

## LETTERS FROM THE WEST INDIES.

DEMERARA, March 6, 1866.

DEAR REVIEW,—

In my previous letters I have been able to give you particular facts in reference to the three most important West India Colonies. In this I can only give you a few general statements as to the extent and productive powers of the remaining islands lying in the neighborhood of those already spoken of. To make this shorter and more intelligible, I will give the statistics in a tabular form.

POPULATION AT THE CENSUS TAKEN IN EACH OF THE UNDERMENTIONED YEARS.

Colony.	Year.	Amount of Population.
Antigua.....	1856	35,403
".....	1861	35,412
Dominica.....	1860	25,665
Grenada.....	1861	31,900
".....	1864	34,027
Nevis.....	1861	9,822
St. Kitts.....	1861	24,455
St. Lucia.....	1861	25,671
St. Vincent.....	1861	31,755
Tobago.....	1861	15,410

And as to the value of imports and exports of these various Colonies, the following figures will be found accurate:—

Colony.	Year.	Value of Imports.	Value of Exports.
Antigua.....	1862	1,185,353	1,296,327
".....	1863	173,912	239,630
Dominica.....	1863	48,257	72,855
".....	1864	43,653	49,809
Grenada.....	1863	90,076	112,477
".....	1864	108,938	145,271
Nevis.....	1863	36,021	49,992
".....	1864	28,226	16,059
St. Kitts.....	1863	151,885	176,686
".....	1864	189,069	125,408
St. Lucia.....	1863	69,583	83,711
".....	1864	90,363	111,383
St. Vincent.....	1863	108,489	142,337
".....	1864	101,266	155,431
Tobago.....	1863	46,869	48,961
".....	1864	49,782	61,286

Antigua, the first Colony mentioned in this list, was discovered by Columbus in 1493, who named it after a church in Seville, Santa Maria la Antigua. It was inhabited by a few English in 1622, and in 1663, Charles II. made a formal grant of the islands to Lord Willoughby, who sent out a large number of Colonists. After a brief interval of French occupation, it was declared a British possession by the Treaty of Breda, 1660. The Governor-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands, Col. Stephen J. Hill, C.B., (formerly Governor of Sierra Leona), resides at St. John's, the chief town of Antigua. This beautiful island has one drawback only: it possesses no rivers, and few springs, and is consequently exposed to frequent droughts; yet, notwithstanding this, it is admirably adapted to the growth of sugar cane, cotton, and many tropical fruits, and is justly celebrated as producing the finest pine apple in the West Indies.

Dominica, lying between Antigua and Barbadoes, is an island more than twice the size of the former, and nearly double that of the latter. It is mountainous, and presents a very fine and bold appearance, as seen from the sea. It is fertile, and possesses, in many parts, a luxuriant soil; but its inhabitants do not possess the same energy and ambition that characterize their neighbors at Antigua. The population is composed of a mixture of French, English, and negro, and both languages are spoken. The island was ceded in 1763 to the English by the Treaty of Paris. It was occupied by the French during the American Revolution, but at the peace was again transferred to England. Nevis and St. Kitts are only separated from each other by a narrow strait two miles in width. The former is nothing but a single mountain, and its total area only 20 square miles. St. Kitts, however, is very considerable larger, and is a prosperous and thriving colony. It has its own machinery of Government, House of Assembly, Legislative Council, and Lieutenant-Governor, and is a well-governed and contented little island. The climate of St. Kitts and Antigua is said to be very favorable to consumptives, and all persons affected with pulmonary complaints.

The remaining four islands—Grenada, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Tobago, lie near each other. Grenada is very prosperous, and is steadily increasing in population. St. Vincent, a well-ordered island, a little larger than Grenada, possesses no less than 62 schools, and is a friendly rival of its last-mentioned neighbor. About half the extent of cultivated land in this island is under cane and arrowroot cultivation. In 1864, upwards of 1,301,265 lbs of arrowroot were exported. St. Lucia, in addition to large quantities of sugar, rum and molasses annually exports considerable quantities of cocoa. In 1864, 211,769 lbs. were shipped. It

is a very mountainous and high island, and is known unfavorably throughout the West Indies for its venomous reptiles—the deadly bushmaster being very common. Nearly 80 deaths a year are said to be caused by snake bites. Tobago, the last of the islands I have alluded to in this letter, is a thriving island, and was once celebrated for its cotton and indigo. In 1730, 2,619,000 lbs of cotton, and 27,000 lbs. of indigo, were exported to England. The formation of the island is evidently volcanic, its physical aspect is irregular and picturesque, with conical hills and ridges, which descend from a common base or dorsal ridge, 1800 feet high, and 20 miles in length.

Having thus concluded an imperfect survey of the West Indian Islands, it would be well, perhaps, to ask, where have these islands hitherto purchased their breadstuffs and many other imports? The answer will be: Chiefly from the United States. But, at the same time, you will be told, as I have been told, that they are, to a very large extent, of Canadian growth and production. If, then, the Americans are the carriers and agents for the sale of Canadian products, the placing the management of the disposal of these products in the hands of the principals themselves, ought not to injure or cause decrease in the trade! For we know that the advantages to be derived from direct trade, with a direct interchange of commodities, are superior to an indirect trade and no such interchange. Indeed, one cannot see, it matters not in what light you regard it, how that the movement in favor of developing the trade between the West Indian Islands and the Colonies of B. N. America, can fail to be productive of good and beneficial results. It is very favorably regarded in the West Indies, and looked upon with equal favor in B. N. America. Action, then, is needed only, to give the feeling tangible expression, and so perfect and cement together those relations which interest and policy point out to be the natural order of things. Your merchants should look to this—they are the interested parties, and I can assure you that in any steps they may take to perpetuate and strengthen commercial or other relations with their Sister Colonies in the Tropics, they will meet with the hearty co-operation of the merchants and planters of the West Indies.

## Great Fire in Detroit.

On Thursday of last week the depots and offices of the Detroit & Milwaukee and Michigan Southern Railroads, together with a large number of passenger and freight cars, and an immense quantity of valuable freight, were entirely destroyed by fire. The first alarm was given about ten o'clock at night, and the flames spread with such rapidity, that although the fire-engines were soon on the ground, all that could be attempted was to confine them to the Railroad buildings. The night express on the Detroit & Milwaukee Road, consisting of baggage, two passenger and sleeping cars, had been made up, and already contained a number of passengers. When the alarm was given, a rush was made for the doors, and a scene of the wildest confusion ensued. Most of the passengers escaped, but it is almost certain that one infirm old man, and another man in a beastly state of intoxication, perished. The steamer "Windos", which lay at the dock, was also burnt, and a number of lives were lost, many having been driven by the flames to trust themselves to the waters, been seen to sink and rise again no more. Several schooners were likewise destroyed. The total loss is almost impossible to estimate at present. The Detroit & Milwaukee Company are the heaviest losers, but the Michigan Southern and the Great Western have also lost a very large amount in freight and cars. The fire is said to have originated in the D. & M. freight-depot, through a barrel containing oil, naphtha or benzine, which was being rolled out, and was seen to be leaking slightly. An attendant came near with a light, which he carelessly passed above and near the barrel, when the escaping gas ignited, and in an instant the work of destruction was begun. At latest accounts the number of deaths by fire and drowning were over twenty.

## The Sugar Duties.

A letter from Mr. Gladstone to the Clyde Crushed Sugar Association has dispelled a notion, which had caused no small uneasiness in the sugar trade, that the forthcoming budget would announce an alteration in the sugar duties. Mr. Gladstone gives his correspondents to understand that no reduction or adjustment in the scale of duty is contemplated in the present year at least.

## Oil Springs—Pi Meeting.

A meeting, called by Mr. A. Mackenzie, Member for the County of Lambton, was held at Oil Springs on the 23rd ult, and speeches made by Mr. Mackenzie, Mr. C. G. Bruce, President of the Oil Springs Board of Trade, and others. The speakers seemed to be all agreed that protection against American oils was necessary, and Mr. Mackenzie pledged himself that his influence would be exerted for the obtaining of a duty upon American oil coming into Canada. Mr. A. Elliott wanted to know if it was not competent for the Governor in Council to impose this duty in advance of the meeting of Parliament, but was informed that the Governor had no such prerogative as the levying of taxes without the consent of the people's representatives; so Mr. Elliott will have to be content to wait. We have already expressed an opinion, that it is useless and unwise to attempt to stimulate the production of oil in Canada by legislative interference, which is unjust in principle, and rarely productive of ultimate benefit to the interests desired to be fostered.

## Ship-Builders vs. Ship-Carpenters.

The ship-carpenters, joiners and caulkers of New York and vicinity have "struck," demanding that eight hours instead of ten shall constitute a day's labor. The ship-builders and master-shipwrights are unwilling to accede to their demands, and have held a meeting, at which the following resolution was passed, with a preamble setting forth, that, under present circumstances, the demands of the workmen were unwise and unjust, and would be ruinous to their employers:—

*Resolved*.—That we, the master-shipbuilders, shipwrights and joiners of New York and vicinity, do hereby pledge ourselves and our respective firms not to hire or employ in our establishments any member of the above-named association, unless by giving up his badge, or furnishing satisfactory evidence that all connection with such associations has been severed. That we shall exercise our own judgment and discretion regarding the number of apprentices we should employ, and shall do whatever we deem essential for the promotion of their best interests and our own. That we will open our respective establishments on Monday, April 30, or as soon as practicable, to such of our mechanics as will resume work, subject to the foregoing resolutions and under the old regulations as to time, and with the assurance that they will be protected.

## Lead at Buckingham.

A mine of nearly pure lead has been discovered by accident in the vicinity of Buckingham. A farmer drawing cedar posts out of a swamp struck a rock with the wheels of his wagon, which splintered and exposed to view a mass of almost pure metal. The vein was subsequently laid bare to the extent of sixty feet by four feet in width of equally valuable ore. Specimens sent to Sir Wm. Logan were pronounced by him to be the best yet found in Canada. Buckingham is much excited over the discovery, and the land in which it was made has gone up enormously in value.

## Supposed Foundering of another Large Steamer with all on Board.

Another new large iron screw-steamer, similar to the ill-fated London, Amalia and Canadian steamers, is, we regret to say, believed to have foundered, with every soul on board. She was the Nurubudda, 1357 tons register, commanded by Captain Hardy, belonging to the Bombay and Bengal Steam Shipping Company and was considered a first class steamship, having been built under special survey of Lloyd's surveyors. She was only launched last summer from Messrs. T. Vernon's shipbuilding yard, at Liverpool, and having received her full equipment she sailed from that port for Bombay on the 18th November last, with a crew of about fifty hands. There is no doubt she encountered the full fury of those disastrous gales, which, from that time until the month of January, swept the Atlantic. The New York packet ship Albion, which arrived at Liverpool on the 21st Nov., reported having signalled her on the 19th, in lat. 50 N. long. 9 W.; she was then apparently in distress, being under canvas only, but the weather was too heavy for the Albion to bear down for her. As time wore on the premium to effect insurances on her gradually increased, until at last it stood at 85 guineas not per cent. This was upwards of a month ago, and since then the underwriters have settled their loss under full belief that the unfortunate steamer has foundered and will never be heard of. She was considered as strong a built steamer as ever went to sea. Her extreme length was 260 feet, breadth of beam 31 feet 3 inches, depth of hold 21 feet 3 inches, ship rigged, with engines of 240 horse-power, and built with four watertight compartments. It is reported that insurances were effected on her and her cargo to the extent of £80,000.