C. Catlow Tells of Winter Vacation He Is Enjoying on St. Lucia Island

C. J. Catlow of Barrington, who is vacationing on St. Lucia Island in the British West Indies, writes interestingly of the life and living on the island in the Caribbean Sea in a letter received by the Barrington Review last week. Mr. Catlow has spent the last several winters on the island. The letter, with its story of life, trade and nature on the island is printed in full for the benefit of The Review readers.

Dear Friends:

In a Chicago Tribune news item, which was sent me recently, St. Lucia is referred to as "a lost island in the ocean". Some cartographers, it is true, omit it, and tourists have yet to find it; but St. Lucia is still atop the Caribbean, and in her primitive grandeur, serenely unaware of any neglect.

To the few from the world beyond who do find this little haven, there comes the thrill of discovery in her ragged, palm-tagged outline, her many inlets dotted with pirogue and sail, her prodigious canyons carved by miniature rivers, and her display of verdure, lush and variegated.

Castries, the land-locked harbor of St. Lucia is the center of trade. Ships the world over draw alongside to discharge or take on coal. Rarely a day that one can not see long queues of natives with their hundred-weight baskets of coal balanced upon their heads, toiling up and down the stages from deck to wharf. And this year, tramp steamers, carrying wheat northwards from the Argentine, and greatly to the coaling.

Not all is coal at the wharf, however. In open produce sheds, awaiting shipment to Canada and England, are bananas—thousands of bunches, crates of limes and mangoes, sacks of coconuts, ginger rhizome, yams, cacoa, nutmegs, pepper, cinnamon bark and the exotic vanilla bean.

The hustle and bustle of the wharf are duplicated in the cane fields and the sugar factories, especially now during the grinding season. From these scenes one might be led to believe that the entire island is a hive of industry. But this is far from true. In the hamlets, on the little "estates," and in the cane-thatched huts hidden about the hillsides, life proceeds with a vast leisure. Bread fruit is always ready for picking, peas and tomatoes are perennial, yams self-multiplying, cacao and coconuts are plentifully at hand for both food and drink, oranges, limes, mangoes, shaddock and many other fruits are constantly ripening, and fish is inexhaustible. It is not surprising, therefore, that the native is little impressed with the needs of a tomorrow; nature in the tropics requires no such dismal reasoning of her dusky children.

Schools here are parochial or private. Learning is by rote with every throat working: class vies with class, youngster with youngster. The few brains that survive this bedlam of magpies, become the doctors, barristers and lesser officials of the place; the rest turn to labor, trades, shopkeeping, or the land.

The island, of course, has its upper crust of elite who speak only to the elect, who in turn fraternize only with the nobility! They are coldly correct and fill their hours with distinctions of punctilio and pretenses of superiority founded on claims some 4000 miles beyond dispute. Such is a cross section of St. Lucia, punctuated with old French customs, Roman church fete days and English cricket.

Those are but incidents of local color to the vacationer, who will find his days all too short to follow up the many fascinating avenues open to him. Most appealing of all is the surf. Vision a sickle of golden sand fringed with palms, sea-grapes and wild almonds, ground swells rising to crest, then carving, breaking, tumbling and sweeping in a rush of foam onto the beach. The entire Caribbean coast abounds with beaches like this—each inviting a tussle with the breakers or a swim in the smoother waters beyond. And no sharks to cause apprehension.

Sailing on the bay at sundown when the Trades freshen is another exhilarating pastime. There are many types of craft available, but for adventuresome sport I choose a one-man, native hybrid, rigged with mainsail and jib. A canoe is no more temperamental, and little faster, but unlike a canoe, she tacks close in without slipping.

In an island with 200 years of turbulent history behind it there is never lack of objective for hike or ride. One might even search for buried treasure. Buccaneer gold has been stumbled upon, and, no doubt, plenty still lies buried in private ores.

Good fortune has attended my more leisurely explorations for rare books. I was thrilled to locate an Anthony Trollope first, "The West Indies and The Spanish Main," 1859; and later to come upon the 2-vol. first of George Brandes, "William Shakespeare," 1898. The further and plaise of this work in current circulation are repellent, so it was a joy to find this rare edition of Shakesperiana.

Although not interested in stamps, I viewed, nevertheless, with awe a casual collection garnered over a period of 50 years by a West Indies crooke. Two topped the group with a catalogue value of 2000 pounds sterling each! Other items were rated at 500 pounds down to 20 pounds.

I avoid thinking that days in St. Lucia will ever end. Away from this isolated spot the world has a way of being too much with us, to paraphrase Wadsworth. Here only dim echoes of complexities and strife seep through. The cable board carries bare outlines of world happenings. At first I read them daily; now only when chance takes me close by. Soon enough to pick up the thread of events when the last palm fades in the Southern horizon.

However, in the back of the mind, there is a date—the 2nd of April, when I am scheduled to leave for Barbados. Later, on to Trinidad for a week, and after that ten days up the map to New York. The Reviews keep me in touch with Barrington. I appreciate your putting my name on the mailing list. All good wishes, and a bientot.

Chester J. Catlow.

Ela Township Woman Returns Home From Chicago Hospital

ELA TOWNSHIP—Mrs. Harry Washo returned to her home in Ela township Saturday from the Frances Willard hospital where she underwent a major operation three weeks ago.

Reported Ill

Mrs. Edward Walbaum has been reported on the sick list the past week.

Called Home By Death

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Herschberger, were called home from California this week because of the death of Mr. Herschberger's mother.

Visit at Hospital

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Walbaum and Mr. and Mrs. William Schumacher visited Charles Schering at the Sherman hospital in Elgin Sunday. Mr. Schering is a brother of Mrs. Walbaum.

Attend Funeral

Mr. and Mrs. Percy Eltrink of Des Plaines, Mr. and Mrs. August Wirtz and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Wirtz of Ivanhoe and Mr. and Mrs. George Berghorn, and Mr. and Mrs. Emory Stockel attended the funeral of Mrs. Herschberger at Long Grove Sunday.

Celebrate 20th Anniversary

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Snetsinger and family spent Sunday at Diamond Lake where they attended the 20th wedding anniversary celebration of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rouse.

Personals

Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Fritz and family of Park Ridge and Mrs. Fritz Sr. spent Sunday evening at the Ray Meyer home.

Mrs. Edward Sandman and Mrs. Henry Kropp were Waukegan business callers last Thursday.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Heidemann and family spent Sunday at Dundee with the Storm children.

Mrs. George Krueger and daughter Mabel visited with Mrs. Walter Hildebrant at Palatine last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Gottchalk entertained at dinner Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Meyer visited with the Fred Meyer family at Algonquin Sunday.

The 4-H club had a meeting at the Ela township high school last Thursday evening. They made plans for the coming year.

Mr. and Mrs. William Pohlman Jr. spent Thursday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Popp.

Mrs. Charles Ost of Palatine spent Monday with her mother, Mrs. Henry Kropp.

Mrs. William Schumacher spent Tuesday at Crystal Lake.

Mr. and Mrs. Noble Finnell of Long Grove visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Popp Saturday evening.

Classified Ads Bring Results

Producing College Play

On the production of Perene Molnar's "Lilium" to be produced March 12 and 13 on the University of Illinois campus by the Illinois Theatre Guild is Miss Barbara Holbrook of Barrington township, who is a member of the scenery department, according to an announcement received here this week from Wesley Swanson, director of dramatic productions.

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Residents of Barrington will find it worth while to make use of this New Service. It is not the purpose of the Home Lighting Advisors to sell lighting equipment, but merely to offer practical suggestions. If you wish a special appointment at some particular time, call your Public Service office . . . Barrington 176.

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