

**Material Progress of the Island—The Sugar and Tobacco Culture—The Grapeshot—Fires in the Windward British Islands—English Report of the Capture of the Schooner La Have.**

KINGSTON, June 12, 1862.

The two engrossing topics of public discussion for some time past are the extension of the Jamaica Railroad to double its former length and the construction of a ship dock in Kingston harbor for the repair of vessels of the largest tonnage, such as the steamers belonging to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company. The line, as formerly completed, extended from this city to a place called "the Angels" (Los Angeles), a distance of thirteen miles, that being the full distance to which the rails had been laid down. The additional line, from Spanish Town (St. Jago de la Vega, to use its ancient Spanish name, which is still retained in official documents) to Old Harbor, is about the same length as the old line, consequently the entire length has been about doubled; and there is talk of a still further extension to the heart of Clarendon and Manchester parishes. The formal opening of the extended line will take place on the 25th of the present month, it is expected, with imposing ceremonies, as the day will mark an era in the history of Jamaica. The benefits which will accrue to Jamaica from this much-needed work are likely to be immense, as the extended line lies through a tract of fertile country, rich in the sugar cane, as in the parishes of Vere, which also abound in logwood, the traffic in which has immensely increased of late. More than this, when it reaches Manchester another advantage will be gained in the facilities with which abundance of excellent beef cattle will be available for the Kingston market, for cattle breeding is the specialty of Manchester, in which there are no sugar estates.

The other affair—the construction of the new ship dock—would also tend in a most material degree to the benefit of the island. Nature herself seems to point out this fine harbor as the central depot of the Royal Mail Company's steamers, especially since the opening up of the railway route across the Isthmus of Panama, and the other still more extensive line which now stretches across a part of the Continent, connecting New York on the Atlantic and San Francisco on the Pacific. Your fine island cannot fail to participate in the benefits that must arise from the traffic across the Continent.

Apropos of the troubles in Cuba, a curious incident has lately occurred in the port of Falmouth, on the north side of the island and opposite the southern coast of that island. On the evening of the 31 instant a schooner named the Grapeshot arrived at that port, and it was soon after ascertained that she came from a Cuban port, where, it is said, she succeeded in landing upwards of thirty-six men and a quantity of arms and ammunition for the revolutionists. It seems that the Grapeshot had cleared at New York for Falmouth, with the arms and ammunition, but that instead of proceeding direct she steered for a port in Cuba, where she landed her passengers and a portion of her cargo. Her crew attempted to run the vessel on shore while the cargo was being landed, when an altercation took place, during which the captain received a bullet from a revolver through one of his legs. He succeeded, however, in getting away from Cuban waters, and steered for Jamaica, making out a manifest at sea, showing that he had on board 155 packages, containing arms, ammunition and accoutrements. Proceeding to one of the Turks Islands, he there procured a clean bill of health, after which he steered for Falmouth, for which port he had originally cleared. On the arrival of the vessel she was admitted to entry, with her cargo for exportation. The Collector of Customs sent a tide-waiter on board, as he entertained doubts as to the right of the Grapeshot lying in British waters under the circumstances. He also wrote to the government for instructions how to act, but on the following day, without waiting for an answer, he seized the vessel and cargo. The captain, through the American Vice Consul, protested against the seizure, on the ground that he had been forced to come to an entry, and did make a proper entry at the Customs; that the cargo was entered for exportation, as he was not allowed to land it in bond, to be exported, which he was ready and willing to do, and that he would seek indemnity from all parties concerned in the seizure for detention of his vessel, and for the value of the goods seized. Information subsequently reached this city that the Grapeshot has been released, her seizure and detention having been declared illegal.

Attention has been awakened in this island to the growth of pimento, a spice peculiar to Jamaica. It has been discovered that this spice is extensively used in Russia for the tanning of leather. Hence the peculiar aroma of Russia leather. Here, then, is a gleam of hope for us; but I am afraid it will not be of long duration. A substitute for pimento is sure to be found by some ingenious experimenter, just as it was discovered that sugar could be made of beet root, to the injury of the whole of us West Indians. However, it is to be hoped that the pimento growers will, in accordance with one of our proverbs, "make hay while the sun shines"—that is, use their present advantage while it lasts.

The Legislative Council is still sitting. The business transacted is of no importance to anybody out of the island, and very little to those in it. There is very little prospect of any relief from the present pressure of taxation. One measure now before the Council has given rise to some rather strong discussion. It is a bill to compel not only parents of illegitimate children to support such offspring, and illegitimate children to support their parents, but the education extends mutually to grandparents and grandchildren. Whether such a bill will ever become a law remains to be seen. Public opinion seems to be against it.

We have in Kingston a society called "The Royal Society of Arts and Agriculture," the object of which is indicated by its title. At a meeting of the society yesterday a copy of a circular despatch from the Secretary of State (England), with a letter from a silk association in London, was presented. The Governor required information regarding the cultivation of the proper sort of mulberry, which his Excellency had no doubt would thrive in different parts of the island. His Excellency was also of opinion that among the various fine and equable climates in the island, it is probable that there are many places where silk culture, skilfully conducted, would be successful. Mr. Kemble, one of the members present, was requested to draw up a paper on silk-worm cultivation, giving the results of attempts made in Jamaica, with suggestions, &c.; and it was ordered that the secretary do acknowledge his Excellency's letter, stating what action the society had taken, and requesting further information on the subject; and expressing their willingness to further, in any way in their power, the object of the silk supply association.

The rainy seasons, which generally prevail in May, have been rather backward this year, especially in this city. No complaints appear to be made, however, of the prevailing drought, nor does any apprehension seem to be entertained for the next year's crop. The sugar crop of this year, so far as ascertained, bids fair to be an average one. Speaking of sugar reminds me of the admirable condition in which Albion estate, in the neighboring parish of St. David, has been placed by its present enterprising proprietor, Mr. Carson, who is absent in England. Albion, which, in the best times, did not make more, if so much, as 100 hogsheads of sugar, will this year make 600 hogsheads; and, if the rum be in proportion, the quantity made will be 300 puncheons. I leave it with you to reduce the figures to your own standard.

Cuba is likely to have a rival in the production of tobacco, and the consequent manufacture of cigars. A quantity of the article, grown in Metcalf parish, has been brought into this city in an unmanufactured state. It has been pronounced by good judges worth one shilling sterling per pound, though inferior to some specimens of native growth already brought to this market. A Kingston paper says:—"This tobacco growing and curing business is worthy of encouragement; for we see no reason why, under proper management, Jamaica cannot be made to produce as good an article of tobacco as any obtained from Cuba." In fact, the Cuba leaf has long been naturalized in the island. The great difficulty hitherto has been in the curing.

Another article of utility has been recently brought into notice. Who would have thought that paper could be manufactured from the hard stem of the bamboo? And yet the feasibility of this seemingly improbable thing has been practically demonstrated by an ingenious American. Now, as Jamaica already abounds with the bamboo, and as from its rapid growth it is capable of indefinite expansion, the invention is one that deeply concerns us Jamaicans. It is to be hoped that the aforesaid American will put his machine to bona fide use.

The intelligence from the other British West India colonies is not of much interest. Immense fires had taken place in the islands of Trinidad and Grenada. In the former island a fire broke out in the woods and extended its ravages to several sugar estates, doing much damage to cultivation, and down to the 12th had traversed from twenty to twenty-five square miles of the district, with a line of fire of several miles frontage. This was followed by still another fire on the day after, which seems to have been equally destructive, burning several hundred acres of cane. In Grenada the fire raged for two days and appears to have been not less destructive than that in Trinidad, sugar mills, cane fields and other valuable property to an immense amount having been completely destroyed.

Her Britannic Majesty's steamer Barracouta will leave Port Royal this evening or to-morrow morning for Havana. It is said that other vessels of war will soon follow. The Vestal, which arrived at Port Royal yesterday, will also proceed to Havana with mails for the Commodore, immediately after the arrival of the packet.

The British steamer Clara Helena arrived at this port this morning from St. Marc, Hayti, which place she left on the 8th inst., touching at Inagua, where she met the British schooner La Have, bound to this port. The Clara Helena left Inagua on the evening of the 7th, with the schooner in tow. The Spanish war steamer Fernando el Catolico was at Inagua, and also left that evening. On the morning of the 10th the steamer fired three shots across the bows of the Clara Helena, and compelled her to heave to. The vessels were then thirty miles from Inagua, thirty from Cuban waters and thirty from the shores of St. Nicholas. Captain Crowell, of La Have, protested that he was bound to Kingston, Jamaica; but she was captured by the Spanish steamer and taken to Cuba. Captain Porter, of the Clara Helena, has arrived in this port for the purpose of entering a protest against the proceedings of the Spanish commander. The schooner La Have sailed from Boston, bound to Jamaica. It is said that the Spanish Consul at Boston had written to Havana to keep an eye on the vessel, and that, acting on the hint, the Admiral sent the Fernando el Catolico after her; hence the capture.