

## **Destruction of Port Royal, Jamaica**

It is with much sorrow we announce a dreadful event, which is laid almost all the town of Port Royal in Jamaica, in Ashes. The following account is extracted from the Jamaica Royal Gazette; --

Kingston, Jamaica, July 15.

"We have this day the melancholy and distressing task of recording the effects of a fatal and destructive fire, which broke out in the towel of Port Royal about half past one o'clock on Thursday afternoon. It began in a negro yard in Callan Street, and was occasioned by a negro woman's making a fire in an improper place. It quickly communicated to the adjoining buildings, and among the first, to Miss Finnan's fine lodging house; from thence it is spread its ravages to the adjoining and opposite houses, and from the very strong breeze that prevailed, burning shingles, etc. were soon wafted to others, which, being remarkably dry, quickly burst out in a blaze, so that by two o'clock three or four parts of the town were burning in a most horrid manner. -- the consternation that now prevailed in the town, as we are informed, surpasses description; every minute fresh flames were issuing forth; the principal street in which the courthouse, Tarrant's Tavern, Mr Bassan's and Mr Jackson's stores, are situated, became a volume of fire and smoke, and from thence it is spread to the whole of the streets and lanes towards the harbour, the wharfs and the Naval Hospital, Mr R. McKowan's house and wharf, and all adjoining, to within a few houses of the officers quarters on the parade. The fire having communicated to Mrs Whittaker's house towards the West corner of the parade, it was suggested to pull down the houses opposite, so as to open a passage between those on fire to those which it had not yet reached, which, being affected by very great exertions, was the means of preventing the flames from continuing their fatal effects along the row of houses on the parade leading to the Artillery Hospital, which were thus fortunately preserved from the dreadful element. The dockyard has been miraculously saved: nothing but the extraordinary exertions and skill displayed on the unhappy occasion could have secured it; as it is, some of the buildings near the wall, close to Mr Jackson's door, have been demolished, partly by the fire, and partly by pulling them down, to prevent the flames from communicated to those of more value, situated further in the yard. To attempt to estimate the loss sustained by, or particularise the individuals who have suffered on this melancholy occasion, would be absurd. Suffice it to say, that, of all classes, some have lost much, and some their little all! The fire was not completely got under until early yesterday morning, and of ill-fated Port Royal all that now remains, besides the dockyard, is Fort Charles, the Artillery Barracks and Hospital, the Church, the street in which Mr Peter Duffus's is house is situated, the street at the back of it, in which Mr Henry Beer's liquor store is, and also from about 14 to 16 houses on the parade, commencing from Mrs Clark's old lodging house, and running each way to about six or seven houses.

"We regret to state, that several lives were lost on this unfortunate occasion.

"An alarm of fire also given in this city yesterday, which, however, was soon extinguished: it proceeded from a small house in Matthews Lane, and it was discovered that a parcel of rags had been stuffed under the shingles, which had taken far. Indeed, for appearances, it seemed as if they had been wilfully set on fire by some incendiary."

## **The destruction of Port Royal.**

(Further particulars.)

Kingston, (Jamaica), July 15.

Two seamen, belonging to the *Carnation* brig, of 18 guns, were killed; a seaman belonging to *La Decouverte* brigantine, had his skull split open by the falling of the, and dropped dead on the spot, Rear Admiral Douglas standing near him at the moment; a negro man was killed by the falling of a wall, and two children are stated to have been burnt. Several individuals are wounded -- among them, a seaman of *La Decouverte*, and one of the Royal Artillery, dreadfully, besides many Negroes. A vast number of unfortunate individuals walked from Port Royal along the pallisadoes, for this city, about 50 of whom reached Fort Nugent yesterday morning in a most deplorable state; while many, completely exhausted, were compelled to lie down on the road, without a drop of water to allay their thirst, and we fear some may perish, if vehicles are not sent to convey them to town; indeed, the scene of desolation and misery that this dreadful fire has occasioned, is truly melancholy, and can only be imagined by those who have witnessed it. Shocking to relate, during this horrible scene of desolation, and while the unfortunate sufferers were in the utmost despair, a number of ruffians (we must call them so), destitute of all feeling and principle, proceeded to plunder the trifling property that individuals were able to snatch from the conflagration: a few of these depradators luckily have been taken and lodged in the guardhouse of this city, and some of the goods recovered; several have escaped, but we sincerely hope due search will be made for them, and if apprehended that they, and those in custody, if their barbarous crime can be brought home to them, may meet a punishment suitable to their merciless conduct. We understand that two engines, which were dispatched from this city with great promptitude, one from the ordinance wharf, the other from the courthouse, were of great service; several other engines were forwarded to the wherry wharf, but from want of boats to convey them, could not be sent off.

We rejoice to observe that measures are in progress for affording some relief to the unfortunate sufferers. A meeting of the inhabitants of this city, called by his honour the Mayor, took place at the courthouse at 10 o'clock this morn, when a subscription list was opened, and we have no doubt that the amount of it, when closed, will be marked by that liberality which so distressing an appeal to our feelings requires. The harmony, independent, and union sonic lodges had advertised for full meetings of their members, the first tomorrow evening, at the latter two on Monday, for the same purpose; and the appeal to the people of colour, noticing that the subscription list is opened at Mr John lodges warehouse, in Harbour Street, is also made public. We are likewise informed that an attracting performance, the sole benefit of the unfortunate people who have suffered, is to be got up at the theatre in this city.

July 22.

A very excellent and affecting discourse was delivered by the Rev. Mr Mann in the church of this city on Sunday forenoon from the second chapter of Job and the 10th verse "what I shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not received evil?" In which he strenuously exhorted the unfortunate sufferers by the late dreadful conflagration to bear their calamity with resignation, and drew a touching picture of their situation, which excited strong sympathy, whilst he called on the humanity of his congregation to alleviate their distress, by contributing each his might to a charity so becoming a Christian. A fire broke out to gain at Port Royal on Monday night, occasioned by the carelessness of a negro with a lighted candle, in the out offices of one of the houses which

fortunately escaped the late conflagration but being early discovered; it was soon happily extinguished by the exertions of the neighbours.

On Tuesday, George Brown, a free Blackman, was brought up and underwent a long examination before the sitting magistrates, on a charge of being concerned in plundering at Port Royal, during the fire in that town, on Thursday se'n night. Several witnesses were examined, whose depositions were taken, and after investigation, which lasted till about two o'clock, he was remanded to the guardhouse. There are several others in custody, charged with the same offence, who are to undergo examination.

In consequence of a number of improper characters appearing in Port Royal since the late conflagration, for the purpose, it is supposed, of plundering, application was made on Tuesday, by the magistrates, to the commanding officer of the Royal Artillery, for assistance in apprehending them, when Captain Petley, in the absence of Colonel Smith, immediately ordered out a body of that corps for the purpose. A range of small buildings, near the Artillery Hospital, were afterwards searched, when several articles were found and taken to the guardhouse, to remain until they can be identified by the owners. Notice was also given that all slaves, found in the town without tickets, will be apprehended and sent to Kingston for confinement. Patrols paraded the streets during the greater part of the day to preserve order, and, we are happy to say, in consequence of the above measures, a horde of vagabonds have quitted that ill-fated town, who had gone thither, no doubt, to rob the unfortunate inhabitants of what little they had saved from the flames.

We are happy to observe that the subscription for the sufferers by fire at Port Royal promises to be of such an amount is to afford them considerable relief.