Some Important Cuban Soils, and Their Relation to Agriculture.

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Cuba, with an area about the size of Pennsylvania, produced in 1925 approximately one-fourth of the world output of cane sugar and one-fifth of the world's output of cane and beet sugar. Cuba is almost one big sugar cane field. Some rather extensive mountain areas in the eastern, western, and south-central parts of the Island are prevailingly too rough for crop use. Otherwise this big cane field would be even more expansive. Considerable tobacco is grown, but the area devoted to this crop is not large. The Island exported to the United States in 1923 bananas to the value of $1,345,354; pineapples, $2,563,496; tobacco and tobacco products, $25,206,890; molasses, $2,472,170; cane sugar, $331,925,786. Considerable sugar goes to other countries; many bananas, some corn and other products are consumed by the dense population of the country. Some coffee is grown, a few patches of cacao, a variety of vegetables and fruits, and some henequin. Still, sugar fields are so expansive that one may ride over nearly level plains for hours on a reasonably fast train, locally known as the rapido, through almost continuous cane fields. One plantation visited had in cane 52,000 acres, but this was by no means the largest of the numerous centrals.

Something over sixty per cent of Cuba's area consists of land essentially level, undulating or gently rolling; while a considerable total of the remainder, the smoother hill and mountain slopes and mountain valleys, constitutes arable land. Sisal hemp could be grown on parts of the more stony and rougher areas. There are very large bodies of almost level land sloping gradually, often imperceptibly, down to the sea from the crest of the watershed somewhere near the central axis of the Island, with a maximum elevation in some places of not much more than 100 or 150 feet.

In some localities numerous miniature and large isolated hills and groups of hills rise abruptly from the plains. Many of these are exceedingly stony.

1. Foreign Commerce and Navigation of the United States for the Calendar Year 1924, U. S. Department of Commerce.