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978-1-108-00796-2 - The West Indies: Their Social and Religious Condition

Edward Bean Underhill

Frontmatter

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The West Indies

In this book, first published in 1862, Edward Bean Underhill gives an engaging account of a journey to the West Indies on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society. He visited Baptist churches in Trinidad, Haiti, Jamaica, Cuba and the Bahamas in order to evaluate the religious state of the many congregations that were established there after the Emancipation Act. Underhill emphasizes that the religious and social consequences of the Emancipation for the people of the West Indies cannot be viewed independently of one another. He finds that the islands, on their own terms, have made the best possible use of the freedom obtained. Underhill gives an elaborate and vivid description of his impression of the islands, but his main focus is on Jamaica, which he finds has benefited most of all.

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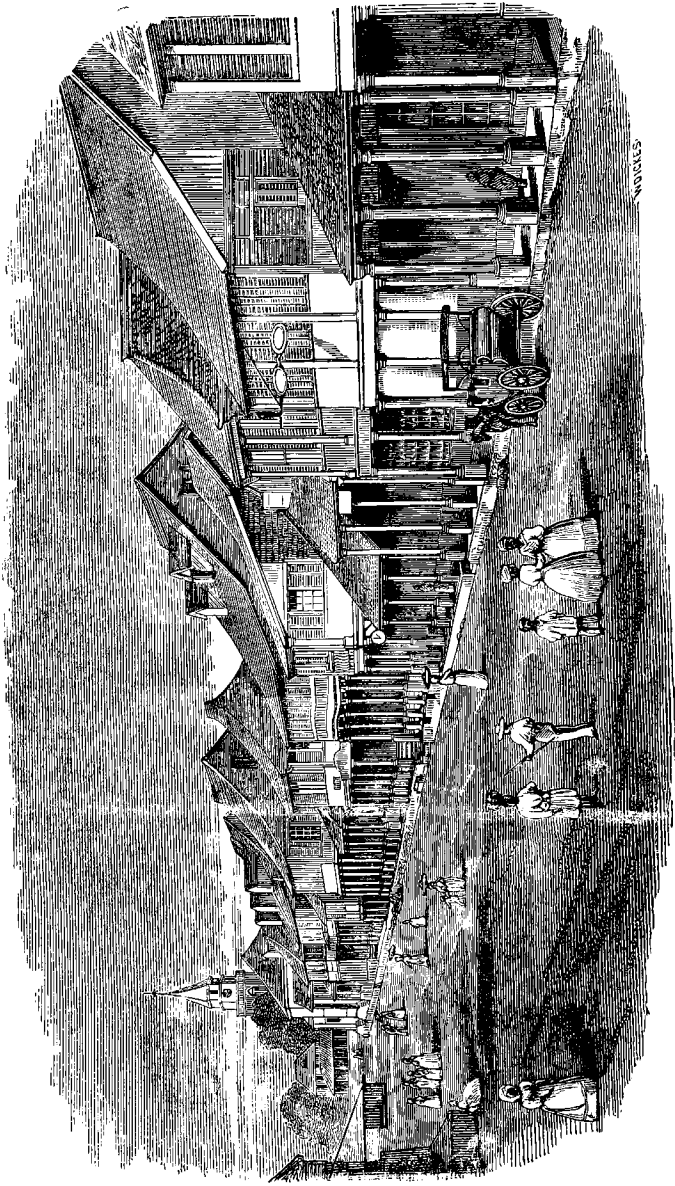
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THE WEST INDIES:

THEIR SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITION.



Negro Servants.

BY

EDWARD BEAN UNDERHILL.

LONDON: JACKSON, WALFORD, AND HODDER,

18, ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

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TO
SIR S. MORTON PETO, BART., M.P.,
Treasurer,
THE REV. FREDERIC TRESTRAIL,
Secretary,
AND TO THE
COMMITTEE OF THE BAPTIST MISSIONARY
SOCIETY,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
BY THEIR
COLLEAGUE AND FELLOW-LABOURER
IN THE
KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR.

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P R E F A C E .

THE tour, of which the following pages contain the record, was undertaken at the request of the Treasurer and Committee of the Baptist Missionary Society. Its object was primarily to investigate the religious condition of the numerous Baptist Churches which have been formed in the islands of the West, especially as that condition has been affected by the Act of Emancipation.

Emancipation was itself the fruit of the religious sentiments of Great Britain, and it has been found impossible, in judging of its results, to separate the religious from the social aspect of it. For in the elevation of the negro, even freedom, with all its stimulating influences, stands second in power to religion, and, without extending our view to other races, it will be seen that the advantages already gathered from liberty, owe their life and hopefulness to the influence which Christian truth exercises over the minds of the enfranchised.

I cannot doubt that the evidence here collected will satisfy both the friends of Christian Missions and the philanthropist, that their efforts have not been in vain; that the Creoles of the West Indies are not deserving

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of the reproaches which have been of late so freely cast upon their character as wanting in industry and intelligence.

It is necessary, however, to remind my readers that the question to be determined, is not whether the enfranchised people of our West Indian Colonies have reached the platform of civilization and wealth occupied by the nations of Europe; but whether they have used well the twenty-three years of freedom they have enjoyed, and won such a position, in that short period of time in the life of a nation, as may fairly be expected of a race emerging from a cruel and debasing bondage. In my judgment, the answer must be given most emphatically in the affirmative.

In that portion of my tour which embraced the island of Jamaica, I enjoyed the companionship and efficient aid of my highly esteemed friend, the Rev. J. T. Brown, of Northampton, who was selected by the Mission Committee for this purpose. Throughout the whole of these varied journeys and voyages, my dear Mrs. Underhill was my constant associate, and greatly contributed to the utility and interest of my work.

We have most gratefully to acknowledge the numberless acts of kindness we received, and the unreserved freedom with which all classes, whether Government authorities, planters, ministers, or the peasantry, communicated the information we sought.

13, *Camden Square*,
December 14th, 1861.

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ERRATA.

- Page 96, line 9, for *hurtling*, read *beetling*.
 Page 120, line 16, for *conversion*, read *conversion*.
 Page 235, line 16, for *impenetrable*, read *impenetrable*.
 Page 266, line 2, for *if*, read *when*.
 Page 295, line 19, for *humam*, read *human*.
 Page 335, line 12, for *twelvth*, read *twelfth*.