COMMERCIAL COLONISATION.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE "CIVILISATION" OF JAMAICA.

(Concluded from p. 340.)

We frequently hear that emancipation, free trade, and sugar bounties have made Jamaica. It is true that since emancipation is labour is so uncertain that the estates cannot be worked to pay. To pay whom and what? An answer to that will explain matters. The estates, it is true, do not at present pay, but it is no fault of the labourers. They do not get the surplus; when they are honestly dealt with can they be depended on to work. Jamaicans negroes make good navvies at Panama. The Jamaica Government experienced no difficulty in getting all the labour required for the railway and other public works, yet the planters have to get coolies imported from the East Indies. This pauper labour is a downright injustice to the blacks of Jamaica, and the more so because the Government levies a tax to carry the immigration. For they pay nothing for it, not for it the labour conditions of the island would soon undergo a change at the expense of some English capitalists. The estates are managed by all mortgaged to English capitalists and there are few resident proprietors. The management of the estates is, therefore, not what it should, or could be. It is neither vigorous nor prospective; it is always extravagant in details, and future crops are often sacrificed to a quick return policy in order to be up to time with payment to the mortgagees. The truck system in freight and estates' supplies prevails. The planters are forced to ship only in mortgagees' ships at excessive rates, and if the estates' sugar makes no profit, all the mortgagors are equally extravagant and expensive. The estates of Jamaica are like "a headless trunk bleeding at every pore." Strange, is it not, that in every country the labourer has to suffer for sins not his own? These planters on the Island who enable or encourage the inhabitants of Jamaica to their own undue enrichment are doing so to the impairment of Jamaica and its people. These plunderers wanted the Jamaica planters to labour for starvation wages. In the case of a man to return to slavery; he preferred to starve or go to Colon even though he met a premature death in going. When the planters or plunderers failed to bring the Jamaican to his knees they called upon the Government to secure pauper labour and it was done. But danger again looms ahead. Twenty thousand planters are shipped every year from Jamaica to Colon. Of this amount one-half must be devoted for those who return on friendly visits, but this stream will stop with the wind up of the Panama Canal works. These works were a God-send to the Administrators of Jamaica. But for it the labour revolution would have developed ere now into something which would have surpassed any rebellion of the past for far-reaching consequences.

The present Governor—Sir Henry Norman—recognises this, for he has had a Bill passed this year giving powers to the Government to immi-

gration at the expense of the Government. How does labour stand at present in Jamaica when so many thousands are drafted each year to Panama? At present the rate of wages, for skilled labour, per day is: bricklayers, 2s. 6d. to 3s.; blacksmiths, 3s.; joiners, 2s. 6d.; painters, 2s.; and for unskilled labour: men, 1s. to 1s. 6d. per day; women, 9d. to 1s. per day. These figures sink much lower in the country. If the figures indicate, we can well appreciate why the labourers are hardy and shoddy clothes. The price of bread is 3d. per lb.; sugar, 2d. per lb.; coffee, 9d. per quart; Indian meal, 2d. per quart; oat meal, 6d. per lb.; butter, 1s. 6d. and 2s. per lb.; English cheeses, 2s. per lb.; American lard, 1s. 6d. per lb.; rice, 1d. per lb.; tea, Is. 6d. per lb.; potatoes, 2d. per lb.; yam, 1d. per lb. The Jamaica labourer gets two meals per day besides the mangles he picks up. For the remaining time he is supposed to pick tobacco and for a small sum the employer takes salt fish and yam. This is an alarming fact if it be true what Mr. Espeut said in their legislative council last month. He declared, "I have noticed that people who live on roots are always lowest down in the mental and physical scale. Greasy food is what the people should produce and eat." Mr. Espeut would be a better legislator were he to inquire into the cause why the people eat roots, instead of trying to cure the effects. He is like our temperance reformers who mistake an effect for a cause. There is more degrading thing than yams operating on the people of Jamaica, and that is the enslavement of its women. They are made to carry stones on their heads for ten or twelve hours, or under a tropical sun for a miserable pittance of 9d. They have to do it frequently when they are in a con-

dition not favourable to the development of the coming race. There is another face is the want of proper female education. If they are degraded the result is branded on the offspring, and it is a well known fact that the poorest and most wretched countries are those in which women are made to labour most. The "ladies" and clergymen of England who advocate pit labour for women should