

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## JUNKETING IN JAMAICA.

New Castle, Jamaica, Oct. 15.

Unlike most of these islands, the traveler finds Jamaica easily accessible in every part. Besides the excellent coasting service, railway and tramlines, there is an extensive system of highways, as well constructed, in their way, and as carefully kept as the boulevards of any northern city; and where cars or mail coaches are not, carriages and saddle horses may always be hired. The Main Road, as it is called—answering to the Camino Real of the Spanish islands—runs around the eastern shore of Jamaica, from Kingston through various port towns to Annatto bay; where a junction road, striking inland across the island, connects the capital with the north coast. Leaving Annatto bay, the Main Road continues along the coast to Ocho Rios, ("Eight Rivers"), whence the two sides of the island is again connected by a road running through Moneague. Then the great highway wanders east, through Linstead and Spanish Town, and sends a branch close along the sea to Falmouth, St. Ann's and Trelawny. Another road, starting from Moneague bay, goes straight across the island to Black River and Savanna-la-mar; and others, criss-crossing in every direction like a mammoth spider's web; reach Lucia, Green Island and every other coast or interior village and hamlet.

Even the ascent of Blue Mountain Peak, the highest point in the range, which was formerly extremely difficult of accomplishment, is now a delightful excursion, over the fine road which Governor Sir Henry Norman caused to be built, at his own expense. It is necessary to take along blankets and food supplies. Leaving Kingston early in the morning you reach the mountain top, 7,000 feet above the sea, before dark. There is a tiny house on the peak, in which the traveler may find shelter for the night, making a picnic of it with his own blankets and provisions; and having enjoyed a glorious sunrise and some of the finest views to be had in this grand old world, he may descend the mountain of interest on the return to Kingston.

Another favorite excursion is to Flamstead, 4,000 feet above the sea. You go by carriage to the government gardens, a thousand feet above Kingston, and the rest of the way on the wily little island ponies. Life takes on a keen edge in these tropical mountains.

The climate of Flamstead is like that of northern June, and the temperature of mid-summer is never above 70 degrees. In the evenings cheerful wood fires are built, and at night more than one blanket is needed for comfort. There is a hotel up there at Flamstead, some boarding houses and cottages, and always in winter a pleasant colony of foreign visitors. Every house has its garden gay with flowers from year to year; ferns, plantains, cedars, tamarinds and wild orange flourish to perfection amid tall spires of cacti. The mountain roads are lined with masses of beautiful pink and white begonias; all the hedgerows are overrun with gorgeous nasturtions, and every bank laden with wild strawberries. The hill slopes are mostly planted with what is known as Blue Mountain coffee, which commands a higher price in England than any other; while the lands between are devoted to potatoes,

yams and other vegetables for the Kingston market. The views from Flamstead cannot be described in words. On a clear day you may see Port Royal and Kingston, at opposite ends of the shining lagoon; the Palisades, Fort Augusta, the Twelve Apostles; and on every side the Caribbean sea, dotted with islands to the horizon.

Jamaica's 4,200 square miles of territory are divided into districts which differ as materially from one another in their natural characteristics, industries and possibilities as do the mountains of Colorado from the prairies of Illinois, the pine woods of Maine from the everglades of Florida. Though so near to the equator, there are frequent frosts in the uplands of Jamaica. In its mountain valleys all the products of the North can be grown, while cane fields and corn fields, coffee plantations and cattle farms suggest a wonderful blending of the temperate and torrid zones. Sometimes the mixture of crops in the same field is striking—carrots and cassava, corn and sugar-cane, bananas and pumpkins growing side by side. It is a charming reproduction of English agricultural life, bathed in the eternal sunshine of the tropics. One may choose his own climate in Jamaica—from the constant heat of the coast plains, through the sub-tropical temperature of the lower ranges, to the cool, bracing air of the mountains.

Spanish Town is only thirteen miles from Kingston—a most delightful drive, unless you prefer to spoil the trip by making it in a parlor car. This former capital of Jamaica—which was founded by Columbus' son, Diego, and by him christened San Jago de la Vega, ("St. James of the Valley"), was sacrilegiously dubbed Spanish Town by the English a century or so later. The very first capital of the island, you know, was Sevilla Nueva, (New Seville), near St. Ann's founded by the same Diego Columbus, in the year 1495. Though the glory of Spanish Town departed with the transfer of the government to Kingston, it is still a quaintly charming place, full of memories of the past, with its deserted plaza, rambling lanes and low, vine-wreathed casa. Among its few "sights" which interest the visitor are the old legislative halls and public buildings, a quaint, red-brick cathedral, and the massive King's House, with pretentious columns and porticos, where the early Governors resided. In front of the King's House is an admirable statue, (by Bacon), of Lord Rodney—he who routed the French fleet under Count de Grasse—which has wandered about like an unquiet ghost. It was held in England for a time; then set up in its present place for a few years; afterwards transferred with the government to Kingston, and lately brought back to Spanish Town, where let us hope, it will remain. Among other relics of the war to be seen in Spanish Town are a couple of brass 32-pounders, still guarding the empty palace. On each of them is inscribed "Louis Charles de Bourbon, Comte d'Eu, Duc d'Aumale, 4th May 1748." The present population of the place is about 7,000. The old assembly room and a portion of King's House are now-days utilized for a government training school. In the burial grounds surrounding the two Episcopal churches you may read on many crumbling stones the pompous records of lords and dukes and "sirs," who ruled Jamaica in the early days, and of naval heroes known to history; and sandwiched between their highly respectable names are those of many no-

torious sea rovers of piratical propensities. The parish of Saint Catherine's, in which Spanish Town is situated, was named for the queen of Charles II and is a memorial of the Stewart-Restoration period. To thoroughly appreciate Spanish Town, one must furnish up his English history. In the same parish are Linstead and Harbort, both towns of consequence. In the old brick church of Harbort, the first English settlers who came over with Penn and Venables worshipped according to their narrow lights; and in the grave yard around it most of them lie buried. Linstead, nestled in a mountain hollow, is a thriving place for trade and marketing, but otherwise uninteresting. Driving the five or six miles between it and Spanish Town, you pass the most picturesque bit of scenery on the island. Steep mountains on either side from a long, deep and narrow ravine, down which the Cobre river dashes on its way to the sea, amid vegetation of richness and variety surpassing description. The Spaniards called the place Boca del Agua, the Water's mouth, which the English, (oh Lord!) have corrupted to Bog Wall. Now-days the old name is almost forgotten and Bog walk prevails among the unimaginative owners of the island. The first Lady Brassey, original owner of the "Sunbeam," went through this ravine on horse-back, and describes it in her happy way. The Brassey party all also drove to Linstead and Moneague, and through the valley of St. Thomas; and after three days of steady driving reached Echo Rios, where the "Sunbeam" lay waiting. In Lady Brassey's inimitable account of it, she speaks of the great fields of Guinea grass, which today feed countless herds of sleek cattle, and tells the story of the accidental introduction of the seeds of this valuable grass, from the coast of Guinea. In 1744 a quantity of the seed was sent, as food for some parrots which had been forwarded from Guinea to Jamaica. The parrots died; the seeds were thrown away, took root and spread, and in time became a most important factor in the prosperity of the island.

St. Ann's with its pastures and pepper groves is interesting as being the place where Columbus was wrecked, in 1503. He ran his caravels ashore and remained a whole year in the little bay which he named Santa Gloria. History relates how the ships had become unseaworthy so he stranded them and built thatched huts upon their decks. "Don Christopher's Clove," as the precise spot where the caravels lay is called, is the loveliest little bay in the world, between walls of coral rock, with a beach of yellow sand, overhung with thickets of sea-grapes. It looks just the spot which a mariner of good taste, or a buccaner of the opera bouffe, would choose in which to strand his sinking ship. The sloping shore affords a secure resting place and the coral ledges give protection from stormiest seas and heaviest gales.

The way to Gordon Town—an important village in the Blue range lies by the side of Hope river, which cuts its way out of the mountains through a narrow, fern-fringed ravine. At this time of year, the stream trickles gently enough along its rocky bed; but during the rainy season it becomes a raging torrent, sometimes raising to thirty or forty feet. Enormous boulders, round as cannon balls and weighing hundreds of tons, show with what restless power the floods sweep down. Within their limits no green thing grows and the rocks are bare and forbidding; but just above high-water mark tropical vegetation waves in all its glory. At Gordon Town the valley winds out and is filled with coffee-groves and cocoa palms. Though only a thousand feet above Kingston, the air is much cooler. Here we visited the plantation of a for-