THE SECRET LOVER.
FROM THE PERSIAN OF JUAMI.

Lives there the soulless youth, whose eye
That ruby tinted lip could see,
Nor long for thee to live or die?
How unlike me!

Or see that cheek's pomegranate glow;
Yet think of anything but thee,
Cold as that bosom heaving snow?
How unlike me!

Or see thee o'er the golden wire
Bend with such lovely witchery,
Nor feel each tone like living fire?
How unlike me!

Or see thee in the evening dance
Float, like the foam upon the sea,
Nor drink sweet poison from thy glance?
How unlike me!

Or hear thy hymn, at moonlight rise,
Soft as the humming of the bee,
Nor think he sits in paradise?
How unlike me!

Or see thee in thy simplest hour,
Sweet as the rose upon the tree,
Nor long to plant thee in his bower?
How unlike me!

But lives there one who vainly tries
To look the freest of the free,
And hide the wound by which he dies?
Ah! how like me!

THE OBEAH WOMAN.
A WEST INDIA NARRATIVE.

It was in the year 18— that I quitted England for the island of Antigua, my father, who was at the head of a mercantile house in this country, considering that a few months' local and practical knowledge of the state of society in the West Indies would better enable me to form a just estimate of the wants and condition of the colonies, than all the theoretical study that could be obtained in England. It was with these just views that he determined I should remain a year in the islands,
previous to my being admitted as a partner in the firm over which he presided.

On my arrival at Antigua, I took up my abode at the plantation-house of an old friend and correspondent of my father. He was a widower; his only daughter had for some years been sent to England for her education. I had seen her but once, and that was a few days previous to my departure, when my father had directed me to call, and offer my services in taking charge of anything which she might wish to send out to Antigua. I was then in all the haste of a young man embarking in life, and on board of a ship at the same time, and my subsequent recollection of her was merely that she was rather a pretty and elegant young person.

I had been about four months on the island, and had gained a very tolerable insight into the habits and peculiarities of the negroes, when the circumstances occurred which I am now about to relate: but I must first describe the plantation and its inhabitants. The plantation house was situated at the end of a ravine, in the hollow of which were the cane plantations, extending from the house to within a hundred yards of the sea. On one side, on the rising ground, and about a quarter of a mile from the plantation house, stood the cottages of the negroes, with their provision grounds, running back towards the hill as far as the industry of the possessors induced them to put the land into the village. The mills and sugar-works were down by the sea-side, where there was a small bay with a wooden pier run out into deep water, for the droghers to come along-side and receive the casks of sugar which were, in these vessels, carried round to St. John's, and transferred to West India ships waiting for their cargoes. It was an isolated beautiful spot. The negroes were contented and happy; I was constantly with them, and have, therefore, no hesitation in making the assertion. Sunday was their day of rest, or rather of pleasure, for they took no advantage of the former privilege. Before the sun had time to evaporate the dew-drops which glistened on the prickly pear-bushes, you would see them dressed in their smartest attire, loaded with the produce of their labor, gaily start off in a crowd to the market at St. John's, which is invariably held on the early part of that day. It was not only to sell their produce, but to meet their friends and supply their little wants, that they went to town. In the afternoon, most of them returned and attended the chapel, which was about two miles from the estate on the road to St. John's; the service being performed in the evening that it might be attended by the negroes after they had disposed of their produce.

Before I had been three months on the estate, I was acquainted with every negro upon the property, and many were the ruses employed by them to obtain from me some indulgence in the shape of rum, &c., when I went down in the evening to their cluster of cottages to witness their merriment—for seldom, if ever, did an evening pass away without their favorite amusement of dancing. There was one slave girl, about seventeen years old, who was considered the beauty of the plantation. I never could myself admire anything so decidedly black, but still I could not deny the extreme beauty of her teeth, the happy smile upon her face, and the neatness, as well as cleanliness, of her person and dress; her figure was perfection, and compared with her own race, she certainly was a beauty.

This girl was usually the delegate from the other slaves, when they would coax me out of an order for two or three bottles of rum, to enliven
their merriment—I might almost say, to enable them to keep it up; for although I seldom observed any sensible perspiration among the gang when they were at work, yet when they danced it was most profuse; it appeared as if they made a pleasure of labor and a labor of pleasure. Half the exertion employed in the field which they expended in their amusement, would have enabled them to have accomplished their tasks before the day was half over. This slave girl was the object of admiration of many a young Othello, but one appeared to me to be decidedly the favorite. This was John Pepper, a fine tall negro, about twenty-three years of age, with a humorous expression of countenance, which he seldom lost, except when flouted by his mistress; for it must not be supposed that there is any want of coquetry in the black damsels of Antigua. 'Eh! you tink I lub you now—keep you distance, Massa Pepper,' would often be the rebuff, accompanied with a scornful toss of the head, which John would receive when he too closely pressed his suit. Now whether it was that Sally Mango thought that I was partial to her, or whether she had first taken a fancy to me, I cannot pretend to say, but certain it was that by degrees she entirely broke off with Mr. John Pepper, and took every opportunity of throwing herself in my way. At this conduct John Pepper became sullen and unhappy. One day I accosted him, and asked when the marriage was to take place. 'So help me Gad, Massa Compton, me tink it neber take place while you here. When you go away back to your own country?' 'Not for some time, John; but what makes you think so?—you do not suppose I want to stand in your way?' 'Suppose then, Massa, no wish stand in my way, why always stand about negro hut? White gentleman neber come to negro hut.' 'I come down to negro huts because it amuses me to see you all so happy.' 'Me no happy, Sir,' replied Pepper, shaking his head, and looking fierce. 'Well, then, John, I'll try and make you so; tell me how I can assist you with Sally. If I can, I will with pleasure.' 'Suppose you really speak for true, Massa Compton, you do me much good. Massa Compton, you know dat dam old hag, Nelly, what you always give pistareen to,—she like you very much—me hear her say you real gentleman. Now, Massa Compton, tell old Nelly you wish Sally marry me, and then it all come true, sure as Gad Almighty in hebben.'

The old negress to whom Pepper referred, was perhaps one of the most miserable and disgusting objects that could be imagined. Her face was shrivelled up like a Norfolk biffin, her thin hair as white as snow, her eyes nearly closed with a running sore, her mouth toothless, her frame bone and skin, her hands withered, and her body trembling. She sat upon a large stone at the door of her hut during the greater part of the day, and muttering to herself as she basked in the sun. In fact, she appeared to be a remnant of existence, a thing alive and breathing, but nothing more. I seldom went down to the huts without putting into her hand a small piece of money, which she would receive with a nod of her head as her long fingers clasped over the gift.

'And how will she bring this to pass?' continued I.

Massa Compton, I tell you,' replied Pepper, who was standing by me—and he leaned down over the back of my chair, until his mouth was
close to my ear, and whispered—"Massa Compton—he great Obah woman."

Of this I had not been aware—it was a secret which never would have been confided to me by any negro, but one so violently in love as John Pepper. Obah 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 skinney 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, accosted me with a searchful 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 jeevistical and dangerous creed—that the end justifies the means. Thus it is that we have two descriptions of missionaries in the Colonies—the 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
The Obeah Woman.

saved. Unfortunately, one of the latter description will do more mischief in his own person than three of the former can remedy; and thus it is, from the want of a careful selection by those who sent them out with the best intentions, the whole body of missionaries have been stigmatised as preaching rebellion and insubordination instead of those divine precepts which would render the negro content in that situation to which it pleased God to call him. It is easy to suppose that a negro, coarse in his appetites, and indolent in his nature, will more readily embrace the dogmas of him who preaches faith, yet permits immoral works, and who points out to the negro that he ought to be free, (which, with the negro, implies that he ought not to labor,) in preference to the creed of that religious and conscientious man who inculcates mortification of the grosser appetites, and diligence in their avocations. One fanatic will, therefore, carry away hundreds of proselytes from every conscientious teacher of the revealed religion. But to continue.

The marriage of Pepper and Sally had taken place about three weeks when Mr. L—, who had a commercial house, and spent a great portion of time at St. Johns, informed me that several missionaries had arrived in the ship from Liverpool, and that he understood that it was the intention that one should be established near the plantation. He appeared vexed at the circumstance, as the conduct of Mr. Wilson had obtained universal respect; and he had been informed that those who had arrived were of a sect not very likely to assimilate with him in their communication with the slaves. What he reported was correct; a day or two afterwards, as I sauntered past the huts, I perceived a white man in earnest conversation with the slaves. His appearance and dress at once told me who he was, but wishing to be certain, I walked up to him, and without ceremony, requested his name, and his reasons for appearing in the plantation.

My name is Saul Fallover,' replied he, in a sanctified tone; 'my calling is of the Lord, to teach salvation to those poor deluded brethren.'

'They attend Mr. Wilson,' replied I, 'who is a deputed minister of the gospel; and obliged as we are to you for your good intentions, you will surely not interfere with the congregation of another preacher.'

'I must obey the calling of the Lord,' replied he; 'and heed not the scoffing of those who are not in Christ, or who seek not diligently.' He then turned and walked away.

During our short conference, I had ample time for surveying his outward appearance. He was a very well looking man, with black hair combed flat on his forehead, dark eyes, pale complexion, large mouth, and splendid set of teeth. He was however maimed, having lost his left hand at the wrist, and by the manner in which his arm hung down, it appeared to have also suffered injury. I afterwards discovered that he had been a cotton-spinner at Manchester, and having lost his hand in the machinery, had turned methodist, as much for a livelihood as from a desire to extend the gospel. Amongst the slaves who had been listening to his exhortation was my friend John Pepper, who, turning round to me as soon as the missionary was out of hearing, said—'Very fine man, Massa Compton,—talk all about grace, and faith, and the devil. He say, he come to my hut and show me new light.'

'Take my advice, Pepper, and have nothing to do with new lights; and if he comes to your hut, tell him to go home again.'

Poor Pepper! he turned a deaf ear to my request. Mr. Saul Fallover
constantly attended at the huts of the negroes, and the effects of his discourses were soon visible—the joyous dance in a few weeks was exchanged for 'holdings forth,' and even at midnight the nasal hum of 'praising the Lord' was to be heard from one or more of the huts. But this was not all. I often overheard the negroes arguing upon emancipation and the right of obedience; and before Mr. Saul Fallover had been two months on the plantation, the chapel was deserted, Mr. Wilson unheeded, and the negroes insolent, idle, and unhappy. I no longer walked down in the evening to the huts, but remained at the plantation-house with Mr. L——, who was in a constant state of excitement and alarm from the alteration which had taken place in one of the best regulated and happiest plantations in Antigua.

It is necessary for the development of my story, that I here make a confession of conduct on my own part, which I shall not attempt to extenuate. I had formed an intimacy with one of the household slaves belonging to Mr. L——, a young creature, about seventeen, of the class called Mustafina. She would in England have been considered as little more than a brunette; her black hair was long and straight, and when the color mantled through her clear skin, she might be considered more than handsome. This class of Creoles are too proud of their color to mix with the negroes; the consequence is, that they are too often induced to form connexions with Europeans, who happen to be on the plantations. Maria, for such was her name, was strongly attached to me, and from her I often obtained important information. One day I was talking about the new missionary, and wishing him at the devil, when Maria replied,

'Suppose you wish him at the devil, he very soon go, Edward, I know that.'

'What makes you think so, Maria?'

'I tell you—so long as he talk about faith and emancipation, all very well. Negro like to hear talk all 'bout that; but last night I go down, hear very fine sermon, and he talk about Obeah,—say Obeah very bad thing. Now that never do—old Nelly hear it all.'

'Why old Nelly can't hear a word, Maria.'

'Not hear, Massa Edward—Nelly hear and Nelly see more than you think. Old Nelly never forgive that missionary man.'

'What harm can she do him, Maria?'

'Do—what harm do—do all—do every thing—make him die in one minute—make him die in one year—five year—just as old Nelly please.'

'Indeed; by poison of course—but how can she give it to him without being found out?'

'Found out,' replied Maria; 'what negro tell; what negro not do what Nelly say? Look, Massa Edward,' continued she, opening my snuff-box, and taking out a very small pinch, which, as she dropped it on the table, she divided into three portions, and placed at a little distance from each other. 'See, this one heap kill one year—two heap kill one month—three heap kill one hour—no matter how little—kill in time—man must die.'

'But, Maria, you can only know this by hearsay.'

'So help me, Heaven, Edward, it all true. My mother had some, and show it to me.'

'What color is it, Maria?'

'All same dust,' replied she, pointing to the ground.

'But, Maria, your mother has been dead these three years. What became of this poison?'
"How I know, Massa Edward," replied she, coloring up, and shortly afterwards she quitted the room.

Mr. L—— had often told me that the negroes were acquainted with poisons of a most subtle nature, but that the Obeah people only knew how to manufacture them. The surgeon who attended the estate, with whom I was on intimate terms, happened to call in a little while after this conversation, which I related to him. He confirmed the account, and told me many curious particulars relative to Obeah practices.

For many weeks the power of Mr. Saul over the negroes appeared to increase; they daily grew more discontented, and declared they were entitled to their freedom. All happiness had fled from the plantation. Mr. L—— was gloomy, the overseer alarmed, and the drivers had great difficulty in making the gangs perform their allotted tasks. One day I was sitting behind a row of prickly-pear hushes, which bordered the cane grounds, when the main gang, who were at work with their hoes, following each other in two lines, approached me, and I overheard the following conversation.

"Dat not de true faite," cried one.

"Eh! you d——n nigger, what you know 'bout true faite?" replied another.

"What I know—I know dis: suppose 'em cut a man in half with cane knife, and he ab true faith, he make himself whole again, all same as before."

"Well, neber mind, next Kissmas, see what cane knife do. Recollect what Massa Saul say." Here the negro sung in a low tone,

Kissmass come, then white man see,

Hal—le—lu—gar.

Ebery slave be then made free,

Hal—le—lu—gar.

"How many week fore Kissmas come?" said a voice which I knew to be that of John Pepper.

"Suppose 'stead you look ater Kissmass, you look ater you own d——n little wife, Sally," cried one of the women. This remark occasioned a loud laugh through the whole gang.

"Massa Saul teach Sally de true faite," observed another and a general laugh again succeeded.

By this time they had hooed up to the end of the row, within a few feet of where I remained concealed. A loud crack from the whip of the driver, who stood at some distance, and out of hearing, announced to the gang that their day's work was over. The negroes threw down their hoes, and sauntered back to their huts.

I now clearly perceived how matters stood; that the missionary was evidently exciting the slaves to rebellion, and in all probability had also encouraged the pretty Sally to incontinence. In the evening I walked down to the hut of John Pepper. He was sitting at the door, apparently in no pleasant humor. As I afterwards found out, he had for some time been taunted with his wife's infidelity, which latterly she had been careless of concealing. There was, perhaps, some extinction to be offered for her, when it is considered, that she had married John Pepper more from fear of the Obeah woman than from any regard for him. She now had become strongly attached to the missionary, and very often remained with him until a late hour in the morning, regardless of the anger and jealousy of her husband.

"Well, John," said I, "how is your wife, Sally—is she at home?"
'No, Massa Compton,' replied he, sulkily; 'she go to missionary man—
not come back yet.'

'Oh!,' replied I, sarcastically, 'to learn the true faith, I presume.'
The eyes of the negro flashed fire, and he ground his teeth, but made
no reply. I must acknowledge that I was pleased with this 'decided
proof of jealousy on the part of the husband, and hoped that the 'back-
sliding' of the missionary might prove his ruin. I therefore continued—
'Sally is very handsome, John. I wonder that you trust her so
much.'

'So help me God, Massa Compton, she no care for me, more than
one pepper-corn. Dat d—n massa Saul—he lub him, she tell me so;
and tell me she not lib with black nigger, like me;' and the poor fellow
burst into tears.

I attempted to console him. In a few minutes he wiped his eyes, and
looking fiercely, said,

'Nebber mind, me ab revenge when Kissmass come.'

'Revenge when Christmas comes, Pepper; it's a long while to Chris-
tmas, and I am afraid that what you all expect at Christmas will not
take place. The governor knows all about your intentions, and the
troops are all ready.'

'Eh!' exclaimed the negro, astonished.

'Even so, Pepper; and I tell you so as a friend; you had better tell
the others that they may give over their foolish ideas—that Mr. Saul
has deceived you, and will bring you all into trouble.'

'How you know Massa Saul tell us?—dat a secret.'

'Yes, but secrets are found out; for instance, what took place be-
tween your wife and the missionary was a secret at first, but every body
knows it now.'

'D—n um! dat no secret now,' replied John, pulling out a tuft of his
woolly hair in his rage.

'If he was a good man, would he have taken Sally from you? Did
he not preach to you all that was wrong?'

'Yes, massa; he tell us dat all very bad; I see, what he tell all lie.
But, Massa Compton, me tink go to Obeah woman, Nelly, she make
Sally lub me again.'

'Well, you can try, Pepper.'

'Will you speak, Massa Compton? suppose you speak, Nelly, mind
all you say.'

This I would not consent to; I knew what Pepper intended, which
was, to ask for a love philter from the Obeah, in the efficacy of which,
the negroes have the greatest faith. My first application for her inter-
ference in his behalf had not been productive of happiness; and in this
instance I considered it would be disreputable. I had great cause after-
wards to rejoice that I did not, or I should have been, to a certain de-
gree, accessory to the tragical events which occurred in consequence of
the second application to the Obeah woman. I hardly need observe,
that I did not, until some time afterwards, become acquainted with the
circumstances which I shall now relate.

It was not until a fortnight after this conversation that Pepper applied
to the Obeah woman; and at that time a remarkable coincidence took
place. Mr. Wilson, to whom it had been satisfactorily proved that Mr.
Saul Fallover had disgraced his profession by his connexion with Pe-
pper's wife, considered it his duty to call and expostulate with him upon
his conduct. This he did, and so effectually, that Mr. Fallover ac-
knownledged his error, and promised immediately to break off the connexion. Whether it was that Mr. Saul had become tired of her sable charms, or, what would be more charitable to suppose, that he was really moved by the exhortations of Mr. Wilson, and afraid of the scandal which had been bruited, certain it is, that the very next day he desired Sally not to come near him again. The poor girl’s attachment by this time amounted to infatuation, and imagining that his rejection of her proceeded from indifference, she determined upon applying to old Nelly for the very same charm, to revive the love of the missionary, which her husband wished to obtain to revive her love for him. Sally was the first who requested the assistance of the Obeah woman, and obtained from her a promise of what she desired. On the following evening her husband applied to the Obeah woman, and made a similar request, stating to old Nelly, that the missionary had taken away his wife. When Pepper left off speaking, the old woman sawed her body to and fro on the stone for some time, musing and muttering. She then rose, hobbled into the hut, and in a short time reappeared, holding in one hand a calabash, in which the draught for Sally to give the missionary had been prepared, and in the other an Obeah horn. She again sat down on the stone, placed the calabash on the ground before her, and the Obeah horn between her knees, muttering as she removed from it small bunches of parrot’s feathers, teeth of men and animals, and sundry other supposed charms. At last she drew forth a bit of rag, carefully tied up, and fumbling at it some time with her trembling fingers, succeeded in detaching the thread. Out of this rag she took a small quantity of powder, and motioning to Pepper to hold out his hand, laid it on the palm and pointed to the calabash, that he should drop it in. He did so; the old woman waved her hand for him to depart, and held up three fingers as a signal that in three days he was to come again. Sally, who had been appointed to call that evening for her philter, came soon afterwards, received the calabash, and retired.

The next day an express was sent to the surgeon of her plantation, requesting his immediate attendance, as Mr. Fallover was alarmingly ill. The surgeon obeyed the summons, but on his arrival he found that the missionary was nearly dead. In two hours he expired. A dispatch had been sent off to Mr. Wilson at the earnest request of the sufferer, but before Mr. Wilson could arrive, all was over. The unfortunate man was in too great pain to be able to speak. But once only did he say to the surgeon in detached words, as he held up the stump of his left arm, ‘When, I lost this, I lost my livelihood—and my poor—miserable—soul.’ As the surgeon decidedly asserted that he had fallen a victim to poison, and the rupture between him and Sally was as well known as their previous intimacy, she was immediately taken into custody by the authorities. The poor girl acknowledged that she had found means to administer to him a love philter, procured from old Nelly, and her frantic grief at his death convinced the magistrates that she had been made an instrument to the vengeance of old Nelly against the missionary, for his having preached against the practice of the Obeah. The old woman was ordered to be brought before the magistrates on the ensuing morning, although they were aware that there was little chance of her making a confession. They were however saved the trouble of examination, as when the hut was entered, she was found dead. Whether she had died a natural death, or had destroyed herself, it was impossible to say, although to all appearance the former appeared to have been the case.
After the missionary was dead, Sally, who was discharged, returned to her husband, and during my stay on the island I never heard that she had behaved herself improperly. The negroes also, again under the influence of Mr. Wilson, gradually returned to their cheerfulness and former obedience, although it was a long while before they could forget the lessons which they had received on the subject of true faith and emancipation.

My narrative would now conclude, were it not that I have a little episode to tell relative to myself. I had remained some months longer at the plantation, and was seriously thinking of taking my passage for England, when Mr. L—— informed me that he expected his daughter to return by the next ship, and that he hoped that I would be present at the happy meeting. I consented to remain, and in due course of time Miss L—— arrived, and was welcomed at the plantation. Her appearance gave a fillip to the usual monotony of a colonial residence, and there was a general rejoicing. If I thought her a pretty, elegant girl at our casual and hasty meeting, my late seclusion, and the contrast of her pure red and white, hitherto not affected by the climate, with the variety of shades of color which latterly I had witnessed in the female face, made me wonder at my former blindness to her personal charms. In a week I was desperately in love, and having no rivals, was perhaps as much indebted to that circumstance as to any advantages of my own for a favorable reception. Before the first month had passed I had offered, and had been accepted by the daughter, and heartily congratulated by the father.

I have mentioned in my narrative, that I had imprudently formed a connexion with a young house slave of the name of Maria; and the reader must naturally be prepared to hear, that as my feelings warmed towards my new attachment, so did they cool towards her.

At the first suspicion, the poor girl tried every art which her fondness could suggest to secure my fidelity. She took every opportunity of throwing herself in my way, and exhausted her various arts of pleasing. So jealously did she watch me, that I seldom could be alone with Miss L—— without her interruption, upon one excuse or the other. At last she taxed me with desertion, to which I pleaded not guilty, pointing out the necessity of my paying some attention to the daughter of the house. I confess that I was moved by the poor girl's tears, which proved the sincerity of her attachment; but what love can be lasting which is not founded upon respect for the individual? I daily became more assiduous to Miss L——, and more careless of showing my indifference to Maria. One day she came into my sitting-room, apparently determined to come to an explanation.

At first, she looked mournfully at me, the tears gathering in her eyes; but her countenance soon changed. Coloring deeply, she advanced with a proud step.

'Mister Compton, I ask you but one question—only one; which you mean to have, Miss Laura or Maria?' And she panted to suffocation as she ceased to speak.

'I cannot imagine, Maria, that you have any right to ask that question.'

'I have right, Mister Compton, all the right woman can have; and I must have answer.'

'Well, then,' replied I, with a selfish disregard to her feelings, for
that very morning I had offered, and had been accepted by her rival; since you must have an answer, Maria, although I think you very pretty, and am fond of you, I do not think you are fit to be my wife, and therefore I shall marry Miss L——. 7 Maria looked at me as I made this heartless reply, and for some minutes appeared fixed as a statue; then, as if her strength had been taken away by sudden paralysis, fell down upon the floor. I hastened to raise her, shocked at the event; she was insensible, and the blood flowed in torrents from her nose and mouth. I called for assistance, and she was removed to her own bed. The surgeon who attended, immediately informed me that she had broken a blood-vessel, and inquired of me how the accident had been occasioned.

As I was on terms of great intimacy, I candidly acknowledged the circumstances, and at the same time my prospect of union with Miss L——.

7 Mr. Compton, you must allow me to offer you my advice; that girl will be up and well in a fortnight. The rupture of a blood-vessel in this climate is not so serious an accident as in a colder country; but even if she were not able to get up, your life is in jeopardy. Do you recollect the conversation you repeated to me that you had with her, relative to the Obeah poison?

7 Perfectly well; and also that when I asked what had become of what was in her mother's possession, she gave me no satisfactory reply.

7 She has it in her possession, you may depend upon it; and what is more, will make use of it. You must immediately acquaint Mr. L—— with the whole particulars.

7 Impossible, replied I, how could I make such a confession to the father of Miss L——? I never could persuade myself to acknowledge my folly to him.

7 Then to be candid with you, I must; for not only your life, but that of Miss L—— is in danger; and should any unfortunate result occur, I never could forgive myself. You must see, yourself, the propriety of the step, for the girl must be removed.

After much persuasion on his part, I consented that he should make Mr. L—— acquainted with the whole transaction. Mr. L——, who was as much alarmed for the safety of his daughter and for mine, as the surgeon, had a careful watch upon Maria until she was well enough to be removed. He then sent her off to an estate on the other side of the island. Before she had proceeded a mile on her journey, she asked leave to dismount from the mule, and sitting on the side of the road, requested the man who had her in charge to pluck her a banana, from a tree which grew on the road side. He did so—she peeled, broke it, and ate it, and then laid down on the ground. Her attendant requested her to rise and proceed, but she refused, saying, 'No—I die here.' In a few minutes she expired, and the remains of that powder which she had stated to me to have been in the possession of her mother, was found in a small piece of paper, lying by her side.

I hardly need observe, that this tragic event was a source of deep regret, although it proved the wisdom of the surgeon's precautions. My narrow escape at the time that I was about to close a wild career, and about to enter into a new and better life, was long the subject of serious reflection, and has I trust, assisted, with the example and affection of my wife, in reforming a character not naturally vicious, but too easily led into error and indiscretion.