

day, we found ourselves close to Cape Maisi, the eastern point of Cuba, a towering headland of rock coated with stunted vegetation, and apparently unacquainted with the existence of man. For hour after hour at our quick speed we passed the same view in endless continuation—a silent continent showing no roads, no boats or wharfs, no houses, no little spiral threads of early morning kitchen smoke, no sign or sound of life. A Cuban planter on aboard with us was amused at our ignorance. He said that not more than one-third of the island is under cultivation, that the eastern end we were then passing possessed iron, copper, silver, gold and other metals in unsurpassed abundance, and that American capital is beginning to interest itself in this vast rich field. He bade us see the mountains that soon would rise before us. Between their ranges, he said, was to be found the nearest approach to Paradise since the Garden of Eden; a soil fertile beyond parallel; a climate even and celestial; water plentiful and clear as crystal; scenery most exquisite, and an utter absence of noxious or harmful animal life.

Presently the mountain heights began to appear though the haze; fantastic shapes of deep blue and of grand altitude. Conspicuous among them is "La Grand Piedra," a peak of about 5,000 feet; and Turquino, 10,500 feet above the sea. The peculiar colour, varying shapes and great size of these mountains, and the fact that you pass them and 130 miles of the coast always in daylight and quite close in shore, renders this the most interesting voyage that can be made in the West Indies. Too much cannot be said for the beauty or wondrous fertility of the land in this part of the island. The ravages of a ten year's war have wrecked all the once famous and princely coffee estates; but the magic of the soil remains, and fresh capital and cheaper labour will yet force the attention of all Christendom to this veritable garden land, which extends for hundreds of square miles. The natural gateway to this wonderland is Santiago de Cuba, a few miles beyond.

You must pass what is at once the most singular and ^{the} most beautiful harbour in the world before you may bring into sharp contrast all your preconceived notions about this city and the extravagant reality, as it presents itself to your wondering eyes.

Suddenly you come upon a yellow old castle that almost makes you rub your eyes and doubt what they show you. The high green bank has broken off almost precipitously, and at