

been exceptionally sickly; many of the storekeepers were suffering from the effects of fever, which, combined with the depression of spirits caused by ruined prospects, produced a condition of total collapse, from which there was only one relief—that of writing to the newspapers and abusing the Government and the island generally.

There must always be martyrs—somebody must be sacrificed—whether burnt at the stake for religious principles, or put in a bell-tent in the sun with the thermometer at 110° Fahr. simply because they are British soldiers—it does not much matter—but the moment your merchants are slain upon the altar, the boiling-point is reached.

The store-keepers sat despondingly behind their counters while the hinges of their doors rusted from the absence of in-comers. It was impossible to rouse them from their state of mercantile coma, except by one word, which had a magnetic effect upon their nervous system—“*Custom House.*”

“I suppose you have no difficulty at the Custom House, Mr. — in this simple island?” This was invariably the red rag to the bull.

“No difficulty, Sir!—no difficulty?—it is *the* difficulty—we are absolutely paralysed by the Custom House. Every box is broken open and the contents strewed upon the ground. The duty is *ad valorem* upon all articles, and an ignorant Turk is the valuer. This man does not know the difference between a bootjack and a lemon-squeezer: only the other day he valued wire dish-covers as ‘articles of head-dress,’ (probably he had seen wire fencing-masks). If he is perplexed, he is obliged to refer the questionable article to the Chief Office,—this is two hundred yards