

approach them, and walked off; and finding all his endeavours to restore order ineffectual, he left them. Soon after, a party of fifty men of the militia arrived, when almost every negro on the estate disappeared. The next day they began to return, and when Colonel Lawson wrote his dispatch, the principal offenders only, amounting to six persons, were absent. This conduct of the negroes on Salt Spring Estate, and information which the magistrates had received that the negroes on other estates would not return to work after New Year's-day, induced the magistrates, assembled at Montego-Bay, to forward a requisition to Major Pennefather, commanding the 22d regiment, at Falmouth, to order a detachment to march to that town, which Major Pennefather immediately complied with. On the following day I received an application from certain magistrates and inhabitants of the parish of Portland, desiring that a vessel of war might be ordered to Port Antonio, on account of some unpleasant rumours which had reached them of discontent amongst the slaves in that quarter.

Being in Kingston when these accounts arrived, I immediately communicated the information I had received to Sir Willoughby Cotton. I applied to Commodore Farquhar for a ship-of-war to proceed to the port of Port Antonio, and, as a precautionary measure, I also recommended that ships-of-war should be dispatched to Montego Bay and Black River, which Commodore Farquhar, with his usual promptitude and attention, immediately complied with. I directed circulars to be addressed to custodes of parishes, inclosing the King's proclamation, and also letters to be written to the Major-Generals of the militia, copies of which (Nos. 1. and 2.) I inclose.

On the morning of the 28th, I received a dispatch from the Custos of Trelawny, (No. 3.) inclosing one forwarded to him by Colonel Lawson, (No. 4.) containing certain affidavits, copies of which (Nos. 5. and 6.) I herewith inclose, and further stating that he considered the information they contained so convincing of impending danger, that he had determined to assemble the whole strength of his regiment, and referring to me for further instructions. From Mr. McDonald, the custos of Trelawny, I also learned that he deeply regretted to find a strong spirit of insubordination amongst the slaves. That, on the 23d instant, the trash-houses on York Estate, in Trelawny, had been purposely burnt down, and that the attorney, who lives on the property, was strongly impressed with the idea that they intended to burn the rest of the works. One company of militia was ordered to proceed to this estate, but before they arrived the negroes had cut down the plantain walk belonging to the overseer, and both men and women had fled.

It happened that I had convened a council on the day I received this dispatch, for the purpose of enabling me to form regulations of quarantine, should such a measure become necessary, by which means an opportunity was afforded me of conferring personally with Sir Willoughby Cotton who came from Kingston for the purpose of attending the council, and being fully satisfied, from the information I had received, that nothing but prompt and decided measures would arrest the spirit of insub-

ordination which prevailed so generally in the parishes of Saint James and Trelawny, I strongly recommended Sir Willoughby Cotton to proceed to Montego Bay with as little delay as possible, taking with him such an amount of force as he might deem expedient, anticipating that his immediate presence would produce the most favourable effect. Sir Willoughby Cotton readily acquiesced in my proposal, and the following day he embarked on board His Majesty's ship Sparrowhawk, with two companies of the 84th regiment.

On Thursday the 29th, I received various dispatches by post, the substance of which I inclose, (No. 7.) which I lost no time in communicating to Sir Willoughby Cotton, and immediately issued the accompanying M. G. O. (No. 8.) On the same day, at 5 p. m., dispatches arrived by express, containing still more alarming accounts of the state of the country. The work of destruction had begun, and fires had been seen, both in Saint James's and Trelawny, to blaze the preceding night, in various directions. The custos of Trelawny stated, that, in his opinion, nine-tenths of the slave-population had refused to turn out to work, and Colonel Lawson, instead of being able to oppose these excesses, had drawn in his regiment to Montego Bay, and even there appeared to feel apprehension, acting only on the defensive. Not waiting to detail this information in a letter to Sir Willoughby Cotton, who, on account of the regular winds which prevail in this latitude, could not leave Port Royal until the following morning, I immediately dispatched Captain Rainsey, 77th regiment, my military secretary, on board the Sparrowhawk, with the letters I had received, not doubting that, on their perusal, Sir Willoughby Cotton would deem it advisable to order a stronger force to follow him. By this means also I communicated to Sir Willoughby Cotton my intention to convene a council of war, according to the 50th Geo. 3, ch. 17, cl. 74, on the following day, for the purpose of submitting to them such information as I possessed on the state of the country, in order to obtain their opinion on the necessity of declaring martial law. The next morning (the 30th) Sir Willoughby Cotton, with the detachment, embarked on board the Sparrowhawk, sailed from Port Royal for Montego Bay, and on the following morning, His Majesty's ship Blanche, Commodore Farquhar, proceeded on the same destination, conveying three hundred men from the 33d and 84th regiments, and sixteen artillery soldiers, with two 8 field pieces, rockets, &c.

I did not come to the resolution of assembling a council of war, for the purpose before stated, until I had thoroughly satisfied my mind that the immediate exigency admitted no middle measures, that more than any thing else, it would remove an impression, which had been made on the minds of the slaves, that the Executive Government and the King's troops would not oppose them. That speedy example, however greatly I must regret and deplore the necessity of resorting to it, could alone stay the destruction that had begun, and ultimately save a greater effusion of blood, and likewise, that under martial law alone I could obtain complete controul over the militia force, on whose services I must chiefly depend to put down this rebellion.