The Obeah Woman.

close to my ear, and whispered—massa Compton—he great. Very great Obeah woman.

Of this I had not been aware—it was a secret which never would have been confined to me by any negro, but one so violently in love as John Pepper. Obeah practices are punished with severity when discovered, the power that those people have over the slaves being enormous. However, it was no affair of mine, and what was imparted in confidence I felt myself bound in honor not to reveal, and as I did wish to help John Pepper, I promised him that I would speak to old Nelly that evening.

As usual, I went down to the huts, and having, to escape observation supplied the negroes with some rum, as soon as they were in the frenzy of their dance, I slipped away to old Nelly, who was, as usual, seated on the stone, rocking her body gently to and fro. I put a dollar into her hand to propitiate my suit. She muttered something as she dropped it down her neck, and then, as if anticipating that my generosity implied a request, stretched out her long skinny throat towards me, as if to hear my petition. I made it in few words, and we separated after she had nodded her head to give me to understand that she comprehended my wishes. During the following week, I observed that Sally was thoughtful, and when I met her, accorded me with a respectful look. Three weeks after my application to old Nelly, John Pepper and Sally were married, and John kissed my hand in gratitude as he requested me to honor the nuptial ceremony, which was performed by a missionary, who lived within three miles of us, and with whom I was well acquainted—a more simple, devout, worthy man, I believe never existed: he had been educated for the church, and had now continued in his vocation for more than forty years. Although he could seldom be persuaded to enter into society, he was a general favorite with the planters. He devoted himself to his calling; and if all the missionaries had been like him, to what a state of advancement the negroes would have by this time arrived! To the slaves, he was mild in his expositions, adapted his language to their comprehension, won them by his kindness and cheerfulness, and would never admit them to the sacred rites of Christianity until he was persuaded that they understood the nature of their engagement.

As in the continuation of this narrative, the conduct of a missionary will afford much interest, I will take this opportunity of making a few remarks upon this class of persons, as they appeared to me during my residence in the West Indies. It is a matter of deep regret, that a more careful selection is not made by those who appoint missionaries from the mother country. Such as I have described Mr. Wilson to be, (and there are many like him,) assist, and often set an example to ministers of the Established Church in their efforts to enlighten the negroes; but it appears to me, that there is no medium—either they are invaluable, or they are dangerous to society, from their over-zeal and precipitation. The religious enthusiasm which induces a man to devote his life to the extension of the gospel, often runs into extremes and becomes fanaticism. This is bad; but what is worse, that fanaticism there is combined the jejuneistical and dangerous creed—that the end justifies the means. Thus it is that we have two descriptions of missionaries in the Colonies—one, which is the most rare, prepares the slave for emancipation—the other, tells him that he ought to be free; the one, that he must prove by his conduct that he is a Christian—the other, that he must only believe, and he is