius of Britain sings:

> Listening to the Negro's cries,
> See, Britain's Genius from the skies.
>
> (Air)
>
> She heard the toil-bled father's shrieks,
> While tears roll'd down their sable cheeks;
> Saw mothers from their children torn,
> Beneath the whip to waste and mourn,
> The lash she heard, she saw the wound,
> And human gore pollute the ground;
> Each feeling tie that nature gave,
> Sunk lost and shatter'd in the Slave.
> Kindling with a sacred ire,
> Her voice broke forth in words of fire;
> England shall stamp the blest decree,
> That gives the Negro Liberty.
>
> (Chorus)
>
> She comes illum'd in mercy's rays,
> Now, now, the heartfelt chorus raise.
> She bears just England's blest decree,
> That Stamps the Negro's Liberty.

Harlequin in the next scene appears in London where his innate goodness naturally conflicts with the evil designs of Furibond and Maligno who have arrived before him. The chase ranges through seventeen scenes of spectacle

and dancing, from Greenwich Hospital to Sir Peevish's museum and on to the Cave of Furibond where the classic confrontation of good and evil occurs. The climax is reached in the Palace of the Fairy where Harlequin and Columbine are united and dance with the attendants of Benigna. The Palace is "said to be the most beautiful ever exhibited . . . composed of pillars richly set with emeralds, rubies, sapphirs, &c." (XIX).

Both of these harlequinades feature a West Indian slave transformed into Harlequin, Columbine in both cases is the daughter of a "Pantaloon-planter." Both utilize patriotic and nautical sentiments, and the initial scenes of both attempt a more-or-less realistic picture of plantation life. The intervening years between 1788 and 1807, however, reveal the vast influence of the abolition movement on public opinion. Bates' Harlequin Mungo is involved in political and social scenes in London. He has no benevolent instincts after he leaves the sugar mill. Harlequin Negro, on the other hand, is a kind of comic Noble Savage who not only visits scenes of humanitarian interest in London but is also unabashedly concerned with Negro emancipation. The latter entertainment was "performed with applause at Drury Lane Theatre" on December 28, 1807, and was, no doubt, considered a most timely Christmas pantomime to celebrate the year which saw Britain's abolition of the slave trade. The notion that "England's blest decree . . . stamps the Negro's Liberty", of course, turned out to be something of an overstatement.

In the post-Emancipation period we have a third harlequinade worthy of consideration. Although the manuscript is not now available, Trelawny Wentworth describes the performance of "Harlequin Planter; or, The Land of Promise" at the theater in St. John's, Antigua in 1834.[22] It is naturally

pro-colonial, and Wentworth finds it "admirably adapted to the taste and temperament of a tropical audience" (171). (It served as the novelty of the evening, following a rendering of "She Stoops to Conquer."[23]) The play opens on an island with a dance of aboriginal savages and Dryads before an audience of tame crocodiles. A party of settlers arrives and puts the savages in servitude. The work of clearing the land goes forward amid the protests of "avenging elements," with thunder, lightning, and earthquakes frightening off everyone except one stubborn old colonist. In felling a tree he releases Maboya (the evil spirit of the natives) who transforms him into Harlequin.[24] The crocodiles disgorge a Pantaloon and a Clown, and a Columbine appears in "the person of a fair caribbess."

The prosm thus complete, "the agents of the thumping and tumbling departments were tolerably au fait in personating the ascititious characters of lawyers, doctors, and planters." The first act concludes with "Harlequin proceeding with Columbine on a voyage to Africa on the back of a crocodile, which for the sake of better accommodation, is changed into a ship." Still a shrewd colonist at heart, Harlequin returns with a cargo of Negroes whom he has garnered in by the timely distribution of boots, razors, and looking-glasses. Thus for a time he is able to support his credit with Maboya who is preying upon him. There is a party of "several staid, straight-haired gentry, bearing the banners of the Anti-Slavery Society." Attended by Astraea, the goddess of Justice, they interfere with a thunderous announcement about abstaining from the use of sugar.

Harlequin discovers Astraea to be an impostor when she commands that the crowd of Negroes be whitewashed in order to make them unacceptable to Maboya whose power is limited to the control of the black race.

Confusion abounds--Harlequin's demon-creditor reappears in a hurricane, the "white" Negroes are frantic in their liberty, Astraea gets upset and puts to sea in a cockle-shell boat. The colonists are all "knocked on the head," and the island resumes its original state of nature.

The final scene reveals a room at the Colonial Office in Downing Street with the Secretary of State in his arm chair, awakening from the nightmare of colonial administration which has been embodied in the pantomimic details of the drama. The play is clearly geared to its planter audience and is a satirical colonial comment on the Emancipation Act.[25] The proceeds of this anti-abolition work, however, "were distributed in charity by the lady patroness . . . in behalf of the necessitous and indigent inhabitants" (177).

Ohio is another anti-Noble Negro who finds himself stranded in a European milieu. Both comic and tragic, he appears in Joanna Baillie's Gothic blank-verse tragedy, "Rayner" (1805).[26] The setting is in Germany where the hero Rayner, having been defrauded of his rightful inheritance, has become involved (to a limited degree) with a band of robbers. The play opens with a midnight meeting of the outlaws. When these "lawless Gentlemen" are ultimately brought to justice, Rayner is also arraigned for a murder in which he had no part. Elizabeth (his betrothed) and Hardibrand (an old friend of his father) do their utmost to save him from execution. But it is the craftiness of Ohio, the ever-essential and clever servant, which finally brings this "tragedy" to a happy conclusion.

Ohio, a prison attendant, first appears in the disadvantageous though conventional comic role of a drunken prankster (III, ii). Yet out of the conversation between Hardibrand and the Negro emerges the traditional

tale of the abused slave, trailing remnants of Oroonoko:

Hard: Holla, my friend! I pray thee not so fast;
Inform me, if thou canst, where I may find
The keeper of the prison.

Ohio: (with tankard) Know you what prince you speak to?
saucy knave!/ I'll have thee scorch'd and flead,
and piece-meal torn,/ If thou dost call me friend.
(Hardibrand gives him money).

Ohio: Silver pieces! He! he! he! he! hast thou got
more of them? (Negro directs him to wrong door,
grinning maliciously, then points to another.
Hardibrand knocks. Ohio, still grinning, directs
him to a third, and Hardibrand threatens to beat
him.)

Ohio: Negroes be very stupid, master friend. (Keeper
of prison appears).

Keeper: Thou canker-worm! thou black-envenom'd toad!
Art thou a-playing thy malicious tricks?
Get from my sight, thou pitchy viper, go! (Exit Ohio)

Hard: What black thing is it? it appears, methinks
Not worth thine anger.

Keeper: That man, may't please you, Sir, was born a prince.

Hard: I do not catch thy jest.

Keeper: I do not jest, I speak in sober earnest;
He is an Afric prince of royal line.

Hard: Why say'st thou! that poor wretch who sneaketh yonder
Upon those two black shanks? (Pointing off the stage)

Keeper: Yes, even he:
When but a youth, stol'n from his noble parents,
He for a slave was sold, and many hardships
By sea and land hath pass'd.

Hard: And now to be the base thing that he is!
Well, well, proceed.

Keeper: At last a surly master brought him here,
Who, thinking him unfit for further service,
As then a fest'ring wound wore hard upon him,
With but a scanty sum to bury him,

Left him with me. He ne'ertheless, recover'd;[27]
And tho' full proud and sullen at the first,
Tam'd by the love of wine which strongly tempts him,
He by degrees forgot his princely pride,
And has been long established in these walls
To carry liquor for the prisoners.
But such a cursed, spite-envenom'd toad!--

The utter degradation of Ohio's present condition is so great that Hardibrand, would-be sentimentalist that he is, barely restrains himself from beating him:

Hard: Out on't! thou'st told a tale that wrings my heart.
Of royal line; born to command, and dignified
By sufferings and dangers past which makes
The meanest man ennobled: yet behold him; (pointing off the stage)
How by the wall he sidelong straddles on
With his base tankard!--O, the sneaking varlet!
It makes me weep to hear his piteous tale,
Yet my blood boils to run and cudgel him.
But let us on our way (III, ii).

In Act V Ohio creeps into the cell where Rayner sleeps the sleep of the innocent as he awaits his execution. Regarding the white prisoner with a malicious grin, he speaks with smouldering hatred:

Thou hast lov'd Negroes' blood, I warrant thee.
Dost sleep? ay, they will waken thee ere long,
And cut thy head off. They'll put thee to rest;
They'll close thine eyes for thee without thy leave;
They'll bloat thy white skin for thee, lily-face.
Come, less harm will I do thee than they fellows:
My sides are cold: a dead man needs no cloak.

Rayner awakes. He makes the wisest move of his entire career when he treats the petty thief with compassion:

Rayner: What would'st thou with me?

Ohio: My sides are cold; a dead man needs no cloak.

Rayner: 'Tis true indeed, but do not strip the living.
Where dost thou run to now? where wert thou hid?

Ohio: (fetches stick) Beat me thyself, but do not tell of me.

Rayner: I would not harm thee for a greater fault.
I'm sorry thou art cold; here is my cloak;
Thou hast said well; a dead man needs it not.
I know thee now; thou art the wretched negro
Who serves the prisoners; I have observ'd thee:
I'm sorry for thee; thou art bare enough,
And winter is at hand.

Ohio: Ha! art thou sorry that the negro's cold?
Where wert thou born who art so pitiful?
I will not take thy cloak, but I will love thee.
They shall not cut thy head off.

At the time scheduled for the execution, we find that "some unknown friend" has sawed through the main prop of the scaffold so that at the crucial moment the platform collapses. The headsman is forced to retire, "all maim'd and bruis'd,/ Unfit to do his office."[28] Meanwhile Rayner receives a pardon from the governor, is united with Elizabeth, and reclaims his fortune. As for Ohio, his nobility now arouses Hardibrand's dormant feelings of true benevolence:

Ha! well done and well said, my brave black thing!
Art thou a prince? in faith I think thou art.
I'll take thee home, and make a man of thee . . .
Thou hast a gen'rous mind, altho' debas'd
With vile oppression and unmanly scorn.

Sambo is a sentimental humourist in Frederick Reynolds' five-act high comedy, "Laugh When You Can" (1798).[29] As the Negro servant of the profligate London lawyer, Ned Delville, he is crucial to the happy and morally-pure conclusion of the play. Henry Mortimer and his wife Maria are beset by the chief scandal-monger in Richmond, Miss Diana Gloomly, "the crying philosopher,"[30] who wishes to marry Captain Mortimer herself. Delville tries to take advantage of Mrs. Mortimer's lack of money, the gossip, and her husband's absence on military duty in Gibralter to seduce her. Meanwhile, George Gossamer, "the laughing philosopher," with his rowdy but perfectly decent practical jokes endeavours to save the situation.

He is materially aided at every turn by Sambo who is burdened for the reformation of his own wayward master. Still for all his villainy, Delville has given his virtuous slave his liberty, after having brought him to England from his Barbados estate. We know, therefore, that the lawyer must have a savable soul.

Sambo appears in the first scene dressed in the fashion of the plantation Negro who was later to become so popular on the American stage: "A white Jacket, silver Shoulder-knot, white Waist coat, glazed round Hat, bold Band, Cockade, Books and Leather Breeches" (I, i). The purity of his speech not only belies any plantation connections but also permits the artistic utterance of beautiful platitudes and the convincing demonstration of the legal knowledge he has picked up around the Temple. In the second scene Miss Gloomly, aided by her maid Dorothy, tries to bribe Sambo into supporting her nefarious purposes. He scornfully rejects a purse full of gold guineas:

> Dorothy: Mr. Negro--let me remind you, that people of your complexion are often bought and sold.
>
> Sambo: And so are people of yours. Black men are not the only men that are bought and sold. Every body has their price; particularly chamber-maids; they are always knock'd down to the best bidder.

In Act II, when Henry Mortimer has returned to try to salvage his marriage, Delville is still determined to keep him from seeing Maria. Sambo protests that even in his "uncivilized country" no one would be savage enough to part husband and wife. Angered, Delville threatens to send him back to the Indies whence he came. Sambo humbly replies:

> Send me where you like--let me toil and fret, and be treated like a slave--only don't let me see the master of my heart descend to actions which will embitter his life and my own for ever!

And he exits, promising that though he "knows his obedience as a servant" he will remain within hearing, for he has not forgotten his "duty as a man." Delville persists in his lustful intentions until even the gay Gossamer advises him to copy the example of his honest Negro by gaining "the cheerfulness of a good conscience" (III, ii). Delville's final evil act is to try to send Mortimer to jail for debt, but Sambo's intelligence thwarts the arrest. At this the Negro "bursts into tears" to realize that the master who has liberated him is yet so perfidious.

In the final act when Mortimer is on the point of suicide, the family is suddenly reunited: the father, still alive and with his faith restored; the mother, still chaste; and the son, drained of every sentimental and tearful possibility that an abused child can offer. Sambo then arrives with a "death-bed" repentance written by his master. (Delville does not actually die of his sickness but is instead permitted to live on to perform righteous deeds):

> Sambo: You must know my master was taken suddenly ill, and sent me for a physician--but I refused to go.--Says I, 'Sir, the natives of my country are all very healthy, and for two simple reasons--first because we've no doctors; and next, because we've no such enlighten'd disorders as ingratitude, false friendship, seduction!--these,' say I, 'play the devil with a man's constitution' (V, i).

Had he been simply left as a Noble Savage, Sambo would have been more convincing. But he "dances and sings" for joy, for having proved that the world is full of good people after all. Although Sambo's festive capering is well within the tradition of the comic Negro servant, in Reynolds' play it assorts oddly with his laboured moralizings. It appears to have been inserted only as a recognition of a well-established conceit of stage comedy.

The "melodramatic spectacle" of "Kongo Kolo: or, The Mandingo Chief" (1811)[31] is an incoherent tale of Sidney, a sentimental English officer shipwrecked upon a tropical island of unspecified location where he is miraculously united with his long-lost wife Laura.[32] There is no mistaking the propagandistic intent of the songs and recitatives for the author has simply produced a potpourri of colonial issues. The chief interest lies in the romance of Felix Fagan O'Fogharty, an Irish slave driver, and the glamourous Negress Zella. The first two songs by Zella eulogize Sidney, the "good white Man" whose virtues have given her a new concept of European character:

> How kind good white Man to de Negro here
> Come you no be sad today--come take cheer
> We make you merry make your heart so glad
> Sit here while me play--dey all dance like Mad
> Come you no idle now you lazy dog
> Dancee nor Workee for which you get frog.

She is joined by a slave chorus proclaiming that they have "no mind" for the "Buckra Man who make us work," if "good white Man him kind." Felix thunders in upon this carefree scene with dire threats:

> Ahora what's all this Hubbuboo and row
> Is it your own swate black ugly mugs now
> I'm after seeing of so full of grin
> Don't you know that I am grand whipperin
> Over the whole of you he dingy set
> And don't you think for this a taste to get
> Of my beautiful little twig here--hey
> Och by the powers I'll back your black hides grey
> So I will--Is it for the likes of you
> To dance and sing as Gentlefolks should do
> Och but I'll make your dancing trade to thrive
> The devil a soul of you I'll leave alive
> I'll find you music--I'm the Fidler Boy
> Will make the bones dance from your skin my Joy.

An argument ensues between Sidney, the humanitarian Englishman who believes that the Negroes are "men and brothers born as free" as himself, and Felix,

the ludicrous Irishman who scorns the whole "set of ugly Devils." When the latter discovers Zella among the slaves, however, he undergoes an instantaneous transformation:

> --What and are you there
> My loveliest of the lovely sooty fair
> Upon my conscience 'twas but now I said
> That I was made a master of my trade
> But spite of all that I've been taught I find
> I've left my flogging temper all behind
> Could I be after lifting up my fist
> Against those lips that only should be kist
> The devil fire the whip and him that made
> The use of it I say in this slave trade.
> (Music while he breaks the whip)
> Give me your hand, Sir, I your pardon crave
> I may look rough--but ne'er will harm a slave.

Felix blames his master for his harshness, for he has been bidden "to lay the limbs of ye bare." He claims that actually he has "not a spark of cruelty" in him. Since the planter himself never appears on stage to speak for himself, we cannot pass judgment on the veracity of Felix, but it is of doubtful quality. By the middle of Act II he has committed himself to marrying Zella:

> Zella: What dat you say, you make poor Zella wife?
>
> Felix: Aye that I will, and love you while I've life
> Faith what care I how e'er the world may grin.
> The heart is what I prize--what for the skin!

Sidney is pleased with this evidence of honourable commitment and moralizes at length over the fact that "black, or brown, or fair" should equally share in blessings. Zella, however, does not immediately embrace the opportunity of going to Britain, land of freedom, with the same alacrity we find in the dusky heroines of the humanitarian plays of the period. As a comic figure she is practical. She foresees very real problems, even though she ultimately capitulates to Felix's vows of fidelity:

Zella: Ah--no--white man when me from my own country go
Then me fear you'll forsake me--

Felix: Ah! no my Love no
I never could act so believe me.

Zella: Ah, but then when the white girl you see with blue Eye
Then you bid the poor black girl for ever good by
To call you a cruel Deceivee
To call, &c, &c.

Felix: No my swate, by the big Hill of Hoath 'tis I swear
And faith that's a big oath that no Irishman dare
To break while he's life Joy to mind it
Och I'll take you for better for worse and all that
And I'll love and I'll cherish you too by St. Pat
And that is the Clincher to bind it
And that &c, &c. (Tune changes to "Irish Wedding")

Zella: No, no

Felix: You'll be my wife--it's clear eno'

Zella: My heart him tell--you no mean well

Felix: It tells a lie then deary O

Zella: But will you ever constant prove
And ne'er be false to bedding O

Felix: I will and all the joys of Love
Shall dance at Felix Wedding O

Both (dancing) Tura lu, Tura lu, &c.

Act II is occupied with the warfare between the Foulah Negroes of the plantation and the Mandingos (Maroons?)[33] who "live by war and drinking" and are led by Kongo Kolo, their robber king. In this violent upheaval the ridiculous Felix becomes lost in the woods, suffers from delirium, and soundly berates himself for ever having left his "own spot of Pratees and Buttermilk to come to this d-mn'd outlandish Country." This view was shared in real life by many an indentured book-keeper in the New World.

Thomas Dibdin's opera,[34] "Zuma: or, The Tree of Health" (1818),[35]

is a tri-coloured drama featuring crafty Spaniards, noble Peruvians, and a comic Negro servant, Caesar. It is set in Lima, Peru, about the year 1640. The Indians are determined to keep the secret of the healing properties of the quinquina tree from the Spaniards who are suffering from a malady[36] that defies the skill of all their physicians (malaria). The Indian princess Zuma who is devoted to her mistress, the malaria-stricken Countess Oriana, is torn between keeping the secret of the Peruvians or saving the life of her benefactress. Zuma's husband Mirvan, along with the other "Children of the Sun," renews his oath in a rite at the Tree, saying:

> We swear never to discover to the Children of Europe, the divine and healing qualities of this only treasure which remains to us! The pulverized bark of this sacred Tree is a powerful and universal remedy for the evils of our climate, which Europeans never must partake! (I, i).

All the other Indians vow to exterminate any traitor among them who imparts the mystery to their conquerors. Picquilla, an eavesdropping Spaniard, however, gains the recipe and fills his pockets with bark from the sacred tree. With it, he says, "[I] shall make my fortune" (I, i). Meanwhile with all the simplicity and loyalty of the noblest of savages, Zuma steals some of the quinine powder to mix in her mistress's drink. Observed by the Negro slave Caesar, she is accused by the Spaniards of trying to poison the Countess and is summarily sentenced to death. She refuses to reveal the secret of the powder even to save her life. There is a telling contrast here between the harshness of the Spaniards who hustle Zuma off to prison, making hasty efforts to convert her to Christianity before she dies, and the Indian chiefs who are constrained by the sacred laws of tradition and of nature to punish the heroine by destroying her

child. Nevertheless the faith of the Countess in the noble Zuma is so great that she drinks the medicine and is "miraculously healed." Thus tragedy is averted, and Mirvan admonishes the Indians: "The providential discovery of your secret, frees you from a cruel oath, form'd by revenge! Instead of hidden enemies, you will become the benefactors of the Old World" (III, iv). The Count, responding to "the duty of humanity . . . and gratitude," emancipates the enslaved Indians. Thus reconciled, the two nations settle down to share the virtues of the Tree of Health along with the other more traditional riches of Peru. They conclude with singing the glories of the Tree.

Meanwhile, the lone, bumbling figure of Caesar wanders anachronistically through the drama. He is a comic Negro moving amid heroic scenes of Spanish splendour and Peruvian-Indian nobility, but he plainly belongs to the West Indian plantations. When he is sent to spy on Zuma, he goes with alacrity: "Lucky Blackee found right way at last! Caesar no lose sight, fear he get Massa Buckra big bamboo" (II, ii). Sancho, a palace valet, finds him resting at the entrance of a gold mine:

> Sancho: Caesar! Caesar! I say, thou little villain, with a great man's name, where is the girl I bade you not lose sight of?
>
> Caesar: Dere, Massa, dere she go--look! pretty creature for all her ignorance, poor devil, eh, Massa? Great beauty, for all she know no better.
>
> Sancho: Caesar, you're no bad judge. I'm glad she's found--stay here, and I'll just follow, and have a tête-à-tête with her (II).

Although Caesar bears some traces of western sophistication, he has sufficient noble savagery to resent such exploitation. He says: "Eh, fine to learn much good tings like white man! Blackee, and poor pagan Peru-

man, no talk to oder man's wife. Black Squaw and Peru woman tink shame to talk to oder woman's husband--poor ignorant devils!" (II, ii). The gold mine and its labourers remind him of Africa "where gold grow in my poor black country--beautiful place for all that." This reverie gives rise to a comic version of the traditional prince-to-slave metamorphosis. He sings:

> Warlike mother Caesar had,
> Negro song her valour speak;
> Yet her temper not so bad,
> For she only kill a man a week!
> Caesar daddy, mighty king,
> Drink and fight, and dance and sing,
> Chickarack,
> Carawack,
> Ho, ho, ho!
> Dingle, jingle, ting, tang, taro!
> King of Congo make great strife,
> Caesar dad, him life to save,
> Pickaninny, crown, and wife,
> Sell poor Caesar for a slave!
> Cruel ting of Congo King,
> But Caesar dry him tear, and sing,
> Chickarack, &c.
>
> Little black Cupid shoot him dart,
> In de land where Caesar come;
> Neger lady touch him heart,
> Love her most as well as rum.
> In her nose she stick a ring,
> And promise, when we meet, to sing,
> Chickarack, &c. (II, ii).

Presently Caesar has the opportunity to rescue Zuma's child who has fallen down the mine shaft. Beatrice, the discontented duenna of the Countess, mistakes the black in his ascent for a "sable daemon of mischief."

As a relic of the Old World,[37] Beatrice says to the Count:

> I see the complete triumph of the Peruvian Princess; and, by the first ship, I humbly solicit my passage from this beautiful New World, to what I suppose you will call, the dreary, bigotted, and less enlightened shores of native Spain (III, i).

In the next scene the Indian prince Azan accosts Caesar and the fortune-seeker Picquilla. A triangle of racial prejudice emerges from the brief encounter of the three men:

> Azan: Where is the infant? (Zuma's child)
>
> Picq: I don't know, as I'm a Gentleman!
>
> Caesar: How should he, poor white animal--no child dere--Caesar save child. . . .
>
> Azan: Outcasts of nature! whose black and pallid hues, unknown to the sun's offspring, proclaim ye monsters, prepare for death! Away with them!
>
> Picq: Here's another turn of fortune! even the powerful panacea in my pocket will fail to preserve me in a case like this (II, iv).

Dibdin's drama primarily exalts the noble Peruvians in a kind of Restoration revival. But now the very useful Caesar, out of place as he is mixing with heroic Indians, has also become a vital feature of the traditional European concept of the Americas.

West India fortunes made on the high seas came without the encumbrances and responsibilities of plantership, and more than one indigent European decided that the rewards were worth the risks. Moreover, high-seas adventure had an addictive power all its own. These themes received their fullest treatment, however, in picaresque fiction which is outside the range of this study. Piracy was also an obvious resort for runaway Negroes. For pirate settings on stage Negroes provided colourful and exotic backdrops in the same way that artists of the time chose to include black attendants in their group portraits.[38] James Cross's tale, for instance, which culminates in the death of Blackbeard, amid gunsmoke and sword-play, "Blackbeard, or, The Captive Princess," (1798)[39] was presented as a "serio-comic ballet." The effect, Genest tells us, was impressive:

> This piece is a Spectacle with songs. It was compiled by Cross from the history of the Buccaneers in America and brought out at the Royal Circus in 1798. At Bath it was very well gotten up, but did not meet with the success it deserved. In one of the scenes the whole stage was made to represent the deck of a man-of-war.[40]

Blackbeard, alias Edward Teach, was a pirate who was the terror of the Caribbean between 1717 and 1719. His story abounds with West Indian characters and events.

Among the more than forty dramas of Isaac Pocock, Defoe's hero, Robinson Crusoe appeared in a romantic melodrama at Covent Garden in 1817.[41] The action of "Robinson Crusoe; or, the Bold Bucaniers" turns on the reunion of Crusoe with his wife Ines and his son Diego and his subsequent conflict with the mutinied sailors on his son's ship. The first Act opens with Crusoe, a man of great sensibility, delivering himself of pious platitudes concerning his relationship with his faithful Carib, Friday. Their ruminations are interrupted by the arrival of Pariboo, the "Cannibal Chief." The main item on his menu turns out to be Iglou, Friday's father, who is successfully rescued by Crusoe and Friday. The second scene introduces the chief mutineers, Windlass the boatswain and Swivel the gunner, accompanied by the cowardly Nipcheese, the ship's steward. They set ashore on Crusoe's island (that is, Tobago), where they leave their captain Diego and his mother Ines (who has been on a perpetual voyage of search for her missing husband). Thus free of restrictions and in possession of the vessel, the mutineers determine to turn buccaneer--an obvious career for men in their circumstances in the Caribbean. The Glee and Chorus of Mutineers singing as they organize the ship's stores appeals to the imagination and tends to confirm Genest's remark that the play "is much better calculated for representation than perusal" (VIII, 609). They sing:

When the anchor's a-peak
And the ship under weigh,
The wide ocean we'll seek
Like a shark for its prey.
We'll take what we can, boys,
Wherever we steer;
Friend or foe, 'tis all one
To a bold Bucanier.

Let the signal be heard
That a sail is in sight;
Sword and hand we must board
If they dare us to fight.
No danger shall daunt us,
No odds make us fear,
We must conquer or die
Like a bold Bucanier (I, ii).

Pocock's interest in the melodramatic possibilities of a Caribbean setting was still unabated eleven years later when he wrote "Tuckitomba, or the Obi Sorceress" (1828). It was acted at Covent Garden six times, but apparently was never printed.[42] The principals are a Jamaican planter, Edwards (named, no doubt, in honour of the West Indian historian Bryan Edwards), his overseer, Abraham Fletcher, Esther the Obi Woman, and Tuckitomba along with an assortment of other pirates. Like so many other tales of its kind, it was apparently a mediocre production. William Hazlitt was in the audience for at least one performance:

> The holiday attraction of the week has been a melo-drama called Tuckitomba, said to be founded on a fact which happened in Jamaica fifty years ago. The interest turns on a black sorceress who steals her master's child out of revenge, on an old pirate (Tuckitomba) who runs away with a mulatto-girl [Clara] for love, and on the blowing up of the vessel in which they are set sail for Africa, by the carelessness of a tailor [Simon Smallthread of Port Royal] on board . . . who sets fire to the powder-magazine with the contents of his tobacco pipe. There is a great deal of bustle and want of interest in this piece.[43]

Other more "legitimate" exploits of empire inevitably tied in with West Indian concerns and served as the basis for several dramas, particular-

ly of the sea-going variety.[44] Two of John Thomas Haines' nautical dramas with West Indian settings illustrate the use of Negroes within this framework of patriotic celebration of Britain's imperial glory. The blacks are multi-purpose, serving as sources of humanitarian sentiments, as comic figures, and as crucial characters to the resolving of the plot. "My Poll and My Partner Joe" (1835) is a good delineation of the impressment of sailors and of the villainies of the slave trade which still prevailed despite the fact that it now carried the death penalty of piracy. After falling into the clutches of kidnappers, Harry Halyard is pressed for the navy. Years later he returns to England "in possession of some ready coin" to marry his "pretty Poll of Putney"--only to find that his old sweetheart has married his faithful partner Joe. This Enoch Arden theme resolves itself in a sea of conflicting emotions. Old Joe dies and his wife presumably will marry Halyard, for the last scene closes with Henry and his Poll locked in an embrace at Joe's deathbed. The picaresque action is designed to "celebrate the wooden walls, and the brave, generous Jack Tars of unconquered and unconquerable Old England," says Haines. This melodramatic plot is supported by a romantic cast of "Sailors, Soldiers, Picarooners, Slaves, Watermen and lasses, &c."

Act II is devoted to the exploits of Henry and his crew mates aboard the H.M.S. Polyphemus as it cruises off the African coast searching for slavers. They eventually capture the slave ship of the wicked Black Brandon, a monster of uncertain (but at least non-British) origin. In contrast to his dark deeds we have the pure loyalty and virtue of Zinga and Zamba, a devoted Negro couple. They are among "the black cattle" between decks where "slaves are discovered chained to the floor with a Seaman walk-

ing to and fro among them, heavily armed and carrying a whip. Brandon quells all grumbling: "Hark ye, ye nigger animals, if I hear the least noise, . . . I'll make sharks' meat of every devil of you." For three years Brandon has reserved Zamba in his cabin for his own purposes. Her husband Zinga has foregone the opportunities for revenge which he has had, and he now pleads to have Zamba restored to him. The slave captain spurns him, and instead orders Zamba put in a barrel and thrown overboard to delay the on-coming Polyphemus (II, ii, 28-29). The Negress is picked up by the British sloop, but the pirate-slaver fails to escape in this borrowed time, even after tossing several more Negroes overboard. In moments she is boarded. After a due amount of gun-fire and sword play, Brandon is slain and the Negro lovers are reunited. Such devotion among "primitives" moves Henry:

> Lord love my eyes, the poor creturs are lovyers--she's the Poll of his heart; tip us your black fin, my honest fellow; there's one at home I'd give the world to hug in my arms as you do your brown fair one here. . . . (Giving orders to sailors) "Do you hear, boys, let the wounded be looked to--let the poor niggers go free upon deck. Dance, you black angels, no more captivity, the British flag flies over your head, and the very rustling of its folds knocks every fetter from the limbs of the poor slave" (II, iii, 33).

In gratitude for Henry's services, Zinga shows him the way to "the pirates' horde" in "the Slavers Fort and Strong-hold on a high rock." After another suspenseful engagement with the rest of the pirates, Henry and Zinga subdue them, the "tri-coloured flag" (French?) is replaced by the British standard, and the fort blown up.

"The Wizard of the Wave: or, The Ship of the Avenger" (1840) also features much piratical blood and thunder as well as the patriotic celebration of the derring-do of British seamen in "a romantic country." The

action involves the encounter between Charles Falkner, captain of H.M.S. Wizard of the Wave, and the black-clad "Unknown" or "Evil One," master of a mysterious schooner, El Melchor, in a river in St. Jago (Cuba). The plot concerns the attempts of the latter to kidnap Isabinda, the governor's daughter. The English seamen enjoy tropical ease with the comforts of rum and cigars, and although they believe Cuba to be the home of the devil they are still not deterred from entering enthusiastically into the social pastimes provided by both Spanish and Negro ladies on the island. To cheer the water-logged spirits of the men Falkner invites the women to a ball on board the Wizard. In doing so he celebrates the primary consolation of a sailor and exhibits a typical Creole and/or nautical impartiality to "black, brown or fair:"

> We poor sons of the sea know too well what it is to be deprived of the heaven of their society--to omit a single opportunity of claiming and obtaining it; the glories and the wonders of old ocean--the sweet varieties of flower-cover'd lands, all pass as nothing to the lonely tar--but were the partner of his heart, the lass he loves, companion of his perios [sic]--the boundless waste around him would be peopled with sweet hopes--the sun-burnt lands of foreign climes would be as dear as loved homes. . . (Music) here comes the grog, lads--we will drink to woman . . . [they are served by a Spanish hostess and negro slaves]
>
> "Black, brown, or fair,
> The soothers of our care" (I, i, 11).

The chief Negro slave Domingo lends the play a tinge of humourous noble savagery. Believing that the angels speak "nigger tongue," he finds his race superior to both the English and Spanish. He tells his mistress Isabinda so in the Negro song and dance tradition:

> No Englis angels, angels neber speak de Englis . . . [They speak] nigger tongue to be sure, nigger poetry beautiful--very
>
> Blacky he lub Sunday,
> Dat him do, dat him do,
> Nassy work a Monday,

> Nigger hate a Monday,
> Cus him black, and cus him blue, cus him blue
> (I, ii, 15).

Furthermore, he warns her against being unduly impressed by the "blood-thirsty English" who must be devils:

> Missee, dem English when dey fight dey neber know when to run away--neber, so de oder party 'bliged to run away to shew dem how. . . . Bery true, de devil is bery good-looking in dat England, him wear a wig to hid him horns, and a bery long skirt to him coat to fold up him tail in (I, i, 14).

And he promises to guard her against any subversive attempts and rallies the rest of the blacks:

> Iss, massa, Mingo sleep on him post, not neber--Mingo's eye watch Englis debils for massa--come along, you black picaninnies--Mingo your general officer now--make you do him exercise--march you grinning tunder clouds--march--(Exit driving them off) (I, ii, 15).

The slaves' primary purpose here, however, is for comic relief.

The virtue of the English is no longer in question after Falkner's men have rescued Isabinda from the first attack of the "Unknown" in a mountain pass. Though all the British tars are more than eager to conduct the Spanish beauty home, she trusts the faithful servant Domingo and departs with him, hand in hand. Tom Truck, the coxswain of the Wizard, is stunned at the rebuff:

> May I go down in a calm on a holiday morning if it arn't a regular disgrace to the British Service, that one of her tars should let a craft like that slip from her moorings; my names' not Tom Truck, if I don't grapple every ship-shape lass, black brown or fair, I can run alongside of, out of revenge, from this ere very hour (I, ii, 19).

The other important domestic in the play is Old Nanny, a trustworthy slave type. At the crucial moment she reveals the secret of the noble birth of the villain and the hero, and in the last flaming action Falkner and the

dying "Unknown" discover that they are twin brothers.

Haines's plays utilize many of the established motifs of the Caribbean. He dramatizes ideas and images with which his audience had been painfully and wearily familiar all of their lives. Yet, amid the trappings of illegitimate theater, West Indian themes have never been more entertaining. His handling of Negro dialect, however, is little improvement over that of eighteenth century versifiers, being merely off-colour English, but Nanny, the quadroon, is allowed cultivated speech by virtue of her improving social status.

It may be noted here in passing that people of mixed blood received only scant attention in the English theater. For example, between her first prose appearance in Captain Stedman's Narrative in 1796[45] and her next one in a novel in 1824,[46] the romantic mulatto Joanna came on stage only briefly in a "New Grand Spectacle."[47] She was the much beloved wife of an English militiaman who, despite the scorn of many Surinam planters, went to great effort to contract a legal marriage with the fair slave. Twelve years later in 1816 Thomas Morton's gentle quadroon Zelinda became the heroine of a melodrama. By and large, however, concern for mulattoes and their kind was left to the sentimental novelists of England and eventually to the rising abolitionist writers of the United States. Only a handful of them appeared in British theater.[48] For abolitionist stage-writers the mulatto lacked Oroonokoan appeal while for the colonially disposed his tainted background rendered him unsuitable "hero" material.

Although it was pleasant to nineteenth-century Britons to find benevolence going so cosily hand in hand with England's glorious deeds of empire, any consideration of the Negro race kept bringing them back to the

uneasy suspicion that the African was not only as good as the European but perhaps even superior to him in some important respects. Imperialists then had to ease the tension by showing the Englishman to be more gallant than his European neighbours, leaving the Negro alone in a kind of unresolved and unrelated state of primitive excellence. Douglas Jerrold tackles the problem in "Descart, the French Buccaneer: or, The Rock of Annaboa" (1828). The coast of Africa is the setting for the traditional controversy between an honourable English captain and an illicit French pirate. Although the pirate activity offers little that is new, the heroine Imla is a somewhat tardy embodiment of the Noble Savage motif and the beauties of natural education.

The Africans, Couri and Scultuo, discuss their situation in highly moralistic terms as they sit on a rock in "wild and romantic scenery" watching the battle between the French and English vessels. Their ideas are in accordance with the tenets of new nineteenth-century anthropology and productive of a philosophy highly pleasing to white audiences. At the same time the French pirate, "robber and renegade" that he is, is consigned to his proper niche as a villain. Couri says:

> Oh, Scultuo, we are poor unlettered wretches, nature's meanest, most imperfect offspring--inasmuch as we differ in complexion with her fairer, her more god-like children. Still, have we not, though lashed and galled, receiving in dull and reckless stupefaction the whip and chain? have we not tendered the honey for the drug? Did not I--gods! my heart sickens as I think on't--did not I, in a time when skies and sea kept horrid warfare, dash from yon rock into the whelming gulf, and drag the white savage, the cursed Descart, from its hold? (I, i, 4).

The African admits that as a slave on the plantations (whence he has returned by unknown means) he had been struck by a master he loved. In reprisal he had stolen the widowed planter's three-year-old daughter and

Plate 13

Joanna of Surinam, wife of Captain J. G. Stedman. Artist, Stedman; engraver, Holloway. In Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam . . . from 1772 to 1777 (1796), I, 88.

Huntington Library



has now reared her as his own in the African jungles.

After the usual fighting and a native revolt, the wounded English captain is brought to Couri's hut. When he has leisure to consider Imla, he wishes to take her back to England where she may receive a genteel education:

> To leave so fair a being mid such scenes of guilt and violence! never. I have seen many adorned with all the graces of European refinement,--but Imla, the child of nature, the timid, uncultivated girl, in her the beauties of ingenuous innocence beam with a more pure and touching softeness, than all the attributes of rank and education. Give me then your consent (II, ii, 20).

But Couri cannot give up the girl, nor will he accept Captain Bland's considerate invitation to accompany him. His contacts with the white man have been too disillusioning:

> Oh, I have seen the proud-built world--have felt its best refinement. I accompany!--What, the black man!--why even my Imla, my dearest, doating Imla, when civilized, might blush for the poor negro, her foster-father? No,--here are my woods--here roll the waves that bore my youthful limbs--here I am equal--here, as the eagle, I am free! Alas! must not a white touch poor Africa, but he leaves behind him some sting within the black! (II, ii, 21).

At this moment Descart and his pirate hordes sweep in. In the struggle a picture of Imla's mother "falls from Couri's bosom," and in a melodramatic scene the African and the pirate recognize each other as Fidele the slave and La Rose the planter respectively. Combatants fill the stage while Descart the natural father and Couri the adoptive father fight for Imla atop the rock of Annaboa. The Negro is victorious and Imla flies to his arms while the Englishmen perform their accustomed task of striking down the pirates' flag. The curtain falls without Jerrold's having explored any of the ethical problems posed by Couri's claims on the white girl and

by her continued stay in Africa, or by Bland's benevolent intentions. Such considerations, of course, are beyond the province of a melodrama; it suffices that the French buccaneer has been defeated. It is apparent, however, that nature wins out, and Imla stays with the devoted Negro.

Two dramatic characters evolved from the comic phase of the treatment of West Indian themes in the theater. The first was the Negro servant, embodying all that was homely and humourous in the plantations and standing at the head of a long line of stage Negroes. He could be assigned to a wholly ludicrous role, or he could be pathetic and become a vehicle of humanitarian opinion. In either case, in his goodness and simplicity he constituted an effective foil to his white master whether at home or in the Indies. Although he was usually a character of the sub-plot and made only brief appearances, his part was not only decorative but often also crucial to the action. The "plantation Negress," of course, was vital to the exhibition of Creole lust in both comedy and tragedy. The chief difference was that in the former she was willing and in the latter she was not.

The second and more minor character was the British champion of justice and liberty, the terror of pirates and foreign slave traders. He stood quite apart from the planters in whose behalf it was not seemly to be too defensive. He was the incarnation of all that was glorious in Britain's golden dream of colonialism. Since his humanitarian instincts were rather crudely developed this lively asset to the stage served patriotic rather than abolition purposes. Many of the traditions of the Indies found bolder and lighter settings in the new drama. Under these circumstances, of course, their humanitarian impact was considerably dissipated.

B. Planters and Heiresses

From the early eighteenth-century, as we have seen, certain clichés about colonial proprietors were rather firmly established: their fantastic wealth and their nonchalant attitude toward it, their hospitality, their sallow complexions, their questionable political activities, their love of display, their cruelty, and their rakishness, to mention a few. In addition, there is the West Indian heiress, inextricably wedded to her fortune. John Gay's suppressed opera "Polly" utilized a surprisingly large number of these motifs.

In "The Beggar's Opera" (1729)[49] and "Polly" (1729)[50] Gay extended his satire of low English society to the West Indian plantations where Creolian customs added a touch of the exotic to basic British vices. In the first work Polly, the daughter of Peachum the informer, provokes her parents who cannot understand why she must "differ from her sex and love only her husband" (I, v). The lovers sing of their enduring devotion through the vicissitudes of transportation and indentured servitude--circumstances to be developed in "Polly":

Macheath: Were I laid on Greenland's coast,
And in my arms embraced my lass;
Warm amidst eternal frost,
Too soon the half year's night would pass.

Polly: Were I sold on Indian soil,
Soon as the burning day was closed,
I could mock the sultry toil
When on my charmer's breast reposed.

Macheath: And I would love you all the day.

Polly: Every night would kiss and play,

Macheath: If with me you'd fondly stray

Polly: Over the hills and far away (I, xiii).

Macheath, however, has a wide acquaintance in the community of London whores. Then there is the awkward presence of Lucy who also believes herself to be his wife. The complication in Macheath's plurality of "wives" continues even as he stands in the shadow of the gallows. His parting advice to Polly and Lucy, the chief contenders, is:

> If you are fond of marrying again, the best advice I can give you is to ship yourselves off for the West Indies, where you'll have a fair chance of getting a husband apiece--or by good luck, two or three, as you like best (II, xv).

In Polly's case this suggestion is worked out in the second opera. Meanwhile, Macheath's execution is averted at the last moment by the Player's insistence on a happy ending "to comply with the taste of the town" (II, xvi).

"Polly" was subtitled "the second part of 'The Beggar's Opera.'"[51] In it the scene shifts from Newgate in London to a planter's house in the West Indies. The play touches upon several features of the West Indian condition: the European lust for gold, the lascivious, spendthrift planter, the depredations of pirates, the miseries of white servitude, and the Noble Caribs who contrast well with the various practitioners of European corruption. At this early date, of course, abolition sentiment is wholly absent.

Among several previous acquaintances from "The Beggar's Opera" we find Mrs. Diana Trapes, the procuress and former associate of Peachum ("Beggar's Opera," II, vi), who has transferred her business to the plantations where she fits comfortably into Creole society. She is doing a brisk trade among the planters and rapidly mending her impaired fortunes while she assumes the guise of an agent for white servants. In Act I she belabours the planter, Mr. Ducat, for being unduly backward socially; the

colonies must not fall behind the Mother Country in gentlemanly excesses:

> Though you were born and bred and live in the Indies, as you are a subject of Britain you should live up to our customs. Prodigality there, is a fashion that is among all ranks of people. . . . You are wealthy, very wealthy, Mr. Ducat; and I grant you, the more you have, the taste of getting more should grow stronger upon you. . . . 'Tis genteel to be in debt. Your luxury should distinguish you from the vulgar. You cannot be too expensive in your pleasures (I, 11).

Ducat protests that he has lived up to all of his obligations as a West Indian gentleman:

> I never thought to have heard thrift laid to my charge. There is not a man, though I say it, in the whole Indies who lives more plentifully than myself; nor who enjoys the necessaries of life in so handsome a manner. . . . As I have a good estate, Mrs. Trapes, I would willingly run into everything that is suitable to my dignity and fortune. Nobody throws himself into the extravagancies of life with a freer spirit. As to conscience and musty morals, I have as few drawbacks upon my profits or pleasures as any man of quality in England; in those I am not in the least vulgar. Besides, Madam, in most of my expenses I run into the polite taste. I have a fine library of books that I never read; I have a fine stable of horses that I never ride; I build, I buy plate, jewels, pictures, or any thing that is valuable and curious, as your great men do, merely out of ostentation (I, 11-12).

But he admits that he "still cohabit[s]" with his wife. To enable him to rectify this conspicuous weakness, Mrs. Trapes offers him the first choice of "a fresh cargo of ladies just arrived" so that he may have a handsome, sprightly wench. When Ducat persists in his tasteless virtue pleading his advanced age, the agent scornfully reminds him that "our very vulgar pursue pleasures in the flush of youth and inclination, but our great men are modishly profligate when their appetite hath left them" (I, 13). At last the decayed old planter submits, for, as he says, "I have a fortune . . . and would fain make a fashionable figure in life" (I, 14).

After an invigorating quarrel with his wife (I, 24-25), Ducat im-

poses upon that vexed lady his newly-purchased servant who is none other than Polly Peachum. Polly has come to the Indies in search of the transported Macheath, her father having at last been hanged for his intrigues. Mrs. Trapes discloses the doleful news that Macheath, a year and a half earlier, "robbed his master, ran away from the plantation, and turn'd pirate," and "that since he came over he married a transported slave, one Jenny Diver, and she is gone off with him."[52] Under the circumstances Polly is forced to modify her romantic notions. Having been robbed of her money at sea, she must now throw herself upon the mercies of Mrs. Trapes who passes on to her the success-formula for indigent ladies in the Indies.

> You are [going to be] in a rich agreeable family, and I dare say your person and behaviour will soon make you a favourite. As to Captain Macheath, you may now safely look upon yourself as a widow; and who knows if Madam Ducat should tip off, what may happen? I shall recommend you, Miss Polly, as a gentlewoman (I, 20).

Planter Ducat, however, balks at Polly's high price:

> Ducat: But, dear Mrs. Dye, a hundred pistoles say you? why, I could have a half a dozen negro princesses for the price.
>
> Trapes: But sure you cannot expect to buy a fine handsome Christian at that rate? You are not us'd to see such goods on this side of the water. For the women [that is, transportees] like the clothes, are all tarnished and half worn out before they are sent hither. Do but cast your eye upon her, Sir. . . (I, 21).

Once he has caught a glimpse of Polly, it takes only moderate pressure to cause the leering old proprietor to count the price into Mrs. Trapes' eager hand. When he begins to press his attentions upon Polly, she ruefully discovers that "climates that change constitutions have no effect upon manners." Ducat is dumbfounded by her resistance: "Sure, hussy,

you belie your country, or you must have had a very vulgar education. 'Tis unnatural" (I, 27-28).

Ducat's amorous activities are interrupted by an Indian representative of Pohetee's tribe which is in alliance with the English colony. He reports that the pirates, led by a rapacious, barbarous Negro, Morano, are "ravaging and plundering the country." The Carib requests the aid of plantation forces.

When Polly confides her troubles to Mrs. Ducat, that lady assists her in escaping the plantation by outfitting her in men's clothing.[53] Eventually Polly discovers her "dear Macheath" (in the person of Morano) among the pirates in a camp in Indian country. In accordance with the tradition of masculine disguise Macheath's mistress Jenny falls in love with Polly, believing her to be a rich planter's son. At the same time the Indian Prince Cawwawkee is taken prisoner and brought before the boorish Morano. He bears himself with admirable dignity and restraint and is prepared to endure torture rather than dishonour his people. When Morano demands a ransom, Cawwawkee remarks laconically that gold is "so rank a poison to you Europeans that the very touch of it makes you mad" (II, 52).

Meanwhile, the pirates chafe at being "commanded by a neger" and plan mutiny. But the Indians defeat them first, and King Pohetee sentences Morano to death. Polly pleads eloquently for his life and offers to be sent back into slavery with him. Although the Indian chief would have rewarded Polly's loyalty, it is too late for the orders for execution have been carried out, and Macheath has finally paid the pirate's account in full.

The parsimonious Ducat suddenly appears on the scene and recognizes Polly as his property. He says to Pohetee:

Ducat: Mercy upon me! now I look upon her nearer, bless me! it must be Polly. This woman, Sir, is my slave; and I claim her as my own. I hope, if your majesty thinks of keeping her, you will reimburse me, and not let me be a loser. She was an honest girl, to be sure, and had too much virtue to thrive; for, to my knowledge, money could not tempt her.

Pohetee: And if she is virtuous, European, dost thou think I'll act the infamous part of a ruffian, and force her? 'Tis my duty, as a king, to cherish and protect virtue (III, 79).

So dedicated is the king to virtue that he does not object to his son's proposing marriage to Polly. The pirates are returned to their owners and slavery while Polly requests time to abandon herself to her sorrows. It is reasonably certain, however, that she will marry Cawwawkee, having found in the magnanimous and grateful Carib a nobility unavailable in the whole range of European society from London to Ducat's plantation.

"The Sailor's Opera, or, a Trip to Jamaica" (1731)[54] is a rather undistinguished production lacking even a note from Genest. In it the ocean voyage serves as a setting for love intrigues seasoned with songs and sentiments. The subject of scandal, which is so easily developed within the confines of shipboard, is a pale foreshadowing of Sheridan's later treatment of the theme. The passenger list, however, is of interest to this study because it provides a fair cross-section of colonial Caribbean society. Gaylove and Freeman are two "gentlemen of fortune" returning to their Jamaican estates. Of the former we learn that

> He came over of few years ago to the West Indies, where a luscious old Gentlewoman, of large Fortune, married him for Love, who in a Trifle of Time takes a bag of money and leaves her;--that now being spent, he is going over to her again, to recruit, in order to supply his Extravagances (III).

Freeman, the other beau, makes no secret of <u>his</u> purposes in his song in Act IV:

Old England now I bid adieu,
Why should I then complain?
The only Reason I leave you,
A Fortune for to gain;
But when once got then home I fly,
With my old Friends to live and dye
fa, la, la, la --

Clerimont, a bookish youth, is travelling under the sponsorship of Thoroughgood, but these intellectuals are oddly assorted with the rest of ship society. The three women are Victoria, a gay lady returning to her planter-husband; Prudentia, a sober lady going out to visit her planter-brother; and Harriet, a buxom West-Indian widow who is jealous of the apparent love affairs of the two younger belles. Being very knowledgeable of colonial society, she vows her revenge when she reaches "India's shores":

> Jamaica . . . is such a Place where Gentlemen stand so nicely on their Honour. They will send their Souls to Eternity at any time for a bare Suspicion of such a point. Now to such things [that is, the shipboard romances] soon spread, Pleadwell may chance to spit up Gaylove against the Wall, and send his Wife to the Bay of Honduras in Exchange for Logwood. Ha, ha, ha. Oh! the pleasing thought. (IV).

In Act V a great storm, the conventional concomitant of every Indies voyage, blows up. Tom Saveall the steward prescribes remedies for everyone's agonies of seasickness, and slaves carry them to and fro across the stage, ministering to their masters and mistresses. Only the beautiful Prudentia is sick in a refined way; the rest are engrossed in physical distresses of which no repulsive detail is omitted. At last the "happy Sight of Jamaica" dawns upon the stricken vessel, and all go ashore to a great party which Prudentia's brother throws with a truly planter-flair to celebrate the safe termination of the voyage. A minor part only is played by the Negroes aboard. The Captain's simple-minded slave girl is seduced by the second mate, and Peter is everyone's dusky errand boy. (In their brief appear-

ances, however, there is a fairly creditable attempt at Negro dialect.) Harriet does not achieve her revenge on Victoria and Prudentia who so markedly outshone her on the voyage, for these ladies and the two beaus are exonerated while the widow herself is discovered in a compromising position with the first mate. Easy, the ship's surgeon, concludes the action with a gay song which rather comprehensively sums up Jamaica's social structure:

> The Rich are all brave,
> The Ladies all kind,
> Each poor Man's a Slave,
> And so you will find. (V).

The two-act farce "High Life Below Stairs" first appeared on November 5, 1759. At first it was mainly a social document dealing with the servant problem that plagued England.[55] A few of the nineteenth-century versions deleted much of the Creolian satire,[56] in deference, no doubt, to the political influence of the West Indian proprietors. The servants, who make up twelve out of the fourteen of the cast, consistently assume the titles and personalities of their masters and mistresses. They strut in the park flaunting their stolen finery, abusing "ordinary servants," ogling one another, and entertaining themselves lavishly on the bounties of their master's cellars and larders while collecting tips from their master's friends.[57] Oliver Goldsmith complained that the work had

> . . . too narrow a plan. . . . The poor affecting the manners of the rich might be carried on through a character or two, at the most, with great propriety; but to have almost every personage on the scene almost of the same character, was unartful in the poet to the last degree.[58]

Although the farce was hissed at the first performance, it actually estab-

lished a long run as a secondary attraction for well over 100 performances between 1759 and 1776.[59]

Peregrine Lovel, the hero, is a carefree young absentee landlord from the West Indies who is enjoying high life and rising to political prominence in London. But he is too easy-going to believe the accusations that his blacks whom he "swears for" are as bad as the whites and that his servants are almost uniformly corrupt. His older friend Freeman, who dines at his house thrice weekly, remonstrates with him:

> Free: You are a young Man, Mr. Lovel, and take a Pride in a Number of idle unnecessary Servants, who are the Plague and Reproach of this Kingdom.
>
> Lovel: Charles, you are an old-fashion'd Fellow. Servants a Plague and Reproach! Ha, ha, ha. I would have forty more, if my House would hold them. Why, Man, in Jamaica, before I was ten Years old, I had an hundred Blacks kissing my Feet every Day.
>
> Free: You Gentry of the Western Isles are high mettled ones, and love Pomp and Parade--I have seen it delight your Soul, when the People in the Street have stared at your Equipage; especially if they whispered loud enough to be heard, "That is 'Squire Lovel, the great West Indian."
>
> Lovel: I should be very sorry if we were as splenetic as you Northern Islanders, who are devoured with Melancholy and Fog. . . . No, Sir, we are Children of the Sun, and are born to diffuse the bounteous Favours which our noble Parent is pleased to bestow on us.
>
> Free: I wish you had more of your noble Parent's Regularity and less of his Fire. As it is, you consume so fast, that not one in twenty of you live to be fifty years old.
>
> Lovel: But in that fifty we live two hundred, my Dear; mark that . . . . (I).

An anonymous letter finally convinces Lovel that perhaps he is being bilked and that an investigation is in order. As an accomplished mimic he assumes the guise of a "gawky country boy" named Jemmy who is striving "to get a good caracter." He is well qualified for the role, he says, since

he "played Daniel in The Conscious Lovers at School and afterwards arrived at the distinguished Character of the mighty Mr. Scrub." He promises Freeman that if he finds the servants to be rascals he will "discover" himself and "blow them all to the devil."

When Lovel announces that he is going to his borough in Devonshire, his servants promptly set about celebrating his absence. They invite to supper the servants of the Duke and the baronet Sir Harry as well as the maids of Lady Bab and Lady Charlotte. Then Lovel's cook negotiates with Mrs. Barter to sell a considerable quantity of her master's personal linen. Lovel, now replete in a red wig, is introduced by Freeman to his own kitchen as Jemmy. Cloe the black girl is a simpleton, and she makes a bawdy pass at "Jemmy" as she carries another box of clothing upstairs to Mrs. Barter:

> Who is this?--Hee, hee, hee--Oh--this is pretty boy--Hee, hee, hee!--You shall be in love with me by-and-by--Hee, hee! (Exit, chucking Lovel under the chin.)

John Coachman and Kingston the black are lying in a state of sodden drunkenness, and Jemmy is given the task of awakening them and getting them off to bed so that preparations for supper may go forward. He administers equivalent justice to black and white, slapping the one and pulling the other one up by the nose. Meanwhile, the damask table cloth is brought out and supper is laid on. Lovel discovers that "the dog Tom" whom he has never trusted is actually his only faithful servant when he hears him tell the others:

> I have lived with his honour four years, and never took the value of that (snapping his fingers)--His honour is a Prince, gives noble wages, and keeps noble company: and yet you . . . are not contented, but cheat him wherever you can lay your fingers.

Presently the guests begin to arrive, by way of the front door rather than the servants' entrance. The "Duke" cynically remarks on the quality of the West Indian's art collection:

> Duke: You have a damn'd vile collection of pictures, I observe, above stairs, Kitty.--Your 'Squire has no taste.
>
> Kitty: No taste! That's impossible, for he has laid out a vast deal of money.
>
> Duke: There is not an original picture in the whole collection--Where could he pick 'em up?
>
> Kitty: He employs three or four men to buy for him, and he always pays for originals (II).

The servant Philip, who plans to marry Kitty on £500 he has lifted out of his master's budget, takes "Jemmy" to the wine cellar where they sample everything from "humble port to imperial Tokay." Kitty powders and ties up Jemmy's hair so that he can wait on the gentlefolks. When she is momentarily non-plussed by his strange head of hair "so coarse and carroty," he assures her that all of his brothers are also "red in the Pole." Then he is counselled from the book entitled The Servant's Guide to Wealth and finally dismissed to sleep off his cellar trip. He leaves, promising: "I will certainly wait on their lordships and their ladyships too." A wooden-legged fiddler comes in, and the dancing begins. When the couples are paired off, "the two devils" [Kingston and Cloe] are left together. They kiss heartily to the general fascinated amusement of the whole company who regard the blacks as a sub-human species.

Kitty sums up the theme of the farce in a song[60] while the drunken Duke and Sir Harry reach the point of duelling over whether or not her rendition is a good one. A violent knocking interrupts festivities,[61] and Kingston hurries in to announce that Tom has just let Master and Mr.

Freeman in. Knowing well that "these West-Indians are very fiery," the servants scatter in terror trying to remove evidences of the supper with them. Philip and Kitty are piously studying The Servant's Guide to Wealth when Lovel, feigning drunkenness, enters with pistols. The two hypocrites solicitously endeavour to get their master to bed before the occupants of the pantry betray their presence. Almost immediately one does so by sneezing. Lovel prepares to shoot through the pantry door, and the game is up.

Having been threatened with complete annihilation if he should be seen on the premises again, the "Duke" departs muttering "low-bred fellows!" --an epithet which applies to the West Indian's servants, but in a broader sense also includes Lovel himself. Lady Charlotte bemoans the grief that "comes of visiting commoners," and Lady Bab denounces them as "downright Hottenpots." Nothing now remains but the speedy discharge of Philip and Kitty, the reward of faithful Tom, and the exchange of sentiments between Freeman and Lovel. Kingston and Cloe do not appear in the final judgment scene. They were colourful stage Negroes whose minor deviations were simply a "low low-comedy" reflection of the major crimes of the superior servants. More important, the young West Indian has proved himself to be capable of instruction: "Well, Charles, I must thank you for my frolic--it has been a wholesome one to me--Have I done right?" Freeman commends him and expresses astonishment that "these fellows [can] affect and imitate their Master's Manners." The now more perceptive Lovel has the solution, but it is an aristocratic sentiment still befitting his class and times:

> If Persons of Rank would act up to their standard, it would be impossible that their Servants could ape them--But when they affect everything that is ridiculous, it will be in the Power of any low Creature to follow their Example (V).

Isaac Bickerstaffe[62] was apparently the first to expose the Creole in a deliberate and seriously negative characterization on stage. He did so in his comic opera "Love in the City" (1767)[63] one year before he introduced the comic Negro Mungo to the English public in "The Padlock." The heroine, Miss Priscilla Tomboy, is a Jamaican heiress living in London. She is saved only by her hoydenish nature from being a thoroughly disagreeable girl. The scene is set in London in "a grocer's shop with a counting-house" where the characters embody all of the class-consciousness, social striving, and material prosperity of the mercantile world.[64] Expelled from boarding school for beating her governess, Miss Prissy is staying with the grocer until her guardian (Barnacle, the grocer's brother) arrives to settle her affairs. She bares her claws in the first dozen lines when Young Cockney, the merchant's son, requests his sister Penny and her friend Priscilla not to do their fancywork in the shop:

> Y. Cock: Come, Miss Prissy, get off that stool; I want to put it behind the counter.
>
> Prissy: I won't give it you.
>
> Y. Cock: If you won't, miss, I'll call my papa, and see what he'll say to you.
>
> Prissy: There, take your stool; you nasty, ugly, conceited, ill-natured--(Throws it at him.)
>
> Y. Cock: Look there now, did you ever see anything so unmannerly? Miss Prissy, I wonder you are not ashamed of yourself; but this is the breeding you got in the plantations. You know you was turned out of Hackney boarding-school for beating the governess and knocking down the dancing-master. I believe you think you have got among your blackamoors (I, i).

Although there is certainly little of West Indian lassitude about her, the brief scene that follows is in a typical Creolian vein. It might

well rasp on nerves at all sensitive to the ills of the Negro. Priscilla orders her Negress:

> Prissy: Quasheba! Quasheba! bring down my catgut. Why don't you make haste? See how she lets it fall: take it up again--Here threadle my needle--where are you going now--stand behind my back (she sings a song). . . . Quasheba, get out. I want to talk to Miss Penny alone--or stay, come back, I will speak before her--But if ever I hear, hussy, that you mention a word of what I am going to say to anyone else in the house, I will have you horse-whipp'd till there is not a bit of flesh left on your bones.
>
> Penelope: Oh, poor creature!
>
> Prissy: Psha,--what is she but a Neger? If she was at home at our plantations, she would find the difference; we make no account of them there at all: if I had a fancy for one of their skins I should not think much of taking it.
>
> Penelope: I suppose then you imagine they have no feeling?
>
> Prissy: Oh! we never consider that there (I, ii).

Since the burden of the play is not humanitarian, the merciful but passive Penelope has no further opportunity to develop her sympathetic sentiments. The abused Quasheba appears again only to throw Miss Prissy's hat and shawl out the window when she tries to run away (II, iv). Priscilla announces emphatically that she will not marry Young Cockney, despite the fact that Barnacle sees fit to bestow her upon the young apprentice. Rather, she has set her sights on the dashing Captain Sightly and is determined to elope with him. The wilted spinster, Miss Molly Cockney, is a pseudo-genteel relative who arrives to put all the matrimonial affairs in order and to supervise the refined education of Penelope. Priscilla's vulgar behaviour becomes a particular vexation in the elegant grocer's house, and Miss Molly enquires of the old man: "Have you determined what to do with this West-Indian?--I allow you, cousin Cockney, her fortune is very con-

siderable!—but she has no more breeding than a rhinoceros." Even the practical, common-sense Barnacle, who is disgusted by the airs assumed in his brother's household,[65] is frustrated, and he secures a passage for her to Jamaica as soon as he arrives. "Please the fates I will be shut of one plague," he sighs.

The heiress has, however, been carrying out her own plans for marriage and has used the rather slow-witted Young Cockney to further her ends. Act III opens with the apprentice believing himself to be her romantic choice and on the point of adding the substantial "West Indian fortune in the house" to the already-secure one he will have from the grocery business. Priscilla encourages him to plan for the plantations, and she promises to assume the more onerous responsibilities for which she is so well adapted: "If you go with me to Jamaica, I'll raise the negers for us; it's only beating them well, giving them a few yams, and they'll do anything you bid them" (II, iv). Young Cockney's disillusionment comes soon enough, but even his shallow mind comprehends the grief from which he has been preserved. He sings:

> Who cares a pin for her love,
> Hang'd like a dog may I be.
> If I would give this old glove
> To have five times better than she.
>
> What lose I?
> Plague of her negers, her sugar and rum.
> False, fly,
> She's for the devil a chum.
>
> Which way you will you may try her,
> You'll find her a vixen, a lyar,
> The man who for nothing should buy her,
> Too dear his bargain would pay:
>
> But where's the need of orations?
> E'en send her back to her relations;

She's fitter for the plantations,
Than here with Christians to stay (III, i).

Although he is honourable in his devotion to Priscilla, Captain Sightly has by this time become alarmed to learn that her fortune lies in the hands of Barnacle, and he expends considerable effort to gain the guardian's favour. In the final scene Barnacle appears to administer rewards and punishments to lovers and boobies alike. He begins by first singling out from the crowd the captain and that "young succubus," Priscilla. As he bestows the heiress on Sightly, one gets tha impression that Barnacle should also pin a medal for valour on the youth, considering the obligation he is assuming:

Barn: You are a brave young fellow, I believe; my own relations don't deserve her money (for as to herself, I only consider her as a clog in the bargain) because they strove to cheat me out of it; therefore I give her to you.

Prissy: Oh! my dear guardian! (Runs and kisses him)

Barn: You spoil my wig. Let me hear no more of you. . . (III, xi).

Sightly's part in the Finale indicates his sentimental intentions as to his own follies and perhaps also to those of his untamed bride:

'Tis modest sweetness gives the grace,
To birth, to fortune, and to face,
That charm secure, will long endure,
And all is vain without it.

In 1785 "Love in the City" was altered anonymously into a two-act comic opera entitled "The Romp."[66] In this more streamlined version the characters of Mrs. Molly and of Wagg, an attorney who helps the young mercer Spruce marry Penelope, are omitted. The personality and career of the fiery Jamaican Creole remain essentially unchanged. This "toler-

able Opera," says Genest, "alas revived with great success."[67] Isaac Bickerstaffe set the pace for two major character types dealt with in this study: the comic Negro in Mungo and the erratic West Indian heiress in Priscilla Tomboy.

Richard Cumberland was a member of a pleasant artistic and literary coterie and a fringe-adherent of the Johnson group. He gave the stage its most celebrated Creole in Belcour, hero of his best sentimental comedy, "The West Indian" (1771).[68] Curiously enough, few contemporary critics found Belcour's "false lustre" in keeping with the stance of West Indian planters. Rather, they declared the play immoral because it was too dangerously attractive. One reviewer looked back to Townley's far less sentimental Lovel for real Creolian satire:

> Had we undertaken to draw the portrait, we should not have paid so great a compliment to the West Indies, a place by no means famous for giving birth to men of extraordinary abilities or uncommon virtue. He who would look for the true designation of the Creole will rather find him in the hasty outlines of Lovel in "High Life Below Stairs," than in the most laboured scenes of this finished comedy ["The West Indian"].[69]

Another critic noted with horror that Belcour considered his attack upon Miss Dudley not criminal but "meritorious."[70] Nevertheless, this delightful variation on the sentimental hero took London by storm. The mass of criticism in the periodicals of the day is the best proof of the popularity of Belcour as a stage character.[71]

The adverse criticism was, of course, much influenced by the unattractive, long-standing stock Creole character which was rather solidly sustained by real-life examples. Cumberland, however, deliberately sought to carry the sentimental principle of universal benevolence to its logical

conclusion. Rejecting temporary subjects, the "clack of the day," he formulated a very clear purpose in this play. In his Memoirs, written in 1804 (while he was "still in possession of his faculties, though full of years") he recalls the circumstances of his greatest success:

> I perceived that I had fallen upon a time, when great eccentricity of character was pretty nearly gone by, but still I fancied that there was an opening for some originality, . . . if I introduced the characters of persons, who had been usually exhibited on the stage, as the butts of ridicule and abuse, and endeavoured to present them in such lights, as might tend to reconcile the world to them, and them to the world. I thereupon looked into society for the purpose of discovering such as were victims of its national, professional or religious prejudices; in short for those suffering characters, which stood in need of an advocate, and out of these I meditated to select and form heroes for my future dramas of which I would study to make such favourable and reconciliatory delineations as might incline the spectators to look upon them with pity and receive them into their good opinion and esteem. . . . With this project in my mind . . . I took the characters of an Irishman and a West Indian for the heroes of my plot. . . . To the West Indian I devoted a generous spirit, and a vivacious giddy dissipation; I resolved he should love pleasure much, but honour more . . . [and] I gave him charity . . . and thus protected, thus recommended, I thought I might send him out into the world to shift for himself.[72]

Cumberland thus illustrated sentimental characteristics in the ennobled characters of Belcour and Dennis O'Flaherty. These two replaced the boorish colonial and the buffoonish Irishman who had long been jests of the stage.

With justifiable apprehension Cumberland's friend, David Garrick, prepared for the West Indian's first appearance at Drury Lane. In order to carry the day with a flourish, he advised the then-inexperienced Cumberland to insert the scene in Stockwell's house before the arrival of Belcour:

> [Let] something more . . . be announced of your West Indian before you bring him on the stage to give éclat to his entrance, and rouse the curiosity of the audience; that they may say--Aye, here he comes with all his colours flying--.[73]

The audience at Drury Lane on January 19, 1771, however, was prepared to allow the flamboyant young planter scarcely any kind of entrance. Accustomed as they were to being looked upon as ill-bred, violent, and grossly ostentatious, the West Indians present had come to the theater assuming that Cumberland would also castigate them. They planned to lay forcible hands upon the playwright.[74] It was with undoubted astonishment, therefore, that they discovered that Belcour was actually a young gentleman who did credit to their land[75] and whose passionate temperament was consistently excused on the grounds of tropical climate. Indeed, the outworking of the West Indian's character proved to be wholly satisfying and carried its creator to the summit of fame. The "happy hit of the West-Indian drew a considerable resort of the friends and followers of the Muses to my house," said Cumberland, and it brought "[me] a huge bag of money," in gold guineas.[76]

Belcour emerges as a Rousseauean child of nature, an attractive spendthrift with passions intensified by the tropical sun. Despite his sentimentality, he becomes an interesting composite of popular attitudes to West Indian planters. His arrival in London is exotic enough to attract attention, for he brings "two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a mangrove dog." He gets into an immediate brawl by treating the worthy British dock hands like Negroes. He explains:

> Accustomed to a land of slaves and out of patience with the whole tribe of customhouse extortioners, boatmen, tide-waters, and water-bailiffs that beset me on all sides worse than a swarm of mosquitoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan.

On the whole, however, he has a very un-Creolian lack of self-conceit.[77]

He does have the instincts of an absentee. He immediately announces to Stockwell, who is also an absentee and unbeknown to him his father:

> Well . . . for the first time in my life here am I in England, at the fountainhead of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it (I, v, 751).

William Hazlitt, remarking on Belcour as "the support of the piece," found

> Something interesting in seeing a young fellow of high animal spirits, a handsome fortune, and considerable generosity of feeling, launched from the other side of the world . . . to run the gauntlet of the follies and vices of the town.[78]

There is always an intrinsic interest in a situation where the imagined freedom and inexperience of the plantations comes in contact with city life in the Mother Country. And even the most cloddish English servant could sense the potential that a young West Indian posed for the con man. While preparing for a tremendous reception in Belcour's honour, one servant tells another: "He's very rich and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him to make all the water in the Thames into punch" (I, iii, 750). Later in the play Belcour casually opens his purse, takes out two £100-notes and bestows them upon a virtual stranger. Fulmer, the villain of the piece, plans to further relieve Belcour of his wealth, and he fairly drools over the prospects:

> He [is] a West Indian fresh landed, and full of cash, a gull to our heart's content, a hot-brained, headlong spark [to] run into our trap (III, ii).

With all of his instinctive goodness of heart and breeding, the West Indian beams at every gesture and is without any of the selfishness and corruption of English society. His extravagance and dissipation are more than balanced by his honour and generosity. Indeed, Stockwell says:

> His very failings set him off. Forever trespassing, forever atoning. I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault (III, i).

His recklessness in romance is most marked. Although he skirts the borders of libertinism, sentimental morality forbids his actually sharing the vices of so many real-life planters. He falls in love with Louisa at first sight. "My passions," he says, "are my masters: they take me where they will" (I, v, 751). Upon Stockwell's questioning his precipitous love affair, the young man naturally blames it all on his environment:

> Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature; you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth . . . and swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

As Stockwell watches the fiery young colonial go off in hot pursuit of romance, he recalls <u>his</u> days in the seductive islands: "Just such a thoughtless, headlong thing was I when I beguiled his mother into love" (III, ii, 765). Belcour is meanwhile in the torments of unrequited love, and he reverts to a tropical metaphor:

> I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains [of Jamaica]. . . . If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild goose chase, I had better have stayed in the torrid zone. I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar cane! (II, v, 757).

He is further discouraged when an English matron tells him: "The lady's gone; you are too late. Girls of her sort are not to be kept waiting like Negro slaves in your sugar plantations" (III, iii, 765). When the hero and heroine are finally brought together, Louisa is unimpressed with his riches and announces that she "must have better proofs of . . . generosity than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dross" before she can encourage his courtship (III, iv, 767). In the throes of repentance and in the manner of [illegible] Jones, the prostrate Belcour proclaims:

> I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters (III, vii, 769-770).

At last the reformation is complete, and Belcour prepares to marry and retire respectably and soberly with Louisa on an English country estate, presumably never to set foot in the West Indies again. Although his reformation is entirely satisfactory even to the most moralistic taste, his last speech still leaves the door slightly ajar upon his innate West Indian rakishness:

> I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the providence of this night, and I will turn to reason and obey (V, viii, 786).

In spite of his virtues Belcour emerges as one of the most delightfully vivacious of all sentimental heroes. Oddly enough, his winsome irresponsibility seldom appears in the fiction of the period which featured Creoles. In poetry his kind is unknown.

Samuel Foote's "The Cozeners" (1778) has already been discussed in its relation to the role of the plantation Negro. It is also a comedy of manners full of allusions to the stock-character of the Creole. Mr. Aircastle, though he scarcely knows East from West, recollects numerous reassuring acquaintances among the planters. There is Miss Patty Plumb of Jamaica whose grandfather was transported and who took fortunes very much for granted, and an ensign, son of a Barbadian he met at Treacle's, the great sugar bakers. In the same line, Mrs. Fleece'em certifies that her "niece" is rich enough "to purchase the sceptre of Poland." Toby is prepared for his interview with the black girl by the application of saffron and snuff, since his complexion is fairer than "the natives of

India are used to, . . . for from their climate [they] have rather a sallower hue" (III).

Foote's "The Patron" (1783)[79] is an entertaining satire on the "republic of letters," with Sir Peter Pepperpot, an absentee West Indian, figuring in the comic sub-plot of Act I. He first comes on stage berating his two blacks: "Careless scoundreis! harkee, rascals! I'll banish you home, you dogs! You shall bake and broil in the sun." He is convinced that living in England has spoiled them: "This same Christening will ruin the colonies." Sir Peter's prejudice is one of the earliest stage expressions of the colonial suspicion regarding the endeavours of sectarian missionaries in behalf of the Negroes. Pepperpot also has political involvements. The arrival of the fleet has brought him "a glorious cargo of turtle." Seven of the healthy ones he has sold at a handsome profit, and he gloats over the way in which colonial merchants have "polish'd English palates" so that they demand such luxuries as turtle. Two sickly specimens he has sent up to his borough in Yorkshire where there is an allowance of six pounds of green turtle to aldermen and five to each of their wives while the mayor, recorder, and rector "are permitted to eat as much as they please" (I, 361). The turtles are sent as inside passengers in the coach (to save money) and this situation calls for a considerable amount of farcical activity. Sir Peter is made still more ridiculous when the hero Bever leads him to believe that he is admired by the heiress Miss Juliet. The tottering old planter describes her in colourful plantation imagery:

> Sir Pet: Why, dear Bever, to tell thee the truth, I have always admir'd Miss Juliet, and a delicate creature she is: sweet as a sugarcane, straight as a bamboo, and her teeth as white as a negro's.

Bever: Poetic, but true. Now only conceive, Sir Peter, such a plantation of perfections to be devoured by that caterpillar, Rust [that is, the local rector].

Sir Pet: A liquorish grub! Are pine-apples for such muck-worms as he? I'll send him a jar of citrons and ginger, and poison the pipkin.

Bever: No, no.

Sir Pet: Or invite him to dinner, and mix rat's-bane along with his curry (I, 363).

In Act II Sir Peter's folly is transferred to the simple-minded virtuoso, Sir Thomas Lofty. He thinks that the amazed silence in which the audience at the playhouse first received his "Robinson Crusoe" was "a strong mark of their sensibility" (III). The lampooning of colonials continues throughout the second Act with the introduction of Sir Roger Dowlas, an East Indian nabob.

Just after the turn of the century there appeared on stage an absentee West Indian who had a novel explanation for his luxurious living--one which satisfied the demands of sentimentality and morality while still permitting him the power and prestige that goes with wealth. John Wallace's "The Merchant of Guadaloupe" (1802)[80] was translated from a French original for staging at the resort of Margate.

After twenty years Woodville, the merchant, has returned from the Indies with an enormous fortune. Lacking immediate heirs he tests the worthiness of his other relations to receive the windfall. In the guise of a tramp he first visits his cousins, the Vanes. He explains that he is their long-absent relative, but that he has endured the "fatigues, troubles [and] unhappiness [of] a long residence in a foreign climate" and that he has lost all of his "little fortune" in a shipwreck (I, 5). From the ele-

gance of their house and the number of their servants, he trusts that they will be able to assist him, perhaps by giving him employment. Mr. Vane piously reminds him of his youthful profligacy and curtly dismisses him, despite his declaration that he has made amends for his follies. Although Vane would have given the "beggar" a crown to fend off starvation, his wife prevents him, and the couple resume their quarrel over gambling debts which had begun before the merchant came in.

In Act II Woodville visits his widowed cousin, Mrs. Milville who is a rejected sister of Mr. Vane. He finds her at work with her maid Lucy, preparing embroidery for sale. She responds to his hard-luck story by giving him her last guinea, by offering to help him find employment, and by inviting him to a place at her table. The ensuing conversation, based upon their mutual tribulations, becomes a massive conglomerate of sentiments. When Woodville at last reveals his true situation and announces his intention of bestowing all his goods on Mrs. Milville and her children, Lucy is quite overcome and must retire to weep:

> I was sure that--that--P--P--P--P--Providence would one day reward you.--I must cry; do let me cry--I have so much pleasure in k--k--k--crying, that I shall k--k--k--cry for a year (Exuent Lucy crying).

Mulson is a character of Wallace's own creation. He is likewise from Guadaloupe, and he arrives to inform the Vanes that Woodville actually possesses an immense fortune. At Mrs. Vane's insistence, he promises to try to act as a mediator between them and Woodville. Upon his departure, the Vanes quarrel again as to whose fault it is that the merchant was thrown out of their house. The husband insists that his wife go immediately to apologize.

In Act III Woodville introduces Mrs. Milville to his luxuriously

furnished house. While she murmurs that it is far too good for her, the merchant explains that he has not thus established himself for ostentation. He purposes to make himself

> an example to the rich, to learn them never to despise the poor; to shew them, that, in one turn of her wheel, Fortune may raise those that were at her feet, and crush those at her summit (III, 26).

First Mulson and then the Vanes arrive upon the scene. They all try to pass the insult off as a joke, but Woodville ignores them. Instead, he calls an attorney and signs his entire fortune over to Mrs. Milville. Then in their presence he offers her marriage. The good lady responds with suitable modesty while the Vanes exit, consumed in rage. The sodden effects of all of this sentimentality are somewhat dissipated in the Epilogue which is spoken by a sailor off a West-India man. At least he knows what <u>real</u> trouble is:

> This tale of pity, and this virtue's grace
> Ill suit the passions of a watering-place. . . .
> Avaunt, roars timber Jack, with scenes of sorrow,
> I steers away from Guadaloupe to-morrow;
> Besides these nasty vapours dowse my beaver
> <u>Mayhap</u> we carry home the yellow fever!!! (33).

Emily, the West Indian heiress in Reynold's "Laugh When You Can" (1798) is a docile, co-operative girl. Her lover George Gossamer, the London lawyer and champion hoaxster, actually reveals a far more Creolian personality than she does. The interest in Emily as a West Indian lies in the fact that in the resolution of the comedy, her estate in Barbados makes possible the tricking of her guardian into giving his consent to her marriage to Gossamer.[81] It is the old money question again. Emily and Gossamer know that without the consent of Bonus the stock-broker to their union they can never claim her West Indian fortune, and marriage

without money was still far too rash a step to contemplate in 1798:

> Emily: What's the use of marrying without it [that is, Bonus' consent], when I lose all my fortune?
>
> Goss: And suppose your fortune were already lost--would the old stock-broker consent then?
>
> Emily: That he would--he'd then think me such a burden to him, that I do believe he'd marry me to--
>
> Goss: To his clerk, or his butler, or your humble servant!

The nimble-minded Gossamer then informs her that she is now as poor as he is:

> Goss: Thanks to good fortune and a lucky hurricane, your whole property's blown into the sea--all your estate is whisk'd off in a whirlwind. (Giving her a newspaper) There--in this newspaper, read the glorious joyous tidings!
>
> Emily: (Reading) "Accounts were yesterday received from Barbadoes, that on the 28th ult. a dreadful hurricane destroyed most of the property on east part of the island, and particularly that beautiful estate called Mount Columbo" (V, ii).

But poor Emily is not amused: "Say what you please, Mr. Gossamer, love can't exist without money, and now I've none, and you've none!" The report is a hoax, however, and Gossamer reveals that it came not from the West Indies, but from "a place as full of warmth and fire," his own head. He is the "sole inventor and proprietor of this facetious hurricane." Now, it only remains for Bonus to read the news item in the evening papers. When he does, he exclaims: "Why, the girl's ruin'd--she's a lame duck!" At the same moment Emily enters weeping: "Yesterday I was worth thirty thousand pounds--to-day I'm a beggar!" Contemporary methods of news reporting were so devious, and natural disasters in the West Indies were so frequent and devastating, that Bonus never thinks to question the authenticity of the report. Instead he regrets that Emily now has no "husband to

maintain her" and sets about finding "some gudgeon-headed Londoner" to fill the role. When Gossamer presents himself, he and Emily are hustled off to the church immediately. In the grand revelation scene Gossamer speaks expansively of his newly-acquired fortune and promises the worthy Mortimers that they shall never be in want while "Columbo [Emily's plantation] nets a guinea."

One of the latest English plays featuring the West Indian heiress was Morris Barnett's "Sarah Blangi, or, A Snake in the Grass" (18--), another translation from the French.[82] Consequently Sarah Blangi is a French Creole and the setting of the comedy is in Paris. She has been received into the bosom of the Dumont household where she has assumed a convincing character of sentimental virtue and pathetic suffering. Colonel Dumont has sustained "heavy" but unspecified losses. His daughter Alice is being courted by the wealthy Julian Duplessis, but he has the usual reservations about the indigence of his beloved. A rich uncle is, however, expected from abroad. Barnett makes a conscious effort to improve upon the conventional colonial, both physically and economically. Drawing his wealth from India, the Brazils, and honest British commerce, Uncle Fabrice could scarcely present a more solid financial front. De Cerney, Julian's practical friend, stresses the stability of this particular connection of the Dumont family:

> De C: Old Dumont's losses have been enormous . . . [but] his brother Fabrice is as rich as a diamond mine. Why, it's said that he has literally dieted upon Rajahs.
>
> Jul: Oh, a wealthy Indian uncle is of doubtful reality.
>
> De C: Ah, but this is not a mere traditionary Indian uncle, such as we find in novels, and see in comedies, meagre and bilious, and aged fifty; but a decent-looking

> fellow, very little, if any, beyond forty. His fortune, I assure you, is anything but doubtful--all realized by selling Carolina cotton, Birmingham kettles, and Manchester muslins (I, 4).

When Julian first urges his friend De Cerney to marry Sarah, that "gamester . . . and smasher of hearts" is sufficiently perceptive to sense, though not yet fully to comprehend, the Creole's duplicity. For him, her being a West Indian is in itself sufficient grounds for wariness. He says:

> Sarah, that beautiful plant, cultivated beneath the burning sun of the Antilles? She's a delicious demon certainly, but dangerous. A being to love, but not exactly a creature to marry. Besides, she has not a sous, and my creditors would never give their consent (I, 4-5).

In other words, who would marry anyone, much less a Creole, without a fortune? Sarah's financial straits are indicative of the ruined West Indian economy, even as her intrigues are symbolic of her ruined womanhood.

Sarah begins operations by attempting to prevent the marriage of Julian and her adopted sister Alice. She hopes, of course, to snare Julian and his inheritance for herself. Vaudris (who is actually Fabrice the Nabob himself) arrives on the scene to announce that Fabrice has died in Rio de Janeiro. Eventually the penniless Alice marries the easy-going De Cerney, but Sarah's poisonous activities are not concluded. She is determined to revenge the death of her father in the West Indies, and she holds Dumont responsible. Acts II and III are occupied with her efforts to ruin Alice's marriage by sowing seeds of distrust, but she is thwarted at every turn by Vaudris. Ironically, through it all old Dumont dotes on her, and Alice continues to receive her as a confidant. In Act IV "Doctor Robert" arrives. He is of exotic origin, and his interview with Sarah has strong overtones of African witchcraft and voodoo. It is evident that their

acquaintance is of long standing, and we recall that Vaudris reported in Act I that Fabrice had died "after a short illness of eight days . . . [and] in the arms of one Robert--who killed him."[83] Robert consents to poison Alice, but Vaudris (who has conveniently been eavesdropping) again foils the Creole's villainy. He confronts the witch-doctor with a pistol and, in the only humourous scene in the comedy, pays him 1,000 crowns to disappear.

Then Vaudris, who has himself picked up some training in the practice of occult medicine, assumes the responsibility of being Alice's doctor. Sarah is obviously distressed, but her fears are allayed when Alice quickly begins to show strange symptoms. Jerome, the French doctor, is utterly mystified by the illness, but he suspects Sarah, and declares that to him she "looks as black as old ------," an allusion to both her complexion and her character. In Act V Alice "dies" in a highly dramatic scene, and her gullible old father turns to Sarah, "the angel," who has been spared to console him! Her revenge complete, Sarah tells the old man that she has killed Alice to avenge her father, and that she has taken care to cover up her tracks so that she cannot be brought to legal justice.

Dumont, as we have long expected, has a story to tell; he is in fact Sarah's father. He had seduced her mother, a Creole, while he was with the garrison at Pointe-a-Pitre (the capital of Guadaloupe), but had been prevented from marrying her because "an order from the Ministry forced [him] to leave suddenly, for war had burst forth in the colonies." Her parents had then forced her into an unhappy marriage with Captain Blangi to save her honour. Sarah is now properly stricken to find that she has killed her sister, but is even more stunned to see Alice walk in, recovered

from a two-hour "sedation" and led by Vaudris who reveals himself to be the long-lost Fabrice. The Dumont family, complete with the rich uncle, can now re-establish itself, and the viper Sarah is ordered "to quit France, and for ever." We are not told where she goes, but it is safe to suppose that it is back to the decaying Indies, presumably a suitable place of exile for one of her ilk. She leaves her father, a sadder and a wiser man, to dismiss the playhouse audience with an edifying moral sentiment, in lieu of the old, lively epilogue:

> Years of true penitence can alone wash away the memory of your deep crimes. Poor shortsighted mortals! In pride of heart and oblivion of duty, ye feel not the unerring power of Providence. Learn that virtue alone can illumine our path in this life, and guide us with assured hope to the future.

Sarah Blangi retains but few of the conventional characteristics of the desirable West Indian heiress of the previous century. Rather she exhibits a full range of the practices of a melodramatic nineteenth-century villain, with Gothic touches of witchcraft, most of which have their roots in long-standing West Indian traditions.

Only a few playwrights felt free to use the Creole character for purely comic and satirical purposes. Perhaps it was because in real life he was associated with too many unpalatable events. Gay and Foote, however, capitalized on colonial idiosyncrasies, and the characters of Ducat, Sir Peter Pepperpot, and the pseudo-Creole, Toby Aircastle, do receive frankly humourous treatment. Both of these playwrights, of course, worked prior to the main force of the abolition campaign. When Peregrine Lovel appeared in 1759, he bowed, in some degree, to the growing demands of sentimentalism. Although he retained most of his Creolian vanities and there-

fore stood in some need of correction, he was only required to learn a lesson in the management of his servants. The violent behaviour of Priscilla Tomboy is seriously called into question, but the audience is still given no assurance of her ultimate reformation. Improvement, however, is implied. With Belcour, sentimentalism finally triumphs, and he must renounce the follies which his stage predecessors had been permitted to retain. Thus, sentimental pressure of the times is still felt, despite the fact that Cumberland's play remains on the periphery of anti-slavery writing. Woodville, dispenser of rewards material and moral, betrays no Creole weaknesses and appears in the stock role of "mender of fortunes." In this character he is accompanied by heiresses like Emily of "Laugh When You Can" whose chief West Indianisms are their conveniently large fortunes. Finally, the evil Sarah Blangi reaches far into the new modes of illegitimate drama. With her, the traditional Creole extravagances are magnified into outright villainy of Gothic proportions. Set against an extensive background of colonial prejudices she still remains a perfectly credible character. Although theatrical productions of the period exemplified the sentimental reform motif as applied to West Indians, true "conversion stories" are most extensively used in prose fiction. There the Creole sometimes became a split image as the sentimental moralists tried to do justice to his sins and natural goodness at the same time.

D. The High Noon of Sentimental Humanitarianism and Its Decline

One major group of dramas remains to be considered in this study--those which openly advocated the cause of humanitarianism and which might be labelled instruments of propaganda. Then the theater next followed the

trend which has already been marked in verse writing and which could similarly be demonstrated in prose. As the vigor of the literary anti-slavery campaign declined, West Indian motifs drifted into either highly romanticized forms or into satire.

As the efforts of the abolitionists gathered momentum in the late 1780's, the Negro was transmuted from a minor comic figure to a major Noble Savage whose wretchedness graphically demonstrated all of the evils of slavery and whose appearances became emotion-packed and unmistakably humanitarian in intent. The philanthropic-minded play writer was faced with the dilemma of giving the audience the beloved and familiar comic Negro and also portraying the pathetic Negro which humanitarianism demanded. An unidentified manuscript[84] describes the painful tension between farcical and melodramatic effects. The Comic Muse commiserates the play-goers: "Cramm'd to the Throat with wholesome, moral Stuff,/ Alas! poor Audience! you have had enough . . . !" But the Tragic Muse hastily interrupts this "flippant Epilogue" which is endeavouring "to wipe the virtuous Tear from British Eyes." She admonishes Britons:

> In decent Manners and Life refin'd,
> Banish the motley Mode, to tag low Verse,
> The laughing Ballad to the mournful Herse.
> When thro' five Acts your Hearts have learnt to glow,
> Touch'd by the sacred tone of honest Woe,
> O keep the dear Impression on your Breast,
> Nor idly lose it for a wretched Jest.

Some writers attempted "serio-comic" effects with a conspicuous lack of success. Since laughter dissipated romantic effects so that the truly earnest reformers phased it out, the serious abolition work had to proceed along sentimental lines. Although the humanitarian plays made much use of romantic incident and surroundings, they also aimed at a certain

domesticity and realism. In this respect they did not show the same degree of love for the picturesque, the exotic, and the humourous as has been found in the dramas examined up to this point.

Since the Quakers were the earliest abolitionists, it is not surprising to find some of the first emancipation sentiments on stage expressed in a play about a Quaker. John O'Keefe's "The Young Quaker" (1784)[85] concerns pharisaical Old Sadboy and his large holdings in Philadelphia. Vexed with his son's dissipation, he determines to leave his property to the "Faithful in Philadelphia, yea, even to the Strangers to my Blood!" (I, 38). In the resolution in Act V, however, the father and son are reconciled when the former discovers that the boy has actually transacted company business honourably in England. Sadboy then promises him "my Vineyard, my House, my Plantations, and my Slaves," but the youth, despite his giddy ways, replies:

> I will accept of the House and Plantations, on Behalf of myself and my Brethren in America; but as to Slaves, I declare that every Slave of mine shall henceforth be as Free as Air. Liberty shall no longer be considered as the peculiar blessing of England; it shall be extended to America; and may him only be deprived of it, who can make a Slave of any one (V, 54-55).

Thomas Bellamy's "The Benevolent Planters" (1789)[86] appears to be the first open discussion of slavery with the stage clearly being used as a medium for the dissemination of propaganda on the subject.[87] The Prologue is spoken in the character of an African slave. He describes the idyllic beauties and joys of Africa, his capture by the "white savage," and the subsequent toils in the "burning suns" and the lashings. These are simply the conventions of the minor abolition poetry of the day, but he stops short of suicide.[88] Contrary to the Noble Negro formula of poetry fortune has given him a kinder master, one "who made me soon for-

get I was a slave." Bellamy could not, of course, at this date offer him complete emancipation, but he brought him to that "generous land" where he can stir up sentiments of benevolence in the audience. This Prologue Negro says:

> They inform me, that [in England] an hallow'd band,
> Impell'd by soft humanity's kind laws,
> Take up with fervent zeal the Negroe's cause,
> And at this very moment, anxious try,
> To stop the widespread woes of slavery.
> But of this hallow'd band a part appears,
> Exult my heart, and flow my grateful tears.
> Oh sons of mercy! whose extensive mind
> Takes in at once the whole of human kind,
> Who know the various nations of the earth,
> To whatsoever clime they owe their birth,
> Or of whatever colour they appear,
> All children of one gracious Parent are.
> And thus united by paternal love,
> To all mankind, of all the friend you prove.
> With fervent zeal pursue your godlike plan,
> And man deliver from the tyrant man!
> What tho' at first you miss the wish'd-for end,
> Success at last your labours will attend.
> Then shall your worth, extoll'd in grateful strains,
> Resound through Gambia's and Angola's plains.
> Nations unborn your righteous zeal shall bless,
> To them the source of peace and happiness.
> Oh mighty Kannoah, thou most holy power,
> Whom humbly we thy sable race adore!
> Prosper the great design--thy children free
> From the oppressor's hand, and give them liberty!

Goodwin and Steady, the two "benevolent planters" of Jamaica, along with the newly-arrived philanthropist Heartfree do not actually follow up all of the humanitarian ideas implied in the Prologue, in spite of the fact that they literally wallow in good will and noble sentiments. Indeed, one gets the uneasy feeling that they are benevolent not so much for the sake of the suffering Negroes as for the warm glow of virtuous satisfaction which they derive from it themselves. Steady advocates mercy "in the treatment of those who, in the course of human

chance, are destined to the bonds of slav'ry," and Heartfree cries "shame on the degrading lash, when it can be spared."[89] The planters plan six days of "diversions" for the "jetty tribe" which they will oversee from their decorated chairs on the lawn.

The heroine Selima is unaware that Oran, her noble African lover, is now on the estate as the servant of Heartfree, so she mourns without ceasing. The visitor is careful to explain the circumstances which have separated Oran and Selima, matters which were quite out of the hands of the white men:

> By the fate of war, Oran had been torn from his beloved Selima. The conquerors were on the point of setting fire to the consuming pile to which he was bound, while the partner of his heart, who was devoted to the arms of the chief of the adverse party, was rending the air with her cries; at this instant a troop of Europeans broke in upon them, and bore away a considerable party to their ships; among the rest was the rescued Oran, who was happily brought to our mart, where I had the good fortune to become his master--he has since served me well and affectionately. But sorrow for his Selima is so deeply rooted in his feeling bosom, that I fear I shall soon lose an excellent domestic and as valuable a friend, whose only consolation springs from a sense of dying in the possession of Christian principles (I, 5).

Selima's song of grief is of her own composition as a semi-natural poet. It is typical of much magazine verse on the same theme:

> How vain to me the hours of ease,
> When every daily toil is o'er;
> In my sad heart no hope I find,
> For Oran is, alas! no more.
>
> Not sunny Africa could please,
> Nor friends upon my native shore,
> To me the dreary world's a cave,
> For Oran is, alas! no more.
>
> In bowers of bliss beyond the moon,
> The white man says, his sorrow's o'er.
> And comforts me with soothing hope,
> Tho' Oran is, alas! no more.

O come then, messenger of death,
   Convey me to yon starry shore,
Where I may meet with my true love,
   And never part with Oran more (II, 7).

The Christian hope in evidence here is, of course, a tribute to the religious education Goodwin has imparted to his Negroes. In the imperialistic role of the "great white father," he persuades the reluctant Selima to attend the Negro frolic which is about to commence. With equal difficulty Oran has been brought to the field by his master, where he pours out his soul to Almaboe, his sworn African friend,[90] desiring only that Selima might join him on "these happy shores [of Jamaica]." The prizes for the various sporting events are designed to cheer any slave's heart. At the same time, they seem to indicate a most un-planter-like generosity, considering the number of slave insurrections which were spawned at such festivities. Each of the winners will receive "a portion of land for himself, and his posterity--freedom for his life, and the maiden of his heart" (III, 9-10).

During the games the despairing, tearful lovers are restored to each other. It is the old Oroonoko theme again, except that all of the planters have been far too noble to try to seduce Selima. On the contrary, Goodwin returns her to Oran in even better condition than she left him with her "mind released from the errors of darkness, and refined by its afflictions" (II, 8). Even in her dejection Selima has been consoled by her generous master with "hope" (for what we are not precisely told), and her heart overflows with gratitude:

> You prepared me with the knowledge of books, and made me everything I am. Prepared too, my soul for joys, which you say are to succeed the patient bearing of human misery (II, 6).

In other words, Selima has reached the stage of civilization to which

all slaves had to attain before liberty could be given to them. The planters and ameliorationists were all to play upon this theme for the next forty years.

After the archery competition Oran receives his promised Selima without the hazard of participating in a sporting event to win her. So great has been his absorption in his grief that it is unlikely that he could have taken part in any case. In the tableau in the finale, Selima comes down stage to the sound of soft music, attended by "six virgins in fancy dresses who present her to Oran." The lovers embrace; there is a shout and flourish of music; and the demands of humanitarianism and illegitimate theater are met simultaneously. Since no mention is made of marriage, we must assume that the generosity of the enlightened planters does not yet include that rite for their slaves. Oran then sings a song to "heaven-born mercy," but the tune is "Rule Britannia." Genest found this "little piece as a Drama . . . but a poor thing, but the moral intended to be inculcated is excellent" (V, 568). Oran's final speech confirms the play as basically an organ of the plantocracy, quite contrary to our initial expectations:

> O my masters! for such, though free, suffer me still to call you; let my restored partner and myself bend to such exalted worth; while for ourselves, and for our surrounding brethren, we declare, that you have proved yourselves The Benevolent Planters, and that under subjection like yours, SLAVERY IS BUT A NAME (III, 13).

Bellamy has cautiously edged about the inflammatory phases of the emancipation question. Perhaps the most that we can say for him is that he is a sentimental ameliorationist, deploring slavery while he fears emancipation.

Open denunciation of slavery from the stage, however, was on the way. It came in two "Oroonokoan" plays already examined in this study:

William Hutchinson's "The Princess of Zanfara" (1792) and President de Kotzebue's "The Negro Slaves" (1796).[91] The first was dedicated to "The Society, Instituted in the Year 1787, for the purpose of Effecting an Abolition of the Slave Trade," and it was clearly promotional writing.[92] The second was a highly sensational "dramatic-historical piece" dedicated to the champion abolitionist William Wilberforce, the "Friend of Negroes." It was written for the express purpose of representing "at one view all the horrible cruelties which are practiced towards our black brethren," an aim to which Kotzebue well nigh attained. He said in his Preface:

> It is with a deep sigh that I am forced to acknowledge that not one melancholy fact is brought forth in this piece, which was not strictly founded in truth. Even the catastrophe itself is known to have taken place.

Archibald MacLaren's "The Negro Slaves" (1799)[93] is an attempt at tragi-comedy, and as such it lacks the grim dedication to the cause of emancipation that is to be seen in the two foregoing plays. Still the work is addressed

> To all whose sympathetic tears can flow
> At the relation of the wretch'd woe,
> Or who can laugh a fool, or fop to scorn,
> Tho' e'er so poorly bred or highly born.

Like "The Princess of Zanfara" the Scotsman's tale is set in America. It is the lively character of MacSympathy, "a general lover of mankind" and a Highlander, which makes this one-act trifle a rather pleasing one. Captain Racoon is an idiotic slave owner who vents his violent rages on the genteel Negro Quako. He is further frustrated by the fact that the admirable Firmlove ranks higher than himself in the regard of Phoebe, the Justice's daughter. Quako repeatedly outstrips him, even in theological discussion. The Negro's latest misdemeanor has been the liberating of "two

delightful blackbirds" which Racoon intended as a present to Phoebe. Quako makes the application:

> Racoon: Villain! would any body but a black savage rob a poor blackbird's nest?
>
> Quako: Yes, your whites, your polish'd, humane whites have robb'd my poor father's nest of all the young and left the old birds to mourn, to droop, to die.
>
> Racoon: But what interest cou'd you have in taking the poor birds?
>
> Quako: I knew the poor things were to be enslav'd, and I set them at liberty . . . because I think that too many of their colour are slaves already.

The Negro graphically describes the reunion of the young birds with their little parents and adds: "By this time they know what Quako's heart would feel, if any friendly power would waft him to his native shore of Guinea." The imagery of the blackbirds is, of course, self explanatory. Racoon determines to sell Sela, Quako's black consort, to a distant plantation as punishment. As Quako philosophizes over his distress, MacSympathy comes by to assure him:

> Many able, learned men are interested in your welfare, and I hope to see the day that will put you on an equal footing wi' the rest o' your fellow creatures, or at least make your situation more tolerable (II).

The interview between MacSympathy and Quako further reveals that the latter is indeed an enlightened Negro and therefore eligible for liberty. In Scene III an Indian raid temporarily shifts attention from Quako and Sela to Phoebe and her maid Lucy who manage to expose Racoon as a fraudulent coward when they threaten him with an old firelock and an empty sword scabbard. In the farewell scene Quako and Sela stand by the river across which Sela must go, never to return. They take vows of constancy,[94] shed sentimental tears, and sing a nostalgic duet:

Quako: Come wipe the tear from your bright eye,
Keeping up your sinking heart.

Sela: How can you bid my cheek be dry,
Yet say that we must part.

Quako: No beams of hope my bosom chear,
Through life I'm doom'd a slave;

Sela: No prospect ever to get chear,
Till laid down in the grave.

Quako: When this sad weary lifetime ends

Sela: Then all our troubles o'er,

Quako: We'll meet again with former friends
Upon sweet Guinea's shore--

Sela: When by the roaring river streams,
On flowery banks we stray.

Quako: Our present griefs we'll mind, like dreams
That long since fled away (V).

While the Negroes still are in the midst of this spiritual exercise, Racoon bears down upon them, but they are saved by Firmlove who (incognito) has been taken as an Indian prisoner. The comic negotiations between Firmlove and Racoon over the purchase of Ouako and Sela demonstrate the planter to be a quivering bundle of self-contradictions. When Firmlove presents them with the "brightest jewel in the British dominion . . . liberty," the Negroes determine to sail for England to be free Britons. Thus they voice the fond hope of nearly all liberated stage-slaves. Realizing that he is a most unworthy member of a much-maligned group, Racoon asks the Negroes: "I suppose you'll not lessen the reports that fly there, of the planter's bad usage of their Negroes?" MacLaren's play differs from most other anti-slavery plays in that it mixes genuinely humourous characters along with those who speak only stock humanitarian sentiments.

Matthew Gregory Lewis's successful but horrific dramatic romance[95] "The Castle Spectre" (1798) introduced a new Gothic framework for the dissemination of anti-slavery opinion.[96] Since the noble pseudo-African was in many respects at odds with the heroic Moor, this genre was not widely used for propagandistic purposes, and Lewis's work will serve as a single representative of the type. The play features four "Gothic blackamoors" in the employ of the villain Osmond (Saib, Hassan, Muley, and Alaric). These vaguely Moorish slaves are a constant and vital part of their master's nefarious schemes, and their mysterious features and their connotations of evil and darkness contribute materially to the supernatural scheme of things. In deference to the abolition agitation of the day and perhaps even more so to his close connections with West Indian estates, Lewis could not resist the temptation to allow the earthiness of the plantation Negro to break through their exotic exteriors and polished speech.

In Act I the Africans' discussion of Angela's love and devotion to Percy permits Hassan to digress upon his own blasted romance. Hassan resembles the Moorish Zanga in Edward Young's "Revenge" (1721), and both have a Byronic wickedness, not unlike Moore's Zeluco. The Negro's noble savagery, of course, mixes uneasily with all of the Gothic paraphernalia. Lewis's humanitarian views are spelled out in Hassan's conventional story and certainly his anti-slavery opinions were ahead of the times, at least for a West India planter.[97] The final note of hatred and revenge, however, is uncommon to the pseudo-African's stock tale even though it is in keeping with the tenor of Gothic romance:

> Has: Saib, I too have loved. I have known how painful it was to leave her on whom my heart hung; how incapable

was all else to supply her loss. I have exchanged want for plenty; fatigue for rest; a wretched hut for a splendid palace. But am I happier? O, no! Still do I regret my native land, and the partners of my poverty. Then toil was sweet to me, for I laboured for Samba! then repose ever blessed my bed of leaves; for there, by my side, lay Samba sleeping.

Saib: This from you, Hassan? Did love ever find a place in your flinty bosom?

Has: Did it? Oh, Saib! my heart once was gentle, once was good; but sorrows have broken it, insults have made it hard. I have been dragged from my native land; from a wife who was everything to me, to whom I was everything! Twenty years have elapsed since these Christians tore me away; they trampled upon my heart, mocked my despair, and, when in frantic terms I raved of Samba, laughed, and wondered how a negro's soul could feel. In that moment, when the last point of Africa faded from my view,--when, as I stood on the vessel's deck, I felt that all I loved was to me lost forever--in that bitter moment did I banish humanity from my breast. I tore from my arm the bracelet of Samba's hair; I gave to the sea the precious token; and while the high waves bore it from me, vowed aloud, endless hatred to mankind. I have kept my oath; I will keep it.

Saib: Ill-starred Hassan! your wrongs have indeed been great.

Has: To remember them unmans me. Farewell! (I, ii, 3).

When the noble Percy[98] is taken prisoner in Osmond's castle, he is put into the custody of the more mundane Saib and Muley, true plantation types. His first move is to make friendly overtures to them with a view to bribing them into helping him escape. The Negroes meet his advances with the traditional shiftiness of the scheming servant:

Saib: Nay, there certainly is something in our appearance highly prepossessing.

Muley: And I know that you must admire the delicacy of our complexions!

Percy: The tincture of our skin, my good fellow, is of little consequence; many a worthy heart beats within a dusky bosom, and I am convinced that such a heart inhabits your's; for your looks tell me that you feel for, and are anxious to relieve my sufferings. See you this purse, my friends?

Muley: It's too far off, and I am short-sighted. If you'll put it a little nearer--

Percy: Restore me to liberty; and not this purse alone, but ten times its value shall be yours.

Saib: To liberty!

Muley: What purse?

Saib: Muley!

Muley: Saib! (II, iii, 7).

Once they have their hands on the purse, however, the crafty slaves have no thought of keeping their part of the bargain. "How unfortunate," Percy moans, "that the only merit of these fellows should be fidelity." The Negroes, of course, are motivated by self-interest, and their faithfulness to Osmond is no more than opportunism. Two innate weaknesses (gambling and drunkenness) betray them. They seat themselves on the floor, front stage, with "a bottle of the best sack in the Earl's cellar" and the purse. Then they divide the gold, and in the end they decide to throw dice for all. While they are thus preoccupied, Percy makes his escape through an open window.

As Earl Osmond's wickedness becomes more and more apparent, Saib who is less bondage-hardened than Hassan gravitates to the side of right. Knowledgeable in potions and poisons, after the manner of an Obeahman, he warns Kenric against drinking the wine he will be served at supper (III, iii, 9). When Osmond almost succeeds in killing Saib, that slave is surprised that his master would attempt his life, in view of all his "past services." With the scorn of a Noble Savage and the deep hurt of racial discrimination Hassan counsels him:

> Has: European gratitude! Seek constancy in the winds, fire in ice, darkness in the blaze of sunshine! But seek not gratitude in the breast of an European.
>
> Saib: Then, why so attached to Osmond? For what do you value him?
>
> Has: Not for his virtues, but for his vices, Saib. Can there for me be a greater cause to love him? Am I not branded with scorn? Am I not marked out for dishonour? Was I not free, and am I not a slave? Was I not once beloved, and am I not now despis'd? What man, did I tender my service, would accept the negro's friendship? What woman, did I talk of affection, would not turn from the negro with disgust? Yet, in my own dear land, my friendship was courted, my love was returned. I had parents, children, wife! Bitter thought! In one moment all were lost to me! Can I think how cruelly they have wronged me, and not rejoice when I see them suffer? Attached to Osmond, say you? Saib, I hate him. Yet viewing him as an avenging fiend, sent higher to torment his fellows, it glads me that he fills his office so well. Oh! 'tis a thought which I would not barter for empires, to know that in this world he makes others suffer, and will suffer himself for their tortures in the next (IV, i, 11).

But Hassan does not have to wait for the torments of the next world, for Osmond now reels on stage, crazed with the terror of the dream in which he is embraced by the decomposed body of the murdered Evelina. While Saib leads his master back to bed, Hassan gloats in a commitment worth of "black Macbeth":

> Yes; thou art sweet, vengeance. Oh! how it joys me when the white man suffers! Yet, weak are his pangs, compared to those I felt when torn from thy shores, O native Africa! from thy bosom, my faithful Samba! Ah! dost thou still exist, my wife? Has sorrow for my loss, traced thy smooth brow with wrinkles? My boy, too, whom on that morning when the hunters seized me, I left sleeping on thy bosom, say, lives he yet? does he ever speak of me? Does he ask, "Mother, describe to me my father; shew me how the warrior looked." Ho! has my bosom still room for thoughts so tender? Hence with them! Vengeance must possess it all. Oh! when I forget my wrongs, may I forget myself! When I forbear to hate these Christians, god of my fathers! may'st thou hate me! (IV, i, 12).

Still Hassan's fierce resolve remains essentially unfulfilled. In the last scene he is thwarted first in his mission of holding the long-

imprisoned Reginald so Osmond may kill him and then in his efforts to prevent Angela from throwing herself between the brothers to prevent the fratricide. There is a certain predictability in his character which devaluates him for perceptive critics.[99] In keeping with his milder character, Saib presumably moves on to gentler labours in the household of Percy, for he is no larger than life and cannot hope to become the nobly suffering figure that Hassan is supposed to be. Even though Lewis carefully groomed his Africans for their Gothic roles, they still bear the unmistakable marks of humanitarianism and of stereotyped Negro servitude.

James Cobb's[100] "Paul and Virginia" (1800)[101] is a musical entertainment based on a French novel of 1789. It is clogged with sentimental moralizing and characters of super-human virtue. Certain familiar plantation clichés seep through the morass. Act I opens with the slaves celebrating Virginia's fifteenth birthday, the day which unfolds the secret of her birth.[102] Dominique is a freed slave and Virginia's devoted attendant. He reveals to Virginia and Paul (her childhood playmate and fellow-orphan) that they are not brother and sister as they had always supposed. This dramatic revelation, of course, clears the way for romance to blossom. At this point Diego, who is the brutal overseer from the neighbouring estate of the English planter Tropic, arrives at the cottage in search of a runaway slave. He makes the mistake of telling Dominique that she "is fortunate in having such a slave." As spokesman for the new "free persons of colour," Dominique is proud of both his parentage and his employment and is therefore particular about the nomenclature:

> Domin: A slave! No, no; I am, indeed, her servant; nay, I will be bold enough to say, her friend; but I am no slave, for I have British blood in my veins.

Diego: Indeed!

Domin: Yes; I am told my father was an English sailor, who, being above vulgar prejudices, admired a black beauty. I was born in this island, and the sun gave a gentle tinge to my complexion to mark me as a favourite (I, i, 11).

The genteel mulatto, a kind of Polonius in his busy interests, contemplates the island-wide pleasure which will attend the union of the two professional philanthropists, Paul and Virginia:

> The whole island, blacks and whites, will rejoice in the happiness of the lovers: every negro, as he passes them, will shew his white teeth, and not in salutation, Ackee O! Ackee O! ay, and the negroes will remember them in their songs when they dance by moonlight, like so many black fairies! (I, i, 11).

The better-than-average quality of this "Ackee Song"[103] is forward looking and anticipates the Negro theater to come, when the race is free from "Buck-ra man's employ":

When the moon shines o'er the deep,
Ackee O! Ackee O!
And whisker'd dons are fast asleep,
Snoring, fast asleep,
From their huts the negroes run,
Ackee O! Ackee O!
Full of frolick, full of fun
Holiday to keep.
Till morn they dance the merry round,
To the fife and cymbal,
See, so brisk,
How they frisk,
Airy, fay, and nimble!
With gestures antic,
Joyous, frantic,
They dance the merry round,
Ackee O! Ackee O!
To the cymbal's sound.

Black lad whispers to black lass,
Ackee O! Ackee O!
Glances sly between them pass,
Of beating hearts to tell.

Tho' no blush can paint her cheek
Ackee O! Ackee O!
Still her eyes the language speak
Of passion quite as well.
Till morn, &c. (I, i, 11).

Paul and Virginia withdraw to sentimentalize upon the sudden raptures that are theirs, supported by a chorus of contented slaves. But they are soon interrupted when the runaway slave Alambra rushes out of the forest to implore Virginia's aid. The lovers immediately and unrealistically drop their own affairs and thank heaven "for having again afforded us the satisfaction of relieving a fellow-creature in distress" (I, i, 12). The "unfortunate victim of avarice" tells the traditional tale of woe, colouring it with a few pathetic variations of his own. He complains of:

> Oppression, cruel oppression; not exerted on my own person, but on my helpless sister. Our parents died on board the ship which tore us from our native country; we were left helpless and deserted orphans. . . . I thought myself too happy that our lot was to serve the same master. We were purchased for a planter named Tropic. . . . [But] it is of his cruel servant I complain. For some time my strength and activity enabled me not only to perform my own task with cheerfulness, but to assist in that portion of labour allotted to my sister. This was discovered by Diego, and he chastised me with stripes (I, ii, 12).

The lovers are certain that "surely no eloquence is required to plead the cause of nature," and they undertake to return to Tropic's plantation with the runaway. In the second scene Diego reports to Tropic on the Alambra case, but the planter is pre-occupied with invigorating and patriotic visions of British freedom. To his overseer he recites a familiar slogan:

> The moment the slave imprints his footstep on our shore,--the moment he breathes the air of the land of freedom,--he becomes free.

"So," complains Diego, who is undoubtedly an insensitive Portuguese or Spaniard, "that makes you spoil your slaves here in the West Indies (I, ii, 12). In Scene iii Virginia, Paul, and Alambra arrive. The heroine has

a brief fainting fit when she contemplates the magnitude of her task, and then she entreats Tropic in a moving air:

> Ah! could my falt'ring tongue impart
> The tale of woe that pains my heart,
> Then in vain I should not crave
> Your pity for a wretched slave.
>
> The injur'd ne'er in vain address'd,
> In plaints of woe, a Briton's breast;
> Compassion ever marks the brave!
> Oh! pity, then, your wretched slave.
> Ah! could, &c. (II, ii, 13).

Unlike his French predecessor in the novel, Tropic shows that his heart is in the right place; he is a benevolent though unenlightened planter. When made aware of his overseer's cruelty, he is grateful for instruction:

> I, who had been made an innocent accomplice of this man's [Diego's] guilt, might have still wandered in the paths of oppression and injustice, had I not been rescued by the courageous virtue of these poor children (I, iii, 13).

Act II introduces the major complication. Don Antonio de Guardes, chosen by Virginia's wealthy Spanish aunt, arrives with presents of gold and gems to claim the fair Creole as his bride. The notion of carrying gold to the Indies might appear a little superfluous, but otherwise Don Antonio's plan for virtually kidnapping Virginia is fool-proof. Paul is arrested by the corrupt governor, and Virginia is made a prisoner aboard the ship which puts to sea before the forces of good can be rallied. In the fourth scene her frantic friends stand on the beach wringing their hands while Tropic intercedes with the governor to have the ship ordered back by means of a lighthouse signal.

With such virtue at stake, however, Providence must assuredly intervene. Before the first drop of rain falls, we are quite prepared for the tremendous hurricane, "the scourge of [the] climate," which

breaks over the island. The ship reels on the "violently agitated" sea, and there is panic ashore. Paul's valiant effort to rescue Virginia fails, but Alambra aided by two other Negroes succeeds in the nick of time. The lovers are united in a melodramatic scene. The fate of Don Antonio is not delineated, but he presumably goes to his reward below. Nor are we gratified by news of the conversion of Diego. These two gentlemen were undoubtedly disadvantaged by their nationality. The West Indians, black and white, are uniformly righteous but are imposed upon by villains of Spanish origin. In this drama Cobb managed to combine comic Negroes, humanitarian interests, spectacular effects, and even a teachable planter. His pointed political implications are also fairly self-explanatory. The French sources of the tale turn Spanish, and, to suit the demands of melodrama, tragedy turns to comedy. With its plantation songs and overt propaganda Cobb's version is much more West Indianized than St. Pierre's.[104]

George Colman's "The Africans: Or War, Love and Duty" (1811) merits consideration because it is a recantation of the notion of a pastoral Africa of which a sentimental slave might dream. It is a full, dramatic portrayal of the African slave trade which fed the West Indian markets and was written just after the passing of the Slave Trade Bill. It also contains a remarkable number of Noble Africans with unusually refined sensibilities. Act I opens with a view of the Foulah town of Fatteconda between the Senegal and Gambia rivers. In "a large tract of romantic country beyond the town" Selico first greets the sunrise on his wedding day. His older brother Torribal tells him that he has publicly announced in town the impending marriage of Selico to Berissa, daughter of Farulho, the Mohammedan priest. He has done so with conscious racial pride:

Africans, said I,
Townsmen of Fatteconda, here in Bondou,
Between the Senegal and Gambia,
We Foulahs are the prettiest of the negroes;
For the same sun that dyes our neighbours black,
(Feloops, Mandingoes, Jaloops, and the rest,)
Has dipt us Foulahs lighter by ten shades.
Berissa is the prettiest maid among us;
My brothers are the prettiest of your tribe;
And brother Selico,--except myself,--
The handsomest of all our family (I, i, 89).

The other brother Madiboo, a clumsy-witted outdoorsman, enters with the game he has shot for the wedding feast. With the carefully-established nationalism Colman has given him, he sings of the refined "kouskous [corn pudding] and sinkatoo, for the king Ali Beg--food which the Foulahs will eat in contrast to the savage fare of "Serwooli King [who] eat antelope's leg" (I, i, 90). The huntsman tells Torribal privately that he has seen a stray band of Mandingo tribesmen in the woods, but both men agree that since small parties of these marauders are not uncommon the town must not be alarmed until Selico and Berissa are safely married. It is evident that all three brothers are in the African tradition devoted to their widowed mother Darina, and this noble loyalty is crucial to the resolution of the plot.

Meanwhile, Farulho's "house cries holiday; and jocund mirth/ Floats down the musky vale" as Berissa prepares for her marriage. A chorus of happy slaves with drums and stringed instruments begin their frolic in the comic tradition:

Now the tang-tang thump; big tabala beat;
While the flute and the bells make music sweet--
And the negro girl on the simbing play,
For this be Missy's wedding day.
Then calabash we fill, for Massa kind,
And he let Slave play as much as he mind.--
Hoo ka te boo hou la, &c
So the tang-tang thump, &c (I).

The transition from comic minstrelsy to humanitarianism is very abrupt. As a "bridal boon" Berissa entreats her father to emancipate the slaves from his bondage, gentle as it is:

> Do but think
> How the slave's heart must sicken for his home!
> The nightingale's wild carol to the moon,
> Reminds him of the sweet and fellow notes
> Once warbled near his cot of liberty--
> If he's a father, and a prattling child
> Lisps where he labours "Where are now my babes,"
> He groans "that I am torn from?" Mothers captiv'd
> Must still know keener anguish. Man or woman
> In bondage doubly feel all kindred ties;--
> And when they die, 'tis heaven only numbers
> How many slaves have perish'd by despondence (I, ii, 107).

The wedding at the mosque is broken up by the announcement of the Mandingo destruction of the town. The "straggling party" now turns out to be an entire army which spare "neither age nor sex." The three brothers join in the street fighting while the priest and the bride remain in the supposed safety of the "religious mansion."

In Act II the famished Selico wanders through the ruined town vowing revenge for the death of his bride for he has found two headless bodies clad in the garments of Farulho and Berissa. Now he engages in the doleful task of

> Plucking out arrows, from the lifeless hearts
> That lately throbb'd in our companions' bosoms;
> Turning the faces of dead friends from earth,
> Then pondering upon their ghastly lips,
> Which ere the last moon waned, smiled sweetly on us (II, i, 119).

Darina's life has been saved, and she is hidden in the woods. With all of their "implements of husbandry" taken by the victorious Mandingoes, however, the Foulahs are oppressed by famine. Colman portrays the starkness of African tribal warfare and the subsequent slavery with considerable realism.

The Mandingo king, Demba Sego Jalla, has commissioned his white slave Mug, (the factor) who knows all the iniquitous tricks of the trade, to run the slave sale to which he has invited some English merchants.

Colman treats the sale scene with light-handed but pointed satire. When the nine European merchants arrive in procession on camel-back their leader Fetterwell introduces the other gentlemen of his profession:

> Here's Mr. Flayall, bound to Barbadoes;--Mr. Grim, going to Jamaica;--young Mr. Marrowbone, once, a carcass butcher in Clare-market, but an estate dropping to him in the West Indian Islands, he now barters for blacks, instead of bargaining for bullocks.--Captain Abraham Adamant, who lost his left leg when the inhuman negroes chucked him down the hatchways, for only stowing fifteen in a hammock, in hot weather,--and sundry others (II, iii, 141-142).

Fetterwell is in haste to have the black generals bring out their prisoners. His reason is evident in his allusion to a bill that was passing in Parliament when he left London, one "that will kick our business to the devil." Immediately the Mandingo warriors and their slaves march on singing:

> Warriors: March, brave Mandingoes, march! in triumph shout:
> And draw your well-won prisoners out;
> When Africk conquerors tread the field,
> Slaves are the harvest battles yield.--
> March, Warriors, march!
>
> Prisoners: Mourn, Captives, mourn! in battle ta'en,
> Destined for life to wear the chain!
> Mourn, Captives, mourn.
>
> Warriors: (When the Slaves are drawn out) Halt! (II, iii, 143).

The slave sale is a spectacular scene, for as the ex-butcher Marrowbone remarks: "The women are trick'd out as gay as a pork-shop on Saturday night, and the men seem tolerably strong." The African king, however, has learned to distrust his Christian guests, and through Mug he warns them

> that it is his majesty's humane decree, that you may purchase--your fellow-creatures--but if you steal, or smuggle, a single slave, he will, with infinite regret, put you to death in the tenderest manner imaginable. . . . You may either be burnt, impaled, or scaled, which ever you think the most agreeable (II, iii, 143-144).

Selico tries to sell himself at the sale in order to raise money for the sustenance of his mother, but has difficulty in striking a bargain because his fair tribe is not reckoned to be as hardy as the black Negroes. When Demba proclaims a reward of 400 ounces of gold for the capture of a man who "with his head muffled in his garment escaped . . . from the tent of the king's favourite female prisoner," Selico immediately forces Madiboo to turn him in and collect the gold (II, iii, 137-145). The Mandingo king condemns Selico and the girl to death. The latter, of course, turns out to be Berissa.

The last scene takes place in the ruins of the town where piles of fagots have been prepared for the burning of the criminals. While they wait, the lovers are sustained by the consolation of their more advanced religion. Then execution is cancelled when Farulho rushes in to announce that it was he who was in Berissa's tent. He is followed closely by Darina who prostrates herself before Demba to plead her mother's love. Now we see that the bitterness and tension of the crusading years of the abolition movement have relaxed somewhat. Demba feels humanity at Selico's plight, and he confesses: "My heart was never mov'd till now." He liberates both Foulah families. Whether the rest of the tribe received amnesty as a reward for their natural and enlightened virtues, or whether the English merchants shipped them to the Indies, we are not told. But there is a chorus of Warriors and Slaves to celebrate their local, and Britain's general, abolition of the slave trade:

The contest's over--Wars alarms
Now leave our native plains:
Then welcome Friendship's charms;
For smiling Peace remains.

Colman accomplished several things in this drama. In the Preface he said that the purpose of the play was to show that

> The nobler virtues are more practised among barbarian tribes than by civilized society;--that the savage heathen, who wages war to extermination and devours his captives, not infrequently displays a glorious self-denial, a sublime magnanimity that with true believers pass for fable and romance.

The final confrontation between Demba, who is simply living by the savage code of war, and Selico, who is giving his life for his mother, reveals that both the serpent-worshipping Mandingo and the Moslem are superior to the "Christian" English merchants. None of the latter has anything benevolent to say, although one does reckon Selico's market value at 1,000 crowns because of "his uncommon virtues." Colman uses a considerable amount of sentimental stress in many of the scenes. We note it in those between the lovers, between the priest and his daughter, and among the three brothers as they endeavour to save the life of their mother. Even the cloddish Mug shares his Mandingo-acquired food with the starving Foulah family. None of these tremors of sensibility, however, unsettles the new realism of this drama of African life, and the concept of pseudo-Africa begins to fade. The actual attack on the slave trade is indirect and veiled in humour. The priest Farulho is the virtuous slave-owner who ultimately "performs the duty it is his business to preach" by liberating his slaves who bear the mildest of yokes (I, ii, 109). Colman's conservative anti-slavery sentiments in this his second play on the subject are unmistakable but not really vigorous. Still one contemporary reviewer rejoiced that the playwright had

"once again put his axe to the root of the Upas Tree of Slavery; which to the honour of British humanity, is now grubbed up and laid prostrate forever!"[105]

As we leave Colman, it will be useful to pause to consider more carefully the character of Cockney Henry Augustus Mug because he is representative of a comic Creole type appearing in numerous plays having overseas interest. Before leaving England he is the transportee, the indentured servant, the victim of the press gang, or a vulgar sailor; in the West Indies he is a slave-driver, a bookkeeper, or a tradesman; in the American plantocracy he becomes "white trash"; and in Africa he is, like Mug, the slave factor. In every case he is white and inferior, a shallow-minded creature who is a foil to all the other characters, heroes and villains, white and black alike. Since Colman's Mug is a full delineation of the type, his personality is worthy of rather detailed description.

He appears in the first Act with his black amour, Sutta. Both are slaves of the priest Farulho and both are more or less refined versions of Trudge and Wowski in Colman's earlier "Inkle and Yarico." Exclusion from genteel white company abroad forced men of his kind to seek their social niches in the lower strata of colonial society. Their lustful or at the least materialistic desires set off the pure devotions of all other lovers, white and otherwise. Mug says:

> Oh nature! since you form'd me amorous, why did fortune cast me on a soil, where to be fair is to be ugly?--Oh, Henry Augustus Mug! once a turner, both in wood and ivory, and free of the city of London, you are now a slave, among the living ebony ware of the world's creation. The chief folks, indeed, of Fatteconda, the Foulahs, as they call themselves, are some patterns lighter than the original natives, and my fellow slaves; but the town altogether looks like a backgammon board, when the game is over, and all the black and yellow men are jumbled together. Still that little jade, Sutta, runs in my head, strangely! She is a dingy Venus, of the dumpling sort, sprung out of the Black Sea (I, ii, 98-99).

In compensation for his other deficiences Mug must put a high estimate on the value of his white skin, and as sole representative of Mug & Co. of Snow-Hill he is mortified to know that the "sympathetic savage" Farulho has bought him for no more than the price that "an English sandman may give for a good donkey":

> Little did I think when I exported myself, to buy a cargo of elephant's and hippopotamus's teeth, on the banks of the Gambia, that I should be kidnapp'd by a negro slave merchant, and carried up the country to be sold. . . . But, after pawing me about, in the market, as a butcher handles a sheep, all this handsome human mutton that now stands before you, was sold for five minikallis: value not quite two pounds ten shillings sterling (I, ii, 99-100).

Equally deflating to his damaged ego is the idea that Sutta prefers black skin to white. She complains that though his "features look like negro, very," his skin is "like tooth; white all over." The Cockney is convinced that "if this girl got over Blackfriars-Bridge into the city, she'd refuse the hand of my lord-mayor, to marry a chimney sweeper" (I, ii, 100). The pair sings a duet concerning the relative handsomeness of blackness and whiteness, a topic with which Mug's low social status forces him to be concerned:

> Sutta: O! the jet-feather'd Raven, how lovely he look, ah!
> When he spread him black wing, to fly over the brook, ah!
> Ulacol! Ulacol!
>
> Mug: Oh! the white Swan he swims, in the Thames, mightly smugly,
> But he hides his black legs, cause they look so damn'd ugly.
> Fol de rol! fol de rol!
>
> Sutta: Young Negro Girl's skin make her eye to shine out, ah!
> And sparkle like night-star, when bats flit about, ah! &c.
>
> Mug: A white Woman's glance, through her eye-lashes darting,
> Make black Ladies' eyes "all my eye, Betty Martin," &c.
>
> Sutta: But I be Africk;--I be Africk:--
> Blacky Man he be my delight, ah!

Mug: And I'm a Cockney;--I'm a Cockney:--
I love black when I can't get white, ah!

Sutta: Go away, white man!--white man go:--
Then me sing quicka-wicka-wit.

Mug: If I had a little black girl that I know,
Then I'd sing fal de ral tit.

Sutta: Ulacol!

Mug: Fol de rol.

Sutta: Quick-a-wit.

Mug: Fal de ral tit.--
(Together)
Sutta: Sweet black boy Love, me bend before you!

Mug: White urchin Cupid, I adore you!

Sutta: Black boy, Love!

Mug: White boy, Love! (I, ii, 100-102).

Thus romantic love bridges the gap between cultures, colours, and social positions.

The tribal warfare of the Foulahs and Mandingoes brings the officious Mug to new honours. From being a slave of Farulho he becomes "Secretary of State to the Mandingo king . . . [who] is a monarch of great natural parts, but . . . can neither read nor write." With his life thus spared for literary purposes, Mug sings of his African adventures:

By trade I am a Turner, and Mug it is my name;
To buy a lot of Ivory to Africa I came;
I met a trading Blackamoor, a woolly old humbug,
He coax'd me up his land, and made a slave of Mr. Mug;
Crying won't you, won't you, won't you, won't you, come Mr. Mug?
Won't you, won't you? &c.

My skin is lilly white, and my colour here is new,
So the first man whom they sold me to, he thump'd me black and blue.
The Priest who bought me from him, in a tender hearted tone,
Said come from that great blackguard's house, and walk into my own.
Crying won't, won't you, &c.

> Good lack! but to behold the vicissitudes of fate!
> I'm his black Mandingo Majesty's white Minister of State:--
> For hours, in my lobby, my petitioners shall stay,
> And wish me at the Devil when I hold my levee day;
> Crying won't you, won't you? &c (II, i, 129-130).

With the tradesman's acuity the little factor asks Demba for double pay, now that he has joined "the fatigue of chancellor of the exchequer to the labours of secretary of war" in his supervision of the slave sale (III, i, 151).

Mug is not basically vicious. On occasion he even voices such humanitarian sentiments as his intelligence is capable of formulating. But his interests do not really go beyond the welfare of his own "darling short bit of a love" whom he is surprised to find among the prisoners at the slave sale. He persuades Fetterwell to buy the whole lot and give her to him, even though the latter well knows that "a face [alone] won't do the work in the West Indies." The Cockney, however, is much too insensitive to be capable of large-scale philanthropy.

The comic Creole is spiritually (and in Mug's case even materially) inferior to the noble Negroes with whom he associates. Mug's grossness contrasts vividly with the gentle priest's love of truth and feelings of compassion. Much as he reveres "his mahogany holiness," the base little white man would rather "get drunk with dooli." He vows:

> If once I get home again, damn me if I'd give up the comforts of an English shopkeeper's dinner, in his back parlour, to be archbishop of Africa. . . . [I have] hot dreams of hot beefsteak . . . with mash'd potatoes, and red pickled cabbage (I, ii, 104).

Mug is not only subordinate to the enlightened Foulahs but also to the savage Mandingoes who bide by natural laws. He is, perhaps, on a par with the European slave traders, but that is no recommendation. Even the coarse Fetterwell

is quick to see through Mug's officious façade, and he speaks patronizingly of the paltry man's opportunism and petty necessities:

> You are [a] turner in wood and ivory, when you are in London? . . . Well, master Mug--your two professions agree nicely, as the world goes: you are not the first, by many, who has wriggled himself into power, when he has been in the habit of turning (II, iii, 141).

But Mug is too obtuse to become a real villain, and thereby he retains some vestiges of decency. Chronic cowardice is another of his characteristics. During the Mandingo attack he heartily wishes that he were up to his neck "in an English horsepond" instead of in "an African town, that's invaded by an emperor as black as the kitchen chimney of the London Tavern" (I, iii).

Other members of Mug's brotherhood turn up with regularity in nautical melodramas. The faint-heartedness of this familiar colonial figure accentuated the valour of the intrepid British Tars. In Haines's "My Poll and My Partner Joe," for instance, this pathetic minor part is played by the pious Watchful Waxend, a "Psalm-Singing Cobler" aboard the slaver. He has been "kidnapped . . . and treated like a white nigger" (II, ii, 28), and in the midst of battle he cries, from within the safety of a wine cask: "Oh, lord, how hot I am! my flesh melteth and my spirit waxeth faint; they've shot away the mast, I wish they had shot away the master" (II, ii, 31).

It is interesting to consider why a white should so frequently have been placed at the bottom of the colonial scale. In a sense, in that position he could like the Hebraic scapegoat carry all the sins of both omission and commission of which the European colonial was guilty. This left the way clear for a white hero to emerge with a high degree of righteousness. Or, if abolition elements were desired, he could, as in the case of "The

Africans," accentuate the Noble Negro. Whatever his purpose, this buffoonish, often abused, little third-rate citizen was consistently comical. His type appears in a number of other dramas in this study: Trudge ("Inkle and Yarico"); Nipcheese ("Robinson Crusoe"); Felix Fagen O'Fogharty ("Kongo Kolo"); Jack Alltrades ("The Negro of Wapping"); the servant of Planter Tropic ("Paul and Virginia"); and the Clowns in two of the harlequinades ("Harlequin Mungo" and "Description of Furibond"), to name but a few. To this list might also be appended the name of Frederic Gowler, a "lily white Buckra Sailee" who appears in one of William Gilbert's Bab Ballads.[106] He goes AWL and establishes himself as a prince in a Caribbean cannibal community. Racially and spiritually he is the satirical reverse of Oroonoko.

In an effort to present well-worn themes in a new light, Leigh Hunt[107] turned his mask, "The Descent of Liberty" (1814)[108] to humanitarian purposes by borrowing imagery from the black genii of abolition poetry and bringing it on stage. The first three genii who present themselves before Liberty who sits in court in a pastoral setting represent Prussia, Austria and Russia. Their new found freedom is celebrated in the festivities of assorted shepherds, goddesses, spirits, and personified abstractions until the scene is interrupted by the hasty entrance of "a Sable Genius" with "fetter-rings at his wrists, a few of the links not broken off." He prostrates himself before Liberty and in a long speech describes the tranquillity of his African brethren before they heard "a horrid peal of laughter o'er the wave" heralding the arrival of those "coast-descending monsters," the slave traders. In an effort to revive the sagging fortunes of the emancipation campaign in 1814, Hunt has Liberty promise aid:

> . . . I will myself inspire
> Those noblest of their [English] race, who walk in lustre

Beneath the star of this my genius here,
To rise once more in their brave scorn, and win
One last, preventing, and perfecting triumph (75).

Contented, the Sable Genius disappears in the upper air to return to warmer lands, and the mask closes with an imperialistically glorious vision of serenity, happiness and liberty under the aegis of Britain.

In 1819 Horace Twiss[109] sought novelty in the "sketches of uncultur'd life" in his five-act tragedy, "The Carib Chief."[110] Unlike Colman, he found nobility resident in the Caribbean rather than Africa, and this work appears to be the sole drama of the period devoted entirely to the West Indian aboriginals.[111] Since the stage suffered no shortage of Noble Savages from the usual places, Twiss placed his high-minded Indians on the island of Dominica. The time is during the Elizabethan period while the island was in dispute between the French and the English; the scene is at the French fort, and the theme is the old motif of revenge. It is here presented in terms of the contrast between the savage's and the Christian's interpretation of it.

Montalbert, commander of the French garrisons in Dominica and Guadaloupe, has just married Claudina, a Carib bride of unknown parentage. He has secretly imprisoned her English lover, General Trefusis, for two years. It is with difficulty that he has persuaded Claudina to marry him, but she does so, believing her betrothed Trefusis to be dead and feeling an obligation to the Frenchman who had saved her life in an Indian massacre sixteen years before. The rebellious Caribs are led by a coalition government: Maloch, a politically-minded prince ruling the northern district of Dominica; Omreah, a younger, idealistic prince of the southern section; and Carbal, Maloch's semi-civilized priest who is seeking a liason with the English forces in order to overthrow the French fortress. Carbal has privately aided

the imprisoned Trefusis to this end, and has at the same time imbibed from the virtuous Englishman certain religious instructions to superimpose upon his natural nobilities. He says: "I have risen above/ My rugged nature [and] turned the ancient priesthood/ Which I inherit, to the means of blessing/ My untaught brethren" (I, i, 2).

In Scene iii, to "wild music" and amid "wild scenery, with a Mountain Bridge" the Carib chiefs take counsel. Omreah has a price on his head, and he vows undiluted vengeance against "the European bloodhounds." He is prepared to "perform the sacred task of blood, to the last drop," and he intends to include the Indian Claudina because she has married a European. When we learn that it is the sixteenth anniversary of the day when the French slaughtered his family and subjects, the revenge theme is thoroughly established. Nor does Omreah wish English aid in the holy task before him. He intends to attack

> . . . before the hateful sons of Europe come
> To share our glory, or to thwart our justice!
> . . . Would ye be fools, and fight
> Faint, bleed, in working off one master's yoke,
> To let another grind you? (II, i, 16: iii, 29).

Meanwhile, Carbal has been imprisoned while he was trying to effect the liberation of Trefusis. Maloch regrets the priest's folly:

> Unhappy Carbal!
> I ever fear'd a danger from his zeal
> To join these English with us: He has haunted
> The tents of Europeans, 'till his heart
> Forgets to hate them. Not that I would have
> This shew of friendship with the English thrown
> Aside as yet. Trefusis, Carbal's friend,
> May for awhile be useful (II, iii, 26).

Maloch craftily welcomes the arrival of Trefusis in the Indian camp, but Omreah remains adamant in his hatred of the white men, regardless of their personal virtues or political usefulness: "Is it a natural hate," he asks in

savage scorn, "that sets these white men/ At one another's throats?":

> There's the matter,
> If, for the myriads of our brethren murder'd
> To glut the European throats with gore,
> One white man die to profit us--One die!--
> Why should one live!--To spawn in our warm sun,
> To taint the free air of our isle, and hiss
> His green infections on us, whose rank crest
> We have strength to crush? (II, iii, 31-32).

The Caribs here loom up very noble and very savage.

Act III concerns the Indian attack on the fortress. Claudina has learned of her husband's deceit concerning Trefusis, over whose imaginary grave she has shed copious tears. Now in a vault under the fort, she awaits the outcome of the conflict, knowing that her husband's victory will mean her lover's death, and vice versa. Another distracted woman is Kathelrade, an Indian slave who is divided between her loyalties to her nation, with the necessity of aiding them in taking the fort, and her devotion to Montalbert, whose foster-mother she has been since his early childhood. Claudina and Kathelrade embody the classic colonial dilemma when romantic and mother love become a complication in the contact between the European and the non-white races.

After a considerable quantity of blood and thunder, Trefusis (whom Omreah has finally been forced to accept) and the Indians are victorious, but it is at the price of Maloch's life. In the fourth scene Trefusis spares Montalbert's life for the sake of Claudina and plans the means whereby the beleaguered newly-weds can escape to Martinique. Claudina and the Englishman, still violently in love, are sustained by their "godlike power to suffer" (III, iv, 49). When the Englishman and Frenchman come face to face, we discover that they were friends "while yet our hostile countries/ Preserved the bond of peace," and both turn out to be men of great sensibility. Montal-

bert offers to die to pay for his betrayal of their friendship, but Trefusis says that his revenge will lie in the fact that henceforth the French general will owe his life, his freedom, and his wife to his mercy. This will be "the sole revenge" of the Englishman's "distracted heart," a Christian rendering of good for evil. Montalbert, of course, must submit to the ascendancy of "the virtue of the man [he has] wrong'd" (IV, i, 52-54).

When Trefusis announces to that "insatiate savage" Omreah that he has set Montalbert and his wife free, the Caribs seize him. Claudina, hearing of his fate, refuses safety and returns to reveal herself as the European's wife. She hopes to save the life of Trefusis, but Carbal is ordered to sacrifice Claudina to the gods. Omreah contrasts the glory of his justified revenge with that of the Europeans:

> Shall I quit
> The instinct heav'n has planted in all hearts,
> The generous lust of natural, sweet revenge?
> While Europe's wise and civilized savages
> Cut throats, as artificial passions prompt,
> Still, still let us, the sons of purer skies,
> Placed here at nature's sources, where her spring
> Bursts fresh and unpolluted, follow only
> The genuine pulse she wakes, and freely feast
> The inborn appetites of our fiercer spirits (IV, iii, 65).

Act V opens with certain "zealous and prudent" Indians watching for the arrival of English forces which Trefusis has ordered from Guadaloupe, fresh from their victories there. The scene assumes a certain Restoration colouring as preparations for human sacrifice go forward amidst the ruins of the razed fortress. Although he knows that "death can have no sting for one of her purity," Trefusis agonizes over Claudina's perishing "almost within sight of succour" (V, iii, 72). Recoiling from his priestly task, Carbal fights a delaying action until Omreah is out of patience. The

Carib chief goads him on, reminding him of the bloody day when Montalbert raided the village. He knows only the primitive injunction of "an eye for an eye":

> What! thou'rt enamour'd of those lucid eyes,
> That soft complexion, and the slender grace
> Of that enwreathed form! Why, such a one,
> My heart once loved, and must this hour avenge!
> Yes, such was once the fond wife of my bosom.
> She had that tint, those eyes, that waving form!
> So sweetly look'd--so passionately wept,
> And called on me for help, when in my sight,
> Bound as I was, Montalbert's soldiers stabb'd her!
> Such, had she 'scaped, were now my blooming daughter,
> Whom they pluck'd from me, as her little arms
> Clung round my neck, imploring--Oh, those wounds
> Of years long past, still, still they rankle deep,
> Still cry within me for their last relief--
> Vengeance! (V, iii, 75).

When the cry goes up: "The English are in sight upon the hill," Omreah orders immediate sacrifice. In dying, however, Claudina gives her necklace to Omreah to pass on to her parents, if he should ever find them. With horror the chief recognizes the gems and then his daughter. In a blind, savage response which contrasts with premeditated European purposes Omreah leaps upon Montalbert. Although the English arrive in time to spare the latter for the remorse which must be his, the poor Carib, misguided as he has been by the light of nature, is unrepentant to the last. He stabs himself and falls upon the body of his daughter crying:

> Then thus
> I free myself for ever. . . . Pardon me,
> Great gods, if for a moment the weak grief
> Of a fond father shook my nature's firmness!
> 'Tis past, and I am nerved again. Ha! Ha!
> Confess that I have triumphed o'er thee, Christian!
> I have redeemed my amplest pledge of hate
> Upon thy aching heart, which, now, I thank them
> They would not let me pierce--since I would have thee
> Still live--and bear my dying curses with thee! (Dies) (V, iii, 78).

Twiss, of course, intended to demonstrate the superiority of Christian forgiveness over savage revenge, but in doing so he made his Carib chief, like the Miltonic Satan, tower over the virtuous Christian characters who surround him. Omreah is a magnificent figure who harks back to the larger-than-life heroes of another age, while the two far less interesting Europeans wash away in a river of sentimental moralizing. Montalbert determines to seek out a monastery where, he says, "in lone prayer and penance,/ I may wear out the remnant of my days." But Trefusis like the practical administrator that he is looks beyond the tearful present to a day of freedom:

> When we shall have shed our parting tears
> Upon the early grave of that sweet flower,
> We will again to sea and leave the isle,
> Thus by heav'n's aid delivered from our foes,
> To its own heirs, the children of the soil (V, iii, 78).

By the time the island of Dominica should actually become independent (1968), however, there would not be a single Carib Indian left to enjoy it. Although the play is not "humanitarian" in the usual sense, it is a vigorous tribute to the proud race which collapsed before the earliest European exploitation in the Caribbean.

John Wilson's[112] "The Isle of Palms" (1812)[113] defies classification according to the types established in this chapter. But because it is in dramatic form and because it represents advanced romanticizing of the West Indies, it will be included here. The work presents the Antilles from a novel viewpoint which seems to be unique in the dramatic literature of the period. Although contemporary spectacles and melodramas regularly presented "picturesque views" of the Indies, there was among them no effort to create the island-retreat which provided romantic solitude and which has since become a major motif in twentieth-century travel literature. In this

respect Wilson's work was very faintly foreshadowed by John Singleton's General Description of the West-Indian Islands (1767), a work which in the midst of its long, didactic passages paid tribute to tropical island beauty. More than twenty years after the publication of "The Isle of Palms" Robert Nugent Dunbar attempted a romantic sketch of the positive natural assets of the Windwards and Leewards in The Cruise (1835).[114] Between Singleton and Dunbar stands Wilson's dramatic poem as one of the very early nineteenth-century efforts to eulogize the spiritual and aesthetic values of the tropical landscape. Two centuries of contending with the physical and mercantile difficulties in the West Indian situation had long blinded Europeans to any higher, romantic possibilities in the Caribbean.

Canto I opens with a moonlit, tropical sea-scape. Mary, "an orphan-maid" from Wales, and Fitz-own, "a Cambrian mountain youth," stand in the prow of a vessel nearing an "Indian Isle." We are not told why they have come to the Indies, except that each has left a lover behind in Wales. Then comes the inevitable disaster; the ship runs aground, and all aboard save the hero and heroine are lost. Thus the stage is set for either a practical, Robinson-Crusoe-type solitude or a transcendental withdrawal from civilization.

Canto II is occupied by the couple's heroic struggles "in the center of the seas." Pages of spongy verse elaborate upon the valour of the youth and the agonies of the maid, but ultimately they are re-united in a small boat which miraculously turns up. Then they sail West, the perennial direction for physical and spiritual adventure and for new beginnings. Canto III brings them to a veritable "Fairy Queen's Retreat" on an uninhabited island, one of the "many lovely unknown tropical isles" and one which spares

them the rather distracting element which savage islands--even those inhabited by Noble Indians--would bring into their lives. Within five days they are "happy [in] their doom, though strange and wild" and are prepared to live in idyllic nature "forever."

Mary and Fitz-own do not consummate their marriage until "Sabbath morn" when they share a most holy communion, so "pure were their souls, as infant's breath" (III, 99). Their union is sanctified by "God and Nature," and the pair live as archetypal man and woman, an Adam and Eve. The Edenic bower they create in the palm grove is "a home on earth most like to Heaven,/ Our own sweet Isle of Palms" (III, 49). They pass the hours improving this bower "in the wild Indian glade." Occasionally they remember Wales and those "who wept for them," but these thoughts do little to abate their raptures. In due time an "angel-daughter" is given to them. Mary dresses her in peacock feathers, and she becomes a precocious child who communes with the birds and calls to mind little Pearl of The Scarlet Letter. Finally, "after many a year," a ship is sighted off-shore; Mary, of course, faints. Fitz-own signals in hopes of rescue, for he knows that they must return to reality and humanity.

While these "three happy spirits" have continued to "sleep among orange blossoms" in their Indian grove, Canto IV takes us to Wales where Mary's mother has daily walked the beach in despair, listening to the ocean and imagining that her daughter yet lives on a distant island. On one of her pilgrimages, after seven years have passed, the old mother witnesses the arrival of a "glorious ship" with "three castaways" aboard. The strangers from Paradise have returned to the familiar Cambrian hills and to old Snowdon. A highly sentimental reunion follows, and "the elf child,"

carrying her wild bird, talks volubly to her "grand-dam." The family settles down into Welsh rusticity, the Isle of Palms is deserted forever, and the lovingly-tended bower reverts to primitive Nature. Philosophically the poem attempts a portrayal of the romantic, transcendental experience; topically it advertises the natural beauties of the Caribbean islands; but poetically it dismays even the most dedicated and mystical of readers with its 179 pages of very dull, turgid verse.

The high noon of humanitarianism had opened with several dramatists using the stage for the forceful expression of anti-slavery views. The new "illegitimate" dramas as well as the traditional type pieces were so used. These playwrights drew on the same literary resources as the abolition poets who surrounded them, emphasizing well-established patterns. During the lull in emancipation activity after the Abolition Bill, the stage propaganda virtually ceased, and a few innovators turned aside to explore the mystical possibilities of West Indian motifs and to revive a few belated Noble Savages. But the renewal of emancipation activity failed to recall the vigour of the early apologists for the cause of slavery. By this time in the literary field there was only feeble humanitarian sympathy for the Negro, and what there was seems to be little more than a courtesy to long-established custom. Moreover, the rebukes for his Creole master were comparatively mild. In the theater, as in the case of West Indian verse, the subject had been exhausted. The remnants that remained were finally absorbed into comic and satirical genres.

After some ninety years of anti-slavery agitation on both sides of the Atlantic, it was inevitable that this reaction should come. Wishing to

relieve the emotional exhaustion of themselves as well as their public, dramatists turned heroic and humanitarian motifs to highly farcical uses in an attempt to say, perhaps, that at last all was well with the Negro. In drama the transition to satire, the picturesque, and the earthy is much more pronounced than in either verse or prose. In conclusion we may be justified in examining three late English dramas. In them this reversal of attitude is well demonstrated,[115] and the decline of sentimental humanitarianism is complete.

"The Negro of Wapping; or, The Boat-builder's Hovel" (1838)[116] is a very minor melodrama, but it has considerable relevance to this study. It was by Edward Fitz-Ball, one of the most prolific of nineteenth-century stage writers.[117] As feeble a production as it is, it summarizes nearly all the attitudes of the period. Coming as he did in the post-emancipation period, we are not surprised to find that Black Sam the Negro is self-employed and adrift in London. His activities are quite independent from those of his unknown, erstwhile master. Sam is seen sweeping the street between the public house (The Green Dragon) and the residence of Old Miers (a notorious miser). The first scene involves a good deal of broadside humour between Sam and his fellow-vagrant, Jack Alltrades, who is mending chairs. The drama begins to assume a sinister air when Sam master-minds a plot to steal money from Miers who is well-supplied. Scene ii portrays Puritanical old Miers counting the gold in his chest while his daughter Fanny and his indigent nephew-apprentice, Philip Cartouch, covertly make love by the fireside, "wasting coals" as the old skinflint says. When everyone is in bed, Sam appears "all clad in black so as to resemble a Demon." Aided by Jack he descends the chimney and tries to force open the

money chest. Aroused, Miers rushes in. Upon being pressed for the key, the miser cries: "The key to my hard earnings! never, never! My soul first. . . . Not my gold. . . . My life sooner!" (I, i). A tremendous storm breaks upon this rather Mephistophelian confrontation. Then Sam kills Miers and escapes back up the chimney with the money bags. On the way he wounds Philip who believes him to be the devil.[118]

Philip and Fanny next show up at an alehouse at Woolwich, among drinking soldiers and brawling sailors. We learn that Philip is about to go abroad. He says:

> In India, I shall distinguish myself--I know I shall, and return home covered with glory, and my pockets filled with an abundance of gold to throw in your lap--then we can be married, girl, and live as happily as the two doves in yonder wicker cage (II, i, 13).

It is the old El Dorado dream, to be fulfilled this time in the East Indies. Fanny begs Philip to take back the "fatal money" he has given her as his advance pay, and stay at home. She can work with her needle. But he is moved by the noblest of purposes:

> No--no, Fanny; the gold which enlists a brave man in the service of his country, cannot be better expended than in the support of misfortune and innocence.

At that moment two yacht-owners appear, one black and one white. With the aid of some evidence from an old military friend, Corporal Broadsword, the lovers suspect the pair to be Sam and Jack, living off old Miers' fortune. Philip must embark and leave the corporal to pursue the miscreants while Fanny goes to her lonely home to weep alone. She is nevertheless secure in the knowledge that "heaven will know, and pity a poor bereaved, forsaken girl, who has no other friend"(II, i, 17).

Realizing that they have been discovered, Sam and Jack retire to a

boatshed by the Thames to sit out another violent storm which has erupted. Black Sam, who is by far the more resourceful and intelligent of the two, is apprehensive of Jack's cowardice and wants to break up their partnership. They decide to divide up the money. As they quarrel, they discover the miserable, rain-soaked Fanny also hiding in the shed; Sam robs her and she faints, undone, no doubt, by the sight of his "starting eyeballs." When Jack feebly tries to protest, the plebian Sam, in keeping with a now almost-defunct tradition, suddenly draws himself up to the magnificent stature of a grossly-wronged royal African:

> Sam: (To Jack) Well enough I know what those quaking lips would utter--but this is ever the way with baseborn hearts like yours. You would draw upon my head the ruin, and go free yourself--you would share with the negro the victory--the shame is to be his alone; but no, my resolution has ripened beneath a warmer sun than thine--the snake of my climate which fixeth but its eye upon its victim, knoweth well that he can never escape (hoarsely) thou art my victim! (Playing with the knife).
>
> Jack: I--I am your--
>
> Sam: Do not say friend: the African torn by the hand of cruelty from his native home--dragged on board a ship, and doomed to labour, till his once proud limbs become warped and feeble, then left to beg, or rob, or die of famine in a stranger land, might well be pardoned his disbelief of the white man's sincerity, were it true as heaven!
>
> Jack: (With vacant surprise) Ugh!
>
> Sam: Bah! I waste time with vacancy like thine, and unman myself in the sad remembrance of what has been! Heart--heart! Why rush such melancholy thoughts across thee now? I thought thou hadst become too callous--long, long ago: away pity--away remorse! (To Altrades) Look on that unconscious girl, she and you are all that living know the secret of my guilt--all, all I have, but to quit thy lips, and with this wealth escaping to my own land, it will be a rare jest with my sable friends to laugh over the broken fetters which the white man's own blood (not the negroes), hath changed into gold! (Fiercely) Come, prepare! for die thou must, this instant! (II, ii).

The wretched Jack jumps into an open chest, which Sam promptly locks. The Negro now determines to take the boat and sail "far away, floating the world of waters, to his African home;" whether in soul or body is not clear. While he philosophizes, Fanny revives and releases Jack. In the commotion which follows, Black Sam is tied to a rafter on the ceiling. From this unlikely position he persuades Fanny to believe that he has repented of his sins, and she misguidedly lets him down. Then, just as the third round of hostilities begins to rock the old boatshed, and as Fanny faints for the fourth or fifth time, Philip and a band of soldiers arrive, all conveniently armed. The storm, of course, has caused the ship to turn back from its projected voyage to the East Indies. Thus supported, the unstable but now morally-improved Jack stabs Black Sam. At this point we discover that the tragedy of the Negro, amazingly enough, is to be laid entirely at the door of Old Miers. He had turned him from his house, a "poor desolate negro, friendless, homeless." Famine had then made him desperate and one crime led to another:

> He might have saved me from all--by a little charity he might have saved himself--and I--but the negroe's story is told--! (Music--He falls and dies).

We are never told what Philip does about his responsibility for service in India, but he and Fanny live happily ever after. Of that we may be certain.

Fitzball's trivial work brings up the rear in a long train of "colonial" dramas. It is really humourous in its extravagance, although no satire or parody is actually intended. Black Sam actually contains in his single person all four major ingredients of the stage Negro of English theater. He is a master of comic action and repartee; he has a noble savagery which, at this later date, is tinged with racism; his blackness is turned to Gothic,

diabolic uses; and he has a potentially virtuous soul which has been ruined by oppression. It would be unfair, however, to say that the slave-master is summarized in the person of the fanatical old Miers. (Such an association would undoubtedly have gratified many emancipationists in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.) Rather, we find the West Indian planters anywhere along the scale between Kotzebue's villainous John and Bellamy's righteous Goodwin, with Townley's flamboyant, worldly Lovel at about mid-point. This diversity of character is a subtle indication of the diverse pressures of abolition and colonial interest which influenced the theater.

The second reactionary play we shall consider is an example of the many low-comedy types which enabled both the heroic and the sentimental Negro to drift into burlesque and impersonation. Since Shakespeare was the most popular stage author, he invited parody and travesty. His Elizabethan English in the mouth of a black-faced comedian, who was expected to have an eccentric vocabulary and to be possessed of a kind of bombastic ignorance anyway, was supposedly productive of hilarious results. The view of a woolly head, for instance, shaking violently and with eyes rolling in fright to the mumbling of strange incantations presumably demonstrated the inherent primitive and superstitious nature of the Negro and allowed for exhilarating ghost scenes. Negro minstrelsy as a white man's creation thus inevitably contained his preconceptions of prejudices toward the black man. In line with this lighter nineteenth-century view of the Negro, we may note an interesting Shakespearean travesty in a folio entitled West Indian Illustrations of Shakespeare which was published in Georgetown, Demerara, in 1870. In it an anonymous artist has presented

Plate 14

A cartoon from West Indian Illustrations of Shakespeare: "This is an art which does mend nature," Winter's Tale, IV, iii). (Georgetown, Demerara [1870], 18.)

Huntington Library



"This is an art which does mend nature." Winter's Tale, Act IV, sc. iii.



"This is an art which doe[illegible]

fifty drawings featuring Negro figures engaged in various activities of social and political interest. Each scene is captioned by a citation from a Shakespeare play.

Although many Shakespearean scenes and characters were burlesqued in the theater, Othello was a prime favourite, and he appears in numerous parodies. He was perfect for minstrel comedy: he was black to begin with, he killed his wife (and that was always good for laughs), and he could be allowed even an Irish brogue upon occasion. Although English Negro minstrelsy was much less plentiful than American, the very year after emancipation Maurice G. Dowling produced an "operatic burlesque burletta" which conforms closely to the type. In "Othello Travestied" (1834) we discover that the famous Moor now has a West Indian past. He is an "independent Nigger, from the Republic of Hayti," a place long renowned for fractious blacks. Iago turns out to be "a native of the Gaultee Mountains . . . of Tipperary." Costume-wise Othello is turned out in the prevailing fashion: "white military coat, red facings, aigulettes, white breeches, high boots, powdered wig, sword, cocked hat and feather." From the lofty heights of Shakespeare, the noble Othello descends to an obsequious attitude to his "fader-in-law" and "good Massa Iago" and to a slave dialect straight from the plantations. He is a "thick-lipped chap" who sings of his love for "him . . . poor wifey" in a ballad to the tune of "Yankee Doodle." Minstrel songs, of course, bore little resemblance to authentic Negro folk music. Instead imagination and poetic license ran riot in vocal parodies supported by popular tunes and rhythms of the day. In response to her dusky husband's love ballad, Desdemona explains how, when, and where she fell under the spell of the Moor:

I'll tell you why I lov'd the Black,
'Cause ev'ry night I had a knack,
Of list'ning to his tales bewitching
My hair while curling, in the kitchen.
Too ral, &c.

Once while darning father's stocking,
Oh! he told a tale so shocking!
So romantic--yet so tender
That I fell fainting 'cross the fender . . .
Too ral, &c. (I, ii 10).

In Act II Othello parodies the air, "Oh, 'tis love!" to further celebrate his good fortune and his wife's attractions, charms which appeal to his own peculiar tastes:

Oh, dis lub--dis lub--dis lub--
It turn him head quite round,
Him not know wedder him tread de moon
Or here upon de ground.
You must not tink him jealous, just because him wife is fair,
Because she sing and play and dance, and nebber drink nor swear.
Because she got good eye and foot, and good taste what can be,
Or else good Massa Iago, she would nebber choose me.
Oh, dis lub--&c. (II, i, 22).

A towel with which Desdemona once bound her spouse's head to cure a headache is substituted for the Shakespearean handkerchief, and it sparks the "Moor's" heroic rage when Iago informs him that Cassio has wiped his hands on it. The possibility of a "coroners inquisition" deters Othello from disposing of "Desdemony" by arsenic or even by saying that she contracted hydrophobia after having been bitten by her favourite kitten. In the last scene Othello enters the chamber where there are two beds. He wishes "the delicate Desdemona" dead, for "him no like much her blood to shed,/ Cause dat bring Sin upon him head." When he announces his intention to kill her, she calmly makes a place for him on the bed and says, "Come, sit you down; we'll talk the matter over." She expresses a disinclination to die, at least not immediately:

> Don't kill me now, give me another day,
> Or else transport me, dear, to Botany Bay.
> Don't--dear Othello--put in a fright--
> Kill me to-morrow--let me live to night (She struggles).

The Moor's purpose is unshakable, however, and he smothers her by throwing the spare bed on top of her. In the Finale Desdemona's ghost appears with a Hamlet-like message; Iago enters and is threatened by Othello with his clasp knife; and finally the wretched hero humbly admits that he is undeniably "a rascal" but is "scarcely worth the killing." Meanwhile, the heroine's body has risen up in bed and peremptorily dismissed the ghost for its premature appearance. With that all is forgiven and forgotten among the contending parties, and Othello presumably retires to his customary place by the kitchen stove.

Uncle Tom's Cabin (1851), the pièce de résistance of the American anti-slavery movement, enjoyed wide circulation in England. A parody of it appeared on the London stage in 1864.[119] Although slightly beyond the announced period covered by this study, it still merits attention as a rather comprehensive satire of abolition motifs and as an illustration of the self-satisfaction felt by certain Englishmen as they viewed the American emancipation struggle. It was entitled "The Tyrant! The Slave!! The Victim!!! and the Tar!!!! An Entirely and Supernaturally Original Nautico-domestic Transatlantic Sensation Drama." The unknown author says in what is a considerable understatement that "it will be seen that the plot and interest of Mrs. Beecher Stowe's popular work have not been closely adhered to." The setting contains several of the more spectacular elements of the American scene as observed from the Old World:

> A group of Walrus and Buffaloes may be discerned in the very remote distance, disporting on the frozen surface of the boundless Savannah--infant Alligators leap and wallow in the green waters of the foaming Fall.

In this pre-historic landscape "an immense Boa Constrictor winds his gay and undulating scales amid the impervious foliage of a CARDUUS CALEDONIA," lending to the scene the classic image of original, Edenic sin. A detailed preamble outlines the violent action of the drama:

> SPLENDID EXPLOSION OF INDIGNANT VIRTUE, More aid from Demons in human form. Tom Loker and Myrmidons. Eliza condemned to a terrible penalty--poor Uncle Tom appears and pleads in vain--a frightful punishment is decreed by the slaveowner, and unhappy Uncle Tom is subjected to a fate which must be witnessed to be credited--the dark depths of despair surround the innocent--infernal triumph animates the guilty, and ALL IS LOST NOW! But for the unexpected, and not to be explained, arrival of a British Tar, who pours in a broadside of nautical eloquence, squares the yards all round, and rescues aged innocence and lovely woman in distress, GRAND COMBAT OF SIX. Gratifying termination to the tale of terror--miserable suicide of the villains, by FOUR TREMENDOUS HEADERS into the unascertained depths of the watery abyss.

Some half dozen conventions of anti-slavery literature are boldly satirized here. Uncle Tom strikes a "Grand Tableau" by "playing bones," kneeling "after the picture" (that is, the Wedgwood cameo), and crying "O, Massa! am I not a man and a brother?" He also sings a sentimental song entitled, "Why did my master sell me . . . all on my wedding day?" Jack Shivertimbers, the British sailor, rescues and later marries the distressed heroine. (He deserves this privilege by reason of his active sensibilities which are aroused by the suffering of the Negroes.) He contemplates the affairs of the southern American plantation with such expostulations as "Old England for ever" and other imperialistic clichés which grow out of his very real sense of moral superiority. The planter Legree is "a monster in human form" who attempts to seduce Eliza, the beautiful octoroon wife of an absent Creole. Replete in her "muslin robes and macassar curled locks," she wails: "Will no one intercede for injured innocence!" Legree's "frightful proposition" and Eliza's "un-

heard of peril" is a kiss. When Uncle Tom intervenes, he and Eliza are subjected to horrendous punishments: the former is "deprived of his shirt collars" and the latter is condemned to "wash the family's dishes for a week." Legree and the villains who support him are thwarted in their licentiousness and are properly disposed of in the green pool with the "infant alligators." The last satirical scene is a melodramatic "ballet" consisting of a plantation break-down by Uncle Tom, a naval hornpipe, and a "general dance and tableau." Virtue is triumphant, and the audience is reminded once again that "Britons never shall be slaves."

Thus the Victorian theater waged its counteroffensive against the extravagance of anti-slavery sentimentalism. The decades of mawkish exploitation of the Negro, his nobility, and his slavehood ended at last in comedy. Although a great distance lies between Bickerstaffe's Mungo and Uncle Tom, the English stage had made the complete circle and returned to the basically comic Negro. In the intervening time emancipation had come to all of the slaves in the New World. Meanwhile, the much-maligned Creoles were finally left in peace to cope with their black labour force and their bankrupt estates and to enjoy whatever pleasures they might derive from the new and pleasantly romantic atmosphere of their beautiful islands.

CONCLUSION

The cleavage of West Indian society occurred at many levels, all of which have been examined in imaginative literature: black and white, rich and poor, pagan and Christian, slave and master, slave and freeman, resident and absentee, primitive and sophisticate, and the vicious and the virtuous. Yet all of these people lived side by side in a barren, money-making society held together by force. The resultant social and political pyramid-climbing led to pretense and vice in private life and incompetence and corruption in public office. These component parts of Britain's wealthy slave colonies naturally attracted humanitarian interest which in turn sparked the long, bitter struggle between "saints" and "sinners."

In this milieu were born the literary motifs which became the clichés of the West Indian scene: Creole heiresses and avaricious, flamboyant planters; heroic princes and black Venuses; suffering innocence and destructive judgment; black minstrels and Obeahmen; and landscapes both benign and sinister. Out of the chaos evolved the three primary dualisms with which this study has been concerned: the characters of the Negro and of the Creole, and the basic attitudes to the West Indian islands themselves.

Two distinct types of Negro developed in colonially-oriented English literature. The first was the noble prince kidnapped in Africa, torn

from the arms of his "sable goddess" and sent to the West Indian plantations. He traced his lineage back to Aphra Behn's Oroonoko and reached his highest development when he joined the fraternity of Noble Savages in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Because it was a long step from the idea of the "Great Chain of Being" at the beginning of the century to the concept of the "Brotherhood of Man" at the end, the Negro attained this status with some difficulty. Abolition writers recognized, however, that it was a necessary move toward his being viewed as an object of humanitarian concern. Although the Carib Indians received relatively scant attention, when they did appear they were also solidly within the Noble Savage cult. In such a class-conscious age this exalted view of the Negro tended to limit philanthropic attention to the plight of a single suffering prince and his love, excluding the woes of the multitude of his humble but likewise abused countrymen. Actually the noble prince tended to inspire more astonishment than pity.

This vengeful, idealistic Oroonoko-figure moved in altogether too rarified an atmosphere. It was seen that if the Negro was to be credible at all his more earthy side would have to be displayed. Indeed, many West Indian slaves were actually observed to possess passive emotions. Tribal differences among Africans supported the creation of the milder slave and the requirements of sentimentalism made the innovation mandatory. Moreover, if a Negro adopted a reckless or apathetic attitude, it could scarcely be a matter of surprise in an age in which all social, political, legal, and economic interests were in the white man's favour.

This second-class black also had a propensity for humour. With the introduction of the "plantation Negro" in the person of Mungo, the

theater gave West Indian writing a comic dimension which was almost wholly ignored by the occasional verse-writers. While such humour obviously contributed nothing to humanitarian activity, the comic and more life-like Negro nevertheless remained a favourite and has survived to the present time. A study of the fiction writers of the period would show that they sometimes presented the pedestrian black in his own right. More often, however, they amalgamated him with the Oroonoko type with conspicuous lack of success. In any event, it was fortunate for his own survival that the Negro had this capacity for pleasure, even though it was often eyed with suspicion by the white man. Neither type of Negro retained much of the inherent evil of many heroic Moors of the Renaissance and Restoration periods, and it was not until the 1830's that Negro villains began to appear in force once more.

The creation of the second type of Negro character also fostered attempts at Negro dialect. Lack of first-hand experience caused most writers of the Indies to fail in capturing the distinctive mode of thought and expression which is present in genuine West Indian patois (see Appendix I). Instead, they assumed that the use of merely ungrammatical English sufficed for slave dialect. The results were generally most unconvincing.

With the passing of the hey-day of West India plantership, the persons of mixed blood in the colonies as well as in England rose to prominence in both their social and literary contexts. With the new, more rigid racial prejudices developing in the nineteenth century the social and psychological problems of mulattoes became increasingly more interesting. The initial English exploration of the theme was ultimately carried over most strongly into American theater and fiction.

The literary Creole served various purposes, and his delineation was more complex than that of the Negro because there were such widely differing opinions on his actual character and moral worthiness. The anti-slavery poets found the planters to be villainous, almost to a man. Infrequently a basically modest, sensible planter appeared in drama, but he was so contrary to the widely accepted opinion about West Indians that he was hardly useful even to the pro-colonials who invented him.

A third and much more popular figure was the repentant West Indian, strongly influenced by Cumberland's Belcour. Since the literature of the Caribbean was a tributary of the literature of sensibility, recalcitrant planters served the moral conventions of sentimentalism admirably. These exotic West Indian prodigals had a high "conversion potential" because they were candidates for spiritual improvement in almost every direction. In addition, these "children of the sun" retained a few seeds of primitive goodness gleaned from their island environment. Thus their souls became worthy of salvation. In general terms, the Creole male was presented as warm-hearted, arbitrary, and licentious, while the female was ignorant, beautiful, lazy, and cruel. Also, in a society and literature so closely tuned to the perennial theme of money, the possession of infinite wealth made the owner of a West India fortune a most versatile character. The management of his riches might be either to his redemption or to his damnation.

The poets tended to avoid the delicate problem of whether Negroes should be portrayed as killing their wicked masters or not. They sidestepped the issue by creating either an Oroonoko who would be defeated by the system or a plantation slave who would learn to live meekly with it.

The playrights, on the other hand, had to meet the demands of dramatic action. They created sub-standard whites who had their roots in the seventeenth-century system of indentured white servitude. As planter-substitutes these overseers, bookkeepers, and slave drivers were expendable and could be stabbed to death during a stage slave insurrection without unduly disturbing the aristocratic absentee West Indians in the audience. (Later, fiction writers and others were to become more bold in allowing planters to be murdered and go to the unrepentant sinner's grave.)

The initial descriptions of West Indian scenery were far more expository than imaginative. During most of the eighteenth century the flora, fauna, and diseases of the islands were atomized by scientifically-minded surgeons while other curious travellers dilated on the hazards of the climate. After the rise of the abolition movement a pall was cast over the tropical landscape, and it became virtually impossible for Englishmen to conceive of any natural attractions in the slave-tainted islands. In fact, the "avenging elements" theory about the punitive role of natural phenomena rendered Caribbean lands positively sinister. Seeking to dissipate this unfriendly atmosphere, James Grainger and John Singleton first defended the West Indian landscape. They found both beauty and picturesqueness in their surroundings, but they stood almost alone for many decades. Romantic interest in Caribbean scenery was to increase proportionately as the abolition fever abated. The poet Robert Dunbar (together with a new generation of prose journalists) may be considered one of the main progenitors of the new literature of romantic tropical landscape. Drama drew primarily on the more sensational elements of Caribbean scenery.

Jamaica, with Barbados a close second, was the favourite setting for abolitionist writers. As the largest and one of the oldest of Britain's sugar islands it provided ample raw material for discourse on the slavery question. With the rise of the new, more relaxed mode of writing about the Indies in the post-Emancipation period, however, the center of interest shifted to the smaller, "healthier" islands of the Lesser Antilles.

The authors of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries who took up West Indian themes were influenced by two overwhelmingly powerful forces, the two warring phases of the age, humanitarianism and colonialism. The first call to the cause of abolition aroused an enormous amount of literary activity from authors both small and great. Their zealous concern with slavery led them to create better Negroes and worse whites and to plant them in a harsh Caribbean setting. The violence and emotionalism of their campaign stimulated the colonials to retaliation. The Planters Club as well as private individuals sponsored by the West India Company and other mercantile groups carried on a counter-offensive to stay the forces of humanitarianism. By the emancipation period, however, most creative writers had exhausted their resources and had lost interest in the much publicized and greatly overworked West India Question. The latter phase of the movement was carried on largely with "replays" from earlier works and with an increase in periodical writing and in public anti-slavery meetings. New works in both poetry and drama remain relatively scarce at this time.

No number of romantic or humanitarian considerations, however, ever wholly dimmed the writers' faith in the glory and basic "rightness" of Britain's colonial empire. Countless poems and dramas conclude with

a bright vision of England's beneficent overseas role. Emancipated Negroes flocked to breathe Britain's free air while benevolent Englishmen continued to "reign" in the Indies, surrounded by enlightened slaves rejoicing in Christianity and mild discipline. Even rabid abolitionists hesitated to destroy entirely this shining concept of empire. Instead, they looked forward to an even greater Golden Age, a millenium of peace and prosperity for the colonies basking in the favour of Mother England.

Closely allied to this imperialistic vision was the mercantile one which advertised the Indies as a place to get rich quickly. The colonial fortune was both proverbial and real, and imaginative writers manipulated it for a variety of purposes. During the first two thirds of the literary campaign, well-heeled planters retired to England as absentees (if the sentimentalists found them morally eligible). During the emancipation period and after, however, literary West Indians, even the virtuous ones. began putting down their roots in the colonies and becoming contributing citizens there. This new realism and national consciousness was due, no doubt, to the unity brought on by the final struggle with the English parliament over the slave question. From the businessman's viewpoint, however, this new faith was ill-founded. By 1833 the salad days of the West Indies were past, and political and economic interest turned to Britain's second colonial empire. Literary concern with the great moral issues which had characterized the West Indies for more than sixty years trailed off into satire and various forms of low comedy.

As has already been noted, the aims of colonial writing coincided neatly with the elements of sentimentalism, and the major West Indian characters were products of the cult of sensibility. The Negro in his

noble savagery was nourished by all of the conventional responses of sentimentalism: exaggerated emotions, submission to death, and torrents of tears, ad nauseam. The Creole was either a villain embodying the naked forces of evil or a repentant rake striving for moral improvement. Only rarely was he purely benevolent. Yet, these West Indians embodied certain ethnic characteristics which were an astringent to the bloated style of sentimental writing. The comic Negro and his master (unreformed) traced a rather lively path through a vast wilderness of somber moralizing and dreary didacticism. But it is only in the illegitimate drama of Caribbean adventure (and picaresque fiction) that these elements receive isolated treatment which is comparatively free from sentimental considerations.

Basically this study has probed a great soggy mass of literature which seldom rises above the mediocre and which frequently sinks to the wretched. While scores of other propagandists were content to attack slavery as an institution or to castigate the colonials as a party, these writers "creatively" pulled out all of the stops on appeals to the emotions. In verse and drama (as well as prose) characters were manipulated in an assortment of stock situations until both men and action became crystallized. The result was a body of literature containing a sometimes tedious group of colonial types operating within highly predictable plots. It is difficult from our present viewpoint to ascertain the actual impact of the literary campaign upon the political acts of abolition and emancipation. The enormous amount of "West Indian" writing would seem to indicate, however, that the support of the literati was of some effect; there had to be a reading public somewhere.

When the first heat of humanitarian endeavour had passed, these "creative" writers found themselves well supplied with a fairly spectacular array of characters, themes, and motifs pertaining to the Indies. But they retired from active participation in the later phases of the anti-slavery movement, leaving the main burdens of the struggle to be borne by essentially non-literary enthusiasts. Instead, they settled down to employing their colonial material in a variety of philosophic, non-propagandistic, and sometimes decorative ways (see Appendix II). They gathered up the suffering Negroes and paradoxical Creoles and inserted them into the extravaganza of Victorian humour, satire, and romance.

APPENDIX I

West Indian Patois and Folk Figures

The Negro's quaint, indirect, and suggestive way of expressing ideas is delightfully original and witty, and it has received considerable attention from folk-lore experts.[1] In the West Indies old concepts have been remolded under new conditions, and it has proved to be a fruitful locale for modern anthropologists to study the development of Negro traditions.

European fascination with the lively, boisterous humour of Jamaican folk-stories is not entirely a contemporary phenomenon. "Monk" Lewis records two types of folk-fiction, a "Nancy-story" and a "Neger-trick" in his Journal (1817).[2] An examination of the first, more common type may serve as an illustration of a field which is actually a separate study in itself.

The "Nancy-story" is the nursery story of Jamaica. Anansi (a "Nancy") is actually the large black house spider[3] common to Jamaica, but the word has come to mean the familiar genius of the field, the wood, or the house, like the Puck of English legendary lore. Anansi is a trickster who engages in deeds of both benevolence and mischief and wisely directs the affairs of men and animals. He does not always figure personally in every tale bearing his name, as is the case of the story Lewis records. Reciting it in English instead of dialect makes it read much like one of the Grimm brothers' tales. Although Lewis was a seasoned planter, he never attempted a very extended use of the vernacular. The story is distinctive,

however, in that it features an Obeah woman.

Actually, the charm of an Anansi story lies in its genuine patois dialect as much as in the wisdom of the Spider. The story of "Annancy and the Yam Hills" illustrates this typical West Indian mode of thought and expression:

> One time Annancy libed in a country where the Queen's names was Five, an' she was a witch; an' she say whoever say five was to fall down dead. It was berry hungry times, and so Annancy go build himself a little house by de side ob de riber. An' him make five yam hills. An' when anybody come to get water at de riber he call them an' say: "I beg you tell me how many yam hills I hab here. I can't count berry well." So den dey would come in and say, "One, two, three, four, five!" an' fall down dead. Den Annancy take dem an' corn dem in his barrel an' eat dem, an' so he live in hungry times--in plenty. So time go on, an' one day Guinea fowl come dat way, an' Annancy say: "Beg you, Missus, tell me how many yam hills hab I here." So Guinea fowl go an' sit on hill an' say: "One, two, three, four, an' de one I am sittin' on!" "Cho!" say Annancy; "you don't count it right!" An' Guinea fowl mouve to anoder yam hill an' say: "Yes, one, two, three, four, an' de one I am sittin' on!" "He! you don't count right at all!" "How you count, den?" "Why dis way," say Annancy: "One, two, three, four, FIVE!" an' he fall down dead, an' Guinea fowl eat him up!
>
> Dis story show dat "Greedy choak puppy."[4]

Like Aesop's fables, Anansi stories are often illustrative of a folk proverb or moral.

Negro wit and philosophy are more justly summed up in the proverb than in any other form of folk art, and West Indian proverbs give a truer picture of the mental life of the Negro than even story or song reveal. Proverbs enter constantly into West Indian life, and in them the Negro expresses his justifications of the vicissitudes of life. They were at one time his consolation in the emergencies of slave life, a weapon of the weak against the provocations of the strong. Some of them also feature Anansi:

> "A fast mek Anansi den a housetop" ("Impertinence caused Spider to live in the housetop").

> "Anansi rope tie him massa" ("Spider gets himself caught in the web he has spread for another").
>
> "Trouble dey a bush, Anansi bring him come a house." (There is trouble in the bush; the Spider brings it into the house").[5]

Proverbs often had religious overtones. Wentworth Trelawny describes Cudjoe, a sagacious Negro of St. Kitts, who comforts an old Negress who feels that no one cares for her any more and that she soon will die. He says

> "Da know no hab no tail, Gor-a-mity brush fry" ("If a cow has no tail, God Almighty brushes away the flies"), and "Gor-a-mity nebber shet he yie" ("God Almighty never shuts His eyes").[6]

Anansi, of course, is but one example of West Indian folk wisdom. He is, however, a sufficiently developed character to take his place among his better-known folk-brethren such as Reynard the Fox, Brer Rabbit, and Felix the Cat. Inasmuch as folklore enjoyed no real literary standing until well into the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that this picturesque feature of West Indian culture made little impact on English literature until recent times. The groundwork was laid, nevertheless, during the time of the plantocracy.

West Indian folklore also produced more concrete personages than the mythical Anansi. The figure of John Canoe, for example, is described by numerous writers. In Jamaica he took the place of the European mock-king, buffoon or devil. He wore cow's horns, boar's tusks, and horrible masks and was an integral part of the Christmas mummings. Of the John Canoe songs used by the mummers, some are innocently satirical while others are impregnated with ideas of idolatry and Obeah.

Monk Lewis, who saw a John Canoe parade at Black River in 1816, describes the rivalries between the two companies of "set girls" who attended the "king." Of the dancer himself, Lewis says:

> The John Canoe is a merry Andrew dressed in a striped doublet and bearing on his head a kind of pasteboard house-boat filled with puppets representing some sailors, others soldiers, others again shown at work on a plantation.

In his colourful description of the slaves' Christmas frolics at Singleton Hall, the author of Marly describes the principal attraction--John Canoe and his wife:

> [They] were accoutred in a manner truly fantastical, according as their fancy, of what was most ridiculous, directed them; but John very prudently carried a small imitation of a canoe, into which he and his wife [who was also a man], with their attendants, expected the donations of onlookers to be deposited. To ensure such more effectually, John and his wife danced without intermission, often wheeling violently round, for a great number of times, and all the while . . . roaring an unintelligible jargon, in true stentorian voices. . . . John Canoe and his lady, with their favourite gumba, were of true African extraction: and their mode of acting seemed well adapted to please a race who was not over fastidious in their amusements (293-294).

In the 1830's Tom Cringle also describes several John Canoe carnivals at length. While Englishmen of the period could quite successfully incorporate John Canoes, Obeahmen, and other picturesque features of West Indian folk-life into their writings, only very rarely did any of them capture in dialogue the subtle nuances of Negro speech and thought. Such penetration beyond the basically visual remained difficult even for committed colonials, to say nothing of transient travellers.

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APPENDIX II

A Summary of the Changes in West Indian Literary Themes

The following outline summarizes the movement of West Indian characters and motifs from the expository stage through the sentimental and picaresque to the humourous. The histories, journals, and legends of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were the starting point from which these elements travelled. They passed through numerous literary forms and through stormy political and economic weather to their destination in Victorian satire and romance. The movement passed through five distinct periods.

A. The Pre-Abolition Period (1740-1785)

1. Heavily expository writing, but it is largely free from propagandistic intent.

2. The comic Negro and the reckless, wayward Creole develop on stage.

3. The fictional foundation for the Caribbean adventure tale is laid by Defoe.

4. The picturesque and poetic dimensions of the West Indian landscape first explored by Grainger and Singleton.

B. The Abolition Campaign (1785-1808)

1. This is a period of maximum literary activity, particularly in the late 1780's and early 1790's. The basic themes and motifs of the West Indies become fully established.

2. The doctrinaire, "reform" novel and occasional verse are the chief vehicles of anti-slavery opinion.

3. Colonial characters appear in both tragedy and comedy, especially in the illegitimate theater.

4. Two Negro types (the heroic and the plantation) are established within the framework of sentimentalism.

5. Primitivism features the Noble Savage and pseudo-Africa.

6. The suffering doctrinaire Negro of fiction becomes less idyllic than his counterpart in lyric verse.

7. Both humanitarian and villainous Creoles appear on stage and in fiction.

C. The Amelioration Period (1808-1825)

1. There is a marked loss of literary interest in the West Indian Question.

2. A few writers experiment with the mystic and romantic possibilities in the Caribbean.

3. A few Noble Savages are revived.

4. Creoles and Negroes are featured in opera, melodrama, the harlequinade, etc., for exotic purposes and with diminishing humanitarian value.

5. Basic West Indian "characters" survive in chapbooks and moralistic tales for juveniles.

D. The Emancipation Campaign (1825-1833)

1. The lack of literary interest continues; activity is now mainly at governmental and tractarian level.

2. Little new creative activity; emancipation pieces are frequently replays from the abolition period.

3. Colonial subjects are taken up in the periodical press with romantic rather than humanitarian colouring.

E. The Post-Emancipation Period (1833-1850)

1. A strong literary reaction to the sentimentalism of the anti-slavery struggle sets in.

2. A humourous attitude to the motifs and characters of the West Indies is seen in all genres.

3. Satire, travesty, parody, burlesque, melodrama, the informal essay and the "romantic journal" become favourite literary forms for the new moods.

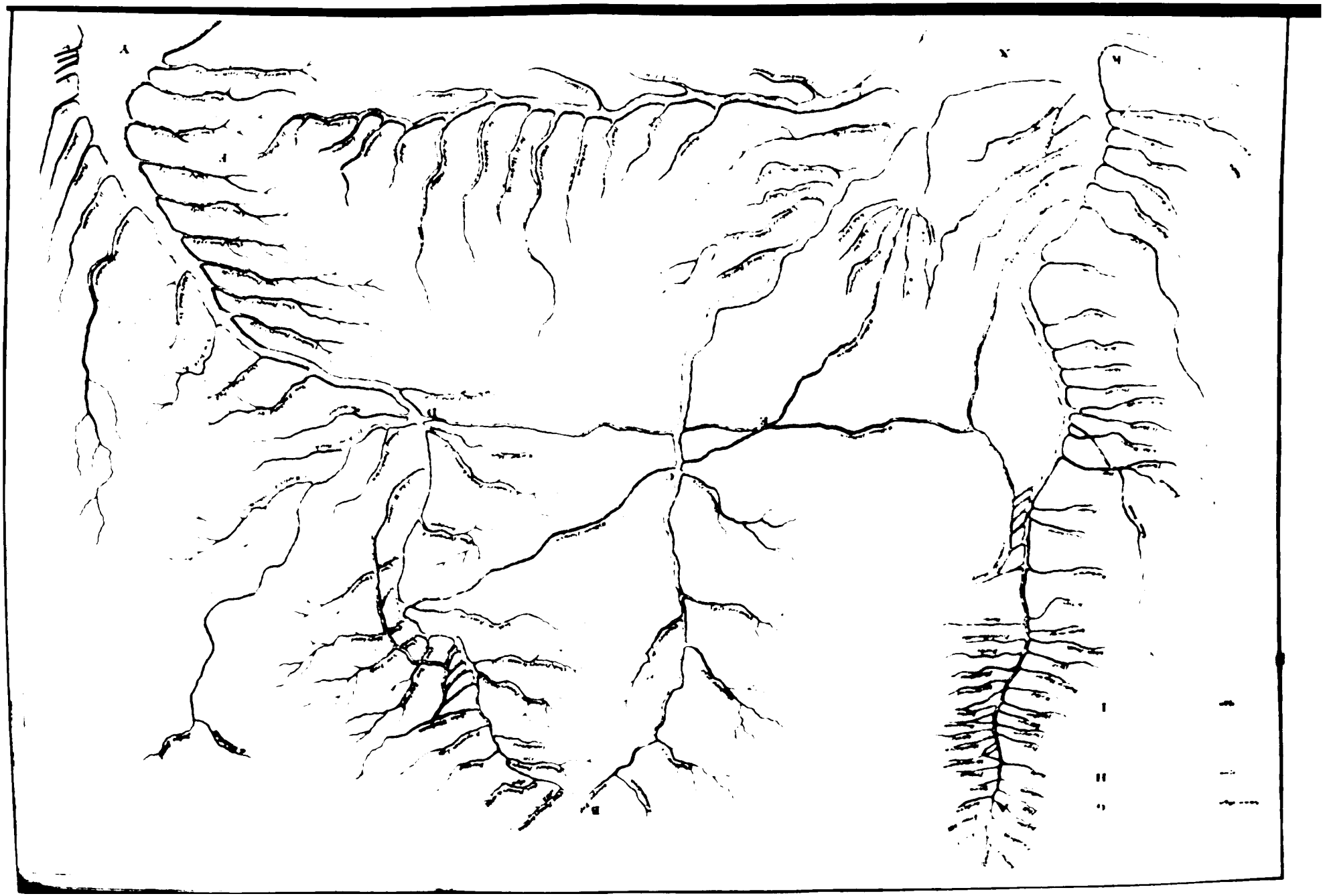
4. The Caribbean sea adventure comes into more or less permanent vogue.

5. Tropical landscape becomes fully romanticized.

Plate 15

Map of the British and American Abolition Movements, by Thomas Clarkson, in History of the Rise, Progress and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade (1808), I, 259.

Huntington Library



APPENDIX III

The Changing Stage

At least three reasons may be given for the decline of the stage in the early nineteenth century.[1] First, there was a sharp cleavage between the theater and the true poets of the day, most of whom lacked the goad of sheer material necessity which stimulated so many theater-authors. The failure of romantic genius to produce an expressive romantic drama was due, however, not so much to outside theatrical influences, difficult as they were, as it was to a weakness on the part of the poet himself. The romantic poet was loath to expend the time and toil necessary to the mastery of dramatic art and theater trends. He saw that melodramas (spectral, domestic, and nautical) were popular on the stage, but he assumed them to be nothing but primitive buffoonery and persisted in writing of romantic Italian conspiracies; he saw that broad humour and boisterous fun was popular, but he plodded on in dull retrospection. Even the more talented men like Coleridge, Byron, and later Browning who did write for the stage failed to produce anything of permanent value.

Generally when the romantic poet descended to the playhouse, he brought forth only still-born dramas.[2] The reason for this failure was that the romantic poet was highly philosophical and possessed of exceedingly lofty ideals. His penchant for didacticism led him to conceive of legitimate tragic drama as being the most suitable method for inculcating the truths he wished to spread among mankind. Unhappily he never thought of producing anything vitally connected with the spirit of his times. Too often he started from a theory and then attempted to discover and devise

a plot which should illustrate his mental abstract. In poetry he was usually able to shake off these self-imposed fetters, but drama seemed to call forth only his most dreary qualities.

If the early nineteenth century failed to produce a really fine tragedy, it failed even more dismally in the realm of comedy. Although the comedies continued to mingle contemporary manners with humane and moral precepts, they floundered in the most gloomy and impossible of emotions. Commonness and conventionality dominated all other characteristics, and throughout this vale of tears there was almost no spark of true comic fire. Higher comedy has always demanded either the great author or the great actor, but all that the age offered was pallid in comparison to the heroic forebears of the genre. Because the serious playwrights fancied themselves a second set of Shakespeares, their efforts were marked by restraint, slavish imitation, and want of force. One can only feel that although the Bard of Avon might have been a little ill at ease with a solemn Wordsworth or a metaphysical Coleridge it is altogether possible that he might have relished the cheerful society of the illegitimatists whose theatrical day it was. <u>They</u> knew how to respond to the spectacular tendencies of the times while the "legitimists" and critics were blinded by the greatness of past English theater and unaware of the present and future. Illegitimate theater was made up of the new tendencies to realism and romanticism. On one side were fanciful kingdoms, gloomy castles, and ruined abbeys; on the other the dingy cottage, the slum tenement, the poverty-stricken alleys. Even though something new had been brought to the theater, however, illegitimacy retarded the normal development of serious drama.

Second, the non-poetic writers of the first half of the nineteenth century also failed to embrace the stage willingly. There were lessening rewards for play-writers, while there was an enormous increase in magazine literature. Writing periodical prose was infinitely more remunerative.

Third, physical and administrative changes in the theaters had made them unsuited to high drama. There was a protracted struggle between the major playhouses, the homes of legitimacy and tradition, and the minor.[3] While the number of minor theaters increased, bad management, poor architecture and acoustics, and rivalries to secure audiences characterized the theatrical scene. In their efforts to produce greater and greater spectacular effects, the minor playhouses attained "a pitch of grandeur and excellence, little or never anticipated by old stagers." Edward Fitzball described this development in his Thirty-five Years of a Dramatic Author's Life (1859):

> The Theatres, in their interior, became so magnificent as to elicit both wonder and astonishment; the Surrey Theatre being, at one time, decorated with gold and velvet, a Genoa velvet curtain covering the stage. The Coburg . . . decorated with one sunny glitter of gold braided mirrors, with a superb looking-glass curtain, which drew up and let down in the sight of the audience, and reflected every form and face in that gorgeous house.[4]

Needless to say, the vastness and distracting splendour of the new playhouses precluded any intimate, personal drama.

The theater audiences did not improve in quality to match the elegance of theater decor. If the spectators in the larger theaters were licentious and debased, those in the minor playhouses were often vulgar, unruly, and physically obnoxious. A critic at a performance of "The Pirate's Doom" at the Adelphi on February 12, 1827, wrote:

> There was much fighting, which probably would have been more effective, but for a real battle in the pit, to which the screams of the women imparted a truth and reality, that quite spoilt the effect of the stage combats.[5]

Such conditions naturally repelled most of the major romantic writers and drove them to closet drama. The decline of the stage, then, was a combination of outward circumstances and inner failings. The coarseness of the audience, the vagaries of the actor-manager, the foibles of the censor,[6] the activities of the literary pirate, and the niggardliness of the publisher all cast their clouds over the playwriting profession.

Melodrama, the showpiece of early nineteenth-century theater, contained all that was vital and popular in the theatrical world of the time and enlarged the whole sphere of the serious play.[7] The romantically adventurous melodrama first gave way to the supernatural, for romanticism loves the strange and uncanny. Then domestic melodrama appeared as a kind of reaction to both the romantic and supernatural types. The possibilities inherent in the domestic type forecast future homely triumphs. Melodrama was also the stronghold of moral sentimentalism which was the most characteristic feature of nineteenth-century drama, but this Victorianism was subtly different from the sentimentalism of preceding decades. It was a more negative than positive influence and succeeded in killing free expression rather than in producing something creative. Melodrama actually held the monopoly on dramatic inventiveness and was an unashamed demand of dramatists and spectators for thrill and action on the stage, a reply to passionless rhetoric.[8]

Melodrama also featured music. There were songs at both fitting and unfitting moments with the action proceeding to the accompaniment of

instrumental orchestration. The unnatural characters who expressed such artificial sentiments might be classified in three types: the hero and heroine in distress, the humourous confidant, and the villains. The plots were complicated by criss-cross love emotions which were reminiscent of the Restoration stage. To these were added attempted seductions, disloyalties, hidden secrets, and so forth. Action was central. Indeed, mimetic action alone could convey the development of the story. Since stage directions were easier to write than dialogue, whenever a melodramatist came to a really difficult situation he switched off his dialogue and turned on stage action. The many picturesque views, poses and tableaux in Isaac Pocock's "Robinson Crusoe, or the Bold Bucaniers" (1817), for instance, are illustrative of this trend wherein romantic qualities ultimately overwhelmed all else. These settings along with boldly drawn type-characters, innumerable adventures and the clear differentiation of virtue and vice appealed to the age.

Many of these features of melodrama encouraged careless workmanship. These were productions of quantity rather than quality. Moreover, plots could be and often were stolen. Melodramatists ransacked contemporary authors for material productive of stirring plots. Enthusiasm for Scott opened up the whole field of fiction for the theater, and his novels themselves inclined towards what has come to be called a melodramatic atmosphere. Other authors looked back to the picaresque and adventure fiction of the preceding century, and Defoe and Smollett also became favourites. At the same time foreign influences were in evidence and adaptations abounded.[9] uch universal imitation by the illegitimate playwrights could lead, of course, to nothing original, and the dramas generally make pitiful

reading. Still the age was not without its innovations: the prologue died a lingering death, the picture-frame stage replaced the apron, and various scenic devices catered to historical accuracy, spectacle, and realism.

The nineteenth century audience wanted to laugh. But while many of the illegitimate farces have rollicking fun in them, few of the five-act comedies possess even the faintest spark of liveliness. The tenants of the galleries were joined in spirit no doubt by some of the more polite persons in the stalls, when they claimed the privilege of an hour's coarse and uncontrolled mirth, after having endured five acts of pathos or of refined, sodden wit.[10] The jolly afterpieces were sometimes popular enough to reappear year after year in a theater's repertory, but usually this flotsam and jetsam appeared only momentarily and sank without hope of recovery. Like the melodramas, farces were made to order, and much was left for the interpretation of the low-comedy actor who could "put across" anything. Careless writing in both plot and form was, of course, the inevitable result. Dull, flimsy plots, however, were filled out with amusing trivialities such as stage follies of awkward, well-meaning servants--Irishmen and Negroes being high favourites. Furthermore, a compound of sentimentalism, bustling action, broad jests, atrocious puns, heavy contrasts, and ridiculous disguises mitigated wretched technique to some degree. Farces represented an admixture of sentimentality and risqué-ness which was pleasing to the age. Dialogue was often very rough in the stylistic sense while remaining ultra-pure in the moral. Although farces admittedly brought nothing of permanent worth to the theater, they still presented a world of hearty laughter which traced its an-

ancestry back to Elizabethan times and which enlivened the dull realities of the contemporary scene.

The quality of nineteenth century plays continued to deteriorate until they became hopelessly bogged down in moralizing and sentiment. Then comic opera flourished. No critic ever deigned to lay down the ground rules for English opera with its questionable Italian parentage, but like a disregarded colony it thrived in its exemption from authority and restriction.[11] Many types came under the designation of comic opera as the desire for novelty led dramatists to alter the labels of farces. Such descriptions as "farcetta" and "comedietta" reveal an individuality of classification as new forms of illegitimate theater came into being. The "comedietta" was a social comedy, midway between a farce of Garrick and a comedy of Congreve. "Vaudeville" was a dramatic story in verse, carried on by means of the songs of the day rather than by original compositions. In the nineteenth century, the "burletta" became a play which could with safety be given at a minor, or unpatented theater. It most usually signified an operatic farce. The "extravaganza," particularly popular between 1830 and 1840, was an interesting union of two apparently contradictory tendencies, the realistic and domestic combined with the fantastic and spectacular. Burlesques might be mentioned in connection with the other spectaculars. Only an age that could see its own follies could have burlesque flourishing freely alongside melodrama. Burlesques generally existed for their own ridiculous qualities which catered to the English taste for the fantastic, the impossibly exaggerated and the patently absurd. Herein lay some of the vital traditions which fifty years later were taken over by Gilbert and Sullivan in their Savoy operas.

The harlequin play was one of the most beloved of all the numerous stage innovations. The harlequinade was drawn from the Italian commedia dell'arte and appeared in England early in the eighteenth century. It brought the spectacular display, bold merriment, and constant action of the ever-popular pantomime to English theater.[12] Along with the Italian opera, however, it suffered widespread criticism.[13] Complaints were numerous and specific:

> [These pieces] cannot deserve the Name of Comedy. . . . There is nothing in any of them which looks like a Plan or Fable regularly conducted; their Characters are imperfect and inconsistent with themselves . . . they want Variety--The Personages they bring upon the Stage are ever the same in every Representation, and these consist of, a miserable Doctor, who is to be as foolish as the Actor can make him,--two dangling Lovers,--a Pantaloon, who is commonly the Father of one of those Lovers,--a Harlequin, who is for the most Part a Valet, and the Buffoon of the Farce,--and sometimes a Metzetein and Scaramouch, by Way of additional Zanis. It is certain that Harlequin sometimes appears in different Shapes, but whether he assumes the Character of a Roman Emperor, or a French Dancing Master, he must be always a Buffoon. Their Discourse is a kind of Extempore Dialogue; . . . they have no Notion of fine Raillery, . . . and it must be known the great Machine of Wit, in all their Entertainments is Harlequin's wooden Sword; and whenever the Mirth of the Audience begins to flag, Harlequin is to take Care to raise it again, by exercising the said Weapon . . . [and] the drubbing . . . about the Stage never fails of having a good Effect.[14]

Despite professional antipathy, however, this extravagant genre flourished. By the nineteenth century the tradition of the Christmas pantomime was thoroughly established, with all the London theaters vying on December 26 with their fare of the harlequinade.[15]

The main trouble with the legitimate drama which survived in the face of the innovations was not that it was legitimate, but that it was too conscious and proud of its legitimacy. It was an aristocrat who trusted too much in his ancestry and feared the power of the vast unwashed mul-

titudes of "low brows" about him. Only the authors who made no claim to the fame of authorship dared to write the kind of plays which might be popular. During the century of this study the whole face of the theater underwent a vast change--one which directed West Indian characters and themes into new and basically non-humanitarian channels.

APPENDIX IV

The West Indies in Prose, with a Classified Bibliography

West Indian types in prose may be summarized in four groups. First, the fictional Creoles and Negroes developed along the same basic lines as their counterparts in verse and drama. The exotic, prodigal Creole became the hero of highly moralized conversion stories. The career of this West Indian "sinner" usually ended with his living as an absentee in England. The noble and generally Christianized Negro appeared in doctrinaire fiction which played elaborately upon his potential virtues. He retained comparatively few fragments of his comic and picturesque character. In prose mulattoes enjoyed a position of far greater prominence than that accorded them in either verse or drama. Second, the tales of Caribbean adventure drew their vitality from the widely-neglected picturesque features of the islands. Illegitimate theater used these elements for spectacular effects, but we find no parallels in verse-writing. Only in prose could the Creole really indulge his cheerful, innate extroversion and his penchant for picarooning, free from the humanitarian and religious pressures which might have reformed him. Third, certain minor genres like the chapbooks and the juveniles reflected at the most elementary level the themes and motifs of the relatively "greater" novelists of sentimental and picaresque fiction. Finally, the journals of the travelling Englishmen contained the rich resources of character and event upon which all imaginative writers of the Caribbean drew. Some were purely episodic and anecdotal, and these be-

came convenient source books for propagandists searching for shocking ideas and for leisure readers desiring lively entertainment. By the 1830's, however, the truly literary journals began to appear in accordance with the new appreciation of the West Indies for their picturesque charms rather than for their monetary value.

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ERRATA

Chapter I

P. 21, l. 31 — [0]John W. Dodds, Thomas Southerne, Dramatist (New Haven, 1933), 131.

P. 23, l. 2 — [1a]Ibid., 149.

P. 23, l. 22 — [1b]Ibid., 148-149.

P. 23, l. 33 — [1c]Ibid., 149.

P. 24, l. 26 — [1d]Ibid., 140.

P. 27. l. 4 — [2a]Oroonoko's "noble savagery" which is touched upon here is fully analyzed and its extent delimited by Dodds (Ibid., 138-143) who also traces the hero's career through to the early nineteenth century.

P. 27, l. 34 — [4a]Dodds, 141.

P. 28, l. 26 — [5a]Ibid., 142.

P. 28, l. 31 — [5b]Ibid., 143.

P. 29, l. 19 — [7a]Ibid., 144-145.

P. 44, l. 18 — [24a]Lawrence Price's Inkle and Yarico Album (Berkeley, 1937) is a definitive work on the evoluation of the Inkle and Yarico legend through eighteenth-century literature. Containing citations from many virtually unavailable versions of the story, it is an invaluable source book to this study.

P. 62, l. 27 — [48a]Price, 44.

P. 65, l. 19 — [48b]Ibid., 46.

Chapter III

P. 235, l. 30 — [9a]Wylie Sypher, Guinea's Captive Kings (New York, 1969), 207.

NOTES

Introduction

[1]British colonialism managed to maintain a certain aura of liberty and constitutionalism even through the anti-slavery struggle. Colonialism may be defined as a nation's seeking to acquire, extend, or retain overseas dependencies; imperialism, a slightly more respectable word, is the policy of building and holding together an empire and is a unit transcending the national state.

[2]Richard Frucht, "Anthropology of Colonialism in the West Indies", The Alberta Anthropologist, I (February, 1967), 24-53.

[3]Cited in Frank Pitman, "The West Indian Absentee Planter as a British Colonial Type", Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association (1927), 113. Every West Indian, native or immigrant, dreamed of going home to Britain, and many writers testified to this desire. See for example A Short Journey in the West Indies (London, 1790), II, 147.

[4]Maria Nugent, Journal of Her Residence . . . 1801-1805 (Kingston, 1966).

[5]Lord Henry Brougham, Buxton's powerful associate, made a careful study of the effects of the West Indian environment on English character in Colonial Policy (1803). See Lowell Ragatz, A Guide for the Study of British Caribbean History (Washington, D. C., 1932), 483.

[6]The anonymous author of A Short Journey (1790) gives a caricature of the repulsive Creole Franky, and then admits that there are some West Indians who are men of "taste and learning" and the very epitome of "European manners, turning all that the climate offers to the best advantage." Such persons appear, however, to have been the exception.

[7]"[The word Creole] has been too commonly understood to signify a native of mixed blood or coloured complexion, and several dictionaries have supported this erroneous acceptation. The word is of Spanish origin, signifying any person, whether white, yellow, or black, born in a colony: whence the term of creole negro, in contradistinction to one of African origin, or a creole horse, or other animal, bred on a plantation, and not imported--in short, it bears a synonymous signification with the word 'native,' and standing by itself, expressly implies a white person of European and unmixed origin, and born in a colony--the conjunction of the word mulatto alone giving it the definition it has usually borne." Trelawny Wentworth, West India Sketch Book (London, 1834), I, 220-221.

[8] History of the British West Indies (London, 1819), II, 18.

[9] See Edward Long, History of Jamaica (London, 1774), II, 261-285; John Stewart, A View . . . of Jamaica (London, 1808, and Edinburgh, 1823), cited in the London Times, October 20, 1823, 2.

[10] John Esquemeling described the seventeenth-century beginnings of the indenture system. Comparing the French planters of Hispaniola with the English, he said: "The planters have few slaves; mostly they do the work themselves, along with indentured servants bound to them for three years. They trade in human beings just like the Turks, selling bondsmen among themselves as people in Europe deal in horses. Some of them make it their business to go to France looking for labourers in the country towns and among the peasants. They make big promises but when the lads get to the islands they are sold and have to work like horses, harder in fact than the Negroes. For the planters admit they must take greater care of a Negro slave than a white bondsman, because the Negro is in their service for life, while the white man is theirs only for a period. They treat their bond-servants as cruelly as the hunters [buccaneers] do, showing them no pity at all. Whether sick or well, they must work all the same in the heat of the sun, which is sometimes intolerable. . . . The English treat their servants no better, but with greater cunning. The lads are usually indentured for seven years. . . . Often these fellows are so simple they will sell themselves for a whole year for the sake of a good meal." In The Buccaneers of America (Baltimore, 1968), 64-66.

[11] The woes of white servants were memorialized in both narrative and poetry. See for example James Annesley, The Memoires of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman, Return'd from a Thirteen Years Slavery in America, Where He had been Sent by the Wicked Contrivances of His Cruel Uncle" (London, 1743-1747). The heroine of Wordsworth's "Ruth" (1799) is enticed to Georgia by a wicked youth who charms her with tales of Indian wars and green savannahs. Robert Burns contemplated emigrating to Jamaica as an indentured bookkeeper, as had so many others of his impoverished countrymen (See "Will Ye Go to the Indies, My Mary?"). His "Slave's Lament," however, moves from "sweet Senegal," not to the Indies but to Virginia.

[12] See Jonathan Swift, "A Project for the Advancement of Religion", in Bickerstaff Papers and Pamphlets of the Church (Oxford, 1966), 54-55, 215; and "On a Young Nymph Going to Bed". For colonial reaction to white transportees see two epigrams in Caribbeana (London, 1741): "Epigram Occasion'd by the News of the Transportation of Two Lawyers from England" (1736); and "On the Occasion of the News of Andrew Buckler's being drown'd with his Cargo of Irish Servants, bound for New-England" (1736), II, 165, 186-187.

[13] Leigh Hunt's London Journal, No. 34 (November 19, 1834), 1.

[14]Edward Long defines the hierarchy of mixed race with mathematical precision:

White Man + Negro Woman
↓
White Man + Mulatto
↓
White Man + Terceron
↓
White Man + Quateron (Quadroon)
↓
White Man + Quinteron (or Mestize, legally white)
↓
White Man + WHITE

In History of Jamaica, II, 260-261. Bryan Edwards deals charitably with coloured mistresses and the white men who kept them. Defensive of the Jamaican society of which he was a part, he enquires: "Who is going to reform manners?" (History of the British West Indies, II, 27-28).

[15]Since the basis of the climatic theory of plantation lay in the great contrast between the tropical plantation (estate agriculture) and the temperate-zone farm colony (peasant agriculture), the theory was closely related to the problem of acclimatization. The popular opinion regarding the acclimatization of man has been based upon two assumptions: that the races of mankind are distinct species, each sprung from a separate origin in its own native habitat, and that climate is is principal factor in limiting or regulating the distribution of the species. The climatic theory had only limited applicability, but it received wide approbation because it was an ideology which resisted social change and which rationalized and naturalized the existing social and economic order.

[16]Jean J. Rousseau, "A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality", in The Social Contract and Discourses (London, 1947), 125n, 165-173.

I. Legends of the West Indies

[1]"Oroonoko", in Five Restoration Tragedies (London, 1960), 205-206.

[2]Anti-Doulous (pseud.), Monthly Magazine, II (December, 1796), 890. Reprinted in a chapbook (Stirling: C. Randall, 1806).

[3]Mrs. Behn elaborates a large assortment of heroic feats by the prince, and when Oroonoko hears of Imoinda's supposed death, he broods in his tent, Achilles-like, until his army is almost defeated. Modern readers, however, require something more than loud rhetoric and one victory over the Indians to demonstrate the prince's heroism.

[4]Love and honour are the eternal attributes of the super-human hero of heroic plays. In theory, the new playwrights did not discredit them, but rather attempted to widen their interests and bring in other human passions.

[5]"The Prince of Angola", reviewed in the Critical Review, LXV (April, 1788), 318.

[6]"Oroonoko", reviewed in The Examiner (January 26, 1817). In Art and Dramatic Criticism. Vol. XVIII of The Complete Works (London, 1933), 216-217.

[7]It is an interesting fact of history that the most favoured and talented slave was often the rebel. Toussaint L'Ouverture, the slave who brought a black republic to Haiti in 1798, was such a one.

[8]The peak years for Southerne's play were 1700-1747, with a total of about 200 performances. Some versions were acted as late as 1829, on the eve of the final emancipation struggle. There were also European translations: Wolfgang von Dalberg's Oronoko, Trauerspiel nach dem Englishcen (1786), and P. Jos. Fiquet Dubocage, Oroonoko, published with his French translations of Pope.

[9]In A Collection of Poems (London, 1732), 92-93.

[10]In Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1652-1700 (New York, 1956). John Genest dismissed "Victorious Love" as only "the hasty production of a young man of eighteen." Some Account of the English Stage from 1660-1830 (Bath, 1832), II, 142.

[11]In The Stroler's Pacquet Open'd (London, 1742), 170-202.

[12]XXII (April, 1752), 163-167.

[13]I, 187. This scene of Kate and Sir Thomas Frolick should be compared with that of Marianne and Toby in Samuel Foote's "The Cozeners" (1774). (See Chapter III of this study, 298-300.) The figure of Sir Thomas is borrowed from Beaumont and Fletcher's "Monsieur Thomas" (1639).

[14]"Oroonoko" (1760), in Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1652-1700 (New York, 1956).

[15]Blandford's "humane" argument for slavery (the saving of the Negroes from preying upon each other) was to become a basic tenet of the colonial party by the end of the eighteenth century.

[16]In Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1751-1800 (New York, 1956).

[17]LVIII (April, 1788), 343-344.

[18]In Poetical Works of William Roscoe (Liverpool, 1853), 54-64.

[19]In Three Centuries of Drama: English. "The Princess of Zanfara" was refused at Covent Garden because it bore too close a resemblance to "Oroonoko."

[20]In Three Centuries of Drama: English (New York, 1966). Coleridge thought that Kotzebue displayed very little genius in "The Negro Slaves." When a young Cambridge graduate recommended Kotzebue's "Count Benyowsky; or, The Conspiracy of Katschatka," the poet said that he hoped that the tragi-comedy would be an improvement over the German president's abolitionist drama. He indicates this in a letter of January 23, 1798, in Collected Letters (Oxford, 1956), 225. "The Negro Slaves" reached England during a hey-day of German influence. German dramatists enjoyed much adulation in the last years of the eighteenth century, but the enthusiasm waned with the moral mood and intense decorousness of the early Victorian period. It was then assumed, in the theater at least, that fresh and novel ideas originated abroad must of necessity be subversive to morality.

[21]"Oroonoko," in The British Theatre, with remarks by Mrs. Inchbald (London, 1808), VII. Not even the great popularity of the humanitarian cause could ensure the success of Oroonoko in every quarter. Mrs. Inchbald says: "There is a great mercantile town in England, whose opulent inhabitants would not permit the play to appear in their magnificent theatre. The tragedy of 'Oroonoko' is never acted in Liverpool, for the very reason why it ought to be acted there oftener than at any other place--The merchants of that great city acquire their riches by the slave trade" (Introduction, 4).

[22]In English and American Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1965). Genest felt that the drama "met with greater success than it deserved. . . . The part of Gambia (for such the author meant it to be) is unnatural to the last degree, and a compound of despicable claptraps from beginning to end. . . . Miss Von Frump's double entendre is by far the best thing in the piece" (VIII, 603-604). Also in keeping with the new musical stage, Oroonoko appeared as a burletta at the Surrey Theatre in 1813.

[23]Although novels of the period portray anguished mulatto heroines, Zelinda is rather unusual in English drama. On the American stage, on the other hand, the tragic mulatto stereotype recurred constantly. There is a whole gallery of mixed-blood ladies: "The Yorker's Stratagem" (1792); Boucicault's "The Octoroon" (1859); "The White Slave" (1882); "The Creole Burlesquers" (1890); and "The Octoroons" (1895).

[24]In The Independence Anthology of Jamaican Literature (Kingston, 1962), 126.

[25]Robert H. Schomburgk in his History of Barbados (London, 1847) gives the outlines of Yarico's story. He says that there is a large pond in the parish of St. James on the island of Barbadoes which long bore the name of Yarico. It was on Kendal's plantation, near Codrington College (233-234).

[26](London, 1673), 54-55. In his comprehensive but unoriginal survey of the Caribbean islands, John Oldmixon in his British Empire in America (1708) retold the Inkle and Yarico legend. He described the carefree ways of Creoles, the treachery of Negro slaves, and the perfections of the Carib Indians. His Yarico fits neatly into the last group.

[27]Ligon, 65. Schomburgk says: "The Chigo resembles in its appearance a small flea, and nestles in the flesh beneath the nails and toes and other parts of the body. It raises great irritation, and may prove dangerous to the limb where their numbers are allowed to increase" (652).

[28]The Spectator, No. 11 (March 13, 1711), edited by Donald F. Bond (Oxford, 1965), I, 49-51. Steele's interest in the story of Inkle and Yarico may have first been sparked by the fact that he owned property in Barbadoes.

[29]In Inkle and Yarico Album (Berkeley, 1937), Lawrence Price lists only eight French works: Boulenger de Rivery, "Inkle et Yariko" (Paris, 1754); Michel-Jean Sedaine, "Inkle et Yarico" (1760); Claude-Joseph Dorat, "Lettre de Zeila, jeune sauvage" (1764-1776); Sebastian Chamfort, "La Jeune Indienne" (1764, comedy); Jean-Francois Mussot, "L'Heroine Americaine" (pantomime); Lucien Bonaparte, "La Tribu Indienne, ou Edouard et Stellina" (1799, 1802); Labenette, Jean-Baptiste, "L'Heroine Americaine, ou Inkle et Zarika" (pantomime, 1808). Also, the frontispiece of the third volume of Guillaume Raynal's Historie Philosophique . . . des Deus Indes (Geneva, 1780) is an engraving of the sale of Yarico, entitled "Un Anglais de Barbade vend Sa Maitresse." While the French did present Indians who are noble at heart, the Rousseauistic contrast of European and primitive man is missing. They preferred to make Inkle representative of his own country rather than of Europe as a whole. The heartless perfidy of the Englishman is stressed on every possible occasion.

[30]The twenty-one German works on the theme are predominantly dramatic. Two of the most important were: Christian Furchtegott Geilert, "Inkle and Yariko" (Leipzig, 1746) and Salomon Gessner, "Inkel and Yariko" (Lindau, 1756). These were translated into English, French, Danish, Italian, Dutch, Hungarian, Swedish, etc. See also Johann Jakob Bodmer, "Inkel and Yariko" (Lindau, 1756); Freidrich Carl von Moser, "Ynkle und Yariko, dritte Fortzetzung" (1762); Johann W. Goethe, "Yncle et Jariko"

(1766); Johann Heinrich Faber, "Inkle und Yariko" (1768); Joseph B. Pelzel, "Yarico, Trauerspiel" (177-); Friedrich Schröder, "Inkle und Yariko, Ballet" (1770); Ernst Rathlef, "Yariko, oder Der Kaufmann von Barbados, Tragödie" (1780); Karl von Eckartshausen, "Fernando und Yariko, Singspiel" (1784); and Johann W. Doring, "Inkle und Yariko, Singspiel" (1798). Other German ballets appeared in 1771, 1777, 1783, 1791, and 1815. In Germany the earliest translations of Steele's story were in poetic form, but their sentimentality was somewhat more restrained than that of the English poems. Tragedies followed lyric poems, and then the legend passed into the third and final stage of opera, ballet, and "singspiele." In both Germany and England the story became a favourite theme, first for rationalism, then for sentimental humanitarianism, and finally for light entertainment. Although in the plays Yarico is heroic and powerful, she finally succumbs in tragedy at the end. In ballets and operas, however, she has either her revenge or reward, but at the cost of her dignity. She must sing, dance, slay wild beasts, defy the arrows of the savages and the bullets of the whites in order to save Inkle in melodramatic fashion. (The English Yarico does not undertake the Brunhildian achievements of her German counterpart.) Other innovations also appeared to cater to popular tastes, and later dramas offered more sea captains, pirates, additional shipwrecks, and happy endings. Some German ballets make a point of stressing Inkle's English ruthlessness which prevents a conciliatory conclusion. In France the fate of Inkle and Yarico was taken less seriously. The Indian maid's plight is sometimes tempered by the fact that Inkle is actually a gentleman and the tragic force is much dissipated.

[31] In Poetical Works of Mr. William Pattison (London, 1728), 53-54.

[32] London Magazine, III (May, 1734), 257-258. The poem was reprinted in The Weekly Amusement (June 7, 1766). With these two printings the work was apparently forgotten.

[33] (Springfield, 1784). First printed in London by Lawton Gilliver, 1736. This poem passed through eleven editions between 1736 and 1792 and contained 384 lines. G. Brown's "Inkle and Yarico" (1799) seems, however, to have the distinction of being the longest treatment of the theme. The work is unavailable, but the editor in the Critical Review says that Brown admits at the end of fifty-four pages that he is no poet. That fact has become self-evident, continues the reviewer, but his "just and humane sentiments deserve . . . applause" (XXVI, 1799), 348; Monthly Magazine, VIII (1800), 1051.

[34] The four printings of Anketell's version of "Yarico to Inkle, An Epistle" (1771, 1774, 1793, 1795) enjoyed great popularity, appearing in pamphlet form and in newspapers in both Ireland and England.

[35] In Poems Written Occasionally, 1742-1751 (Dublin, n.d.), II, John Winstanley's "The Happy Savage" (1732) is typical of the many eight-

eenth-century effusions on the Noble Savage. Enlightened England (New York, 1947), 494.

[36]"Avaro and Amanda", Lady's Poetical Magazine (London, 1782), IV. In "A Poetical Version of the Much-Admired Story of Inkle and Yarico" American Museum (1792) the author altered the names to "Mercator" and "Barsina," for "poetical reasons." This poem was also added to "The Secret History and Misfortunes of Fatyma and the History of Olympia (Banbury, 1820).

[37]When Steele first gave the petty, calculating youth the name of Inkle, it was not without a subtle connotation. "Inkle" is a kind of braided linen tape, or the thread from which it is made. In Shakespeare's "The Winter's Tale" inkles are listed among the items of haberdashery in the pedlar's pack of Autolycus, the rogue (IV, iii, 208). An inkle also appears among the needlework implements of Marina in "Pericles, Prince of Tyre" (V, Chorus, 8).

[38](London, 1766). This poem was reprinted seven times in collections of Jerningham's poems and was translated into German in 1778.

[39]Lady's Magazine, XIII (December, 1782), 664.

[40]"Yarico to Inkle", Scots Magazine, LV (May, 1793), 242; and Gentleman's Magazine, LXIII (June, 1793), 560. In the latter periodical the poem is accompanied by a Latin translation by Lord Deerhurst.

[41]Lady's Magazine, XXXIII (April, 1802), 215.

[42]Ibid., (August, 1802), 436-437.

[43]Ibid., (September, 1802), 495-496.

[44]Ibid., (December, 1802), 714-715. Yarico's voice is silenced soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century. Rufus Dawes takes up the motif again in "Yarico's Lament" (1830), but he seems to stand alone.

[45]Barbadoes. A Poem, reviewed in Blackwood's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1833), 520-521.

[46](London, 1835), LXII, 44.

[47]In further response to the public taste for frivolity in lieu of edification of soul or improvement of mind, Yarico made a few English comedy appearances late in the eighteenth century: an undated pastoral drama, "Yarico"; "The American Heroine; or, Ingratitude Punished" (1792), a pantomime adapted from the French "L'Heroine Americaine" (Paris, 1786); and a burletta, "Inkle and Yarico" (1810).

[48]In Three Centuries of English Drama (New York, 1956).

[49]Mrs. Inchbald reports the great success of Colman's work: "This opera has been performed in every London theatre, and in every theatre of the kindgom, with the same degree of splendid success. It would have been wonderful had its reception been otherwise; for the subject is a most interesting one, and in the treatment of it, the author has shown taste, judgement--virtue." She even predicts that the opera "might remove from Mr. Wilberforce his aversion to theatrical exhibitions, for . . . the doctrine is most effectually inculcated, where exhortation is the most required--[in] the resorts of the gay, the idle, and the dissipated." Remarks in Dramatic Pamphlets, taken from the prompt book (New York, 1806), XXVI.

[50]The Spectator, No. 215 (November 6, 1711), 42.

[51]Ibid., 42-43.

[52](London, 1788), 79. Pratt's story of Zebron and Zabor was reprinted in The Massachusetts Magazine, IV (August, 1792), 522.

[53]Gentleman's Magazine, LXX (August, 1800), 772.

[54]The popular love-friendship theme is explored in Boccaccio's Le Teseide. In English literary tradition it appears in Chaucer's Knight's Tale, and Fletcher's The Two Noble Kinsmen, to name two.

[55](Edinburgh, 1792), 22n.

[56](London, 1784), 249-254.

[57]Various writers showed an appreciation of this "aesthetic of blackness." Zaraida, the heroine of William Walker's drama "Victorious Love" (1698) refers to the Negro pride in smooth skin:

> . . . Can Tears call back his Soul?
> Or force mine out to him? In vain I grieve.
> Where is thy Body smooth as Ebony,
> And softer than the tender'st yielding Virgin's skins? (II).

In his Narrative (1796) Stedman notes the handsomeness of the slaves rowing the planters' barges in Surinam: "Each of these vessels was rowed by six or eight Negroes. The colonists generally make choice of their handsomest slaves for this office, as well as to attend them at table: the rowers were good-looking, young and vigorous; their almost complete state of nudity gave us full opportunity of observing their skin, which was shining, and nearly as black as ebony". In Joanna; or, The Female Slave (London, 1824), 8-9.

[58] Ramsay, 252-253. In a footnote to his fourth West Indian Eclogue (1787), Edward Rushton tries to explain the motivation of the noble Loango who kills both his wife and the white slave driver who has seduced her: "Many instances might be adduced to shew, that some Negroes are capable of kind, nay even heroic actions. The story of Quashi, related by Mr. Ramsay, is one signal proof of this assertion" (32n).

[59] See, for instance, the character of Fidel in Robert Bage's novel, Man as He Is (1792). The slave's story of his master's perfidy is probably one of the most fiercely sensational incidents in all British abolition fiction.

[60] See Hesketh Bell, Obeah: Witchcraft in the West Indies (London, 1893); Frank Mellani, "Ethical and Political Aspects of African Witchcraft," Africa, VIII (October, 1935), 495-503; G. Orde-Brown, "Witchcraft and British Colonial Law", Africa, VIII (October, 1935), 481-487; Joseph Williams, Voodoos and Obeahs; Phases of West Indian Witchcraft (New York, 1932); and Fernando Henriques, Jamaica, Land of Wood and Water (London, 1957).

[61] Richard Madden devotes an entire chapter in Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies (1835) to an analysis of specific Obeah cases and to the ways in which African superstition was becoming engrafted on West Indian Christianity (Philadelphia, 1835), II, 65-77.

[62] 2nd ed. (London, 1800). Extracted in Scots Magazine, LXI (August, 1799), 516-518.

[63] "This barbarous insanity was called the Witch Plague. It was first set on foot by one Parris, minister of Salem. This fellow had a beautiful [West Indian Jamaican] maid, named Tumba, whom he had by some means or other procured from her native country, to attend upon his niece and daughter. These girls, among many others, being attacked with nervous affections and endemial despondency of that part of America, were deemed bewitched. In some of their distempered reveries, they fancied they had seen Tumba's ghost. Poor Tumba was seized; put into a dungeon in the common prison; confessed herself a witch to save her life: but her ruthless master, after beating her into confession of what he wanted,

and of which she was innocent, sold her to slavery to pay the gaoler's fees." (Moseley, A Treatise on Sugar, 196-197).

[64]The protagonist of the novel Marly (1828) describes a party of Jamaican slaves who were baptized in order to escape the power of Obeah. Their spokesman, Trajan, says: "Massa, Obeah bad for him poor neger, massa--him kill poor neger, massa.--All massa's negers, want massa, to hab him buckra priest, kirsten him negers, dat Obeah no more him kill, massa. Ebery one neger, massa want to be kirstened in de buckra fashion, massa" (131). Christian baptism was supposed to be the imparting of the white man's "Obi." The christening described in Marly is performed within the pale of established church practices.

[65]Accounts of Obeah trials appeared rather regularly in the London Times and other newspapers. Bryan Edwards also gives an account of Obeah practice and trials in his History (London, 1807), II, 114-119.

[66]Duppies are the spirits of the dead, and they rarely undertake any beneficent action. These tricksters are more to be feared than the devil, for while there is only one devil, there are many thousands of duppies to concern themselves with human affairs. A duppy lives in bamboo thickets and cottonwood trees and makes his appearances at midday and midnight, at which times he terrifies people into injuring or killing themselves. He looks like a human being, to all intents and purposes, but may be identified by his lack of a navel!

[67]"The Sugar Cane" (1764), in British Poets (Chiswick, 1822), IV, LIX, 131-132.

[68]Ibid., 131-132. John Singleton in his General Description of the West Indian Islands (Bridgetown, 1767) gives another early account of the "cures" wrought by Obeah-men:

> There baleful weeds are said to grow; whose juice
> Th' experienced leech among the sable tribe,
> Extracting, turns to medicinal use,
> For oft the crafty slave, affecting skill
> In pow'rful herbs, calls magic to his aid;
> And, when old age has silver'd o'er his chin,
> Draws in the credulous, unthinking crowd,
> To venerate his art, and fill his purse.
> How gross soe'er the imposition seem,
> Yet powerful fancy aids him in the cheat.
> Sometimes, when his emollient hand's apply'd
> To the complaining part, pins, crooked nails,
> Flints, horse-shoes, broken glass, and leaden balls,
> Have issued forth from arms, necks, legs and sides,
> Where none e'er enter'd in. Nay (strange to tell!)
> These mock-physicians, by a single touch,

Will bring the patient, sinking to the grave,
To life again; and by emetic sure,
Eradicate a malady long fix'd,
(Past any pow'r of art but theirs to reach)
By easing the swell'd stomach of contents
Such as no human stomach e'er contain'd (II, 331-352).

These lines refer to practices Singleton observed in the "hidden valleys" of Montserrat.

[69] A General Description, II, 55-59.

[70] Coleridge, Poetical Works (London, 1964). In the Preface to "The Three Graves" Coleridge explains that he chose this story to demonstrate the power of the imagination: "I had been reading Bryan Edwards' account of the effects of the Oby witchcraft on the Negroes in the West Indies . . . and I conceived the design of shewing that instances of this kind are not peculiar to savage or barbarous tribes, and of illustrating . . . the progress . . . of the morbid action on the fancy" (269).

[71] Monthly Magazine, IV (July, 1797), 51.

[72] (New Brunswick, 1814), 21.

[73] Poetical Works of James Montgomery (Boston, 1858), III, 32.

[74] Moseley, 198-199. Moseley's account was excerpted in a penny-dreadful, Obi; or, The History of Three Finger'd Jack (Newcastle, 1800?). Other chapbook editions were: The History and Adventures of Obi; or, Three-Fingered Jack, the Famous Negro Robber (Newcastle and Hull, n.d.); and The History and Adventures of that Famous Negro Robber, 3 Finger'd Jack, the Terror of Jamaica (Falkirk, 1822). In addition to his Treatise on Sugarcane, Dr. Moseley also wrote: Treatise Concerning the Properties and Effects of Coffee (1775); Observations on the Dysentery of the West Indies (1781); and Treatise on Tropical Diseases and on the Climate of the West Indies (1787).

[75] "Story of Makendal", Massachusetts Magazine, or, Monthly Museum, V (January and February, 1793), 35-37; 77-79.

[76] Huntington Library, Larpent Collection, MS 1297. Fawcett's pantomime was acted 39 times, thrilling theater-goers for more than three decades. Also in 1800 W. H. Murrey brought out a two-act drama of the same title, its plot and principal incidents being taken from Fawcett's pantomime. The play was also adapted for the Juvenile Theater. It actually reverts to the theme of "The Revenge" and brings it up to date with a background of Negro music: Jack was a veritable Zanga to his persecutors.

[77]See John Gay's "Polly", Chapter IV, 343, 509-510n in this study.

[78]The "John Canoe" mummers are discussed at length in Appendix I 431-432.

[79]In Three Centuries of Drama: American, 1741-1830 (New York, 1956). The account was reprinted in an anonymous tract under the title: The History and Adventures of Jack Mansong, the Famous Negro Robber, and Terror of Jamaica (Otley; W. Walker, 1850?). This version concluded with a rather extraneous engraving of the Wedgwood slave.

[80]Obi; or, The History of Three-Fingered Jack. In a Series of Letters from a Resident in Jamaica to his Friend in England (Worcester, 1804).

[81]I, 10-11. The more realistic descriptions of Jack claim that the disease of yaws had hideously disfigured him, as it had Amalkir, Gorget, and Bashra before him.

II. The Suffering Negro of Abolition Verse

[1]See Eva Dykes, The Negro in English Romantic Thought (Washington, 1942); Wylie Sypher, Guinea's Captive Kings (New York, 1969); "The West-Indian as a 'Character' in the Eighteenth Century", Studies in Philology, XXXVI (1939), 518-520; and Joseph Jones, "The 'Distress'd' Negro in English Magazine Verse", University of Texas Studies in English, XVII (1937), 88-106.

[2]In Poems on the Abolition of the Slave Trade (London, 1809), 7-9.

[3]In Blackwood's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1833), 503-528.

[4](Bridgetown, 1767), ll. 393-405.

[5]In Complete Poetic Works (London, 1913). Seven years later an anonymous poet of "The Slaves: An Elegy" (1788) directly refutes the same anthropological assumption that blacks are innately slavish:

> There are men with shameless front have said,
> That Nature form'd the NEGROES for disgrace;
> That on their limbs subjection is display'd--
> The doom of slavery stampt upon their face.
> Send your stern gaze from Lapland to the Line,
> And every region's natives fairly scan,

Their forms, their force, their faculties combine
And own the vast Variety of Man!

Scots Magazine, L (April, 1788), 200. The same poem appeared in European Magazine and London Review (March, 1788), 219-220, under the pseudonym of "Della Crusca".

[6]The word "Negro" must here be used advisedly, for Pratt mixes his Noble Savages racially with little distinction. His work is a eulogy of all primitive virtues.

[7]"Slavery, a Poem" Critical Review, LXV (March, 1788), 226. Wilkinson reminds those who believe Negroes to be savages to remember that "Britons once were so,/ And little knew beyond the dart and bow" 21.

[8]"September 1, 1802" in Poetical Works (London, 1967), 243.

[9]European Magazine and London Review, LXVII (July, 1814), 46-47.

[10]Broadside sheet (North Shields, 1823).

[11]In English Romantic Poetry and Prose (New York, 1956), 200. Some metaphysical poets and others who examined the aesthetic of blackness are: John Cleveland, "A Faire Nimph Scorning a Black Boy Courting Her" (ca. 1650); Richard Crashaw, "On the Baptised Ethiopian" (1646); Edward Herbert, "The Brown Beauty", "Sonnet of Black Beauty", and "Another Sonnet to Black Itself"; and George Peele, "Hot sunne, coole Fire, tempered with sweet aire", from David and Bethsabe.

[12]With less artistry but with more tropical realism, Amelia Opie's black boy, like Blake's, defends his colour in accordance with white tastes. To his Creole mistress Anna, he says:

Missa, dey say dat our black skin
Be ugly, ugly to de sight;
But surely if dey look vidin,
Missa, de negro's heart be vite.
Yon cocoa-nut no smooth as silk,
But rough and ugly is de rind;
Ope it, sweet meat and sweeter milk
Vidin dat ugly coat ve find. . . .
De cocoa husk de skin I vear,
De milk vidin be Zambo's heart

"The Negro Boy's Tale" (1802), in Poems by Mrs. Opie (London, 1802), 59.

[13]In The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb (London, 1935), III, 75.

[14]"Imperfect Sympathies", in Essays of Elia and Eliana (New York, 1903), 260. William Hazlitt exhibits similar prejudice, only he states the case more boldly than does the gentle Lamb: "The Negroes[in Oroonoko] . . . are very ugly customers upon the stage. One blackamoor in a picture is an ornament, but a whole cargo of them is more than enough. This play puts us out of conceit with both colours, theirs and our own; the sooty slave's and his cold, sleek, smooth-faced master's." In The Examiner (January 26, 1817), in Art and Dramatic Criticism (London, 1933), 217.

[15]Song of Solomon 1:5 (Italics mine).

[16]The Sugar-Cane, IV, 119-121. Grainger finds Koromantyn women useful because they are accustomed to field work and constant toil for their husbands who pass their days smoking tobacco (the "charm of sauntering minds"), beating for prey in the forest, and waging war.

[17]In a review of Clarkson's History (1808) Coleridge contrasted the Negro's malleability with the stolid nature of the Indian. He concluded that the Africans were "more versatile, more easily modified, than perhaps any other known race," and therefore it would be wise for the government to enter upon a program of colonization and civilization. In Edinburgh Review, XII (July, 1808), 376-377.

[18]In Poems (London, 1761), IV, 164.

[19]In Poetical Works, 79. In Table Talk (1781), a debate on freedom, Cowper points out that while submission to "constitutional controul" may be a virtue on one hand, if "authority grow wanton" a man must fight in freedom's "glorious cause" (228-229). Byron also believed that the slave system would defeat itself. He calls upon the Greeks, "the servile offspring of the free" to "arise and snatch from the ashes of your sires the embers of their former fires!" By submitting to tyranny they merely "crawl from cradle to the grave slaves--nay, the bondsmen of a slave." (In "The Giaour," ll. 108-151. See also the speech of Israel Bertuccio in "Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice," II, ll. 94-100.)

[20]"Epistle to William Wilberforce" (London, 1791), 8.

[21]"Sonnets on the Slave Trade" (1794), in Poetical Works (Boston, 1837), 67-68.

[22]The poem under the initials "B. F." was published in The Universal Magazine, LXI (November, 1777), 270-271. It was reprinted under the author's name in The Massachusetts Magazine, or Monthly Museum, V (January, 1793), 54.

[23]"Stanzas on the Execution of a Negro, at Spanish-town, Jamaica, August, 1785", in Slavery, An Essay in Verse (Edinburgh, 1792), 30-31. Marjoribanks draws a comparison between Azubal and Brutus:

Ideal loss of Liberty inspir'd
The haughty Roman to destroy his friend;
But keen injuries the Negro fir'd
To end a tyrant, and to kill a fiend.

Southey's dying Negro of Sonnet VI is also obsessed with memories of idyllic Africa.

[24]The Negro belief in transmigration back to Africa is documented by most of the major historians of the Indies. At the time of emancipation, Dr. M. Clare testified at length before the West India Parliamentary Committee on the subject (London Times, January 7, 1833, 7). This doctrine also fostered gay mourning customs among the Negroes, giving West Indian slave funerals an enduring fascination for Europeans.

[25]It is noteworthy that Campbell in his enthusiasm for establishing his noble exiled slave falsifies the West Indian countryside. The land which could produce crops and require slave labour would not be "dewless."

[26]The Imperial Magazine, I (1831), 383.

[27]The Pleasures of Memory, and Other Poems (New York, 1820, first printed in 1792). Robert Merry of Philadelphia replied to Samuel Rogers in 1796 with his "Pains of Memory." He found that "remembrance more frequently occasioned uneasiness than delight, [and] that it was rather the source of regret than satisfaction" (The Bouquet, 124).

[28](Liverpool, 1853), 52-53.

[29]"The Dying Slave", in Poetical Works (Edinburgh, 1855), I.

[30]"The Slave", Scots Magazine, LXIV (October, 1802), 847.

[31]Imperial Magazine, II (1832), 140-141.

[32]Barbadoes. A Poem", cited in Blackwood's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1833), 524.

[33]"Boko, or, the African", Scots Magazine, LXIII (March, 1801), 204.

[34]"The Slave-Father to his Slave-born Child", Dublin University Magazine, I (March, 1833), 329.

[35]XLI, 29. Dunbar declares that the "inscrutable Ways" of heaven which brought the Negro into slavery have now turned the evil to good and that they now reap the benefits of civilization. He says that many with whom he conversed detested their own country and that "slaves need not envy European paupers or mourn that their fathers were abducted from the wilds of Africa" (70n).

[36]The Sugar Cane, IV, 143. See "An Account of the Christmas Racket among the Negroes in Jamaica", Scots Magazine, LXXX (March, 1818), 213ff.

[37]Negroes were not uncommon in England, and an observer in 1764 estimated that there were nearly 20,000 ex-slaves in London. See Gentleman's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1764), 493. The blacks were highly favoured as servants in Britain, running a fairly close second to the French domestics as status-symbols. Addison describes the misfortunes of an English gentleman whose wife turned out all of the white servants and replaced them with blackamoors (The Spectator, No. 299, February 12, 1712). A similar servant problem is the theme of William Bates' "Blackamoor Wash'd White" (1776). See Chapter IV, 299-303, in this study.

[38]Although numerous writers alluded to the freedom which came with the breathing of English air, William Cowper appears to be one of the first to popularize the expression:

> Slaves cannot breathe in England; if their lungs
> Receive our air, that moment they are free;
> They touch our country, and their shackles fall"

"The Timepiece", in Complete Poetical Works (London, 1913), 146-147.

[39]Imperial Magazine, XI (1829), 923.

[40]"Don Juan" (1818), V, vii. In Poetical Works (London, 1967), 712.

[41]XIX (July, 1749), 323-325. An undated slavery pamphlet entitled The Royal African; or, Memoirs of the Young Prince Annamboe contains newspaper accounts of the distressed and ill-used African prince in England and of his education there. It also describes, in a long, dull account, Guinea and slave trade and the settlement of the Royal African Company at Annamboe on the Gold Coast in 1672.

[42]In British Poets (Chiswick, 1822), LIX, iv, 126-127.

[43](London, 1773). The poem is subtitled "A Poetical Epistle Supposed to be Written by a Black, (who lately shot himself on board a vessel in the River Thames); to his Intended Wife." It was written in collaboration with Day's schoolmate, Joseph Bicknell. Coming as it did a year after Lord Mansfield's ruling that a slave setting foot on English soil was free, the story is a little difficult to believe. Still there were thousands of Negro slaves (so-called) in England, and advertisements of the sales of black boys were common.

[44]History . . . of the Abolition of the Slave Trade (London, 1808), I, 82-83.

[45]Day scores an early hit on the inhumanity of West Indians in the latter part of his Advertisement: "The Author trusts, that in an age and country, in which we boast of philanthropy, and generous sentiments, few persons (except West-Indians) can read the above paragraph,

without emotions similar to those, which inspired the following lines. They who are not more inclined to sympathize with the master, than the servant, upon the occasion,--will perhaps not be displeased at an attempt to delineate the feelings of the latter, in the situation above described.--

'Such artless plaints as nature might inspire,
But smooth's and fitted to the sounding lyre.'

Whatever reception this little piece may meet with from others, the Author can never regret that portion of time as lost, which he has employed in paying this small tribute of humanity to the misery of a fellow-creature (June 5, 1773)."

[46]Soon after the publication of "The Dying Negro" the American Revolution intervened to distract men's thoughts from the miseries of West Indian slaves to more immediate concerns. Not until after the American colonial matters had been settled did the poetry pages of the magazines again feature "dying Negro" verse. Day himself later incorporated American interests with his anti-slavery burdens. In a letter written to an American planter in 1776 he identified himself as "an Englishman, who, after daring to assert their [America's] cause through all the varied events of the late revolution dares now with equal intrepidity assert the cause of truth and justice." He said: "The rights of a nation are nothing more than the rights of every man in it. . . . Slavery is the absolute dependence of one man upon another. . . . It is a crime so monstrous against the human species that all those who practice it deserve to be extirpated from the earth. . . . If there be an object truly ridiculous in nature, it is an American patriot, signing resolutions of independence with one hand, and with the other brandishing a whip over his affrighted slaves. . . . Yes, gentlemen, as you are no longer English, I hope you will please be men: and, as such, admit the whole human species to a participation of your inalienable rights." In Letter. . . (London, 1784), 18, 24, 33, 38.

[47]In his letter on American slavery, Day revealed a similar tolerance: "I wonder how the unfortunate Africans have incurred their forfeiture--Is it the antiquity, or the virtues, or the great qualities of the English Americans, which constitutes the difference, . . . or do you choose to make use of that argument, which the great Montesquieue has thrown out as the severest ridicule, that they are black, and you white; that you have lank, long hair, while theirs is short and woolly?" (Ibid., 34).

[48]Day footnotes this passage with a citation from Adamson's Voyage to Senegal which established the pastoral simplicity and mild disposition: "Which way soever I turned my eyes on this pleasant spot, I beheld the perfect image of pure nature, an agreeable solitude bounded on every side by charming landscapes; the rural situation of cottages in the midst of trees; and ease and indolence of Negroes, reclined under the shade of their spreading foliage; the simplicity of their dress and manners; the whole revived in my mind the idea of our first parents, and I seemed to contemplate the world in its primitive state. They are, generally speaking, very good-na-

tured, sociable, and obliging. I was not a little pleased with this, my first reception; it convinced me that there ought to be considerable abatement made in the accounts I had read and heard of the savage characters of the Africans" (Day, 11n).

[49]July 1, 1773. Cited in Sypher, Guinea's Captive Kings, 180-181.

[50]"Charity", in Complete Poetical Works, 76.

[51]"Hayley's Life of Cowper", reviewed in The Edinburgh Review, II (April, 1803), 69-86.

[52]Later in the year 1788 Cowper lost faith when he foresaw that laws enacted for Negroes probably would not be effectively carried out. He then renounced propagandistic poetry.

[53]Life and Letters of William Cowper (London, 1835), 353.

[54]Clarkson, History, II, 190-191. A Subject for Conversation was reprinted in the American slavery compendium, The Mirror of Misery; or, Tyranny Exposed (New York, 1814). This collection ends with a poem from the New-Haven Gazette on the horrors of the slave passage and another on the blasted romance of two African lovers. The latter poem, although it appears under the title "The Negro's Complaint," is actually Roscoe's "The African." On the last page is an effective engraving of the Wedgwood Negro and a planter, chained together. Captain Marjoribanks' poetic Essay on Slavery also appears in this edition.

[55]The Anti-Slavery Committee ordered the seal, and Josiah Wedgwood copied it for them and joined the group himself shortly thereafter (Clarkson, History, II, 445, 450).

[56]The slogan is apparently taken from Dr. Peter Peckard's tract of 1788 of the same title. See Gentleman's Magazine (December, 1798), 1090-1091. In "The Botanic Garden" (1799) Erasmus Darwin, a member of Thomas Day's liberal group in Lichfield, describes the Wedgwood works of Etruria, Staffordshire, where the "bold Cameo" is made:

> To call the pearly drops from Pity's eye,
> Or stay Despair's disanimating sigh,
> O Friend of art! the gem you mould
> Rich with new taste, with antient virtue bold:
> Form the poor fetter'd SLAVE on bended knee
> From Britain's sons imploring to be free.

(London, 1799), II, vi, 101.

[57]Clarkson, History, II, 191-192.

[58]"Charity", 80.

[59]"The Time Piece", in Complete Poetical Works, 146-147.

[60]See also Complete Poetical Works, 371-372. "The Negro's Complaint" also appeared in Scots Magazine, LIV (January, 1792), 32; and Gentleman's Magazine, LXIII (December, 1793), 7.

[61]Complete Poetical Works, 373-374. Written March 17-19, 1788. Published in Gentleman's Magazine, LVIII (November, 1788).

[62]Ibid., 374-375. This poem was not published until 1836 when Southey brought it out.

[63]Ibid., 375-376. Written July-August, 1788, published in 1800.

[64]Reviewed enthusiastically in The Critical Review, LXV (March, 1788), 226; The European Magazine and London Review (March, 1788), 166. Another bluestocking, Ann Yearsley, brought out her contribution to the increasing flow of propaganda, but the reviewer of Critical Review dealt with her less benevolently: "Mrs. Yearsley starts forward as a kind of competitor, to bend the Ulyssean bow with her quondam guardian friend and patroness. She is not, however, in our opinion, so successful in this as in some of her other publications. She is frequently rather turgid than sublime" (LXV, April, 1788, 314). Mrs. Yearsley's work was entitled A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade.

[65]To Caroline Bowles Southey wrote in 1833: "I have read of the Slave Trade and of the Inquisition, but neither ever thrilled my heart like the evidences on factory conditions which you have been reading. It distracted my sleep and I laid the book aside in horror. . . . After such an experience I wonder (as far as I can wonder at anything in these times) that none of those cotton and worsted and flax kings have yet hanged themselves; that none of their factories have been destroyed; that the very pavement of the streets has not risen and stoned them". Cited in C. Brinton, The Political Ideas of the English Romanticists, (London, 1926), 92.

[66]Wordsworth's devotion to liberty is manifested in several of the poems touching directly upon England's mission and place in the world, but more so in those dealing directly with other states. In the seventy-four poems of Independence and Liberty an international outlook is reflected which did not fade in later years. He remained subject to "those mysteries of being which have made . . . of the whole human race one brotherhood" (Prelude, XXI, ll. 54-56 . ee also his apostrophe to Freedom in "Descriptive Sketches Taken During a Pedestrian Tour Among the Alps" and in "Lines Written in Early Spring" where his awareness of the close union between Man and Nature is balanced by a knowledge of the lack of unity between Man and Man.

[67]"Humanity", in Poetical Works (London, 1967), ll. 78-93. This poem captures the temper of the "high-minded Slave" who is "impelled to spurn/ The kindness that would make him less forlorn" (ll. 64-65), for "stone walls a prisoner make, but not a slave."

[68]III, ll. 919. Wordsworth's "The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman" (1798) was composed in the Tintern Abbey period when he regarded identification with nature as prerequisite for humanitarian interest in man. It is based on Hearne's "Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean." The Indian woman does not portray stoical submission to death in the Noble Savage tradition.

[69]Prelude, X, ll. 253-262. In this attitude Wordsworth represents the feelings of several would-be humanitarians who became weary of the stalemate between Wilberforce and Parliament over the anti-slave trade bill. But he was not unaware of the picturesqueness of the Negro. During his residence in London the poet was "well pleased to note/ Among the crowd all specimens of man,/ Through all the colours which the sun bestows." Among the many races which attracted him were "Negro ladies in white muslin gowns" (Prelude, VII, ll. 228) and "the silver-collared Negro with his Timbrel" (VII, ll. 703).

[70]See The Excursion, VIII, ll. 298-303; and IX, ll. 113-117.

[71]In 1826 Crabb Robinson wrote to Dorothy Wordsworth that her brother appeared to have "died in the year 1814, as far as life consisted in an active sympathy with the temporary welfare of his fellow creatures." He added: "He had early manifested a feeling for the negroes, and the poet did honour to his friend Clarkson. That source of sympathetic tears was dried up". Cited in Edith Batho, The Later Wordsworth (Cambridge, 1933), 220. In a letter to Benjamin Dockray, Wordsworth aligned himself with the supporters of "gradual emancipation": "No man can deplore more than I do the state of slavery in itself. I do not only deplore it, but I abhor it, if it could be got rid of without the introduction of something worse, which I much fear would not be the case with respect to the West Indies" (Ibid., 135).

[72]Coleridge's prize ode bore distinct touches of pseudo-Africa. A copy of the ode is difficult to find, but a translation of the introductory stanzas was published in 1823--at a time when the poet had certainly lost interest in claiming it:

Fling wide thy gates of darkness, Death!
Speed to the race with misery yoked:
No mangled cheek of howling breath
Shall greet thy presence, long invoked.

But circling dance shall beat the ground;
The joy of song shall burst around;

Stern tyrant! dreadful though thou be,
Thy swelling is with Liberty!

They, wafted on thy dusky wings,
Look down upon the ocean swell;
Their wandering foot on either springs
To their own land beloved so well:

And there the lovers to their loves
By fountain brink, in citron groves,
Recount the deeds of wrath and scorn
Which they as men from men have borne.

"The Negro's Euthanasia", London Magazine, VIII (October, 1823), 356.

[73]Cited in Dykes, 76. The lecture itself is no longer extant.

[74]The omitted stanza is alluded to in Stanza VI:

Shall I with these [slave traders] my patriot zeal combine?
No, Afric, no! they stand before my ken
Loath'd as th' Hyaenas, that in murky den
Whine o'er their prey and mangle while they whine.

In The Poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London, 1964), 247n.

[75]"Fears in Solitude", in Poems, 258, ll. 43-63.

[76]"The Devil's Thoughts" (1799) is a satiric ballad in which the Devil, risen from his brimstone bed, goes forth "to visit his snug little farm the earth." Among the many "righteous" activities which please him is the sight of a Turnkey reluctantly unfettering a man, "which put him in mind of the long debate/ On the Slave-trade abolition" (xi).

[77]"Sonnet on La Fayette" (1794), in Poems, 82.

[78]Cited in Dykes, 87.

[79]Poetical Works of William Roscoe (Liverpool, 1853), 25-70. Of the presentation of the poem Clarkson says: "To find friends [Roscoe and Dr. Currie] to our cause rising up from a quarter, where we expected scarce-anything but opposition [Liverpool] was very consolatory and encouraging" (History, I, 280).

[80]Poetical Works of William Roscoe, 71-73. "The African" was published anonymously in 1788 because Dr. Currie apparently did not share Roscoe's moral fearlessness and did not wish to acknowledge his part in the poem.

[81]Cited in "The Negro Friend," The South Devon Monthly Museum, I (May, 1833), 155. The anecdote had also appeared in the London Times, June 14, 1825, 2. Rushton himself alludes to the experience in his fourth Eclogue: ". . . The Author of these Eclogues . . . was preserved from destruction by the humanity of a Negro slave. His deliverance, however, was purchased at a price which he must ever deplore. For in the saving his life, the brave, the generous African lost his own!" (Eclogues, 32n). At the age of ten Rushton was bound apprentice to the West India shipping firm of Watt and Gregson, and made several voyages in which he distinguished himself not only for his seamanship but also for his humanitarian disposition toward the Negroes. On his only Guinea voyage the captain threatened to charge him as a mutineer because of his benevolent concern for the slaves.

[82]The Negro Friend, 154. Rushton paid his debt to the blacks in person. During a voyage to Dominica in 1774, an eye disease ("malignant ophthalmia") broke out with great fury among the slaves. The eighteen-year-old boy ministered daily to their wants when no other European would venture near them, and he caught the infection and lost his own sight. Thirty-three years later, just seven years before his death, he regained his vision by means of surgery.

[83]Ten years later Rushton was still consumed with abolitionist fervour. In 1797 he wrote an "Expostulatory Letter to George Washington, of Mount Vernon in Virginia, on his Continuing to be a Proprietor of Slaves." Eight months after the American president returned the letter, under sealed cover and unanswered, Rushton published it in a pamphlet. He voiced a view held by several benevolently-minded Englishmen during the years following the Revolutionary War. To the famous planter of Mount Vernon estate he said: "That a Liverpool merchant should endeavour to enrich himself by such a business is not a matter of surprise, but that you, an enlightened character, strongly enamoured of your own freedom, you who, if the British forces had succeeded in the eastern states, would have retired with a few congenial spirits to the rude fastnesses of the western wilderness, there to have enjoyed that blessing, without which a paradise would be disgusting, and with which the most savage region is not without its charms; that you, I say, should continue to be a slave-holder, a proprietor of human flesh and blood, creates in many of your British friends both astonishment and regret. . . . Your friend Jefferson [in Notes on Virginia] has endeavoured to shew that the negroes are an inferior order of being, but surely you will not have recourse to such a subterfuge. . . . Of all the slave holders under heaven those of the united states appear to me the most reprehensible; for man never is so truly odious as when he inflicts upon others that which he himself abominates. . . . You have been raised by your fellow-citizens to one of the most exalted situations upon earth, the first magistrate of a free people; yet you are a slave-holder. . . . In the name of Justice, what can induce you thus to tarnish your own well earned celebrity, and impair the fair features of American liberty, with so foul and indelible a blot!" The zealous letter-writer concludes with the supposition that Washington is avaricious and that he has "leopardized both fame and character "for a few thousand pieces of paltry yellow dirt" (Liverpool, 1797, 4-11, 14-15, 22-23). Rushton

also published an essay entitled "The Causes of the Dissimilarity of Colour in the Human Species." In it he sought to explain the differences in physical rather than moral terms. Samuel Johnson used this same argument of slave-driving against the American claims of liberty in his "Taxation no Tyranny." Boswell quotes: "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?" See Life of Johnson (Westminster, 1901), IV, 204.

[84]The poisonous manchineal apple was mentioned by many travellers in the West Indies. It was of both botanical and social interest. Trelawny Wentworth in his leisurely West India Sketch Book described the fruit and its various uses: "Here [in Barbuda] too, luxuriates 'the dark and deadly manchineel' whose specious fruit, like the fair apples of Sodom, provoketh repentance from him who eateth of them. . . . The manchineel apple resembles the crab apple in appearance and size, and its fragrant smell when ripe favours the deception. Many writers have assigned fatal consequences to those who eat of it, and to the tree, the power of blinding for a time those who have slept under its shade. The branches contain a milky juice which will certainly blister the skin, and it has been a common trick among the negroes to apply it to their backs, in order to excite the compassion of those who might mistake it for the effects of beating. Hughes in his Natural History of Barbadoes, tells us of an attempt made by a female slave to poison her master by putting a spoonful of this juice in his chocolate." It immediately produced a violent burning in his throat and stomach, and he resorted to an emetic which gave relief. His recovery, however, was long and slow. The same writer also tells of a lady who craved the apples and could eat of them with impunity" (II, 250).

[85]Reviewed in Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (April, 1791), 358-359.

[86]Boswell, Life of Dr. Johnson, IV, 214-215. Also cited in Gentleman's Magazine, LXIII (June, 1793), unnumbered page following the Index.

[87]"I beg leave to enter my most solemn protest against his general doctrine with respect to the slave-trade. For I will resolutely say, that his unfavourable notice of it was owing to prejudice, and imperfect or false information. The wild and dangerous attempt which has for some time been persisted in to obtain an act of our legislature, to abolish so very important and necessary a branch of commercial interest, [should] have been crushed at once. . . . The encouragement which the attempt has received excites my wonder and indignation; and, though some men of superior abilities have supported it, whether from a love of temporary popularity when prosperous, or a love of general mischief when desperate, my opinion is unshaken. To abolish a status which in all ages God has sanctioned, and man has continued, would not only be robbery to an innumerable class of our fellow-subjects, but it would be extreme cruelty to the African savages, a portion of whom it saves from massacre, of intolerable bondage in their own country" (Ibid.).

[88]Ibid., IV, 204. Apropos of this anecdote, a reviewer in Blackwood's wrote: "Samuel, in his heart, was not a lover of the shedding of blood. He knew the negroes in the West Indies did not overhear him--and 'tis lucky for them that he was not an overseer. For though naturally humane, he was passionate; nor would it at all times have been safe to trust him alone in a boiling-house with a pretty young negress" (XXXIV, October, 1833, 505).

[89]Cypher, 17.

[90]22. William Shenstone in"Elegy XX" makes the lover compare "his humble fortune with the distress of others; and his subjection to DELIA, with the miserable servitude of an African slave." Shenstone's Negro, like his brethren, rebukes the "savage race" who have torn him from his home, and his musings are "smooth'd, and suited to the sounding lyre."

[91]"To England on the Slave Trade", in Poems (London, 1807), I.

[92]Bowyer's deluxe edition, illustrated by engravings from anti-slavery pictures, was dedicated to "H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester, Patron, and to the Director and Governors of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Natives of Africa." This rather expensive effort (the volume sold for £5. 5. 0.) was not outstandingly successful, and Montgomery's major piece, The West Indies, did not enjoy any degree of popularity until its 1810 edition.

[93]"To the Public", Prologue to The West Indies, i-ii.

[94]Both of Montgomery's missionary parents died of yellow fever in the West Indies.

[95]In Poetical Works, 243. The Clarksons were neighbours of the Wordsworths for some years, and they were among the first to whom the poet turned upon the death of his brother on a voyage to the Indies in 1805.

[96]Another emancipation work also adopted the image of the rainbow, Bow in the Cloud; or, The Negroes Memorial (1834). It consists of eighty-five prose and verse contributions as well as tributes to prominent abolitionists and biographical sketches. Most of the works were written between 1826 and 1828, and the Advertisement indicates that "the entire Profits arising from the sale of this Volume will be devoted to the West-Indian Negroes."

[97]In Complete Poetical Works (London, 1920), 248.

[98]The "whimsicalities" of Thomas Hood are perhaps among the most outstanding prose satires on West Indian themes. They seem to come closer to theater humour than any other work in the period immediately following emancipation. See "Black, White and Brown"; "The Black and White Question"; and "Letter from a Parish Clerk in Barbadoes to One in Hampshire." In Hood's Whimsicalities in Prose and Verse (London, n. d.).

[99] Poetical Works, 1-17. Roscoe wrote "Mount Pleasant" at the age of sixteen and modelled it on John Dyer's "Grongar Hill" (1727). The poem was used in many English and American anti-slavery collections.

[100] Shelley, Poetical Works (London, 1967), VIII, ll. 172-183.

[101] See C. A. Moore, "Whig Panegyric Verse, 1700-1760: A Phase of Sentimentalism", PMLA, XXI (1926), 362-401.

[102] "Charity" (1781), in Poems (London, 1782), 184-185. In this poem Cowper flirts with primitivism. He admits the broad humanitarian possibilities in England's commerce, but not so specifically as Dyer does in The Fleece (1757).

[103] "A Poem, Occasioned by the Abolition of the Slave Trade", in Poems on the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 131.

[104] Works of the English Poets (London, 1790), XVI, 71.

[105] Sir John Scott, "Privateering" (1781), in The Poetical Works of John Scott (London, 1782), 211-213. Scott demonstrated his interest in the scenes of Britain's commercial ventures in his three Oriental Eclogues: "Zerad; or, The Absent Lover" (Arabian); "Serim; or, The Artificial Famine" (East-Indian); and "Li-Po; or, The Good Governor" (Chinese); in Poetical Works, 127-161. See also Robert Dunbar, The Cruise, LXXV, 45.

[106] Mrs. Barbauld celebrated the advent of sugar prejudices in her satirical "The Groans of the Tankard" (1772). The silver tankard, now filled with water, regrets being in the service of a "lean student" of evangelical persuasion. His abstinence from rum and other liquid joys represents one facet of the abolition campaign:

> And 'midst the circle lift my honest face,
> White o'er with froth, like Etna crown'd with snow,
> Which mantled o'er the brown abyss below,
> Where Ceres mingled with her golden store
> The richer spoils of either India's shore,
> The dulcet reed the Western islands boast,
> And spicy fruit from Banda's fragrant coast" (27).

Nostalgically the tankard recalls the days when it had graced the "festal board":

> Unblest the day, and luckless was the hour
> Which doom'd me to a Presbyterian's power:
> Fated to serve the Puritanic race,
> Whose slender meal is shorter than their grace;
> Whose moping sons no jovial orgies keep;
> Where evening brings no summons but to sleep;
> No Carnival is even Christmas here,
> And one long Lent involves the meagre year" (28-29).

[107] The British Album of Poems (Boston, 1793), 58-62. Also printed under the pen-name of Robert Merry (Della Crusca) in Scots Magazine, L (April, 1788), 199. The first American edition from the fourth London edition (Boston: Belknap and Hall, 1793).

[108] Appeal to England on Behalf of the Abused Africans, a Poem (London, 1789).

[109] "The Negro's Complaint", ll. 17-24. The compiler of A Subject for Conversation follows his printing of "The Negro's Complaint" with an impassioned appeal to sugar-users: "Prove that your wishes are not empty words; let your conduct declare that these are the genuine desires of your heart, and be assured that in the end you shall reap, if you faint not. The number of those who have already refused the produce of slavery is large; it is increasing daily, and no bounds can be assigned to its future progress. . . . Realize the delightful retrospect, the joyful sentiments . . . that YOU have contributed to so important and glorious an end. . . . Such sublime pleasures will abundantly more than compensate the loss of the low gratifications of a mere animal depraved appetite" (44).

[110] To the Rev. Jekyll Rye, William Cowper wrote on April 16, 1792: "If any concludes, because I allow myself the use of sugar and rum, that therefore I am a friend of the Slave Trade, he concludes rashly, and does me great wrong; for the man lives not who abhors it more than I do. My reasons for my own practice are satisfactory to myself, and they whose practice is contrary are, I suppose, satisfied with theirs" (In Life and Letters, 456).

[111] Thy country, Wilberforce, with just disdain,
Hears thee, by cruel men and impious, call'd
Fanatic, for thy zeal to loose th' enthrall'd
From exile, public sale, and slavry's chain.
Friend of the poor, the wrong'd, the fetter-gall'd,
Fear not lest labour such as thine be vain!
Thou hast achiev'd a part; hast gain'd the ear
Of Britain's senate to thy glorious cause;
Hope smiles, joy springs, and thro' cold caution pause
And weave delay, the better hour is near,
That shall remunerate thy toils severe
By peace for Afric, fenc'd with British laws.
Enjoy what thou hast won, esteem and love
From all the just on earth, and all the blest above!

First printed in the Northampton Mercury, April, 1792. The poem also appears in manuscript in the flyleaf of a 1782 edition of Cowper's Poems in Huntington Library. The same edition contains the suppressed Preface by John Newton.

[112] Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (November, 1791), 1047.

[113] "The Slave, An Ode", European Magazine and London Review, XXII (October, 1792), 304-306.

[114]Complete Poetical Works (London, 1913), 376. William Gilbert, the "mad poet" of Antigua, in his "theosophic" poem "The Hurricane" (1796), framed this popular notion about sugar in terms of his own mystical philosophy. In a footnote, which develops his theory that the "genius" of a people may be "either suppress, destroyed, or chemically combined with that of a foreign country," he says: "With every lump of Sugar, a certain portion of Essence of America and of Africa is swallowed; and if refined with the blood of bulls, a proportion of England too; but the first are wholly predominant" (63).

[115]London Times, June 3, 1833, 3.

[116]William Cowper's "Sweet Meat has Sour Sauce: or, The Slave-Trader in the Dumps" (1788) appears to be almost the only early piece written in a similarly humourous vein.

[117]Cushoo: a Dialogue between a Negro and an English Gentleman" (London, n. d.). This work is a revised edition of the anonymous No Rum, No Sugar, omitting the section of that work which urges a boycott of West Indian produce as a means of forcing the planters' hands. See also the dialogue between Mr. Eastlove and Giles Homespun in Negro Emancipation (London, 1824).

[118]In Hood's Whimsicalities, 63.

[119]"Summer", in Poetical Works (New York, n. d.), 71-73.

[120]Poems on Various Subjects (Bath, 1754). The Phipps family was prominent in colonial affairs in Jamaica.

[121]European vain--mock not my hue,
Nor ridicule a slave;
Death soon, like me, will blacken you,
In darkness, and the grave.

Tho' nature o'er my swarthy skin
Diffus'd a sable blot;
Yet was my mind unstain'd within,
And free from vicious spot.

It boots not here, or black, or white,
All colours suit the tomb;
Black guests, and Aetheopian night,
Sit round this funeral room. . . .

It matters not, or rich, or poor,
But 'tis the honest man;
Whether he lives on India's shore
In Europe, or Japan (Ibid.)

[122]*Poetical Works* (Boston, 1855), 15-16.

[123]By Reverend Gregory, *Gentleman's Magazine*, LII (December, 1783), 1043.

[124]"A Negro's Address on the Apparition of Slavery", *European Magazine and London Review*, V (June, 1784), 455-456.

[125]*Humanity*, I, 29.

[126]*An Appeal to England*, 16-17.

[127]"The Dying Slave" (1798), in *Poetical Works*, I, 58-59.

[128]"An African's Complaint On-Board a Slave Ship", *Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXIII (August, 1793), 749. Only in the first four stanzas in which the slave describes "the winged house" in which he is flying away and his fear of being eaten by the white man does the "humourous" effect of dialect seem to have even the remotest justification.

[129]*Gentleman's Magazine*, LXXII (July, 1792), 652.

[130]John Walcot (Peter Pindar, pseud.), *Scots Magazine*, LVII (August, 1795), 517-518.

[131]*European Magazine and London Review*, XXII (October, 1792), 304-306.

[132]See also Thomas George Street's "Aura; or, The Slave: A Poem" (1788) for an unusual development of the kidnapping theme. Reviewed in *Gentleman's Magazine*, LVIII (April, 1788), 343.

[133]*Travels of Mungo Park* (London, 1960), 151-152.

[134]Ibid., 152. Park records numerous other instances of African hospitality, but the story of the benevolent Negress had the greatest popular appeal. The explorer died in 1824, drowned in a river while on a canoe trip in the Bouassa country (See *London Times*, October 6, 1824, 3). The adventures of Mungo Park were a source of interest in minor theater even during his life time. See *Mungo Park; or, The Treacherous Guide* (Burletta, 1819); *Mungo Park; or, The Source of the Nile* (Spectacle, 1824); and *Mungo Parke; or, The Arab of the Niger* (Spectacle, 1840 and Drama, 1841).

[135]Cited in Sypher, 226-227. "Our tree" to which the woman referred was the Bentang tree which was sacred to hospitality and served as the tribal "town hall." Park describes the custom in his Travels. Miss Benger celebrated the tree in her "Poem Occasioned by the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1806".

[136]III, 25. In the Bowyer edition the passage is accompanied by an illustrative engraving by Smirke, showing the Negress talking to Park under the Bentang tree. (See Plate VI, 183 of this study.)

[137]A "saphie" is a Mohammedan charm.

[138]A "bar" is nominal money worth approximately two shillings (sterling).

[139]Crabbe commends the Negro women for living above the prejudice which causes Africa's "swarthy sons" to display their scorn of Europe by painting their demons white.

[140]In George Crabbe's Poetical Works (New York, 1907), 515-516.

[141]Poetical Works (New York, n. d.), 197-212.

[142]In 1743 Robert Blair in "The Grave" also denounced the "petty tyrant . . . who fix'd his iron talons on the poor, . . . deaf to the forceful cries . . . of Misery (As if a Slave has not a shred of nature, of the same common nature with his lord.)". In the grave, however, "vassal and Lord, grossly familiar, side by side consume." In English Romantic Poetry and Prose (New York, 1956), 23-26.

[143]Gentleman's Magazine, LIII (December, 1783), 1043-1044.

[144]Reviewed in Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (April, 1791), 358.

[145]The eighth stanza of "Philanthropy" depicts the scene by the slave ships:

See where on Afric's groaning coast
The nation praised so high,
(Say wilt thou yet that nation boast?)
Their fellow-mortals buy:
Exiled from all that gladdens life,
Friends, parents, country, children, wife,
Seest thou not the drooping band?
Lo, they drag them to the strand!
Now the breeze distends the sail;

Hearest thou not the frantick wail?
Happy if on the watery way
Each stiffled wretch expires, to sharks a destined prey!
In Poems by John Marriott (New-Bedford, 1805), 101.

[146]"Mialma", in Poems by John Marriott, 70-83.

[147]See Chapter IV, 377-379, in this study.

[148]"There is an account of an intrepid Negress who was separated from the rest of the slaves on board a slave ship so that she could give birth to her child. As soon as she had delivered her infant, she threw him overboard and then followed him. In her chains she sank immediately". In Massachusetts Magazine, III (December, 1791), 728.

[149]During the slave voyage Stanfield spent some time ashore in Africa, but returned to England--one out of three survivors of the entire crew. He renounced the sea, joined a theatrical company, and participated in abolitionist activities. The painful impressions of his single slave voyage never left him. His prose and verse works on the slave trade were published in one volume in Edinburgh in 1807. An interesting poem by "H. F. Stanfield" in The Freemasons' Magazine in 1795 is apparently an early account of Stanfield's experiences as a factor and a "rash youth" on the Guinea coast in 1776. The desolation he beholds destroys any pleasure he might have found in the "rich scen'ry".

. . . My pow'rs, how they wither'd, declin'd!
When I found fellow-mortals our prey,
And our traffic the blood of our kind.

From the first glowing tinges of light
To the latest suffusions of day,
What outrages wound the sad sight!
What shrieks strike the soul with dismay! . . .

The sun in his genial career
With horror beholds the dire plain--
May he lend swifter wings to the year,
And his winds waft me far o'er the main!
May the waves bear my bark to the pole!
From these much-injur'd shores may she sweep!

Shall man fellow-mortals enchain?
Shall Christians make traffic in gore?
Shall Britons, who boast freedom's train,
Bring slav'ry and death to each shore?

[150]"The Sorrows of Yamba", Universal Magazine, CI (July, 1797), 43. A contributor to Freemason's Magazine in 1794 describes the trading scene on the African coast in sensational terms:

Yes! Albion! yes! thou land that lov'st applause,
When thy proud barks the fiend to Afric bore,
Delighted MURDER gnash'd his gory jaws,
And, howling death-whoops, stamp'd along the shore!

While on the strand the monster INTEREST waits,
Whose tearless eye in marble sockets rolls;
He claps his iron hands, exults, and freights,
His human ballast and his bales of souls! (43).

[151]Since the British appointed themselves to policing activities along the Guinea coast, interest in slave traders continued long after the Abolition Act. Quashee Sam, a simple-minded Negro seaman aboard H. M. S. Mermaid falls into the hands of a Brazilian slaver and spends two years on a plantation at the Port of Bahia. He escapes to discover and bring the slave captain and crew to justice in the free colony of Sierra Leone. His court testimony, which was acceptable in 1831, results in the villain Jenkins' execution. Quashee Sam collects his pay and buys a few "tawdry clothes" and returns to his own country to live on the telling of his wonderful adventures (In The Sketch Book of I. Y. C., Containing a Voyage to Rio de Janeiro. . . . Quashee Sam, Being the Authentic and Wonderful Escape of a Carew Negro from Slavery. A sop in the Pan, or, the Drunkard Reclaimed. The Jew Outwitted, Manchester, 1831).

[152]The West Indies, II, 16.

[153]"The Dying African", Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (November, 1791), 1047.

[154]The West Indies, II, 17.

[155]Scots Magazine, LXXI (November, 1809), 847.

[156]"The Sorrows of Yamba", Universal Magazine, CI (July, 1797), 43.

[157]In an interesting article, "Anti-slavery Opinion in the Poems of Some Early French Followers of James Thomson", Modern Language Notes, L (1935), 427-434, Edward Seeber shows that Thomson's French imitators, valuing the philosophical and moral content of his poems more highly than the descriptive, turned him into "an instrument of propaganda". In spite of the slave revolts in Santo Domingo at the end of the eighteenth-century, French poets upheld the cause of abolition during the score of years that preceded Victor Hugo's first novel, Bug Jargal (1818) wherein the noble and heroic Negro became an established figure in French literature.

[158]"Summer", in Poetic Works, 79-80. Thomson was also of the school of thought which conceived of tropical climate as a determinant in various deviations in the physical and behavioural elements of man.

[159]The slave-ship passage from Thomson's "Summer" (11, 151-152) is said to have been the inspiration of the artist Joseph M. W. Turner in one of his most famous canvases, "The Slave Ship". He subtitled it: "Slavers throwing overboard the Dead and Dying--Typhoon coming on". The painting was purchased by John Ruskin's father in 1844 in token of the success of Modern Painters (See Part II, sec. 5, Ch. III, 39). Ruskin sold it in 1869 for £2,042 because the subject had become painful to him. See C. B. Tinker, Painter and Poet (Cambridge, 1938), 151-152. The painting visualizes several West Indian motifs and is now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The shark following the slave ship did not do so in vain. In 1781 a spectacular case was fought through the courts when Captain Luke Collingwood was accused of having thrown 132 slaves overboard in order to stop an epidemic that had broken out among the 400 in the hold. He pleaded a clause in the insurance policy which permitted the jettisoning of some cargo to save the rest (Coupland, 59). Montgomery alludes to the Collingwood case in The West Indies, III, 157. Clarkson records the incident of a Captain Smith who had 300 to 400 Negroes destroyed when his slave ship struck some shoals at Morant Keys, east of Jamaica. Smith did not want to share provisions with the survivors. (History, II, 242-243).

[160]"The Dying African", Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (November, 1791), 1046-1047.

[161]"The African's Complaint On-Board a Slave Ship", Gentleman's Magazine, LXXIII (August, 1793), 749.

[162]"The Negro Boy's Tale" (1802), in Poems by Mrs. Opie (London, 1806), 56.

[163]In The Poetical Works of Ebenezer Elliott (London, 1876), Vol. II, 11-13. Ebenezer Elliott (1781-1849) is best known for his vigorous Corn-law Rhymes (1831) which arose out of his constant hatred of the "bread-tax." Although he pursued the iron trade in Sheffield, the busts of Shakespeare, Achilles and Napoleon which graced his country house gave evidence of his catholic interests. As an impressive public speaker, he was active in the literary and political life of the city, taking part in various reform movements, including Chartism. Walter Savage Landor honoured Elliott in his poem, "On the Statue of Ebenezer Elliott by Neville Burnard, Ordered by the Working Men of Sheffield". The statue was erected in the market place at a cost of £600.

[164]It is interesting to note that many other dedicated reformers, like Southey, rested for a time on their laurels after the passing of the 1807 Slave Trade Bill. In effect, a second generation of abolitionists had to arise in the nineteenth century to agitate total emancipation. Among them were few writers of any literary significance.

[165]"Verses Spoken . . . at Oxford", in Poetical Works, XX, 78.

[166]In Shelley, Poetical Works (London, 1967), 573.

[167]The Sugar-Cane, II, 83-85.

[168]"The Lovers", Gentleman's Magazine, LIV (March, 1784), 200.

[169]In an early poem, "To Horror" (1791), Southey associates slavery with various forms of human torment. Finally, he bids Horror go to the "accursed shore where . . . the Negro writhes" and

> Assume thy sacred terrors then; dispense
> The gales of Pestilence;
> Arouse the oppressed; teach them to know their power;
> Lead them to vengeance; and in that dread hour
> When ruin rages wide,
> I will behold and smile by MERCY'S side (VII).

[170]The West Indies, III, 32.

[171]"Queen Mab", in Shelley, Poetical Works, 795 (VIII, ll. 176-182).

[172]"The Slave Ship", The Imperial Magazine, XI (June, 1829), 538-542.

[173]"The Negro", The Imperial Magazine, I (1831), 382-383.

[174]Imperial Magazine, II (1832), 140.

[175]The West Indies, III, 33.

[176]The Penny Magazine for the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, No. 41 (November 24, 1832), 336.

[177]The four friends who "comforted" Job in his ash-heap experience insinuated that his misery was due to some hidden sin in his life. Eliphaz enquired, "Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" (Job 4:7). Upon seeing a blind man by the wayside, Christ's dis-

ciples asked: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:1-3). Jesus Himself raised the question rhetorically in reference to the tower in Siloam which collapsed, killing eighteen men: "Think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem?" (Luke 13:4).

[178]Gentleman's Magazine, LII (December, 1783), 1043-1044; LIV (January, 1784), 45-46. These two 'Eclogues' are very similar to Hugh Mulligan's Poems Chiefly on Slavery and Oppression (1788) which condemn the exploitation of the peoples of the Orient as well as in the Indies.

[179]"The Slave, an Ode", European Magazine and London Review, XXII (October, 1792), 304-306.

[180]"The Dying African", Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (November, 1791), 1047.

[181]Several Europeans sought to place the Negro on the same plane as the lordly white by proving him to be capable of moral and intellectual advancement. See, for example, Richard Nisbet, Capacity of Negroes for Moral and Religious Improvement (1789); and Abbe Gregoire, Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties of Negroes (1808).

[182]"On being brought from AFRICA to AMERICA", Universal Magazine, LII (September, 1773), 153.

[183]In Poetical Works (Boston, 1858), 181.

[184]The Sorrows of Yamba, or, the Negro Woman's Lamentation (Mountpleasant, 1820), 1-12. This same version of the Yamba story appeared in The Cheap Repository Tracts (London, n. d.), XCVI.

[185]Monthly Magazine, IV (October, 1797), 286.

[186]Thomas Moore's poem entitled "The Slave" concerns attitudes of slavery but not specifically of Negroes'. The imprisoned slave in this poem learns from his dungeon that his master, the king, is dead, but he cannot rejoice, for his was "the error of the head, not heart." The slave is able to say: "Heaven rest his soul!" In Poetical Works, (Philadelphia, 1836), 418-419. Moore's piece, though it may be more literary, does not reveal a moral excellence to match that of Miss Holcroft's unbelievable slave.

[187]The soliloquies of the dying Negroes were supposed to be expressions of primitive poetry, but in actuality they are marked by the white

man's sentimental imagery and his preconceived notions of African characters. As for "natural poetic genius," the suffering Negro had two choices--to speak in a poor plantation "dialect" or to use the conventional patterns of sentimental poetic diction--neither alternative is satisfying to twentieth-century tastes.

[188]Thomas Adney, "The Slave, An Ode", European Magazine and London Review, XXII (October, 1792), 306.

[189]"The African's Complaint On-Board a Slave Ship", Gentleman's Magazine, LXXIII (August, 1793), 749.

[190]"The Negro", Monthly Magazine, IV (October, 1797), 286.

[191]"The Sorrows of Yamba", Universal Magazine, CI (July, 1797), 43.

[192]In Poetical Works (Edinburgh, 1855), I, 58-60.

[193]23n. Marjoribanks' verse, however, adopts a very different notion of the state of the dead: "Happy they, who in the friendly deep,/ Fly from their tyrants to eternal sleep" (27). Bryan Edwards' "An Inscription at the Entrance of a Burial Ground for Negro Slaves" also indicates the disinclination of whites to credit the Negro with paradise--he gets only rest:

> Stranger! whoe'er thou art, with reverence tread;
> Lo! these, the silent mansions of the dead!
> His life of labour o'er, the wearied slave
> Here finds, at length, soft quiet in the grave.
> View now, with proud disdain, th' unsculptor'd heap,
> Where injur'd innocence forgets to weep,
> Nor idly deem, although not heare are found
> The solemn aisle and consecrated ground,
> The spot less sacred:--o'er the turf-built shrine,
> Where Virtue sleeps, resides the Power Divine.

Edwards, nonetheless, desired to be buried in this plot among his slaves, should he die in Jamaica. See History (London, 1819), V, 234. The inscription first appeared anonymously in Universal Magazine, XCVIII (November, 1795), 347.

[194]Bryan Edwards denies that the Negroes deliberately court death, but in his ode on a Negro funeral he uses the conventional treatment of the deliverance-by-death motif. In the History, however, he says: "[There is a] prevalent notion, that the Negroes consider death not only as a welcome and happy release from the calamities of their condition, but also as a passport to the place of their nativity; a deliverance which, while it frees them from bondage, restores them to the society of their dearest, long-lost, and lamented relatives in Africa. But I am afraid that this, like other

European notions concerning the Negroes, is the dream of poetry; the sympathetick effusion of a fanciful or too credulous an imagination. The Negroes, in general, are so far from courting death, that, among such of them as have resided any length of time in the West Indies, suicide is much less frequent than among the free-born, happy, and civilized inhabitants of Great Britain. With them, equally with the whites nature shrinks back at approaching dissolution" (105-106).

[195]"An Appeal to England, on Behalf of the Abused Africans" (1789), 17.

[196]"The Dying African", Gentleman's Magazine, LXI (November, 1791), 1046-1047.

[197]The West Indies, III, 28.

[198]In The Warrior's Return, and Other Poems (Philadelphia, 1808), 74-85. "Lucayan" is a corruption of "Los Cayos," or the keys or shoals. The name was given to the Bahamas by the Spanish discoverers. The Indians of these islands resembled the Tainos and other Arawak tribes of the Greater Antilles.

[199]Elizabeth Bonhote's Londoner in The Rambles of Mr. Frankly (London, 1772) is puzzled by the Negro faith in transmigration. He holds out a more Christian and more conventional hope: "That man . . . flatters himself with the hopes of revisiting his own country when he dies--many cannot be made sensible to any other change, than that of returning to the country from which he was so disgracefully sold--and the thought affords pleasure. . . . But the slave must surely have forgotten his parents, who only regarded him in his days of infancy as a treasure of which they determined to make the most.--Sigh not, then, to return to such unhospitable shores--Would that I could explain to you all the far happier prospect that awaits you--for I doubt not but there will one day be as many Blacks as Whites in Paradise" (111-112).

[200]Gentleman's Magazine, LXXXVII (October, 1817), 349. A slightly different version of this poem appeared in the same periodical in April, 1826, 353.

[201]"The Slave", Scots Magazine, LXIV (October, 1802), 847. Leigh Hunt's "The Negro Boy, A Ballad" (1796-1800) is one of his juvenile works, which sings of "the little wand'ring Negro-boy" who roams the wintry streets of London--unaware of the "good which men call Pleasure." He is the prototype of many such little boys straying through nineteenth century sentimental literature. His death, however, is within the Christian mode, not the African notion of transmigration from the plantations:

No sorrow e'er disturbs the rest,
That dwells within the lonely grave;
Thou best resource the wo-wrung breast
E'er ask'd of Heav'n, or Heav'n e'er gave!
Ah then, farewell, vain world, with joy
I die the happy Negro-boy!

In Juvenilia: or, a Collection of Poems (London, 1801), 55-56.

[202] "The Lovers, an African Eclogue", Gentleman's Magazine, LIV (March, 1784), 199-200.

[203] 11. 571-577. General Description of the West-Indian Islands (1767), III, 113-115. In his West Indian adventure, Tom Cringle, Michael Scott describes a rollicking Negro funeral in Jamaica. The procession was led by "a squad of drunken vagabonds, singing and playing on gumbies," and the coffin was borne on the heads of two Negroes. In the course of the dancing the white-clad corpse rolled out, and the procession halted briefly while the body was bundled back into the coffin (38).

[204] Richard Madden's account of a Negro funeral differs somewhat from pre-emancipation pictures of the rite: "I heard a lugubrious concert of many African and Creole voices strike up, as I approached the hut of the deceased negro. . . . There were no African allusions [in the song] to Fetish divinities, but an abundance of scriptural paraphrases, strangely applied to their ideas of Happiness of a future state, and the deserts of the dead woman. The expressions were a mixture of genuine piety and fanaticism." Madden found himself called upon to read the service. He managed the rite successfully, except that he made the material error of ordering the committal before the handsome mahogany coffin had been set upon the ground. The old sexton put him straight: "Put him in de hole first, Massa,--always put him in de hole first." In Twelvemonth's Residence in the West Indies (Philadelphia, 1835), I, 139-141.

[205] History, II, 104-105. This poem was also printed anonymously in Gentleman's Magazine, LXXIX (December, 1809), 1149.

[206] Wordsworth makes a similar point in the two sonnets (XXIV and XXV, 1810) in which he describes the joyful funerals of the "rude Biscayans" which "brighten fortitude." He advises, however, that the dead infant be borne covered to his grave, for "a garland fashioned of the pure white rose/ Becomes not one whose father is a slave" (In Poetical Works, Sonnet XXV, 253, 11. 4-5).

[207] In his Journal (Boston, 1929) Matthew Lewis tells of the trial of two Negroes at Black River, Jamaica, for rebellion. They had used a child's funeral as a pretext for plotting a conspiracy. "The King of the Eboes" was sentenced to death and executed. Lewis records the incriminat-

ing song which had been used as a funeral chant, noting that it actually attempted rhyme and meter and was superior to other Negro songs he had heard on his own estate:

> Oh me good friend, Mr. Wilberforce, make we free!
> God Almighty thank ye! God Almighty thank ye!
> God Almighty, make we free!
> Buckra in this country no make we free:
> What Negro for to do? What Negro for to do?
> Take force by force! Take force by force!

By way of contrast, Lewis records a song of his "Cornwall bards" on one of his Jamaican estates:

> Hey-ho-day! me no care a dammee!
> Me acquire a house,
> Since massa come see wee--oh!
> Hey-ho-day! neger now quite eerie
> For once me see massa--hey-ho-day!
> When massa go, me no care a dammee,
> For how them usy we-hey-ho-day! (190).

[208] I, 127-128. Marly, in the novel bearing his name, also comments on the impact of sudden death upon the colonials: The overseer Wogan remarks "[This] is the best [country] for either a poor or rich man to die in. Here, one is not tied up on a sick-bed for weeks and weeks, as in some places. No, no! Things happen far better in this Island, ... Two or three days at the farthest make a finish of a man. . . . Besides, too, we get so accustomed to death, by the frequency of these quick exits, that it furnishes only an hour's talk ere it is forgotten. We do not whine and regret what is inevitable, nor do we render life bitter by thinking always on death." In Marly (Glasgow, 1828), 206. Warner Arundell describes the expedition with which his father's funeral was executed: "A West Indian funeral has fewer of the trappings of wo than a European interment. . . . Little preparation can be . . . made for the mournful occasion. Here, we hear of the sickness of a friend in the morning, and receive an invitation to his funeral that very evening. The relatives of the deceased [are] . . . overwhelmed with the first and full flood of sorrow; and those mockeries of wo, hired mourners and mutes, are here unknown. . . . My father's mortal remains were followed by many friends, and by all his slaves, whose grief, though brief, was yet violent and sincere." In Warner Arundell, Joseph, F. I. (London, 1838), I, 60-61.

[209] Madden explains that the knowledge of impending death, added to the ordinary travel hazards of the day, imparted a certain recklessness to emigrants: "There is something peculiar in the merriment of men who are embarking for far-distant lands--it is too high (to speak medically,) too hectic a sprightfulness for genuine gaiety. . . . No matter, feigned or felt, we [the magistrates] are all in high spirits; how will they be I wonder this day twelve-month? how many of the merry party may then be in existence?" (Twelvemonth Res., I, 14).

[210]"Summer". In Poetic Works, 75-76. William Cowper likewise saw little possibility of social or artistic advancement in tropical countries. Of Captain Cook's new-found islands in the South Seas he said:

> . . . Even the favoured
> Isles so lately found, although the constant sun
> Cheer all their seasons with a grateful smile,
> Can boast but little virtue: and, inert
> Through plenty, lose in morals what they gain
> In manners, victimes of luxurious ease.

(The Task, I, ll. 620-626).

[211]The poet would have it understood, however, that he is not a fanatic. In the cant of the day, he asks for a "gradual and gentle emancipation, which perhaps might be found to be as practicable on the offspring of Africa in our islands . . . as it has been on . . . some of the tribes of Europe from their antient vassalage" (31n).

[212]The West Indies, IV, 43.

III. The Poets' View of the Planter and His Islands

[1]"An Appeal to England" (1789), 15, 12. Thomas Wilkinson, a journeyman poet, owned himself "a stranger in the walks of literature" and confessed that he laid down his pen "to take hold of the plough."

[2]Robert Bage's Man as He Is (1792) is a novel which takes a morbid interest in Creole violence and obscenity. It contains the story of Fidel, an eloquent Noble Negro who is betrayed by two Creoles, the planter Benfield and the overseer Stukely. The tale is probably one of the most fiercely sensational incidents to be found in any British abolition novel. J. B. Moreton's Manners and Customs in the West India Islands (1790) is a rabidly prejudiced work in which the conditions of the slaves and the moral degradation of the whites are pictured in the darkest colours.

[3] Essay on Slavery is the pièce de résistance in a little horror volume published in New York in 1814 and "sold at the Juvenile Book-Store" there. The title page featured the Wedgwood slave and inscription. The first two essays concerned methods of procuring slaves and remarks on the slave trade. There followed seven descriptive engravings showing the separation of Negro families, instruments of torture, floggings and branding. Following the captain's poem is a reprint of Roscoe's ballad "The African." The entire collection was titled The Mirror of Misery: or, Tyranny Exposed.

[4]The planters are accused of turning old slaves adrift, whipping without regard to sex or age, causing pregnant women to miscarry, chaining slaves to ant-nests, smearing them with "cowhage" (a noxious weed which causes severe itching), and using "chains, hooks, and horns, of every size and shape" (Essay on Slavery, 12-16).

[5]Christopher Anstey in his "Horatian Imitation" (1776) includes the Nabob among the characters around Bath. Like his planter-brother, the colonel displays the conventional colonial characteristics:

> Secure from Wars, and dangerous Seas
> Colonel Jaghire enjoys his Ease;
> Buys Land, and Beeves, with Indian Gold,
> Which some poor English 'Squire has sold;
> Kings, Lords, and Commons he defies,
> "The Town is all my own, he cries,
> "That cursed Climate I've been hurt in,
> "And Nabob-making grows uncertain--
> "This snug Retreat I'm safe from Harm in,--
> "How sweet that Wood! that Lawn how charming!"
> But ah! his passion soon returns,
> With restless flames his Bosom burns;
> His Bark he rigs, resolv'd once more,
> The distant Ganges to explore,
> Rather than on his native Ground
> To starve--on Fourscore Thousand Pound.

In Prelude to An Flection Ball, in Poetical Letters from Mr. Inkle at Bath to his Wife at Glocester: with a Poetical Address to John Miller at Bath-easton Villa (Bath, 1776), 12-13.

[6]Creole atrocities served for fillers in newspapers and magazines on both sides of the Atlantic. An item from the Massachusetts Magazine may be taken as a case in point: "A rich planter at Jamaica took it into his head to build a carriage which was drawn by six Negroes harnessed two and two. He insisted upon travelling in this manner as expeditious as if he had post horses. The negroes had scarce drawn this monster a few miles when their strength and agility were exhausted; nevertheless, he forced them to draw him to the end of his journey by dint of his whip; they arrived half dead, palpitating, and their limbs covered with sweat, dust and blood. He ordered their wounds to be dressed with vinegar; and other six were harnessed for this inhuman amusement" (IV, March, 1792, 168-169).

[7]Many of the Negro girls thus tortured had blood-ties with their mistresses. Marjoribanks explains in a footnote that "the ladies are generally attended by girls of colour, who frequently are their near relations; in the third and fourth generation, many of them are almost as fair as Europeans."

[8]In 1809 James Grahame used less impassioned language than the Captain, but he made the same charges in "Africa Delivered":

> . . . [The slave's] shrieks
> Heard in the festive hall, are drowned in peals
> Of mirth; and, should a stranger's voice presume
> To plead for mercy, even the female hand
> With taunt demoniac fills the cup brim-full
> And sends it to give spirit to the arm
> That brings out music from a pipe so rude (III, 81).

[9]"The Simkiniad" (1790), 136-155. The poem is a pseudo-novel in letter format, written under the pen name of "Philanthropos." This writer also celebrated the sublime atmosphere of a cavern in St. Ann Parish, Jamaica ("The Grotto; or, Melancholy, an Ode," 130-137).

[10]In A Short Journey in the West Indies, II, 8-23.

[11]"What Triumph Moves on the Billows so Blue", in The Journal, 31-32.

[12]The History . . . of the West Indies, II, 33.

[13]Reverend Vardill, "The Spirit of Toussaint", European Magazine and London Review, LXVIII (July, 1814), 47.

[14]The Spectator, No. 80 (June 1, 1711), 342-345. More than a century after Steele's anecdote of the rival beauties Richard Madden found Jamaican society still basically unsound. Competition and the love of luxury remained a blight on the scene: "The demon of colonial society is the spirit of rivalry in luxurious entertainments and apparel. If Mrs. S-- gives a party, it is incumbent on Mrs. W-- to give a larger; if Miss A-- should happen to exhibit a tiara of pearls at the King's house, Miss B-- would go into hysterics if she could not display one of diamonds at the next ball; if the General gives three courses at dinner, the Adjutant feels himself imperatively called on to give four; and if his Excellency the Governor, should set down two-and-twenty guests at table, it would be a great dereliction of the first principles of hospitality in Jamaica for his Honour the Mayor, to have less than twenty-four, even though he have to build a new dining-room for the purpose. What is the effect of this spirit of rivalry? . . . [The] tranquil enjoyments of friendly intercourse in minor circles, and little reunions of neighbouring families, are unknown " (In Twelvemonth's Residence, I, 151-152).

[15]In their preoccupation with appearance, Creole ladies invented bizarre cosmetics. One of their most notable practices was the art of skinning the face with rancid cashew-nut oil in order to acquire a new complexion. Basing his remarks on Singleton's description of 1767, Trelawny Wentworth outlines the process in his West India Sketch Book (1834): "The Antillian ladies have had credit for the use of a cosmetick whose application is to be regarded only as a refinement upon self-persecution to which tight-lacing bears no sort of comparison, and it appears to have been practised at one time more particularly by the ladies of Monserrat. Having buried a quantity of cashew nuts for nine days, as a necessary charm, we presume, the corrosive oil contained in them was afterwards extracted, and laid lightly over the face and hands with a feather. One continued blister was thus raised over the whole surface, which gradually turned black, the head swelled to a prodigious size, and the patient, lying in one posture, unable to smile or speak, waited for several days a willing sufferer, till her hideous mask should fall off in flakes. The operation was not only painful but dangerous; one instance

is mentioned of the sight having been lost by an incautious application of oil, but what will not pride attempt, walking in the train of folly. We believe the abominable practice has now wholly ceased" (II, 275-276).

[16]Caribbeana contained essays modelled on The Spectator and satirical verses and epigrams. A pair of essays addressed to "our Lovely Country-Women" by Barbadian bachelors ("Centry-Lackwives") and married men ("Century-Havewives") reveals a distinct sense of national pride and identity. The "dearest Creolias" are rebuked for their preference for foppish Londoners over honest, local planters. See "To our Lovely Country-Women, who are Single, the Barbadian Batchelors, and Widowers, send lovingly Greeting" (Saturday, September 30, 1732); and "To our Lovely Country-Women, both single and double, the Barbadian Married Men send kindly Greeting" (Saturday, October 8, 1732), in Caribbeana (London, 1741), 56-59; 60-63.

[17](London, 1741), II, 276-277.

[18]The literary pre-eminence of Barbados is evidenced by the fact that in 1847 there was on record the publication of five newspapers in the island, but at times there had been as many as eight. "Barbados has always maintained a larger number of newspapers, in proportion to its population, than any other of the West India Islands . . . [even] the larger island of Jamaica, with its numerous and scattered populous towns" (Schomburgk, A History of Barbados, 124).

[19]Gentleman's Magazine, VIII (April, 1738), 214.

[20]Fawcett Burlington's collection, Broadside Ballads of the Restoration Period from the Jersey Collection known as the Osterley Park Ballads (London, 193-), contains three ballads on Virginia servitude, each with a detailed sub-title: "The Trappan'd Maiden; or, The Distressed Damesel" (The girls was cunningly Trappan'd, sent to Virginny from England, Where she doth Hardship undergo, their is no Cure it must be so: But if she lives to cross the Main, she vows she'll ne'r go there again); "The Trappan'd Welsh-man, sold to Virginia showing how a Welshman came to London, and went to see the Royal Exchange, where he met a Handsom' Lass, with whom he was enamoured; who, pretending to show him the ships, carried him aboard a Virginia-Man and sold him, having first got the Welsh-man's gold, to his great grief and sorrow"; and "The Woman Outwitted; or, The Weaver's Wife cunningly catch'd in a Trap, by her Husband, who sold her for Ten Pounds, and sent her to Virginny."

[21]In Specimens with Memoirs of the Less-Known British Poets, 1640-1800 (Edinburgh, 1760), III, 293.

[22]"Written on Board, on his leaving the Downs, in the Year 1720", Caribbeana, II (December 13, 1738), 292.

[23]"To a Young Lady Going to the West Indies", in Minor English Poets, 1660-1780 (London, 1967), 310.

[24]James Boswell, Life of Dr. Johnson (Westminster, 1901), II, 142.

[25]In Roderick Random (1748) Smollett gives us one of the most notable literary picaroons ever to visit the Caribbean. He paints a vivid social scene which is only indirectly glanced at by dramatists, poets and other prose writers. Smollett sailed as a surgeon's mate in 1741 on the HMS Cumberland in Vernon's unsuccessful Carthagena Expedition. His handsome Jamaican wife, Anne Lascelles, is said to have been the original Narcissa in Roderick Random. "[She] has been described as a 'fine lady, but a silly woman,' and there is no doubt that her stupidity often irritated her husband, who at best was generally peevish. . . . He was entirely faithful to her, and . . . was careful to make the point that the amorous adventures upon which he embarked his heroes had no counterpart in his own life." See Lewis Melville, The Life and Letters of Tobias Smollett (London, 1926), 23-32. Smollett's widow was ruined by a fire at Kingston in March, 1782.

[26]A paper war had ensued between Smollett and Grainger, and the latter finally embarked for the West Indies in destitution. On shipboard he saved the wife of Governor Burt of St. Christopher's from smallpox. Upon arrival at the island he married the Burt daughter and was thus allied with the principal families in the colony. During his long residence in St. Kitts he undertook the arduous labour of The Sugar-Cane. (See R. A. Davenport, "The Life of James Grainger", in The British Poets, LIX, 8-12). The poem received lavish praise in the Critical Review, while Smollett, one of the magazine's sponsors, was absent from England. See Vol. XVIII (October, 1764), 270-277.

[27]Singleton attempted to fuse the character of the heroic Negro with that of the picturesque--with very limited success.

[28]Singleton advises Creole wives to awaken their philandering husbands to "Nature's [and Virtue's] call" by their own patience:

> As Heav'n has form'd ye beautiful and fair,
> Be wife, be good, be tender, and be kind,
> And rather seek by gentle arts to win,
> Your truant lord back to his lawful bed
> Too oft allur'd by Ethiopic charms,
> And sinful made by an impetuous wife;
> Be chaste, obedient, mild, sedate, and true,
> With tender blandishments, and words of love,
> Reclaim your wearied spouse, meet him with smiles,
> Let him find certain happiness at home,
> And he'll not fly to looser joys abroad (ll. 449-459).

Singleton offers several beauty-hints for the tropics: exercise in the early morning, and the drinking of mineral waters and milk, but he denounces "face-skinning" as a diabolical practice.

[29]See also the tale of Junio and Theana (of St. Christopers) at the conclusion of Book I in Grainger's The Sugar-Cane, and the legend of Philander and Aurelia (of St. Croix) in Book III of John Singleton's General Description.

[30]In British Poets, LIX, 25-27. The 1809 edition of the poem is accompanied by an engraving showing Bryan's head rolling in the surf while Pereene faints on the bosom of her Negress.

[31]In Hood's Whimsicalities in Prose and Verse (London, n. d.), 116-117.

[32]In the same entry in the Journal Lewis describes the lady. She was his mulatto slave Mary Wiggins, who was "devoted" to him: "She was much too pretty not to obtain her invitation to Cornwall; on the contrary I insisted upon her coming, and bade her tell her husband that I admired his taste very much for having chosen her. I really think that her form and features were the most statue-like that I ever met with: her complexion had no yellow in it, and yet was not brown enough to be dark--it was more of an ash-dove colour than anything else; her teeth were admirable, both for colour and shape; her eyes equally mild and bright; and her face merely broad enough to give it all possible softness and grandness of control: her air and countenance would have suited Yariko; but she reminded me most of Grassini [a contralto of the London stage, 1804-1806] in 'La Vergine del Sole,' only that Mary Wiggins was a thousand times more beautiful, and that, instead of a white robe, she wore a mixed dress of brown, white, and dead yellow, which harmonized excellently well with her complexion; while one of her beautiful arms was thrown across her brow to shade her eyes, and a profusion of rings on her fingers glittered in the sunbeams. Mary Wiggins and an old Cotton-tree are the most picturesque objects that I have seen for these twenty years" (Journal, 66-67).

[33]Blackwood's Magazine, a pro-planter periodical, gave Chapman's poem a long and lavish review and concluded with the hope that the graces of Christianity would enable the West Indians to cope with the hardships of emancipation. See Vol. XXXIV (October, 1833), 503-528.

[34]Cited in J. H. Parry and P. M. Sherlock, A Short History of the West Indies (London, 1957), 4.

[35]In Specimens with Memoirs of the less-Known British Poets, II, 177-178.

[36]In Works of the English Poets (London, 1790), XVI. James Grainger prefaces his discourse on Barbadan limestone in The Sugar-Cane by a nod of recognition to Waller, one of the very few poets who had praised the beauties of his beloved Caribbean:

The famed Bermuda's every healthy isles,
More famed by gentle Waller's deathless strains,
Than for their cedars (III, 108).

The Bermudas retained their reputation as a garden paradise through the next two centuries. Even Joshua Marsden in his moralistic tale of evangelical endeavour in the islands devotes at least a third of his essay to a description of the bounties of nature. See "A Tale from the Bermudas--Somers Islands", Imperial Magazine, I (November, 1831), 259-261.

[37] Gentleman's Magazine, VIII (March and April, 1738), 158, 213-214.

[38] "Jamaica, a Descriptive and Didactic Poem" (1764?), in History . . . of the West Indies (1819), 215-235.

[39] In review of Barbadoes , Blackwood's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1833), 507.

[40] The Sugar-Cane, 28. Apropos of Grainger's work, Alexander Chalmers complained that "it will not be easy to persuade the reader of English poetry to study the cultivation of the sugarplant, merely that he may add some new imagery to the more ample stores which he can contribute without study or trouble". Barbadoes, Blackwood's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1833), 506. Judging from the public reception which the poem received, there seems to have been some justification in this criticism, in spite of the fact that the Blackwood's reviewer protested: "Nothing in our literature equals the unfailing stupidity of his critical remarks. . . . Who would not wish to add new imagery from the loveliest and grandest scenery on the face of the sea, to his stores, however ample?"

[41] Boswell, Life of Dr. Johnson, II, 142; III, 292-294. Davenport said: "The Muses are fastidious, and cannot easily be induced to be teachers of manual processes. . . . [And] by what art is it possible to make dignified or attractive the description of merely mechanical toil, where, amidst squalor, and privation, and a mournful monotony of existence, man is degraded into something scarcely superior to the machine which is the companion and the rival of his efforts? . . . The horrors of the slave-trade, and of the slave system, have so often been depicted to us in vivid colours, that to read of the culture of the sugar-cane inevitably calls up a succession of the most painful ideas. No pastoral images present themselves to our imagination . . . [even though] Grainger bestows on the negroes the Arcadian denomination of swains. . . . He gravely advises them not to repine at their destiny, but to 'pursue their pleasing task'". "Life of James Grainger", in The British Poets, LIX, 13-15.

[42] Preface to The Sugar-Cane, 16.

[43]11. In a similar vein, Captain Marjoribanks in his violent Essay (1792) finds no redeeming feature in the Jamaican countryside:

Do your fair fields with pipe or song resound?
No! chains and scourges echo all around!
Thro' verdant meads yon limpid waters flow,
But scarce a freeman there is seen to go!
Not gay to me yon gaudy mountain's side,
There sickly Slavery "work'd and wept," and died! (27).

[44]The Freemason's Magazine; or, General and Complete Library, III (October, 1794), 294-295.

[45]The Retrospective Review, X (1824), 160-172.

[46]Captain Stedman in his Narrative (1796) gave visual expression to the reverse of Gilbert's concept of the relationship between the New World and the Old. Imperialistically he painted three Venuses--the white one in the center flanked by a black and a brown. The picture is captioned "Europe supported by Africa and America" (II, 394). William Blake was the engraver.

[47]"What Triumph Moves on the Billows so Blue?" 31-32.

[48]Journal of a West Indian Proprietor, 13. Lewis died in the arms of his valet Tita, who was afterwards present at Byron's death.

[49]In The Sugar-Cane Grainger describes the sport of tropical fishing in the tale of Junio whose ship on the return to the West Indies pauses in the Madieras for recreation.

[50]Grainger also observed the surprising vigour of the humming bird:

Tipp'd with burnish'd gold,
And with imperial purple crested high,
More gorgeous than the train of Juno's bird,
Thy bloomy honours oft the curious Muse
Hath seen transported: seen the humming bird,
Whose burnish'd neck bright glows with verdant gold;
Least of the winged vagrants of the sky,
Yet dauntless as the strong pounced bird of Jove;
With fluttering vehemence attack thy cups [the privet, a flowering plant]
To rob them of their nectar's luscious store.
(In The Sugar-Cane, I, 58-59).

[51]Imperial Magazine, II (1832), 140-141.

[52]The island of Barbados was probably first discovered by the Portuguese in their voyage from Brazil. They left the island as they found it, without occupants, for the Caribs had deserted it.

[53]Barbadoes. A Poem (1833). The Portuguese named the island "isle of beards" after a native fig tree with long filaments. (See also Dunbar's The Cruise, LXI, 44).

[54]The last portion of Chapman's poem is a eulogy of Bishop Coleridge and his labours in the island as well as an indictment of evangelical missionary activity in the Caribbean.

[55]The South Devon Monthly Museum, III (June, 1834), 233-235.

[56]In A Twelvemonth's Residence, I, 95-97. Madden was one of the magistrates appointed to administer the requirements of the Emancipation Act.

[57]Preface to The Cruise; or, A Prospect of the West Indian Archipelago (London, 1835). "Men's minds, both at home and in the colonies are at present intently fixed on the proposed regeneration of our West Indian possessions, by the eradication of a long-established system, and the introduction of a new one. While therefore all eyes are turned towards the political prospects of the West India Islands . . . it may not be uninteresting to take a glance at their picturesque beauties and natural treasures. While the statesman and political economist are employed in profound speculations on their government and internal polity, the poet may be permitted to wander musing through the chain, and to luxuriate in their enchanting scenery and eternal summer. The marine graces and tropical splendors of the Antilles are seldom sufficiently estimated, and are indeed but little known to the generality of European readers. . . . No countries possess in a higher degree the elements of poetry, or offer richer resources for thought and imagery. Surpassing the Cyclades in picturesque attractions, they want but their classic associations to be objects of equal admiration" (viii).

[58]See a full discussion of "The Isle of Palms" in Chapter IV, 405-408 of this study.

[59]Dunbar chose to use the Spenserian stanza because he felt that since he was incapable of good blank verse only that mode could "adequately sustain the grandeur of the tropics" (Preface to Beauties of Tropical Scenery, viii).

[60]Dunbar individualizes each island: Curacao, home of the music volute shell; Margarita, belonging to Columbia; Trinidad, Isle of the

Trinity; Grenada, Trinidad's "softer sister", and Barbados, home of the Inkle and Yarico legend and of the buccaneers.

[61]The later novelists, whatever their humanitarian or propagandistic intentions may have been, also turned aside to note picturesque island landscapes. Marly finds the surroundings of his Water Melon Valley estate "romantically grand": "All nature at the feet of the travellers was smiling in the rich and diversified foliage of a tropical climate, on a virgin soil; . . . [The bush of Jamaica] surpasses the forests of every other country without the tropics, in the loftiness of the trees, and the strength of their trunks. The mountain palm . . . the lofty cedar, the immense silk cotton tree, and the famed mahogany, with many others, grace this view of nature's works, for the hand of man has scarcely yet exerted on this part of the forest". See Marly (Glasgow, 1828), 65-66. Two decades later Henry Senior sought less sublime heights. He admitted that Kingston at closer view lacked the "romantic magnificence" of the mountain views first seen from the ship, but that it was not without interest. At the naval watering-place, for instance, is "the noisy assemblage of washerwomen . . . standing all day nearly naked in the running water, with a bench covered with linen before them, hammering it between boards after the continental fashion." But he waxes almost poetic in portraying the view from his plantation at Mt. Edwards: "The red-shingled roofs of Kingston resembled, at this distance . . . a brick-kiln without smoke. The narrow long line of the palisadoes, overgrown with mangroves, looked like an immense green water-snake floating in the sea, the head of which seemed formed by the town of Port Royal. The inlet off the furthest point might be supposed to be the mouth; and . . . the masts of the shipping resembled most formidable teeth. The white foam of the breakers, which were dashing against the rocky Keys off the palisadoes, was just distinguishable; and farther out all was sea to the horizon". See Charles Vernon (London, 1849), I, 29, 59.

[62]See also The Caraquin: A Tale of the Antilles (1837). Dunbar's last work in the genre appeared three years before his death: Illustrations of the Beauties of Tropical Scenery; Lyrical Sketches and Love Songs (1863). Most of the book is a compilation of lyrics from The Cruise and Indian Hours. The Preface is an important statement of his literary theory and a summation of his work: "I have not sought to present merely light, agreeable pictures; but have endeavoured to combine with poetical sentiment much interesting historical and general information" (ix). Above all, he had tried to eulogize "the marine graces and natural splendors of the Antilles" (v)--a tribute long overdue.

[63]Indian Hours . . . Comprising the Nuptials of Barcelona, and The Music Shell (London, 1839).

[64]From the Preface to "The Music Shell", 84-86. This portion of Indian Hours contains a number of distinctively Caribbean lyrics. It is

not necessary to analyze any of these undistinguished, eighteenth-century oriented poems in detail, but a glance at a few of the titles will indicate the strongly ethnic character of Dunbar's work: "The Sugar Cane" (described without reference to slave labour); "The French Picaroon's Song" (a rare poetic reference to the pirate cult of the Caribbean); "The Scornful Creole Beauty" (modelled on Pygmalion's ivory statue, just endued with life); "On a Flower of the Night-Blowing Cereus' Closing When Held to a Lady's Cheek" (Amelia's beauty is too pure for the magnificent orchid to rival); "The West Indian Lover's Evening"; and "On a Handsome Shell, Given to a Lady."

IV. The Stage Negro and His Master

[1] In The London Stage (London, 1825), I. "The Padlock", Hopkins tells us, was "a very complete, and pretty piece--the music very striking . . . and it went off very well, and was much applauded." See The London Stage, 1660-1800 (Carbondale, 1960), IV, 1356. There were 113 performances of the play in the nine-year period following its initial presentation in 1768.

[2] Mungo is a stock name for West Indian slaves and is of African derivation. Most of the Negroes in England during Bickerstaffe's time were, or had been, attached to West Indian families.

[3] (London, 1808), I, 79-82. Clarkson reprinted the entire epilogue in his History. It had appeared in The Bee (February 6, 1793), entitled "Mungo's Address--the epilog to 'The Padlock'". It was signed "P. P." and dated from Leeds, November 21, 1792.

[4] In 1778 Foote added "The Nabob" to his colonial group. In it Sir John Oldham, an East Indian proprietor with Oriental airs mixes with Company executives and antiquarians with comic effect.

[5] In Three Centuries of Drama: English (New York, 1956).

[6] The farces of Foote and his contemporaries, Colman and Garrick, were among the more potent attacks on sentimental comedy. Especially noteworthy is Foote's "Primitive Puppet Show" at the Haymarket (1773). He had an unusually large comprehension of the nature of sentimental comedy. While most attacks upon it were directed against its sententious style and serious tone, Foote struck deeper and made ridiculous the sentimental desire to idealize common life. "The Cozeners" ran for twenty-one nights in the first season.

[7] Compare Foote's maliciously satiric characterization of Mr. and Mrs. Aircastle and Toby with Goldsmith's good-natured portrayal of Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle and Tony. Toby is also reminiscent of Southerne's Daniel.

[8]Foote's wit and strong perception of the ludicrous, along with his unusual power of mimicry, made him an outstanding farce-writer. On occasion, however, he exposed on the stage the natural imperfections and innocent absurdities of persons who really merited no public ridicule, other than the fact that their peculiarities happened to be generally obnoxious to the world.

[9]Huntington Library, Larpent Collection, MS 400.

[10]Addison describes a similar situation in the misfortunes of one "John Enville, Knt." whose wife insisted on "the disposal of [his] Fortune and the Regulation of his Family," and in the course of her material and social renovations she overturned the stolid British values by which he had always lived. "She turned off a parcel of very careful Servants who had been long with me, and introduced in their stead a couple of Black-a-moors, and three or four very genteel Fellows in Laced Liveries". See The Spectator, No. 299 (February 11, 1711), 325-326.

[11]The London Stage, II, 1949. Genest attributes the violence to an additional cause: "This Farce occasioned a riot on this evening [February 5, 1776]--the author was the conductor of a most scurrilous newspaper, called the Morning Post: in which abuse was daily vented on private and public characters. The Farce itself was probably as trifling as Bate's other productions; but people were determined to damn it out of dislike to the author. . . . Garrick acted to sweeten the dose, but it would not go down" (V, 488-489). The Westminster Magazine (February, 1776) also declared the production "a theatrical trifle."

[12](I, vi) The costume of Amoroso in this scene compares with that of Sambo in "Laugh When you Can" (See 319 in this chapter).

[13]In Cumberland's British Theater (London, 1827-1828).

[14]Edward the footman is modelled on the character of the hero of "The Intriguing Footman; or, The Humours of Harry Humbug" (1791), a piece attributed to James Whitely. (See the Preface to "An Irishman in London", 4.)

[15](London, n. d.) John Haines is best known for his nautical plays.

[16]Georg Lichtenberg in his contemporary commentaries on Hogarth's engravings (1784-1796) describes the moment in which the lady overturns the silver table with tea-pot and cups during an argument with the Israelite: "Everything jingles and clatters and crashes; even the Zona torrida, the Moor, trembles and stands petrified, while his compatriot, the monkey, makes off. His woolly hair seems to stand on end. Perhaps while sorrowing over the fate of his West Indian brothers, he sees with horror that here

too he will have to--clear up the mess. The figure is striking and the expression has become almost proverbial." See The World of Hogarth (Boston, 1966), 21-22.

[17]One disinterested writer said: "The practice of importing negroe servants into these kingdoms is said to be already a grievance that requires a remedy, and yet is every day encouraged, insomuch that the number in this Metropolis only, is supposed to be near 20,000, the main objections to their importation is, that they cease to consider themselves as slaves in this free country. . . . It is therefore highly impolitic to introduce them as servants here, where that rigour and severity is impracticable which is so absolutely necessary to make them useful." See Gentleman's Magazine, XXXIV (October, 1764), 493.

[18]J. Jean Hecht, Continental and Colonial Servants in Eighteenth-Century England (Northampton, 1954), 33-36.

[19]Huntington Library, in the Kemble-Devonshire Collection, No. 266 (London, 1781).

[20]The conclusion of "Harlequin Mungo": At Pantaloon's house the negotiations for wedding Columbine to a Chinese merchant are broken up, and Harlequin, Columbine and the Wizard take ship back to England, followed closely by Pantaloon, the Chinese and the Clown in another. The traditional chase takes place through the Tower of London, the Den of Beasts, and other places reflecting the tastes and topics of the day.

[21](London, 1807).

[22]West India Sketch Book, II, 171-177.

[23]Wentworth reports that the group of amateur Antiguan actors who presented "She Stoops to Conquer" played the drama in triplicate, with three sets of performers on stage at the same time--in order to make use of the many would-be actors who had applied (II, 168-169).

[24]There was a temporary delay at this point because the transformation of harlequin aborted: "Only the chequered legs of Harlequin appeared beneath a mass of dark coloured drapery, which, as he ascended many feet above the stage, formed confused folds about his body, whilst the voice of the manager behind the scenes vociferated lustily 'Let go, let go!' . . . The curtain dropped for a few moments to allow the musicians to recover harmony; . . . and harlequin to regain his self-possession." When the "embryo harlequin" was disentangled from the strings, hooks and ropes holding his inner and outer garments together, the show went on.

[25]"Harlequin Planter" had wide appeal. Wentworth says that "the audience, white, yellow, and black, freemen and slaves were all vastly delighted, and notwithstanding the price of admission was high--namely, Boxes 18 s. Pit 13s. 6d. Gallery 9s. currency, the house was crowded in every part" (II, 177).

[26]In Miscellaneous Plays (London, 1805).

[27]This statement is an interesting allusion which apparently has reference to the Strong and Somerset cases. Abolitionist Granville Sharp won two court cases which publicly underlined the evils of the slave trade. In 1767 he took up the affair of Jonathan Strong, an ill and unprofitable Negro who had been cast off by a Barbadian lawyer, David Lisle, in England. When Strong had recovered from his sickness, he was kidnapped by Lisle and sold to a Jamaican planter for £30. In 1772 Sharp fought the case of James Somerset, a Negro in circumstances similar to Strong's. He successfully liberated both Negroes, and these legal proceedings called forth the ruling of Lord Mansfield, Chief Justice, to the effect that the right of property in slaves could not be upheld in an English court (See Parry and Sherlock, History, 177-178).

[28]In her Advertisement to the second edition of "Rayner," Miss Baillie defends her creation of this final scene: "It has also been objected, from many different quarters, that the incident of Ohio sawing across the main beam of the scaffold, &c. is a very bad one, and so absurd, that it would set an audience into a roar of laughter. That it is not a good one I very readily admit; but, in representation, the absurdity, or I ought rather to say, ludicrousness of it, so far from being more obvious, would be less so than in the closet. . . . This incident, however, is most certainly not happily conceived, and as it is all comprised within the compass of a very few lines, might easily be changed into any other in which Ohio is still made the agent, by any person who should be willing to bring this play before an audience" (v-vi. Italics mine).

[29]In The Modern Theater (London, 1811). Frederick Reynolds was a prolific stage-writer. Of his nearly 100 tragedies and comedies, some twenty obtained temporary popularity. His plays have been described as "slight" and "aimed at the modes and follies of the moment." Byron, in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers", includes Reynolds as one of the degraders of drama: "While Reynolds vents his 'dammes, poohs, and zounds'/ And common-place and common-sense confounds. . .'" In 1813 an anonymous burletta on "Laugh When You Can" was staged at the Surrey Theater.

[30]Miss Gloomly, holding "laughter to be a . . . low and immoral . . . tendency," is a sentimental "blue-stocking" author who has written Artemesia, the Victim of Sensibility; and the Effusion of the Soul, in addition to elegies, sonnets and other pathetic and moral publications" (I, ii).

[31]Huntington Library, Larpent Collection, MS 1644.

[32]In Act II Laura receives a torrid love poem from "Zanta Benzada, Prince of Foulah, to the Beautiful Englishwoman." This sentimental lyric was hopefully to find a place beside the declaration of Shakespeare's Prince of Morocco.

[33]The Mandingoes in "Kongo Kolo" bear distinct resemblance to the Maroons of Jamaica. The Maroons were originally runaway, outlawed Negroes from Jamaica, where they had escaped their Spanish masters under the leadership of Cudjoe. Many of them were hunted down with dogs, recaptured, and shipped to Nova Scotia. The subduing of the Maroons remaining in the central mountains of Jamaica aroused public interest throughout the eighteenth century, especially during the two "Maroon wars" of 1734 and 1795. The Maroons, when tamed by treaties with the colonial legislature, made savage and effective mercenaries for tracking down runaway slaves. See Wylie Sypher, Guinea's Captive Kings, 45-46; and Robert Dallas, History of the Maroons (1803).

[34]Thomas John Dibdin and his brother Charles Isaac Mungo wrote prolifically for the new illegitimate theater of the early nineteenth century. Thomas Dibdin wrote some 226 dramas, and his brother, 167. Their works included spectacles, melodramas, operas, pastorals and preludes, burlesques, extravaganzas, ballets, and pantomimes. See Nicoll, History of Early Nineteenth Century Drama, II, 280-286; and History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama (Cambridge, 1927), 256-257.

[35]In Modern Plays (London, 1818), XVI.

[36]Quinine, the specific for malarial fever, was made from the bark of the quinquina tree. The guaiac tree of Venezuela, first described by a Spanish physician in 1493, was another important medicinal tree which was a remedy for the "pox" (syphilis). It detoured some of the seekers of El Dorado. See Chapman, The Golden Dream, Chapter 2. For settlers in the Indies and Spanish America the virtues of the quinquina and guaiac trees were, in some ways, more important than gold.

[37]Old Beatrice, jealous of Zuma, is cast in the role of the disillusioned colonist who can only cling to the traditions of the Old World.

[38]Pirate dramas were by no means confined to Caribbean activities, as popular as that area was. Classical and Moorish settings had been perenially attractive, and with the ascendancy of the East Indies, a new area was opened in the Indian ocean. The British Isles themselves, popularized by Sir Walter Scott's novels, became a fruitful place for both fictitious and realistic smuggling and privateering. Although Negroes frequently appeared in these dramas, lending them an exotic, Gothic air, they are beyond the province of this study.

Among the many pirate plays which did appear in the first half of the nineteenth century, however, there were many with Caribbean settings--a fact which is indicative not only of their correlation with public taste, but also the constant problem of controlling privateering in the West Indies. See, for instance: John C. Cross, "King Caesar; or, The Negro Slaves" (1801); Michael O'Sullivan, "The Corsair: or, The Pirate's Isle" (1814); "The Buccaneers" (1824); "The Bold Bucaniers; or Caribs" (1826); "The Brown Devil; or, The Charmed Pirate" (1830); "Amalderac, The Black Pirate: or, The Rock of Death" (1840); and William H. Williams, "The Wreck; or, The Buccaneers Bridal" (n. d.).

[39] In Three Centuries of Drama: English, 1751-1800 (New York, 1956).

[40] (VIII, 562). Blackbeard became a legend of the American as well as the English stage. Congressman Lemuel Sawyer's comedy (1844) on the treasure-hunting for Blackbeard's gold, however, had an undercurrent of the political corruption in Currituck County, North Carolina. See Richard Walser's introduction and facsimile of the play (Raleigh, N. C., 1952).

[41] In Modern Plays, XII. Pocock's drama was apparently influenced by Pierecourt, a French dramatist whose "Robinson Crusoe" appeared in Paris in 1805 and was reviewed in 1826. An anonymous melodrama of the same title was published in England in 1842, as was Mark Lemon's burletta. Edward Blanchard's spectacular of the same title appeared in 1845. The harlequin format was applied to Defoe's legend in "Robinson Crusoe and Harlequin Friday" (1786); "Puck's Pantomime; or, Harlequin and Robinson Crusoe" (1844); and Henry Byron's "Robinson Crusoe; or, Harlequin Friday and the King of the Caribee Islands" (n.d.).

[42] Genest, IX, 432.

[43] "Charles Kean" in The Examiner. In Collected Works (London, 1904), 365.

[44] As has already been shown, the fires of imperialism burned low in the overseas-oriented lyric poetry of the period. One must search long to discover even one instance such as is to be found in Amelia Opie's "The Negro Boy's Tale" (1802). The Jamaican planter Trevannion is impatient to set sail for England. Passengers and crew alike rejoice over the prospects of leaving the West Indies in a song which might easily have been lifted out of a melodrama:

> Haste! hoist the sails! fair blows the wind:
> Jamaica, sultry land, adieu!
> Away! and loitering Anna find!
> I long dear England's shores to view (53).

Abolitionist poets and colonists alike seldom found Britain's imperialistic activities admirable.

[45] J. G. Stedman, Narrative of a Five Years' Expedition against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam (London, 1796), 2 vols.

[46] Joanna, or, The Female Slave. A West Indian Tale. Founded on Stedman's Narrative (London, 1824). This novel is merely a précis of the Narrative. It attempts to superimpose sentimental and abolition material over Stedman's original work.

[47] See The Songs, Duets, Glees, Chorusses, &c. in the New Grand Spectacle called Joanna of Surinam (London, 1804).

[48] A sampling of titles from the Lord Chamberlain's records gives evidence of the growing interest in the plight of coloured people: "The Quadroon Slave" (1841); "The Ship Boy; or, The White Slave of Guadeloupe" (1847); and Edward Stirling's "The White Slaves; or, The Flag of Freedom" (1849). In the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries a "white slave" was an indentured servant, but in the nineteenth century the term most often applied to fair persons of mixed blood.

[49] In Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (New York, 1931), 588-615.

[50] (London, 1777), Bell's Edition.

[51] Genest said that "Polly" is "miserably inferiour" to "The Beggar's Opera," but that "it is much better than the usual run of Operas" (V, 583-584). Although the sequel immediately followed the first opera in 1729, it was not acted until thirty years later. The Lord Chamberlain suppressed it, not so much for anything contained in it, says Genest, but "out of a mean, dirty, pitiful spirit of revenge for the honest and open satire of 'The Beggar's Opera.' The censor, however, as is often the case, defeated his own purposes, for 'Polly' was published by subscription, and Gay is said to have made more money than he could have done by the representation" (Ibid., III, 245-246. See also V, 583-584).

[52] I, 18-19. See also "The Beggar's Opera", II, iv.

[53] The idea of women seeking their fortunes in the West Indies in the disguise of men was not without historical basis. A General History of the Pirates (1724) by Captain Charles Johnson (New York, 1926) was first published just four years before Gay wrote "Polly". Anne Bonney and Mary Read were two colourful adventurers who ranged the Caribbean with pirates and buccaneers, fighting duels and full-fledged battles and carrying on love affairs--their true identity being generally unknown. The account of the close of their daring careers is told in "The Tryals of Captain John Rackham and other Pirates, who were all Condemn'd for Piracy, at the Town of St. Jago de la Vega, in the Island of Jamaica . . . [in] November, 1720, as also the Tryals of Mary Read and Anne Bonny . . ." (London, Public Record Office, 1721). The executions of both ladies were temporarily postponed since both were pregnant. See Clinton Black, Tales of Old Jamaica (Kingston, 1952), 22-39. Titles from the Lord Chamberlain's Manuscripts (See Nicoll, History of Early Nineteenth-Century Drama, II) and elsewhere indicate a popular interest in female pirates: "Ann

Jane Thornton, the Female Sailor" (1835); Charles Dillon, "The Female Blue-beard" (1844); and George Pitt, "Pauline the Pirate; or, The Female Buccaniers" (1845). See also an anonymous drama of the same title in 1845 at Liverpool. The Amazonian tradition here is, of course, a classical one.

[54] In Three Centuries of Drama: English (New York, 1956).

[55] Townley advertized his work apologetically: "It was a real Desire to do good, amongst a very large and useful Body of People, that gave Rise to this little Piece. The Author thought the Stage, where the Bad might be disgrac'd, and the Good rewarded, the most ready and effectual Method for this Purpose: And, as he never wrote before in the Dramatic Way, and was unwilling to be known, he was Happy in recommending the Performance, by the Assistance of a Friend, to the Care and Judgment of Mr. Garrick" (Preface to "High Life Below Stairs"). Some later editions of the play cited David Garrick's name as author.

[56] See "High Life Below Stairs", in The London Stage (London, 1825), I.

[57] Richard Ryan describes the reception of Townley's play in Edinburgh: "The practice of giving vails [gratuities] to servants at one time universally prevailed in Scotland. Nothing can be conceived meaner, on the part of a master, than permitting his servants to be paid by others,--nothing more inhospitable towards guests. . . . Although it is the province of the stage to lash the vices, and to ridicule the follies of the people, in all ranks, yet soon after the farce of 'High Life Below Stairs' was published, the footmen taking it in dudgeon, that a farce, reflecting upon their fraternity, should be exhibited, resolved that it should no more be performed. . . . [They wrote a letter] containing the most violent threatenings, both against the actors and the house, in case the piece should be represented; declaring that above seventy people had agreed to sacrifice fame, honour, and profit to prevent it. . . . No sooner was the piece begun, than a prodigious noise was heard in the footmen's gallery. . . . Many of the gentlemen discovered, amongst the noisy crew, their own servants. When they would not submit to authority, their masters, assisted by others in the house, went up to the gallery; and it was not till after a severe battle, in which the servants were fairly overpowered and thrust out of the house, that quietness could be restored." See Dramatic Table Talk (London, 1825), 220-222.

[58] Goldsmith also lamented the barrenness of incident, but admitted that one or two scenes of "High Life" were "fine satire and sufficiently humourous." He also commended the actors who "shewed more humour than I had fancied them capable of." The Bee (1759), 145.

[59] There was another play, "Low Life Above Stairs," which was never acted but which was intended as a counterpart of Townley's drama. It was subtitled "A Farce as it is acted in most families of distinction throughout the kingdom." Genest found it contemptible as drama but with some merit as a satire. He pronounced it "one of the most indecent pieces ever printed" (X, 179-180).

[60]"Come here, fellow-servant, and listen to me,
I'll shew you how those of superior degree
Are only dependents, no better than we.
Chorus: Both high and low in this do agree,
'Tis here fellow-servant,
And there fellow-servant,
And all in a livery.

See yonder fine spark in embroidery drest,
Who bows to the great, and if the smile is blest!
What is he i'faith, but a servant at best.
Chorus: Both high, &c.

Nature made all alike, no distinction she craves:
So we laugh at the great world, its fools and its knaves;
For we are all servants, but they are all slaves.
Chorus: Both high, &c.

The fat-shining glutton looks up to the shelf
The wrinkled lean miser bows down to his pelf,
And the curl-pated beau is a slave to himself.
Chorus: Both high, &c.

The gay sparkling belle, who the whole town alarms,
And with eyes, lips, and neck, sets the smarts all in arms,
Is a vassal herself, a mere drudge to her charms.
Chorus: Both high, &c.

Then we'll drink like our betters, and laugh, sing and love,
And when sick of one place, to another we'll move;
For, with little and great, the best joy is to rove.
Chorus: Both high, &c.

[61]O'Keefe tells of a hungry Irish actor who looked forward joyously to the feast of excellent roast, fowl and wine called for in the last scene of "High Life Below Stairs" only to be bitterly disappointed--for his skillfully directed fork failed to make an impression upon the "painted timber" with which the property-man had sought to fill the bill, and the wine was a "mere coloured element" (Recollections, I, 160. Also Genest, IV, 576-577. At Drury Lane, October 31, 1759).

[62]Isaac Bickerstaffe enjoyed a considerable amount of prestige in the early part of his life. Mrs. Inchbald considered him second only to Gay as a farce-writer, and he associated with the most famous men of his day, including prominent members of Dr. Johnson's circle. Then he fell into ignominy, being dismissed from the marines and accused of a capital crime. He fled to France in 1772 and lived under an assumed name. His exile stretched out for forty years.

[63]In Three Centuries of Drama: English. Between 1760 and 1771 Bickerstaffe produced a score of pieces for the stage. "Love in the City" was an "urban" counterpart to his earlier "pastoral" comic opera, "Love in a Village" (1763).

[64]The opening chorus of "Love in a City" defines the mercantile milieu into which West Indian wealth ultimately drifted:

"Hail, London, noblest mart on earth,
Unrivall'd still in commerce reign;
Whence riches, honours, arts have birth,
And industry ne'er toils in vain (I, i).

[65]Of the training of his daughter the grocer testifies: "I have given her the best of educations--French, music--Mr. Thrum, our organist, says upon the spinet he never saw her fellow--And she has had a dancing-master, as I may say, ever since she was the height of a sugar loaf" (I, v). Barnacle takes exception to Young Cockney's embroidered waistcoat and "the flour and suet" on his hair. Shop keepers, he finds, now practice all the noble vices: "Tradespeople are out of their senses now-a-days; no sooner are they a little above the world but they must have town-houses and country-houses; every night running junketting to gardens and play-houses; and in a year or two there is eighteen-pence in the pound for their creditors" (I, vii). The theme of commercial pyramid-climbing counterpoints Priscilla's false status, with Barnacle as the norm for frugality and commonsense.

[66]In The London Stage (London, 1827), IV.

[67]Genest, V, 134.

[68]In Plays of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century, 748-787.

[69]The Critical Review, XXXI (February, 1771), 113. Arthur Murphy said: "This has always been considered as Cumberland's best play . . . [but] tho' this piece is deservedly a favourite both on and off stage, yet it cannot be said to be a copy from life--the foibles, the humours, and real manners of a West Indian planter are not delineated with truth and accuracy" (Genest, V, 297).

[70]The Monthly Review (February, 1771). Cited in E. T. Williams, "Richard Cumberland's West Indian", MLN, XXXV (November, 1920), 414.

[71]The comedy was described as having "amiableness and splendour" in the character of Belcour (The Monthly Review, February, 1771), as well as a "volatile and gay spirit" (The British Chronicle, January 30, 1771), together with a "great variety of incidents" (The London Magazine, January 30, 1771). See also The Oxford Magazine (January, 1771); The Universal Magazine (February, 1771); The London Courant (November 22, 1772). The play was also a matter of daily conversation. At Genoa Lady Blessington told Lord Byron: "You remind me of Belcour in 'The West Indian.'" The poet quipped: "No one sins with more repentance or repents with less amendment than I do" (From A Journal of the Conversations of Lord Byron with the Countess of Blessington, 102. Cited in Williams, 413).

[72](Boston, 1806), 115-116. The title of a comparatively late Creole "spectacular" indicates that the concept of shocking West Indians did not die easily: "The West Indian Terrific Brothers," performed at Astley's Pavilion in January, 1813). Cumberland's interpretation of the sentimental ideal of such unpopular characters was at least a more original effort at reforming the age than were the endless declamations of sentimental characters against duelling, gaming, and immorality.

[73]Ibid., 122-123.

[74]Cumberland says of the opening night: "A rumour had gone about, that the character, which gave its title to the comedy, was satirical; of course the gentlemen, who came under that description, went down to the theater in great strength, very naturally disposed to chastise the author for his malignity, and their phalanx was not a little formidable. Mrs. Cumberland and I sat with Mr. and Mrs. Garrick in their private box. When the prologue-speaker had gone the length of the four first lines the tumult was excessive, and the interruption held so long, that it seemed doubtful, if the prologue would be suffered to proceed. Garrick was much agitated; he observed to me that the appearance of the house, particularly in the pit, was more hostile than he had ever seen it." Then, with justifiable pride Cumberland describes how the tide was turned to allow for the development of Belcour's excellencies: "[I] remarked to him that the very first word, which discovered Belcour's character to be friendly, would turn the clamour for us. . . and in the delivery of a few lines more than they had already heard they seemed reconciled to wait the development of a character from which they were told to expect-- 'Some emanations of a noble mind!' Their acquiescence, however, was not set off with much applause; it was a suspicious truce, a sullen kind of civility" (Ibid., 123-124).

[75]Even a skeptical reviewer of the drama had to credit Belcour's innate virtue: "He who would form a complete idea of the West Indian, must attend him through a long train of carelessness and reflection, of vices arising from exuberance of passion, and actions which could result only from the noblest disposition. In this pursuit the reader will be surprised with new prospects at every turn." See Critical Review, XXXI (February, 1771), 116.

[76]Ibid., 124, 138. With an initial run of twenty-eight nights, "The West Indian" survived longer than any other sentimental drama of the period, and Cumberland received enormous profits on his author's night. Between 1771 and 1775 the drama passed through five editions. Forty-eight performances are reported between 1779 and 1805, according to the Theatrical Register in Gentleman's Magazine. Later performances had a very favourable reception with English, Scotch, Irish and American audiences elsewhere. We find a prologue for the play in The Massachusetts Magazine; it was written for a performance in Gloucester, Massachusetts, to introduce a popular theatrical import from the Old Country to the United States. See III (March, 1791), 151-152. See also Seilhamer, History of the American Stage, 1792-1797. There were also several foreign translations:

the German, "Der Westindier, ein Lustspiel . . . aus dem Englishchen", by J. J. C. Bode (Hamburg, 1772); and the French, "L'Americain, comedie. . . en prose," by F. G. J. S. Andrieux, in Chefs-d'oeuvre des Theatres Etrangers (1822), to name two.

[77] I, v, 75. See also Stockwell's concluding speeches in Act I, v.

[78] Lectures on the English Comic [Writers], 387. Cited in Williams, 413-417.

[79] In Modern British Drama (London, 1811), V.

[80] Huntington Library, Larpent Collection, MS 1357.

[81] Frederick Reynolds was associated with London's prosperous mercantile world through the families of both his father and his mother and was thus equipped to portray the progessive, but not wholly unkind, stockbroker, Bonus.

[82] In English and American Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1968). Morris Barnett was a music critic and dramatist who spent his early years in France. He became a celebrated delineator of French character.

[83] Nine days is the length of time required in the practice of Obeah and some forms of voodoo for the working of the curse.

[84] Huntington Library, Larpent Collection, MS 2421.

[85] In Three Centuries of Drama: English. O'Keefe is also to be credited with the bringing of the popular Noble Savage, Omai on stage. He says: "I composed a grand spectacle for C. G. called Omai; the incidents, characters, &c. appropriate to the newly-discovered islands in the southern hemisphere, and closing with the apotheosis of Captain Cook--the effect of this piece was most happy" (Genest, VI, 390).

[86] In Three Centuries of Drama: English.

[87] Thomas Bellamy was a literary entrepreneur of such vitality that it is not surprising that he should ride the crest of the wave in producing an abolition drama in 1789. His other miscellaneous writings included two abortive journalistic ventures, The General Magazine and Impartial Review (1787) and Bellamy's Picturesque Magazine and Literary Museum. Moral tales from the former periodical were collected in 1794. He also sponsored the Monthly Mirror, a publication chiefly concerned with stage affairs. One of his last endeavours was the founding of a circulating library.

[88] Since the stock tale of the sentimental Negro recurs in the theater as well as in magazine verse, Bellamy's Prologue merits recording here:

To Afric's torrid clime, where every day
The sun oppresses with his scorching ray,
My birth I owe; and there for many a year,
I tasted pleasure free from every care.
There 'twas my happy fortune long to prove
The fond endearments of parental love,
'Twas there my Adela, my favourite maid,
Return'd my passion, love with love repaid.
Oft on the banks where golden rivers flow,
And aromatic woods enchanting grow,
With my lov'd Adela I pass'd the day,
While suns on suns roll'd unperceiv'd away.
But ah! this happiness was not to last,
Clouds now the brightness of my fate o'er cast;
For the white savage fierce upon me sprung,
Wrath in his eye, and fury on his tongue,
And dragg'd me to a loathsome vessel near,
Dragg'd me from every thing I held most dear
And plung'd me in the horrors of despair.
Insensible to all that pass'd around,
Till, in a foreign clime, myself I found,
And sold to slavery!--There with constant toil,
Condemn'd in burning suns to turn the soil.
Oh! if I told you what I suffer'd there,
From cruel masters, and the lash severe,
Eyes most unus'd to melt, would drop the tear.

[89] I, i, 3 (Italics mine).

[90] These "David-and-Jonathan" attachments between African slaves are, of course, reminiscent of Southerne's "Oroonoko." Almaboe appears to be founded upon the faithful Aboan, but his name derives from William Dodd's poem, "Zara at the Court of Annamboe . . ." (1749).

[91] See Chapter I, 38-42, in this study.

[92] Although "The Princess of Zanfara" was performed in some of the country theaters, it was refused at Covent Garden because it bore too close a resemblance to "Oroonoko."

[93] MacLaren's drama was first acted at the Amphitheatre, Westminster Bridge, under the title of "Blackman and Blackbird," but for some reason it appeared in print under the unoriginal title of "Negro slaves".

[94] River and other water imagery is significant in Negro literature as a symbol of death. Note also its use in Negro spirituals.

[95] The British West Indian Islands did not lend themselves well to Gothic development, save in those few works which featured African witchcraft. Hence, we find few plays of this type for our purpose. ettings in the French and Spanish islands, on the other hand, with their Roman

Catholic influences proved more fertile for Gothic use. There is, for instance, John St. John's opera "The Island of St. Marguerite" (1789). The plot concerns the rescue of Carline from a nunnery on the island off the northern coast of Venezuela. The hero is "the Man in the Iron Mask" who continued to interest audiences until late in the century. (See the Advertisement to the 1789 edition, v.)

[96]"Monk" Lewis belongs more to the popular than to the literary school of drama. He did, however, introduce romantic diablerie, based on the German terror school, into English theater where it gloomily continued to flourish. But he never pretended to do anything else than give the public what it wanted. Genest tells us that "about the end of the season, Sheridan and Lewis had some dispute in the green-room; when the latter offered, in confirmation of his arguments, to bet Sheridan all the money which the "Castle Spectre" had brought, that he was right--no, said Sheridan, I cannot afford to bet so much; but I'll tell you what I'll do--I'll bet you all it is worth! (VII, 333). The drama was performed about fifty times in its first season (Ibid., 340).

[97]Of the character of Hassan Lewis said: "I by no means regret that introduction of my Africans . . . and could I have produced the same effect by making my heroine blue, blue I should have made her" (Cited in Sypher, 247). Genest called the appearance of Hassan anachronistic.

[98]Percy is carefully portrayed as a man of sensibility. Angela demonstrates the vast contrast between her lover and Osmond, her persecutor: "What peasant names you his benefactor? What beggar has been comforted by your bounty? What sick man preserved by your care? Your breast is unmoved by woe, your ear is deaf to complaint, your doors are barred against the poor and wretched. Not so are the gates of Aluwick castle; they are open as their owner's heart" (III, iii, 9-10).

[99]Although Coleridge was at one point fired with abolition ardour, he soon cooled. Apparently sated with emotional slave tales, he wrote a letter to Wordsworth in which his criticism of the character of Hassan reveals his boredom, both social and literary: "The author in a postscript lays claim to novelty in one of his characters--that of Hassan--now Hassan is a negro who had a warm and benevolent heart; but having been kidnapped from his country and barbarously used by the Christians, became a misanthrope--This is all!!" Letter of January 23, 1798, in Collected Letters (Oxford, 1956), I, 225.

[100]James Cobb was a secretary of the East India Company, and he wrote twenty-four dramatic pieces. One, "The Humourist," was lost in the Drury Lane fire of 1809, and Genest remarked that if all of his works had disappeared in like manner it would have been no great loss.

[101]In The London Stage (London, 1825), IV.

[102]Virginia is of certified Spanish parentage, and her plight is a classic one. Her mother was disowned by her aristocratic family for having married a penniless young merchant of low birth. Rejected even by friends, they came to the Indies to "make good." A series of misfortunes befell his small plantation, he died of a broken heart--as did his wife shortly thereafter, and Virginia was entrusted to the care of Dominique.

[103]The nonsense line of "Ackee O!" is not without local significance. The ackee is a savoury, tree-grown vegetable which was imported from Mauritius to the Indies in the late eighteenth century to feed the slaves.

[104]Cobb based his drama on Bernardin de St. Pierre's novel Paul et Virginie (1789). It enjoyed several English translations including one by David Malthus (1789). This tale of dainty sentiment was a sequel to St. Pierre's Studies in Nature and is an early prose recognition of the poetic validity of tropical scenery. Cobb's alterations are significant of the abolition times during which he wrote. He transfers the setting from Isle de France (Mauritius) to the West Indies; the sentimental Tropic replaces the fierce, profane planter who knows not the love of God or man; and the avenging hurricane brings about a happy ending to take the place of the Frenchman's tragic one.

[105]Reviewed in The Monthly Mirror, IV, Ser. 2 (1808), 117-118.

[106]"The King of Canoodle-Dum", in Bab Ballads (London, 1964), 301-306.

[107]Leigh Hunt had humanitarian interest in Negroes from childhood, despite the fact that he was a descendant of West Indian planters. Some time between the ages of twelve and sixteen he wrote "The Negro Boy, a Ballad" in which the boy looks forward to Death to bring him relief. (See Chapter II, 217-225, 490n, this study). For Hunt's further views on race see his essay "Negro Civilization" in The Examiner (August 4, 1811).

[108](London, 1815).

[109]Horace Twiss was a wit and politician and a nephew of Mrs. Siddons. He had a great love for the stage, but "The Carib Chief" was apparently his only dramatic work. The "energetic action of Kean secured an unprecedented success for it," and this "indifferent tragedy" was acted ten times (Genest, VIII, 690-691).

[110]In English and American Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1965).

[111]In the Prologue to "The Carib Chief" Twiss says:

> If now the means remain
> To wake the Drama into life again,
> Where shall we seek them? Not in monstrous woes,
> The ultra tragedy of spasms and throes;

Nor in faint copies from our father's drafts,
Barren as cuttings of exhausted grafts,--
But in a fresh adventure to explore
Nature's own fields, if haply they of yore
Have, in their forage of that fair demesne,
Left some ungather'd fruit for us to glean.

Such is our hope to-night. Our simple plot
Chooses an unreclaim'd and distant spot:
For since the arbiters of taste expect
All to be new, yet all to be correct,
No course was left us, but to guide the helm,
To some remote, but not unfruitful realm--
Where no preceding bard had touch'd, to claim
Possession in his Sov'reign Muse's name.

With Twiss then the selection of a Caribbean setting was a conscious choice.

[112]John Wilson was a member of the Blackwood's Magazine group and a professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. He appeared in the pages of that organ of Scottish Toryism under the pseudonym of "Christopher North." As a retired country gentleman, he worked on improvements on his estate on Windermere and composed poetry. His "Isle of Palms" was followed in 1816 by "The City of the Plague."

[113]In English and American Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1966).

[114]For a discussion of A General Description of the West Indian Islands and The Cruise see Chapter II, 97-98, and 286-289, in this study.

[115]As might be expected, American theater was late in adopting these comic, satiric modes, but ultimately the Comic Negro received his fullest development in the Negro minstrelsy of nineteenth-century America. There are traces of the sentimental slave there also. The peak years of American Negro comedy (1850-1870) included, interestingly enough, the period of the Civil War struggle in the United States. A parallel situation had prevailed in England in the 1780's and 1790's when Negro and Creole farces accompanied the abolition movement. The uniquely American minstrel character, Jim Crow, made several appearances in England and was recorded in the ballad chapbooks. The white public in general were delighted with this grotesque distortion, and Jim Crow became the "typical Negro" because he confirmed their notions of white superiority.

[116]In English and American Drama of the Nineteenth Century (New York, 1967).

[117]Edward Fitz-Ball, upon the advice of Amelia Opie, took up stage writing and was active in theatrical life for forty years. He turned out an enormous number of melodramas, burlettas, tragedies, and spectacles, chiefly for London's minor metropolitan theaters. In addition to the Negro, they included a variety of exotic persons--East Indians, North

American Indians, and Moorish and classical characters. 120 plays are listed in Nicoll's Handlist in Nineteenth-Century, II, 302-307. As a playwright Fitz-Ball practiced every trick and artifice known to the stage, and had in addition ambitions as a poet and as a writer of romance. His many songs are in the three prevailing types: the patriotic, the sentimental, and the comic.

[118]In the late eighteenth century abolition pressure had been too great and the plight of the Negroes too real to permit many black villains on the stage. This trend changed noticeably in the nineteenth century as is evidenced by some of the titles. In addition to the Negro of Wapping we find: "The Wicked Negro; or, A Picture of St. Domingo" (a spectacle, 1802); "The Treacherous Black; or, The Monkey of the Wreck" (a burletta, 1829); "The Negro Murderer" (a melodrama, 1831); and "The Waltham Blacks; or, The Deer Stealer of 1623" (a melodrama, 1832).

[119]Charles Hermann's stage adaptation of Uncle Tom's Cabin was performed in Manchester in 1853, only two years after the publication of the controversial novel in the United States.

Appendices

I. West Indian Patois and Folk Figures

[1]See William C. Bates, "Creole Folk-lore from Jamaica", The Journal of American Folklore, IX (January-March, 1896), 38-42, 121-128; Martha Warren Beckwith and Helen H. Roberts, Jamaica Folk-lore (New York, 1928); and Ada Wilson Trowbridge, "Negro Customs and Folk Stories of Jamaica", Journal of American Folklore, IX (January-March, 1896), 279-287.

[2](Boston, 1929), 254-261.

[3]Anansi is adapted from the Ashanti spider deity of the same name.

[4]"Two Negro Stories from Jamaica", Journal of American Folk-lore, IX (January-March, 1896), 287.

[5]Martha Beckwith, Jamaica Folk-Lore, 13-126. This study is a compilation and interpretation of 972 Jamaica proverbs.

[6]West India Sketch Book, II, 17n-18n.

[7]Journal (1834), 51-59. See also Hubert Aimes, "African Institutions in America", Journal of American Folk-Lore, XVIII (January-March, 1905), 15-32; and "Christmas Mummings in Jamaica", in Jamaica Folk-Lore, 1-67.

III. The Changing Stage

[1]Allardyce Nicoll, History of Early Nineteenth-Century Drama (Cambridge, 1930), I, 58-78.

[2]Much dramatic work of the "legitimate" type never got beyond the closet, and some of it halted at the manuscript stage. It is difficult to separate unacted from acted drama, since most of those who wrote plays originally intended them for the stage. Some poets deliberately eschewed the theatre, however, and professed openly that their works were for the closet alone.

[3]The records of the large theaters, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, in this period constitute a long tale of disaster and despair. The latter burned to the ground in 1808 and ultimately became an opera house. Meanwhile, the Haymarket Theater Royal flourished in its specialties of farces and lighter pieces, and the Lyceum offered a variety of entertainments. The Adelphi Theater, one of the best of the minors, was noted for lively burlesques and for weird and wonderful melodrama, favouring the introduction of strange "effects" and animal performers. Astley's Pavilion presented historic spectacles in an extended circus ring and eventually became the Olympic Theater (Ibid., 217, 220-221, 223).

[4](I, v-vi). Cited in Nicoll, I, 25.

[5]The Theatrical Observer (February 2, 1827). Cited in Nicoll, I, 8.

[6]John Larpent (to whom we are indebted for one of the most valuable of play collections) was one of the official licensers of plays. In the course of his long career he quietly converted to his own uses the dramatic manuscripts submitted to him, becoming guilty of what is tantamount to larceny. A zealous Methodist, he rigidly protected all Methodist characters on stage. George Colman the younger followed him in the office. Forgetting the licentiousness of his own early plays, Colman insisted on utmost decency, piety and loyalty. The miserable dramatists, whose lords the censors were occasionally, however, thanked them when their refusal of a license created a public interest in their works (Ibid., 1718).

[7]The melodrama originated about 1780 and had European roots. In Germany a dialogue passage was spoken to orchestral accompaniment. In France music was used to accompany "dumbshow"and to express the character's emotions when he was silent.

[8]Melodrama also provided an escape from the greyness of early Victorian society, and theater authors seemed to feel, perhaps instinctively, that it was impossible to devise dramatic material wholly in harmony with the spirit of the age. Only with the rise of a wittier spirit in more aristocratic circles and with the resolution of England's industrial chaos did a higher drama appear toward the end of the nineteenth century.

[9]Nicoll estimates that fully one-half of the English plays written between 1800 and 1850 were suggested by Parisian models, and translations from the French were very popular (Ibid., 79).

[10]Theater performances started at 6:30 or 7:00 p. m. and lasted until at least midnight--hence there was ample time for a three-hour play, a farce and a pantomime all on the same evening (Ibid., 120).

[11]In 1824 William Dimond presented a "confession of operatic faith" in his Preface to "Native Land; or, The Return from Slavery." The plot of the comic opera, he said, "may be either serious or sprightly, or it may combine both qualities, ad libitum, with just a sufficient interest to excite attention and to banish ennui during the necessary spaces between song and song, but never so vividly to stimulate the feelings of an Audience, as to make the recurrence of Music be felt as an impertinent interruption. The Incidents are not required to be strictly probable; nevertheless they certainly ought to be just possible, and at no time to degenerate into the downright extravagances of fantastic Melodrama or of buffoon Farce. The Dialogue should be unambitiously colloquial, yet raised above positive meanness; it should unfold whatever fable there may be, intelligibly, and come to the point with as much conciseness as possible--Above all, the MUSICAL SITUATIONS ought to spring with spontaneity out of the very necessities of the Scene; never betraying themselves to be labored introductions for the mere purposes of exhibiting vocal talent, but always to appear so many integral portions and indispensable continuations of the Story (Ibid., I, 141).

[12]See Allardyce Nicoll, Masks Mimes and Miracles; Studies in the Popular Theater (London, 1931).

[13]A writer in Mist's Weekly Journal in 1726 deplored the emasculation of the English stage: "[I knew] that of all the Moderns, the Italians were the People who least understood, and had least cultivated Dramatick Poetry. I had observ'd too, that this effeminate and luxurious People being enchanted as it were with the Charms of Musick, had made it their chief Study to improve that Science, as a Diversion most suitable to their indolent Genius, at which a Man may sit till his Senses are all lull'd into a State of Inaction, and where the Mind can have no Share of the Entertainment" (October 29, 1726). In Essays on the Theatre from Eighteenth-century Periodicals (Los Angeles, 1960), 40.

[14]Ibid., 41-42.

[15]In 1804 Richard Cumberland, sentimentalist that he was, mourned the passing of legitimate theater and the prevailing degeneracy of taste: "I have . . . never disgraced my colours by abandoning the cause of legitimate comedy, to whose service I am sworn, and whose defence I have kept the field for nearly half a century, till at last I have survived all true national taste, and lived to see buffoonery, spectacle and puerility so ef-

fectually triumph, that now to be repulsed from the stage is to be recommended to the closet, and to be applauded by the theatre is little else than a passport to the puppet-show". In Memoirs (1807), I, 270. Cited in Alwin Thaler, Shakespeare to Sheridan (Cambridge, 1922), 19-20.

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