

**A WINTER IN THE WEST INDIES AND  
FLORIDA; CONTAINING GENERAL  
OBSERVATIONS UPON MODES OF  
TRAVELLING, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS,  
CLIMATES AND PRODUCTIONS**

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A winter in the West Indies and florida; containing general observations upon modes of travelling, manners and customs, climates and productions by Anonymous

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A WINTER  
IN THE  
WEST INDIES AND FLORIDA;

CONTAINING

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

UPON MODES OF TRAVELLING, MANNERS AND CUSTOMS,  
CLIMATES AND PRODUCTIONS,

WITH A PARTICULAR DESCRIPTION OF

*ST. CROIX, TRINIDAD DE CUBA, HAVANA,  
KEY WEST, AND ST. AUGUSTINE,*

AS PLACES OF RESORT FOR NORTHERN INVALIDS.

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BY AN INVALID.

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INDEX.

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	PAGE
PREFACE. . . . .	v
CHAPTER I. Of Climate in general. . . . .	13
—— II. Author's Own Case. . . . .	25
—— III. The Voyage. . . . .	29
—— IV. Bassin, or Christianstadt, St. Croix. . . . .	35
—— V. West End, or Frederickstadt. . . . .	49
—— VI. Santa Cruz in general. . . . .	62
—— VII. Voyage to Trinidad de Cuba. . . . .	72
—— VIII. Trinidad de Cuba. . . . .	75
—— IX. Voyage to Detabannó and Havana. . . . .	106
—— X. Havana. . . . .	110
—— XI. Key West. . . . .	115
—— XII. Voyage to St. Augustine. . . . .	137
—— XIII. St. Augustine. . . . .	143
—— XIV. Return Home. . . . .	159
—— XV. General Observations upon the West Indies and Florida. . . . .	163
—— XVI. Preparations for going South. . . . .	190

## PREFACE.

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THE great and constantly increasing number of pulmonary complaints in the United States, is happily beginning to excite the attention which the importance of the subject demands. The bills of mortality abundantly prove, that about one-fourth of the deaths in these States is caused by diseases of the lungs, in one shape or other, and the fairest and the best of the youth of our land are every day cut down around us, in the full flush of youthful hopes and ardent anticipations; discouraged by the almost equally unsuccessful application of patent quack-nos-trums and scientific medical skill, the friends and relatives of these unfortunate victims of premature decline, have generally abandoned all hope of relief from the earliest appearance of this terrible disease; and, in many cases, they have been left to pine away by its slow and sure operation, with the consoling reflection that they were past all hope, and had nothing to

do but wait patiently for death to end their miseries. For a time, it was supposed that much might be hoped from a winter residence in the southern States; and many a poor patient has been sent to Charleston or Savannah, St. Augustine or Pensacola, Mobile or New-Orleans, or some other equally unfit and improper place, to add to his other afflictions, that of dying in a strange land, without the consolation of his friends to stand around him in his last moments, or shed a tear over his untimely grave. So little benefit was found to result from a visit to the southern States, that many came to the conclusion that *no* change of climate could be of any avail, and refused to separate themselves from their friends in their days of desolation and despair: choosing, rather, to meet their unhappy fate at home, than to try so forlorn a hope as that afforded by going south. The enterprise of our people had found out every nook and corner of every State in the Union where *money* could be made, and well ascertained the nature of the trade and commerce of every place; but, upon the nice and important question of the fitness of a climate for invalids, very little knowledge was obtained, partly because the attention of the healthy was never turned to the subject, but more because *no healthy man can be a com-*



*petent judge of such matters*; and invalids were unable to make the proper investigations, or to publish them when made. It is only within the last few years, that the idea has become prevalent, even among physicians, that the southern States of this Union are the most unfit place on earth for invalids, and that the whole winter season there, is not unlike November and April in the north, which every-body knows, or ought to know, are the worst months in the year.

So great is the ignorance upon this subject, that it is believed more than five hundred from the northern and middle States are sent on a useless pilgrimage annually: the same patient scarcely ever going more than once, having learned by experience that it was merely changing from bad to worse. Within a few years past, many eminent physicians have been urging their patients to go to the West Indies, and many have pursued the advice with decided advantage; but the unwillingness of Americans to leave their own country, connected with their ignorance of the West India climate, have deterred thousands from going there who would otherwise have gone, with the certainty of benefit, if not of perfect restoration to health.

The author of this little volume, after having suffered the effects of northern winters for seve-

ral years, and having tried the southern States with no advantage, was induced, by the strong recommendation of his physician, and the increased severity of his disease, in the early part of the winter of 1838-39, to visit the island of St. Croix, which was supposed to be the best of the West Indies for climate, partly, perhaps, for want of sufficient acquaintance with other places. After spending several weeks at St. Croix, and being greatly improved in health, for the purpose of being able to judge for himself between different places of resort, he visited Trinidad de Cuba; passed from thence, through the island of Cuba, to Havana; from thence to Key West, the only tolerable place in the United States; and from thence to St. Augustine; stopping long enough at each place to form an accurate conclusion, and, in the meantime, collecting all the information he could as to other places. The information thus obtained is so useful to himself, that he deems it his duty to publish it for the benefit of the community; and, to insure the attention which the importance of the subject demands, it has been thought better to make a small volume by itself, than to put it in any public journal, which would be merely read, thrown aside, and forgotten. In order to enable the reader to judge for himself,

it has been thought proper to give him an account of the author's own case, and some others that fell under his immediate observation; a detailed description of the situation, climate, and other material circumstances of St. Croix; the same as to Trinidad de Cuba, Havana, Key West, and St. Augustine; with observations upon other places, and the reasons of the healthiness or unhealthiness of each particular place. The invalid, knowing his own symptoms, will then be able to decide at once which is the best place for himself, and act accordingly. By possessing the information herein contained, before leaving home, the author could have saved himself at least three hundred dollars in expenses, besides adding greatly to his comforts, during a single winter. He cannot doubt, therefore, that the work will prove acceptable to the public, particularly to that unfortunate class for whose benefit it is principally intended. They will get here the dispassionate judgment of one who had no interest to lead him to prefer one place to another, and who has been willing to give as well the unfavourable as the favourable circumstances of each particular place.

The following chapters contain a very concise statement of the results of my observation, and