

Having received an offer from the rangers belonging to Moore-town, in the parish of Portland, and Charlestown, in the parish of Saint George, to serve in this district, I ordered a detachment of one hundred and seven men, under the command of Captain Fyffe, Superintendent at Charlestown, to embark at Port Antonio, and proceed to Palmenth, there to act under orders from Sir Willoughby Cotton, who speaks highly of their services, particularly in scouring the woods, a species of service for which their habits of life render them particularly efficient. I considered it important to avail myself of their offer, not only on this account, but also that by employing them, I thereby secured their fidelity, a consideration to which I attached much importance in the critical position of affairs at that time.

The information I received from Sir Willoughby Cotton caused me to suppose that my departure for Montego-bay might be hastened sooner than eventually it was thought expedient for me to arrive there. It became necessary, therefore, to summon a council of war, previous to my departure from the seat of government, to determine whether martial law should continue in force. The council assembled on the 21st ultimo, and decided unanimously that martial law should continue in operation.

On the 25th January, certain Wesleyan missionaries communicated their desire to wait on me. On receiving them, two of their members preferred complaints, in written papers, against some of the militia stationed at Saint Ann's-bay. I immediately directed copies of these papers to be transmitted to Major-General Cox, who is also Custos of the parish of Saint Ann, with directions that he should institute an inquiry thereon. I have the honour to transmit a copy of his reply, with the several inclosures to which he refers.

I received a dispatch from Sir W. Cotton, dated the 27th ultimo, inclosing also a letter from Mr. Barrett, the Custos of Saint James, by which I learned that both Sir Willoughby and the Custos concurred in thinking, that the time had arrived when a conditional amnesty might be proclaimed, and that my appearance here might in some degree serve to heal the moral wounds this rebellion had inflicted, and expedite the period when affairs might be suffered to resume their ordinary course. On my arrival at Montego-bay I found the favourable reports I had received from Sir W. Cotton fully confirmed. With few exceptions, the negroes in the parishes of Saint James and Trelawny had returned to their estates, and in some instances the managers of properties had begun to repair the buildings which had been destroyed on the commencement of the insurrection. The gaol, however, was crowded with prisoners, and numbers still continued to be brought in. Not one of these miserable wretches, amounting fully to five hundred, would probably escape conviction on the clearest testimony, for all were engaged in the insurrection. Enough of examples had been made to render indiscriminate punishment unnecessary, and with Sir Willoughby Cotton's full concurrence, I stopped in some measure the trials by court martial, limiting their proceedings to cases of great enormity. On the 3d instant I issued a proclamation, a copy of which is inclosed. Your Lordship may perhaps consider the

terms of the proclamation to vague and undefined, that the names of those intended to be excepted ought to have been stated, and all others admitted to a free pardon; but until the overseers could be allowed to return to their estates, it was impossible to know who ought to be excepted, and at the time of issuing the proclamation I also issued a general order, a copy of which I have the honour to inclose. When returns agreeable to this order are received, I shall then discriminate even among principles, by publishing another proclamation, should it be found necessary, excepting by name those only whose offences are of a nature which must exclude them from pardon. Although I felt unable to frame the proclamation exactly to my satisfaction, I did not on that account delay to issue it, because I hoped it might save some among the insurgent slaves from the destruction they were daily exposed to while holding out in opposition to the laws; and I soon felt happy to learn that many had since returned to the estates to which they belong. The day following I constituted a commission of magistrates, in whose humanity and discretion I placed much reliance, to inquire into the nature of the charges against the prisoners, so that none should be brought to trial who were not accused of murder, or had rendered themselves conspicuous as leaders in the insurrection. The Magistrates having commenced an inquiry many were discharged and sent to the estates they respectively belonged to; others were sentenced to receive corporal punishment, on whom sentence of death must inevitably have been passed, if tried either by court martial or in a civil court of law. Those whose crimes could not be passed over were left for trial. I had not been long at Montego-bay before I felt convinced the period had arrived when martial law might be discontinued; tranquillity had been in a great measure restored in the parishes of Saint James and Trelawny, and the insurrection could now only be considered to lurk in the parish of Hanover. The returns I received before leaving the seat of government, represented the number of slaves absent from properties in Hanover at one thousand six hundred, soon after the publication of my proclamation, this amount was reduced to little more than four hundred, the rest, with the exception of some killed, having returned to the estates to which they belong. It became, therefore, a matter of great importance to relieve the overseers and book-keepers of estates, all of whom are Europeans, from militia duty, and allow them to return to the properties under their charge, for in their absence the slaves felt themselves neither under protection or controul. By the 48th of George the Third, cap. 4, commonly called the party law, the Governor is empowered to order parties of militia on duty in time of insurrection or rebellion, and this law appears exactly applicable to present circumstances. With Sir Willoughby Cotton's concurrence, and on the recommendation also of Mr. Barrett, the Custos of Saint James, I published a proclamation, declaring martial law to cease. At the same time I issued a militia general order under the party law, a copy of which is inclosed, with the proclamation. Having now accomplished all that I had hoped, and more than I had expected, in so short a time, after my arrival at Montego-bay, I determined to remain in this part of the country a few days longer, in order to observe how these measures could operate, and to