

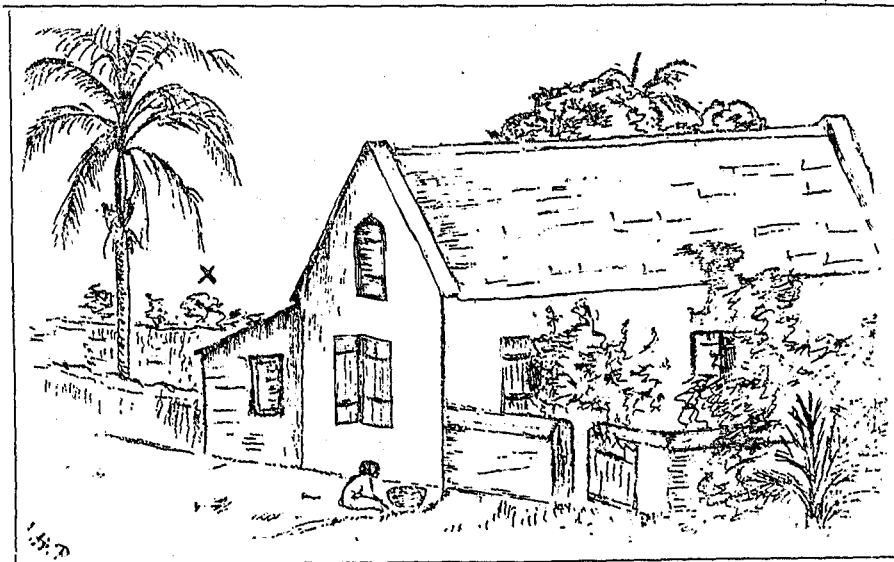
rigor of fever had attacked her, and she wished to remain there. I told the daughters to rouse her and get her home, as the sun was setting quickly. As she rose, and staggered away between her daughters, the latter said it was the third time she had left the hospital. Although only fourteen miles distant from Port Louis, the port and capital, I feel quite "at the back of the world"; only French is spoken, and the Creole "patois" by the servants. Life is quiet and uneventful, and there are no near neighbours to worry over; the excitement of the day is the arrival of the letters, and local newspaper. An old man, from the estate, fetches them in a flat tin case, slung on his back, and, as he cannot read, each picks out his own correspondence. But, if life is quiet, it is very comfortable; a full staff of servants is at one's beck and call; there is an abundance of fruit, in season, and the river supplies "Camerons" (that shell-fish delicacy Mark

religious rites performed by him are all to propitiate the devil, for, as he argues, it is better to keep the devil in good humour, as God, being good, will never do any harm, and needs no propitiation.

Being of a thrifty nature, he saves the rupees, burying the hoard in a hole dug in the floor of his hut (occasionally these hoards get stolen). Then, he will buy a young goat, feed it up, sell it, and buy two goats, and so on, until, at last, his ambition is realised, and he owns a cow.

The coolie mourns to a greater extent over the death of a cow, than the loss of his spouse; the former represents the savings of many years, and the latter could be replaced in a few weeks, and very little loss of money entailed.

When his contract has expired, he will not return to his native Madras or Calcutta, but will buy a small piece of waste ground, build a hut and cowshed, keep fowls, and, in a few years, additional ground will be acquired and canes planted.



ESTATE HOSPITAL, RIVIÈRE DE REMPART, MAURITIUS.

Twain is said to have appreciated so much whilst on a visit to Mauritius).

On occasion, a stately palm tree will be cut down, to provide a "salade de palmiste." It makes an excellent dish, but, it is regrettable that a majestic palm tree should be sacrificed, that man may have a few minutes' epicurean pleasure. At 4 a.m. a bell is rung to wake the Indians, and 5.30 finds the manager or sub-manager out, calling the roll, and giving the daily tasks.

When one thinks of the starvation and misery of the unemployed in Great Britain, and compares his lot with that of the uneducated, but contented, coolie, the latter is to be congratulated. He is regularly paid a monthly sum, has a house given him, a weekly allowance of rice, dholl, etc., medical attendance, and drugs free, and can generally pick up wood enough for cooking purposes. An "Inspector of Immigrants" looks after his interests. The coolie eats, works, and sleeps, and never having known luxury, has no craving for it. The

"Early to bed, and early to rise" is the motto in this house. No sleep is to be had after 5 a.m., when the servants arrive from their outhouses, and doors bang, and the chopping of wood commences. At this season of the year, here, in the north of the Island, it is impossible to find pleasure in lying late in bed. The sun, at an early hour, is high in the heavens, and one commences to perspire, and continues doing so until evening.

A sudden gust of wind blows my paper along the verandah; the sky has changed to a duller shade of blue, and small black clouds are scudding across it. A strange stillness is in the air, and the distant sea breaks on the coral reefs with a dull, booming sound; a marten screamingly seeks the leafy shelter of an "intendence" tree, and a large drop of rain strikes my cheek. The feathery leaves of the old palm tree behind the hospital appear agitated; to-morrow may see its plumes wrenched off, and the trunk snapped across in the fury of a cyclone, which is surely coming.

ISABEL H. PENNIE.

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