

LETTERS FROM THE WEST INDIES.

BARBADOS, 21st February, 1857

DEAR REVIEW,

HAVING come to this thriving colony on business for a few days, since writing you from our prosperous colony of British Guiana, I have possessed myself of some information, which I thought, if laid before your readers, might interest them. Barbados, the oldest British possession in the West Indies, was settled by Englishmen, in 1625. It was then a barren coral rock. But now with a population of 162,727, and being the depot for the distribution of goods to all the other islands of the Windward group, it will probably excite a little more interest among Canadian merchants, who are looking for consumers of their productions in this part of the world, than it would have done in the state it was 22½ years ago. The island itself is very different from any of the others of the same group. It is, as I have said before, of coral formation, while the other Windward islands are of volcanic origin. It is flat, and gently undulating, with a great many valleys or runs, containing a rich alluvial soil, admirably adapted to the production of that great West Indian staple—the sugar cane. Its superficial area consists only of 16½ square miles, so that it is the most thickly inhabited country in the world 320 inhabitants to the square mile. (China itself, which is so often quoted as the most densely populated country on the globe, falls short of this by 300 or 400 to the square mile.) Of course with so numerous a population every foot of soil on this island is cultivated to the greatest extent it will bear, but even with every exertion devoted to production, the island is totally incapable of supporting so many human beings, and Barbados has to depend on other countries, and especially on America, for her breadstuffs, lumber, cattle, horses, and many manufactured articles.

This state of affairs existing, a few facts will probably prove interesting. For the last variations of the markets, you will find those mentioned in my letter from Demerara, (with one or two exceptions which I still mention), to approximate so nearly that there is no necessity of my repeating. Horses will not bring such a high price in Barbados as in Demerara, but there is a market for a larger number of them. A horse which I am told could be purchased in Lower Canada for \$30 or \$40, sells here for \$120 to \$130, and Lower Canadian horses are always preferred. There are several other articles which are a little lower in price here, but the difference is so trifling that I will not waste any space in enumerating. But there is one thing I will give you in this letter, which I am sure will be interesting, that is, a list of what a moderately sized assorted cargo should consist of—this I give you the authority of an old and long established house here, and whose judgment in these matters can be relied upon. Of course, it is difficult to estimate correctly the proper quantities of each article, as so much depends on the stock here, but on the presumption that the market is about equally supplied with all, I give the following as the assortment of a vessel of 1800 to 2000 barrels capacity.

Meal.....	650 brls	400 Extra Ohio
		200 Superfine
		60 Family.
Flour.....	550 "	250 bags.
Corn.....	125 "	
Crackers.....	100 "	
Bread.....	100 "	
Peas.....	75 "	100 bags Canada
		25 Sphl.
Oil Meal.....	100 "	30 casks.
Pork.....	75 "	50 Inspected.
		25 Clear.
Beef.....	25 "	25 half brls
Lams.....	125 "	100 hams
Butter.....	125 "	100 kgs.
Lard.....	125 "	100 kgs.
Candles.....	10 "	20 boxes.
Oil.....	10 "	20 tins
Cheese.....	15 "	50 cheeses
Total.....	1865 brls.	

And on deck, 200 to 500 bundles coiled wood hoops.

WHITE PINE LUMBER—The description used in this market is *inch boards* with an assortment of plank of 2 in., 2½ in., and 3 in. thick, (the larger portion being of 2 in.) to the extent of 12 to 15 per cent. of the whole cargo. The boards should be not less than 15 inches wide, or 10 feet long, as any under this size are put aside by the purchaser as refuse, and an allowance of \$1 to \$1½ per M has to be allowed. All **SAPY** boards are also taken as refuse. They should be as free from knots as possible.

STAVES, RED OAK—Should be dressed and of an uniform width of 4 to 4½ inches and 4 feet in length.

saleable from November to June. White oak is very little used in this market.

SHINGLES, CEDAR—Should be 22 inches long, 4 to 6 inches broad, but shingles of less breadth will sell here also. The value ranges from \$2½ up to \$7 per M, as in size and quality.

A lumber cargo of 100 M. feet, to 120 M. feet would consist of

80 M	pine boards, 1 inch thick.
8 "	pine plank (assorted)
120 "	spruce boards, 1 inch thick
15 "	1 inch shingles.
100 "	12 M slaves red oak (inspected)

Sales can be effected at two or three months' credit, but proceeds can always be remitted promptly under a discount of 6 per cent. per annum.

The trade in Barbados is a very strong prejudice in favor of barrel in barrels with round hoops. There is great difficulty in disposing of it in any other sort of barrel.

TEAS—Canada should be in bags of two bushels or barrels of 3 bush., former preferred. Should be all white, a mixture with black renders them *unsaleable*. Split in brls of 3½ bush. each.

POKE—In barrels containing 200 lbs net. Should be split in brls of 3½ bush. each. Clear and mess are the most saleable. Prime mess is very little used.

BEEF—Should come only in half barrels of 100 lbs net. Mess in barrels is very little used and scarcely saleable.

HAY—Eight or ten to a 12 lbs in weight. Hay is packed when they come loose covered with cloth.

OIL—Kerosene—best in tins of 5 gals. each. It is also imported in barrels of 5 to 10 gals. each.

You will see from these facts and figures that it is rather a fastidious market, but when its requirements are complied with sales are speedily effected, and Carleton Place, the harbour of Barbados, always contains a goodly fleet of vessels either waiting for or discharging cargoes. Let us hope that in future years the staunch and well built vessels, for which the British North American Provinces are famed, will form a larger portion of that fleet than they do at present.

I will now conclude this day's epistle, but perhaps may trouble you again with a word about the beautiful island of Trinidad.

TRADE WITH THE LOWER PROVINCES.

WE are not as yet in possession of complete returns of the exports and imports of the several maritime provinces, but there can be no doubt that when published they will exhibit, in the aggregate, a very large increase over the preceding year, as has been the case with regard to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. In order to show the importance of the trade that may be carried on between Canada and the other British North American Provinces, we give the following list of a few of the principal imports of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, from Canada and the United States, for the year 1854.

FLOUR.

	From Canada.	From U.S.
New Brunswick.....	brls. 44,839	222,402
Nova Scotia.....	40,741	316,623

MEATS—CURED.

New Brunswick.....	lbs. 293,895	1,599,845
Nova Scotia.....	tierces and brls. 115	14,563

LEATHER—SOLE, BELT, AND HEAVY.

New Brunswick.....	(about) lbs. 4,000	181,487
Nova Scotia.....	2,359	283,373

ALCOHOL.

New Brunswick.....	galls. 11 981	113,841
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HEMP, FLAX, TAR.

New Brunswick.....	\$9,000	\$37,000
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HOPS.

New Brunswick.....	pks 65	
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FURNITURE AND IMPLEMENT WOODS.

Walnut, oak, elm, ash—all imported from United States.

We see no reason why Canada should not step in and trade directly with her fellow-colonists, instead of using the Americans as "middlemen." St John merchants have been in the habit of buying large quantities of flour in New York, which was ground in Canada. All that is required is to have a reliable quick and cheap mode of transit organized. There will be no trouble about money matters, as we are assured that we can always have cash down for our produce, and even in advance if any gain can thereby be secured to the purchaser. Efforts are now being made to establish

a line of steamers from Quebec to Pictou, to carry mails, passengers and freight. It is intended to run a main line weekly to Shediac and Pictou, connecting at the former place with the railroad to St. John, and at Pictou with the road to Halifax, now in process of construction. Under hitherto existing arrangements, the government boat running every two weeks, took the greater part of a week in making the trip from Quebec to Pictou, the time being occupied in running round the Bay of Chaleur, and touching at a number of small ports on the Canada and New Brunswick sides. These small ports, though unimportant in point of general trade, have hitherto been too much neglected. By the proposed line, it is intended to provide for their accommodation by a branch boat or boats, connecting at Gaspé and at Shediac with the main line. By this way passengers from Montreal will be enabled to reach St. John in about the same time by way of the Gulf as by Portland, while the route to Halifax by way of Pictou will be much quicker, after the completion of the railway, than by the Bay of Fundy. It is thought that the rate of freight to St. John, will be at least as low as has hitherto been the case via Portland, possibly lower, should the amount of business offering warrant the reduction. For the transportation of flour, 50 to 55 cents per brl., is mentioned as the probable charge, through, to St. John. We understand that merchants of that city would even pay a small additional charge to avoid the delay of taking it in bond from Portland. Should the several governments of the Provinces interested in the formation of this line, offer a sufficient sum for the performance of the mail service, the boats will be ready not long after the opening of navigation. Those intended to be used will be stout sea-going boats, over two hundred feet long with suitable accommodations for passengers.

St. John supplies the whole of the Bay of Fundy portions of Nova Scotia, and also the ports as far as, and including Yarmouth, with dry goods, hardware, West India goods and general merchandize, but they have heretofore sold their mineral products to Boston, and import it thence direct. Now, if there were a large depot for flour in St. John, they would supply themselves with that important article of consumption there, instead of buying American flour or Canadian flour from Americans. New Brunswick takes from Nova Scotia in return, fruits, potatoes, and small agricultural produce. Supposing, we say, that the ports of Nova Scotia supplied by St. John would take only 50,000 barrels of flour, this would enable New Brunswick to import more than 10,000 barrels per week from Canada, during say thirty weeks. If a large depot were built in St. John, capable of holding 50,000 brls., our merchants might lay in stock in the Fall, and export to England, if prices were favorable; if not favorable, then the flour might be sold to the New Brunswickers locally. If our millers would grind on the French system, they might prepare flour which would do for the West Indian and South American trade carried on by the Lower Provinces. The tendency to sour has been the great objection to Canadian flour; but we understand, that some, though not all, of the flour ground in Montreal and sold in St. John last summer gave great satisfaction. Some Oshawa flour also appeared to give satisfaction. We hope our millers will make every effort to manufacture an article that will be universally sought after.

Canada might also supply the Lower Provinces with cured meats, leather, alcohol, hemp, hops, furniture and implement woods. Walnut wood, for instance, is used in small quantities, but this is owing to its being nearly as expensive there as mahogany. The price in St. John is 15 cents per foot—\$15 per thousand, the import price from the United States. The cabinet-makers there use principally butternut, stained, and birch. The former is \$70 per M; and if walnut were sent, it could undoubtedly be sold in considerable quantities at \$80 to \$100, and displace the cheaper woods. As it is, Canadian grown wood, bought from the Americans, is sold there now.

In furniture, too, a good trade might be done, as our furniture sold at present prices would give an excellent profit, after paying duties. Of course, very bulky articles could not be taken beyond a certain distance without incurring too much expense; but there are many goods which could be sent in a compact form or in pieces. We understand there is a large market for ale and beer of good quality, which could be furnished at moderate prices—that made there being, as a rule, inferior—and English ale being very expensive.