

CUBA AS IT IS.

Its People, Industries and Climate—Its Immense Forests

Although Cuba is only ninety miles from our coast and has been the subject of more discussion among our people during the last three years than any other country, it is remarkable how much ignorance concerning Cuba there is in the United States, says the Atlanta Journal. In the first place the island is much larger than is generally supposed. It is of irregular crescent shape, is 720 miles long and has an average width of eighty miles, and an area of 43,319 square miles, without including its adjacent islands, which add over 2,000 square miles more. Although mountainous in the interior, much of the coast line is low and flat and difficult of approach on account of the numerous reefs and small islands. Notwithstanding this feature of the coast, it is said that no other island in the world has as many excellent harbors in proportion to its size. Of these Havana, Matanzas, Bahia Honda, Mariel, Nuevitas, Nipe and Cardenas, on the north side, and Santiago de Cuba, Trinidad, Guantanamo and Cienfuegos, on the south side, are the principal and best known.

Cuba is divided into six provinces, Havana being the most thickly populated, and Puerto Principe the least. The total population of the island before the present insurrection was more than 1,600,000, but it is believed that fully 400,000 people have since died from disease and starvation. A large part of the island is in a high state of cultivation, but there are no less than 20,000,000 acres of almost impenetrable forest, fully 13,000,000 of which have never been disturbed by man. But the soil which has been cultivated is marvellously rich and productive. To what extent this is so, is shown by the fact that, notwithstanding the discouragement to industrial enterprises through the misrule of Spain, the exports in 1893 were valued at over \$3,000,000 Spanish dollars.

The idea that Cuba is entirely unhealthy is a great mistake. The fact is that the greater part of the island, under normal conditions, is a very healthy region, and the sickly district could be made healthy by proper drainage.

The climate is not as disagreeable as most people think. The highest temperature is rarely over 82 degrees, and the average the year round is about 77 degrees. The chief agricultural products are sugar, coffee and tobacco, of which the United States takes the greater part. In 1893, for example, there were 815,894 tons of sugar produced, of which 718,204 tons were exported, the United States taking 680,642 tons. Of 227,000 bales of tobacco exported two-thirds came to this country, together with more than half the 147,865,000 cigars made. But while the exports footed up to a total of \$3,000,000 Spanish dollars, and the imports 56,000,000, the taxation on the people reached nearly 25,000,000 Spanish dollars.

Of this sum, which is more than one-sixth the combined value of the imports and exports, less than one-half came from customs and one-fourth of the whole goes directly to Spain. Another popular misconception concerning Cuba is that its native population is composed almost entirely of negroes. The fact is that of the 1,600,000 people at the last census more than 1,000,000 were whites and less than 500,000 negroes. There were 50,000 Chinese in the island. Cuba is not only one of the most fertile regions of the world, but is also exceedingly rich in minerals. The iron ores are unsurpassed, it has an abundance of coal, an enormous quantity of hard woods and rich deposits of gold. The island has been so little developed that possibilities can not be estimated. We shall probably see a wonderful agricultural and industrial advance in Cuba in the next ten years.

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L. C. Caldwell is still railroad commissioner, and chairman of the commission so far as he is advised. Up to Monday evening he had had no information that the governor wanted to dispose of him and it is presumed that his excellency intends to allow him to hold on.—Statesville Landmark.

W. B. Glenn, who has been doing daily local work on the Winston Journal, has gone to New York to enter the service of the Jersey Central railroad as an assistant in the auditor's office.

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