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*By JOHN T. FARIS*

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**VIEW OF CHARLOTTE-AMALIA FROM LUCHETTI'S HILL, ST. THOMAS**

# THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OUR NEW POSSESSIONS AND THE BRITISH ISLANDS

BY  
**THEODOOR DE BOOY**

AND  
**JOHN T. FARIS**

AUTHOR OF "OLD ROADS OUT OF PHILADELPHIA," "REAL STORIES FROM OUR HISTORY," "MAKERS OF OUR HISTORY," ETC.

*WITH 97 ILLUSTRATIONS AND 6 MAPS  
ESPECIALLY PREPARED FOR THIS VOLUME*



**PHILADELPHIA & LONDON  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY  
1918**

SA 3279.25

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PUBLISHED MAY, 1918

089 \* 274

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY  
AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS  
PHILADELPHIA, U. S. A.

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## PREFACE

**T**HE authors of this volume have tried to put into concise form the facts concerning the story, the present conditions and the possibilities of the Virgin Islands of the United States for the tourist and the business man as well as for those who must be content, for the time being, at least, to make their journeys to the West Indies in imagination. At the same time, the attempt has been made to weave into the fascinating story something of the romance that cannot be separated from the thought of the islands in the mind of one who has had the pleasing experience of spending in these newest possessions of the United States a winter that was the culmination of a number of seasons on other islands of the dreamy Caribbean.

The absorbing history of the Virgin Islands is told in sufficient detail to enable the reader to understand by what a devious road they came at length into the possession of the country to which they logically belong. Without this historical setting it would be impossible to tell also of the

## PREFACE

rise and decline of the commerce of the islands and of the reasons for the conviction that there is a great commercial future before them.

The book would be incomplete without a chapter on the islands of the Virgin group which are under the flag of Great Britain. Then a chapter of definite suggestions to those who are planning a trip to St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix is a needed supplement to the portions of the book which tell in detail of the attractions of the islands and of their great value as a resort for visitors from the United States, while a chapter of condensed agricultural, shipping and banking information, quoted from the government documents, completes the volume.

A careful study has been made of such literature as has appeared on the islands. These publications are described in the Bibliography. Facts gained from these sources supplemented the careful observations made by Mr. de Booy, who spent the winter of 1916-1917 on the islands while compelling them to yield the secrets of a vanished race which for centuries have been buried deep in the earth. The archeological work, of which glimpses are given in the volume, was conducted for the Museum of the American Indian, Heye

## PREFACE

Foundation, in which may be seen many specimens secured from the kitchen-middens of the Virgin Islands.

Kitchen-middens are responsible for the preparation of this volume. Having become interested some years ago in the waste heaps built up at pre-historic back doors which the archeologist calls kitchen-middens, I welcomed the opportunity to talk of these absorbing relics of the past presented when I made the acquaintance of Mr. de Booy in the West Indies, where he has spent a number of winters in scientific exploration. His fascinating stories of experiences in the islands of the Caribbean led me to urge him to write this volume. He consented only on the condition that the book should be prepared jointly.

The acknowledgments of the authors are due to the writers and publishers of the books and papers named in the Bibliography, as well as to the "Geographical Review," the "Scientific American Supplement" and "Forward," for permission to use illustrations which appeared first in these periodicals, as well as for portions of the material which accompanied the illustrations.

The courtesy of E. M. Newman in granting the use, for the volume, of photographs taken by

## **PREFACE**

himself is acknowledged. Mr. Newman, at the time of the transfer of the islands from Denmark to the United States, was in Charlotte-Amalia, gathering material for one of his famous travelogues.

William T. Demarest also has supplied a number of photographs which he took in October, 1917. The authors thank him for his help.

With the exception of photographs otherwise credited, all illustrations are from originals made in the islands by Mr. de Booy.

Especial thanks are due to the American Geographical Society of New York for the interest shown in the authors' undertaking. The splendid library of this institution was freely placed at their disposal and the maps used in the volume were made and compiled under its careful supervision. And grateful homage is paid to the kindly inhabitants of the former Danish West Indies, who know so well how to make a visitor in their midst feel at home, and to the Danish officials who ruled the islands when the Dannebrog still waved over them.

**JOHN T. FARIS**

**PHILADELPHIA, January, 1918**

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## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Porto Rico, and a new nation, the Republic of Cuba, was created. By the ceding of its American colonial possessions, Spain was eliminated as a European nation holding colonies in the American hemisphere.

On March 31, 1917, the United States took formal possession of the Danish West Indies, by far the larger portion of the Virgin Islands. The history of the sale and the transfer of these islands is somewhat involved.

During the Civil War in the United States the lack of a naval station in the West Indies was a serious hindrance to those who sought to prevent the blockade-running of the Southern States. Consequently, on the conclusion of the war, American diplomats sought to secure a stronghold in the Caribbean. The Danish West Indies were chosen as a likely spot, partly because it was felt that Denmark—owing to the reverses which this small nation had undergone, and the losses which she had suffered in her war with Prussia—might be induced to welcome the sale with open arms. Mr. Seward, who was then Secretary of State of the United States, secured a preliminary survey of the islands in 1866. After a personal visit he

## FROM DENMARK TO UNITED STATES

seemed more determined than ever to obtain St. Thomas and St. John for the United States, and he was prepared to pay for these islands \$5,000,000. St. Croix was regarded as a separate venture, and was offered for a like amount, on condition that the government of France, which might object to the sale owing to the conditions of a treaty made in 1733, should allow the transfer to take place.

At last, in October 1867, a treaty was concluded for the purchase of St. Thomas and St. John for \$7,500,000, subject to the consent of both the Danish Landsting (Senate) and the Senate of the United States. A popular vote was taken on the islands to see if the inhabitants were desirous of transferring their allegiance to a new flag. When the returns were counted the inhabitants, by the practically unanimous vote of 1244 to 22, showed their approval of the proposed transfer. The Danish Parliament then consented to the treaty, and nothing was required to complete the sale but a ratification by the United States Senate.

In fact, the proposed sale seemed so certain that on November 27, 1867, the following royal proclamation appeared in the St. Thomas "Tid-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

ende," the paper which published the official government notices:

WE, CHRISTIAN THE NINTH,

By the Grace of God, King of Denmark, the Vandals and the Goths, Duke of Sleswig, Holstein, Stornarn, Ditmarsh, Lauenborg and Oldenburg. Send to Our beloved and faithful Subjects in the Islands of St. Thomas and St. John Our Royal Greeting.

We have resolved to cede Our Islands of St. Thomas and St. John to the United States of America, and We have to that end, with the reservation of the constitutional consent of Our Rigsdag, concluded a convention with the President of the United States. We have, by embodying in that convention explicit and precise provisions, done Our utmost to secure to You protection in Your liberty, Your religion, Your property and private rights, and You shall be free to remain where you now reside, or to remain, retaining the property which You possess in the said Islands or disposing thereof and removing the proceeds wherever You please, without Your being subjected on this account to any contribution, charge, or tax whatever.

Those who shall prefer to remain in the Islands, may either retain the title and the rights of their natural allegiance or acquire those of Citizens of the United States, but they shall make their choice within two

## FROM DENMARK TO UNITED STATES

years from the date of the exchange of ratifications of said convention, and those who shall remain on the Islands after the expiration of that term without having declared their intention to retain their natural allegiance, shall be considered to have chosen to become citizens of the United States.

As We, however, will not exercise any constraint over Our faithful subjects, We will give You the opportunity of freely and extensively expressing your wishes in regard to this cession, and We have to that effect given the necessary instructions to Our Commissioners Extraordinary.

With sincere sorrow do we look forward to the severing of those ties which for many years have united You to Us, and never forgetting those many demonstrations of loyalty and affection We have received from You, We trust that nothing has been neglected on Our side to secure the future welfare of Our beloved and faithful Subjects, and that a mighty impulse, both moral and material, will be given to the happy development of the Islands, under the new Sovereignty.

Commending you to God!

Given at Our Palace of Amalienborg, the 25th  
October 1867.

Under Our Royal Hand and Seal.

CHRISTIAN R.

L. S.

Royal Proclamation to the Inhabitants of  
St. Thomas and St. John.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

But the treaty was deliberately pigeon-holed in the Senate, owing to internal dissent for which Senator Charles Sumner was principally responsible, probably at least in part, because of his personal enmity towards President Johnson. Denmark granted an extension of time for the ratification of the sale, but the matter was not again taken up, despite the efforts of Secretary Seward and of his successor, Secretary Fish. Finally, on April 14, 1870, the proposed treaty lapsed automatically.

The Danish king made a dignified proclamation announcing that the sale of the islands had fallen through:

WE, CHRISTIAN THE NINTH,

By the grace of God, King of Denmark, the Vandals and the Goths, Duke of Sleswig, Holstein, Stornarn, Ditmarsh, Lauenborg and Oldenborg, send to Our beloved and faithful subjects in the Islands of St. Thomas and St. John, Our Royal Greeting.

You are aware of the motives that actuated Us at the time to give ear to the repeated and urgent requests of the North American Government for the cession of St. Thomas and St. John to the United States. We expected that We, in that manner, should have

## FROM DENMARK TO UNITED STATES

been able to lighten Our realm of the heavy burdens incurred by the then recently terminated war, and We hoped that the annexation to the United States would have afforded the islands advantages so important that they could have contributed to soothe the pain which a separation necessarily must cause in the Colonies, no less than in the Mother Country. You, for your part, and the Danish Diet, on the part of the Kingdom, have concurred in these views, and We all met in the mutual readiness to accommodate ourselves to what appeared to Us to be recommended by the circumstances.

Unexpected obstacles have arisen to the realization of this idea, and released Us from Our pledged word. The American Senate has not shown itself willing to maintain the treaty made, although the initiative for it proceeded from the United States themselves. Ready as We were to subdue the feelings of Our heart, when We thought that duty bade Us so to do, yet We cannot otherwise than feel a satisfaction that circumstances have relieved Us from making a sacrifice which, notwithstanding the advantages held out, would always have been painful to Us. We are convinced that You share these sentiments and that it is with a lightened heart You are relieved from the consent, which only at Our request you gave to a separation of the islands from the Danish crown.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

In, therefore, making known to you that the Convention made on the 24th of October, 1867, for the cession of the Islands of St. Thomas and St. John to the United States of America, has become void, We entertain the firm belief that Our Government, supported by your own active endeavors will succeed in promoting the interest of the islands and by degrees efface all remembrances of the misfortunes which, of late years, have so sadly befallen the islands. To this end We pray Almighty God to give Us strength and wisdom.

Commending You to God!

Done at Our Palace at Amalienborg, the 7th May,  
1870.

CHRISTIAN R.  
L. S.

A writer in the "Review of Reviews," referring to the disappointing failure of 1867, said:

"If we had purchased the islands at that time, our influence in the West Indies would have grown in such a way that it is reasonable to believe that we could subsequently have purchased Cuba from Spain, and thus averted two or three wars, and much misery."

Not until after the Spanish-American war was the purchase of these islands again seriously con-

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sidered. Once more the United States had felt the need of a naval station in the Caribbean. Consequently, another treaty was negotiated, in January, 1902. Owing to the efforts of President Roosevelt and Secretary of State John Hay, this treaty was promptly ratified by the United States Senate. The Folkething (Lower House) of Denmark readily gave its consent to the proposed sale of the islands for \$5,000,000, but the Upper House of the Danish Parliament failed to vote in favor of confirmation. It has generally been thought that German influence was responsible for the failure to sanction this treaty. Possibly the German government itself hoped, at some time or other, to obtain a foothold in the West Indies.

While there were in 1911 and 1912 attempts to renew interest in the purchase, nothing came of these. Not until the latter part of 1916 was another determined effort made to induce the Danes to cede the islands. For the three principal islands and their outlying cays \$25,000,000 was offered. A popular vote of the Danish people was taken in December, to see if it was their wish to give up Denmark's only tropical colony. As the cost of governing these islands had become

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far greater than the revenues derived from them, and as the Danes were forced to admit that the inhabitants of the Dutch West Indies were themselves greatly in favor of the transfer, 283,000 voted for the ratification of the treaty while 157,000 were opposed to the sale. This favorable vote was hailed with great joy in St. Thomas and St. Croix.

The islands finally came into the possession of the United States on January 17, 1917, when Secretary of State Lansing and Minister Brun of Denmark signed the ratification of the treaty of cession.

In this ratification it was stipulated that the islands would be taken over within ninety days. The final act was staged on March 31, 1917, when the Dannebrog (the official name of the Danish flag) was replaced by the Stars and Stripes. It was the original intention that this change of flags should take place with great ceremony, but the exigencies of the international situation, and the fact that the break of the United States with Germany had just taken place, made a popular demonstration inadvisable, and the plans made by the Assistant Secretary of the Navy to assist



Photograph by William T. Denmarck

UNITED STATES SAILORS LANDING AT CHARLOTTE-AMALLIA  
Fort Christian in the Background



Photograph by William T. Demarest

DOCK FOR THE LANDING OF INTER-ISLAND SLOOPS, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA

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in the celebration with part of the United States Atlantic Squadron were cancelled. But, in spite of the comparative lack of ceremony, the lowering of the Dannebrog and the hoisting in its stead of the Stars and Stripes was an impressive event, an event which every thinking American should regard with pride. Once again the adherents of the Monroe Doctrine rejoiced in the acquisition of additional territory, needed to promote the peace of the world, and one more European nationality ceased to be represented in the complex political scheme of the Antilles.

While the transfer of the islands was not viewed with universal joy by their inhabitants, it can be said safely that fully ninety per cent. of the natives were only too glad to be adopted by the American government. They were not dissatisfied by the treatment that had been accorded them under Danish rule, for the government by the Danish officials had been benevolent and paternal; but Denmark was far away, and—especially in the last three years when regular communication with Europe was hard to maintain—a long time was required to consult the home government on matters of importance, and to bring about neces-

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sary improvements in local affairs. They felt that under the rule of the United States any public business could be attended to speedily. Furthermore, practically all the commerce of St. Thomas was with the United States, and the imports from the mother country were but a negligible item. The St. Thomians were more used to American customs and manners than they were to those of Denmark, owing to the frequent visits of American ships to the shores of the island. In St. Croix, also, it was felt that adoption by the United States would give a new impetus to the sugar industry, that there would be a new development of all her latent resources, and that there would be an outlet to Porto Rico for her surplus population.

It was of course a sad thing for the Danish government to view the lowering of the Dannebrog which, with but two short intervals in the nineteenth century, had proudly waved for two and one-half centuries over the little group of islands. Yet it was the wish of Denmark not to stand in the way of the prosperity of its colonial dependents. While there will undoubtedly be a few who will regard with disfavor the innovations that will be introduced by the United States, the majority

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will be grateful that the uncertainty which began in 1866 and lasted until 1917, is now ended for all time.

It was left to the present inhabitants of the islands to decide whether or not they wished to become citizens of the United States. Those who, within one year of the date of transfer, should signify their desire to do so, would remain subjects of the Danish King. All others would automatically become citizens of the United States, having all the rights and privileges of this status.

According to the National Geographic Society of Washington, the total area of the three principal islands acquired by the United States is 132.47 square miles. With the cays and rocks that form part of the group, the area might possibly be as much as 150 square miles. The population has been variously stated as being from 30,000 to 33,000, of whom about ten per cent. are white. A study of earlier statistics shows that the population has decreased greatly during the century. In 1828 there were 46,000 inhabitants, but by 1841 this total had dropped to 41,000.

Because of their situation, the islands are the logical distributing center for goods destined for

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the Lesser Antilles and they have long been a shipping point of some importance. In the days before the European war, a number of Inter-Colonial steamers called at the ports of St. Thomas and St. Croix and connected the towns of these islands not only with the Leeward Islands but also with Porto Rico, Santo Domingo, Hayti, Cuba and Jamaica.

That this value of the islands as a shipping center was well realized when their purchase was considered, is shown by the report of Secretary of State Lansing, transmitted to Congress on January 22, 1917. In this report he said:

"The commercial value of the islands cannot be doubted. Lying in close proximity to many of the passages into the Caribbean Sea, the use of St. Thomas harbor as a stopping station for merchant ships plying between the United States and South America, and for vessels in other trades, is of great importance."

Though the United States took over the islands at a cost of about three hundred dollars per acre, there is no doubt that, from all points of view their value is incalculable. It is more than probable that the revenues derived from them will

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suffice to pay the cost of their government, and none of these revenues are to be expended upon matters not directly related to the local government. The act providing for the temporary government specifically states that debts and taxes collected on the Virgin Islands of the United States shall not be placed in the treasury of the United States, but shall be used and expended for the government and benefit of the islands.

The government of the islands will not be expensive. The form has already been fixed. In the language of "an act to provide temporary government for the West Indian Islands acquired by the United States from Denmark," "all military, civil and judicial powers . . . shall be vested in a governor and in such person or persons as the President may appoint and shall be exercised in such manner as the President shall direct until Congress shall provide for the government of said islands." The governor, who may be an officer of the army or navy, is appointed by the President, subject to senatorial confirmation. The first governor appointed was an officer of the navy, Rear Admiral James H. Oliver.

Election laws and local laws are to remain in

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effect and are to be administered by the local tribunals. Judicial tribunals have their jurisdiction extended to cases in which the United States or a citizen is a party.

Under the new customs regulations, no duty is charged on articles coming into the United States from the islands, providing they are native products or do not contain more than twenty per cent. of foreign materials. All other articles pay the same duty as imports from foreign countries. Sugar pays an export duty of eight dollars per ton, regardless of its ultimate destination.

The elimination of the Danish nation as a power in the Antilles left the flags of but three European nations in the Caribbean: those of Great Britain, of France and of the Netherlands. It is not inconceivable that Great Britain, at some future time, may be induced to cede to the United States some of her islands in the Caribbean. The Bahamas, for instance, are to-day in very much the same position as were the Danish islands during the twenty years before the transfer. They depend upon the United States for the majority of their imports and for a market for their exports. The tourist resort of Nassau, on the Island of New



**COWELL'S BATTERY AND ENTRANCE OF ST. THOMAS HARBOR**



**CHRISTIAN'S FORT AND THE HARBOR FROM GOVERNMENT HILL  
CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



**CHRISTIAN'S FORT FROM THE HARBOR, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS**



**DANISH CRUISER "VALKYRIEN" IN ST. THOMAS HARBOR**

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Providence, is visited almost exclusively by Americans and would lose its only claim to importance if the revenue from this source were cut off. This condition is well appreciated by the Bahamians themselves; they would, in all probability, welcome adoption by the United States, for their fruits would find a duty-free market and thus the one agricultural possibility of the islands would be given an encouraging impetus. Jamaica, while having more intercourse with Great Britain, practically depends upon the United States for the sale of her entire banana crop; where one steamer communicates with England, ten seek the nearer ports of the North American continent. It must be understood, however, that the sale of any of the British West Indies is but a remote possibility, although within the bounds of probability.

A far more probable purchase would be that of the Dutch islands of the West Indies. The possessions of the Netherlands in the Caribbean are a loss to the government and a menace to the mother country. In the event of war between the United States and one of the larger European nations, the first hostile act on the part of the latter might well prove to be the violation of Dutch neutrality

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by the seizure of the island of Curaçao, which possesses an excellent naval station and a well protected harbor. Such seizure would be a serious menace to the safety of the Panama Canal, and there might be far-reaching consequences. If, on the other hand, the United States had Curaçao in its possession, the approach to the Panama Canal, by way of the southern channels of the Lesser Antilles, would be safeguarded. This also applies to the Dutch islands of St. Martin, Saba, and St. Eustatius in the northern group of the Leeward Islands; should these come under the United States flag, the entire range of islands from the Florida coast to the mainland of South America would be dominated by the American navy.

A glance at the map of the Caribbean will reveal the truth of this statement. The Guantanamo naval base on the southern coast of the eastern part of Cuba can control not only the Florida Straits, between Florida and Cuba, but also the Windward Passage between Cuba and Hayti. A fleet stationed at Culebra Island and at St. Thomas could give battle to any squadron that should try to force its way through the Mona Passage, between Santo Domingo and Porto Rico,

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or through the Virgin Passage, separating Porto Rico from the Virgin Islands. This same fleet would also be in a position to protect the passages due east from the Island of St. John.

From the Island of Barbuda to the Island of Trinidad, however, can be found some twelve deep water channels, which, in the event of war with a maritime nation, would require a patrol fleet of almost prohibitive size to give warning of the approach of a hostile fleet.

If, therefore, the United States can prevail upon the Dutch government to sell her West Indian possessions, not only would the sale be to the advantage of Holland, since it would relieve her of her unproductive colonies in the Caribbean, and would remove the menace of having these colonies seized by a European nation, but also the strategic importance of the naval station to be established by the United States on the former Danish West Indies would be materially increased. A chain of defenses could thus be thrown around the Panama Canal that would afford complete protection from all the Atlantic approaches.

## CHAPTER II

### GLIMPSES OF FOUR HUNDRED YEARS

THE STORY TOLD BY OLD POTTERY—THE NAMING OF THE ISLANDS—NATIVES ATTACK THE SOLDIERS OF COLUMBUS—EXTERMINATION OF THE NATIVES AND THE COMING OF EUROPEANS—THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SLAVES

**T**HE story of the Virgin Islands of the United States may be told in three parts. First comes their record until their settlement by European natives in the seventeenth century. Next is the period of European settlement, until 1733, when, on the purchase of St. Croix from France, the three islands were joined under one government. From that date the history of the islands can be described as a whole.

Before the discovery of the Virgin Island group by Columbus, these islands were inhabited by a warrior nation of aborigines. The Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, of New York City, was the first institution to devote itself to an archeological survey of the three islands under discussion. This museum has devoted a large amount of its energy to furthering archeological work in the West Indies.





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It was found necessary to gather some data and pre-Columbian specimens from St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, in order to enable students of the pre-Columbian occupation of the Antilles to make a comparative study of the remains of the primitive races that at one time inhabited this region. The researches proved that they had been inhabited by tribes that made long voyages for purposes of trading, or for purposes of warfare, practically throughout the West Indies.

In the excavations conducted by the museum expedition, the finding of some of the so-called "collarstones" proved that voyages to Porto Rico were undertaken, for these highly ornamented stone objects up to the present time have been found only on Porto Rico and Santo Domingo, and assuredly could not have belonged to the low cultural development that must have existed on both St. Thomas and St. Croix. The presence of a grotesquely carved "swallowing-stick" in the aboriginal deposits suggested a communication with Santo Domingo, where the native priests used sticks of this character in their ceremonies.

That voyages were possibly undertaken even to Jamaica, was suggested by the finding in an aborig-

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inal deposit on St. Croix of a cylindrical stone ornament, specimens of this kind being more typical of Jamaican culture than of the culture of the other Antillean islands. Again, some painted postsherds typical of the South American cultural area proved that pre-Columbian communication had been held between St. Croix and either Trinidad or the northern coast of Venezuela.

It is hardly likely that the tribes inhabiting St. Thomas and St. Croix made these voyages for purposes of barter or of peaceful intercourse. Probably they undertook extensive voyages in order to wage war upon the more peaceful Arawak tribes who inhabited the other Antillean islands, and the specimens found must have been secured by force of arms rather than by trading.

If the intercourse with the islands to the west had been of a peaceful nature, it is probable that the Indians would have adopted some of the technique of the potter's art from their neighbors. As it is, the pottery from St. Thomas and St. Croix—and the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, has some six thousand specimens in all from these islands—bears not the slightest resemblance to the pottery of Jamaica, Porto Rico,

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Santo Domingo or Cuba. It is, in fact, the crudest pottery from the West Indies and of a kind typical of a nation of pirates and warriors, who found no leisure to devote themselves to an attempt at ornamentation of their household utensils.

There is another way of deciding that the Indians who originally inhabited St. Thomas must have been not only warriors but of the same race as those on St. Croix, for the St. Thomas pottery shows an absolute resemblance to the specimens from St. Croix, and history says that the St. Croix Indians were warriors. Columbus found them so, to his sorrow, for when he sent soldiers ashore for purposes of exploration the Indians attempted to repel the visitors by force.

When Columbus was on his second voyage of discovery, in 1493, he came to the island of St. Croix, after first touching at a number of the Leeward Islands. The story of the visit, as told by Washington Irving, after an examination of the letters and diaries of Columbus, is full of interest:

“The weather proving boisterous, he anchored on the 14th [of November] at an island called Ayay by the Indians, but to which he gave the

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name of Santa Cruz. A boat well manned was sent on shore to get water and procure information. They found a village, deserted by the men; but secured a few women and boys, most of them captives from other islands. They soon had an instance of Carib courage and ferocity. While at the village they beheld a canoe from a distant part of the island come around a point of land, and arrive in view of the ships. The Indians in the canoe, two of whom were females, remained gazing in mute amazement at the ships, and were so entranced that the boat stole close upon them before they perceived it. Seizing their paddles they attempted to escape, but the boat being between them and the land, cut off their retreat. They now caught up their bows and arrows, and plied them with amazing vigor and rapidity. The Spaniards covered themselves with their bucklers, but two of them were quickly wounded. The women fought as fiercely as the men, and one of them sent an arrow with such force that it passed through and through a buckler.

“The Spaniards now ran their boat against the canoe, and overturned it; some of the savages got upon sunken rocks, others discharged their arrows

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while swimming, as dexterously as though they had been upon firm land. It was with the utmost difficulty they could be overcome and taken: one of them who had been transfixed with a lance, died soon after being brought aboard the ships. One of the women, from the obedience and deference paid to her, appeared to be their queen. She was accompanied by her son, a young man strongly made, with a frowning brow and lion's face. He had been wounded in the conflict. The hair of these savages was long and coarse, their eyes were encircled with paint, so as to give them a hideous expression; and bands of cotton were bound firmly above and below the muscular parts of the arms and legs, so as to cause them to swell to a disproportioned size; a custom prevalent among various tribes of the New World. Though captives in chains, and in the power of their enemies, they still retained a frowning brow and an air of defiance. Peter Martyr, who often went to see them in Spain, declares, from his own experience, and that of others who accompanied him, that it was impossible to look at them without a sensation of horror; so menacing and terrible was their aspect. The sensation was doubtless

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caused in a great measure by the idea of their being cannibals. In this skirmish, according to the same writer, the Indians used poisoned arrows; and one of the Spaniards died within a few days, of a wound received from one of the females.

"Pursuing his voyage, Columbus soon came in sight of a great cluster of islands, some verdant and covered with forests, but the greater part naked and sterile, rising into craggy mountains; with rocks of a bright azure color, and some of a glistening white. These, with his usual vivacity of imagination, he supposed to contain mines of rich metals and precious stones. The islands lying close together, with the sea beating roughly in the narrow channels which divided them, rendered it dangerous to enter among them with the large ships. Columbus sent in a small caravel with lateen sails, to reconnoitre, which returned with the report that there were upwards of fifty islands, apparently inhabited. To the largest of this group he gave the name of Santa Ursula, and called the others the Eleven Thousand Virgins."

It has frequently been suggested that the Island of Virgin Gorda is the one originally named St. Ursula, but it is more likely that either St. Thomas



**MOSQUITO BAY, ST. THOMAS**  
**Saba Island, and Dove Cay in Distance**



**WATER BAY AND NATIVE BRINGING IN FODDER FROM THATCH CAY, ST. THOMAS**



**ABORIGINAL POTTERY DRYING IN THE SUN**



**NORTH COAST OF ST. THOMAS, OUTER BRASS AND INNER BRASS ISLANDS**

## GLIMPSES OF FOUR HUNDRED YEARS

or St. John was the one named after St. Ursula. In voyaging from St. Croix either of the latter islands would be first sighted by a navigator and, as Columbus was on a voyage of discovery, he would probably investigate and name the first island seen.

It should be noted that, geographically, St. Croix does not belong to the Virgin Islands, but that from common usage it has been included under this name.

It has frequently been stated that the encounter between the soldiers of Columbus and the Indians on St. Croix led to the first blood-shed in the New World between the conquistadors and the aborigines. But an encounter took place during the first voyage of Columbus in 1492, when he discovered Samana Bay, on the Island of Hispaniola. This bay, in fact, was named by the Admiral the Bay of Arrows, in commemoration of the event. St. Croix, therefore, cannot lay claim to the doubtful honor of having been the first battlefield in the New World.

No trustworthy records have been discovered of the ultimate fate of the aboriginal inhabitants of St. Thomas, St. Croix and St. John. Possibly a statement made by the German historian, Olden-

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dorp, may afford a clue. He says that, about 1555, the Indians were driven away from the Virgin Islands by Charles V of Spain, the Emperor having ordered that they be treated as enemies and exterminated. But was not Oldendorp speaking of the Island of St. Croix, and not of the true Virgin Islands group, when he made this statement? It is much more likely that such inhabitants as may have lived upon the Virgin Islands after their discovery were taken as slaves, and made to work the mines on Hispaniola after the labor supply of this latter island had become exhausted. But even if Oldendorp's statement is founded on fact, it does not necessarily imply that the extermination of the Indians was completely carried out. Nevertheless, when the Danish, Dutch and French settlers arrived on these islands, at different times in the seventeenth century, no Indians were found on them.

It was due to the efforts of the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, that a few of the problems regarding the pre-Columbian inhabitants of this little group of islands have been solved, and short mention will be made of the archeological work done under the auspices of

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this institution when the history of each island is discussed.

After the visit of the Spanish squadron under Columbus, history takes but little note of the islands. This silence continued through most of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Probably the dread in which they were held by the early navigators had a great deal to do with the silence. A sailing vessel caught in the strong currents which eddy between the rocks and shoals of the islands, might find great difficulty in extricating itself, especially in days when there were no charts of these waters.

An indication of the fear with which the seas surrounding the Virgin Islands were regarded was given by the Earl of Cumberland, who, in 1596, while on his way to take Porto Rico, said that "he would rather be the first to take Porto Rico, than the second to pass through the Virgines." The first to pass this way was Sir Francis Drake, who, in 1580, sailed through what was later known as the Drake Channel between the islands. The Earl of Cumberland mentioned at the same time that the islands were "wholly uninhabited, sandy, barren, and craggy."

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The first mention of settlers on any of the Virgin Islands was made in 1625, when St. Croix was colonized. St. Thomas remained uninhabited for even a longer time, there being no record of Europeans on this island until 1666. St. John was not colonized until 1684.

Each of these islands has its individual history until 1733, when the Island of St. Croix was purchased from France for the sum of seventy-five thousand pounds by the Danish West India and Guinea Company. Holdings of this company were sold to the Danish Crown in 1754, and a commercial policy was instituted which was responsible for the new prosperity.

St. Thomas was thrown open as a free port in 1764 with certain restrictions to ships from European ports, though these restrictions were partially removed in 1767. In 1815 the trade of St. Thomas and St. John became free from all restrictions, and European ships were allowed to enter on equal terms with those from America. St. Croix, on the other hand, was not opened to international commerce until 1833.

Little occurred to interest the student of international affairs until the British fleet under Admiral

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Duckworth and General Trigg captured the islands on April 1, 1801. A little before this time Denmark and Norway had allied themselves with France, and England was not slow in seizing the Danish colonial possessions in retaliation. The islands were held until February 22, 1802, and were restored to Denmark by the Treaty of Amiens.

In 1807 affairs between Great Britain and France once more came to a crisis, and on December 22 the islands were captured by the British under Admiral Cochrane and General Bowyer. They continued under British rule until April 15, 1815. They were then restored by Great Britain, which took the Danish island of Heligoland in exchange.

Since 1815 the islands have not been involved in international affairs, and their history is but a record of fires, hurricanes and slave rebellions. The chief events of this period came in 1847, when King Christian VIII passed certain laws for the future emancipation of slaves, and in 1848, when slavery was abolished throughout the Danish West Indies after an uprising of the slaves of St. Croix. Thus freedom came to the islands fifteen years before the Emancipation Proclamation put an end to slavery in the United States.

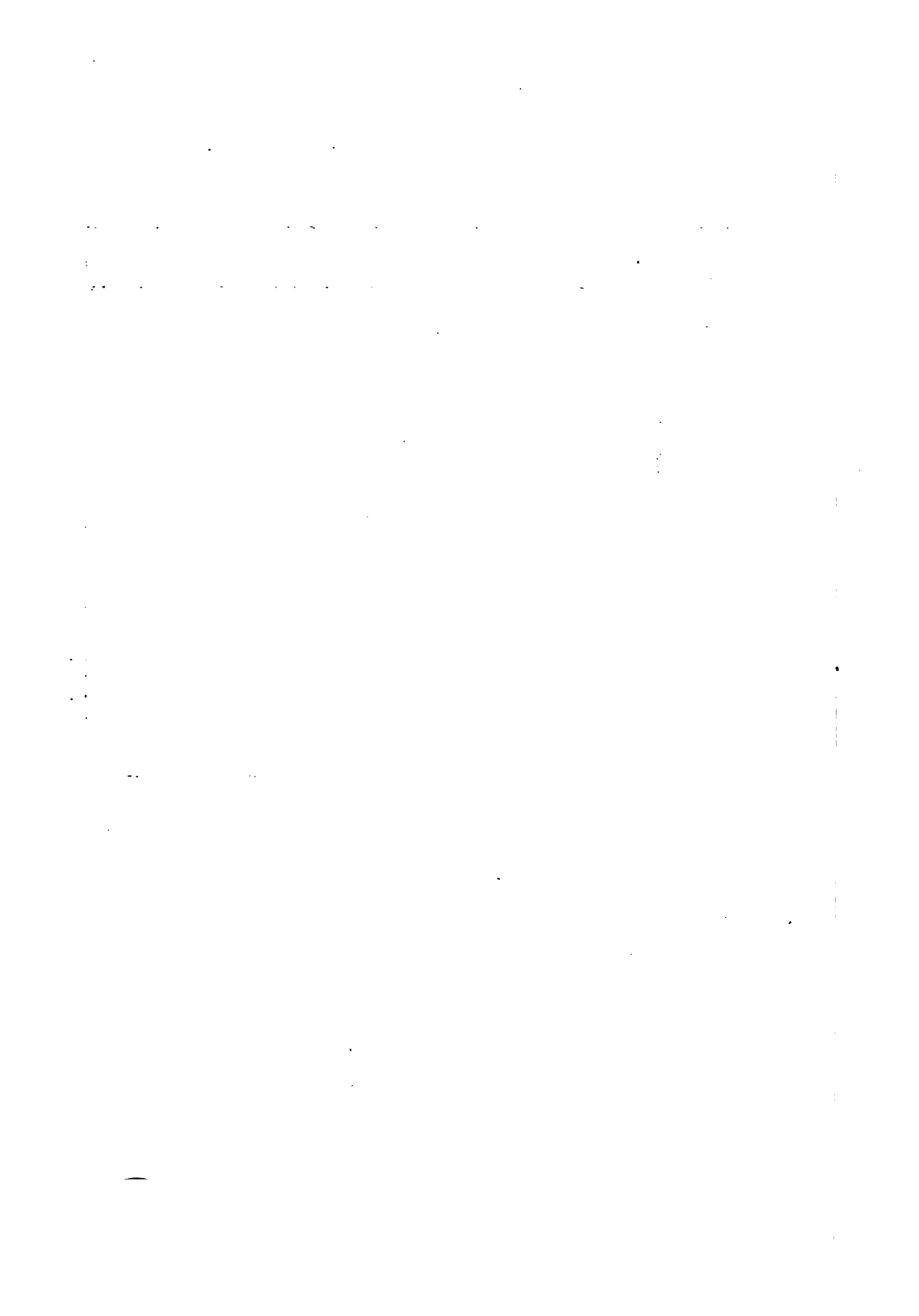
## CHAPTER III

### ON BEAUTIFUL ST. THOMAS

UPS AND DOWNS OF THE FIRST COLONISTS—GOVERNOR IVERSEN'S STRINGENT REGULATIONS—WHEN SUGAR DISPLACED TOBACCO—"ON THE WAY TO EVERY OTHER PLACE."—BOMBARDING A CLIFF INSTEAD OF A SHIP—THE COLOR SCHEME OF CHARLOTTE-AMALIA—THE SIGNAL-MAN'S DILEMMA—A HEALTHY ISLAND'S MOST FATAL DISEASE—THE NIGHT OF THE HURRICANE

**W**HILE there are no trustworthy records that tell of the first settlement of St. Thomas, it is generally believed that there was a colony on the island at some time before 1647. In 1647 a small company of French settlers from the nearby Crab Island made their way to St. Thomas, after the destruction of their plantations and the burning of their ships by Spanish soldiers. The perilous voyage was made in frail canoes. Upon their arrival on St. Thomas these refugees found abandoned groves of lemons, oranges and bananas, which helped to keep them from starvation. It is reasonable to suppose that these groves were planted during the short occupation of St. Thomas by Dutch buccaneers, who afterward settled on St. Martin and St. Eustatius.





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St. Thomas next appears on the records as having been the burial place of one Erik Schmidt, who arrived on the ship *Eendracht*, in 1666. This vessel probably brought supplies to Dutch settlers who had taken up their abode there at some time between 1657 and 1666. Soon a number of these people, learning of the great prosperity of the new colony of New Amsterdam, now New York, took their departure for the village on the Hudson. In 1667 the remainder were forced to leave St. Thomas. At that time St. Thomas, St. Martin and St. Eustatius were captured by the British, and the captors insisted upon the removal of the St. Thomas colonists to the latter two islands, owing to their greater fertility.

The island once abandoned, it was an easy matter for the newly-formed Danish West India and Guinea Company to claim St. Thomas, in 1667, as a trading-post, in spite of protests from Great Britain, which claimed the island by right of conquest. This objection was not followed up by any serious measures, and preparations were made in Denmark to found a colony on St. Thomas.

On August 31, 1671, the first ship, the *Golden Crown*, was dispatched from Copenhagen, while

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less than three months later the *Pharaoh* followed. On this vessel came Jorgen Iversen, the new governor, to whom had been given full power to represent Danish authority. When the *Pharaoh* arrived, on May 23, 1672, a few colonists were already established. These were principally Dutch planters who had returned from the islands of St. Martin and St. Eustatius to reclaim their former holdings on St. Thomas. With them were a few negro slaves.

It cannot be said that the early Danish colonists were of high character. In fact, they resembled the criminal type of sailors, who, upon being granted pardon for former offenses, were induced to accompany Columbus on his first voyage of discovery. There were also among the first settlers a number of Danes who, in order to settle pressing debts and to escape imprisonment by their creditors, had sold themselves for service in the colony. Men of this class were hardly promising material for the founding of a prosperous settlement.

When Governor Iversen reached the scene of his labors he was compelled to adopt stern measures to force his subjects to fulfil their contracts

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and attend to their duties. His first official act was the building of a fort, which was probably commenced in 1672. It became the residence not only of the governor, but also of the Lutheran pastor who accompanied the expedition. Part of this fort is included in the present Christian's Fort at Charlotte-Amalia.

That Governor Iversen ruled the new colony with an iron hand is revealed by some of his proclamations. He commanded everybody to attend service in the fort every Sunday, the penalty for failure to attend being twenty-five pounds of tobacco. There was also provision for a fine of fifty pounds of tobacco for the performance by the servants of the settlers of unnecessary Sunday work. All householders were obliged to keep in their homes arms for defense and a sufficient supply of powder and ball, there being a penalty of one hundred pounds of tobacco for failure to do so. Specific warnings were to be given in case of attack from an enemy. Drills were held every Saturday afternoon in favorable weather, and there were fines for non-attendance. Departure from the island without permission of the governor was also punished with a fine, although the proclamation

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did not state how this fine could be collected, once the transgressor had departed. Servants must not leave their masters, and if they made a practice of running away, they were to be held in irons until they were broken of the habit.

The growing of tobacco was the chief occupation of these early colonists, and it is likely that this commodity was the principal article of export. The raising of cattle was an industry of such importance that the colonists lived in a constant state of alarm because of the raids made upon their pastures by the Spaniards from Porto Rico and the buccaneers of Tortola. It is therefore not strange that Governor Iversen provided for the arming of his followers; the Danes had every reason to guard themselves from molestation by inhabitants of other islands. Even the Spaniards from Porto Rico took part in the campaign against these early Danes, and they succeeded in capturing Crab Island, over which Governor Iversen first claimed sovereignty in 1682. Two years later, the place of Crab Island was taken by St. John, which was then added to the island realm of which Iversen was governor. St. Croix did not become a part of the Danish possessions until 1733.

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Difficulties of another sort were not lacking. A labor shortage was soon felt. The Danish servants proved unsatisfactory, and the slaves who belonged to Dutch landowners did not supply the demand for workmen. Word of this condition of affairs was sent to the home government in Copenhagen, and prompt measures were taken to meet the colony's needs. The Danish West India and Guinea Company purchased land on the Gold Coast of Africa and erected two forts. With these forts as a base, the servants of the company conducted operations which insured a constant supply of slaves for the Antillean colony.

In 1685 the Danish West India Company found its means too limited to furnish a sufficient number of ships for the transportation of the necessary slaves to St. Thomas to supply the agricultural needs of the landowners, and for the carrying of the exports from this island back to the native country. An arrangement was therefore made with the Duchy of Brandenburg to operate a factory on St. Thomas.

The result is what might have been expected, for soon after the erection of the Brandenburg Company's trading station, the Danish West India

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Company found that it was losing a large amount of its trade to the new enterprise. As a consequence there was much jealousy between the companies, and the older organization longed to cancel the rights given to the Brandenburg Company. This could not be done, however, for the term of the contract ran until 1716. It was fortunate that a period could not be put earlier to the new company's privileges, for it was due to the efforts of this company that sugar cane supplanted tobacco plantations. In those days the price of sugar was extremely high. Thus, while the Danish West India Company was the loser by the transaction, the island of St. Thomas was materially benefited.

At one time the affairs of the Danish West India Company were at such a low ebb that in 1690 the Danish king was compelled to rent the entire colony of St. Thomas, with the exception of the holdings of the Brandenburg Company, to a man named Thormöhlen, probably in order to secure to him the liens which he held upon the property. The lease was for a period of ten years, and Thormöhlen was obliged by the terms of his contract to maintain during this time a garrison. The soldiers of this garrison arrived in 1692, and



Photograph by Clarence Taylor, St. Thomas

VIEW OF ST. THOMAS HARBOR AND CHARLOTTE-AMALIA FROM HAVENSICHT HILL



ENTRANCE TO ST. THOMAS HARBOR, WITH POWDER MAGAZINE AND COWELL'S BATTERY ON HASSEL ISLAND, AND QUARANTINE  
STATION ON MUHLENFEL'S POINT

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these were the first regular troops to be stationed in Christian's Fort.

St. Thomas lies in latitude 18 degrees 20 minutes N. and longitude 64 degrees 55 minutes W., and is but forty miles from Porto Rico and twenty-five miles from the island of Culebra. A vessel going from St. Thomas to Porto Rico is always sheltered by the cays lying between the islands. Even small craft are generally safe in making the passage. Owing to the prevailing easterly trade winds, it is easier to go from St. Thomas to Porto Rico in a sailing vessel than it is to return by the same means; while it not infrequently takes but five hours to go from Charlotte-Amalia to the port of Fajardo on the east coast of Porto Rico, the return voyage has been known to take from two to three days. This difference is partly due to the strong currents running between the islands which offer a serious impediment when the wind is light.

The island is admirably situated for communication with other ports. It is on a direct line between Europe and the entrance to the Panama Canal. Furthermore, vessels plying between the Atlantic ports of North America and the Atlantic

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ports of South America must pass directly by the island, which is situated fourteen hundred miles from New York, one thousand miles from Colon and five hundred miles from La Guaira, the chief port of the Republic of Venezuela. Thus the enthusiastic traveler was not far wrong who said that St. Thomas is "the place which is on the way to every other place." He justified this description by adding:

"When the sailor lays his course for any part of the Caribbean Sea, the tip of his horny finger points to St. Thomas. To call the little island the gateway of the Caribbean is not poetic fancy. The shortest and best course from England to any Central American port, for steamer or sail, is by St. Thomas. For the liner from the United States to Brazil, the most convenient port of call is St. Thomas. To go from the Greater to the Lesser Antilles, one goes by way of St. Thomas. Nature has given this half-way house of the sea a prestige that even the commercial supremacy of Barbadoes has not overshadowed."

St. Thomas is surrounded by seventeen islands and cays and by an innumerable number of rocks. The islands and cays are mostly very small, the largest being Water Island, which is two and one-

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half miles long and three-fourths of a mile wide, and Hans Lollik, one and one-half miles long and one mile wide. Most of these cays are rocky and elevated, and all are uninhabited, with the exception of Water Island and Thatch Cay.

Perhaps the most remarkable of the cays is a small island called Sail Rock, so called because this mountainous rock when viewed from the eastward has the exact appearance of a vessel under sail. There is a tradition that there was once an engagement between a French frigate and this little island. In the night the commanding officer of the frigate ran close to Sail Rock, which he took for a privateersman. He hailed the supposed ship, and the echoes from the rock returned the hail. Receiving no satisfactory answer from the "privateersman," the commander gave orders to fire. The echoes returned the noise of the cannonade. As the frigate was very close to Sail Rock, some of the cannon balls ricocheted and gave the impression that the adversary was giving battle. It is said that the engagement continued for some hours. Not until dawn did the commander of the frigate realize his mistake and retire from the scene in mortification.

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The length of St. Thomas is thirteen miles, while its average width is about two miles. The area is 28.25 square miles, or about eighteen thousand acres, of which only about five hundred acres are under cultivation, while possibly two thousand acres are used for pasturage. The island is really nothing more than a range of hills running east and west, with branching spurs. There is practically no level land. The highest elevation toward the western part of the island, is 1515 feet. This hill is called West Mountain. The next highest peak, Signal Hill, in the center of the island, has an elevation of 1500 feet.

While the island is not as well watered as St. John—which has the largest water supply of the three islands, probably owing to the presence of forests, which are absent on both St. Thomas and St. Croix—there are a number of springs on the northern side. An absolute water shortage, such as is occasionally experienced on some of the smaller Antillean islands, has not been known to occur here. There is but one small stream, and this loses itself in the hills; probably it finds an outlet to the sea through a fissure in the rocks.

According to geologists, the island is composed

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for the most part of a mass of Trappean rocks of various colors, and these rocks contain many veins of quartz which can be observed wherever a cut has been made in the rocks along the road. Much of the rock has decomposed, and is still decomposing into yellow or reddish clay. The aborigines made their pottery from this clay. In places the rock also decomposes into a whitish marl.

With the exception of red ochre, there are no known minerals on St. Thomas. In a few places can be seen the white coralline limestone so typical of the western Antilles.

While the agriculturist can obtain remarkable results because of the wonderful climate and a fairly equable rainfall, the soil in most places is thin and it is liable to be washed from the hill slopes on which it is found.

It is more than likely that St. Thomas at one time was covered with dense forests, but none of these remain today. The trees were probably felled by the earlier settlers and the valuable woods found in them were sold or used for the local manufacture of furniture.

St. Thomas harbor is located on the southern side of the island, and its entrance faces almost

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due south. The mouth is fairly narrow, although its width of nine hundred feet is ample for large vessels. After passing through the narrow entrance, the harbor gradually expands into a large, circular bowl some two miles in diameter. A somewhat fanciful geological theory claims that the harbor is formed by the crater of a submerged, extinct volcano. This theory has been suggested more because of the shape of the harbor basin than because of the evidence of geological formation.

For many years, navigators found it difficult to locate the southern shore of St. Thomas during the night, and they were compelled to wait for daybreak before entering the harbor. Since the erection of a lighthouse on Buck Island, passage in the night has become possible, but even now the services of the pilot who meets ships outside the harbor entrance are needed.

A traveler once gave the following true and picturesque description of the first sight of Charlotte-Amalia by the tourist who enters the harbor:

"The view from deck, as the ship creeps into the anchorage, is the most charming in the West Indies. The bay lacks the great sweep of Algiers, but it has the same mountain background, the



**FRONT ENTRANCE OF CHRISTIAN'S FORT FROM  
COURTYARD INSIDE**



**SIGNAL STATION, TOP OF COWELL'S BATTERY**



**BATTEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN'S FORT AND BLACKBEARD'S  
CASTLE ON TOP OF GOVERNMENT HILL, CHARLOTTE-  
AMALIA, ST. THOMAS**



**COALING WHARF OF THE WEST INDIA COMPANY, LTD., CHARLOTTE-AMALIA  
Destroyed October 9, 1916**

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same glorious blue of sea and sky. The village, blue and orange and yellow and red, recalls some of the coast towns of Italy. The garden walls of the hillside villas shine out dazzlingly white against the luxurious green of the tropical foliage. The ruins of Bluebeard's castle above the town—a landmark of the old days of the buccaneer—present the only touch of gray. The rest is a riot of color. Most striking of all is the gaudy red Danish fortress down by the water front. I have never seen so red a building. At first it is glaring and unpleasant, but after a time one's eyes become accustomed to the new scale of color values which the intense sun of the tropics requires. And the bizarre glory of the fort—which would be unspeakably offensive in a gray mantle—seems to be not out of place in the color scheme of St. Thomas. The town of Charlotte-Amalia has taken the atmosphere of Algiers and the gorgeous coloring of Venice, rolled them into one, and reduced it to miniature."

On passing the harbor's mouth, one is immediately reminded by Cowell's Battery of the British occupation of 1801 and 1802. This battery was erected by Colonel Cowell during this period. It

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was constructed upon the highest elevation of Hassel Island. Nearby lie buried the soldiers who died during the occupation. On the shore, below the hill, are the remains of an early Danish stronghold, which antedates the British fortifications. Near the old Danish fort is the gaily painted powder magazine, which was used as a storehouse for explosives during the latter days of the Danish occupation.

To-day, Cowell's Battery is used as a signal station, and it is from here that the inhabitants of Charlotte-Amalia learn of the coming of vessels to St. Thomas Harbor. A mast with a yard-arm serves to support the semaphore and a number of wicker balls. The positions of the balls and of the semaphore arms indicate whether an incoming ship is a sailing vessel, a steamer or a man-of-war, its nationality and the direction from which it is coming. Without this signal station, a number of the inhabitants of Charlotte-Amalia would be deprived of their chief interest, and their greatest source of gossip.

The citizens say that at one time a Siamese man-of-war called at St. Thomas in order to obtain a supply of coal for its bunkers. On seeing the

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ship approach, the watchman on the signal hill did not find in his signal book any instructions informing him what position to give the balls and the semaphore for a man-of-war of this nationality. In desperation, he rigged up his signal mast with all the wicker spheres he happened to have on hand. Naturally the people became greatly excited and made all sorts of hurried preparations for international festivities, for they thought that the combined navies of the world were coming to visit their little island.

One of the most interesting excursions on St. Thomas may be taken by rowboat to Cowell's Point, and thence up the hill upon which the battery is located. The existence on the rocks below the signal station of a large sign which advertises the bay rum of a local manufacturer, does much to spoil an otherwise perfect view. During the hurricane of October, 1916, the sign was blown down, but this offensive eyesore to all visitors approaching St. Thomas Harbor has unfortunately been restored.

Directly opposite Hassel Island, on Muhlenfel's Point, is the quarantine station. This, happily, is seldom needed for its intended purpose. When no

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patients are residing there, it is occasionally rented out to picnic parties from Charlotte-Amalia. This is a delightful spot for a temporary sojourn, for the sea bathing here is the best on the island.

The harbor of St. Thomas presents little difficulty to navigation. The few obstructions beneath the surface have been marked by buoys, while the rocks which extend above sea level have been carefully whitewashed. A number of range-lights also protect the harbor and serve to keep the incoming ship in its proper channel. The harbor is landlocked, and the safety of ships in the harbor is jeopardized only when the dreaded West Indian hurricanes strike St. Thomas from a southerly direction.

But for the hurricanes St. Thomas would be an earthly paradise. The climate is healthy for newcomers, even for those who are unaccustomed to the tropics, and it is especially enjoyable during the winter months. The greatest heat is felt in August, September and October, but even then the thermometer seldom goes above 91 degrees Fahrenheit, while the average temperature is 84 degrees Fahrenheit. In winter the temperature occasionally drops as low as 67 degrees, and the

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nights are so chilly that it is necessary to sleep under a blanket.

The rainfall is not excessive; it averages about forty-seven inches per year. May, August, September, October and November are the rainy months, but it is not unusual for a drought to prevail for six or even nine months. Such a prolonged drought is generally followed by severe rains.

Though this is not true of the majority of West Indian islands, the air of St. Thomas is bracing. Probably this is due to the fact that the island is directly exposed to the Atlantic Ocean on the north, so that it feels the cooling effects of this large body of water rather than the tropical heat radiated by the Caribbean Sea. For invalids and for people of delicate constitution, the equable climate is especially suitable, and many wonderful cures have been credited to the island. All that is necessary in many cases is simply to live long enough in the bracing climate.

Aside from scorpions and centipedes, there are no poisonous animals, and no intending visitor need fear the presence of the usual venomous insects of the tropics. There are no snakes of any variety. Land crabs are the chief annoyance.

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Thanks to the efforts of the government, there are few mosquitos in the town itself, although occasionally sand-flies and mosquitos make life a burden in other parts of the island, especially in the rainy season.

Once the general sanitary conditions of Charlotte-Amalia were not entirely satisfactory, but these have been greatly improved by the blasting of a channel through the "Haul-over" peninsula which connects Hassel Island with the mainland of St. Thomas. This channel permits a current of water to circulate through the harbor. Formerly the waters which washed the shores of the town became stagnant at times and the imperceptible flow of the ebb and flood tide was not sufficient to carry off the refuse which was emptied in the bay. In consequence, there were a number of typhoid fever epidemics. Since the opening of the new channel, there has been no more difficulty.

Nowadays there are no epidemics in Charlotte-Amalia, owing to the efficient medical inspection and the stringent quarantine laws and regulations made for vessels which enter from infected ports and the efficient medical inspection. The death rate of the island is remarkably low, and its inhab-

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itants generally seem to die from one disease only, a disease for which no cure has been found—old age.

Hurricanes will always be the principal drawback to residence in the West Indies, and St. Thomas does not escape them. Many times the island has been visited by these destructive storms. In 1713, in 1738, in 1742, in 1772, in 1793, in 1819, in 1837, in 1867 and again in 1916, tropical storms passed over the little island and caused an incredible amount of destruction. These storms are regarded with such dread that it is the custom of the people, at the commencement of the hurricane season, to offer prayers that their island may escape from the horrors of the tempests. At the end of the season, they betake themselves to their churches and give thanks that the period of danger has been safely passed.

The last hurricane, on the night of October 9, 1916, was perhaps one of the most destructive ever experienced. The smaller negro cabins were bodily blown from their foundations and smashed to pieces against other buildings or trees. Few houses escaped without the loss of their roofs or damage of some kind. That little loss of life accompanied the hurricanes was a miracle, for the galvanized

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iron sheets which formed the roof coverings of the houses were hurled through the air like projectiles. The rain which accompanied the hurricane in many instances did more damage than the wind itself, and the stocks of a number of merchants were totally ruined. Trees which for many decades had been the pride of the town were uprooted. Electric light poles, branches of trees, pieces of guttering, spouts and tiles from the roofs, filled the public thoroughfares with a tangled mass of debris. In the harbor the Danish bark *Thor* was wrecked on the rocks near Cowell's Battery. The *St. Hilda* dredge was taken up bodily and placed alongside the landing wharf in three feet of water. The Hamburg-American liner *Calabria*, which had been anchored in the harbor since the beginning of the European War, was thrown on the rocks east of the wharf with practically her entire bottom ripped out. The *Wasgenwald*, owned by the same company, was torn from her moorings and driven ashore, but the vessel managed to pull herself off with but slight injuries. The motor ship *Anholt* was thrown high and dry on the beach. A number of sailing vessels foundered in the harbor. Two large electric conveyers of the Danish West India Com-

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pany were reduced to a tangled mass of scrap iron.

On the morning of October 10, when the extent of the damage caused during the night could be perceived, the Danish officials took prompt and active steps, not only to give relief to the sufferers but also to restore the town as far as possible to its usual immaculate condition. In many instances money was given to the poor to enable them to build new houses. In other cases money was loaned without interest.

In addition to these means of bringing relief, the government placed gangs at work on the mountain roads, which in many instances had been completely effaced, and restored them to their proper condition. A little park on the water front which, until the night of the hurricane, had been one of the principal attractions of Charlotte-Amalia, and which was almost completely demolished, was cleaned up and the uprooted trees were replanted when this was possible. Even after the officials of the island were informed that the sale of the Danish West Indies was a certainty they did not in any way diminish their efforts towards effacing the damage caused by the storm; they seemed to think it a sacred duty to hand over the

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islands to the United States in as good condition as possible.

While, of course, the damage caused by one of these hurricanes is enormous, one must take into consideration the fact that tropical houses as a general rule are but lightly built and easily blown down. No true West Indian will learn from the last hurricane that he should prepare his new abode in conformity with the demands that may be made upon its strength by any subsequent storm. For this reason the inhabitants of the Antilles are frequently a great deal to blame for the fact that their homes have suffered the effects of a hurricane. The damage done in the agricultural areas, while large, is not noticeable three months after the passing of a storm, as in the luxuriant climate of St. Thomas practically all destroyed vegetation is quickly replaced.

Earthquakes also sometimes occur, and these are most frequent in the months of January, February and March. No intending visitor to St. Thomas need, however, feel any alarm on this score. While, occasionally, plaster and loose stones or bricks from old walls have been known to fall, no instance has yet been recorded of so much as a



**CANAAN ESTATE HOUSE, AFTER HURRICANE**



**HAMBURG-AMERICAN LINE OFFICES, AND DREDGE "ST. HILDA"  
Driven Ashore by Hurricane**



**FIRING TIME-GUN BATTERY ON WATERFRONT, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



**LUTHERAN CHURCH, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**

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wall being thrown down. Usually the shocks seem to come from the south and pass off toward the north. Rarely are there more than two shocks. The earthquakes have but once been accompanied by marine disturbances, such as tidal waves; they appear to be nothing but survivals of stronger shocks that may have taken place in South America and been thence transmitted to St. Thomas.



An old wood cut of Blackbeard's Castle, Charlotte-Amalia, St. Thomas, made by Dr. Charles Taylor. The pirate's flag is a concession to popular sentiment.

## CHAPTER IV

### RAMBLES ABOUT CHARLOTTE-AMALIA

PICTURESQUE COAL CARRIERS—WHY ENGLISH IS THE POPULAR LANGUAGE—HOW THE “RECONCILING-COURT” DISCOURAGES LITIGATION—CHURCHES AND SCHOOLS—STREETS, GUTTERS AND HILLS—THE FABLES OF FOUR HILL-TOPS—BUCCANEERS, BLACKBEARD AND BLUEBEARD—WHY THE GUNS WERE FIRED—HOSPITALITY AND FLOWERS—WATER-FRONT ACTIVITY

**T**HE smiling little town of Charlotte-Amalia nestles among four hills, which branch southward from the main range of the island. No stranger can fail to be impressed by the beauty of the situation of the picturesque town and no native of St. Thomas can return here after an absence, be it ever so short, without being thoroughly content with his original choice of residence.

Charlotte-Amalia was the seat of government when Denmark ruled, and the governor of the three islands spent six months out of the year here and the other six months on the island of St. Croix. The town was named after the consort of Christian V, in whose time it was founded. On the earliest records the name of the town was Tappus, but why

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this name was used is not known. The population is about eight thousand, though there are only about ten thousand people on the entire island. That there are many more women than men is due to the fact that so many of the men have been forced to leave the island to gain a living.

Fully ninety per cent. of the total population is negro, but, despite this fact, the St. Thomian negroes are far more polite than any other negroes in the West Indies; they do not seem to wish to be on a footing of equality with their white fellow-citizens. This is undoubtedly due to the excellent and kind training given them during the Danish rule, the results of which will show for many years. If in the future the same treatment is accorded the natives, there will be no troubles between the whites and the negroes.

Because of hard times the negroes of St. Thomas have been too frequently forced to leave their beloved little island and seek a living elsewhere. These absentees from home make splendid servants. Happy indeed does a housewife in the West Indies count herself who possesses a St. Thomian for a house-servant. Her less fortunate sisters who have to content themselves with an inefficient and at

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times insolent servant from Barbadoes, or some other British island, look upon her with envy.

The stay-at-home St. Thomian depends for a living chiefly upon the ships that come to Charlotte-Amalia, either to load or to discharge their cargoes. He or she, as the case may be,—for the women work as hard as the men,—easily finds work as a stevedore upon one of these vessels, or else as a coal-carrier on the wharves which supply ships calling at this port in order to fill their bunkers.

The stevedore's wages are one dollar per day. The coal-carrier is paid according to the amount of work done. Until January, 1917, the rate for coal-carriers was a cent for every basket brought on board. By dint of hard work some of the stronger laborers were enabled to make as much as two dollars a day, but this was possible, of course, for only a few days each week. To earn two dollars it was necessary to fill two hundred baskets, each of which contained from eighty-five to ninety-five pounds of coal, and to toil with these from the coal heap up a steeply-inclined gangway to the bunkers of the ship. A labor union formed in Charlotte-Amalia, in imitation of a similar organization founded two years earlier in St. Croix, has



Photograph by William T. Demarest

A HILLY STREET, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA



**TYPICAL COAL CARRIERS, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



**CUSTOM HOUSE AND POST OFFICE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS**

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succeeded in raising the rate per basket from one cent to two cents. A few strikes occurred before the coal companies agreed to this increase, but in the end matters were settled amicably. The workers took advantage of the fact that the large electric cranes, which had been erected by the West India Company not long before, and which were capable of handling one hundred and fifty tons of coal per hour, had been completely wrecked by the hurricane of October, 1916. Yet it is true that the increased cost of living, and the fact that few ships have called at St. Thomas since the outbreak of the European War, made higher wages imperative.

At best, the lot of the faithful coal-carriers is not enviable. The work is hard and the workers are exposed to weather of all kinds, from the intense tropical heat of the waterfront to the drenching downpour of the rainy season. In spite of these hardships, the laborers are a cheerful lot. They reside in a part of the town known as the "Back-of-All."

The port of San Juan on Porto Rico has of late years become a serious rival of St. Thomas for the coaling of ships. A number of steamship lines

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which for years called at Charlotte-Amalia are now going to San Juan, where coal is cheaper, owing to the greater proximity to the ports of the United States and the better facilities which have been provided for the supplying of ships with bunker coal. It is thought that when the United States establishes a naval base on the island, the increased demand for laborers and the better pay which they undoubtedly will receive will go far toward bettering their lot and the conditions under which they live.

As a race the St. Thomians are far from indolent. They are hard-working and willing, but not very efficient, judged by northern standards. Their employers find it advisable to cajole them, instead of using harsh words to them. If the laborers are treated in a kind manner, they are willing to go to all sorts of extremes to repay the treatment.

Though, of course, Danish was the official language under the rule of Denmark, it is rare indeed to find a native of St. Thomas who is acquainted with it. All government notices were printed in both Danish and English, while the two local newspapers appeared in the English language.

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But for the fact that the streets bear Danish names, the visitor would not realize that he is in a former colony of Denmark. The Danish language was never forced upon the inhabitants by the government, and, as a matter of fact, they would have had but little use for it, since their principal commercial relations have been with the English-speaking races.

Offenses of a criminal nature are almost unknown on the island. A few instances of theft were so severely punished that grand larceny was completely stamped out. While a St. Thomian is not above appropriating to himself or to his family food from his master's table or any small trifle that happens to strike his fancy, it cannot be said that predetermined stealing is part of his nature.

Little happens to disturb the quiet of the tropical *dolce-far-niente* of Charlotte-Amalia. A quarrel between two jealous female coal-carriers, or the bibulous noise made by a convivial laborer on pay day, are about the only disturbances that call for the interference of the few policemen necessary on the island. The law courts are most deserted, and only one professional lawyer resides in Charlotte-Amalia.

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During the Danish rule, St. Thomas boasted of a system which the other West Indian islands, where litigation at times proves costly, might do well to adopt. This is the "reconciling-court." If an employer, for instance, became involved in a dispute with his clerk as to the wages due the latter, the clerk was not obliged either to accept his employer's decision or to hire an expensive lawyer to defend his interests. Either the clerk or his employer could call on the two reconciling judges of the court, who were appointed from the people by the governor. The plaintiff could then state his case and request the judges to take the matter up. Both parties would then be summoned and each would be allowed to tell his side of the question at issue. The judges would give their opinion off-hand and attempt to effect a settlement between the disputants. Generally this would succeed, and the matter would be finished. By this simple means many a costly lawsuit was prevented and thus the long delays of northern law courts were unknown. If those who appeared before the "reconciling-court" professed themselves as being content with the decision of the judges and did not carry out the stipulations of

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this decision afterwards, they were severely and summarily dealt with. If, on the other hand, the decision of the judges was not satisfactory to them, and they stated that they wished to carry the matter to the regular law courts, they were at liberty to do so.

Since the days of its foundation, Charlotte-Amalia has always welcomed religious bodies of all denominations. The official religion of the Danish government was Lutheran, and ministers of this creed were sent out by the Crown; but no restrictions were placed upon the followers of other beliefs, and as a result the little town has a diversity of houses of worship. Perhaps the handsomest of these buildings is the Memorial Church of the Moravian Brethren. To-day the Moravians are one of the strongest sects on the island, and their missionaries take the most active measures to better the conditions of the St. Thomas laboring classes.

At first the Lutheran congregation worshipped in Christian's Fort. In 1793 the new church building was consecrated and was used until 1826, when it was destroyed by fire. The church was soon rebuilt, and it has been used since 1827.

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Until the hurricane of 1916, it was chiefly noticeable because of the beautiful, symmetrical avenue of royal palms which led from the gate to the steps of the building. These were totally destroyed. It will be many years before this attractive feature of the surroundings of the old building can be restored.

Like the Lutheran Church, the Dutch Reformed Church was founded in Charlotte-Amalia on the first settlement of the town. It is possible even that it antedated the Lutheran congregation, for it is more than likely that the first Dutch settlers in 1666 had their own pastor with them. The present building used by the congregation of the Reformed Dutch Church was erected in 1846, the two previous buildings having been destroyed by fire.

There is also a large and imposing Roman Catholic church in Charlotte-Amalia. This was built about 1844. Either Spanish or French supplements Latin in the services, owing to the fact that the majority of the Catholics are natives of the French or Spanish-speaking islands of the Antilles. Occasionally there are services in English.

The Episcopal Church has many adherents,



Photograph supplied by William T. Denarest

**REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**  
Organized 1688



Photograph by Clarence Taylor

**CHRIST CHURCH, WESLEYAN, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



Photograph by Clarence Taylor

**MEMORIAL CHURCH, MORAVIAN, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



Photograph by Clarence Taylor

**ALL SAINTS' ANGLICAN CHURCH, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**

## **RAMBLES ABOUT CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**

and services are held in a handsome building which was erected some twenty or thirty years ago.

In addition to the other denominations named, the French Huguenots and the Jews have places of worship.

Good public schools have been founded for education in the lower grades, and Charlotte-Amalia compares favorably in this respect with towns of its size almost anywhere. Facilities for higher education, however, are woefully lacking. The more well-to-do of the people are obliged to send their children to the United States or to other countries for their final education. It is also to be regretted that St. Thomas does not possess a well-equipped trade school where the negroes can be instructed in the handicrafts. The Moravian missionaries have made successful efforts to instruct their followers in craftsmanship, but otherwise the only manner in which artisans can learn their trades is by apprenticing themselves to a master workman.

The town has but one level street of any length. This is the Main street and it is parallel to the waterfront. On this are the shops and warehouses and here merchants and shipping agents have

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their offices. All other streets run at right angles to the main street and are quite precipitous, owing to the fact that the greater part of the town lies on four hills. These hills are, from west to east, Frenchmen's Hill, Delanois Hill, Government Hill, and Luchetti's Hill. Many of the streets are called streets by courtesy only, for they consist of a series of stone steps which lead to the heights above. Parallel to these steps run stone gutters which, in rainy spells, carry the water down hill to the sea. These gutters are locally known as "guts," and on St. Thomas a gut may mean anything from a ravine to a small watercourse. The streets and steps are always kept extremely clean. This work is done for the most part by the petty offenders from the prison in the fort. The houses, many of which have most picturesque grilled iron gateways, are painted in all colors and, with their scarlet roofs, they give a gay touch of color to the pretty town.

Charlotte-Amalia is lighted by electricity, and good service both for streets and residences is given by the electric company. The town also has a good ice-plant and its markets for the selling of produce and meat are well arranged. In the

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fish-market a supply of fresh fish can always be obtained in the mornings, and fruit, brought by small sailing-vessels from the neighboring British islands, can generally be purchased.

Frenchmen's Hill is so called from the fact that, in the early days, the section of the town in which is this hill was chosen by the French Huguenot refugees as their abode. The hill forms the extreme western boundary of the town. The next hill, toward the center of Charlotte-Amalia, Delanois Hill, is named after one of the early settlers. Upon the crest are two beacon lights which, when held in line, serve to indicate to vessels entering the harbor the proper channel. Here also can be seen the former Delanois residence and the house which, at one time, was occupied by General Santa Anna of Mexico, who came to St. Thomas, after being expelled from his native country, to pass his declining years in the quiet of Charlotte-Amalia. The older residents still remember seeing this noted warrior in their early childhood, and enjoy telling visitors of the general and how he stumped about the town on his wooden leg.

The central portion of Charlotte-Amalia is

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built upon Government Hill. Here are the official residence of the governor during the Danish rule and the former Danish Government offices. Few colonies of the West Indies boast of a government-house equal in quiet splendor to that found on St. Thomas. Here the magnificent functions were always held for visiting men-of-warsmen, and naval officers of all nations counted a stay in St. Thomas harbor one of the most pleasant visits made by them in the West Indies. The large ballroom of the residence, with its enormous chandeliers and wonderful old colonial mahogany furniture, is especially handsome.

The making of mahogany furniture always was a specialty of the craftsmen of the island, and some of their finest pieces are to be found here. Once visiting tourists were successful in discovering antiques of this kind in the little carpenter shops of the town, but so much has been carried off that few specimens are obtainable to-day.

On Government Hill is also Blackbeard's Castle, named after the celebrated John Teach, alias Blackbeard. No proof has ever been brought forward that this pirate, or any other pirate, ever actually resided on the island, although in the



BALLROOM, GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA



Photograph by E. M. Newman

RESIDENCE OF GOVERNOR, AND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA

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early days raids by the buccaneers were not uncommon. Furthermore, no authentic record has ever been found that John Teach resided upon St. Thomas. It will be seen, therefore, that this interesting old residence, one of the first built in Charlotte-Amalia and one of the very few remaining to-day that hark back to the settlement of the island, cannot lay claim to having been the abode of the interesting and notorious buccaneer.

The cold historical facts about the castle are that it was built by one Charles Baggaert, one of the more turbulent of Governor Iversen's colonists, probably in order to annoy the governor. The "absconder from Middelburg," as Baggaert is called in some of the early reports written by Iversen, built himself a house upon the hill overlooking the lately-erected Christian's Fort. Iversen complained bitterly about Baggaert's residence that "it is not advantageous to the fort that Baggaert built his house so much higher than the fort, in so much that everyone who comes to see him can completely overlook it." This remark of the governor gives one an interesting sidelight on the strategic value of Christian's Fort.

One of the few authentic stories of the activity

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of buccaneers in the Virgin Islands is told in the Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies. In 1682 Jean Hamlin captured the merchant vessel *La Trompeuse*, refitted her as a man-of-war, and made a piratical cruise in the Caribbean. For a time he made his headquarters at St. Thomas, whose governor not only winked at his misdeeds but received him as a friend. From St. Thomas, during the early months of 1683, raids were made on a number of English merchantmen. Then came an expedition to Africa, in which seventeen Dutch and English sloops were captured. On July 27 *La Trompeuse* returned to St. Thomas. The story of what happened next is told by C. H. Haring in "The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the XVII Century":

"They were admitted and kindly received by the governor, and allowed to bring their plunder ashore. Three days later Captain Carlile of H. M. S. *Francis*, who had been sent out by Governor Stapleton to hunt for pirates, sailed into the harbor, and on being assured by the pilot and by an English sloop lying at anchor there that the ship before him was the pirate *La Trompeuse*, in the night of the following day he set her on fire

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and blew her up. Hamlin and some of the crew were on board, but after firing a few shots, escaped to the shore. The pirate ship carried thirty-two guns, and if she had not been under-manned Carlile might have encountered a formidable resistance. The Governor of St. Thomas sent a note of protest to Carlile for having, as he said, secretly set fire to a frigate which had been confiscated to the King of Denmark. Nevertheless he sent Hamlin and his men for safety in a boat to another part of the island, and later selling him a sloop, let him sail away to join the French buccaneers in Hispaniola.

“The Danish governor of St. Thomas, whose name was Adolf Esmitt, had formerly been himself a privateer, and had used his popularity on the island to eject from authority his brother, Nicholas Esmitt, the lawful governor. By protecting and encouraging pirates—for a consideration, of course—he proved a bad neighbor to the surrounding English islands. Although he had but three hundred or three hundred and fifty people on St. Thomas, and most of these British subjects, he laid claim to all the Virgin Islands, harbored runaway servants, seamen and debtors, fitted out

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pirate vessels with arms and provisions, and refused to restore captured ships and crews which the pirates brought into his port. The King of Denmark had sent out a new governor, named Iversen, to dispossess Esmit, but he did not arrive in the West Indies until October, 1684, when, with the assistance of an armed sloop which Sir William Stapleton had been ordered by the English Council to lend him, he took possession of St. Thomas and its pirate governor."

But even if St. Thomas is not celebrated in the annals of the buccaneers, the residents are not slow to put forward claims to piratical distinction.

On Luchetti's Hill—which was named after an Italian consul—is another so-called buccaneers' stronghold, Bluebeard's Castle. Again the cold light of historical research has to dispel the haze of romance. Bluebeard's Castle was built in 1700 by the local government and served as an additional fortification to defend the town. It was named Frederik's Fort, and did not pass out of government hands until it was acquired by a Mr. Luchetti in the first part of the nineteenth century. Local tradition states that there is an underground passage between Bluebeard's and

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Blackbeard's castles. If so, the early colonists not only were expert miners, but must have possessed boundless patience, superfluous energy and a wonderful lack of common sense to drill a useless tunnel down a hill three hundred feet high, through about a mile of solid rock, and up another hill two hundred feet. It would be hard indeed to say what purpose such a passage could have served, and there can be no doubt that this local belief has no foundation of fact.

Christian's Fort, built on the waterfront, was used during the latter days of the Danish occupation as a police station and a jail for offenders sentenced to less than two years' imprisonment. Although the fort was built in 1672 by Governor Iversen, around the existing old Dutch fortifications, it looks today almost as it looked in the seventeenth century, though a clock tower has been added and the main entrance has been somewhat changed. It has, of course, no military value, and only three small cannon defend its battlements. At one time these were used for saluting purposes, but it was found that their recoil damaged the roof of the apartment underneath, and the practice was discontinued.

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For many years the fort was the official residence of the governor and other officials. Here the Lutheran clergyman had his quarters, and the church services were held in one of the rooms. The pastor, in fact, had to obtain a military pass from the governor before he was allowed to leave the stronghold, so strict were the seventeenth century regulations here.

The apartments, which are built around an attractively-tiled courtyard, served as offices and cells. There is only one dark cell found, and this is used solely to quiet obstreperous prisoners when they become violent and abusive. Incarceration in this cell soon calms them; the gloom appears to depress the spirits of men of a sunlight-loving race. The prisoners are employed on road work, but they are treated mildly and they have but short working hours.

Until a few years ago, one of the rooms of the fort also served as a depository for the currency of the local bank, and the archives of the government offices were also safeguarded here.

The most attractive aspect of the fort is from the waterfront. A small balcony in one corner, decorated with potted flowers, offers a curious con-

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trast to a supposedly frowning fortress. This balcony was part of the residence of the assistant-policemaster. A visit to the fort is well worth while, for it offers a great deal to interest the tourist.

On the waterfront, under the fort, is a saluting battery of twelve pieces. From here are returned the salutes given to the governor by visiting war-ships on entering the harbor. The time gun also is fired here. During the Danish rule this gun was fired at five in the morning, at noon, and again at eight in the evening. No satisfactory explanation for the firing of the gun at these hours has ever been given. No one thinks of getting up at five in the morning in happy-go-lucky Charlotte-Amalia, and no one thinks of going to bed at eight o'clock in the pleasure-loving town. The noon gun was noticeable only for its inaccuracy, its being sometimes five minutes fast and again five minutes slow. With gunpowder so high, it is hard to understand why the formality of these detonations was not dispensed with.

There is also on the waterfront a little park, called Emancipation Park. In its center stands a noble bust of the beloved Danish king, Christian

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IX. Here the excellent little native band plays twice a week. Yet another small park in the town is known by a name more utilitarian than beautiful, "Coconut Square." This park also is most attractive with its native shrubs and bougainvillea trees.

Near Emancipation Park and Christian's Fort are the large barracks of the *gendarmerie*, erected in 1829. These can house two hundred or more soldiers, but during the latter days of the Danish occupation it was necessary to keep only about sixteen gendarmes on the island.

There is one theatre, the Apollo Theatre, in Coconut Square. This is seldom used, for traveling theatrical companies do not find it profitable to come to St. Thomas. Local entertainments are held here, and it is probable that, since so many American sailors and marines are to be stationed on the island, the building will be used frequently for motion pictures.

As mentioned, the sanitary conditions of Charlotte-Amalia as a whole are extremely good and there is little disease. An excellent hospital was built by the Danish Government, with all up-to-date appliances. Nurses and physicians were sent out from the mother country.

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The large parade ground, which lies on the eastern limits of the town, is fringed with a wonderful array of mahogany trees. In former days, this was used for the military parades of the garrison. To-day games such as cricket and football are played here.

It is one of the pleasant customs of Charlotte-Amalia to welcome its more popular returning sons with the strains of its little band, which will be assembled upon the landing-wharf on their arrival; and this welcome is typical of the spirit of the kindly, hospitable town. In fact, there is no hospitality like that found in Charlotte-Amalia. It is the delight of the inhabitants to welcome the stranger within their gates, not only with words, but also with gifts of the wonderful flowers that are raised on the island. Unpopular indeed is the lady visitor, coming with proper introductions, who is not greeted every other morning or so by a dusky servitor with an enormous bouquet of roses or lilies such as a New York florist would envy, and the message: "Mrs. So-and-So's compliments." The word "compliments" is extensively used by these happy people; it designates greetings, love and thoughtful kindness such as is not often found elsewhere.

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Travelers may speak as they will of the delights of the floral tributes of Hawaii; these cannot compare with the offerings made by the St. Thomians to their visiting friends. The custom is not restricted to the upper classes, for it is no unusual thing for the servants to bring flowers to their employers. This is not done in any spirit of sycophancy, but only from a warm-hearted desire to please.

And then the dinners and festivities provided for the visitor! It is almost impossible to escape from them, and the more formal affairs make one think of the eighteenth century ceremonial banquets. Old wines are produced from the cellars, toasts are drunk, and wonderful food is prepared for these feasts by old negro cooks from whose looks none would suspect an ability to produce the most Lucullean dishes without the aid of a cook book!

Happy indeed is life in Charlotte-Amalia. Any right-minded visitor cannot but feel a thrill in later years when memories come to him of days spent on "the blessed island."

Curious old-time customs still prevail in the town. On Christmas night carols are sung in the

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streets and native bands circulate through the town with the singers. Most of the singers in these bands play on the flute, the guitar or an instrument called a "scratchy-scratch." This latter instrument is made from a long calabash upon which grooves have been cut which, when scraped with a piece of wire, produce a weird sound that does not go badly with the other instruments. The voices of the negroes, while a trifle melancholy, are not unmusical.

New Year's Day is the great festival. Singing and dancing take place in the streets, beginning as early as three in the morning. At daybreak the performers join in a body under the balcony of the governor's residence and the official in charge is supposed to appear and make a speech. Then eatables and drinkables are distributed among the merry-makers, and a small amount of money is given to each. Later in the day the streets are filled with the so-called "maskers"—natives who have dressed themselves in carnival costumes, and who, in small bands, visit their friends and employers to wish them the compliments of the season and, incidentally, to receive some liquid refreshment. The performers are well-mannered

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and not too noisy, and the police do not often find it necessary to interfere with their merry-making.

Although of late years the trade of St. Thomas has fallen off sadly, a number of steamship lines still call at the port regularly. The Quebec Steamship Company's steamers arrive bi-monthly from New York and on their return voyage from the Leeward Islands and the Guyanas again touch here. The motor-ships of the East-Asiatic Company call on their way to Denmark from Oriental ports by way of the Panama Canal. The inter-colonial steamer of the *Compagnie Generale Transatlantique*, trading between Martinique, Guadeloupe, Porto Rico, Santo Domingo and Cuba touches at St. Thomas on both its outward and homeward-bound voyage. The Leyland Line ships put into the port every six weeks on the way from England to Jamaica. The Bull-Insular Line comes here every two weeks with a small steamer to obtain freight for its large cargo-vessels plying between Porto Rico and New York and to bring passengers to St. Thomas and receive passengers for Porto Rico. In addition to these, many cargo-ships call in order to obtain coal for their bunkers. A small motor-vessel also makes weekly trips to Fajardo

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from Porto Rico and carries the mail in both directions.

Before the outbreak of the European War a far larger number of steamship companies made St. Thomas a regular port of call. The Hamburg-American Line, which established its chief depot in the Antilles on St. Thomas, had as many as fifteen steamers per month during the first six months of 1914. Accurate figures are not available as to the number or tonnage of vessels now calling at the port, but, in order to obtain an idea of the facilities offered by this excellent harbor, it may be stated that in 1913 two hundred vessels called here, while during the first half of 1914 this number was materially increased. Since the outbreak of the European War, a large percentage of the St. Thomians have been thrown out of work and have been forced to leave the island because of the decrease in the number of arriving steamers.

There are six docks on the waterfront from which coal can be supplied to ships, or where cargo can be discharged or taken on board. Vessels drawing up to thirty-one feet of water can moor alongside these docks. In addition to these facilities an anchorage for an incredibly large number

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of ships can be found in the harbor itself, and these can be discharged by means of lighters owned by private companies and steamship agents. In 1867 a floating dry-dock was launched. This had a lifting capacity of three thousand tons. It failed to work, and was not repaired and put into active operation until 1875. Since then it has lifted over eleven hundred large ships. This dock is generally used by the smaller steamers which ply around the islands of Santo Domingo and Porto Rico, and those in inter-insular service in the northern part of the Leeward Islands. The only other docks in the West Indies are at Trinidad, Havana and Jamaica. For this reason, St. Thomas can depend upon a steady amount of work of this character.

Various shipyards offer facilities for the docking of small sailing vessels and the repairing of the machinery of steamers.

A cable comes to St. Thomas from Jamaica and Panama and connects this island with the Leeward Islands, so that there is telegraphic communication with all parts of the world. The two excellent little newspapers published in the island, one a daily paper, the other and larger one a bi-weekly, obtain their foreign news from the bulletins pro-

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vided by this cable company. Another cable connects St. Thomas with the island of St. Croix. This cable was laid by the Danish Government and was used principally for government business. There is no telegraphic communication between St. Thomas and St. John.

St. Thomas does a fair amount of inter-colonial trade, and, since its acquisition by the United States the local merchants look for a substantial increase in their business. In the year preceding the sale of the islands, more of this island's foreign trade of St. Thomas went to the United States than to any other country. During the fiscal year ending March 31, 1916, the total trade amounted to \$734,680. In this amount the United States shared to the extent of \$332,286. Imports at St. Thomas constitute about seventy per cent. of the total imports for all three islands.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ISLAND OF BEAUTIFUL VIEWS

TO "MA FOLIE" ON PONYBACK—FINDING HIDDEN TREASURES ON THE SHORES OF MAGENS BAY—WHAT THE KITCHEN-MIDDENS REVEALED—AN ABANDONED SUGAR ESTATE AND A RUINED MISSION STATION—A HUNTERS' PARADISE—MORE ABANDONED ESTATES AND A HAUNTED RUIN—CURIOUS CEMETERY ORNAMENTS—THE "GRAVE-YARD OF SHIPS" AND A GHOSTLY ARRAY OF FIGURE-HEADS—ESCAPING SLAVES AND PICTURESQUE "CHA-CHAS"

**T**O learn thoroughly the island of St. Thomas one must either be a good pedestrian or obtain a sure-footed pony. There are practically no carriage roads. The only roads which allow a fairly long drive lead from Charlotte-Amalia to Brewer's Bay, about three miles west of the town, or from Charlotte-Amalia to Water Bay, about five miles east. This latter road, however, is none too good, and it has some stiff hills which make a strong horse a necessity. But what St. Thomas lacks in carriage roads it makes up in attractive mountain trails and bridle paths.

Perhaps the first excursion which a visitor with plenty of time at his disposal should take is to Ma Folie, an estate lying upon one of the crests of the



OLD RESIDENCE AND GATEWAY, CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG, ST. THOMAS



**PANORAMIC VIEW OF ST. THOMAS HARBOR, SHOWING CHARLOTTE-AMALIA AND THREE OF ITS FOUR HILLS UPON WHICH THE TOWN IS BUILT**  
Delanois Hill to Right, Government Hill with Blackbeard's Castle on Left and, on Left, in Distance, Luchetti's Hill with Bluebeard's Castle

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main mountain range of the island, on which can be seen the stone obelisk erected by the Brazilian astronomers when they established a station to observe the transit of Venus in 1882. The owner of this estate seems to have been aware of the futility of going in for agriculture on the precipitous slopes of his land, and named it "My Folly" in consequence.

The road leading to Ma Folie makes a stiff ascent from the town, but the view from the summit well pays for all the labor involved. It is always possible on St. Thomas to obtain hardy little ponies suitable for and accustomed to the mountain trails, and they can be hired at small cost. It is well, though, to try out a hired animal on a level stretch before using him on a steep path.

The summit of Ma Folie once reached, there is spread out what is perhaps one of the most wonderful views in the Antilles. Directly below, one sees the town of Charlotte-Amalia and the harbor of St. Thomas with its variety of ships of all nationalities. In the far distance Buck Island and Frenchman's Cap can be seen, and on clear days the mountains of the island of St. Croix. To the west, Culebra and Vieques seem to beckon the

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visitor toward the misty elevation of the mainland of Porto Rico. To the north, the seas seem studded with little islands. Hans Lollik, Little Hans Lollik, Outer Brass, Inner Brass, and the Cockroach and Cricket resemble nothing so much as emeralds in an azure setting. To the east an even larger number of cays and islands are visible, and even Virgin Gorda of the British Virgin Islands looms up, while Sage Mountain on Tortola is a prominent feature. The bays and inlets on St. Thomas itself astound with their beauty the visitor unaccustomed to the blues of West Indian seas and the cream-colored sands of the shores.

A road leads both east and west from Ma Folie. Following this road to the eastward the tourist comes to the Louisenhöh estate and to a road named the King Road which leads, by way of the Canaan estate, to the wonderful Magens Bay. Of all the scenic splendors on the island, this bay stands alone. Its waters run through all shades and variations, from a delicate green to a sapphire blue, and its fringe of white beach forms a vivid contrast to the brown and gray of the rocks on the peninsula of Picara which forms its eastern boundary.

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It was on the shores of this bay that the expedition sent out by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, of New York City, was successful in locating the remains of the village site of the aboriginal tribe that lived on the island previous to the coming of the Spanish discoverers.

There can be no doubt that Magens Bay was an ideal location for the Indian village. In the first place the bay is well sheltered, with the exception of northerly storms, and its sloping, sandy beach made the hauling up of canoes an easy matter. Then the presence of the giant *Ceiba* (cottonwood) trees on the hill slopes near by assured the Indians of an unfailing supply of material for their dug-out canoes.

The waters of Magens Bay abound not only with shell food but with fish of all kinds. Birds and bird-eggs and the now extinct *Isolobodon portoricensis* (a mammal about the size of a rabbit) helped to supply the Indian's wants for animal food. And the hills and valleys to the back of Magens Bay undoubtedly served admirably for the cultivation of cassava, yucca and the hundred and one fruits that make life delightful in the West

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Indies. Pools and springs furnished the Indian household with the required water.

To fix the actual location of the Magens Bay village site was a difficult matter, for the dense brush with which the shores of the bay was covered made the search for low mounds almost impossible. Minute pottery fragments were widely scattered, but, as the water courses which exist in the Magens Bay valley during the rainy season undoubtedly were responsible for the distribution of these fragments, they did not serve as a guide to the spot where excavations were to begin.

At last an uprooted tree solved the problem. An examination of the cavity left by the roots of a large "turpentine tree" which had been overturned by the recent hurricane, brought to light many shells and several large postsherds. Then the realization came that, since the days of the aborigines, the entire Magens Bay valley had been covered by a two foot deposit of diluvium, and that in consequence it was of no use to look for hummocks or mounds of pre-historic origin on the surface of a valley covered and made almost level by the decomposed humus.

Owing to the dense undergrowth, it was found

MOUNTAIN PATH LEADING TO MA FOLEY, ST. THOMAS





**PANORAMIC VIEW OF MAGENS BAY, NORTH COAST OF ST. THOMAS**  
Showing Picara Point on Right and Outer Brass Cay in Mouth of Bay

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necessary to employ a gang of men to chop down the brushwood and smaller trees and then to burn them. When the ground was cleared, it became possible to observe the presence of a ten foot high mound which merged with the slope of a small hill against which it lay.

Excavations were started in this mound by a considerable number of workmen and a trench was commenced which had a semi-circular shape, a width of about seventy-five feet and a breadth of perhaps thirty feet. The eastern slope of this mound was limited by the slope of the hill, and the western slope was terminated by a little path which ran through the undergrowth. The mound, as has been stated, was almost indiscernible; it was impossible to make out where the mound stopped and the hill slope began until after the excavations had been made. In fact, had it not been for the fallen tree, it might have been a long time before the expedition would have started excavations in this particular spot, because the appearance of the ground made one think more of a hill slope than of a pre-Columbian deposit.

The process of digging for prehistoric treasures of Indian pottery is interesting. First a trench

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some thirty feet wide was made in an easterly direction, toward the slope of the hill. Then a hole some six feet wide was dug over the entire length of the trench—in this instance thirty feet—and from this an excavation was made down to the original bottom which existed before the forming of the Indian mound. While making such a hole, it is difficult to prevent breakage of the artifacts that may be found, as work with a pick and shovel in a perpendicular direction is not conducive to the preservation of specimens of a friable nature. Once the hole is made, however, the workmen are able to proceed in a straight direction by undermining the wall of the trench in the lowest part of the excavation. It will then be found that the earth, shells and ashes will fall down by their own weight and it becomes an easy matter to pick the Indian specimens from the debris. The bottom of the excavation is always kept as clean as possible so that smaller artifacts, such as stone beads and amulets, can be the more easily discovered.

The formation of an Indian kitchen-midden, or refuse heap, is a curious process. In the Magens Bay middens, beginning on the surface, one finds a deposit, about two feet thick, of diluvium. This

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deposit is somewhat lighter in color than those immediately below. The diluvium or humus was formed in the course of centuries, after the Indians had abandoned the site, by a decomposition of the leaves, branches, roots, et cetera, that fell upon the surface of the mound. The grasses growing upon the surface formed a kind of sod, and, what with this and the intertwining of the roots of the trees and bushes, the first layer was quite tough, and hard enough to dig in. Under the first layer came two others, both of these being about three feet thick.

These latter layers were constituted of a mixture of humus, ashes, charcoal, artifacts, shells and the bones of such animals as were eaten by the Indians. Occasionally a burial was found in the lower of the two layers, but fully eighty per cent. of the burials were found in the sea sand directly under the two layers caused by the Indian occupation.

While the majority of the artifacts found in the two layers directly under the diluvial deposit were the fragments of broken vessels, there were sometimes entire vessels. In the majority of cases these vessels accompanied burials, and, in conse-

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quence, had been buried entire. Probably they were filled with food stuffs which were to serve the departed for his journey to the Great Beyond. But sometimes a vessel would turn up in the Magens Bay deposits which was not accompanied by a burial. Probably this had been discarded by its Indian owner, owing to a flaw in the ware, or else had been buried accidentally under a mound of shells.

The Indians probably deposited their dead in the original surface of sea sand some seven feet below the surface of the mound. The practise of burials in the floors of dwellings was not uncommon on many of the West Indian islands, as has been proven by the researches of other investigators. Of the nine burials that were found on the Magens Bay site, seven were of adults and two of children. Six of the burials were accompanied by mortuary vessels, but outside of these vessels no other objects were found with the dead. The vessels were of the plainest construction, without decoration, and so were in great contrast to the elaborately decorated vessels that are found on the islands to the westward, Porto Rico and Santo Domingo. Judging from these and from



**CROSS-SECTION OF ABORIGINAL MOUND, MAGENS  
BAY, ST. THOMAS**



**KING ROAD, NEAR MAGENS BAY, ST. THOMAS**



**CLEARING LAND BY FIRE, MAGENS BAY, ST. THOMAS**



**LABORERS EXCAVATING IN PRE-HISTORIC DEPOSITS, MAGENS BAY, ST. THOMAS**

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other objects found in the deposits, the aborigines of St. Thomas were decidedly not of Arawak stock.

The only other aboriginal deposit found on St. Thomas was an extensive shell-heap on Krum Bay, on the south coast of the island. No Indian specimens were found in this, and the only plausible theory to account for the presence of these shells is that the Indians went from the north coast over the mountain ridge to Krum Bay to fish for these shells, opened them on the spot, and then carried the mollusks to their homes at Magens Bay. An extensive and thorough survey of the bays of the island convinced the expedition that no other village site could be found on St. Thomas.

An exploration of the valley of Magens Bay will reveal the ruins of the buildings of a forgotten plantation, "Eenigheit," which was erected by the earliest Dutch settlers. These remains are known to but few present-day inhabitants of the island, and one has considerable difficulty in locating them. They lie about half a mile inland. Near the shore is some other masonry, as well as an old cannon or two. Evidently the canny Dutch settlers did not seem inclined to live here without taking

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necessary precaution against the raids of sea rovers and assaults from other enemies.

Another most attractive road, to the eastward of Charlotte-Amalia, leads by the extensive ruins of what once was one of the largest sugar estates of the island. What is now used as pasture land for the herds that provide the town with its daily supply of fresh milk was at one time a waving field of sugar-cane. Here is practically the only level area of any extent that can be found on St. Thomas. The remains of an abandoned wind-mill speak of the days when the sugar-cane was ground by the rollers of a mill operated by the sea breezes or by the mules which walked in an unceasing circle. The juice from the cane ran into open kettles under which were enormous fires, and the heat brought about the evaporation of the sugar. From a modern point of view this method would be considered wasteful and expensive, but that it was profitable in the eighteenth century is proven by the ruins of the handsome residence which the planters were able to erect.

Continuing along this road, one comes to the Moravian missionary station of New Hernhut, .

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erected in 1737. The history of the estate and of the Moravian Brethren on the island is interesting. The first missionaries sent out were received on sufferance by the planters, who were violently opposed to the Brethren's efforts to improve the condition of their slaves.

A tree is still shown on St. Thomas under which the Moravian services were held for a long time, as the missionaries were too poor to erect a building and no one on the island was kindly enough disposed toward their efforts to lend them one. Finally, in 1737, a benevolent planter assisted them in purchasing a small estate, which was named New Hernhut, after the Hernhut Seminary whence the Brethren came.

Opposition to the Moravians grew, and the planters finally forbade their slaves to attend their services, fearing that the kindly treatment accorded the unfortunate Africans might make them discontented with their lot and lead to future revolts. In spite of this opposition and many other trials, the mission of New Hernhut prospered and to-day the Moravians are a power for good on the island. One cannot but have great admiration for these people, not only because they are earnest teachers

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of religion, but because they teach the natives the use of tools.

The missionaries have always personally assisted in the erection of their buildings and are as adept in the handling of tools as they are in expounding a theological doctrine. They owned slaves for many years, but they liberated those they held in 1844, four years before emancipation became a fact by royal decree.

The New Hernhut station was severely damaged by the hurricane of 1867 and was allowed to fall into ruins. Since then the missionary in charge has contented himself with humbler quarters on the estate. There is a fairly large church, as well as a school which is well patronized by the natives who live in the neighborhood. Of the old buildings, the ruins of the large kitchen are especially noticeable.

After passing New Hernhut, the road leads by the old Tutu Estate, another landmark of the days when St. Thomas derived as great wealth from its agriculture and its slaves as from the commerce that came to its harbor. The Tutu Estate is situated on what is said to be one of the healthiest spots on the island, and it is a favorite



**RUINS OF STAIRWAY, NEW HERNHUT MORAVIAN  
MISSION STATION, ST. THOMAS**



**RUINS OF OLD MORAVIAN MISSION STATION, NEW HERNHUT, ST. THOMAS**



**RUINS OF MANDAL ESTATE, ST. THOMAS**



**NEGRO FISHING WITH CASTING NET, ST. THOMAS**

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recuperating resort for those worn out by the summer heat in town.

The road finally leads to Water Bay, on the east coast of the island, where is a small settlement of fishermen who live in somewhat precarious poverty. These natives pursue their calling in the waters between St. Thomas and St. John and sell their catch in the market of Charlotte-Amalia.

Water Bay, like all bays of these regions, abounds with pelicans, and it is interesting to watch the graceful dives of these seemingly clumsy birds, made in order to obtain their quota of food. Their method of fishing differs from that frequently employed by the local fishermen, who have become expert in the use of a peculiar type of casting net, shaped like a parachute, the outside edge weighted with leaden balls. The fisherman wades into the water and detects a school of small fish. With an indescribably quick motion he then throws the net—which has been carefully folded into small compass—in such a manner that it opens out and drops on the school of fish. The fish, becoming entangled in the meshes, are the fisherman's property.

In this region and in the Red Hook district the

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followers of Nimrod and Isaac Walton can find ample opportunity to satisfy their desire for sport. European fallow-deer were imported by some of the early European settlers and can still be found and hunted, although there are so few left and they have become so wild that hunting them becomes an arduous sport indeed. At certain times of the year pigeons abound and make excellent shooting, especially at dusk when they fly from the woods, where they have been gathering berries, to their nests in the mangrove trees. Ducks are also found on some of the small ponds and lagoons. At any time of the year one can hunt a large variety of the delicious wood-dove, which is found in considerable numbers.

Because of the importation of the East Indian mongoose other birds have become scarce. This supposedly useful animal, after finding that the rats he was to destroy did not offer as easy a prey as the young birds and that the birds' eggs were quite to his liking, turned his attention to these. Soon he was successful in annihilating the greater part of the bird life of the island.

One occasionally sees the agouti (*Dasyprocta agouti*) on the island. A few of these small Brazil-

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ian mammals, which resemble an overgrown guinea pig, must, at some forgotten time, have been set loose on the island by a practical joker. They have multiplied wonderfully.

To the south of Water Bay the entire east coast of St. Thomas is barren and dry. But little water is found here, and the vegetation resembles that of an arid tropical region. Those of the people who keep cattle or horses are obliged to go elsewhere for fodder. It is their usual practice to procure grass for their animals on Thatch Cay, bringing this home in their canoes.

There are in circulation many stories regarding the presence of piratical treasure on Thatch Cay, and every once in awhile some enthusiastic St. Thomians will repair here and spend time in arduous excavations of parts of the cay. Up to date, however, these efforts have not been crowned with success, and it is more than probable that the treasure will forever remain lost to posterity.

Another charming excursion that can be taken to the east of Charlotte-Amalia is a trip to the old Windberg Estate, with a further trip to the summit of Windberg itself. Windberg was well named "Windy Hill" by the first planter who

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owned land here, as even on the most sultry days there is upon its crest a constant chilly breeze. But little remains of the old building, which was one of the first and most important plantation houses on the island. The walls and upper stories of the "Great House," as the owner's residence was always called in slave times, have been blown down by the successive hurricanes since the estate was left uncultivated after the abolition of slavery. But a tessellated floor of imported marble speaks volumes for the ease and luxury in which the old-time settlers lived, and the ruins of an enormous bake oven alongside the kitchen tell of the hospitality for which St. Thomas was famous.

After examining the remains of the house, the traveler does well to make the precipitous ascent of the hill itself. Elevated perhaps twelve hundred feet above sea level, its crest offers a view to the eastward over St. John and the British Virgin Islands that rivals in beauty the seascape observed from Ma Folie. And even if the little trail is hard to ascend, and one lives in fear that one's pony may slip while clambering upward, every visitor to the island should make the climb; it will prove a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

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After visiting Windberg, instead of returning by the same road, it is possible to take a road to the north coast and to return by the King Road to Magens Bay. This route leads past the Mandal Estate, where the unusually large ruins of an ancient sugar factory again speak of the former agricultural resources of St. Thomas. It is popularly believed by the natives that these ruins were at one time inhabited by an unfortunate sufferer from that dread tropical disease, leprosy, and that he died here in solitude and still haunts the spot. One cannot hire a St. Thomian of the lower classes to pass this road after nightfall, and even in the light of day those who are really superstitious unconsciously hasten their footsteps and show a desire to pass this spot as quickly as possible.

In this district the hill slopes are covered with large forests of turpentine trees, perhaps the least attractive of West Indian trees, and certainly the most worthless of the flora of the Antilles. They have gawky, brown limbs and trunk, and one wonders to what use they can be put, or why an attractive landscape should be spoiled by their presence. The wood contains too much resin to make the tree of use for lumber, and yet the

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quantity is not enough to make the extraction of turpentine profitable. Furthermore, wherever forests of these trees are found, other vegetation seems to languish. The presence of these trees is therefore rather undesirable and a detriment to an estate.

Before reaching the road leading down to Magens Bay, the visitor passes an estate named Lovenlund, which is now used for the raising of cattle.

In addition to the routes named, a multitude of small trails over the hills offer interesting excursions to the visitor to the eastern part of the island. Each trip he takes makes him eager for the pleasures that can be found in further explorations of the bypaths with a good horse.

The excursions to be made west on St. Thomas are also of great interest. On leaving the outskirts of the town, the traveler first passes the three different cemeteries that are kept in order by various congregations. Perhaps one of the most curious customs of the island is the manner in which the graves are ornamented. No rocks are found locally that are sufficiently hard and durable to serve as tombstones, so a St. Thomian makes



**A "GUT" AND STREET MADE LIKE A STAIRWAY  
CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



**NATIVE GRAVE ORNAMENTED WITH CONCH SHELLS, ST. THOMAS**



**FIGURE-HEADS OF OLD SAILING VESSELS IN KRUM BAY SHIPTYARD, ST. THOMAS**



**KRUM BAY WITH SHIPTYARD AND COCONUT TREES DESTROYED BY HURRICANE  
ST. THOMAS**

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use of conch shells to ornament the graves of his dear ones. These shells, the mouths of which are a vivid pink, are set in the concrete edge surrounding the grave and they form a decoration that is attractive even if it is somewhat unusual. On some West Indian islands a cemetery is synonymous with a thicket which has the appearance of an abandoned jungle, but on St. Thomas the cemeteries indicate loving care. Even upon the most humble grave may be seen a small bunch of flowers, sometimes placed in a broken bottle. These flowers show as much thought as the most elaborate floral tribute on the graves of those whose families are endowed with more worldly goods.

After passing these burying grounds, the road branches to the north and to the south, and the southern and more level road leads by another Moravian missionary station named Niesky. This is of somewhat later date than the New Hernhut station, but is in far better preservation and to-day is of more importance. Here is a very pretty little church and an imposing three-storied residence for the missionary in charge. There is also a school of some one hundred and fifty pupils under direct supervision of the missionary.

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The next point of interest on this road is Krum Bay, where is the important supply station of the West India and Panama Telegraph Company. This station was practically totally destroyed by the recent hurricane. Several of the smaller buildings were completely turned over and storehouses with their valuable contents were greatly damaged. A plantation of coconut trees suffered a like fate, the tops of the trees being damaged to such an extent that they will never again bear fruit.

The tanks in which the submarine cables are kept in sea water, to prevent deterioration of their rubber coverings, are an interesting sight. It is a strange fact that rubber, which finds its origin in tropical countries, does not withstand the climatic conditions of the tropics once it has been prepared. In consequence, cable companies in these regions are forced to keep their spare cables constantly submerged.

Directly across from the station of the telegraph company is the wrecking-yard which has made Krum Bay famous to dozens of marine insurance companies, and is of prime interest to all visitors to the island. For years, whenever a ship was forced to put into St. Thomas harbor in

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distress, in a dismantled or leaking condition, it was necessary for the agent of the underwriters to decide whether the vessel was worth repairing by the insurance companies, or if it should be written off their books as a total loss. It is whispered that on most occasions the inspectors found it necessary to condemn a disabled vessel. The vessel then was put up at public auction and sold for a mere song. The next procedure was to take the ship to Krum Bay, where it was stripped of its valuable parts, such as rigging, winches, anchors, masts, yards, et cetera. Then, if the ship was of wood, it was burned in order to save the copper nails and sheathing in its hull. Krum Bay, in consequence, has often been named "the graveyard of ships," and for many years it was held in bad odor by the insurance companies.

Of late years, however, these conditions have been changed, and the wrecking-yard pursues the legitimate calling of providing missing parts for storm-tossed ships which come to St. Thomas for repairs.

The owner of the shipping yard has a small museum of curiosities which he at different times saved from ships, such as old style compasses,

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barometers, signal cannon, and a thousand and one other articles found on ancient wind-jammers before the advent of steam made navigation a matter of exact science. Here also is a strange collection of figure-heads from old sailing ships. The owner has around his dwelling house and repair shops perhaps eighteen or twenty of these curious relics. On one side is Joan of Arc, a gaudily dressed female who once was the pride of a sailing vessel of that name. Then a respectable old gentleman in a white choker collar calls to mind an old whaling captain, who not only gave his name to the ship he owned but found it necessary to embellish his command with his own effigy. An American eagle speaks of the days when the fame of clipper ships was undimmed, and a Pocahontas, in conventional Indian dress with buckskin moccasins, brings to mind the picture of a staunch old sailing vessel from a southern port.

The owner of the yard is inordinately fond of these figure-heads and will not part with them at any price. Every year he decorates his charges with coats of paints of many hues, and he is only too glad to relate their history to visitors who call at his establishment.

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The road to the westward leads on to Mosquito Bay, where there is opportunity for excellent sea bathing. Beyond this comes Brewer's Bay, one of the most charming inlets on the island. The road then ascends the mountain range, and, after passing a few small settlements consisting of two or three houses, finally comes to Botany Bay on the extreme western end of the island. From Botany Bay, in plantation days, escaping slaves made their way to Porto Rico by way of the small cays which lie between St. Thomas and Porto Rico. They made the dangerous journey in canoes, which they either stole from their owners or found opportunity to manufacture. The returning of these escaped slaves was always a matter of controversy between the Danish or Dutch owners and the Spanish authorities on Porto Rico, since the latter claimed that the slaves came to Porto Rico to be baptized in the Catholic religion. This was their excuse for retaining the valuable property. While the slaves went to Porto Rico to escape the cruelties of Danish or Dutch owners, history does not state that they received any kinder treatment from the Spaniards, who were never noted for their gentleness toward those they held in bondage.

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Throughout St. Thomas are small patches of cultivated land which are tilled by the so-called "cha-chas." These patches are frequently located on the precipitous slopes of the mountains and it is a wonder that the roots of plants can take hold there and that the agriculturists can keep their balance while engaged in tilling the soil. These cha-chas are white settlers who came originally from the Dutch and French Leeward Islands. They have not intermarried with the negroes and they live to themselves, resenting any outside interference with their affairs. They are a hard drinking race, yet they are among the most industrious people on the island, and are especially good canoemen. Their canoes are not much better than boxes made from scraps of wood, but they manage not only to get about in them but also to prevent themselves from getting drowned. With their ruddy faces, stiffly starched blue shirts, tight white trousers and broad-brimmed straw hats of their own manufacture, they present a curious and unusual appearance.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ROMANTIC STORY OF ST. JOHN

IN THE DAYS OF COMPANY RULE—ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST SETTLERS—ENCOURAGEMENTS TO GROWERS OF SUGAR-CANE—THE HARSH MEASURES THAT INCITED A SLAVE INSURRECTION—A CAPTURED FORT, A SIEGE RELIEVED AND GUERILLA WARFARE—THE AFTERMATH OF THE REBELLION—INCREASING POPULATION

**H**ISTORY does not tell the exact year in which St. John was settled. As early as 1687 the Danish West India and Guinea Company seems to have laid claim not only to St. Thomas but also to St. John and Crab (Vieques) Islands; at any rate the appointment papers of Governor Adolph Esmit, who succeeded Governor Milan in that year, included all these islands under his charge. This may, of course, have been an idle claim on the part of the company and an unwarranted assumption of authority over islands to which they had no right. Three years earlier, in 1684, with the aid of two merchants from Barbadoes, an attempt seems to have been made to set up an establishment of a sort on St. John, but Governor Stapleton of the Leeward Islands sent two sloops and drove away the forty odd men that had established themselves there.

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In 1688 the Governor of St. Thomas was instructed by the directors of the West India Company to place from four to six men on the island of St. John and to encourage them to begin planting, but it was not until 1717 that these plans were actually carried out. In 1716 the governor of St. Thomas wrote his directors that a number of his charges were anxious to settle on St. John, but that they were afraid to do so because the British from Tortola would allow no one of another nationality to go there and cut timber. In reply the directors sent instructions that the British claims to St. John were to be disregarded. Consequently, in 1717, Governor Erik Bredal took passage on an armed vessel with twenty planters, sixteen negroes, five soldiers and one officer, and landed on St. John in Coral Harbor Bay.

The governor afterwards reported the adventures of the expedition, as follows:

"I have planted there the flag of our most gracious king, and fired a salute, and then we feasted, and drunk the health, first of our sovereign, and then of the Company. Later, I selected a place on which to build a fort and a level place beneath it on which a village can stand. The harbor here



CRUZ BAY SETTLEMENT AND GOVERNMENT STATION, ST. JOHN



**MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT OF EMMAUS, ST. JOHN**  
Destroyed by Hurricane of October 9-10, 1916

## THE ROMANTIC STORY OF ST. JOHN

is quite secure and when a person is in it, he sees land all about him. I have permitted the planters to indicate which pieces of land they preferred and have selected a place for the Company's plantation just a cannon-shot distance from the fort which is to be built there. Later, the planters have returned because of their fear of the English and are simply waiting cautiously to see what the latter will attempt."

Although the planters returned to St. Thomas in trepidation, fearing an invasion by the British, the little garrison sent by the governor seems to have been made of sterner stuff. The sixteen negroes, helped by the five soldiers and commanded by the Danish officer, cleared ground around the site selected for the fort and made a road through the brush on which to drag the nine-pounders that were to be mounted on the redoubts.

When the discovery was made that the Danes really intended to claim St. John and that, if necessary, they were ready to defend their claim, the governor of the Leeward Islands dispatched a man-of-war to Charlotte-Amalia to remonstrate with Governor Bredal and to intimidate him with threats of an armed descent upon the infant colony.

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Bredal returned a message to the British authorities that he was but following out the directions given him from Copenhagen. Forthwith he notified his directors of the threats that had been made, at the same time pleading for the sending from Denmark of a reinforcement of a hundred men. Having additional forces, he seems to have considered that any British attempt to dislodge the new settlement on St. John was doomed to failure.

St. John soon attracted other settlers from the neighboring island of St. Thomas, as can be gathered from the fact that by 1720 thirty-nine planters had received deeds to estates on the island. Exemptions from taxation were granted for the first eight years of residence and settlers were allowed to take as much lime and wood as they wanted free of cost in order to enable them to erect their buildings. They were requested to set up their sugar mills within five years after the land grant was made, and, in the event that they did not carry out this stipulation, their property was to revert to the West India Company.

Not only did the new plantations prove to be more productive than those on less fertile St. Thomas, but grants of land to each settler were

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also fifty per cent. larger, so that it was not long before prosperity began to show itself and the island became a large sugar producing center.

The settlers were of all nationalities, but the majority were of Dutch stock. Evidences of Dutch blood on the island are not lacking to-day, as many of the place-names are in the Dutch language. In 1733 St. John had a population of two hundred and eight whites and ten hundred and eighty-seven negro slaves.

On November 13, 1733, a serious revolt of the St. John slaves took place. This revolt was indirectly due to the harsh measures adopted by Governor Gardelin, who, in order to stop the escapes of Africans to the neighboring island of Porto Rico, published a proclamation which imposed dire penalties for the punishment of offenders. The leader of runaway slaves was to be pinched thrice with red hot irons and then hung. Every runaway slave was to lose one leg or one ear, or he was to receive one hundred and fifty stripes in case his owner preferred that he be given the latter punishment. Any slave who knew of a plot to escape and did not inform his master was to be punished with a brand on the forehead as well as a hundred

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stripes. On the other hand, any slave who gave information of a plot was to be rewarded with ten dollars for every slave who proposed to take part in the plan to gain liberty. Any slave who lifted his hand against a white person was to be hung, in case the white person made this demand; if not, he was to lose his right hand. A slave who attempted to poison his master was to be pinched thrice with a red hot iron and then broken on the wheel. The proclamation that told of these penalties was to be repeated thrice a year to the beat of the drum.

The slaves resented these terrible measures, and soon an open revolt broke out. Secret preparations were made by them to surprise the garrison of the little fort overlooking Coral Bay, which was built in 1717. Here were stationed but eight soldiers, commanded by a sergeant, and one officer. On the morning of November 23, 1733, the sentinel observed at the entrance of the fort a small band of negroes, carrying fagots of wood. When they were challenged they said that they were coming with wood for the soldiers. But as soon as the negroes were inside the gate they dropped the fagots and massacred the garrison with the large

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cane-knives which had been hidden in the bundles. Only one soldier, who had hidden himself under a bed, escaped. Having disposed of the garrison, the victorious negroes gave the signal for a general massacre by firing three shots from the cannon on the fortifications. The murderous rebels then proceeded to the Caroline Estate, where they killed the judge of the island and his daughter, with twenty-five other men, women and children.

In the meantime many of the planters, together with their families and such slaves as remained faithful to them, had betaken themselves to the estate of Peter Duerloo, called Little Cinnamon Bay, now known as K. C. Bay, on the northwest corner of the island. As the estate was built on an eminence and defended by two small cannon, the refugees felt that they could defend themselves there against the embittered slaves. Another advantage was that they were within easy reach of St. Thomas. The women and children were sent by canoes to places of safety on nearby cays, while the men put their defenses in order and sent an urgent plea for assistance to the governor of St. Thomas.

A number of revolting slaves soon arrived at the Duerloo estate, but they suffered severely

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from a discharge of grapeshot which killed a number of them. Noting the preparations which had been made for defense, they could not summon enough courage to attempt to rush the improvised fort.

Not long afterwards a boat with some eighteen soldiers arrived from St. Thomas. The governor also dispatched a larger body of troops to Coral Bay, on the other end of the island. After traversing the island these troops relieved the siege of Little Cinnamon Bay.

For a time the revolting slaves were in command of the situation. With the exception of Duerloo's estate, the entire island of St. John was at their mercy. There was much pillaging and burning of estate houses and sugar factories; practically every estate suffered. Two attempts were made by the St. Thomas government to put an end to the uprising and to restore St. John to its legitimate owners. The authorities first secured the services of the captain of a British man-of-war that was just then paying a visit to Tortola. Landing forces from this frigate were ambushed by the negroes and were forced to withdraw with the loss of four wounded.

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Early in 1784, another British force of volunteers from the island of Nevis attempted to dislodge the rebels, but these troops also suffered defeat with a loss of three men killed and five wounded, and left the island quicker than they came.

During all these months, the slaves were in possession of the Coral Bay fort, which they seemed determined to hold at all odds, in spite of the fact that their supply of gunpowder was running low and that they had no means of obtaining a fresh stock.

Becoming desperate, the colonists finally appealed to the governor of the French island of La Martinique. This governor was informed that his men would be allowed to keep four-fifths of all the rebels captured, while the Danes would retain the remainder in order to punish them as an example and a warning to the slaves on St. Thomas in case they felt inclined to attempt a similar revolt. Two French barks were promptly dispatched with a body of two hundred and twenty men. To this force was added a Danish contingent, made up of the majority of the local soldiers, numerous planters and seventy-four loyal slaves from St. Thomas.

After a landing was effected in Coral Bay, a

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guerilla warfare was begun, for the negro forces, abandoning the fort and splitting up into separate bands, were pursued in all directions. So desperate had the situation of the revolting slaves become that some of them were forced to arm themselves with bows and arrows, owing to the lack of gunpowder.

It was not long before the pursuers were successful in their grim task. Numerous small bands of slaves were overtaken and killed after offering an unsuccessful resistance. Finally, on May 24, a small band of some twenty-four negroes was found dead in the jungle. Evidently the men had committed suicide when they found that their last hope of escape was gone and that the liberty for which they longed was forever out of their reach. It was then thought that all revolting negroes had been accounted for.

Twenty-seven captured slaves who had taken part in the revolution were summarily executed as a warning to possible future wrong-doers.

About two months after the departure of the French it was reported that a party of fourteen slaves were still at liberty. These also soon gave themselves up, relying on the promise of uncondi-

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tional pardon. This promise was not kept, however, and they were all put to death.

Of the ninety-two plantations on the island forty-eight had been damaged by the rebels, some of these having been totally destroyed. But another sad consequence of the affair was a quarrel between the planters and the Danish West India Company. The planters claimed that the original insurrection had been started on the Caroline Estate of the Company, by laborers belonging to the company. They also said that the fort had been left in an insecure condition and that it was not properly garrisoned, so that it had been easily surprised. For these reasons the planters refused to pay one-third of the expenses incurred in quelling the rebellion which the St. Thomas authorities wished to charge up to them.

While the rebellion was the cause of a great deal of loss to the planters, some of whom were forced to leave the island and settle on Tortola in order to escape their debts, St. John must have speedily recovered its prosperity. At any rate, records show that in 1789 the island had a population of 2383, of whom 167 were white, while 16 were free negroes and 2200 were slaves.

## CHAPTER VII

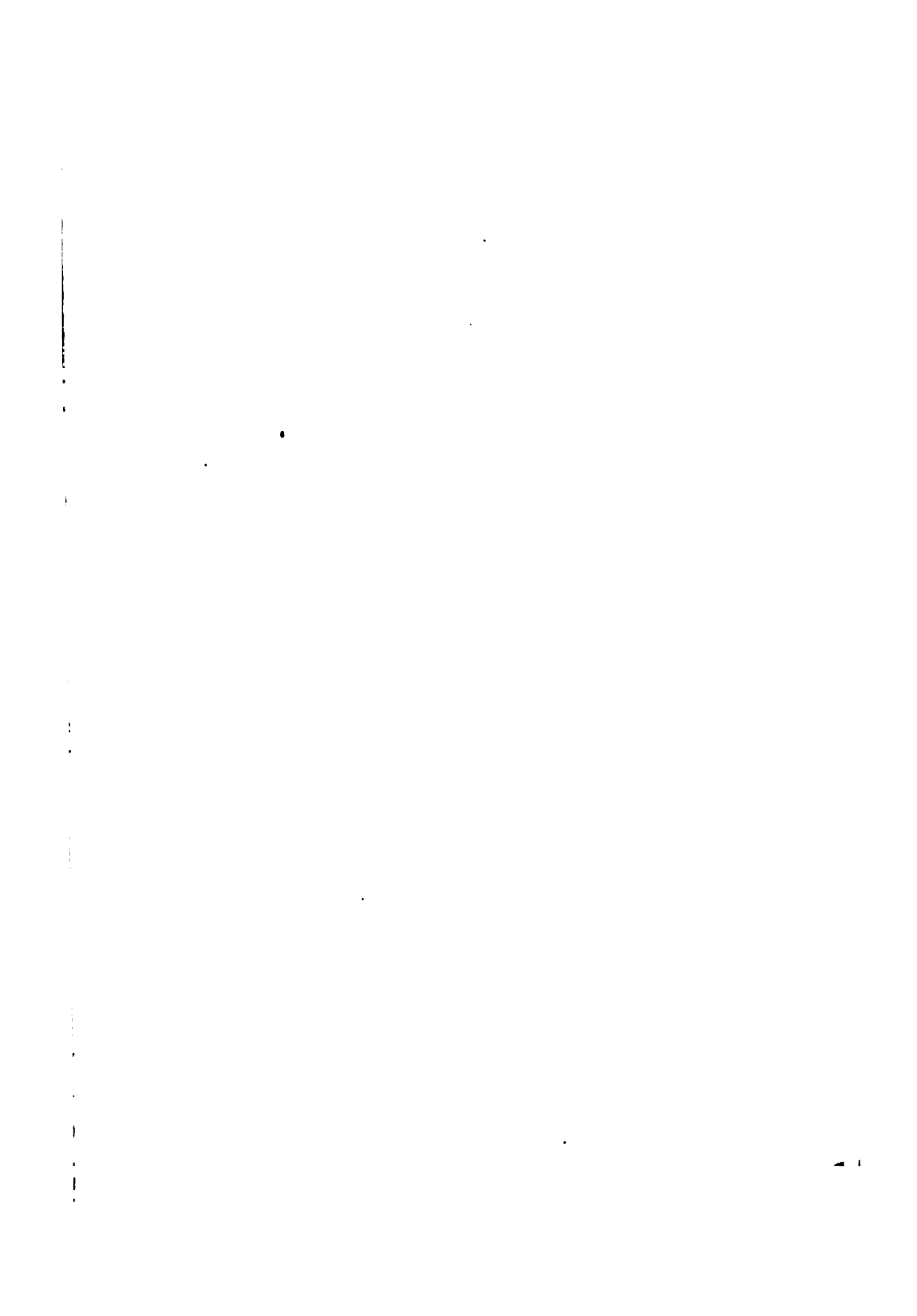
### AROUND ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF ST. JOHN—MARKETING BY SAILBOAT—THE NAMING OF K. C. BAY—THE MISTAKE OF THE CORAL BAY BOOMERS—AN ATTRACTIVE CLIMATE—AN ISLAND WHOSE PROSPEROUS DAYS ARE IN THE FUTURE

**S**T. JOHN lies in latitude 18 degrees, 20 minutes N. and longitude 64 degrees, 45 minutes W., and it is but three miles from the extreme western point of the island to the extreme eastern point of St. Thomas. Numerous cays lie between St. John and St. Thomas, but with the exception of Lovango Cay and Thatch Cay these are uninhabited.

Strong currents set between the straits that divide the islands and the smaller cays, and navigation for large vessels is dangerous in the extreme unless a local pilot is on board to inform the commander as to the way in which the variable currents set at different times.

St. John, unlike St. Thomas, is not surrounded by cays of any size. It approaches the British territory closely in the strait named The Narrows, where but one mile divides the United States





## ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

island of St. John from the British Thatch Island.

St. John is nine miles long, while its breadth is irregular; at the widest point it is five miles across. The area is 19.77 square miles, or nearly 12,700 acres, of which not over 400 acres are under cultivation. If the baytree groves are included, the total cultivated area might amount to about 1600 acres.

The island consists of a series of mountain peaks, which lie in no particular order; the entire island is made up of hills and valleys, with almost no level land. The only regular mountain range runs along the north coast, but this is not continuous and cannot rightly be named a range. The highest elevation is Camel Mountain, about 1300 feet high. The next highest, Bourdeaux Mountain, is 1270 feet high.

There are a number of small streams which empty on the south side into the sea, so that St. John is far better watered than the other islands of the group. While these streams are of no great size, they are sufficient to insure a supply of water at all times. A multitude of springs help to promise success to future agricultural efforts.

The island is in large part of the same geological

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formation as St. Thomas, though a larger quantity of coralline limestone is found here. Copper- and iron-bearing rocks also are said to exist, and the presence of greenish and reddish stones at Reef Bay, in which copper can be detected, seem to bear out this statement. Yet it is not thought that the ores contain a sufficient quantity of metal to make the working of the deposits profitable. The land of the island is far more fertile than that of St. Thomas and the soil covering the rocks is found in far thicker layers.

No ships called at St. John, with the exception of an occasional schooner which puts into Coral Bay to load cattle for the neighboring islands, and the only regular communication with St. Thomas consists of the bi-weekly trips of a small sloop which carries the mail from one island to the other. All inhabitants of any consequence own their little sailing boats which they use not only for fishing but also for the transportation of their humble products to the St. Thomas markets.

The bays and inlets of St. John are not quite as numerous as those of St. Thomas, there being thirty-one on the former island and forty-five on the latter. Yet the entire island of St. John has



**RUINS OF K. C. BAY SUGAR ESTATE, ST. JOHN**



**FORT FREDERIKSTED, ST. CROIX**



CORAL BAY, FROM BOURDEAUX MOUNTAIN, WITH MORAVIAN SETTLEMENT OF EMMAUS  
Tortola (British) in Distance

## ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

an indented shore line. Beginning on the west coast one finds Cruz Bay, where is one of the two fairly large settlements. This bay has for the last hundred years been the site of the government offices and the residence of the local official in charge of the island. A large building which was fort, jail, court house and residence of the police-master in one, testifies to the former importance of what is now an almost deserted island.

To the north of Cruz Bay, one finds K. C. Bay, where the large ruins of Duerloo's estate call to mind the heroic defense of the settlers against the revolting slaves in 1733. The origin of the name "K. C. Bay" is curious. In the days of the first colonization a Hollander who started a plantation on the north coast of the island found a large cinnamon tree on the shores of the bay included in his land grant. He named his property "Caneelboom," or Cinnamon Tree. In later years he owned another estate which he named "Klein Caneelboom," or Little Cinnamon Tree. This name proved too much for the linguistic attainments of the other settlers, and in the course of time the abbreviation K. C. Bay found popular acceptance.

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After beautiful K. C. Bay one comes to Dennis Bay. The next bay to the north is Cinnamon Bay, and Maho Bay comes next. Finally, Francis Bay lies to the west of Mary's Point. On the other side of the point, still on the north coast, is found Leinster Bay, the estate house of which at one time boasted the presence of the one Masonic Lodge on the island. The entire upper part of this "great house" which was situated on a hill overlooking the bay, was demolished by the hurricane of October, 1916, and the majority of the owner's effects were blown down the hill into the sea. Brown's Bay and Mennebeck Bay are also found on the north coast toward the eastern part of the island.

On the extreme eastern peninsula is found Privateer Bay, named after the sea rovers who used to put in here to careen their ships. Reports are current in the East End settlement—the second of the two most important settlements of St. John—that there is pirates' gold in the sands surrounding this bay, and many a futile search has been made for this.

Then comes Coral Bay. Extending inland from Red Point on the east to Ram's Head on the west,

## ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

this bay has numerous inlets, of which Hansen Bay, Watercreek Bay, Hurricane Hole and Coral Harbor Bay are the most important. Coral Bay is by far the best harbor in the Lesser Antilles, and even boasts of many advantages which surpass those of the wonderful bay of St. Thomas. It is less exposed to the south and is absolutely protected from all other points of the compass, so that, in case of a hurricane, ships lying in the bay would have but to shift their anchorage to any one of the deep indentations of Hurricane Hole in order to be able to ride out the storm in perfect safety. The shores of the bay are steep, and vessels of large draught can come quite close to the shore.

The numerous peninsulas serve admirably for the erection of warehouses and piers. Of late years a number of St. Thomians, hearing rumors of the possible acquisition of the islands by the United States, bought up several of the abandoned estates lying upon the bay. Their idea was that the naval authorities might decide to use Coral Bay for a base instead of the harbor of Charlotte-Amalia. A little reflection on the part of the speculators might have convinced them of the impracticability of this idea, for the mountains of the neighboring

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

island of Tortola completely overlook the bay and are but four miles removed from the inlets, as the crow flies. It would, of course, not be wise to build a naval station on the shores of a bay that could be controlled completely by an eminence on an island belonging to another nation, upon which the mounting of guns of heavy calibre would be an easy matter. The harbor of St. Thomas does not have a like drawback.

It is not conceivable that Coral Harbor will ever be able to supplant the harbor of Charlotte-Amalia even in commercial importance, since steamers would not here find the facilities for loading and unloading their cargo and for filling their bunkers with coal which they at present have on St. Thomas.

The south coast of the island is precipitous and has but few bays that are easy of approach. The promontory of Ram's Head, which forms the western boundary of Coral Bay, is usually given a wide berth by local sailors; the seas run high in this neighborhood, and the cliff-like rocks make landing an impossibility.

After passing this dangerous spot, one comes to Lamesure Bay and then to Reef Bay, a reef-

## ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

girdled inlet formerly of importance as a sugar shipping center. Continuing to the westward, Fish Bay and Rendezvous Bay are found, the latter so named because it was the favorite meeting place for certain privateers who assembled here to prepare for their piratical raids upon the St. Thomas shipping. The last bay, on the southwest coast, is Great Cruz Bay.

No statistics are available as to the climate of St. John. In general, it can safely be said that the average temperature here is fully five degrees lower than on St. Thomas, even on the areas lying at sea level. A stay at Cruz Bay or on the north coast will speedily convince the traveler that he must sleep under a blanket, and if he spends a night in the mountains he will find the air quite bracing.

The rainfall has never been systematically measured, but it is undoubtedly far larger here than on any other island of the group. In all probability this is due to the forests which still cover the hilltops.

This island also lies in the hurricane belt, and it did not escape from damage during the disaster of October, 1916. In fact, the storm was more

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destructive here than on St. Thomas, although—owing to the comparatively few settlers on St. John—the material damage was not great. The Moravian missionary station and settlement of Emmaus, on the shores of Coral Bay, was among the worst sufferers and the church, living house and school-house were totally wrecked. Practically all the lime and coconut trees were destroyed and the baytrees were stripped of their leaves and badly damaged. The forests were devastated and the ruins of many an old and forgotten plantation-house, which had been hidden by the jungle, came to light with the removal of the larger trees.

No snakes or poisonous insects other than the usual centipedes and scorpions are found on the island. Mosquitoes are few, but sand-flies generally herald the approach of a coming rain by their vicious bites. In this respect the island is not so different from the other Antilles, where some kind of similar affliction is always found, reminding the visitor that even the happy existence of the tropics has a few drawbacks.

It is needless to speak of the sanitary conditions of the island. Since there are no settlements of any size, epidemics do not take place and malarial

## ST. JOHN'S INDENTED COAST LINE

fevers are unknown. The natives sometimes suffer from fevers which are attributed to malaria, but an investigation will show that these were brought on by exposure and carelessness. During the last two years of the Danish rule no physician was stationed on the island. A St. Thomian doctor came here every month or two for a short visit, staying just long enough to relieve the ailments of the few patients to be found.

## CHAPTER VIII

**THE CINDERELLA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**  
**REMINDERS OF FORMER RICHES—COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL POSSIBILITIES—THE MAKING OF BAY RUM—CATTLE RAISING AND FISHING—THE STORY OF THE PETROGLYPHS—SCENERY AND RUINS TO DELIGHT THE VISITOR—THE CROSS AT REEF BAY—LEGENDS OF SLAVERY DAYS—TREASURES OF OLD FURNITURE—THE POSSIBILITIES OF ST. JOHN**

**S**T. JOHN has a population of not over nine hundred. Possibly the number is even smaller, no census having been taken for a considerable period. Of this population fully ninety-nine per cent. are colored.

Like the St. Thomas negro, the St. John negro is noted for his politeness. Added to this virtue is friendliness toward strangers. The negroes are very accommodating, without a thought of recompense for their services, as many a visitor has learned during a stay on the island. For instance, should one get lost on one of the mountain trails he would need only to tell of his predicament to the first native he meets. At once the native would accompany the stranger and show him the right road. He will expect no reward, nor will he think

## CINDERELLA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

of the possibility of reward, even though he be suffering from the pangs of hunger and though he may have gone far out of his way to be of service.

There is much misery and want on the island. This is due to the lack of work and the very small wages which the planters—who themselves are forced to lead a hand-to-mouth existence—are able to pay. Unlike a St. Thomian, a native of St. John is too fond of his little island to wish to seek employment elsewhere. He may occasionally sign on as a sailor on some local vessel, but the ties which bind him to his own island are too close to allow him to remain content with a prolonged absence. He is ready to eke out an existence on the wages of whatever work he can obtain here, rather than try for higher wages elsewhere.

The inhabitants make their living principally by the collecting and selling of the bayleaves to the owners of the stills which manufacture the essential oil of bay rum. They are paid eight cents for a bag of leaves weighing sixty-five to seventy pounds. This opportunity is presented only during certain seasons. The natives are also experts at the building of small sailing boats; poor

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indeed is the man who does not own a small craft of some kind with which he can go out and obtain his supply of sea food.

The two principal villages of the island are at Cruz Bay, where perhaps a hundred and fifty natives reside, and at East End, where there are not more than a hundred. Still another settlement is the Moravian station of Emmaus in the neighborhood of which about twelve families, consisting of some sixty persons, have settled. These three villages have schools with a fairly good attendance. In recent years the Moravian missionaries have made attempts to teach the children and the women to make baskets of a wiry kind of grass that grows here in abundance. It is quite possible that ultimately the sale of these baskets to visiting tourists on St. Thomas may become the means of providing many a St. John family with pin-money. There is no reason why brooms should not be made of this same grass, for it is well adapted to the purpose. The scarcity of broom corn in the United States and the high price of labor there would help in the development of a profitable industry.

The ruins of sugar estates everywhere convince

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one of the former importance of this island and of the riches that are lying idle in its fertile fields. Of late a number of planters have made attempts to raise on these abandoned estates lime trees, from whose fruits the citric acid and the lime juice of commerce are manufactured. With slight investment this venture should become profitable. Machinery could be installed to crush the fruit, and the old sugar kettles could be employed to evaporate the citric acid from the juice.

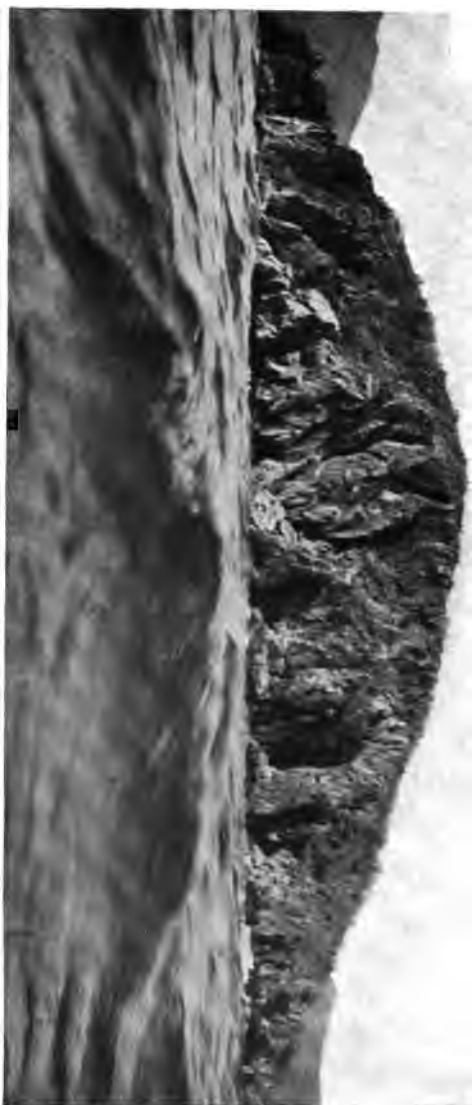
Yet another industry of the island is the manufacture of charcoal, which commands a ready market on St. Thomas. Practically all cooking in the West Indies is done over charcoal stoves, for charcoal is always available on the wooded islands and this fuel does not heat up the kitchen as would a coal-burning range. There is a great deal of timber on the abandoned estates of St. John, so the inhabitants are never at a loss for wood which can be manufactured into charcoal. The smoke arising from the charcoal pits is a familiar feature of the landscape.

The commercial and agricultural possibilities of St. John are great. In the first place, the bay-tree (*Pimenta acris*) flourishes on the little island.

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It has been found by actual experience that this bay tree is somewhat erratic and is most particular as to its habitat. Attempts have been made to grow it on various islands, and practically all attempts were failures. Even on St. John, small as it is, it seems that the trees do well only in certain parts and are unable to gain a foothold in other parts. Why this is so has never been satisfactorily explained. But even with this drawback there are to-day many regions of St. John where an extensive cultivation of the baytree would be highly profitable. The trees are not regularly planted or set out at the present time, and propagation is entirely due to natural agents, such as the birds and the winds, which scatter the seeds.

The leaves of the baytree are gathered by breaking small twigs from the tree and afterwards separating them from these twigs. Instead of harming the tree, this breaking off of the smaller branches seems to improve it; several branches will sprout from the break made by the removal of a single branch. The leaves are then distilled in copper stills of the usual type. This distillation results in the collecting of the essential oil, the



RAM'S HEAD, SOUTH COAST, ST. JOHN



EAST END, ST. JOHN



BAY-OIL STILL, ST. JOHN

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bay-oil, which is contained in the minute cells of the leaves. The bay-oil is sent to St. Thomas and is there mixed with white rum or alcohol in the ratio of about one quart of oil to five hundred quarts of rum, the resulting product being the bay-rum of commerce. If cheap alcohol or rum is used the product does not have the delicate odor which is found when better grades are employed. The essential oil, which is worth from five to seven dollars per quart, has a strong acrid odor.

Occasionally bay-rum is made by distilling the bay leaves directly in the rum, but this method is slower and far more expensive. It has practically been discontinued, although bay-rum made in this manner is superior in quality and commands a higher price.

The bay industry, therefore, presents one of the possibilities of St. John. While various proprietors are at present engaged in the cultivation of the trees and the distilling of the oil, there can be no doubt that development of this industry would result in material benefit, especially if a more modern type of still for the collection of the oil were employed.

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Again, St. John offers great possibilities as a cattle raising center. While the ground is generally steep and hilly, the slopes are covered with excellent grass of all varieties and offer feeding grounds for thousands of herds of cattle. At the present time cattle raising is neglected by the majority of landowners, there being but two real stock farms on the island, with a total of about six hundred head of cattle. Because of the increased population that will come to the neighboring island of St. Thomas through the prospective establishment of a naval station there, and because of the fact that no duty would have to be paid on cattle exported to Porto Rico since the two islands are under the same government, a ready market would be found for all cattle raised on St. John. There would be no rivalry in cattle production on the other islands of the group, for St. Thomas cannot compare with St. John for pasturage or for water supply and practically all of St. Croix is given up to sugar cultivation.

The water surrounding the numerous small cays that encircle St. John literally swarms with fish of all species. Perhaps no better fishing grounds can be found in the Antilles than those between St.

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John and the cays to the westward—Congo Cay, Lovango Cay, Mingo Cay, and Grass Cay. Yet there is always an unsatisfied demand for fresh fish in Charlotte-Amalia, and this demand must increase in the future. What then could be a more profitable investment than a suitable fishing boat with a motor auxiliary? It can find a safe harbor in any one of the numerous bays of St. John and, with this island as a center, can fish the surrounding waters and carry the catch to the St. Thomas market.

From the point of view of a tourist anxious to try his piscatorial luck, a visit to the little cays between the two larger islands is well worth while. Lovango Cay is inhabited by a Danish fisherman who rents the little island from the government and who would be ready to show the visitor the best location for fishing. By either trolling or rod fishing success is certain as soon as the bait has been in the water for the briefest possible time.

No better place for rod fishing can be found than on Congo Cay, which is located due north of Lovango Cay and faces the wide Atlantic. A visit to this rocky island is an event. It consists of nothing but a collection of boulders which give

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the impression that they must have been piled one on top of the other by some giant who wished to amuse himself. Congo Cay presents a forbidding appearance. Vegetation is noticeable by its absence. The island resembles the upstanding fin of a shark. But one landing place is found here, and that is a mere ledge about two feet above water level and not more than six feet wide and twelve feet long. The visitor who is desirous of fishing here must be quick of eye and nimble of foot as he takes a hurried jump out of the rowboat which carries him to his destination. Should a heavy sea be running it would be inadvisable to attempt to make the landing, for not only would there be danger of smashing the boat on the rocks, but, even if a landing is made, it might prove impossible to embark for the return journey.

The best rod fishing is to be had on the extreme eastern point of Congo Cay. Fish of all varieties seem to congregate directly under the rocks, which are some twenty feet above sea level, and to show an eager desire to be caught.

The visitor is reminded here also of the aborigines of St. Thomas in pre-Columbian times, who must have come here for the fishing, for in the rocks

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there are a number of small cavities, perfectly rounded, in which the Indians evidently pounded the salt used to preserve the fish they caught. There is evidence that, while not engaged in fishing, they were employed in carving a series of apparently meaningless figures upon a large, flat boulder on the eastern extremity of the cay. Carvings of this character are named pictographs, or petroglyphs.

“Petroglyph!” Unless one should happen to be a professional archeologist, he may have to consult a dictionary to find out the meaning of this word. And yet it is rather simple: *Petro* means stone, and *glyph* means a sign, so that the complete word merely means a sign carved on stone. So there you are, and the next time that a passing gypsy carves a cabalistic sign upon the stone pillars of your front entrance, signifying that you keep a savage dog on your estate, and that your property had best be left unvisited, remark it well, for you will then actually be the proud possessor of a bona fide petroglyph.

And so the Indians of the Antilles, in the days before the coming of the Spanish conquistadors, had an amusing habit of carving signs upon rocks

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in certain of the islands inhabited by them. This habit not only provided the carver with the wholesome satisfaction that accompanies honest toil, but it has since provided countless archeologists and amateur archeologists with the joy of attempting to decipher the meaning of the carvings. This is especially true in the case of amateur archeologists, who see the most wonderful significance in the humblest carving, so that the Simon-pure archeologist not only has the original pleasure of trying to unravel the mystery of the petroglyph, but is permitted the additional joy of scoffing at the attempts of the amateur. Thus the circle is completed, and the shade of the Indian chuckles with glee at the problems bestowed by him upon those who have come after him.

Chalk is the principal weapon of the petroglyph hunter and is used by him to make the marking of the carvings more distinct, so that they will show up more clearly in the photographs. There is nothing to prevent an enthusiast from adding a carving or two of his own, not necessarily by hewing grooves in the living rock, but by the more simple and direct method of adding with chalk such lines as his fancy dictates. But that, of course, is another story.

## CINDERELLA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Petroglyphs are to be found on many of the islands of the West Indies. In fact, they are found from the northern limits of North America to the southernmost point of South America. Naturally, many of them have become obliterated by the action of the weather on the rocks. In addition to this, numerous rock carvings must still be hidden by the undergrowth of the primeval forests, or be in such inaccessible places that their very existence is unsuspected. When they are found in the open, the rocks with carvings upon them are generally near running water.

It is one of the favorite theories of the local historians of the West Indies that the presence of these petroglyphs indicates the existence of a pre-Columbian place of worship. Using this theory as a base, the local authors as a rule begin to write of "Carib sacrifices," "Carib orgies," and what not, and make good copy out of the bloodcurdling yells of the unhappy victims of this fierce warrior tribe. But probably posterity will never know the true significance of these rock carvings, nor will it ever understand the vagaries of the Indian mind which made them.

The carvings on Congo Cay are on the rock at

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the extreme eastern part of the island. The rock lies almost horizontally and faces, to the eastward, a small island named Caravel Rock. There is a large cavity in the center of this rock, and one visitor suggested that this cavity was artificial and might have been used to store the blood of the victims of the Carib sacrifices. But here is another chance to see what a difference there is between cold facts and charming theories. In the first place, no proof ever has been brought forward that the islands of St. John and St. Thomas were inhabited by Caribs. In the second place Congo Cay, bleak, barren, hard to land on, and with no place upon which to hold sacrificial ceremonies, would be too exposed to the neighboring islands to allow one to suppose that a marauding tribe of piratical Caribs would have selected this place for the cannibal feasts. Third, the cavity in the rock was undoubtedly caused by the decomposition of the stone, and there are several rocks on Congo Cay that have cavities of this order. It is true that the opening of the cavity is somewhat smaller than the area of the lower surface of the hole, but one can readily see that the cavity would fill up with sea water whenever the



**HOSPITABLE CONGO CAY, ST. JOHN**



**THE ONLY LANDING-PLACE ON CONGO CAY**



**PRIVATEER BAY, ST. JOHN**



**BUILDINGS ON CAROLINE ESTATE, AND BAY-OIL STILL, ST. JOHN**

## CINDERELLA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

waves broke over Congo Cay during stormy weather and that this water would attack the sides of the cavity and make it larger without necessarily enlarging the mouth.

But to return to the mainland and to the subject of sugar, St. John is not well adapted to the cultivation of cane and the manufacture of sugar, under modern conditions. Because of the present cost of labor this island, with its steep roads and hills, could not compete with sugar plantations on islands where flat areas make the gathering of the cane an insignificant item of expense. Even in the days of long ago the collecting of the sugar cane at the mill was done with a considerable expenditure of trouble and labor. Wooden troughs led down the incline to the level roads, and the cane was shot down these inclines and loaded on wagons when it reached the road. Many stories have been told of slaves who were decapitated or who lost a leg or an arm when they were struck by a heavy piece of sugar cane which escaped from the trough and came hurtling with terrific force through the air. On some estates it was found necessary to arrange some sort of cable tramway to convey the cane to the mill. On the summit of

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some of the hills immense *lignum-vitæ* posts are still found to which these cables were attached.

But if the production of sugar would not be profitable, undoubtedly truck farming would amply reward one who undertakes it on a large scale and the raising in the West Indies of all sorts of vegetables is a possibility which is frequently and strangely overlooked. The consumption of canned vegetables by the well-to-do in these regions is quite large, and the small quantities of fresh vegetables that are raised are in demand at good prices. It is a common mistake to suppose that the tropics are not suited to the production of garden truck. As a matter of fact, tomatoes, lettuce, beans, melons, et cetera, not only thrive when well watered, but bear more abundantly than in northern climates. The raising of these vegetables on St. John would give employment to many, and a profitable market in St. Thomas would be assured.

Another possibility is the erection of tourist hotels on St. John. The acquisition of the island by the United States should make these popular with the tourist. St. John should be even more popular than St. Thomas, for while St. Thomas is attractive because it has a busier outlook on ac-

## CINDERELLA OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

count of the many ships that enter its wonderful harbor, and because of its magnificent scenery, St. John excels in scenery, and scenery attracts the tourist. Climb any hilltop in St. John and look north, east, south or west, and unrivaled views delight the eye. The surrounding islands of vivid green serve only to make more pronounced the contrast between the pale blue sky and the dark blue sea. Surely no other island in the Antilles offers views that can compare with this in natural beauty.

But St. John has other attractions for the tourist than its scenery. If one is searching for the picturesque, it may be found in abundant measure in the ruins of the old plantation buildings whose walls and quaint staircases still exist in the tropical undergrowth. What can be more interesting than the exploration of an old mill with kettles for the boiling of syrup still intact, and of the remains of a "great house" with its imposing avenue and slave quarters and kitchens nearby? Is the visitor interested in boating, bathing, hunting, or riding? The forty odd bays of the island will repay a systematic exploration with a small yacht, and will astound one with the variety of their scenery.

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Sea bathing here is equal to any in the West Indies and excels that at many of the resorts that are famed for this attraction. Then pigeons and doves are found at all seasons; these make excellent shooting and good eating.

There is no road on St. John that is more than a bridle path; but also let it be said that there is no road that does not have features to delight the visitor. The road most commonly used by the inhabitants leads from Cruz Bay through the center of the island to Emmaus, and from there to the East End settlement. Directly after leaving the Cruz Bay landing one ascends the hill, passing, in turn, Herman Farm with its extensive ruins, and Adrian, another forgotten plantation which is almost entirely obliterated by the jungle. At Esperance a road branches off to the south coast and to Reef Bay. This branch road leads over the summit of Camel Mountain, the highest peak on the island, and then dips toward the sea at a precipitous angle.

Some half mile inland from the shores of Reef Bay one obtains a distant glimpse of the Reef Bay waterfall. A searching glance is necessary, as it is hard to make out the thin thread of water that

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comes tumbling from the heights above. The rocks back of the waterfall are plainly to be seen, however. It is said that this waterfall is never dry. Occasionally it becomes so small as to be almost negligible, but it never seems entirely to vanish. One is privileged to surmise, therefore, that in pre-Columbian days, when the woods of the island were still intact and fulfilled their purpose in drawing water from the clouds, the volume of water passing over the rocks must have been considerably larger.

There are in reality two falls, but the higher fall is difficult of access. The lower fall is about forty-five feet high. As the crow flies, it is not over one and a quarter miles from the sea and not more than half a mile from the road. In order to visit it, it is necessary to follow a dried-up watercourse, and then cut a way through a somewhat dense thicket. Before the hurricane of October, 1916, there was a small footpath following this water course, and the ascent to the falls was far easier than it is to-day.

The lower fall empties itself into a pool some five feet deep and about twelve feet in diameter. This pool empties its contents into a second pool

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about seven feet lower than the first. The second pool, in which the water is quite tranquil, is about six and one-half feet deep, fourteen feet wide and nine feet broad, and makes an excellent bathing place. The water, filtered during its long passage through the hills, is excellently adapted for drinking purposes, and it is possible that the Indians inhabiting the south coast of St. John must have come here for their supply of drinking water.

Around this pool, in which bathing is a pleasure—a cold pleasure—one finds huge boulders upon which are more of the aboriginal carvings known as petroglyphs.

There really are three sets of rock carvings on the stones surrounding the pool, and it is impossible to get all three sets in one picture. The most elaborate set is found just above the edge of the pool and the Indians seem to have designed the carvings so that their reflection would show clearly in the water. A few of the figures seem to depict a very crudely drawn human face, consisting of a circle for the face, with smaller circles or just dots for the eyes, and a line for the mouth. In one or two instances some extra lines below the large circle may represent arms and legs. But the

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reader is at liberty to scoff at this suggestion. The largest figure of all, in appearance somewhat like a figure eight, or like a sand glass, is perhaps the most inexplicable.

In order to give one some idea of these carvings, it may be said that from the figure on the extreme left side of the rock, just above the water line, to the figure on the extreme right hand side, just above the water line, is a distance of ten feet four inches.

On the same large rock, a little to the left, but at a much higher point above the pool, one can find another series of petroglyphs even more enigmatical than those just above the water level. This group consists of six figures, two of which represent somewhat simply designed human forms—strongly reminiscent of the pictures chalked by children on wooden fences—and two simple faces.

On the extreme western side of the pool is another rock upon which are seen three more carvings. This rock may well be named the "Archeologist's Delight." No doubt every person who ever has seen it, excepting of course the original Indians, has evolved some deep theory regarding the carvings on this boulder. Almost any

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meaning may be given to two of the three figures, the one on the extreme left of the photograph and the one directly above the carving that looks exactly like a cross. It is therefore possible to eliminate two carvings at the very start, which is far more than would be done by seriously minded amateur archeologists who would deem it their duty to explain fully these two problematical carvings.

But there still remains the crosslike figure. Can it be that the teachings of Christianity had penetrated to the New World before the discovery of St. John and the Virgin Island group in 1493? This is to be doubted. Then were the Indians converted to Christianity by the piously inclined conquistadors? Considering that these same conquistadors were responsible for the total extermination of the Indian race some thirty years after the discovery of the West Indies, this also is to be doubted. Then why the cross? Perhaps the most ingenious explanation is the one found in an early history of the Danish West Indies in which the author states that the Spanish monks saw the other carvings on the rocks and deemed them to be the work of the Devil. In order speedily to overcome the evil influence, the earnest friars carved the



**PETROGLYPHS ON CONGO CAY**  
**Caravel Rock in Middle Ground**



**THE CAROLINE ESTATE HOUSE AND PASTURE, ST. JOHN**



**THE CROSS THAT IS NOT A CROSS, REEF BAY, ST. JOHN**



**INDIAN PETROGLYPHS, REEF BAY, ST. JOHN**

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sign of the cross on the rock, thereby neutralizing all other influences.

But the carving of the cross appears to be of the same age as the other figures on the same rock. And the suggestion is made that the sign of the cross has been found in many places to which it is positively known that Christianity never penetrated. Yet the sign is there, and has been found in many forms, perhaps one of the most common of which is the swastika sign. This sign represents nothing more than the four cardinal points of the compass, east, south, west and north, and by a process of evolution first became a figure resembling two interlaced S figures and finally a simple cross. But when challenged on the subject, we must withdraw this explanation of the cross figure at Reef Bay. The carving representing the cross stands seventeen inches high, and the length of the cross arm is eleven inches.

It is time to turn from the mysterious petroglyphs and follow the south coast, by the Parforce Estate, once the property of one of the richest planters on the island. Rather than use ordinary plaster for the finishing of his walls, this landowner had them decorated with ground rice mixed

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with some adhesive substance; he claimed that this gave the walls a smoother appearance. He lived to regret his extravagance, when the abolition of slavery changed his former prosperous position to one of dire poverty.

The road now mounts again, and after an arduous climb the traveler reaches the summit of Bordeaux Mountain, the second highest peak of St. John. From here one seems almost able to touch the crest of Sage Mountain on Tortola, so near does this elevation appear to be in the bright atmosphere of the tropics. The best view of Coral Bay can be had from this peak, and the white buildings of the Emmaus settlement form a prominent feature of the landscape.

Descending toward the bay, the first estate reached is the Caroline property, famous in the annals of the slave insurrection. Here, it is said, the murdered daughter of the St. John judge still haunts the rooms of the "great house." Emmaus is reached next and one had to admire the industry of the Moravian Brethren who, in the eighteenth century, despite opposition and poverty, were able to erect the large buildings that were found here previous to the hurricane of 1916.

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A little further along, on the road which leads to the East End settlement, the extreme eastern inhabited point of the island, one passes the remains of the fort whose garrison was massacred in 1733. A cannon or two is still embedded on the hillside. Then the road continues along the south coast, up hill and down dale, and one has every opportunity of admiring the extensive inlets which form part of Coral Bay, whenever the road rises to any height above sea level. The pretentious farm of Hermitage, with its numerous buildings, is passed. This estate, like the Caroline Estate, is devoted to stock raising. Finally, one gets to the East End settlement, whose inhabitants live their quiet lives far removed from the bustle of the outside world.

The explorer must return by the same road until he again reaches Hermitage. There he can take a branch road leading to the north coast of the island. The road to the westward along the north coast offers even more scenic splendors than does the south coast road, since the island of Tortola presents a succession of views that delight the eye.

The first estate one comes to on going west is

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Leinster Bay, where an excellent boarding house for use by occasional visitors was once kept. The storm of 1916 blew this house down. The wonderful old mahogany furniture that was the envy of all who came to stay here was scattered in all directions.

Near by are the remains of the building occupied by the only Masonic Lodge on St. John. One can almost picture the banquets held by the Masons when they assembled here in the olden days, when feasts were of first importance in the life of the West Indian planters.

Annaberg, also called Brim Bay, is the next estate. Report has it that when the slave revolt of 1733 was being put down, three hundred of the rebels were found upon a precipitous cliff that can be seen on this estate and, rather than suffer capture, dashed themselves on the rocks below. While an act of this kind might actually have been committed by one or two of the slaves, the story can hardly be true of such a large number as three hundred, for the entire number of the rebels at large did not amount to this total.

There is an excellent view from this road of Mary's Point, a square peninsula which reaches out toward the British Thatch Island. The Nar-

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rows between Thatch Island and the mainland of St. John are only a mile wide. In former days slaves who thought they might meet with kinder treatment on Tortola than they had experienced from their Danish owners, used to defy the numerous sharks found in these waters and swim across the strait. It must be remembered that slavery was abolished on the British islands of the West Indies in 1838 but that the institution continued its existence on the Danish islands until 1848. Thus if any slave held on St. John between these dates managed to reach British territory, he immediately became free, so long as he remained there.

Even after the days of fleeing slaves there was excitement in The Narrows. Smugglers did a thriving trade across The Narrows, so the British government was obliged to erect a custom house and fort upon the isolated Thatch Island. These have long since been abandoned.

After crossing the peninsula of Mary's Point, the wayfarer arrives at Maho Bay and afterwards at America Hill. The estate house on this latter property is a noticeable feature of the landscape, for it is built upon the very summit of a hill which

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has the appearance of a sugar loaf. The hill is some six hundred feet high, and the ascent to the house must have furnished needed exercise to its former owners.

Cinnamon Bay and Dennis Bay come next. Both were in former days the sites of important sugar factories. From here the way leads across the island. At K. C. Bay are the largest sugar factory ruins on the island. Here also is a coconut grove in which the damage done by the late hurricane was tremendous. On the hilltop, before the beginning of the descent to Cruz Bay, may be seen the almost obliterated remains of another Danish fort, whose history no one seems to know.

To the tourist who is interested in old colonial furniture, St. John offers interesting hunting grounds. In the most ramshackle negro cabins one is liable to run across the dilapidated remains of the most wonderfully carved mahogany four poster beds. These antiques may be marred by a century of neglect, but the wonderfully skillful cabinet makers of St. Thomas can easily restore them to their former beauty. Not only bedsteads, but sewing tables, claw-foot serving tables and interesting looking chairs are scattered over the island. These were probably given to the negro

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WHARF AND OLD FORT, CORAL BAY, ST. JOHN



HERMITAGE ESTATE, ST. JOHN



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laborers on the estates when the planters departed on account of the waning of prosperity. The visitor who picks up one or two of these pieces will be able in future years to boast of them to admiring friends.

It will be seen, therefore, that St. John, the Cinderella of the Virgin Islands, has her charms and that the exploitation of the island would well repay the original outlay. A suitable tourist hotel, built to entertain the traveler who is content with what the country offers and does not insist upon imported food, would be well patronized. Let a few young and energetic men, accustomed to the handling of West Indian laborers, start produce farms on the rich soil of St. John and they would be certain of large returns. Let some capitalist stock a farm with a large number of cattle of a breed that will thrive in this climate, and he would be sure of a profitable investment. Let the bay tree industry be encouraged by having expert men advise the planters as to the best methods of increasing the groves.

When all this is done, it will be found that St. John, now only a name and a small speck on the map, will become as important as its more prosperous sisters to the west and south.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CHECKERED HISTORY OF ST. CROIX

WHY THE TONGUES OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH'S MEN BECAME "BIGGE"—A SUBTLE METHOD OF POISONING—A JOINT OCCUPATION THAT LED TO MURDER—A STARTLING SUCCESSION OF OWNERS, PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS—A BLUFF THAT SUCCEEDED—A VISITOR WHO DIED OF MORTIFICATION—A CONFLAGRATION THAT PROMOTED HEALTH—AN ABANDONED ISLAND RESCUED BY DENMARK—A SYMBOLIC TRANSFER OF TITLES—OUT OF THE CLUTCHES OF AN EXPLOITING COMPANY.

**N**O record has been discovered of a visit to St. Croix between the time of its discovery in 1493 and the day in 1587 when Sir Walter Raleigh touched here. There is, however, assurance that the Indian inhabitants of St. Croix made a few visits to Porto Rico during this period and instilled a lively fear in the early Spanish settlers of the latter island. It was the practice of the St. Croix Indians to go to Porto Rico to manufacture their sea-going canoes, as the Porto Rico forests bore trees of greater size than those of St. Croix. On one of these occasions a Porto Rican chieftain demanded that seven of the St. Croix cannibals remain on his island in order to be kept as hostages in case of attack by other Indians from the same island. When the





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companions of the luckless seven departed, the Borinquen chief promptly put his hostages to death. Upon their return the St. Croix Indians speedily avenged the death of their fellows. To quote from an early historian:

“They cut the King with his familie in peeces and eate them in the revenge of their seven workmen; and then they made faggottes of their bones to carry to the wives and children of their slayne workmen, in witness that the bodies of their husbands and parents lay not unrevenged, and therewith shewed the faggottes of bones to our men [the Spaniards], who being astonished with their fiercenesse and crueltie, were enforced to dissemble the matter and holde their peace, quarreling no further at any time.”

The narrative of one of the men who accompanied Sir Walter Raleigh on his expedition to Virginia, which paused on St. Croix, tells only of the discomforts suffered by some of the colonists who ate inadvertently of the manchineel apples that are found in quantities on the shores of the island:

“Some of the women and men, by eating a small fruit like a greene apple were fearfully

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troubled with a sudden burning in their mouths and swelling of their tongues so bigge that some of them could not speak."

It was fortunate for Raleigh's companions that some of them did not suffer worse effects from their lack of caution in eating these poisonous fruits. Tales are told in the West Indies of people who have died after eating the manchineel or who have lost their eyes because the juice of the fruit touched the pupils. Many negroes, especially in the Bahama Islands, have attempted to do away with their enemies by means of this juice. A favorite practice of the would-be poisoner is to place a little of the sap taken from a broken twig of the manchineel tree on the point of a knife and to insert this point in a raw potato. The potato is then cooked and given to the victim. In the course of a short time a mysterious slow poisoning results which baffles all medical skill, since the presence of the acid of the manchineel cannot be detected in the stomach when it is given in such small doses. Unless the victim keeps a close watch upon the preparation of his food, he will ultimately succumb to the effects of this subtle method of poisoning.

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From 1587 until 1625, St. Croix appears to have been unoccupied by either natives or visitors from Europe. History does not tell how the fierce tribes that lived here were exterminated. In 1625 Dutch, English and French settlers seem to have occupied the island jointly. As early as 1645 the island sustained some six hundred settlers, who were governed by general officers appointed by the respective countries from which the settlers originated. This peaceful living together on one island of three different nationalities was not to last long, for in 1645 war broke out between the Dutch and the English colonists. The Dutch governor's residence witnessed the killing in this year of the governor of the British part of the island, while he was on a visit. It is a matter of doubt whether this killing was accidental or by design.

In retaliation, the British planters flew to arms, gave battle to their neighbors, and wounded the Dutch governor so severely that he died a few days later. The Hollanders now elected another governor, who, under promise of protection, visited the British part of the island in order to attempt to arrange matters amicably with the planters of

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that nationality. The latter, however, still incensed over the loss of their chief, saw fit to violate their promise of safe conduct and had the Dutch governor shot publicly.

Finding that they were unable to continue living on the same island with the British without being constantly subjected to hostile raids, the Hollanders departed shortly afterward for the islands of St. Eustatius and St. Martin, which they then colonized.

The French settlers, numbering perhaps one hundred and fifty, most of them deserters from the island of St. Christopher, having sympathized actively with the Dutch during their quarrel with the British, now considered discretion the better part of valor and followed the example of the Hollanders by leaving St. Croix. Upon asking permission from the English government, they were allowed to depart. Passage was engaged on a British privateering vessel which carried them to Guadaloupe. On their arrival, the French not only refused to pay the captain of this vessel for their passage but complained of the treatment they had suffered at British hands. The governor immediately seized the ship and declared her a

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lawful prize, on the pretext that she was an armed vessel without the necessary government papers.

This left the British in undisputed possession of St. Croix from 1645 to 1650. In the latter year the Spanish governor of Porto Rico, noting the prosperity of the settlement and jealous of the riches that were found so close to his own colony, decided that it was better to claim St. Croix for Spain than to have it remain a possession of Great Britain. So he sent an expedition of twelve hundred men to the island. They landed at night and fell upon the unprepared inhabitants, slaying a large number of them before the alarm could be given.

On the following day two British prisoners were sent to their compatriots who had taken refuge in the woods and mountains, to inform them that they were given three weeks in which to leave the island. The refugees promptly dispatched a vessel to the governor of St. Christopher with an urgent plea that he send a fleet and take them and their possessions off the island. Upon the arrival of the ships the planters departed, leaving the Spanish in possession.

Learning of the disaster that had overtaken

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the British colonists, the original Dutch settlers thought they could return to their old plantations on St. Croix. When they landed, thinking that the Spanish forces had long since departed, they took no precautions to discover if the island was still inhabited. This rashness cost them dear, for a Spanish garrison of sixty soldiers had been left behind. These soldiers gave battle to the invaders and killed most of the party, taking the remainder prisoners.

The French on St. Christopher also had heard of the defeat of the British colonists, and thought the time ripe to regain their former possessions. They accordingly fitted out a large expedition of two ships and one hundred and sixty of their bravest men under De Vaugalan. Orders were given to kill or take prisoners any Spaniards who might be found on St. Croix. The smaller vessel arrived before the other ship, and from this about forty men landed. These men were ambushed by the Spanish garrison and all but three or four were killed after a brave and desperate defense. A day or two later the second vessel anchored. After waiting three days for its convoy, Commander De Vaugalan, ignorant of the disaster that had

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overtaken the men from the first ship, determined to lay siege to the Spanish fort. He surrounded it and summoned the garrison to surrender. The Spanish chief, thinking that he had to do with a company of adventurers or pirates who might be in need of provisions, sent a cow and a supply of wine to the besiegers. This peace offering had no other effect than to provoke another demand for a surrender of the fort in two hours, with a threat that if this command were not obeyed a general assault would be made and no quarter given to the garrison. Being under the impression that the strength of the French was larger than it really was, the Spaniards surrendered and embarked for Porto Rico on a vessel that had been put at their disposal, together with their arms and baggage.

Upon entering the fort, De Vaugalan found here a few prisoners who had survived the ill-fated expedition of the Hollanders. These he sent to their own island of St. Eustatius.

A sequel to these various operations on St. Croix between 1645 and 1650 was that the expelled British planters complained to their home government, and Cromwell, noting the hold which Spain was attempting to get on the West Indies, decided

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to declare war against that country. In 1655 he succeeded in depriving her of the important island of Jamaica.

When the French were once more in possession of St. Croix, it was determined by the home authorities to lose no time in colonizing the island. Three hundred men, under command of Auger, who was appointed governor, were dispatched for this purpose. This appointment so grieved De Vaugalan, who thought he would be rewarded for his gallant services, that he died of grief and mortification shortly afterward.

The new settlement proved to be so unhealthy that three governors died in quick succession, as well as two-thirds of the colonists. It was reasoned that this high rate of mortality was occasioned by the dense forests with which the island was covered. Accordingly, fire was set to the woods and the colonists took to their ships until the woods were burned. The conflagration was a great advantage in two ways, for not only did the island become healthier but the wood ashes decidedly increased the fertility of the soil.

Shortly afterward measures were taken by France which went far toward nullifying the efforts

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of the planters to make St. Croix a prosperous colony. Oppressive taxes were levied and trade was restricted to the other French West Indian islands. In consequence the revenues from St. Croix became negligible.

In 1651 various French islands, including St. Croix, were sold for 120,000 livres to the Knights of Malta, a French religious order at whose head was Louis XIV. But it was not until 1653 that this organization took possession of St. Croix, "in order to form an establishment in the West Indies for the service and defense of Christianity and for the conversion of the savages to the Catholic religion." On what island these savages were to be found, history does not state. It is more than probable that the statement was made only to give an air of religious endeavor to an enterprise which had for its sole object the aggrandizement of France. The Knights of Malta were to hold the island for the crown, and were not allowed to appoint anyone but a Frenchman for governor.

In spite of this change of ownership, affairs remained in a precarious state. So bad did the situation become that a relief ship, loaded with

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merchandise and farming implements, had to be sent out in 1657. When this ship arrived the colonists, who had become completely disgusted with conditions, seized the vessel, forced the sailors to do their will, and proceeded to Brazil, where they established themselves.

A new governor, Du Bois, who was appointed in 1659, accepted the post on condition that he be allowed to remove all restrictions as to the commerce of the island and that he be given a force of 400 men to defend the island in case of an invasion by the Spanish or the Porto Ricans. Du Bois arrived in 1659 and found conditions even worse than they had been pictured. He fell sick here and was obliged to return to St. Christopher, where he remained until 1661 to recuperate. Then he returned with another company of colonists. Prosperity was renewed, thanks to his untiring efforts.

The wise Governor Du Bois continued in power even after 1665, when the French West India Company purchased the privileges and possessions of the Knights of Malta for 500,000 livres. But even he was not able to prevent the French West India Company from enforcing its rule that

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commerce was to be restricted to French islands and to France. Thus it was not long before evil days again beset the colony.

In 1670 only about two hundred settlers, together with their slaves, remained on the island. By 1674 affairs of the French West India Company were in such a bad condition that Louis XIV was obliged to take St. Croix over as a part of his dominions. For a while longer the settlers continued their existence under these unprofitable conditions. Many of them gave up their holdings and went to other colonies. Finally, in 1695, when the population was 147 whites and 623 slaves, it was decided to abandon the island entirely and to join the French planters on St. Domingue. The French government, feeling that St. Domingue would benefit by this influx of agriculturists, gave orders to abandon St. Croix and to burn all the houses on the island. The harbor works were to be destroyed, and such planters as might refuse to leave were to be compelled to do so.

Yet the French government continued to lay claim to the island and resented any efforts on the part of other nations to get control of it. In 1725 a report was current in the West Indies that the

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British had in mind an occupation of the island, and this report induced Governor Moth of St. Thomas to urge the Danish West India Company to attempt to forestall the British and join St. Croix to the existing Danish colony. He had also heard that some private individuals in Denmark had offered to buy the island from France, and he voiced his fears that if St. Croix should become the property of individuals, rather than of the Danish West India Company, the islands of St. Thomas and St. John would promptly be ruined through the granting of free trade to St. Croix. He also urged that if St. Croix were joined to St. Thomas and St. John, both islands would be the gainers.

In 1733 France was urgently in need of money to carry on the wars she was waging in Poland and she consented to sell St. Croix to the Danish West India and Guinea Company. The exact sum for which the island was sold is doubtful. According to Bryan Edwards, it amounted to seventy-five thousand pounds, but Abbé Raynal, a French historian who had every opportunity of being better informed than Edwards, named 758,000 livres as the price agreed on. Half of the

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price was to be paid on the exchange of the ratifications, and the balance in eighteen months. The Danish West India and Guinea Company was at the same time reorganized in order to raise funds to pay for the island and to make arrangements for its exploitation.

It was not until 1734, when the company's ship, *Unity*, arrived, that the governor of St. Thomas was informed of the acquisition of St. Croix. Governor Moth was named governor of the three islands, and he was directed to take over St. Croix.

Preparations were made at once to go to the new possession. A number of the settlers on St. John who had suffered the almost total loss of their property through the slave insurrection of 1733, were only too glad to accompany the governor and attempt to restore their lost fortunes by a venture on the richer island of St. Croix. On August 31, 1734, services were held in the churches of Charlotte-Amalia for the benefit of those who were to leave. On the following day the governor, together with the prospective settlers, embarked on four vessels for the island to the south. On reaching what is now the site of Christiansted they found the fort in a comparatively good state

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of preservation, but the shore was so covered with a dense jungle that the party had to remain on board their vessels until the slaves had cleared land enough for them to live on with any degree of comfort. On September 6 the royal standard of Denmark was hoisted over the fortifications and the new governor's commission was read in the hearing of all.

Not until the beginning of 1735 did the French officials arrive from Martinique to turn the island over to Denmark. Imposing official ceremonies marked this event. Governor Moth held a parade of his forces, and fired a salute of nine shots for the Danish flag. The remainder of the program included the snuffing out of a candle and its re-lighting, the pulling of plants and herbs, the breaking of branches from the trees, the tasting of water from the brook, and the throwing of stones. In this symbolic manner the governor indicated that he took possession of the island for the king of Denmark.

The first settling of St. Croix was naturally attended with a great deal of expense. A costly survey had to be made, and transportation for new colonists had to be provided.

## CHECKERED HISTORY OF ST. CROIX

In 1734 a new charter was granted to the Danish West India and Guinea Company to take the place of the temporary charter made two years previously. In this new charter it was stipulated that Danish merchants were to buy sugar only from the islands belonging to the Danish West India Company. Thus a trade monopoly was given to the company which prohibited ships of other nationalities from calling at the company's possessions. There were other concessions which, while of benefit to the Danish stockholders, proved to be a decided detriment to the planters.

The Company's first care was to obtain planters for the three hundred estates which it wished to lay out on St. Croix. English colonists from Tortola and Virgin Gorda, who were acquainted with the greater agricultural possibilities of St. Croix, were easily persuaded to move. Efforts were also made to get the better class of settlers from the Island of Barbadoes. The Company also sent to Germany for a few families; but these proved, in the words of Governor Moth, "anything but satisfactory, the men being drunkards and the women dirty, lazy and immoral."

The directors of the Company proposed to send

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refugee debtors from Denmark to St. Croix, but the local authorities of the islands were much against this step; they did not think that this class of colonists would prove satisfactory.

The survey of the island was almost finished in 1735, but the fort at Christiansted was not completed until 1740. The plantations, as surveyed, were generally 3000 feet by 2000 feet, and were sold at from 500 to 600 rix-dollars, for sugar plantations, and at from 120 to 240 rix-dollars for land suitable for the raising of cotton. The latter land, owing to its dryness, was, of course, of less value.

Soon there was bitter discontent on the part of the colonists because of the restrictions and monopolies enjoined by the Company. The planters resorted to all kinds of subterfuges to sell their sugar to ships of other nationalities. Smuggling was carried on to such an extent that the company was obliged to erect a fort at Fredriksted to put a stop to the illegal exportation of produce.

The unrest of the planters was increased by the severe hurricanes of 1738 and 1742 which caused an enormous loss of property. In 1748—the year



Photograph by William H. Rau

A NATIVE FAMILY, ST. CROIX



Photograph by E. M. Newman

**DANISH SUGAR MILL, ST. CROIX**



Photograph by E. M. Newman

**A SCHOOL IN ST. CROIX**

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when separate governors were appointed for St. Thomas and St. Croix, St. John being included with St. Thomas—John Schopen was sent by the planters to Copenhagen to inform the king of the hardships which were laid upon them by the strict rule of the Company.

Finally, in 1754, King Frederick V became convinced that the prosperity of St. Croix was likely to be entirely ruined by the methods employed by the Danish West India Company, and he resolved to take over the colony and put an end to the existence of the Company by purchasing its holdings. These were surrendered for 2,239,446 rix-dollars. At this time there were 7,566 slaves on the island.

From then until 1917 St. Croix was under direct rule of the Danish king, except during the two short periods when the British occupied the Danish West Indies. It will be seen, therefore, that the earlier history of St. Croix was turbulent and kaleidoscopic and that its prosperity cannot be said to have begun until 1754. Since then the wise regulations put in force by the successive Danish kings were responsible for making St. Croix take rank as one of the richest islands in the Antilles.

## CHAPTER X

### THE STORY OF LABOR ON ST. CROIX

SLAVE INSURRECTIONS—FREEING THE SLAVES—THE FIGHT FOR UNCONDITIONAL FREEDOM—TEACHING THE NEGROES TO WORK—QUIETING THE RIOTERS OF 1878—DEALING WITH DISGRUNTLED LABORERS—IMPROVING INDUSTRIAL CONDITIONS—PROSPERITY AND INCREASED WAGES—GIVING THE NATIVES THEIR DUE—PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE ISLAND—REMARKABLE FERTILITY OF THE SOIL

**A**LTHOUGH the planters on St. John suffered in 1773 from the consequences of the stern measures in force against the offenses of negro slaves, the settlers of St. Croix do not seem to have profited by this lesson. In 1746 an incipient revolt broke out on the latter island, but this was quickly put down, mainly through the efforts of a free negro who was instrumental in subduing the rebels. In 1759, however, a more serious affair took place when a larger number of Africans made plans for wholesale desertion. This revolt was also brought to a speedy conclusion when the conspiracy was discovered, and the most agonizing tortures were inflicted upon those who had taken part. Some of the negroes, and

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these the more fortunate, were hung; others suffered torture for from one and a half minutes to ninety-one hours.

It must be remembered, however, that the treatment given to the Africans on the Danish islands was no worse than that meted out to slaves on the islands belonging to other nationalities, and, further, that this cruelty reflected the times.

As early as 1792 the king of Denmark declared further slave trade unlawful. For a time the edict did not put a stop to the traffic, but it was not long until importation of slaves was ended.

In 1847 laws were passed for the future emancipation of all slaves in the West Indies. These laws were modeled after those passed in 1838 in the British colonies. Their substance was that all children born of slave parents were to be free, and that all who were slaves at the time of the publishing of the law were to become free after a number of years, when they had passed through "an apprenticeship period." In the Danish West Indies the fact that this period was to last twelve years was the cause of great discontent among the slaves, for they naturally wished to gain their freedom immediately.

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To voice their discontent the St. Croix Africans planned a revolt throughout the island. On July 2, 1848, at an understood signal, the laborers on the estates rose in arms and most of the terrified inhabitants of the towns took refuge on vessels in the harbors. A body of some three thousand slaves marched to Christiansted and demanded their unconditional freedom. Upon being told by the commander of the fort that the governor of the island was absent, and that he had no authority to grant their demands, the rebels sacked and destroyed a number of government offices, but left private residences untouched. The governor finally arrived, and, after a short delay, proclaimed to the assembled negroes from the battlements of the fort that the unconditional freedom they sought would be given them. A general dispersal followed and the Africans retired to the estates of their former owners.

At a late hour the following night the rebels, drunk with their new-found freedom, made an attempt to enter the town. They became disorderly, and it was found necessary to discharge into their midst a cannon loaded with grapeshot. The shot caused the death of several of the former

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slaves. The negroes were so angry that they scattered over the entire island and began a systematic destruction of the estate houses and factories and a wholesale plunder of their contents. No murders were committed, thanks to the fact that the planters had sought refuge, with their families, in the protected towns of Christiansted and Frederiksted; if the whites had been in the country-side, it is more than likely that a general massacre would have followed.

The authorities were now forced to send to St. Thomas for aid. This was promptly dispatched and Frederiksted was soon defended by three hundred men, while a thousand soldiers and militia were stationed at Christiansted. Upon seeing that the total destruction of all the estates was imminent, the leaders decided to march on the rebels and end the insurrection. Because the negroes were scattered over the entire island, it was feared that it would be a difficult matter to carry out the program. But the junction with the Danish forces of a body of five hundred Spanish troops, sent over from Porto Rico, simplified the problem. Later a junction was effected between the troops from Frederiksted and those

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from Christiansted. The leader of the rebels was captured and a number of negroes were shot.

For a long period the liberty of the Africans proved to be an unsettling factor in the economic life on the island. It was necessary to pass laws to force the former slaves to work, for apparently they were under the impression that work was no longer necessary and that their former owners were now obliged to provide them with all the necessities of life. When the governor announced the freedom of the slaves one of the stipulations of the proclamation was that all old and infirm negroes were to be provided for by their late owners. This stipulation did not apply to those of the younger generation who were able to work, though it was not an easy matter to persuade them of the fact. In time, however, all these difficulties were overcome. The little plots of ground, which had been allotted to the freed negroes on the estates of their owners, were taken away from them when they refused to till them, so that the Africans came to realize that unless they worked starvation stared them in the face.

But the unfortunate island of St. Croix was not yet to enjoy a peaceful existence. In 1852

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another riot broke out, this time in Christiansted itself. The beginning of the trouble was that the negroes, for some reason, were forbidden to hold their customary dances at Christmas time. When this order was disregarded, an over zealous officer of militia saw fit to order his men to fire a volley into the midst of the rebels, a number of whom were killed. The governor did not find it easy to convince the laborers that the act was unauthorized. The officer was severely punished and the militia corps was disbanded.

From 1852 to 1878 there were no differences of moment between the planters and their former slaves. During this period of quiet a labor act, which provided for the proper treatment of the workmen, was responsible for increased prosperity both for the estate owners and for the laborers. But in 1878 a rumor was circulated in the agricultural districts of St. Croix that the act was to be repealed and that other laws to the disadvantage of the laborers were to be put into effect. In consequence of this rumor, there was another revolt. The result was the almost total destruction of one-third of the town of Frederiksted. Stores and houses were looted and then set on fire.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

After a night of rioting an ineffectual attempt was made by the laborers to capture the fort. Next the rioters sought the agricultural districts, where they began a systematic destruction of the estates west of Christiansted.

Five days later the riot was suppressed by troops from St. Thomas. Assistance was offered by the commanding officers of war vessels of the United States, Great Britain and France, and aid was also tendered by the governor of the (then) Spanish island of Porto Rico, who said that he was ready to send three hundred men with two mountain guns; but this help was not needed.

A few Danish soldiers were caught by the rioters and were brutally murdered. Twelve of the laborers were subsequently court-martialed, and were sentenced to be shot. Many others were jailed. Soon quiet was once more restored to the island.

Since 1878, no further riots of this character have taken place on St. Croix, yet conditions have always been troublesome and even to-day there is great unrest among the laborers of St. Croix. Until the last day of its rule over the island the Danish government found it necessary to maintain a considerable body of men in the forts of Christian-

## STORY OF LABOR ON ST. CROIX

sted and Frederiksted, and to patrol the island with an efficient corps of *gendarmes*. Strikes have taken place on different occasions, and the St. Croix laborer has always been ready with veiled threats to burn the properties of the sugar planters. What these threats meant can only be realized by those who know that the owner of a cane field is in a constant state of anxiety because of its inflammability. A cigar inadvertently dropped along the edge of the field may result in the destruction of thousands of dollars' worth of sugar cane before the fire can be checked, especially on a windy day.

During recent years the editor of one of the local papers formed a labor union on St. Croix. This editor is seeking to better the conditions of the negro and hopes soon to start an industrial school on the island modeled after Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institution. There is a great opportunity for such work as is planned by him, for it must be admitted that, in spite of the contentions of the planters to the contrary, the lot of the laborer on St. Croix is not an enviable one and there are many conditions which need a remedy.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Until January, 1916, the prevailing wage was twenty cents per day, but the last strike resulted in the increase to thirty-five cents per day for nine hours' work. The percentage of increase may seem large, but it should be remembered that many benefits which before the estates were obliged to furnish, such as a plot of ground, the privilege of keeping a horse or a cow, and medical attention, are now withheld.

When sugar was low in price, as it was during the years immediately preceding 1914, the St. Croix planters found it impossible to pay adequate wages to their men. These men would work but five days a week, and, in the height of the sugar crop, when everything depended upon constant work, they had to be coaxed to work even this length of time. Since the increased price of sugar has enabled the planters to continue the manufacture of this product with a better prospect of making a profit on their investment, the laborers will probably be paid more for their work—that is, if they give better services for the money they are supposed to earn.

It has become habitual with many of the planters to give their laborers a sinister reputation,

## STORY OF LABOR ON ST. CROIX

but it should be stated that the latter are sometimes blamed for vices which were brought here when the planters, desperate for laborers to save their sugar crops, imported a lawless element of negroes from some of the British islands to the south. The result was the acquisition of all the riff-raff who were too worthless to make a living on their native shores. Naturally they have helped to give the St. Croix native-born laborer a bad name. Yet it must be admitted that the native of St. Croix, unlike the St. Thomian and the laborer on St. John, is not a good worker and that he is apt to desire pay for work which he has but half performed.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE CHARACTER AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF ST. CROIX

THE HURRICANE OF 1772—ALEXANDER HAMILTON'S FAMOUS  
DESCRIPTION—SUGAR CULTIVATION AND SEA-ISLAND COT-  
TON POSSIBILITIES—SUGGESTIONS FOR INCREASED PRO-  
DUCTION—CATTLE RAISING AND FINE HORSES.

**S**T. CROIX lies in latitude 17 degrees, 45 minutes N., and longitude 64 degrees, 45 minutes W. The island is about forty miles due south from St. John. The meridian of 64 degrees, 45 minutes W., cuts both St. John and St. Croix almost exactly through the center. Small sailing vessels trading between the three islands are always apprehensive of the passage between the two northern islands and St. Croix, as unaccountably high seas will occasionally rise without warning and these prove a decided menace to craft of small tonnage. Only one island lies off St. Croix, Buck Island, a rocky cay with an elevation of about four hundred feet.

The island is twenty-two miles long and about six miles wide in the center. It supports a popu-

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Photograph by E. M. Newman

STREET SCENE IN FREDERIKSTED, ST. CROIX

## CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX

lation of about fifteen thousand inhabitants, of whom fully ninety-five per cent. are colored. Its area is 84.25 square miles, so that it is more than four times the size of St. John and about three times the size of St. Thomas.

Only the northern part of St. Croix is mountainous. Mt. Eagle, near the northwestern point of the island, having a height of 1164 feet, is the highest elevation. The greater part of the island south of the mountain range is rolling and the extreme southern part is quite flat. On the flat portion there are a number of lagoons. Several rivulets find their way from the mountain slopes to the south and west, while but one water-course empties itself into the sea on the north coast. In the rainy season these rivulets become angry torrents which seem only too anxious to break their bounds and damage the crops upon their banks. In the dry season they are hardly more than a bed of pebbles, with here and there a small pool to indicate that the bed is occasionally covered with water. But, even with these streams, the island cannot be said to be well watered and a large part of the south coast presents at all times a barren appearance, cacti forming the prevailing vegeta-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

tion. The rainfall averages 31.26 inches per year, and the rainy months are May, September, and October.

According to Dr. Taylor's work, "Leaflets from the Danish West Indies," the geological formation of St. Croix is almost the same as that of St. Thomas, although less of the blue-bit stone and more of a fine grayish stratified slate is found here. The western part of St. Croix is formed of tertiary limestone. The southern part of the island consists principally of large limestone plains.

In spite of the somewhat scanty rainfall the soil of St. Croix, throughout the island, is remarkable for its fertility, with the exception of the area bordering the south coast. The mountain tops, which in pre-Columbian days were covered with large forests, were burned bare during the French occupation of the island and are now mostly covered with grasses of different varieties which serve as fodder for the herds that graze there.

There are no harbors on St. Croix, and the island suffers greatly because of this lack. The contour of St. Croix includes practically no bays, and there are dangerous reefs along the north and

## CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX

south coasts. There is no east coast, owing to the fact that the south and north coasts meet in a point, and the west coast is exposed to northerly, southerly and westerly storms. Thus no safe anchorage for vessels can be found.

The climate is good, but is warmer than that of St. John and St. Thomas. The statement has been made that this is due to the fact that St. Croix lies further within the tropics; but it is to be doubted if forty miles could account for the variation. It is more likely that the profile of the island and the fact that it is not directly exposed to the north Atlantic, as are the islands of St. John and St. Thomas, has a great deal to do with this increase in temperature. In former days, because of its climate, St. Croix was a Mecca for American tourists, and it should be a favorite with them to-day. Undoubtedly the climate is even better and more equable than that of the famed Bermudas or Bahamas.

There are few mosquitoes on the island. The ubiquitous sand-fly occasionally proves to be a pest, but the attacks of this insect do not occur often. There is but one variety of snake, and this is of a non-poisonous variety. The sanitation

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

of the two towns is good, and of later years there have been no epidemics.

Like the other Virgin Islands, St. Croix has been frequently a sufferer from hurricanes. Even the earlier records speak of these disasters. In 1772 no less than four hundred and sixty houses in Christiansted and all the houses in Frederiksted, with the exception of three, were destroyed. The sea rose seventy feet above its usual level, and all shipping was driven ashore.

This was the hurricane which was so well described by Alexander Hamilton in a letter to his father. The future aide-de-camp of Washington and Secretary of the Treasury in Washington's administration, was at the time a clerk in the counting house of a merchant named Nicholas Cruger in Christiansted, and, though he was but fifteen years old, he was a marvel of ingenuity and ability. The letter attracted so much attention from admiring friends and relatives that it was decided to give him the chance he longed for to go to the United States to secure a college education. The letter is worth quoting here, for it gives a more vivid word picture of a West Indian hurricane than does the average narrative:

## CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX

ST. CROIX, Sept. 6, 1772.

HONORED SIR,

I take up my pen, just to give you an imperfect account of one of the most dreadful hurricanes that memory or any records whatever can trace, which happened here on the 31st ultimo at night.

It began about dusk, at north, and raged very violently till ten o'clock. Then ensued a sudden and unexpected interval which lasted about an hour. Meanwhile the wind was shifting round to the south west point, from whence it returned with redoubled fury and continued till nearly three in the morning. Good God! what horror and destruction—it's impossible for me to describe—or you to form any idea of it. It seemed as if a total dissolution of nature was taking place. The roaring of the sea and wind—fiery meteors flying about in the air—the prodigious glare of almost perpetual lightning—the crash of falling houses—and the ear-piercing shrieks of the distressed were sufficient to strike astonishment into Angels. A great part of the buildings throughout the island are leveled to the ground—almost all the rest very much shattered—several persons killed and numbers utterly ruined—whole families wandering about the streets, unknowing where to find a place of shelter—the sick exposed to the keenness of water and air—without a bed to lie upon—or a dry covering to their bodies—and our

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harbors entirely bare. In a word, misery, in its most hideous shapes, spread over the whole face of the country. A strong smell of gunpowder added somewhat to the terrors of the night; and it was observed that the rain was exceedingly salt. Indeed the water is so brackish and full of sulphur that there is hardly any drinking it.

In 1867 an earthquake devastated St. Croix and caused enormous damage on St. Thomas. The town of Frederiksted on St. Croix was the principal sufferer and the U. S. S. *Monongahela*, a wooden cruiser with auxiliary steam power, was taken up bodily by a wave which lifted it over the tops of some coconut trees and deposited it a considerable distance inland. Later it was necessary to dig a canal in order to float the ship to the ocean.

The last hurricane, that of October 9 and 10, 1916, did not do one-tenth as much damage on St. Croix as it did on St. Thomas, though it destroyed a number of the smaller houses and unroofed some of the larger ones. No shipping was lost with the exception of the schooner *Vigilant*, which was sunk in Christiansted harbor, and a few small sloops.

St. Croix is essentially an agricultural island.

## CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX

Of the total acreage of 51,913, about thirteen thousand acres are devoted to the cultivation of sugar and about two thousand to the raising of sea-island cotton. Grass, fodder and other kinds of miscellaneous products are produced on about thirty thousand acres. Without irrigation or fertilization the island can raise eight to ten tons of sugar per acre, thus equaling what is produced in Hawaii with irrigation or in Louisiana with fertilization.

Should the estate owners become convinced of the wisdom of using imported fertilizers on their land and the government arrange for a system of irrigation which could be installed at small cost by damming existing water courses and digging small canals, there is every reason to believe that St. Croix would soon equal the record of the island of Porto Rico by producing twenty-five to thirty tons of sugar per acre. Incidentally, the irrigation system, if installed, would convert into land capable of raising large crops of this product great areas which are now unsuitable for cane culture. Another improved method to which little attention has been paid, and which would prove of incalculable benefit to the soil, would be a system of

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crop rotation. This would restore the fertility of land worn out by too long use in raising but one kind of produce.

There are three large sugar mills in operation. These are the St. Croix Sugar Factory near Christiansted, the West End Mill, half way between Christiansted and Frederiksted, and the La Grange Mill, two miles from Frederiksted. These three mills produce seven-eighths of all the sugar made on the island, eight smaller estates manufacturing the remainder. It has been estimated that, with proper machinery and increased cultivation, St. Croix would be capable of producing 100,000 tons of sugar per year. Yet in 1916 the sugar crop amounted only to about 16,000 short tons. In 1903, a record year, the total crop came to but 19,275 short tons.

Formerly St. Croix was famed throughout the West Indies for the rum produced in the distilleries which were run in connection with the sugar estates, and "Santa Cruz" rum commanded a higher price than any other on the market. But of late it has been found unprofitable to continue distilling, and attention is paid solely to the manufacture of sugar.

## CHARACTER OF ST. CROIX

Before the United States took over the islands, the exporters were obliged to pay to the Danish government five per cent. export duty on their sugar. In addition to this they had to pay a considerable import duty when sugar was sent to ports of the United States. Now that the islands have come under the American flag, a flat rate of eight dollars per ton export duty is to be imposed on all sugar sent from the island. Of course when the sugar is shipped to New York or any other United States port, no import duty has to be paid. Thus the planters who export their sugar to the United States pay much less duty than they did before.

In addition to enormous possibilities of St. Croix for the increased cultivation of sugar-cane, the island also is capable of greatly increased cotton production. To-day the 2,000 acres devoted to this valuable plant produce the finest cotton in the market, the long staple sea-island cotton, whose present value is from forty to fifty cents per pound. Cotton cultivation has been temporarily abandoned owing to the difficulty of shipping the product and the appearance of insect pests, but it is thought that if the fields are permitted to

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rest idle for a few years this last difficulty will be conquered.

Attempts have recently been made to grow sisal (hennequin) on the drier parts of St. Croix. Very likely this venture will prove successful, as it has been found in other parts of the West Indies, such as the Caicos Islands and the Bahamas, that this fibrous plant appears to thrive best in the less fertile districts and in sections where rainfall is scant. Efforts to raise bananas and other fruits are also being accompanied by a fair measure of success.

Many cattle are raised on the island. Most of these are used for drawing the wagons which transport the sugar-cane from the fields to the mill. Thirty thousand acres are devoted to the raising of fodder and for the pasturage of herds.

The island is also especially noted for the good quality of the horses raised and a number of these are exported to neighboring islands. Thanks to the importation of stallions from the United States, the breed is constantly improving. The influx of a large number of automobiles has not succeeded in making the St. Croix planter lose his pride in his saddle or driving horses.

## CHAPTER XII

### ON "THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"

FREDERIKSTED AND CHRISTIANSTED—THE BUSTLE OF STEAMER DAY—ISLAND COMMUNICATION, STEAMERS AND SAILING VESSELS—THE ROMANTIC STORY OF THE VIGILANT—ALEXANDER HAMILTON, THE CHRISTIANSTED CLERK—ROADS AND MOTOR CARS—THE RUINS ON THE SUGAR PLANTATIONS—WHY DEER ARE PLENTY—COLUMBUS' TREE-GROWING OYSTERS—WHAT THE EXCAVATOR LEARNS FROM KITCHEN-MIDDENS

**T**HERE are two ports of entry on St. Croix, Frederiksted and Christiansted. Of these two towns the former represents the commercial interests of the island and the latter the governmental interests. Naturally, then, there is more bustle around Frederiksted than one ever sees around Christiansted, especially on "steamer day," when the Quebec Line steamer calls on its way to islands farther south or on its return voyage to New York.

Frederiksted, or West End as it is more popularly called, has a population of about three thousand. It cannot, therefore, be said to be a large town. Yet, as it is the depot of eighty per cent. of all the island's imports and exports, it does a considerable amount of business and the large

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warehouses attest to the prosperity of the merchants. All cargoes and passengers have to be landed here in lighters and in rowboats, for there is no harbor, and the steamer must remain about a half mile off shore.

The roadstead is exposed to storms from three directions, the west coast giving protection from easterly winds only. In consequence, steamer captains who anchor here are always prepared to depart at a moment's notice. They are especially cautious in the hurricane months.

There are few old buildings in the town itself, the majority of the larger houses having been destroyed in the laborers' riot of 1878. There is, however, a fort in which, until March 31, 1917, a company of Danish gendarmes was quartered.

It is only on steamer days that one realizes the importance of this little town. The one pier of which the water front boasts is then covered with a swarming mass of laborers, boatmen and lookers-on, anxious for a glimpse at the arriving tourists with the latest styles from the North. The pier on the water-front suddenly seems to become one enormous warehouse with bales, bags, barrels, crates and trunks scattered everywhere.

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WHARF, CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX





WHARF WITH CARGO FROM CALLING STEAMER, FREDERIKSTED, ST. CROIX

## **"THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"**

But whereas, in St. Thomas, a visitor is greeted by a grinning boatman and a porter who makes up in willingness what he lacks in efficiency, the atmosphere in St. Croix, generally speaking, is charged with surliness. No pleasant greetings are given; indeed, the negroes one meets seem to scowl at the stranger and resent his presence. However, their looks do them an injustice, for it will be generally found that the native-born inhabitant of St. Croix is at heart good natured, and the discourtesy one meets with is due more to the resentment of the people because of their condition than to any evil intentions toward the visitor.

At the present time but this one steamship line, the Quebec Steamship Company, calls at Frederiksted. Vessels of this company also call at Christiansted in the sugar season, but only when the weather is very favorable, so great are the dangers incident to touching at the latter port. There is daily communication between Frederiksted and Christiansted by an automobile service which transports the mail and carries passengers for six dollars the round trip. Various small sloops lighter the goods landed at Frederiksted to Christiansted and call at different places along the

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coast. These sloops also make occasional visits to St. Thomas. The mail between St. Croix and St. Thomas is always brought to Christiansted by a small sloop which has a contract for this service, except when it is carried on the steamers of the Quebec Line.

An electric light plant is being installed in Frederiksted and the little town will soon be illuminated by this means and the kerosene lanterns which are now used will be abolished. There is an ice-plant, but, as it has not been found profitable to run this, all ice is brought from the Christiansted factory by the automobile which carries the mail.

Christiansted, or Bassin as it is more generally known, is the oldest settlement on the island, and has a population of about forty-five hundred. The town is built around a curving water-front with an amphitheatre of hills in the background. It has a picturesque appearance, and this is heightened by the old forts and churches which still remain.

Successive hurricanes, wars, rebellions and riots of the negroes are responsible for the fact that only a few of the old residences are standing to-day. During the latter days of the Danish rule,

## **"THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"**

the governor spent six months of each year on St. Croix and a handsome gubernatorial residence is found here, which is said to be larger than any similar house in the Lesser Antilles.

There are two forts in Christiansted, the Sophia Frederika Fort, which is built upon a small island, Protestant Cay, in the harbor, and the Luisa Augusta Fort, located on the mainland. It was to this latter stronghold that an intending traveler who desired a passport was obliged to go when Denmark ruled the island. For his passport he had to pay thirty-two cents if he wished to make a voyage to St. Thomas, while one dollar was required if he planned to go beyond the jurisdiction of the Danish government. Although the amount demanded was so small, the tax on passports brought a considerable sum of money to the treasury, and incidentally prevented emigration of absconders or negroes who were in debt to the estate owners.

Steamers seldom call here. When captains do decide to risk the dangers of the roadstead, it is always in fear and trepidation. A circle of reefs makes the entrance difficult. Even when a fair-sized steamer has safely navigated the tortuous

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channel of the reef, it is necessary to anchor by bow and stern, since there is not enough room between the rocks and the reefs to allow a vessel to swing with the tide or wind. Experts say that it would be quite possible to blast away some of the obstructions which make this anchorage unsafe and to widen and straighten the entrance through the outer reef. If this should be done, Christiansted would undoubtedly become commercially the more important port and the trade conditions of St. Croix would be bettered to an astonishing extent.

There is regular communication by sailing vessels between Christiansted and Charlotte-Amalia. Perhaps one of the most interesting of these vessels is the old schooner *Vigilant*, which makes Christiansted her home port. This ship, which is always pointed out to visitors, has had a turbulent history. When built in Baltimore, in 1800, she was named the "None-such," and sailed under the American flag. She was first employed for the carrying of slaves. Local history still tells of the days when the ship carried human cargoes and of the miseries suffered by the unhappy Africans when some two hundred of them were confined at one time in the small holds. When slave trad-

## “THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES”

ing became illegal, the schooner was sold to a St. Croix merchant. For some time it was a privateersman, with letters of marque from the Danish government.

In 1825 the vessel was used as a man-of-war. A Spanish privateer had caused considerable loss to shipping by cruising in the waters around the Virgin Island group and capturing many merchant vessels. The Danish government was unable to stop this practice with the man-of-war that was stationed here; the deeper draught of this vessel made it impossible to pursue the small privateer into the shallow channels in which it took refuge. The *Vigilant*, as the historic None-such had by this time been named, was chartered by the Danish government and a crew of thirty soldiers was hidden on board. She cruised about in the waters surrounding the islands until the privateersman perceived her. Thinking he had found an easy prize, the captain of the enemy vessel made ready to capture the schooner. But as soon as he grappled with her the thirty soldiers who had been hidden in the *Vigilant's* hold suddenly appeared and turned the tables, killing the Spanish captain, his officers, and a number of the crew.

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Next the *Vigilant* was used as a mail schooner between the islands. She changed owners many times. Originally she was a topsail-schooner, but was changed to a fore-and-aft schooner. In the hurricane of 1876 she struck the reef of Christiansted harbor and sank, but was raised again and was later used as a government packet. Finally, in the destructive hurricane of October 9, 1916, the *Vigilant* was again sunk inside the Christiansted reef. She was once more raised. To-day she serves in the humble capacity of a cargo carrier in the inter-island trade.

A visitor to the island after hearing this long story, naturally wonders how the vessel could have existed for more than a hundred and seventeen years in West Indian waters, where the teredo worm works quick destruction to all woods exposed to the sea. The owner of the *Vigilant*, if closely questioned, will admit that parts of the vessel have occasionally been renewed. If he is hard pressed he will frankly confess that the only original part of the vessel remaining is a small eight-foot piece of oak keel!

Christiansted prides itself upon having been the home of Alexander Hamilton and the house where



Photograph by William H. Rau

STREET IN FREDERIKSTED, ST. CROIX



**LUTHERAN CHURCH AND ADJOINING HOUSES, CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX**



**SCHOONER "VIGILANT" AT WHARF, CHRISTIANSTED, ST. CROIX**

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he resided is still pointed out to visitors. When but twelve years of age he began to work as book-keeper and general assistant to Nicholas Cruger, who soon found that he had in him a helper on whom he could depend. Yet the clerk was not satisfied, as appears from a letter which he sent to a friend who went to America to study. In this letter he said:

I condemn the grovelling condition of a clerk, or the like, to which my fortunes condemn me, and would willingly risk my life, though not my character, to exalt my station. I am confident, Ned, that my youth excludes me from any hope of immediate preferment, nor do I desire it; but I mean to prepare the way for futurity. . . . I shall conclude by saying I wish there was a war.

Less than a year after this letter was written Mr. Cruger went to New York, leaving his business in the hands of the young clerk. He had been absent only a few weeks when the boy wrote to the captain of the sloop *Thunderbolt* a letter which showed that Mr. Cruger's confidence in his clerk was well merited:

Herewith I give you all your despatches, and desire you will proceed immediately to Curacoa. . . . You

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know it is intended you shall go from thence to the main for a load of mules, and I beg if you do, you'll be very choice in the quality of your mules, and bring as many as your vessel can conveniently contain—by all means take in a large supply of provender. Remember, you are to make three trips this season, and unless you are very diligent you will be too late, as our crops will be early in. . . . I place an entire reliance upon the prudence of your conduct.

The persistent seeker after old furniture on St. Croix is sure to be rewarded with valuable finds. Here, as on St. John, the cabinet maker of former days seems to have taken a delight in his craft and turned out pieces which could vie with those from any part of the world. The objects are generally made of Santo Domingan mahogany and are exquisitely carved.

Many a piece of rare crystal also may be discovered in the dilapidated negro cabins. A specialty of the island is the old liquor case, a polished mahogany box with compartments for a number of square cut glass bottles which speak eloquently of the rare old wines imbibed by the forefathers of the present planters.

It would be difficult to say whether St. Croix

## **"THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"**

would appear more attractive to a visitor than St. Thomas or St. John. While St. Croix lacks the magnificent grandeur of the seascapes and the wild beauty of the mountains possessed by St. Thomas and St. John, it presents a far more orderly appearance, with its straight roads and its vast areas of cultivated land. The island is laid out with parallel roads, intersected by other roads running at right angles, and the more level portions present the appearance of a checker board. Excellent macadamized roads provide good facilities for motoring and are fringed with coconut trees. In all, there are about one hundred miles of good roads on the island. There are also a few short lines of narrow gauge railroads, which are used to collect sugar cane and to carry this to the mill. Of late years this transportation is being done on one estate by motor truck, and it is likely that this sort of vehicle, so much more efficient than the ox-carts now in use, will speedily come into popular favor. Motor cars can be hired at the rate of twenty cents per mile, and there are a large number of these conveyances. But a visitor who would see the island well should hire a good horse and trap, for these will

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the owners of the field are obliged to grant the increase or else lose the entire crop. The second reason for the laborers' satisfaction in case of fire is that a burned stalk of sugar-cane is far easier to cut than a green, live stalk.

The watch-houses provided for the use of those who guarded against fire in the cane fields were supplied with loop-holes for muskets, so many of them proved a good defense against revolting Africans in the days of rebellions and riots. Brick chimneys of former sugar estates and the remains of old wind-mills also remind the visitor of the fact that sugar at one time was king of the island.

Very few "great houses" remain on St. Croix, although ruins of these are plentiful. Bülowminde and Havensicht still exist to tell of the pomp and circumstance in which the former planters lived. These houses are beautifully located about six hundred feet above sea level. Other large plantations are Concordia and the Princess Estate. An excursion to any one of these will well repay the tourist who seeks for information as to the manners and customs on the island in the eighteenth century.

There is good hunting on St. Croix for fallow-

## **"THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"**

deer, which are found here in large numbers. In fact, there are so many of these animals that they do a great deal of damage to the produce patches of the humbler class of agriculturists. For this reason deer are not protected, but may be hunted at all seasons. Venison is sold almost every day in the local markets. The animals have multiplied rapidly since they were first introduced. They are found in larger numbers on the north coast than elsewhere. The unprepared visitor who happens to be walking through a field is sometimes startled by the sudden appearance of a deer which, upon seeing the intruder, will beat a hurried retreat. There is also good pigeon and duck hunting, while splendid fishing and bathing may be enjoyed by the lovers of these sports.

On the north coast of St. Croix extensive Indian remains are found on village sites which were at one time occupied by the savage aborigines. There are so many mounds near the mouth of the Salt River that it seems certain the pre-Columbian inhabitants had here a village of considerable size. These mounds are located at the very edge of the sea, due south from the reef which is some half mile distant from the shore line. They consist for

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

the most part of the large conch and oyster shells which are so typical of these islands.

When Columbus reported to his Spanish masters upon the wonders of the West Indies, he laid special stress upon the fact that he had seen oysters growing on trees. The explanation of this seemingly incredible phenomenon is simple, as any visitor to the West Indies knows. The shores of brackish lagoons in these latitudes are always fringed with mangrove trees, whose overhanging branches take root in the water until the bush finally resembles the leaf-covered ribs of an umbrella. Upon these branches the young oysters (*Ostrea Virginica*) find a hold. At length the parts of the tree that are submerged at high tide are completely covered with the mollusks. The Indians who inhabited the Salt River district seem to have been especially fond of this sort of food.

The work of excavating in the St. Croix deposits was far easier than in the similar deposits on Magens Bay on St. Thomas. Practically no roots of destructive trees were found, as the vegetation around the mouth of the Salt River was scant, owing to the intense heat and the saline moisture



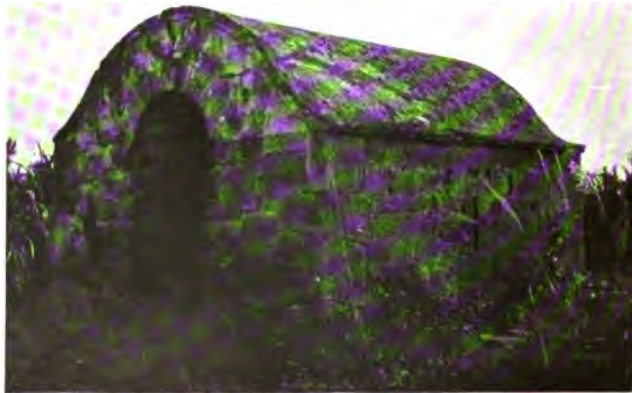
REEF AT MOUTH OF SALT RIVER, ST. CROIX



ROOTS OF MANGROVE TREES, WITH OYSTERS, SALT RIVER, ST. CROIX



**ABORIGINAL POTTERY VESSEL AS FOUND IN  
THE EARTH, SALT RIVER, ST. CROIX**



**TYPICAL OLD WATCH HOUSE ON SUGAR ESTATE, ST. CROIX**

## **"THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES"**

of the atmosphere. In fact one wonders why this region should have been chosen for a residence by the aborigines, since it is one of the portions of the island where the most intense heat is found.

The expedition sent out by the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, of New York City, was especially fortunate in excavating in these deposits a number of entire vessels which were found buried in the debris of the mounds. It was necessary to use the utmost care in removing a vessel from the trench, so that the uncovering of one of these was generally undertaken only by the leader of the expedition. It was impossible to tell beforehand if the roots of the smaller bushes here had developed cracks in the vessels during the centuries that the fragile specimens had awaited the coming of the archeologist. Frequently a bowl would fall into numerous pieces on being lifted from its matrix. But the accident was by no means irretrievable; the pieces would be packed together carefully and upon their arrival at the Museum in New York they would be cleaned and put together in such a manner that the breaks became practically invisible.

Not only are pieces of entire vessels saved,

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

but the hundreds of postsherds found in the deposits are "matched" as far as this is possible and are afterwards mended. At times surprising results are obtained. Occasionally the excavator will find a fragment in one place and a piece of the same bowl some fifteen feet away. The explanation is that when an Indian woman broke one of her cooking pots she would throw the pieces in the refuse heap back of her hut. Naturally, the pieces would fall in different places. After years of practice, the archeologist develops a good memory for the fragments he excavates. He mentally classifies these by their color and the thickness of the ware, and often he is able to reconstruct a bowl out of perhaps twenty different sherds. This "matching" should be done first in the field, and once again after the museum is reached. The Virgin Island sherds were washed as they came out of the kitchen-middens and then were placed in the sun to dry. Not only are postsherds found in the deposits, but broken stone implements, stone beads, shell and bone pendants, bone awls, et cetera, are among the hundreds of objects that enable the archeologist to gather his data on the aboriginal inhabitants.

## “THE GARDEN OF THE ANTILLES”

Perhaps the most important item of all is the examination and identification of the shells and animal bones that are found. All animal bones are preserved and are sent on to various zoölogical experts for identification. The shells also are saved and ultimately are identified by conchologists.

After all this has been done, it is possible to tell quite accurately just what constituted the diet of those who lived in the ancient villages. It was found in St. Croix that the principal shell food of the Indians consisted of the oyster (*Ostrea Virginica*) and the conch (*Strombus gigas*). In all, more than twenty-five varieties of shells were found. Of mammals, there were the bones of a small, extinct animal, the *isolobodon portoricensis* and a species of *trichechus* (sea cow) were found. Of birds, the Indians appear to have consumed the puffin, the booby, the yellow-crowned night heron, the gallinule, the crow, and a species of extinct and hitherto unknown rail. The bones of the green turtle were also found, as were the remains of eight different varieties of fish. A number of claws of the common, light-colored land crab proved that the aborigines did not despise these animals in their dietary.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

But not only are the shells and bones found in the kitchen-middens important as evidences of the food of the Indians; frequently they are of the highest zoölogical interest, if they belonged to animals now extinct.

There can be no doubt that St. Croix supported a large aboriginal population. There are village sites like that of Salt River in many other parts of the island. Then the stone axes and other pre-Columbian implements which had been picked up by tillers of the fields, and are to be seen in almost every laborer's cabin on the island, add to the evidence that the population in pre-historic days must have been far more dense than it is now.

To the tourist, as well as to the archeologist, St. Croix offers pleasant possibilities in the way of excursions. The island has been aptly named "the Garden of the Antilles," because of its luxuriant vegetation. The wilder element of the scenery of the other Virgin Islands is noticeably lacking, but St. Croix, with its myriad shades of verdure, is a constant delight to the eyes of those unaccustomed to tropical vegetation.

## CHAPTER XIII

**A VISIT TO THE BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS  
BUCCANEERS AND REBELS—A RULER WHO IS JACK-OF-ALL-  
TRADES—TORTOLA AND THE SURROUNDING CAYS—WHY  
THE SAILORS OF JOST VAN DYKE DROWN—VICTIMS OF THE  
PROPRIETORS—THE ATTRACTIONS OF TORTOLA—THE DI-  
VERTING STORY OF AUDAIN—VIRGIN GORDA AND ITS  
PENINSULAS—ANEGADA, "THE DROWNED ISLAND"—MEN  
WHO LIVE ON SHIPWRECKS**

**T**HE early history of the British Virgin Islands is shrouded in darkness. There is brief mention of the fact that these islands were first settled in 1648 by Dutch buccaneers who made them a base from which they carried on their piratical raids upon merchant shipping. It seems certain that Great Britain laid claim to the islands as early as 1666 and has owned them without interruption ever since. But how the sea-rovers came to lose these possessions to the British and what class of Englishmen first came to the islands, is not definitely known.

From 1666 until 1793 the islands appear to have existed without any definite administrative organization. Not until 1773 was a court of justice created with a civil governor.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

In 1831 a plot was formed by the negroes to murder the male whites, plunder the islands and seize such ships as might be found in the harbors. Their intention was to carry off the wives of their former masters to Hayti, where they wished to join the citizens of this negro republic. As in 1733 the government of the British Virgin Islands had helped the St. Thomas authorities to suppress the rebellion on St. John, the Danes now reciprocated by dispatching a man-of-war to Tortola in order to intimidate the rebels. The presence of this ship was sufficient to subdue the negroes.

In 1867 a legislative council was given to the colony. Finally an ordinance, dated May 1, 1902, placed the islands under the authority of the governor of the Leeward Islands, they forming a separate presidency. The commissioner in charge is usually a physician, as the presidency is too poor to support a resident physician as well as a commissioner. Besides being administrator and physician, he holds the offices of chief judge, recorder of deeds, et cetera.

The line between the British and the American islands runs from the north between Little Tobago and Hans Lollik; from thence to the channel



PANORAMIC VIEW FROM ST. JOHN OF JOST VAN DYKE AND TOFTOLA ISLANDS (BRITISH)



BAYS ON NORTH COAST OF ST. JOHN  
With Thatch Island and Jost Van Dyke (British) in Distance

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

between Thatch Island, Tortola and St. John, around the eastern end of the latter, and thence through Flanagan Passage.

The total area of the British islands is about fifty-eight square miles, and they consist of over forty cays and islands. They support a population of a little over five thousand inhabitants, though the number is constantly decreasing. But few ships call here and the only communication with the outside world is by sailboat and by motorboat from St. Thomas. Those who man these boats are the finest seamen in the West Indies. Their familiarity with the currents in the channels between islands, with the reefs and other hidden dangers, and with the baffling winds caused by the surrounding mountain tops, makes them the best of boat-handlers.

The climate of Tortola and of the other British Virgin Islands is especially good. At times the days are quite cool, for the temperature frequently ranges as low as sixty-five degrees Fahrenheit.

That the trade of the islands is of little consequence may be judged from the fact that in 1914 the only export worth mentioning was 35,201

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

pounds of cotton. The imports in 1915 amounted to \$41,132, and the exports to \$32,805.

The origin of the name of the island of Tortola, meaning "turtle-dove," is unknown. It seems more than likely that the early Spanish discoverers gave it that name, but it is difficult to understand how it survived from 1493, when the island was first seen, until 1666.

Tortola lies in latitude 18 degrees, 25 minutes N., and longitude 64 degrees, 40 minutes W. It is extremely mountainous, the highest elevation, Sage Mountain, dominating all the surrounding land with an altitude of 1780 feet. It is shaped irregularly, and is ten miles long by three and one-half miles wide. Of its 13,300 acres, one-fifth were under cultivation in 1815, but it is doubtful if to-day more than one-twentieth of the land is tilled.

The island is surrounded by a number of cays of which the largest are Jost Van Dyke, Norman Island, Peter Island, Beef Island, Guano Island, Great Camanoe Island and Scrub Island. Jost Van Dyke, which was named for one of the leaders of the Dutch buccaneers who first settled here, is the most prominent of these cays, having a peak

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

with an elevation of 1070 feet. It is inhabited by some three hundred and fifty settlers, who are even better boatmen and fishermen than the other inhabitants of the British Virgin Islands. It is said locally that they are so confident of their ability as sailors that they have never taken the trouble to learn to swim. So, whenever there is a mishap to any boat from these islands, the members of the crew who are natives of Jost Van Dyke are the ones drowned.

Tortola has the same geological formation as St. John. It is very fertile in parts, but is not well watered, there being but one rivulet. Limes, oranges, and other fruits are grown. The vendors of these products go to the markets of Charlotte-Amalia.

There the local merchants, knowing that they are obliged to sell their fruits before these become spoiled and that Charlotte-Amalia is the only place where a sale can be made, offer them very low prices in comparison with the prices given for the same products raised on St. John and St. Thomas. The unfortunate Tortola islanders are bound either to accept these prices or to throw their produce away.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Other products which find a ready sale on St. Thomas are charcoal, which is burned by the men, and is carried to market in small sailing boats, and drawn work, in the making of which the women are quite expert.

Another industry is being developed by the planting of coconut groves, and it is possible that these groves may prove to be a saving factor in the economic life of the island. In 1904 experiments were conducted for the growing of sea-island cotton, but for some reason these experiments were not very successful and the expectations of an island-wide cultivation of the cotton plants did not materialize.

There are a number of bays, of which Road Harbor is the most important. While this bay is exposed to the southeast, it is protected from all other sides by an amphitheatre of lofty hills. Here as many as three or four hundred sailing vessels used to assemble to await the coming of a convoy of men-of-war to protect them on their homeward-bound voyage, and in those days, Tortola was a place of considerable traffic. A number of old forts still bear evidence of those days of prosperity, when it was found necessary to protect the ship-

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

ping that took shelter here from the raids of buccaneers and privateersmen.

Some four thousand people live on the island. Most of these are scattered through the mountains, only about four hundred being found in the settlement of Roadtown. This village, which stands on the southwest shore of the bay, is surmounted by the ruins of Fort Charlotte, situated on a spur of the main mountain range, 940 feet high. But for the commissioner's residence and the custom house, the place would be nothing more than a collection of fishermen's huts with here and there the ruins of large houses to tell of the former importance of the town.

At one time Roadtown was the scene of many condemnation proceedings of captured privateers and freebooting craft. Such vessels were frequently brought to Tortola by British cruisers. These sales contributed in no inconsiderable degree to the resources and prosperity of the town. An attempt to add to this prosperity was made when the British proclaimed Tortola a free port, in the effort to keep pace with the development of Charlotte-Amalia on St. Thomas.

The only regular communication between Road-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

town and the Virgin Islands of the United States is by a small sloop which goes to Charlotte-Amalia once a week to get the mail. A voyage on this sloop can be recommended heartily for those who are not afraid of roughing it and who care to enjoy a pleasant trip through the channels among the islands.

Directly across Road Harbor Bay, on the eastern side, lies the small and scattered settlement named Kingston.

A short distance from Roadtown are the Botanic Gardens, as well as the Experiment Station where attempts are being made to exploit the agricultural possibilities of the British Virgin Islands. At the west end of the bay are seen the interesting ruins of Fort Burt. A number of other ruined fortifications may be seen along the coast.

Ruined sugar estates are everywhere, for on this island, as on the Virgin Islands to the westward, sugar cane was at one time extensively cultivated.

Good ponies are for sale or for hire on Tortola and pleasant rides and excursions can be made all over the island. The roads over the mountain paths are of wonderful scenic interest and often

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

lead by precipitous ravines. No visitor should fail to take the road which leads by "Anderson's Leap," named in honor of one Anderson who managed to land at the bottom of a ravine without breaking his neck.

The hunting on Tortola is very good, and a yachting trip around its shores would be a source of great delight. A voyage to Norman Island will remind one of the days when buccaneers had their hold on the Spanish Main. On this cay are a few interesting caverns, called the "Pirates' Caves," in one of which a chest of treasure was once found.

No visitor to Tortola can escape without hearing the story of a man named Audain who at one time lived here. Audain began life as a midshipman in the British navy, but, finding this profession unprofitable, he became a clergyman on the Virgin Islands. Later he broadened his activities by obtaining a license as an auctioneer and also by building a schooner with which he engaged in the profitable business of privateering.

If half of the stories told of Audain are true, he must have combined courage with cupidity and hypocrisy with heresy. It is said that at one

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time he was conducting services in church when he noted from his pulpit that a British man-of-war was pursuing a privateersman. Hurriedly dismissing his congregation, he boarded his own vessel in order to give chase. The wind being light, he made use of the large oars with which his schooner was provided and succeeded in capturing the privateer before the man-of-war could approach.

He was a great duellist. It is said that at one time, after he had fired twice without success, and while he was waiting for the pistols to be re-loaded, he walked up to his antagonist, saying, "Something between, something between, good sir;" then promptly knocked him down with his fist. He finally wound up his varied life as a trader in Hayti.

The island of Virgin Gorda, or the "Fat Virgin," as it was called by the early Spanish discoverers, has never been able to lay claim to the slightest importance. It lies in latitude 18 degrees, 30 minutes N., and longitude 64 degrees, 25 minutes W. The main part of the island is a rectangle, two and one-half miles long by one and three-fourths miles wide. One peninsula runs out from the northeast coast in a direction almost due west.

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This peninsula is a half mile wide and four miles long. Another peninsula runs due south from the southwest coast and is three and one-half miles long and a half mile wide. The main body of the island has one high mountain, the Virgin Peak, with an elevation of 1370 feet.

The eastern peninsula ends in Pajaros Point, a remarkable pinnacle rock. The eastern coast of the southern peninsula has been broken up by some violent action of nature into immense granite blocks which are scattered along the shores. Between some of these bowlders there are large pools which have the appearance of baths and are erroneously attributed to Indian handiwork. They are, however, nothing but natural formations. A continuance of this peninsula is a small island, Fallen Jerusalem, which, because of the presence of these same granite blocks, presents the curious appearance of a ruined city, this illusion being especially noticeable from a distance. Many of these blocks are from sixty to seventy feet square. They appear to have been hewn out by giants and rest the one upon the other in the haphazard order so often found in such freaks of nature.

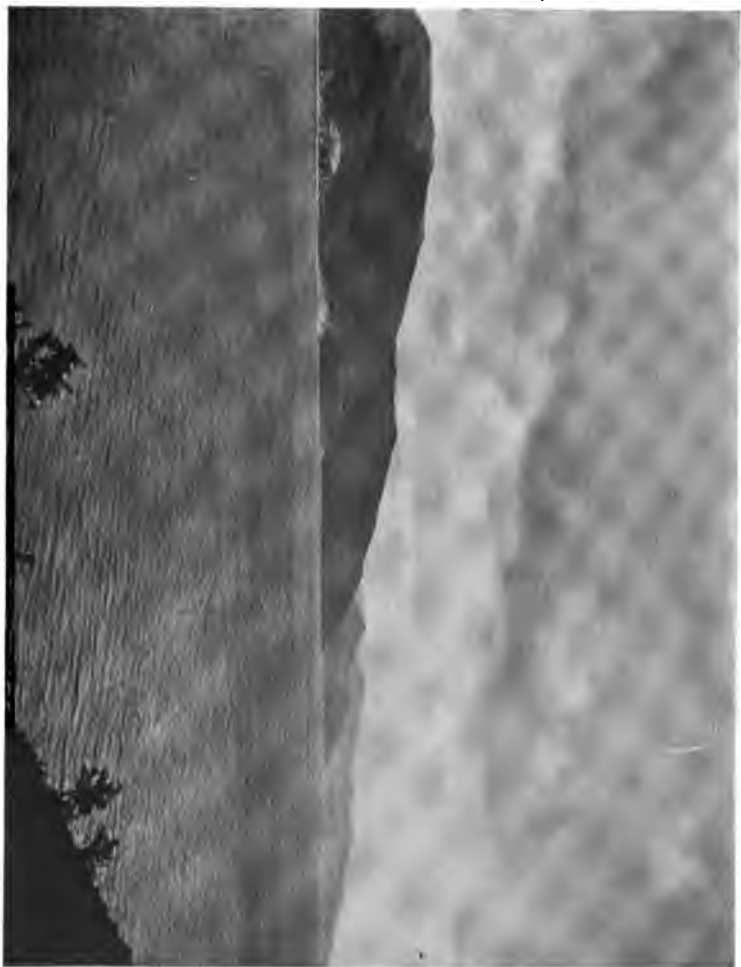
The island is very close to Tortola, Drake

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Channel being but four and one-half miles wide between Virgin Gorda and Reef Island, the latter lying off Tortola. It is badly watered, there being but two small wells on the entire island and absolutely no rivulets. An abandoned copper mine is pointed out to visitors, and there are said to be gold and silver on the island.

The total number of inhabitants of Virgin Gorda is but 417. The majority of these people live in the small settlement called Spanishtown. They make a precarious living by raising vegetables and stock and the producing of charcoal for the St. Thomas market. Owing to its unproductiveness, Virgin Gorda was never densely populated, though it was at one time fortified because of its strategic position, controlling as it does the channels leading to the other Virgin Islands.

The island of Anegada, the loneliest outpost of the Caribbean Sea, lies 14 miles due north of Virgin Gorda. It is situated in latitude 18 degrees, 45 minutes N., and longitude 64 degrees, 20 minutes W., and has a length of nine miles and a breadth of from one to two miles. The total area is thirteen square miles. In most places it has an elevation



THE BRITISH ISLAND OF TORTOLA, FROM ST. JOHN



**TURN-OUT WITH NATIVE DRIVER**



**NORTH COAST OF ST. THOMAS**

**With Thatch Island and British Islands of Tobago and Little Tobago in Distance**

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

of but thirty feet, and its highest point is only sixty feet above sea level.

The Anegada coast has always been known as a most dangerous spot for ships. In the days when St. Thomas was one of the busiest ports of the West Indies, Anegada had more wrecks in two years than those two dreaded localities on the American coast, Cape Race and Sable Island, can now claim in thirty-six months. Tides and currents are nowhere in the West Indies as swift as they are here and in few spots in the Seven Seas are there so many reefs and hidden dangers. Occasionally mariners can hardly see the island owing to the mist caused by spray which forms when the great waves dash against the cliffs. This mist hangs over the island and often hides it completely. It is from this fact that Anegada derived its Spanish name, "Drowned Island."

Anegada is of tertiary limestone formation, over a core of volcanic origin. It is covered mostly with brushwood. The numerous large salt water lagoons are visited at certain seasons by thousands of flamingoes, which come here during the rainy season when their accustomed haunts on the Orinoco River in South America are inundated

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

and they must go elsewhere in search of food.

There are no rivulets on Anegada. Water is obtained from two curious water holes named "The Wells" on the northeast coast of the island, but the inhabitants prefer to drink the rain water which they catch in their cisterns. They make use of the fresh water from The Wells for the cultivation of crops. These curious water holes have a mouth from ten to twenty-five feet in diameter and a funnel-shaped formation. They are very deep, and the surface rises and falls with the tide. The water in them is not only fresh, but it is also colder than the sea water.

Anegada was the first settled of all the Virgin Islands and was a favorite resort of buccaneers and filibusterers. These undesirable subjects were driven off by two successive naval expeditions sent out by Henry Morgan when this former buccaneer became governor of Jamaica and waged relentless war upon his erstwhile companions. The buccaneers were then replaced by settlers who lived on the booty saved from the ships wrecked here. In fact, they made so much in this way that they gave but scant time to agriculture or to stock-raising. In earlier days these wreckers did not

## VISIT TO BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

hesitate to murder the crews of the unfortunate ships that struck on the island and they made no effort to rescue the drowning.

These conditions have now changed, for severe penalties are meted out by the Tortola government. The Anegadians still have a tendency to lay pilfering fingers on any unfortunate ship that goes aground here, but there is no actual violence.

The island has poor agricultural possibilities. The four hundred and fifty-nine inhabitants are all of them black or colored. They raise a certain amount of stock and vegetables, but spend their time mostly in an anxious lookout for shipwrecks. Most of their houses and huts are built from the timbers and other remains of vessels that found a last resting place on the island. Numbers of the wrecks are still to be seen on the surrounding reefs.

There are said to be copper and silver ore deposits on the island, but none of these are worked. A quantity of buried pirate treasure is also supposed to exist here.

Many snakes and a poisonous variety of wasp disturb the otherwise peaceful existence of the inhabitants.

It is an interesting archeological fact that even

## **THE VIRGIN ISLANDS**

**Anegada supported a large aboriginal population. Numerous deposits of large extent, consisting mostly of conch shells, are found upon the east end of the island and around the shores of the lagoons. These deposits go to prove that the Indians, even if they did not come here for any permanent settlement, at least visited the place to obtain a supply of shell food.**

## CHAPTER XIV

### HINTS FOR THE TOURIST

THE CLOTHING A MAN SHOULD CARRY WITH HIM—WHAT  
THE WOMAN VISITOR NEEDS—WHY SILKS ARE USELESS—  
ROUTES AND RATES OF FARE—HOTELS AND BOARDING  
HOUSES—OTHER ADVANTAGES—THE LAND WHERE SOUVE-  
NIRS ARE UNKNOWN

**T**HE tourist who intends to pay a visit to the Virgin Islands naturally desires to learn a number of facts pertaining to them before beginning his voyage.

Perhaps the first matter on which information is desired is suitable clothing. The male tourist need have little difficulty here. If he will provide himself with the same underwear he is accustomed to wear in summer in the United States and a number of Palm Beach suits, he will find himself comfortable under all circumstances. Pith helmets are not needed, as the heat of the sun is not great enough to warrant the use of these clumsy contrivances. An ordinary wide-brimmed panama or straw hat will fill every need. Stiff collars are, in the daytime, out of place; the use of soft collars or of shirts with rolling collars is recommended. In

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

the evening warmer clothes should be worn. Either light flannels or light serge will offset the chill which sometimes is felt at night.

The tourist should, by all means, take his evening clothes with him, as he will have many opportunities to use his dinner jacket or his formal dress suit. As to footwear, it will not be found necessary to carry along anything more than the usual supply. White canvas shoes with rubber heels will be found more satisfactory than buckskin shoes, for they are cooler and they are less apt to be spoiled by the well-meaning but often unskilful shoe-cleaners at the hotels and on ship-board. Leather soles will be found more durable and less heating than rubber soles.

Another need is a light cravenette raincoat, for this will be useful on rainy days. A rubber coat is not recommended, since this is liable to crack after a short sojourn in the tropics; all prepared rubber goods have a short life south of the twenty-third degree of latitude.

The tourist who visits the islands with the idea of going in for hunting, boating or riding should by all means bring light khaki clothes, which will be found serviceable and will give good wear. For



**BLUEBEARD'S CASTLE AT TOP OF LUCHETTI'S HILL, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA,  
ST. THOMAS**



**THE BARRACKS, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA**



Photograph by William H. Rau

IN THE MARKET PLACE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA

## HINTS FOR THE TOURIST

these sports, heavy boots are also recommended, as the thorns and sharp stones will quickly destroy the lighter kind. Bathing suits should not be forgotten if the visitor is a lover of this sport, for which he can find every opportunity.

It is more difficult to advise women tourists as to the clothes they ought to carry with them, but one word of advice may not be taken amiss. Do not bring gowns made of silk. Dresses of this material will look all right for a time, but after a few weeks they will suddenly split everywhere they have been folded. This is another of the mysteries of a tropical climate which many a visitor has found out to her cost. Plenty of washable gowns and dresses, of linen and other like material, will be found best for daytime wear. Laundresses on the island are experienced, careful and inexpensive. For the evenings gowns made of crepe de chine, organdie, et cetera, will be best.

The next important question is how to reach the islands. The Quebec Steamship Company has a fleet of three steamers under the British flag which call, approximately, bi-monthly at St. Thomas and St. Croix on their way from New York to ports of the Leeward Islands. The fare

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

from New York to St. Thomas is \$70 each way, and the passage takes from five and one-half to six days. The largest ship of these three vessels, the *Guiana*, is quite comfortable. The food supplied is good, while there are ample cabin accommodations and plenty of deck room. The other two vessels of this line are not recommended, except to travelers who have no objection to roughing it. This is the only steamship company which sails from New York direct to the islands.

Another way to reach St. Thomas is by taking one of the two steamship lines which sail from New York to Porto Rico. Of these two lines, the New York and Porto Rico Steamship Company has larger steamers than the Red D Line. Both are under the American flag, and the vessels of both are very comfortable and their owners take the utmost pains to satisfy their patrons. The New York and Porto Rico Steamship Company has three vessels on the New York to San Juan route which leave New York on Saturdays and reach San Juan Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning. The fare depends upon the accommodations one selects, varying from \$45 to \$65. In San Juan one can connect with the inter-island steamer of

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the Bull-Insular Line which makes a fortnightly trip to St. Thomas, leaving San Juan Thursday night and reaching Charlotte-Amalia the next Friday morning at daybreak. The fare on this little steamer for the night trip is \$15. While the accommodations are somewhat cramped, they are clean and the trip is of but eight hours duration. The *Carmen*, a small motor vessel which has a contract for the carrying of the mails, also connects Porto Rico with St. Thomas. It leaves Fajardo every Friday morning for Charlotte-Amalia. A line of motor buses connects San Juan and Fajardo, so that one is not obliged to spend the night in this village. The entire trip does not take over eight hours in all, being two hours from San Juan to Fajardo and six hours at sea from Fajardo to Charlotte-Amalia. This cannot be recommended, however, as accommodations for passengers are limited to benches in the cabin. The fare on this vessel is \$10; but \$5 extra must be paid for the motor trip from San Juan to Fajardo.

Two of the steamers of the Red D Line are on the New York-San Juan route. They leave New York every other Wednesday and reach San Juan

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Monday afternoon. From San Juan to St. Thomas the same connections as those noted above have to be made. The other two ships of this company leave New York on the intervening Wednesdays and go direct to Mayaguez, on the west coast of Porto Rico. From there one can take the railroad to San Juan to make connections for St. Thomas and the other Virgin Islands. The fare on the Red D Line is from \$45 to \$55, according to accommodations.

There is a noticeable lack of suitable communication between the different Virgin Islands. One is occasionally fortunate enough to secure passage on one of the Quebec Line steamers from St. Thomas to St. Croix. Failing this, it is necessary to depend entirely upon sailboats and motorboats for travel between St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix. It is to be hoped that a small steamer or motorboat will soon be placed in service between the islands, with a government subsidy for the carrying of mail. Such a vessel should be a profitable venture.

As recuperating resorts for invalids the Virgin Islands unquestionably offer incomparable opportunities. The climate in many ways is far superior



GOVERNOR'S RESIDENCE ON GOVERNMENT HILL, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS



GRAND HOTEL, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS

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to that of the Bermudas and the Bahamas, and the quiet life of the islands should be a favorable element in the treatment of patients who go there. The man who builds a large sanatorium on St. John should have a remunerative investment, if the place is well advertised and well managed.

The tourist will find two hotels in Charlotte-Amalia and a number of boarding houses. The Grand Hotel, with about twenty-five rooms, situated directly opposite Emancipation Park, is considered the better, although the Hotel Italia, with about twenty rooms, is also well spoken of. Both hotels charge alike, according to accommodations, and are on the American plan. The meals at the Grand Hotel are served on a large covered balcony which overlooks the little park and the wonderful harbor, and the mild climate and the absence of mosquitoes make dining here a constant pleasure.

The cooking in Charlotte-Amalia is renowned, and the tourist is advised to come here prepared to like the creole dishes. It may be said in general of West Indian cooking that the native dishes are far more wholesome and delightful than the concoctions that are sometimes provided by tourist

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resorts with the claim that they are American dishes. There are, of course, imported meats, canned salmon and many other canned edibles. But if the visitor is content with fish that was alive in the sea not more than one hour before it comes on the table, with fresh native lobster more delicate in flavor than the far-famed coast-of-Maine variety, with vegetables which, even if unfamiliar to his eyes and taste, are as toothsome as the kinds he is accustomed to eat up North, he cannot fail to be pleased.

St. John has practically no accommodations for visitors. For some time a boarding house was kept in an historic old estate house at Leinster Bay, but this was destroyed by the hurricane of 1916, and it is doubtful if it will be rebuilt. Limited accommodations for visitors are to be had in a small bungalow belonging to one of the inhabitants of Cruz Bay. While these are quite suitable for the temporary stay of two or three guests, they are not sufficient for a party of any size.

Both in Frederiksted and Christiansted there are good boarding houses for visitors, with ample accommodations and good cooking. Numerous owners of the smaller estates are also willing to

## HINTS FOR THE TOURIST

take in boarders who care for the country life of the island.

There are excellent shops in St. Thomas, whose prices correspond favorably with those of the United States. There is also a good drug store. In fact, a visitor will be able to secure practically all he needs. This is true also of St. Croix; but on St. John nothing is obtainable. On both St. Thomas and St. Croix there are experienced physicians, and trained nurses are available.

Practically no tourist souvenirs are obtainable on the islands with the exception of the native baskets that are now produced on St. John. This lack is perhaps one of the chief charms of a stay there. Elsewhere in the West Indies vendors of rubbish and trash make life a misery to the tourist by their clamorous solicitations.

## CHAPTER XV

### DETAILED AGRICULTURAL, COMMERCIAL, SHIPPING AND BANKING INFORMATION

**T**HE facts presented in this chapter are quoted from government documents, including United States Commerce Reports, the United States Naval Medical Bulletin, and the Special Agents' Report made to the Department of Commerce on December 14, 1916, by H. G. Brock, Philip S. Smith, and W. A. Tucker.

#### FOREIGN TRADE

##### IMPORTS

The total value of the St. Thomas imports during the fiscal year ended March 31, 1916, with the exception of machinery and material worth \$19,165 that was brought in for use at the harbor works at Longbay, was \$734,680, which was shared as follows by the chief countries of origin: United States, \$332,286; West Indies, \$91,748; Great Britain, \$88,411; Denmark, \$50,778; France, \$13,286; the Netherlands, \$12,601; and Germany, \$1,195. Imports at St. Thomas constitute about 70 per cent. of the imports for all three islands.

## DETAILED INFORMATION

Figures for the shipments to St. Croix, either direct or via St. Thomas, are not shown separately.

The value of the principal articles imported into St. Thomas during the fiscal year ended March 31, 1914 (the year preceding the war), and 1916 (a whole year under war conditions), is shown in the following table:

| Articles        | 1914    | 1916    | Articles      | 1914   | 1916   |
|-----------------|---------|---------|---------------|--------|--------|
| Ammunition...   | \$6,718 | \$2,102 | Breadstuffs:  |        |        |
| United States   | 6,562   | 1,919   | Corn.....     | 4,098  | 3,715  |
| Apparel.....    | 9,470   | 5,575   | United        |        |        |
| United King-    |         |         | States...     | 4,094  | 3,415  |
| dom.....        | 4,388   | 2,213   | Corn meal...  | 7,437  | 10,153 |
| United States   | 3,966   | 2,764   | United        |        |        |
| Beverages:      |         |         | States...     | 7,437  | 10,028 |
| Coffee.....     | 3,818   | 2,863   | Flour:        |        |        |
| West Indies     | (a)     | 2,468   | W h e a t     |        |        |
| United          |         |         | (practically  |        |        |
| States...       | 112     | 353     | all from the  |        |        |
| Tea .....       | 883     | 2,280   | United        |        |        |
| United          |         |         | States)....   | 46,336 | 62,301 |
| Kingdom.....    |         | 1,340   | Rye.....      | 2,224  | 3,377  |
| Germany..       | 861     | .....   | United        |        |        |
| Boats, etc..... | 2,935   | 1,338   | States...     | 2,086  | 3,377  |
| United States   | 2,000   | 599     | Rice.....     | 6,247  | 5,420  |
| Boots and shoes | 14,632  | 14,504  | Germany..     | 4,064  | .....  |
| United States   | 13,751  | 11,662  | Nether-       |        |        |
| United King-    |         |         | lands....     | 1,303  | .....  |
| dom.....        | 283     | 1,034   | United        |        |        |
| Breadstuffs:    |         |         | Kingdom       | 815    | 4,770  |
| Cereals, n.e.s. | 1,314   | 1,634   | United        |        |        |
| United          |         |         | States...     | .....  | 342    |
| States...       | 543     | 1,106   | All other.... | 4,848  | 4,023  |

(a) Not separately stated.

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

| Articles                                               | 1914   | 1916   | Articles                         | 1914   | 1916   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|----------------------------------|--------|--------|
| Spirits, wines<br>and liquors:                         |        |        | Textiles:                        |        |        |
| Whisky (practically all<br>from United Kingdom) .      | 7,101  | 3,632  | Mixtures....                     | 3,689  | 1,670  |
| Wine.....                                              | 11,807 | 4,797  | United Kingdom....               | 3,657  | 639    |
| France....                                             | 4,342  | 2,526  | France....                       | .....  | 992    |
| United States... 63                                    | 401    |        | Tobacco, and<br>manufactures of: |        |        |
| Other spirits. 23,704                                  | 20,171 |        | Unmanufactured...                | 7,194  | 14,461 |
| West Indies 17,067                                     | 19,150 |        | United States..                  | 5,230  | 4,027  |
| Germany..                                              | 4,403  | .....  | West Indies (a)                  | 10,434 |        |
| Starch.....                                            | 3,050  | 2,029  | Cigarettes...                    | 7,776  | 5,268  |
| United States                                          | 2,988  | 2,015  | United Kingdom....               | 4,069  | 2,577  |
| Straw and straw<br>goods (hats, baskets,<br>etc.)..... | 28,986 | 7,772  | United States...                 | 160    | 45     |
| United Kingdom.....                                    | 5,173  | 3,542  | West Indies (a)                  | 2,501  |        |
| United States                                          | 297    | 744    | Cigars.....                      | 8,851  | 5,029  |
| Sugar.....                                             | 38,232 | 4,130  | United States...                 | 1,388  | 158    |
| United States                                          | 6,133  | 4,023  | West Indies (a)                  | 3,926  |        |
| Textiles:                                              |        |        | Wood and manu-<br>factures of:   |        |        |
| Cotton.....                                            | 70,006 | 39,398 | Lumber.....                      | 34,783 | 4,707  |
| United Kingdom....                                     | 49,838 | 24,902 | United States...                 | 28,631 | 4,334  |
| United States... 13,798                                | 11,517 |        | Matches.....                     | 1,005  | 2,224  |
| Germany..                                              | 4,614  | 101    | Denmark..                        | 463    | 772    |
| Woollen....                                            | 5,949  | 678    | Staves.....                      | 5,090  | 4,846  |
| United Kingdom....                                     | 5,473  | 664    | United States...                 | 265    | 4,213  |
| Silk.....                                              | 2,432  | 329    | All other n.e.s                  | 1,555  | 3,873  |
| United Kingdom....                                     | 1,231  | 181    | United States...                 | 441    | 3,292  |

(a) Not separately stated.



Photograph by William I. Demarest

THE MAIN STREET, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS



Photograph by E. M. Newman

A BUSINESS STREET IN HARAT-AFGHANIA, ST. THOMAS

## DETAILED INFORMATION

### EXPORTS

Complete statistics of exports from the Danish West Indies were not obtainable. Exports to the United States in 1915 amounted to \$273,625. To Porto Rico there were shipments worth \$1,956. For the preceding year the total to the United States was \$278,437, to Porto Rico \$2,700. Shipments to the United States are shown, by articles, in the following table:

| Articles                         | 1914     | 1915    | Articles       | 1914      | 1915      |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| From St. Thomas                  |          |         | From St. Croix |           |           |
| Bay rum.....                     | \$125    | \$146   | Hides.....     |           | \$365     |
| Cacao.....                       |          | 107     | Household      |           |           |
| Hides and skins                  | 6,723    | 6,641   | effects....    |           | 421       |
| Metal, old.....                  |          | 663     | Metal, old..   | \$93      | 3,086     |
| Margarine.....                   | 375      | .....   | Rum.....       | 2,449     | 1,511     |
| Paper, straw...                  | 900      | .....   | Skins, goat    |           |           |
| Rum.....                         | 167      | 70      | and sheep      | 875       | 322       |
| Sandalwood....                   | 500      | .....   | Sugar.....     | 262,736   | 259,963   |
| Sugar.....                       | 1,380    | .....   | Tamarinds..    | 136       | 118       |
| All other articles               | 1,978    | 212     |                |           |           |
|                                  |          |         | Total...       | \$266,289 | \$265,786 |
| Total....                        | \$12,148 | \$7,839 |                |           |           |
| Grand Total. \$278,437 \$273,625 |          |         |                |           |           |

### MARKET FOR BOOTS AND SHOES

By far the largest number of the shoes worn in the Danish West Indies at present are the products of American factories. Before the war in Europe stopped the regular visits of British,

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

French, and German traveling men, many shoes were purchased from these countries. The representative of a British house still visits St. Thomas and St. Croix on his way to St. Kitts, Dominica, Guadeloupe, Barbadoes, and the other islands of the Lesser Antilles, but for the most part the absence of commercial travelers from the Continent and the prevailing high freight rates and scarcity of bottoms have left the field almost entirely to American shoe manufacturers.

Only one American firm, however, a New York manufacturing shoe wholesaler, is aggressively going after this business, and as a result this firm sells practically all the shoes that are being imported to-day. A few orders are placed through New York commission houses by means of catalogues sent out by different factories or wholesalers in the United States, but there is scarcely a store in either St. Thomas or St. Croix that does not carry in stock a certain quantity of shoes bought from this particular manufacturing shoe wholesaler. There are without doubt opportunities for other American manufacturers to sell shoes in this market.

There are no stores selling shoes exclusively. Dry goods, notions, shoes, clothing, furnishings,

## DETAILED INFORMATION

and, in some cases, groceries are all sold in a single "general store." With two exceptions they occupy small one-room buildings, with no windows in which to display goods and with no modern interior fittings. Very little distinction is made in stock arrangement, goods of one kind overlapping into the next. At present the stock in most lines of merchandise is very low. In St. Thomas especially every store possesses a heterogeneous collection of broken lots of shoes which were bought a year or two ago. In Frederiksted every one of the five stores that handle boots and shoes is owned and personally managed by a woman. Some idea of the extent of the business done by individual retailers can be obtained from the statement that two typical stores in the towns of Frederiksted and Christiansted bought American-made shoes in 1915 to the value of \$3,000 and \$3,400, respectively. These figures are somewhat higher than the average for the retail shoe business in the Danish West Indies.

### MARKET FOR TEXTILES

The imports of textiles amount to slightly less than \$250,000 annually, cotton piece goods forming 75 per cent. of the total and wearing apparel

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

about 10 per cent. The remainder is made up of mixed goods, largely cotton and worsted dress fabrics of British manufacture, woollens, hats, and caps. Silks form a very unimportant part of the imports, amounting to less than one-half of one per cent. The low earning power of the mass of the population prevents the sale of any appreciable quantity of high-priced goods, and most of the imports are the cheaper grades.

The United Kingdom supplies most of the cotton goods required on the islands, the customs returns for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1914, showing that 63 per cent. of the cottons used were imported from that country. The United States, the leading competitor for the trade, furnished about 30 per cent., leaving a very small amount for other nations. Practically all of the finer grades of white goods are purchased from British manufacturers, as are the prints, while the United States furnishes a considerable portion of the gingham, domestics, and khakis, and nearly all of the denims.

Next in importance to cotton piece goods is the item of ready-to-wear apparel, the United Kingdom and the United States supplying about

## DETAILED INFORMATION

90 per cent. of the total, with British goods leading by a slight margin. Included in this classification are all types of ready-made clothing, underwear, and hosiery. The men's clothing is almost entirely khaki and drill, most of the fine white suits being made to order by local tailors. In women's wear suits are a very small part of the dealer's imports, the native women making most of their own garments and the white women purchasing in the United States on their trips north, through friends, or from catalogues issued by various firms specializing in mail-order business.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICAN TRADE

One of the principal reasons for the relatively small sale of American-made goods is the fact that there has been no consistent and sustained effort to secure the trade. No American house sends a traveling man to the islands, nor has there been adequate representation of any sort. During the past two years the scarcity of European-made goods has forced importers to seek new sources of supply, and attention has been directed toward fabrics made in the United States. In several instances connections have been established with

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

a New York commission house that acts as purchasing agent for the importer, receiving the orders and searching through the market for the merchandise required. This method works out very satisfactorily in the buying of standard goods in which the price factor is the dominant feature, but is very undesirable in the purchase of colored goods and fancies, in which color, style, and pattern are the prime considerations.

That American manufacturers have not given this market the attention it deserves is evident to anyone who makes the most perfunctory investigation of trade conditions. Lines of American goods that have been introduced have been successful and are now accepted as standards in their class.

### TARIFF

In St. Thomas the import duty on all kinds of commodities is the same, namely, 6 per cent. of the invoice value of the goods placed on board the ship for exportation.

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Photograph by William H. Rau

ON THE SHORE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA



Photograph by William T. Demarest

**U. S. S. "ITASCA" IN THE FLOATING DOCK, ST. THOMAS**



**STREET IN FRONT OF GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS**  
Looking East from Government Hill towards Luchetti's Hill

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tax of 25 per cent., based on the invoice value plus the "exchange tax." A shipment of shoes with an invoice value of \$100 would thus pay a duty at the St. Croix custom houses of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of \$130 (\$100 plus \$4 plus \$26), or virtually an import duty of  $16\frac{1}{4}$  per cent. Whatever the country of origin, all shoes enter at the same rate.

### DOCKS AND OTHER PORT FACILITIES

#### ST. THOMAS HARBOR

There are six docks from which coal can be taken or upon which cargoes can be discharged. Vessels drawing up to 31 feet can lie alongside any of these docks.

There is a floating dry dock measuring 250 feet long and 70 feet wide. Its maximum lifting capacity is 3,000 tons. Vessels which are not overweight and drawing 23 feet, with a keel of 300 feet or less, can be taken up. The charge for docking varies from 60 cents to 90 cents per ton the first day and for succeeding days it goes as low as 10 cents.

There is also a repairing slip on which small vessels (not over 250 tons) are taken at the same rates.

The facilities for general repairing are excel-

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

lent, there being many competent ship carpenters, sailmakers, and riggers. There is also a very good machine shop and foundry.

Rock or sand ballast can be obtained for \$1 per ton f.o.b.

There are many lighters, owned by various companies, and the usual charge for a lighter of 10 to 15 tons capacity, without labor, is \$5 per day.

There are many stevedores who are always ready to make tenders or estimates for discharging or loading vessels.

On account of the low rate of duty (6 per cent.) ship's stores are obtainable at nearly the same prices as in the United States. The principal imports at St. Thomas are coal, fuel, oil, lumber, and general provisions. The chief suppliers of coal are the West Indian Company (Ltd.), the St. Thomas Dock, Engineering & Coaling Company (Ltd.), and the Hamburg-American Line.

There are many large warehouses, both on the wharves and in the town. At the present time a warehouse in the town can be rented for \$25 to \$50 monthly. This includes the store in front and the private wharf in the rear. All warehouses run from the principal street to the water, and the

## DETAILED INFORMATION

rent varies with the size. They may be had from about 100 to 400 feet long and with an average width of 40 feet.

Water can be supplied either at the docks or from water boats in the harbor, from which it is pumped into the ship's tanks. Rain water is used exclusively, except by the West Indian Company (Ltd.), which recently has drilled three wells, the water from which will be pumped into storage tanks at the dock. The price at present charged for water is \$1 per ton of 250 gallons (September, 1916).

The West Indian Company (Ltd.), a joint-stock company with a capital of \$1,680,000, with domicile originally in Copenhagen, is the largest concern dealing intimately with the affairs of St. Thomas. Its new harbor works, coaling station, and complements in Longbay promise to be, when fully completed, the finest in the West Indies.

Formal announcement was made in the early part of 1916 that the first large section of the company's extensive harbor works had been completed. This covered the construction of new wharves to the extent of 970 meters in length and the dredging of the water in Longbay Basin to a depth of



Photograph by E. M. Newman.

A BUSINESS STREET IN CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS

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## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

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Photograph by William T. Demarest

THE MARKET PLACE, CHARLOTTE-AMALIA, ST. THOMAS



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statistics are available. Sanitary conditions in both St. Thomas and St. Croix are decidedly better than those existing in many tropical countries. Epidemics are practically unknown, although there are no public sanitary works of any description.

It is believed that there is an opportunity for at least one strong life-insurance company and at least one strong fire-insurance company from the United States to establish an agency at St. Thomas and St. Croix, the latter offering the most attractive field at the present time.

### MONOPOLISTIC DRUG STORES

Some of the most curious facts connected with business on the islands have to do with the pharmacies. C. S. Butler and E. G. Hakansson write in the United States Naval Bulletin:

“There are three grades of diplomas issued from the Danish College of Pharmacy. Only pharmacists rated one or two are qualified for the privilege of running a drug store. The grade of diploma, number of years of experience, professional merits and scientific work done are the main factors to determine a choice. The privilege of having a drug store is granted for a lifetime to the successful candidate. He pays no tax for this

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

monopoly and is independent of the Government in his business. He may resign at any time, with the permission of the authorities, and his successor, appointed in a similar manner, is obliged to buy his stock and place of business. This form of drug store is called 'real,' and is the only kind established since 1830. Before this year the privilege of leasing drug stores did not return to the Government until the death or resignation of the appointee, but the privilege was his personal right, which he could sell at any time to any qualified pharmacist for any price he could get. These drug stores are called 'personal' and were not changed to 'real' when the new law went into effect.

"There are three drug stores in the Virgin Islands, one in each of the three towns. The ones in Charlotte-Amalia and Christiansted are 'real;' the one in Fredericksted is 'personal.' The history of Apothecary Hall, in St. Thomas, illustrates the system. It was established about 1830 and kept by the successful pharmacist until 1883, when he transferred it to his two sons and retired, spending the remainder of his days in a suburb of Copenhagen, in his magnificent villa, 'St. Thomas,' entertaining royalty and nobility. His sons man-

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aged the business up to 1913, when the present owner bought it for \$76,000."

### CLIMATE AND RAINFALL

For the year ending June 30, 1915, the records furnished in the annual report of Dr. Longfield Smith, director of the colonial agricultural experiment station in St. Croix, show that the coolest weeks during the period were January 18 to 31, with a maximum temperature of 83° F. and a minimum of 65° F., and March 8 to 14, maximum 82° F. and minimum 66° F. The hottest weeks were August 31 to September 6, maximum 91° F., minimum 76° F., and September 7 to 13, maximum 92° F., minimum 74° F.

No records of rainfall are available for any of the islands except St. Croix. On that island, according to the report of the experiment station, the average rainfall for the previous 63 years was 375.1 lines (31.26 inches), and the records show that there has been no diminution or alteration of distribution during that period. The heaviest rainfall occurs in May and again in September and October.

There are periods when the rainfall is less than a maximum sugar crop requires and irrigation

## THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

would be desirable. Abundant opportunities exist for the impounding of water for this purpose by the construction of dams across the narrow entrances of some of the small valleys debouching on the fertile plains of the south. The relatively small expense involved would be well repaid by the assurance of sufficient water during the occasional dry periods and the resultant more uniform yield of cane.

### AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED INTERESTS

#### SUGAR-CANE

The largest amount of sugar that has been exported in the last 15 years was in 1903, when 19,275 short tons were taken from the islands. The amount for 1915 was but 4,500 tons, though in 1916 the total was much larger.

The director of the agricultural experiment station has been endeavoring to develop a cane that will be better suited to the soil and climatic conditions than any of the varieties now being grown. Much progress has been made in this direction, though it is too early yet to publish the results.

#### COTTON

In 1913 there were some 2,000 acres devoted to sea-island cotton, but owing to the appearance of insect pests in the fields, and more especially

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to the various difficulties experienced as a result of the European war, financial loss was threatened, and since that year cotton raising has been temporarily abandoned. That it will ultimately become next in importance to cane, however, is the belief of all who have been connected with it in the past.

### GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION

Under the rule of Denmark the executive power was in the hands of a colonial governor appointed by the Crown. The executive resided on the island of St. Thomas for six months of the year—from October 1 to March 31—and in the sister colony of St. Croix for the other six months. The islands were divided into two political parts, the first consisting of St. Thomas and St. John, and the second of St. Croix. Legislative power was vested in two distinct colonial councils, the seat of one being in Christiansted, the capital of St. Croix, and of the other in Charlotte-Amalia. In the latter island the council was composed of 11 members—4 nominated by the Crown and 7 elected, 4 from the town of Charlotte-Amalia, 2 from the island of St. John, and 1 from the country district of St. Thomas. The colonial

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council of St. Croix was made up of 18 members—5 nominated by the Crown and 13 chosen by the electorate.

The qualifications for voters were based on two cardinal points: First, the applicant must own real estate yielding a monthly income of \$5, or else his personal income must be \$300 per year; and, second, he must be of unblemished character.

The government revenues were raised largely by import duties, export duties on sugar, trade and lamp taxes, vehicle taxes, boat taxes, real estate taxes, tonnage fees, and a head tax on all persons leaving St. Thomas for other countries.

Education is compulsory from the ages of 7 to 13. Under the able supervision of the school director, Mr. O. Rubner-Peterson, the school system was gradually extended during the few years before the transfer of the islands, new buildings opened, and new courses instituted. Instruction is free in all cases, and all but a few of the textbooks are furnished by the government. During the later years of instruction the aim is to teach subjects of a decidedly practical nature. Both English and Danish are taught, but the latter has never been made compulsory, and the

## DETAILED INFORMATION

native preference for English has not been interfered with. Except among officials and soldiers and for street signs and notices, Danish is little used.

In 1916, 3,500 pupils were enrolled in all grades. Two sessions were held six days in the week, the first session from 8 to 11 in the morning, the second from 1 to 4 in the afternoon. The high-school masters in St. Croix were Danes, the remainder of the teachers in all three islands being natives who have been given a course of training in Danish at Copenhagen, or, in some cases, teachers obtained from the neighboring British island of Antigua. The salary of grammar-school teachers was \$30 per month and that of high-school teachers was \$60 per month for 12 months in the year. Twenty teachers made up the regular staff, and these met different classes at the morning and afternoon sessions.

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