"My poor friend was actually bowed out of the house, and I warrant he will never forget Havanese hospitality."

"Ah! it is quite as well to know these things, as I feel a great inclination to accept the kind invitation the Countess gave me. I hope, however, that she will not serve me in the same manner."

"She forms an exception, and she will keep her word. I really cannot tell what she sees so charming in the Havana. True, the winter—that is to say, the months which constitute our winter months—is delightful, the cigars and the fruit are delicious, the quitrins very comfortable, and many of the houses spacious and well-built—but then the furniture is paltry and mean. They have no taste whatever in these matters. You should see the pictures that adorn their walls!"

"Are they beautiful?"

"Beautiful! the vilest and commonest things I ever saw; they have no more taste for pictures or the fine arts than the Vandals. When you go there, you will be astonished to find gaudy pictures—daubs I should call them—in magnificent gilt frames. Ah! par exemple, they love gilt frames."

"And what are the pictures, what the subjects?"

"They are only fit for pot-houses. The subjects?—For instance, Coriolanus at the gates of Rome, one eye fixed upon his supplicating family, the other upon the ungrateful city: he of course is wrapped in a scarlet cloak like Zampa, and looks as if he could not help it. Then Moses in the Bulrushes, looking as red as a boiled lobster; Susannah in the Bath, with two old rascally churchwardens, or elders, whatever they were called, looking most impertinently at her; or Joseph cutting his stick, and leaving his Taglioni in Mrs. Potiphar's hands. These are the subjects they admire."

I did not say so, but I thought my interlocutor was an odd fish. Ere I had time to ask some more questions, he had vanished; and throwing myself upon a sofa, I meditated upon all that I had heard, until I actually fancied myself at the Havana, seized with yellow fever. I started, roused myself, and was not a little delighted to find that it was a slight mistake. I then joined in the dance, and tripped it on the light fantastic toe, until I made it ache, and finally withdrew with the rest of the company, promising the Countess, as she passed me on her way to her carriage, that I should soon do myself the honour of waiting upon her.

I did call, and repeated my visits, and it is not unlikely, gentle reader, that the next chapter will find us, with all sails set, within sight of the Morro, straining our eyes to get a peep at the "Queen of the West."

(To be continued.)
AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIBERATED AFRICAN
ESTABLISHMENT AT ST. HELENA.*

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LIBERATED AFRICAN ESTABLISHMENT AT ST. HELENA.

At the present moment, when the attention of the Proprietary of
the West Indies, and of the British Government, is directed to the
devising of measures best adapted to promote Emigration to those
Colonies alleged to be almost ruined from the want of labour, I trust
that, in according to the public the benefit of my long and extensive
acquaintance with that class of the great family of mankind best calcu-
lated to prove useful settlers there, I shall be considered to be actuated
simply with the view of forwarding the philanthropic intentions enter-
tained for securing their interests and welfare. Having been connected
with the Liberated African Establishment at St. Helena from its forma-
tion to its dissolution at the beginning of 1844, and having lived all the
time at the principal station, surrounded by negroes of all denomina-
tions, I enjoyed peculiar opportunities of acquiring a perfect knowledge
respecting them. Conversed with their different languages, acquainted
with the numerous diseases to which they are subject, and intimate with
their manners and customs, I flatter myself that I possess the knowledge
necessary to undertake the task which I have imposed upon myself, of
being their advocate to the public, since my professional services in
their behalf are now no longer required. Were my abilities equal to
my information and my zeal, I should feel more confident of success;
which, however, if it do not amount to the sum of my wishes, cannot
fail in some measure to be attained, from the inherent merits of the
cause which I vindicate, and which, as it is the cause of humanity, will
be blessed by Providence, and prosper in spite of the attacks of its
enemies, or the in difference of its friends.

In order to carry out the object now contemplated, of inducing a
stream of emigration of Africans to the West Indies, their condition
must in no part of the transition be impaired, as it hitherto decidedly has
been. No link of the chain that connects together his departure from
his natal soil to his arrival at a new home, in a new hemisphere, must
pinch or fret the African; every step of that process must, in order to
render emigration voluntary and therefore effectual, bring an accession

* A portion of this interesting narrative has already appeared in the
Colonial Gazette, and the Author proposes to continue it in our pages.
to his comfort and happiness. When this is accomplished, which I shall endeavour to show may easily be effected without the expenditure of larger sums than are lavished upon the present inefficient system, then is emigration not only justifiable, but a blessing to the exile who by its means becomes converted into the free, independent, and useful citizen.

The Liberated African Establishment at St. Helena, which might have been a happy asylum for the oppressed and afflicted slave, and a useful temporary dépôt where he might have recruited his strength previously to his transference to other Colonies better suited for his permanent location, owing to mismanagement, carelessness, and extravagance, became incompetent to fulfil the benevolent object for which it had been created. As the situation of the island, however,—its continuity to the opposite shores of Portuguese Guinea, where the principal slave-trade in existence is now carried on,—point it out as the fittest of all the British Colonies for a dépôt, which must sooner or later be established there, or restored, in spite of all the arguments adduced against its adoption for such a purpose, it will be my aim to expose the errors formerly committed, and suggest such new measures as will ensure its proper guidance for the future, on the event of its revival. The pilot who is acquainted with the rocks and shoals of a dangerous navigation is best qualified to conduct the vessel with safety through the perils that beset the voyage. With order and regularity in business, with careful diligence in the conducting of the duties of the establishment, and with an economy consistent with humanity, a dépôt might be formed at St. Helena, alike creditable to its officers, honourable to the Government, and of infinite advantage to suffering human nature. This dépôt need not exact more than one-third of the expense previously incurred, if proper rules and regulations be enacted and enforced. This I shall also be enabled to prove can be done. As the question, however, involves many interesting particulars relating to the class of Africans who have been the tenants of the past and may be expected to be the inmates of the future dépôt, in giving a brief description of the establishment as it formerly existed, I have thought it advisable to open the narrative by an account of the people themselves, whose sufferings have interested the world in their favour, and nowhere incited to more earnest efforts to relieve their misfortunes than in sympathising, generous England. As I proceed in my account of the nature and character of the establishment, I shall introduce to the reader's notice the officers of the institution, and their respective duties will be detailed, likewise every fact that may be considered important or amusing, connected with the accommodations provided for the liberated Africans—their food, clothing, apprenticeship; the births, marriages, and deaths that took place amongst them; and a minute relation will be given of the manner in which their emigration to the West Indies was conducted; accompanying the whole with remarks respecting the propriety or necessity of alterations, revisions, or improvements, wherever these can be effected.
CHAPTER I.

The different Tribes—their Intellectual and Moral Attributes and Physical Conformation—Coiffure—Distinctive Marks of the Tribes—Dances—Songs—Musical Instruments, and Ornaments of Dress.

With a few exceptions, comprehending about forty persons, all the negroes who were brought to St. Helena came either from the countries bordering on the Congo River, from Angola, Benguela, or the Mozambique.

The exceptions alluded to are natives of the interior of Africa, at such a distance from the coast that to arrive at any possession of the Portuguese, they inform us, they are obliged to travel three or four moons often over burning deserts; and they point to the thick, cracked soles of their feet in corroboration of the statement. They speak a language which, though unintelligible to the rest of the negroes, seems to resemble the dialects spoken by the Vishi-Congos, and Congos, in several of its words, especially the numerals, in which, indeed, there exists a remarkable analogy in all the various tongues prevalent along the south-western shores of Africa. They are the most degraded of the people of Africa hitherto presented to my observation, and are accused by the other tribes, though I suspect unjustly, of being cannibals. On account of their excessive laziness and obstinacy, they are not much esteemed by the slave-trader, who considers them as bad bargains at any price. No doubt, from their having been subjected to a longer period of suffering than the other Africans, from having to travel a greater distance to arrive at the port of embarkation, they are usually more sickly and delicate on their arrival at St. Helena; and, from their perfect indifference about their fate when ill, they are very troublesome patients. The will reject all medicines, refuse even food, and their only wish seems to be to lie down undisturbed, and die. The Portuguese affirm that the are much disposed to commit suicide, which they accomplish by twisting the tip of their tongue backwards, and inducing suffocation by closing the larynx with it: a practice to which, unfortunately, they too often have recourse, when they conceive they have been harshly treated. They are slender of form and short of stature, and the face is broad between the cheek-bones, but narrows off very much to the chin, which is small; the projection of the malar bones, and the great breadth between them, and the general flatness of the physiognomy, were marked in two or three instances, that the individuals, in their configuration, approached very much to what is represented to be the characteristics of the Tartar face. The name by which they are called is Kavoomboo; and their distinctive marks are parallel longitudinal lines cut in the temples and cheeks.

The slaves that come from the coast of the Congo, though not tall and muscular, and therefore not adapted for field-labourers where hard work is to be done, yet make capital domestic servants, especially those amongst them who are natives of the country around Ambriz. They are willing and faithful, very obedient to the commands of their master, but
are inclined to disrespect orders emanating from any other person, and
disregard the instructions imparted by a fellow-menial, by whom they
will not submit to be censured, and for whom they affect to entertain
the most profound contempt. They perfectly understand the proverb
of the Scriptures, "No man can serve two masters."

The body presents a perfect outline of symmetry amongst the Congos,
especially amongst the women before they have borne children; yet the
head is exceedingly ugly, presenting the exaggerated characteristics of the
negro race—the small cranium, the slanting forehead, the projecting
face, and the lengthened chin. Amongst them prevails the practice of
filing the front teeth sharp; some limit the use of the file to only two
teeth of the upper jaw, others to the same number of both the upper
and lower; whilst a third class will have every incisor and canine tooth
as sharp as a needle: and it may be imagined what a terrible instrument
of offence the mouth of such a savage must be. Amongst them, and,
indeed, amongst the negroes in general, will be found many who are
deficient of two or three of the front teeth. This defect being so com-
mon, led me to inquire into the cause of it; and the explanation I
received was, that, being very subject to the scurvy, whenever they are
offered for sale labouring under that disease to the Portuguese mer-
chant,—as he will never purchase, except in cases of great want of
slaves, such as are in that un sound condition,—to recognise them, and
prevent the dealer from imposing the same upon him at some future
period, he has recourse to the expedient of extracting the teeth: There
is, however, I dare say, more probability in the supposition that the
teeth were loosened and fell out in consequence of the disease—a usual
occurrence in scurvy.

Amongst the Congos I include the various people who live on the
banks of the river of that name, and its tributaries, and in the adjoining
country extending along the sea-shore to the confines of the kingdom of
Angola, and comprising the Vishi-Congos, who dwell in the remotest
parts from the coast; the Congos, properly so called, who occupy the
territories situated along the principal river; and the inhabitants of the
towns and districts of Loango, Cabenda, and Ambriz. All these speak
a somewhat similar language, and present a likeness in their physio-
gnomy, and in their mental and moral faculties. They are not, however,
united together as members of the same nation—are not linked by ties
of friendship, or joined by a community of interests; on the contrary,
each locality has its separate government, and each village, however
small, constitutes a sort of patriarchal monarchy, which is continually at
variance and enmity with every petty state in its neighbourhood. These
feuds arise out of the most trivial provocations: an offence given to an
individual of a clan is resented by the whole of his connexions, and ven-
geance is declared against the obnoxious party. The stealing of pro-
visions and articles of clothing, and the seduction of a daughter or
abduction of a wife, are frequently the causes that involve a whole
district in sanguinary collisions; but the principal incentive to bloodshed
and murder, and cruel exterminating war, is the desire of obtaining
slaves,—all who are captured in battle being by universal custom re-
duced to that condition. As it is the easiest and most ready means presented to the negro chief to enrich himself by exchanging his slaves for European manufactures, it is not to be wondered at that he should so frequently adopt it. Hence a state of civil discord is always prevailing throughout the interior of Africa.

I was much entertained one day by the narrations, communicated to me by two Congos, of the contentions and collisions that took place between the inhabitants of their respective villages about the possession of some salt springs or mines. One recounted the stratagems made use of by his party to enter unperceived the territory of the other, and carry off the salt; and the other would relate the muster of his people, the ambuscade laid, the sortie made, the defeat and rout of the encroachers, and capture of the booty, accompanying the tale with the most violent gesticulations. These men were probably mortal enemies in their own country, yet very friendly at St. Helena, so much amity doth fellowship in misfortune create.

A custom prevails amongst the Congos of shaving the hair off their heads in a singular manner, patches of hair being left to represent circles, ovals, squares, and parallel and spherical lines all about the head. The Cabenda women cut a figure on their breast, extending from shoulder to shoulder, and meeting over the sternum, between the mammae; the cicatrizations, in order to be rendered conspicuous and elevated, are fretted and enlarged by the insertion into the cuts of wood-ashes, which, by irritating the scarifications, convert them into ulcerating sores, and cause them, when healed, to form high and broad scars. I could never discover that the men among the Congos resorted to the practice of tattooing or disfiguring themselves, in order to bear a badge of national distinction; there was no peculiar mark of caste required amongst them; they would, however, occasionally adopt the marks of the Angolans, especially if they had lived on friendly terms with any of the latter; but this they did either as a compliment to their new associates, as a source of amusement, or as an object of admiration.

The Angolans are a stout and strong race. The men possess fine muscular limbs, and powerful, well-made bodies; yet the flesh is soft and flabby—has by no means the hardness, elasticity, and firmness of European muscular fibre. The women approach very much in their form and physical characters to the men, being masculine in appearance, without the tendency to obesity so common amongst the Mozambique and Benguela females, and destitute of the elegance and roundness of figure to be observed amongst many of the Congos.

The Angolans are not such amateurs of music and dancing as the other tribes—seem to be better adapted for laborious occupations, such as digging, rowing, &c. Though capable of being useful servants, yet they are so fickle that they seldom remain long with the same master.

There are some powerful men among the negroes from Benguela and the Mozambique; but on the whole I am disposed to pronounce the Angolans the strongest, and they are decidedly the most healthy.

A very pretty way of dressing the hair is practised by the Angola women, consisting of separating it into small tufts by means of a wooden
pin, and plaiting these in rows, every plait being very small and neatly executed—much in the same manner as a horse’s mane is sometimes ornamented. Beads are often interwoven with these plaits, and pieces of copper, brass, and small Portuguese silver coins are fixed here and there, and give a picturesque effect to the coiffure. The Angola belle is very proud when she can exhibit a peacock’s or a pheasant’s feather in her head-dress.

The marks used by the Angolas to distinguish them, are a sort of circle with radii deeply scarified on the back over the right scapula, and a figure bearing some resemblance to the steps of a ladder cut on the upper part of the arm.

Although inhabiting a territory of Africa considered to be very unhealthy, nevertheless many of the Benguela negroes are strong, athletic men, and the women amongst them are inclined to be stout and corpulent. They are gay, light-hearted, and fond of amusements.

From the circumstance of the small-pox having been introduced by slave vessels into St. Helena nine different times during the short period of two years and a half, and every time from the coast of Benguela, we must infer that the countries around are very liable to the invasion of that terrible scourge. Owing to being so much exposed to its ravages, a great extent of sickness prevailed amongst the Benguelas. If not carried off by the small-pox, they were, in the greater proportion of cases, so reduced by it that they easily contracted other diseases, and died in consequence of them, or pined away for months, wretched and melancholy specimens of marasmus.

From a Benguela woman I obtained the only curiosity I have seen in the possession of the negroes. It is a necklace made of little circular bits of the ostrich’s shell, well polished, and each piece bored with a hole to enable a string to pass through it. In that necklace, I suppose, there are some thousands of these circular bits; and the trouble it must have cost to fashion, polish, and pierce them without splitting, will prove that the negro is not destitute of ingenuity, or deficient in perseverance.

A rude imitation of a star, cut on the forehead, is the mark the Benguelas assume to distinguish their nation. The men plait their hair in long tufts, a fashion which is extremely ugly; but the women have more taste, and adopt the following singular manner of beautifying their head-dresses:—The hair having been allowed to grow long, is separated into two furrows, one extending across the front between the temples, the other from the centre of this to the back part of the head; handkerchiefs folded up are laid in these furrows, and the hair plaited over them so as to form two considerable elevations from before, behind, and transversely, not at all unlike a soldier’s helmet. If the extraordinary shape of the head-dress attracts attention, the neatness and regularity with which the plaits are woven merit commendation; and the negro perruquier might with justice assume to himself some of the rare abilities with which nature has been graciously pleased to endow, Aut Caesar aut nullus, "Professor Browne."

A number of the negroes who passed for Benguelas at St. Helena, on
account of speaking nearly the same language, belonged to an extensive
country some hundreds of miles inland, denominated by them Bondo.
This district is governed by an absolute monarch, who is represented to
be very wealthy in lands, flocks, and slaves. Master of the liberties of
his subjects, this despot uses them with unbounded cruelty, making them
work in the fields of yam, in the tending of herds, and employing
them as beasts of burden, to carry the bees' wax, ivory, and dyewoods,
with which he has established an extensive traffic with the Portuguese,
from whom he obtains all sorts of European commodities in exchange
for these articles, and for the slaves themselves. Not content with re-
ducing his people into bondage, and from their forced labour drawing
support and wealth, he carries the exercise of his power so far that, in
order to exhibit it, to gratify a whim or evaporate ill-humour, he will
have recourse to the murdering of a few of his innocent servants around
him. The sacrifice of prisoners of war is of frequent occurrence at Bondo,
and accompanied with the most horrible atrocities. The victims, who
are led bound into the presence of the tyrant, are despatched either by
himself or his ministers, and their bodies roasted amidst the acclamations
of the populace, who share with majesty in the loathsome repast of
human flesh. The sanguinary ruler of this oppressed country is
described, however, as a jovial and sociable personage at times, a great
admirer of music, and an ardent devotee to the rites of Bacchus. Seated
in the centre of a large circle, with kegs and puncheons of brandy, aqua-
ardente, and wine scattered about, he delights to collect his chiefs and
musicians around him, and pass the evenings away with songs and
drinking. Such is the story I have heard related by the Bondos them-
selves of their worthy sovereign and their unfortunate country.

The inhabitants of the eastern shores of Africa appear to be a little
more advanced in civilisation than the natives of the western coast. The
Mozambique understand the cultivation of rice and other gramineous
productions: they have explained to me the whole process of sowing the
seed, irrigating and flooding the grounds; pulling the stalks, which they
practise instead of reaping; and treading out the grain by means of
oxen, which is adopted by them in lieu of thrashing. They are skilful
in the raising of sugar-canes, bananas, plantains, mangoes, and other
tropical fruits: while the western negroes cultivate nothing but man-
dioca, beans, yams, and pumpkins, and leave the more esteemed products
of the garden or the field to be raised by the unaided care of nature.
More attached to their masters, more industrious and diligent at their
work, quicker in learning and adopting European usages, and less in-
constant in their dispositions, the Mozambique are superior to all the
other southern negro races of Africa.

The Mozambique women have a custom, which seems to be pretty
common amongst the natives of Asia, and was perhaps borrowed from
them, as these, I am informed, carry on a considerable commerce with
the different people of Africa on the coast, from Abyssinia as far as
Delagoa Bay: it is that of piercing a large hole in the upper lip, for the
purpose of introducing through it a ring, or any fanciful article, such as
a carved stick or a polished piece of ivory. This practice is peculiar to
the Mozambique, though the other tribes will sometimes pierce a hole through the septum of the nose, through which aperture they are very fond of passing a bit of metal, usually lead or thick wire, the two ends of which, regularly twisted in circles, hang very gracefully suspended, according to their ideas, on either side of the upper lip.

Large prominent cicatrices, the results of self-inflicted wounds, on the middle of the forehead, at the external angle of the eyebrows, down the cheeks, and over the chin, characterise the Mozambique, who, if they be elevated above the other tribes that have been introduced into St. Helena for natural intelligence, have not yet been endowed with sagacity enough to perceive that it is worse than useless to attempt to improve the works of nature. By these hideous scarifications on his face, and the large shining copper rings dangling from his ears, the Mozambique may be known from all the other negroes.

To the Congos must be accorded the palm for the little knowledge of the refined arts existing amongst the captured Africans. The Congos are exceedingly fond of music and dancing. With an old cigar-box, a bent stick, from the point of which to the box are attached three strings, and little bits of metal hung upon iron wire around the box, and a small piece of smooth hard wood for a bow, they will manufacture a sort of violin, and amuse themselves for hours with the creaking and jingling noise emitted by it. A Cabenda man, of the name of Maguaka, was an excellent performer on this instrument. On a fine moonlight night it was really a picturesque and animating sight to view Maguaka, seated on the ground with his hurdy-gurdy, striking the cords and accompanying the sounds with his strong sonorous voice, while four or five couples would execute the rapid and tortuous movements of some of their national dances: they would work and wriggle their bodies until you would imagine they were all hinges; and at the finale of each figure there was a loud chorus repeated by all present, and a clapping of hands. The wildness and lasciviousness of expression exhibited on some occasions, together with the corkscrew movement of the body, while the feet would be almost at rest, reminded me much of what I had heard of the Spanish fandango. But Maguaka was not a musician only, but also an excellent dancer, could squeak most scientifically, and imitate to perfection the cries peculiar to any animal—the crowing of a cock, the mewing of a cat, the barking of a dog, or the neighing of a horse; and his representations of the goat and the ass were admirably executed, and exceedingly comical; he was, moreover, barber and surgeon, could shave with a piece of broken bottle, bleed with a rusty nail, and cup with a ram's-horn, the expanded portion being applied to the flesh while his mouth, being fixed to the small end, would rarely the air inside by suction until the blood oozed freely from the scarifications. He was besides a capital hand at pulling an oar and fishing; both of which useful acquirements, however, he learned at Saint Helena. So indefatigable was he at the last occupation, that he would swim, dive, and creep under water about the rocks to catch crabs to serve as bait; and he seldom returned without a good dish of fish. With the benefit of a good education Maguaka would have arisen to some distinction
even in a civilised community, for he was shrewd, ingenious, quick, and persevering; his diversified talents, improved and refined by cultivation, would have created him an exalted rank in each art or science, for the excelling in which nature had so well adapted him.

Of the dances in greatest vogue amongst the Congos there were two in which none but the girls or young women figured, the seniors of either sex being excluded from the pleasure of joining in them. As these dances were not deficient in some parts in elegance of attitude and gracefulness of motion, so very unusual in most of their performances, which generally consist of shrugging up of the shoulders, twisting of the back, and shuffling and stamping of the feet, the reader may perhaps be amused with being made acquainted with them.

Two girls stand opposite each other and join hands; all the rest form one column, and, as they pass under the elevated arms of the former, singing all the time, the last in the column is caught by the arms of the two who are linked falling and catching her round the waist, when a loud chorus is shouted forth, and laughter and taunts raised at the capture of the prisoner, who is obliged to repair behind one of the two girls; the second prisoner falls to the share of the other girl, and, when all the column is thus disposed of, two equal sides are composed of all engaged in the performance. Each side draws up, singing and dancing, until they nearly meet, when they fall back; thus they approach and retire several successive times; and in this part of the dance the figure resembles the avancez and retirez of the quadrille; then, all joining hands and forming a circle, each girl dances quickly and alternately to the neighbour, right and left, until the rapidity of the step, and the ridiculous attitudes exhibited, completely exhaust them.

The second dance consisted in a girl remaining seated in the centre on the ground, and all the rest forming a circle around her and joining hands; each girl successively, without letting go her hold, is required to dance round her that is seated quickly three times without stopping: the forfeit of her inability to execute the movement is to take the place of the girl in the centre, and allow the others to dance round her; then all form a larger circle, and, all hands being still united, each pair turns round with each other face to face and back to back, their joined hands, which must not be loosened during the performance, being turned above their heads, and they form again into a circle as at the beginning.

The Benguelas are also adepts at the dance, such as it is among them, consisting of every movement that is awkward and ungraceful, shrugging up and hitching of the shoulders, twisting of the arms and neck, wriggling of the hips, and attitudes that surpass what the imagination can conceive of ludicrousness. Combining very little grace with a great deal of awkwardness, it may be reckoned to hold a middle rank between the light, easy, and picturesque steps of the Polka, and the heavy evolutions of the dancing bear. In almost all their dances there is little shuffling with the feet, all the motions being executed by the arms, shoulders, and hips. An exception, however, to this rule must be made in favour of the war-dance, which none but the chiefs are permitted to perform; and as we had two of these worthies, they often