

there is of them, are as noisome, and their politicians as verminous, as ours are or as such are everywhere. Our marines went in and took possession; and in 1918 a new constitution, with this cardinal provision left out, was written by a pliant politician in our Navy Department, and forced on the Haitians at the point of the bayonet.

Like Poincaré's silly invasion of the Ruhr, however, the thing did not pan out; the Haitians would not stand for it. We occupied Haiti for years, hanging on hopefully, and getting out as late as 1932, I think it was, only because the scheme was not practicable. Its abettors finally saw that it would have to be garrisoned in perpetuity by about six marines per native, and would cost more than could be got out of it. The Haitians did not wait for our backs to be turned before pitching out the constitution of 1918, and adopting a new one which restored the old provision.

People will tell you that we had to invade Haiti in support of the Monroe Doctrine: i.e., if we had not gone in, other creditor nations would. Yet I can very easily imagine some Grover Cleveland serving notice that our State Department was no collection-agency, and that we would neither go in ourselves nor let anyone else go in; Haiti might murder all the politicians it liked — not half enough of them being murdered as it was. Others will tell you that we went in because the Germans were about to establish a base on the Mole-St.-Nicolas, commanding the Windward Passage. Pretty thin, my friend — pretty thin. Not that I would put any conceivable idiocy past the Wilson Administration in the face of its superb record, but if that were the case, why should we have gone on occupying Haiti for a dozen years after all supposititious peril from the Germans had blown by? Can you believe we would ever have got out if there had been any prospect of making the

enterprise pay? Hardly. The whole episode is simply a first-class exhibit of economic imperialism backed up by force of arms; in other words, an exhibit of American politicians in cahoots with American enterprisers — all in all, as our old friend Artemus said, 'a sweet and luvly set of men. I'd like to own as good a house as some of 'em would break into.'

So much for that. The second factor tending to maintain Haiti's isolation is the absence of a middle class. Industrialists and merchants are the sappers and miners of a country's isolation; indeed, as Mr. Jefferson said, rather contemptuously, 'Merchants have no country. The spot where they stand is not as dear to them as that from which they draw their gains.' Haiti has no industries of any consequence, and few merchants. Eighty-three per cent of the people are in agriculture, which they carry on in small independent holdings, usually detached; the inland settlements are mere hamlets, pretty widely separated, and most of them are unearthly hard to get at. Thus there is no general contact of the people with an organized merchant class, except in the port towns; which from the point of view of civilization is all to the good. You remember Julius Caesar's grim observation that one reason why the Belgians had managed to preserve so fine a character was that 'drummers almost never get through to them with a line of goods which tend to effeminate the spirit.' That holds for at least eighty per cent of Haiti's population, and it is one strong root of their persistence of type.

Again, Haiti is very short on bridges and roads; that is, what we would call roads. What few it has are poor. Yet while this is highly discouraging to foreigners, the natives seem to have all the transportation they need, for they get about on mules, and mules care nothing whatever about roads; any sort of