

Contributed Articles . . .

CUBA, PAST AND PRESENT.

When we consider that in the beginning of the present century Spain owned vast possessions on the western continent, both in North and South America, and that she has left to her now nothing but the island of Cuba, and that in a most miserable and pitiable condition, it behooves us to inquire what has brought about her losses and what has devastated Cuba? We will get the answer that always comes when one country holds another in subjection. Where the strong dominates the weak, until life becomes a burden rather than a blessing, revolt is inevitable. Spain of all powers, claiming to be civilized, must have been most incapable of governing her possessions. Not only has she been hard, tyrannical and cruel, but most perverse and shortsighted, and through all her losses, has not learned one lesson in justice, toleration, or policy. Her officers sent to govern Cuba were armed with the prestige of the court of Spain, aristocratic in bearing, scornful in disposition, the people were to them as dirt under their feet to whom they could not even accord rights, much less extend protection.

Little can be said of the condition of Cuba at that time. There was not a printing press in possession of the people. Their poets passed their verses, very creditable productions, about in manuscript. The better class feeling the need of education sent their sons to schools and colleges in the United States. When this fact became known at the capital a law was passed making it a criminal offense to educate a child off the island of Cuba and yet no adequate provision was made for education in the province.

Men who had become identified with the interests of their adopted country vainly endeavored to secure the attention of the mother country upon any subject whatever. Courtiers had been sent out who were the only eyes and ears of the court of Spain. However, the princes of the world are not created by the courts, but are natures noblemen, and to them must we look for progress in all lines. Some of these were sons of the soil of Cuba, who fully realized the necessity of social expansion. Yet, hampered as they were on all sides, they knew full well that the only constant and permanent advance in that direction must be, at that time, entirely in the improvement of the people. Education was fostered in every possible way, mainly by private schools and libraries; as an evidence of this we find in the city of Havana alone over fifty book stores.

In the study of political economy we find no people of the Spanish race more laborious than the Cubans. In spite of the drawbacks attached to immense accumulations of property in land, to the debasing effects on labor due to slavery, and notwithstanding that the laws and system of taxation have not been encouraging to production, but on the contrary, the special object of which has been to fill the royal coffers, no matter to what extent the island might be drained. In spite of all this, the people of the country have worked indefatigably, revealing a spirit of industry not excelled in Spain or any of its former colonies. The planters with prodigious effort introduced inventions from Europe for the manufacture of sugar. By this means the sugar industry became famous, and when in later years the slaves were liberated the centralization of machinery plants saved the sugar industry to Cuba.

The religion of Cuba seconded the court of Spain in persecution, until 1871 nothing but Roman Catholicism was tolerated. The Spanish clergy took active part in politico-social battles and were lamentably forgetful of their high calling. Spanish priests however, ignorant, were promoted to high positions while many who had chosen the priesthood as a vocation, men of acknowledged worth, learning and oratory, were shut off in obscure villages because they were Cubans. Like the Spanish officials the clergy was most interested in the subject of lucre, and the purification of

consciences alone cost \$548,694 per annum.

It is marvelous that for three-quarters of a century Cuba has been in almost constant rebellion, one war following another in rapid succession and still the spirit of freedom lives in the hearts of her people. Her own institution of slavery prevented the United States from interfering in behalf of her slaves or her people. So from the time John Quincy Adams took the presidential chair, up to today, we have lived neighbor to atrocities practised by Spain, only equalled by her own barbarities in former ages.

The present revolution is one of the people, it is a common cause with the principal Cuban families and the plain people, and they are all desperately in earnest. The present outbreak was caused by an offer from Spain to make certain reforms in the government of the island. The old revolutionary leaders, fearing that the promise of these reforms might satisfy the Cubans and that they would cease to strive for complete independence, started the revolt. Another cause which precipitated the revolution was the financial depression of 1894 which closed the sugar mills all over the island. Had Spain been a protector instead of a persecutor of her provinces, she might then have issued a loan that would have kept her people employed in industry—the greatest preventive of war. Starvation rather than battle is the policy of Spain. Little forts are thrown up all over the island making its plains look like fields of hay-cocks. It is remarkable how closely the line is drawn around every town and city in Cuba. It is impossible for anyone to pass either from the inside or outside, so a stranger in Cuba is a prisoner and only permitted to leave by train. From the towns daily raids are made into the country, the troops returning in time for supper.

By order of General Weyler, all disloyal subjects of Spain were compelled to move into the fortified towns while their huts and crops were burned by the Spanish soldiers. The result of this is the herding together of hundreds of people without food, without clothing, without shelter, simply huddled together on the bare ground, with no thought but how they could live another day. These are mostly women and children; the men having escaped and joined the insurgents rather than starve. The object of this order was to starve out the insurgents, but it has proved a boomerang that has brought swift and terrible suffering to the adherents of the government. So cruelly is this law enforced that a man steals out to dig potatoes from an adjacent field he is shot down. The beautiful and fertile island is simply a waste, every growing thing having been cut down and burned. To realize this we need only remember the fact that from one small province there was shipped to the United States in 1894 eleven millions of dollars worth of sugar, in 1895 it fell to eight millions and in 1896 did not reach one million.

It may be very well for the United States to avoid entering into a foreign war but this is not a war, it is a slaughter of innocent women and children carried on at our very doors. President Cleveland stated in his message to congress, that when the war in Cuba "has degenerated into a strife which is nothing more than the useless sacrifice of human life, our obligations to the sovereignty of Spain will be superseded by higher obligations which we can hardly hesitate to recognize and discharge." We find the struggle has degenerated into not only a useless sacrifice of life, but a wanton sacrifice of life, property and decency. Is it the money power that is holding back the protecting hand of our president? Can any power hold back our people when we know that within eighty miles of our coast, American property has been destroyed, American people have been imprisoned and shot, American children are begging for bread? Surely our degradation has become complete when we fail to act, and act at once, for every day means the loss of hundreds of lives of the innocent and helpless.

Mrs. W. E. DUNLAP.

Picturesque Hood River.

Hood River Valley is one of the most beautiful, if, indeed, it is not the most beautiful of all the valleys of the Northwest. It is in the very heart of the Cascade range, yet sweeps down in gentle undulating slopes to the Columbia, where it is only fifty feet above tide water. The valley proper, is from three to five miles wide and about sixteen miles long, but its limits would be hard to place. The gentle slopes that bound it rise, at first, almost imperceptibly growing gradually more and more inclined until the line of demarcation between valley and mountain can not be determined. Starting from the Columbia, as has been stated, almost at tide-water, one can drive for twenty odd miles due south and then only realize that the valley has been left behind when the snow line of Mt. Hood is but a half dozen miles away.

Nature was in her happiest mood when she designed it, and evidently intended it as the especial property of her lovely daughters, Flora and Pomona.

To the north Mt. Adams, distant thirty miles, lifts its snowy dome to the skies, while the Columbia pours its cerulean tide ever past on its way to the Pacific. To the south Hood pierces the summer sky with its snowy minaret, while on the east and west, the ever green forests lift terrace on terrace until the green shades into a purple, and then a misty blue, that meets and blends with the azure of the sky.

Hood river, a typical mountain stream winds its way from the glaciers of Mt. Hood to the Columbia, noisy with its message from mountain to river.

Majestic oaks, each fit abiding place for a laughing Dryad, gnarled of bole rugged limbed and glossy-leaved, dot the hill sides and send their long branches protectingly over trail and road. The grassy slopes show a brighter green by comparison with the thousand wild flowers scattered by Nature's hand in patterns too intricate for mortal ken. The violet peeps demurely through the green curtains of the sward, butter-cup and spring beauties lift their yellow and pink blossoms from the long grass, the wild rose bolder, flirts with butterfly and bee, blushing anon at her deceitfulness, and the wanton honey suckle twines her tendrils carressingly on anything within reach, and pours from all her gold-lined chalices intoxicating perfume on the wing of every vagrant breeze. The dog-wood opens its green white petals, a delight to the eye and on the hill side the rhododendron flashes a crimson flame, as bright as that in the bush, which Moses saw as he herded the flocks of the Midian priest in Egypt.

For a wonder, man has not spoiled Nature's work, but this was caused by circumstances more than by sentimental love of Nature. It was not that his hand had become less ruthless, to fell the oak or prune the vine, but that the uses to which the soil was adapted made a few acres sufficient for all his needs. The vine and the fruit tree found here their homes, and orchards heavy with yellow and scarlet fruit, instead of billowing grain fields, were the husbandmans' care and pride. In consequence though the valley contains a population of more than 2,000, much of the land is in the condition that man found it. The mountain streams have been diverted, and instead of leaping and laughing as of old, adown the rugged canyon, they toil slowly noiselessly patiently the long summer through, between rows of vines and trees, until swallowed and absorbed by the thirsty soil.

The roads are perfect, the wheelmans' paradise. But why attempt to describe it? Some future Goldsmith may do so in flowing verse. Some painter, yet unknown to fame, may here find inspiration, but the unpoetic pencil can but conceal the beauties it most would show. To be appreciated it must be seen, and just now it is at its loveliest. Spend a day there in May or June, see, feel, realize and then tell if you can.

Mrs. J. H. CRADLEBAUGH.

The bull that faced the engine on the railroad track had plenty of pluck, but no judgment. He was just like Spain at the present time.



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