

with approval, it was talked of easily and freely, and he did not appear to be entirely beyond the pale of society. I had a curiosity to meet a murderer without having the responsibility of any fiscal relations with him, and made an arrangement to call at his cottage; but something came in the way and prevented the visit.

It turned out, however, that the poor fellow had not been murdered or robbed at all. His body was found a week or two after we left, lying, dried up with the scorching heat, on a ledge near Wellington Peak; he had wandered too far, and had been overcome by heat and fatigue and unable to return—very probably he had had a sun-stroke. His purse and watch were intact; even the vultures had failed to discover him: he had gone too far beyond the ring round the town where they chiefly find their food.

Fresh water is about the most important element at San Vicente, for although heavy rains fall now and then, sometimes the island is for a whole year without a shower. The water is taken from deep wells sunk through the tufaceous rock; and as the supply is limited, the wells are carefully inclosed and protected, and closed except at certain times. A large well just behind the town, in an octagonal building covered in with a low-pitched roof, is the great centre of attraction; thither from early morning one can see files of stately negresses marching with large rather elegantly formed earthen vases poised upon their heads; and it is amusing to watch the congregation of them good-naturedly helping one another to draw the water and to fill their pitchers; and chattering and laughing, and most generously exhibiting their serviceable rows of pearly teeth. I think the negroes at San Vicente are certainly better-looking than those in the West Indies: their figures are slighter, and they have altogether a lighter effect. No doubt this carrying of water-jars has a great influence in producing the erect gait and ease of gesture for which the women especially are remarkable.