

ISLAND OF SANTO DOMINGO

This was the *Hispaniola* of Columbus, the first vision of hope fulfilled after the perilous voyage over unknown seas, though it did not prove to be the India of his quest. It was the first land in the new world to be colonized, the worst governed, the most troublous, and the earliest lost to Spain. It was invaded on the west by the French about 1590, and that part was ceded by Spain to France in 1697. The eastern part was ceded to France in 1785. The boundary between what are now the two independent governments — the Dominican Republic and Haiti — runs in a zigzag line from the Bay of Mancenillo on the north to Cape Rojo on the south, following a line of mountains with eight or more high peaks like sentry towers. The island is a huge mountainous mass, much of it inaccessible and little of it well explored. The highest peak is *Loma Tina* (9420 feet), northwest of the city of Santo Domingo. The two divisions are notably different in vegetation and climate, owing to varying winds and rainfall, but both are well-watered by numerous streams. The heat at Port au Prince is probably greater than at any other place in the West Indies, especially from April

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to October, the *rainy season*. There are some places on the island where it never rains at all. It is about 400 miles across the island from east to west, and 160 from north to south. The east coast is indented by the great *Bay of Samaná*, which, during the administration of General Grant, was under consideration for purchase by the United States, and the west coast by the *Gulf of Gonaïve*, in which lies the island of that name, 44 miles long.