

the greater part of an unusually large crop, were destroyed. When the hurricane occurred there were not more than 20 bags of corn and 10 barrels of flour on the island. The damage to the Salt Pond was estimated at £1,000. An intelligent and competent resident has offered to repair it for less than half that amount, if supplied with corn for the payment of the labourers. I regret to say that this proposal has met with opposition from persons who, it is alleged, are interested and desirous, as shopkeepers, of deriving profits out of any money that may be disbursed by the Government in the payment of labourers' wages, and I have been obliged to send the magistrate, who resides at Long Island, to inquire into the matter, and to arrange in the best manner for the repair of the pond, upon which the very existence of the majority of the inhabitants depends, and to require from the several leaseholders, or persons working the pond as such, but who have not for years paid any rent, a fair contribution, in labour or otherwise, towards its restoration.

8. WATLING'S ISLAND.

16. The first report from Watling's Island led me to suppose that it had suffered in an equal degree with its neighbours. An old school-house was blown down, several dwelling-houses were injured, and a schooner was lost on the coast. The sea was stated to have "made fearful inroads upon the coasts, and the spray to have blighted all vegetation, as if a fire had passed over the island, burning off the leaves and young shoots." This description, which was given by a trustworthy person, must have applied to a limited locality, for the person whom I employed to take the first cargo of provisions round in the interinsular packet schooner, reported on his return that he found the island green and flourishing, that he rode into the interior and saw the fields of corn standing unhurt. He therefore did not leave any provisions here. He stated that the people seemed industrious, and that the island must have been on the edge of the Cyclone. It is the most easterly of the group, at some distance from the Bahama Bank.

9. EXCUNA.

17. This island affords an illustration of the difficulty to which I have alluded elsewhere,\* of discriminating between want produced by ordinary causes and frequently recurring droughts, and want created by the hurricane. As there was reason to believe that the centre of the Cyclone must have passed over, or close to Excuna, and as no intelligence from it reached Nassau for several days, while boats with eager applications for assistance were coming in daily from the neighbouring islands, it was feared that the island must have suffered severely, and that all the boats and means of transport had been destroyed. It did not escape lightly, as the following list of casualties will show :—

- 2 chapels (Episcopal) damaged.
- 3 chapels (Baptist) damaged.
- 2 lock-up houses unroofed.
- 1 public school unroofed.
- 2 salt stores destroyed.
- 112 dwelling-houses destroyed.
- 97 out-houses destroyed.
- 8 vessels (Excuna) destroyed.
- 6 vessels (Nassau) destroyed.
- 12 boats (Excuna) destroyed.

\* In Despatch No. 183 of 12th December.

18. But the person already mentioned as employed to direct the distribution of provisions reported that when he arrived at the port the local Justice of the Peace at first informed him that supplies were not wanted; but the people, to the number of about 200, who had come into the village to procure the supplies known to be on board, threatened to lynch the Justice, and tear down the office, if he did not receive the supplies and distribute them to all alike, and in equal shares, which he was forced to do. I regret to say that the same community received a further supply sent from Nassau upon the receipt of unfavourable intelligence regarding their condition, and before the return of the mail packet. Subsequently I had an opportunity of expressing to the bearer of a letter of thanks to myself my condemnation of their conduct, and the effect which it would have upon the reception of any future application for assistance from the same quarter.

19. The truth is that Excuna, which was once the second island of the group, the only one that had an official establishment besides New Providence, has sunk into poverty, and its people into a state of misery and degradation. The land lies high, and the hurricane does not appear to have affected their fields greatly. The salt pond is not reported to have been injured. But the people had little in their fields to be destroyed. A drought had cut off their crops, and the hurricane has not deprived them of their food, but only of their dwellings. Nevertheless I can believe that many of them were in want of food, which they found more difficult to procure in consequence of the injuries inflicted upon their neighbours by the hurricane. These, therefore, and the others who shared in the issues, are so much the better off to the extent of the supplies which they have received, and I learn from the local Justice of the Peace that the crops of corn and cotton look very promising, and that the prospects of the people, as regards future supplies of food, are decidedly improved.

20. I am very desirous of seeing the three fine islands Excuna, Acklin's, and Crooked, restored to their former state of cultivation and prosperity, and I hope that I may receive your Lordship's permission, solicited in another Despatch,\* to employ an experienced cotton-grower from the United States to inspect them, and to report upon their capabilities for yielding cotton, which may be the means of attracting capital and labour to them, and perhaps of stimulating the present small proprietors to increased exertion and industry.

10. ST SALVADOR.

21. At St Salvador the injury done was confined to the destruction or injury of the two Episcopal churches, and several dwellings. The crops, which had been generally abundant, and had been housed, escaped with little damage. The island has since been shipping corn to Nassau. A large wreck on the coast also added to the means of subsistence. The resident Justices of the Peace did not require any supplies, and the Reverend Mr Sullivan, the clergyman lately appointed to this parish, even collected a few shillings and a small quantity of corn, and sent them to Nassau, to be forwarded to some of the suffering settlements in one of the adjoining islands.

11. ELENThERA.

I have an excellent report upon the injury done at each of the settlements of ElenThera,

\* No. 183 of 12th December.