

## XXII.—THE WEST INDIES.

Ha-van'-a. | ve-ran'-da. | ba-na'-na [-ah'-nah].

1. THESE islands lie in the ocean, east of the Gulf of Mexico. Four of them are much larger than the others. They are covered with rugged mountains, among which are broad green valleys where not a flake of snow ever falls, nor a particle of ice is formed.

2. The forests are filled with large trees, that bear fresh green leaves, flowers, and fruits throughout the year, as in the lowlands of Mexico and Central America. The earth beneath the trees is covered with beautiful feathery ferns, lovely flowers, and many singular plants.

3. Suppose you are traveling in the forests, and become thirsty. You look about for a spring or brook of cool, pure water, from which to drink. You may not find any, because sometimes no rain falls for several months, and the springs and brooks become quite dry.

4. Here beside you, climbing from tree to tree, is a vine that looks as much like a dead grapevine as anything can. As high up as you can reach, you cut a notch in a branch of it, and lower down you cut the branch entirely off. Putting the end to your mouth, you suck upon it, and find that it gives you a small stream of delicious cool water, which it has drawn up from the earth, and stored away to feed the plant in this dry time. There are many other plants that thus provide water for themselves. What a happy thing to find such plants in this warm, and sometimes very dry, country!