A DESCRIPTION OF THE SPANISH ISLANDS and SETTLEMENTS

On the Coast of the WEST INDIES,

Compiled from authentic Memoirs,

Revised by Gentlemen who have resided many Years in the SPANISH Settlements;

AND ILLUSTRATED

With Thirty-two MAPS and PLANS,

Chiefly from original Drawings taken from the Spaniards in the last War,

And Engraved by the late THOMAS JEFFERTS.

The SECOND EDITION.

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To the Right Honourable

GEORGE DUNK, Earl of HALIFAX,
Viscount Sunbury and Baron of Halifax;

One of the Lords of his Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council;

Lord Lieutenant and Caiffos Rotulorum of the County of Northampton;

Lieutenant General of his Majesty's Forces;

Lord Lieutenant General and General Governor of the Kingdom of Ireland;

And

First Lord Commissioner for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of Great Britain;

This Description of the Spanish Islands and Settlements on the Coast of the West Indies,

Is, with the utmost respect, inscribed by

His Lordship's most obedient,

And most obliged

Humble Servant,

THOMAS JEFFERYS.
INTRODUCTION.

The British nation being forced by the crown of Spain into a war with that country, much against both interest and inclination, after having reduced the French to the lowest extremity, by the assistance of providence, and the valour and wise disposition of our fleets and armies, under the auspices of a good cause, our eyes of courest turn towards those parts of Spanish America, where it is most likely the English will principally aim their attacks.

To contribute somewhat toward gratifying this curiosity so natural at a season when such large and powerful armaments from our own country, are abroad, hovering as it were about their coasts and territories in the new world; and while we are in doubtful expectation where next the fury of war will fall, and for the consequences of it in those parts; this brief description makes its appearance to the Public. In the execution of our design, it is intended to confine the pen chiefly to an account of the sea-coasts, harbours, and towns adjacent to them, of the Spanish acquisitions in the West-Indies; beginning from the eastern part of the south coast of the Tierra Firma, thence along the shore to Vera Cruz, round to Florida, and so to the islands of Cuba, &c. Two reasons more especially induce us to limit our work in this manner; the
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one, because the internal part of these vast regions cannot be so accurately treated of, from a deficiency of intelligence so minute and well attested as is to be wished for, the Spaniards being rather cautious in this particular; the other, from considering the ports and places bordering upon, or not far removed from the shores, as the main and most convenient objects of naval expeditions, and consequently, most likely to become the theatre of British enterprise. The Spanish empire in America, as likewise the whole southern continent, connected by the isthmus of Panama, together with all the islands below the tropic of Cancer thereto belonging, are commonly called the West-Indies, which appellation is said to have arisen from a mistake of Columbus, the first discoverer of the new world; who, concluding the Indies which the Portuguese had a little before discovered in the east, to be some great continent, balancing those parts of the universe already known, imagined that whoever failed westward, must at length arrive at the most eastward bounds of that continent, and in consequence of this supposition, called the islands he discovered, the West-Indies. Under his conduct one of the Lucayas islands, named Guanabani, or Cab Island, was the part of America first debouched by the Europeans, on the 11th of October, 1492, from which place he proceeded to Haiti, now Hispaniola; and having fixed a settlement upon that island, returned to Spain. Soon after this, he made a second voyage, when the first land he fell in with was the island of Deseda; hence he sailed again to Hispaniola, where at his arrival, he found affairs in the utmost confusion, caused by the ill behaviour of the Spaniards he had left behind him, towards the natives of the country. Columbus being a man of strict discipline and severity of manners, his proceeding hereupon so much disgusted the licentious crew he had to deal with, as to inflame matters to such a height, that appeals were sent from both parties into Spain. A person was deputed to enquire concerning these grievances, who carried it with that partiality against Columbus, as to send him, at the instigation of the opposite party, into Spain laden with chains. He was, however, at his arrival, set at liberty, and had the satisfaction of seeing King Ferdinand and Queen Isabel, who was truly his friend, much concerned at his misfortunes, but it was with difficulty, nevertheless, that he could procure a new Governor to be sent to Hispaniola. This great man made four voyages to the West-Indies; and at the end of the last, seeing many disorders and disputes arising among the new settlers, he determined to return to Spain, to give their Majesties the best account he could of those parts; where, at his first landing, he was shocked with the news of Queen Isabella’s death, which, together with the ill usage he then received, met with from the Spanish courtiers, and the cold behaviour of the King, broke his heart after a few months illness, in the year 1506. The chief discoveries of Columbus were the Lucayas islands, Hispaniola, Deseda, Puerto Rico, and the Spanish Main, north of the river of the Amazons; it is true he saw the isthmus of

Panama.
ANew Chart of the WEST INDIES, drawn from the best Spanish Maps, and regulated by Astronomical Observations.
ISLANDS ON THE COAST

PUERTO DE LA GUAIRA,

I t is above 60 leagues from Caracas, and 15 from Cape Blanco to the north, which cape is the easternmost boundary of the Caracas; this is the chief place on this coast, and is the chief port to Santiago de Los de Caracas; and tho' it has but a bad harbour, or rather is open road, yet it is much frequented by Spanish shipping, for the Dutch and English anchor in the sandy bays, that lie along the shore, in the mouths of several valleys, where there is very good riding. The town, which is situated at the foot of a very high hill, is open on the land side, but has two forts, and several batteries toward the sea. It was taken in the last century by Capt. Wright and his privateers.

This place was attacked in 1743, and the garrison commanded by Don Marofo Quat, defended it against a squadron of British ships of war, commanded by admiral Kewa, who bombarded the town, made some breaches in the fortifications, demolished their churches, and blew up a magazine; but there being only one landing-place, they did not attempt to disembark; and most of the ships being so much damaged as to be entirely disabled from continuing the attack, were ordered directly to Cartagin to refit; when this came to be known by the garrison, many of the inhabitants who had fled to the woods on the first appearance of the British fleet, returned to their houses with great joy.

PUERTO CAVELLO.

It is a fortified town on the coast of Caracas, distant 20 leagues from La Guaira. We have not been able to get any account of the trade or commerce of this place, and it was but little known before 1743, when Commodore Kewa, after the defeat at La Guaira, having reformed the squadron under his command, came, on the 17th of April, before this place, which was extremely well supplied with a garrison of 1500 seamen and soldiers. 4000 Indians, Blacks, &c., which the governor of the Caracas had sent for the defence of the town. The Admiral having landed 1200 men under
whole southern settlements on the continent would have hereby been secured
against any attempts of the Spaniards by land, besides the great service this
place would have been to our trade, not only by depriving the Spaniards of
a post from whence they might annoy us on that side, but also by enabling
us to annoy them upon occasion, by cruizing on their homeward bound
ships coming from the gulf of Florida.

According to the charter of King Charles II. in 1665, which fixes the limits
of South Carolina at latitude 29, this town is, as well as Georgia, within the
English dominions, and consequently belongs to us as a fortress. The
Spaniards say indeed that grant is an invasion of their right, they pretending
a right of possession to all the coast as high as Virginia. But if the first dis-
covey gives a title, which is generally the foundation of the Spaniards pre-
tentions to their dominions in America, it belongs to us; for Sebastian Cabot
discovered it about the year 1497; it was more thoroughly discovered in
1513 by Leon, a Spaniard from Puerto Rico, who took possession of the
country for the king of Spain.

Seven leagues below the fort of Saint Augustine are two forts, one on the
north, and the other on the south side of a large lake. General Oglethorpe
destroyed the last, and took possession of the first, which is called Mucubico-
dic, surrounded with strong palisadoes, eight feet high, with a parapet and
loop-holes, about breast high.

CUBA,

Is the most considerable island of the Great Antilles, lies between 19° 50'
and 23° 20' of north latitude, and between 73° 40' and 85° 10' west lon-
gitude. It is about 780 miles in length, but very narrow in proportion, not being
in some places above 40 miles in breadth, and in its width not more than 132.
It lies within the tropic of Cancer, about 20 miles west of Hispaniola, and 90
to the northward of Jamaica, commanding the gulf of Mexico, Florida,
and the windward-passage, where it may with propriety be called The Shield
of
trade; and all their prey on the east side of the continent would easily fall into the hands of the conquerors, if they pursued the blow, with resolution and intrepidity.

BAHIA DE MATANZAS,
Is a fine deep bay, and one of the largest in Cuba, opposite Bahama Channel, about twenty-four leagues east from the Havana, snugly fit for large ships, but very convenient for small vessels to anchor and take in fresh water at the bottom of the bay is the small town of San Carlos, and a flat to guard the road. There is here a very great fish manufacture.

PUERTO DEL PRINCIPE,
Is three hundred miles S. E. of the Havana, and one hundred eighty & N. W. of Baracoa. It was formerly a large and rich town; but being taken by Capr. Morgan with his buccaneers, after a stout resistance, it never recovered itself. Near it are several fountains of bitumen.

BAHIA DE NIPE,
Is an extensive bay, with very deep water on the north side of Cuba, thirty leagues west of Punto de Mayo, and 140 leagues S. E. of the Havana. There is a road from hence over the mountains to Sants Jago de Cuba, distant about eighty miles from this place.

PUERTO DE BARRACOA,
Is about seven leagues north west of Punto de Mayo on the north side of Cuba, being a good port with regular soundings; the course into it is S. W., tho' many avoid entering it, because it is troublesome to come out again, for the wind blows right & head; tho' some have thought it would make a