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THE COUNTRY DOLLAR.

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From the Democratic Review.

THE ISLAND OF CUBA.

When we reflect upon the wonderful events that, on this continent, in the last one hundred years, have conspired to promote the prosperity of the States, and to aggrandize the Union, we but admire the mysterious manner in which the imperial governments of Europe have, undesignedly, been made the instruments of fostering our national growth. The long course of neglect with which the imperial government treated the English colonies, until they came to be important enough to plunder, undoubtedly, laid the foundation of our practical system of self-government; giving birth to that hardy spirit of independence which, trained to resistance in a long series of increasing oppressions, became finally strong enough to triumph.—Only so many colonies, however, and so much territory as could combine in a strong confederation, were emancipated. As these grew in magnitude, jealousy and supposed self-interests induced the imperial governments of Europe to cling tenaciously to their remaining dependencies, until the United States were prepared to receive them. England on the north, and France and Spain on the South, each held and continued to govern, with what success their systems would permit, their respective colonies. As, however, the government of the United States became consolidated, their population increased and their wants developed, circumstances compelled the European powers to cede just so much new territory as contributed to our strength and importance, without adding any weakening element to our system.—Precisely at the moment when the possession of the delta of the Mississippi became of first importance to our internal quiet, was Bonaparte compelled to abandon his darling idea of transatlantic colonies, and sell Louisiana to the United States. No sooner had that fair territory become incorporated, and the pressure of the south upon Florida developed the necessity of its incorporation, than the feeble and arrogant government of Spain was induced to part with it, and also to accept the dangerous cession of Texas, which, in the course of our national growth, became the means of a new addition to the national domain, bringing with it California and New Mexico, as soon as the further progress of the nation made such additions to its territory not only necessary but safe. The *quasi* occupation of Oregon by the English for a quarter of a century, prepared it for the reception of the American settlers as soon as the advance of civilization brought it within the reach of the hardy pioneers. Thus, on all sides, the hope expressed by Jefferson in relation to the Mexican states—viz., that Spain would be strong enough to hold them until the United States should be ready to embrace them, has been fulfilled. A new & more important movement is now at hand; and the last and most valuable of European colonies is about to be annexed to the "Model Republic." Cuba, for a century, has been a prize on which the eyes of Europe have been fastened, and which, perhaps, more than any other trans-atlantic possession, has in years gone by stimulated the cupidity of statesman. The fact that the most despicable of all the European governments has contrived not only to hold it through all the convulsions of the present century, but, as it were, to preserve and gradually prepare it, by a system of gross oppression, (in which it is questionable whether folly or iniquity most predominates,) for delivery to the United States, at the precise moment when this country is fully prepared to receive it, and when rival nations of Europe have lost the power, and perhaps the will to object, certainly developes an over-ruling power in the destiny of nations, to which it becomes us to bow in reverence.

From the moment when Charles V., having acquired almost boundless territory in the New World, and firmly consolidated his power in the defeat of the Castilians, thereby extinguishing all opposition to the sovereign will, the national spirit of Spain seems to have been broken; and while the inquisition exerted itself to crush all energy and independence of mind, the nation sunk into a state of stupid indifference. The invasion by Napoleon aroused it partially, and induced, in 1812, the formation of a constitution, by her ancient Cortez, newly convoked. This constitution was set aside by the pitiable Ferdinand, on his release in 1814. He was, however compelled to restore it in 1820; but he again abolished it, by the aid of the French army, which entered Spain as the instrument of the holy alliance, in 1823, and absolutism continued until after the death of Ferdinand, in 1833. The miserable Ferdinand had married in 1829, Marae Christina, sister to the present King of Naples, and sister-in-law of Louis Philippe. In ten months after this marriage, was born a daughter, Isabella; and sixteen months later, another daughter, Louisa Ferdinand. The Salic law, which was in operation, gave the succession to the crown of Spain to Don Carlos, uncle of the young Isabella; but by the influence of the Queen, Ferdinand set aside this law, and conferred the succession upon Isabella, with the queen as regent: Louisa to succeed in case Isabella died without issue. This led to a civil war, which finally resulted in the utter defeat of Don Carlos and his claims. The queen regent, however, as an element of success, was compelled to issue a decree adopting the constitution of 1812; and this constitution remains in force. How far the settlement of the succession hastened the death of Ferdinand, will probably never be known. At his death, however, the royal widow, twenty-seven years old, became regent of the kingdom for ten years, her daughter being three years old at the time. A handsome private soldier, son of a cigar pedlar, named Munoz, had, without any particular merit, except personal appearance, risen rapidly through all the grades of rank, until he had received a commission in the body-guard of the king, and become domesticated as a chief officer of the palace. Soon after this appointment, the queen regent was seized with a passion for adopting infants, whose similitude to the guardsman was wonderful. The scandal of the palace at length compelled the announcement, that a marriage had existed between the royal mother and the promoted sentinel since the death of Ferdinand. This marriage, even if it ever existed, was required to be made valid by royal decree, which was accordingly promulgated October 11, '44. Munoz, in this respect, was more fortunate than his prototype, Godoy, who, by the criminal favor of the queen of Charles VI., was, in a similar manner, raised from the ranks to be dictator to the nation.

The young queen having now reached her thirteenth year, had attained her majority; and the ex-regent having become Duchess of Rianzares, by obtaining that dukedom for the quondam sentinel, became anxious about the marriage of her daughter. Louis Philippe, at the same time, was "under exercise of mind," as to the settlement of his brood of dukes. A strong affinity thus existed between the royal intriguers. For the citizen-king to marry one of his sons to the Queen of Spain, would be too much for his brother-sovereigns to swallow at one gulp; but there lived sons of the queen's second uncle, Don Francisco—Don Carlos being driven into exile. Of these, the oldest, Don Francisco, had been educated at a college in Paris, amid the spies of his uncle, Louis Philippe, to whom they reported his personal habits and condition. Through these means, the respectable King of the French ascertained that his marriage with the Queen Isabella would ensure the condition in the law of Ferdinand, on which the succession would devolve on Louisa. The result thus far has been the banishment of the ex-regent from Spain, and the separation of Queen Isabella from her victimized husband. Taking advantage of the troubles in Mexico, recently a conspiracy was set on foot to restore a monarchical government to that country, and place the Duke of Montpensier and his Spanish bride upon the throne. It was ascertained however, we hope satisfactorily, that kings and queens cannot take root in the New World.

We have mentioned these incidents in the lives of the persons who rule Spain, as indicative of the morality and wisdom which govern their conduct, and as somewhat explanatory of the spirit which has governed the colonies.

On the resignation of Charles VI., in 1808, the discontent of the American colonies, engendered by a long series of oppressions, burst into insurrections, which, after a struggle of some fifteen years, became successful, partly through the intrigues of England. As we have stated, the French entered Spain at the behest of the holy alliance in 1823, to overturn the constitution of the Cortez, and restore the absolute power of Ferdinand. Although that was a most barbarous outrage, England did not interfere, as she was secretly not ill-pleased at the triumph of absolutism. Mr. Canning, however, in his bombastic cunning, satisfied the English nation for the course taken, by asserting, that even if Spain fell into the hands of France, it would not be the "Spain with the Indies," because, said he, "I called the new world into existence to redress the balance of the old." This egotistical flourish was successful. It covered the movement of the allies against constitutional liberty in Spain, and at the same time prepared the way for that intrigue, in respect of Cuba, which the vigilance of the United States frustrated. The policy announced by the U. States, as well against the premature movement of the Congress of Panama, as the intrigues of England, was conclusive for the time. The loss of the Mexican colonies was, however, a severe blow to Spain, and for once, in the lapse of centuries, a gleam of wisdom shone upon her councils, and the first effect was favorable to Cuba. The Imperial Government, by adopting a liberal system—opening the ports of the island, and authorizing a representation of the island in the Cortez, at once secured its dependence, and gave a new impulse to its prosperity. After lingering out a period of nearly three centuries, in a sort of stagnation, it now started forward in the race of improvement, with a rapidity like what we have seen in our own country, & which, under all the subsequent oppressions, is far from being entirely suppressed. Under this salutary reform, Cuba, represented by those deputies in the Cortez, was governed by the same political laws as spain, and if her taxes were oppressive, she was at least represented, and far more capable by her great fertility of discharging them than were the arrogant paupers of the Peninsula. On the breaking out of the war between Don Carlos & the highly respectable regent with her quondam guardsman, the finances of Spain fell into utter confusion, and to carry on the war required funds. Don Carlos opened a loan in London for $80,000,000 five per cent. stock, in four series, of which the first series for $20,000,000, was mostly subscribed. The queen did better: she had a chief in Cuba devoted to her interests, and drawing the revenues of the island, she had the sinews of war that enabled her to triumph. Cuba was her main-stay. She could not, however, keep the cigar maker's son in splendor, fight Don Carlos, and keep Madrid, without squeezing Cuba rather more than its representation thought right; they were therefore dismissed from the Cortez, in 1836, and sent home by a majority of thirteen votes. From that moment Cuba has been entirely at the mercy of such persons as Madame Munoz, judges most capable of extracting the largest revenue from the island, which presents the anomaly of a country intended for a paradise, oppressed and borne down by a system of Algerine despotism unexampled in the civilized world, yet surrounded on every side by the freest and most liberal governments the world has ever known. The creature of the imperial government, appointed as Captain General, commands about 14,000 troops, officers and men, from old Spain; with this force he has hitherto succeeded in weeding out all that had been done for the welfare of the island. Thus the *Junta de Fomento* (Royal Association for Improvement,) formerly composed of respectable merchants and wealthy planters, has been pruned of every healthy branch, and filled with the most abject tools of unscrupulous power, while its power of discussing questions for the welfare of the island has been almost altogether suppressed; the military exercising unbridled and licentious power, to the jeopardy of the domicils, property and even lives of the Cubans.

The island of Cuba is possessed of a soil of unsurpassed fertility, and of a most salubrious climate, and yet, although one of the first discovered portions of the new world, it is to this day the least known internally, and is comparatively unsettled. The area of England and Wales, which contain now 20,000,000 of people, is 57,760 square miles. The island of Cuba, including the isle of Pinos, has an area of 64,975 square miles, and, after three centuries of possession, contains less than half a million white inhabitants. The United States, since 1794, has increased 17,000,000 people, while Cuba has increased but 900,000, and of this increase one-half has accrued since the modification of the government on the independence of the Mexican colonies. The population of the island is divided into three general heads, viz: slaves, free blacks and whites.

The slave population does not naturally increase, but is sustained by a constant arrival of large importations from Africa, and these successive importations are, for the most part, composed of the various tribes which enslaved each other at home, viz: the Cariballis, Lucomees, Palas, Gangas, Mandingoes, Congos, Minas, Maquas, Quecseces and Breechees. These bring with them, from Africa, all the animosities against each other which originates in the savage wars waged eternally in that benighted region. This is far from being a united class; and the *ladinos*, or those somewhat civilized by long residence, have little sympathy for the clumsy *Bozales*, while the free colored have almost all obtained their freedom by purchase, and are therefore the most intelligent and industrious, and their rights, as a class, are far better protected than in the northern states of the Union, as compared with the whites, with whom they would probably sympathize, in case of revolution, and by whom they are not regarded socially with the prejudice manifest in the northern states. The population is mostly divided into three great divisions, of whom the most powerful are the native Spaniards, filling all posts of honor and profit in the government, the army and the priesthood, and embracing many merchants. The second class is formed of the creoles, who are planters, farmers and lawyers, and are scrupulously excluded from the army, as well as all civil offices. The third class is formed of the free colored.

The creole population are the occupiers of the land, and owners of the slaves, producing the wealth of the island. The chief culture is sugar, coffee and tobacco. The export of the former article has increased from 40,000 lbs. in 1800, to 156,000,000 lbs. in 1833; 190,613,825 lbs. in 1837, and 653,419,226,501,355 lbs. in 1841. When the government, in 1836, changed its policy in relation to the island, rejected its delegation, and determined upon wringing from it as much money as possible, it became necessary to enhance the number of the troops, to restrict the privileges of the tax-payers, and to stimulate the vigilance of the government in every way calculated to suppress the discontent which the increased burdens would not fail to produce. It is needless to enter into the detail of taxes. It may be stated in a few words, that to such a condition have affairs now reached, that the Cuban is taxed beyond the exactions imposed upon the citizens of any other known community; he is at the mercy of the military; he can neither write, read, nor speak upon political subjects, he cannot go a mile from his home without purchasing a passport, and is liable, at any hour of the day or night, on any pretence; to be removed from his family; and incarcerated in a dungeon, where his innocence or offence can only be made manifest by the exhibition of large bribes; every action of his life, the buying of a servant, the selling of house or land, the killing of an ox, has its specific tax exacted with remorseless rigor. The aggregate of these impositions make up the sum of nearly $20,000,000 extorted from the planters per annum. From this sum is deducted the expenses of the Captain-General, his Spanish troops and officers employed in the extortion, with all the machinery of spies and police, and the remainder is shipped to fill the coffers of the dissolute government at home. That Captain-General stands best with his government who sends the largest sum to Madrid, no matter what may be the effect upon the Cubans.

It is to be supposed that this horrible oppression of a people, who, being in constant communication with the United States, are fully alive to the thraldom in which they languish, should for years have prompted them earnestly to look for an opportunity of redress. The blacks have more than once risen against their masters, but it was usual for the negroes, among whom no extended conspiracy can ever exist, to set fire to the cane, and escape to the mountains, where they were soon captured by other blacks, and brought back in triumph. In 1842, however, one of those infamous agents of which the English government makes use in its nefarious designs upon other nations, by the name of Turnbull, was appointed British Consul at Havana. This person formed the design of uniting the blacks in an insurrection, slaughtering the whites, and erecting a government on the St. Domingo plan, of which, as was proved legally afterwards, himself was to be the Provincial head. The cruelties that attended the suppression of this revolt were unparalleled, and in 1844, a movement of the whites was suppressed by the vigilance of the government; and the addition of new rigors has but stimulated the desire, and urged the necessity of an emancipation.

One of the chief sources of profit to the Captain-General, as well as the queen, has been the slave trade. The imperial government have long affected to consider the importation of the blacks as necessary to the welfare of the plantations. On the 2d of June, 1843, Gen. Valdez received from the department of state a royal order, issued on the 20th of March, in consequence of a request of the British Ambassador at Madrid, directing the general to appoint a commission from the merchants and planters of the island, who should be instructed to prepare the plan of a law for the punishment of such persons as might be found guilty of violating the slave trade treaties. The preamble to this order is worthy of remark, and is as follows:—"Whereas, the treaty of 1835 is supplementary to that of 1817; and whereas, both have for their object to prevent the trade in slaves, whose labor is so necessary to the cultivation, wealth and prosperity of the island, therefore," &c. The body of the order breathes a spirit of similar protection to the trade—confounding the former condition of the island—when it was supposed that the blacks were laboring machines, and the whites incapable of cultivating a tropical soil—with the present state of things, in which these supposed machines are giving pretty significant proofs that they are men, and men not without some notions of liberty, and in which the planters and the whole population would gladly sacrifice the profit to be obtained by any further importation of blacks, to the care for their own safety, even were it not as it is already certain, that the climate of Cuba is as favorable to the natives of the Canaries and Spain, as that of Valencia and Andalusia.

The ex-queen regent herself, it is stated, is at the head of a slave-importing company that sends into Cuba ten thousand slaves per annum, on which the profit is $250 each to the company, and $50 each to the Captain-General. This trade has long been regarded by the Cubans with dread, and an earnest and universal wish has frequently been expressed for its abolition. While, however, it continues to be a source of profit to the iniquitous government, it will be forced upon the island.—An attempt was made to colonize with Asiatic and Yucatan settlers, but this, it was supposed, would interfere with the profits of slaves; and among other acts for the *encouragement* of those immigrants, is the following:—

"ARTICLE 11. The colonist who disobeys the order of his superior, either by refusing to work, or by refusing to fulfil any of his duties, may be corrected with twelve lashes inflicted with a cow-skin; with eighteen more, if he would persist; and if, notwithstanding that he would not do his duty, a chain shall be put on him, and he shall be made to sleep in stocks."

Certainly a pleasant and hospitable mode of treating *free* laborers.

The difficulties which attend the importation of slaves from Africa, lately induced the Captain-General to ask of the Pretorial Audience, whether the importation of negro slaves from Brazil would be a violation of the treaties of 1817 and 1835, and they replied that it would be no violation. The introduction of negroes holds out a political as well as a pecuniary advantage, inasmuch as that by multiplication, the hopelessness of freeing themselves from the imperial government, with such a danger at their doors, may make the creoles more submissive, while the ample supply of negroes may enhance their means of paying taxes.

"When we reflect that 500,000 whites pay $20,000,000 per annum, say $200 per family, which is carried out of the island, we may well wonder at the fertility of the soil which permits such an outlay. It is, however, only when sugar and coffee command fair prices that the estates can afford it; at other seasons they fall in arrear, and their bonds multiply in the merchants' hands. These, although many of them Spaniards, have thus become largely interested in the estates, and see clearly only ultimate ruin in the continued maladministration of the island.

The Cuban, thus mericilessly fleeced, and kept in jeopardy of his life, is by no means free, either from the infamous espionage of the government, or from the daggers it puts in motion, even when he visits this boasted land of freedom. Our hotels, watering-places, and theatres, swarm with the emissaries of the despots; and the luckless Cuban who allows to escape him a word in favor of the institutions he sees around, or sighs for the liberties of the people with whom he sojourns, prepares a dungeon for himself on his return, and beggary for his family from the confiscation of his estates. The infamous persons who have sought our shores for refuge from the just punishment of crimes, lend themselves to the iniquities of the government in hope of earning pardon for their offences. The offices are filled with the pimps and slaves of the infamous Christina and her paramour, while the cities of the United States are but too often the scene of their atrocities. A late outrage upon the honor of our flag, which has been forced upon the attention of the government, affords an instance of the abuse of our hospitality.

The Cubans, in their natural aspirations for liberty, have been checked by the fact, that being deprived of arms by the government, they are placed on one hand in danger of the insurrection of slaves forced upon them, and on the other at the mercy of a foreign mercenary and licentious soldiery quartered among them. Under these circumstances they perceive that the only chance for freedom is foreign aid, in some force, around which they can rally, give expression to their opinions, and assert their rights in the government. They now pay $20,000,000 per annum to their oppressors. In little more than two years that sum per annum sufficed the United States to defray the expenses of the conquest of Mexico. The hardy character and indomitable enterprise manifested by the Americans in that war, pointed out at once the feasibility of employing a sufficient force to disenthral Cuba, and to allow, henceforth, the wealth of the island to accumulate within itself, to the enrichment of all classes. Accordingly, an extensive organization was formed in Cuba and out of it. In New York was established an able periodical, called "La Verdad," to advocate the cause of Cuban freedom.—Many of the articles inserted in this paper were written in Havana, and some by Cubans who had become citizens of the United States. Several persons accused of writing those articles were arrested in Cuba; among others, Machin, Tolon, and Villavarde. Tolon was condemned to death for having, as an American citizen, written to the United States, and published in New York, articles favorable to the freedom of his native country. Villavarde is a scholar, full of the generous enthusiasm and patriotism natural to a cultivated mind. He is the organ of a formidable organization, extending throughout the island, and embracing many influential families, whose object is to achieve the independence of Cuba. He was condemned to six years transportation to Africa, to wear chains, although nothing could be proved but that he corresponded with Tolon. He was confined in the gloomy castle of Havana, in the same dungeon with another prisoner sentenced as a fraudulent bankrupt. These two prisoners bribed the turnkey, Rey, to let them out and escape with them to New Orleans. Villavarde, however, landed at Apalachicola. Machin was assassinated, but was reported to have committed suicide. In his letters, written a short time before his death, he speaks of one Llorente as having threatened to make away with him if he did not cease his traitorous designs of circulating "La Verdad" among the Spaniards. Now the escape of Valdverde, in connection with the turnkey, created the utmost anxiety in the breast of the Captain-General to get Rey again into his power, in the hope that, by the aid of torture, he could force from him the whole secret of the organization. For this purpose he put his agents on the alert. The Spanish consul at New Orleans, a person of great hauteur, is a friend and *eleve* of Munoz, the paramour of the ex-queen regent, and is crawling into the confidence of the government by the unscrupulous zeal with which he does that which is required of him. An agent of this consul is Signor Fulgencio Llorente, a poet, politician and intriguer, who seeks to repair his decayed fortunes by zealous intrigues in behalf of the Cuban authorities, and is the same who threatened poor Machin with the dagger. Connected with Llorente, is another agent named Ayala, a Cuban, who sixteen years ago, slew his own cousin on the highway, and escaped the *garette* by flying to New Orleans. He has property in Cuba, and the great reward he looks forward to for his efforts in behalf of the consul, is his pardon, and permission to return to Cuba. These two arch conspirators undertake to hunt up Rey, and either by force or seduction, induce him to return to Havana, so that he may expose the parties who aided the escape of the prisoners. These intriguants decoy Rey from the protection of the friends of his brother refugee, ultimately force him on board a vessel, and transport him to Cuba. The absolute ignorance of the poor turnkey of all that relates to the popular movement, foiled the Captain-General. The investigation held at New Orleans has, however, revealed to the public the existence of a state of things in that city, in connection with the Spanish government, that calls for the immediate interference of our Executive. A system of under-hand acting has been fully brought home to the Spanish consul and Captain-General of Cuba, under whose orders he acted, highly dangerous to the peace of the community here, and extremely offensive to our national honor. While these events were developing themselves it transpired that a number of armed men in various parts of the Union, were preparing for some expedition of which the object was unknown. The Executive government availed itself of the vague rumors to issue the following proclamation as a sort of pro-peace display:

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

A PROCLAMATION.

There is reason to believe that an armed expedition is about to be fitted out in the United States with an intention to invade the island of Cuba or some of the provinces of Mexico. The best information the Executive has been able to obtain points to the island of Cuba as the object of this expedition. It is the duty of this government to observe the faith of treaties and to prevent any aggression by our citizens upon the territories of friendly nations. I have, therefore, thought it necessary and proper to issue this Proclamation, to warn all citizens of the United States who shall connect themselves with an enterprise so grossly in violation of our laws and our treaty obligations, that they will thereby subject themselves to the heavy penalties denounced against them by our acts of Congress, and will forfeit their claim to the protection of their country. No such persons must expect the interference of this government in any form on their behalf, no matter to what extremities they may be reduced in consepuence of their conduct. An enterprise to invade the territories of a friendly nation, set on foot and prosecuted within the limits of the United States, is in the highest degree criminal, as tending to endanger the peace and compromit the honor of this nation; and, therefore, I exhort all good citizens, as they regard our national reputation, as they respect their own laws and the laws of nations, as they value the blessings of peace and the welfare of their country, to discountenance and prevent by all lawful means any such enterprise; and I call upon every officer of this government, civil or military, to use all efforts in his power to arrest for trial and punishment every such offender against the laws providing for the performance of our sacred obligations to friendly powers.

Given under my hand, the eleventh day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty-nine, and the seventy-fourth of the independence of the United States.

Z. TAYLOR.

By the President:

J. M. CLAYTON, Secretary of State.

That our treaty obligations forbid any armed expedition to be fitted out within our borders against nations with which we are at peace, is undoubtedly the case; but the assumption that armed citizens are going to march against some particular state with which we are at peace, is a most absurd stretch of power. That American citizens have the full and undoubted right to enter into the service of any foreign [illegible] all the [illegible]