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The Virgin Islands of the United States of America.— Luther K. Zabriskie.

New York and London : G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1918. \$4 or 20s.

The Virgin Islands : Our New Possessions and the British Islands.— Theodore Debooy and John T. Faris. Philadelphia and London : J. B. Lippincott Company. 1918. \$3.

On March 1917 the Danish West Indies became by purchase the property of the United States. Fifty years before, the Government of the United States, led by the experience of the Civil War to feel the need of a naval station in the West Indies, negotiated a similar treaty with Denmark, but the Senate refused to ratify it. And a second treaty for the same purpose, which passed the Senate in 1903, was rejected by the Upper House of the Danish legislature. Spain was the first, Denmark is the second, of the old colonizing nations of Europe to yield her place in the West Indies to the expanding energies of America. But the Danish possessions bore no comparison with those of Spain. They included some fifty or more small islands, of which three only had any importance—St. Thomas for its fine harbour, which made it so long a great distributing centre of trade in the West Indies, and for its strategic position between Europe and Panama ; St. John, as the home of the bay tree, from which bay rum is manufactured ; and Santa Cruz, “the garden of the West Indies,” for its sugar plantations. St. Thomas, which the Danes annexed in 1666, was the oldest of their possessions. Santa Cruz was disputed between the English, Dutch, and Spaniards, and finally fell into French hands, to pass by sale to Denmark in 1733. St. John was annexed by the Danes in 1684, and colonized in 1716. Like other West Indian islands, they have had a very chequered history—subject to the uncertainties of war, climate, and the movement of trade. In war they have suffered less than many of the neighbouring islands, for Denmark was neutral in most of the great eighteenth century wars ; but twice during the Napoleonic wars, 1801–2 and 1807–14, the islands were seized by Great Britain. They have been several times devastated by earthquake or hurricane ; they have had their share of the troubles—rebellion and riot, which slavery brought in its train ; the decline of the West India sugar trade has affected them, though, of economic influences on their prosperity, the most important was steam navigation, which took away from St. Thomas its position as a great distributing centre in the West Indies. Perhaps they were most prosperous in the early part of the nineteenth century before the slaves were emancipated, an event delayed till as late as 1848 in the Danish West Indies. Certainly in 1835 the population was much larger than at the last census, being over 43,000 then as compared with 27,086 in 1911. The annexation of the islands by the United States, with which their commercial relations are already close and extensive, may revive something of this diminished prosperity. Such is the expectation of Mr. Debooy and Mr. Faris, whose joint labour has produced the very readable and admirably illustrated volume before us. They write for the tourist and traveller and the man of business, and their book will be an invaluable companion to visitors to the islands. Mr. Zabriskie's work is more serious. It is solid and full of information on economic and administrative matters, on which the author's experience as American Vice-Consul enables him to speak with knowledge and authority. Its comprehensive treatment and up-to-date statistics make it a valuable handbook to the new possessions of the United States.

E. A. B.