

growth, which at first sight might perhaps be taken for indigenous vegetation, but is composed of plants that have overrun deserted sugar plantations. It is only in a few remote parts of the island, and in small streaks of broken ground bordering the water-courses, that any original forest exists. The whole of the available land in the island itself, and in all the adjoining islands, was planted with sugar cane until the emancipation of the slaves in 1833; since that time the ground has been allowed to run wild. There was only one estate partly under cultivation at the time of the ship's visit, and the owner of it, Mr. Wyman, said that he made no sugar, but found sufficient sale for his canes in the raw state to be cut up and resold for chewing. The consumption of cane for this purpose must be considerable, for chewing cane appears to be the constant occupation of the negroes of both sexes and all ages. Mr. Wyman was nearly ruined by the emancipation, and said that the planters received only 50 dollars per head compensation for the loss of their slaves, and that after the lapse of three years.

The shore is covered with corals bleached white by the sun, and amongst these occur quantities of Calcareous Seaweeds (*Halimeda opuntia* and *Halimeda tridens*), branching masses composed of leaf-shaped joints of hard calcareous matter articulated together. These are all quite dry and bleached white, and hard and stiff, like corals. Seaweeds belonging to two very different groups of algæ thus secrete a calcareous skeleton, *Halimeda* and its allies, belonging to the Siphonaceæ—green coloured algæ; and *Lithothamnion* and allied genera belonging to the Corallinaceæ, which are red coloured algæ. These lime-secreting algæ are of great importance from a geological point of view, as supplying a large part of the material of which calcareous reefs and sand rocks are built up. At St. Thomas the Siphonaceæ are especially abundant, whereas at other places, as at St. Vincent, Cape Verde Islands, the Corallinaceæ appear to supply most of the calcareous matter separated from the sea water by plants.

There is only one kind of Humming Bird at St. Thomas, but it is very common, and is constantly to be seen poised in the air in front of a blossom or darting across the roads. It is remarkable how closely Humming Birds resemble in their flight Sphinx Moths, such as our common Humming Bird Sphinx, so named from this resemblance. They make in their flight exactly the same rapid darts, sudden pauses, quick turns, and the same prolonged hovering over flowers. The most conspicuous land bird in the island is commonly called the "Black-witch" (*Crotophaga ani*). These birds are usually to be seen in flocks of three or four, in constant motion amongst the bushes, and screaming harshly when they apprehend danger. They behave very much like Magpies, but are somewhat smaller than the English Magpie and black all over. They belong structurally to the family of the Cuckoos (Cuculidæ).

Two Snakes, one a species of *Typhlops* and the other apparently referable to the genus *Coronella*, were obtained, as also specimens of Lizards belonging to the genera *Anolis* and *Ameiva*.