History

The books reissued in this series include accounts of historical events and movements by eye-witnesses and contemporaries, as well as landmark studies that assembled significant source materials or developed new historiographical methods. The series includes work in social, political and military history on a wide range of periods and regions, giving modern scholars ready access to influential publications of the past.

The Jamaica Planter’s Guide

Thomas Roughley (fl. 1820) published this Guide, based on his own experience, in 1823. It is an important source on Britain’s richest colony, where the sugar trade had reached its peak around 1810. At a time when the abolition of slavery was a major issue, Jamaican planters were particularly concerned, as so much of their activity was based on slave labour. The book deals with all aspects of running a sugar plantation profitably, the chapter on the work force being particularly interesting. He outlines each role necessary for the effective estate, and criticises the ‘slanders’ of philanthropists regarding the mistreatment of slaves, referring to the strict laws for their protection: since the importation of new slaves had been banned since 1807, it was all the more necessary for owners to look after their workforce’s health and welfare. Roughley shows that well-run plantations were highly complex agricultural and economic units.
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The Jamaica Planter’s Guide

Or, a System for Planting and Managing a Sugar Estate or Other Plantations in that Island, and Throughout the British West Indies in General

Thomas Roughley
THE

JAMAICA

PLANTER'S GUIDE.
THE

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PLANTER’S GUIDE;

OR,

A SYSTEM FOR PLANTING AND MANAGING

A

SUGAR ESTATE,

OR OTHER PLANTATIONS IN THAT ISLAND,

AND THROUGHOUT

THE BRITISH WEST INDIES

IN GENERAL.

ILLUSTRATED WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES.

BY THOMAS ROUGHLEY,
NEARLY TWENTY YEARS A SUGAR PLANTER IN JAMAICA.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1823.
Academia Cantabrigiensis
Liber.
PREFACE.

At any period, but more especially the present, when Jamaica and West India produce is so much depreciated, and the heavy expenses attending the cultivation of the land, and the manufacture of its produce; together with the capital laid out in the establishment of a plantation, and its annual disbursements, is considered, a system of practical cultivation, combined with proper economy, will, it is presumed, be readily adopted by every proprietor. An attention to such a plan will doubtless appear necessary in all cases of the non-residence of the owners, and where the management of estates is intrusted to agents. Many circumstances may concur to render such care indispensable—the failure of crops, the unusual decrease and
PREFACE.

loss of slaves and stock, the exhaustion of land, inadequate and trifling returns by shipments or sales, a consequent diminution of capital, and the inevitable alternative (after many years of toil and anxious hope) of borrowing money by mortgaging his estate, to sustain his credit. To these contingencies may be added law charges, interest of money, and per centage to agents; and at last a consignment of the produce to a mortgagee, or putting him in possession of the estate, thus perhaps blighting his prospects for ever.

The author of this work has spent many years in the Island of Jamaica, in the occupation of a planter, and in the management of several estates, principally in the north side of that productive, delightful island. His knowledge of the prevailing system of culture has been matured by experience, and he has, he trusts, discovered some of those errors which have occasioned both expense and failure. He has therefore ventured to arrange such a method of
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plantership (especially for the sugar department) as is best adapted, not for Jamaica alone, but for the West India islands in general. He has introduced some useful, comprehensive, and beneficial modifications, which he doubts not will be conducive to the interests of the proprietors. He presumes that such a plan will meet with the approbation, countenance, and support of the independent, non-resident owners of land, and capitalists, and all who are interested in the welfare of that species of property. He has endeavoured to make it simple and of easy acquisition, particularly so to the beginner; yet, he trusts, of equal value to the old practitioner. In the work he has also inserted some interesting anecdotes founded on facts, which have either fallen under his own observation, or been received from credible testimony. He trusts that his work will be found by the impartial and unbiassed of general utility, and that it will therefore meet with approbation.
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