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**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

OF

*The City of Nassau,*

AND

**Island of New Providence,**

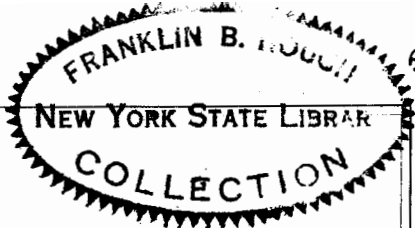
**Bahamas, West Indies,**

**WITH METEOROLOGICAL TABLES,**

**And other Statistics of Interest**

**TO INVALIDS AND TRAVELERS.**

**GEO. EDW'D SEARS, PRINTER & STATIONER, 45 WILLIAM ST., N. Y.**



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BAHAMAS, WEST INDIES,

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION

OF THE

# City of Nassau, N. P.

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The Bahamas are a numerous group of Islands which lie on the east coast of North America, north of Cuba and St. Domingo, encircling and almost enclosing the Gulf of Mexico to the northward. These Islands are twenty-nine in number, and without exception of the same geological character, being formed of calcareous rock, composed of coral shells and marine deposits, hardened into lime-stone more or less stratified, and abounding in fossils of recent and living species.

New Providence is the most important of the group; Nassau, its chief and only town, was settled by Europeans in 1629, since which time it has been the seat of government. It is situated in north latitude  $25^{\circ} 5'$ , and west longitude  $77^{\circ} 20'$ , covering an area of 85 square miles, with a population of about 12,000. Its history is full of interest to the student, but limited space and desire to place before the reader important facts and statistics regarding it as a winter resort for invalids, compels us to ignore the claims of both history and romance.

New Providence has been noted for salubrity of climate for many years, but events connected with its early and recent history have so prejudiced the minds of Americans, and led to such false impressions, that only to those who have had more intimate knowledge of the Island has the idea of an even transient residence been sufferable. During our civil war, Nassau was, from its geographical position, the natural resort

for "blockade runners," and this, though the inhabitants were as a general rule free from blame for the support the so-called Confederacy received, yet, the fact that this Island formed the depot for traffic by which foreigners grew rich from our misfortunes, has given our countrymen a very mistaken idea of the character of the residents. In no country will the traveler find a better society, or more kind people, than among the European and native inhabitants of Nassau. The Hon. Horace Greeley, writing from here under date May 29th, 1870, says: "I cannot bid adieu to Nassau without atesting the spontaneous, hearty kindness evinced by her people universally, for the small but increasing colony of Americans, whereof the nucleus is the Royal Victoria Hotel. These are nearly all invalids with their attendant relations drawn hither by pulmonary disease, and the harshness of our winter winds, and naturally expecting little sympathy or hospitality save from each other; yet we are treated from highest to lowest, and from first to last with a generosity and kindness which hardly allows us to remember that it is a foreign country."

Peter Bruce, in his memoirs (1732), says of the climate: "The Bahama Islands enjoy the most serene and the most temperate air in all America, the heat of the sun being greatly allayed by refreshing breezes from the east, and the earth and air are cooled by constant dews which fall in the night, and by gentle showers which fall in their proper seasons, so that they are free from the sultry heat of our other settlements. They are as little affected with frost, snow, hail or the northwest winds, which prove so fatal both to man and plants in our other colonies. It is, therefore, no wonder the sick and afflicted of these climates fly hither for relief, being sure to find a cure here."

A large volume might be filled with like extracts complimentary to the climate, but we prefer to devote what space we have to official statistics, from which the reader may draw his own inference.

The subjoined table is taken from Gov. Rawson's "Report of the Bahamas" for the year 1864, accompanying the blue book of the colony.

Mean of daily observations on week days for ten years, from 1855 to 1864,

THERMOMETER AT 9 A. M.			WIND AT 9 A. M.	RAINFALL DURING MONTH.		
Max.	Med.	Min.	4 chief points in order of prevalence.	} Rainy Season.		
75	70	66	NE. E. SE. N.		2.4	Jan.
76	71	66	NE. E. SE. S.		2.4	Feb.
78	72	66	E. SE. NE. N.		4.5	March.
81	75	68	NE. E. S. SE.		2.4	April.
84	78	71	NE. SE. E. S.		6.9	May.
88	81	74	SE. E. NE. S.		6.4	June.
88	82	75	E. SE. S. NE.		6.5	July.
88	81	75	E. SE. S. NE.		6.7	August.
86	81	75	E. NE. SE. N.		5.2	Sept.
82	77	73	NE. E. SE. N.	7.4	Oct.	
79	74	70	NE. E. E. SE.	2.8	Nov.	
77	73	69	NE. E. SE. N.	2.4	Dec.	
82	76	71		4.6		

"The mean height of the barometer is exactly 30 inches. The greatest maximum heat exceeds the average heat by not more than 12°. The greatest minimum falls short of it by 10°, the extreme variation is therefore 22°."

The following table shows the average obtained from three observations, taken daily (7 A. M., 12 M., 5 P. M.,) at the Royal Victoria Hotel during the past season.

### Thermometer Record at the Royal Victoria Hotel.

SEASON OF 1869-'70.

	Nov.	Dec.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY.
1	...	77 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	70	74	81 $\frac{3}{4}$
2	...	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{1}{2}$	79
3	...	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	67 $\frac{1}{2}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	68 $\frac{3}{4}$	82
4	...	73	69 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	70 $\frac{3}{4}$	70 $\frac{3}{4}$	81
5	...	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	69	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	71 $\frac{3}{4}$	72	81
6	...	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	72 $\frac{1}{2}$	73	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	82 $\frac{3}{4}$
7	...	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	73	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	74	81 $\frac{3}{4}$
8	...	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	70	70	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	75	82 $\frac{3}{4}$
9	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	67 $\frac{3}{4}$	74	62 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	80 $\frac{1}{2}$
10	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	69 $\frac{3}{4}$	74	64	78 $\frac{3}{4}$	79	81
11	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	69 $\frac{3}{4}$	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	67 $\frac{3}{4}$	70	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	80 $\frac{3}{4}$
12	78	71 $\frac{1}{2}$	74	70 $\frac{1}{2}$	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	81 $\frac{1}{2}$
13	78	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	70 $\frac{1}{2}$	78 $\frac{3}{4}$	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	79 $\frac{3}{4}$
14	78 $\frac{3}{4}$	73	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{1}{2}$	79	73	80
15	78	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	79 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	79
16	81	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	75	78 $\frac{3}{4}$
17	80 $\frac{1}{2}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	76	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	66 $\frac{3}{4}$	76	79
18	79	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	68 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{3}{4}$	81 $\frac{1}{2}$
19	80 $\frac{3}{4}$	68	74	67	68	73	80 $\frac{3}{4}$
20	80 $\frac{1}{2}$	72 $\frac{3}{4}$	74	70	70 $\frac{1}{2}$	78 $\frac{3}{4}$	80 $\frac{3}{4}$
21	70 $\frac{1}{2}$	75	74	68 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{1}{2}$	77 $\frac{3}{4}$	77
22	70	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	66	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	76	75
23	77 $\frac{3}{4}$	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	70 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	76
24	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	76	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	70 $\frac{3}{4}$	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	77	80
25	77	77 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{3}{4}$	76	77 $\frac{3}{4}$	82 $\frac{3}{4}$
26	77 $\frac{1}{2}$	76	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	68 $\frac{1}{2}$	79 $\frac{1}{2}$	77	84
27	74	76 $\frac{1}{2}$	76	73	79	77	83 $\frac{1}{2}$
28	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	75	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	74 $\frac{1}{2}$	73	80	84
29	76 $\frac{3}{4}$	71 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{3}{4}$	...	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	80	...
30	78	69 $\frac{1}{2}$	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	...	73 $\frac{3}{4}$	79	...
31	...	70 $\frac{3}{4}$	74 $\frac{3}{4}$	...	75 $\frac{1}{2}$	...	...

Surgeon Major Bagot, R. A., gives the following comparative table of temperatures :

	WINTER.	SPRING.	SUMMER.	AUTUMN.
Funchal .....	63 '50	64 '46	71 '60	70 '88
Halifax, N. S.....	21	31 '67	61	46 '67
New York.....	30 '12	52 '06	70 '93	53 '20
Nassau.....	70 '67	77 '67	86	80 '33
Nice.....	46 '33	55 '92	71 '83	61 '52
Algiers.....	52 '32	60 '46	74 '41	67 '87
Cairo .....	58 '52	73 '58	85 '10	71 '48
*Jacksonville, Fla....	55 '02	63 '88	81 '93	62 '54

Staff Asst. Surgeon Segrave, R. A., in charge of meteorological observations at Nassau, gives the mean degree of humidity as follows :

January.....	76	July.....	66 '2
Feb'y .....	82	Aug.....	72
March.....	73 '8	Sept.....	72
April.....	64 '7	Oct.....	81 '3
May.....	71	Nov.....	77 '7
June.....	61	Dec.....	82
Average.....	73 '3		

From these observations, two important deductions will be made. First, that the average temperature from November to May inclusive, is exactly that at which out-door and in-door life are best combined. Always above that, at which artificial heat becomes necessary; and always below that, at which exercise becomes exhausting. Second, that the variation between extreme limits of temperature is comparatively small, and that these limits are those within which any variation is of the least possible importance to the health or comfort of the individual. Moreover, the mean barometrical

standard indicates a light or rarified atmosphere, and the average rainfall for a series of years during the season of resort, demonstrates one of unusual dryness. If, then, the climatic desideratum for invalids suffering from pulmonary disease is, as indicated by medical authorities, "a dry, rarified atmosphere at equable temperature," the climate of Nassau fulfills the indication not only in an unequaled but also in a marvelously perfect degree. How perfect will become evident by comparing it with Madeira, South of France, or Southern United States of the Atlantic Coast!

Regarding the sanitary state of the Bahamas, we quote again from Governor Rawson's Report:

"These Islands are, without exception, remarkably healthy. They are free from, and are seldom visited by, epidemic diseases. Intermittent fevers, which prevail to so great an extent on the neighboring continent, are comparatively infrequent here, and usually assume a mild form. During the last thirty-five years Nassau has been visited by cholera once, viz.—1852; by small-pox in 1845 and '60, when it was introduced, in both cases, from St. Domingo; and by yellow fever at distant intervals, and attended with very slight mortality—viz., 1829-45 and '53, until 1861-2, when, from transient circumstances, it assumed a more malignant form."

In 1864, yellow fever was again introduced, as also to a slight extent during the last summer, (1869). In both cases this is accounted for by the presence of large numbers of strangers, in the first instance, to those engaged in "blockade running," and during the past summer—those connected with the Cuban revolution. The entire number of fatal cases during the summer of 1869, did not exceed twelve, including those who died on vessels in the harbor.

As foreign traffic is less, epidemics as well as sporadic cases of yellow fever and cholera, have been much less numerous than in New York. But as such instances occur *only* during the summer when visitors are away, the subject has no interest in our present inquiry. During the last season, no known case of intermittent or remittent fever has occurred, either at the hotel or among the white population of the Island. It may, therefore, be considered certain that no disease that takes epidemic form is indigenous to the Island, neither can such diseases exist there, except to a very limited extent when introduced from foreign ports, and even in such case *only during the summer months*.

The city of Nassau is built on the northern side of the Island which slopes down to the water's edge, affording sure and perfect drainage. It extends along the water front for about three miles and back to the crest of the slope, on which stand the Government House, the Royal Victoria Hotel, and many of the finest private residences. The streets are laid out at right angles with each other, and are uniformly macadamized, as are also the drives around the Island. The houses, are, for the most part, built of stone, and the grounds surrounding them are ornamented with flowers and trees. The city has a fine public library of over six thousand volumes. Nassau has almost as much right to be called "the City of Churches" as our own Brooklyn. All creeds find themselves at home in the services of the various churches and chapels.

The drives are not to be excelled—the roads being equal to the best; the scenery, both seaward and inland, being varied and beautiful. The harbor and neighboring waters afford at once a safe and extensive boating ground—while the shores are covered with marine treasures, in the form of

shells and corals. In the interior and on the out islands, game abounds to reward the labors of the sportsman; while the adjacent waters supply fish in abundance, and unrivaled for beauty and size.

Almost all the fruits known to the tropics are found here, including the following varieties:—

Pine-apple, sappadilla, cashew, sweet sop, sour sop, papaw, sweet and sour orange; lemon, lime, star apple, cocoa-plum, cocoa-nut, sea-side grape, mammee, plantain, banana, love-in-a-mist, guava, Spanish plum, hog plum, scarlet plum, tamarind, wild grape, custard (Jamaica) apple, ground nut, bread fruit, ackee, citron, mandarin, shaddock, rose apple, fig, mango, abacado pear, pomegranate, date, balsam apple, mulberry, broad-leaf almond, grape fruit, jujube.

The Royal Victoria Hotel was built by the Government in 1860 to meet the demands of invalids and others seeking to avail themselves of the peculiar natural advantages offered by Nassau for a winter residence. Being intended especially for invalids, neither pains nor expense was spared in answering the requirements of the most modern and scientific theories of architecture.

Following close upon its completion, came the outbreak of our civil war, and the conversion of Nassau into a resort for those engaged in illicit trade with the Southern States. Owing to which fact the hotel was soon filled with an entirely different class of occupants, and the object of the Government for the time defeated.

The building is of limestone—four stories high; each of the three first stories being surrounded by a piazza ten feet wide, forming an uninterrupted promenade of over one thousand feet in extent—affording to those unable to with-

stand the fatigue of out-door exercise, perfect facilities for enjoying the fine scenery and refreshing breezes. The rooms are large, and perfectly ventilated; those of the first, second and third stories being provided with French casements, opening on the piazza, and each door and window having a fan-light. The house is provided with bath rooms and other modern improvements. The tanks for rain water exceed 300,000 gallons in capacity; while spring water is forced through the building from a fine well on the premises. The parlors are large and conveniently situated. The dining-room will seat one hundred and fifty persons comfortably. Sea-bathing is conveniently near the house, and salt-water baths, either in bathing-rooms or private apartments, can be furnished at all times.

To sum up the advantage offered by Nassau: We find a place where the invalid, (after a sea voyage of only four days,) may enjoy the finest and most equable climate in the world, during the winter months, absolutely free from all danger of epidemic disease, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other dangers and disadvantages usually incident to tropical countries, good society, fine educational and religious privileges; the use of a choice library; medical talent, of the highest order; recreations of varied and healthful character.

The subscriber, having secured the Royal Victoria Hotel from the Bahamian Government, for a term of twenty years from May 1st, 1870, intends making this a life-time business, and will spare neither pains or expense in his efforts to give entire satisfaction to those, who, either from necessity or fancy, may choose to spend a winter in the tropics. The table will be provided with the very best of native and imported supplies, and the attendance will be prompt and willing. The house opens on the 1st of November, and will close June 1st.

Terms, three dollars per day, American gold, which gives choice of unoccupied rooms, excepting private parlors, which are reserved for families and persons rooming together. Visitors will find letters of credit, certificates of deposit, U. S. gold notes or coin the most convenient form of funds, as most of the business of the colony is transacted with the United States and on a basis of U. S. gold.

Nassau is at present in direct communication with New York by the Atlantic Mail Steamship Co.'s steamers, which leave every fourth Thursday, viz.:—Oct. 6th, Nov. 8th, Dec. 1st, Jan. 26th; fare, forty-five dollars, gold. On February 1st, the present contract between the Bahamian Government and this Company ceases, after which time, a fortnightly steam communication is to be established. Until that time, a mail will be made up and sent from 758 Broadway, by sailing vessel, as opportunity offers. In this way, persons having friends at the hotel may be tolerably certain of sending and receiving letters each week. Letters addressed, "Care of Agent, R. V. H.," at the above number, will be promptly forwarded.

LEWIS F. CLEVELAND.

By special permission, reference is made to the following named gentlemen:—

DR. ALONZO CLARK,	N. Y.
" JOHN T. METCALFE,	"
" WILLIAM A HAMMOND,	"
" T. GAILLARD THOMAS,	"
" JAMES R. WOOD,	"
" FORDYCE BARKER,	"
" JOHN J. CRANE,	"
" AUSTIN FLINT,	"

## APPENDIX.

From General JAMES WATSON WEBB.

NEW YORK, May 10th, 1870.

My Dear MR. GREELEY:

I have, within a few days, returned from Nassau, N. P., where I took a member of my family in February, by advice of our family physician, in consequence of a bronchial affection, which admonished us to avoid, for the present, a north winter, after having spent eight in the tropics. The result has been most satisfactory, exceeding indeed, our most sanguine anticipations. And, therefore, I trouble you with this letter, to be published in September next, when so many invalids suffering from lung affections, will be anxiously enquiring where they may find a refuge from the cold and damp of our winters. As MRS. GREELEY spent the winter in Nassau, at the Royal Victoria Hotel, you will have no difficulty in investigating the claims of Nassau, to be without a rival in this hemisphere, as a grand *Sanitaria* for all diseases of the throat and lungs.

South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, all put in their claims to be favorable resorts for invalids desirous of escaping from the severity of our winters; and relatively, their claims are good. But being situated on this great continent, and subject to all the changes and vicissitudes of climate experienced north of the tropics, their merits are only relative when considered in relation to more northern places. Every where in our country, we are liable more or less, to frost in winter. This is emphatically the case in Florida; and what makes it far worse for the invalid, the climate is so mild during most of the winter, that when frost does come, it is discovered that few



if any precautions have been taken to resist its deleterious influence. Even the Island of Cuba is occasionally visited by frosts; and I know from personal observations in February last, that the Northers experienced in Cuba, are quite as distressing to the invalid suffering from affections of the lungs, as are the frosts of Florida. To escape frost in the West Indies and avoid the influence of the Northers, St. Thomas and St. Croix are the only Sanitarias that can safely be recommended; and those are not always free from yellow fever before late in December, or after the middle of March. This fact, effectually excludes both of these Islands from becoming places of general resort for Invalids suffering from pulmonary complaints, because they may not prudently remain at the North until December, and cannot return with safety until May. Besides, the distance of St. Thomas and St. Croix from New York, and the difficulties in reaching them, effectually ignores their claims to competition with Nassau.

Madeira is the great *Sanitaria* of Europe; and until lately, was considered to be without a rival throughout the World. Recently however, Nassau has not only been proved to be superior to all other localities as a *Sanitaria* in the New World, but superior also, to Madeira itself. Madeira is decidedly more healthy than Nassau, from the 1st of June to the 1st of November, when the thermometer in the former Island stands at an average of  $71^{\circ} 60'$ ; while in the latter it averages  $85^{\circ}$  of Farenheit. And Surgeon General Bagot of the British Army very properly remarks, that no person seeking health should ever find himself in Nassau, from the middle of June to the middle of October. The unhealthiness of the Island in summer is conceded, but from the first of November to the first of June, *there is not, in all probability, any spot on the face of the earth, so desirable for persons suffering from Pulmonary complaints.* And Nassau is only four days sail from New York; the Steamer landing passengers on their way to Havana.

Nassau is situated in Lat.  $25^{\circ} 05'$  North, and Longitude  $77^{\circ} 20'$  west. Madeira is in Latitude  $31^{\circ}$  North.

The climate of the two places, as indicated by a long series of thermometrical observations, is as follows:

Madeira.....	Winter, $63^{\circ} 50'$	Spring, $64^{\circ} 45'$
Nassau.....	do $70^{\circ} 67'$	do $77^{\circ} 67'$
New York.....	do $30^{\circ} 12'$	do $52^{\circ} 06'$

Now, you and I know, that when in winter, the temperature of our houses gets down to  $65^{\circ}$ , we increase our fires; and consequently we know too, that to constitute a climate, the mean or average of which is  $63^{\circ}$ , the Thermometer must, most of the time, be below  $60^{\circ}$ , consequently, fires become a necessity; and the outdoor atmosphere is not one which an invalid afflicted with disease of the lungs may safely breathe. The remedy in all lung diseases, is exercise in the open air, constantly inhaling an atmosphere of  $70^{\circ}$  or upwards; and the mean of the winter temperature in Nassau being  $70^{\circ} 67'$ , and of the spring  $77^{\circ} 67'$ , both dry with perfectly cloudless skies, there appears to be no doubt, that from November to May, New Providence is without a rival as a great *Sanitaria*.

*Frost* has never visited Nassau,—the coldest day known during the past twenty-one years of careful registration (with one exception not verified), being  $64^{\circ}$ ; and the warmest, from November to May,  $82^{\circ}$ —a variation of only eighteen degrees between the coldest and the warmest day, during the period that invalids would naturally visit the Island for health. And the greatest difference in the thermometer ever recorded between October and June, is only twenty degrees.

It follows, then, that there is on earth no such other place, as regards climate between October and June, as Nassau. The rain fall during the Winter and Spring, is as follows, viz. :—

November.....	2.8	February.....	2.4
December.....	2.4	March.....	4.5
January.....	2.4	April.....	2.4

The mean height of the barometer for a series of years is ascertained to be exactly 30 inches, and the average humidity of the climate is 73.3.

During the month of March and April, we had only five falls of rain, usually of only two or three hours' duration, or

less; and once, raining about six hours continuously. During those two months we had rain previous to 10 P. M. but once; and both day and night the heavens were cloudless.

Such are the facts of the case in regard to the climate of Nassau; and extraordinary as they are, when compared with other places on the globe noted for their salubrity, there are great natural causes, visible and apparent to all, why it should be found free from frost, although in Lat.  $25^{\circ} 05'$  North; and at the same time, boast all the benefits of the Tropics with a warm summer climate as equable as man can desire. Those causes consist in the very peculiar and remarkable position of the Island. Look at the map, and you will at once perceive that on the *South* it is bounded by the South Atlantic, and the *warm* waters which constitutes that mighty arm of the ocean—the Gulf Stream. On the *West*, that great wonder of the Ocean separates it from the Continent of America, and again protects Nassau on the North, and modifies all the cold winds of the Continent into gentle zephyrs by the time they reach New Providence; and on the East we are open to the Broad Atlantic; which, in Lat.  $25^{\circ}$ , never emits any amount of cold which the invalid may not safely inhale.

The sanitary virtues of the climate of Nassau are not of recent discovery; and one hundred and forty years ago, Peter Bruce, in his memoir, said:—

“The Bahama Islands enjoy the most serene and the most temperate air in all America,—the heat of the sun being greatly allayed by refreshing breezes from the East, and the earth and air are cooled by constant dews which fall in the night, and by gentle showers which fall in their proper seasons; so that they are free from the sultry heats of our other settlements. They are not affected with the frost, snow, hail or north-west winds, which proves so fatal both to men and plants in our other colonies. It is therefore, no wonder the sick and afflicted inhabitants of those climates fly hither for relief, being sure to find a cure here.”

What was true in 1732, is equally true now; and it is to benefit suffering humanity that I write this letter over my own signature as a guarantee, that the invalid who may visit

Nassau for affections of the lungs and throat, not too long neglected, may feel a well-grounded assurance of being benefited at this great *Sanitaria*.

I have already said that the trip to Nassau is performed in four days from New York by the line of steamers which run weekly to Havana. Of course, there is no difficulty in being supplied, at all times, with every delicacy which invalids may desire; and I feel justified in saying, that Messrs. CLEVELAND & NEWELL, the proprietors of the Royal Victoria Hotel, intend to keep a first-class house, and are, in every respect, well qualified to do so.

The Hotel was built by, and is the property of, the Government of the Bahamas; and is not only the largest and most commodious Hotel ever built in the Tropics, but is a building which has few rivals in our own country out of our large cities. And the Government of Nassau have given the proprietors a twenty years' lease of the hotel, conditioned only that they shall keep a first-class American hotel. They are both intelligent Americans, who held commissions in our army during the Rebellion; and writing from two months' residence in their hotel, I have no hesitation in saying that invalids and their friends are certain to fare as well at the Royal Victoria as anywhere out of New York.

Nassau is the seat of Government for the Bahama Islands, and here reside the Governor and his staff, the Chief-Justice, Attorney-General, merchants, &c., &c., &c. Four companies of the 2nd West India Regiment (blacks, with white officers,) garrison the town; and altogether the officials, civil and military, and some dozen or two intellectual and cultivated families, constitute the best society I have ever known in a population of ten thousand souls.

Yours, &c ,

J. WATSON WEBB.

From N. Y. Tribune, Jan. 17th, 1870.

NASSAU, N. P., Jan. 9.

Leaving New York on the last of December, in search of a sunnier clime and more indulgent skies, our fifth day at sea brought us to what seemed in truth a new heaven and a new earth. Anchoring for a few minutes just in sight of our Promised Land, the good ship Eagle left us to pursue our further way in the prettiest yacht imaginable. Sailing leisurely up the winding, shallow channel, still bright with many a submerged sun, it appeared as if we were gliding along in a pleasant dream that was never going to end. On either side the land was luxuriant with verdure; the wild cactus, the palm, and the cocoa marking its tropical character. Two immense square heaps of coal on this solitary shore attracted my attention, and inquiry proved them to have been sold to the Confederates during the war, but, for some reason, not removed. The thickly interlacing vines of morning glory had been partially successful in ornamenting the black mass with their delicate tracery, whereat a fellow passenger remarked, rather sentimentally, that nature covered the ruins of the dead Confederacy with flowers to hide its hideousness, which little speech a less poetic bystander paraphrased, placently, "to show it's gone to grass."

Nearer yet to the harbor we passed the famous Lilian and the San Salvador, those unlucky Cuban privateers, now held in durance vile by the British powers that be. A Spanish man-of-war keeps guard over the deserted vessels, having arrived, with characteristic slowness, some time after the seizure. The British lion has the tenderest conscience in the world as regards any violation of the Neutrality laws, when any but Uncle Sam's rebels are concerned. The Nassau people, I am told, have lost all they made during the war. The hurricanes carried away all their ungodly gains—and served them rightly, too, said a British official to me—I know not how sincerely.

But to return to our yacht. Arrived at the wharf, it was boarded by the chief officer of the Custom-house—a colored man, eminently respected and respectable, with the manners

of a Chesterfield, and an accent that Lord Dundreary might have owned. He was educated in England, I am told, and has since traveled nearly everywhere. The colored people here seem to have a very good chance, in many respects. There is next to no prejudice against them. The policemen are all colored men, so are the soldiers. The climate suits them; they can earn good livings, if they choose to work; and, if they do not, why they can live on sugar-caue, and be as idle as crown princes. Candor compels me to state that they generally choose the latter alternative; consequently there is very little done in the way of agriculture. Some of the blacks do a moderate trade in sponges, which they gather by detaching with a long hooked pole, from the coral bed of the sea. They also dive for conch pearls, which are said to be very pretty, but are not obtained in sufficient quantities for commerce. I am told that they have a rosy, opalescent luster. The most exquisite shell-work I ever saw is done here. Some of it was sent to the Great Exposition, and honorably mentioned in its report. Flower-crosses, baskets, vases, butterflies, brooches, bracelets, all kinds of ornaments, are made of shells, and are extremely beautiful.

One of the most charming features of Nassau is its beach, which extends for miles, and is covered with all sorts of treasures in the shape of pretty shells, star-fish, sea eggs (a creature that looks like an animated chestnutburr, and has unmistakable way of saying "touch me not" by darting some of his sharp prickles into one's flesh), sea fans, branching coral, and little sponges washed ashore by the tide. The sea appears here in its gentlest, most caressing mood. No foaming billows, no sighing of the salt sea waves, no moaning nor groaning—in fact, none of the usual melancholy aspects of old ocean. Verdant little peninsulas, running out here and there, give a pleasant variety to the coast. The harbor, with its little fishing-smacks, its weather-worn sail-ships, its lighthouse, and old, ruined fort, is picturesque enough for Venice.

Speaking of forts, there is a most curious one on an eminence commanding the island. It is built very much in the form of a side-wheel steamer, which is singular enough, inas-

much as it is nearly a hundred years old. A local tradition places it on the spot from which the British took the island, of which occurrence the following version is given: A handful of English freebooters landed in the night, planted a couple of cannon on this peak in such a manner as to command the house of the Spanish Governor, and, when that hidalgo awoke next morning, it was to surrender at discretion to the adventurers who had so adroitly placed him at their mercy.

Some of the plants here are very curious. A variety of *semper vivens*, very common on the island, will, if taken from its native soil and suspended in the air without a particle of earth, live for years, new plants growing out of the crenated edges of the original leaves. The effect is very curious, and can be obtained with even a single leaf pinned to the wall of your room.

The climate is marvelously fine. The thermometer, I am told, will scarcely vary four degrees in as many months. The air is balmy, without being enervating. There is positive enjoyment in breathing it. It has frequently wrought almost incredible cures in lung difficulties. There are not a few people living here now, in apparently perfect health, who came here dying with consumption. I will give a few of many instances of benefit derived from this climate:

A physician from Philadelphia came here about ten years ago, having lost the use of one lung completely, and being expected to live but a short time. He did not gain very much the first year; but the second made him a well man, as I saw him to-day.

Another instance; A young man with one lung destroyed was brought there in an almost dying condition. In a few weeks he was riding horseback, and by Summer time was well enough to return to business. That occurred only last year.

Several consumptives, who came this last Fall, are gaining rapidly, and expect to keep up the reputation of the place by returning in good health next June. I presume many more will come in time to avoid our severe Northern Spring.

The hotel here is the finest structure on the Island. It was built by the Government, not very long since. It is now exceedingly well kept, and would compare not disadvantageously with the best New York hotels. The opportunities for boating, sporting, and driving, are excellent. The roads, formed of the native rocky bed of the Island, are as good as concrete. Altogether, these are charming winter quarters, where, instead of hail and snow, and stormy blast,

"Blossoms and fruits and flowers together rise;  
And the whole year in gay confusion lies."

I. L. G.

From Albany Evening Journal, Feb. 17th, 1870.

MESSRS EDITORS:

It is said that

"To avoid the ills we have,  
We fly to those we know not of;"

And this is no poetic fiction, yet I fancy we do not realize how often the converse is, also, true.

Our climate, for instance, taken as a whole, is not, perhaps less healthful than any other, and yet how often do we see the victims to its rigidity in our streets, and mourn over them in our dwellings.

With the conviction that part, if not greater is in certain cases better than a whole; that, with us, an east wind is not alimint, or in January, the north an elixir; that the animal functions rebelled, alike, against their exclusion, and transformation, I sought, a few weeks ago, in the interest of others, to turn the seasons about, and to receive the breath of summer in this winter of our complaining.

To do this, we left New York in as fine and comfortable a steamer as we have on the Hudson, and in four days we were at Nassau, New Providence, one of the Bahamas, in latitude 25, where frost never comes and where the bloom is perpetual.

We luxuriated in a soft, balmy atmosphere of seventy-four degrees, and could but feel there was health in every breath.

The changes of temperature are extremely slight. That between midnight and midday, in the shade, not ordinarily over five degrees, and between the summer and winter mean, not more than ten or fifteen degrees. The formation is (coral) and the air dry.

All the ordinary tropical fruits abound in great perfection, and are had for little more than the gathering. The senses are wrapped by the novelty of the surroundings, the suddenness and entirety of the change. In a less distance from New York than Chicago, the transformation is perfect, not a shrub or tree is seen which surround, alike, both those places; not any other dress, than a light and summer toilet.

The effect of a residence here upon invalids is not less surprising than the scenery, so suddenly presented to the senses. I was told, as I have often been told before, of some of the most remarkable cures in consumptive cases, and I saw much to confirm the report.

Indigenous chest difficulties are almost unknown. They have intermittent fevers, and die there as we do here, but have their own diagnosis.

In our recent troubles, the inhabitants here said much as those of old Tyrus, "Aha, she is broken that was the gate of the people; I shall be replenished now she is laid waste;" and the results, commercially, are about the same in type and antetype.

Nassau is the seat of the Bahama Government. Here the Governor resides, and here are the Parliament Houses. This is the principal station for Government troops, and this the judicial, as well as ecclesiastical head of the whole group.

At Nassau, too, is not only the best hotel building in all the West India Islands, but one of the best kept houses to be found anywhere, nor are the charges by any means exorbitant. Three dollars a day (gold) secures all the care, attendance, comfort and luxury that four and a-half currency does in New-York—more, I think, for here are less extras.

The hosts, Messrs. Cleveland & Newell, are enterprising young men from New York, who are ambitious to make a reputation, and well do they deserve a reputation. Mr. Newell

is a nephew of the late George W. Newell of our city, formerly Canal Auditor, &c. They have the assistance, too, both on the steamers and at their house, of one of the most efficient and gentlemanly caterers to be met with anywhere, in the person of Major Keating.

It was here, as I think, under the best hygienic influences I left the friend in whose behalf I made the trip; and here should I be glad to know, that many of the more numerous class to which I have alluded, as seen in our "streets and mourned over in our dwellings," were to have these advantages. It is simply to call their attention to these facts that I ask you to publish them.

I am, &c.,

V. Q.

From Albany Morning Express, April 12th, 1870.

NASSAU, N. P.

Perhaps the observations and reflections resulting from a few weeks residence on this island of New Providence, may be of some interest to your readers.

The Bahama Islands are the most northerly group of the West Indies. They extend nearly or quite 500 miles, in a general direction ranging from North-west to South-east, just on the verge of the tropics. Their number is indefinite—the larger are designated Islands those of smaller dimension are called cays, and the still smaller, rocks or reefs. The principal islands number some twenty or twenty-five, the cays over six hundred and the rocks and reefs thousands. Their geological structure is a carbonate of lime of coral formation. Their products are sponges, turtles, salt and fruits. All the tropical fruits are grown in perfection, cotton and sugar cane also flourish but are little cultivated.

These islands form a Colony of Great Britain—*The Bahama*. Their total population is about 35,000, of which New Providence contains about 15,000. The seat of Government Nassau—a town of some 12,000 people—about 9,000 of whom are blacks.

New Providence is centrally located in the group, and, containing the seat of government and the bulk of the white population and their principal commercial post, is the most important of the Islands. Its dimensions are much smaller than several others, being about nineteen miles in extreme length and seven in breadth, and containing an area of about 80 square miles. The City of Nassau is located on the North side of the island on an eminence overlooking the ocean. It has one of the finest natural harbors in the West Indies—the waters of which are however too shallow for ships of over fifteen feet draught. The town is defended by three forts and a water battery. Part of a regiment of black soldiers are stationed as garrison. Finer specimens of the physical man than many of these blacks are seldom seen. Nassau has also a black police—men who seem to discharge their duties intelligently and faithfully.

Nassau is a remarkably clean town. Mud is unknown, and dust is rare. The streets are swept regularly, and their middle is always cleanly and agreeable to walk in. The side walks are either too narrow or do not exist. The coral rock when worn by constant passing is white and the reflection of the bright sun from the surface of the street is trying to the eyes. The disintegrated coral has a peculiar property of packing and hardening from the effect of rain, and the surface of the streets and roads are thus kept smooth and hard almost by nature.

The vegetation is essentially tropical. Many plants and shrubs grown at home only in our green-houses, are here indigenous. None of our trees are observed in the forests excepting only the yellow pine. Roses and the oleander are in perpetual bloom. The lantana is a forest shrub, and the vinea with its cheery pink blossom, is a road-side flower. The aloe (century plant) grows in garden, field or forest, wherever it happens to have found root, and pushes up its wonderful flower stem twenty or thirty feet in height, and six inches in diameter, in a few days. It strikes the visitors from Northern States with peculiarly pleasurable surprise to be transferred in four days

from the snows and cold of our mid winter to the floral abundance and balmy atmosphere of this Island.

The climate of the Island is remarkably equable and favorable to health. It is much visited by invalids with lung difficulties, and it would seem that they are here placed under all the favorable influences that genial climate can render. Situated to the east and south of the gulf stream, the winter climate of the Island is free from the sudden depressions and fluctuations of temperature to which our Southern States are subject. All our north and north-west winds which reach the States, Georgia and Florida, after blowing over a continent of snow and ice, are tempered before reaching it by the genial warmth of the gulf stream. The weather record of the past winter at Nassau, shows 64 deg. Farenheit as the minimum and 84 deg., the maximum of the thermometer. The meteorological record for ten years from 1850 to 1860 taken each day at 9 A. M., reported to the home government, states 66, as the minimum and 88 as the maximum for the whole ten years. Dr. Kirkwood, who has been a resident on the Island for nearly thirty years, says that on one occasion of a long storm, the thermometer descended to 54 deg. which is the lowest he ever knew it to mark during his residence here. It is very rare indeed that so low a mark as 60 deg. is reached in winter, or that a higher than 90 is made in summer. As a winter residence for persons suffering from or threatened with lung difficulties, so far as climate is concerned, it would seem that this Island affords all that could be hoped for in any place so readily accessible.

The comforts and conveniences afforded invalids are, too, of the best class. About 1860, the colonial government with a view to making the advantages of the climate more readily available to invalids, constructed a large hotel, which in adaptedness to its purpose and the general wants of its guests has few equals, and the writer does not know of its superior. The activity of the blockade trade consequent on the rebellion, making Nassau its centre, diverted this hotel from the purpose of its construction, and it helped the attractions of the town to the contraband traders inimical to our government

during the war. The name of Nassau has ever since had a certain odium attached to it; and with good reason, when we consider the ready sympathy yielded the insurgents by its citizens and government. Since the war and up to the past winter the hotel has been in incompetent hands and badly kept, until the present proprietors Messrs. Cleveland and Newell took charge of it. These gentlemen are among the few who "know how to keep a hotel," and the writer can say confidently from the experience of several weeks residence under their roof, and the larger experience of friends, that a better kept hotel—considering the circumstances, does not exist. The proprietors with Maj. Keating their assistant, are untiring in their endeavors to provide for the comfort, convenience and wants of their guests, and especially of invalids. No labor or pains on their part seems too much, if they can add to the comfort or gratify the wants of such, and the service is rendered with courtesy and cheerfulness which make it doubly acceptable. For the benefit of invalids who may require the advantages of a milder climate another season, and as a merited return for the kindness of Messrs. C. and N., I desire to state that they have just concluded a lease of the Royal Victoria Hotel for ten years—and in its management I am confident they will deserve, and sincerely hope may realize success.

Nassau has good society. There are many English and a few American residents. Strangers are offered every courtesy and kindness by the citizens. There are numerous churches, which are well attended. The church of England is predominant, or until recently it has been the "established" church which means that the Government footed its bills, as in England. It has quite recently been dis-established, though I believe the present bishop and clergy receive the usual stipend during their personal tenure, when it ceases. The Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian denominations are also represented. The Sabbath is well observed. No where, unless in moral New England towns, has the writer seen the Sabbath better kept by all classes. The streets, for their whole width, are filled with people going to and from church—black faces preponderating.

I must not forget to mention that Nassau has an excellent public library established by the Colonial Government, which is available to strangers and residents at the moderate charge of \$1.50 quarterly, and that the gentlemanly Librarian, H. E. Mosely Esq., will give all visitors courteous attention.

When speaking of the Hotel Royal Victoria, I should have stated a fact interesting to Albanians particularly, that Albany is represented by a table seating thirteen denizens of that good old town, to be diminished by one, who to-day takes his departure homeward.

This Island and the harbor of Nassau was for nearly a century the rendezvous and strong hold of the buccaniers—the freebooters of the seas. Rumor has it that the Colonial governors have not always been free from complicity with the pirates and that they have some times shared in their plunder. These honest officials in early times occasionally called in the services of the freebooters to aid them in disciplining and controlling the landmen, and it is hardly surprising that they should find themselves in the condition of the horse in the fable after he had invited the man to mount him for hunting the stag. The story has it that they actually roasted one English governor for being a little refractory in complying with their virtuous behests.

A large, perhaps the principal branch of business of Nassau is wrecking. The navigation of the seas contiguous to the Bahamas is peculiarly perilous. There are numerous shoals and sunken coral reefs, upon which if a ship strikes, she is sure to be seriously damaged if not totally wrecked. The government commissions numerous small vessels as wreckers which continually cruise among the islands to discover and aid any vessel in distress. By lightening their cargo, such vessels are usually got off and taken to Nassau where they are repaired and again fitted for sea. The services of the merchants are called in to settle salvages, store the cargo while waiting repairs. A liberal commission is charged for services and ten to fifteen per cent. often paid for advances of funds for the round trip of the damaged vessel. These expenses are usually paid by the underwriters of insured ships. During

the five weeks stay of the writer at Nassau to date of writing, some ten or twelve such damaged vessels and cargoes have been brought in, ranging from three to seven or eight hundred tons burden; and cost of salvage repairs and expenses, from ten to thirty thousand dollars each. The merchants state that the business is much less in amount than formerly, owing to the better lighting of the points of danger, and better acquaintance with the navigation.

The seas abound with fish of many varieties, and fish is one of the staples of food with the Islanders. Many men in little sloops and schooners are employed in fishing. The fish are brought into the market dock at Nassau and exhibited to customers alive. Being promptly cooked after taking them from the water, they are of excellent quality. There are but few fish of our northern waters, and none that afford you gamey sport in the taking, like our blue-fish or bass. The morganate and the mutton-fish seem to be the most important food fishes. Then there is the turbot and the tine; the squirrel-fish and the grunter, the angel fish, beautifully silvered and spotted, and the jew-fish. Of the jew-fish, which frequently reaches the weight of two hundred pounds, it is stated that he is only caught by diving and putting the hook in his mouth by the hand of the diver. The story sounds a little to *fishy* to be vouched for, and reminds one of the prescriptions of our juvenile days for catching birds by putting salt on their tails; but I am, nevertheless, assured by veracious men of its truth.

An incident has this morning occurred reminding us of similar scenes with us in times now happily for ever past. A Spanish war steamer lying in the harbor on service for suppressing the Cuban insurrection, had sent on shore a slave. The colored citizens of Nassau availed of the occasion to apprise him of his legal freedom, whereupon the sable chattel objected to being returned aboard ship, preferring to control his own actions. A short examination before the magistrate resulted in declaring him free, at which announcement the cheers of the assembled multitude filling the streets made the welkiu ring again. Thus it is the universal human heart beats in sympathy with personal freedom. Thus may it ever be!

W.



