

**WEST INDIES. EXTRACTS FROM
THE JOURNAL OF JOHN
CANDLER, WHILST TRAVELLING
IN JAMAICA. PART I**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649191291

West Indies. Extracts from the journal of John Candler, whilst travelling in Jamaica. Part I by John Candler

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

JOHN CANDLER

**WEST INDIES. EXTRACTS FROM
THE JOURNAL OF JOHN
CANDLER, WHILST TRAVELLING
IN JAMAICA. PART I**

612 R. S. Anthony to B. H. Winder
11mo 4th 1840

WEST INDIES.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE JOURNAL OF

JOHN CANDLER,

WHILST TRAVELLING

IN

JAMAICA.

PART I.

LONDON:

HARVEY AND DARTON,
GRACECHURCH STREET.

MDCCCL.

SA 2646.10

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
GIFT OF
HENRY JOEL CADBURY
MAR 3 1937

HARVEY AND BARNON, PRINTERS, GRACECHURCH STREET.

EXTRACTS, &c.

AGREEABLY to the minute of the Yearly Meeting of 1839, encouraging the Meeting for Sufferings to send out to the West Indies one or more friends, with a view of inquiring into the present condition of the newly-emancipated Negroes, and also of ascertaining in what way the funds at the Society's disposal might be most satisfactorily applied, the proposal of our friend John Candler and his wife, of Chelmsford, to undertake this interesting and arduous service, was accepted, and they sailed from Falmouth, on the 4th of 11th month last, in the government packet-ship, Magnet, bound for Barbadoes. The following extracts, from the accounts transmitted of their proceedings, are printed for the information of Friends.

Kingston, Jamaica, 23d of 12th Month, 1839.

HAVING dispatched one letter from Cape Haytien to my sisters, and prepared another, giving an account of our voyage, I now sit down to communicate a few particulars that may perhaps be interesting to thyself and our other friends of the Committee. On first day, the 24th ult., when about 400 miles from Barbadoes, we discerned a sail at sea, which the officers of our ship pronounced, from its appearance, to be a slaver. The commander, on the first day before, had called over the muster-roll, and read the prayers and lessons of the Church of England: on this occasion he put off the religious service, stating as a reason, that the strange vessel was suspicious craft, and must be narrowly watched. The port-holes were ordered to be opened, and the guns got ready, and powder and loaded fire-arms were brought on deck from the magazine. The Magnet, our vessel, is a man-of-war gun-brig, but has no authority to pursue or detain slavers. During the pre-

parations, myself and wife, and our young friend —, retired to our cabin to enter on a service, which I hope will be ever dear to us, that of waiting on a God of peace: we felt not the least alarm, and the circumstance was, perhaps, useful to us, in bringing our Christian testimony against war to the test of individual principle in our own minds, and as leading us to look forward with hope and confidence to the time when all fightings shall be at an end. Before we left the cabin we heard a commotion on deck: the sailors were moving one of the great guns near to the fore-castle, and there was much excitement. The commander had hoisted his pennant and flag, and the stranger making no reply, he was preparing, according to the rules of war, first to fire a-head of her, then to fire over her, and then to fire into her; but before the match was applied she hoisted Sardinian colours, and we were compelled to move on. What she really was nobody could tell, perhaps a slaver, perhaps not; but the officers said the colours were very likely meant to deceive us. The commander said he once came up with a slaver in distress, whose captain the night before had thrown fifty of his slaves overboard for want of water, but he could neither take nor detain the vessel; he sent them, however, a supply of water.

We arrived at Barbadoes on the 6th instant, having been thirty-two days at sea, without once seeing land, and the same night set sail again by the mail-boat for St. Thomas. We had experienced some sea-sickness on board the Magnet and much discomfort, and for a few days some miserable feelings arising from squalls and head-winds that made the ship pitch and roll, the timbers creak, and heavy things to roll and tumble about on deck and the cabin-floors, so that we could not stand to dress, and had several bruises. We had dreaded the change to the mail-boat, which is a much smaller vessel, but found it on the whole an improvement: the passengers were reduced in number and the berths more commodious, and we could take all our meals upon deck under an awning. Enjoyment might now be almost said to begin: we were favoured with good health, lovely weather, gentle breezes, a smooth sea, and sailed among beautiful islands which it gladdened our eyes to see.

Our captain, contrary to his regulations, stopped at Martinique, and allowed us to land at St. Pierre. Nature has done much for this lovely island, spreading over it the beauties of tropical vegetation and a fertile soil, and man has done much to deform it. Slavery lingers here, and the lot of the servile population is still so hard that they are constantly making efforts to escape. Joseph Sturge tells us, that large numbers had escaped to the British islands when he was in the West Indies. I mentioned this fact to one of our fellow-passengers, a slave-owner at St. Thomas, who denied it, and said it was impossible; that the French government would never submit to have

its runaway slaves harboured in the neighbouring islands, and that the English would not dare to detain them. I told him to make inquiry on shore. We all took a different course in the town, and went to different quarters. When we met again on board the vessel, my aforesaid friend said to a Kingston merchant, a thorough-paced planter's man, "Mr. Candler was right." Yes, was the muttered reply. My wife and I went to a large hotel kept by a Barbadian woman of colour. I asked her how things were going on in Martinique? How are they going on? why slaves had got to be of no value now; she would gladly sell all she had for eighty dollars a-piece: two of her slaves had lately run away to St. Lucia, and there was no getting them back again: she wondered at one of them, for she had never even slapped her in the face: it was infamous, and the French government winked at it. I asked her how the slaves got away? In boats, she said, and on rafts, and many of them were drowned: the coast-guard had often seen rafts upset and the negroes perish, but now there was a man-of-war to sail round the island and keep the shore. As a further confirmation that the system of escape continues, I will here copy an article of session news, which I saw in the "Journal Officiel de Martinique, 27 Novembre, 1839." "*Par arrêts du contumace.* Les nommés, Joseph, esclave du Sieur Louis Marie, habitant aux Trois-Islets; Jonas, esclave du Sieur de Vassoigne; Elisée, esclave du Sieur Ferdinand de Pelletier, accusés, 1^o, d'avoir soustrait frauduleusement une pirogue, à l'aide de laquelle ils ont fui dans une colonie étrangère; 2^o, d'avoir, dans la nuit, pénétré dans la maison du dit Louis Marie, et d'y avoir enlevé les divers agrès et appareils de la dite pirogue, &c., ont été condamnés à recevoir chacun 29 coups de fouet, et à cinq années de chain de police." So that when they are caught, which we may hope they never will be, they are to receive twenty-nine lashes each, and to work five years in a chain-gang! Another number of the same journal advertises six runaway slaves, caught in the act of decampment.

I was told at St. Thomas' Town that fifty slaves had run away from that island to Tortola: some of the slaves escape to Dominica, but more to St. Lucia; and Captain Stuart, who is now in Jamaica,—but I have not seen him,—told the captain of our mail-boat, that he had in his possession a piece of cork on which a slave floated from Marigalant to Dominica, about sixty miles, exposed to sharks swimming around him, and that he was picked up, exhausted and senseless, on the shore.

At Tortola I visited the national-school founded by the bishop of Barbadoes. Boys, girls, and infants are all instructed under one roof in a splendid room. A coloured master and mistress, a female superintendent, and an under-teacher were all in attendance; and groups of children, black, white, and brown, mostly jet black, but classed without distinction of colour, were receiving instruction: the first class read remarkably well, and the

children altogether exhibited a liveliness and intelligence quite equal to what we see in England. The Wesleyans have three other schools in the island, which contains about 6000 inhabitants. Since the abolition of slavery about 600 of the labourers have emigrated to Trinidad, to get higher wages, as Tortola, though a lovely island, is very poor, and the wages only about 5s. sterling per week. St. Thomas' Town abounds in stores well furnished with merchandize, and here the slavers come to purchase their horrid paraphernalia for a new voyage. The port is free to all nations, and only one per cent. is demanded *ad valorem* on goods imported, as a duty to the Danish government: its merchants are prosperous and wealthy. The slaves of the Danish isles know that Governor Scholten is gone to Copenhagen, and they say that when he returns he will bring out freedom: they will be much disappointed. One of the Santa Cruz planters told me that the English had done their best to injure them, and to abolish slavery, but they should have twenty years of it yet! A French merchant of St. Thomas told me that he had recently bought land in Porto Rico, but no slaves, not because he was averse to slavery, but because he was sure, from the present appearance of things, slavery must soon cease even in the Spanish colonies. This, however, is not the opinion of the planters generally in Porto Rico and Cuba, as they readily give 300 and 400 dollars each for newly-imported slaves.

At St. Thomas we changed our quarters from the mail-boat to a new steamer man-of-war of 240-horse power, carrying six officers and seventy men, charged with the mails to Porto Rico, Hayti, Cuba, and Jamaica. Such a vessel, I suppose, never sailed in these seas before, and never before was such a voyage performed so expeditiously. The distance is more than 800 miles, which we ran in four days and three hours, including all stops and detentions. The capital of Porto Rico is a large town and handsome, built at right angles, and beautifully paved: the inhabitants and garrison about 35,000. In walking through its streets in the evening I experienced the same stifling sensation in the atmosphere which we had felt before in Barbadoes and Tortola: it seemed as if exertion would kill me: I walked slowly and languidly, and was almost afraid to walk at all. The West Indies are now very sickly. In Barbadoes the troops are encamped, for the sake of health: we left three army-surgeons there who came out in the same packet. We had one case of yellow-fever on board the steamer, and two others of beginning sickness.

Port-Royal has lost within the year two surgeons and twelve assistant-surgeons, and a great many soldiers and sailors; and the town of Kingston, where we now are, is very unhealthy. Samuel Oughton, one of the Baptist missionaries, tells me he has buried thirty persons of his congregation (a very large one, amounting to at least 4000,) besides many children within the last six weeks.

My dear wife and I are under no alarm; we endeavour to put all our trust in Him who can restrain the sun from smiting by day, and the moon by night; and though now and then a little cast down, and almost ready to doubt whether we can be of any service here, we have never lost sight of the impressions of duty which we felt to leave home, and which still attend us in the work we have entered upon. On landing at Cape Haytien we paid a visit to the British consul, who kindly offered to introduce me to the authorities, if it were my wish to stay or return to St. Domingo: he said they were extremely jealous of the least interference with their institutions, but he was sure that no obstruction would be thrown in our way if our work was one of benevolence. If favoured with health to accomplish what we have in view in this island, it is my intention to proceed to Hayti before we return to England.

I was cautioned against opening my mouth in condemnation of slavery and the slave-trade in Cuba; a fellow-passenger, a Peruvian, assured me that the Spaniard, when aroused to anger, was sometimes ferocious, and a hasty word might cost me my life. We spent two hours in St. Jago, and on leaving it saw and heard things that were heart-aching. As we left the beautiful harbour, a rakish-looking schooner entered it under the guns of the fort: "That vessel," said an officer on board, "is rigged for a slaver, and has probably landed its cargo on the shore, and is going in to refit;" and several persons on board stated that another slaver was lying in the harbour, that landed 180 slaves six weeks ago. These things are talked of unblushingly in Cuba, and seem as common as the sun at noon-day. The people in this region talk and act precisely as if Christianity had no existence, and as if there were no God to judge in the earth. They justify the slave-trade as our old slave-traders did in England before the abolition of the traffic. One man told me that many of the new slaves were so happy they would not return to Africa on any account; another had the impudence to say, that they are sometimes so well treated on the middle-passage, that on leaving the vessel they will cling to the captain as they would to father and mother! We have felt deeply and seriously for poor, injured Africa. When will that dark continent be enlightened, and the white man cease to be a man-stealer? when will "Ethiopia stretch out her hands unto God?"

We reached Kingston on the 16th instant, and after two days of tarrance at one of the hotels, where board and lodging are extravagantly dear, we entered into hired apartments, and engaged a servant. Three of the missionaries have called on us, and kindly offered us assistance; and we have already attended the examination of two schools, on the plan of the British and Foreign School Society, about to break up for the "Christmas holiday," which is here observed by some of the sober blacks with devotion, but by great numbers in dancing, music, and riots. The drums and dancing have already begun, and servants begin to leave their employ-