

# ST. DOMINGO.

**More About Annexation—General Babcock and President Baez—Grant's Supposed West India Policy—Advantages of Manzanillo—An American Naval Station Wanted.**

ST. DOMINGO, Oct. 15, 1869.

We begin to feel much nearer the United States since we have a monthly steamer from New York, and we also hope that New York will soon know the Dominicans better than of old. The past month has been full of excitement, in which the question of annexation always rises to the surface, whatever else is started.

There has been another of those border skirmishes, which actually attained the dignity of a regular battle, and might be reckoned a conclusive victory for Baez over the Cabranetas and Cacos. Were there ever anything conclusive in these incessant conflicts on the debatable border land between St. Domingo and Hayti.

The presence and the object of General Babcock at this point is still the question of the day. This gentleman is certainly busy in gathering national statistics, but he may only be preparing to write a book—or a report to President Grant—on the state of this island. But collecting statistics will not altogether account for the long interview with President Baez, to which no one is admitted but the Secretary of State. Men who generally eschew politics are buzzing about with theories of annexation, and others are rushing with headlong haste to carry the welcome hope to the farther corners of the republic; but I fear that all this rejoicing is premature. The very best authority here has said so in answer to the eager inquiries of his most trusted officers, and I think it can be decidedly asserted that the popular opinion of the object of General Babcock's presence here is a mistake. It presupposes that it is to complete the Puyol-Seward negotiations for Samaná, but enough has oozed out to show that this is not the plan. The members of this Cabinet have intimated in various ways their admiration of General Grant as having a policy of his own; to use exactly the words of one of them, "General Grant's policy is wisely comprehensive and nobly American." Reading that by the light of Dominican aspirations we may reach an excellent programme, though entirely new and wholly unexpected to the world at large. This is the reason.

GRANT'S WEST INDIA POLICY rests on these suppositions:—

1. That he is opposed to the acquisition of troublesome little fragments of territory like St. Thomas, costly to govern, difficult to protect, incapable of self-support and in every way unfit to combine integrally with our American system.

2. That he nevertheless considers it right and necessary to have the American system and United States interests strongly recognized in our own American seas, so that our isthmus highways and our inter-coast trade shall not owe its safety to European tolerance.

3. That should blessing Cuba and ardent Hayti voluntarily rush into the willing arms of Uncle Sam, President Grant is quite ready to pronounce the nuptial benediction in due time and legal form.

Leaving Cuba to wear her own wedding garment, let us bring to the touchstone the known, or at any rate generally believed, convictions of President Grant on West India questions, and the report of his perseverance in Mr. Seward's policy become more than improbable.

Dismissing that wholly we come to the widely different, though more easy, consistent and probable plan for the annexation of all Hayti as the true solution of the "problem of the Antilles." How this may be effected is like Columbus setting the egg on end—very perplexing to the wise and mighty in their own conceit, but very simple when the shell was once properly cracked. Hayti, all of Hayti, for Grant don't like camps and fragments, will be set as heavy and safely right end up as Columbus managed the egg.

It is no longer doubtful that the large and wonderfully rich northwestern section of the island, which constituted a distinct kingdom under Christophe, is at present separated from the southern section of the republic of Hayti, and that its actual government wishes to annex it to the United States. Baez and his Cabinet are now disposed to admit this fact, for they are the friends of Salnave, the President of the other division; but the partisans of Pimentel assert that Saget would put the question to vote any day that a United States agent will call in to salute his flag and recognize his government. This section lines with that part of the Dominican republic most thoroughly anxious for annexation, and should it be accepted by the United States the rest of Hayti would have no choice but to follow the example and all come in together. Monte Cristo and the noble bay of Manzanillo are on the dividing line, and the presence of a single United States steamer would protect both governments in the act of transition.

President Grant has it in his power to accept the use of a naval station at Manzanillo, and certainly has the duty, as well as the right, to protect and advance American interests in that direction. Manzanillo is peculiarly safe from hurricanes, and is about as central as Samaná. It is also the key to the great agricultural and mining regions of La Vega Real and the mountains of Chaco. The Stars of the Union would not float a month over a naval station at Manzanillo before the chief provinces of the Dominican republic would openly declare for annexation, and the nearest half of the republic of Hayti would lose no time in profiting by the example. While these sections were passing a brief period of preparation under a provisional government as a Territory of the United States, the remaining fractions of the island would inevitably apply for admission. This does not prove very much nearer General Grant's real programme than any of the crude and contradictory reports hitherto thrown out by the press. There has been an awful amount of fibbing and false guessing about here.

I repeat the conviction, however, that the first footprint of President Grant's West India policy will be visible somewhere about Monte Cristo, in the shape of a naval station. The second will be seen in the public declaration of the Dominicans in favor of immediate unconditional annexation. The third will follow so closely as to be almost simultaneous, in the form of a similar declaration from the Haytian side of the line. All this will come—the sooner and better if the Saget government is recognized and accepted in amity by the United States. The fourth and last act will be manifested at Port au Prince, when that government, reduced to a sixth or seventh part of the island territory, is divided within itself and forced to choose between a wretched anarchy and the saving graces of annexation. It will then hasten to unite with the great majority in asking to merge and enter with them in a form to become a future state of the Union as a pendant to Cuba. This beautiful island, this

*Emerald gem of the Western World*  
Shall not be set in the crown of a stranger.