

**A GEOGRAPHICAL
SKETCH OF ST. DOMINGO,
CUBA AND NICARAGUA**

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A geographical sketch of St. Domingo, Cuba and Nicaragua by Anonymous

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CUBA AND NICARAGUA**

A
GEOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ST. DOMINGO, CUBA,
AND
NICARAGUA,

WITH
REMARKS ON THE PAST AND PRESENT POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN,
AFFECTING THOSE COUNTRIES.

"The winds and seas are Britain's wide domain
And not a sail but by permission spreads."—

BY A TRAVELLER.

BOSTON:
1850.
EASTBURN'S PRESS.

PREFATORY OBSERVATIONS.

THE object of this sketch is to illustrate the moral condition of a region which has hitherto been regarded with but little interest except on the score of trade, and to point out some of the obstacles which have been placed in the way of its advancement.

These lands of the "Cypress and Myrtle," have, by their luxurious productions, ministered largely to the enjoyment of the people of other countries, and almost the only plant of that clime which has been viewed with total indifference by enlightened and polished nations seems to have been *MAN*.

If these few pages should inspire a single operative kindly feeling towards the race alluded to, or tend in any degree to the correction of the abuses which have been so long practised, the writer's aim will be accomplished.



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H A Y T I .

The island of Hayti was discovered by Columbus in 1492. It is situated between 17° and 20° north latitude, and 68° and 75° west longitude. It is 360 miles in length, from east to west, varying in breadth from 60 to 120 miles. Its circumference, measured by an even line, excluding its bays, is 1000 miles. This island, so important for its situation and great natural advantages, lies 45 miles east of Cuba, and 60 miles from Porto Rico, and can be seen from either in clear weather. It is four times as large as Jamaica, and about equal in extent to Ireland. Jamaica lies westward about 40 leagues, and the Bahamas north about two days sail, and southward is the great continent of South America. Columbus gave it the name of Hispaniola, and that of San Domingo, (the Spanish for Sunday) to a city established on the south side in 1494, but in process of time the whole island was called by the latter name. It afterwards re-assumed its original name of Hayti, and is now divided into two distinct territories. The

Haytien Republic possesses about one-third of the island—that part which the Spaniards had ceded to the French, and which subsequently fell into the hands of the black population. The Dominican Republic possesses two-thirds on the eastern side of the island. Its inhabitants are the descendants of the natives Columbus discovered, and of the Spaniards that settled there.

This island is one of the richest in tropical products. The western side belonging to the Haytiens, is remarkable for its fertility; and though the eastern side is by no means equal to the western, yet it contains certain districts which alone are capable of producing more sugar and other valuable products than all the British West Indian Islands together. The country is continually refreshed by breezes and rains, and its salubrity seems to increase yearly. There are three principal chains of mountains, the whole of which are fertile and susceptible of cultivation even to their summits. Their highest elevation is about 6000 feet above the level of the sea. These are covered with forests of mahogany, Brazil-wood, palms, elms, oaks, pines, iron-wood, cedar, ebony. The island has its mines of gold, some of which must even lie on the surface, as much of the dust rolls with the sand of the Yago river, and is often gathered by the peasantry, at certain seasons of the year. There are also mines of silver, copper, iron, and lead. Its plains nourish vast herds of cattle, equal in every respect to those of the continent, and sufficient in num-

ber to supply all the West Indies. The temperature from the tops of the mountains to the sea-side, varies from 50° to 85°. It would be difficult for a person unacquainted with mountain scenery in the tropics, to form an idea of the grandeur and loveliness of nature as exhibited in these wonderful hills. Jamaica and Martinique have scenes of surpassing beauty, but are as inferior to Hayti, as a lake compared to the ocean in extent. In Hayti the soil is fertile in the extreme—there are fields of canes which were planted in the times of the French possession, which have yielded a yearly crop ever since, and are yet in cultivation. The French with great truthfulness, designated this island as the Queen of the Antilles.

Turn we now from the pleasant contemplation of the works of God to a consideration of some of the baleful influences which have plunged these children of nature into a labyrinth from which it is not easy for soul or body to escape, into a condition worse than that of slavery.

Hayti about a half a century ago was in a state of rebellion against France, at the same time that the latter was entangled in the European war. The British were then at war with France, and were one of her most hostile neighbors, as they not only engaged wherever they could meet the French at home, but aimed also at their colonies. Hayti was one of the most prosperous and richest spots of the new world, and at the opening of the war attracted the attention of the British government. They hastened to help

the Blacks, with no other motive than that of taking possession of a French territory, the most beautiful spot of creation, and to effect as much destruction as possible, wherever they could come in contact with French interest. They concealed from the Blacks the real motive of their interference, and induced a belief in their minds that England was their friend and wished to assist them. They took possession of several towns, built forts and began to settle as if at home. The Blacks did not at first observe that this intrusion was preparing a new struggle for them, but soon after were obliged to turn their arms against their early professed friends, and succeeded in driving them out. The policy of the British was hypocritically quiescent, and though driven out, they continued to favor the Blacks, increasing their means of defence and preventing thereby future submission to France.

At this period Napoleon sent an army to Hayti of about 40,000 men, the command of which was trusted to his brother-in-law who had received from him secret instructions. It is not to be supposed that it was with the view only of reconquering St. Domingo, but also to render harmless these troops who were the flower of France, and devoted to the interest of General Moreau his rival. He had orders to take possession of the island and make it the home of the army. Had these officers been experienced or well acquainted with the state of things in the island, had they not intended to renew the slave system, when emancipation had been proclaimed by France itself, had they kept them-