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THE SCENERY OF CUBA, HISPANIOLA (HAITI), AND JAMAICA.*

By Sir HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

THE island of Cuba—44,000 square miles in area—is truly remarkable for the scenic beauty of its landscapes, its tropical vegetation and bird-life, and the historical interest and architectural features of its old Spanish towns and fortresses. Its winter climate comes very near perfection. A painter will wax enthusiastic over Cuban colour—the painted houses of the Spanish towns; the women's dresses; the gorgeous flowering trees and shrubs; the brilliant green sugar-cane with its delicate mauve-grey blossom; the plumage of Cuban trogons, parrots, cuckoos, kestrels, and starlings; the white, columnar stems of the royal palms; and the unrivalled sunsets. The botanist, ornithologist, anthropologist, and butterfly collector will find material for months of fascinating study.

Havana is probably the most picturesque city in America, not even excepting Cartagena, on the north coast of Colombia; and Cartagena, like Havana, Santiago, and other Cuban and Spanish-American towns, is beautiful enough in colour and form to provoke a special school of painters, if landscape painting were not nearly dead under the advancement of photography. The harbour of Havana is entered by a deep, narrow strait, commanded by the frowning forts of the Morro and Cabañas. This strait widens abruptly into a magnificent basin; but the sea-front of Havana and the approach through the natural canal irresistibly recall Venice—an illusion further fostered by the somewhat gondola-like appearance of the "guadaños," the boats with awnings which ply to and fro over the green water. Curiously enough, the most striking public building of Havana, and that which with the dome reminds one of Santa Maria della Salute at Venice, is a quite recent

* Read at the Royal Geographical Society, April 5, 1909. Map, p. 740.
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addition of the Americans—the “Lonja de los Viveres” (Produce Exchange). It is difficult to believe that a few years ago this most splendid building of all Havana did not exist. Nowadays it is the heading-up of the city, placed with an appreciation of scenic effect so distinguished, as, from our conventional point of view, to be more characteristic of France than of the United States. But those who have seen twentieth-century New York, Boston, Washington, and Philadelphia should realize that in splendour and originality of architectural genius North America is now leading the world.

The American occupation also endowed Havana with its noble esplanade or marine drive, which from the end of the Prado and the low promontory of La Punta (opposite the Morro fort) extends for three or four miles along the sea-coast past the pretty western suburbs of Havana. The same agency has furnished Havana with banks, hospitals, and markets. The streets, narrow and broad, have been paved or asphalted so that their surface is invariably clean; the water-supply has been repaired and extended; the mosquito and the flea, with the disappearance of their breeding-grounds, have been eradicated: the result being that Havana is now an absolutely healthy town, and from some points of view an ideal place of residence. The Spanish beauty of the city has been left undisturbed, and it is very marked. Most of the old houses present a plain aspect to the street front (except for the beautiful ironwork of the long window grilles), but the arched entrances of the passages, when the massive outer doors are opened, reveal enchanting *patios* of tropical vegetation, fountains, bright plumaged parrots and gaily caparisoned mules or horses. Many of the streets have massive colonnades along one side, in the shade of which a great variety of shops display their wares. The other side of the medal is the much increased cost of living which has prevailed since the American occupation. The dearth of comfortable living in Havana and most other Cuban towns is the only deterrent which can be quoted—besides the sea voyage—to explain why Cuba should not be the principal winter resort of civilized America.

The railways of Cuba are owned and worked by several American, British, and Canadian companies. They extend eastwards from Havana to Guantánamo, zigzag across the island from north coast to south coast, and penetrate also from Havana into the western part of the island, and towards that Isle of Pines which is practically the private property of a few rich Americans and one of the many earthly paradises of the Antilles.

The dominant note in the scenery of Cuba is certainly struck by the royal palm (*Oreodoxa regia*). This is possibly the most beautiful and stately member of a princely order of plants. It is especially characteristic of Cuba, for although found also (sparingly) in Hispaniola and in Porto Rico, it is not native to the other Antilles or to tropical

CEREUS CACTI, EASTERN CUBA.

AN AVENUE OF ROYAL PALMS, CUBA.

America. It has been so widely introduced into the other West India islands and Brazil that its area of distribution appears at first to be much larger than it really is. But it grows nowhere with such stateliness as in Cuba. The *O. oloracea* or "cabbage palm" of Jamaica is a near relation, but of humbler appearance. The stems of the royal palms are absolutely smooth, rounded like columns, and a uniform grey-white. The fronds as they wither fall off cleanly, leaving no perceptible roughness or scar; the result is that a row of royal palms looks like a colonnade of white marble pillars crowned with a copious but neatly arranged *gerbe* of glossy green fronds. The greenish—and when ripe, creamy white—blossoms (followed by small, shining, reddish fruit) grow out with prim neatness below the sheaf of fronds, just where the white marble column of the stem changes, without transition of tint, into the smooth emerald green midribs of the ascending plumes of the fronds. The royal palm is a fastidiously beautiful thing. We shall yet find the location of the vegetable soul; and we shall then know that *Oreodoxa* is as self-conscious and proud of its appearance as the peacock or the lifeguardsman.

Nearly every residence or even farmstead in Cuba is approached by an avenue of royal palms, and although they do not precisely grow in forests, still the royal palms permeate Cuba with their stately influence, redeeming the landscapes from any meanness, even where industrialism has aimed at substituting the prosperous sameness of sugar-cane, cotton, or tobacco for the variegated colour and outline of forest, bamboo thicket, and prairie. Other noteworthy features in the landscapes of the plains and foothills are the brakes of glaucous green palmetto (*Sabal*) and clumps or actual forests of two other types of fan-palm, belonging to the genera *Coccothrinax* and *Thrinax*. The *Coccothrinax* palms grow to a fair height—40 or 50 feet—with smooth, round, grey stems. *Thrinax* is a much smaller palm with a very slender, perpendicular stem crowned by a great mop-head of grey-green fan-fronds. Both *Coccothrinax* and *Thrinax* are distinguished from *Sabal* (the familiar palmetto of the Southern States) by their smooth stems, whereas the palmetto retains the dead frond stalks as a defensive *chevaux de-frise* from the base of the trunk to the growing fronds. All three are singularly handsome trees with what might be called an "architectural" beauty.

Huge bamboos (besides dwarf species) grow all over Cuba. The smaller bamboos of the genus *Arenaria* (similar to those of the Southern States) are obviously indigenous, as in Haiti. But a good many botanists maintain that the tall bamboos of Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica, Trinidad, and other West Indian islands are of an introduced East Indian species. If so, this imported bamboo has spread everywhere in these lands till it has become an essential—and very beautiful—feature in the scenery.

An indigenous plant which arrests one's attention in Cuba from its striking appearance is the cycad, which grows so commonly by the roadside or at the thresholds of the cottages, no doubt planted by the natives for its handsome appearance.

Above 2000 feet (ordinarily) the Georgian pine makes its appearance, where it has not already been destroyed by reckless wood-cutting under the Spanish *régime*. In the Island of Pines this handsome and valuable conifer grows as low down as 500 feet altitude above sea-level.

Where the land has not been cleared for plantations, or its elevation (above 3000 or 4000 feet) does not induce a temperate climate, the surface of Cuba is still clothed with dense tropical forest, in which the Cuban mahogany and ebony trees and a good many examples of the flora of Central America are met with. These forests mostly linger in east-central and eastern Cuba. They are being somewhat ruthlessly cut down by lumber concessionnaires. The Government of the Cuban Republic is not yet sufficiently awake to the importance of preserving forests in due measure for the climate and the amenities of scenery. There is a feature in the Cuban woodland which at once attracts the attention of the tourist coming from the north, and new to the American tropics, namely, the large number of ærophytic or epiphytic growths on the branches and trunks of big trees. These consist of lizard-like fig trees, which eventually strangle their host; of members of the pineapple family (*Bromeliaceæ*); of cacti, aroids, orchids, and ferns. In Cuba the commonest growth on the trees is a pretty aloe-like *Tillandsia*, with a spike of reddish-yellow buds, disappointing in that they barely open their petals.

This epiphytic growth begins in the forests of the Southern States in the form of the celebrated "Spanish moss." Few people seem to be aware that this extraordinary growth is not a "moss" or a lichen, but belongs to a genus (*Tillandsia*) of the pineapple family! It is one of Nature's best jokes, for on the opposite side of the Atlantic, in Africa, we have a real lichen—*Usnea*, "old man's beard"—which grows as a parasite on trees in the upland forests exactly in the fashion and with precisely the same colour and general appearance as the *Tillandsia usneoides* of the United States, Cuba, and the elevated regions of the Antilles and Central America. But *Tillandsia* betrays itself as a phanerogam and monocotyledon by its small blue flowers like those of the pineapple.

The moister climate of the Antilles makes them less suited to cactus growth than the arid regions of the United States and of Mexico. Still cacti enter considerably, and picturesquely, into the scenery of eastern Cuba, especially on sandy flats, which are the recently raised beds of former estuaries or lakes. Here the tall cacti, especially of the genus *Cereus*, offer a striking parallel in appearance and rôle to the African euphorbias. Like them they rise up out of the barren, sun-smitten

waste, and serve as a shelter and a nucleus for other vegetation, thus in time creating oases of forest.

The rivers of Cuba, though seldom offering much facilities of navigation (except, perhaps, the case of the Rio Cauto of eastern Cuba, which has a navigable course inland from its mouth of about 40 miles for small boats), are remarkable from the point of view of scenery. Their upper courses are a succession of boiling rapids and snowy falls, as they tear down through the splendid forest of the hills and plateaus. The bed of each river (away from the alluvial plains) being usually bare limestone, the colour of the water is a lovely greenish-blue. Sometimes they flow over a long series of abrupt steps in the rocks, exactly like the formal descents of artificial cascades. When they have reached sea-level they meander through swampy forests of South American luxuriance, or create vast swamps which are jungles of reeds, rushes, and "water-hyacinths," and the home of countless herons, tree-ducks, pelicans, darters, rails, and jaçanás. The south coast of Cuba, away from the eastern prolongation, possesses more swamp lands of great extent than the northern part of the island. Zapata swamp, in the south of Cuba, is over 2000 square miles in area. This region is, or was, the breeding-ground of myriads of white herons (egrets); and here, in spite of native and American gunners, urged on a career of abomination by the misplaced taste of forty millions of unthinking American and European women, the beautiful white *Ardea egretta* is sufficiently numerous to be quite a feature in the landscape. In the swamps and river estuaries of Cuba there are two species of crocodile—*C. rhombifer* (peculiar to Cuba) and the widespread *C. americanus (acutus)*. In spite of the loose statements of writers, I believe there is no *alligator* and no *caiman* in any West Indian island.

Cuba, Hispaniola (Haiti), Porto Rico, and Jamaica (besides the Bahamas, Virgin islands, the northern Leeward islands, and Barbados) are entirely without poisonous snakes. In Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica (the southern Bahama islands also) there are tree boas of the genus *Epicrates*, and a genus of the water-loving boas, *Ungalia*; there are no snakes, however, of the genus *Boa*. Cuba shares with Hispaniola and the rest of the West India islands colubrine snakes of the genera *Dromicus* and *Liophis*, and with Central America (but not with the other Antilles) a colubrine of the genus *Urotheca*. It also possesses a colubrine genus absolutely peculiar to itself—*Arrhyton*. Whilst on the subject of snakes in the West Indies, it might be mentioned that Hispaniola has two peculiar genera of colubrine snakes—*Uromacer* and *Hypsirhynchus*—so far not found anywhere else; Jamaica has no peculiar genus and has fewer species of snakes than Hispaniola and Cuba, but more than Porto Rico or the northern Lesser Antilles; and, finally, that in their serpent fauna the southern groups of the Lesser Antilles (Guadaloupe to Trinidad) are more "continental" and South American than is the case with the

Greater Antilles. These last, be it noted, are absolutely unconnected in the affinities of their reptilian fauna with Florida and North America, but offer some relationship to southern Mexico and Central America. These indications as to past land connections or approximations are further borne out by plant, bird, spider, fish, and mammal distribution, showing that the Greater Antilles have had no nearer neighbourhood with the North American continent since the middle of the Secondary epoch (if then); that their least ancient land connection (? early Tertiary) has been with Central and not South America; and, finally, that they to some extent shared with Tropical America a connection with or approximation to West Africa perhaps as late as the beginning of the Tertiary epoch. An interesting relic of such a connection is the rare insectivore of the genus *Solenodon*, found in Cuba and Hispaniola. The nearest living relations of the *Solenodon* are probably the tenrecs of the *Centetes* genus in Madagascar. The *Solenodon* (*S. cubanus*) was discovered in Cuba in 1835 (*S. paradoxus* perhaps earlier in Haiti); its native name in Cuba is *almiquí*. It is now extremely rare, and may be restricted to the wild mountain country of eastern Cuba, although it was still recently met with in the west. There are about twenty genera of bats represented in the indigenous fauna of Cuba, Haiti, and Jamaica, only one of which is of North American affinities, three being peculiar to the Greater Antilles and the remainder Central American. The manati still visits the coasts of Cuba and Hispaniola, though it seems to have vanished from the fauna of Jamaica. The only other indigenous terrestrial mammals in these three islands are rodents of the Octodont type—three species of *Capromys* in Cuba and one in Jamaica, and a single species of *Plagiodon* (*P. ædium*) in Haiti and Jamaica. A *Capromys* is also found on the little Swan island,* between the coasts of Jamaica and British Honduras. The Cuban name for the *Capromys* rodents is *Hutia*. It is not true that there is any aguti in Cuba or the other Great Antillea. There is a nearly extinct aguti lingering in some of the Lesser Antilles south of the dividing line—the Antigua channel—which can be equally well a vestige of former land connection with South America or a creature introduced by the Arawak or Carib seafaring colonists.

In Cuba, as in Hispaniola, the domestic pig has run wild, and developed into a lean, long-legged, miniature wild boar. The forests, moreover, of Cuba and of Haiti are full of deer. These I found to be simply roe-buck, with, in the male, rather fine antlers. I also saw in Cuba (semi-domesticated) North American deer from Florida or Louisiana, or brocket deer from Venezuela. But the roe is the prevailing type, and is commonest in the mountainous districts of the east. The history of this introduction is that the French first of all brought the roe from France to Martinique; then, as they throve there, the roe deer were carried on to Haiti and San Domingo, whence the French (for there have been many

* Named after Captain Swan, the buccaneer.

THE HUT OF AN "INDIO" (A CUBAN OF AMERINDIAN RACE).

IN PORT AU PRINCE, HAITI.

French planters in Cuba under the Spanish *régime*) or Spanish introduced them into Cuba. Venison from the roe is now an important item in Cuban dietary.

Sir Sydney Olivier, the Governor of Jamaica, informs me that peacocks were a long while ago, with guinea-fowl, introduced into Antigua and other of the Lesser Antillean islands, with the result now that peafowl populate the scrub of these islands, and are a source of revenue to the inhabitants. Peacocks are abundant as domestic birds in Haiti. It is surprising they are not kept also in Jamaica and Cuba.

Of course, the right and proper thing to do in the Greater Antilles would be to populate the wastes and woods, not with the birds and beasts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, but with those of Central and South America—to finish the task that Nature heedlessly left unfinished. The magnificent ocellated turkey of British Honduras should be introduced in large numbers into Jamaica, Cuba, and Hispaniola; jaguars should be placed in small game reserves; tapirs be encouraged to roam where they willed; the roe deer should be replaced by the South American red brocket; and a discreet selection of American monkeys and macaws be given a new lease of existence in the Antillean forests.

As it is, Cuba and Jamaica possess the material for some very lovely national parks and bird reserves in the partially land-enclosed, islet-studded lagoons and gulfs along the north-east and south-west coasts of Cuba and the south coast of Jamaica. Here there are already wonderful sea gardens where, as in a huge aquarium, may be studied the life-history of sponges, anemones, crinoids, polyps, and strange crustaceans; where the tourist may gaze fascinated from the clean coral rocks at the marvelously coloured fish of the West Indian sheltered waters. In the air above, frigate birds, phaetons, and gannets are wheeling and poising; on the still waters there are many pelicans and flamingo; indeed, the boldly marked dark-grey, white, and lemon-tinted *Pelicanus fuscus* is very tame, and delights to perch in a spirit of Japanese art on the fishing-stakes or navigation beacons. Birds form a very prominent element still in Cuban, Haitian, and Jamaican landscapes, though, unless strict measures be taken by the respective governments, the trade in feathers and the rush of ignorant, slaughter-loving tourists will soon eradicate this beautiful element in Antillean life. The parrots in all these islands are becoming scarce—the Jamaican macaw is practically extinct—but the little green todies (with crimson breasts) are still as tame as robins, and the humming-birds will continue to buzz round the blossoms until they are finally extinguished by the plumage-hunters. It is supposed that Cuba possesses the smallest humming-bird in the world—*Calypte helenæ* (named after Princess Christian); but it may have a rival in tininess in a Peruvian species of *Acestrura*. The *Calypte helenæ* is an exquisite little creature not quite $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long with a forked crimson gorget. Its nearest relations are in southern California.

No one visiting the forests of eastern Cuba can readily forget his first sight of the trogon peculiar to Cuba—the *Prionotetus temnurus*. It is not difficult to watch it at close quarters in its favourite resorts, sitting on a bough with upturned head, displaying its white shirt-front and gorgeous crimson scarlet stomach, and uttering at intervals a low and singularly musical cry. The Cubans call it tocoloro.

Other prominent birds in the Cuban landscapes are the bold *Polyborus* hawks (*P. cheriway*) stalking about after their prey like the African secretary bird (the *Polyborus* type is not found in Hispaniola or Jamaica, and possibly reached Cuba from Florida); the prettily coloured kestrels (found also in Hispaniola) of vivid orange-chestnut, dove-grey, and black barrings; the very numerous black cuckoos (*Crotophaga*) with parrot beaks; and the Turkey buzzards (*Cathartes aura*). These last are only found in Cuba, the Bahamas, and Jamaica; not in Hispaniola. Though written of disparagingly by so many writers, this scavenger is a very handsome bird with its bright-red head and neck, glossy black and sepia general plumage, and satiny grey-white under-side to the great wings which it wields so majestically. The turkey buzzard is the most abundant bird in Jamaica.

The human inhabitants of Cuba consist of 609,000 Negroes or negroids, about 200,000 pure-blood Spaniards (mostly of quite recent immigration), some 20,000 Americans, British, Germans, Italians, and French, 2000 Chinese, and some 1,200,000 Spanish-speaking Cubans, who obviously contain a very considerable degree of Amerindian-Arawak intermixture. Although the "Indian" aborigines of Cuba became officially extinct in the middle of the sixteenth century, it is obvious (to me) that their extermination was in no way so complete as Spanish and Anglo-Saxon historians have asserted. By adopting under cruel compulsion the Christian religion, they became merged in the Spanish community and henceforth were ranked as Spanish. As half-breeds—almost as pure breeds—they linger to this day, especially in eastern Cuba. It is, indeed, authoritatively asserted that pure-blood Amerindians remained in the mountains of eastern Cuba down to the early part of the nineteenth century. I have seen "Indian" reservations of land which were only finally broken up and thrown open to general settlement (mainly by Indian half-breeds) by the Spanish Government forty years ago.

The dwellings of the Cuban peasantry are very picturesque if slightly tumble-down. An invariable feature in every household where there is a man is the gamecock. The Cubans are passionately fond of cock-fighting, and although the Americans have tried to suppress this (they have completely done away with bull-fights), they have not succeeded. The beautiful game-fowl bred for this sport are certainly a further episode of picturesqueness in Cuban life—as are the magnificent long-horned cattle, the gaily caparisoned mules, and the barb riding-horses.

The great landed proprietors—Spaniards in the past, now mainly

Americans—dwell often in marble palaces near their sugar plantations, which recall the most sumptuous dwellings of Andalusia. What a beautiful thing is the lush growth of the tall sugar-cane—the brightest emerald green, flecked with plumes of mauve-grey blossom!

Not one of the old Spanish towns of Cuba but is a source of inspiration to a painter. Let me cite two examples: Camagüey in the north-centre, and Santiago-de-Cuba in the south-east. Camagüey is nearly four hundred years old as a Spanish city, but it was a place of Indian settlement for a long antecedent period. It is the “all white” town where the sixty thousand inhabitants are for the most part of pure Spanish descent, and the handsomest people in Cuba. No town in Spain is more “Spanish” or more picturesque, with its narrow streets, projecting balconies screened by carved wood or iron grilles, tiled roofs, thick walls, *patios* glowing with sunlit vegetation, its sixteenth and seventeenth century cathedral, churches, chapels, monasteries, and convents. The steeples and doorways of some of these churches (and of a good many Cuban buildings generally) almost suggest the Moorish influence in architecture which prevailed in Southern Spain down to the period of Columbus’s voyage. Several of the ecclesiastical buildings of Camagüey contain magnificent altar-pieces and shrines of hammered silver.

In Santiago, the eastern capital of Cuba, and now one of the most beautiful places in the world, the solidly constructed houses (the Spaniards, among many great qualities, had that of building appropriately and permanently) were painted in tempera almost every attainable tint, combined with white copings, window-frames, doorways, parapets, and skirtings. One house is ultramarine blue (and white), another dull mauve (and white), or pale green, maize-yellow, pink, terra-cotta, sky-blue, greenish-blue, apricot, grey-brown. The effect, combined with the fronds of palm trees and bananas, the dense foliage of figs, ilexes, mimosas, orange trees, and giant laurels, the brilliant flowers of bushes and creepers, the brown-red tiled roofs, the marble seats and monuments, the graceful balconies, the white stone colonnades, the blue waters of the harbour, and the magnificent encircling mountains, was daring, but eminently successful. One might undergo at Santiago de Cuba a colour cure for melancholia. But in pre-American days the streets were utterly neglected and the drains stank (as was also the case in all other Cuban towns). There was either a pavement of rough cobble stones, with a filthy stinking gutter on either side, or there was no pavement at all—merely the dust, mud, and rock of the pristine pathway. The city was almost impassable for carriages; rough carts groaned and rattled over its uneven surfaces.

The Americans, represented by a deputy or provisional governor, changed all that. The steep streets were asphalted, tram-lines were laid along the principal thoroughfares, and neat side walks of stone or brick were constructed, while at the same time a modern system of

drainage was created. The cool grey or white of the asphalt, stone, or encaustic brick is an admirable accompaniment to the riot of colour above and around; the town is odourless, save for the scent of flowers, and its streets are accessible to all types of carriages; while poor people can for five cents travel this way and that, across the town and out into the country in pretty little electric tramcars proportioned and painted to suit the narrow streets and gay colours of this fairy-tale city.

In the proximity of Santiago are the highest mountain ranges of Cuba,* and the scenery on the extreme east of the island, round about Guantánamo, is of exceptional beauty and interest.†

I said good-bye to Cuba under a sunset of crimson and gold, a reminder of the old Spanish colours which eleven years ago were still waving over the island—the red and yellow that the Cubans might well have retained (with a different device) in their national flag instead of the inept red, white, and blue, which two-thirds of the world now adopt, without reason, as national colours.

After a rough passage across the 60 or 70 miles of strait between the two islands, Haiti received me in the blue and silver of placid water girdled with lofty ranges of mountains wreathed or crowned with white clouds. The open arms of Haiti are two peninsulas of alpine heights that enclose a vast gulf of sheltered sea screened from rough winds and vexing currents. Nearly in the middle of the Gulf of Haiti arises, to over 2000 feet, the large island of Gonave, purple with woodland or scrub, green with crops, and slashed here and there with squares of red clay or the gleaming yellow-white of the underlying limestone. This island affords further protection from such winds as are not sufficiently broken by the sierras of Haiti (7000 to nearly 9000 feet high) or by the lofty ranges of eastern Cuba. So that the Gulf of Haiti, and most of all its easternmost half, would make the safest and amplest naval station in the world. A million years ago (or less) the great southern peninsula of Haiti and the south-westernmost portion of San Domingo were a long mountainous island, cut off from the rest of Haiti by a narrow strait connecting the Gulf of Gonave with the Bay of Neiba. At the present day the fiord is dry land for more than half its surface, and enclosed water (salt and fresh water lakes) for the remainder.

Port-au-Prince, the capital of Haiti, is placed near the south-westernmost edge of this isthmian plain, the *cul-de-sac* of the old French colonists (just where the last spurs of the southernmost mountains descend into the inland sea). In daylight, viewed from steamer deck in

* The Pico Turquino of the Sierra Maestra range is about 8400 feet in altitude. It has once been ascended by a British consul. As it and the other high peaks of the Sierra Maestra rise up from the actual seashore, their appearance is very grand.

† Before quitting the subject of Cuba, I should like to acknowledge here the assistance and hospitality I received from Mr. Theodore Brooks, of Guantánamo.

THE SHORES OF LAKE AYULY, HAITI,

IN THE OPEN MARKET, HAITI.

the outer harbour, it does not present a poor appearance. This is largely due to the magnificent new cathedral, which is placed just where such a building should be situated to give a focus to the town. Without this cathedral (of French design and Belgian construction), Port-au-Prince, two or three years ago, must have presented a somewhat paltry appearance for a great capital city. The other notable buildings are seldom remarkable for stateliness of design or prominence of position, though there are some handsome churches. On the left-hand side of the town is a low promontory, or jetty, composed chiefly of mangrove mud-banks and stranded, rusting, paddle-wheel steamers. This spit of land culminates seaward in a low lighthouse surrounded by a battlemented fort. Far to the right are more low mangrove islets, but behind the actual shore-line the land rises rapidly into green highlands, studded with fantastic palaces, and the highlands enlarge into mountains of almost Alpine character. On the sky ridges of these may be seen from the shipping in a harbour of intense tropical heat the silhouettes of the tall pine trees, which indicate a land of cool, invigorating temperature within half a day's climb.

I first saw Port-au-Prince in the late evening, and the effect, after the brilliant variegated lighting of Cuban and American towns, was disheartening. We might have been approaching some sullen, pirate capital of Haiti two hundred and fifty years ago, desirous of offering no attraction or assistance to the inquiring stranger. A few dull yellow lights blinked from the dense foliage of the suburb. Here and there a glowing red lamp seemed to indicate danger. Although Port-au-Prince, with its suburbs, is a city of 104,000 inhabitants, and is the capital of an independent state of nearly 12,000 square miles in area, it possesses no system of public illumination.

When one lands here in the morning (steamers may not communicate with the shore after sunset) the impression is less unfavourable, though docks and wharves are absolutely non-existent, and landing from or boarding the steamer means a long and weary row. But it is obvious that Port-au-Prince—thanks to German, American, and Haitian enterprise—has made considerable strides of late towards the amenities of life. It is true that in dry weather the streets near the seaside are occasionally intolerable with their clouds of malodorous dust, that there is no continuous side walk along any of the streets, and that, with the exception of about half a mile of recently macadamized roadway, the paving of the streets is monstrous in its grotesque imperfections. But the houses are by no means uncomely, nor is the town nearly so dirty as it was described by various writers down to the year 1900. Either they exaggerated, or their criticisms stirred up the civic authorities of Port-au-Prince to effect considerable improvements in the cleanliness of the streets.

A welcome surprise which greets the visitor to Port-au-Prince who
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arrives from any other part of America, not excepting Jamaica and the other British West India islands, is the far greater cheapness of living. The President's palace, situated with its surrounding garden on one corner of the extensive Champ de Mars, is a turreted, verandahed erection, apparently roofed and faced with corrugated iron, or with some cold grey glistening metal. But the general appearance is not unpleasing, though a little "baroque," especially when in times of festivity it is extravagantly decorated with the blue and red Haitian colours. But the so-called garden which surrounds it is a dreary trampled waste perpetually paraded by soldiers. Not far away is the range of Government offices, all in one building. In front of this, painted a gaudy red and blue, is one of those extraordinary rostrums found in every town in Haiti, large or small, whether dating or not from the time of the French colonization I do not know. From these open-air pulpits addresses are made to the populace, and laws are proclaimed. The Champ de Mars has, no doubt, been much improved of late, and may even in time be made an open space of agreeable appearance. At present it consists of irregular patches of turf, crossed in many directions by roads authorized and unauthorized, some of which are macadamized.

The houses in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince are for the most part built by Germans, and are really tasteful in their architecture, cool, comfortable, and surrounded by beautiful gardens. The public cemetery, on the other hand, is a staggering mixture of beauty (vegetation and the old tombs), grotesqueness (the modern miniature houses and goblin huts erected to house the deceased), and horrors.

Port-au-Prince possesses market buildings which are worthy of Paris in size and design, but the interior is nauseously filthy, so much so that the mass of the country people prefer to establish themselves in open-air market-places away from the great buildings erected for their use. In these open-air markets there is endless material for the painter or photographer. The sellers are mainly women, who have journeyed into Port-au-Prince from the country, riding sideways on donkeys, horses, or mules, situated, it may be, on the top of enormous panniers of provisions. Nearly every woman wears a large and picturesque straw hat, fastened by a leather band under the chin that ends in little twiddles of leather so absurdly resembling the pointed chin beard of the negro man that the market-women look like men dressed in women's clothes. These clothes are always ample and picturesque, usually blue cotton, or else gay prints with many flounces. Some of the women in the market-place are selling fish which an artist would purchase for their colours alone. They look like the *poissons d'Avril* in Eastertide shop-windows—such combinations of blue and orange, scarlet and mauve, yellow and black, pink and green. Other vendors are surrounded by a troop of tethered turkeys, fine, plump fowls, or Muscovy ducks. Goats, sheep,

cattle, and pigs wander where they please. Pigeons and an occasional green parrot lend variety to the immense crowd of humans, beasts, and birds.

One curious point about Port-au-Prince and the whole of Haiti and Santo Domingo is that the turkey buzzard (*Cathartes*) is entirely absent, a strange contrast to all the other West India islands and the Southern United States. Haiti has no other scavengers but pigs and dogs.

The water-supply of Port-au-Prince is grumbled at by the residents, but though it may not be as perfect as tradition relates it was under the French Government, it seemed to me to be very much better than in many other West Indian towns I have visited. Some of the fountains are very picturesque, and obviously date from the French period of over a hundred years ago. All over this large town there was an abundant supply of good, fresh water for the poor as well as the rich, and the drinking-water usually served one in hotels and private houses seemed to me pure and good.

Port-au-Prince is always hot, often dusty, and a good deal afflicted by mosquitoes; it has many other faults, no doubt, and yet it is not half a bad place. Ice is abundant and cheap. There are at least two good newspapers, one of which gives a very ample supply of European cable-grams. It is a noisy place; the dogs are perfectly sickening in their midnight howlings, alarums, and excursions; there is too much military music, and on festivals people let off guns and fire crackers. And yet it is one of those places that by a strange inconsistency one is sorry to leave and glad to return to. The educated Haitians, however they may mismanage their public affairs, are most agreeable people to meet in society—witty, amusing, well-read, except in the natural history and botany of their own country. There is a very pleasant club where the European and American residents meet the natives of Port-au-Prince, and a delightful friendship seems to exist amongst all the foreign residents.

I have referred to the German suburban residences of Port-au-Prince, especially those which lie on the south-east of the main town. But perhaps the most beautiful district within easy reach of the capital is round about Diquiny and Bizoton. The railway runs along the shore road from Port-au-Prince to the vicinity of these outlying bourgs, and there is as well a fairly good carriage-road, with picturesque old bridges over the innumerable streamlets that come tearing down from the mountains. Here, between Port-au-Prince and Léogane, many of the beautiful country seats are little more than modernized reconstructions of the estates of the French planters. The district is musical with a never-absent ripple of falling water, and the extravagant tropical vegetation is reduced to orderly pictures by masonry runnels and conduits of the old French irrigation systems. Probably nowhere else can one see such a complete riot of brilliant colour. The clouds, attracted by the high

mountains, are always a feature in the landscape—dazzling white cumulus at noonday, becoming flamingo-red in reflection of the sunset. The high mountains are purple-grey. The sea of the Gulf of Haiti is the most brilliant blue-green. The distant town of Port-au-Prince is pink and white and grey. Around the many-coloured houses are groves of crimson-scarlet *Poinsettia* or smalt-blue *Petræa*, together with roses, oleanders, allamandas, hibiscus, and a hundred and one flowering shrubs and creepers of the tropics. As to the foliage trees, there are royal palms and fan palms, trees unknown to me with huge glossy leaves like magnolias, the primly perfect mahogany trees, the Haitian oak, mimosas, flamboyants. In this region is indeed an earthly paradise, with the delectable mountains behind, up which, if you choose, every morning you may ride to the pine-ridges and the air of Europe.

Every square mile of Haiti (I should think) is beautiful, or at least is interesting. The greater part consists of masses of incredibly tortured mountains. No doubt in the far distant past it has been the scene of volcanic energy. Yet there is not much actual area covered with lava or igneous rock. For the most part the formations seem to be of limestone, a limestone which in places is such a pure cold white as to look like snow. In the very high mountains—nearly 9000 feet—the hasty observer might well be excused for believing that he saw vestiges of snow in the crevices or deep clefts of stream valleys. In reality it is due to the rush of water from the summits, which tears away the surface soil and reveals the limestone. In the dry season many a river valley is blazing white with its tumbled masses of chalky stones and pebbles.

The plains of Haiti occupy but a small portion of its area, and they are usually fertile, or could be rendered so by irrigation. Where they are uncultivated they are overgrown with a low scrub of very thorny mimosa and logwood, but even this is rendered tolerable by the highly scented yellow blossoms and by the clumps of weird-looking cacti. Here, in this low-lying country, are specimens of arboreal cactus worthy of Mexico. A form of prickly pear (*Opuntia*) grows to a height of about 30 feet in a solid stem, and pushes out in all directions great pudgy hands of flattened leaf-stalk, studded (as though with giant rubies) by red flower-buds or blossoms, and having a strange resemblance to some Hindu god or goddess with innumerable hands. A species of *Cereus* (bristling with white thorns) grows in erect columns. Another and thornless *Cereus* is so grotesque in the pointing of its fat gouty fingers that it, together with another writhing, snake-like arboreal cactus, might be the fit surroundings of an enchanter's cave in a pantomime. Perhaps, however, the most beautiful item in the vegetation of the plains and mountains of Haiti (ranging from sea-level to 7000 feet) is the agave with its basal cluster of immense, bright green lily leaves and its flower stalk 20 to 30 feet in height tufted with clusters of golden-yellow blossoms. In and out of the corollas of these golden flowers dart woodpeckers of crimson, black,

EPIDPHYTES AND AEROPHYTES GROWING ON A JAMAICA TREE.

THE VALLEY OF A HAITIAN RIVER, SHOWING THE WHITE LIMESTONE FORMATION IN THE RIVER-BED.

and gold, starlings of black and silvery yellow, metallic humming-birds, innumerable small quits of variegated tints. Hovering over these and occasionally making a successful dart are small kestrels of bright chestnut-orange and dove-grey, with bars and splotches of deep black. Haiti, in fact, is full of interesting bird-life, and should be a great field for the ornithologist, as its ornithology is only partially known and studied. Columbus noted the abundance of bird-life when he discovered this great island, and referred especially to the songs of the nightingales. These are really mocking birds, apparently the same as the American species.

The scenery of Lake Azuey is perfectly beautiful. Its salt waters are of an intense blue-green, and the surrounding mountains, clothed with forests of *lignum vitæ*, of glaucous green fan-palms, and on the extreme heights of Georgian pines, rise to altitudes of 6000 to nearly 9000 feet. At its eastern, Dominican end is a colony of the scarlet American flamingo.

And what may not be said in detail about the Haitian mountains? The highest (Mont de la Selle) is a few feet under 9000, but the ridges rise so abruptly from sea-level or from the tremendous gorges which separate one massif from another that you get the full value of their height. They have been carved by water, sun, and wind into the most exaggerated relief, and many of their crevices are illuminated by the fissures of limestone. Here and there is a curious intrusive hummock of bright red clay, only partially revealed because of the exuberant vegetation. This again assumes so many tints owing to the season or the sunlight that the Haitian hillsides frequently resemble a turkey carpet with their scrub of scarlet fuchsia, rose-pink honeysuckle, intensely green bracken and maidenhair ferns, and the mauve-and-white of certain *Compositæ*, the purple of many labiates, the yellow-and-silver of everlasting flowers. The large white blossoms of the local blackberry (which has a most delicious fruit the size of a mulberry) should not be omitted in describing this beautiful mountain scenery.

In the dells of the mountains, about 4000 feet, are handsome jungles of tree ferns. Everywhere grows the glossy green agave, with its lofty column of gold flower-clusters. The aromatic scent of the pine woods is indescribably good to the jaded European exhausted with the tropics.

And nearly everywhere, except on the highest peaks and ridges, may be seen the picturesque and happy peasantry—happy if dwelling far enough away from the oppression of the town governments. Wherever there is a fairly level patch or plateau there is a collection of thatched huts surrounded by an emerald grove of bananas, and by fields of maize, sorghum, cabbages, and sugar-cane. The country swarms with domestic birds and beasts—horses, donkeys, pigs, dogs, cattle, goats and sheep, turkeys, fowls, and guinea-fowls. The peasants usually wear clothes of blue-dyed cotton and huge straw hats. The dress of the men is a blue

gaberdine and trousers; that of the women is a loose robe not unlike the Egyptian costume.

Altogether the country of Haiti is beautiful to look at, and might, with a better government, be made an earthly paradise to live in, not merely for the sake of the foreigner or the tourist, but for the 2,700,000 negroes and negroids who first conquered and then purchased it from the power of France.

The scenery of such parts of the Republic of Santo Domingo (Republica Dominicana) as I was enabled to have a glimpse of, naturally resembled that of Haiti. I am informed by Americans that the landscapes of the auriferous Cibao range of mountains (highest peaks averaging 10,000 feet) were surpassingly grand, and the pine forests more abundant than in Haiti. The highest point in the whole of the Antilles seems to occur in Santo Domingo—the Loma de la Tina. This apparently has never been ascended, and its guessed-at altitude (10,300 feet) has not been as yet confirmed by the American surveys. In the more northern part of the Cibao range is the striking peak of Yaqui, about 9700 feet.

The Spanish civilization of the Dominican republic (which has an area of nearly 18,000 square miles) gives a picturesqueness to town or village life which is quite different to the colonial French or purely Negro aspect of inhabited Haiti. The game-cock is everywhere much in evidence. There are some negroes in Dominica, but the mass of the population is of Spanish or mixed Spanish-Amerindian origin—a handsome, well-set-up, grave, virile-looking people of olive or pale yellow complexion. The Americans, who are giving a general direction and advisory control to Dominican affairs, are effecting wonders of happy and wise development in the exploration, communications, industries, and commerce of Santo Domingo. Their customs officials and surveyors are of the best American pioneer type.

It is really necessary for geographers that we should agree on a joint name for the great island which contains the two radically distinct states of Haiti and Santo Domingo. For this purpose I would propose to revive Columbus's first name of Hispaniola. Santo Domingo was only the name given to a town (the existing capital of the Dominican Republic). It is true that the French of the eighteenth century adopted this (Domingue) for their colony; but after the withdrawal of the French the independent negroes revived the original Amerindian name for the western part of the island—Haiti. The Spanish settlers, however, who did not remain long connected with the Negro government of Haiti, retained, or rather reinforced, the appellation of Domingo (Dominica), which Columbus had originally applied to a landing-place first discovered on a Sunday.

Nearly midway between the south-westernmost extremity of Haiti and Jamaica is the tiny islet of Navassa. This rises precipitously from

the sea to an altitude of about 200 feet. It has one small cove or landing-place to the south. The upper surface is fairly covered with dense tropical forest. Some years ago an American concessionnaire obtained from the Haitian Government a concession for the exploitation of the guano on Navassa. Since then (though the guano seems hardly worth working) the island—say the Haitians—has been practically taken possession of by the United States Government. This is denied at Washington, but on visiting Navassa I found it in the possession of some quiet resolute American men, who were building themselves substantial and agreeable-looking houses on this little islet of forest-covered rock. Navassa might become of some importance after the opening of the Panama canal, as a place of call for United States men-of-war.

Jamaica, as seen from the roadstead of Kingston, offers sumptuous scenery. The spit of Port Royal is a flat tongue of land accentuated at its extremity by tallish buildings—earthquake shattered—and casuarina trees and coco-palms; but it partially encloses like a huge natural breakwater a vast lagoon—one of the best natural harbours in the world. Beyond this and the narrow green plain, hazy with the smoke of Kingston, rise the majestic Blue mountains, tier after tier, till their summits are often lost in the clouds. They are very different to the clear-cut, brightly and diversely coloured mountains of Cuba, or the bare blue ridges carved and scarped by water and crested with scattered pine forest in Haiti. The mountains of Jamaica are so densely clothed with diversified forest that their outlines are softened, while the prevailing tint in a distant view is indigo or purple. Jamaica at first sight looks like an exaggerated edition of Madeira.

Although several brilliant pens have dealt with Jamaica, due justice has never been done to the amazing beauty of this island, as is the case with Cuba and Hispaniola. The fact is that the Greater Antilles take a very high rank in the category of lands remarkable for grandeur or loveliness of scenery. Moreover, each of the three islands of Cuba, Hispaniola, and Jamaica is so individualistic, so unlike the other two in the character and colour of the landscapes, the buildings, and costumes of the people that they are difficult of comparison: the one may be praised without any slur on either of its neighbours.

Indeed, considering the close geographical proximity of Jamaica to Cuba and Haiti, it is singularly unlike either of these two countries. Possibly it bears a greater general resemblance to the opposite mainland of Spanish Honduras. But although its mountains rise in parts to over 7000 feet, it does not possess a single indigenous pine tree; whereas the mountains of Hispaniola and Cuba and the territory of British Honduras are celebrated for their forests of Georgian pine, growing sometimes as low down as 2000 feet only above sea-level. Jamaica is in the same

latitude as southern Haiti, but it is considerably more tropical in its vegetation, perhaps on account of its greater rainfall. The forests, in magnificent lavishness of growth, resemble much more those of equatorial South America.

The island of Jamaica has an area of 4207 square miles (as compared to the 44,000 square miles of Cuba and the 29,820 of Hispaniola). Its total population, however, now stands at nearly 850,000. Of this about 15,000 are white (mainly British); about 1000 are Chinese, 15,000 are East Indians (of the Tamil group, chiefly), some 9000 consist of Cuban and Haitian half-castes, of Syrians and unclassified types—hybrids between Negro, European, and Asiatic; finally, over 800,000 are negroes and negroids (mulattoes and octoroons). The people of pure Negro stock probably number 670,000. With a total negroid population of 800,000 in 1909, Jamaica takes a place of considerable prominence in American politics, aided, of course, in this by its remarkable geographical position—nearest of the Antilles to the Panama canal, and therefore the future pivot of marine transport in that American Mediterranean, the Mexican Caribbean sea.

The importance of Jamaica, however, is only just beginning. Although it is little more than half the size of Wales, it might easily support a population of five millions, and still not be overcrowded. Two-thirds of its surface—excepting the precipitous limestone mountains and a few tracts of marshy land in the south—are suited for cultivation. Although it is likely to be in the future largely a black man's country, because of the preponderance of negroids at the present day, and of their rate of increase, physical vigour, and material prosperity, there is really no climatic reason why Jamaica should not support a population of a hundred thousand whites. A very large proportion of its surface away from the sea-coast is elevated above sea-level from 2000 to 7000 feet, and contains stretches of healthy park-like country where persons of European descent can live in a climate resembling that of an average English June, a climate singularly beneficial to tuberculous complaints.

The north coast of Jamaica bears a resemblance in general outline and scenery to the French and Italian Riviera. Strip this Mediterranean district of its palaces or palatial hotels, take the snow from off its mountain-tops, but endow it with such tropical vegetation as Kingsley revelled in (first by the divination of the story-teller, and latterly with the pen of a geographer), and you have that wonderful "Cornice" drive all along the north coast of Jamaica, from Manchioneal and Port Antonio to Montego bay and Lucea. Here there are about 300 miles of road following closely the sea-coast, with forested, verdure-clad cliffs or mountains (broken occasionally by river-valleys) on one side, and on the other, palm groves and limestone rocks or coral reefs, over which the blue sea breaks in fountains of snowy foam when the

IN THE MOUNTAINS OF HAITI.

northern breeze blows stiffly. Amid these reefs there are marvellous sea-gardens, wherein from the road parapet immediately above you can descry sponges, anemones, and polyps, sea-lilies, crabs, and parrot-coloured fish, through a film of blue-green water in times of flat calm. It is indeed the New Riviera, and the strongest attraction of Jamaica to every one who has a mind to see and be interested in other things than alternate golf and bridge.

One element of the picturesqueness of Jamaican scenery is the limestone formation which is characteristic of so much of the coast and the lower mountain ranges. Rain-water has carved the limestone into remarkable amphitheatres, known locally as "cockpits" (Kingston harbour is really a submerged cockpit), or has washed out large and small caverns—many a one of which along the north coast must have been seen by Shakespeare with the intuition of genius when he described the island home of Prospero. Or there are natural bridges, strange tunnels through which a stream disappears underground to emerge on the other side of a mountain as a full-blown river. The entrances to these caverns, worthy of Prospero or Merlin, are hung with fantastic curtains of trailing aroids and cacti, draperies of maidenhair ferns, and matted tangles of pink begonias. On the white limestone rocks lizards of blended ultramarine, grass-green, and dull red bask in the sun. Humming-birds with emerald gorgets and long black plumes to their tails flutter in the sunlight round the tubular blossoms—orange, blue, mauve, rose-pink, waxy-white, purple, lavender, and sulphur-yellow—of a hundred different kinds of creepers, lianas, or rock-dwelling plants. Some caverns might be arranged for Sycorax rather than Prospero and Ariel. Their portals are wreathed with snaky cacti or are defended by stiff *Bromeliaceæ*, whose sharp-pointed leaves are armed with the teeth of a saw. The limestone bottoms of the tranquil streams and still pools where the overflowing waters of Jamaica rest after precipitous descents from mountain peak to valley, give a lovely tone of blue-green to the clear water which is a frequent interlude in the landscapes to the limestone crags, cliffs, boulders, and caverns.

The splendidly made, limestone-surfaced, parapeted roads of the Jamaica coast-line lead the delighted traveller past one romantic harbour after another—harbours partly enclosed by fantastic Capri-like islands, where picturesque sailing craft (the hulls often painted bright red) lie in still waters of purple and green, alongside piers of bamboo and palm, at which they unload or receive brightly coloured cargoes of fruit or foreign produce. The harbours mostly bear Spanish names, and are frequently reminders of some episode in the history of Jamaica during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Here was a pirate stronghold; there was the last stand of the Spaniards. From that ruined fort, half overgrown by palmetto palms, may have been witnessed the decisive defeat of a Spanish or French attack, or the capture of a

contraband slave ship. The ruined dwelling-houses and sugar-mills tell of a less distant past when, under the changing industrial condition of Jamaica—the transition from slavery to eventual free labour and the competition of beet-sugar—many an old free-living family of British Jamaicans came to financial grief. The old home was abandoned, and the sugar plantation gave way in course of time to coffee, oranges, cacao, or bananas. The ruins may not be more than sixty to a hundred years old, but they have sometimes the dignity of a mouldering castle or monastery. The climate of Jamaica has coloured the walls of stone or brick with brilliant lichens and thick green moss-ferns in every cranny and perpendicular fringes of the *Rhipsalis* cactus, like mistletoe in its growth. Lofty trees grow from the desecrated alcoves or the bow-windowed front of a drawing-room. The unheeded leat of water which once played some important part in the industry of the sugar-mill now drips away to form a magnificent pool of water-hyacinths. The crumbling masonry tank that was once a refreshing plunge-bath has become the dry playground of brilliant-coloured lizards.

Yet in close proximity to these ruins are spick-and-span verandahed houses of painted wood, mounted high above the ground on pillars or blocks of concrete, approached by flights of steps and terraces of stone or brick, bright with flowering shrubs or roses. There are ruined churches—why ruined no one can tell me, since they were abandoned long before the recent earthquake—and within sight of them new chapels of wood and corrugated iron. Corrugated iron, indeed, enters somewhat too lavishly into the modern architecture of Jamaica, from the negro cottage to the Government building. A much more picturesque form of roofing is the American shingle of pine wood. The Spanish tile seems to be unused. As a rule, however, the Jamaican towns and villages are pleasing to the eye. There is no uniformity in the style of houses, and they are usually gay with colour or dazzling white with limewash; and, of course, every dwelling is surrounded by magnificent foliage and brilliant flowers—*Hibiscus*, *Thunbergia*, *Bignonia*, *Petræa*, and *Bougainvillea*; by the red, yellow-green, and purple leaves of the crotons; and by orange trees loaded with golden fruit, grape-fruit with their large lemon-yellow globes, the crimson-fruited akees, and the purple-and-green star apples.

January is the opening of spring in Jamaica, and the flower shows of fields and gardens then transcend any reasonable description. Particularly remarkable is the honey-scented, sulphur-yellow blossom of the logwood trees, and an almost Japanese effect is produced along the roadsides and in garden fences by the *Gliricidia* with its sprays of lavender-pink bean-blossoms, laburnum-like in growth. Verandahs and outhouses are covered by the immense white or smalt-blue flowers of the *Thunbergias*, by the scarlet-orange *Bignonia* from Brazil, white *Jasmines*, yellow *Allamandas*, and the too common magenta *Bougainvillea*.

A TYPICAL JAMAICA LANDSCAPE.

Away from the handiwork of man, the forested mountains constitute beautiful natural botanical gardens. The copses of tree ferns on the lower and middle slopes of the Blue mountain range are alone worth the twelve days' journey from England. Then there are the handsome upright fronds of the wild bananas (*Heliconia*) with blue-green stems and scarlet and yellow spathes; the foliage of the eight species of palms indigenous to Jamaica; a naturalized myrtle with large creamy-white flowers; the extraordinary cacti, trailing, arborescent, and stumpy; the handsome papyrus-like rush in the coast swamps, and the king of the reeds (*Gynerium*) with an immense plume of fawn-coloured blossom; the lofty bamboos with their yellow-green foliage and bottle-green stems; the banyan fig trees with innumerable depending roots and trunks of immense girth; the silk-cotton trees with their glabrous mauve-white trunks and horizontal branches towering 100 to 200 feet into the air; and several other giants of the forest, which might be nicknamed "poor relations' trees," since their main trunks and huge horizontal branches support an extraordinary family of divers parasitical plants—aroids, bromeliaceæ, cacti, and ferns. A feature of the Jamaica hedgerows at this season (January) which is grateful to the eye of the English or American tourist is the large white wild rose (*Rosa lævigata*), with its centre of golden stamens.

Jamaica was well termed "the land of wood and water," if such was really the meaning of the old Indian name (which was probably pronounced "Shaimaka," and was rendered by the sixteenth-century Spaniards as "Xaymaca"—later "Jamaica"). Curiously enough the same name was applied by the Indians to the eastern extremity of Cuba, also a land of high mountains, rich woods, and numerous streams. This district of Cuba is still known officially as "Jamaica," pronounced in the modern Spanish fashion, and is still peopled by a race mainly Indian in blood. (There is frequently a similarity in sound, and probably in meaning, between the few remaining river and place names of Arawak-Indian origin in Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica.)

The leading features of the last-named island at the present day, as at the time when the Spaniards first saw it, are dense forests and innumerable streams. The cascades of Jamaica are too numerous to catalogue, and many of them are of quite unique beauty, owing to the limestone rocks and the fantastic vegetation.

The climate of the island is not uniformly moist. The north-east portion has a rainfall of over 100 inches annually; yet within a few hours' journey of this land of dripping forests, where landslides are unfortunately common and sometimes of disastrous occurrence, is the relatively dry district of Kingston where the rainfall seldom exceeds 35 inches in the twelve months. There are several parts of Jamaica which require irrigation to supplement their rain-supply in order to maintain all the year round the cultivation of fruit and crops. Irrigation

canals may therefore be seen here and there along the south coast of Jamaica, and one of these is the resort of tourists in punts, because the makers of this canal have had the good sense to render it remarkably picturesque by the planting or retention of trees on either side. Indeed, this Rio Cobre canal might be a natural river flowing through a dense tropical forest of unusual beauty. Here and there it widens into bays covered with masses of reeds and water-hyacinths.

If, in addition to a care for the forests and the floral beauty of Jamaica, the Colonial Government instituted a strict protection of bird-life over the whole island, this country would have an additional attraction for residents and tourists interested in natural history, so far as they admire birds in a landscape. As it is, though a constant destruction of bird-life is going on at the hands of the European and negro gunners, partly to supply the plumage market, the wild birds are still a feature in Jamaican scenery. I have already alluded to the humming-bird with the long tail-plumes and emerald gorget which is happily so frequent an episode wherever there are flowering shrubs or creepers. Another exquisite form is the green tody, the "robin" of the Jamaica negroes. This is a tiny bird distantly related to the kingfisher group, with long flat yellow beak and a plumage of emerald green, shading here and there into green-blue, and in addition a splendid patch of scarlet feathers on the throat and breast. Then there are the black *Crotophaga*, cuckoos with parrot-like beaks, the tyrant birds with crests of black and lemon-yellow and shouting cries, the copper-coloured, rosy-tinted mountain pigeons, the tiny little ground-doves, the green pink-cheeked parrots, the large buzzards (almost the size of eagles), and, above all, the turkey buzzards (*Cathartes*), whom the Jamaicans call "John Crows."

But whilst Jamaica is, at the present moment, extraordinarily attractive to the hardier type of tourist, to the painter and the naturalist there is just the beginning of a danger that its local inhabitants and its local government do not appreciate the importance of scenery amongst its real assets. There will come soon, it may be, troops of winter visitors, from October to April, or all-the-year-round sojourners, who will not be satisfied with the frolic dances in the hotels at hot and moist Port Antonio, or the golf and polo at Constant Spring. To these people the natural ferneries, the stretches of primeval forest, the unspoiled waterfalls, the cays and marshes off the south coast, with their myriads of fishing birds, will be the main attraction and the cause of retention. The island has been magnificently endowed with a road system, the like of which possibly does not exist anywhere in the new hemisphere; but the people and the Government think too little of the importance of natural beauty, and too much of the immediate gain to be derived from agriculture. It would, of course, be ridiculous to plead that an island, even of exceptional beauty, of 4200 square miles should be given up entirely to scenic display. The chief consideration of the

IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS OF JAMAICA: A TREE FERN.

Jamaican Government and people must be agriculture and the commerce that springs from it; but while there are perhaps 3000 square miles of the island which may be wholly assigned to the cultivation of bananas, oranges, coffee, cacao, and tea, the grazing of horses and cattle, yet there should be sufficient left over for the maintenance of forest and the preservation of wild scenery, to the delight of the tourist and satisfaction of cultivated minds among the native-born. It is heedlessness more than malice at present which leads to the profitless destruction of beauty spots.

For instance, there is Fern Gully, some 5 miles of hill road on the route from Ocho Rios, on the north coast, to Moneague, one of the interior towns. Fern Gully is a Devonshire lane transported to the tropics and exaggerated five or six times in its fern-producing capacity. It is, or was, a small world-wonder, justly advertised as one of the attractions of Jamaica. Four years ago, judging by photographs, it was perfect and unspoiled. On either side the mountains rise precipitately, and the banks below the edge of the great forests down to the surface of the road were clothed with twenty different species of ferns growing in lace-like flounces of exquisitely varied pattern. Yet, when I drove through Fern Gully the other day I saw this: a band of men and women workers with hoes, not only cleaning the road surface and making it exasperatingly new-looking, but carefully scraping away with their hoes all that part of the fern tapestry which they could reach on either side of the cliff. "What are you doing that for?" I asked. "To make de road clean, sah," was the answer. Then wherever the banks were not too precipitous some barbarian had come and hoed up the fern jungle to replace it by bananas, coconut-palms, and that utterly wearisome product of the Pacific—the breadfruit tree. Not one of these three was indigenous to Jamaica, and their forcible introduction into this 5-mile-long bower of ferns was a needless outrage which at most brought in a few shillings return to the perpetrators. There is still time to save Fern Gully and to make it as beautiful as it has ever been. To do this the Government of Jamaica should expropriate the landholders for 200 or 300 yards on either side of Fern Gully (the land is mostly virgin forest), and henceforth see that the fern growth continues unchecked so long as the road remains passable for vehicles. And this procedure will bring hundreds of pounds annually into this part of Jamaica, in expenditure on hotels and carriages, and on the poor negro folk who supply the hotels and tourists with provisions.

In the same way protection should be extended to all of the more remarkable amongst the waterfalls. Something might also be done in the way of building rest-houses and extending carriage roads in the Blue mountain and other wilder districts of Jamaica, whither the more adventurous tourists resort for the sake of the magnificent scenery. The most stringent laws should be enacted and put in force forbidding,

under any pretext, the killing of birds or of iguana lizards. All this action means no great expenditure of money, and would result in Jamaica really becoming a great winter resort—a typical Riviera, as well as, with its hill stations, a summer residence for the overheated people of Equatorial America.

A mild type of malarial fever is endemic in the low-lying parts of Jamaica, and, so far as science is at present informed, the sole agency of its transmission is an anopheline mosquito. Yellow fever has not visited the island for years, partly owing to the American cleansing of Cuba; but should it again reach Kingston or Port Antonio, there is the *Stegomyia* mosquito abundant in those towns, and ready for the purpose of spreading an epidemic. These facts have now been publicly stated in America by a visiting commission from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine. With far less trouble and expense than the Americans took in Cuba or Panama (because Jamaica is only a tenth of the size) the Jamaican authorities, colonial and parochial, might get rid of the dangerous mosquitoes from the vicinity of human settlements, and so relieve their country entirely of the risk of yellow fever, and eradicate the malaria which still makes portions of the coast-lands unhealthy for the native-born and for the passing tourist who departs from the beaten track.

Before the paper, the PRESIDENT: I have often noticed that when a chairman announces that no words of his are necessary in order to introduce a lecturer to his audience, it is generally a preamble to an exceptionally long oration. To-night, however, this is literally true. In the case of Sir Harry Johnston, who has lectured to us so often, I will defy all precedent and simply ask him at once to be kind enough to address you.

After the paper, the American Ambassador, Mr. WHITELAW REID: Certainly anything like a speech was farthest from my thoughts when I accepted your very gracious hospitality. But he would be a churlish listener indeed who did not respond to your invitation by taking the opportunity at least of expressing the gratification I am sure we have all felt at the admirable and charming lecture by Sir Harry Johnston, to which we have just listened, and our sense of gratitude for the privilege. He has made us know much more intimately and accurately than we knew before many of the peculiarities of what is, I think, one of the most important and interesting archipelagoes in the world, if not the most important.

I have also a congratulation to express. I remember being in this hall once before as the guest of the club and of the Society, coming for the purpose of presenting on behalf of the New York Geographical Society a Gold Medal to a great British explorer, who at that time had gone nearer than any of his predecessors to the South Pole. I congratulate you to-night, sir, that the hero of that evening, Captain Scott, has been found to have trained a successor who has bettered his achievements. Some time you may yourself have the pleasure and honour of bestowing another medal here on this successor—the man who has gone nearest the South Pole.

There is only one other thing in my mind, and that is an expression of grateful appreciation to the lecturer this evening for the kind words he has uttered about the action of my country and countrymen in a portion of the Greater Antilles.

WEST INDIES

THE GREATER ANTILLES

to illustrate a paper by

SIR HARRY JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.

Natural Scale 1 : 5,000,000 or 1 Inch = 78.91 Statute Miles.

50 0 50 100 200 Miles

Heights in feet
Railways ———

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