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DOCUMENT A

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko the Noble Slave* (1688), Oxford Wolrd Classic 1998, pp. 6-8

I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this royal slave, to entertain my reader with the adventures of a feigned hero, whose life and fortunes fancy may manage at the poet's pleasure; nor in relating the truth, design to adorn it with any accidents, but such as arrived in earnest to him: and it shall come simply into the world, recommended by its own proper merits and natural intrigues, there being enough of reality to support it, and to render it diverting, without the addition of invention.

I was myself an eye-witness to a great part of what you will find here set down, and what I could not be witness of I received from the mouth of the chief actor in this history, the hero himself, who gave us the whole transactions of his youth, and though I shall omit, for brevity's sake, a thousand little accidents of his life, which, however pleasant to us, where history was scarce, and adventures very rare, yet might prove tedious and heavy to my reader, in a world where he finds diversions for every minute new and strange. But we who were perfectly charmed with the character of this great man were curious to gather every circumstance of his life.

The scene of the last part of his adventures lies in a colony in America called Surinam in the West Indies. But before I give you the story of this gallant slave, 'tis fit I tell you the manner of bringing them to these new colonies; for those they make use of there are not natives of the place, for those we live with in perfect amity, without daring to command 'em, but, on the contrary, caress 'em with all the brotherly and friendly affection in the world; trading with 'em for their fish, venison, buffaloes' skins and little rarities, as marmosets, a sort of monkey as big as a rat or weasel, but of marvelous and delicate shape, and has face and hands like an human creature, and cousheries, a little beast in the form and fashion of a lion, as big as a kitten, but so exactly made in all parts like that noble beast that it is it in miniature. Then for little parakatoes, great parrots, macaws, and a thousand other birds and beasts of wonderful and surprising forms, shapes, and colours, for skins of prodigious snakes, of which there are some threescore yards in length, as is the skin of one that may be seen at His Majesty's antiquary's, where are also some rare flies, of amazing forms and colours, presented to 'em, by myself, some as big as my fist, some less, and all of various excellencies, such as art cannot imitate. Then we trade for feathers, which they order into all shapes, make themselves little short habits of 'em, and glorious wreaths for their heads, necks, arms, and legs, whose tinctures are unconceivable. I had a set of these presented to me, and I gave 'em to the King's Theater, and it was the dress of the Indian Queen, infinitely admired by persons of quality, and were unimitable. Besides these, a thousand little knacks and rarities in nature, and some of art, as their baskets, weapons, aprons, etc. We dealt with 'em with beads of all colours, knives, axes, pins, and needles, which they used only as tools to drill holes with in their ears, noses, and lips, where they hang a great many little things, as long beads, bits of tin, brass or silver, beat thin, and any shining trinket. The beads they weave into aprons about a quarter of an ell long, and of the same breadth, working them very prettily in flowers of several colours, which apron they wear just before 'em, as Adam and Eve did the fig-leaves; the men wearing a long strip of linen, which they deal with us for. They thread these beads also on long cotton threads, and make girdles to tie their aprons to, which come twenty times or more about the waist and then cross, like a shoulder-belt, both ways and round their necks, arms, and legs. This adornment, with their long black hair and the face painted in little specks or

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flowers here and there, makes 'em a wonderful figure to behold. Some of the beauties, which indeed are finely shaped, as almost all are, and who have pretty features, are very charming and novel, for they have all that is called beauty, except the colour, which is a reddish yellow or, after a new oiling, which they often use to themselves, they are of the colour of a new brick, but smooth, soft, and sleek. They are extreme modest and bashful, very shy, and nice of being touched. And though they are all thus naked, if one lives forever among 'em, there is not to be seen an indecent action, or glance, and being continually used to see one another so unadorned, so like our first parents before the Fall, it seems as if they had no wishes, there being nothing to heighten curiosity, but all you can see, you see at once, and every moment see; and where there is no novelty, there can be no curiosity.

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DOCUMENT B

Sir Francis Bacon, *Essay XXXIII—"Of Plantations" (1625)*. *Essays, Everyman's Library*, London, 1992, pp. 104-106

Plantations are amongst ancient, primitive, and heroical works. When the world was young, it begat more children; but now it is old, it begets fewer: for I may justly account new plantations to be the children of former kingdoms. I like a plantation in a pure soil; that is, where people are not displanted to the end to plant in others. For else it is rather an extirpation than a plantation. Planting of
5 countries is like planting of woods; for you must make account to leese almost twenty years' profit, and expect your recompense in the end. For the principal thing that hath been the destruction of most plantations, hath been the base and hasty drawing of profit in the first years. It is true, speedy profit is not to be neglected, as far as may stand with the good of the plantation, but no further. It is a shameful and unblest thing to take the scum of people, and wicked condemned men, to be the
10 people with whom you plant; and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation; for they will ever live like rogues, and not fall to work, but be lazy, and do mischief, and spend victuals, and be quickly weary, and then certify over to their country to the discredit of the plantation. The people wherewith you plant ought to be gardeners, ploughmen, labourers, smiths, carpenters, joiners, fishermen, fowlers, with some few apothecaries, surgeons, cooks, and bakers. In a country of plantation, first look about,
15 what kind of victual the country yields of itself to hand; as chestnuts, walnuts, pine-apples, olives, dates, plums, cherries, wild honey, and the like; and make use of them. Then consider what victual or esculent things there are, which grow speedily, and within the year; as parsnips, carrots, turnips, onions, radish, artichokes of Hierusalem, maize, and the like. For wheat, barley, and oats, they ask too much labour; but with peas and beans you may begin, both because they ask less labour, and
20 because they serve for meat, as well as for bread. And of rice likewise cometh a great increase, and it is a kind of meat. Above all, there ought to be brought store of biscuit, oat-meal, flour, meal, and the like, in the beginning, till bread may be had. For beasts or birds, take chiefly such as are least subject to diseases, and multiply fastest; as swine, goats, cocks, hens, turkeys, geese, house-doves, and the like. The victual in plantations ought to be expended almost as in a besieged town; that is, with
25 certain allowance. And let the main part of the ground employed to gardens or corn be to a common stock; and to be laid in, and stored up, and then delivered out in proportion; besides some spots of ground, that any particular person will manure for his own private. Consider likewise what commodities, the soil where the plantation is doth naturally yield, that they may some way help to defray the charge of the plantation: so it be not, as was said, to the untimely prejudice of the main
30 business; as it hath fared with tobacco in Virginia. Wood commonly aboundeth but too much; and therefore timber is fit to be one. If there be iron ore, and streams whereupon to set the mills, iron is a brave commodity where wood aboundeth. Making of bay-salt, if the climate be proper for it, would be put in experience. Growing silk likewise, if any be, is a likely commodity. Pitch and tar, where store of firs and pines are, will not fail. So drugs and sweet woods, where they are, cannot but yield great
35 profit. Soap-ashes likewise, and other things that may be thought of. But moil not too much under ground; for the hope of mines is very uncertain, and useth to make the planters lazy in other things. For government, let it be in the hands of one, assisted with some counsel; and let them have commission to exercise martial laws, with some limitation. And above all, let men make that profit of being in the wilderness, as they have God always, and His service, before their eyes. Let not the
40 government of the plantation, depend upon too many counsellors and undertakers in the country that planteth, but upon a temperate number: and let those be rather noblemen and gentlemen, than merchants; for they look ever to the present gain. Let there be freedom from custom, till the plantation be of strength; and not only freedom from custom, but freedom to carry their

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45 commodities, where they may make their best of them, except there be some special cause of
caution. Cram not in people, by sending too fast company after company; but rather hearken how
they waste, and send supplies proportionably; but so as the number may live well in the plantation,
and not by surcharge be in penury. It hath been a great endangering to the health of some
plantations, that they have built along the sea and rivers, in marish and unwholesome grounds.
Therefore, though you begin there, to avoid carriage and like discommodities, yet build still rather
50 upwards from the streams than along. It concerneth likewise the health of the plantation that they
have good store of salt with them, that they may use it in their victuals when it shall be necessary. If
you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles; but use them justly
and graciously, with sufficient guard nevertheless: and do not win their favour, by helping them to
invade their enemies, but for their defence it is not amiss. And send oft of them over to the country
55 that plants, that they may see a better condition than their own, and commend it when they return.
When the plantation grows to strength, then it is time to plant with women as well as with men; that
the plantation may spread into generations, and not be ever pieced from without. It is the sinfulness
thing in the world to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness: for besides the
dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.

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DOCUMENT C

***Europe supported by Africa and America, William Blake, 1796, Albert & Victoria Museum, London
Engraving for J. G. Stedman's Narrative, of a five years' expedition, against the Revolted Negroes
of Surinam, in Guiana, on the Wild coast of South America; from the year 1772, to 1777***



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