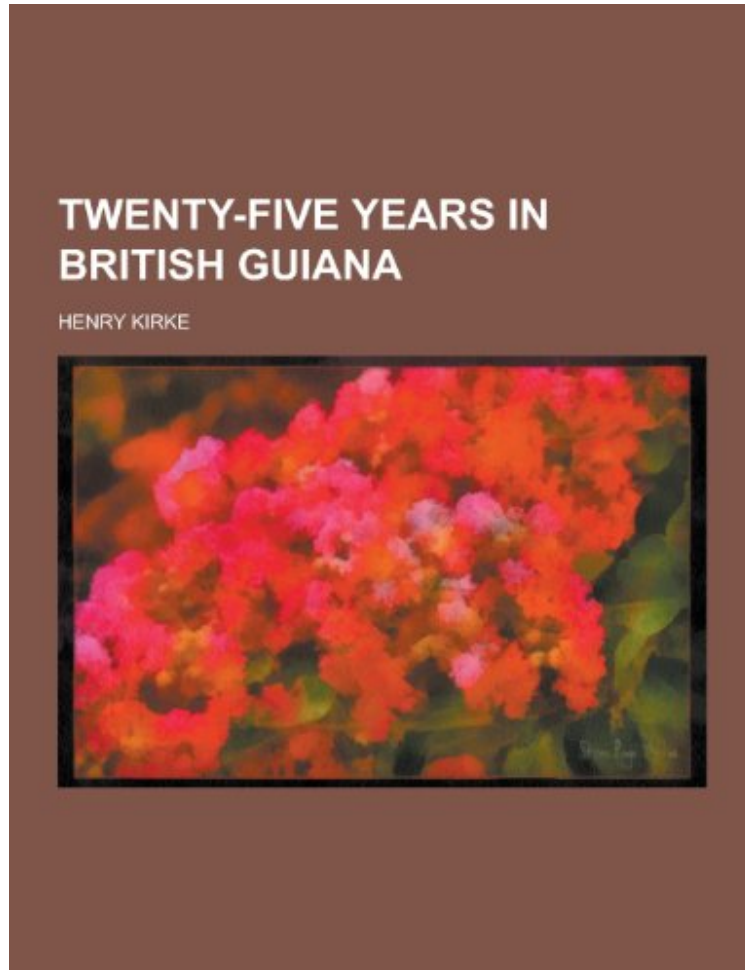


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Twenty-Five Years in British Guiana

Henry Kirke

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APPENDIX C The following most amusing case between two Africans occurred in Mr. Turk's court, and was most inimitably reported by Mr. McTurk. Of course the spelling is conjectural and phonetic:-- William Henry summoned Thomas Hercules to answer an alleged charge of theft. Complainant asserted that defendant had stolen his duck, value five shillings. While the complaint was being read, defendant listened without interruption until the alleged value of the duck, five shillings, was stated, when he made the remark, "Duck price raise fo' true!" On being called upon to

plead to the charge, he replied, "Wa da? Da tough, tough, someting fo' five shillin'; man no ha conseience. Bin sevin bit an' a half, fine someting; but whole five shillin' Guilty? No, sah, me isn't guilty. Hello!" The complainant was then sworn, and in answer to the magistrate stated that he lived at Water Lot, in the county of Essequibo. The defendant interrupted, said this statement was a lie, "cause he lib a' one trash house, inside cow-pasture." Proceeding, complainant stated that on a certain day he "bin hab one duck-drake, and de duck-drake always does walk in de trench wid de duck-hen; dem da catch shrimmies. One big trench bin deh right a we do' mout', me honour, an' we bin lib one side de trench and Tammass de oddah. Me always does see how Tammass does watch dem duck, hungry fashion." Happening this moment to look at the defendant, complainant wanted to know "da who you a cut you yiye 'pon?" Defendant simply remarked, "You see um!" Complainant, who was becoming excited, continued, saying he "bin see how Tammass does watch dem duck, hungry fashion." Thomas here audibly sucked his teeth, at which complainant became more excited, and hurriedly said, "Look da nagah mout', me..."