

*An Extract of a Letter of Mr. Listers, containing some Observations made at the Barbado's.*

S I R,

A Correspondent of mine at the *Barbados*, the Learned Dr. *Thomas Towns*, hath lately furnished me with some Observations in a Letter of his dated in that Island *March 26. 1675*; which I shall transcribe for you:

1. Our general draught of Wine is from the *Madera*, which, contrary to all other I know of, will not endure a cool Cellar. *French* nor *Rhenish* Wines neither keep nor agree well with our stomachs, if so constantly drank as in *England*. *Canary-wine* few here care for, counting it fulsom, &c.

2. For my part, I would wish to live in this Island, as 'tis now settled, before any other place, it being so temperate that we need not hang over the fire to keep out cold, nor shut up doors at noon (as I hear the custome is in *Spain*) nor set our beds in the tops of Houses (as they do in some places on the *Mediterranean-Sea*) to fence off heat: For the Sun, notwithstanding his neighbourhood, is very gentle here, being fann'd with a constant gale from the East.

3. I have heard it question'd, Whether *America* have not some Plants common with those of *Europe*, especially the more Northern parts of it; and probably supposed, that the tops of Mountains here might produce such, as being cool and somewhat approaching to the temperature of those places in the North, that are level and more forcibly influenced by the Sun. To the clearing of this doubt, I observe, that *Purslane* is here all the Country over where I have been, and even troublesome to the Planter: In the fields I have many times gathered a Sallat of it, and it eats as well with Oyl and Vinegar as that of our *Engliff* Gardens. Here is likewise a *Sonchus*, *Lens palustris*; I found also a *Melilot*, or one so like it in all circumstances (except that the branches are not so erect) that I cannot find any difference from that of *England*.

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4. The Springs here are all near the Sea, so that those who live up in the Country have no benefit of them. They made Ponds formerly to receive Rain; which served well enough, being kept cool by a *broad leav'd Weed* and *Ducken-meat*, which over-grow most Ponds. But now almost every *Sugar-Plantation* hath a Well, that gives very good Water.

5. The Soyl is fertil, though not above a foot or two thick, upon a white and spongy Lime-stone-Rock, which affords good Quarries here and there, that serve for building. Every Dwelling-house, with the Sugar-work and other Out-housing, looks like a handsome Town; most being now built with Stone, and covered with Pan-tile or Slate (brought hither in the ballast of Ships, as are likewise Sea-coal for Forges, and so are brought cheap enough.) Indeed the whole Island appears in a manner like a scatter'd Town, which with the perpetual green Fields and Woods makes the place very pleasant.

6. The Blood of *Negro's* is almost as black as their skin. I have seen drawn forth the Blood of at least twenty, both sick and in health, and the superficies of it all is as dark, as the bottom of any *European* Blood, after standing a while in a dish. So that the Blackness of *Negro's* is likely to be inherent in them, and not caused by the scorching of the Sun, especially seeing that other Creatures here, that live in the same Clime and heat with them, have as florid Blood as those that are in a cold Latitude, *viz. England*: Though much farther to the North there are People, that cannot brag of much clearer skins than the *Europeans*; so that Complexions are no less Cold-burnt (if I may so phrase it) than Sun burnt.