

In the absence of the Director, Mr. Rudler read the following paper for the author :

On the EXCESS of FEMALES in the WEST INDIAN ISLANDS, from documents communicated to the Anthropological Institute by the Colonial Office. By FRANCIS GALTON, F.R.S.

A CIRCULAR was lately sent from the Colonial Office to the several governors of the West Indian colonies, desiring information on the causes of the excess of females that had been noticed in some of them. The replies have been very obligingly communicated to the Anthropological Institute, and have since been handed to me for examination ; hence the following remarks.

The population of the several West Indian Islands live under various and continually varying social conditions, but they are characterised, with one exception, by an unusual excess of females. The cause of this does not reside in any peculiarity of the birth-rate ; it is partly accounted for by an unusually large mortality among the male children, but appears to be principally due to emigration of the male adults. The annexed table shows the proportion between the sexes at the present time, and the ratio of male to female births.

	TOTAL POPULATION.			BIRTHS.			
	Males.	Females	No. of F. to 100 M.	No. of Years.	Males.	Females	No. of F. to 100 M.
Bermuda	5402	6619	122	5	1190	1173	98
Virgin Islands...	3379	3272	97	10	1106	992	90
Montserrat	not	stated	—	5	838	877	105
Antigua	not	stated	—	5	3863	3724	96
Grenada	18280	19404	106	5	3804	3697	97
St. Lucia	not	stated	—	3	2164	2102	97
St. Vincent	16865	18823	111	5	4197	4080	97
Barbadoes	73452	88590	120	all child. un. 1 yr.	2898	2857	99

The last column shows that the male births are here, as is commonly the case everywhere, in excess. Montserrat is exceptional, but its population is so small that casual circumstances may account for its peculiarity, especially as it appears that the male births predominated in two out of the five years.

Bermuda affords a striking example of the variety of conditions which affect the same island at different periods of its history, and different islands at the same periods. In 1830, there were in Bermuda 106 females to every 100 males ; in 1833, about the period of the slave emancipation, there were 120 ; and in 1840, 134. Since that time, the numbers have be-

come less unequal ; in one year there was a temporary increase of shipping business, emigration was checked, and the ratio fell to 116. Of later years the white male adults have been addicted to quitting the island altogether, and settling in America ; consequently, the excess of females is very strongly marked among the white people. The Virgin Islands afford another instance of special conditions ; they are, also, the only colonies in which the males predominate, and where there is a deficiency of females of marriageable age. This peculiarity is accounted for by a steady drain of the girls, for the purpose of prostitution, to St. Thomas's, where they die of disease, or whence they do not return to their birthplace until they are old women. Every island appears to have its own anomalies, which have differed at every stage of its history.

The mortality of male children is exceptionally great, but it does not appear from these returns why they should be so much more difficult to rear in childhood than those of the other sex. A suggestion of the possibility of there being a custom of male infanticide is satisfactorily negatived. In boyhood and youth the case is different to what it was in childhood ; dissipation of all kinds acts more fatally upon boys than on girls, because they have the stronger passions and are less under restraint. Thus, the Administrator of Sta. Lucia writes, "Immediately after the age of infancy, while girls are commonly kept closely under the eye of their mother, boys are allowed a liberty comparatively uncontrolled, and may frequently be seen smoking strong tobacco and drinking new rum."

However, the chief cause of the deficiency of males is attributed with great confidence by many of the governors to the direct action of emigration. The facts from Bermuda have already been given ; those from Barbadoes may be added. In the years 1864-5, a sudden increase of emigration took place from Barbadoes to British Guiana, and no less than 6,779 persons emigrated in those two years ; their sex and age is not specified, but undoubtedly a very large proportion of them must have been male adults.

I would remark, in conclusion, that the population of the West Indian Islands being subject to a variety of large and discontinuous influences, do not afford a suitable field for ordinary statistical inquiries. On the other hand, they present a most instructive aggregate of strongly-marked social experiments, each of which well deserves the pains of a separate and thorough investigation.
