The founding of communities.—Cities and villages.—Farms.—Houses and interior decoration.—Clothing and the display of finery.—Cordial social intercourse.—The popularity of societies.—Freemasonry lodges.—Temperance societies.—Chivalric order.—National holidays.—Christmas.—Religious sentiments.—Sunday observance.—Religious conditions.—Denominations.—Excessive religious fervour.—Revivals and camp-meetings.—Freedom of religion.—Schools and education.—Educational level.—The first printing press.—Newspapers.—Literary achievements.—The national hymn.—Reflection.

As already mentioned before, the immigrants who came over from America have always preferred to settle at the mouths of major rivers and establish their communities there, called towns. Most of these have been laid out according to a rectangular plan. The houses are never adjoining, but always stand singly, each on its own plot along the street and often surrounded by banana bushes, coconut trees, mango trees and other tropical fruit trees. The result is that such a “city” lies half-hidden in the evergreen trees, and is actually more like a village. In most of these towns one finds pretty, often quite large and solid-looking houses built mainly from locally produced bricks and partly also from quarry stone, which is produced at local quarries in a most laborious and time-consuming manner. Such houses usually belong to the more affluent class and are often furnished quite
homely and even comfortably. However, many of them show clear signs that their present owners can hardly meet the costs of maintaining them, and quite a few make a truly neglected or even a dilapidated impression. With increased immigration and a growing sense of security towards the natives, the more agriculturally minded colonists started to settle in suitable areas, being along the river courses, up into the regions of the first rapids and even further up. In this manner, numerous agricultural colonies gradually came into being which continued to extend their territory and turned vast former forest areas into thriving plantations. Just as in America, there are also planters in Liberia who only feel comfortable in quiet solitude, and, so to speak, form the backwoods people of Liberia. Not rarely, one therefore finds remotely located farms whose owners only visit the population centres when urgent business compels them to do so.

With only a few exceptions, the houses of the farmers are constructed according to one and the same floor plan. They are built from wood and whitewashed, which protects the woodwork from the effects of the climate and also reflects the sun's burning rays, thus keeping the house's rooms cool. The first peculiarity that one notices at these houses, is that they aren't based on the ground or on continuous foundations, but on about 1–2 m high poles, or, if this material is readily available, on pedestals of stacked-up rocks. The salutary effects of this local manner of construction shouldn't be underestimated, because the wind is allowed to blow freely underneath the houses and in this way many miasmatic effects are efficiently prevented. Such foundations are also necessary in order to keep the houses dry during the long rainy season and to better protect them from the devastating attacks by termites.

In order to even better achieve this effect, the supporting poles are soaked in tar. Furthermore, and this may well be the main reason for opting for this type of construction, it is considerably cheaper and easier than continuous foundation walls would be.

The whole of the wooden building rests on 8–12 of such poles or rock pedestals. Its ground floor, as the illustration shows, usually consists of a living room called a \textit{parlor}, which is separated from a slightly smaller bedroom by a plank wall. Behind these two rooms, at the same level, under an extension of the roof and along the entire length of the house, is the so-called \textit{back-shed}. It too has plank walls and serves as a pantry and as a storeroom for anything that cannot be properly kept in the two living quarters or in the attic, which also serves as a bedroom.

Along the front long side of the building, and also under an extension of the roof, one finds the at least 2 m wide veranda, called a \textit{piazza}, and