

# A CARIBBEAN DERELICT

BY W. P. LIVINGSTONE

THE protection of the Panama Canal when it connects the Atlantic and Pacific oceans has been met to a certain extent by the decision of the United States to construct fortifications at Colon and Panama, but the possible sources of danger in the situation extend farther than the immediate vicinity of the works. It will be found necessary not only to provide for local defense of the Canal, but to acquire a larger measure of control over the waters on both sides of the Isthmus, and particularly of the Caribbean Sea, from which an attack could most easily be delivered.

It is true that the position of the United States in the West Indies is now less disadvantageous than it was before the Spanish-American War. There is no longer an unbroken front of foreign outposts extending from Florida to South America. Of the islands lying in the direct route to Central America one, Puerto Rico, has passed into her possession; another, Cuba, is under her protectorate and has supplied her with naval bases of the greatest strategic value. But between these two is situated another, which, although more than any other the key to the Caribbean, is practically derelict from a social and political point of view. The larger half is occupied by the republic of Santo Domingo, with a small Spanish-speaking population; the western portion by the black republic of Haiti, in which the language is French. The island is one of the most beautiful and fertile in the world; the land rises from sea level to peaks seven to twelve thousand feet high and embraces many varieties of climate. On the plains one finds the usual tropical conditions, whilst on the hills the writer has ridden over undulating ground which might have been mistaken for Scottish pasture-ground, and has been unable to sleep at night on account of the cold. Apart from its physical attractions it possesses

natural sites for naval harbors and coaling-stations unequaled in the West Indies. In the east Santo Domingo has Samaná Bay, a well-sheltered indentation thirty miles long, bordered by luxuriant cacao and tobacco lands; and in the west Haiti has, opposite the American acquisition of Guantanamo, the Môle St. Nicolas, a harbor which fully justifies the title once applied to it of the Gibraltar of the New World.

Santo Domingo has considerable relations with the outside world and is not averse to developing them. American influence is predominant, and when it became necessary to satisfy foreign financial claims United States officers were placed in charge of the customs. But Haiti takes up a different position. Racial fear and hostility have caused the natives to cut themselves off from the rest of mankind: they have few dealings with other nations and they resolutely decline to allow any encroachment on their isolation. They are careful not to give occasion to any Power to interfere in their internal affairs, and they keep clear of foreign loans and other entanglements which might menace their autonomy. "We do nothing to bring the white man here," said a President to the writer, "because we know that once he was here our independence would be gone."

This attitude has hitherto been regarded with the tolerance of indifference by the Powers who have tacitly agreed to give the negro a chance of development untrammelled by the exigencies of the higher civilization. Whether sufferance of the present state of things will continue after the inauguration of the Panama Canal is more than doubtful. The bulk of the world's shipping will pass within sight of the island, and it is impossible to conceive that it will be able to remain, as it has done for the past hundred years, self-contained, unprogressive, helpless, in the midst of a great stream of commercial traffic. The spirit of modern life does not allow stagnant conditions to exist within its sphere of activity, and circumstances may at any moment combine to bring the republics into notice and call for a reconsideration of their position.

In any settlement of their status in the future the United States must naturally have the greatest say. Haiti especially is a point of supreme strategic importance in relation to the Isthmian waterway, and it cannot be permitted to pass into hands that might utilize it to lower the prestige

and damage the interests of America in this region. So long, however, as the existing conditions continue it will always be a cause of anxiety and an increasing source of peril to the Washington Government. Its position has, moreover, a close connection with the ascendancy of the United States in South America. Europe, which has for centuries been busy exploiting the East, is awakening to a realization of the enormous potentialities of Latin-America, and nothing is more obvious than that the whole of this vast area will yet be the theater of great events. Americans entertain the comfortable assurance that the Monroe Doctrine hedges it round with an inviolate boundary within which the United States alone acts as guardian and dictator; but the unforeseen has a habit of disturbing what appear to be settled relations and values, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that some first-class Power, bitten with the desire for colonial expansion, may, on some plausible pretext, seize a territorial advantage from which neither the suasion of the Hague Tribunal nor fear of the arbitrament of war would serve to dislodge her. Political and dynastic changes on the continent of Europe may easily have far-reaching consequences, and should any such Power not already established in the New World obtain a foothold in the West Indies it would not only materially weaken the strength of the American position, but provide a jumping-off point for further acquisition in South America. Against any such contingency, however fanciful it may at first seem, it is the duty of American statesmen to provide.

The question is how it can be accomplished. The annexation of Haiti pure and simple would, no doubt, prove the most direct and efficacious plan, and it is probable that as good a plea could be made out for this step as was put forward to justify intervention in the case of Cuba. It has been amply demonstrated that, left to themselves, neither the Haitians nor the Dominicans evince any capability of evolving a higher ideal of national life than that of autocracy and revolution. It is clear that they need to come into bracing contact with more advanced peoples before they can make headway in the art of self-government and the development of social virtues. So far as Santo Domingo is concerned there would be little difficulty in carrying out such a policy. Local sentiment is, on the whole, favorable to any régime that will insure peace in the country and

the opportunity for quiet and continuous progress. An effort in this direction was, in fact, made in 1869, when, with the authority of the populace, a proposal for annexation was made to the United States. A commission was sent down to investigate the situation, and a treaty to carry the scheme into effect was prepared and strongly supported by General Grant, who was then President. It was, however, opposed by the leading statesmen of the day, and failed to obtain the requisite two-thirds vote of the Senate. In his message to Congress, General Grant said he had been thoroughly convinced that the best interests of the country demanded its ratification. His chief fear was that a free port would be established in the island by some other nation and that Samaná would become a great town capable of supporting millions in luxury. It is noteworthy that while the commissioners were on the spot they were desirous of extending their observations to Haiti, but were on some diplomatic pretext prevented from entering and exploring that republic. It is the African element in the island that will resent and resist any plan involving the loss of the constitutional freedom which they secured at so great a cost and the retention of which, however much they misuse it, they still regard as a matter of life and death.

Americans, on the whole, are not very anxious to extend their activities as a colonial Power. They have now had some experience of the difficulties of such a position, and there is a not unnatural reluctance among the responsible classes to bring a further batch of the colored race into a commonwealth already dominated and overshadowed by the negro problem. The most satisfactory solution of the question will probably be found to lie in some plan short of actual annexation. Something more than sentiment suggests a policy that will give the Haitians a further lease of self-government. However discouraging their history has been up to the present, the republic nevertheless constitutes what is, perhaps, the most interesting experiment in racial evolution which the world has seen, and a further chance should be given it of showing what the race might be able to attain to under better conditions than those which have hitherto governed it. The aim should be to place the country under the tutelage of a nation which, while refraining from exploiting it, would bring to bear upon the natives the outside influence that seems to be necessary to lead

them into a higher national existence. Such a relationship the United States could establish by creating a protectorate over the republic and applying to it some such wholesome check as that contained in the Platt Amendment or in some other special way guaranteeing the stability of government and securing the efficient and honest administration of the public services. In order to maintain its authority, and at the same time to protect its wider interests in the Caribbean region, it would occupy the Môle St. Nicolas and Samaná Bay.

The United States may be reluctant to take a formal step of this character, but it will sooner or later be forced to act as a matter of necessity. General Grant was wise before his time; and the situation to-day cannot be better summed up than it was by him forty years ago:

“The acquisition is desirable from its geographical position. It commands the entrance to the Caribbean Sea and the Isthmus transit of commerce: it possesses the richest soil, best and most capacious harbor, most salubrious climate, and the most valuable products of forest, mine, and soil of any of the West-Indian islands. The acquisition of Santo Domingo is an adherence to the Monroe Doctrine: it is a measure of national protection: it is asserting our just claims to a controlling influence over the great commercial traffic soon to flow from east to west by way of the Isthmus of Darien. So convinced am I of the advantage to flow from the acquisition, and of the great disadvantage—I might almost say calamity—to flow from non-acquisition, that I believe the subject has only to be investigated to be approved.”

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# OUR GREAT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

BY HERBERT L. SATTERLEE

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It has always been a question as to whether or not it would be a good thing to have a national university in this country. We have the other two kinds of universities—that is, those supported by the States and those established upon religious or charitable foundations. The latter are all private corporations although exerting an ever-increasing influence in public affairs. Columbia University, the largest in the United States, was started with the money furnished by a lottery; Chicago, the next largest, by the generosity of a single individual; Michigan, the third in size, by the State in which it is situated. Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania, and Cornell follow in the order named. The aggregate number of students in these six universities in 1910 was 34,318, and was a little in excess of that figure in 1911.

It has generally been considered that these universities, as well as the many others, furnished ample educational opportunities and served the needs of the country. It is as generally conceded, however, that no matter how much professional education might be represented by the diploma of any one of them, not a single university gives exactly the training that is most needed by the young men of a republic. Certainly none of them was organized for such a purpose. Most of them were molded by the traditions of the old world, more or less modified to suit the circumstances of their environment.

If it should be argued that no foreign country has a true national university, the answer is that no other country in the world needs one as much as we do. With such a variety of racial characteristics, with so many different religions, and with such divers climatic and physical conditions, a spirit of nationality must be the breath of life to our great federation of States. With no dynastic nucleus—with the