

JAMAICA IS GREAT BRITAIN'S ISLAND PORT AT CROSSROADS OF THE GREAT CARRIBBEAN SEA

(New York Sun)

In the Caribbean all roads lead to Jamaica. And to Kingston, that picturesque little tropic town of black and white, hot as Singapore, busy as Honolulu, the flags of all nations are borne on far-wandering ships from all the seas. For Kingston is the crossroads of the Caribbean, even as Singapore is the crossroads of the East and Honolulu is the crossroads of the Pacific.

Liners from New York and Liverpool, Bremen and Hamburg and Rotterdam, "de luxe" cruisers, from both sides of the Atlantic, battered tramps from anywhere and black-manned schooners from among the romantic isles of the Caribbean throng its sun-drenched docks. Off Port Royal they lie at anchor even as lay the bold barques of the buccaneers in the old reckless days when maritime existence in the Caribbean was distinctly a survival of the fittest. And somewhere beneath them, buried deep now under the ever-shifting sands of the southern sea, lies the ancient city whose very name men once spoke of with bated breath.

In the tropic dawn Kingston, verdure-decked, nestles in the shadow of its background of emerald hills with a charm almost equal to Honolulu's. It is then that one usually approaches on some far-come ship, and in the cool of early morn there is wafted out to

one a breath of the perfumed air of the low latitudes, redolent with the smell of fecund soil after rain, of a hundred blossoms, of fruit trees and spice and copra. The tropics greet one, even the tropics at their climax, through one is but five days from New York. The "Pearl of Caribbean" its loyal folk call Jamaica. And when the visitor comes to know it well he is apt to agree.

The Ubiquitous Chinese

Kingston's streets except the one extremely English main thoroughfare vary little from those of Colombo or Sourabaya or Penang, and the ubiquitous Chinese is almost as much in evidence. In Jamaica he has found still another land of prosperity and content, far removed from famine and civil wars. All over the immense island he has extended his commercial operations until every country crossroad knows his little shop. As in the South Seas and West Indies and South America west coast he has taken the native woman to wife, and his progeny bear such curious names as Jefferson Ah Choy and Jackson Chung.

In summer Kingston rivals Singapore or Sourabaya in climate but the hills are close at hand and easily reached. A railway of British dependability even in the colonial deliberateness ascends them to an altitude of 3,000 feet. Among the hills, green-clad and tranquil as the Devonshire uplands at "Home," there are hostel-

ries of large variety, invariably British in management, little oases here in the tropics which are "forever England." All about them are British communities, well-to-do planters of fruit or sugar, country clubs, tennis courts and golf links. Best of all, there is the hospitality and friendliness of the English colonial settlement. There is welcome to a stranger here in the Jamaican hills, and there is a charm which the guest at the noisy and expensive hotels about Kingston, never knows. For the real beauty and joy of Jamaica reveals itself apart from the seaports, away from the hot steamy alluvial plain, up here among these hills, which are almost the hills of England herself transported across the sea.

Devonshire in the Tropics

Fairest of all the hill towns, perhaps, is Handenville, five hours' railway journey from Kingston, 2,200-feet above the sea, a true bit of Devonshire in a tropical setting. Across the broad plain, past sleepy, old-fashioned Spanish Town with its ancient cathedral and memorial to Henry Morgan, first buccaneer and then Lieutenant-Governor, the Jamaica railway pursues its winding, leisurely way.

It leads through fields of sugarcane across clear streams from the hills with banks shaded by coconut palms, past native villages of sunbaked clay huts and paintless frame shacks, along the borders of vast banana plantations and finally rod by rod, it mounts imperceptibly into the uplands. Now the breeze which comes in through the open windows of the "observation-car" grows cooler and as the quickly passing southern twilight fades one's raiment of tropical "whites" is ready

to yield to tweeds. For during the winter season the temperature of the hills sometimes drops at night to fifty degrees.

The Mandeville station is five miles from the village and the road winds still upward among the hills revealing at every turn panoramas of tropical beauty unsurpassed in any isle of Southern seas. Among the richly clad hills in a saucerlike depression lies the village itself, truly the fair gem of all Jamaica. It gathers itself comfortably about a "common," even as a village of Worcestershire or Surrey. And on every hand are the same gently sloping downs with their sheep and cattle, the distant hills green as the Cotswolds, the comfortable estates, all suggestive of what is to the loyal colonial always "home." It is an English community, this, the most distinctly English in the island. And in an environment most suitable and most typical of all they have left behind these hospitable colonials of Mandeville have made themselves a bit of England here in the Caribbean.

All the British Institutions

Across the common stands an English church stone, tree-surrounded, Norman towered, howelike as a church in Warwickshire. Opposite is the courthouse and behind the broad green sweep of a croquet and football field. Here and there are the shops, some British, most Chinese. On the slope of the nearest hill is the country club with its golf course straggling "sportingly" through the valleys and among the woodlands. Here, when the day's leisurely work is done—usually at about 3 p.m.—gathers the British community for tennis and golf—and a well-patronized "nineteen hole" afterward.

I came to Mandeville for a week, and remained three months, with an occasional trip down to Montego Beach, which reminds of the South Seas, and to other little hamlets even higher in the hills. Jamaica is that kind of place and so are its people. One never tires of either and they leave a memory which ever calls one back. The quick hospitality which among the English never fails, from New Zealand to the Himalayas, is here; for the English, too, are that kind of people. But here in Mandeville, gem of fair Jamaica, British hospitality fairly outdoes itself. And it lends a charm to existence quite as does the lovely environment. It makes life ideal in an ideal setting, furnishing zest for work no less than for the play that follows.

And yet Jamaica possesses many another beauty spot than this. If you continue on by the railway to its terminus at the far end of the island you reach, long after dark, the aforesaid Bontego Beach. You will have left the hills behind and descended to the coast, to find a tropical town that almost suggests Papeete and is considerably better equipped with hotels. The warmth of the lowlands is here tempered by the trade breeze, and for a full tropical community there is no more attractive in the West Indies.

Here is a fine white beach for bathing with water like that at Waikiki, and over it the palm trees droop as beside a Tahitian lagoon. Its contrast with such as Mandeville, a few hours away, or with "stations" even higher in the hills and still cooler, is the contrast that declares the wonderfully fascinating variety of this fair "crossroads" island of the Caribbean where nature has provided about all that men can desire, and they themselves the rest.

Rich Suitor:—"I—er—suppose you are aware that I've been making advances to your daughter."

Impecunious Father (extending hand):—"Yes, put it there, son. And now what about her poor old father?"

—LONDON OPINION

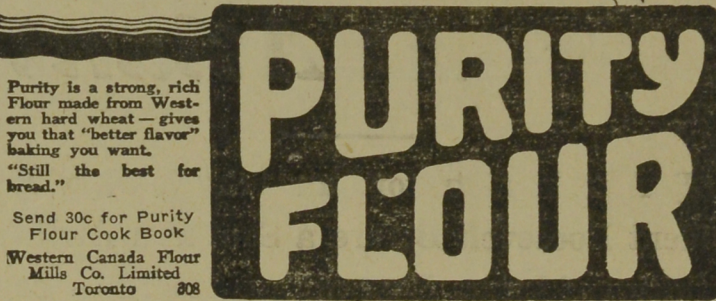
What there may be a need of is a little less hitching and a little more hiking.



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