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The Index included at the end of this etext (which includes volumes 1

thru 4) appears at the end of volume four of The History of Cuba. It is

provided here for the convenience of the reader.

[Illustration: FRANCISCO DE ARANGO

One of the noblest names in Cuban history of a century and more ago is

that of Francisco de Arango y Parreño, advocate, economist and

statesman. He came of a family of noble lineage, and was born in Havana

on May 22, 1765. Among the great men of his day in Cuba, who were many,

he was one of the foremost, as the detailed story of his labors and

achievements in the chapters of this History abundantly attests. He

worked for the reform of the economic system of the island, for the

development of agriculture on an enlightened basis, for the extension of

popular education, and for the promotion of commerce. He urged upon King

Charles III plans for averting the evil influences of the French

Revolution, while securing the good results; and he set an example in

educational matters by himself founding an important school. Recognized

and honored the world over for his character, talents and achievements,

he died on March 21, 1837.]

THE

HISTORY OF CUBA

BY

WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON

A.M., L.H.D.

Author of "A Century of Expansion," "Four Centuries of

the Panama Canal," "America's Foreign Relations"

Honorary Professor of the History of American Foreign

Relations in New York University

\_WITH ILLUSTRATIONS\_

VOLUME TWO

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THE HISTORY OF CUBA

CHAPTER I

When the Treaty of Utrecht was signed on the eleventh of April, 1713,

the Spanish colonies in America felt as if they were entering upon a new

era, an era of peace and unhindered growth and prosperity. They did not

realize until the first elation over the establishment of peace had

spent itself, that this treaty contained the seeds of future wars which

were bound to be quickened by the powerful spirit of commercial rivalry,

which had been awakened in the European nations and was alarmingly

dimming the justice and righteousness of their policies. By losing the

European possessions, the population of Spain had been so seriously

diminished that it was entirely out of proportion to the area of her

over-seas dominion. While the Bourbon king had nothing more to fear from

France, even her pirates having palpably decreased their operations

against the Spanish colonies in America, he had in England a rival and

enemy whose power he had reason to dread. For all the maritime and

commercial agreements of the treaty favored England.

George Bancroft justly characterizes the spirit of the period in the

second volume of his "History of the United States" when he says

(Chapter XXXV, p. 388):

"The world had entered on the period of mercantile privilege.

Instead of establishing equal justice, England sought commercial

advantages; and, as the mercantile system was identified with the

colonial system of the great maritime powers of Europe, the

political interest, which could alone kindle universal war, was to

be sought in the colonies. Hitherto, the colonies were subordinate

to European politics; henceforth, the question of trade on our

borders, of territory on our frontier, involved an interest which

could excite the world to arms. For about two centuries, the wars

of religion had prevailed; the wars for commercial advantages were

now prepared. The interests of commerce, under the narrow point of

view of privilege and of profit, regulated diplomacy, swayed

legislation, and marshalled revolutions."

Concerning the mooted problem of the freedom of the seas, discussed as

ardently and widely then as at the present time, Bancroft had this to

say in the same chapter (p. 389):

"To the Tory ministry of Queen Anne belongs the honor of having

inserted in the treaties of peace a principle which, but for

England, would in that generation have wanted a vindicator. But

truth, once elicited, never dies. As it descends through time, it

may be transmitted from state to state, from monarch to

commonwealth; but its light is never extinguished, and never

permitted to fall to the ground. A great truth, if no existing

nation would assume its guardianship, has power--such is God's

providence--to call a nation into being, and live by the life it

imparts."

The great principle first formulated by the illustrious Dutch historian

and statesman Hugo Grotius was touched upon in the treaty of Utrecht in

the passage saying,--"Free ships shall also give a freedom to goods."

The meaning of contraband was strictly defined; the right of a nation to

blockade another's ports was rigorously restricted. As to the rights of

sailors, they were protected by the flag under which they sailed.

But whatever credit belongs to England for her upholding of this

principle was obscured by her exploitation of a monopoly, created by a

special agreement of the same treaty. The "assiento," which established

that most ignominious traffic in negro slaves, was to have disastrous

effects, political, economic and racial, upon the American colonies,

whether British, French or Spanish. The agreement had been specially

demanded by the British representatives and had been approved by Louis

XIV, who saw in its acceptance not only an advantage for England, but

justly hoped his own colonies on the Gulf of Mexico to profit by it. It

was worded simply as follows:

"Her Britannic Majesty did offer and undertake by persons whom she

shall appoint, to bring into the West Indies of America belonging

to his Catholic Majesty, in the space of thirty years, one hundred

and forty-four thousand negroes, at the rate of four thousand eight

hundred in each of the said thirty years."

The duty on four thousand of these negroes was to be thirty-three and a

third pesos. But the assientists were entitled to introduce besides that

number as many more as they needed at the minor rate of sixteen and two

third pesos a head. However, no Frenchman or Spaniard or any individual

of another nation could import a negro slave into Spanish America.

This trade in human flesh was duly organized and carried on by a stock

company which promised enormous profits. King Philip V., sorely in need

of money with which to execute all his plans for the reconstruction of

his kingdom, anticipated great gains from such an investment and bought

one quarter of the stock. Queen Anne was the owner of another quarter

and the remainder was sold among her loyal subjects. Thus the sovereigns

of these two kingdoms became the leading slave-merchants in the world

and by the provisions of the agreement "her Britannic Majesty" enjoyed

the somewhat dubious distinction of being for the Spanish colonies in

the Gulf of Mexico, on the Atlantic and along the Pacific coasts, the

exclusive slave-trader.

No trade required as little outlay in capital as the slave-trade.

Trifles, trinkets and refuse stock of every possible kind of merchandise

including discarded weapons, were exchanged for the human cargoes on

the African coast; who, crowded into vessels, crossed the seas, and upon

their arrival in the New World were sold to the colonists who wanted

cheap labor and a cheaper service. A fever of speculation which had in

it no little touch of adventure, seemed to sweep over England and to

delude the people with visions of wealth to be acquired by a conquest of

the Spanish possessions from Florida south, including Mexico and Peru.

Wild schemes of colonization promised to open Golcondas on the fields of

sugar-cane and tobacco, and in the mines holding inestimable treasures

of gold and silver. For the realization of those plans negro labor was

needed. Even in the West Indies it was welcomed especially by those

settlements engaged in the raising of sugar cane.

That the Assiento opened the door to all sorts of clandestine commercial

operations, as also to insidious political intrigue was soon to become

evident. Agents of the Assiento had the right to enter any Spanish port

in America and from there send other agents to inland settlements; they

had the right to establish warehouses for their supplies, safe against

search unless proof of fraudulent operations, that is importations, was

incontestable. They could send every year a ship of five hundred tons

with a cargo of merchandise to the West Indies and without paying any

duty sell these goods at the annual fair. On the return trip this ship

was allowed to carry products of the country, including gold and silver,

directly to Europe. The assientists urged the American colonies to

furnish them supplies in small vessels. Now it was known that such

vessels were particularly favored by the smuggling trade. Hence British

trade in negro slaves was indirectly used to encourage smuggling and

thus undermine Spanish commerce.

To estimate the extent of the smuggling trade directly traceable to the

loop-holes which the Assiento offered, was impossible. Jamaica, the

stronghold of British power in the West Indies, and ever a hotbed of

political and commercial intrigue against the Spanish neighbors, became

a beehive of smuggling activities. In places formerly used as bases of

buccaneer operations a lively business was carried on with contraband

goods. The danger to legitimate commerce in and with the West Indies

became so great that the Cuban authorities were forced towards the end

of Governor Guazo's administration to adopt strenuous methods in dealing

with such offenders. D. Benito Manzano, Andrez Gonzales and other

mariners and soldiers of experience and known valor were sent out

against them and made important seizures in this service. The governor

was authorized to organize cuadrillos (patrols) of custom officers and

equip custom house cutters that watched for and descended upon all

vessels found without proper clearance papers or that had failed to

register their cargoes in conformity to the laws of the island. The

smugglers were tried and condemned to suffer various penalties, ranging

from loss of property, hard labor and imprisonment, to death.

Governor Guazo's reorganization of the military forces gave proof of his

extraordinary foresight and his executive power. He formed a battalion

of infantry composed of seven companies of one hundred men and besides

two other companies, one of artillery, the other of light cavalry, which

was later changed to mounted dragoons. Two more companies of seventy men

each were added some years later by order of the king. For the lodgment

of these troops Governor Guazo ordered built the rastrille (gateway of a

palisade), which became later part of the fortress and the quarters that

run along the southern part.

Governor Guazo was a man of action and enterprise, besides being endowed

with no little military genius. Never once during his administration did

he lapse into that passive attitude which was in a large degree

responsible for the slow pace at which the Spanish colonies progressed.

One of his first aims was to inflict an exemplary punishment upon the

outlaws of the seas that rendered insecure the coasts of the Spanish

island colonies, and interfered seriously with commerce in the Gulf of

Mexico. The militia of Havana had on previous occasions, when called

into service on the sea, proved its mettle and displayed so much bravery

and perseverance in the pursuit of its tasks that he had unlimited

confidence in its ability to do the work he planned. He conferred with

the governor of Florida, and they agreed upon concerted action against

the English colony of St. George in the Carolinas. He made it known that

he intended to dislodge the pirates on the island of the Bahamas called

New Providence and for some time settled by the British. For that

purpose he fitted out fourteen light vessels, ten bilanders (small

one-mast ships, one of them of fourteen pieces), two brigantines

(two-masted vessels with square sails) and other smaller ships with

munitions and sufficient stores. Then he gathered a force of one

thousand volunteers, one hundred veteran soldiers and a few of the

prominent residents of the city to whom he entrusted the command of some

of the ships. As head of the expedition he named D. Alfonso Carrascesa,

a dependable official, and as his assistant D. Esteban Severino de

Berrea, a native of Havana and the oldest captain of the white militia.

The story of this enterprise as related by Guiteras gives a somewhat

different version of the struggles between the French and the Spaniards

for the possession of Pensacola as that contained in the preceding

chapter. According to Guiteras the armada organized in Havana and placed

under command of Carrascesa sailed on the fourth of July, 1719. But it

had barely left the harbor, when it sighted two French warships. They

were coming from Pensacola, which the French had just captured, and had

on board as prisoners the governor and the whole garrison. Carrascesa

did not for a moment lose his calm assurance at this unexpected

intermezzo. He stopped the French when they turned to flee, and they

were in turn captured. With the rescued Spaniards from Pensacola he

returned to Havana, considering this easy victory of happy augury for

the expedition upon which he had set out. But Governor Guazo persuaded

him that the reconquest of Pensacola was of paramount importance.

Carrascesa yielded to Guazo's arguments and the entreaties of the

governor of Florida's stronghold and started upon his new task. He

succeeded in recovering Pensacola and reinstalling the Spanish governor

with his garrison. Of the ultimate defeat of the expedition Guiteras has

nothing to say.

Carrascesa, too, was a man of untiring activity and did not rest upon

the laurels of his victory over the French. He made several expeditions

to the ports of Masacra, Mobile and other places, laying waste rice

fields and sugar plantations. He captured a number of transports

carrying army provisions, and also took many negroes that had been

brought over by the company carrying on slave trade, prisoners. So

encouraged was he by his successes, that he planned another attack upon

Masacra, which was defended by four batteries mounted on the coast and

had a garrison of about two thousand Frenchmen and Canadians. But he

realized that his forces were numerically far inferior and he desisted

from carrying out this enterprise. He contented himself with turning

his attention to the improvement of the fortifications of Pensacola and

built a fort at the point of Siguenza for the defense of the canal.

While engaged upon this work he was surprised by the arrival of a French

squadron under the command of the Count de Champmeslin. There were six

vessels in all well equipped with artillery far superior in quality to

that of the Spaniards. A fierce and stubborn combat ensued, in which the

volunteers from Havana distinguished themselves by their valor, but the

French admiral succeeded in forcing the passage of Siguenza and

compelled Carrascesa to surrender. Pensacola fell for the second time

into the hands of the French, who, however, gave credit to the Cubans

for unusual bravery and declared that, had it not been for their

inferior numbers, and the inferior equipment of their ships and their

troops, they never would have been defeated. This is the story of the

fights for Pensacola as related by the Spanish historian Guiteras.

Governor Guazo's administration covered one of the most important

periods in the history of Cuba. One of his last acts was the

proclamation in Havana in March, 1724, of the ascension of King Luis I.

to the throne of Spain, his father, King Philip V., having abdicated.

But King Luis died on the thirty-first of August and King Philip V.

resumed the scepter. In the following month Governor Guazo retired from

office and on the twenty-ninth of September was succeeded by the

Brigadier D. Dionisio Martinez de la Vega. One of the first acts of

Governor Martinez was to raise the garrison to the number of two hundred

and fifty men. By decree of the court he also superintended the

construction of the arsenal which was to contribute much to the

improvement of the rather poorly equipped fleet. In order effectively to

pursue his predecessor's policy of prosecuting the smuggler bands, the

number of which was alarmingly multiplying on and about the island,

Governor Martinez suggested to the Minister of the Treasury the erection

of a shipbuilding plant to turn out vessels especially designed for that

purpose. He obtained the consent of the Minister and within a short time

the plan was realized.

This dockyard for the construction of ships primarily intended for

revenue service, was at first erected between the fort of la Fuerza and

la Contaduria (office of the accountant or auditor of the exchequer),

because that location offered great facilities to lower the vessels

directly from the rocks to the sea. But as soon as the superiority of

the ships built in Havana over those produced in Spain became manifest,

owing to the excellent quality of the timber used, it was at once

decided to extend the dockyard and it was moved to the extreme southern

part of the city where it occupied a space of one-fourth of a league,

near the walls with the batements and buttresses, which added much to

its solidity and beauty. There within a few years were built all kinds

of ships, from revenue cutters to warships intended to strengthen the

Armada. In time the plant turned out large numbers of vessels. According

to Valdes there were built between the years 1724 and 1796 forty-nine

ships, twenty-two frigates, seven paquebots, nine brigantines, fourteen

schooners, four ganguiles (barges used in the coasting-trade, lighters)

and four pontones (pontoons or mud-scows, flat bottomed boats, furnished

with pulleys and implements to clean harbors); in all one hundred and

nine vessels.

This shipyard and the fortifications which were being steadily improved

were found of invaluable service in the year 1726, when a break between

Spain and England occurred and a British fleet appeared in the Antilles.

So alarmed was King Philip V. by the news of the danger of British

invasion which threatened Cuba, that he immediately ordered D. Gregorio

Guazo, who had in the meantime been entrusted with the superior military

government of the Antilles and Central America, to adopt measures of

safety. Guazo accordingly sent the squadron of D. Antonio Gastaneta with

a force of one thousand men to assist in the defense of Cuba. The

historians Alcazar and Blanchet report that D. Guazo himself accompanied

the squadron, fell sick upon his arrival in Havana and died the same

month. But Valdes records that he died on the thirteenth of August of

that year in his native town of Ossuna. However, D. Juan de Andrea

Marshall of Villahemosa seems to have been appointed his successor.

The precautions taken were to be well rewarded. On the twenty-seventh of

April, 1727, the English squadron under the command of Admiral Hossier

came in sight and approached the entrance to the harbor of Havana. But

the population had so effectively prepared the defense of the city, that

the attack of the British failed. Besides seeing himself defeated by the

enemy, the Admiral saw with dismay that his crews were decimated by

fever. Gastaneta was at that time in Vera Cruz and Martinez alone

carried off the victory over the British forces which after a blockade

of a month had to retire. Admiral Hossier was so overcome with his

failure and the loss of his men that he himself died of grief shortly

after.

The following two years of the governorship of D. Martinez were

turbulent with the discord of rivals and their factions. The immediate

cause of these regrettable disturbances was Hoyo Solorzana, the governor

of Santiago de Cuba. He had some time before taken a prominent part in

the removal of the treasures lost in el Palmer de Aiz. The charge was

raised against him that he had appropriated a certain portion of these

treasures and he was suspended and proceedings were begun against him.

The case was pending when the accused, who enjoyed great popularity with

the people, suddenly without the knowledge of the Captain-General or the

Dominican Audiencia, took possession of the government office in which

he had formerly exercised his official functions. The authorities were

indignant and sent a complaint to his Majesty in Madrid. When the reply

arrived a few months later, it ordered his immediate removal from

office, annulled his earlier appointment and demanded that he be sent to

Madrid. The commander-in-chief took steps for his removal, but the

municipal government claimed that the cause could not be pursued as long

as an appeal was pending. Governor Martinez, too, waited with the

execution of the royal decree in order to learn what decision the

Ayuntamento of Havana would take. But the latter was kindly disposed to

Hoyo Solorzano, remembering the undeniable services he had rendered the

city.

Both sides held stubbornly to their opinions and the lawyers also could

not be swayed by any arguments. Suddenly there appeared in the harbor of

Santiago de Cuba a few galleons under command of the chief of the

squadron, Barlavente, and acting under orders of Fra D. Antonio de

Escudero. They were to apprehend the governor and his supporters, and

take them as prisoners to Vera Cruz on the Admiral's ship. True to his

character and antecedents, Solorzano bravely defended himself and with

the help of his adherents managed to elude his pursuers and to escape to

the country. After visiting places where many of his friends lived, he

ventured into Puerto Principe, whose inhabitants were such loyal

partisans of his that they decided upon protecting him arms in hand. A

detachment of troops had been sent from Havana and surrounded the house

in which Solorzano was staying. They succeeded in crushing the riotous

demonstrations in his favor and seized him. Manacled and chained he was

taken to el Morro and imprisoned. Although he was evidently the victim

of misaimed ambition, the court that tried his case condemned him to

death.

While these unpleasant events were agitating the official circles of the

island, the people saw in the year 1728 one of the most ardent desires

of the ambitious youth of Cuba attain fulfillment. This was the

foundation of the University. Hitherto, it was necessary for young men

desiring a superior and especially a scientific education to attend the

universities of Mexico, Santo Domingo or Seville. With the opening of

this institution of learning in the metropolis of the island, Havana,

the intellectual life received a strong impulse. The credit for having

secured the permission to open this university is due to the Dominican

order which was mainly instrumental in promoting the cause of education

in Latin America and especially the West Indies. The University was

opened in the convent of Havana by virtue of a bull issued by Pope

Innocent XIII. and in accord with the royal order of March fourteenth,

1732. The event was celebrated by brilliant decoration and illumination

of the principal thoroughfares and buildings of the city and by festive

gatherings and banquets, as also by dignified and solemn ceremonies in

the building itself.

The first rector of the University was Fra Tomas de Linares. According

to the custom of the period and the country the rector, vice-rector and

assistants were all selected from the clergy. The curriculum comprised

courses in grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, philosophy, theology, canons

of economic laws, jurisprudence and medicine. But it seems strange that

for a number of years no professor could be found to occupy the chair of

mathematics. The peripatetic system prevailed. After two years of

existence the university won such hearty approbation from the king that

it was granted by royal decree of the twenty-seventh of June, 1734, the

same concessions and prerogatives as were accorded to the University of

Alcala. In the year 1733 Cuba lost her most revered and beloved

spiritual leader, Bishop Valdes, who expired on the twenty-ninth of

March. He lived in the memory of many generations that followed not only

by the many parishes which he had founded in the smaller towns and rural

districts, and by the seminary of San Baulie el Magne, which he had

called into being, but also by his many personal virtues that had

endeared him to his people.

An important innovation was made at this period concerning land tenure.

The Ayuntamentos or municipal corporations started to rent lands, that

is to give them in usufructu for the pasturing of cattle, to swine

herds, for labor or as ground plots. The person receiving such a grant

paid to the propios (estates or lands belonging to the city or civic

corporation) six ducats annually for the first, four for the second, and

two for the others. The land-surveyor, D. Luis de la Pena, resolved to

give a plot of land in the radius of two leagues to the haciendas that

raised black cattle, called hatos, and to the raisers of hogs, cordos or

corroles (enclosures within which cattle is held). But there was such a

lack of precision in determining the boundaries of the lands covered by

these concessions, that one overlapped the others and caused innumerable

heated lawsuits. The abuses committed by the corporation concerned in

these land deals, finally caused the king to strip these bodies of the

power of renting the lands. This important royal decree was according

to the historian Pezuela dated 1727, according to La Torre 1729.

The copper-mines of Cuba which had during the second half of the

seventeenth century been totally abandoned, but had been reopened in the

year 1705 under the direction of D. Sabastian de Arancibia and D.

Francisco Delgado, once more disappointed those interested in that

investment and yielding little profit were closed. The result was very

disastrous for the men that had been employed in the mines. For when

they found themselves without work, they began to lead a sort of

unrestrained life, which caused unrest and disturbances. In the year

1731, the governor of Santiago de Cuba, D. Pedro Jiminez, decided to put

an end to this idleness and without warning imposed upon them hard

labor. This the men resented and rebelled. After considerable

difficulty, the gentle exhortations of the Canonicus Morrell of Santa

Cruz prevailed and succeeded in appeasing the men, who took up other

work.

In other parts of the island there occurred about this time uprisings of

the slaves, which required the use of force and led to no little

bloodshed before they could be suppressed. One of these revolts on the

plantation Quiebra Hache and some on other neighboring haciendas led to

the foundation of Santa Maria del Rosario. It was D. Jose Bayona Chacon,

Conde de Casa-Bayona, who conceived the idea that the existence of a

white population in the heart of the mutinous district might help to

keep the negroes submissive. He asked the king's permission to establish

a town on the land of said plantation and of the Jiaraco corral, which

were all his property, and asked for manorial grants, civil and criminal

jurisdiction, that is the right to appoint alcaldes (ordinary judges),

eight aldermen and as many other officials of the court as were needed.

King Philip, remembering the services D. Bayona Chacon had rendered the

island, granted this request in the year 1732, and D. Bayona or Conde

(count) Casa-Bayona settled thirty families on the place, which was

henceforth called Santa Maria del Rosario.

The last years of the governorship of D. Martinez were undisturbed by

strife either from within or without, and Cuba prospered during that

brief spell of peace and quiet. But he did not delude himself by

imagining Cuba safe from further disturbances, either of her internal

conditions or her relations to her enemies. Like his predecessors he

continued to add to the fortifications, as is proved by an inscription

on the gate of la Punta, which reads:

Reinando en Espana Don Felipe V. El Animoso y Siendo Gobernador y

Captan General de Esta Plaza E Isla de Cuba El Brigadier Don

Dionisio Martinez de la Vega, se Hiciron Estas Bovedas, Almacenes,

Terraplenes, Y Muralla Hasta San Telmo; Se Acabo La Murella Y

Baluartes Desde El Angel Hasta El Colateral De La Puerta de Tierra

Y Desde El Anguilo De la Tonaza Hasta El Otro Colatoral; Se Puso En

Estado y con Respeto La Artilleria; Se Hizo La Caldaza, Y En El

Real Artillero Navios De Guerra Y Tres Paquebotos, Con Otras Obras

Menores; Y Lo Gueda Continua do Por Marzo de 1731 Con 220 Esclavos

De S. M. Que Con Su Arbotrio Ha Puesto En Las Reales Fabrica.

(While King Philip V. the Brave reigned in Spain and the Brigadier

Don Dioniosio Martinez de la Vega was Governor of this place and

the island of Cuba, there were built three vaults, stores, terraces

and a wall as far as Telma, were finished the wall and bastions

from El Angel unto the Colateral of the Gate of Tierra, and from

the corner of the tenaillo unto the other collateral; was set up in

good condition the artillery; was constructed the high road and

were built in the royal dockyard war vessels and three packet-boats

and minor ships; and this was continued in March, 1730, with 200

slaves of his Majesty, who deigned to have them placed in the royal

shops.)

Accounts of foreigners that traveled in the West Indies and visited Cuba

during this period give glimpses of the cities and the life therein

which are interesting reading. John Campbell, the author of "The

Spanish Empire in America" and "A Concise History of Spanish America,"

published in London in the year 1747, says in the latter book, in the

description of Havana:

"The Buildings are fair, but not high, built of Stone and make a

very good appearance, though it is said they are but meanly

furnished. There are eleven Churches and Monasteries and two

handsome hospitals. The Churches are rich and magnificent; that

dedicated to St. Clara having seven Altars, all adorned with Plate

to a great Value; And the Monastery adjoining contains a hundred

Nuns with their Servants, all habited in Blue. It is not, as some

have reported, a Bishop's see, though the Bishop generally resides

there. But the Cathedral is at St. Jago, and the Revenue of this

Prelate not less than fifty thousand Pieces of Eight per Annum.

Authors differ exceedingly as to the Number of Inhabitants in this

City. A Spanish Writer, who was there in 1700 and who had Reason to

be well acquainted with the Place, computed them at twenty-six

thousand, and we may well suppose that they are increased since.

They are a more polite and sociable People than the Inhabitants of

any of the Ports on the Continent, and of late imitate the French

both in their Dress and their Manner."

The Spanish historian, Emilio Blanchet, also limns a picture of life in

Havana about this time. Always inclined to express their feelings of joy

or of sorrow in a rather demonstrative manner, every national event of

some importance gave occasion for festivities that lasted sometimes

several days, and in one instance almost a whole month. This

extraordinary example of Cuban delight in great public celebrations

occurred in the year 1735 in Villaclara. The recent victories of Spain

in Italy and the ascension of Carlos to the Neapolitan crown were

celebrated in that town from the first to the twenty-second of February.

Of course, the national sport of bull-fights figured largely in the

program of this month of festivities; but there were also equestrian

contests, military games, processions and cavalcades, and for the first

time in Cuban history, dramatic performances. Besides such unusual

occasions as the celebration of a victory, the numerous church festivals

also encouraged the people's love of more or less ceremonial display and

solemn public functions. The eyes of the people loved to feast upon the

processions on foot or on horseback which took place on various saints'

days, especially on the days of St. John, St. Peter, St. James and St.

Anna.

The British writer quoted above was right in saying that the Cubans

emulated the example and followed the models of the French in the dress

of the period. For Blanchet gives a description of the dress of the

Cuban women of that time, which evokes before the reader visions of the

elaborate costumes inseparable from the period of Louis XIV. The Spanish

historian dwells at some detail upon the gorgeous dresses of the wealthy

women of Cuba. There were gowns with long, sweeping trains, the material

of which was mostly a heavy brocade silk, interwoven with threads of

gold or silver, trimmed with taffeta in sky blue or crimson. Other

material was trimmed with gold or silver braids. The belt generally of

rose taffeta joined the waist to the skirt. The hair was adorned with a

large silver or gold pin which held the folds of a richly trimmed

mantilla, also either of brocade or some lighter tissue, gracefully

falling back over the shoulders. The undergarments were of silk taffeta,

all of these materials being flowered or checkered and interwoven with

threads of gold. Velvet was also used in the fashioning of vestees and

jackets. Cloaks, capes and redingotes were either of camelot or barocan,

or of some other fine cloth. Pink was the favorite color. Laces and

embroideries were used on the dress of both men and women. No cavalier

was without a frill. The use of powder for the face and hair was quite

common, and the powdered queue was as indispensable to the costume of a

cavalier as the buckled shoe.

CHAPTER II

When Governor Martinez de la Vega was promoted to the post of President

and Captain-General of Panama, there was appointed in his place, as the

thirty-sixth governor of Cuba, Fieldmarshal D. Juan Francisco Guemez y

Horcasitas, a native of Oviedo and son of Baron de Guemez. Valdes

remarks that during his administration was born his son D. Juan, who

seems to have been also actively engaged in public life. Guemez was

governor of Cuba long enough to occupy a prominent place in the

chronicles of the island. He was inaugurated on the eighteenth of March,

1734, and continued in office until the twenty-eighth of April, 1746.

Guemez entered upon the political and military administration

simultaneously with the Franciscan padre D. Juan Lasso de la Vega, who

assumed the spiritual leadership of the people as successor to Bishop

Valdez. During his governorship, the Municipio of Havana was organized,

and Santiago de Cuba being for the first time subordinated to his

authority, Havana became virtually the capital of the island, and one of

the most important of Spanish America. In that civic corporation, a very

prominent member was the Habanero D. Jose Martin Felix de Arrate, who

wrote a valuable history of Havana under the title "Llave del Nuevo

Mundo, Antemural de las Indias Occidentales, la Habana descriptiva:

Noticias de su fundacion, aumentos y Estado."

Governor Guemez introduced some measures of reform which tended to

appease the discontent occasioned by previous abuses of municipal power.

One of these was the rigid enforcement of the royal decree which forbade

the ayuntamentos to trade in land. He also improved the functioning of

the primary courts called Justicias ordinarias; for a great deal of

disorder was caused by the fact that their decisions were rarely

promptly obeyed. He associated with them the tenentes a guerra, military

lieutenants, whose authority was more likely to be respected. One of

these, the Captain of militia D. Jose Antonio Gomez, was sent to the

salt works of Punta Hicacos and Cayo Sal, where much confusion had

reigned, to regulate the salt production, and insure an efficient

functioning of the organization concerned in it. He became later known

as a famous guerillero, a civilian serving in guerilla warfare, and was

familiarly called by the people Pepe Antonio.

During this administration some very important work was done towards

sanitation. Guemez succeeded in having the harbor thoroughly dredged; by

urgent appeals to the residents he secured the removal from the streets

of all encumbrances of traffic and insisted upon having them regularly

cleaned. It can be justly said that, if the standard of public health in

Cuba was raised at this period, it was undoubtedly due to his efforts.

Nor was he indifferent to the extortion practiced upon the poorer

inhabitants by unscrupulous landlords and shopkeepers, one of his

ordinances to that effect regulating the prices at which provisions were

to be sold by the grocers and thus insuring a proper and sufficient

supply of these necessities to the population which otherwise would have

been underfed. He was also the first governor of Cuba who paid attention

to the island's forests and curbed the operations of the thieves that

ravaged them. Of course such measures were bound to be resented by those

elements who had previously profited from the freedom with which they

could carry on their trade regardless of human equity and public

welfare; and although the administration of Guemez was one of great

material prosperity for the people, he did not escape the fate that

befell so many of his predecessors, that of being made the target of

slanderous accusations. But the government had profited from previous

experiences of this character, that of the Marquis de Casa-Torres being

still remembered; it was no longer inclined to lend so ready an ear to

charges raised against the governors, and paid no attention to the

attempts made by his enemies to discredit Guemez in Madrid.

The colonial government was then in charge of D. Jose del Campillo, an

official of great knowledge and sagacity and of wide experience in

economic and financial affairs. Many of the improvements that had been

introduced in Spain by Minister Ori were through D. Campillo's efforts

now applied to the colonies in America. Among these valuable innovations

were the regulation of the revenues, the reduction of import and export

duties, and the distribution of the realenzes or royal patrimonies. But

equally important was the creation of royal commissions to inquire into

the state, the resources and needs of the provinces, and to organize

industry and commerce upon a sound and equitable basis.

On the other hand it cannot be denied that powerful influences were at

work to secure privileges for private corporations, which in a measure

threatened to undo what those commissions attained. The organization

which came into being in Havana in the year 1740 under the name Real

Compania de Comercio under the patronage of the Virgin del Rosario, was

such a corporation and it seems doubtful whether the privileges it

enjoyed and the profits that accrued from them did not outweigh the

advantages which were promised to the colony. The company was given a

general monopoly, including the exclusive right of exportation of

tobacco and sugar; it had the right of importation of articles of

consumption in the island without paying custom on goods imported into

the interior. Of course, it pledged itself on its part to render the

community certain services which should not be underestimated. It was to

build in its dockyards vessels of war and of trade; to supply the

warships anchored in the harbor with provisions for their crews; to

furnish ten armed vessels for the persecution of contraband; and for the

transportation of the country's products to the port of Cadiz; to bring

from Spain the ammunition needed in Cuba; to provision the garrison of

Florida; and to furnish articles of equipment to the weather-side fleet.

The Captain-General himself was given the office of Juez conservador

(judge conservator). The first president of the company was D. Martin de

Aroztegui. The organizers had at first counted upon a capital of one

million pesos, but it barely exceeded nine hundred thousand. Each share

was valued at five hundred duros (dollars) and eight shares were

required to entitle the holder to a vote in the general conventions.

There were at first five directors in all, but they were gradually

reduced to two only. Some historians had warm praise for the work of the

company, among them Arrate, who with many others was preoccupied by the

economic interests and the commercial progress of the community. But

there is no doubt that at the end it did not bring about the results

that had been expected. During twenty years of its existence Cuba

derived no tangible benefit. The importation of goods from Spain did not

amount to more than three vessels annually. The exports amounted to less

than twenty-one thousand arrobas of sugar (a weight of twenty-five

pounds of sixteen ounces each).

Governor Guemez was not oblivious to the dangers forever menacing the

security and the peace of the island. He made great improvements on the

batteries of el Morro; he had parts of the city walls, which ran from la

Tenaze to Paula, demolished, and rebuilt of better material; he had the

walls on the inland side re-enforced so as to offer greater resistance

in case of attack by enemies. To all these improvements the citizens of

Havana contributed generously; they furnished ten thousand peons

(day-laborers) and as many beasts of burden to do the work. Guemez also

built factories in the parish of El Jaguey on the other side of the bay

and established the first powder magazine on the coast. During the

latter part of his administration, in the year 1743, the town of

Guanabacoa received its charter. The following year, 1744, is memorable

in the history of Cuba as the year when the first postal service was

organized. Thus the governorship of D. Guemez proved for the island a

period of great civic and material progress and prosperity. The peace it

enjoyed during the earlier years was, however, to be seriously disturbed

later on.

For even towards the end of the administration of D. Martinez de la Vega

clouds had arisen upon the political horizon of Europe which had begun

to cast their shadows over the colonies. The slave-trade sanctioned by

the famous Assiento agreement gave rise to more and more serious tension

between the governments of England and of Spain. In order to execute

that part of the Treaty of Utrecht which related to the importation of

negro slaves into Spanish America, the British government had encouraged

the formation of a company, the Compania de la Mar del Sud, or South Sea

Company, which was to act as agent of the assientists. It consisted of

men holding the large national debt of Great Britain and had received a

grant for the exclusive trade of the South Seas. But since Spain was in

possession of a great proportion of the coast in that part of the world

and had so far enjoyed a monopoly of its trade, the South Sea Company

derived no benefit from that grant, unless the commercial activity of

Spanish America could be paralyzed. The slave-trade with its clandestine

opportunities for contraband, offered the South Sea Company

possibilities to undermine Spanish trade. The slavers, as the

slave-carrying vessels were called, being protected by passports issued

by their contractors, were not slow in getting into communication with

those elements in the Spanish colonies that placed their personal profit

above their duty to the country under the protection of which they

lived, and had no difficulty in delivering cargoes of divers merchandise

while they unloaded their human freight. Moreover they never returned to

Europe in ballast, but carried a correspondingly large cargo of West

Indian goods of which they disposed in European ports.

Spain had repeatedly entered complaints against these scandalously

dishonest operations upon the coasts of Spanish America, but Great

Britain was then not in the mood to concern herself with problems of

international ethics. The enormous profits that the trade in negro

slaves had brought to investors in that enterprise had dimmed their

sense of honor. Queen Anne herself had in a speech to the parliament

boasted of having secured to the British a new market for slaves in

Spanish America. A considerable part of the population of Jamaica lived

exclusively on the profits of this traffic between the Spanish-American

harbors. The vessel which the British according to the Assiento were

allowed to send annually to Portobello was soon followed at a certain

distance by a fleet of smaller ships that approached the harbor at night

and replaced the cargo that had been unloaded by day. Frequently the

slavers would appeal to the human feelings of the officials in

Spanish-American ports and with stories of shipwreck and damages

sustained in hurricanes induce them to desist from the customary

inspection of every foreign vessel. The effect of these manoeuvers was

the complete extinction of Spanish commerce. While the tonnage of the

fleet of Cadiz had formerly reached sixteen thousand, it was reduced at

the beginning of the eighteenth century to two thousand.

But the reclamations of Spain were not heeded. Great Britain, then in a

mad fever for the acquisition of wealth, was intoxicated with the rich

profits it was deriving from the operations in the West Indies and other

parts of Spanish America. It not only wished to continue these, but it

also tried to bring about war between the two countries. As Guiteras

says, and Bancroft expresses the same ideas in his second volume of his

"History of the United States," the war which was on the point of

breaking out was not about the right to cut the timber of Campeche in

the Bay of Honduras, nor because of the difference between the King of

Spain and the South Sea Company, nor about the disputed frontiers of

Florida. All these questions could have been easily settled. The sole

aim and end was to compel Spain to renounce her right of inspecting or

examining suspected merchant vessels that cruised in the Antilles, in

order that Great Britain might extend her insidious operations.

After much deliberation on both sides, an instrument was drawn up and

signed, in which the mutual claims for damages sustained in the overseas

commerce were balanced and settled. The king of Spain demanded from the

South Sea Company sixty-eight thousand pounds as his share of their

profits, in the slave-trade; on the other hand he paid to the British

merchants as indemnity for losses caused by unwarranted seizures the

sum of ninety-five pounds. The question with regard to the boundaries of

Florida was also disposed of; it was agreed that both nations were to

retain the land then in their possession, until a duly appointed

commission should determine the exact boundaries, which meant that Great

Britain would hold jurisdiction over the country to the mouth of St.

Mary's River.

The discussion about this agreement in the British parliament did not

add to the glory of the United Kingdom. Walpole spoke in favor of its

acceptance, saying "It requires no great abilities in a minister to

pursue such measures as make a war unavoidable. But how many ministers

have known the art of avoiding war by making a safe and honorable

peace?" The Duke of Newcastle, not credited with too much intelligence,

opposed the measure. William Pitt, Pulteny and others sided with him.

The opposition finally triumphed. Bancroft says of this disgraceful

termination of a conference intended to seek equitable solution of a

most harassing international problem:

"In an ill hour for herself, in a happy one for America, England,

on the twenty-third of October, 1639, declared war against Spain.

If the rightfulness of the European colonial system be conceded,

the declaration was a wanton invasion of it for immediate selfish

purposes; but, in endeavoring to open the ports of Spanish America

to the mercantile enterprise of her own people, she was beginning a

war on colonial monopoly, which could not end till American

colonies of her own, as well as of Spain, should obtain

independence."

Even before this official break between the two countries, the British

had become guilty of movements that violated Spanish territory.

There is not much said by Spanish historians about the difficulties

between Florida and the newly planned British colony of Georgia. But

the dispute about the boundary of Florida ripened into an armed

conflict, in which Cuban forces assisted those of St. Augustine.

Oglethorpe, the founder of Georgia, had in the year 1736 endeavored to

vindicate British rights to territory previously claimed by the

Spaniards and the opposition of the latter when the British approached

more and more closely was easily understood. Oglethorpe dispatched

messengers to St. Augustine and, claiming the St. John's River as the

southern boundary of the British colony, built Ft. George for defense of

the British frontier. The messengers were for a time held in St.

Augustine as prisoners, but eventually released. The dispute was

temporarily settled by negotiation. But though the British abandoned Ft.

George, they kept St. Andrew's at the mouth of St. Mary's, which was

bound to be a perpetual source of irritation to the Spaniards. Two years

later, according to Blanchet, hostile movements of British ships were

observed in Cuban waters. He speaks of the \_Commodore Brown\_ as having,

by the effective defense which Guemez had prepared, been prevented from

landing in Bacuranao, Bahia-Honda and other places. With the beginning

of the war, Guemez was called upon to secure the aprovionamento, the

provisioning of the island and to insure its security. He received

efficient assistance from some of his privateers, among them D. Jose

Cordero and D. Pedro Garaicochea, who valorously fought some British

vessels and obtained advantages over the British fleets commanded by the

admirals Bermon and Oglethorpe. D. Jose Hurriaza, too, won some

victories over the British with his three ships, of the kind called at

that time guipuzcoanos. He sank one British vessel, captured another and

anchored safely with his booty in the harbor of San Juan of Puerto

Rico.

The British war party made capital out of the news of these encounters.

Exaggerated reports about the cruelty practiced upon British prisoners

were sent to London. The authorities did not hesitate to call as

witnesses of victims of such outrages, characters whose words would not

have received credence at other times. Bancroft quotes the case of a

notorious smuggler by the name of Jenkins, who accused the enemy of

having cut off one of his ears, and Pulteny, in order to precipitate the

issue, exclaimed in parliament: "We have no need of allies to enable us

to command justice; the story of Jenkins will raise volunteers."

Not only politicians and the ever ready pamphleteers lent their voice to

the "cause," but even the poets joined the ignoble chorus. Alexander

Pope wrote in his customary mordant manner:

"And own the Spaniard did the waggish thing

Who cropped our ears, and sent them to the king";

and even Samuel Johnson burst out into the cry:

"Has Heaven reserved, in pity to the poor,

No pathless waste or undiscovered shore,

No secret island in the boundless main,

No peaceful desert yet unclaimed by Spain?"

Thus was the mood of the moment prepared in the multitude and mass

psychology did the rest, as it always does in such crises.

About this time occurred an incident, in which Guemez showed his mettle

as a man, regardless of his official capacity. It is the historian

Blanchet who has recorded this remarkable example of noble generosity.

It seems that the British frigate \_Elizabeth\_, under the command of a

Captain Edwards, had been caught in a terrible tempest off the coast of

Cuba and threatened with inevitable shipwreck, sought the protection of

the harbor. According to the laws of warfare, the Captain surrendered as

prisoner of war. But Guemez, as acting Captain General, refused to take

advantage of his misfortune, and not only permitted the vessel to careen

and take on much-needed supplies, but gave Captain Edwards letters of

safe-conduct allowing him to continue on his way as far as Bermuda. The

rivals and enemies of Guemez, who had previously attempted to lodge

complaints against him with the Consejo de Indias, renewed their

intrigues and cabals, aimed at robbing him of the good name he enjoyed

in Cuba as in Madrid, and accused him of all sorts of misdemeanors and

abuses. But they failed in ruining his career. He was made

lieutenant-general and on his retirement from the governorship was given

the rank and title of Conde (count) de Revillagigedo and appointed

Viceroy of New Spain. He died in Madrid as commander-in-chief of the

army at the ripe old age of eighty-six years.

However great were the services rendered by D. Guemez y Horcasitas to

Cuba, the conflicting rumors attacking his character must have had some

foundation. Perhaps the impression the governor made upon a French

traveler, who visited Havana at this time and was on board the vessel

which took him to Mexico, may add some traits to his portrait. M.

Villiet d'Arignon is quoted in Pierre Jean Baptiste Nougaret's "Voyages

interessans" as saying:

"D. Juan Orcazita had been appointed to this important post on

account of the sums he had lavishly spent at the court of Madrid.

One could say that he bought it. The immense fortune he made during

his governorship soon enabled him to turn his eyes to a higher

goal. Everything depended upon contributions. So he in a short time

amassed considerable sums, which from a simple civilian raised him

to the highest rank ambition could aspire to. We shall see that he

continued the same tactics in Mexico and profited even more, the

country being wealthier. Orcazita was a man of some height, rather

handsome, but of a mediocre intelligence, and had no ambition

except for spoils. This was the viceroy given to Mexico, whither

his reputation had preceded him. For the inhabitants soon made fun

of his, and circulated this uncomplimentary nickname which sounds

better in Spanish than in French: 'Non es Conde, ni Marquis, Juan

es,' which means that he was neither count, nor Marquis, but simply

'Juan.' In fact he was not a man of birth, and he owed all he had

to his money."

In the meantime Great Britain's preparations for the war resulted in the

sending over to Spanish America of two fleets. The one under Edward

Vernon was commanded to make an attack upon Chagres, east of the Isthmus

of Darien; the other one, considerably smaller, under the command of

Commodore Anson, was to begin operations in the Pacific. But a series of

unfortunate accidents made it impossible for him to cooperate with

Vernon, as he was expected to do. He encountered terrible gales, which

disabled and scattered his ships, one by one, and after many romantic

adventures which were set forth by a member of the expedition in a very

readable book, he returned to England with a single vessel, but one

richly laden with spoils acquired in pirate fashion. Edward Vernon,

whose experiences have also been recorded in a volume, giving

interesting details of his expedition, arrived at Portobello in

November, 1739. He had under his command six war ships and a

well-equipped force of trained men, and on the twenty-second of the

month launched an attack. The garrison was so small and poorly prepared

that he forced it to capitulate on the very next day. The British lost

only seven men in the engagement and found themselves in the possession

of the place. Vernon dismantled the fortifications and returned to

Jamaica with a booty of ten thousand pesos. Expecting to be joined by

Anson, he went to Chagres early in January, succeeded in forcing that

port, too, to surrender, and after having demolished it, returned to

Jamaica, and rested from his easily won victory, which the party

opposing Walpole celebrated in London as a most heroic exploit.

The greatest armed force that had yet been seen in West Indian waters

had in the mean time sailed from England to join the expedition of

Vernon. It consisted not only of British troops, but had been reenforced

by recruits from the colonies north of Carolina. Its commander was Lord

Cathcart, who, when they stopped to take on fresh water in Dominica, was

taken violently ill with a malignant fever and succumbed. His death was

a disastrous blow to the British, for it destroyed the unity of command

which is indispensable for the success of military operations.

Cathcart's successor was Wentworth, who not only lacked experience and

firmness, but was a political opponent of the impulsive, irritable

Vernon. Thus the enterprise seemed to be at the outset doomed to failure

owing to the rivalry and the discord of the leaders. The fleet under

their command consisted of twenty-nine line ships, eighty smaller

vessels with a crew of fifteen thousand sailors and a land force of

twelve thousand men.

The expedition set sail from Jamaica without having agreed upon any

definite plan of attack. Havana was the nearest point at which

operations should be directed and besides her conquest would have given

Great Britain supremacy over the Gulf. But Admiral Vernon saw everything

only in the light of his own advantages and decided to go in search of

the French and Spanish squadrons, without taking trouble to inform

himself whether they had not already left. Finally a war council was

held and it was decided to make an assault upon the tower of Cartagena.

The squadron appeared before the city on the fourth of March and after

a siege of twenty-two days succeeded in capturing the fort of Bocachica

at the entrance of the harbor. Admiral Wentworth then made preparations

to take the fort of San Lazare, which dominated the city. He planned to

attack it with a force of two thousand men, but half of them,

misunderstanding his directions, remained in camp. The squadron, too,

failed to come to his assistance in time, and after a complete defeat he

was forced to retire. Before the British had a chance to recover from

the effects of this disaster, caused mainly by the lack of harmonious

cooperation between their commanders, the rainy season set in. With it

came the usual epidemic of tropical fever and alarmingly decimated the

forces of the British. The blockade was for the time being abandoned and

the survivors of the expedition returned to Jamaica.

Admiral Vernon resumed the plan in July, 1741, and arrived in the bay of

Guantanamo on the coast of Cuba with a force of three thousand men and

about one thousand negroes. He landed and then moved to Santiago with

the purpose of taking that city. There the governor Colonel Francisco

Cagigal prepared for him an unexpectedly hot reception. He divided his

people into small detachment of trained troops, militia and armed

inhabitants, and placed himself at their head. His example and the care

with which he had calculated the defense inspired the people with the

will to win and they plunged with zest into the fight with the invaders.

Never for a moment stopping in their furious assaults upon the British,

the forces of Admiral Vernon were decimated in the endless series of

attacks and counter attacks. The climate, too, was against the British,

and they were forced to retire. Vernon left the island with the

remainder of his men and abandoned large stores of provisions and

ammunition, which Governor Cagigal appropriated amid the enthusiastic

acclamation of the brave citizens.

Thus ended according to the reports of Guiteras and other Spanish

historians the British expedition which had started out with the

intention of conquering not only the Spanish West Indies, but Mexico and

Peru as well. British arrogance and greed had for the moment received a

well-earned lesson. The fleet retired to Jamaica towards the end of

November. When a survey of the state of both the naval and military

forces was made, it was found that the British had lost some twenty

thousand men. During all the time that these fights took place, commerce

with the Spanish colonies had of necessity been suspended. The

importation of negroes had ceased. Smuggling had considerably decreased.

Spanish privateers lay in wait and intercepted the British merchant

vessels, whose cargoes were triumphantly brought to Spanish ports. Great

Britain, on the contrary, had not conquered a single Spanish possession

and the damage caused to her commerce was far greater than that which

Spanish America had suffered.

In the meantime, the undaunted Oglethorpe had once more decided to

challenge the Spanish neighbor in Florida, and encouraged by the British

authorities marched upon St. Augustine. He had six hundred regular

troops, four hundred militia from Carolina and two hundred Indians, and

set out on his expedition in January, 1740. But the garrison of the old

town, under the command of the able Monteaco, was prepared and had also

secured reenforcements. Five weeks lasted the siege; the troops of

Oglethorpe lost patience and courage, failure staring them in the face.

When they threatened to abandon him, he retired without even being

pursued by the enemy. After this provocation the Spanish authorities

felt forced to retaliate and decided upon an invasion of Georgia. A

large fleet with troops from Cuba joined the forces of the Florida

settlement. They arrived at the mouth of St. Mary's, where Oglethorpe

had built Ft. William, in the first days of July. But Oglethorpe

succeeded in retaining his hold upon that place, though his forces had

to retire. The Spanish took possession of their abandoned camps, but on

the seventh of July, when they were attempting to advance towards the

town on a road which skirted a swamp on one side and a dense wood of

brush-oak on the other, they were surprised by Oglethorpe and the fight

which ensued was so fierce, and caused such a great loss of life, that

the spot has ever since been known as Bloody Marsh. Another attack was

made upon Fort William, but being again repulsed, the Spanish forces

retired, abandoning a quantity of ammunition.

When Guemez of Cuba was promoted to the vice-regency of New Spain, he

had been succeeded by Field Marshal D. Juan Antonio Tines y Fuertes, who

was inaugurated on the twenty-second of April, 1746, but died on the

twenty-first of July of the same year. In spite of his very brief term

of service, he is remembered according to Valdes for having been the

first governor to whom it occurred to do something for the confinement

and possible reform of dissolute women. He is said to have founded for

that purpose the Casa de Resorgimento, which seems to have been both a

home and a reform school. He was temporarily replaced by Colonel D.

Diego de Penalosa. About the name and exact date of his interim

administration there seems to exist some confusion, some historians

placing him immediately after Martinez de la Vega. Valdes says he was

Tenente-Rey in 1738, assumed the functions of provisional governorship

at the death of Fuentes, and upon the arrival of the newly appointed

governor, was sent to Vera Cruz as Brigadier General. Blanchet, too,

calls him Penalosa; but Alcazar gives his name as Penalver. However,

Penalosa or Penalver enjoyed during his brief administration the

privilege of proclaiming the ascension of Fernando VI. to the throne of

Spain.

King Philip V., who had so reluctantly been dragged into the war with

England, did not live long after the victory of Santiago had temporarily

checked the designs of Great Britain. He had died on the ninth of July,

1746, and his crown descended to his son Fernando, an amiable and

virtuous prince. King Fernando VI. was also inclined to follow a

peaceful policy. He promptly settled the foreign questions that called

for attention at this time, and tried his best to enter into and

maintain friendly relations with all foreign powers. He aimed at the

preservation of Spanish neutrality in the European wars of the period,

being most deeply concerned with developing the national wealth. The

brilliant festivities with which Cuba celebrated Fernando's coronation

gave proof of the love his subjects even in Spanish America had

conceived for him before he ascended the throne.

After the brief administrations of Fuentes and Penalosa, a new governor

was appointed in Madrid and the choice fell upon D. Francisco Cagigal de

la Vega, Knight of the order of Santiago. The brave defender of his town

against the attack of Admiral Vernon had since that experience

ingratiated himself with his people by other equally commendable

exploits. With the cooperation of his valiant seamen Regio Espinela and

D. Vicenzo Lopez, he had repulsed many an aggressive manoeuver of the

British fleet in Cuban waters, until the signing of the peace of

Aix-la-Chapelle. Cagigal was a personality of quite different calibre

from Guemez. While the latter had been singularly open and sincere for a

man in an official position, Cagigal was endowed with a suavity of

manner which concealed his keen shrewdness. He had after the defeat of

Admiral Vernon been created Field Marshal and was certainly the right

man for his place.

His inauguration occurred on the ninth of June, 1747, and from that day

Cagigal entered upon his duties with the energy and perseverance that

had characterized his previous career. Seriously concerned with the

defenses of Havana, he had the battery of la Pastora finished, which had

been begun long before him, and upon his urgent request the king ordered

a citadel to be built on the mountain-side of la Cabana. He also had the

Barlovento (weather-side) fleet removed from the port of Vera Cruz to

that of Havana. The activity of the ship-building plant of Havana was

remarkable during his administration. In the thirteen years of his

governorship it turned out seven line ships, one frigate, one brig and

one packet-boat and kept in steady work a great number of laborers.

Cagigal improved the fort of la Fuerza by having a reception hall built

on the seaward side, which was surrounded by a row of balconies. The

interior was sumptuously decorated with medallions and escutcheons in

bas-relief. He was much interested in the work of the Commercial Company

which had been organized during the administration of Guemez; its

capital at this time was nine hundred thousand pesos, with shares of one

hundred pesos each, and there was declared in 1760 a dividend of thirty

per cent. on each share.

Before the signing of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle became known in

America there was a serious engagement between the British fleet and the

Spanish on the twelfth of October, 1747, a league off Havana. There

were six vessels on each side, the Spanish under the command of General

Andreas Reggio, the British under that of Admiral Knowles. The Spanish

opened fire at three o'clock in the afternoon and a furious battle took

place which lasted for full six hours. The forces of both sustained

heavy losses, computed approximately at one thousand men on each side,

and when the firing ceased, neither could claim a decisive victory. The

British fleet retired and the Spanish returned to Havana.

The efficient management of the island's affairs during the

administrations of Guemez and Cagigal greatly stimulated the initiative

and enterprise of the Cubans. The first coffee-trees were set out on a

plantation in the province of Waja by D. Jose Gelabert. Brandy and other

spirits were distilled. The armory of Vera Cruz having been removed to

Havana, there was great activity in military circles, and D. Rodrigo de

Torres was appointed as the first commander of the navy of Cuba.

King Fernando VI. succeeded during the thirteen years of his reign in

keeping out of the general European war of 1756, in which England and

Prussia had ranged themselves against Austria, France, Russia, Sweden

and Poland. He was intent upon building up the resources of the kingdom

which had been drained by the wars waged by his predecessors and devoted

his attention to promoting the agriculture, industry and commerce of

Spain. He was fortunate in the choice of an intelligent wife and of two

ministers whose wise counsel he could ever depend upon. The Marquis de

Ensenada, who had risen from a peasant to a banker, financier and

finally minister of marine, war and finance, enjoyed at first the

unlimited confidence of the sovereign and the people, but later fell

into disgrace, because it was discovered that he had sent out secret

orders to the West Indies to attack the British logwood colony on the

Mosquito Coast. The other adviser of Fernando VI., D. Jose de Carvajal,

was a man of quite different stamp, endowed with common sense, sound

judgment, pure of morals and as just as he was incorruptible. But

Fernando died without direct heir to the throne in the year 1759, and

his brother, D. Carlos III., succeeded him.

The solemn proclamation of King Carlos III. in the cities of Cuba was

one of the last acts of the administration of Governor Cagigal. In the

year 1760, he was promoted to the post of viceroy of Mexico and left the

affairs of the government in charge of the Tenente-Rey, the King's

Lieutenant, D. Pedro Alonso. During this provisional government there

was erected a new sentry-house at the gate of Tierra, as is commemorated

in the following inscription:

Reynando La Magesdad de Carlos III Y Siendo Gobernador Y Capitan

General de Esta Ciudad E Isla El Coronel D. Pedro Alonso Se

Construyo Esta Garita. Ano de 1760.

In the reign of his Majesty Charles III. and when Colonel D. Pedro

Alonzo was Governor and Commander-in-Chief of this town and island

was built this sentry-box. In the year 1760.

During this administration died the venerable Cuban prelate D. Juan de

Conyedo, who as spiritual adviser to individuals and as counselor to

prominent officials had won the love and esteem of the population as did

the Bishop Compostela and later the popular Bishop Valdes. Conyedo's

services to Cuba in the interest of religion, charity and education were

invaluable. He was especially identified with the growth of Villa Clara,

where in the year 1712 he had founded a free school for children of both

sexes and had himself taken charge of the classes. Before he opened this

school, the people knew absolutely nothing besides the Christian

doctrine, and the rudiments of reading and writing.

The propaganda of the British war party favoring the conquest of Spanish

America was in the meantime going on without interruption. When the

greed of acquisition of territory is once roused in a nation, it is

difficult to appease it. It enlists in the cause all ranks and

professions, it employs all means, whether they answer the test of

international justice and human equity, or not. Art, literature, science

are harnessed in its service. It is needless to remind of a recent

example of national mentality and morality gone astray through

misapplied ambition. The utterances of Pope and Johnson were tame in

comparison to the hymns of hate following the declaration of the World's

war, still fresh in our memory.

But, there was another side to this literary activity. It did not always

appeal to the emotions and stir up feelings. It was also of an

instructive kind. Just as the Dutch at the time when their attention was

fixed upon the Spanish possessions of America wrote book upon book

describing the coveted islands and the coasts of the continent supposed

to hold inexhaustible riches, so did the British during the eighteenth

century suddenly conceive an interest in Spanish America which led to

magazine articles, pamphlets and books dealing with those lands. That

this literature with its endless descriptions of ports and products was

intended for the use of mariners venturing forth on legitimate or

illegitimate business, was evident. All these writers did not fail to

remark that Havana was the richest town in America, that it had

magnificent churches and public buildings and that the streets were

narrow, but clean. But their main concern was to describe the exact

location of every bay and every harbor: Matanzas, Nipe, Puerto del

Principe, Santiago, Baracoa, Guantanamo, etc., and their next concern

was to dwell upon the several products of the country, as tobacco,

sugar, and others.

One of the most curious books of this kind was "A Voyage to Guinea,

Brazil and the West Indies," published in London in the year 1735. Its

author was John Atkins, surgeon of the Royal Navy, and though it

contained an account of a trip made by him, it very plainly revealed an

interest in the commerce of the countries visited and in the

possibilities they offered, which, while natural in a business man, was

quite surprising in a member of the medical fraternity. After devoting

considerable space to the products of these southern lands, hurricanes,

etc., he also discourses at length upon the slave-trade and gives

interesting glimpses of the manner in which it was conducted. "To give

dispatch," says he, "cajole the traders with Brandy," and continues:

"Giving way to the ridiculous Humours and Gestures of the trading

Negroes is no small artifice for success. If you look strange and are

niggardly of your Drams, you frighten him. Sambo is gone, he never cares

to treat with dry lips, and as the Expenses is in English Spirits of two

Shillings a Gallon, brought partly for this purpose, the good Humour it

brings them into, is found discounted in the sale of goods." Speaking of

Cuba, he calls it a very pleasant and flourishing island, the Spanish

building and improving for posterity without dreaming, as the English

planters do, of any other homes. But he does not fail to add, "They make

the best Sugars in the world."

Another publication aiming more directly at the mariners and merchants

of Great Britain is by one Caleb Smith, called on the title page, the

inventor of the "New Sea Quadrant." It was printed in 1740 and was a

translation of Domingo Gonzales Carranza's description of the coasts,

harbors and sea-ports of the Spanish West Indies. In the curious preface

he says:

"The original was brought to England by a Sympathetic prisoner who

had been in Havana where he procured it in manuscript and presented

it to the Editor as a Testimony of his friendship and respect,"

and the dedication is addressed "to the Merchants of Great Britain, the

Commanders of Ships, and others who were pleased to subscribe for this

Treatise."

Thus was the mind of the people perpetually stimulated to look beyond

the Atlantic for lands and seas which waited to be conquered by British

prowess; and the defeat of Vernon in Santiago was hardly heeded. In the

meantime negotiations had been going on between the European powers and

a convention of their representatives had met at Aix-la-Chapelle to

settle certain disputes and sign a treaty of peace. England and Spain on

the one and England and France on the other hand had gained nothing by

eight years of mutual fighting, but an immense national debt. As at

other conferences for the establishment of the world's peace much was

said and after all little was done. For when the document known since as

the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle was signed in 1748, it left some of the

most harassing problems unsolved. Among them was the frontier of Florida

and the right of Spanish ships to search British vessels suspected of

smuggling. The assiente agreement, which had been found so profitable,

was continued for four more years. In the light of later events the

treaty was found to be only a makeshift for the moment, and did not

prevent the outbreak of new hostilities between Great Britain and Spain

when the ink with which the treaty was signed had barely dried on that

document.

CHAPTER III

The alliances among the powers of Europe in the middle of the

seventeenth century and the unsatisfactory settlements of some of the

most harassing questions in dispute produced a state of unrest and

tension throughout the world which the clever pourparlers and the

fascinating fencing bouts of European diplomacy failed to relieve, and

of which Cuba was destined to feel the effects. In spite of her insular

isolation Great Britain was closely concerned with the intrigues that

were being spun at the courts of the continent and were bound sooner or

later to involve Europe in a new bloody conflict. She had on the one

hand allied herself with Austria, bribing even some of the South German

principalities to insure the election of Joseph II. to the throne of the

Holy Roman Empire, and on the other hand with Russia, which was then a

newcomer not yet vitally interested in the issues at stake. Both allies

failed to keep their pledge; Austria turned away to enter into a

confederacy with France, while Russia passed from one camp to the other.

The growing ascendancy of Prussia under Frederick II. had long been

watched with distrust by the immediate neighbors, but by this time even

those whose territories seemed safe from his acquisitive aggressiveness

were roused to the realization of the danger it foreboded.

When Saxony and some other German states, Austria, Hungary, Sweden,

Russia and France combined to check the Prussian's ambitious designs,

Great Britain, Hanover, Hesse-Cassel and Brunswick became the allies of

Frederick. Spain with remarkable firmness decided to keep out of the

general war which broke out in 1756 and, lasting until 1763, was to be

known in history as The Seven Years' War. Even when Pitt, who was the

ally of Frederick of Prussia, offered the conditional return of

Gibraltar and the abandonment of the British settlements on the Mosquito

Coast and in the Bay of Honduras, Fernando VI. resolutely refused to

participate.

By this wise policy of non-interference this king secured for Spain a

period of peace which brought with it a prosperity it had long lacked.

The country recovered from the losses occasioned by previous wars, and

when Carlos III. succeeded his father, he found fifteen millions of

dollars in the treasury. He, too, was determined to keep peace, but the

stubborn resistance of Great Britain to any equitable settlement of the

question in dispute between the two countries, and the continual

violation of international justice by her mariners were hard to bear and

sorely tried the patience of the people. Bancroft says in his history of

the United States (Vol. III, p. 264):

"The restitution of the merchant ships, which the English had seized

before the war, was justly demanded. They were afloat on the ocean,

under every guarantee of safety; they were the property of private

citizens, who knew nothing, and could know nothing, of the diplomatic

disputes of the two countries. The capture was unjustifiable by every

reason of equity and public law. 'The cannon,' said Pitt, 'has settled

the question in our favor; and, in the absence of a tribunal, this

decision is a sentence.'"

It is meet in this place to call attention to the literature called

forth by Britain's colonial ambitions. Albert Savine, a French writer,

during the Spanish-American war, wrote an interesting article in the

\_Revue Brittanique\_ of Paris (1898, Vol. III, pp. 167 etc.), entitled:

"Les Anglais dans l'ile de Cuba au dix-huitieme siecle," in which he

refers to a History of Jamaica by Hans Sloane, published in 1740 and

translated into French in 1751. This writer brought out the importance

of Cuba very clearly, saying that no vessel could go to the continent

without passing that island, that Havana was the general rendezvous of

the fleet and that for the British to be really lords of the seas

surrounding them, nothing was needed but Havana. Savine in discussing

Britain's designs upon Havana, continued:

"The reason for their attack upon Cuba was, as is seen, the commercial

and military importance of the island, which was at that epoch

considered a necessary stopping place, a rallying point for the vessels

going from Spain to America and from America to Spain. To be master of

Cuba, thought they, was to be master of the road which the Spanish

galleons followed. This rôle of port of supply and repairs for the

damages sustained on the sea had made of Havana since the middle of the

sixteenth century an important arsenal and dockyard, where there were

continually in process of construction enormous ships destined for

travel to Spain or South America. From 1747 to 1760 they fitted out

seven ships of line, a frigate, a brigantine, and a packet-boat. The

vessels which at the side of our fleet at Trafalgar fought those of

Nelson had almost all come from the yards of Havana, which used the

excellent timber of the island, commerce in which has somewhat

diminished in our century."

The notes and dispatches exchanged between France and Spain on the one,

and Britain on the other side, prove how the two were slowly forced into

an alliance against the latter. On the fifteenth of May, France

presented a memorial asking that England give no help to the king of

Prussia and simultaneously a paper was presented from Spain, demanding

indemnity for seizure of ships, the right to fish at Newfoundland and

the abandonment of the settlements in the Bay of Honduras. On the

twenty-ninth, England demanded Canada, the fisheries, granting to the

French a limited concession, unlikely to be of any use, the reduction of

Dunkirk, half of the neutral islands; Senegal and Goree, which was

equivalent to a monopoly of the slave trade; Minorca; freedom to give

help to the king of Prussia; and British supremacy in East India. On the

fifteenth of August, the French minister Choiseul concluded with Spain

what was called a family compact, rallying all the Bourbons to check the

arrogance of Britain. On the same day a special agreement was reached

between France and Spain, empowering the latter, unless peace were

concluded between France and England before the first of May, 1762, to

declare war against England.

Guiteras in his "Historia de la Isla de Cuba" has set forth the position

of Spain at this time and her relation to France, which led to the

famous alliance known as the Family Pact. He says justly, that the

general interests of the nation demanded from Carlos III. the

continuation of the strict neutrality which his brother had pursued in

this war; for by that neutrality the commerce and general welfare of

Spain had derived great benefits. But personal motives of resentment

against England and of esteem and gratitude for Louis XV. predominated

in his mind against the serious reasons of state and the advantages to

his subjects, and the voluminous correspondence carried on between him

and the king of France made him deeply share the humiliation of the

principal branch of his family under the triumph of British arms. These

sentiments and other motives finally gave birth to the treaty which was

concluded between the two sovereigns on the fifteenth of August, 1761,

and which was a defensive and offensive alliance of the two countries

with the object of creating between them firm and lasting bonds for the

mutual protection of their interests, and thus to secure on a solid

basis the internal prosperity of the two kingdoms and the predominance

of the house of Bourbon among the princes of Europe.

It was agreed to consider henceforth as a common enemy any government

that would declare war against either of the two kingdoms and

reciprocally to guarantee the dominions they possessed at the conclusion

of the war, in which France saw herself involved; to lend each other aid

at sea and on land, and not to listen to or enter into any settlement

with the enemies of both crowns unless so done with common accord. For

as much in peace as in war they had to consider the identified interests

of the two nations, compensate their losses and divide their respective

acquisitions and operate as though the two peoples were one, by granting

to the subjects of both kingdoms in their European dominions the

enjoyment of the same privileges as those of their native subjects; and,

finally, to admit to participation in this treaty only such countries as

were ruled by sovereigns of the House of Bourbon.

As Spain was by this treaty compelled to break with Great Britain, they

awaited only the arrival of the galleons from South America in order to

provide for the security of their commerce and territory, and that of

their distant possessions. Then would be the moment to make known the

consummation of this alliance and to begin hostilities against the

common enemy. But somehow Britain anticipated the designs of Spain, for

the French with their characteristic impatience had divulged the secret

in their communications to foreign courts, and a lively correspondence

ensued between the countries, soon to be arrayed against each other in

the war Carlos III. had so zealously wished to avoid. But there was no

doubt in the minds of the Spanish king and his cabinet, that the British

policy was one solely of conquest, that Britain recognized no other law

than the aggrandizement of her power on land and her universal despotism

on the ocean. Nor could it be doubted by any impartial onlooker that

Britain had long cast covetous eyes upon the Spanish possessions in

America, and had for a long time given Spain sufficient cause for

grievance. The audacity of her privateers and pirates in their attacks

upon the West Indies had not been forgotten; the colonies especially had

reason to remember the numerous and criminal outrages to which they had

been subjected at the hands of men openly or covertly breaking treaties

that had been made and accepted by the two nations for the mutual

protection of their merchantmen at sea. The leniency of Britain in

dealing with the most notorious pirate of all, the scoundrel Morgan,

whom she allowed to settle under the protection of her flag in Jamaica,

to rise to social prominence, to be appointed to public offices of

importance, and whom her king had finally distinguished by conferring

upon him knighthood, had always been felt as acts of defiance.

In the rapid exchange of notes during the period when the rupture

between the two powers was daily coming nearer the suavity of diplomatic

language was sometimes discarded for rather plain speech. When Britain

proposed some regulations of the privileges of the British to cut

logwood in Campeche, the king of Spain, through his minister, Wall,

replied in a dispatch:

"The evacuation of the logwood establishment is offered, if his Catholic

majesty will assure to the English the logwood! He who avows that he has

entered another man's house to seize his jewels says, 'I will go out of

your house, if you will first give me what I am come to seize!'"

This drastic comparison enraged Pitt and he decided upon even more

stringent measures to humiliate Spain and crush her power in America.

But in the meantime the party in parliament that had steadily opposed

him succeeded in its propaganda against him, and he was forced to

retire. However, the feelings had run too high, the hostility on both

sides had assumed such proportions that war was inevitable. The British

were more than ever bent upon pursuing their acquisitions in America,

regardless of France and Spain; and the Spanish were unanimous in their

hatred of the aggressor.

The year 1762 opened for the powers concerned in this conflict with the

declaration of war upon Spain by King George III. on the fourth of

January. This was promptly followed on the sixteenth of the same month

by a declaration of war upon Britain by King Carlos III. Thus was the

die cast, and both governments at once set about to make extensive

preparations for military and naval action. Fortune seemed to favor the

British; for George Rodney, the gifted naval officer, who was to

distinguish himself during the war between Britain and her colonies by

his daring and successful operations against the French and Spanish

fleets in the West Indian waters, was at that time in the neighborhood

of what was to be the scene of action. He had with a fleet of sixteen

ships of line and thirteen frigates, carrying an army of twelve thousand

men under Monckton, arrived at Martinique and laid siege to the colony

which France cherished most among her island possessions in America.

After five weeks, it was forced to surrender. A number of other islands

followed, until all the outer Caribbeans from St. Domingo towards the

continent of South America were in the possession of the British.

Naturally the attention of the British government was immediately fixed

upon Havana. This being the most important military post of New Spain,

its conquest promised to close the passage of the ocean to the Spanish

ships carrying away from America its inexhaustible treasures for the

sole enrichment of the crown of Spain. It meant also opening that and

other ports of the Spanish West Indies to British navigation, and lastly

it was to be only the beginning of operations which ultimately were to

include the conquest of other possessions of Spain in that part of the

world. The honor of conceiving the project has been conceded to Admiral

Knowles, who had submitted his plan to the Duke of Cumberland; but

although the latter recommended it to the ministry, the plan of the

invasion, which had been simultaneously submitted by Lord Anson, chief

of the board of Admiralty, and which was almost identical with that of

Knowles, was the one finally adopted. In order to divert the attention

of the enemy from the true object of the expedition, a rumor was

circulated that the forces were destined for Santo Domingo, which seemed

quite plausible, this island being nearer to Martinique than to Cuba,

and one half of it belonging to France, the other to Spain. \_The London

Gazette\_ of January ninth corroborated this statement by the

announcement that the English army was bound for the Antilles.

George III. entrusted the Duke of Cumberland with the task of selecting

the chiefs who were to be placed at the head of the enterprise, and his

choice fell upon the following: Lieutenant-General Keppel, Earl of

Albemarle, for general-in-chief of the land forces, and Admiral Sir

George Pococke for the command of the squadron. The latter and a

division of four thousand men gathered in Portsmouth and orders were

given to General Monckton to hold the forces which had gone to the

conquest of Martinique and Guadeloupe ready for the arrival of Admiral

Pococke. The authorities in Jamaica and the British colonies of North

America were ordered to prepare two divisions, the first of two thousand

men, the latter of four thousand. The British command staked everything

upon a surprise attack. Fear that information of the rupture between the

two countries might have reached Cuba, caused no little anxiety to Lord

Albemarle and Admiral Pococke. The expedition narrowly escaped an

encounter with the squadron of M. de Blenac, who had left Brest in aid

of Martinique with seven vessels and four frigates and a sufficient

force to have saved that colony, had he come in time. Unfortunately he

arrived in sight of Martinique only after the surrender of Fort Royal,

and on hearing that the island was in possession of the British, he

altered his course and turned towards Cape France, leaving the passage

free for Admiral Pococke and his fleet.

Upon his arrival in Martinique, Lord Albemarle took command of all the

forces assembled on the island and found that his army consisted of

twelve thousand men. He divided them into five brigades and formed

besides them two bodies, one of four companies of light infantry brought

from England, and one battalion of grenadiers under the command of

Colonel Guy Carleton, and placed two other battalions of grenadiers

under the command of William Howe. He also ordered the purchase of four

thousand negroes in Martinique and other islands, who were incorporated

into a company with six thousand negroes of Jamaica. When all these

preparations had been made, the forces that were to take part in the

siege of Havana were under orders of the following commanders:

Lord Albemarle, Commander-in-chief.

Lieutenant-General George August Eliot, second chief.

Field Marshals: John Lafanfille and the Hon. William Keppel.

Brigadiers: William Haviland, Francis Grant, John Reid, Andrew Lord

Rollo and Hunt Walsh.

Adjutant-General: Hon. Col. William Howe; second;--Lieutenant-Colonel

Dudley Ackland.

Quartermaster General: Col. Guy Carleton; sub-delegate:--Major Nevinson

Poole.

Secretary of the general-in-chief: Lieutenant-Colonel John Hale.

Engineer-chief: Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick MacKellar.

Chief of the Military Health Board and of the medical corps: Sir Clifton

Wintringham; sub-delegate: Richard Hunck and a staff of three

physicians, four surgeons, four druggists and forty-four attendants.

A month passed in concluding the details of this well-elaborated plan.

Finally on the sixth of May Admiral Pococke started from Martinique in

the direction of the Paso de la Mano, where he was joined on the eighth

by the division of Captain Hervey, who was blocking the squadron of

Admiral de Blenac at Cape France; on the seventeenth they arrived at

Cape Nicolas and on the twenty-third they met the Jamaica fleet under

command of Sir James Douglas. The British naval forces, including these

two divisions and the one that later arrived from North America,

consisted of fifty-three warships of various kinds with a crew of ten

thousand eight hundred men, and a great number of transports, among them

two hundred vessels carrying provisions, hospital supplies, ammunition,

etc. When the manner of conducting the expedition was at last decided

upon, the fleet ordered to take part in the siege of Havana was

composed of the following vessels:

The Admiral ship \_Namur\_ of fifty cannons; \_Cambridge\_ of eighty;

\_Valiant\_; \_Culloden\_; \_Temerare\_; \_Dragon\_; \_Centaur\_; and \_Dublin\_ of

seventy-four; \_Marlborough\_ and \_Temple\_ of seventy; \_Oxford\_ and

\_Devonshire\_ of sixty-six; \_Belleisle\_; \_Edgar\_; \_Alcide\_; \_Hampton

Court\_; and \_Sterling Castle\_ of sixty-four; \_Pembroke\_; \_Rippon\_;

\_Nottingham\_; \_Defense\_; and \_Intrepid\_ of sixty; \_Centurion\_;

\_Depford\_; \_Sutherland\_; and \_Hampshire\_ of fifty; the frigates

\_Penzance\_, \_Dover\_ and \_Enterprise\_ of forty; \_Richmond\_ and \_Alarm\_ of

thirty-two; \_Echo\_, \_Lizard\_, \_Trent\_, \_Cerberus\_ and \_Boreas\_ of

twenty-eight; \_Mercury\_ of twenty-four; \_Rose\_, \_Portmahon\_, \_Forvey\_

and \_Glasgow\_ of twenty; \_Bonetta\_, \_Cygnet\_ and \_Merle\_ of sixteen; the

schooner \_Porcupine\_ of sixteen, \_Barbadoes\_, \_Viper\_, \_Port Royal\_,

\_Lurcher\_ and \_Ferret\_ of fourteen, and the bomb-vessels \_Thunder\_,

\_Grenade\_ and \_Basilisk\_, each of eight cannons.

Of such formidable dimensions were, according to Guiteras, the

preparations made by Britain for the attack upon Havana. Little is heard

of corresponding steps taken by her opponents. France was too exhausted

to indulge in great expenditures of money or men. Spain was curiously

unconcerned. The possibility of an attack upon Havana was discussed in

Madrid, but the Spanish minister Grimaldi could not be made to believe

that it might be successful. Cuba, too, little suspected what was in

store for her. The new governor appointed to take the place of Cagigal,

when the latter was promoted to the vice-regency of Mexico, was the

Field Marshal D. Juan Prado y Portocasso. Before the consummation of the

Family Pact, in March, 1670, King Carlos III. had told Prado of the

menacing attitude of Britain and had warned him of the possibility of a

rupture. He counted upon him to reorganize the island from a military

point of view. Nevertheless Prado did not immediately after his

appointment sail for Cuba, but lingered six more months in Spain, and,

when he arrived on the island, wasted another month in a visit to his

friend Madriaga, the governor of Santiago. He did not arrive in Havana

until January, 1761. Valdes gives July as the month of his inauguration

which seems improbable.

CHAPTER IV

When Prado took charge of the governorship, he immediately proceeded to

build quarters for the reenforcement of dragoons which were to be sent

over from Spain, and for that purpose engaged sixty galley-slaves from

Vera Cruz. He also began work on the fortifications of Cabanas under the

direction of the excellent engineer Francois Ribaut de Tirgale. But a

second consignment of galley-slaves in June brought to Havana the

"vomito negro," the yellow fever, of which Siam had made a gift to

Mexico in 1713 and which so far had been unknown in Cuba. Physicians

being unfamiliar with the terrible scourge, all remedies proved of no

avail. Within three months eighteen hundred men of the garrison and the

fleet succumbed to the disease. The hospitals were filled with the sick,

and work on the important public constructions was suspended. Engineer

Tirgale was one of the first stricken. He was succeeded by his brother

Balthazar, but he himself was sick and had such insufficient and

inadequate help that he was much handicapped in his work. New

difficulties having arisen with the vigueros, or tobacco-planters, Prado

convoked the Junta which agreed to fix the process, the quantity and the

brands of tobacco which the General Factory was to receive from the

planters.

[Illustration: THE OLD ESPADA CEMETERY, HAVANA, 1750]

Thus was the whole year 1761 wasted, while the signs of the impending

outbreak multiplied and the danger of the dreaded invasion came nearer

and nearer. On the sixteenth of January, war was declared and only on

the twenty-sixth of February did the news reach Prado, for the vessel

carrying the dispatches of the Spanish government had been captured by

the tender of the \_Dublin\_. He called at once a meeting of the council

and asked for one thousand veterans to replace the losses which the

troops had sustained through the epidemic. He also demanded that he be

furnished four thousand rounds of powder. The army that he could muster

in the eventuality of an invasion did not number at that time more than

four thousand six hundred men. Yet Prado could not be roused from a

curious apathy that possessed him and that made him again lapse into the

indolence of Creole life. It seemed impossible for him to realize that

anybody would dare to attempt what neither Hossier, nor Vernon, nor

Knowles had dared. M. de Blenac, who commanded a French fleet charged

with the protection of Santo Domingo, and Prado's friend Madriaga were

equally unsuspecting. Had the former come to an understanding with the

commander of the Royal Spanish transports, they might have surprised

the British in the straits of Bahama and averted the disaster.

On the twenty first of May, a business man from Santiago, Martin de

Arana, who had been on an errand to Kingston and in his patriotic

anxiety perceived the armaments and supplies that were being collected

there, came to Havana to inform the government. Reluctantly Governor

Prado consented to an interview with this man who had braved the sea

voyage and suffered privations to save his country from the menacing

attack. The attitude of the people as soon as the news spread was

commendable. The sugar-planters promised their negroes freedom if they

joined the troops of defense and the clergy went about rousing the

spirit of the people to action. Bishop Pedro Agustino Morell of Santa

Cruz did admirable work. He had during the expedition of Edward Vernon

traversed the country on horseback, and stirred the people to resist the

invaders. Beloved by his parishioners, whom he inspired with his zeal,

he had for twenty years preached the holy war against the enemies of his

native soil. His generosity and his self-denial knew no bounds. The word

of such a man at such a moment had weight and the people were ready to

go to any length of sacrifice; but the man at the head of the government

seemed oblivious to the gravity of the situation and did nothing

efficiently to prepare the defense of the city. Prado presided at the

meetings of the War Junta which failed to suit the action of the word

and wasted time in heated discussions. This War Council consisted of the

"Marquès" of the Royal Transports, the honorary marine quartermaster, D.

Juan Montalvo, Col. del Rio D. Alejandro Arroyo, the engineer D.

Balthasar Ricaut, and the captains of the vessels anchored in the bay.

Later it was joined by the Lieutenant-General D. Jose Manso de Velasco,

the former viceroy of Peru, the Field Marshal D. Diego Tabares,

ex-governor of Cartagena, and the Lieutenant-General Conde de Superanda,

then visiting Havana. The council did not heed the warning of D. Martin

de Arana, the Santiago trader, any more than did Governor Prado.

In the meantime the British fleet was approaching through the straits of

Bahama, clear of purpose, strong of will, and bent upon conquest. An

interesting document of that event is "An Authentic Journal of the Siege

of the Havana By an Officer. Printed in London MDCCLXII. Reprinted in

Dublin, by Boulton Grierson, Printer to the King's Most Excellent

Majesty." That record of the expedition had evidently for its author a

man of sound judgment and is imbued throughout with a rare sense of

justice towards British and Spanish alike. Spanish authorities, among

them Blanchet, give the number of line ships in the fleet as twenty-six,

fifteen frigates and an infinite number of smaller vessels, and about

twenty thousand combatants. The author of the journal reports nineteen

ships of the line, about eighteen frigates, sloops, and other vessels

and one hundred and fifty transports with ten thousand troops. The

commander of the fleet was Sir George Pococke, Knight of the Bath,

Admiral of the Blue, etc., and the commander of the troops,

Lieutenant-General Earl of Albemarle. The witness writes that they left

Cape Nicolas, northwest of Hispaniola, on the twenty-seventh of May and

sailed in seven divisions through the old straits of Bahama--"an

undertaking far superior to anything we know in our times, or read of in

the past, as few ships care to go through this passage at any time, much

less such a fleet, destitute of pilots that professed any knowledge of

it and almost of any information of the passage that could be relied

on." He goes on to say that "frigates, smaller vessels and even the

great ships' boats were sent ahead and so distributed on both shores,

with such proper and well adapted signals for day and night, that not

only reconciled every one to the dangers and risk of so hazardous an

undertaking, but almost ensured our success. We were often in sight of

the keys or shoals on each side."

In the first days of June some of the British ships engaged in a fight

with and took a Spanish frigate of twenty-four guns and a smaller vessel

of eighteen guns, a brig and a schooner, all of which had sailed ten

days before from Havana for timber. Through the crews of these vessels,

the British learned that at the time of their sailing the people of

Havana had not yet been informed of the declaration of war. On the fifth

of June the fleet cleared the straits and the next day was off Puerto de

Terrara, about thirty-six miles windward of Havana. Colonel Carleton and

Colonel Howe went to reconnoitre the coast for landing. The siege of

Morro Castle was left to Commodore Keppel. "The Admiral went himself

with the rest of the fleet off the harbor, to block up the enemy's ships

and in order to more effectually draw the attention of the enemy that

way, took with him all the victualling ships, store ships and

transports, whose troops had over night been put in those men-of-war

appointed for securing the landing." By daylight the troops were in the

flat and other boats, and Captain Hervey gave the signal for descent on

the sandy beach between Boconao and Cojimar. The enemy had thrown up

small breastworks near the old tower commanding the mouth of Boconao and

attempted a defense, but was soon dispersed by fire from two ships

anchored close to shore. At three o'clock in the afternoon the army was

on shore and began to advance toward the Morro, five miles away, along a

road which had a thick wood to the left and the sea to the right. The

ten guns of the old stone fort of Cojimar were soon silenced by the

\_Dragon\_, anchored close by. Two and a half miles from the Morro the

British lay down for the night upon their arms in a heavy rain.

While the British were continuing their advance upon Havana, the

authorities of the Cuban metropolis were deliberating in the sessions of

the War Junta, and the Governor was still unconvinced of the serious

intention of the British, this time determined not to rest until Havana

was in their possession. Valdes reports that this state of affairs

lasted until on the sixth of June there appeared on the weather-side

about two hundred and fifty vessels. Everybody but Governor Prado was

convinced that they had come ready to fight. He supposed them to be a

flotilla come from Jamaica to discharge their cargo. Nevertheless he

went that morning to the Morro to observe the movements of the armada.

He found the garrison under arms by order of the royal lieutenant D.

Dionisio Soler. Much vexed by what he considered exaggerated fear and

suspicion, he rescinded the order and commanded the soldiers to return

to their quarters. That afternoon, however, the report came from the

Morro, that the fleet had arrived and was preparing to land troops.

[Illustration: LAUREL DITCH, CABANAS FORTRESS

The Cabanas fortress stands near the Morro Castle, at the eastern side

of the entrance to the harbor of Havana, and ranks with the Morro and La

Punta, on the western headland, as one of the historic fortifications of

the capital. Like the Morro Castle, it was used by the Spaniards as a

prison, and the Laurel Ditch, under its landward walls, was the scene of

many a martyrdom of Cuban patriots. Here men and boys innumerable,

during the years of Cuba's struggles to be free, were lined up to be

shot, until the massive wall was thickly pitted with the marks of

bullets fired not at the foes but at the friends of Cuba.]

The consternation of the inhabitants can be imagined when suddenly the

bells began to ring and the cannons to thunder. The people rushed out of

their houses. Some were armed; but the greater part had no weapons and

hurried to the Sala Real, where fifteen hundred guns were stored away

with some old carabines, swords, bayonets, and other weapons, mostly out

of order and too old to be of any use. They were quickly distributed

among the people. The war council assembled. The governor, the Royal

Lieutenant, the General of the Navy, the Marques of the Royal

Transports, the Commissary D. Lorenzo Montalvo and the distinguished

visitors, the Commander-in-Chief Conde de Superanda and Field Marshal D.

Diego Tabares were present. It was decided to charge Colonel D. Carlos

Caro with the task of opposing and preventing the enemy's debarkation at

Cojimar and Boconao, and to collect the cavalry of that place, a few

companies of infantry, militia and lancers, in all about three thousand

men, at this point. La Cabanas was rapidly supplied with artillery. But

in the meantime the enemy, according to the testimony of a British

officer's journal, had already landed troops and overcome the resistance

of the very places to the support of which these forces were sent!

The military defense of Havana, as described by Blanchet, presented a

sorry spectacle. It consisted of eight hundred and ten cavalry, three

thousand five hundred infantry, three hundred artillery, nine thousand

marines and fourteen thousand militia. The armament of these troops was

insufficient in quantity and inferior in quality. Twelve vessels were

anchored in the port. The entrance was protected by the Morro with

fourteen cannons, the battery of the Doce Apostoles with twelve guns,

that of the Divina Pastora with fourteen guns and the fort of la Punta.

In the city there were the twenty two guns of la Fuerza, the residence

of the Captain-General, and the depository of the royal estates. The

condition of the walls was unsatisfactory. The town was dominated by

fortified heights, which, however, were very accessible. It is not

difficult to imagine the state of the people when the news reached the

town that Cojimar and Boconao had fallen. When on the following day

General Eliot defeated D. Luis Rasave and took Guanabacoa, Colonel Caro,

who had been little more than a spectator, retired to Havana. The

population was in a panic.

The war council then entrusted the defense of the Morro to D. Luis

Vicente Velasco, a native of Villa de Noja in Santander and commander of

the vessel \_La Reina\_. Defenses were hurriedly put up at Chorrera and

Cabanas. All residents unable to bear arms were advised to leave the

city. Soon a procession of women and children and members of the

religious orders of both sexes, with here and there the calash of some

wealthy family, were seen to proceed along the roads radiating from the

city towards the suburbs and the more remote haciendas, under the

protection of a detachment of troops. It was a heartrending picture to

see these crowds, trudging along on foot in the cruel heat of the

tropical sun, on roads almost impassable from recent rains. Many

succumbed to the hardships of this exodus. Others were dumb with terror

as they realized that they might never again see their fathers, brothers

and husbands. Again others gave vent to their high-strung emotions by

loud wails. About the time this evacuation took place, fire was set to

the suburbs outside of the city walls and unspeakable was the distress

of innumerable unfortunate families, who in the face of foreign invasion

saw their homes reduced to ashes.

A part of the British fleet was seen sailing at this time towards the

leeward part of the island with the manifest intention of making another

landing. The population was dazed. Some men rushed out to defend their

homes and their women, but the greater number was so overcome by the

calamity confronting them, that their wills seemed paralyzed and they

dumbly awaited the blow that was coming. The next day the work of

fortifying la Cabanas began in such an exposed place on the border of

the city that rifle bullets could reach the Plaza de los Armas. The

construction of a trench was also begun. It was intended to hold one

hundred cannon, but after nine or ten had been mounted, the war council

changed its plan, ordered the destruction of the trench and had the

artillery brought down. This was done in the night of the ninth of June

and fire was set to some houses on the hill. The people were startled by

this surprising procedure and began not only to grumble, but to talk of

treason.

As the British fleet was then menacing the port, the three vessels,

\_Neptune\_, \_Europa\_ and \_Asia\_, were concentrated in the canal of the

entrance. With the huge iron beams that closed it and the artillery of

the harbor, they acted like forts securing its safety. It seemed as if

these land batteries could prevent the landing of any enemy vessel. But

the war council wanted to improve upon this measure and decided to sink

\_Neptune\_ and \_Europa\_, during the hurried execution of which order two

sailors were drowned. Still bent upon what seemed an improvement, two

days later the \_Asia\_, too, was sunk. The British, supposing the port to

be closed, anchored along the coast, landed five thousand men and after

defeating the land forces, the fleet entered the canal without

encountering serious obstacles. But the Spanish authorities continued to

commit more blunders. Appointing as commanders of the land-forces

officers of the fleet, the army of course resented this as an insult.

The task of mobilizing the troops was entrusted to D. Juan Ignacio de

Madriaga; the defense of el Morro had been given to D. Luis Vicente de

Velasco, whose second was D. Bartolome Montes, and that of la Punta to

D. Manuel Briseno, who was soon relieved by D. Fernando de Lortia.

Almost all the army posts were occupied by officers of the fleet. The

reasons for these measures which seemed absolutely senseless in view of

the critical situation, were hotly discussed and some malicious tongues

asserted that the object of this curious disposition was to prevent the

fleet from making its escape.

On the tenth of June a British division moved from the leeward part of

the fort of Chorrera, a short distance from the port, with the object of

landing troops. They met with greater resistance than they had reason to

expect; for the defense was here aided by the loyal executor D. Luis de

Aguiar, who had been appointed Colonel of the militia. All day his men

fought bravely; they consisted of whites and negroes. They expected a

supply of powder and ammunition from an official of Guadeloupe, but he

by mistake had delivered them at la Caleta. Finally their stock gave

out, and, obeying the order of a superior officer, Aguiar withdrew his

troops with little loss. The British then advanced about three thousand

men strong, until they reached the hill of San Lazaro, where they dug

trenches and prepared a new encampment. They also occupied and fortified

the height of the caves, called Taganana, where they mounted three

cannon and two large mortars. With two vessels, armed with bombs, in the

small bay, the fire they kept up helped the camp on the weather-side, at

which the chief force was concentrated. They then proceeded to erect

batteries on the height of la Cabanas and were at first much molested

during their work by Aguiar, Chacon and the guerilla Pepe Antonio, who

had collected a force at that point. A detachment of militia under the

command of Captain D. Pedro de Morales was sent to reenforce them, but

on the next day he was surprised by the British, who thus came into

possession of this important place.

In the meantime, the British expedition was beginning to suffer much

from incessant rains, alternating with excessive heat. Their work was

retarded as much by the weather as by the physical condition of their

forces, which began to suffer from the climate and fatigue. The

resistance of the Cubans was increasing in proportion as the enemy drew

near. During the last days of June, Colonel D. Alejandro de Arroyo

landed a body of six hundred men at Pastora battery. Simultaneously the

naval lieutenant D. Francisco de Corral placed three hundred men at

Norno de Barba. The plan was to spike up the enemy's artillery. But

laudable as was the ambition of the commanders, their ability of

achievement was not in proportion. Their forces, too, were sadly

inferior in number to those of the British. The Captain of the infantry

of the fleet, D. Manuel de Frias, was made prisoner, three hundred of

his troops were killed and forty men wounded. The force of Col. Arroyo

also sustained heavy losses, especially the grenadiers of Arrajon.

A council held at el Morro resulted in the election by the commanders of

D. Luis Vicente de Velasco as their head and chief. No man was more able

or worthy to fill this responsible position. Untiring in his efforts to

defend the fortress, Velasco resolutely and capably endeavored to foil

the enemy's designs. But he was out-numbered and the danger grew daily

nearer. Though at a great loss to their forces, the British forged ahead

and surrounded Velasco with a continuous fire. With the port closed to

the Cuban squadron they were free to place their cannon as they went

along. The rain of bullets, bombs and grenades was incessant and the

breakdown of the bastions inevitable. The garrison seemed to be doomed.

The commander declared that it would not be possible to maintain his

position without some aid from the camp, but while the walls were being

gradually destroyed by the enemy, he did not venture a well organized

sortie. On the first of July el Morro was attacked by the batteries

which the British had planted on el Cabanas and the fire from three

vessels, among them the \_Cambridge\_ and the \_Dragon\_. The valor of

Velasco inspired his troops, pathetically small in comparison with those

of the British. After seven hours of the hottest fire, the \_Cambridge\_

and the \_Dragon\_ were so badly battered that they were forced to the

rear. The British lost three hundred men, among them Captain Goostree of

the \_Cambridge\_. So fierce had been the resistance offered by Velasco

and the few cannon at his disposal, that the British camp, which had

been pouring a rain of bombs on el Morro, finally ceased firing. So the

honor of this day belonged to the Spanish commander.

It is interesting at this point to revert to the journal of the British

officer, who took part in this memorable siege of Havana. After

reporting under date of July third that their great battery had caught

fire, he continues on the following day:

"The Morro was now found to be tougher work and the Spaniards more

resolute than was at first imagined. Our people grew fatigued by the

heat and hard labour and the want of water near them was a sensible

distress, and the disappointment of the Morro's not being reduced so

speedily as at first they were made to hope, helped to depress the

spirits of the weak and low minds; but we found every want relieved and

amply made up for by the Admiral's attention, not only to supply every

article that could be asked, but by his own sagacity, foreseeing and his

precaution providing everything we could want."

During the following days the British seem to have suffered much from

the climate. The writer of the journal records that the men in general

"fall down with fevers and fluxes, but few are carried off by them."

Admiral Keppel was much weakened by illness and fatigue, but this

discouraging entry is followed immediately by a cheerier note, dated

July 8th and 9th:

"Every one was exerting himself in his different station and with such

zeal as gave fresh hopes to our undertaking, notwithstanding the

melancholy scene of the infinite number of sick and the apprehension of

the approaching hurricane season."

The British had begun to realize the failure of the naval attempt to

reduce el Morro. They tried to fortify themselves in the harbor and

established the lee-shore camp on the slope of Aroztegui, the same on

which El Principe was situated. From this point they undertook many

movements, but were always driven back. In spite of these temporary and

local successes the Cuban authorities now fully realized that their

situation was almost hopeless and devised various measures to stay the

progress of the enemy. The magistrates D. Luis de Aguiar and D. Laureane

Chacon were made colonels of the militia. They decided to stop the

forays and attacks from that encampment, and D. Aguiar established

himself in the Horon and tried to dislodge the enemy from various points

to which they had penetrated. His undertaking was successful, as was

proved by the number of prisoners taken. The hostile forces at Taganana,

however, did much mischief and he resolved to attack them on the night

of the eighteenth of July. His troops consisted of peasants and negro

slaves and fought so effectively, that he was able to send to the

fortress eighteen prisoners, including an officer and many trophies. The

governor was so elated by this success that he gave one hundred and four

negro slaves, that had taken part, their liberty.

The British officer in his journal alludes in the entries of these days

to the heavy losses sustained by the British, but dwells more upon the

ravages caused by disease. The sick list increasing, the guards had to

be reduced. The necessity of having a supply of fresh meat for the

invalids and convalescents worried them much. They had counted upon

getting it from Santiago and Bejucal, where the rich plantations and

pastures were, and a monastery that promised rich loot. But D. Laureane

Chacon anticipated their movements in that direction. He concentrated

some troops four leagues leeward from Wajay, and thus not only checked

their progress, but by his persistent opposition weakened their forces.

Many of the smaller actions that were undertaken against the British by

the Cubans were by volunteer forces recruited by veteran fighters, who

had not been associated with the army proper, and their manner of waging

war was of the kind called guerrilla warfare. Nevertheless they did

active and efficient work and had they not been hindered and restrained

by orders from the regulars, they might have accomplished much more. The

Lieutenant Diego Ruiz lost his life in such an enterprise. Another

famous guerrilla, the valiant fighter known as Pepe Antonio, had won the

esteem of the whole army by his courage. He had collected a force of

three hundred men and was planning an ambitious assault upon the enemy,

when he was called to report to Colonel Caro, who commanded the

encampment at Jesus del Monte and San Juan. Colonel Caro, who had not

during the siege distinguished himself by any extraordinary

achievements, not only censured Pepe Antonio severely, but discharged

him. The valiant patriot hero of many daring exploits was so grieved by

this injustice that he died within five days.

Among these side plays of the great siege an expedition led by Colonel

Gutierrez had some successful encounters with the British. D. Luis de

Aguiar and D. Laureane Chacon, too, who had gathered under their command

the brave youths of the country side, were untiring in their efforts to

weaken the British. They prevented them from establishing a cordon and

cutting communication with the fort and were themselves enabled

uninterruptedly to secure provisions and supplies with which to carry on

their operations. Less fortunate was the attack upon Cabanas by D. Juan

Benito Lujan with a thousand militia men from the interior of the

island. At daybreak, on the twenty-second of July, according to the

British officer, the Spanish at el Morro, having been enforced by twelve

hundred men from the town, furiously attacked the British. But Brigadier

Carleton directed so fierce a fire against them that their forces were

driven into the water. He describes them as having consisted mainly of

militia, some seamen, mulattoes and negroes. They lost four hundred

dead, many wounded and seventy prisoners. A violent cannonade followed,

during which Carleton was wounded.

While the British troops were encamped from La Cabanas to Cojimar they

made many looting raids in the neighborhood, extending their incursions

as far as San Miguel and Santa Maria del Rosario. They not only

ransacked the churches for their treasures, but also private estates,

and took away whatever they could carry. They had approached el Morro by

the bulwark of Pina and a body of forty to fifty men in the shelter of

some rocks maintained an incessant gunfire. The garrison of the fort,

which was being steadily reduced by the rain of bombs and grenades,

wanted to make a sortie into the open country, hoping there to be

reenforced. Remaining in el Morro was becoming more and more perilous,

because the enemy had undermined the fortress. D. Luis de Velasco,

broken down by the strain and overwork received a blow on the shoulder,

which temporarily disabled him. His aide, Mentes, was likewise wounded,

and the two were replaced by D. Francisco Medina and D. Manuel de

Cordova. During their absence nothing was done, for the peasantry, fond

as they were of Velasco, were reluctant to fight and perhaps die under

the command of another. Mentes returned on the third day, appointed

Lieutenant-Colonel, and, joined by D. Juan Benito Lujan, who commanded

one thousand men of Tierradentro and some colored troops from the fort,

attempted a sally. But the British on the heights threw themselves upon

the Cubans and overpowered them. The loss on both sides was so great,

however, that the enemy had to ask for a truce to bury their dead. As

the British said, the Spanish were valiant, but they had no head. If

there had been at their head a man of foresight, and if unity of command

had been insured at the beginning, the disaster might have been avoided.

The British forces were at this time beginning to suffer painfully for

want of water and lack of fresh provisions. Five thousand men, and a

great proportion of officers among them, were unfit for duty. But the

arrival of North American troops under convoy of the \_Intrepid\_ of

sixty-four guns, revived the spirit of the expedition. The North

Americans had lost a ship of forty guns and six transports in the old

straits of Bahama, but the people were saved and encamped upon the

shores, and the British Admiral sent frigates for them. One thousand and

four hundred men under Brigadier Burton reenforced Col. Howe on the west

side. The Cuban defense was also encouraged in these days, for Velasco,

who had been wounded on the sixteenth of July, with second, Mentes,

forced to seek medical care in the city, returned to his post at el

Morro on the twenty-fourth. During the siege the Spanish vessels, with

the exception of the frigate \_Perla\_, which was sunk by the foe, were

singularly inactive. The critical and decisive moment of the siege came

on the thirteenth of July, when at two o'clock in the afternoon the

British sprung their mines. Through the breach they rapidly entered and

captured the battery of San Nicolas. Although the garrison was so

terrified that not a few soldiers had fled, the remaining offered a

brave opposition to the invaders. D. Fernando Parrayo and thirteen men,

supported by two cannon, fought heroically, while the British forces

poured into the port. The British officer gives due credit to the Cuban

commanders who desperately tried to save the honor of their country. He

writes:

"The Marquis de Gonzales, commander of a man of war, etc., second in

command of the fort, fell bravely endeavoring to animate and rally his

people. Don Luis de Velasco, also Captain of the \_Reina\_ man-of-war,

soon after shared the same fate endeavoring to defend the colours of the

fort, round which he had made a breastwork and had collected about 100

men, who soon fled and left him to that stroke he seemed to invite and

wait for; for being shot through the breast he fell, offering his sword

to the conquerors. Confusion and fright ensued, and as much slaughter;

for near 400 of the enemy fell by the sword; as many more taken

prisoners to whom the soldiers had generously given quarters, though no

ways obliged by the rules of war. English colours were soon flying on

the fort, that were welcomed by the loud huzzas of all the rejoiced army

and navy. A parley ensued, and D. Luis de Velasco (not yet dead) was at

his own request sent to breathe out his last at the Havana, where he

expired a day after, leaving a name behind and a character that justly

merited admiration and esteem from his opposites as respect and love

from his confederates."

The historian Blanchet also reports that the British showed due

reverence to the dead leader and that hostilities were for that reason

suspended during the following day. They received a reenforcement of

troops from New York on the second of August; but they had fallen in

with three French men-of-war and some frigates on their passage, who

took five or six transports with about five hundred men. Their forces

were being decimated by the climate and the hardships. The British

witness writes that finishing the batteries on Cabanas cost the lives of

many poor seamen who were obliged to be day and night filling vessels

with water for the men at work. Some men-of-war were sent down with

transports to Mariel, for want of men made it unsafe for them to remain

any longer on this most open and frightful coast, where the Spaniards as

well as West Indians expressed their surprise and dread at seeing such a

fleet ride so long in such a season.

When the British entered el Morro, they found only one hundred and two

bronze cannon of various calibres, two hundred iron cannon, nine bronze

mortars, two iron mortars, four thousand one hundred and fifty-seven

rifles, five hundred hand grenades, four hundred and seventy empty

grenades of various quality, seventeen thousand four hundred and four

cannon balls, thirty quintals of rifle balls, one hundred and

twenty-five thousand cartridges and five hundred quintals of powder. The

sorrow at being forced to give up el Morro was great. Supported by the

vessel \_Aquilon\_ the quick fire from la Punta and the bulwarks of the

place promptly demolished the fort. The Cuban vessels retired to the

interior of the bay, fearing the bombs from la Cabanas. The commanders

for the same reason sought shelter in the hospiteum of St. Isidore,

which was situated at the point farthest away from the fire. Yet the

determination to continue to resist the invaders prevailed and a battery

was formed on the elevation of Soto, where the fort of Attares was

located, and fortifications were continued to be strengthened wherever

it was possible.

The batteries of the British were completed on August tenth, and Lord

Albemarle summoned the city to surrender. But Governor Prado relied upon

reenforcements promised him by the governor of Santiago de Cuba and

hoped also for the possible arrival of a French squadron, so he refused.

The people, too, were opposed to surrender, for they had within the last

six days received reenforcements from several sides; two hundred and

twelve rifles and ammunition from the town of Cuba, five hundred more

from Jagua and fifteen hundred on the very last day. However, the fierce

fire which the British opened against Havana at daybreak on the eleventh

of August, induced the commander of the Cuban forces to give up the last

hope. About noon the Spanish ceased firing and at three o'clock in the

afternoon flags of truce appeared everywhere. The governor sent word

that Havana was ready to capitulate.

According to the British officer's journal the victors took possession

of the town and port of Havana on the next day; they also became the

owners of nine ships of the line, of seventy four and sixty four guns,

two very large ones on the stocks, nearly completed, about twenty-five

loaded merchant ships; nearly three million dollars belonging to the

King and the Royal Company; about six hundred pieces of cannon, and

great magazines of stores and merchandise of all kinds. He continues:

"But the most grateful at the time was, that it furnished us with fresh

provisions, rest and shelter for the many thousands poor sick wretches

we had in our camp and hospital ships, all mouldering away for want of

nourishment when their disorders had left them. Our battalion is so weak

that we have not above one hundred and fifty men fit for duty. I am told

the navy is badly off. Our loss of killed and wounded is very trifling

in comparison to that of the enemy. Theirs amounts to upwards of six

thousand killed and dead of their wounds since, and of sickness."

The following day the governor ordered all weapons to be surrendered by

military bodies as private individuals and Mayor D. Antonio Ramirez de

Estenez was authorized to accord the articles of capitulation.

ARTICLES OF CAPITULATION

ARTICLE I

The garrison will leave by the puerta de Tierra on the twenty-eighth of

the present month, if there should not arrive before sufficient help to

raise the siege, with all military honors, the soldiers with arms,

hoisted flags, six field cannon, and the regiments will also remove the

military cases with their contents, and besides six carriages of the

Governor.

ARTICLE II

Said garrison will be permitted to remove from the town all luggage and

money, and transport them to another place of the island.

ARTICLE III

That the ship crews of the port that had served on land shall in their

departure enjoy the same honors as the garrison and be brought back to

their vessels. They may sail to any other place of Spanish domination,

on the condition that on their voyage until their arrival at their

destination they shall not attack any vessel of H. British Majesty, of

his allies, or any vessel of his subjects.

ARTICLE IV

That of all the artillery, arms, ammunition and provisions belonging to

his Catholic Majesty, excepting those that particularly correspond with

said fleet, an exact inventory shall be taken, with the assistance of

four subjects of the king of Spain, who will be appointed by the

governor, and four subjects of H. British Majesty, chosen by H. Ex Count

Albemarle, who will take possession of all until both sovereigns agree

otherwise.

ARTICLE V

That in this capitulation shall be comprised H. Ex Conde de Superanda,

Lieutenant-General of the armies of H. Catholic Majesty, and former

Viceroy of Peru, as well as Don Diego Tabares, Fieldmarshal of the same

royal arms, and former Governor of Cartagena, who happens to be in that

town on their way to Spain, together with their families. They shall be

left in the possession of their baggage and their sailing to Spain shall

be facilitated.

ARTICLE VI

That the Catholic Apostolic Roman religion shall be maintained, and

conserved, as before exercised under H. Catholic Majesty, and that not

the least impediment shall be placed in the public acts in regard to the

rites exercised and with the churches, and the observation of religious

feasts, and all priests, convents, monasteries, hospitals, societies,

universities, colleges shall remain in the free enjoyment of their

privileges and rights, as to their property and income, and furnitures,

as they had enjoyed before.

ARTICLE VII

That the Bishop of Cuba shall likewise conserve his rights, privileges

and prerogatives, which are required for the direction and spiritual

nourishment of the faithful of the Catholic religion, or nomination of

priests and ecclesiastical ministers necessary, and exercise his

accustomed jurisdiction. (Note: Conceded with the reserve that the

nomination of priests and other employes be subject to the approval of

the Governor of H. British Majesty sent to the place.)

ARTICLE VIII

That in the cloisters and nunneries the internal government hitherto

prevailing shall be followed with subordination to their legitimate

superiors, according to the statutes of the particular institutions.

("Conceded.")

ARTICLE IX

That the funds in the town belonging to H. Catholic Majesty shall be

embarked on the vessels of the fleet that happen to be in port to be

shipped to Spain, likewise all the tobacco belonging to H. Catholic

Majesty; that even in war time the same Sovereign shall be permitted to

buy tobacco from the island, in the district subject to the King of

Great Britain at current prices, and to transport it to Spain in their

own foreign vessels. ("Refused.")

ARTICLE X

That in consideration of the fact that this port is so conveniently

situated for those navigating in these parts of America, be they Spanish

or English, it shall be available to the subjects of H. Catholic Majesty

as a neutral port and they shall be permitted to enter and leave freely,

taken the food they require and repair their vessels, paying for

everything at current prices, and that they cannot be insulted or

disturbed in their navigation by the ships of H. British Majesty, nor

the ships of his subjects and allies, from the promontory of Celoche on

the coast of Campêche and St. Antonio in the West, and from the sound of

la Tortuga to this port, and thence to the latitude 33° North, until

their two Majesties agree otherwise. ("Refused.")

ARTICLE XI

That all permanent inhabitants of the city and neighborhood remain in

the free use and possession of their political offices and employments,

and in that of their funds and other property, i.e. household stuff of

whatever origin, quality, or in whatever condition they be, without

being obliged to contribute in other terms than those made by H.

Catholic Majesty. (Conceded, and they will be permitted to continue in

the enjoyment of their property so long as their conduct does not give

cause for denying them.)

ARTICLE XII

That these same should retain and have guaranteed the rights and

privileges which they hitherto enjoyed, and that they will be governed

in the name of H. British Majesty under the same conditions as they have

been under Spanish domination, naming their judges and agents of justice

according to usages and customs. (Answered in the preceding.)

ARTICLE XIII

That whoever of said inhabitants is unwilling to stay in this city, be

permitted freely to remove his property and wealth in the manner most

convenient to him, to sell them or leave them to be administrated, and

to go away with them to the dominions of H. Catholic Majesty, he may

choose, granting them a space of four years and giving them bought or

chartered vessels for conveyance, with the passports and necessary

protection of safety, and the power to arm them in the cruise against

the Moors and Turks, with the express condition not to use them against

subjects of H. British Majesty or his allies, nor to be ill-treated or

molested by them. (Reply: The inhabitants will be permitted to sell and

remove their effects to any place of Spanish dominions, in vessels at

its coast, for which purpose they will be given passports; and it is to

be understood that officials who have property in the island will enjoy

the same benefits as conceded to the other inhabitants.)

ARTICLE XIV

That these will not be in the least molested for having in their loyalty

taken up arms, and enlisted their militia for the war; nor shall the

English troops be permitted to plunder or any other abuse, and that, to

the contrary, they shall completely enjoy the other rights, exemptions

and prerogatives as the other subjects of H. British Majesty, the

families that had left the town on account of the present invasion to

return without any obstacle or difficulty from the country to the city

with all their provisions and funds, and it is to be understood that

neither the one nor the others will be inconvenienced by the stationing

of troops in their houses, unless it be in quarters as were used during

Spanish dominion. (Reply: Conceded, excepting that in case it becomes

necessary to quarter the troops, it must be left to the direction of the

Governor. All the slaves of the King will be delivered to the persons

that will be named to receive them.)

ARTICLE XV

That holders of stocks found in this town and belonging to merchants of

Cadiz and in which all nations of Europe are interested, be facilitated

to depart freely with them, to remit them with the protocols without

being insulted in their voyage.

ARTICLE XVI

That the ministers in charge of the administration and distribution of

the Exchequer or any other business of H. Catholic Majesty be left in

the free use of all those documents that are in their guard, with the

power to remit or bring them to Spain for safety, and the same to hold

also good with regard to the Royal Company established in this town, and

its clerks. All public papers will be delivered for revision to the

secretaries of the Admiral, and will be restored to the ministers of H.

Catholic Majesty, unless they be found necessary for the Government of

the island.

ARTICLE XVII

That the public archives remain in the power of the Ministers in whose

charge they are, without being permitted the least irregularity in

regard to these papers and the instruments they contain, because of the

grave mischief that would result from it to the rights of the community

and to private individuals. (Replied in the preceding articles.)

ARTICLE XVIII

That the officials and soldiers who are in the hospitals be treated in

the same way as the garrison, and after having recovered, they should be

helped in obtaining beasts of burden or vessels for their transportation

to where the rest of the garrison happens to be, as well as everything

necessary for their safety and subsistence during the voyage, and among

others they should be given the provisions and medicines asked for by

the directors and surgeons of said hospitals. (Conceded: The governor

having competent commissaries to assist them with provisions, surgeons

and the necessary medicines at the cost of H. Catholic Majesty.)

ARTICLE XIX

That the prisoners of either party taken by the other since the sixth of

June when the English fleet appeared before this port, be reciprocally

restituted without any ransom whatever in the course of two months.

(This article cannot be concluded before the British prisoners are

returned.)

ARTICLE XX

Upon the granting of the articles of this capitulation, and the giving

of hostages by either party, the gate of Tierra will be delivered to the

troops of H. British Majesty, for placing there a guard, together with

another provided by the garrison of the place until the evacuation is

carried out, and His Ex Conde de Albemarle will send a few soldiers for

the protection of the churches, convents, the houses of the generals and

other officials. (Conceded.)

ARTICLE XXI

That the governor and commander of the fleet be permitted to dispatch to

H. Catholic Majesty and to other parties information by the vessels, to

which passports for their voyage shall be given. (Since the troops are

to be sent to Spain, the information is useless.)

ARTICLE XXII

That in consideration of the vigorous defense made by the Fort of la

Punta, it shall be included in this capitulation and its garrison shall

enjoy the same honors as that of the fortress, and it shall leave

through one of the most suitable breaches made in the ramparts.

(Conceded.)

ARTICLE XXIII

This capitulation to be observed punctually and literally. (Conceded.)

Headquarters in Habana, August 12, 1762.

(Signed) G. Pococke,

Albemarle,

Marques of the Royal Fleet,

Juan de Prado.

What is contained in these articles in regard to the squadron, its

officials, crew and garrisons, has been done with my intervention, and I

propose them as their Comendante General, and in consequence of what has

been accorded in the Junta of yesterday.

Habana, August 12, 1762--El Marques of the Royal Transports.

We agree with these articles, which are a true copy of the originals,

according to the translation made from the English into Spanish by D.

Miguel Brito, public interpreter of this town for H. Catholic Majesty.

Habana, August 12, 1762--El Marques of the Royal Transports--Juan de

Prado.

CHAPTER V

With the solemn signing of the foregoing articles of capitulation on the

twelfth of August, 1762, began the occupation of Havana by the British,

who thus seemed to have attained the goal of their covetous aspirations.

It was a great day for them; it was a day of mourning for the Cubans.

While these articles of capitulation were in themselves not unjust,

differing in no essentials from those usually exacted by the victors

from the vanquished, the people of Havana found it difficult to obey all

these injunctions coming to them from a foreign authority. History

furnishes abundant proofs that it is comparatively easy to conquer a

country by numerical superiority or clever strategy, but that it is

infinitely more difficult to conquer the hearts of its people. The

Spanish historian Alcazar records an incident belonging to the history

of the capture of Havana which illustrates this point.

As soon as the British were masters of the city Lord Albemarle called an

extraordinary meeting in which he declared to the Municipio that, being

masters of the city by force of arms of King George III. of England,

they had to insist upon obedience and allegiance to him as sovereign.

The Alcalde D. Pedro Santa Cruz at once rose to say that subjects of Don

Carlos III. of Spain could not without committing perjury swear

allegiance to any other monarch. He added: "The capitulation compels us

to passive obedience. Count on this, but never on our dishonor." It

seems that these noble words found an echo in the heart of the British

commander who henceforth let the people choose whether to take the oath

or not.

This story is symptomatic of the attitude of the population of Cuba

towards the conquerors. When the morning of the thirteenth of August,

1762, dawned, the British were in possession of the town and port of

Havana with one hundred and eighty miles to the east and all that tract

of land to the west which terminates the island on that side. They took

without resistance Managuas, Bejucal, Santiago, Mariel and Matanzas. The

commander of the fort of San Severine in Matanzas, D. Felipe Garcia

Solis, had stored up a large amount of provisions and supplies of all

kinds in view of an eventual attack. But when he heard of the

capitulation of Havana, he blew up the fort and retired with part of the

garrison to Santiago. The governor of that city, D. Lorenzo Madriaga,

was recognized as the authority to be obeyed by the people in that part

of the island not taken by the British. Perhaps the British had gauged

the sentiment of the population; perhaps they felt that their forces

were too much weakened by the hardships of the siege. They made no

attempts at further extending their conquest.

According to the agreement between Admiral George Pococke and Lord

Albemarle on the one side and the Marques of the Royal Transports and D.

Juan de Prado on the other side, the Spanish garrison was to retire with

military honors; artillery arms and munitions were to be delivered to

the British; the Spanish troops were to be sent back on British

transports; but the British were to respect the Catholic religion, its

ministers, and churches, hospitals, and colleges; and the population was

not to be disturbed in the exercise of wonted occupations and

employments; and the laws of Spain were to remain in force. On the

thirteenth of August, the gates of Tierra were opened to the British

and on the following day they entered with two pieces of artillery and

planted their flags on the forts. The following day the Spanish vessels

were delivered to them: \_Tigre\_, \_Reina\_, \_Soberano\_, \_Infante\_,

\_Aquilon\_, \_America\_, \_Conquistader\_, \_San Antonio\_ and \_San Genero\_.

Many merchant vessels in the bay were also taken. The value of their

booty was estimated at fourteen million pesos. But according to Valdes

their losses during the first twenty four days of the siege had been

seven thousand men, some killed in combat, some deserters, but the

greater part victims of the Cuban climate. Hence in spite of

reenforcements from Jamaica and North America, they had only three

thousand men of infantry when Havana was taken.

The departure of the Spanish troops was scheduled for the twenty-fourth

of August. The British held ready for them three transports which on the

thirtieth sailed through the gate of la Punta. One of them carried the

Governor and his family. On his arrival in Madrid he was tried by a war

council, which for his lack of foresight and energy in preparing the

defense of Havana, condemned him to exile. But the king commuted the

sentence to imprisonment for life. The British commanders, no longer

needed in Havana, worn out with fatigue and weakened by the climate,

also hurried to leave. Brigadier Burton returned to North America,

Admiral Keppel to Jamaica, Pococke to England. He met with terrible

tempests, lost one ship of line, and twelve transports. But the greeting

he received on his arrival in England was most enthusiastic. Though the

parliament was divided on the question of extending British conquests in

Spanish America, there was still the party representing commercial

interests to be reckoned with.

With a promptness quite unusual at that time a book was published

shortly after the capture of Havana, which outlined the course to be

pursued in order to reap the benefits of the South Sea trade, which so

far had been in the hands of the French and Spanish. It was entitled

"The Great Importance of the Havana" set forth in an "Essay on the

Nature and Methods of Carrying on a Trade to the South Sea and the West

Indies, by Robert Allen, Esq., who resided some years in the Kingdom of

Peru, London, printed for J. Hinxman in Paternoster Row and D. Wilson in

the Strand, in 1762. Dedicated to the most Hon. Thomas Harley, Esq., M.

P. and Merchant of London." The author begins with reference to an old

tradition that a Prince of Wales had made an expedition to the coast of

Mexico in 1190 and died there. Upon this tradition and the assertion

that the Mexican language abounds in Welsh words, he seems to base the

right of British priority to Spanish America.

Mr. Allen was evidently much concerned with the activity of the French

in West Indian waters. He says: "As to the slave-trade, it is too well

known that the French are now under contract with the Spanish Assiento

to supply them with four or five thousand negroes yearly and the greater

profits and advantages which they reap from this trade has encouraged

them to send many strong ships yearly to the coast of Africa which have

not only taken many of our own ships on that coast, but also destroyed

several of our many forts and settlements and likewise made several new

settlements of their own, all which has been frequently represented both

in the governing and legislative bodies of Britain, and no effectual

reconciling remedy taken yet." He continues, that the channel of Spanish

trade is quite altered from Jamaica "and the French, a nation whom we

least suspected in trade, have of late years engrossed much of the

greatest part thereof to themselves." He tries to rouse the British to

the need of regaining the Spanish market in America, which was slowly

slipping away from them, by a strenuous appeal to his Majesty to

encourage such commerce by underselling the French. After giving a list

of commodities and manufactures proper for this trade, he adds the

postscript:

"If Queen Anne, at the treaty of Utrecht, obtained so valuable a branch

of trade as the Assiento contract by the success of the Duke of Marlboro

alone, which according to stipulation was for two millions in shares

annually, but doubly augmented under that contract in other goods (tho'

given up by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle with our right of logwood) how

much more ought we to insist on valuable terms since the reduction of

Cuba, the key to the South Sea trade?"

While the British people, like all people under a mass suggestion, were

giving themselves up to jubilating and celebrating, the politicians in

Parliament and elsewhere to controversies on technical questions, the

business world of London and the great industrial and manufacturing

centers of the country were considering investments in West Indian trade

and calculating the profits to be made thereby. After all human nature

is very much alike the world over. That the British as victors were also

not different from other conquerors by force of arms and exacted

requisitions and even without any formalities and ceremonies

appropriated the treasures that seemed worth taking possession of, is

evident from many data in the chronicles of those days. Not only were

the royal chests taken, but also the property of private corporations,

and individuals. Some documents relating to the "right of bells" have

been presented and are interesting reading. Lieutenant Colonel Samuel

Cleaveland, Artillery Commander of the island, addressed the following

communication to Bishop Senor D. Pedro Agustino Morell of Santa Cruz,

and to other priests:

"According to the rules and customs of war observed by all official

commanders of artillery in all European countries when a besieged town

surrenders by capitulation:

"I command that the city of Havana and the neighboring towns, where the

army was situated, give account of all the bells found in all the

churches, convents and monasteries, as well as in the sugar-plantations,

and of other metals similar to bells, in order that said point shall be

put into effect.

"Havana, 19 August, 1762.

"SAMUEL CLEAVELAND,

"Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery."

The bishop addressed a letter of inquiry concerning this "Derecho de

companes" to Lord Albemarle and received the reply, that the war custom

was well known, that the chiefs of artillery receive a gratification

from any besieged and captured town or city, and that the

Lieutenant-Colonel insisted upon compliance with his demand, adding,

however, that it would not be disproportionate. Cleaveland was offered

one thousand pesos in place of the coveted bells, but the British

considered this amount too small, and the bishop received another letter

from Lord Albemarle, which reads:

"Illustrious Sir:

"The compensation offered to the Commandant of Artillery of His British

Majesty for the bells of the city is so low as to compel me to express

my indignation. In order to have the matter settled, I say, that your

Reverence can give the said official for all the churches ten thousand

pesos and I am in the hope that this letter will deserve your immediate

attention.

"Your obedient servant,

"ALBEMARLE.

"Havana, 27 August, 1762."

The Bishop tried to obtain the sum demanded by alms and collections

among his parishioners. But at a meeting on the thirty-first of August

it was seen that the collection amounted only to one hundred pesos and

four reales, which together with the previous one thousand pesos did not

nearly approach the sum required. This was communicated to the British

General with the remark that it would be impossible to raise more. This

communication received no reply and the Commander of Artillery came to

ask for the delivery of the bells, although this was not to take place

until September fourth. He did not receive the bells, for the ten

thousand pesos were got together by a loan, and the money was paid to

Cleaveland on the sixth of that month.

Difficulties between the British authorities and the Spanish clergy

increased as time went on. On the twentieth of August the Junta of

priests and prelates had a meeting at which was discussed the demand of

the British Lieutenant-General, the local governor of the place, for a

church in which the Anglican worship was to be instituted. The Bishop

decided at once to send the communication to said governor, explaining

to him that this demand was not contained in the articles of

capitulation and if his Excellency had some other basis to justify his

claim, he should communicate it. In reply the Bishop received on the

thirtieth of August the following letter:

"Havana, Aug. 30, 1762.

"Rev. Sir:

"I wish and ask that your Reverence provide for the British troops a

church for their divine worship, or that an alternative be arranged with

the Catholics for such hours in the morning or evening, in which they

don't use their church.

"I request at the same time that an account be given me of all churches,

convents, monasteries of every denomination, that are comprised in the

jurisdiction of the Bishop of Cuba, as well as of Superiors and public

officers associated with them.

"Very respectfully, etc.,

"ALBEMARLE."

In a long letter dated September second, 1762, the Bishop replied, that

he had to consult with the government of his Spanish Majesty and briefly

avoided complying with the demand. Thereupon he received a caustic

communication from Albemarle saying:

"Sir:

"I received your very large letter, but which is no answer to mine. I do

not know having read a particular Capitulation made with the Church, but

I am sure that there is none that can exclude the Subjects of H. British

Majesty of their public worship in churches; and for that reason, if you

do not assign me a church I shall take one that suits me best, and

please remember that all Ecclesiastical employes or dignitaries have to

receive my approbation, and also that you better comply with my demand,

and cease writing such long Epistles.

"ALBEMARLE.

"Havana, September 4, 1762."

After a consultation with the other prelates the bishop informed

Albemarle that since he was so decided, he should choose any church that

he liked best. Albemarle selected the Church of San Francisco. But he

insisted upon his other claims, as can be seen from the following letter

dated September 25:

"Some time ago I asked for a list of all Ecclesiastical Benefices (to

which is associated a curacy) of the Donation of Your Honor; and once

more I repeat my wish to be complied with without loss of time.

"I learn that the Jesuit college received in their order an English

official dismissed from the Royal Service on account of his bad

proceedings; I can hardly believe that such a thing has been done

without my license. That order has even in Spain a bad reputation, and

in Portugal and France they have been expelled. If they are not entirely

under your jurisdiction, send to me their Rector, etc.

"ALBEMARLE."

The Bishop replied that the story about the admission of the discredited

Englishman into the Jesuit seminary was altogether untrue, since the

authorities of that college could not admit anybody, this being a

special privilege of the Provincial residing in Mexico. A somewhat

amusing incident of these disputes between the British authorities and

the Spanish clergy of Havana is recorded in the following letter of the

Bishop dated October twenty-second. It reads:

"Your Excellency:

"Yesterday between 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, there called on me

on your part a person whose name and nationality I do not know. All I

know is that he speaks Spanish, though with a foreign accent and wears

golden earrings as is customary with women. He addressed me with

'Usted.' I informed him in the conversation that in speaking to me he

had to use a more dignified title. He replied that he would always use

'Usted.' It then occurred to me that this obstinacy might be justified

by his higher rank. I asked him and he said that he had no other rank

but that of a bomb-thrower in his Majesty's name. He continued in his

way of speaking to me with a loud voice, and since in all his conduct he

was wanting of the respect due to my dignity, I deem it fair that it

should be corrected and that your excellency give me satisfaction."

Lord Albemarle seems to have paid no attention to this letter. But on

the same day the Bishop received another urgent order in which Lord

Albemarle, as Governor and Captain-General of the island, insisted in

his demand to receive a list of all ecclesiastical orders and benefices,

in order to know and be the "competent judge" of the persons appointed

by the Bishop and be able to consent to their appointment. The Bishop in

his reply referred to his previous letter, stating that the Governor

could neither before nor after the appointment be a competent judge of

the appointees, since ecclesiastics, according to all rights, were

exempt of protests by the laity, and their privileges were inviolate.

According to the historian Blanchet, Bishop Morrell was at the end

exiled to Florida for having refused to obey certain orders given by the

British authorities.

Although Albemarle cannot be said to have governed with the tyranny that

characterized the German governors of occupied territories in the recent

war, he failed to win the people. Those residents of Havana who were

able to leave the place, moved into the country or to towns like

Villa-Clara. The peasants of the neighborhood, who had carried on a

profitable trade with the city in garden and dairy products, fowl,

venison, etc., preferred to renounce these profits rather than go to the

market and have the British buy what their soil had raised and their

hands had tended. The spirit of the people was unanimous in the hatred

of the enemy conquerors. Their intemperance, their customs, and even

their language irritated them. Altercations that terminated in bloodshed

became more and more numerous as time went on. Any act of violence

against the British was severely punished, and not a few Cuban "rebels"

were executed; the atmosphere of Havana was soon charged with invisible

mines that a spark could set off.

Complying with the orders of the British government, Albemarle had to

exact the payment of certain sums from the population, including the

clergy and the religious organizations, and found great difficulty in

enforcing these orders. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the

feelings of the population were being deliberately hurt, especially by

the disregard of the British authorities for the institutions maintained

by the clergy. Thus a wave of indignation swept over the city, when the

beggars and the sick were ejected from the convent of San Juan de Dios,

which was turned into a hospital for the British. Without remuneration

they occupied almost one-third of the buildings subject to an

ecclesiastical tax, they transformed private residences into jails; they

seized merchandise and funds that were owned by the Real Compania de

Comercio and when these were claimed as private property, they were

returned only after payment of one hundred and seventy-five pesos. As

the tension grew crimes committed from vindictiveness increased among

the population. M. Savine, the French writer referred to previously,

reports that the Guajiros of the mountains poisoned the milk furnished

to the garrison. A Cuban "rebel" who had escaped from the jail went

about in the part of the island not occupied by the British and preached

a "holy war" against the invaders of the island. Conditions were such

that Havana might have become at any moment the scene of a new Sicilian

Vespers.

It was at this time that the Commissary D. Lorenzo de Montalvo wrote to

the Minister of War at Madrid under date of October eighteenth, 1762:

"The extraordinary mortality of the British troops has reduced them to

the state which Your Excellency will see from the included papers. If at

this moment eight or ten vessels arrived with two or three thousand men

to debark, it would not be forty eight hours before they would

capitulate."

There was indeed a movement on foot in the unoccupied part of Cuba to

collect a force, march against Havana and deliver it from the British

conquerors. A force of guerilleros was ready for action under command of

the intrepid Aguiar. He was only waiting for enforcement promised him by

Governor Madriaga of Santiago, who had three hundred and fifty men with

two thousand and five hundred guns, collected at Yaguas and Villa-Clara.

But he lingered at Yaguas and it was supposed that he was afraid of

losing his position if the British should decide upon moving against

Santiago. Madriaga was however associated with Aguiar, D. Lorenzo

Montalvo, D. Nicolas Rapua, D. Pedro Calvo de la Puerta, D. Augustin de

Cardenas and other prominent citizens and patriots of Cuba in a pact to

reconquer Havana at an opportune moment, and action may have been

delayed only because rumors were afloat that peace was about to be

signed.

In Spain itself feeling ran high. The provinces of Murcia, Granada,

Aragon, Valencia and Catalonia sent an address to King Charles III.

asking to defend the colonies. It said among other things:

"Sir:

"Now is the moment to hold high the glory of the nation; let us

humiliate under your auspices ambitious England which in her folly

proposes nothing less than the ruin of all Europe. As her only aim is

commerce, that is sordid gain, she wages a regrettable war upon a

warlike nation that does not know meanness and has no other sentiments

than the love of her king and her country. Money may be needed in

London, as once in Carthage; but virtue, constancy and heroism we shall

never lack, as they never failed the ancient Romans."

But there is no record that this address elicited anything more than an

appreciative reply from the government at Madrid. For the diplomatic and

political world of Spain as of Great Britain was indeed occupied in

considering a settlement of the Spanish-British problem.

Nevertheless there were Spaniards, who even at that trying time must

have viewed the state of things dispassionately, for the historian

Pezuela gives the British much credit for the moderation and

conciliatory tendency of their policy during the occupation. He records

that they did not materially alter the general regime of the city, nor

even make any radical changes in the municipal government. On taking

possession of the town, Albemarle named for civil lieutenant-governor

the Alderman D. Sebastian Penalver, a prominent lawyer; for the latter's

Suplente or alternate, the alferez real or chief ensign D. Gonzale

Oquendo, and for common civil judge D. Pedro Calvo de la Puerta, a

high-constable and property holder highly esteemed by his fellow

citizens. These three officials by their wisdom, unselfishness and

impartiality lightened the burden of the foreign yoke.

Both Albemarle and Keppel had soon recognized some of the greatest evils

of the colonial administration, among them the corruption of the lower

courts and the amazing amount of bribery going on even in the higher

departments of the government. They tried to check the malpractice of

lawyers, and in a decree dated the fourth of November, 1762, prohibited

the making of gifts or presents of any kind to the principal governor

and to the inferior authorities, considering such practice as means to

promote dishonesty. However, the attitude of the great majority was and

remained hostile to the British and it needed all the prudence and tact

of men like Oquendo, Penalver and Puerta to avoid conflicts between the

citizens and the foreign authorities. Nor should the Intendant Montalvo

be forgotten, whose services were highly appreciated by Albemarle.

In the British parliament there existed at that time a state of turmoil.

The Earl of Bute, friend and adviser of George III., did not care for

further extension of Britain's colonial possessions in America, saying

that it was much greater importance "to bring the old colonies in order

than to plant new ones." Others favored the return of Havana to Spain in

exchange for Porto Rico and Florida. On the twenty-sixth of October,

1762, the British King expressed his approval of the latter proposal and

urged the diplomats engaged in deliberating upon the subject speedily to

draft a treaty. He wrote to Bedford, as quoted by Bancroft in his

"History of the United States," Vol. III., p. 298:

"The best despatch I can receive from you will be those preliminaries

signed. May Providence, in compassion to human misery, give you the

means of executing this great and noble work."

The terms proposed to the French according to the same authority were

severe and even humiliating, and Choiseul is reported as having said:

"But what can we do? The English are furiously imperious; they are drunk

with success; and, unfortunately, we are not in a condition to abase

their pride."

The preliminaries of a peace which was to bring a certain stability to

the colonies in America and permanently settle the claims of the three

nations that had for three centuries been striving for supremacy in the

New World, were signed on the third of November, 1762. They contained

the following stipulations: England was to receive the Floridas and some

islands in the West Indies, but abandon Havana; it was to have Louisiana

to the Mississippi, but without the island of New Orleans; it was

likewise to have all Canada, Acadia, Cape Breton and its independent

islands, Newfoundland, except a share of France in the fisheries, with

the two islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon as shelter for their

fishermen. In Africa England was to have Senegal, which insured for it

the monopoly of the slave-trade. In the East Indies, too, France

recovered only what she possessed on the first of January, 1749, the

rest going to England and assuring its sway over that territory. France,

on the other hand, to indemnify Spain for the loss of Florida, ceded to

Spain New Orleans and all Louisiana west of the Mississippi. There is no

doubt that France came off worst in this settlement; but, as her

minister Choiseul said, it was at the time helpless. In England, which

by this settlement laid the foundations of her great power, there was a

great display of flamboyant oratory. The king was reported to have

said:

"England never signed such a peace before, nor, I believe, any other

power in Europe."

Granville, then, on his deathbed, exclaimed:

"The country never saw so glorious a war or so honorable a peace," and

Bute, roused to defend it against some opponents in Parliament, uttered

these words significant of the high esteem in which he held himself and

whatever services he rendered England as favorite of the king:

"I wish no better inscription on my tomb than that I was its author."

It is needless to say that the effect of this document upon Spain was of

quite a different nature. For it practically checked for all time her

ambitions for maintaining supremacy in the world her discoverers and

explorers had once claimed under her colors. Cuba, of course, rejoiced

at the prospect of the restitution of Havana. Lord Albemarle, suffering

from the strain of the siege and the climate, as no less from the

realization that he would never be able to reconcile the Cubans to a

recognition of his authority, had left early in the year 1762 and Sir

William Keppel occupied his post. The peace was ratified at Paris on the

tenth of February, 1763, and the people began to look forward with

impatience to the arrival of a new governor from Madrid and to the

debarkation of the British. In spite of the harassing situation which

they had endured during the rule of the enemy they had not been idle,

but planned many improvements and reforms which they promised themselves

to execute as soon as the British domination would end. They had

learned, too, to appreciate the advantages of free trade; for during the

British occupation no less than nine hundred merchant vessels entered

the harbor and not a few cargoes of negroes were landed.

CHAPTER VI

The changes which the island underwent during this time were

far-reaching. The British occupation had established a direct contact

with the world outside of Spain, which was bound to broaden the narrowly

provincial viewpoint of the residents of the colony. For the nobles to

whom large tracts of land had been granted in the earlier days of the

colony had never permanently resided there but only came over for a

short time to occupy their winter residence in Havana and for another

brief season to show themselves in all their old-world aristocratic

splendor on their haciendas. The great majority of the people,

descendants of the adventurers and the poor immigrants of the pioneer

period, had acquired the habits of country people so engrossed in their

fields, their live stock and the daily labors required to make these

possessions profitable, that they had lost any desire to seek the

stimulating influence of city life. The cities themselves, Havana not

excepted, had a provincial aspect and offered little attraction to the

foreign traveler who did not come there exclusively on business.

Nevertheless they left a pleasant memory with many a casual visitor. A

Frenchman, who spent some time in Havana about the year 1745, set down

his impressions, which with other letters and memoirs of travel were

edited by Pierre Jean Baptiste Nougaret and published in Paris in 1783

under the title: "Voyages interessans dans differentes Colonies

francaises, espagnoles, anglaises, etc." In these reminiscences of

Havana some twenty years before the British occupation, he draws a

picture of the city, which it is interesting to compare with what other

writers have to say of the Havana of 1762. He writes:

[Illustration: HAVANA, FROM CABANAS

"Beautiful for situation" indeed is the Cuban capital, whether it be

used as a point from which to view the sea and land, or be itself looked

upon from some neighboring or distant height. This view, from the

grounds of the great Cabanas fortress, shows the central portion of the

city, with the notable public buildings clearly discernible, and nearer

at hand the waters of the inner harbor, where occurred in 1898 the

memorable and mysterious tragedy of the \_Maine\_.]

"It is a very spacious city, well enough built and among the best

fortified in America. In size it compares about with la Rochelle, but it

is far more populated. It is graced with a large number of public

buildings, churches, convents and you see there usually more negro

slaves than in any other city of Spanish domination. Its harbor

especially is one of the largest and most beautiful in America, and they

build there warships for the construction of which the king of Spain

employs a prodigious number of laborers, an arsenal and an immense

workshop. It is the Catholic king's custom to pay one thousand piastres

a cannon; so a vessel of eight cannon costs him eight thousand piastres.

There are always on the docks five or six vessels at once; it is a

company called the Company of Biscay which attends to the business.

Havana is rather regular in plan; the streets are surveyed by the line,

although some of them are not absolutely straight; all houses are of two

or three floors, built of masonry and have balconies mostly of wood; the

lower part of most houses is terrace-like as in European Spain and

altogether they make a respectable impression.

"The city is protected by a numerous garrison of about four thousand

regular troops, extremely well kept, who make Havana impregnable in a

country where one cannot attack, except with considerable forces. The

city which is one of the best located seems an oval; the entrance to her

port is advantageously protected by different forts, of which one, the

first, is called Morro or port of entrance; the second is opposite; a

third has been erected toward the side of the city; it is so large that

it seems rather a citadel than a fort. There is besides before the

principal section of the city before the palace of the governor which is

magnificent, a battery of big guns and of considerable calibre; so one

can say that Havana is the best defended of all places in America, the

vessels that want to enter being obliged to pass so close to the forts

that it would be easy to sink them.

"The customs of the Spanish are here about the same as in Spain,

differing from other colonies of the nation, where frankness,

righteousness and probity seem to have been exiled. The Havanese are

quite frank, extremely gay, more so than suits the ordinary Spanish

gravity which is probably due to the great number of strangers which

come there from all parts. The climate is rather good; the sex very

handsome and enjoying much more liberty than in the rest of Spanish

America.

"Armed cruisers are entertained to keep away strangers from the coast,

which does not prevent all the fraudulent operations in which the

commandant often shares. Nevertheless life is agreeable for the rich,

everything being abundant in Havana; and the residents are far more

neatly habited than elsewhere. One does not drink but cistern water,

much superior to that of the only fountain which is in the center of a

large square; and which serves only as watering trough for animals. You

see in Havana many rolling chairs, most of which are rented, which gives

the city an air resembling European towns."

Appreciative as this description sounds, which had for its author a M.

Sr. Villiet d'Arignon, the Havana of the time of the British calls forth

even more appreciative language from the Spanish historians of Cuba.

They dwell much on the beauty of its location and of the city itself

say:

The streets were not large or well leveled, especially those running

from north to south, which caused the town to be so great in length;

over three thousand houses occupied an expanse of nine hundred fathoms

in length and five hundred in width; they were of hewn stone, of

graceful form and as a whole afforded a very beautiful appearance. To

the beauty of the city contributed eleven churches and convents and two

large hospitals; the churches were rich and magnificent, especially

those of Recoletos, Santa Clara, San Agustino and San Juan de Dios.

Their interior was adorned with altars, lamps and candelabra of gold and

silver of an exquisite taste. There were three principal squares: The

Plaza des Armas, which still retains its name, encompassed by houses of

uniform frontage with the metropolitan church. A magnificent aspect was

added to this square by the castille de la Fuerza, where resided the

Captain-Generals, and the pyramid encompassed by three luxuriant

five-leaved silk cotton trees planted there in memory of the tradition,

that the first mass and town meeting were held in the shadow of a robust

tree of that kind; that of San Francisco adorned with two fountains was

considered the best place in the city and on it were the houses of the

Ayuntamento and the public jail, whose two-story façade with arched

entrance contrasted with the severe architecture of the convent after

which the square is named; and there was still another, the new square,

because it had been opened after the former, with a fountain in the

center and all encompassed with porticos for the convenience of the

public, serving also as market-place, where the inhabitants, according

to Arrate, provided themselves "copiously" with all they wanted.

Native writers also dwell upon the good manners of the Havanese, calling

them the most polite and social people of Spanish America, much given

to imitating the French customs and manners, which were then in vogue at

the Spanish court of Madrid, both in their dress and their conversation,

as also in the furnishings of their houses and the good table they set

their guests. These descriptions of Cuba and Cuban life tally well with

those of the foreigners quoted by the author, and indicate the progress

made by the island, and especially by Havana, in the sixth and seventh

decades of the century.

The economic conditions of the island underwent a great change during

the sixth decade of the century. Up to this time, the majority of the

people had been engaged in agriculture and led a more or less simple,

rustic life. The products of her soil were consumed on the spot. Her

mines were neglected because the gold and silver which had been

discovered in the earlier part of Cuba's history and which had roused

the jealousy of other countries were not sufficient in quantity to

justify the labor needed for working them. With the increasing number of

negro slaves, the possibilities of exploiting all the rich natural

resources of the island were multiplied. Among the products that came

into prominence was sugar. Not ordinarily consumed, it brought forty

three cents a pound. John Atkins, the British surgeon and author of that

interesting book of travel in Spanish America referred to in a previous

chapter, had declared the sugar of Cuba the best in the world; and it

was indeed so considered in the market. It became soon one of the most

important articles of Cuba's commerce. The cheapened labor encouraged

enterprises which the Spanish would have been physically unable to carry

through.

The commerce of Havana had in this epoch increased considerably and the

greatest part of it came from the ports of the island itself. Besides

supplying with goods the towns of the interior and the littoral, Havana

exported great amounts of hides, much esteemed for their excellent

quality, and also sugar, tobacco and other articles. The trade was

carried on by vessels registered from Cadiz and the Canaries besides

those of Spanish merchants who were allowed to trade with the

Spanish-American continent. Especially favored were those that returned

to Spain from Cartagena, Porto Bello and Vera Cruz and entered Havana to

renew their supply of provisions and water, and enjoy the advantage of

going out with the convoy which in the month of September returned to

the Peninsula with galleons loaded with the riches of Peru and Chile,

and the fleet freighted with the treasures of New Spain. This periodical

assembly of a great number of merchant and war vessels in Havana had

introduced the custom of holding fairs, during which great animation

prevailed in the city. For while they facilitated commercial

transactions, they also furnished diversion and entertainment to the

sailors and others who were waiting for the sailing of the convoy. At

that time an order was published prohibiting on penalty of death any

person belonging to the squadron to remain on land over night, and all

had to retire on board at the report of a gun. Provisions were then, as

also M. d'Arignon reported at his time, very dear. The monopoly which

was exercised by the company had unreasonably raised the cost of living.

The flour brought from foreign smugglers at five or six piasters a

barrel, was sold at his time at thirty-five and more! Besides the

ordinary wages of men hired by the day every male slave day-laborer was

paid in excess four pesos a day and every female two pesos.

The description of the defenses of the city during the British invasion

suggest that the surrender to the enemy may after all not have been

entirely the fault of the procrastination and unconcern of the Cuban

governor, as some zealous patriots alleged at the time. The entrance of

the port was in the eastern part, defended by the strong fort of el

Morro, situated upon an elevated rock of irregular, somewhat triangular

form, in the walls and bulwarks of which were forty mounted cannon. It

was protected also by the battery of Doce Apostoles, so called for

having a dozen mounted cannon, situated toward the interior of the port

in the lower parts of the Morro bulwark, which looked to the southeast

and were almost at sea-level. There was also the Divina Pastora with

fourteen cannon, on a level with the sea at a point a little higher than

the former facing the gate of la Punta. Toward the west in the same

entrance of the port and about two hundred yards from it with four

bulwarks well-mounted with artillery, was la Fuerza with twenty-two

cannon. Although not of as solid construction as the others, it served

as storehouse for the treasures of the King and was also the residence

of the governor. Between these fortresses there were erected along the

bay a number of other bulwarks well supplied with artillery. The walls

from la Punta to the arsenal were protected by bulwarks with parapets

and a ditch. From the first to the second gate there was considerable

territory converted at that time into gardens, and pasture land, and

covered with palmettos. In front of the Punta de Tierra was a ravelin.

Nevertheless those fortifications had serious defects of position,

because the city as well as the forts were dominated by many hills easy

of access. East of the port was Cabanas, where there was a citadel built

later, dominating a great part of el Morro and the northeastern part of

the city. West of the town was a suburb, called Guadeloupe, the church

of which was situated on an eminence half a mile from the gate of

Tierra, and on the same level with it, the highest of all fortifications

in that direction. From the northern side of this elevation the gate of

Punta could be flanked and from the southeast the shipyard was

dominated. The zanja real, or royal trench, in the northern part,

descended not far from the Punta de Tierra and then ran into the

shipyard where its water was employed in running a mill. Half a mile

from said church was the Chavez bridge, built over a rivulet flowing

into the bay, which served to unite the central road of the island with

that of Baracoa; and from the bridge to the Lazareto was a stretch of

two miles with an intermediate hill. A trench between these two points

could easily cut the communication of Havana with the rest of the

island. From this close description it can be seen that in spite of the

imposing impression its fortifications made upon foreigners, Havana was

by no means an impregnable fortress at the time of the British invasion,

which was brought out at the trial of Governor Prado. But whatever may

have been the cause of its capitulation to the British, the period of

their occupation at the end benefited Cuba, for it opened the eyes of

the government to the needs of the island, and prepared a new era,

political, social and economic.

CHAPTER VII

By the terms of the treaty signed at Versailles on the tenth of

February, 1763, Britain was to give back to Spain the city and territory

of Havana in the condition in which the British had found it and Spain

was to grant the British a term of eighteen months, so that those who

had established themselves upon the island could insure their interests

by transferring their property. To administrate the political and

military affairs of Cuba and carry out these stipulations, a new

governor was appointed in the person of the Lieutenant-General Conde de

Ricla, a relative of the famous Minister Aranda. Ricla arrived in Havana

on the thirteenth of June and prepared to enter upon his duties, while

the British authorities made preparations to wind up their affairs and

to embark. Spanish love of festive demonstrations of joy must have

culminated in a frenzy of exultation on the day when Admiral Keppel

solemnly and formally gave up Havana to the Tenente Rey, the King's

Lieutenant, who took possession of all military posts. It was the sixth

of July, 1763, ever since remembered as the glorious day when Cuba was

delivered from the British yoke. The new governor entered through one of

the iron gates of the city, driven in an open coach, and acclaimed by

the enthusiastic vivas of the population. On the same day the British

authorities set sail, and the city entered upon a celebration of the

event which lasted nine days. The Spanish colors fluttered from every

roof, the houses were draped in them, the doors were garlanded in green,

and when the evening came, lights shone in every window and sky rockets

were set off on every street corner, turning the tropical night into

day.

[Illustration: ATARES FORTRESS--(ERECTED 1763)]

The new governor was a man of rare character and was endowed by the

royal government with more power than any of his predecessors had

enjoyed. He received a salary of eighteen thousand pesos annually. The

task before him was one of reorganization and reconstruction. He was

charged and expected to inaugurate a new era in the administration of

the colony, to employ the most judicious means to prevent errors

committed by his predecessors and to insure a prompt and efficient

enforcement of the principles of colonial policy which the time

demanded. He was also to repair all the fortifications and defenses of

the island, rebuild whatever had been destroyed and add to them whatever

was needed as rapidly as possible, so they would be proof against any

possible coup-de-main on the part of any enemy. The reconstruction of

the Morro and of the arsenal destroyed by the British, and the erection

of the forts of Cabanas and Atares was entrusted to the able engineers

D. Silvestro Abarca and D. Agostino Crame, who later drew the plan for

that of Puerto Principe, intended to protect that place and prevent any

landing by la Chorrera. The records of the period show that six million

pesos were spent on those fortifications. New hospitals and other public

buildings were also erected. The work was greatly facilitated by the

number of negroes that had been added to the population since the

British domination of the city. The great activity of the building

trades stimulated the circulation of gold and gave a new impetus to all

business life.

That the antagonism between the Spanish and British was not confined to

Havana, which had suffered British occupation, is proved by the influx

of immigrants from Florida, when this province was ceded to England.

Unwilling to live under British dominion, many French and Spanish

families of that colony left their old homes for new ones in Cuba. A

great number of them settled in Matanzas and its environs, on land which

belonged to the famous Marquis Justiz de Santa Anna. The generosity of

this man in gratuitously ceding that land endeared him to these

immigrants. Their love for the place they came from induced them to give

to the towns into which their settlements were formed, names that

suggested the old home, as San Augustin de la Nueva Florida proves. As

soon as the enemy had left, the residents of Havana who had retired to

the interior of the island returned to the city and resumed their

occupations. Bishop Morell, who had been exiled to Florida by the

British, also returned. He brought with him the white-wax bee, which in

time became a new source of wealth for the island.

It was a period of reconstruction and readjustment during which not only

were old business relations renewed and reaffirmed, but many new steps

taken to insure the welfare of the community. Those elements of the

population which were particularly concerned with the honest and

efficient management of its affairs, had during the British occupation

become aware of some malpractices that had escaped their attention or to

which they had become so accustomed that they did not make any effort to

check them. There were always on the island rumors of corruption in this

or that department. Occasionally a fraudulent functionary was tried and

convicted, but the great majority of these dishonest officials escaped

without ever being brought to trial. The frequent change of governors

with the inevitable periods of interim administration gave unscrupulous

men ample opportunity to fill their pockets at the expense of the

government. Nor can it be doubted, that the governors sent over by the

Spanish court were invested with a farther reaching authority than was

advantageous for the colony. For they enjoyed not only a political power

almost absolute, but directed the economic affairs of the colony.

The governors of Cuba had in former times authority to handle the

revenues and in accord with the municipal councils were wont to elect

delegates to discharge these duties. In 1551 they had begun to exercise

these functions as ministers de capa y espada, which means literally of

cloak and sword. There were two of them for the island; they enjoyed

seat and vote in the town corporations and were considered royal

officials. They supervised the work of the Auditor and Treasurer and

together with the Governor were judges in cases of contraband. Later

there were appointed tenientes (lieutenants), one for each of the

following communities, Bayamo, Puerto Principe, Trinidad, Matanzas, San

Juan de los Remedios, Sancti Spiritus, and Guanabacoa, and two for

Santiago de Cuba. The new ministers of the Tribunal de Cuentes

(Exchequer) were provisionally endowed and the whole department hitherto

in charge of the royal officers was reorganized and managed under a new

system by the newly appointed Intendant. To him was probably due the new

classification of the revenue rates, which was as follows:

(1) Duties on imports and exports,

(2) of the fleet,

(3) of the armadilla,

(4) of the royal Fifths (i.e. a duty of 20% on prizes,

etc., paid to the Spanish government),

(5) the duty on anchoring,

(6) the duty on frucanga, i.e. beverages made of water

and molasses, which at a later time, when the use of wine,

beer, etc., became more general, went into oblivion.

These duties were from twenty-one to two and one half per cent.

according to the articles, the time and the place they came from. There

were also two per cent. duties on importations, on fruits of the country

brought to Havana in smaller vessels; on the gold and copper of the

mines of Jaguas, Holguin, etc., and there was also what was called the

extraordinario del Morro, which consisted in collecting four pesos for

each vessel sent to Spain and the American continent. The enforcement of

these custom regulations was entrusted to the Intendant referred to

above, who in October of the year 1764 was given the right to use a

special building for the offices of this department.

For the military reorganization of Havana had been appointed Marshal

Senor Conde D. Alexandre O'Reilly, who as Inspector-General devoted

himself to the organization of line troops and militia and was

materially assisted in his work by Aguiar. O'Reilly succeeded in getting

the veteran troops and militia of the island into good condition. By

studying the city, dividing it into districts, naming the

streets--simple requirements which according to Valdes had at that late

date not yet been established in Havana--O'Reilly learned that the city

alone could raise a battalion of disciplined militia of white men. After

organizing two such battalions in Havana and Guanabacoa, he realized

that this force was insufficient for the protection of the capital and

he raised two more battalions, composed of colored men. When on

examining the polls or registers of tax-payers he found that owing to

the poverty and also the ignorance of the majority of the people he

could not proceed with the draft system without including the married

and other classes, he decided to resort to conscription.

In 1764 there was created by royal decree a military and provincial

administration for Cuba in the manner of the peninsulas. D. Miguel de

Altavilla took charge of it in February, 1765. He established in Havana

an accountant's (auditor's) office, a treasury and custom-houses at

various points, subject to the department. This organization required

many employees, and increased the expenses of the administration. The

salaries of the officials amounted to one million two hundred thousand

pesos, while until the year 1761 they had been only four hundred and

fifty thousand pesos annually. As the Mexican assistant of the director

never arrived in time to help with the accounts, the Royal Hacienda, as

it was called, was not a sinecure. The revenues rose within a short time

to one million two hundred and fifty thousand pesos, but whether this

was due to the high duties or to the wise administration of the

Intendencia does not appear.

The tentative effort at establishing a mail service during a previous

administration was taken up in 1765, when the tax administrator D. José

de Armona established the internal and external mail service of the

island. It was found that every fortnight there was sent from Havana to

Santiago de Cuba the mail, touching at Villa-Clara, Sancti Spiritus,

Puerto Principe and Bayamo. According to royal decree of 1718 there

should have been sent annually to Spain eight avisos or ships of one

hundred tons, carrying letters from the Philippines and America, four of

them stopping for provisions and supplies at Havana. These avisos

(advice-boats, light vessels for carrying dispatches) sailed at the

beginning of January, the end of March, the middle of June, and the

first days of November. Most of the letters at that time were carried by

smugglers. Armona succeeded in establishing a weekly postal

communication between the towns mentioned above and also engaged

postillions to carry mail sacks of San Juan de los Remedies, Trinidad

and other towns not included in the other line. Every month except

September, \_la Coruna\_, a vessel with the mail of Cuba and Spanish

America, sailed from Havana for Spain. The work of Armona was

extraordinary in face of the great difficulties which he had to

overcome, both in regard to the lack of sufficient funds and to the lack

of efficient and reliable officials. When he retired from the department

the mail service of Cuba was neglected and even the line established

between Havana and other towns of the island reduced its operation to

one mail a month.

In the meantime the tragedy of the siege of Havana was being discussed

in Spain before the tribunal charged with the investigation of the

conduct of the men then at the head of the government in Havana and

supposed to be responsible for its defeat by the British. After many

months of tedious conferences, the Military Council, according to

Alcazar, condemned Ex-Governor Prado to degradation of rank and

banishment, Conde de Superanda and Tavares likewise, and the colonel of

engineers Ricaut to ten years' suspension from office. The Teniente-Rey

Soler, the colonels Caro and Arroyo and the artillery-commander Crel de

la Hoz escaped with severe admonitions. Thus was the curtain rung down

upon the epilogue to the tragedy of that siege.

After two years, during which he administered the affairs of the

government with great sagacity and introduced many valuable reforms,

Conde de Ricla asked permission to retire from his office and return to

Spain. The Court accepted his resignation and appointed as his successor

the Field Marshal D. Diego Manrique, who took charge of the government

on the thirtieth of June, 1765. But he was almost immediately taken sick

of yellow fever and died on the thirteenth of July, a few days after his

inauguration. The Municipio of Havana urgently requested Ricla to resume

the duties of governor, but he firmly refused and embarked for Spain.

There may have been reasons for his determination not to continue in

office, that are not mentioned by Valdes and Alcazar. For Blanchet

remarks that the Conde de Ricla, though a man of action and efficiency,

seems in the awarding of privileges and assignment of punishments not to

have conducted himself quite properly. Ricla is described as having been

a man of small stature, and grave but not unpleasant manner. He died in

1780 as minister of war in Spain.

There is a memorial to his services in carrying through the extensive

work on the fortifications of Havana in the chapel of Cabana, where on a

block is found this inscription:

"During the reign in Spain of His Catholic Majesty Senor D. Carlos III.

and the government in this island of the Count de Ricla, Grandee of

Spain and Lieutenant-General of the Royal Armies, was begun, in the year

1763, this fort of San Carlos, that of Atares in the Loma de Sota and

the rebuilding and enlargement of el Morro. The works of this fort were

continued and those of el Morro and Atares were finished during the

government of the Lieutenant-General of the Royal Army Senor Baylio D.

Antonio Maria Buccarelli, etc."

The provisional governorship of the Teniente de Rey, the King's

Lieutenant, D. Pascal Jiminez de Cisneros, lasted from the thirteenth of

July, 1765, to the nineteenth of March, 1766. He conscientiously

endeavored to continue to rule in the spirit of his predecessor and to

carry out the instructions given him by Ricla before he left for Spain.

Some disturbances took place during that time, caused by the

tobacco-planters and by the soldiers. The former began to object to

selling their entire harvest to the factory. The latter had become

dissatisfied on account of the irregularity with which they were paid.

The new governor appointed by the court of Madrid for Cuba was the Field

Marshal Senor Baylio D. Antonio Maria Buccarelli, a native of Sevilla.

He entered upon his office on the nineteenth of March, 1766, and was

evidently determined to continue and if possible improve upon the many

reforms and improvements that had been introduced by Ricla. Among them

were certain police regulations which tended to insure the safety of the

residents, as well as order and cleanliness on the streets. He also

resolved to abolish the abuses of the bar, by putting a stop to the

extortions practised by unscrupulous lawyers on ignorant clients. This

decidedly new departure from any precedent was outlined in a

proclamation of good government, which he published according to Valdes

on the seventh, according to Alcazar on the twelfth of April, 1766. In

this memorable address to the people, he announced that he would devote

two hours daily to giving hearing to complainants; at this hearing were

to be present attorneys and clerks to take down the depositions and

render advice, and the judgments there delivered were to be signed

without delay, except on holidays. By these verbal audiences he

succeeded in clearing up many cases before they went to the regular

courts, thus protecting the people against exploitation by the numerous

officials attached to the lower courts and avoiding expensive lawsuits.

This new reform in the judicial department of the island especially

benefited the slaves, whose rights he endeavored to protect and insure.

The extraordinary discretion with which he performed this function of

his office, preserving his dignity and affability in the most trying

situations, endeared him to the people.

The most difficult task before him, and one calling for unusual prudence

and tact, was the execution of the royal decree concerning the expulsion

of certain religious orders against whom drastic measures had been taken

in Europe. The movement began in Portugal in 1759, when the Jesuits were

expelled from that country. Two years later the society was dissolved

and its members banished from France. Then the opposition to them made

itself felt in Spain. King Carlos III. had always been their zealous

protector, but he suddenly turned against them after the curious

Sombrero-and-Manta revolution in Madrid in 1766. His favorite, the

Marquis Squilaci, a Neapolitan, had tried to inaugurate various reforms

in the city, among them the cleaning of the streets, which were in an

unspeakable state of filth, the regulation of the prices of food and the

installment of a lighting system. Simple and reasonable as were these

innovations, they met with furious opposition on the part of certain

classes of the people. This opposition was fanned into open revolt by

another ordinance which he issued. It was directed against the enormous

sombreros and voluminous mantas (cape cloaks) worn with preference by

individuals who could thus easily disguise themselves, hide their

identity and carry dangerous weapons which played a dismal part in the

numerous assassinations that had shocked the authorities. An organized

revolt against these measures took place in Madrid and led to

considerable bloodshed. The king was made to believe that the Jesuits

were the prime agents in that insurrection, and at midnight of the

seventeenth of February, 1767, Carlos III. signed a decree ordering

their immediate expulsion from Spain. In this decree, the execution of

which was entrusted to Count Aranda, the king gave as reason for this

step, the necessity to maintain among his subjects order, obedience,

quiet and justice. At the same time he ordered the temporal property of

the society of Jesuits in the dominions of Spain to be adjudged to the

treasury. The order was executed with a promptness and a quiet deserving

especial comment. On the same day were sent to all judges, governors,

regents and viceroys a secret message, accompanied by a circular letter

saying that the message containing royal instructions to be obeyed by

every one should not be opened before April 1. Those officials were

moreover warned not to communicate the contents of the message to any

one, and should the public by some chance obtain such knowledge, those

responsible were to be treated as though they had violated the secret

and were guilty of opposition to the Sovereign's orders. This measure

was so effectively executed that the padres of the order were taken by

surprise, and were speedily sent on their way out of the country without

the slightest disorder. On the day of this expulsion the king had

affixed a "pragmatica" on the doors of the palace and public buildings

in the principal streets, in which it was said among other things, that

the individual priests would be given seventy-two pesos annually for

their means of subsistence, and the lay brothers sixty-five, that their

pensions would be paid out of the property of the Society, and that it

was prohibited in the whole monarchy to receive any individual of the

Society in particular, or to admit them into any community, or any court

or tribunal, or to appeal in their behalf. It was also prohibited to

write or influence the minds of the people for or against this

pragmatica or to enter into any correspondence with the members of the

expelled order. This royal decree was carried into effect in all the

colonies of Spanish America, and in Cuba it was Buccarelli to whom

credit was due for the tact displayed in performing this extremely

difficult duty. The proceeds of the property of the Society, which

reverted to the state, were devoted by Buccarelli to the endowment of

three professorships at the university, two for law and one for

mathematics. The decision of the King met with no open opposition among

the residents, although the Jesuit College, since then called the

Seminario de San Carlos, and their church, actually the Cathedral, had

been a center of interest to the society of Havana, and the much

esteemed and beloved Senor D. Pedro Agostine Morell was reported to have

been responsible for the coming of the order to Havana. Senor Morell

died on the twenty-ninth of December, 1769, and was succeeded in his

diocese by D. José Echeverria.

Governor Buccarelli made strenuous efforts to abolish contraband trading

in the island. He tried also to promote coffee culture in Cuba, which

had so far yielded so little as to be not even sufficient for home

consumption. His Majesty granted an extension of customs for five years

at that time. A new step for the improvement of the maritime department

was taken in the year 1766, when the Apostadero was created a military

and naval station. To the administration of this office was appointed D.

Juan Antonio de la Colina, who during the siege of Havana in 1762 had

ordered the sinking of the three vessels for the purpose of closing to

the British the entry of the port. Colina was invested with the same

powers possessed in Spain by the Captain-General of the naval

department. In the shipyard of Havana there were built at this time

vessels of various sizes and purposes, among them the \_Santissima

Trinidad\_, a vessel of one hundred and twelve guns, and three smaller

but excellent ships. The \_Santissima Trinidad\_ was destined some years

later to be destroyed in the battle of Trafalgar.

Two great calamities caused much distress and loss of lives and property

during Buccarelli's administration. In July and August, 1766,

earthquakes destroyed a great portion of Santiago de Cuba. It was

estimated that more than one hundred persons perished. Among them was

the governor, Marquis de Casa-Cagigal, who was removed from the ruins of

his residence. The disaster called for such great funds for the

alleviation of the suffering and the hardships occasioned by this

catastrophe, that the Royal Treasury had to retard the payment of the

salaries to the officials of the island. The civilian population

contributed generously to the relief funds collected in the principal

towns of the island. Governor Buccarelli himself sent contributions to

two hundred presidarios and to two engineers that had been stricken in

the performance of their duties.

The losses and the sorrow caused by this calamity had barely been

repaired and mitigated, when another disaster called for sympathy and

active assistance on the part of those that were spared. This was the

tremendous hurricane which swept over Havana on the fifteenth of

October, 1768, and left the city a scene of desolation. The vessels in

the harbor were torn from their anchorage, and drifted into the sea

lashed into fury by the tempest; the trees in the orchards were

uprooted, the fields appeared as if they had been churned. Buildings

were carried away from their foundations and deposited in remote places.

It was difficult to estimate the damage done in the city and its

neighborhood. Again a call for relief was sounded and responded to

readily. To assist the sufferers a great sum came from the proceeds of

the Jesuit properties recently seized, which according to the valuation

of experts amounted to several million pesos.

Buccarelli was appointed Viceroy of Mexico, and retired on the fourth of

August, 1771. He had proved a worthy successor of the much esteemed

Count Ricla and left behind him an excellent reputation. It was said of

him that he had never once lacked that political prudence which should

ever guide the actions of an official in such a responsible position as

was the governorship of Cuba. He was praised for his cautious inquiries

into legal abuses and his judicious settlement of cases, some of which

had for forty years occupied the time of the courts and filled the

pockets of greedy attorneys. He was reported under the most exasperating

circumstances to have always conserved his affable disposition and to

have never lost his temper, however great may have been the provocation.

Upon the whole, he was looked upon as a man of rare nobility of

character and Cuba was loath to part with him. He was one of the few

governors that had never given cause for any complaint. This was

attested by the Minister of the Indies, then Baylio Knight Julian de

Arriaga, who wrote to him by order of His Majesty that not the slightest

complaint of his government had come to the court.

CHAPTER VIII

While Cuba was enjoying the peace and prosperity which had followed its

return to Spain, Louisiana, which by the Treaty of Paris had been ceded

to Spain by Louis XV. of France, to indemnify her for the Floridas and

the government of which was annexed to that of Cuba, was going through a

most harassing period of anxiety. For this agreement, which transferred

the French inhabitants of Louisiana to Spain, was a violation of that

human right which at this very time was beginning to dawn in the

awakening political consciousness of mankind, and was to be a source of

serious conflicts between the French of Louisiana and the authorities

that came to establish upon her soil the rule of the king of Spain.

Bancroft gives an interesting account of the events that occurred. He

writes in his "History of the United States" (Vol. IV, p. 122):

"The Treaty of Paris left two European powers sole sovereigns of the

continent of North America. Spain, accepting Louisiana without

hesitation, lost France as her bulwark, and assumed new expenses and

dangers, to keep the territory from England. Its inhabitants loved the

land of their ancestry; by every law of nature and human freedom, they

had the right to protest against the transfer of their allegiance."

The spirit which found ultimate expression in the formula: "no

government without the consent of the governed" had been awakened in the

people of the North American continent. As soon as the news reached

Louisiana, that the territory was to be transferred under the rule of

the Spanish king, the call for an assembly was issued and every parish

in the colony sent representatives to voice their protest and deliberate

upon measures preventing the execution of that transfer. Under the

leadership of Lafreniere the people unanimously decided to address a

petition to the king of France, entreating him not to abandon them to

foreign rule. The loyalty with which the colony had so far adhered to

the kings of the mother country seemed to call for redress of the wrong

which was about to be inflicted upon them.

The wealthiest merchant of New Orleans, Jean Milhet, went to Paris as

the spokesman of the colony. He met Bienville, the pioneer founder of

the city which enjoyed at that time the reputation of being an American

Paris, and the octogenarian lent his aid in an attempt to appeal to the

French minister, Choiseul. But Choiseul gave them no encouragement. His

answer was, briefly: "It cannot be; France cannot bear the charge of

supporting the colony's precarious existence." On the tenth of July,

1765, the Brigadier D. Antonio de Ulloa, who was appointed by Governor

Buccarelli of Cuba to take possession of the territory ceded to Spain,

sent a letter from Havana to the superior council of the colony at New

Orleans announcing that he had orders to take possession of that city

for the Catholic king. But the French authorities did not remove the

flag of France and Acadian exiles continued to pour into the colony from

the north. Ulloa finally sailed from Havana and on the fifth of March,

1766, he arrived in the bay.

The very elements of nature seem to have conspired to lend gloom to his

arrival. A terrible thunderstorm and violent downpour of rain was a

feature of the landing. He was accompanied by some civil officers, three

Capuchin monks and eighty soldiers. The people, resentful of being

forced to submit to foreign rule, received him coldly and sullenly. He

had brought with him orders to redeem the seven million livres of French

paper money which had been a heavy burden upon a population of not more

than six thousand souls. He saw at once that the population was

unwilling to give up its nationality and to change its allegiance from

France to Spain. He learned that the French garrison peremptorily

refused to serve under Spanish commanders. So he was forced to leave the

government, which he was supposed to administer with the aid of the

Spanish officials that he had brought with him, in the hands of the

former French functionaries.

When in September of that year an ordinance was introduced by Ulloa

forcing French vessels having special permits to accept the paper

currency in payment for their cargoes at an unreasonable tariff, the

merchants of the colony protested vigorously. They declared stoutly:

"The extension and freedom of trade, far from injuring states and

colonies, are their strength and support."

Reports circulating about the disorders caused by this conflict between

the French population and the Spanish authorities frightened the owners

of merchant vessels that had been in the habit of trading at the colony

and its commerce with them was for the time being almost suspended. The

ordinance was rescinded, and Ulloa retired from New Orleans to the

Balise. He had to be contented to establish Spanish rule at that spot

and opposite Natchez at the river Iberville. Perhaps a man of different

disposition would have been able to reconcile the colonists to the

foreign régime. But Ulloa did not possess the amiable qualities that

characterized the Governor of Cuba, Buccarelli. He had to learn, as did

Lord Albemarle during his brief administration of Havana, that it was

not an easy task to conquer the hearts of a people and win them over to

the rule of foreign authorities.

According to Bancroft this irritating state of things continued for more

than two years. He writes (p. 123):

"But the arbitrary and passionate conduct of Ulloa, the depreciation of

the currency with the prospect of its becoming an almost total loss, the

disputes respecting the expenses incurred since the cession of 1762, the

interruption of commerce, a captious ordinance which made a private

monopoly of the traffic with the Indians, uncertainty of jurisdiction

and allegiance, agitated the colony from one end to the other. It was

proposed to make of New Orleans a republic, like Amsterdam or Venice,

with a legislative body of forty men, and a single executive. The people

of the country parishes crowded in a mass into the city; joined those of

New Orleans; and formed a numerous assembly, in which Lafreniere, John

Milhet, Joseph Milhet, and the lawyer Doucet were conspicuous. 'Why,'

said they, 'should the two sovereigns form agreements which can have no

result but our misery, without advantage to either?' On the twenty-fifth

of October, they adopted an address to the superior council, written by

Lafreniere and Caresse, rehearsing their griefs; and in their petition

of rights, they claimed freedom of commerce with the ports of France and

America, and the expulsion of Ulloa from the colony."

This address was signed by upwards of five hundred persons and at the

meeting of the council on the very next day it was, contrary to the

warnings of Aubry, accepted. The excitement of the people, when they

heard this good news, was indescribable. The French colors appeared in

the public square and veteran pioneers of the colony, women and children

crowded around to kiss the cherished flag of the much beloved mother

country. Nine hundred men pressed around the flag pole when it was

about to be raised, eager to lend a hand in what was to them a sacred

function, and men, women and children began to cry: "Vive le roi de

France! Nul autre que lui pour nous!" This clamorous demonstration

manifested to Ulloa the will of the people; and when they proceeded to

elect their town officials, he abandoned the attempt of establishing

Spanish rule in Louisiana. He set sail for Havana, and through his

representatives sent the news of these events to Spain. That incident

was so significant of the spirit of the times that Du Chatelet wrote to

Choiseul:

"The success of the people of New Orleans in driving away the Spaniards

is a good example for the English colonies; may they set about following

it."

For at this very time the British colonies of America were entering upon

their struggle for deliverance from restrictions upon trade as

symbolized in the stamp act and the atmosphere upon the continent was

rife with revolution. While the statesmen of France and even some of

England were inclined to grant greater freedom of commerce, Spain still

lagged behind. She had been the champion of the protective system for

centuries, and though it had not added to her wealth, on the contrary,

had helped to impoverish her, she was unwilling to depart from the

time-honored policy. Grimaldi, the Spanish minister, thus set forth the

stand which Spain was to take in this question:

"Besides, the position and strength of the countries occupied by the

Americans excite a just alarm for the rich Spanish possessions on their

borders. Their interlopers have already introduced their grain and rice

into our colonies. If this should be legalized and extended to other

objects, it would increase the prosperity of a neighbor already too

formidable. Moreover, this neighbor, if it should separate from the

metropolis, would assume the republican form of government; and a

republic is a government dangerous from the wisdom, the consistency, and

the solidity of the measures which it would adopt for executing such

projects of conquests as it would naturally form."

This fear of a republic in Louisiana haunted the king of Spain and his

cabinet and after discussing the question of returning it to France, it

was almost unanimously agreed that Louisiana was needed "as a granary

for Havana and Puerto Rico, a precaution against French contraband trade

and a barrier to keep off the English encroachments." The Duke of Alva

said, in a spirit true to his namesake of two centuries before:

"The world, and especially America, must see that the king can and will

crush even an intention of disrespect."

Masones de Lima expressed himself briefly:

"If France should recover Louisiana, she would annex it to the English

colonies or would establish its independence."

Minister de Aranda began cautiously:

"A republic in Louisiana would be independent of the European powers,

who would all cultivate her friendship and support her existence. She

would increase her population, enlarge her limits, and grow into a rich,

flourishing and free state, contrasting with our exhausted provinces."

He continued in this vein, dwelling at length upon the consequences such

an example might bring in its wake, and advised to keep New Orleans in

such insignificance as to tempt no attack.

The deliberations in the French cabinet were of quite a different

nature. Du Chatelet, as quoted by Bancroft (p. 151), declared:

"Spain can never derive benefit from Louisiana. She neither will nor

can take effective measures for its colonization and culture. She has

not inhabitants enough to furnish emigrants; and the religious and

political principles of her government will always keep away foreigners,

and even Frenchmen. Under Spanish dominion, the vast extent of territory

ceded by France to Spain on the banks of the Mississippi will soon

become a desert.

"The expense of colonies is required only by commerce; and the commerce

of Louisiana, under the rigor of the Spanish prohibitive laws, will

every day become more and more a nullity. Spain then will make an

excellent bargain, if she accords liberty to the inhabitants of

Louisiana, and permits them to form themselves into a republic. Nothing

can so surely keep them from falling under English rule as making them

cherish the protection of Spain and the sweetness of independence."

But the king of Spain had no thought save that of upholding the Spanish

traditions, and, accepting the advice of the Duke de Alva, decided to

crush the rebellion of Louisiana. He chose as his instrument the Conde

Alexandre O'Reilly, who had gone to Cuba with de Ricla and had

reorganized the army and militia of the island. Buccarelli was informed

of the royal decision and assisted O'Reilly in fitting out an expedition

which was to enable him to enforce Spanish rule and eradicate all traces

of republican leanings in the French colony. The people of New Orleans

had in the meantime once more sent a petition to France in the attempt

to enlist the sympathy and aid of the mother country in their endeavor

to remain French citizens. They also sent an appeal to the British at

Pensacola but the governor was not inclined to offend any powers with

which his king was at peace. So great was the dread of the Louisianans

of being forced to bow to Spanish rule, that they spoke seriously of

burning New Orleans rather than giving it up to the hated foreign

authorities.

O'Reilly set sail from Havana with a squadron of twenty-four vessels,

with three thousand well-trained troops on board. He arrived at the

Balise at the end of July. For a time panic reigned in the city. Aubry

tried to quiet the people, and advised them to submit and trust in the

clemency of the king of Spain. A committee of three, Lafreniere, as

representative of the council, Marquis of the colonists, and Milhet of

the merchants, presented themselves at the Balise to pay their respects

to the Spanish general and to appeal to his mercy. O'Reilly entertained

them at dinner and they left assured of perfect amnesty. On the eighth

of August the Spanish squadron anchored before the city itself, and the

authorities took possession in the name of his Majesty, Carlos III. of

Spain. The Spanish colors replaced those of France and it seemed as if

with this ceremony and the installment of Spanish officials in the

different departments of the colony's government the mission of O'Reilly

was ended. But there was still the punishment to be meted out to the

rebels who had dared to defy the authority of the Spanish king and had

sworn unchanging allegiance to the sovereign of France. After having

received from Aubry, who seemed to play traitor to his compatriots, a

list of those who had taken part in the recent insurrection and had

prepared the foundation of a republic with a protector and an elective

council of forty, O'Reilly on the twenty-first of August invited to his

home the most prominent citizens and asked the representatives of the

people's council to pass, one by one, into his private apartment. In

their unsuspecting innocence, they accepted this invitation as a mark of

distinction, but they were sadly disillusioned, when O'Reilly entered

with Aubry and three Spanish officers, and arrested them in the name of

his Majesty the King of Spain.

According to Bancroft two months were spent in collecting evidence

against the men. The defense asserted that they could not be tried and

condemned by Spanish officials for acts done before the proper

establishment of Spanish rule in the colony. The citizens begged for

time to send a petition to the Spanish sovereign. But all attempts to

divert O'Reilly from his purpose summarily to punish the men who had

dared to defy Ulloa, as the representative of Spain, were futile. Twelve

of the richest men of the colony had to see their estates confiscated;

from the proceeds were paid the officers employed in the trial. Six

others were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, from six years

to life. The five who had been most conspicuous in the revolt,

Lafreniere, Marquis, Milhet, Caresse and Noyau, were sentenced to death.

According to Bancroft they were shot in presence of the troops and the

people on the twenty-fifth of October, 1769. According to Spanish

historians they were hanged.

Whatever the fate of these French champions of the newly awakened desire

for liberty may have been, the effects of O'Reilly's cruelty were felt

far beyond the still ill defined boundaries of the colony. Though the

king of Spain was reported to have expressed his approval of O'Reilly's

summary procedure, even in Spain voices rose to condemn it. A pall

spread over Louisiana. Business life was for a time paralyzed. Commerce

came to an absolute standstill. In the country parishes of the colony,

the Spanish authority was accepted with sullen silence. Many of the

wealthy families, long identified with the history of the colony,

abandoned their homes and emigrated to other parts of the continent. The

government of the colony was reorganized on the pattern of all Spanish

colonies. The restrictions which were placed upon commerce robbed the

people of whatever initiative and enterprise they had possessed. A

period of stagnation set in, contrasting sharply with the activity and

the animation that had previously reigned in the city which claimed and

was reported by travelers of that time to have been fairly well started

on the road of becoming the Paris of America. It was an inauspicious

beginning for the Spanish régime in Louisiana. But the successor of

O'Reilly, D. Luis de Uznaga, made up for his predecessor's mistake by

showing so much discretion and exercising his authority with such

mildness, that he gradually succeeded in reconciling a part of the

population to the Spanish rule. Only the families of the victims that

had paid for their loyalty to France with their lives remained the

implacable enemies of Spain, as long as the colony remained under her

rule. Aubry, who immediately after the tragedy of the twenty-fifth of

October had set sail for France, suffered shipwreck on his voyage and

perished. The six men who had been committed to the dungeons of Havana

were, according to Bancroft, later set free by the aid of France.

This tragic prelude to the Spanish rule in Louisiana, little as it has

to do with Cuba, with which colony it was but loosely connected in an

administrative way, was the herald of a new epoch dawning upon the

horizon of the New World. The establishment of the little republic at

the mouth of the Mississippi had been frustrated. But the establishment

of the greater republic on the continent, under the protection of which

Cuba was to come some centuries later, was even at this time approaching

consummation.

CHAPTER IX

While the new Spanish possession annexed to Cuba by virtue of the Treaty

of Paris, Louisiana, was passing through that painful state of

transition which always follows the transfer of a nation belonging to a

certain race speaking a certain language and cherishing customs deeply

rooted in the national consciousness, to the rule of another nation, of

a different race, speaking a different language and practising widely

different customs, Cuba was enjoying a period of peace, prosperity and

progress. When Buccarelli was appointed Viceroy of Mexico, D. Pascal

Jiminez de Cisneros once more exercised superior authority as

provisional governor of the island. But in November, 1771, the newly

appointed governor arrived from Spain, the Captain-General D. Felipe

Fons de Viela, Marquis de la Torre. He was a valiant soldier who in the

wars of Spain with Italy and Portugal had distinguished himself by his

conduct and his ability, and had risen to his high rank at the cost of

his blood. He was a native of Zaragoza, a Knight of the military order

of Santiago and Alderman in perpetuity, or prefect-governor of his

native city. He came to Cuba with the reputation of an exceptionally

worthy official and in the five years of his administration not only

justified but far surpassed the hopes that his arrival awakened in the

population of the colony. He entered upon his duties on the eighteenth

of November, 1771.

Marquis de la Torre was without doubt one of the most efficient and

successful governors that Cuba ever had. Havana was at that time

growing in population and extent, and entering upon a new era in her

economic development, due largely to the foresight of King Carlos III.,

who had granted her an exemption from certain taxes. The city had,

however, suffered so much in previous times, first from the perpetual

unrest arising from the fear of invasion by pirates, then from the

siege, and lastly from the hurricane of 1768, that it needed a man,

clear of purpose and strong of will, to inaugurate the many innovations

which he introduced, in order to make the place worthy of being the

metropolis of Spain's richest island-possession in America. While Ricla

and Buccarelli, entering upon their governorships immediately after the

occupation of Havana by the British, had of necessity devoted most of

their energy towards insuring the safety of the place from a repetition

of the events of 1762, and had therefore been primarily concerned with

the fortifications and the military reorganization of the place, la

Torre was able to direct his attention to improvements, which made for a

higher standard of public health, and paved the way for a culture, which

in spite of the wealth of the population, was still only in its

beginnings. Coming as he did from the Spain of Carlos III., who during

his long peaceful reign did so much for the cultural progress of his

country by introducing measures of sanitation and other improvements

unknown to his predecessors, it was the ambition of la Torre to make

Havana worthy of comparison with the large cities of the mother country.

[Illustration: IN OLD HAVANA

Havana is at once one of the oldest and of the newest of the great

cities of the western world, and the architecture of its streets

exhibits samples of the work of five centuries. This scene, showing the

side wall of the great Cathedral, is typical of the older portions of

the city, with comparatively narrow streets and characteristic Spanish

houses.]

It seems almost unbelievable that Havana had up to this time lacked

proper pavements; that it had no public promenade, such as every

European city far inferior in size and population possessed, that the

streets were disfigured by unsightly and unsanitary out-houses and that

even the government buildings had been put up with little regard

for appearance, not to mention beauty. Moreover it is almost incredible

that a city, the population of which belonged to the race that had

produced some of the greatest dramatists of the world, Calderon and Lope

de la Vega, had after an existence of some centuries not yet erected a

playhouse, providing wholesome entertainment for her residents there to

enjoy the works of their master poets and be for the time of the

performance lifted above the purely material pursuits of their daily

life. This was the state in which la Torre found Havana and he

immediately set to work to study the city's most urgent needs and to

raise it as rapidly as possible to the high standard he intended to

apply.

The first task that claimed his attention was the improvement of the

streets. When the plan to have them paved was about to be realized it

was found that there was not a sufficient quantity of cobblestones

available for that purpose. So the contractors had to employ timber

soaked in tar, which had proved to be extremely durable, little affected

by atmospheric conditions, and offered only the one disadvantage of

making a very slippery surface in the rainy season. The next step

towards raising Havana out of its village state to urban cleanliness and

dignity was the abolition of the ugly and unsanitary out-houses, a

measure which seemed so radical and revolutionary to the conservative

elements of the population that it met with no little opposition. Then

la Torre deliberated upon plans for public promenades, and those of

Paula and Almadea Nueva were laid out, followed by the Mall in the

interior of the city and the Nueva Prado outside of the city walls.

Great was the delight of the residents, who slowly began to wake up to

the benefits and the pleasures to be derived by these attempts at

improvement and embellishment of their town. Among the ordinances

insuring the health, the beauty and the safety of the city, was one

prohibiting the roofing of houses with guano, which had long been the

source of dangerous conflagrations, aside from its unsanitary features

and its being an eyesore. Modest as these demands may seem to twentieth

century readers, la Torre had no little difficulty in carrying them

through. But thanks to his energy, perseverance and executive power the

streets of Havana with their neat pavements, and the public promenades

with their gravel walks not only improved the appearance of the city,

but stimulated the dormant esthetic sense of the inhabitants to an

appreciation of civic beauty.

The next step undertaken by la Torre for the improvement of Havana was

the erection of more suitable public buildings, especially one for the

governor himself and for the Ayuntamento, which, strange enough, was to

be under the same roof as the public jail. Under his order were rebuilt

seven of the old barracks for the soldiers and a new one was erected for

the veterans. A great number of bridges was built, that of the Santa Fe

passage over the Cojimar river, that of las Vegas on the road of Santa

Maria del Rosario; the bridge of Arroyo Hondo, under the leeside of that

town; the Enriquez and the Carrillo, and others. All these bridges had

shields of arms and inscriptions on their pillars and with their many

arches presented a beautiful sight. The harbor was thoroughly dredged

with the aid of twelve pontoons and barges manned by a crew of

presidarios (criminals condemned to hard labor) and slaves. The wharves

of Carpineti, Cabana and Marimilena were constructed. Finally there was

erected the first theatre, which was in its way as important an addition

to the cultural life of the city as had been the foundation of the

university some time before. For the wealthy and intellectually

ambitious part of the population had keenly felt the lack of dignified

entertainment and not a few individuals had made an annual pilgrimage to

Madrid to enjoy a season in drama and music and keep in touch with the

progress of the arts. The value of all the public edifices and

reconstruction was appraised by D. Simon de Ayala as amounting to two

hundred and fourteen thousand eight hundred seventy-three and one half

reals; in the light of more recent days a very small amount in

proportion to the number and the importance of the buildings

constructed.

Nor were the efforts of la Torre by any means limited to the improvement

of the capital. Trinidad, Santiago and Puerto Principe benefited largely

from the earnest desire for improvement that actuated Governor la Torre

to undertake these many works. He was instrumental in the founding of

the towns of Jaruco and of Nueva Filipina, which was later called Pinar

del Rio. He inspired new life into all the towns that he visited during

his administration and turned the colony into one of the richest and

most beautiful, by applying to its improvement the most advanced ideas

in civic management that were known in his time. From the census which

la Torre ordered to be taken it appears that there were on the island

three hundred and thirty-nine corrales or well defined farms, seven

thousand eight hundred and fourteen farms for horse-breeding, estancias

for cattle pasture and vegas for tobacco culture and four hundred and

seventy-eight sugar plantations. There were twenty-nine thousand five

hundred and eighty casas (buildings, private or public), ninety churches

and fifty-two parochial chapels. The population of the island numbered

one hundred and seventy-two thousand inhabitants; of which ninety-six

thousand four hundred and thirty were whites, forty-five thousand six

hundred and thirty-three slaves; that of Havana seventy-five thousand;

Santiago nineteen thousand; Bayamo twelve thousand; Santa Clara eight

thousand two hundred; Sancti Spiritus eight thousand, Guanabacoa seven

thousand nine hundred; Trinidad five thousand six hundred, Matanzas

three thousand two hundred and San Juan de los Remedios three thousand.

The reforms which la Torre inaugurated in the government itself were

also remarkable. In the proclamation published on the fourth of April,

1772, he repeated the ordinances issued by his predecessors to insure

order and quiet in the communities; but he added some important

innovations. He delivered the people from the exploitation they had

suffered at the hands of annually appointed visitadores de partido

(party judges), whose legal malpractices had been a source of great

grievance to the citizens, and he compelled the members of the inferior

courts of justice to reside in their respective districts. Commerce had

after its transient extension during the British dominion once more

begun to suffer from the restrictions imposed by the government of

Spain. But about the year 1771, it was revived, for the export duties on

sugar, honey, cane brandy, hides and wax were lowered and cotton could

be exported free of duty. In order to stimulate the wax industry, the

growth of which was remarkably rapid and added largely to the wealth of

the island, la Torre published in form of a decree measures for its

protection and promotion. Among them he prohibited the cutting of trees

on which there were hives. In the year 1770 there were exported to Vera

Cruz more than five arrobas of wax. At the end of the same year Cuba

exported to Spain and various points in America twelve thousand five

hundred and forty-six and in the following year twenty-one thousand one

hundred and eighty-seven arrobas. The Captain-General was authorized in

certain cases to import provisions from abroad. But contraband

prevailed and flourished as ever. Governor Torre engaged in an active

campaign against the smugglers and was the cause of their suffering

heavy losses; but he was unable to exterminate the evil. This was mainly

due to the arrogance and arbitrary attitude of Governor D. Antonio Ayanz

de Ureta, who favored the smugglers that carried on a lively trade in

the eastern part of the island with Jamaica and the foreign Antilles.

Much as General la Torre ingratiated himself with the citizens by his

gentle disposition as well as his sound judgment and impeccable honesty,

he was not to be spared disagreeable experiences with other officials.

One of these was with the commandant of the Apostadero or naval station,

D. Juan Bautista Bonel, to whom credit is due for having enriched the

shipyard by some magnificent structures. The dispute between them

concerned some civilians who were implicated in a case against

individuals belonging to the navy, and whom la Torre asked to be given

over to his jurisdiction. Another unpleasantness was caused by

conflicting orders given by la Torre and the commandant-general of the

army. The latter had opened the new gateway that ran as far as the

suburb of Jesus Maria in the neighborhood of the arsenal, and it was

said the governor ordered that of la Tenaza to be closed, because the

commandant opposed its running to that suburb and thus running through

the arsenal. But upon the complaints that were entered at Madrid by

Ureta as well as the other gentlemen, that caused these dissensions, his

Majesty always upheld the side of la Torre and dismissed the

accusations. Governor la Torre retired on the twelfth of June, 1776, and

died in Madrid as Lieutenant-General on the sixth of July, 1784. His

term of administration was the first during which the revenues exceeded

a million of pesos, which augured an era of prosperity for Cuba.

That Governor Torre left Havana a healthier and more beautiful city to

live in, than it had been before, is an achievement which gives his

administration a place of its own among those that were especially

concerned with the welfare of the population. Visitors to Cuba that had

marked the difference between the Havana of 1745 and that of 1762, would

have been even more impressed with the appearance of the city after

Torre had left upon it the seal of his improvements. The residents began

to take a pride in the capital of the island; a civic spirit arose and

began to weld the inhabitants more closely by the bond of interests,

which at last began to surpass those associated with their purely

material welfare. Visitors coming from the old centers of European

culture had formerly commented upon the absence in the colonies of

places where men and women could gather for social intercourse and

intelligent entertainment. The French visitor quoted in a previous

chapter, after his visit to Cuba and Santo Domingo, wrote rather

dejectedly:

"Life offers no attraction here for anybody who is not in commerce.

Dependent on one's self, there is no relaxation for anyone who has lived

in France and there played a certain rôle. One must not expect theaters,

nor cafés, nor public promenades, and still less societies. One does not

know how to spend the time and this is a real annoyance to a man of

leisure. The carnival, especially where there are French, offers the

only opportunity to banish in a degree the dryness of the entertainments

in these countries--and what entertainments! One would never dream of

seeking them, if one were not so far from Europe. The residents in

comfortable circumstances come to town, you play a game of cards in some

house, in others you drink abundantly, and in most you are bored. The

country has hardly more attraction for any one having no residence; but

besides the restraint which is banished there, you can at least enjoy a

morning and an evening walk; and if you are so lucky as to come across

some wealthy resident of the better class, you may in rare instances

find yourself in agreeable company. But there are parts of the country

where neighbors hardly visit one another once a year."

This is a true glimpse of life in the colonies before the British

occupation. Had the distinguished foreigner who made these observations

come to Cuba after the administration of la Torre, he would have found

the theatre and the promenades, and perhaps even the cafés he had

previously missed. For the prosperity which set in for the island after

King Carlos III. began to relax the unreasonable restrictions upon her

trade and navigation, brought with it to the wealthier classes that

leisure which calls for higher forms of social life and leads to the

appreciation of such entertainment as the arts of music and drama offer.

The theatre of Havana became the meeting place of Cuba's intellectuals

and the center from which began to radiate the modest beginnings of a

Cuban culture, which a century later was to produce poets that took

their place beside those of the mother country. With closer commercial

relations and increasing facilities of travel even the inhabitants of

the country living on their haciendas a beautiful domestic life, but one

making for a certain clannishness, gradually came out of their

isolation, and benefiting by the progress of their urban neighbors, were

stimulated to participate in enterprises which a few decades before they

would have spurned. The constantly growing intercourse with the Old

World, bringing them into touch with contemporary thought, was another

leaven that began to work in the minds of the Cubans, and to encourage

activities and interests held as being entirely without the range of a

people whose chief pursuits for some centuries had been agriculture.

Thus Cuba entered upon her first period of progress.

This was due in no little measure to the peace and prosperity of Spain

during the long reign of King Carlos III. For the overseas colonies of

the European powers were so closely associated with and dependent upon

the mother countries, that their healthy progress as a rule indicated

healthy political and economic conditions of the latter. If there was at

this time any unrest and anxiety at the courts and in the diplomatic

circles of Europe this was due to events that were happening in North

America and were beginning to shake the foundations of the old order. On

the nineteenth of April, 1775, there had been fired the first shot in

the struggle upon which the thirteen British colonies had entered in

order to secure their freedom from the unbearable restrictions which

Britain had imposed upon them. That shot sounded an alarm which was

heard all over the world and sent a thrill through millions of hearts.

The spirit that had dictated the works of the French encyclopedists and

had worked like a leaven of liberty in millions of minds, had become

incarnate in the British colonists and was clamoring for consummation of

its ultimate aims. Monarchs and ministers convened in solemn conferences

and deliberated seriously upon the possible effects of the action taken

by the rebels against British overrule.

Spain and France, sharing with Britain colonial possessions in America,

were profoundly disturbed. They had been allies in the recent war

against Britain, and they still depended upon each other for mutual

counsel and consolation. The king of France, Louis XVI., an autocrat if

ever there was, had an excellent minister of finance in Turgot, a man of

extraordinary foresight, of liberal judgment and of rare administrative

ability. After Vergennes, the minister of foreign affairs, who favored

the emancipation of America, had forwarded to the king a cautiously

worded report upon the situation, Turgot was asked to give his opinion,

and did so in a memorial which very succinctly stated the position of

both France and Spain, and contained the following significant passages:

"The yearly cost of colonies in peace, the enormous expenditures for

their defence in war, lead to the conclusion that it is more

advantageous for us to grant them entire independence, without waiting

for the moment when events will compel us to give them up. This view

would, not long since, have been scorned as a paradox, and rejected with

indignation. At present we may be the less revolted at it, and perhaps

it may not be without utility to prepare consolation for inevitable

events. Wise and happy will be that nation which shall first know how to

bend to the new circumstances, and consent to see in its colonies,

allies and not subjects. When the total separation of America shall have

healed the European nations of jealousy of commerce, there will exist

among men one great cause of war the less, and it is very difficult not

to desire an event which is to accomplish this good for the human race.

In our colonies we shall save many millions, and, if we acquire the

liberty of commerce and navigation with all the northern continent, we

shall be amply compensated.

"The position of Spain with regard to its American possessions will be

more embarassing. Unhappily she has less facility than any other power

to quit the route she has followed for two centuries, and conform to a

new order of things. Thus far she has directed her policy to

maintaining the multiplied prohibitions with which she has embarrassed

her commerce. She has made no preparations to substitute for empire over

her American provinces a fraternal connection founded on identity of

origin, language, and manners, without the opposition of interests; to

offer them liberty as a gift, instead of yielding it to force. Nothing

is more worthy of the wisdom of the king of Spain and his council, than

from this present time to fix their attention on the possibility of this

forced separation, and on the measures to be taken to prepare for it."

Alas! the warning of Turgot was not heeded by the government of Spain

and a whole century had to elapse and many lives had to be sacrificed

before the Spanish colonies in America were to gain their independence!

Both the French and the Spanish king were opposed to taking sides in the

war which Britain was waging with her colonies; but they were quite

ready secretly to help those colonies, knowing that their success meant

the weakening of British power! Bancroft reports in his "History of the

United States" (Vol. V., p. 321):

"After a year's hesitation and resistance, the king of France, early in

May, informed the king of Spain that he had resolved, under the name of

a commercial house, to advance a million of French livres, about two

hundred thousand dollars, towards the supply of the wants of the

Americans."

His example was followed by the king of Spain, who, a few weeks later,

without the knowledge of any of his advisers except Grimaldi, sent a

draft for a million livres more, as his contribution!

Such had been the effect of the first shot fired in the struggle for

American independence. When the news of the official declaration of this

independence on July fourth, 1776, reached Paris and Madrid, the worst

fears of the upholders of the old régime and the most exalted dreams of

the champions of the new political ideal were realized. But neither

France nor Spain dared openly to take sides against Britain, both having

ample reason to avoid being involved in new wars. As Turgot intimated in

his message, Spain was far more directly interested in the step taken by

the British colonies and the possible effects it might have upon her own

possessions. Hence France decided to do nothing without the agreement of

Spain. Again it is Bancroft who gives the clearest statement of the

economic position of Spain and her reasons for avoiding a break with

Britain. He writes in his "History of the United States" (Vol. V., p.

535):

"Equal to Great Britain in the number of her inhabitants, greatly

surpassing that island in the extent of her home territory and her

colonies, she did not love to confess or to perceive her inferiority in

wealth and power. Her colonies brought her no opulence, for their

commerce, which was soon to be extended to seven ports, then to twelve,

and then to nearly all, was still confined to Cadiz; the annual exports

to Spanish America had thus far fallen short of four millions of dollars

in value, and the imports were less than the exports. Campomanes was

urging through the press the abolition of restriction on trade; but for

the time the delusion of mercantile monopoly held the ministers fast

bound. The serious strife with Portugal had for its purpose the

occupation of both banks of the river La Plata, that so the mighty

stream might be sealed up against all the world but Cadiz. As a

necessary consequence, Spanish shipping received no development; and,

though the king constructed ships of the line and frigates, he could

have no efficient navy, for want of proper nurseries of seamen. The war

department was in the hands of an indolent chief, so that its business

devolved on O'Reilly, whose character is known to us from his career in

Louisiana, and whose arrogance and harshness were revolting to the

Spanish nation. The revenue of the kingdom fell short of twenty-one

millions of dollars, and there was a notorious want of probity in the

management of the finances. In such a state of its navy, army, and

treasury, how could it make war on England?"

Nobody realized these facts better than King Carlos III. His new

ministers, D. Jose Monino, Count de Florida Blanca, who had succeeded

Grimaldi, and Galvez, the minister for the Indies, agreed with the

sovereign; and when Arthur Lee, emissary of the new republic, appeared

in Europe and sought an audience with the authorities in Madrid, he was

detained at Burgos to confer with Grimaldi, who was then on his way to

his native Italy. Lee found little encouragement and satisfaction in

this interview; he was told that the Americans would find at New Orleans

three thousand barrels of powder and some store of clothing, and that

Spain would perhaps send them a cargo of goods from Bilbao, but he was

urged to hurry back to Paris. Florida Blanca, too, very decidedly

expressed his aversion to the new republic and was reported to have said

"that the independence of America would be the worst example to other

colonies, and would make the Americans in every respect the worst

neighbors that the Spanish colonies could have." Thus the constant fear

that the close proximity of an independent state might rouse the spirit

of independence in her own colonies, determined the policy of Spain

toward the War of American Independence.

Yet her colonies in America gave Spain little trouble at that time,

being contented with their lot and working out the problem of their

existence as well as their loyalty to Spanish institutions would

permit. Cuba, especially, was at that time absorbed in living up to the

high standards set her by the three excellent governors that had

followed the British domination: Ricla, Buccarelli and la Torre. Their

successor was the Field Marshal D. Diego José Navarro, a native of

Badajoz. He entered upon the duties of his administration on the twelfth

of July, 1777, at a time when the war being waged between Britain and

her American colonies had created an atmosphere of apprehension and once

more brought near the possibility of a conflict with the old enemy. The

repeated protests of her economic experts against her trade restrictions

had induced the government of Spain to issue the royal "Ordenanza para

el libre comercio con las colonias," a decree due to the constant

efforts of the Minister of the Indies, D. José de Galvez, whose

experience in the colonies had given his voice sufficient weight to

convince his Majesty of the urgent necessity of this reform. During two

and a half centuries Spain had traded with America only, through the

ports of Cadiz and Sevilla; this ordinance opened all the ports of the

peninsula to traffic with all those of Spanish America.

At the same time was ordered a reduction in the duties and the

permission of importing foreign goods, though they always had to be

carried in Spanish boats. These duties were henceforth three per cent.

on Spanish products, and seven per cent. on foreign products. When the

value of the goods was greater than their bulk, a duty was levied,

called estranjeria (foreign custom). As a result of this reform, the

revenues of Cuba which in 1764 had amounted to not more than three

hundred and sixteen thousand pesos, rose in the year 1777 to one million

twenty seven thousand two hundred and thirteen pesos. Contraband which

had been one of the worst evils that the Cuban authorities had to

contend with for two centuries, visibly declined and was soon limited to

articles of luxury. At the same time there was also ordered by royal

decree the unification of the coinage, and the macuquino, a coin with

the milled edges cut off, was replaced by one of silver with a corded

edge. All these reforms were received by the people with unbounded

enthusiasm. In all parts of the island the inhabitants spontaneously

gave vent to their joy in brilliant festivals and in a display of

oratory, which acclaimed the beginning of the new era for Cuba.

Like Buccarelli, Governor Navarro was much concerned with the legal

malpractice that had long existed in the courts. The bar was composed of

many men who with insidious cunning stirred up and prolonged innumerable

lawsuits. Their machinations not only violated the sense of justice, but

directly disgraced their profession and the judicial administration of

the island. So many families had been ruined by such legal procedures,

that Governor Navarro was determined to check the operations of these

sharks. He ordered that no one but a duly appointed notary should be

permitted to draft legal documents and perform judicial acts and he

reduced the number of these men to thirty-four for the whole island. He

also appointed an appraiser to adjust the costs of legal proceedings and

ordered that lawyers who had been convicted of malpractice should be

deprived of the right to plead. The Audiencia of Santo Domingo protested

against some of these decisions of Navarro, but he succeeded in

convincing the court of the justice of his acts.

CHAPTER X

In the mean time events in North America continued to agitate the

diplomatic world of Europe and to stir up trouble. As Great Britain had

begun to interfere with the commerce and navigation of France, the

relations between the two countries grew daily more strained. France had

come to an understanding with Spain, that by the beginning of the year

1778, the two powers would have to combine to make war on Britain, but

Carlos III., getting old and more and more conservative, did not want to

depart from his policy of neutrality and wanted to end his days in

peace. When on the thirteenth of March, the British secretary of state

received from the French ambassador a note, saying that France and the

United States of North America had signed a treaty of friendship and

commerce without any definite advantage to France, but that the king was

determined to protect the lawful commerce of his subjects, a state of

war was established between the two kingdoms. Efforts to change the

decision of Spain were repeated; the return of Florida to Spain was

offered with the consent of the United States. But Florida had by this

time lost all charm for the conservative court of Spain, so awed by the

fact that a republic was to be the neighbor of her American possessions

that it was bound not to do anything that might help the insurgents, and

sooner or later kindle the desire for independence in their own

colonies. Only the prospect of recovering Gibraltar might at that moment

have swayed the decision of Spain. But that seemed beyond reasonable

possibility.

The king was in an embarrassing position. The compact entered into by

the two countries when the Bourbons ascended the Spanish throne, a

certain respect for the senior branch of the family and the grudge which

he bore Britain, tempted him many a time to revise his decision. His

ministers, too, were by no means unanimous in approving Spain's

neutrality. While some held that to assist rebels in their fight upon

their mother country was morally wrong and politically imprudent,

others, impatient of the passive inactivity to which they were reduced,

modestly expressed their disapproval. One of them, Florida Blanca, more

ambitious for himself than for his country, eager at any moment to

embrace an opportunity of making a name for himself, continued to

negotiate with the statesmen of France and secretly hoped that somehow

he would have a hand in the return of Gibraltar to Spain. In this vague

hope he quietly worked to enlarge and improve both the army and the

fleet of his country; he collected a large number of battering cannon at

Seville, and the port of Cadiz soon held a greater number of well-built

vessels than it had seen since the golden age of Spanish maritime power.

Cunningly holding out the prospect of a final alliance against the

common enemy to France, while at the same time offering Britain to

become a mediator in the bloody conflict, he succeeded in delaying any

decisive action on the part of France. The French became irritable.

Finally the diplomats of the two powers came to an agreement and on the

twelfth of April, 1779, a treaty of alliance was signed.

The terms of this treaty were as follows: France was to invade Great

Britain or Ireland; if she succeeded in wresting from the British

Newfoundland, she pledged herself to share the fisheries exclusively

with Spain; she also pledged herself to secure for Spain the return of

Minorca, Pensacola and Mobile, the Bay of Honduras and the coast of

Campeche. Moreover, the two powers pledged themselves to continue the

war on Britain, until that country agreed to return Gibraltar to Spain.

From the United States Spain expected as reward of her services the

basin of the St. Lawrence and the lakes, the unrestricted navigation of

the Mississippi and all the territory lying between that river and the

Alleghany mountains. The United States were by this treaty to be free to

make peace with Britain, as soon as their independence was recognized,

but were not in any way expected to continue war until Gibraltar was

returned to Spain.

The Spanish colonies in America proved at this time that the distance

which separated them from the mother country, and the greater sense of

space and elbowroom which they enjoyed and in which several generations

of their people had been born, was beginning to differentiate the

Spanish Americans from their kinsmen in old Spain. Unable in the varying

aspects of rough pioneer life to preserve the old traditions and

conventions, the character of the people themselves had changed. They

were not to be bound by the numerous considerations that entered into

every step European nations took. They were not slow in taking action,

when there was cause and opportunity for such. The news of the alliance

between France and Spain against Britain was received in Cuba and

Louisiana with intense interest. Within a few days both colonies were

swayed by the desire to avenge wrongs formerly suffered at the hands of

the British, and with a remarkable promptness framed measures to this

effect. Governor Navarro immediately issued privateering patents to

Spanish ships and they as promptly set out on their quest and captured a

number of British vessels. The coasts of Cuba were closely watched for

the possible arrival of a hostile fleet, and the garrison of el Morro

was keenly on the alert.

In Louisiana the feeling against the British ripened into the plan of

reconquering Pensacola. D. Bernardo de Galvez, who had settled in that

colony in 1776, had in 1779 been elected Governor and invested with full

rights, proprietary and otherwise. The official council of the colony

was of the opinion that Louisiana should assume a passive defensive,

until advices and perhaps reenforcements were received from Havana. But

Galvez, enterprising and energetic in all his undertakings, and a

fighter whose valor had been tried before, was determined to attack the

British without delay. He collected a force of only seven hundred men,

according to Valdes, fourteen hundred according to Blanchet, among them

many veterans and militia men, and marched towards Fort Manchac. It was

a perilous and trying expedition through a country then little more than

a wilderness. But he arrived at his goal and surprised the garrison,

taking the British prisoners. Encouraged by this success, he left the

captured fort under guard of a part of his force and turned towards

Baton Rouge. There he found the enemy much stronger; the British under

command of Lieutenant-Colonel Dickson opposed his attacks so

strenuously, that his forces had to entrench themselves in anticipation

of a prolonged siege. But after nine days, on the twenty first of

September, Dickson surrendered and his garrison, too, were made

prisoners. Point Thompson and Point Smith, British establishments on the

eastern bank of the Mississippi, followed, and leaving General de Camp

in charge of the conquered territory, Galvez hurried to Cuba to secure

reenforcements for his attack on Mobile and Pensacola.

In Havana he found everything in readiness to engage in or furnish an

expedition against the British possessions. He had in the meantime been

raised to the rank of Field Marshal and everything seemed to favor his

plan. During the preparations there arrived in the port the squadron of

D. José Solano, consisting of eight thousand men under the command of

the Lieutenant-General D. Victorio Navia. Receiving a valuable addition

to his troops from Solano, Galvez prepared to embark with five

regiments, a small squadron of dragoons, two companies of artillery and

forty pieces of ordnance. The expedition was abundantly supplied with

ammunition and provisions. On the sixteenth of October, 1780, they set

sail with fifty transports, escorted by Solano, seven ships, five

frigates and three brigantines. But on the following day a terrible

hurricane surprised them out at sea, seriously damaging some of the

ships and dispersing the others. Galvez was obliged to return to the

sailing port without even knowing the fate of some of his vessels. A

number of them on escaping from the storm drifted towards Campeche,

others to the mouth of the Mississippi, still others to unknown ports

and one was known to have been wrecked.

News coming to Havana, that the forces at Mobile, which had in the

meantime been taken by General de Campo, were in need of food and

threatened with an attack by the British, a council of generals was held

and ordered two ships, capable of transporting five hundred men and

carry a sufficient amount of provisions, to be immediately prepared and

sent on their way. The convoy sailed on the sixth of December under the

command of the Captain of the frigate, D. José de Rada. On arriving at

the mouth of the Mobile, he did not dare to enter, having found some

variation in the channel, and sailed directly for the Balize of the

Mississippi. He left his cargo at the entrance and returned to Havana.

Two days later two British frigates penetrated the very Bay of Mobile

and the detachment of the village was reported to be attacked. D.

Bernardo de Galvez urged that, although the state of things did not

permit a repetition of the expedition that had sailed from Havana in

October, some troops be given him with which to reenforce the garrisons

of Louisiana and Mobile. There, as soon as a favorable opportunity

presented itself, he would pledge the inhabitants to a further effort

and attack Pensacola. The plan was approved by the council, thirteen

hundred and fifteen men were organized, including five companies of

grenadiers, five vessels were equipped as transports and the war-ship

\_San Ramon\_, under command of D. José Calvo, the frigate \_Santa Clara\_,

commanded by Captain D. Miguel Alderato, the \_Santa Cecilia\_, commanded

by Captain D. Miguel de Goicochoa, the tender \_Caiman\_, commanded by

Captain D. José Serrato, and the packet \_San Gil\_ under Captain D. José

Maria Chacon, were designated as escorts. The whole fleet was placed

under the command of D. Bernardo de Galvez, who now bore the title of

General.

A communication sent by the General of the Marine to D. José Calvo shows

in what esteem Galvez was held and how eager were the Spanish

authorities to help him with his attack on Pensacola:

"To the question contained in your paper of yesterday, that I manifest

to you the terms under which you must subordinate to and obey the orders

of the Field Marshal of the Royal armies, D. Bernardo de Galvez, I beg

to advise that your honor shall put in practice with all your well-known

and notorious diligence those that the expressed Don Bernardo shall give

your Honor relative to the conquest of Pensacola, without separating

yourself in other things from what the Royal Ordinances of the Armada

provide, endeavoring that the strictest discipline be observed in all

the ships under your orders as provided therein. May our Lord keep you

many years.

"JUAN BAUTISTA BONET,

"Sr. D. José Calvo.

"Havana, 6th of February, 1781."

Galvez embarked on the thirteenth of February, the troops followed on

the fourteenth and the convoy sailed on the twenty-eighth. The General

had previously sent Captain D. Emiliano Maxent in a schooner to New

Orleans with orders to the Commandant of Arms, so that the troops which

D. José Rada had left and those that had arrived there on account of the

October hurricane should set out to meet the convoy. He had ordered them

to be ready to sail at the first signal. On the first of March the

General sent D. Miguel de Herrera of the Regiment of Spain to Mobile by

schooner with letters for D. José Espeleta, directing him to proceed to

the east of Santa Rose island, fronting the port of Pensacola. He

advised him to march by land to form a union with the troops of his

command. Such were the extensive and well calculated preparations made

by the Spaniards for the recapture of Pensacola. After Galvez had

effected the junction of his troops with those of Mobile and New

Orleans, he proceeded towards the place which was well fortified and

garrisoned.

The progress of the blockade was at first very slow. Colonel Campbell,

who commanded the British, offered a stubborn resistance to the attacks

of the Spanish troops. But Galvez was equally persistent and undaunted

continued in his operations. Very much smaller in number than the

Spanish forces, the British seemed from the first to be doomed to

defeat. But the decisions of the siege hung a long time in the balance.

After a brave struggle against odds, the British began to relax in their

firing, while the Spaniards seemed ever to bring into the firing line

new batteries. Finally the powder magazine was blown up and demolished

some of the advance works, and on the ninth of May, 1781, the British

garrison surrendered with honors. The conquest of Pensacola decided the

fate of Florida, which returned to Spanish dominion. As a reward for his

valor the king promoted D. Galvez to the rank of Lieutenant-General and

gave him the title Conde de Galvez. The British garrison had to pledge

themselves not to serve during the war against Spain or her allies, but

were left free to do so against the United States.

During the administration of Governor Navarro, which was soon to come to

an end, there was one measure enacted, which anticipated our modern

prohibition. It was promulgated by means of a proclamation of the year

1780, which prohibited, except for medicinal uses, the sale of liquor.

So disastrous and wide-spread were the ravages caused by an immoderate

consumption of distilled spirits, brandy, wine, etc., in the population

of the island, and especially among the soldiers, that heavy fines were

imposed upon the offenders; the first offence was punished by a fine of

fifty pesos, the second by one of one hundred pesos and the third by

banishment and a fine. The fear that the British would invade Havana or

Puerto Rico caused a revival of all military activities and the building

of additions and improvements of the fortifications. In the year 1781

Governor Navarro, being old and sickly, resigned his office and retired

to Spain, where the king rewarded his services with the

Captain-Generalship of Estramadura.

CHAPTER XI

Washington's warning of entangling alliances comes to one's mind on

reading the curious results of the concerted action against Britain

decided upon by France and Spain in Europe, while the United States were

fighting the British in North America, and the Spanish colonies of Cuba

and Louisiana were attempting to wrest from them the Gulf coast. The

lure of Gibraltar had led to a state of blockade; but this was far from

satisfying to the insatiable ambition of the Spanish prime minister,

Florida Blanca, still bent upon making the world ring with the sonority

of his name. Ignoring all arguments to the contrary presented by the

French statesman Vergennes, and even by some of the Spanish authorities

familiar with the situation, he began to insist upon an immediate attack

on Britain and gradually persuaded the French allies. An expedition was

fitted out and in June, 1779, the fleet consisting of thirty-one French

ships of line and twenty Spanish warships sailed for the Channel.

It was the largest and best equipped force that had been seen on the

Atlantic in many years; for the Spanish shipbuilders had been busy

during the past years of unrest and threatening war clouds and had

turned out vessels far superior in construction to those of Britain. The

French were not over hopeful; even light-hearted Marie Antoinette was

conscious of the importance of the enterprise and the great risk it

involved; for she wrote in a private letter: "Everything depends on the

present moment. Our fleets being united, we have a great superiority.

They are in the Channel; and I cannot think without a shudder that,

from one moment to the next, our destiny will be decided." The French

staked their hope upon the reputation of the Spanish as fighters on sea.

Montmorin said: "I hope the Spanish marine will fight well; but I should

like it better if the British, frightened at their number, would retreat

to their own harbors without fighting." King Carlos alone was

optimistic; he imagined a rapid invasion, a prompt victory and the

humiliation of Britain, which he had so long wished for.

The unexpected was to happen for both French and Spaniards. The fleet

appeared at Plymouth on the sixteenth of August, but, without even an

attempt at attacking the town, for some unexplained reason was idle for

two whole days. Then a storm came up and drove it westward. When the

weather became more favorable, the vessels returned and the British

retired before them. There was no action to speak of; there was nothing

lost and nothing gained, and realizing the futility of the undertaking,

the chiefs decided to abandon it. The French returned to Brest, and the

Spanish to Cadiz. To the onlooking world the actions of the expedition

appeared nothing less than quixotic. The reasons for this

incomprehensible performance gradually became known; the expedition had

sailed under many chiefs, but it lacked the one chief, whose will and

word was to prevail and insure unity of purpose. Unable to agree upon

any one plan of action, they decided upon no action whatever. The

Spanish admiral, who had been fired with the spirit of Florida Blanca

and been eager to display the famous military prowess of his nation in a

big fight with the enemy, was so furious, that he vowed on his honor

after this experience rather to serve against France than Britain. Marie

Antoinette wrote to her mother: "The doing of nothing at all will have

cost us a great deal of money."

But while a legitimate engagement between the French and Spanish vessels

on the one and the British on the other side was for the time being

avoided, the three countries did not disdain to stoop to smaller means

to inflict damage upon the commerce and the navigation of one another.

Nor did they hesitate to attack the vessels of neutral countries, if

they suspected them of lending aid to the belligerent they were

opposing; and as this spirit began to spread, it led to a state of

anarchy upon the seas, which recalled the golden age of piracy. British

privateers and other vessels cruised about the ocean in quest of booty

and attacked and robbed indiscriminately whatever ships they suspected;

and very frequently this suspicion was only a pretext. Dutch commerce

and navigation especially suffered from these depredations, and as

French and Spanish vessels began to vie with the British in these

violations of neutrality, the council chambers of the European powers,

from Lisbon to Petrograd and from Naples to Christiania began to ring

with vociferous protests against these disgraceful conditions. When

Spain issued an order that all ships found by her vessels to be carrying

provisions and to be bound for Mediterranean ports, should be brought

into the harbor of Cadiz and their cargoes sold to the highest bidder,

even Britain was alarmed and indignant.

That was the moment which brought into prominence Sir George Rodney, the

British commander, whose naval exploits soon were to worry the Spanish

colonies, as did once those of British freebooters. Rodney sailed with

his squadron on the twenty-ninth of December, 1779, and by the eighth of

January had captured seven warships and fifteen merchantmen. At Cape St.

Vincent, where he arrived on the sixteenth, he destroyed a part of the

Spanish squadron under command of D. Languara. In the spring of the same

year he had several encounters with the French fleet, under command of

Admiral Guichen, with results so favorable for him that Britain soon

resounded with his praise. His progress had so far been almost

unobstructed, but in the summer it was temporarily checked, when the

Spanish squadron, commanded by D. Solano, joined that of the French.

However, the curious disparity of French and Spanish temperament once

more manifested itself in a manner which disastrously affected their

work. Unable to agree on important questions of action, their

cooperation threatened to come to naught. In the mean time an epidemic

of fever broke out in both fleets and D. Solano returned with his ships

to Havana, while Admiral Guichen sailed for France.

The new governor, who had succeeded Navarro in the administration of

Cuba, was Lieutenant-General D. Juan Manuel de Cagigal. Alcazar calls

his governorship a provisional one; Blanchet asserts that he received

his appointment in reward for the valuable services he had rendered

during the recent conquest of Pensacola, he having been the first to

enter through the breach which the Spanish had made in the

fortifications. Cagigal was a native of Cuba; he entered upon his office

on the twenty-ninth of May, 1781, and remained until December of the

same year. He contributed largely to the efficiency of the expedition

which was fitted out under the command of D. Solano, the General of the

Spanish fleet, consisting of twelve vessels with one thousand men on

board, and was to join the French fleet at Guarico. The object of the

expedition was to capture the island of Providence and eventually take

other island possessions of the British in the contiguous seas.

According to Alcazar, Providence was taken, but the defeat of the French

squadron by Rodney made the position of Cagigal critical and attention

had to be concentrated upon the defense of Havana.

According to Blanchet this joint expedition of the French and Spanish

forces, which had for its ultimate object the capture of Jamaica, had

elected for its chief D. José de Galvez, giving him for the duration of

the campaign authority over the Captain-General of Cuba and the

president of Santo Domingo. By order of Galvez, Cagigal had set out from

Havana in April, 1782, with forty-eight transports and two thousand men

to possess himself of the British island of Bahama, and in particular of

Providence. During his absence D. José Dahan exercised the authority of

the governor. Cagigal was not aware that a week before his sailing

Admiral Rodney had defeated the French squadron of Count de Grasse,

which he was to join in the attack on Jamaica. However, Providence was

taken and a sufficient garrison left there to make the conquest secure.

Blanchet indulges in some criticism of Cagigal that he had left Havana,

and taken all the troops with him at such a critical time. For when he

reached Matanzas after a heavy gale which had dispersed his ships, he

found the authorities no little alarmed since a British fleet had been

sighted.

Cagigal immediately hurried to the capital, fortified the approaches,

employing one thousand negroes in the work, and formed an intrenched

camp. He armed the militia, which was reenforced by many civilians,

eager to fight the enemy, and when on the fifth of August el Morro gave

notice of the presence of the British, everybody was prepared for the

defence. Sir George Rodney, now Admiral, had calculated upon taking

Havana by surprise. He brought with him a squadron composed of

twenty-six ships of the line, and carrying a large number of troops.

When he arrived and began to reconnoiter, he perceived the formidable

preparations that had been made for the defence of the place, and

deciding that it was imprudent to attack Havana by land, planned to

approach it from Jarico. In the meantime Cagigal had received

reenforcements which seemed to assure the safety of the capital. Daring

as was the gallant Britisher, he was not inclined to waste his material

in an enterprise so doubtful of success, and to the great relief of the

Cubans he sailed away.

In his administration Cagigal did not prove as efficient as in his

military operations. He was a born soldier. He had followed the military

profession in Portugal, Oran and at Gibraltar; he had participated in

the unfortunate expedition against Argel, had fought in Florida and had

been with D. Pedro Caballero at Buenos Aires. He disliked the atmosphere

of official bureaus and the complicated machinery of government. This

lack of interest in the indispensable functions of his office brought

him into serious trouble. He had counselors or asesores attend to

matters which did not immediately require his intervention, and as such

had employed the Venezuelan D. Francisco Miranda, who eventually became

prominent in the history of his own country. When Miranda returned from

a commission in Jamaica, he disembarked some contraband in Batabano. The

Intendente Urriza, who was informed of the matter, at once sent a

complaint to Cagigal, who, either from indifference or indolence, never

even stopped to examine the case, but simply resolved to suppress it. He

had, however, not taken into account the presence of the functionaries

of the royal Hacienda or Treasury, who communicated the incident to the

proper authorities in Spain. An urgent order for Cagigal's removal from

office was the result; and the Captain-General of Caracas, D. Luis de

Unzaga, was sent to take his place as governor of Cuba. Miranda fled.

Cagigal was sent to Guarico and later dispatched by D. José de Galvez to

Cadiz, where he was for four years a prisoner in Fort Santa Catalina.

During the proceedings against him it was found that he was in no way

implicated in the smuggling operation of Miranda. He was rehabilitated

during the reign of King Carlos IV. and in the war with the French

Republic had once more an opportunity to prove his military abilities.

He died as Captain General of Valencia.

The strong impulse towards progress which had been given to Cuba in that

period of peace when the administrations of Buccarelli and la Torre

devoted their main energies to internal improvements and to modest

attempts at laying the foundations of Cuban culture, had of course

subsided during the recent unrest and the predominance of military

interests. Nevertheless, there is evidence that the spark kindled a few

years before was not quite dead. A long-felt want had been the absence

of any periodical publication that would give the people of Cuba

information upon the current political events and also be a medium for

advertising purposes. According to some historians the first periodical

of this kind, the \_Gazeta\_, published under the direction of D. Diego de

la Barrera, made its appearance in the year 1780; others give as the

date of its foundation the year 1782.

Whatever the date of its publication may have been, the \_Gazeta de la

Habana\_ became a medium through which the people were kept informed of

the doings of the various administrative departments. The issue dated

April eleventh, 1783, contains some statistics concerning the silver

coins with milled edges cut away, which had been recently withdrawn from

circulation, which is of interest as it suggests the relative financial

rank of the different localities mentioned.

In the Treasury of the General Silver Reales

Administration: with milled edges Weight

cut away in ounces

Havana 311,625 23,340 10

Guanabacoa 2,808 151

Santa Maria del Rosario 21,870 1,117 12

Arroyo Arenas 7,049 380 14

Santa Clara 237,665 12,558

San Juan de Los Remedios 68,153 3,848

Trinidad 40,137 2,145

Sancti Spiritus 197,905 11,670 14

Puerto Principe 73,792 3,207

Bayamo 94,499 4,615 7

Holguin 31,013 1,701

Baracoa 6,396 1,465

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1,092,940 66,231 5

The \_Gazeta\_ added to this report: "There have been collected from the

public over two million pesos (cut away), and in their exchange they

yielded a little over eighty thousand pesos fuertes (efficacious), and

although the loss is excessive as a whole it must be stated, that in

particular it was not very grave, the money being distributed in small

amounts among the public."

This was a critical period in the conflict which had gradually involved

the principal countries and was watched with apprehension by all the

sovereigns of Europe. Up to this date Florida Blanca, who, from a simple

lawyer in the provinces had risen to be prime minister of Spain, had not

attained the goal of his ambition and secured for Spain victories, the

glory of which should cast a halo about his name. On the contrary,

circumstances began so to complicate the task which he had imagined to

be comparatively easy, that he was puzzled and began to lose some of his

extraordinary self-assurance. Bancroft gives in his "History of the

United States" (Vol. VI. p. 441) a very interesting review of the

situation and of the relation of Spain to the Revolutionary War, which

was drawing towards its close. He says:

"The hatred of America as a self-existent state became every day more

intense in Spain from the desperate weakness of her authority in her

trans-atlantic possessions. Her rule was dreaded in them all; and, as

even her allies confessed, with good reason. The seeds of rebellion were

already sown in the vice-royalties of Buenes Ayres and Peru; and a union

of Creoles and Indians might prove at any moment fatal to metropolitan

dominion. French statesmen were of the opinion that England, by

emancipating South America, might indemnify itself for all loss from the

independence of a part of its own colonial empire; and they foresaw in

such a revolution the greatest benefit to the commerce of their own

country. Immense naval preparations had been made by the Bourbons for

the conquest of Jamaica; but now, from the fear of spreading the love of

change Florida Blanca suppressed every wish to acquire that nest of

hated contraband trade. When the French ambassador reported to him the

proposal of Vergennes to constitute its inhabitants an independent

republic, he seemed to hear the tocsin of insurrection sounding from the

La Plata to San Francisco, and from that time had nothing to propose for

the employment of the allied fleets in the West Indies. He was perplexed

beyond the power of extrication. One hope only remained. Minorca having

been wrested from the English, he concentrated all the force of Spain in

Europe on the one great object of recovering Gibraltar, and held France

to her promise not to make peace until that fortress should be given

up."

From that time began a series of secret manoeuvres in favor of a general

peace, and rumors of the signing of treaties that had then not even been

drafted, began to float across the ocean and agitate the colonies of

Spanish America. But naval operations in the waters of the West Indies

continued almost without cessation. The French fleet under de Grasse had

before its return to France restored to the Dutch St. Eustatius. It had

captured St. Christopher, Nevis and Montserrat. When in February, 1782,

Admiral Rodney appeared at Barbados with twelve new ships of line in

addition to his fleet, and was towards the end of the month joined by

the squadron under command of Hood at Antigua, it became necessary for

the French to look for a junction with the Spanish fleet. For this

purpose de Grasse left Port Royal to Martinique on the eighth of April

and hurriedly sailed for Hispaniola. After a small engagement at

Dominica, Admiral Rodney by a skillful ruse brought on a battle with the

French between Guadeloupe, Saintes and Marie Galante. The British had on

their side superiority in number and quality, having thirty six vessels,

all in good repair and manned by well-trained and disciplined sailors.

The French ships were better constructed, but inferior in number, and

their mariners were known to be less efficient and experienced. The

combat raged for eleven hours. Four of de Grasse's ships were captured,

one sunk. The British lost about one thousand men in killed and wounded,

the French about three times as many. This defeat of their ally tended

to depress the spirits of the Spanish people, both in the mother country

and the colonies, for they saw Britain once more exercising almost

undisputed authority over the seas.

By this time the belligerents were all becoming tired of the war and

were seriously hoping for peace. The situation in France had after this

new defeat become specially precarious. Her coffers had been depleted by

participating in a war in which she had nothing to gain. Hence her

statesmen were particularly anxious to end a conflict the ideal aim of

which had been attained by the recognition of the independence of the

United States from Britain. But she was bound by the alliance with

Spain; and Spain was inflexible in refusing to acknowledge that

independence and in insisting upon her demands, among them above all

others, in Europe, the return of Gibraltar, in America the territory

east of the Mississippi, including the right of navigation on that

river. Conferences between John Jay and Benjamin Franklin, the special

American emissaries, and the French minister Vergennes and his able

assistant Rayneval were constantly taking place. Couriers were speeding

back and forth between Paris and London. Rayneval attempted to bring the

subject of Gibraltar to the attention of the Earl of Shelburne, saying:

"Gibraltar is as dear to the king of Spain as his life," but he was told

that it was out of the question even to propose to the government to

cede it to Spain. He pleaded for Spain's claim of the Mississippi and

its eastern valley, and received an ambiguous reply, implying that

Britain might be induced to cede Jamaica. But the indirect offer was

ignored, just as had been that of Porto Rico some time before. The more

the negotiations progressed, the more did Spain, persisting in her

traditional conservatism, prove a stumbling block to peace. For as late

as September, 1782, in a meeting between Lafayette, Jay and Aranda, did

the latter, as representative of King Carlos III., refuse to

acknowledge the independence of the new republic.

In the mean time Spain was clamoring for action against Gibraltar, and

the French and Spanish fleets united in an attempt to reduce the fort

under the command of the Duke of Crillon. But three years of blockade,

with intervals of famine and privation, had not broken the spirit of the

British garrison. While the first question of the king of Spain on

awakening every morning was: "Is Gibraltar taken?" the British continued

to defend it with a stubbornness which threatened to prolong the

struggle interminably. Receiving constant supplies from the British

fleet under Lord Howe, General Eliot was able to hold his own and the

futility of this expedition soon became apparent. When the Spanish

batteries were blown up and General Eliot made his audacious sortie, the

hope of this victory had to be abandoned.

Spain at last realized the necessity of yielding to the inevitable. Her

debt had been increased by twenty millions sterling, her navy had been

almost annihilated and she had gained nothing but an island or two. King

Carlos III., who had so long withheld his recognition of the United

States and blocked the negotiations for peace, because the American

envoys justly demanded that recognition before they could deal with the

representatives of Spain, finally yielded to the pressure of the moment

and the preliminaries of peace were signed on the thirtieth of November,

1782. By the separate articles of this treaty, the claim of the United

States to all the country from the St. Croix to the southwestern

Mississippi, from the Lake of the Woods to the St. Mary's, was verified.

By a separate article the line of north boundary between West Florida

and the United States was defined, in case Great Britain at the

conclusion of the war should recover that province.

Thus was the republic, the consummation of which King Carlos III. had in

his loyalty to the old tradition of sovereignty so zealously tried to

prevent, established upon the very continent, which Columbus had

discovered, and to the greater part of which Spain had laid claim. If

the Spanish king and his cabinet were at all conscious of the analogy

presented by comparison of the commercial and other restrictions placed

upon both colonies by the kingdoms from which they had sprung, they had

reason to be filled with vague apprehensions at the rise of this new and

free power among the countries of the world. They could not help seeing

in the republic which by a long and tenacious fight had won her

independence from the mother country, a neighbor whose example offered a

dangerous precedent.

Perhaps it was with the intention of forestalling the development of

such events in Cuba, as had led to the Declaration of Independence by

the colonies to the north, that the Spanish King had some years before

begun to remove the restrictions which had for two centuries and more

hampered the growth of Cuban commerce and retarded her general

development. It was a proof of his own growth towards a more liberal

conception of the relations between a country and her colonies, that the

removal of these restrictions was effected within so short a time. He

opened the trade of Cuba and the other islands of his possessions in

America in 1765, and that of Louisiana in 1768 to eight Spanish ports

besides Cadiz; he gradually permitted direct trade from the Spanish

ports to his dependencies in South and Central America; and in 1782 even

allowed New Orleans and Pensacola to trade with French ports that had

Spanish consuls.

The breath of freedom which seemed to sweep across the world during

these last decades of the eighteenth century, might well have filled the

sovereigns of Europe with fear for their possessions and prerogatives.

Although Carlos III. was the most liberal monarch that Spain had had in

a long time, he still clung to a rigorous paternal regime in the

relations of the court to the colonies, the population of which began to

resent the rule of officials sent to them from Madrid, and rarely

concerned with their welfare. He had had more cause than other European

sovereigns to dread the consequences which the American Revolution might

bring in its wake. For an insurrection, headed by Tupac-Amaru, who

called himself an Inca, had broken out in Peru, and was directed against

the exactions of the corregidores; and though it was suppressed by the

year 1782, incipient revolt seemed everywhere to be ready to break out.

As Garcia Calderon says of that period in his book on Latin America:

"The revolution was not merely an economic pretext; it nourished

concrete social ambitions. An equalizing movement, it aimed at

destruction of privileges, of the arbitrary Spanish hierarchy, and

finally, when its levelling instinct was aroused and irritated, the

destruction of authority to the profit of anarchy. The Creoles, deprived

of all political function, revolted; in matters of economics they

condemned excessive taxation and monopoly; in matters of politics they

attacked slavery, the Inquisition, and moral tutelage. Charles III. had

recognized, in 1783, in spite of the counsels of his minister Aranda,

the independence of the United States, which were to serve his own

colonies as precedent, and he expelled the Jesuits from America, the

defense of the Indians against the oppression of Spanish governors. The

corruption of the courts, the sale of offices, and the tyranny of the

viceroys, all added to the causes of discontent, disturbance and

poverty."

The insurrection in Peru was but the tocsin sounding the alarm. It was

to be followed by a number of revolts that shook the very foundations of

Spain's colonial empire in America.

Cuba for some time to come remained untouched by the high tide of

insurrection. It enjoyed a period of peace, which promoted the welfare

of the people and insured their content. D. Luis de Unzaga, who entered

upon his office as governor of the island in December, 1783,

distinguished himself by his strenuous prosecution of officials, whose

honesty he had reason to doubt. One of these was the administrator of

the Factoria or tobacco factory, D. Manuel Garcia Barrieres, whose

disposal and trial he ordered. This factory, which monopolized the

tobacco crop of the island for the benefit of the royal government,

received a subvention from Spain which at this time was increased to

fifty thousand pesos annually. Unzaga also took steps to limit the

number of inexperienced and unscrupulous lawyers, against whom some of

his predecessors had already inaugurated a campaign, by refusing to

issue new diplomas to barristers, there being at that time two hundred

practicing in the island. A royal decree of the year 1784 was directed

towards the same evil, but lawyers still remained too numerous in

proportion to the population for in 1792 the island had one hundred and

six, and Havana seventy two. Governor Unzaga had also some trouble with

the governor of Santiago de Cuba, D. Nicolas Arredondo. D. Arredondo,

who is remembered in history of the island as the founder of the first

"Sociedad Patriotica," in which he had such fellow-members as D.

Francisco Lozo de la Torre, D. Pedro Valiente, and D. Francisco Grinan,

was accused of participating in contraband trade and was temporarily

deposed. Ultimately it was discovered that the real offenders were two

aldermen, the brothers Creaght. After a protracted trial the innocence

of Arredondo was established and he was reinstated in office.

The greater the natural wealth of a country, the more are its

inhabitants inclined to indulge in thoughtless or deliberate waste of

resources which would be carefully husbanded in country less favored by

nature. Cuba was wasteful of her forest wealth. The governors of the

island had so far paid little or no heed to the wanton destruction of

the forests by people who exploited them for their timber. In a

proclamation issued soon after he was inaugurated, Governor Unzaga made

a serious attempt at checking this criminal waste of the island's

wealth. He prohibited the use of cedar for building purposes; he

designated the land where the people could procure their supply of that

valuable wood, and ordered that for each log cut the arsenal should

receive two "knees." The state had for years looked with indifference

upon the devastation of the forests, and, conceding to private

individuals the absolute dominion over those that shaded favored

territory, wanted to monopolize them for the use of the Navy. Not only

the sugar refineries were using unreasonable quantities of that wood,

but especially the shipyard. This enterprise, which received an annual

subvention from the Spanish government of seven hundred thousand pesos,

and was more active than those of the mother country, because negro

labor was cheaper than white, used enormous quantities of cedar.

Thus the order of Governor Unzaga, while ultimately benefiting the

island, caused for the moment no little heated discussion and unpleasant

tension.

Among the foreigners of high rank that visited Cuba immediately after

peace had been signed was the son of George III., William of Lancaster,

who had served as midshipman in Rodney's squadron. According to Alcazar,

he was most graciously received, being sumptuously lodged by Governor

Unzaga, who in honor of his presence arranged many brilliant

festivities, in which the aristocracy of the island had opportunity to

show itself resplendent in all its wealth. So pleased seemed the prince

with his stay that he might have prolonged it, had not the admiral

reprimanded him, and insisting upon his immediate return on board,

threatened to leave without him. Knowing Rodney's severity, the prince

obeyed, although it must have been difficult for him to tear away from

that gay life. The visit cost the Cubans great sums of money, officials

and civilians having vied with one another in offering entertainment.

The mess at which the General of the Marine, D. Solano, had treated him,

is reported by Valdes to have cost four thousand pesos. A gold peso

being about the value of three dollars, it was a handsome sum to spend

on the son of the king who had been Spain's enemy in the war just

concluded.

One of the most serious mistakes which Spain had always made in the

administration of her American colonies was the appointment of men who

were mostly natives of the mother country and not as familiar with the

conditions and the needs of the territory they governed as those who had

been born in the colonies. The short period of some administrations also

greatly hindered a well-ordered systematic management of the different

departments of the government. Earlier periods of the history of Cuba

had such frequent changes of governorship; and the latter part of the

eighteenth century was to undergo the same experience. When Unzaga

retired on the eighth of February, 1785, he was succeeded by a man whose

previous career had given him a reputation which recommended him to the

Cubans; D. Bernardo Galvez, who had distinguished himself in the last

expedition against Pensacola, and as former governor of Louisiana was

thoroughly in touch with colonial life in Spanish America. Galvez was a

native of Malaga, Knight Commander of the order of Calatrava and endowed

with the title of Conde de Galvez. But the hopes of the island were much

disappointed when only two months later he was transferred to the

vice-regency of Mexico and was on the fifth of April temporarily

replaced by the King's Lieutenant-teniente de Rey, and Field Marshal D.

Bernardo Troncoso. He had been governor of Guatemala, and when he had

barely become acquainted with Cuban conditions, was appointed governor

of Vera Cruz. But during his brief administration he showed no little

initiative and firmness of purpose and among other things succeeded in

repressing the bakers' guild which had become very troublesome.

At this time the Spanish colonies of the continent, Louisiana and

Florida, became aware of the hostility with which they were regarded by

certain elements of the United States, that tried to foment disturbances

along their northern boundaries. In June of that year Troncoso received

news from Louisiana that a corps of two thousand three hundred Americans

were organizing in the state of Georgia for the purpose of taking the

fortifications of Natchez, which they alleged were on ground of their

demarcation. Troncoso accordingly dispatched from Havana a few pickets

of infantry and a company of dragoons, with the aid of which the

governor of Louisiana could mobilize a column of twelve hundred regular

troops to check the project.

With the inauguration of Brigadier D. José de Espoleto on the first of

December, 1785, a little more stability came into the government of the

island. One of the first official acts was the formation of the Regiment

of Cuba, in which he was ably assisted by the Inspector D. Domingo

Cabello. Espoleto entered upon the functions of his office in the spirit

of the Marques de la Torre, to whose wise administration Havana was

indebted for all the improvements and reforms that made her worthy of

being the metropolis of the Spanish West Indies. Espoleto continued the

work on the piers, hastened the completion of the buildings for the

government and the Intendencia, inaugurated a system of water supply and

street cleaning and established a public market for the convenience of

the producers in the outlying districts and the city dwellers relying

upon them for their supplies in dairy and garden products. He also

introduced some reforms in the police department of Havana. But what was

most important for that commonwealth was his settling upon it of a sum

which was to be devoted to the permanent lighting of the city.

In his administration Santiago de Cuba took a significant step towards

the more effective concentration of the literary activities of the

island. This was the foundation of the first Sociedad de Amigos, which

was approved of by the king and on the thirteenth of September, 1787,

received a royal grant. In his colonial administration Espoleto tried to

follow the example of Ricla and Buccarelli, ordering the publication of

the decrees which they had enacted and which in the course of time had

been forgotten, and did his best to enforce them. In this by no means

easy task he was backed by D. José Pablo Valiente, an oidor of the

Audiencia or judge of the Supreme Court, who had come to Havana in 1787

to start an inquiry into the disbursement of certain funds. By order of

the king he had to investigate how the enormous sums, which the

expeditions of the gallant Galvez had cost, had been invested; had to

examine the state of the royal revenues and suggest needed reforms,

watch the administration of justice and propose measures to raise the

standard of the bar. One of the high officials who had given a previous

administration trouble and was probably guilty of irregularities,

Urriza, was so resentful of this investigation of his office, which D.

Valiente was ordered to undertake, that he speedily resigned. He was

succeeded by D. Domingo Hernani.

Death reaped a rich harvest between 1786 and 1788, in removing men so

closely identified with the fate of the colonies and the mother country

that they were not soon to be adequately replaced. On the thirtieth of

November, 1786, D. Bernardo de Galvez died in Mexico, where he had

reigned as viceroy since he left Havana eleven months before. By his

rare executive talent and his extensive knowledge he had become one of

the most efficient colonial governors that Spanish America had known,

and to him was in a great measure due their progress and prosperity. A

few days later died in Madrid his uncle D. José de Galvez, the noted

minister of the Indies, whose name is also identified with colonial

reforms. But the greatest loss to the colonies and to Spain was the

death on the twenty-eighth of December, 1788, of King Carlos III. The

kind and prudent sovereign had in a reign of almost thirty years,

handicapped as he was by the Spanish tradition of absolutism, tried his

best to further the growth and the welfare of his country and its

dependencies, and inaugurated policies more liberal than any his

predecessors had followed. He had endeared himself to his people and was

sincerely mourned.

The accession of Carlos IV. to the throne of Spain was not calculated to

advance Spain and her colonies beyond the degree of development they had

attained during the long reign of his father. He was forty years of age

and by stature and physiognomy was singularly fitted to represent so

important a kingdom as Spain. But he was as unintelligent as ignorant,

and allowed himself to be guided by his wife, Maria Louise, princess of

Parma, who was as clever and scheming as he was dull and indolent. She

was an autocrat, who suffered nobody to share the reins with her, and

imperceptibly they slipped into her hands, until she was absolute

sovereign of the kingdom. Two years after the death of Carlos III.

Florida Blanca was forced to resign. Count Cabarrus, an ardent champion

of reform, and a man of considerable executive power, was arrested. D.

Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos, one of the most profound thinkers and

noblest patriots that Spain could claim in the eighteenth century, was

removed from the important position he held in Madrid and exiled.

Campomanes, too, fell into "disgrace" in 1791. All these men,

distinguished for their character and their ability, were replaced by

some feeble creatures with no idea or will of their own, puppets in the

hands of the queen, who transformed the court of Madrid into a den of

corruption.

The policies pursued by Spain during this time culminated in so much

confusion that Florida Blanca was recalled in 1792 and set about to make

an attempt at restoring order in a thoroughly disorganized government.

But he was deposed the same year, having been unable to obtain the favor

of the queen. Aranda, who during the previous reign had been the

representative of progress, peace and the liberal ideas that came to

Spain from France, followed him with no better luck. For he too was

dismissed within a year and his place was taken by the queen's favorite,

Manuel Godoy, who some years later was to turn up in Cuba. Godoy was a

handsome young officer; she made him a grandee of the first class with

the title of Duke of Alcudia, and entrusted him with the ministry of

foreign affairs. The proud old aristocracy of Spain grumbled at the rise

of the upstart; but it succumbed to the spirit of servility which

pervaded the atmosphere of the court, and sought the favorite's favor.

Such was the condition of the country which was exercising a paternal

authority over Spanish America. It was not calculated to tighten the

bonds existing between the mother country and the colonies. As

transportation increased and news began to spread more rapidly and to

circulate more freely, the eyes of the colonists were opened to the

iniquities they suffered, and they began to question institutions and

laws which they had formerly unconditionally accepted. The glamor of the

period of conquistadores had long faded; the excitement of the age of

piracy was slowly being forgotten. Cuba, like all Latin America, had

entered upon that period, which President Poincaré in his preface to

Garcia Calderon's book on "Latin America" calls "the colonial phase with

its disappointments, its illusions, its abuses and errors; the

domination of an oppressive theocracy, of crushing monopolies; the

insolence of privileged castes, and the indignities of Peninsular

agents." It needed strong and noble men to guide her through the period

of unrest which even at that moment was culminating in the French

Revolution.

The immediate echoes of this Revolution were heard in 1791 in

Hispaniola, where at the very first risings of the people in France, the

slaves had revolted, killing their masters and burning their property.

It was only the prelude to the greater insurrection, which broke out

later and in which Cuba became involved. In the mean time, this island

had come under another interim governorship, and was drifting along on

the tide of progress in some directions, while in others it had come to

a standstill, if it had not retrograded. The provisional government of

D. Domingo Caballo which began on the twentieth of April, 1789, and

ended on the eighth of July, 1790, was not noteworthy for any important

measures, unless it be another attempt at restricting the number and the

activities of lawyers. The royal decree of the nineteenth of November,

1789, which prohibited the admission of any more professors of

jurisprudence, native or foreign, to the bar of the island, was modified

to read thus: "To the profession of lawyer, only those shall be admitted

who studied in the greater universities of their countries and had

practiced in some of their capitals, where there existed a superior

tribunal certifying that they had practiced six years at the superior

courts of Spain."

During Caballo's interim rule there occurred the ecclesiastical division

of the island. The archbishopric of Santo Domingo was divided into two

suffragan dioceses, both the bishopric of Santiago de Cuba which had

existed since 1518 and the new bishopric of Havana being subject to the

metropolitan mitre of Santo Domingo. To the bishopric of Santiago was

appointed D. Antonio Feliu, a man of great piety and gentle

disposition, who rapidly won the esteem of the community and the love of

his flock. That of Havana, which also comprised Louisiana and Florida,

was entrusted to D. Felipe José de Tres Palacios.

In spite of the apparent prosperity, the island was still suffering from

centuries of restriction which had paralyzed the initiative of its

population. Maria de las Mercedes (Jaruco), Countess de Merlin, says of

that period in her work, "La Havana" (Paris, 1844):

"Owing to the long tyranny which had weighed upon the island, Cuba

needed hands to cultivate her fields. The products were devoured by a

monopoly; territorial property did not exist; for the proprietor could

not even cut a tree in his woods without the permission of the royal

marine; the population was reduced to 170,370 souls; the sugar

production had become so inferior in quality, that no more than 50,000

barrels of sugar annually left the port of Havana; finally, the island

was involved in debts and Mexico was obliged to aid it in the necessary

expenses of the administration and agriculture."

The author, a niece of the Conde de Casa Montalvo, who was identified

with the great revival of civic spirit during the administration of

Governor Las Casas, also limns a rather discouraging picture of the

state of education in the island, saying that in the year 1792, Havana

had only one grammar school, of which the mulatto Melendez was the

teacher, and that up to the year 1793 girls were forbidden to learn to

read. So thoroughly familiar was the author with the political and

economic conditions of Cuba, and closely associated with the men, whose

energy, integrity and patriotic ambition ushered in that wonderful era

of progress, that the three volumes of her work, consisting of letters

to Chateaubriand, George Sand, Baron Rothschild, and others are full of

valuable information presented in a most fascinating manner.

[Illustration: DON LUIS DE LAS CASAS]

The historian Valdes is not far from right, when he calls the history of

Cuba, as compared with that of other countries, \_nuestra pequena

historia\_--our little history. But that little history contains more

than one great epoch and its biography more than one figure that stands

out with something like sovereign impressiveness from the many names

which it records. The administration of D. Luis de Las Casas is such an

epoch, and he is such a man. Born in the village of Sapuerta in Viscaya,

his was a picturesque career. He had embraced the military profession

and been on the battlefields of Villaflor and Almeida; in Portugal he

attracted the attention of Count O'Reilly, who took him on the

expedition to Louisiana, where he was sergeant-mayor of New Orleans. On

his return to Spain, he solicited permission to go to Russia and served

under the flag of Marshal Romanzow, distinguishing himself in the

campaign waged by the empress. Then he studied the science of government

in Paris; but as soon as Spain was once more engaged in war, he joined

the expedition of O'Reilly against Argel. His conduct at the capture of

Minorca earned for him the title of Field Marshal and Commandant-General

of Oran. He also took a gallant part in the unfortunate attempt to

recover Gibraltar. On being appointed to the governorship of Cuba, he

arrived in Havana the eighth of July, 1796, and on the following day

took charge of his office.

One of his first official measures was to have a new census taken, for

when the results of the one taken by la Torre were published, many

questioned the correctness of the figures. It was said, not without some

justice, that, if the population of the island in the year of the

British invasion, 1762, was one hundred and forty thousand, it should

have been more in 1775 than one hundred and seventy-one thousand six

hundred and twenty, since the number of negroes that had been added to

the population was in itself enormous, and there were also the

immigrants from Florida that had settled on the island. Profiting by the

criticism of his predecessor's work, Las Casas took great pains so to

systematize the work of the census takers, that their investigations

would be unexceptionally thorough and conclusive. When the result became

known two years later, the population of the island was found to be two

hundred and seventy-two thousand five hundred and one inhabitants.

In the second year of his administration, Governor Las Casas had an

opportunity to show his generosity and his executive ability when Cuba

was visited by another typical West Indian hurricane. It broke upon the

island on the twenty-first of June and lasted fully twenty-four hours.

The terrible windstorm was accompanied by a deluge of rain, which caused

the overflow of the Almendares and its tributaries, uprooted the trees

in orchards and nurseries, inundated plantations and damaged houses to

such an extent, that great numbers of residents in the districts of

Wajay, San Antonio, Managua and others were rendered homeless and

reduced to poverty. The governor not only effectively organized the work

of relief, but spent freely of his private funds to alleviate the

suffering of the people. He showed the same spirit a year later, when

Trinidad was visited by a conflagration which consumed property valued

at six hundred thousand pesos. The establishment of the Real Casa de

Beneficiencia was another work that proved his sincere concern for the

welfare of the people, and especially those unfortunates who were

dependent upon public charity. The founding of this asylum for destitute

orphans of both sexes, including a school, in which they were to be

taught a trade to make them self-supporting on reaching maturity, was

first proposed by him in a meeting of citizens on the twenty-second of

March, 1792. So warm and rousing was his appeal, that large

subscriptions to defray its expenses were immediately signed. A royal

patent of the fifteenth of December conferred upon the plan official

approval. There was connected with the asylum a hospital, and both were

temporarily organized and began their work in a provisional building,

until on the eighth of December they were transferred to the structure

erected for them.

Cuba's commerce, though still laboring under difficulties due to

unreasonable trade laws of Spain, was gradually becoming so extensive

that it needed some central organization to protect and promote its

interests. The citizens had so far let things take their course as they

might; lack of initiative was perhaps natural with a people under the

strict paternal supervision which Spain exercised over colonies.

Governor Las Casas roused their latent energies and induced them to

organize for mutual profit and for the general progress of the island's

commerce. For this purpose was established the Tribunal of Commerce or

Consulado, which was also to act as a court of justice for mercantile

litigants and bankrupts. The Consulado was founded on the sixth of

June, 1795, and within a short time settled more than three hundred and

twenty such cases.

But the most important step towards the internal reform and improvement

of the island was taken by Las Casas when on the second of January,

1793, he presided at the foundation of the "Real Sociedad Patriotica o

Economica," which later changed its name to Junta de Fomento, or Society

of Progress. Among his associates in this most significant enterprise

were the marquises de Casa Calvo, Casa Penalver and San Felipe, the

counts de Casa Bayona, Lagunillas, Buenavista, O'Farrel and Jaurequi,

distinguished citizens like Romany, Sequeira and Caballero, and that

greatest patriot among them all, Sr. D. Francisco Arango y Pareno, to

whom credit is due for the inception of this organization. The different

sections, into which this society was divided, devoted themselves to the

development of agriculture, stockbreeding, industry, commerce, science

and art, and were of inestimable service to the people. Reports of the

meeting held on the twenty-first of December, 1796, showed a clearness

and seriousness of purpose which commanded respect and augured well for

the future of the undertaking.

In those first four years of its existence it was the medium through

which were established some much needed improvements for the

facilitation of traffic. Within a few months after its foundation it

invested some of its funds in the highway of Horcon which cost about

thirty thousand seven hundred pesos. Then it built the Guadalupe road

and finished the principal pier of that place. To introduce indigo

culture on the island, it lent to the administration three thousand five

hundred pesos without interest. When the royal professor of botany, D.

Martin Sese, suggested to take with him a young native of Havana to

study that science in its application to agriculture, the society again

defrayed the expenses. There was hardly a work of public utility that

was not materially assisted by this corporation.

Its efforts at promoting the cultural progress of the population were no

less remarkable. A number of its members united in editing the \_Papel

Periodico\_, which was published every Thursday and Sunday at a cost of

fourteen reales per month and was of the size of a half sheet of Spanish

paper. As the work of the society expanded, it gave to the press its

"Memorias," a collection of original writing and translations by the

members, covering a variety of subjects, among them contributions to

Cuban history which contain valuable data. Some forty years after its

foundation, it published at its expense the history of D. José Martin

Felix de Arrate, which is one of the earliest works on the history of

Cuba. But even more important were the constant and vigorous efforts of

the Society to reform and improve public education. It founded many

establishments of free instruction and offered special inducements to

teachers, who could show a certain number of children with a more solid

knowledge of grammar and the four fundamental principles of arithmetic

than the schools had so far produced. The university, too, was

encouraged in its work; the textbooks were improved and the curriculum

was enlarged so as to include courses in geography, physics, history and

Spanish literature.

The first director of the Society was Sr. D. Luis Penalver, bishop of

New Orleans, and later archbishop of Guatemala, a man who was closely

identified with the work of the Casa de la Benficiencia and other

institutions. But, although all members were men distinguished for their

gifts and their achievements, the soul and moving spirit was D.

Francisco Arango, of whom we shall hear much more in our later

narrative.

A worthy fellow-worker of Arango was D. José Pablo Valiente, who as

Intendente organized the Royal Exchequer, and with no little risk to

himself, permitted and encouraged commerce with neutral and friendly

nations, regardless of still existing restrictions. He assisted in the

establishment of the Consulado and the Sociedad Economica, made a gift

of seven thousand pesos to the Casa de Beneficencia, encouraged the

progress of public instruction and in many lawsuits brought before the

Consulado played the role of a noble conciliator. With such men as these

to assist him, the administration of Las Casas was soon regarded as the

most glorious in the history of the island. For though Havana was the

principal scene of the activities of these men, Las Casas did not fail

to extend the blessing of his reforms and improvements to other

communities. The towns of Santa Maria del Rosario, Santiago de las Vegas

and others soon showed considerable growth; in the districts of

Guanajey, Alquiza, Quivican, Managua and others, the territory under

cultivation was steadily expanding; the village of Casa Blanca and the

town of Manzanillo were founded, and the port of Nuevitas essentially

improved. An excellent cooperator of Governor Las Casas was D. Juan

Bautista Valiente, governor of Santiago de Cuba, who protected

agriculture, founded primary and Latin schools, introduced a system of

lighting in his city, started to pave its streets, and invested his

savings in an edifice, which served to house the Ayuntamiento, the

governor's and other offices and also contained the jail.

The first revolution in Santo Domingo in 1791 had warned Las Casas and

brought home to the administration of Cuba the necessity of looking once

more after the defences of the island. He was aided in this task by the

chief of the navy yard, D. Juan Araoz, who hastened the work of naval

constructions, and in a short time turned out six war vessels, four

frigates and a number of boats of lesser tonnage. They proved of great

usefulness in the operations against Santo Domingo and Guarico during

the second uprising when in order to protect Spanish interests and

inhabitants there were sent from Havana the regiment bearing the name of

the city and from Cuba a piquet of artillery. That revolt is so closely

associated with the problem of slavery, which had become the cause of

grave apprehension to the government that it will be referred to in the

following chapter. The massacre of French and other colonists in that

unfortunate island brought a multitude of refugees to Cuba and

materially increased its population.

An event in the last year of the administration of Las Casas gave rise

to festivities of a memorable character. When the war between Spain and

the French Republic broke out, General D. Gabriel Aristizabal, who

operated in Hayti, did not want the ashes of Columbus to be lost during

the ensuing disturbances. It seemed more appropriate, too, that they

should not remain in the place where he had been slandered and

persecuted and where the villain Bobadilla had put him in fetters, but

in the island that had always smiled upon him. On the fifteenth of

January, 1796, there entered into the port of Havana the warship \_San

Lorenzo\_, carrying the casket. It was received by Governor Las Casas and

General Araoz, the bishops Penalver and Tres Palacios, and between two

lines of soldiers was carried to the cathedral, where it was deposited

in a humble niche. Though the first city of the island did not then

raise a monument to Columbus it was done by a much smaller town,

Cardenas, which for this act alone deserves to be mentioned.

The inscription upon the stone, under which the remains of Columbus

found rest, reads:

D. O. M.

Clares Heros. Ligustin.

CHRISTOPHORUS COLUMBUS

A Se, Rei Nautic. Scient. Insign.

Niv. Orb. Detect.

Araque Castell. Et Legin. Regib. Subject.

Vallice. Occub.

XIII Kal. Jun. A.M. DVI

Cartusianor. Hispal. Cadav. Custod. Tradit.

Transfer. Nam. Ipse Praescrips.

IN HISPANIOLAE METROP. ECC.

Hinc Pace Sancit. Galliae Reipub. Cess

In Hanc V. Mar. Concept. Imm. Cath. Ossa Trans.

Maxim. Om. Frequent. Sepult. Mand.

XIV. Kal. Feb. A. Md. C. C. X. C. V. I.

HAVAN. CIVIT

Tant. Vir. Meritor. In Se Non Immen.

Pretros. Exux. In Optat Diem Tuitur.

Hocce Monum. Erex.

Praesul. Ill. D. D. Philippo Iph Trespalacios

Civic AC Militar. Rei. Gen. Praef. Exme

D.D. LUDOVICO DE LAS CASAS

When the administration of Las Casas came to an end, the municipality of

Havana called a testimonial meeting for the sixteenth of December, 1796,

which gave proof of the high esteem in which the extraordinary man was

held by the people. Four years after his retirement, on the nineteenth

of November, 1800, he died of poison. He had not escaped criticism by

those who saw in his enforcement of forgotten laws and in many of his

new ordinances the manifestation of an arbitrary spirit; but it was

universally conceded that during his government Cuba reached a

high-water mark in her development. Though the corruption and

degradation of the court at Madrid had a baneful influence upon the

Spanish colonies, the island which had enjoyed the blessings of his rule

and caught a breath of the spirit of such men as Arango and Montalvo

could never again be contented unquestioningly to accept the dictates of

that court. The flood of new liberal ideas which, coming from France,

swept over the whole world, could not be turned back at el Morro. They

found their way into the hearts and the minds of the people and slowly

but surely taught them to see where their ultimate salvation lay.

CHAPTER XII

The French Revolution set the pace for the world's movements in the last

decade of the eighteenth century and spread the seeds of many more in

the century to come. Pamphlets, books and proclamations coming to Spain

from France opened the eyes of the people to evils, which in their

loyalty to the throne and to the traditions of the country they had

never dared to perceive. The corruption of her court, the ruin of her

finances, the incompetency of her statesmen and her generals were

revealed to the population and stirred sullen resentment. Demoralization

seemed to have set in and threatened to dismember the once all-powerful

kingdom. To the profligate Godoy was in a great measure attributed the

degradation of the country and an atmosphere of conspiracy pervaded even

the royal palace, from which patriotic plotters, resentful of Spain's

humiliation, hoped soon to chase the favorite of the queen, who with

supreme unconcern continued to fill his pockets from the royal treasury

and to live in his wonted extravagance and dissipation. The forces of

the French Republic had occupied the frontier forts and seemed to find

little or no resistance. The fate of the royal Bourbons of France struck

terror in the souls of the royal Bourbons of Spain, and the flight of

the king and his family from Madrid was daily expected.

Even to the overseas possessions of France and Spain had the influence

of the liberating movement extended and awakened the indolent and

indifferent creoles to the realization of wrongs they had suffered at

the hands of their mother countries. Moreover, the gospel of Liberty,

Equality and Fraternity had reached the ears of those who had for

centuries silently borne oppression and had been made to believe that

serfdom was to be their fate forever. Already in 1791 the news of the

outbreak of the Revolution had been acclaimed by the slaves in Santo

Domingo and followed by revolt and violence against the life and the

property of their masters. When in 1794 the Convention declared the

abolition of slavery in the colonies of the Republic, the floodgates of

insurrection were opened. For Old Hispaniola, divided between two

foreign powers, populated by races antagonistic to one another, was a

fertile soil for any revolutionary propaganda. As early as 1762 there

were three negroes to one Frenchman in the northern part of the island;

and these negroes whom a Jesuit priest of the time declared to be fit

only for slavery, hated all other races and castes: the whites, the free

negroes and the mulattoes.

But even among this ignorant and superstitious race there were

individuals that rose far above the average in intelligence and had by

association with the more advanced and privileged castes and races

acquired certain achievements. They were men who had done some thinking

of their own and perhaps by their relation of servant to master learned

to know the faults and weaknesses of the latter far better than they

knew their own. When these men caught the ring of the magic three words,

a world of possibilities opened before them, and they embraced the

message they conveyed with the eagerness of people desperate from and

resentful of iniquities, real and imaginary. Their brains were afire

with hatred and revenge and it needed only a great leader to organize

this powerful army of malcontents into a horde of fiends. That leader

came to them in the person of the ex-coachman, Toussaint L'Ouverture, a

man of exceptional gifts and abilities, who with the one-track mind of

the idealist-fanatic had but one aim and pursued but one goal: the

liberation of his race.

The war between the French republic and Spain had naturally called forth

hostilities between the two parts of the island inhabited on one side by

French, on the other by Spaniards. The negro insurgents saw their

opportunity and did not let it go by without exploiting it for their

purposes. The unfortunate jealousies between the President and

Captain-General of Santo Domingo and the General of the Navy,

Aristizabel, who had captured Bayaja, had weakened the Spanish forces,

and when they attempted to take Guarico, they had to retire at Yazique

before a force of five hundred undisciplined negroes. This encouraged

the negro commanders and in quick succession they captured San Rafael

and Las Caobas, and had the satisfaction to see San Miguel, Bonica and

Incha evacuated before they even reached these places. Bayaja was

strongly fortified and garrisoned; but the climate of that place being

very unhealthy, the Spanish troops were decimated by sickness, until

they numbered only about four hundred men. The negro general Juan

Francisco on the other hand could increase his troops at will. In order

to enforce the Spanish it was proposed to send them a regiment of white

Frenchmen. Seven legions of these men arrived at Bayaja on the morning

of the seventh of July, 1794. But Juan Francisco surprised the place

half an hour before, and placing artillery in the principal streets and

squares, informed the commandant that all white Frenchmen were to leave

Bayaja before three o'clock that afternoon. When the commandant

remonstrated saying that the time was too short to provide barges for

their transportation, the negro leader left the government house and

gave the signal for the massacre of all Frenchmen in the place. The

terrible slaughter lasted until far into the afternoon, when the

governor and the venerable priest of the place so urgently implored the

negro troops to have mercy, that they moderated their savage rage.

While this wholesale murder, which cost the lives of seven hundred and

forty-two Frenchmen, not counting those who were drowned in flight, was

going on in the streets, military conferences were held at which, after

some irresolute wrangling, it was decided to withdraw to Fuerte Dolfin,

about five hundred varas (rods) distant from Bayaja, in order to save

the garrison from being at the mercy of a negro mob, intoxicated with

the victory won over their adversaries. They succeeded in holding Fuerte

Dolfin, until Bayaja itself was evacuated by Juan Francisco on the

thirteenth of July. The loss of the Spanish troops, including deserters

and those that died from privations, was about three thousand men. The

national treasury suffered during the revolt a defalcation of some fifty

thousand pesos. The negroes were at first charged with the embezzlement

of that sum, but there were rumors to the contrary, which in view of the

only too well-known turpitude of many colonial officials, were quite

plausible.

The peace concluded between Spain and the French republic at Basilea

(Basle) on the twenty-second of July, 1795, and published in Madrid on

the sixth of November, terminated Spanish rule on the island, Spain

ceding her part of Santo Domingo to the French Republic. The people of

Spain welcomed this peace, as they would have hailed any other. To the

part played in the negotiations by Manuel Godoy was due his title

"Prince of Peace." In the elation of the moment the court even

remembered Aranda, Florida Blanca, Cabarrus and Jovellanos, the able

statesmen and faithful patriots who had been imprisoned or exiled, and

granted them full amnesty. Yet this treaty of Basilea was the official

admission of the decline of Spain's power. It heralded the gradual

disintegration of her colonial possessions, where, as some authorities

assert, British intrigue sowed the seeds of discord and discontent. When

two years later, in February, 1797, the Spanish fleet, although superior

in vessels and artillery, was defeated by the British in the battle of

Cape St. Vincent off the south point of Portugal, the ruin of the

kingdom was complete. The total income between 1793 and 1796 was

twenty-four hundred and forty-five millions of reals; the total

expenses, thirty-seven hundred and fourteen millions; the debt amounted

to more than twelve hundred millions. The annual deficit was eight

hundred millions. The paper money in circulation amounted to nineteen

hundred and eighty millions. Such was the financial status of the royal

bankrupt.

If the peace of Basilea had temporarily brought satisfaction and

lightened the burden of anxiety, the defeat at Cape St. Vincent sufficed

once more to cloud the horizon. The capture of Rome by the French in

1798 and the proclamation of a republic in place of the papal

sovereignty, plunged Spain into a state of panic. Cabinet ministers

succeeded one another with bewildering rapidity. Even Jovellanos, who

had been recalled to restore order in the disorganized department of

justice, was unable to cope with the chaotic situation. Enormous sums

were being continually wasted. Of eighteen hundred and thirty-three

millions spent in 1799, the royal court alone had used one hundred and

five, the department of war nine hundred and thirty-five, finance four

hundred and twenty-eight, foreign affairs forty-six, and the department

of justice only seven! Every branch of the administration was filled

with the minions of Godoy, who was now related to the royal house,

having espoused the daughter of the Infante Don Luis. His annual

revenues amounted to one million reals. The elements themselves seemed

to be in conspiracy against what had once been the greatest power in

Europe. The failure of crops, famine, epidemics and earthquakes filled

the minds of the superstitious with vague terrors.

Cuba was at that time too much engrossed in the attempt to continue on

the path of progress to be seriously affected by the fate of Spain. The

insurrection of Santo Domingo had brought the eventuality of internal

trouble so close to her door, that she did not dare to look across the

ocean for more sources of apprehension. Yet the revolt of the

neighboring island had also its advantages for Cuba. At the first

outbreak of hostilities against the French, many French refugees had

fled to Cuba. They were followed by others and after the massacre of

Bayaja even by Spaniards and by colored women. This French element which

settled in Santiago and Havana became a valuable factor in the

population of the island. A French traveler and writer, Vicomte Gustave

d'Hespel d'Harponville, says about it in his book "La Reine des

Antilles":

"They brought to Cuba the remnants of their wealth, some slaves, but

especially their knowledge, their experience and their activity. From

that moment the two great Antilles changed rôles: San Domingo lapsed

into barbarism, Cuba placed her foot in the chariot of fortune."

The French settlers were industrious laborers and skilled artisans and

as such were highly valued by economists who had been anxious to

increase Cuba's insufficient labor supply by the introduction of white

labor. Even the women among them were workers, in strange contrast to

the Cuban women, who were given to tropical indolence. Many of these

French "Dominicans" established themselves as nurses, laundresses and

seamstresses. In education, too, these newcomers were far above the

average Havanese; a difference which foreign travelers were quick to

detect and to comment upon. The French settlements southeast of Havana,

in the environs of Matanzas, Santiago and Baracoa, became such centers

of activity, industrial and otherwise, that the Spanish, who had

persisted in their habitual indolence and indifference, became jealous,

which in time resulted in some friction and unpleasant disturbances.

The definite loss of Santo Domingo to Spain caused also a great change

in ecclesiastical affairs. The archbishopric was removed to Santiago de

Cuba. Havana and Puerto Rico remained "suffragans," i.e. subject to the

other. About that time there was established a territorial tribunal in

Puerto Principe.

[Illustration: TOMAS ROMAY

One of the foremost figures in the great Cuban awakening at the close of

the eighteenth century was Dr. Tomas Romay, physician and scientist, who

was born in Havana on December 21, 1764, and died on March 30, 1849. He

greatly aided the two good Governors, Las Casas and Someruelos, in their

labors for the betterment of Cuba; with the help of Bishop Espada he

introduced vaccination into the island; he was prominent in the Society

of Friends of Peace, and did much for education, agriculture, and other

interests of the Cuban people. Among his writings was a monograph on

yellow fever which attracted world-wide attention. His earnest

patriotism involved him in violent controversies in the troublous times

of 1820-1823, from which he emerged in triumph and in universal honor.]

Everything seemed to combine at that period to promote the growth and

assure the future welfare of Cuba. The government of Las Casas, with its

wonderful awakening among the citizens of a sense of civic

responsibility and opportunity, was one of those epochs which seem to

form a pivot around which past and future revolve. It was impossible to

consider it in its full value and significance without comparing it with

the past out of which it had developed, and taking note of the progress

it signalized. Nor was it possible to forecast the future, without

projecting into it the lines of evolution along which the work of Las

Casas and his associates seemed to have prepared the progress of the

island. Compared with the passive inertia which had all through the

history of the Spanish West Indies retarded individual and communal

advancement, it was like a sudden birth of aspirations and endeavors all

directed towards a lofty goal, perhaps still vague to the multitude, but

clearly and strongly defined in the minds of the men who with a singular

unity of purpose, forgetting for once all the petty jealousies that had

clouded so many big issues in previous periods, combined for concerted

action for the common good.

They were men who had at heart the interests of the island, who had

inquired into the causes for its backwardness and who had thought deeply

about the measures that might provide a means to rouse the whole

population to the realization of the gigantic task before them. They

were men of extraordinary intelligence, of thorough knowledge, of

unblemished character and of wide experience. Never before had Cuba been

able at any one period to point to such a galaxy of names as Las Casas,

Arango, Romay, Montalvo, Pedro Espinola, Caballero, and others. Never

before had it at any one time a like number of men combining all the

qualifications that seemed to destine them to be the leaders in a great

movement of revival and reconstruction. For the task they accomplished

was not only that of rousing the inhabitants, who had lingered for

several generations in apathy and indolence, but to reconstruct the

whole decadent edifice of provincial management, in order to start anew

on a solid foundation.

Individually considered almost every one of those men stood for some

achievement, some work the benefits of which the future was to reap.

Towering above them all, Arango seemed to combine all these efforts,

seemed to be the center from which radiated all the plans that had for

their ultimate aim the happiness of all. As one looks back upon that

brilliant epoch, this man of noble birth, of rare gifts and of

considerable means, seemed to dominate them all. Surely no other could

have accomplished what he did; for his youth, his affability, his

distinguished manners, these invaluable social qualities impressed and

attracted those in the highest positions at the Spanish court and won

for him a hearing, which would have been refused to many others. Once

this was gained, his general learning, and his special knowledge of the

economic and financial problems of his native island, backed by an array

of conclusive statistics and conveyed to his listeners with forcible

logic and convincing oratory, compelled the attention even of the most

recalcitrant conservatives that had steadily opposed reforms in the

colonies. By this rare combination of qualities Arango had succeeded in

obtaining from the royal government greater concessions for Cuba than it

had ever made to any of her colonial possessions. The effect of Arango's

work, though at intervals clouded by periodical relapses of the

government into the old evil ways, was felt during more than a

generation, and his name remained identified in the memory of the people

with the great strides that the island was henceforth to make in

agriculture, industry and commerce, as no less in matters of education.

Among his associates, the name of Dr. D. Thomas Romay was to be

remembered by future generations for the great blessing which his

medical skill and foresight secured for the island. He had been

identified with many measures promoting public health, when Dr. Maria

Bustamente of la Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, brought to Havana the first

consignment of vaccine. Following the example of Dr. Bustamente, who had

vaccinated his little son and two mulatto servants, Dr. Romay at once

introduced vaccination in Havana and gradually checked the ravages

which small-pox epidemics had caused. The Count de Montalvo was forever

to be remembered for his wise and humane adjustment of judicial

conflicts in connection with the tribunal of commerce. Pedro Espinola's

memory was to be cherished by all those concerned with the cause of

education. Nicolas Calvo's efforts at introducing timely innovations in

the sugar industry could never be forgotten in the island. Lastly there

was Governor Las Casas himself, who, had he been a man of smaller

calibre, could have clogged the wheels of progress by administrative red

tape and obfuscated the larger issues of his time by petty official

considerations. But, unlike some of his predecessors, who did not suffer

any citizens in the community to rise to such eminence as to rival them,

he had appreciated the spirit of those men and to further their aims had

brought to bear all the weight of his official position.

Rarely in the history of any country did so many fortuitous

circumstances combine at one and the same period to call out what was

best in the latent forces of the population, as in Cuba during the

administration of Governor Las Casas. The future never seemed to smile

so brightly upon that island, so richly endowed by nature and so long

indifferently treated by men. Setbacks and even relapses into previous

errors might occur, but it seemed unthinkable that the work accomplished

by Las Casas and his associates, individually and collectively, could

ever be undone.

Such periods of extraordinary growth are infallibly followed by a

standstill during which individuals as communities seem to gather

strength for new efforts. Nor is it likely that a country will

successively produce men of such marked individuality and forceful

character. The governor that followed Las Casas could not reasonably be

expected to come up to the high standard of his predecessor. The

Lieutenant-Governor Conde de Santa Clara, who was inaugurated on the

sixteenth of December, 1796, was a man of generous character and

agreeable manners towards all classes of society, but he was not a man

of that broad culture which distinguished Las Casas and his associates

in the famous Sociedad. D. Juan Procopio Barsicourt de Santa Clara was a

native of Barcelona, and had come to Havana at a critical moment. The

colonies of the West Indies and the Gulf coast were deeply worried about

the slave revolt of Santo Domingo. The Cuban forces that had taken part

in the attempt to quell the uprising, and the French and Spanish

immigrants that had fled to Cuba from the terrors of the insurrection

had brought with them tales of the doings of the insurgents which filled

with vague apprehensions all territories that contained a numerous slave

population. Moreover, the favorite of the queen of Spain, Manuel Godoy,

had by his blunders involved Spain in a new war with Great Britain, and

Spanish America was once more threatened by her old enemy.

This menace forced the new Governor to turn his attention first towards

the defenses of the island. He constructed between San Lazaro and la

Chorrera the battery known as Santa Clara, and took other measures for

the protection of Havana as well as Santiago. Among the municipal

improvements which he effected the most important for Havana was his

removal of the principal matadero (slaughterhouse), from the city to a

place outside of its walls. The existence of this establishment had long

been considered a public nuisance; for the foul smells which it spread

in the neighborhood and which the wind sometimes carried over the whole

town were a menace to the health of the inhabitants, and the frequent

commotion caused by bulls that escaped from the enclosures was also a

feature that made a most unfavorable impression. Both the suburb of

Jesus Maria and el Horcon being without any direct water supply, Santa

Clara had a fountain constructed in each place.

Santa Clara was a man of generous instincts. The Casa del Beneficencia,

the fortunes of which had been declining, owed him many a rich supply of

provisions and some large donations. Both he and his wife, who was said

to be a perfect model of womanly virtues, were interested in the

hospital of San Paula. They also gave material aid to the hospital of

San Francisco, which had progressed very slowly since its foundation.

Within one year after Santa Clara's arrival, the number of beds was

raised from thirty-two to seventy-eight. The governor's lady also

succeeded in enlisting the cooperation of the clergy and many other

wealthy and influential people in the San Antonio Hospital, which was

increased to a capacity of one hundred and nine beds. Though the more

ambitious cultural work which had been begun under the previous

administration was not promoted by him, Santa Clara proved himself

possessed of no little executive power and tact.

This last quality was especially needed at the time when Havana was

honored by the visit of three French notables, the Dukes of Orleans and

Montpensier, and Count de Beaujolais. Santa Clara received them most

courteously and an opulent lady of Havana, Doña Leonor Herrera de

Contreras, gave up to them her home, placed at their disposal her

servants and defrayed all their expenses. Refugees from their country,

which was suffering from the terrors of the Revolution, they remained in

Havana and enjoyed this sumptuous hospitality for almost four months,

when even the famous "Prince of Peace," Godoy, in order to avoid

further disagreements with the French Republic, indicated to them the

propriety of removing to other dominions.

In the meantime the British had declared war and made an auspicious

beginning by the capture of Trinidad. They had demanded the surrender of

the vessels commanded by D. Sebastian Ruiz de Apodoca, a high-spirited

mariner, but he preferred reducing them to ashes before giving them up

to the enemy. This first loss was, however, amply retrieved at San Juan

of Porto Rico. The city had been attacked by over ten thousand trained

soldiers under the command of Gen. Abercrombie, but the attack was

repulsed and the British lost over one thousand men and two thousand

prisoners, besides a stock of provisions and equipment. At Santa Cruz de

Teneriffe the Spaniards defeated even the celebrated Nelson and seized a

number of vessels that tried to take other points. But there was more

trouble in sight for the Spanish colonies. For the South American

revolutionist Miranda who had emigrated to London by clever intrigues

induced the British government to stir up insurrections in the

Spanish-American possessions. These intrigues resulted in revolts that

broke out in Puerto Cabello, Caracas, Panama and Maracaibo. Their prompt

suppression was due to the firmness and energy of the Captain-General of

Caracas, D. Manuel de Guevara y Basconcelos.

These disquieting occurrences made the Spanish government fear for the

safety of Cuba and decided the court to give the island a governor more

capable of coping with the eventuality of invasion. The Field Marshal D.

Salvador de Muro y Salazar, Marques de Someruelos was appointed on the

second of March, 1799, and ordered secretly and immediately to repair to

the place of his destination. Accordingly there appeared in Havana on

the thirteenth of May a distinguished stranger who delivered to the

governor important messages from the court and proved to be no less than

the new governor. Santa Clara immediately retired in favor of his

successor and Someruelos entered upon the functions of his office. The

Intendente Valiente was promoted to the position of Counselor of the

Indies and his place was taken by D. Luis Viyuri. Colonel D. Sebastian

de Kindelan was appointed to the governorship of Santiago.

The administration of Someruelos beginning on the threshold of a new

century, it seems meet to cast a backward look upon the condition of the

island and the great changes which had taken place during the hundred

years just closing. The great need for reform was urged upon the

government immediately after the British occupation of Havana, which had

opened the eyes of the authorities to mistakes made not only in the

political and military, but especially in the economic management of the

colony. Revenues had to be created in order to meet the increased

expenses of the administration and defray the cost of much needed

improvements. Hence upon the proposal of Count Ricla the king had

ordered a thorough reorganization of the administration and especially

of the treasury department. In the attempt of solving the problem of

taxation, Spain had followed a suggestion of M. Choiseul, minister of

foreign affairs in France, which was conceived with little knowledge of

colonial conditions and legislation and hastily accepted by the supreme

government. This change in the tax system then in force in the Indies

produced great commotion in the island of Cuba and other Spanish

possessions in America.

Guiteras reports that many real estate owners of Puerto Principe and the

southern territory designated in the island by the name of la Vuelta de

Abajo were especially bitter in complaining against the innovation, but

neither the intendant nor the Brigadier Cisneros could modify

dispositions decreed by the supreme government. Discontent increased and

some men were so exasperated that they preferred to destroy their own

products rather than pay the tax which was to go to the public treasury.

By the influence of D. Pedro Calvo de la Puerta, D. Penalver and other

land-owners, some of the people were pacified, before disorder ensued.

But others rose in open revolt and had to be dispersed by the militia

hastily mobilized for their repression. Although hardly any blood was

shed, the opposition which the authorities had met gave them cause for

anxiety, and upon their urgent appeal the supreme government renounced

the enforcement of the new taxes.

After the establishment of the Intendencia and the creation of a weekly

Junta, D. Juan de Alda drew up a budget of expenditure for the year

1768, which amounted to 1,681,452 pesos. Of this sum the army consumed

only 665,655 pesos. Approved by the supreme government and taken as a

basis for figuring the annual expenditure, 1,200,000 pesos were

consigned to the treasury of Mexico with the assumption that the public

revenues would cover the eventual difference. According to Ramon de la

Sagra, the general revenues of the island from 1764 to 1794 amounted to

20,286,173 pesos, and the sums which besides came to the treasury under

the name of situados (duties assigned upon certain goods or effects) and

other classifications amounted from 1766 to 1788 to 101,735,350 pesos.

The revenues of the island for the same period were, according to

Alcazar, 50,000,000 pesos, but he adds that the decree of the

seventeenth of August, 1790, by which farmers and merchants were allowed

to pay with promissory notes, resulted in some loss to the import

duties. On the other hand, the system of tax collection was open to

dishonest practices, which were checked during the administration of

Someruelos.

The objections which had been raised against the new taxation having

chiefly come from people engaged in agriculture, the government found on

investigation that the existing commercial laws were at fault. Inclined

as was the court of Spain during the rule of Carlos III. to yield in

favor of the people, the new measures only mitigated but did not remove

the evils complained of, which were founded on institutions and

ordinances so thoroughly antiquated as no longer to be of any benefit to

the population. The commerce of Cuba had since the year 1740 been

carried on by the Real Compania of Havana. Although its institution was

based upon the old and faulty principle of monopoly and privilege, and

discriminated against foreign goods that came to Cuba via Spanish ports,

the exportations of the island which at the beginning of the eighteenth

century were confined to timber, hides and a small amount of cattle,

soon began to include other products, such as sugar, honey, brandy and

wax.

After the founding of the Intendencia there was opened by way of

experiment a small commerce with the principal ports of Spain; but the

regulations required the collection in the Peninsula of two custom

duties on manufactures embarked at Cuba and destined for Spain, one

being called entry, the other exit duty, to which was later added a

consumer's duty. These extraordinary charges destroyed the profits hoped

for by the extension of commerce, and were the source of more

discontent, until in the year 1767 the king authorized the abolition of

the Compania of Havana "in case of urgent necessity for Cuba" and at the

same time inaugurated some franchises which tended to relieve the much

restricted commerce of the island. As has been recorded at the time, it

was not until the twelfth of October, 1778, that the king issued an

order calling for free commerce and abolishing the monopolies of the

larger ports.

The effects of this measure made themselves felt in a sudden revival of

commercial activities which led to such an expansion of Cuba's commerce,

that the island was forced to ask concessions and obtained from the

court more favors than any other of Spain's American possessions. When

the War of Independence paralyzed the commerce of the British colonies

with the island, the king granted still greater franchises and a new

decree opened the entry of the Port of Havana to the flags of all

nations, provided their ships introduced provisions only. But while

these new decrees favored the commerce of the colony, they reacted

unfavorably upon the commerce of Spain, the merchant navy of which had

been annihilated during the many wars, until there were not enough

vessels to transport the goods the colonies needed. The imports of

foreign products which the monopoly permitted Spain to make were in

value superior to the exports from America. Direct commerce with

friendly nations was more convenient inasmuch as the foreigners could in

turn export all the fruits of the country. The only remedy for the evils

confronting Spanish commerce would have been the reestablishment of the

merchant fleet; but in their short-sightedness Spanish merchants turned

back to the old monopoly and at the foot of the throne begged for return

to the old system. Under such pressure were exacted from the king the

decrees of the twentieth of January and the fifteenth of April, 1784,

which once more closed the ports of Spanish America to the friendly

nations, carrying the prohibition to the extreme of denying merchant

vessels entry, even if they were foundering!

Owing to this confusing and irritating condition of commercial

legislation the growth and progress of the colonies received another

setback, and probably caused the decrease in population which the

Countess de Merlin mentions. It also seriously affected the agriculture

of the island. For Spain had not enough inhabitants on her own soil to

colonize her vast overseas territories; and even if her legislation in

respect to commerce had been more liberal, her constant opposition to

the admittance of foreigners to her provinces discouraged white

immigration. Even during the reign of Carlos III., which seemed to

inaugurate a new and more enlightened era, the distrust of the

government towards foreigners is manifested in the new and abridged

version of the law of the Indies, published in the year 1778, which

decrees that in no port nor part of the West Indies, either the islands

or the continent to the north and south, shall any kind of traffic with

foreigners be admitted, even by way of barter or any other mode of

commerce, those violating this order being liable to forfeit life and

property.

The slave trade was therefore the means Cuba was forced to adopt to

supply the lack of white laborers and artisans. It was subject to the

same restrictions as all maritime commerce, with the important

difference that it could not be carried on without a special permission

from the king, which usually fixed the number of years in which a

certain number of slaves should be granted certain individuals,

companies or corporations. These permissions were called licenses, later

assientos, and finally contracts and privileges, until in the year 1789

they entirely ceased to exist. A British concern, called the South Sea

Company, had been the first to receive such a privilege, when in 1713 it

was allowed to introduce into the colonies of Latin America, with

absolute exclusion of Spaniards and foreigners, four thousand eight

hundred negroes in the course of thirty years. Next came the permiso

obtained by the Compania Mercantil of Havana in the year 1740, of which

use was made until 1766. Then came the contract concluded with the

Marquis de Casa Enrile, which lasted from 1773 to 1779; and finally the

permission granted in the year 1780 on account of the war with England,

that most Spaniards in America could have recourse to the French

colonies for their supply of slaves.

The manner in which this trade in human flesh was carried on reflects

sadly upon those engaged in this traffic. Loaded into vessels that were

hardly considered fit for carrying freight, thousands were known to have

perished in shipwrecks. Crowded into the dark, unventilated holds of

these rotten hulks, more thousands succumbed to disease and were thrown

overboard. Of the trades associated with cruel exploitation and inhuman

abuses, that of the slavetrader ranked first, for the sufferings to

which the poor victims were subjected in the transit from their native

home to the foreign land defied description. There were captains of

slave ships who loathed their task. One is quoted in a book by the

Jesuit Sandeval as confessing his misgivings about the business; he had

just suffered a shipwreck in which only thirty out of nine hundred on

board escaped!

On their arrival in Cuba the poor wretches who survived the ordeal began

to fare better. E. M. Masse, a French traveler and writer, in his work

"L'Isle de Cuba et la Havane" describes the quarters in which they were

lodged. They were the \_baracones\_, the famous barracks originally

destined for the troops which were to take Pensacola, and that had cost

four million pesos, though they could have been put up for a few

thousand. At the time of his visit to Havana, some of the contractors

who had made this handsome profit on the buildings were still in jail.

He goes on to say that immediately on landing the negroes were taken to

these barracks, waiting to be sold. They contained one immense room,

covered with straw and divided into three compartments. The first was

for the employees or jailers; the second for the women slaves, the third

for the men. There was a spacious court or yard with a kitchen in one

corner. In this yard they spent their days, shielded from the sun and

the rain by tents. They were permitted to bathe in the sea. The writer

looked at the spectacle with an artist's eye. For he remarks that he had

always considered the pose of the Venus of Milo unnatural, until by

observing these women slaves at their bath in the surf, he found that

the identical pose was frequently assumed by them, and hence must have

been natural. The only garment obligatory as long as a slave was not

sold, was a kerchief; if somebody made them a gift of another kerchief,

they made of it a turban or wore it like a sash.

The freedom which they enjoyed in this brief interval between landing in

Havana and being sold, may in the lives of the majority have been the

only freedom they were to know. Being merchandise, it was of course in

the interest of the slave traders to have them appear well when put on

the market. Hence the food they received was wholesome. They were also

encouraged to indulge in their wonted amusements and could be seen

marching or dancing around in the yard, as they raised their voices in

song. The African who had just arrived and spoke only his native tongue,

was called \_bosale\_; the slave who was born in Africa, but spoke

Spanish and knew the trade he was destined for, was called \_ladino\_.

Children of African or European origin born in Spanish America, were

called \_criolles\_, from which the French derived the term in use today:

creole.

Miscegenation was not favored in Cuba. When the immigration from Santo

Domingo brought into the island a great number of mulattoes, quadroons

and octoroons, the color line was severely drawn. A woman of colored

origin with a perfectly white and very beautiful daughter was known to

have denied her child in order to make it possible for her to marry a

Havanese. Many of these women were far better educated than the native

Cubans; M. Masse says that the art of conversation, unknown in Havana

society, flourished only in their homes. But they were rigidly barred

from the drawing-rooms of the wealthy Havanese.

According to the data available, the number of slaves introduced into

the island from the beginning of its colonization until the year 1789

was probably not below 100,000. It is estimated that in the two hundred

years between 1550 and 1750 the annual importations of the assientists

into Spanish America averaged at least three thousand a year. In the

census taken by Governor la Torre about 1772 Cuba was found to have

45,633 slaves. In 1775 their number had risen to forty-six thousand and

that of free colored people to about thirty thousand. The relaxation of

the commercial restrictions gave a strong impulse to all sorts of

enterprises, mercantile and otherwise, and especially to building, and

the laboring forces employed on all the new constructions were mostly

slaves. By the year 1775 their proportion to the free colored population

was four and sixth tenths to three. As the value of slave labor began to

be recognized in that period of internal improvements and general

progress, the number of slave importations steadily increased. According

to Blanchet, Cuba acquired in the years 1783 and 1784 one thousand and

five hundred negroes through contracts between the government and

various French and Spanish firms, as also the British house of Baker and

Dawson and the private shipowners D. Vicente Espon and Col. D. Gonzalo

O'Farrel. Armas y Cespedes gives the number of slaves for the year 1774

as 44,333; for the year 1792 as 84,590. In the enormous number of

negroes imported between 1791 and 1816 there were counted 132,000

imported legitimately, 168,000 by contraband means.

A more systematized and conclusive estimate of the number of negroes

gradually introduced in Cuba was made by D. Francisco de Arango, the

high-minded patriot of the period of Governor Las Casas. It covers the

time from the beginning of the sixteenth to the middle of the eighteenth

century. D. José Antonio Saco, author of "Collecion de papeles

cientifices, historicos, politicos y de etros ramos sobre la isle de

Cuba, ya publicados ya ineditos," and "Historia de la Esclavitud," did

the same for the eastern part of the island from 1764 to 1789. These

estimates furnish the following figures:

Imported on the whole island from 1523 to 1763 60,000

By the Compania de la Habana in 1764, 1765,

1766 4,957

By the Marquis de Casa Enrile from 1773 to

1779 14,132

By the permiso of 1780 authorizing the supply

of negroes from French colonies during the

war ending 1783 6,593

By the house of Baker & Dawson from 1786 to

1789 8,318

From the eastern part of the island, 1764 to

1789 6,000

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Total 100,000

Humboldt remarks in his "Personal Narrative of Travels to the

Equinoctial regions of America during the years 1799-1809, "that the

British West Indies then contained seven hundred thousand negroes and

mulattoes, free and slave, while the custom-house registers proved that

from 1680 to 1786 two million one hundred and thirty thousand negroes

had been imported from Africa, which suggests a rather high mortality.

In Cuba the annual death rate of the recently imported negroes was seven

per cent. Hence the current assumption that the African negro was

particularly adapted for and could stand the climate of Cuba, does not

seem to be well founded.

About this time the social conscience of mankind seemed to be suddenly

awakened and philanthropic ideas began to modify the general conception

of slavery. Nations whose political organization made the government

dependent upon public opinion, had already begun to yield to the demand

of abolishing slave trade. The United States had auspiciously

inaugurated that movement. The state of Virginia had closed her ports to

the traffic in 1778; Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island and

Massachusetts followed in 1780, 1787 and 1788. The Third Congress of the

American Republic proclaimed negro traffic as contrary to the

civilization of Christian peoples and condemned it before the end of the

eighteenth century. At the same time the Convention of the French

Republic declared its abolition in the colonies of France, and the

events in Santo Domingo, like a seismic disturbance made all

slave-owning nations tremble. Stimulated by the example of America and

stirred by the noble words of her own great humanitarians, Howard and

Wilberforce, England, too, began from 1787 on to discuss that problem.

In the course of the serious debates that took place in the British

parliament in May, 1788, it was said that a decree abolishing the

traffic would in a short time paralyze the commerce carried on by

British merchants with Africa. In her isolation from the current tides

of thought in Europe and other countries, Cuba had so far been untouched

by the humanitarian aspect of the question and looked upon it merely

from her utilitarian viewpoint. Fearing that the house of Baker &

Dawson, which had been her main source of supply for negro labor, would

no longer be able to furnish her the hands she needed in her deserted

fields, she hastened through her representative in the Ayuntamiento to

solicit from the king permission to continue the traffic. Hence on the

twenty-eighth of February, 1788, a royal decree permitted the Spaniards,

and foreigners in general for the term of two years, to introduce

negroes, exempt from duties, in Cuba, Santo Domingo and Puerto Rico and

in the province of Caracas.

Guiteras, in his "Historia de la Isla de Cuba" speaks of the slavery

problem with a remarkable display of native fervor. He says:

"The slavery question met with political difficulties of an even graver

character in the rapid progress made by the ideas of the abolitionists,

which inflamed and inspired those foreign nations who had filled their

own colonies with slaves. Imprudent exaltation of the republican ideals

of France finally led the children of Hayti to rise in a horrible

revolution. A race of men that had come to the coasts of America not in

royal vessels and clad in steel to plant standards with the sign of

Redemption, but locked up in the stench of a closed hold, the body naked

and in chains, to irrigate with their sweat and blood the land of

slavery, rose in defence of the natural laws, demolished the banner at

the sight of which the most powerful nations of Europe had trembled, and

conquered the outraged rights of humanity. One should think that the

beam of light which radiated through all the sea of the Antilles would

have dissuaded the Cubans and the government from promoting African

colonization on the island of Cuba; nevertheless a lamentable error,

though based upon the best intentions, caused Cuba to invite that evil

and Spain filled the island with African slaves."

It may seem incongruous that a man of D. Francisco de Arango's liberal

ideas should have been instrumental in securing for Cuba from the court

at Madrid a privilege which the enlightened humane viewpoint of his time

began to consider a disgrace. But as pointed out in a previous chapter,

this measure was resorted to by Arango only as a temporary expediency.

As soon as the immediate shortage of hands was relieved, he himself

recommended the substitution of free white labor for negro slavery. For

the enormous influx of negroes as compared with the very minimum

increase of white inhabitants began even then to fill with vague

apprehensions for the future of Cuba's population those most earnestly

concerned with the welfare of the island. To the Spaniards of Florida

the great percentage of negroes was repulsive. More than five hundred

Floridians, who in 1763 had come to Cuba to escape British rule,

returned to their old home in 1784. When after the reign of terror in

Santo Domingo French refugees settled in Cuba, they, too, were opponents

of the slave traffic and their influence contributed no little towards

changing the attitude of the Spaniards towards negro slavery.

One of the disturbing features in this large negro population was the

small proportion of women. Planters refused to invest in the latter,

because they considered them unfit for the hard labor required. The

result was such a surplus of male slaves that in some communities there

were five hundred men to one negro woman. At first the negro slaves were

employed mostly in the mines, where the native Indians had proved

inefficient. Later they entered also domestic service. But with the

development of agriculture, they began to be largely employed in the

fields and on the plantations. Edward Gaylord Bourne says in his work on

"Spain in America," the third volume in the historical series "The

American Nation," in the chapter on Negro Slaves (p. 272):

"The development of the sugar industry and the growth of slavery were

dependent upon each other, especially after the mines of the Antilles

gave out. Each trapiche, or sugar-mill, run by horses or mules, required

thirty or forty negroes, and each water-mill eight at the least. Had the

commerce of the islands been reasonably free, plantation slavery on a

large scale would have rapidly developed, and the history of Hayti and

the English islands would have been anticipated a century by the

Spaniards."

While Howard, Wilberforce, Judge Sewall and the Quakers are usually

considered the pioneers of the abolition of slavery, the first voice

raised against this institution came from Peru and was that of a Jesuit,

Alfonso Sandoval, a native of Seville, but a resident of Peru, where his

father held an important position in the royal administration. Sandoval

wrote a work on negro slavery entitled "De Instauranda Aethiopum

Salute," which was published in Madrid in 1647 and contains valuable

data concerning the traffic, frequently quoted by historians. Nor can it

be denied that the Spaniards knew better how to treat the negroes than

either the French or the British. Evidences to the contrary suggest that

whatever may have been the wrongs under which the negro slaves of the

Spanish colonies suffered, they were not as much due to the cruelty of

the masters, as to their ignorance and carelessness.

The humane attitude of the Spaniard towards the negro slave made the

Royal Cedula issued by King Carlos III. in 1789 a unique document. For

in this royal decree are set forth the rights of the slaves with a

precision which in an eventual dispute with the masters could admit of

no doubt. By that decree the Spanish king earned for himself a niche in

the gallery of human benefactors. For the individual paragraphs as

compared with the civic code of Spain show little or no discrimination

between the black and the white elements of the colonial population.

These laws agreed perfectly with the spirit of the period which had

produced Howard, Wilberforce, Sewall and others. They were conceived in

a remarkable spirit of equity, whatever violations and abuses may have

occurred in individual practice. According to this cedula, a slave, if

ill-treated, had the right to choose another master, provided he could

induce this new master to buy him. He could buy his liberty at the

lowest market-price. He could buy wife and children and marry the wife

of his choice. If he suffered cruel treatment, he could appeal to the

courts and in some instances might be set free. If negroes were in doubt

about the lawfulness of their enslavement, they also had the right to

bring their case to the notice of the courts. By that same cedula negro

slaves were granted the right to hold property which opened for them

opportunities for eventual emancipation. Moreover that law declared that

fugitive slaves who by righteous means had gained their freedom were not

to be returned to their masters.

In accordance with these humane slave laws, the colored population of

Cuba enjoyed greater latitude than in many other colonies. Although

converted to Catholicism, they were known to revert to their heathen

practices at certain times and to have chanted invocations to the saints

in the African dialect of their forefathers. Numerous clans existed

among them, which were supposed to have for their aim the perpetuation

of their ancestral customs. Among them was the \_manigo\_, which was

frequently the source of grave apprehension on the part of the

authorities and, surviving in the \_cabildos\_, societies, which are both

religious and social, had in a later period to be suppressed. The rites

of these organizations were a grotesquely uncanny mixture of Roman

Catholicism and African paganism. One day in the year the negroes of the

island had almost unlimited liberty to celebrate in their barbaric

fashion. It was the sixth of January or All Kings' Day, and was the

occasion for a spectacle as weirdly fascinating as any carnival. That

day belonged to the negroes. Dressed in the gaudiest costumes, carrying

huge poles with mysterious transparencies, they paraded through the

streets to the beat of drums, shouting and gesticulating, or singing as

they went along. At the squares they stopped and indulged in a dance.

Melodious as were their songs, the rhythms betrayed the African origin.

The dances, too, even after several generations, retained their African

characteristics. As the day progressed, hilarity became more and more

boisterous, and the holiday frequently ended in riotous demonstrations

and street brawls. The white population of Havana and other towns, in

which this day was celebrated by the blacks, remained indoors, and even

suspended business for fear of disturbances.

There is no doubt that the important service which negro labor performed

for the agriculture of the country induced the Cubans to allow the

negroes this great amount of freedom. For without them, as D. Francisco

de Arango and others knew only too well, the fields and the plantations

of the island could never have yielded that abundance of products upon

which depended the wealth of Cuba.

CHAPTER XIII

The prosperity of a new country and the happiness of the people depend

largely upon a just apportionment of the land of that country and the

opportunity to exploit the resources of the soil and sell the products

thereof at the greatest possible profit to the producer. Had this simple

truth been recognized as the cornerstone of Cuban colonization the

island would have been spared centuries of hard up-hill struggle for

healthy economic conditions.

From the standpoint of the agrarian reformer, the land problem was at

the bottom of all the evils that retarded the development of the colony,

so richly endowed by nature that it should have been a paradise for

those who came there to settle. The noble Spanish adventurers of

Castilian blood, who had accompanied the early explorers and in a spirit

of romance followed in their wake, were the first to obtain grants of

land. They returned to Spain, brought with them their families and

servants and settled upon the land, which became their new home. But

they were hardly of a type willing to rough it after the first glamor of

romance and novelty had faded, or able by hard labor to transform the

wilderness into richly yielding fields and gardens. Stockbreeding was

very much easier and according to their ideas required no particular

exertion on their part. They let nature take care of the increase of

their herds and flocks. A few of them retained the land, made their

haciendas the home of generations to come, and attained to some rank and

standing by virtue of these great holdings. Essentially domestic by

nature, they lived there sometimes two or three generations under one

roof, frugally and contentedly all the year round.

Among the earliest Cuban landholders were nobles, Castilian, Andalusian

and others, who received great grants of land in recognition of some

services to the crown. These people, who had not known the spell of

adventure in strange tropical climes, did not settle permanently on the

island, but became absentee landlords. They owned perhaps a residence in

Havana, which they visited briefly during the winter. They had a

hacienda, which saw them even less frequently and more briefly. The

traditions and conventions of their caste did not allow them to work,

even if they had been able and willing; so they left the management of

their land to an agent, whose paramount concern was to hold his position

long enough to fill his pockets and who beyond that was no more

interested in the colony than was his master. Whatever profits the

latter made on the products of his Cuban estate, did not accrue to the

benefit of the island; they were spent in the old country. Madrid was

the place where these absentee landlords of Cuba wasted their wealth in

extravagance and dissipation, instead of investing it in improvements of

their estates and works of civic importance and advantage to the island.

These property-holders looked out only for the revenues they could get

out of their Cuban estates; but they were not concerned with the problem

of revenues for the island. They have their counterpart today and not

only in Cuba, but in other countries where vast tracts were acquired by

foreigners, some for the hunting they afforded, some for speculative

purposes, while native citizens had to go without the little plot of

land that could insure them a home and sometimes even a living.

Thus were the best tracts of land apportioned among or pre-empted by

people having no vital interest in the development of the island's

resources. When the real workers came, peasants from the Basque

provinces, from Catalonia and other parts of the Peninsula, they again

had no capital to invest in the necessary improvements, and being

obliged to content themselves with a small plot of land and to work it

with their own hands, soon drifted into a deadly indifference towards

anything beyond the satisfaction of their most urgent daily needs. Even

if their land had produced more than they needed for their own

consumption, they would have been at a loss how to dispose of their

products, since there were no transportation facilities and since every

movement of the producer was subject to local customs and other

restrictions, limiting the possibilities of creating a market and from

the profits realized to set aside a fund to spend on current

improvements or to insure their future.

There is little doubt that much of the indolence attributed to the

climate was gradually developed in the people by the lack of

opportunities to market their products and to get into touch with the

outside world. The Cuban settler of that class had in course of time to

acquire a habitual indifference toward the morrow, which developed into

shiftlessness. His initiative being paralyzed at the beginning, he never

could rouse himself to conceive of another life. His children growing up

about him under these same circumstances, true to the clannishness of

Spanish family life, remained with the parents and followed in their

footsteps. This may explain the lack of backbone with which the Cuban

has been reproached. Official repression, even if founded upon a sort of

paternal solicitude, is bound to stunt the growth of individuals as of

nations; and of this repression the people of Cuba were for centuries

the victims.

The French traveler and writer quoted before, E. M. Masse, describes the

life of Cuban rustics at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the

nineteenth century. He calls them \_monteros\_, which means huntsmen, and

they were probably the more shiftless descendants of this first class of

settlers. For he speaks of their simple, frugal and indolent ways; tells

how satisfied they are just to own a little plot of ground, with a

bananery beside the hut, or a rice or corn-field, and perhaps a few

cows. They were happiest when they could afford a slave, who would go

fishing and hunting for them; for that would allow the master to lie in

the hammock and smoke cigarettes. It seems natural that the home of such

a montero was usually a wretched little "cabane," a shack of one room in

which he dwelt with his family, which was sometimes numerous, and in

close companionship with a pig, and other domestic animals. Yet this

same man, preferring to lie in the hammock rather than to exert himself

in some much needed work, was very fond of lively sports, as

horseback-riding. Even the women of the monteros were splendid

horse-women.

The dress of these people was extremely simple. The men wore trousers of

oiled linen extending to the ankles; shoes of raw leather, a short shirt

of the same material as the trousers, a kerchief wound tightly about the

head and a big straw hat with a black ribbon or one of felt with gold

braid. An indispensable article of accoutrement was the machete,

cutlass, in his belt. The women wore a calico skirt, a white shirt with

a bracelet at the elbow to hold the sleeves and a fichu on the head.

When they went to mass, they dressed their hair, wore a mantilla on

their head and put on shoes with big silver buckles. At dances they

donned a round hat woven out of the tissue of plantain leaves, trimmed

with gay ribbons, or a black hat with gold braid. Modest as was the

montero in his demands upon life, there was one entertainment he could

not forego: the \_feria de gallo\_, cock-fight. Many a one saved up his

money for months to spend it on that day.

This description by M. Masse, of the montero of Cuba at the end of the

eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, tallies well with

the description of the guajiro of today by Forbes Lindsay in "Cuba and

Her People Today." Lindsay sees in that Cuban rustic a descendant of

Catalonian and Andalusian settlers:

"Time was when he occasionally owned slaves and a fair extent of land,

but nowadays he is more often than not a squatter in a little corner of

that no man's land which seems to be so extensive in the central and

eastern portions of the Island. In comparatively few instances he has

title to a few acres, lives in a passably comfortable cabana, possesses

a yoke of oxen, a good horse, half a dozen pigs, and plenty of poultry.

Much more often he lives in a ramshackle \_bohio\_, the one apartment of

which affords indifferent shelter to a large family and is fairly shared

by a lean hog and a few scrawny chickens. There is nothing deserving the

name of furniture in the house and the clothing of the family is of the

scantiest. A nag of some sort, usually a sorry specimen of its kind, is

almost always owned by the guajiro, who loves a horse and rides like the

gaucho of the Argentine pampas."

That montero of a hundred and more years ago and the guajiro of today

have so much in common that it seems safe to consider the latter a

descendant of the former.

The lack of proper facilities for the exchange of commodities between

city and country caused the fact that Havana up to the beginning of the

nineteenth century raised almost all her necessities on her own soil.

The economical cassava was still generally used. The ground in the

environs of the capital, though not the best soil on the island, within

a short time attained considerable value. The administration of the navy

yard opposed the cultivation of ground rich in trees that it could use

for shipbuilding. By this monopoly alone many people were barred from

owning and cultivating land. The preference of the earlier Spanish

settlers for stockbreeding also limited the agricultural area. Besides,

real estate conventions and regulations were as rigid as other customs

of the country, and were never changed, be the need for a change ever so

pressing.

From the first days of the colony the circular form of plot had been

adopted, the extent of a \_hatos\_ being fixed at two miles and that of

the \_corrales\_ at one mile in circumference. This curious system of

measurement gave rise not only to difficulties in computing the area of

contiguous properties, but to misunderstandings and disputes which

caused much litigation. It was difficult to buy a plot of ground that

was not in some way subject to legal controversy. The great number of

lawyers on the island had probably a certain reason for existence owing

to the innumerable boundary and other land disputes. It is evident, too,

that complicated boundaries and questionable titles were a rich source

of dubious activity for unscrupulous members of the profession. Land

cases were wont to drag on from one generation to the other, and while

the lawyers representing the interests of the clients waxed rich, the

clients themselves had often to sacrifice the land itself in order to

settle their claims.

The changes brought on by gradual cultivation of unimproved lands on the

other hand enriched the owners of such lands quite out of proportion to

their original value. When pastures were converted into farm plots, the

price was augmented. A hato contained more than sixteen hundred

caballerias at thirty-three acres per caballeria. The corral contained

more than four hundred. The caballeria pasture land cost from ten to

twenty-five pesos; as soon as it was cultivated, its lowest price was

three hundred pesos. Thus a hato, worth at most forty thousand pesos,

was in its new state worth more than four hundred and eighty-four

thousand. Likewise a corral, originally valued at most at ten thousand

pesos, rose in price to one hundred and twenty thousand. The same was

true of building lots. A caballeria in the suburbs, divided into

\_solares\_, house plots, could sometimes bring eighty-five thousand

pesos. A caballeria to the southwest of Havana was worth three thousand

pesos, one in the neighborhood of Matanzas only five hundred. The

extraordinary wealth of certain convents, frequently commented upon by

economists and historians, was due to the gradual and enormous increase

in the price of the land which had originally been given to them. From

these early grants and concessions were derived the privileges which

some private properties and some convents enjoyed; they had for instance

the right to forbid the building in their neighborhood of houses beyond

a certain height, a precious privilege in a city where the circulation

of air had not been overencouraged.

M. Masse comments at length upon these conditions in his book on Havana.

He says:

"The immense fortunes of certain Havana families are thus explained. The

sobriety of the Spaniards, the very limited taste and luxury found in

their residences and their furnishings, a commercial management which

favored agricultural products, would have ended in concentrating in a

few hands fortunes rivalling those of kings, had not libertinism, the

rage of lawsuits and the passion for gambling produced that

instability, which some moralists would have liked to secure by other

means, though these were not easily found."

The prospect of becoming hopelessly entangled in interminable lawsuits,

and of having large tracts of land on one's hands without the certainty

that the products of this land would find a market and bring a price

commensurate with the amount of money and labor spent upon it, prevented

many residents of the island from becoming landholders. Only when the

conflict between the landholders and the monopoly that robbed them of

their profits became acute, did certain patriots concerned with the

welfare of Cuba unite to secure a radical reform in the legislation of

the Indies. The demand for an extension of maritime commerce was the

first to be urged upon the authorities, and the first to be granted. As

has been related in a previous chapter, the British occupation of Havana

opened the eyes of the Spaniards to the benefits of free commerce with

and among the colonies, and led to a gradual relaxation of the law which

gave to one or two Spanish ports the monopoly of transatlantic trade.

When greater freedom of maritime commerce had been secured, and

agriculture began to be carried on on a larger scale, not only for home

consumption, but for export, the questions of repartition of land, of

introducing different standards of measurement, of diminution of taxes

on the fruits of the country and of duties on articles of importation,

and lastly of securing the labor needed for these larger enterprises,

began to occupy the minds of the leaders.

The chief branches of Cuban agriculture were the raising of live stock

and the cultivation of tobacco and sugar. Until the beginning of the

eighteenth century the breeding of cattle was the principal occupation

of the Cuban farmer. It suited the taste of the Castilian and

Andalusian immigrant, for it required comparatively little work and lent

itself to the acquirement of habits of idleness which the climate of the

country tended to confirm. Guiteras is right, when he says:

"Had our ganaderos (ranch owners) cultivated the plains for the

alimentation of the animals and established a regular order in the care

of breeds and in the management of their haciendas, this branch would

have made greater progress and served as a powerful stimulus and been of

great benefit for our agriculture. It would have supplied fertilizer for

the fields, furnished the markets with meat for consumption by employers

and laborers, and moreover, would have supplied oxen for our ploughs."

But it seems that the Cuban farmer, as are many in other countries, was

too short-sighted to perceive the advantages of a well-organized system

of production, and indulged in a laissez-faire policy which did not much

advance his interests or those of the community.

The product next in importance was tobacco. The sections of the island

best adapted for the cultivation of tobacco are the sandy fields west of

Havana in the district of la Vuelta Baja, a country bathed by the waters

of the San Sebastian, Richondo and the Consolacion of the south, and the

Cuyaguateje or Mantua; also those in the palm belt running between

Sierra Madre and the southern coast which forms a rectangle of

twenty-eight leagues in length and seven in breadth. Other tobacco belts

of great value are las Virtudes, between San Cristobal and Guanajas in

the same Vuelta Baja, and in the east that nearest to Holguin and Cuba.

The tobacco harvest of the year 1720 was six hundred thousand arrobas.

But, as the historians say, "a severe system of monopoly, odious

examinations and vexatious regulations and restrictions limited the

profits, and the excessive cost of indispensable tools and the distance

of the tobacco fields from the capital, discouraged the production of

tobacco and visibly diminished the cultivation of this most important

product of the island." The frequent disputes between the vegueros and

the factoria, as the royal agency which owned the tobacco monopoly was

called, abundantly prove the existence of conditions which were not

likely to benefit the colony.

The most valuable product of the island was sugar; and the cultivation

of sugar cane was in such a backward state that it reflected upon the

intelligence and enterprise of the native farmers. It revealed their

ignorance, habitual indifference and lack of resources most lamentably.

One of the oldest sugar planters of the island, Captain D. José Nicolas

Perez Garvey, presented a series of memorials to the Sociedad Economica

of Santiago de Cuba, which give a fair idea of the processes employed in

the elaboration of this precious product. Sr. Garvey was a pioneer in

demonstrating the imperfections of the existing methods and in advising

the introduction of innovations. But his recommendation of modern

inventions horrified the majority of the farmers and was violently

objected to by the laborers.

At first in order to press the juice out of the cane the same means were

employed as for the grinding of wheat. They were cylinders set in motion

by mules or oxen, a process in which half of the juice was wasted. At

the beginning of the eighteenth century a more efficacious process was

employed in imitation of that which was in use in Hayti. Not until the

government itself took the initiative and encouraged the use of

implements and machines that had proved of advantage in other

sugar-raising colonies, was a change gradually effected. The great

planter and landowner of Havana, D. Nicolas Calvo de la Puerta, was the

man through whose influence and insistence upon certain innovations the

sugar production was slowly improved. Finally there was the problem of

converting the guarapo or fermented cane juice into sugar, which was at

first also very primitive and slowly yielded to more productive and

profitable methods. Lastly the sugar production of the island developed

another product, which was not only popular on the island, but became an

article of exportation. From 1760 to 1767 Havana, which was the only

port qualified to export sweetmeats, sent out annually thirteen thousand

cases of sixteen arrobas each. In the period of five years from 1791 to

1795 inclusive, the export was 7,572,600 arrobas. White sugar was then

worth thirty-two reals per arroba, brown sugar twenty-eight. The French

immigrants from Santo Domingo were an element that contributed to the

improvement and promotion of the sugar industry.

Though they furnished a far smaller proportion of the island's wealth,

hides, cane, brandy, refined honey and wax also began to figure in the

economic records of Cuba. Wax became a valuable product about the year

1764 when Bishop Morell brought a few swarms of bees from his Florida

exile. It was exported to the ports of the Gulf of Mexico where it was

highly esteemed for its superior quality. The indigo plant which was

introduced during the administration of Governor Las Casas proved in

time a new source of Cuban wealth. Coffee plantations and cocoa groves

had also multiplied in number, and were slowly furnishing new products

for home consumption as for exportation.

The following figures will give a limited but reliable survey of the

growth of agriculture towards the end of the century. Before the year

1761 there were only between sixty and seventy sugar refineries on the

island. By the end of the century there were four hundred and eighty.

Before the year 1796 there were only eight or ten coffee plantations, so

that the island barely produced enough coffee for its own consumption.

By the end of the century there were three hundred and twenty-six

"cafeyeres." At the same time the island had two thousand four hundred

and thirty-nine vegas, or tobacco fields, and one thousand two hundred

and twenty-three \_colmenares\_ or apiaries. The revenues of the island

from 1793, when they amounted to over one million pesos, rose steadily

until at the beginning of the century they were about three million

pesos annually. The sugar plantations yielded great profits, but they

also required big investments of money and labor. One of the most

prominent sugar planters on the island, D. José Ignacio Echegoyen,

calculated that to produce ten thousand arrobas of sugar, an expenditure

of twelve thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven pesos was needed,

besides a capital of sixty thousand. He was one of the foremost citizens

that protested against the tax of one tenth on sugar. Work on the sugar

plantations was the hardest imaginable; even the negro slaves could not

stand it longer than ten years. Then their working capacity was

completely exhausted and they were given their liberty.

Though the importation of negro slaves essentially helped the

development of agriculture and the industries connected with it, there

still existed restrictions and regulations which acted as a continual

check upon the growth of the population, and had a paralyzing effect

upon the intellectual development of the colonists. A favorable solution

of these important questions offered great obstacles. Although the

principles on which Spain founded her restrictive system had been

relaxed, there existed a great number of interests that had been created

through this system and were unwilling to give up their privileges.

Derogation of these restrictions would have meant loss and injury to

some peninsular subjects that had grown rich and powerful through them.

The historian Guiteras elucidates this point when he says that higher

state reasons, supported by the right that, according to the notions of

the epoch gave them the international law and the famous bull of

Alexander VI. and was sustained by a great and expensive war against the

nations that attempted to colonize America, had influenced the conduct

of the government for nearly three centuries. The government only agreed

by force of invincible circumstances to have the British and the French

establish themselves in and continue in possession of a part of North

America and a few islands of the Antilles; but it always insisted on

maintaining the vast possessions that recognized its authority closed to

the commerce of the allies according to the agreement. With the

existence of a new and independent nation near these states, whose

political organization, religious principles and national character were

diametrically opposed to those of the Spanish government, these

possessions and dominions of the crown seemed to be in danger. The

imprudent demonstration in the state of Georgia had already shown the

spirit of hostility which when the republic of the United States was

barely established began to manifest itself against the neighboring

possessions of a country which in her diplomatic relations had from the

beginning of the Revolution always showed herself friendly. Such

considerations very likely increased the aversion of the monarch as of

his court towards Britain and the British race, in whose favor they had

yielded more than to any other power concessions demanded by the

interests of their subjects in America.

These were some of the great impediments which the champions of progress

encountered in their valiant endeavors to free the economic development

of Cuba and to help its much hampered industries. But one of the most

serious obstacles was the restriction of Spanish and especially foreign

immigration.

It seems that these restrictions which dated from the accession of

Philip II. had two definite objects; the first was to preserve the

purity of the Spanish stock in the West Indies and other possessions of

Spanish America; the second was to prevent foreigners from learning the

extent and the resources of Spain's American colonies. Edward Gaylord

Bourne says in "Spain in America":

"In regard to Spaniards, the policy adopted was one of restriction and

rigid supervision. No one, either native or foreigner, was allowed to go

to the Indies without a permit from the crown (or in some cases from the

Casa de Contracion) under penalty of forfeiting his property. Officers

of the fleets or vessels were held strictly responsible for infractions

of this rule. In the code the details of these restrictions are

amplified in seventy-three laws. The reasons for such strict regulations

covering emigration was to protect the Indies from being overrun with

idle and turbulent adventurers anxious only 'to get rich quickly and not

content with food and clothing, which every moderately industrious man

was assured of.'"

Another reason for this strict supervision is given in a law enacted in

the year 1602, which directs the deportation of foreigners from the

ports of the Indies, because "the ports are not safe in the things of

our holy Catholic faith, and great care should be taken that no error

creep in among the Indians." An exception to the rule was made twenty

years later, when expert mechanics were allowed, but traders in the

cities remained excluded. So rigidly was this policy upheld that

Humboldt during five years of travel in Spanish America met only one

German resident.

It is more difficult to understand the object of this policy than to

realize its effect upon the country's growth and progress. M. Masse says

in his book "L'Isle de Cuba et la Havane":

"No Spaniard was allowed to sail for America without permission of the

king, a permission granted only for well-defined business reasons, and

for a period limited to two years. The agreement to settle there was

even more difficult to obtain. A special permission was needed even to

pass from the province first chosen to another. Priests and nuns were

subject to the same rule."

These restrictions were enforced even at the beginning of the nineteenth

century. M. Masse continues to say that travelers were detained on board

several days before they were allowed to land in Havana. They had to

present a passport, a certificate of birth and baptism and a certificate

of respectable life and good conduct, all signed by a consul of Spain.

In individual cases these severe requirements may have been evaded--M.

Masse mentions the fact that minor functionaries were ready to do the

foreigners any favor--for a consideration. But upon the whole it must be

admitted that their observance tended to keep up a certain moral

standard in the colonies, which may not have been without some good

influence in moulding the character of the people. While other powers of

Europe allowed--and even encouraged--their colonies to become

dumping-grounds for human refuse, to populate them with their derelicts

and those of other nations, until America was spoken of by the Germans

as the big reformatory, Spain made an attempt at what some centuries

later, in our scientific age, might have been called "race culture."

CHAPTER XIV

The conditions which we have described did not, however, prevent the

colony, when prosperity came to her, from succumbing to the evils which

invariably follow in the wake of new wealth. The historian Blanchet

reports that there existed in Cuba towards the end of the century a

strange mixture of immorality and piety. Religious enthusiasm rose to an

unusual degree of fervor in Villa Clara in the year 1790. Two Capuchin

missionaries had been there a month, and the church was crowded from

early morning until late at night with men and women spellbound by their

words. After the orisons there was a sermon, and at times, immediately

after the sermon, the women left, the building was closed and darkened

and the men remained inside. Prayers alternated with flagellations,

until some individuals were exhausted with pain and the loss of blood.

In the penitential procession, which took place on some evenings, the

two missionaries and the priests of the town were followed by a

multitude in which both sexes were represented. The members of the

Ayuntamiento took part, bare-legged and bare-foot; some marched with the

head and face concealed by a white cowl, the body uncovered to the

waist, and from the waist down wrapped in sack-cloth. Some staggered

under the weight of a heavy cross; others walked straight and attempted

to inflict wounds upon themselves with the point of a sword. It seems,

however, that this religious exaltation was at times carried too far,

for flagellation assumed such proportions at burials that it had to be

forbidden.

In contrast to this religious revival was the wave of frivolity and

immorality that seemed simultaneously to sweep over the island. The

streets of the towns resounded with ribald speech and lascivious songs.

The Bishop was scandalized to see Cuban women discard their veils when

they went on the street. When they wore décolleté gowns, they did not

even close the blinds, but openly showed themselves at the windows.

There is little doubt that increase of overseas traffic in the ports of

the island contributed to the growing laxity of morals. M. Masse

considered the navy yard a special source of the corruption which wealth

had brought. "For the money needed by that enterprise circulated in the

city at the same time as the vices and the passions of its employees and

sailors." With a remarkable psychological insight he gives a most

plausible explanation how the change in the life of the island affected

the women of Cuba, and especially of Havana.

For these women had so far been brought up in strict conformity to the

conventions of their female ancestors in Spain. They had been sent to a

girls' school, always escorted, and had never until they were married

even talked alone with a man. In the narrow confines of their home,

either before or after marriage, their beauty was taken for granted and

passed uncommented. For the Cuban women were always unusually handsome,

having the same regular features and rich coloring as the Spanish, the

same large black eyes and bluish black hair, perhaps even accentuated by

their placid immobility of expression. A strange type, bound to attract

attention anywhere, they struck the strangers landing in this tropical

city like rare exotic flowers, and they suddenly found themselves the

objects of an admiration which manifested itself in ways that were new

and irresistible. The Cuban husband was known not to be as loyal as his

wife was expected to be; why should they not accept the homage offered

them? To this host of admirers, ever changing, ever ready to shower them

with favors, M. Masse, the keen psychologist, attributes the change in

the attitude of the women and the gradual change in the tone of Cuban,

especially Havanese, society. As more and more of these industrious

foreigners, who might have been as good Spaniards as their own

ancestors, settled on the island, the difference between them and the

native Cubans manifested itself, not always to the latter's advantage.

Women began to prefer them as husbands, and there was one more cause for

antagonism between these scions of a common stock, whom different

environment and conditions of existence had caused to drift apart, and

become irreconcilably estranged.

Of Havana that subtle student of life has this to say:

"The need of forgetting the many privations of a prolonged sea voyage,

with gold always in abundance for those who do not know how to manage

their affairs and to whom each voyage seems a new adventure, the

influence of a climate which makes for voluptuousness, all this combines

to make Havana a new Cythera placed at the port of long journeys even as

the ancient cradle of pleasure was at that end of the long voyage of

that time."

Thus Havana, like other capitals of the world, became gradually not only

the cradle of Cuban culture, but also of that corruption of the simpler

and purer instincts of human nature which seems to be inseparable from a

certain degree of material comfort. The man of Havana had in centuries

of repression and restriction lost the power of initiative; the end of

the century which gave the colonists of North America their independence

made them free to think and act, and work for themselves, and above

everything else, to govern themselves, found him still under a rigorous

paternal supervision by representatives of a king whom he perhaps never

saw. Centuries of such guardianship had robbed him of all incentive and

made him drift along the line of least resistance.

Physically and morally a product of the country which was politically

and economically a victim of that type of government, the Cuban of that

period had no interests save the quest of comfort and such pleasurable

excitement as certain entertainments offered. The women divided their

attention between their church and their home, indulged in deadly

idleness and senseless extravagance, dressed luxuriantly, but with bad

taste, and sought distraction in gossip or gambling. The men, who had

caught faint echoes of Voltaire and ideas of the Revolution and were

estranged from the church, divided their interests between their

business and their friends of both sexes, and also sought distraction in

gambling. There was gambling in the home circle, in the houses of

friends, in the clubs, even in the convents. It was estimated that ten

thousand games of cards were annually imported into Havana.

Of places of amusement there was no lack at that time. M. Villiet

d'Arignon, who visited Havana fifty years before and was bored by the

provincial monotony of Cuban life, could not have complained of lack of

entertainment, had he seen Havana at the threshold of the nineteenth

century, though his fastidious Gallic taste would perhaps not have been

satisfied with the quality of the attractions the Cuban metropolis

offered her guests. The native Cuban, and the Spaniard who had settled

there, did not wish for anything more fascinating and more exciting

than the national fiesta of the bull-fight, the corrida de toros. No

true Cuban could resist the trumpet call summoning the population to

that most sumptuous spectacle.

"These costumes of the age of chivalry, those richly harnessed palfreys,

those banderillos (small darts with a bandorol) or stilets trimmed with

the colors, with which the neck of the poor beast is seen magnificently

larded; this martial music, these cheers of the mousquetaires rendering

homage unto the victors, this most eminent magistrate presiding at the

feast, this vast arena, this wealth of beautiful women, who have the

opportunity of hearing the most drastic, disgusting and obscene

exclamations, into which the vulgarity of spectators and toreadors

lapses in the heat of the combat. And yet I would not advise the Spanish

government to attempt to abolish at least in Havana this sort of

spectacle. A revolt might cause the authorities to repent of their

temerity."

Thus does the French author quoted before paint the picture of the

greatest entertainment the Cuban of that time knew. But there were

others, for instance the caroussel, the circus, the magicians, and there

was always the cock-pit, offering almost as much excitement as the

bull-ring. Here, too, the gambling craze of the people asserted itself.

For not only the prosperous man about town spent his money in betting at

the cock-fight, as he did at the bull-fight. Every little town had its

cock-pit and every montero or guajiro sacrificed his wages to taste the

excitement of that spectacle. Surely Cuba at that century's end had

already learned what the hosts of strangers needed, when after a long

and tedious voyage they landed on the island.

One cannot help being reminded of the impressions M. Villiet d'Arignon

carried with him from his visit to Cuba as recorded in Jean Baptiste

Nougaret's "Voyages interessans," when after a month's sojourn he sailed

for Vera Cruz on the same vessel that took D. Juan Guemez y Horcasitas

from the governorship of Cuba to the vice-regency of Mexico. Then

already was gambling the favorite, and, as the island lacked such places

of amusement as were established later, probably the only pastime. The

Frenchman noticed also the total absence of any interest in literature,

art and music, and the impossibility of finding a circle of people where

he could enjoy an animated conversation on subjects outside of the

commonplace and of current local gossip, made him reflect rather

unfavorably upon West Indian society of that time.

Such reflections must, however, be accepted with some reservation. For

if the West Indian and especially the Cuban of the eighteenth century

lacked interest in those things that make for culture, it must be

remembered that the country in which he was living was still young, and

that the people's paramount interest had of necessity to be for the

things material. There has perhaps never been a colony of settlers in a

foreign and primitive land that has not been so thoroughly absorbed in

the task of founding a home and making a living, that all other things,

for the time being, did not seem to matter. All pioneer settlers are

bound for at least one or two generations to be so engrossed in rude

manual labor or in plans to establish a trade, that they lose touch with

the current intellectual life of their mother country and fall behind.

When those most urgent duties are performed and allow them brief spells

of leisure, in which they look about and try to pick up the threads they

had dropped, they find that the mother country has in the meantime

advanced so far beyond them that they are unable to catch up with it.

Spanish America was no exception to this rule. While the sons of Spain

that had settled in the New World were engaged in cultivating the soil,

making roads in the rough country and laying the foundations of commerce

and trade in the cities founded by their fathers or grandfathers, Spain

had entered upon the heritage of many centuries of European culture,

which on her soil had a rich admixture of Arabian elements. The

literature of Spain had given to the world an immortal epic, the story

of Cervantes, "Don Quixote," the deep significance of which was not

perhaps grasped at that time, but the human essence and the humor of

which were not lost upon his generation. It had given to the world a

drama, which was far in advance of anything the continent had so far

produced, and was comparable only to the works of that unparalleled

British genius, Shakespeare. The plays of Lopé de Vega were performed

all over Europe and found their way even into the seraglio of

Constantinople; and those of Calderon de la Barca have survived the

changes of time and taste and are even today occasionally performed.

Of all this the Spaniard of Cuba was hardly aware. Even if he had not

been so engrossed in his rude task, he could barely have known anything

about it, because the limited communication with the mother country and

the restrictions upon travel kept Spanish America in a state of

isolation, that made for stagnation rather than progress. When the

period of material prosperity came to Cuba with the relaxation of

Spain's commercial restrictions, the Cuban awoke to the realization that

he had lost contact with Spain's intellectual life, and had been left at

least two centuries behind. Out of this knowledge, depressing and

discouraging as it must have been, grew the attempt to centralize and

organize a gradual revival of literary and scientific activity on the

island.

Whether the Sociedad Economica Patriotica which was later called Junta

di Fomento is identical with the Sociedad de Amigos del Real Pais, is

not made clear by the historians. The Spaniards' fondness for long and

sonorous names and titles may have added the second name. However, both

this organization and a society founded about the same time in Santiago

for the purpose of organizing the literary activities of that place, and

similar societies in Sancti Spiritus and Puerto Principe were an

expression of the earnest desire of at least a part of the people to

turn their attention towards other things than those material. To

Governor La Torre, Havana owed the foundation of its first theatre. That

this establishment was encouraged and effectively patronized by Governor

Las Casas and other men closely identified with the cultural work of the

Sociedad, goes without saying.

But it is perfectly natural in view of the long period of indifference

towards anything like the drama that the classical Spanish dramas, the

masterpieces of Lopé de Vega and of the inimitable Calderon, did not

immediately find their way upon the stage of Havana. The audiences had

gradually to grow up to their standard and the directors of the

enterprise wisely refrained from forcing them upon a people that had so

long been ignorant of the strides Spain had made in the interval since

their ancestors settled in the New World. Hence the repertoire of the

theatre of Havana towards the end of the century catered to the

Spaniard's love of music and favored the best comic operas then produced

in the theatres of Europe. The ballet was very popular, as it was

everywhere at that period. But that subtle observer, M. Masse, was not

favorably impressed with it.

"The ballet is of that kind which carries far the art of varying the

most voluptuous attitudes and the expression of the least equivocal

sentiment."

He suspected the fandango, supposed to be typically Havanese, of being

originally a negro dance, saying "The difference is in the embroidery,

which civilization, or if one wishes, corruption, has introduced."

Very popular were at the time little comedies of domestic life, called

Saynetes, and offering pretty truthful pictures of social customs and

habits on the island, and especially glimpses of the society of Havana.

A Cuban writer of the period, D. José Rodriguez, is credited with the

authorship of a comedy, "El Principe Jardinero," The Prince Gardener,

which by its complicated plot held the attention of the audience and was

performed with great success in 1791. A comedian of considerable ability

and fame, then very popular with the Havanese, D. Francisco Covarrubas,

was the author of farces, which were very warmly received and drew large

audiences. The theatre of New Orleans, much older and better equipped

than that of Havana, sometimes sent its company of actors for a short

season of more serious drama. Among other plays which this company

produced was the tragedy "Les Templiers." Although undoubtedly still in

its beginnings, the theatre of Havana was upon the whole doing good

work. Anglo-Americans who visited Havana about the century's end are

said to have admitted that it was superior in building, stage setting,

acting and music to the American theatres of that period.

The regular company which played in Havana at the time of Governor Las

Casas was under the direction of Sr. Luis Saez. The performances were

given twice a week, on Sundays and Thursdays, and mostly offered a

program in which drama and music alternated. If a play of several acts

was given, these musical numbers came between the acts. The program

would usually begin with a dramatic composition; in the first

intermission a short play was acted, in the second a tonadilla (musical

composition) was played or a few Seguidillas (merry Spanish song or

dance tunes). At times the pieces between the acts were suppressed and

the performance ended with a tonadilla or a farce. In the bill of

January twenty-ninth, 1792, it is announced that "this performance will

conclude with a new duly censored piece entitled 'Elijir con discrecion

i amante privilegiado' (The privileged lover chosen with discretion), by

an inhabitant of this city, D. Miguel Gonzales."

[Illustration: A VOLANTE: AN OLD TIME PLEASURE CARRIAGE]

They did not know then, in Havana, the lyric theatre, although the

Havanese were fond of music and the members of Havana society in their

gatherings usually provided some musical entertainment by having an

instrumentalist perform on the piano, guitar or harp. However, there

seems to have existed an Academy of Music, where concerts were given.

There is an article in an issue of the Havana paper of that time, the

\_Papel Periodico\_, which refers to a concert given by Senora Maria

Josefa Castellanos, whose performance on the harpsichord called forth

not only a tribute in verse, but a glowing description of her "rare

skill and mastery of which she has given proof in the Academy, with the

sweetest harmonies of the best composers." This eulogy is contained in

the Sunday issue of January twenty-second, 1792. Besides Senora

Castellanos and other skilled amateurs, there was a Senora Doña Maria

O'Farrell, who distinguished herself by her musical accomplishments, for

another issue of the \_Papel Periodico\_ contains a sapphic ode dedicated

to her by an admirer, who signed the pseudonym Filesimolpos.

It appears that balls as an amusement were not approved of, which seems

a contradiction in a society which was by no means puritanical. Although

social evenings in private houses frequently ended in a dance, there

were few indications that large affairs consisting mainly of dancing

took place in the public assembly halls. The \_Papel Periodico\_ of

December sixteenth, 1792, contains an announcement which for its brevity

gives room to manifold interpretation. "The gentlemen are informed that

there will be a dance today" is so laconic, that one is almost induced

to believe that these dances were given at places known only to the

initiated. In this particular instance it was subsequently learned that

this dance of the sixteenth of December, 1792, took place at the house

of a man who was considered "a dangerous reformer of the customs of

Havana." Did this dangerous reformer perhaps admit to his dance the

ravishingly beautiful and cultured women that had come from Santo

Domingo, where they freely moved in society, but were barred in Havana,

because they had a white father or grandfather and a colored mother or

grandmother? Foreign visitors to Havana at that period were so warm in

their praise of these refined unfortunate victims of miscegenation, that

they may have converted some of the gilded youth of the smart set or the

Bohemia of Havana to their point of view.

The fine arts were not at first considered in the planning and building

of the city of Havana. Though much money was spent upon public

buildings, no artistic effect whatever was aimed at and the impression

of a crude utilitarianism prevailed. The churches, too, did not possess

the noble dignity of the great cathedrals of France, Italy and Spain.

The most ambitious ecclesiastical edifice in Havana, the church of San

Francisco, was architecturally mediocre in style and barbarously

overornamented.

In all the churches the sculpture and the wood-carving on the altars

were over-elaborate and bewildered by their decorative details. Besides

all these buildings were too low and narrow, and by their endless

decoration diminished the sense of space and produced one of oppression.

On special saints' days the decorations were pathetically crude and

primitive. Angels of paper tissue, artificial flowers, birds, lambs,

etc., were displayed with a profusion which was distracting, instead of

adding to the fervor of religious sentiment.

[Illustration: MONTSERRAT GATE IN CITY WALL OF HAVANA, BUILT 1780]

The Church de la Concepcion, built about 1795, was the only church

edifice which by a certain classic simplicity approached the solemn

beauty of a Greek temple. The Carmelite Church was interesting for the

tomb of Bishop Compostele with the epitaph, which expressed his wish to

be laid to rest "between the lilies of Carmel and the choirs of the

virgins." None of these churches had pews or chairs, the seating

capacity being limited to two rows of stalls or benches along the nave.

This made for an admirable democracy in a society which otherwise

rigorously segregated the castes for it happened not infrequently that

men of rank and ladies of position found themselves beside a poor negro.

Occasionally, however, one could see a lady going to mass with her

family of children, accompanied by a negro, carrying a rug and a small

chair; and when such a handsome senora seated herself in the center of

the rug with her offspring grouped about her, the effect was so

picturesque as to call for the brush of a Velasquez. But this privilege

was limited to white ladies of rank only. The music in the churches, on

the other hand, was exclusively furnished by the musically gifted

negroes. Though it sometimes occurred in Cuba, as in other colonies of

America, that owing to the lack of printed church music sacred words

were adopted to secular tunes, and frequently to those of popular comic

opera, the master works of the old church composers were sometimes heard

at special occasions.

Among the streets of Havana the most metropolitan was the Calle de la

Muralla, so called from the muralla or rampart built by Governor Ricla.

This was the Rue de la Paix for the women of Havana. It was lined with

"tiendas de ropas," shops displaying all the latest importations of

dress goods and wearing apparel. At that time, as at the present, the

fashionable ladies of the Cuban capital insisted upon keeping pace with

the styles of dress and adornment which prevailed in the great cities of

Europe, as their pecuniary means, their taste and their natural gifts

abundantly enabled them to do. Every morning the street was crowded with

the carriages of ladies engaged in shopping. For no white woman, unless

she belonged to what in the southern states of North America would have

been called "poor white trash" was allowed to go on foot during the day,

unless she was going to mass. Up to the twenties of the new century and

beyond, this convention was rigidly observed. Those who had to go on

foot were not seen on the Calle de la Muralla until the evening hours.

Then it was crowded with as gay and handsome a multitude of women,

white, black and of all the intervening shades, as ever trod the

pavement of a southern capital.

At such times the relation between the white and the colored women of

the city could be observed in little incidents that were an unending

source of amusement to the student of life. The lithe and willowy form

of the young girl of Spain, which Montaigne has called "un corps bien

espagnole," was frequently to be found among the Cuban women. The almost

regal dignity and grace of carriage, for which the Spanish women were

noted, had also been transmitted to their descendants in the colonies.

Now it was nothing unusual for any one to follow with his eyes the

perfect form and the graceful movements of some woman in the crowd of

such nights, and on coming up and catching a glimpse of the face to find

a negress. For the imitative faculty of the colored race is

extraordinary, and the negro maids of the white ladies of Havana copied

faithfully every detail of the gait and gestures of their mistresses.

The dress worn by the Havanese on the streets was the national basquina,

a black skirt, with a waist according to the prevailing fashion, and

under that basquina was often worn a white petticoat trimmed with lace,

which most unconcernedly was being dragged through the dust. But the

most important article of a Cuban woman's dress was the mantilla, also

often trimmed with the rarest lace, that indispensable covering for head

and shoulders, which made an effective frame for a face in which shone a

pair of luminous black eyes. That mantilla, like the fan, was a medium

of expression and spoke an eloquent language to those that understood.

The cafés, which were sadly missed by M. Villiet d'Arignon in the middle

of the century, had begun to appear in the streets of Havana, but never

became as popular as in European capitals. The Cuban did not

particularly care for coffee as a beverage; he preferred chocolate,

which he took at home. He did not care to go out, unless it was for a

game of cards, a feria di gallo, or cock-fight, or the bull-ring. He was

essentially a domestic creature, though Havana had a smart set the

masculine members of which furnished ample material for gossip of a

more or less scandalous nature. He spent his time at home smoking; in

fact, everybody in Cuba smoked, men, women, children, priests, masters

and slaves. It was not an infrequent sight to see a negro maid about her

work with a cigar in her mouth or behind her ear. Small favors and

services were paid in cigars.

Outside of the cultural endeavors of the Sociedad little was done in

Cuba for the cause of education. As the Countess de Merlin reported in

her book on Havana, there was only one school in that city in the year

1791, that taught grammar and orthography, the instructor being the

mulatto Melendez. The children of the monteros and guajiros in the

country grew up in almost complete illiteracy. As was mentioned in a

previous chapter Governor Las Casas devoted from eleven to twelve

thousand pesos of his private fortune for primary instruction, but it is

not clear whether this was to be extended throughout the island or

limited to Havana. At any rate there were at the beginning of his

administration thirty-nine schools in the city, seven of which were for

males only, the others for children of both sexes. In many of these

schools, which were in charge of mulattos or free negroes, only reading

was taught; in the better schools arithmetic as far as fractions; thus

prepared young men were expected to enter upon a university course. The

smallest fee for primary instruction was four reales a month; for higher

instruction two pesos. To two hundred white and colored children the P.

P. de Belen (Fathers of Bethlehem) gave lessons free of cost; it is

reported that their class surpassed in writing. Towards the end of the

administration of Las Casas there were seventy schools, with about two

thousand pupils. But they seemed to have a hard fight for their

existence and the number is reported to have been later reduced to

seven hundred and thirty-one pupils.

The low intellectual standard of the average Havanese woman of that

period is easily understood by a glance at these data. The education of

girls even in the cities was considered of such minor importance, that

as late as 1793 it was not deemed necessary for them to learn to read.

The daughters of the Havanese patricians were taught accomplishments

regarded as inseparable from an ideal of refined womanhood, such as

embroidery and a little music. But as work of any kind was not on the

program of their lives, serious occupation, even with household duties,

was unheard of. The matronly senoras, who were frequently held up as

models of womanhood and especially of motherhood, were woefully ignorant

of the simplest cooking and other branches of what is today called home

economics. The orphans and poor children admitted to the Casa de

Beneficiencia were better prepared for life. They were all taught the

alphabet, the girls sewing, embroidery and the making of artificial

flowers, and the boys learned the cigar-makers' trade.

From these premises it can be easily inferred that the standard of

literary activity in Cuba could not have been very high. That great

democratic medium for the diffusion of information, the printing press,

was an institution which in Cuba was also limited by royal decrees.

According to Sr. La Torre the first printing press was established in

Havana in 1747; there were printed the decrees and reports and other

official documents of the government, and sometimes matters of general

interest were published on loose sheets. Some authorities claim for

Santiago de Cuba the honor of priority, stating that it had a printing

press before the year 1700. But Sr. Hernandez in his Ensayos literarios

declares that he could find no foundation for this statement. Nor do

Valdes, Arrate or Pezuela contain any definite data on that subject.

It is safe to presume that the work of the press established in 1747

produced some good results in spreading information otherwise withheld

from the public; for in the year 1776 a royal decree forbade the

establishment of any other printing press besides that devoted to

governmental work. It is possible, too, that some speculator had

attempted to found another printing establishment. For Sr. Saco tells us

that in the year 1766 there was in Havana a printing concern under the

name of Computo Ecclesiastico and in 1773 another under the direction of

D. Blas de los Olivos. But there are no data to show that these concerns

existed at the time of the royal decree of 1776.

The establishment of a periodical has usually been deferred to the

administration of Governor Las Casas. But there is reason to believe

that the note contained in the fourth book of the history of Cuba by

Valles rests upon fact; it speaks of a "Gaceta de la Habana" as being in

existence in the year 1782. An issue of that \_Gaceta\_, dated May 16,

1783, was said to contain a report of the festivals with which the Duke

of Lancaster was honored in Havana. In that issue the publisher said:

"Since in the preceding \_Gaceta\_ the arrival in this town of the Infante

William Duke of Lancaster, third son of King George of England, could

hardly be indicated, we suppressed for one week the circulation of other

news, in order to offer to our readers the details of his entry into

Havana."

Besides those printing concerns no other is known to have existed in

Havana until the opening of that of Bolona, in the year 1792, which is

referred to in an advertisement in the \_Papel Periodico\_ of Sunday,

August 26th of that year. This advertisement read:

"Another negress about 20 or 21 years old, good cook and laundress,

healthy and without defects, for three hundred pesos. He who wants her

will apply to the printing office of D. Estaven Joseph Bolona, where her

master will be found."

That this press was not identical with the government printing

establishment is inferred from the fact that in this number of the

\_Papel Periodico\_ as well as other issues are contained many

advertisements referring to the printing office, where information will

be given.

The \_Gaceta de la Habana\_ was a weekly, which probably contained the

government announcements and news of the most important events of the

time. The space of the \_Gaceta\_ was too limited to admit of the

publication of communications from readers on matters concerning the

community, hence such effusions, as also the lyrics coming from the pens

of poetically inclined dilettanti, were published on separate sheets to

be circulated among their admiring friends. But at the time of Governor

Las Casas the desire of improving this publication of the government

made itself felt; the space was enlarged and the old time \_Gaceta\_ seems

to have been merged in the \_Papel Periodico\_, which began to circulate

from the twenty-fourth of October, 1790. It appeared once a week and was

edited by D. Diego de la Barrera.

This publication was the only medium through which those desirous of

knowing something of the current life of the island at the end of the

eighteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century could obtain a

fair picture of the customs and occupations of that time, described by

the individual contributors with the warmth and the florid exuberance

then in style and occasionally, when coming from a more critical mind,

with a touch of satire. The following extract from the periodical will

give an idea of its contents and character. In an issue of the year

1792, the writer speaks of the lamentable ignorance reigning in the

country districts of Cuba and hampering the development of agriculture.

He attacks the current opinion that the climate is the source of the

Cuban's indifference and indolence, saying that this assumption would

give ground to deny even the possibility of progress. He says:

"Many opine that the laziness of the inhabitants of this country is the

effect of the climate. They take it for granted that the lassitude of

the muscles and tendons is due to the heat and makes the bodies lose

their tenseness and hence their capacity for exertion. They also give as

cause the excessive evaporation of elements needed for the growth and

the strength of the organism, asserting that this loss owing to weak

constitution of the stomach cannot be repaired by fatty and abundant

food.

"These reasons founded upon the organic mechanism of our bodies seem

quite conclusive. There is no doubt that the intense heat which we

suffer during the greatest part of the year in the countries near the

equator promotes evaporation too much. But I dare to assert that the

excess is being insensibly recovered by the bodies through the particles

produced by perspiration. This does not seem chimerical, when we reflect

that by our constant respiration the air in which we are living enters

and is being constantly renewed in our liquids, and that this air is

impregnated with innumerable corpuscles extracted from the solids. The

same is true of a fountain, the surplus flows off to fertilize the near

forest, while at the same time is restored to its bosom through

different means an equal quantity, which incessant infiltration also

supplies from other water sources."

After comparing the physical and intellectual aptitude of the children

of the tropics with those of Greenland and the progress made by the

French of Hayti in science, agriculture and art, which is in diametrical

contrast to that of the Spanish West Indians, he continues:

"Therefore, as indolence or laziness do not proceed from external

causes, we must admit that they proceed from ourselves. I find no other

source. It is a voluntary habit, or speaking more plainly, a vice

propagated like the pestilence and causing incalculable harm to the

social structure. But as I propose to combat this enemy, I shall show

the most visible injuries it produces in those who yield to its

insidious charm.

"Every living body without movement goes into corruption. This is a well

established principle and in the hot countries which are usually humid,

the effect is quickly seen. We have a sad experience in this city, where

the inhabitants are frequently afflicted with dropsy, internal and

external tumors, hypochondria, nervous diseases and many other ailments,

the origin of which is inaction or want of movement and circulation.

While in this respect indolence conspires against our very existence,

the injury is no less when it manifests itself in the vices to which

professional idlers are subject. Incessant gambling, excessive

sensuality, late hours, unreasonable food and drink and other

correlative features are the means by which health is ruined, life is

shortened; and he who succeeds in prolonging it, does so at the cost of

a variety of aches and pains.

"Prisons and other dismal places are the final abode of idleness. Those

liable to get there for theft, debt and other offences curse their

unhappy lot; but they will not admit that their laziness is the chief

source of their misfortunes. Celibacy, depopulation, the languishing of

commerce, the backwardness of science, art, agriculture, etc., are all

the results of idleness.

"When I see on this island a city of so large a population, the greater

part of which is living in ill-concealed poverty, while her fertile and

beautiful fields around are uncultivated and deserted, painful

reflections suggest themselves to me. If this oldest and most wholesome

occupation, agriculture, is an inexhaustible source of wealth even in

countries less favored for it, how much wealth might not be produced in

this country. It is evident that the difference in its favor would be as

great as the superiority of our fields which in fertility are unrivalled

by those of any other country.

"I therefore conclude by saying that even those living in opulence have

no excuse for giving themselves up to shameful inaction. When their

riches exempt them from ordinary occupations, they should devote

themselves to the cultivation of the mind."

This somewhat predicatory article, published in Nos. 11, 13 and 14 of

the \_Papel Periodico\_, proves how seriously the men at the head of the

great intellectual revival of the century's end took their task of

rousing the people from their torpor. Nevertheless there is little

documentary proof that much was produced by the pens of that generation.

The question of promoting agriculture seems to have preoccupied the

minds of the readers at that time. In another article the author says:

"I must state that no country can progress unless it produces in

abundance fruits for exportation; if it confines itself to the amount

used for home consumption, it will never come out of her poverty. The

beautiful climate, the fertile soil, and the location of our island

offer much richer resources than any other country; but unfortunately we

are hampered by various conditions, mainly in the attitude of the people

themselves. There are those whose notions do not permit them to take a

great part in the community of laborers; these, again, living in

poverty, are afraid to change their work, thinking that what they are

doing is the best for them. What is needed is to remove some of the

prejudices that prevent people from seeing the advantages that would

result from their devoting themselves to the cultivation of fruits for

exportation.

"There is no doubt that there are in this island physical and moral

causes that hamper the progress of agriculture. The physical are: the

distribution of the grounds in large portions to individual owners, the

condition of the roads, almost impassable during the rainy season; the

lack of bridges, the lack of labor, and lastly the lack of concerted

action among the inhabitants. The moral reasons are: insufficient

instruction and education of the laboring people, the contempt for

farming peculiar to the young, and especially the unmarried landholder;

the great number of idlers and the small population."

The measures adopted by the supreme government in 1784 had checked the

progress of Cuba and even diminished the population. In that epoch the

allowances from Mexico decreased and the authorities of the island found

themselves without means to perform the every day business of the

island. The evils produced by these new decrees were set forth in a

petition to the king and were amply discussed in the paper.

The excitement of the authorities and the population is reflected in

various articles of the \_Papel Periodico\_ which have not only the merit

of showing the state of the public mind, but also of proving that the

authorities in Cuba itself favored reforms. They certainly would not

have been published had they not been approved of by Governor Las Casas.

There are interesting communications in the paper from foreigners then

visiting in Havana. One of them signing himself "El Europeo imparcial"

gives a very appreciative account of the character and customs of the

Havanese. He praises their religion, their piety, their zeal for divine

worship and devotion to the saints; their courteous and affable conduct,

the refinement of their leaders, the magnificence of their festivities

and assemblies, both sacred and secular, their streets and promenades,

where multitudes of brilliant carriages are to be seen, and other

features of public life which in all countries are the first to strike

the foreign visitor.

A most ambitious and for the time extraordinary work appeared in the

year 1787. It was a book by D. Antonio Parra on the fish and crustacea

of the island, illustrated by the Cuban Baez. It was the first

scientific work written and published in Cuba, and seems for some time

to have remained the only one. For until the end of the century the

literature produced had a distinctly dilettante character. The fable,

epigram and satire occasionally relieved the flood of lyric verse. Most

of this appeared anonymously; or the writers used pseudonyms or signed

their names in anagrams. P. José Rodriguez, the author of "The Prince

Gardener," the comedy popular in Havana at that time, wrote under the

pen-name "Capucho" a number of gay decimas, poems in the Spanish form of

ten lines of eight syllables each. But none of these works were of a

quality to call for serious criticism and had no merits that insured

for them a permanent place in what was ultimately to be known as Cuban

literature; for this literature dates only from the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER XV

"Cuba; America: America; Cuba. The two names are inseparable." So we

said at the beginning of our history of the "Pearl of the Antilles." So

we must say at the beginning of a new era, the third, in these annals.

At the beginning the connection was between Cuba and America as a

whole--the continents of the western hemisphere. In this second case it

is between Cuba and America in the more restricted meaning of the United

States. There was a significant and to some degree influential forecast

of this relationship in the preceding era, in which Cuba was in contact

with England and with the rising British power in the New World. For

what was afterward to become the United States was then a group of

British colonies, and it was inevitable that relations begun in Colonial

times should be inherited by the independent nation which succeeded.

Moreover, Cuba was in those days brought to the attention of the future

United States in a peculiarly forcible manner by the very important

participation of Colonial troops, particularly from Connecticut and New

Jersey, in that British conquest of Havana which we have recorded in

preceding chapters.

It was nearly half a century, however, after the establishment of

American independence that any practical interest began to be taken in

Cuba by the great continental republic at the north. The purchase of the

Louisiana territory and the opening to unrestrained American commerce of

that Mississippi River which a former Governor of Cuba had discovered

and partially explored, had greatly increased American interest in the

Gulf of Mexico and had created some commercial interest in the great

Island which forms its southern boundary. Later the acquisition of

Florida called attention acutely to the passing away of Spain's American

Empire and to the concern which the United States might well feel in the

disposition of its remaining fragments. Already, in the case of Florida

in 1811 the United States Government had enunciated the principle that

it could not permit the transfer of an adjacent colony from one European

power to another. It will be pertinent to this narrative to recall that

action in fuller detail. The time was in the later Napoleonic wars, when

Spain was almost at the mercy of any despoiler. There was imminent

danger that Spain would transfer Florida to some other power, as she had

done a few years before with the Louisiana territory, or that it would

be taken from her. In these circumstances the Congress of the United

States on January 15, 1811, adopted a joint resolution in these terms:

"Taking into view the peculiar situation of Spain, and of her American

provinces; and considering the influence which the destiny of the

territory adjoining the southern border of the United States may have

upon their security, tranquility and commerce,

"Be it Resolved: That the United States, under the peculiar

circumstances of the existing crisis, cannot without serious inquietude

see any part of the said territory pass into the hands of any foreign

power; and that a due regard for their own safety compels them to

provide under certain contingencies for the temporary occupation of the

said territory; they at the same time declaring that the said territory

shall, in their hands, remain subject to future negotiations."

Then the same Congress enacted a law authorizing the President to take

possession of Florida or of any part of it, in case of any attempt of a

European power other than Spain herself to occupy it, and to use to that

end the Army and Navy of the United States. Nothing of the sort needed

to be done at that time, though a little later, during the War of 1812,

Florida was invaded by a British force and immediately thereafter was

occupied by an American army.

The enunciation of this principle by Congress marked an epoch in

American foreign policy, leading directly to the Monroe Doctrine a dozen

years later. It also marked an epoch in the history of Cuba, especially

so far as the relations of the Island with the United States were

concerned. For while this declaration by Congress applied only to

Florida, because Florida abutted directly upon the United States, the

logic of events presently compelled it to be extended to Cuba. This was

done a little more than a dozen years after the declaration concerning

Florida. By this time Florida had been annexed to the United States and

Mexico, Central America and South America had revolted against Spain and

declared their independence. Only the "Ever Faithful Isle," as Cuba then

began to be called, and Porto Rico remained to Spain of an empire which

once nominally comprised the entire western hemisphere. Cuba was not

like Florida geographically, abutting upon the United States. But it lay

almost within sight from the coast of Florida and commanded the southern

side of the Florida channel through which all American commerce from the

Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean must

pass, and thus it was invested with peculiar importance to the United

States. Nor was it lacking in importance to Great Britain and France.

Those powers possessed extensive and valuable holdings in the West

Indies and they were rivals for the reversionary title to these

remaining Spanish Islands, Cuba and Porto Rico. Each of them realized

that whichever of them should secure those two great Islands would, by

virtue of that circumstance, become the dominant power in the West

Indies. Moreover they both felt sure that Spain would soon have to

relinquish her hold upon them. This latter belief prevailed widely also

in the United States, and was by no means absent from Cuba itself.

Indeed a party was organized in Cuba in the spring of 1822, for the

express purpose of seeking annexation to the United States, and in

September of that year did make direct overtures to that end to the

American Government. The President of the United States, James Monroe,

received these overtures in a cautious and non-committal manner. He sent

a confidential agent to Cuba to examine into conditions there and to

report upon them, but gave no direct encouragement to the annexation

movement.

At about this time the direction of the foreign affairs of Great Britain

came into the hands of George Canning, a statesman of exceptional vision

and aggressive patriotism, and one specially concerned with the welfare

of British interests in the New World. He was well aware of the

condition and trend of affairs in Cuba, and felt that the transfer of

that Island from Spain to any other power would be unfortunate for

British interests in the West Indies. When he learned of the Cuban

overtures for annexation to the United States, therefore, in December,

1822, he brought the matter to the careful consideration of the British

Cabinet and suggested to his colleagues that such annexation of Cuba by

the United States would be a very serious detriment to the British

Empire in the western hemisphere. He made no diplomatic representation

upon the subject either to Spain or to the United States, but he did

send a considerable naval force to the coastal waters of Cuba and Porto

Rico, apparently with the purpose of preventing, if necessary, any such

change in the sovereignty and occupancy of those Islands.

[Illustration: GEORGE CANNING]

In this Canning was probably over-anxious, since there is no indication

whatever that the American Government contemplated any such step or that

it would have attempted to take possession of Cuba if the Island had

been left unguarded. On the other hand, this action of Canning's very

naturally aroused American concern and provoked the suspicion that

England was planning the seizure or purchase of the Island. The result

was the formal application to Cuba of the principle which had already

been enunciated by Congress in respect to Florida. It was the

legislative branch of the United States Government that took that action

toward Florida. It was the executive and diplomatic branch which took

the action toward Cuba. This was done in a memorable state document

which formed a land-mark in the history of American foreign policy.

The American Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, on April 28, 1823,

wrote an official letter to Hugh Nelson, who at the beginning of that

year had become American minister to Spain. This letter contained

official instructions to Nelson concerning his conduct in the war which

was impending between Spain and France, because of the latter power's

intervention in Spanish affairs in behalf of King Ferdinand VII. It then

turned to the subject of Cuba and continued as follows:

[Illustration: JOHN QUINCY ADAMS]

"Whatever may be the issue of this war, it may be taken for granted that

the dominion of Spain upon the American continents, north and south, is

irrevocably gone. But the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico still remain

nominally, and so far really, dependent upon her, that she yet possesses

the power of transferring her own dominion over them, together with the

possession of them, to others. These islands are natural appendages to

the North American continent, and one of them almost in sight of our

shores, from a multitude of considerations has become an object of

transcendent importance to the commercial and political interests of our

Union. Its commanding position with reference to the Gulf of Mexico and

the West Indian seas, its situation midway between our southern coast

and the island of San Domingo, its safe and capacious harbor of the

Havana, fronting a long line of our shores destitute of the same

advantages, the nature of its production and of its wants, furnishing

the supplies and needing the returns of a commerce immensely profitable

and mutually beneficial give it an importance in the sum of our national

interests with which that of no other foreign territory can be compared,

and little inferior to that which binds the different members of this

Union together. Such indeed are, between the interests of that island

and of this country, the geographical, commercial, moral and political

relations formed by nature, gathering in the process of time, and even

now verging to maturity, that in looking forward to the probable course

of events for the short period of half a century, it is scarcely

possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our

Federal Republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity

of the Union itself.... There are laws of political as well as of

physical gravitation. And if an apple, severed by the tempest from its

native tree, cannot choose but to fall to the ground, Cuba, forcibly

disjoined from its own unnatural connection with Spain, and incapable of

self-support, can gravitate only toward the North American Union, which,

by the same law of nature cannot cast her off from her bosom. The

transfer of Cuba to Great Britain would be an event unpropitious to the

interests of this Union.... The question both of our right and of our

power to prevent it, if necessary, by force, already obtrudes itself

upon our councils, and the Administration is called upon, in the

performance of its duties to the nation, at least, to use all the means

within its competency to guard against and forefend it."

That was the beginning of the policy of the United States toward Cuba.

In making that declaration Adams had general support and little or no

opposition. A few weeks afterward the ex-President, Thomas Jefferson,

writing to Monroe, expressed in part the same view, though he coupled it

with the suggestion of an alliance with Great Britain. He wrote:

"Cuba alone seems at present to hold up a speck of war to us. Its

possession by Great Britain would indeed be a great calamity to us.

Could we induce her to join us in guaranteeing its independence against

all the world, except Spain, it would be nearly as valuable as if it

were our own. But should she take it, I would not immediately go to war

for it; because the first war on other accounts will give it to us, or

the island will give herself to us when able to do so."

Two years later, in 1825, Henry Clay, then Secretary of State in the

Cabinet of President John Quincy Adams, instructed the American

ministers at the chief European capitals to make it known that the

United States for itself desired no change in the political condition of

Cuba; that it was satisfied to have it remain open to American commerce;

but that it "could not with indifference see it passing from Spain to

any other European power." A little later he added, referring to Cuba

and Porto Rico, that "we could not consent to the occupation of those

islands by any other European power than Spain, under any contingency

whatever."

This attitude of the American Government was sufficient to accomplish

the purpose desired. Although the power of Spain continued to decline,

no attempt was made by either France or England to acquire possession of

Cuba by either conquest or purchase. But in August, 1825, the British

Government laid before the American minister in London a proposal that

the United States should unite with Great Britain and France in a

tripartite agreement for the protection of Spain in her possession of

Cuba to the effect that none of the three would take Cuba for itself or

would acquiesce in the taking of it by either of the others. The

American minister reported this to the President, who promptly and

emphatically declined it. It was then that Henry Clay made the

pronouncement already quoted, that the United States could not consent

to the occupation of Cuba by any other European power than Spain, under

any contingency whatever.

A little later in the same year American interest in Cuba was again

appealed to from another source. Several of the former Spanish colonies

which had declared their independence, particularly Mexico and Colombia,

expressed much dissatisfaction that Cuba and Porto Rico should remain in

the possession of Spain. They desired to see the Spanish power entirely

expelled from the western hemisphere. They therefore began intriguing

for revolutions in those islands, and failing that prepared themselves

to take forcible possession of them. These plans encountered the serious

disapproval of the United States government, and on December 20, 1825,

Henry Clay wrote to the representatives of the Mexican and Colombian

governments urgently requesting them to refrain from sending the

military expeditions to Cuba which were being prepared; a request with

which they complied, Colombia readily but Mexico more reluctantly. Those

two countries had been specially moved to their proposed action by the

declaration of the famous Panama Congress, then in session, in favor of

"the freeing of the islands of Porto Rico and Cuba from the Spanish

yoke." It is interesting to recall, too, that in his instructions to the

United States delegates to that Congress, who unfortunately did not

arrive in time to participate in its deliberations, Clay declared that

"even Spain has not such a deep interest in the future fate of Cuba as

the United States."

Justice requires us, unfortunately, in concluding our consideration of

this early phase of Cuban-American relations, to confess that the

motives of the United States were not at that time altogether of the

highest character. To put it very plainly, there was much opposition to

the extension of Mexican or Colombian influence to Cuba because that

would have meant the abolition of human slavery in the island, and that

would have been offensive to the slave states of the southern United

States. Also some of the earliest movements in the United States toward

the annexation of Cuba were inspired by the wish to maintain the

institution of slavery in that island and to add it to the slave holding

area of the United States. It was on such ground that Senator Hayne and

others declared in the American Congress that the United States "would

not permit Mexico or Colombia to take or to revolutionize Cuba." James

Buchanan declared that under the control of one of those countries Cuba

would become a dangerous explosive magazine for the southern slave

States because Mexico and Colombia were free countries and "always

conquered by proclaiming liberty to the slave."

We have recalled these facts and circumstances in this place somewhat in

advance of their strict chronological order, by way of introduction to

the history of Cuba in the Nineteenth Century, because they really

dominate in spirit the whole story. It will be necessary to recur to

them again, briefly, in their proper place. But it is essential to bear

them in mind from the beginning, even through this anticipatory review

of them. Every page and line and letter of Cuban history in the

Nineteenth Century is colored by the Declaration of Independence of

1776, by the fact that the United States of America had arisen as the

foremost power in the Western Hemisphere. Through the inspiration which

it gave to the French Revolution, the United States was chiefly

responsible, as an alien force, for the complete collapse of Spain as a

great European power. Through its example and potential influence as a

protector it was responsible for the revolt and independence of the

Spanish colonies in Central and South America. Then through its

assertion of special interests in Cuba, because of propinquity, and

through the tangible influence of commercial and social intercourse,

together with a constantly increasing and formidable, though generally

concealed, political sway, it determined the future destinies of the

Queen of the Antilles.

CHAPTER XVI

We must consider, in order rightly to understand the situation of Cuba

at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the momentous train of

incidents in her history which then began, the salient features of the

history of Spain at that time. The reign of Charles III. had temporarily

restored Spain to a place in the front rank of European powers, with

particularly close relations, through the Bourbon crowns of the two

countries, with France. But that rank was of brief duration. In 1788

Charles IV. came to the throne, one of the weakest, most vacillating and

most ignoble of princes, who was content to let his kingdom be governed

for him by his wife's notorious lover. A few years later the Bourbon

crown of France was sent to the guillotine, and then came the deluge, in

which Spain was overwhelmed and entirely wrecked.

The first Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1796 made Spain little better than

the vassal of France in the latter's war against Great Britain. That was

the work of Godoy, the "Prince of the Peace" and the paramour of the

queen. Against him Spain revolted in 1798 and he was forced to retire

from office, only to be restored to it by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1800.

Then came the second secret and scandalous Treaty of San Ildefonso, in

which Spain was the merest tool and dupe of France, or of Napoleon; and

in 1803 there followed another international compact under which Spain

agreed to pay France a considerable yearly subsidy. A few years later

occurred the French invasion, the abdication of Charles IV., the

accession, then merely nominal, of Ferdinand VII., the imposition of

Joseph Bonaparte, and the Peninsular War.

The effect of these events was two-fold, the two parts strongly

contrasting. On the one hand, the Spanish national spirit was aroused as

it had not been for many years. Napoleon's aggressions went too far. His

ambition overleaped itself. In their resistance and resentment the

Spanish people "found themselves" and rose to heights of patriotism

which they had not scaled before. Concurrently they began the

development of a liberal and progressive spirit of inestimable

significance. They demanded a constitution and the abolition of old

abuses which for generations had been stifling the life of the

Peninsula.

On the other hand, the prestige of Spain in her trans-Atlantic colonies

was hopelessly impaired, and her physical power to maintain her

authority in them was destroyed. With French and British armies making

the Peninsula their fighting ground, Spain had no armies to spare for

the suppression of Central and South American rebellions. Thus while

there was an auspicious renascence of national vigor at home, there was

an ominous decline of imperial authority abroad. The work of Miranda,

San Martin and Bolivar was thus facilitated and assured of success.

In domestic affairs, Spain showed some progress, even under her worst

rulers. Godoy, vile as he was, abolished the savagery of bull-fighting

and promoted the policing of cities and the paving and cleaning of

streets, some advance was made in popular education, and the

intellectual life of the nation began to emerge from the eclipse which

it had been suffering. Possibly the most significant achievement of all

was the development of an approximation to popular government, with an

attempt to unify Spain and the colonies; which latter came too late. The

Junta Central in January, 1809, declared that the American colonies were

an integral part of the Spanish Kingdom, and were not mere appanages of

the crown. This was revolutionary, but it was insisted upon by the

Junta, and practical steps were taken to make the principle effective.

The Junta was driven from Seville by Napoleon, whereupon it fled to

Cadiz, and there, in superb defiance of the invader and oppressor,

arranged for the assembling of a Cortes, or National Parliament, in

which the colonies should be fully represented. This body, a single

chamber, met in September, 1810, with elected representatives from the

American colonies, including Cuba. Owing to the difficulty of getting

deputies from America in time, however, men were selected in Spain to

represent the colonies at the opening of the session.

A tangled skein of history followed. The Cortes, though far from radical

in tone, was progressive and was sincerely devoted to the principle of

popular government, and it insisted upon the adoption of the

Constitution of 1812, under which the people were made supreme, with the

crown and the church in subordinate places. All Spaniards, in America as

well as in Europe, were citizens of the kingdom, and were entitled to

vote for members of the Cortes and were protected by a bill of rights.

In many respects it was one of the most liberal and enlightened

constitutions then existing in the world.

The first act of the wretched Ferdinand VII., however, when Napoleon

permitted him to return to Spain, was to decree the abrogation of this

constitution and the establishment of a most repressive and reactionary

régime which liberals were cruelly persecuted. The result of this was

to promote the revolution which had already begun in America, and to

provoke a revolution in the Peninsula itself; in the face of which

latter Ferdinand pretended to yield and to consent to the summoning of

another Cortes and the reestablishment of the Constitution of 1812.

These things were effected in 1820. But the false and fickle Ferdinand

made his appeal to the reactionary sovereigns of the Holy Alliance, with

the result that in 1823 the French invaded Spain to suppress Liberalism,

and those preparations were made for the resubjugation of Spain's

American colonies which were frustrated by the promulgation of the

Monroe Doctrine in the United States.

Meantime all the Spanish colonies on the American continents had not

only declared but had actually achieved their independence. There were

left to Spain in all the Western Hemisphere, therefore, only the islands

of Cuba and Porto Rico; and they remained intensely loyal. When the

legitimate King of Spain was deposed in favor of Joseph Bonaparte, Cuba

made it plain and emphatic that she would not recognize the French

usurper, but would remain true to Ferdinand VII. Again, when the

colonies of Central and South America seceded and declared their

independence, Cuba remained loyal to the kingdom. It was because of

these two acts that Cuba became known at the Spanish Court as "Our Ever

Faithful Isle."

For this contrast between Cuba and the rest of Spanish America there

were three major reasons. One was, the insular position of Cuba, which

separated her from the other Spanish provinces and their direct

influence and cooperation, and which thus placed her at an enormous

disadvantage for any revolutionary undertakings. The second was the

character of the people. The Spanish settlers of Cuba had come chiefly

from Andalusia and Estremadura, and were the very flower of the Iberian

race, and from them had descended those who after three centuries were

entitled to be regarded as the Cuban people. They retained unimpaired

the finest qualities of the great race that in the sixteenth century had

made Spain all but the mistress of the world, and they still cherished a

chivalric loyalty to the spirit and the traditions of that wondrous age.

In other colonies the settlement was more varied. Men had flocked in

from Galicia and Catalonia, with a spirit radically different from that

of Andalusians and Estremadurans. To this day the contrast between

Cubans and the people of any other Latin-American state is obvious and

unmistakable.

The third reason was this, that in the years, perhaps a full generation,

preceding the South and Central American revolt, Spain had manifested

toward Cuba a disposition and actual practices well calculated to

confirm that country in its loyalty and in its expectation of enjoying

liberty and prosperity under the Spanish crown in an age of Spanish

renascence. With the brief English occupation, indeed, the modern

history of Cuba began in circumstances of the most auspicious character.

The English opened Havana to the trade of the world and caused it to

realize what its possibilities were of future expansion and greatness.

Then the Spanish government, reestablished throughout the island, for a

time showed Cuba marked favor. The old-time trade monopoly, which had

been destroyed by the English, was abandoned in favor of a liberal and

enlightened policy. Commerce, industry and agriculture were encouraged,

even with bounties. Cuba was made to feel that there were very practical

advantages in being a colony of Spain.

Moreover, the island enjoyed a succession of capable and liberal

governors, or captains-general; notably Luis de las Casas at the end of

the eighteenth century, and the Marquis de Someruelos in the first dozen

years of the nineteenth century. Under benevolent administrators and

beneficent laws, and with Spain herself adopting the liberal

constitution of 1812, Cuba had good cause to remain loyal to the Spanish

connection.

But these very same conditions and circumstances ultimately made Cuba

supremely resolute in her efforts for independence. The men of

Andalusian and Estremaduran ancestry had been loyal to Spain, but they

were just as resolute in their loyalty to Cuba when they were once

convinced that there must be a breach of relations. The same

characteristics that made their ancestors the leaders of the Spanish

race in adventure and in conquest made them now equally ready to be

leaders in the great adventure of conquering the independence of Cuba

from Spain. And if the liberal laws and policy of Spain, and the

Constitution of 1812, had greatly commended Spanish government to them,

the restored Spanish king's flat repudiation of all those things equally

condemned that government.

We must therefore reckon the rise of the spirit of Cuban independence

from the date on which Ferdinand VII. repudiated the constitution which

he had sworn to defend. From 1812 to 1820 that spirit passed through the

period of gestation, and in the years following the latter date it was

born and began to make its vitality manifest. The king's pretended

repentance and readoption of the Constitution of 1812 in 1820 came too

late, and when it was followed by several years of alternating weakness

and violence, and by the French intervention in 1823, the Cuban

resolution for independence was formed. To that resolution, once formed,

Cuba clung with a persistence which for the third time entitled her to

the name of "Ever Faithful Isle." But now it was to herself that she was

faithful.

[Illustration: JUAN JOSÉ DIAZ ESPADA

Born at Arroyave, Spain, on April 20, 1756, and educated at Salamanca,

Juan José Diaz Espada y Landa entered the priesthood of the Roman

Catholic Church, and on January 1, 1800, was Bishop of Cuba. Much more

than a mere churchman, he applied himself with singular ability and

energy to the promotion of the mental and physical welfare of the people

as well as to their religious culture. He strongly assisted Dr. Tomas

Romay in introducing vaccination into the island and in the prosecution

of other sanitary measures, and was one of the foremost patrons of

education. He also gave much attention to the correction of abuses which

had grown up in the ecclesiastical administration. He died on August 13,

1832, leaving a record for good works second to that of no other

ecclesiastic in the history of Cuba.]

Seldom, indeed, has there been an era in the history of the world more

strongly suited to cause the rise of a revolutionary spirit in such a

people as the Cubans, than was the early part of the nineteenth century.

We have already referred to the United States of America and its

attitude toward Cuba and Cuban affairs. That country had achieved its

independence in circumstances scarcely more favorable than would be

those of a Cuban revolt; and it presently waged another war which made

it formidable among the nations. On the other hand, all Europe was in

war-ridden chaos, with the rights of peoples to self-determination made

a sport of autocrats. There was nothing more evident than that

republicanism was the policy of order, stability and progress. The

United States had just forced Spain to sell Louisiana to France, and

then had forced France to sell it to itself. That was an object lesson

which was not lost upon thoughtful Cubans any more than upon the peoples

of Central and South America. It demonstrated that the power of Spain

was waning, and that the dominant power in the western world was that of

Republicanism. And Cubans, as well as others, were not blind to the

practical advantages of being on the winning side.

Indeed, before that Cuba had had another great object lesson. At the

middle of the eighteenth century the English had seized Havana. That in

itself indicated clearly the decline of Spain and her inability to

protect or even to hold her own colonies. But the English force which

achieved that stroke was by no means purely English. It was largely

composed of Americans, soldiers from the British Colonies in North

America who were, of course, British subjects but who were more and more

calling themselves Americans; and who in course of time altogether

rejected British rule and established an independent republic. First,

then, Spain was beaten by England; and next England was beaten by the

United States. Obviously the latter was the power to whom to look for

guidance and support.

There were still other circumstances making toward the same end. We have

remarked upon the puissant opulence of Spanish intellectuality in the

first century of her possession of Cuba, and upon, also, the paucity of

native Cuban achievements in letters. But in the seventeenth century a

decline of Spanish letters and art began, with ominous progression,

until at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the

nineteenth the very nadir of intellectual life had been reached. This

was the more noteworthy and the more significant because of the contrast

which the Peninsula thus presented to other lands. Elsewhere throughout

Europe and in America that was an era of great and splendid intellectual

activity. In almost every department of letters, science and art fine

deeds, original and creative, were being done. The colossal military

operations that convulsed the world from the beginning of the American

Revolution to the fall of Napoleon sometimes blind our eyes and deaden

our ears to what was then done in the higher walks of life; but the fact

is that probably in no other equal space of time in the world's history

was the mind of man more fecund, in both theory and practice.

In science that era was adorned with the names of Priestly, Jenner,

Herschel, Montgolfier, Fulton, Whitney, Volta, Pestalozzi, Piazzi, Davy,

Cuvier, Oersted, Stevenson, Humboldt, Lavoisier, Buffon, Linnaeus. In

music, Gluck, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven. In literature the annals of

those days read like a recapitulation of universal genius: Goethe, Kant,

Herder, Lessing, Diderot, Voltaire, Rousseau, De Stael, Chateaubriand,

Beranger, Lamartine, Burns, Scott, Goldsmith, Johnson, Adam Smith,

Keats, Shelley, Byron, Colderidge, Lamb, Alfieri, Richter, Niebuhr,

Derzhavin. The steamboat and the railroad came into existence. The

Institute of France, the University of France, and the University of

Berlin were founded. As on more than one other occasion political and

military activity, in the direction of liberal revolution, stimulated

intellectuality and made invention and letters vie with arms.

Amid all this, Spain alone stood singular in her decline. Not one name

of the first rank adorned her annals. In the two departments of letters

which perhaps most of all reflect the national mind and spirit, lyrical

poetry and the drama, she was almost entirely lacking. Most of such

writers as she had seemed content to copy weakly French examples. And

even when the Spanish people rose with splendid patriotic energy against

the tyranny of Napoleon, fought their war of independence, and strove to

establish their liberal Constitution of 1812 upon the wreck of broken

Bourbonism, there was scarcely a glimmer of intellectual inspiration

such as those deeds might have been expected to produce. It was reserved

for later years, even for our own time, for Spanish letters to regain a

place of mastery amid the foremost of the world.

Meantime the intellectual life of Cuba was beginning to dawn. As early

as 1790 a purely literary journal of fine rank, \_El Papel Periodico\_,

was founded in Havana, and during many years contained contributions of

sterling merit. As these were all unsigned, their authorship remains

chiefly unknown. We know, however, that among them were two poets of

real note, Manuel Justo de Rubalcava and Manuel de Zequiera y Arango.

These were not, it is true, native Cubans. They were Spaniards from New

Granada. But with many others from the South and Central American

provinces they became fully identified with Cuban life and Cuban

aspirations. In the third year of the nineteenth century, too, there was

born of Spanish refugee parents from Santo Domingo, Cuba's greatest poet

and indeed the greatest poet in Spanish literature in that century, José

Maria Heredia. True, he called himself a Spaniard, in the spirit of the

"Ever Faithful Isle," and referred to Spain as his "Alma Mater." He was

in his youth a passionate partisan of the liberal movement in the

Peninsula, especially of the revolution led by Riego, and his earliest

poems were written in support of that ill-fated struggle and in scathing

denunciation of the French oppressor of Spain and of those unworthy

Spaniards who consented to the suppression in blood of the rising cause

of liberty. A little later these very poems were equally applicable to

the situation in Cuba, when the people of that island began to rise

against their Spanish oppressors, and when a certain element among them

consented to oppression. Thereafter his writings were largely the

literary inspiration of Cuban patriotism; and he himself was doomed by

Spain to perpetual banishment from the island of his birth.

One other factor in the situation must be recalled. During the period

which we are now considering Cuba was the asylum for a strangely mingled

company of both loyalists and revolutionists; with the former probably

predominating. When Spain lost Santo Domingo to France, many of the

Spanish inhabitants of that island removed to Cuba; and when the island

under Toussaint rose against Spain, there was a flight of both Spanish

and French in the same direction. Also, when one after another of the

Spanish provinces on the continent began to revolt, Cuba was sought as

an asylum. Spanish loyalists came hither to escape the revolution which

they did not approve; and it is quite possible that they were in

sufficient numbers materially to affect the course and determination of

the island, first in standing by Ferdinand against Napoleon and later in

declining to join the revolutionists of the American continents. Yet not

a few of these became in a short time imbued with Cuban patriotism and

cast in their lot with the natives of the island.

There were also many revolutionary refugees, who sought asylum in Cuba

when their cause seemed not to be prospering in other lands. As we shall

see, the first important Cuban revolutionist, Narciso Lopez, came from

Venezuela; and there were others from that country, and from Guatemala

and Mexico; sufficient to exert much influence in insular affairs.

It was in these strangely diverse and complex circumstances that Cuba

entered the third great era of her existence. She was still a Spanish

colony, and she was still a potential pawn in the international games of

diplomacy and war. But she had at last gravitated politically toward the

American rather than the European system, and she had begun to develop a

spirit of individual nationality which was destined after many years and

many labors to assure her a place among the sovereign states of the

Western Hemisphere.

CHAPTER XVII

For a correct understanding of the internal dissensions and uprisings

which played so large a part in the history of Cuba during the greater

part of the nineteenth century, it is necessary to have clearly in mind

an idea of the number, nature and distribution of her population during

this period.

The first record of anything like a satisfactory enumeration of the

people of the island is that of the census of 1775. It was known as that

of the Abbe Raynal, and was taken under the direction and by order of

the Marquis de la Torre. It was so far from being accurate and complete

that it can hardly be regarded as much more than a fair estimate.

Indeed, most authorities are of the opinion that its figures are far

below the actual facts. It showed a population of 170,370, for the

entire island, with 75,604 of this number residing in the district of

Havana.

The population of Cuba at that time was made up almost entirely of two

races, the whites and the blacks, the native Indians having long ago

practically disappeared. The following table gives a brief resumé of the

result of the census of 1775:

\_Men\_ \_Women\_

Whites 54,555 40,864

Free colored 15,980 14,635

Slaves 28,774 15,562

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99,309 71,061

Total 170,370

The spirit in which this census was taken was admirable. It sought not

only to present statistics as to the age, race, sex and social condition

of the population, but also, so far as possible, to indicate something

of its distribution. It is not difficult to imagine, however, what a

momentous undertaking such a work must have been with the meagre

facilities then in the hands of the authorities, and it is not

astonishing that the results left much to be desired. The failure was

not one of intent but of the means by which the information might be

acquired.

In 1791 a second attempt to enumerate and classify the population of

Cuba was made by order of Don Luis de las Casas. This showed a

population of 272,141. This apparently great increase, however, is to be

attributed to a more accurate compilation, rather than to any unusual

immigration to Cuba during this period. Indeed careful statisticians,

notably Baron Humboldt, have reached the conclusion that even these

figures fell far below the truth, and that in reality the population of

the island at this period numbered at least 362,700 adult persons.

Humboldt's conclusions merit quotation. He says:

"In 1804 I discussed the census of Don Luis de las Casas with persons

who possessed great knowledge of the locality. Examining the proportions

of the numbers omitted in the partial comparisons, it seemed to us that

the population of the island, in 1791, could not have been less than

362,700 souls. This has been augmented, during the years between 1791

and 1804, by the number of African negroes imported, which, according to

the custom-house returns for that period, amounted to 60,393; by the

immigration from Europe and St. Domingo (5,000); and by the excess of

births over deaths, which, in truth, is indeed small in a country where

one-fourth or one-fifth of the entire population is condemned to live in

celibacy. The result of these three causes of increase was reckoned to

be 60,000, estimating an annual loss of seven per cent, on the newly

imported negroes; this gives approximately, for the year 1804, a minimum

of 432,080 inhabitants. I estimated this number for the year 1804, to

comprise, whites, 234,000, free-colored, 90,000, slaves, 180,000. I

estimated the slave population, graduating the production of sugar at 80

to 100 arrobas for each negro on the sugar plantations, and 82 slaves as

the mean population of each plantation. There were then, 250 of these.

In the seven parishes, Guanajay, Managua, Batabano, Guines, Cano,

Bejucal, and Guanabacoa, there were found, by an exact census, 15,130

slaves on 183 sugar plantations."

After expatiating on the difficulty of ascertaining with absolute

accuracy the ratio of the production of sugar to the number of negroes

employed on the different estates, Humboldt continues:

"The number of whites can be estimated by the rolls of the militia, of

which, in 1804, there were 2,680 disciplined, and 27,000 rural,

notwithstanding the great facilities for avoiding the service, and

innumerable exemptions granted to lawyers, physicians, apothecaries,

notaries, clergy and church servants, schoolmasters, overseers, traders

and all who are styled noble."

Accepting, however, for the moment the figures of the census of 1791,

merely for the sake of future comparison, let us see how the population

of the island was distributed at this period. Of the 272,141 inhabitants

shown by the census over half, or 137,800, were in the district of

Havana, and almost one third of the latter number in the city itself.

These were divided as follows:

Whites, both sexes 73,000

Free colored, both sexes 27,600

Slaves, both sexes 37,200

-------

137,800

One of the best reasons for believing that this 1791 census does not

tell the whole story is that the proportion of white persons to the

black slaves is practically two to one, while as a matter of fact the

most eminent authorities are agreed that during the first half of the

nineteenth century, and for some years previous, it was about 100 to 83,

a matter which, as we shall see, was of grave concern to the Spanish

colonists.

It should be noted in passing that the greediness with which the Spanish

conquerors regarded their possessions in the New World had marked effect

on the difficulties of numbering the people. For too well the plantation

owners had learned that a record of an increase in their possessions, an

added number of slaves or signs of growing prosperity, meant that the

long arm of the crown would stretch out to despoil by further taxation,

added to the already heavy toll. It is no wonder, therefore, that the

efforts of the census takers were impeded rather than furthered.

In 1811, when the slave trade and the consequent increase of the black

population was giving great concern to the more intelligent and

far-seeing of the Cuban patriots, pressure was brought to bear on the

Spanish government and on March 26 of that year, Señors Alcocer and

Arguelles made a motion in the Spanish Cortes against the African

slave-trade and the continuation of slavery in the Spanish colonies. A

little later in the same year Don Francisco de Arango, an exceedingly

erudite statesman, also made a remonstrance to the Cortes upon the same

subject. This was in the name of the Ayuntamiento, the Consulado and the

Patriotic Society of Havana. The text of this representation or

remonstrance may be found in the "\_Documents relative to the

slave-trade, 1814\_."

Unfortunately in compiling the tables which were published in 1811 no

new census was taken, and the increases in population from 1791 to 1811

were merely estimated. These estimates show a population of 600,000--a

greater number, it is interesting to note, by many thousands than was

shown by the census of 1817, with which we shall deal later. This

population was distributed as follows:

\_Western Part of the\_ \_Free\_

\_Island\_. \_Whites\_ \_Colored\_ \_Slaves\_ \_Total\_

Surrounding Country 118,000 15,000 119,000 252,000

Havana and Suburbs 43,000 27,000 28,000 98,000

------- ------ ------- -------

161,000 42,000 147,000 350,000

\_Eastern Part of the Island\_.

Santiago de Cuba 40,000 38,000 32,000 110,000

Puerto Principe 38,000 14,000 18,000 70,000

Cinco Villas 35,000 20,000 15,000 70,000

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113,000 72,000 65,000 250,000

------- ------- ------- -------

Totals 274,000 114,000 212,000 600,000

From the above we can see that at this time there were only 62,000 more

white people in Cuba than there were slaves, and if we take into

consideration the free blacks, then the negroes exceeded the white

population by 52,000. This was perhaps inevitable when we consider that

there must be labor to develop the plantations and that that labor was

almost entirely provided by the slave trade. Nevertheless, the white

population of Cuba lived in somewhat the same state of subconscious

terror of the possibilities of a black uprising which tormented the

planters in portions of the United States. But "that is another story"

of which we shall hear more later.

In 1813 the Spanish Cortes passed certain measures, which, together with

the necessity for as accurate as possible an enumeration of the

population of the island for the purpose of an equitable establishment

of electoral juntas of provinces, partidas and parishes, made a new

census obligatory. This was taken in 1817. The results of this new

census were as follows:

\_Districts\_ \_White\_ \_Free colored\_ \_Slaves\_

\_Western Department:\_

Havana 135,177 40,419 112,122

Matanzas 10,617 1,675 9,594

Trinidad (with

Sancti Spiritus,

Remedios, and

Villa Clara) 51,864 16,411 14,497

\_Eastern Department:\_

Santiago (with

Bayamo, Holguin,

and Baracoa) 33,733 50,230 46,500

Puerto Principe 25,989 6,955 16,579

------- ------- -------

257,380 115,691 199,292

Total 572,363

The census of 1817 was without doubt the most perfect which had up to

that time been taken; but, for the reasons before given, it was far from

being an accurate enumeration. To these figures, before transmitting

them to Spain, the Provincial Deputation added 32,641 transients of

various kinds, and 25,967 negroes imported during the year in which the

census was taken. These additions made the report read as follows:

Whites 290,021

Free Colored 115,691

Slaves 225,259

-------

Total 630,971

It would seem that these various censuses and the estimate of 1811 show

great discrepancies, but on this point we have the sage observations of

no less an authority than Baron Humboldt to guide us. He says:

"We shall not be surprised at the partial contradiction found in the

tables of population when we taken into consideration all the

difficulties that have been encountered in the centres of European

civilization, England and France, whenever the great operation of a

general census is attempted. No one is ignorant, for example, of the

fact that the population of Paris, in 1820, was 714,000, and from the

number of deaths, and supposed proportion of births to the total

population, it is believed to have been 520,000, at the beginning of the

eighteenth century; yet during the administration of M. Necker, the

ascertained population was one-sixth less than this number."

The process of census taking even in this twentieth century is an

enormous undertaking and not free from error. How much more difficult

must it have been in a country where it was to the interest of the

intelligent to suppress the facts, where a large proportion of the

population was still in slavery, and where means of communication from

place to place were far from adequate!

Baron Humboldt after very careful calculation estimated the population

at the close of 1825 to be as follows:

Whites 325,000

Free colored 130,000

Slaves 260,000

-------

Total 715,000

This was nearly equal to that of the British Antilles, and about twice

that of Jamaica.

During the first half of the nineteenth century three additional

censuses were taken:

\_Census of 1827\_

\_Whites\_ \_Free Colored\_ \_Slaves\_ \_Total\_

\_Department\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_

Western 89,526 75,532 21,235 24,829 125,388 72,027 408,537

Central 53,447 44,776 13,296 10,950 28,398 13,630 164,497

Eastern 25,680 22,090 17,431 18,753 29,504 17,995 131,353

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Total 168,653 142,398 51,962 54,532 183,290 103,652 704,487

\_Census of 1841\_

\_Whites\_ \_Free Colored\_ \_Slaves\_ \_Total\_

\_Department\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_

Western 135,079 108,944 32,726 33,737 207,954 113,320 631,760

Central 60,035 53,838 15,525 16,054 34,939 15,217 195,608

Eastern 32,030 28,365 27,452 27,344 38,357 25,708 180,256

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Total 227,144 191,147 75,703 77,135 281,250 155,245 1,007,624

\_Census for 1846\_

\_Whites\_ \_Free Colored\_ \_Slaves\_ \_Total\_

\_Department\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_ \_Male\_ \_Female\_

Western 133,968 110,141 28,964 32,730 140,131 87,682 533,617

Central 62,262 52,692 17,041 17,074 32,425 14,560 196,954

Eastern 34,753 31,951 26,646 26,771 28,455 20,506 169,082

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Total 230,983 194,784 72,651 76,575 201,011 122,748 898,752

J. S. Thrasher, translator of Baron Humboldt's admirable work on Cuba,

and himself an authority of note, offers the following interesting and

suggestive discussion of the census of 1846:

"The slightest examination leads to the belief that there is some error

in the figures of the census of 1846; and we are inclined to doubt its

results, for the following reasons:

"1st--During the period between 1841 and 1846, no great cause, as

epidemic, or emigration on a large scale, existed to check the hitherto

steady increase of the slave population, and cause a decrease of 112,736

in its numbers, being nearly twenty six per cent. of the returns of

1841; which apparent decrease and the annihilation of former rate of

increase (3.7 per cent. yearly), amount together to a loss of 47 per

cent., in six years.

"2d.--During this period the material prosperity of the country

experienced no decrease, except the loss of part of one crop, consequent

upon the hurricane of 1845.

"3d.--During the period from 1842 to 1846, the church returns of

christenings and interments were as follows:

\_White\_ \_Colored\_ \_Total\_

Christenings 87,049 74,302 161,349

Interments 51,456 57,762 109,218

------ ------ -------

Increase 35,591 16,540 52,131

"4th.--And because ... a capitation tax upon house servants was imposed

in 1844, and a very general fear existed that it would be extended to

other classes."

Incorrect as we have seen these various censuses to be, they do furnish

us with very interesting means of analysis. We can see by the foregoing

tables that the free population (black and white) was nearly two thirds

of the entire population of the island; and also that, according to the

last census given above, the blacks on the island exceeded the white

people by many thousands. The balance of power then lay with the free

blacks.

But this was not as dangerous as it may seem--as it often appeared to

the Cubans. At this stage of his history the negro was not even one

generation removed from his native jungle. He was imitating the white

man not so much in his quiet virtues as in his glaring and showy vices.

The negro is naturally sociable and happy-go-lucky. The island of Cuba

has not a climate which is conducive to arduous labors.

The natural tendency of the colored freed man was to gravitate away from

the plantations, into the cities and villages. This made it necessary

constantly to be importing new slaves to take the place of the freed

man. Frequently, however, the latter improved in his new surroundings.

His freedom, his increased obligations, his new sense of self-respect,

made him desire to throw his fortunes, not with his enslaved black

brothers but with the free born white man. This was the more easy of

accomplishment because there is no place in the world where people are

more democratic in matters of race than in Cuba. A free black man who

improved his opportunities was sure of being received as the equal of

the white man in the same station of life. This even extended to

intermarriage with white women. Miscegenation was very common, but

curiously enough, more common in plantation life, on the same basis that

the American planter in the southern part of the United States conducted

his relations with his women slaves. The tendency of the free colored

man, in spite of his new opportunities, was to marry one of his own

race.

In 1820 the slave-trade with Africa was legally abolished, and

undoubtedly if this law had been enforced the negro population would

have diminished rapidly, because the mortality of the negro race in

slavery is very high. Even in Cuba, a land where the climate is more

similar to that of his own country than that of any part of the United

States, the negro is all too frequently a victim of tuberculosis.

Indeed, although in the Custom House between 1811 and 1817, 67,000

negroes were registered as imported, and the real number must have been

far greater, in 1817 there were only 13,300 more slaves than in 1811.

Another reason, too, would have contributed very quickly to the

diminishing of the negro population. Spain, always greedy for the main

chance, never far-seeing in her relations with her American possessions,

had urged the importation of male slaves in preference to females. Of

course this meant a preponderance of laborers, but it also militated

against the increase of the race in Cuba by natural means. There was far

from being a sufficient number of young women of child-bearing age. On

the plantations the proportion of women to men was one to four; in the

cities the rate was better, 1 to 1.4; in Havana 1 to 1.2; and in the

island considered as a whole 1 to 1.7. For a normal and proper birth

rate there must be a preponderance of women over men.

But, although the laws forbade the slave traffic, by illicit means it

continued to be carried on. Between 1811 and 1825 no fewer than 185,000

African negroes were imported into Cuba; 60,000 of these subsequent to

the passage of the measure of 1820.

The ratio of population to the square league is a very interesting and

illuminating study. On this point J. S. Thrasher gives us some excellent

deductions:

"Supposing the population to be 715,000 (which I believe to be within

the minimum number) the ratio of population in Cuba, in 1825, was 197

individuals to the square league, and, consequently, nearly twice less

than that of San Domingo, and four times smaller than that of Jamaica.

If Cuba were as well cultivated as the latter island, or, more properly

speaking, if the density of population were the same, it would contain

3,515 x 974, or 3,159,000 inhabitants."

In 1811, at the time the population was estimated, we find the negroes

to have been distributed as follows; the figures indicating percentages:

\_Western Department\_ \_Free\_ \_Slave\_ \_Total\_

In towns 11 11-1/2 22-1/2

In rural districts 1-1/2 34 35-1/2

\_Eastern Department\_

In towns 11 9-1/2 20-1/2

In rural districts 11 10-1/2 21-1/2

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34-1/2 65-1/2 100

The foregoing indicates that sixty per cent. of the black population at

this period lived in the district of Havana, and that there were about

equal numbers of freedmen and slaves, that the total black population in

that portion of the island was distributed between towns and country in

the ratio of two to three, while in the eastern part of the island the

distribution between towns and country was about equal. We shall find

the foregoing compilations of inestimable value in consideration of the

problem which was such a source of concern to the white population and

which played so large a part in this period of the history of Cuba;

namely, slavery.

CHAPTER XVIII

The first records of the slave trade in Cuba--so far as the eastern part

of the island is concerned--were in 1521. Curiously enough it was begun

by Portuguese rather than Spanish settlers. It was a well recognized

institution, licensed by the government. The first license was held by

one Gasper Peralta, and covered the trade with the entire Spanish

America. Later French traders visited Havana and took tobacco in trade

for their slaves. The English, during their possession of the island,

far from frowning on the traffic, encouraged it; yet in the latter part

of the eighteenth century the number of slaves in Cuba was estimated not

to exceed 32,000. This was previous to 1790. Of these 32,000, 25,000

were in the district of Havana.

Baron Humboldt is authority for some interesting figures on the traffic.

"The number of Africans imported from 1521 to 1763 was probably 60,000,

whose descendants exist" (he writes in 1856) "among the free mulattoes,

the greater part of which inhabit the eastern part of the island. From

1763 to 1790 when the trade in negroes was thrown open, Havana received

24,875 (by the Tobacco Company, 4,957 from 1763 to 1766; by the contract

with the Marquis de Casa Enrile, 14,132, from 1773 to 1779; by the

contract with Baker and Dawson, 5,786 from 1786 to 1789). If we estimate

the importation of slaves in the eastern part of the island during these

twenty-seven years (1763 to 1790) at 6,000, we have a total importation

of 80,875 from the time of the discovery of Cuba, or more properly

speaking, from 1521 to 1790."

It was in the period of which we are writing, particularly in the very

early years of the nineteenth century, that the slave trade most

flourished in Cuba. It is estimated that more slaves were bought and

sold from 1790 to 1820 than in all the preceding history of the Spanish

possession of the island.

England, possibly seeing what an enormous power for developing the

natural wealth of the island an influx of free labor would give to

Spain, entered into an arrangement with Ferdinand VII.--whose sole

animating motive in dealing with his foreign possessions seems to have

been to grab the reward in hand and let the future take care of

itself--whereby, upon the payment by England to the king of four hundred

thousand pounds sterling, to compensate for the estimated loss which the

cessation of the slave trade would mean to the colonies, Ferdinand

agreed that the slave trade north of the equator should be restricted

from November 22, 1817, and totally abolished on May 30, 1820. Ferdinand

accepted the money, but as we have seen he did not fulfil his contract

and winked at the continuation of the importation of labor from Africa.

The following table shows an importation into the district of Havana

alone, for a period of 31 years, of 225,574 Africans:

1790 2,534 1806 4,395

1791 8,498 1807 2,565

1792 8,528 1808 1,607

1793 3,777 1809 1,152

1794 4,164 1810 6,672

1795 5,832 1811 6,349

1796 5,711 1812 6,081

1797 4,552 1813 4,770

1798 2,001 1814 4,321

1799 4,919 1815 9,111

1800 4,145 1816 17,737

1801 1,659 1817 25,841

1802 13,832 1818 19,902

1803 9,671 1819 17,194

1804 8,923 1820 4,122

1805 4,999 -------

Total 225,574

But Havana was not the only port through which slaves entered Cuba, and

the recognized channels were not the only ones through which they came.

Therefore, to provide for the illicit importations and those made at

Trinidad and Santiago these figures should be increased by at least one

fourth to cover the importations for the whole island. This gives us the

following results:

From 1521 to 1763 60,000

1764 33,409

Havana

From 1791 to 1805 91,211

1806 to 1820 131,829

Secret trade and trade in other parts of the island 56,000

-------

372,499

As we have seen, the trade did not stop when it was made illegal. We

have the authority of one of the British commissioners at Havana that in

1821 twenty-six vessels engaged in the slave trade landed 6,415 slaves;

and this gentleman also states that only about fifty per cent. of such

arrivals ever reached the attention of the commissioners, so that to

this number an equal amount should be added to provide for the slaves

imported by "underground" methods.

The yearly reports of these British commissioners furnish some food for

thought on this subject. They report the following data:

1822, 10 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--3,000 slaves

1823, 4 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--1,200 "

1824, 17 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--5,100 "

1825, 14 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--4,200 "

1826, 11 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--3,000 "

1827, 10 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--3,500 "

1828, 28 vessels arrived, bringing--estimated--7,000 "

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27,000 "

Adding the estimated one half for the number

not reported 13,500 "

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40,500 "

In 1838, the British consul at Havana reported to the foreign office in

London, regarding slave importations into Cuba for the previous nine

years:

1829 8,600

1830 9,800

1831 10,400

1832 8,200

1833 9,000

1834 11,400

1835 14,800

1836 14,200

1837 15,200

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Total 101,600

Add 1/5 20,320

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121,920

It will be observed that the consulate adds only one fifth to cover the

secret importations during this period.

From 1838 to 1853 the importations, according to records laid before

the British House of Commons, were as follows:

1838 10,495 1846 419

1839 10,995 1847 1,450

1840 10,104 1848 1,500

1841 8,893 1849 8,700

1842 3,630 1850 3,500

1843 8,000 1851 5,000

1844 10,000 1852 7,924

1845 1,300 1st half 1853 7,329

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99,239

During the early years of the slave trade, the Spanish masters treated

their slaves not so well as they treated their work animals. But

gradually they began to realize that after all it was cheaper to keep

the slaves that they had in good physical condition than to be

continually buying new ones, especially when the trade had fallen off

because of legal restrictions.

A greater number of colored women were imported; the moral condition of

the negroes, especially as to marriage, became a subject of greater

interest to the plantation owners; the negroes were encouraged to marry,

and wives were recruited from among the mulattoes as well as those of

pure black blood. Some efforts were made for better sanitary conditions

toward the middle of the century, and persons were employed on the

estates whose business it was to look after the sick slaves and nurse

them. In the last analysis, however, the conditions under which the

slaves lived on each plantation rested entirely--as it did in the United

States--on the kind of overseers under whom they were employed.

There are many touching stories of the devotion of the slaves to their

master. This was quite as great as among the old southern families in

the United States. The Cuban was naturally a kind master--we wish the

Spanish-born planter might always be as well spoken of--and he inspired

in his slaves a feeling of real affection. This often developed into a

single hearted devotion so great that the slave grew to count his

master's enemies as his own.

This is not extraordinary when we consider that the African, torn from

his own home and family ties and transported to a strange country, among

a strange people, took the name of his master and became a part of the

big household, identified not only with the working life but also with

the social life of the little community represented by the plantation.

Fierce as he may have been in his native surroundings, he was naturally

affectionate and clung eagerly to the one who, holding the slave's whole

destiny in his hand, yet was kind to him. The women slaves, especially

those of mixed blood, were bound to their masters often by ties of

consanguinity. They attended the master's wife when her children were

born, nursed the babies at their own breasts, and served and waited upon

the second generation as foster mothers. They were like grown up

children. The places where they lived, the food that they ate and the

clothing that they wore were all under the control of the one whom they

served. When he fell ill, they were devoted nurses, and when he died,

they buried him, and manifested their grief in their own primitive

fashion.

The slave owner who treated his slaves well, until other factors began

to enter the situation, had little to fear from them. But masters were

not always kindly. There were as many different varieties of human

disposition in those days as in these. The negro can hate as fiercely as

he can love, and gradually, as he acquired more knowledge and

understanding, on the estates where kindness was not the law, there grew

up mutterings of discontent and hatred, and hints of possible uprisings.

It was the excessive mortality among the black population which first,

perhaps, influenced their owners to favor better laws and more natural

and healthful conditions for them. Curiously enough, up to the opening

of the nineteenth century there were "religious scruples" against the

introduction of female slaves on the plantations, although the colored

women were much less expensive to purchase than the men. The colored men

were condemned to celibacy, as Baron Humboldt told us, "under the

pretext that vicious habits were thus avoided." They were worked in the

day time, and locked in at night to avoid their having any chance for

female companionship. And yet, in spite of the fact that these

"scruples" were "religious," we find the paradoxical situation that the

Jesuit and Bethlehemite friars were the only planters who encouraged the

importation of women slaves.

Don Francisco de Arango, being a clear sighted man, endeavored to bring

about the imposition of a tax upon such plantations as did not have at

least one third as many women as men among their slaves. He also tried

to have a duty of $6 levied upon every male negro imported from Africa.

In both of these efforts he was defeated, but they had the excellent

effect of stirring public opinion. While the juntas were opposed, as

always, to enacting any such drastic measures, yet there began to be a

disposition to encourage the mating of the slaves, to increase the

number of marriages, to give each negro a little cabin of his own that

he might call home, and, when children came, to see that they were

properly cared for. Then, too, efforts were made to insure lighter work

for the women during pregnancy, with a total relief as the time for the

birth of the coming child grew nearer.

How much of this came about because the slave owners were forced to see

that a continuation of the early conditions would compass their own

ruin, and how much because they were naturally inclined to be humane

when their duty was brought home to them, it is difficult to determine;

but judging from the Cuban's naturally kindly disposition, we are

inclined to believe that in many instances the master was glad to treat

his slaves as well as he could, when he began to realize that after all

they were not merely property--cheap labor--but human beings with

emotions and longings very much like his own. Under these bettered

conditions the rate of negro mortality fell as low as from eight to six

per cent. on the best plantations.

Another element, however, which was not conducive to the betterment of

the conditions of the negroes was the introduction of thousands of

Chinese laborers. They contracted to work for a number of years at

prices far below those usually estimated as fair, on the island. They

were the very lowest type of Chinese, and brought with them many vicious

influences and practices. No Chinese women were imported, and the

Chinese men mingled freely with the negro women. The very worst kind of

miscegenation was thus promoted, and the effect on the morals of the

negroes on the estates where these Chinese were employed was very bad

indeed.

In no other of the foreign colonies in America did the free negro so

predominate as in Cuba. It was not at all a difficult matter for a black

to gain freedom, since almost no real obstacles were placed in his way.

Every slave who did not like his "condition of servitude" had a right

to seek a new master, or to purchase his liberty, on payment only of the

price paid for him.

Then, too, the religious education of the slaves came to be recognized

as a matter of great importance. Religion played an important part in

the life of the Spanish colonies in general. It was therefore only

natural that they should employ every available means to convert the

African slave from his "false heathen superstitions" to their own "true

faith." Besides, it had long been the theory of tyrants that if men were

imbued with religious fervor and taught self-immolation, they were thus

rendered more docile under oppression. The slave code accordingly

required every master to instruct his slaves in religion.

One of the first and most marked results of this encouragement of

religious feeling was quite different from what had been expected or

intended. That was, to arouse a strong and increasing repugnance to the

legal continuance of the institution of slavery. This prevailed among

the better class of owners as well as among the slaves themselves. More

and more frequent became the custom of providing by will for the

emancipation of slaves at the death of their masters. The natural

affection, also, to which we have referred, which arose between slaves

who acted as domestic or body servants and the owners who enjoyed such

faithful service, conduced to the same end. The natural inclination of

the humane master was to grant such servitors their freedom.

Despite these palliating circumstances, slavery was odious, and

persistent negro insurrections began to cause serious concern to the

white population. In hope of checking them by kindness, new laws were

enacted. Legal restrictions were placed upon the hours of labor. It was

decreed that except under certain stated conditions a master should not

work his slaves more than nine or ten hours a day. When the exigencies

of the season required greater efforts, sixteen hours were prescribed as

the extreme limit, and the master was required to give extra pay for the

extra time. But these regulations were difficult if not impossible to

enforce. Indeed, we must assume that they were not meant to be enforced.

They were for show and nothing more; and they remained practically a

dead letter.

Religious scruples could not and of course did not prevent the

performance of much labor on Sundays, and the needs of agriculture often

made work necessary on holidays. There were routine duties to be

performed every day. For these, two hours were regarded as sufficient,

and to such time the code restricted the labor of Sundays and holidays.

There was also a general provision under which slaves were granted the

right to labor on their own account, paying a certain part of their

wages to the masters and retaining the remainder from which they might,

if they desired, create a fund looking toward their own eventual

freedom.

One cannot escape the conclusion that during the periods of slavery,

either in the United States or the Spanish colonies, the African negro

was never really regarded--no matter how close and friendly his

relations with his master--in the last analysis, as anything more than a

sort of higher animal or at best a child. Men do not thrash their

employes for disobedience, when there is any pretence of equality

between master and servant. Animals are whipped to teach them obedience,

and a child is chastised when he is naughty. The last was ever the

corrective which the white master wielded against his disobedient or

lazy slaves. It is true that nominally the laws of Cuba did not permit

its brutal misuse. The slave code limited the amount of punishment for

any offense to twenty-five lashes. Any more severe measures, if known,

were the subject of careful judicial investigation, and the penalty for

them on conviction was a fine of from $20 to $200. Unfortunately,

however, these laws were not effective. It is obvious that a strong man

can do much damage to a human being with 25 lashes. Infractions of the

law were seldom reported. The frightened African, subject to his master,

feared the results of reporting a violation of the law. He would have to

stand trial before a jury, not of his peers but of white men, one of

whose number was the aggressor. The other slaves--his witnesses--were

far too afraid of what might befall them if they upheld the testimony of

the complainant. Even the sluggish brain of the slave could picture,

with dreadful anticipation, the anger of the master, and the subsequent

retribution, much more severe than the original beating, should by any

extraordinary chance the slave be triumphant and his master be compelled

to pay a fine.

And so, in spite of the fact that in none of the colonies was the

condition of the black freedman better than in Cuba,--far better than in

Martinique, where free negroes were prohibited from receiving gifts from

white people, and where they might be apprehended and returned to

servitude if they could be convicted of the very natural act of aiding

any of their less fortunate brothers to escape--and in spite of the laws

which might, if not dead letters, have safeguarded the interests of the

slaves, a feeling of dissatisfaction and unrest among the blacks was

seething beneath the surface. The more knowledge they gained, and,

curiously enough, the more concessions there were granted them, the

stronger it grew, breeding trouble and bad blood between the white

owners and the blacks, both enslaved and free, destroying mutual

confidence and engendering a spirit of fear and distrust which was

presently to break forth into open revolt.

The negroes hated the Spanish authorities, too, because they recognized

them to be cowards and hypocrites, pretending one thing and doing

another; oppressing the weak for their own gain, and siding with the

powerful because it served their interests to do so. In such

circumstances the drift toward slave insurrections was inevitable.

CHAPTER XIX

Perhaps it is a wise Providence that decrees that even government shall

be subject to that rhythm by which the tides of human affairs rise and

fall. Who shall say? In 1796, Las Casas, who had tried to do so much for

Cuba, was succeeded, as Captain-General, by the Conde de Santa Clara.

The latter was of a different type from Las Casas. In spite of his

aristocratic birth, he was a man of little education, and indifferent to

it. The result was, since he had no taste for letters, and social

elegance did not appeal to him, that the impetus was withdrawn from the

development of the finer arts in Cuba. His influence was all the more

deleterious since he was a man of generous, hearty, open-handed nature

and personally was immensely popular. Naturally, but unhappily, culture

in Cuba quickly fell from the high standards maintained by his

predecessor.

Santa Clara's interests were military and he did a great deal to improve

the forts of Cuba--a much needed work. Almost all of the new

fortifications on the island, which aided in its defense during the

latter part of the nineteenth century, were originated by him, and the

Bateria de Santa Clara, outside of Havana, was named in recognition of

his services.

Previous to 1796 there had been a great navy yard on the Bay of Havana,

and more than a hundred war vessels or convoys for Spanish treasure

ships had there been built. The same year that Santa Clara became

Captain-General, the Spanish ship-builders, realizing that they were

losing the large profits from this work, demanded that the navy yard at

Havana be closed, and that the work be done in Spain. Influence was

finally brought to bear on the crown, and an order was issued closing

the Cuban navy yards.

The rule of Santa Clara was, however, a short one; which was well for

the island. In 1799, the Marquis de Someruelos succeeded him. By Spanish

law the term of Captain-General was limited to five years. The Conde de

Santa Clara failed to complete his term, but the Marquis de Someruelos

served for a much longer period. He remained in Cuba until 1812, and he

sought by every means in his power to efface the bad effects of the rule

of Santa Clara and to reestablish the régime of progress which had

flourished under Las Casas.

In 1802 Havana was visited by a devastating conflagration. As frequently

happens in such disasters, it was the poorer people who suffered the

most severely. Over 11,000 of the poorer inhabitants of the suburb of

Jesus Maria were rendered destitute. The Marquis de Someruelos lent his

personal efforts to their succor, to excellent effect, and his kindness

of heart quickly endeared him to rich and poor alike. He tried hard to

rule impartially, to dispense justice to all classes without

distinction, and attained a gratifying measure of success.

The improvement of the island from an architectural point of view also

interested him, and he left behind him two public memorials. The first

was intended to give an impetus to art. It was a great public theatre;

perhaps not great for these days, it is true, but an undertaking of note

for that time. The second showed his interest in sanitary measures. It

was a public cemetery, a huge burying-ground, 22,000 square yards in

size, where the dead might be gathered, rather than to permit their

being buried in small plots on estates or in yards. The walls, gateway

and chapel were good examples of the Cuban architecture of the period,

and the mortuary chapel contained a beautiful fresco depicting the

Resurrection.

Early in the nineteenth century, in 1807, the people of the island began

to manifest a fear, which indeed was well founded, of hostile invasion.

Both England and France had long cast appraising and jealous eyes on the

Spanish possessions in America. The Spanish trade was valuable, and

England was eager to seize as much as possible of it. In view of this

peril the defenses of Havana were materially strengthened. Troops were

carefully drilled, and the army was increased by the addition of

recruits. Several coast towns were attacked and sacked by the English,

but no large invasion took place and the damage was small.

But the Cubans soon learned that the enemy whom they had real cause to

fear was not England but France. Spain and France were at war, and the

French colonists in America stood ready to take up the quarrel. To avert

this peril "Juntas" or Committees were organized for national defense.

War was unofficially declared on the unnaturalized Frenchmen on the

Island, many of whom were killed and their plantations wrecked, while

6,000 were expelled from the island. Even these drastic measures did not

prevent a French invasion, although it was rather an opera bouffe

performance. A motley company of soldiers of fortune, adventurers, and

refugees from Santo Domingo tried to take Santiago and failed; they did,

however, effect a landing at Batabano.

The Cuban army hastened to defend the country, but found that the

invaders were not particularly enthusiastic about fighting. They wanted

to colonize. They endeavored to "build homes and make their residences

in uninhabited portions of Cuba, just as they had done in Santo

Domingo. The Cubans, however, realized that this apparently peaceful

effort might well be a menace in disguise. If the French were allowed to

settle portions of the island, soon France, who also appreciated the

value of the Spanish possessions, might endeavor to claim the island, or

at least a portion of it, as her territory.

The Captain-General was equal to the occasion. He did not resort to

arms. He plainly but firmly impressed upon the invaders the fact that it

was unthinkable that they should be allowed to take as their own any

portion of Cuba. He told them that if they were dissatisfied with Santo

Domingo, he would see that transportation was furnished them to France.

On the other hand, if they wanted to return to Santo Domingo, he would

insure their being taken thither. But on no account could they remain as

inhabitants of Cuba. His persuasions were partially successful and

numbers of them peacefully left the country.

For a long time, Spain had paid but meagre attention to her American

possessions, save to mulct them for revenue. They had no representation,

and their messages to and requests of the mother country received but

scanty attention. Spain herself was passing through stormy times. The

country was in turmoil. Revolution was impending. Napoleon, whose greedy

glance embraced almost the whole of Europe, had turned his attention to

the Peninsula. In 1808 the royal family of Spain was abducted, and held

virtually prisoners by Napoleon, while a new government was set up.

When the news of Napoleon's action reached Cuba, the Cabildo was in

session. At once, each and every member took a solemn oath to make every

effort to retain the island "for their lawful sovereign." Don Juan de

Aguilar arrived in Cuba on the American ship \_Dispatch\_, and the

government at once declared war against Napoleon and reaffirmed the

loyalty of Cuba to Spain. On July 20, 1808, they proclaimed King

Ferdinand VII as their lawful sovereign. This conduct, so little

appreciated and so cruelly repaid by the mother country, won for Cuba

the title of the "Ever-Faithful Isle."

The internal troubles in Spain naturally had a most disastrous effect

upon the Cuban trade and prosperity. The exports to Spain fell off to an

alarming degree. The products of the country had, for a time, lost their

natural market. Only statesmen of vision were able to understand the

causes of the trouble. The common people looked upon the results only,

and a strong feeling of unrest was engendered. The colony was

practically independent of the mother country at this time, so far as

any guidance or aid was concerned. The King was exiled and Joseph

Bonaparte held sway in the Spanish capital.

But now a new difficulty showed its head. Not all the French had

returned to Santo Domingo or France. There were numbers of French

settlers in the rural districts. The people were discontented, and soon

a movement arose--on March 21, 1809, it came to a crisis--to endeavor to

persuade the French colonists, who had been so easily disposed of by

Someruelos, to return. This movement took on almost the aspect of a

revolution. It seemed as if France, not content with obtaining control

of Spain, was again stretching out a clutching hand to grab Cuba as

well.

The heads of the Cuban government were thoroughly aroused. Summary

measures were taken, and the uprising, which had bid fair to be so

serious, was subdued in two days. It was due, probably, to the firmness,

decision and resourcefulness of those at the helm of Cuba at that time,

that Cuba did not then and there become the victim of a movement which

might have resulted in her becoming subject to France instead of Spain.

The attitude of the United States toward French aggression also lent

Cuba moral support, as we shall see.

The encounters which took place in putting down this trouble were

practically bloodless. Almost no lives were lost, but much property was

destroyed. A more serious result was that dissatisfied colonists, some

of them of the most desirable type, to the number of many thousands,

were driven to seek their fortunes and find new homes away from Cuba.

Napoleon was not satisfied to leave Spain in possession of Cuba, but

soon instigated another effort to get possession of the island for

France. In 1810, a young man arrived in Cuba from the United States. He

was Don Manuel Aleman. His mission was apparently private business of

his own, but the Cuban government had confidential information to the

effect that he was an emissary of Napoleon. He was not allowed to land

unapprehended, but was arrested on the ship on which he had come, and he

was thrust into a none too pleasant Cuban prison. A council of war was

assembled, but this was merely a form. Aleman's fate was predetermined.

On the following morning, July 13, 1810, he was taken to the Campo de la

Punta and there publicly hanged as a traitor to Spain.

No account of events in Cuba at this time would be complete without some

record of one whom Las Casas called "a jewel of priceless value to the

glory of the nation, a protector for Cuba, an accomplished statesman for

the monarchy," Don Francisco de Arango, the bearer of the "most

illustrious name in Cuban annals."

Arango, to whom we have previously made reference, was born on May 22,

1765, at Havana. In early boy-hood he was left an orphan, but he managed

the large estate which had been left him with all the skill and judgment

of a mature mind. He studied law, and was admitted to practice in Spain,

and he there acted, for a number of years, as agent for the municipality

of Cuba. He was thoroughly familiar with the wrongs and needs of his

country, and it is probable that no one of his time was more suited by

nature, training and sympathies to act for Cuba. He succeeded in fact in

obtaining from the crown some very valuable concessions for the island.

In Cuba itself he worked hard to bring about an increase of staples. He

exerted his influence among the planters to the end that the fertile

soil should be worked to its utmost productiveness. It was necessary

that not only should Cuba be self-supporting, and be able to pay her

enormous taxes, but that there should be a large surplus to feed the

royal exchequer. No one realized this more than Arango, whose years at

the Spanish court had made him familiar with the greed of the Spanish

government. His work was fruitful, and Cuban production at this period

came almost up to the wild expectations of the Spanish government, which

regarded Cuba as a land of inexhaustible riches. Arango was moreover a

humanitarian at heart. The wrongs of the slaves and the evils of the

slave trade appealed to his sense of justice. On the other hand, he saw

very clearly the difficulty of obtaining the proper amount of labor for

the Cuban plantations if the slave trade was abolished, and so his

efforts on behalf of the slaves took the form of attempts toward their

protection by wise laws.

The attitude of Spain toward her colonies was at this time, as indeed

always, grossly illogical. She wanted to take everything and give

nothing. She could not foresee that a present of constant depletion

meant a future of want; that in order to produce in quality the proper

facilities must be provided. Arango, who was a diplomat as well as a

statesman, by persuasion and by constant but gentle pressure at last won

some of those in authority at the court to his point of view. If Cuba

was to be a source of wealth to Spain, she must be endowed with the most

efficient equipment to produce that wealth. Through Arango's efforts

machinery was allowed to be imported into the island, free of duty.

This, of course, furnished the means for industrial expansion. He also

obtained the removal of the duty on coffee, liquors and cotton, for a

period of ten years.

But Arango saw as clearly as Las Casas had seen that Cuba to show

progress must have facilities for uplift, and for the improvement of the

mental and moral status of the inhabitants. He accordingly started a

movement which resulted in the formation of the "Junta de Fomento," or

Society for Improvement, which was long a power for good in the island,

until later the Spanish Captains-General saw in it a means to further

their own designs, and it became an instrument for oppression. Its

object was avowedly to protect and to promote the progress of

agriculture and commerce. The formation of the Cuban Chamber of Commerce

was another benefit which Arango conferred upon Cuba. For a long time he

was the Syndic of the Chamber of Commerce. There were certain

perquisites of this office which Arango steadily refused to accept, and

he also declined the salary which the office carried with it. In all his

long and useful life he never accepted remuneration in any office which

he held under the Cuban government.

Now the real power at the court of Spain at this time was the infamous

Godoy, the personal favorite of the king and the queen's lover; who

seemed to be so firmly entrenched that no one would dare to oppose him.

This creature turned greedy eyes toward Cuba. It was quite the fashion

of those times for Spanish courtiers to consider Cuba as a source of

revenue to bolster up their own fortunes. So Godoy claimed to be

protector of the Chamber of Commerce, and demanded that the receipts of

the custom house at Havana be turned over to him. He immediately met

with the opposition of Arango, who bitterly opposed his every move and

stood firmly against his plans for mulcting Cuba; in which conflict it

is a pleasure to relate that for once virtue was triumphant. Godoy was

unable to carry out his designs, and Arango was not only victor but he

gained a still further point for Cuba, the relinquishment of the royal

monopoly of tobacco.

There is another curious and interesting phase of this matter, which

speaks highly for the remarkably forceful personality of Arango.

Although he at all times stood firmly as the inflexible opponent of any

schemes which the court at Madrid might father for the oppression of

Cuba, he was always an object of respect and esteem in high political

circles in Spain, and he was offered a title of nobility. Possibly he

looked upon this as a bribe. At any rate he declined it. However, when

the Cross of the Order of Charles III. was offered him he accepted the

decoration.

In 1813 Cuba, by the adoption of the constitution of 1812, became

entitled to representation in the Spanish Cortes, and Arango was

unanimously chosen for this office. There was no person in Cuban

politics more fitted for the honor. He proved himself worthy, for, as

deputy to the Cortes, he achieved the greatest victory of his long fight

for the good of Cuba, the opening of Cuban ports to foreign trade. New

honors awaited him, for he was awarded the Grand Cross of Isabella, and

when in 1817 he returned to Cuba, he was accorded the rank of Counsellor

of State, and Financial Intendente of Cuba. Arango died in 1837, having

lived seventy-two years, and having faithfully served his country for

the greater portion of them. He bequeathed a large portion of his

considerable fortune for public purposes and charitable objects, all for

the betterment of the land that he loved.

In the darkest hours of tyranny, while suffering wrongs that would have

inflamed other peoples to rebellion, Cuba remained "The Ever-Faithful

Isle" for many years, until forced to rebellion. Against the background

of injustice, as contrasted with the Spanish Captains-General who were

to follow, and whose sole interest in Cuba was to extract as much as

they could from her, acting on the principle of "after us the deluge,"

and caring nothing for her ultimate fate, the figure of Arango, the

native Cuban, fighting at home and abroad for Cuba, stands out in bold

and happy relief. It is not a matter for surprise that his name has been

written on the annals of Cuba, with all the love and respect with which

the other South American countries revere Bolivar. Here was a man who

could not be tempted by honors, who refused remuneration for his

services, and who against the greatest odds stood staunchly for

everything which would help his travailing country.

Among Spain's other possessions in America unrest was now beginning to

manifest itself. They were sick of Spanish rule, and the period when

Spain was occupied with troubles at home seemed to be a good opportunity

to thrown off the yoke. Revolution was in the air in those days.

Independence had arisen like a new star on the horizon, and had become

the object of popular worship. It was therefore greatly to the credit

of Someruelos that in such troublous times he maintained a relatively

peaceful government. The better class of Cubans recognized his ability.

They realized that he of all men was best fitted to keep Cuba free from

disturbances which would hinder her advancement. Consequently when his

term of office was ended, a petition was sent to the Spanish government,

requesting that he be retained for a longer period. We have, however,

only to study the dealings, not only of Spain but of all the European

nations with the colonies in the New World, to understand that not the

good of the subject country, but the supposed interests of the mother

country, were what determined the destiny of the colonies. The very fact

that Someruelos was so popular in Cuba apparently seemed to those in

power in Spain an excellent excuse for his removal. They reasoned that

if he had the interests of Cuba at heart, he might not be loyal to the

government in Spain. And so, when multitudes of the best citizens of

Cuba petitioned that he be retained longer in office, not only was the

petition denied, but the petitioners were severely reprimanded by a

mandate of the Spanish government.

Hurricanes are not unusual in the southern seas, but now and then one of

exceptional severity leaves so devastating a trail that it is worthy of

chronicle even in a country where the elements are always more or less

to be reckoned with. Such a hurricane visited the western coast of Cuba

in 1810. Valuable shipping in the harbor of Havana was sunk. Sixty

merchant vessels and many ships of war were torn from their anchors and

swallowed up by the sea. Property all along the coast was destroyed, and

a large number of lives were lost. That same year an uprising occurred

among the negro population of the island. It bade fair to be far

reaching in effect and occasioned much alarm among the white

population. The most drastic and even cruel methods were taken to check

it, and finally it was subdued.

[Illustration: ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ]

On April 14, 1812, Don Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, afterwards the Conde de

Benadito, assumed the post of Captain-General, in place of the Marquis

de Someruelos. His assumption of power was marked by the gift of

additional authority to the office of Captain-General. For the first

time, the Captain-General was also the commander of the naval forces.

His initial act was to proclaim the Constitution of Cadiz. This was far

from popular in Cuba, but the citizens realized the futility of

resistance. His action created a sensation and caused much talk, but it

met with no open opposition. De Apodaca's tenure of office was short. He

retained the office of Captain-General for only two years, when he was

sent to Mexico by the Spanish government.

Next, Lieutenant-General Don José Cienfuegos was installed at Havana as

Captain-General, on July 18, 1816. It was under his direction, in 1817,

that the third census of the island was taken. Cienfuegos was most

unpopular with the Cubans. He instituted many reforms which did not find

favor in the eyes of those he governed.

ALEJANDRO RAMIREZ

An economist and statesman of three countries, Alejandro Ramirez

was born in Spain in 1777. He began his career in Guatemala as an

agricultural reformer and promoter; thence in 1813 went to Puerto

Rico as Intendente and saved that island from bankruptcy. In 1816

he became Intendente of Cuba, where he effected great reforms in

land-holding and in education. Despite his excellent services he

was bitterly attacked, and largely because of grief over the

ungrateful injustice thus shown him he sickened and died on May 20,

1821.

The entire policing forces of Havana were revolutionized and put under

new rules. We are told that his most unpopular move was to have the

streets of that city lighted at night, and that this was "thoroughly

resented." Just why such a move should be resented is not told us, but

it certainly might be the subject of fruitful and romantic conjecture.

His action is said to have caused "consternation."

A second measure was even more distasteful to the Cubans, and they

regarded it as an infringement of personal liberty. Cienfuegos ordered

that, as soon as the public services in the churches in the evenings

were over, all public thoroughfares be closed. Now this was the time of

day when all Cuba was most bent on amusement and enjoyment, and this

decree of the Captain-General made it impossible for any man to stray

far from his own door with hope of returning the same night. The

populace was up in arms with indignation. Cienfuegos had intended the

command to have a quieting effect, but its result was exactly the

reverse. It gave rise to the very disturbances which the Captain-General

was endeavoring to restrain.

It would be hard to conjecture what might have been the result of a

continuance of Cienfuegos's arbitrary methods. They certainly boded no

good for the peace of Cuba. Fortunately before he could resort to any

more of what the Cubans termed "these outrages against liberty," he fell

ill, and thereupon the administration of the government fell into the

hands of Don Juan Maria Echeverria, as a temporary substitute. This

officer had no time to formulate new rules for the government of the

Cubans, being kept very busy laboring against the troubles caused by his

predecessor's doings. Then, too, his stay was short, for on August 29,

1819, the Spanish ship of war \_Sabrina\_ brought Cuba a new

Captain-General, Don Juan Manuel Cagigal.

In "Cuba and the Cubans," published in 1850, we are told that "The

political changes adopted in Spain in 1812 and 1820 were productive of

similar changes in the island: and when in both instances the

constitution was proclaimed, the perpetual members of the municipalities

were at once deprived of office, and their successors elected by the

people. The provincial assembly was called, and held its sessions. The

militia was organized; the press made entirely free, the verdict of a

jury deciding actions for its abuses; and the same courts of justice

were in no instance to decide a case a second time. But if the

institution of the consulate was very beneficial during Ferdinand's

absolute sway, the ultra-popular grants of the constitutional system,

which could hardly be exercised with quiet in Spain, were ill-adapted to

Cuba, though more advanced in civilization, stained with all those vices

that are the legitimate curse of a country long under despotic sway.

That system was so democratic that the king was deprived of all

political authority. No intermediate house of nobility or senators

tempered the enactments of a single elective assembly. This sudden

change from an absolute government, with its usual concomitant, a

corrupt and debased public sentiment, to the full enjoyment of

republican privileges, served only to loosen the ties of decency and

decorum throughout the Spanish community. Infidelity resulted from it;

and that veil of respect for the religion of their fathers, which had

covered the deformity of such a state of society, was imprudently thrown

aside. As the natural consequence of placing the instruments of freedom

in the hands of an ignorant multitude, their minds were filled with

visions of that chimerical equality which the world is never to realize.

The rich found themselves deprived of their accustomed influence, and

felt that there was little chance of obtaining justice from the common

people (in no place so formidable as in Cuba, from the heterogeneous

nature of the population), and who were now, in a manner, arrayed

against them throughout the land. They, of course, eagerly wished the

return of the old system of absolute rule. But the proprietors only

asked for the liberal policy which they had enjoyed at the hands of the

Spanish monarch; not, most surely, that oppressive and nondescript

government, which, by separating the interest of the country from that

of her nearest rulers, and destroying all means of redress or complaint,

thrust the last offspring of Spain into an abyss of bloodshed and ruin,

during the recent disgusting exercise of military rule, in publishing by

the most arbitrary and cruel measures, persons suspected of engaging in

an apprehended servile insurrection."

This not altogether coherent statement gives an idea of how the rule of

the Spanish Captains-General of this period, and how the so-called

reforms which were instituted during the early part of the nineteenth

century, were regarded thirty-five or forty years afterward.

Senor Cagigal was accompanied by troops, ostensibly to supply the local

garrison, and it would be strange if they were not also imported to fill

the native hearts with respect for the government and to help in

quelling any threatened uprisings. History furnishes strange paradoxes,

and so in 1820 we have the spectacle of Cagigal's own troops rising in

revolt against him and compelling him to proclaim the constitution of

1812. It is true that he soon quelled this rebellion, set aside his

proclamation, and restored the old order, but that does not detract from

the grim humor of the situation in which he for a time found himself.

But Cagigal was a diplomat of a high order, and he did make efforts to

accomplish well the difficult task of governing Cuba. His decisions and

decrees were generally impartial. He had a charming social manner, and a

delightfully conciliatory way; always suave, affable and approachable.

He placated trouble makers, and dispensed justice in an endeavor to give

universal satisfaction. He was accordingly held in the highest esteem by

the majority of the Cubans. And Cuba apparently found favor in his eyes.

He grew to love the beautiful island, and perhaps his heart was touched

by her patience under the galling Spanish yoke. At any rate, he applied

to the crown for special permission to spend the rest of his life in

Cuba. This request was granted and he made for himself a home at

Guanabacoa, where he lived until his death, some years later.

Cagigal was succeeded in 1821 by Nicholas Mahy, an old man, of a

distrustful and arbitrary disposition, who was entirely out of sympathy

with the liberal movement in Cuba. He could see no way of retaining her

for Spain except by keeping her people in subjection under an absolute

despotism. He proceeded to carry out his ideas with a high hand, and it

is a matter of speculation to what lengths he might have gone, had not

death speedily cut short his career. He ruled for only a single year,

after which no new Captain-General was sent out from Spain but Sebastian

Kindelan, Mahy's subordinate, took command. He was a sterner

disciplinarian than even his former master. His sole object seemed to be

to reunite the military and civil power in the hands of the

Captain-General. He was willing to stoop to any means to accomplish his

purpose, and he was backed up by a large body of troops imported from

Spain. Feeling ran high between these--as the Cubans termed

them--"interlopers and troublemakers" and the local militia, and

serious trouble was with difficulty avoided. Then in 1823 Ferdinand VII.

was again in power in Spain; weak, crafty, scheming, malicious, and

grasping; and it is needless to say that Cuba was visited with new

oppression.

CHAPTER XX

It was on May 2, 1823, that Don Francisco Vives, afterward Conde de

Cuba, arrived in Cuba to take over the office of Captain-General. Let us

first contemplate the good which he accomplished for Cuba, before

scanning the darker pages of his high-handed rule.

Vives reorganized the rural militia, and he caused the construction of a

number of important fortresses and the completion of others already

begun. He divided the island into three military departments. Under his

instructions two asylums for the insane, el Departmento de Dementes, and

the Casa de Beneficencia, were constructed. He made an effort to mark

the historic spots of the island, and under his auspices a temple was

built on the spot in the city of Havana where was reputed to have been

celebrated the first mass. So much for the good done by Vives. Now we

come to a different story.

This Captain-General was a despot of the most pronounced type, the kind

dear to the hearts of the rulers in the mother country. He obtained from

his royal master, in 1825, an order placing Cuba under martial law, and

giving the Captain-General complete control of her destiny. It reads as

follows:

"The King, our master, in whose royal mind great confidence has been

inspired by your excellency's proved fidelity, indefatigable zeal in his

majesty's service, judicious and well-concerted steps taken since Y. E.

had charge of the government, in order to keep in quietude his faithful

inhabitants, confine within the proper limits such as would deviate

from the path of honor, and punish such as forgetting their duty would

dare commit excesses in opposition to our wise laws; well convinced as

H. M. feels, that at no time and under no circumstances whatever will

the principles of rectitude and love toward H. M. royal person be

weakened which now distinguish Y. E.; and being at the same time

desirous of preventing the embarrassments which under ordinary

circumstances might arise a division in the command, and from the

complicated authority and powers of the different officers of

government, for the important end of maintaining in that island his

sovereign authority and the public quiet, it has pleased H. M., in

conformity with the advice of his council of ministers, to authorize

your excellency, \_fully investing you with the whole extent of power

which by the royal ordinances is granted to the governors of besieged

towns\_. In consequence thereof H. M. most amply and unrestrictedly

authorizes Y. E. \_not only to remove from that island such persons,

holding offices from government or not\_, whatever their occupation,

rank, class or situation in life may be, whose residence there you may

believe prejudicial, or whose public or private conduct may appear

suspicious to you, \_employing in their stead faithful servants of H. M.

who shall fully deserve your excellency's confidence; but also to

suspend the execution of whatever royal orders or general decrees in all

the different branches of the administration, or in any part of them, as

Y, E. may think conducive to the royal service\_; it being in any case

required that these measures be temporary, and that Y. E. make report of

them for his majesty's sovereign approval.

"In granting Y. E. this marked proof of his royal esteem, and of the

high trust your proven loyalty deserves, H. M. expects that in due

correspondence to the same, Y. E. will use the most wakeful prudence

and reserve, joined to an indefatigable activity and unyielding

firmness, in the exercise of your excellency's authority, and trusts

that as your excellency shall by this very pleasure and graciousness of

H. M. be held to a more strict responsibility, Y. E. will redouble his

vigilance that the laws be observed, that justice be administered, that

H. M. faithful vassals be protected and rewarded, and punishment without

partiality or indulgence inflicted on those who, forgetful of their duty

and their obligations to the best and most benevolent of monarchs, shall

oppose those laws, decidedly abetting sinister plots, with infraction of

them and disregard of the decrees from them issuing. And I therefore, by

royal order, inform Y. E. of the same for Y. E.'s intelligence,

satisfaction, and exact observance thereof. God preserve your

excellency's life. Madrid, 28 May, 1825."

As a marvel of unconscious irony this is a unique document. Evidently

both the King and his minister lacked a sense of humor. Here is a

document purporting to be issued "to keep in quietude" "faithful

inhabitants." Why the "Ever-Faithful" needed a curb or why if such

measures were necessary the insurgents were referred to as "Faithful,"

only a stupid king through the mouth of an equally pig-headed minister

could determine. This royal order, we may relate with satisfaction,

proved a boomerang. It gave the Captain-General--just why it is hard to

decide--absolute power, not only to govern by military force, but to

depose from office those who offended him, whether they were the king's

minions or not. It also made inoperative all royal decrees unless the

Captain-General chose to sanction them. Now Cuba, at this time, was

saddled with hosts of fortune seekers, court favorites who were

temporarily and voluntarily exiles from the sunshine of the monarch's

smiles, that they might line their pockets and return to startle the

Spanish grandees with their new splendor. Naturally they were seeking

office and emoluments from the Spanish government. But then came their

royal master and placed them, their positions, their fortunes, in the

hands of a man who, should they offend him, could summarily degrade

them, and force them to return home no richer than when they came. Truly

the ways of kings are no less inscrutable than those of Providence.

Naturally this royal order found little favor in Cuba. In vain, however,

were efforts made to have it suspended, and to prove that it had never

been intended to be anything but a temporary measure.

The trouble which was brewing for Spain, in Cuba, at this period was

well forecast and described in an article, primarily on the dangers of

the slave trade, which was published in a periodical in Havana, in 1832.

After detailing some facts as to slave importations, it said:

"Thus far we have only considered the power which has its origin in the

numbers of the colored population that surrounds us. What a picture we

might draw, if we were to portray this immense body acting under the

influence of political and moral causes, and presenting a spectacle

unknown in history! We surely shall not do it. But we should be guilty

of moral treason to our country, if we were to forget the efforts now

making to effect a change in the conditions of the African race.

Philanthropic laws, enacted by some of the European nations,

associations of distinguished Englishmen, periodicals solely devoted to

this subject, eloquent parlimentary debates whose echoes are constantly

repeated on this side of the Atlantic, bold exhortations from the

pulpits of religious sects, political principles which with lightning

rapidity are spreading in both hemispheres, and \_very recent commotions

in several parts of the West Indies, everything is calculated to awaken

us from our profound slumber and remind us that we must save our

country\_. And should this our beloved mother ask us what measures we

have adopted to extricate her from her danger, what would those who

boast themselves her dutiful sons, answer? The horrid traffic in human

blood is carried on in defiance of the laws, and men who assume the name

of patriots, being no other than parricides, cover the land with

shackled victims. And as if this were not sufficiently fearful with

criminal apathy, Africans freed and brought to this country by English

policy, are permitted to reside in our midst. How different the conduct

of our neighbors the Americans! Notwithstanding the rapid increase of

their country; notwithstanding the white has constantly been four fifths

more numerous than the colored population, and have ten and a half

millions to offset two millions; notwithstanding the importation of the

latter is prohibited from one end of the republic to the other, while

European immigration is immense; notwithstanding the countries lying

upon their boundaries have no slaves to inspire dread, they organize

associations, raise funds, purchase lands in Africa, establish colonies,

favor the emigration of the colored population to them, increasing their

exertions as the exigency may require, not faltering in their course,

and leaving no expedient untried which shall prove them friends of

humanity and their country. Not satisfied with these general measures,

some states have adopted very thorough and efficient measures. In

December, 1831, Louisiana passed a law prohibiting importation of slaves

even from other states of the Union.

"Behold the movement of a great people, who would secure their safety!

Behold the model you should imitate! But we are told 'Your efforts are

in vain. You cannot justly reproach us. Our plantations need hands and

if we cannot obtain negroes, what shall we do?' We are far from wishing

to offend a class equally deserving respect and esteem, including many

we are happy to call friends. We are habitually indulgent and in no

sense more so than in that before us. The notions and examples to which

they have been accustomed justify in a great measure the part they act,

and an immediate benefit and remote danger authorize in others a course

of conduct which we wish may never be generally and permanently adopted.

We would not rudely censure the motives of the planters. Our mission

requires us only to remark, that it is necessary to adopt some plan,

since the change in politics is inconsistent with and hostile to the

much longer continuance of the illicit traffic in slaves. We all know

that England has, both with selfish and humane motives, made and is

still making great efforts against it by means of treaties. She is no

longer the only power thus engaged, since France is also taking her

share in the enterprise. The United States will soon appear in the field

to vindicate down-trodden humanity. They will adopt strong measures, and

perseveringly pursue the pirate negro-dealer. Will he then escape the

vigilance of enemies so active and powerful? And even should some be

able to do so, how enormously expensive must their piracy be! It is

demonstrable that the number of imported negroes being then small, and

their introduction subject to uncommon risks, their cost would be so

enhanced as to destroy the motive for preferring slave labor. A proper

regard to our true interests will lead us to consider henceforth other

means of supplying our wants, since our present mode will ultimately

paralyze our resources and be attended with baneful consequences. The

equal distribution of the two sexes in the country, and an improved

treatment of them, would alone be sufficient, not merely to prevent a

diminution of their number, but greatly to increase it. But the existing

disproportion of the sexes forbids our indulging in so pleasing a hope.

We shall, however, do much to effect our purposes by discontinuing

certain practices, and adopting a system more consonant to the good

principles that should be our guide.

"Would it not be advisable to try some experiments that we may be able

to compare the results of cultivating cane by slaves, with such other

methods as we may find expedient to adopt?

"If the planters could realize the importance of these propositions to

their welfare, we should see them striving to promote the introduction

of white and the exclusion of colored hands. By forming associations,

raising funds, and in various ways exerting themselves vigorously in a

cause so eminently patriotic, they would at once overcome the obstacles

to the introduction of white foreigners, and induce their immigration by

the guarantees of good laws and thus assure the tranquillity of the

country.

"We may be told that these are imaginary plans, and never to be

realized. We answer that they are essays, not difficult or expensive, if

undertaken, as we suggest, by a whole community. If we are not disposed

to make the voluntary trial now, the day is at hand when we shall be

obliged to attempt it, or abandon the cultivation of sugar! The prudent

mariner on a boisterous ocean prepares betimes for the tempest, and

defies it. He who recklessly abandons himself to the fury of the

elements is likely to perish in the rage of the storm.

"'How imprudent,' some may exclaim, 'how imprudent to propose a subject

which should be forever buried in "lasting oblivion."' Behold the

general accusation raised against him who dares boldly avow new

opinions respecting these matters. Unfortunately there is among us an

opinion which insists that 'silence' is the true policy. All feel the

evils which surround us, are acquainted with the dangers, and wish to

avoid them. Let a remedy be suggested and a thousand confused voices be

simultaneously raised; and a significant and imploring 'Hush!--hush!' is

heard on every side. Such infatuation resembles his who conceals the

disease which is hurrying him speedily to death, rather than hear its

unpleasant history and mode of cure, from his only hope, the physician's

saving science. Which betrays censurable apathy, he who obstinately

rushes headlong to the brink of a mighty precipice, or he who gives the

timely warning to beware? Who would not thus save a whole community

perhaps from frightful destruction? If we knew most positively that the

disease were beyond all hopes of cure, the knowledge of the fact would

not stay the march of death, while it might serve but as a terrifying

enunciation of his approach. If, however, the sick man is endowed with a

strong constitution, that with timely prescription promises a probable

return of health, it would be unpardonable to act the part of a passive

spectator. We heed not that the selfish condemn, that the self-admiring

wise censure, or the parricidal accuse us. Reflections of a higher

nature guide us, and in the spirit of our responsible calling as a

public writer, we will never cease to cry aloud, '\_Let us save our

country--let us save our country!\_'"

A subtle document that. Hidden carefully in the denunciation of slavery

is a call to organization to form societies. We shall see later how

important and potent those societies were and that their objects were

something far different from the destruction of slavery. The paper

closed with a clear cry for freedom for Cuba.

It cannot be disguised that those who had the real good of the island of

Cuba at heart, patriots, Cubans who loved their country, men who longed

to stand upright, to put off the yoke of Spain, and to look the

inhabitants of free countries in the face as equals, were withdrawing

their heartfelt allegiance from Spain, and were longing for

independence. That this desire had been created by Spanish oppression,

and nurtured by Spanish injustice, is a self-evident fact. The causes

which led to the insurrections by which Cuba was torn from this time on

until she obtained her independence, we must leave for another chapter.

There are two matters most pertinent to this investigation, which we

must first discuss: The attitude of the United States toward Cuba at

this period, and the revolt of the other Spanish colonies, led by Simon

Bolivar, "The Liberator."

CHAPTER XXI

Cuba, so rich and fertile, was an object of desire, not alone to

America, but at least equally to the countries of Europe. Thus England

cast covetous eyes at Cuba, and some of the English papers intimated

that the United States was anxious to acquire the island, and that if

England wished to save her West Indian trade, she had best look to her

interests and, if possible, wrest Cuba from Spain. Probably the

strongest feeling in the United States in the early part of the

nineteenth century was that Cuba must not pass from the hands of Spain

into those of any other power, and that if Cuba was to be separated from

Spain it must be either as an independent country or by annexation to

the United States. The desire for annexation, \_per se\_, did not appear

to be so strong as the feeling that the United States must not allow

either France or England to acquire Cuba, and there were, of course,

strong political and geographical reasons for this decision. In a former

chapter we have recalled some of the circumstances of that time, and

have cited some of the authoritative utterances of American statesmen

concerning Cuba in the first half of the nineteenth century. Let us now

recur to that part of Cuban history in its chronological order.

Early in 1823, those Cubans who were more or less secretly in favor of

independence sent an agent named Morales to Washington to try to

discover what course the United States would pursue in case Cuba should

declare her independence. It was intimated that in case Spain continued

her oppressions, and did not grant Cuba a more liberal government, Cuba

would ask for the protection of the United States, possibly for

admission to the Union; and in case this was refused, she would appeal

to England. While no definite promises were made to Cubans, it seemed to

be the sentiment in Washington that, should Cuba thus offer herself, it

would be tempting fate not to accept the gift. Indeed, a considerable

portion of the United States was at this time eager for the annexation

of Cuba. There seems moreover to have been in the American cabinet a

strong feeling toward urging Cuba to declare her independence, and this

might have resolved itself into promises if not into decided action, had

it not been for the counter current of opinion that, should she do so,

she could not maintain such a status. John Quincy Adams was sure of

this, and although he felt that the time was not ripe in the United

States for the adoption of a policy of annexation, yet if Cuba should

fall to the United States by the mere gravitation of politics, he

believed it would be folly to refuse to accept the gift, particularly

since the occupation of Cuba by England would give her a base from which

to proceed against the United States; and matters between England and

her former possession were by no means yet settled on a basis of

enduring friendship. Indeed, Adams believed that the future might make

the annexation of Cuba almost indispensable to the destiny of the Union;

as on April 28, 1823, he said in his instructions to the American

minister at Madrid which we have already quoted.

It was practically certain at this time that France would intervene in

the affairs of Spain, and would try to overthrow the liberal government

of that country, and it seemed probable that England would take

advantage of the opportunity in an endeavor to secure Cuba for herself.

The island was seething with an undercurrent of revolt, and Washington

was uneasy as to what England might do. Reports had it that orders had

been sent to British troops to take possession of Cuba, by force if

necessary, and that Spain, in return for certain secret concessions from

England, had consented to this course. Adams wisely saw that if the Holy

Alliance overthrew the Spanish constitution, Spain could not hope to

retain Cuba, and since the island was believed to be incapable of

self-government, the natural inference was that it would become a

dependent of either England or the United States. We may be sure that

Washington did not intend that this dependence should be upon England.

About this time, Mr. Miralla, a man of affairs who had been for some ten

years a resident of Cuba, told Jefferson in a conference in Washington

that public sentiment in Cuba was against the country becoming an

English territory, and that the Cubans would rise to resist it. He

stated that Cuba would prefer to remain as she was rather than to change

masters--jump from Scylla to Charybdis, as it were--and that if any

change must come she desired independence; that she realized that

unaided she could not maintain herself a separate nation, but that she

hoped for the support of the United States or of Mexico, or both, to

help her to maintain her freedom. Cuba had a secret fear that should she

seek independence, the turbulent blacks would try to seize the

government, and of course that would mean ruin.

On December 2, 1823, President Monroe delivered his epochal Doctrine:

"In the wars of European powers in matters relating to themselves, we

have never taken any part nor does it comport with our policy to do so.

It is only when our rights are invaded or seriously menaced that we

resent injuries or make preparations for defense. With the movements in

this hemisphere we are of necessity more immediately connected, and by

causes which must be obvious to all enlightened and impartial observers.

The political system of the Allied Powers is essentially different in

this respect from that of America.... We should consider any attempt on

their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as

dangerous to our peace and safety. With the existing colonies and

dependencies of any European power we have not interfered and shall not

interfere. But with the governments who have declared their independence

and maintained it, and whose independence we have on great consideration

and on just principles acknowledged, we could not view any interposition

for the purpose of oppressing them, or controlling in any other manner

their destiny, in any other light than as the manifestation of an

unfriendly disposition toward the United States."

[Illustration: JAMES MONROE]

This message had the desired effect. The Holy Alliance wisely kept its

hands off from affairs in the southern Americas, including Cuba. But the

United States naturally sought to cultivate closer relations with its

neighbor. There were indeed practical reasons why it should do so; even

for its own peace and comfort. For pirates preyed on United States

shipping. A blockade was proposed to catch the offenders, but it did not

find favor with the powers at the United States capital. Landing in

Cuba, and reprisals on persons and property, were suggested, but it was

considered unwise for the United States thus to take steps which would

be opposed if any other power should assume a like attitude.

The United States government feared a secret transfer of Cuba by Spain

and that such action would be taken before Washington could become

cognizant of it. It therefore sought to be allowed to station consuls at

Havana, and in Porto Rico, who were, of course, practically to be the

eyes of the United States government, to detect any incipient plot to

rid Spain of Cuba. This idea did not find favor at the Spanish court and

a polite letter of demurrer was sent, stating that such a proposition

was untenable at the time, owing to the turbulent condition of affairs

on the island, but that later, when Cuba became more peaceful, it would

be considered. The real reason for Spain's refusal doubtless was that

she was still smarting from the United States's recognition of the

independence of other South American countries, and she did not feel

justified in allowing anyone who she felt would be a spy to have an

official position on the island, particularly when that person came from

a country which, having attained its own liberty, naturally had sympathy

with those who had theirs yet to gain.

The state of affairs at this time was epigrammatically described by \_The

London Courier\_, when it said: "Cuba is the Turkey of trans-Atlantic

politics, tottering to its fall, and kept from falling only by the

struggles of those who contend for the right of catching her in her

descent."

Spain, always badly in need of money, made in 1838 a proposal to England

to offer Cuba as security for a loan, which undoubtedly would have meant

that England would eventually have to take Cuba in payment for the debt.

The United States Minister at Madrid, hearing of the project, made it so

clear that such a course would not be tolerated by his country, that

the idea was abandoned. A few years later President Van Buren again

expressed the American pro-slavery policy toward Cuban independence:

"The Government has always looked with the deepest interest upon the

fate of these islands, but particularly of Cuba. Its geographical

position, which places it almost in sight of our southern shores, and,

as it were, gives it the command of the Gulf of Mexico and the West

Indian seas, its safe and capacious harbors, its rich productions, the

exchange of which for our surplus agricultural products and manufactures

constitutes one of the most extensive and valuable branches of our

foreign trade, render it of the utmost importance to the United States

that no change should take place in its condition which might

injuriously affect our political and commercial standing in that

quarter. Other considerations connected with a certain class of our

population made it to the interest of the southern section of the Union

that no attempt should be made in that island to throw off the yoke of

Spanish dependence, the first effect of which would be the sudden

emancipation of a numerous slave population, which result could not but

be very sensibly felt upon the adjacent shores of the United States."

The United States had a selfish interest in keeping Cuba in a state of

peace and prosperity. In 1842 it was found that Spain could not pay the

interest upon her debt to the United States. It was suggested that she

make it a charge upon the revenues of Cuba, and the next year it was

arranged that the entire claim be settled by a sum paid to the United

States annually by the Captain-General of Cuba. Naturally if there were

constant revolutions and uprisings in Cuba, these revenues would not be

forthcoming. On the other hand, taxation for the purpose of settling

Spain's debt to America was not looked on with favor among Cuban

patriots.

From the foregoing it will be seen that while the United States did not

urge annexation,--since it was against her avowed policy to do so--she

would not have been unwilling to accept Cuba, had that country knocked

at her door and offered herself as a free gift. It will be equally clear

that the United States had no intention that Cuba should be transferred

by Spain to any other country than herself, and that she stood ready to

combat such a project by force of arms if necessary. It will also be

seen that some of her statesmen would have smiled upon the idea of Cuba

as an independent nation, if they had for a moment believed that Cuba

could maintain her independence, and that surreptitiously the United

States might have lent her aid to this end, if it could have been done

without embroiling herself with Spain. However, there was a division of

opinion in Washington as to the effects on the Southern States of any

change of condition in Cuba.

It might also be observed that France and England--particularly the

latter--would have been glad to add Cuba to their possessions, but they

feared war with the United States if they made the attempt. And as for

Cuba herself, her first choice was freedom, but if it were necessary, in

order to escape Spanish tyranny, she would have accepted annexation to

the United States, or at any rate a protectorate from that government.

CHAPTER XXII

The half century from 1776 to 1826 was afire with the spirit of

revolution and freedom. During this period the United States won her

independence from England; Belgium sought separation from Holland;

France was in the throes of revolution; and Greece won her freedom from

Turkey. This spirit of liberty penetrated to Central and South America

and set the Spanish colonies there aflame.

A successful revolution must have a competent and daring leader. The

South American revolt in Venezuela and surrounding countries was led by

a romantic figure, a man of such tremendous personality, such high

ideals, and such ability to carry them out, that, although he never set

foot in Cuba, and never personally figured in her politics, his

influence reached out from the other colonies and more than any other at

this period swayed the destiny of the "Pearl of the Antilles." His

desire for liberty was like a bright light which illumined the whole

Latin-American atmosphere.

It has been said that "only an aristocrat can be truly democratic," for

only an aristocrat has everything to lose and nothing to gain by

espousing the cause of democracy and liberty. It is true that, like

Washington, Simon Bolivar came of wealthy and aristocratic ancestry. His

people were among the foremost of the Creoles. His parents died when he

was still a child, and his passionate, wilful nature was allowed to go

uncurbed. He developed a violent and hasty temper, but he was also

openhearted, generous, and quick to sue for pardon. He had a charming

personality, and the ability to make friends and hold them for life. In

his later years his followers would have died for him. He was absolutely

fearless, and it is said of him that at one time at a banquet, in the

presence of the Governor of Venezuela--Bolivar's native country--he

arose and proposed a toast to the "Independence of the Americas."

[Illustration: SIMON BOLIVAR]

At an early age he went abroad. When in Spain he became friendly with

Prince Ferdinand, afterwards King Ferdinand VII. of Spain--then a boy.

They were both tennis enthusiasts, and it is told that Bolivar

constantly beat the young prince on the courts at the royal palace at

Madrid, just as later his armies prevailed against those of Ferdinand

VII. He travelled in Italy and contrasted the progressive spirit of that

country as compared with the turbidity and tendency to disintegration

which dominated Spain. A sojourn in France made him an eye witness of

some of the most frightful scenes of the French revolution. On his

return home, he visited the United States and there beheld the actual,

peaceful workings of a republic. All this time there was stirring within

him the eager desire for freedom for his own country, which at last

impelled him to cast aside the luxury and ease which his position and

family gave him, and to accept the danger of exile and death, so that he

might free South America.

The process of revolutionary organization in Venezuela and her sister

states was much the same as that later adopted in Cuba. Secret societies

were formed, the members of which were pledged to the cause of liberty.

They grew, and waxed strong and powerful, and at length the fire of

revolt was kindled. Bolivar's first active step toward the rescue of his

country from the Spanish rule was an insurrection at Caracas in April,

1810. The governor was deposed and the freedom of Caracas was

established without violence. The commerce of Venezuela was opened to

the world, taxes to the crown were declared abolished, and a republic

was formed. In recognition of Bolivar's services, he was given a

commission as Colonel and with Louis Lopez Mendez went to England to try

to get her aid. Great Britain, however, declined to be drawn into the

controversy and declared her absolute neutrality.

On July 5, 1811, the flag of the new republic was unfurled to the world.

But Spain was not inclined to relinquish what she considered her rights

without a struggle, and Spanish troops were quickly dispatched to

Venezuela. In a famous speech Bolivar, now returned to his native

country, voiced the sentiments of the republic. He said:

"Why should we take into account Spain's intentions? What shall we care

if she chooses to keep us as her slave or sell us to Bonaparte, since we

have decided to be free? That great projects should be patiently

weighed, I hear; but are not three hundred years of waiting long enough?

Let us set without fear the foundation of South American independence.

To tergiversate is to fail."

With Bolivar to Venezuela came General Francisco Miranda, who had fought

under Washington for the independence of the United States and under

Dumouriez for the freedom of the French people. He was an experienced

and tried soldier and one who loved liberty as he loved his life, but he

was unfamiliar with conditions in Venezuela, and he was a better fighter

than an organizer. He was made general-in-chief of the Venezuelan army;

but his campaigns against the Spaniards were unsuccessful and he was

captured and flung into a dungeon, where he remained for the rest of his

life. Bolivar escaped and went to Curacao, where he published a

declaration to the effect that in order to make possible the liberty of

the continent Venezuela must be again established as a republic; and to

accomplish this end he called for men. Two hundred responded and with

this small force he engaged an army ten times the size of his own, and

fought twenty successive battles in fifteen days. His way led across

mountains and through passes where death, not only from the foe but as

the result of a single misstep, was ever imminent, but neither Bolivar

nor his men were daunted. He was victorious over the Spaniards, took the

city of Cucuta, and added a million dollars to the treasury. His army

was constantly increased by volunteers. Over 750 miles were traversed,

and fifty times the Spaniards were engaged. On August 6, 1813, Bolivar

entered Caracas in triumph. The most beautiful women of the city crowned

him with laurels; cries of "Long live our Liberator! Long live New

Granada! Long live the Savior of Venezuela!" filled the air; the people

wept for joy, and Bolivar himself, much moved, dismounted from his horse

and knelt to give thanks to God for the victory which had attended his

efforts.

But while the patriots were showering honors upon their "Liberator" the

Spanish were remarshalling their forces. On the plains lived the

Llaneros, cattle breeders, men of the wildest nature, almost outlaws.

They were reckless fighters and rode fearlessly. They were won over to

the Spanish cause by the promise of booty, and soon, under the

leadership of a Spaniard named Boves, were arrayed against Bolivar's

little army.

The days that followed were dark for the patriots, with a long record of

heart-breaking defeats. But no matter how the tide of battle went

against them, their souls were unconquered. Rumors against the honor and

integrity of Bolivar began to be circulated and he lost caste among

those who had been his staunch supporters. Finally he was denounced as a

traitor and driven into exile. In this, the darkest hour of his life, he

made a farewell address to his people:

"I swear to you," he said, "that this title (Liberator) which your

gratitude bestowed upon me when I broke your chains shall not be in

vain. I swear to you that Liberator or dead, I shall ever merit the

honor you have done me; no human power can turn me from my course."

Bolivar went to New Granada, where Camille Torres, the president of that

Republic, was his staunch friend. He is said to have cried: "So long as

Bolivar lives, Venezuela is not lost." There Bolivar never ceased to

work for his country, even though he was unjustly exiled. The cause of

liberty suffered severe reverses during these days. Ferdinand VII., who

was once more securely seated on the throne of Spain, sent a great army

to America, under the command of General Morillo, who had instructions

to subdue the insurgent colonies even "if no patriot was left alive on

the continent." New Granada was conquered and all the revolutionists on

whom the Spanish could lay hands were massacred. Peru, Chili and Buenos

Aires were also made to bow to the power of Spain, who outdid herself in

cruel injustice to show the revolutionists that revolt was useless. Of

the Spanish action in Venezuela, an official report says: "Provinces

have ceased to exist. Towns inhabited by thousands now number scarcely a

hundred. Others have been entirely wiped out. Roads are covered with

dying, dead and unburied skeletons. Heaps of ashes mark the sites of

villages. The trace of cultivated areas is obliterated."

Bolivar next banded his little following together on the island of Santo

Domingo, and at the close of 1816 landed just off the coast of

Venezuela, on the island of Margarita. He convened a congress,

instituted a government, and issued a proclamation abolishing slavery in

Venezuela; almost fifty years before the famous Emancipation

Proclamation of Lincoln. Then he entered upon a two years' campaign, of

fierce and fearless fighting against the huge forces of General Morillo.

On July 17, 1817, his capture of Angostura marked the turning tide of

his fortunes. In 1818 his followers were increased by a large number of

soldiers of fortune who were seeking new employment in the pastime of

fighting, now that the end of the Napoleonic wars had taken away their

occupation. These men were an acquisition because they were skilled in

warfare and used to its hardships.

A congress was convened at Angostura, in February, 1819, and Bolivar, as

the unanimous choice for President, was given supreme power. He made an

address which is famous in the annals of history. Among other things he

said:

"A republican form of government has been, is and ought to be that of

Venezuela; its basis ought to be the sovereignty of the people, the

division of power, civil liberty, the prohibition of slavery and the

abolition of monarchy and privilege---- I have been obliged to beg you

to adopt centralization and the union of all the states in a republic,

one and indivisible."

On August 7, 1819, the decisive battle of Boyaca was fought, and Bolivar

entered the capital of New Granada again crowned with laurels. Bolivar

believed that the colonies, to make a strong resistance to Spain, must

be united. His dream was a confederacy of South American States. This

was partially realized when he formed a union of Venezuela, New Granada

and Ecuador, in 1819, as one republic, of which he was made president.

He was also made commander in chief of the army, with full powers of

organization of any new conquests which he might add to the union.

Now Spain cried for mercy, and when, in 1820, King Ferdinand was again

deposed, she asked for a six months truce, which was granted, because

Bolivar saw in this lull in hostilities a chance further to entrench

himself and prepare for new conquests. His wisdom was demonstrated by

the fact that in June, 1821, his army was triumphant at Carabobo, and he

soon entered Caracas to cries of "El Libertador," his honor vindicated

and his vow fulfilled. In victory he was generous, for in reviewing his

army he greeted them with the words, "Salvadores de mi patria." In the

period from 1821 to 1824, Bolivar fought for the freedom of Ecuador and

Peru, and accomplished it. He was hailed as the South American

Liberator, and a separate nation, formed from the territory of Upper

Peru, became known as Bolivia, in honor of the great South American

patriot. In 1826 Bolivar was at the height of his power, with his best

dreams realized. He bore the titles, Perpetual Protector of Bolivia,

President of Colombia and Dictator of Peru. The territory under his

control was almost two-thirds the size of all Europe.

History is too often a record of ingratitude. One would think that in

South America Bolivar would have remained first in the hearts of all the

people. But jealous seekers after self-aggrandizement plotted against

his rule and even attempted his life. Venezuela, which owed so much to

him, was the first to withdraw, Ecuador became a separate republic and

Bolivar was banished. At this his heart and his spirit were broken and

he died at the age of only 47, on December 17, 1830. His last words

were: "For my enemies I have only forgiveness. If my death shall

contribute to the cessation of factions and the consolidation of the

Union, I can go tranquilly to my grave."

No other single individual has left such a mark on the pages of South

American history; and though he never even visited the island he greatly

influenced Cuba as well as the countries in which he lived and struggled

for freedom.

For the breath of revolt which was scorching the Spanish possessions on

the main land, was no longer leaving Cuba untouched. It has ever been

the history of tyranny that sooner or later the oppressed have found a

leader and have risen against their tormentors, and also--we have only

to contemplate French history, or to study the story of Russia under the

Czars, to find confirmation--that such opposition was born first in

secret gatherings, and gained strength under cover of concealment and

darkness, until it grew strong enough to stand in the daylight.

CHAPTER XXIII

Tales of Bolivar's triumphs in South America were not slow to penetrate

to the knowledge of the Cubans. Liberty, which had seemed only a dream,

now began to take on the aspect of a possible reality. Men expressed

their opinions and desires furtively in their own homes, to tried and

trusted friends. They began to assemble and exchange views. No one dared

to come out openly at first, and so propaganda was carried on through

veiled articles, by word of mouth, by the secret clasp or sign of union.

Under pretext of meeting for amusement and social pleasure clubs whose

members were all friends of liberty began to be formed, about 1820. The

Free Masons, whose principles were far from inimical to what now began

to become the aim of all Cubans who loved their country, organized

societies, which immediately became hot-beds of revolt, of the fiercest

kind of protest against Spanish rule, and the rendezvous of those who

planned to overthrow it.

Other clubs, all of them masking their real purpose under some pretext,

sprang into existence like magic. The best known of them all was called

the "Soles de Bolivar" in which the influence of Bolivar had bridged the

waters which separate Cuba from South America, and was leading the

Cubans, in the inception of their fight for liberty. What the members of

these societies most longed for was that the renowned "Liberator" would

come at the head of an army and overthrow the Spanish rule in Cuba;

though this was not to be.

Now if the Spanish rule was politically weak and tottering at this

time, the evidence of this fact was strongly repressed, and financially

the country was flourishing. At the head of the financial department was

the Count de Villanueva. He made many reformations in the methods of

collecting taxes--to enable Spain more readily to lay her hands on her

spoils. He changed the methods of keeping accounts, and of checking up

the books of the public treasury. His influence at the Spanish court was

greater than that of the Captain-General, and so he was able to have him

deposed as President of the Consulado and himself appointed in his

stead. He exercised a despotic control over the functions of that body,

and made them subservient to the improvement and development of Cuba for

the enrichment of Spain. He saw to it that everything that could be

taxed paid its share into the public treasury. As agriculture increased,

its products were more heavily taxed. The plight of the Cuban who

desired to own property and get on, was similar to that of a pieceworker

who, when he speeded up productions, found the piece work price cut to

take care of any surplus. The more the Cuban produced, the more he was

taxed, and his last state was about the same as his first; the only ones

who profited were the officials in Spain. Now for the first time taxes

were imposed without even consulting those taxed, to say nothing of

obtaining their consent. Villanueva was the friend of the

Captain-General and his co-conspirator against Cuba's happiness, in

spite of the fact that he wrested from him certain honors. He was

naturally most popular with the Spanish court, and was cordially hated

by all loyal Cubans.

Yet Villanueva did do some things for the improvement of Havana. He had

many roads in and near the city paved, and devices erected to clear the

anchorage of the harbor of the infiltrations of mud, and to preserve

the wharves. He had the waters of the Husille brought into the city by

an excellent method. He established a regular mail packet system between

Spain and Cuba, and it was under his administration that the Guines

railroad was built. This road ran from Havana to Guines, a distance of

forty-five miles, and was built under the direction of an American

engineer, Mr. Cruger. It was the nucleus of a system which in 1848

comprised 285 miles of rails in operation, and 85 more in process of

construction. These lines connected Havana with Guines, Batabano,

Cardenas and Matanzas; Cardenas with Juacaro, Matanzas with Sabanilla

and Colisco, Nuevitas with Puerto Principe, and Santiago de Cuba with

the copper mines. They represented an investment of between five and six

million dollars.

Villanueva, however, oppressed and robbed the people in order that he

might make frequent and munificent remittances to the treasury in Spain.

The more they gave, the more they were urged to give. Spain cared

nothing for the manner in which the money which she demanded was

accumulated, only that by fair means or foul it might be forthcoming.

Villanueva established the Bank of St. Ferdinand, but for all the good

it did Cuba at this time, it might have remained unestablished. Its

capital was seized by the crown as fast as it accumulated, and it proved

to be just a new method for the extortioners. Spain had no more

unscrupulous agent than her chief of the finance department.

The victims were not quiescent, except in appearance. The rack keys were

being too tightly turned. In the "Soles de Bolivar" and in other

assemblies patriots were crying out for vengeance. In vain Vives tried

to suppress the societies. Known members were arrested and thrown into

prison, and meetings were forbidden; but the movement was like a

conflagration which has gained start in many parts of a city. When

stamped out in one place--when one society was destroyed--it only made

its appearance in another. The principal headquarters were at Matanzas.

Very carefully and in secret the leaders laid their plans for a

widespread revolt, the date of which was set for August 16, 1823. But

Vives had secret agents in the societies, and there were traitors as

there frequently are in such movements. When the day of the revolt

dawned the leaders were seized and imprisoned. There were many eminent

Cubans among the patriots, the best known being the greatest of Cuban

poets, José Maria Heredia. Perhaps some appreciation not so much of this

man's courage as of his genius influenced the Captain-General. At any

rate, instead of being condemned to death, he was sent into perpetual

exile. A few of the members of the society learned of the betrayal

before they could be taken and made their escape from the island.

Those who were conspiring for the liberation of Cuba were not cowed,

however, but simply temporarily overcome. One of the first acts of Vives

under the royal decree of May 25, 1825, was to use every means possible

to suppress and to annihilate the secret societies, but he simply made

them more wary. The desire for liberty which had sprung up in the

breasts of so many Cuban patriots was destined never again to be

extinguished, and the history of the island from this time down to the

War of Independence, in the closing decade of the century, is that of

one long struggle for separation from Spain--sometimes open, more

frequently secret but always continuous.

When the uprising of 1823 failed so signally, a number of the refugees

who escaped prosecution fled to Mexico and Colombia. There was a

settlement of these people in Caracas. They turned to "The Liberator"

for support, and soon the invasion of Cuba, by a force composed of

Mexicans and Colombians, either under the personal leadership, or under

the direction of Bolivar, was planned. The leaders of this movement also

sought aid in the United States. Now the slaveholders of the South were

at this time opposed to the separation of Cuba from Spain, because under

the lead of Bolivar it would mean the doom of the slave trade, the

abolition of slavery, and such an achievement in Cuba would be inimical

to their own interests. So the attempt to procure assistance in the

United States was really the cause of the failure of the proposed

expedition. Spanish spies were quickly informed of the proposed plan,

and such strenuous efforts were openly made to make such an attempt

ineffective, that it was never made. Bolivar had all he could attend to

in South America, and he was too intelligent a leader to attempt the

impossible, and at the same time leave his plans for the liberation of

South America to meet certain defeat in his absence.

But Spain did not easily overlook the conspiracy, and she seized the

leaders in Cuba who were conspiring with those in Colombia and Mexico.

Two young men of fine families, Don Francisco de Aguero Velasco and Don

Bernabe Sanchez, were apprehended by the aides of the Captain-General,

imprisoned and most cruelly treated, and when their spirit was not

broken by torture and they refused to divulge the secrets of their

leaders, they were condemned to die for treason, and paid the penalty of

their patriotism with their lives.

Still the love of freedom grew and waxed stronger in Cuba. In 1828, a

secret society known as El Aguila Negra (The Black Eagle) was

inaugurated in Colombia and Mexico, by those patriots who were escaping

the vengeance of Spain by remaining in exile. This movement was

splendidly organized. It had branches, not only in Colombia and Mexico,

but also in the United States, where recruiting offices were openly

established, and in Cuba where its operations were secret. But the

organizers of The Black Eagle could not make a move which Spanish spies

did not report to their master, the Captain-General of Cuba. Every plan

was known to him as soon as it was formulated. He made no secret of his

determination to deal summarily with those who were plotting against the

power of Spain, but he waited in hope that he might be able to seize the

real brains of the expedition. Besides this, the declaration of Bolivar

for the freedom of the slaves as one of the principles for which he was

fighting, and the fact that he was so closely connected with these

revolutionary movements in Cuba, excited at this time the fears and

animosity not only of the slave owners in the United States, but also of

the most selfish, greedy and powerful of this class--particularly those

of Spanish birth and sympathies--in Cuba. Before the expedition could be

actually started, the leaders were apprehended and a farce of a trial

followed. The Captain-General was beginning to fear the new spirit which

was abroad in the land. Perhaps he had discovered that cruelty and

fierce opposition only fanned the flame. At any rate he commuted the

sentence of death, and imprisoned the conspirators.

Since Mexico had conspired against the Spanish occupation of Cuba,

General Vives retaliated by a military expedition against Mexico, in

1828. A force of three thousand and five hundred men was sent against

Mexico--not a large army, but General Vives expected that large numbers

of Mexicans would join his soldiers, once they set foot on Mexican soil.

A landing was made at Tampico, in August, 1828. Instead of being

received with acclamations by the people of Mexico, the movement met

with the most strenuous opposition. The expedition was surrounded by the

Mexican army, and its members were glad to surrender and to make terms

with the Mexicans by which they were allowed to return to Havana. In

March, 1829, the would-be conquerors of Mexico arrived in Havana with

none of the honors with which it had been planned to crown the victors.

Vives, while a stern governor, did not actually play the part of a

despot. He held his office until May 15, 1832, when he was succeeded by

Don Mariana Ricafort, a tyrant of the most pronounced type. His rule

left one continuous record of oppression and misgovernment. No better

person to encourage in the hearts of thinking Cubans an eagerness to be

rid of Spain could have been chosen, for he was thoroughly hated and

despised. His rule continued two years, and then, in 1834, the reins of

government were taken into the hands of General Don Miguel Tacon. The

eastern department of the island was commanded at this time by General

Lorenzo.

Tacon, one of the most famous of the nineteenth century

Captains-General, was a man of small mind and great stubbornness,

shortsighted, narrow and jealous. He was exceedingly vain, grasping for

power, and a tyrant of the most pronounced type. He took many privileges

from the wealthy inhabitants of the island, and he seized for himself

the power, which had theretofore been a municipal function, of naming

the under-commissaries of police in Havana.

Like all people of extremely arbitrary nature, Tacon was an arrant

coward at heart. He was perpetually in terror of being assassinated,

and upon the slightest pretext had anyone whom he considered dangerous

to his rule thrown into prison. The life of no Cuban who happened to

offend the Captain-General was safe at this time.

In 1836 there occurred in Spain the revolution of La Granja, when the

progressive triumphed over the moderate party, and the Queen Regent was

obliged to proclaim the old Constitution of 1812, granting Cuba

representation in the Spanish Cortes, and to summon deputies from Cuba.

The news of this triumph reached Santiago de Cuba before it did Havana,

whereupon General Lorenzo, in command there, immediately proclaimed the

Code of Cadiz, and ordered an election for deputies to the Cortes. He

reestablished the constitutional ayuntamiento, declared the press free,

reorganized the national militia and put his department on the same

footing that it had been in 1823.

Tacon was furious when knowledge of this action reached him. He had no

power to compel General Lorenzo to retract, but he summarily cut off all

communications with his department and laid his plans to invade that

territory, and by military force to restore his own absolute government

and do away with representation for Cuba in the Spanish Cortes. Perhaps

nothing that he could have done could have added more to his

unpopularity. He was hissed in the streets, and plots were made against

his life.

For himself, Tacon paid no attention to the royal mandate which

announced the reestablishment of the Constitution of 1812 and

foreshadowed orders for election of deputies to the Cortes. Under the

royal decree of 1825, which was still in force, Tacon had power to set

aside any instructions which came from Spain, if it seemed to him to

the best interests of Cuba. He did not hesitate to take advantage of

this authority, which gave him the same rights as a Spanish governor

over a city in a state of siege, allowed him to suspend any public

functionary no matter what his rank, and to banish any resident of the

island who opposed him, without trial, and even without the formal

preferring of accusations, as well as to suspend any law or regulation

emanating from Spain, should he see fit.

Under Tacon's orders, a column of soldiers, picked from the Spanish army

of occupation, and chosen--much against their will and inclination--from

the rural and provincial militia and cavalry, was placed under the

command of General Gascue, in the town of Guines. Meanwhile, Tacon's

secret agents were carrying on an active propaganda among the citizens

of Santiago de Cuba, and endeavoring to seduce public sentiment from

Lorenzo's to Tacon's side. They did not hesitate to tell the most

unblushing falsehoods, and to make the most dishonest promises to win

the people over, and by such means attained some degree of success.

If Tacon had had a different sort of opponent the story would have been

written along very different lines. A strong commander of the large

forces at Santiago de Cuba could easily have compelled him to withdraw

from his position, and could have assured for Cuba greater freedom, and

this course might in the long run at least have postponed her further

efforts for separation from Spain. But General Lorenzo though

well-meaning was fatally weak. Instead of resisting Tacon's tyranny he

left Cuba for Spain, in an effort to make sure of the support of the

Spanish crown, leaving Tacon to follow his own will, and to wreak his

vengeance on those who had opposed him. Tacon was of course delighted

with the success of his strategy. He sent some of the officers of his

companies to Santiago and established a military commission to try all

the people of prominence who under General Lorenzo had opposed him.

Moya, the commandant, was the presiding judge, and Miret, a lawyer and a

tool of Tacon's, acted as advocate. No greater travesty of justice has

ever been staged than the proceedings of this precious body.

Now all the Creoles of wealth, education and family had welcomed the

royal decree, and hastened to obey the commands of General Lorenzo and

to take oath to uphold a constitution which was so beneficial to their

interest. Their names were known to Tacon, and he seized not only such

people, but anyone of whom he had the slightest suspicion. Men of the

highest rank, or the best reputation for loyalty and honesty, of the

finest education and standing, were among the number who were summoned

before Tacon's tribunal. Even the church was not exempt, and several

clergymen, with liberal leanings, and of known revolutionary sentiments,

were arrested and imprisoned. This was an excellent time for Tacon to

find a pretext to separate the sheep from the goats, and to put those

who seemed likely to oppose him where he thought they belonged. Many of

these people were confined in dungeons which were as barbarous as those

of the middle ages, and were left there until they died of disease or of

starvation. They were cut off from communications with their families

and friends, and in darkness and filth suffered until death relieved

them. A few considered themselves fortunate to get off with sentences of

banishment, and those who had warning were glad to escape to another

country. Families were separated and homes were broken up. Tacon was

very thorough in his methods of putting down what he considered a

menace to his government. Even the soldiers under General Lorenzo's

command were made his victims. They had been guilty of no offence save

that of obeying their superior officer, but this made no difference to

Tacon. He decided to make an example of them. Over five hundred of them,

with ball and chain dragging, were condemned to work on the streets of

Havana like convicts.

The deputies to the Cortes whom Lorenzo had chosen, or who had been

chosen under his rule, were among those who escaped from the island.

They made their way to Spain, and, hoping that the Spanish crown would

recognize the regularity of their election, and the irregularity of

Tacon's action, presented their credentials to the Cortes. They were

referred to a special committee composed of Spaniards whose only

interest in Cuba was in what might be extracted from her, and who had no

sympathy with her struggles or concern for her welfare or the good of

her people. What few ideas they had of the best way to govern Cuba and

make her pay the highest returns to Spain were derived from such

intellects as those possessed by men of Tacon's ilk, and they were

stoutly ranged on Tacon's side of the controversy. The deputies were

refused seats in the Cortes, and it was decided that the Constitution of

1812 did not apply to Cuba. Cuba was thus placed under the despotic rule

of the Captains-General, who were given absolute power, even precedence,

over the will of the Spanish Cortes. The decree of the Cortes on this

matter was framed in the following language:

"The Cortes, using the power which is conceded to them by the

Constitution, have decreed: Not being in a position to apply the

Constitution which has been adopted for the peninsula and adjacent to

the ultramarine provinces of America and Asia, these shall be ruled and

administered by special laws appropriate to their respective situations

and circumstances, and proper to cause their happiness. Consequently,

the Deputies for the designated provinces are not to take their seats in

the present Cortes."

Tacon was exultant over this strengthening of his hand, and he began a

regime even more cruel than his previous record. His agents were

constantly busy stirring up strife and jealousy between the Spanish

residents of the island and the native Cubans. He dominated the civil

courts with his military officers, and justice became a mere chimera of

fancy. In order to keep the police in line, he insisted that a certain

number of arrests must be made within a given period. When there were

not enough real offenders to make up the quota, the police naturally

wreaked any little personal animosities which they might have against

private citizens; and it has even been said that frequently they were

paid by certain revengeful citizens who held grudges to prefer charges

against men who were absolutely innocent of any offence.

Of course societies, whether political or social, came under the

governmental ban. Citizens were not encouraged to assemble in groups for

any purpose, and they feared to do so openly, lest the entire group

might be apprehended and tried on some trumped up charge. All

associations for education or personal betterment were discouraged,

because if people came to know too much, they were harder to handle and

more apt to revolt. Besides this, any society or institution which did

not depend on the favor of the Captain-General might find means of

denouncing his rule, and one could never tell how royal favor might be

swayed. Tacon well knew it to be a very uncertain quantity, and meant

to keep the wind blowing in his quarter, if possible.

In connection with his management of the police force, the whole

attitude of justice was changed. No person was presumed innocent until

his guilt was proved, but on the contrary his guilt was presumed unless

he could beyond the shadow of a doubt prove his innocence; and if he had

been unfortunate enough to incur the displeasure of one of the legion of

sycophants from the court of Spain who hung around the palace of the

Captain-General, seeking their own aggrandizement, his chances of having

an opportunity to prove himself innocent were very small. Tacon

encouraged rather than discouraged his subordinates in acts of

injustice, and did not care to what lengths they went if they kept the

people quiet. He roared at his officers, and demanded that they be

vigilant against his enemies, and they were thoroughly cowed by him. To

satisfy him, they invented accusations and thrust just men into prison,

or had them condemned to death. A curious result of this regime, and one

which shows how some good will often work out of the basest evils, was

that thieves and banditti were much less active than under any other

Captain-General. The long arm of Tacon reached out to subdue them, to

fall upon the guilty as well as the innocent.

Tacon is said to have stated his own position in these words: "I am

here, not to promote the interests of the people of Cuba, but to serve

my master, the king." The press was muzzled, and the local ayuntamientos

were deprived of their rights, and became merely the means for the

collection and distribution of the funds of the municipalities. The

prisons were overcrowded with Tacon's victims, and it became necessary

to lodge some of the political prisoners in the dungeons of castles.

Nearly 600 people, against whom there was no formal accusation, and

about whom no treason could be proved, were lodged in cells and

dungeons. No private citizen was safe, and no one had any personal

liberty.

In spite of the lack of a free press, pamphlets denouncing the rule of

Tacon were constantly being written, printed and circulated. One,

entitled "\_Cuba y su Gobierno,\_" contained the following assertions:

"With the political passions of Spaniards and Cubans excited; the island

reduced from an integral part of the monarchy to the conditions of a

colony, and with no other political code than the royal order,

conferring unlimited power upon the chief authority; the country bowed

down under the weighty tyranny of military commissions established in

the capitals of the eastern and western departments; with the prisons

filled with distinguished patriots; deprived of representation in the

Cortes; the ayuntamientos prohibited the right of petition; the press

forbidden to enunciate the state of public opinions; closed the

administration of General Don Miguel Tacon in the island of Cuba, the

most calamitous, beyond a question, that this country has suffered since

its discovery by the Spaniards."

The party in Cuba which was struggling against her oppression decided

that since they dared not give expression of their views in the local

press, they would establish organs outside their distressed country. Two

papers were accordingly issued, one at Paris, called \_El Correo de

Ultramar\_, and one at Madrid called \_El Observador\_. These were both

edited by able Cubans who were in exile. Later, in 1848, \_La Verdad\_, a

paper devoted to Cuban interests, was started in New York and the copies

given free distribution.

Tacon, like other despots, sought to cover his misdeeds by public works,

with which he tried to placate those possible insurgents whom he had not

imprisoned, and to deceive the Spanish government; for cruel and

arbitrary as had been the Spanish attitude toward her colonies, it is

doubtful whether the Spanish Cortes, had all the facts been known, would

have countenanced some of the brutalities of which Tacon was guilty.

There is a curious irony, a sort of paradox, about one of the

improvements which Tacon made on the island. As we have seen, the

prisons had never before been so full, and there had never before been

such a demand for places to incarcerate political offenders. Tacon

consequently caused a prison to be built, which has ever since been

pointed to as a palliation of some of his misdeeds. It is situated near

the gate of La Punta, and not far distant from the sea coast. It is well

ventilated and airy, and open to the sea breezes. One point urged in its

favor was that "its unfortunate inmates were protected from those

pestilential fevers rising from crowded and ill-ventilated rooms." In

other words, they were torn from squalor to well ventilated

imprisonment. This would have been all very nice, were it not for the

fact that numbers of the prisoners were from the best homes on the

island, and had no need of a comfortable boarding house by the sea,

watched over by an inhuman jailor. The prison had a capacity of five

thousand prisoners, and very shortly after its erection it sheltered one

thousand. It was built by the labor of convicts, and poor, unhappy

political prisoners, and partly with funds which Tacon extracted from

some of the officers who served under his predecessors, claiming that

such funds had been by them unlawfully appropriated to their own use.

To give opportunities for "graft" to his followers, and work to their

hangers-on, Tacon constructed a wall, high, level and massive, and for

what purpose only he knew, right through the widest avenue of Havana.

The Cubans were taxed to pay for the work, and subsequently were retaxed

to pay for its removal. Tacon also established a public meat and fish

market, for which he won popular approbation--outside of Cuba. It was in

fact much to the detriment of the public and the public revenue, and

greatly to his own gain and that of his friends. Even the contract for

this market was not honestly let, but was given to the highest bidder

for Tacon's enrichment, while honest bidders were ignored. The grant was

obtained, whereupon the contractors came into their own, and commenced

extorting large and valuable fees to which they were not entitled.

Finally the matter became such a public scandal that even Tacon could

not avert its being investigated, but when this investigation was

completed, the record was taken possession of by Tacon, and mysteriously

never again was discovered. The scandal of Tacon's administration at

last became too great even for the Spanish court, which was supposed to

be inclined to stand for anything, and the voice of Don Juan Montalvo y

Castillo was raised in the Spanish Cortes in expostulation. But Tacon

wrote artful reports, dodged the real issues, and cheerfully lied, and

his utterances--perhaps better fitting the temper of the Cortes--found

credence and his rule was continued.

Tacon caused the Governor's palace to be rebuilt, at great profit to

himself and his favorites in the way of perquisites and bribes; he

caused a military road to be constructed; and he had a spacious theatre

erected, cynically saying, that "it would keep the people amused, and

keep their minds off of matters which did not concern them." He also

caused a large parade ground to be opened just outside the city. But in

none of his improvements was he free from suspicion of having enriched

his own purse, and having in some manner pulled the wool over the sadly

strained eyes of the Cuban patriots.

A story which reads like a romance is told of Tacon's institution of the

fish market. In those days pirates infested the waters around Cuba, and

indeed were a menace to American and French vessels, as we have seen.

The most daring pirate and smuggler of them all was said to be a man

named Marti, of whom many exciting tales are related. He was a bold

leader of desperadoes, and since the Isle of Pines was where his band

most frequently had their headquarters, he was known as the "King of the

Isle of Pines." Now Tacon was eager to suppress smuggling and piracy,

probably because they interfered with his own plans. The Spanish ships

of war lay in the harbors of Cuba at anchor, while the officers indulged

in dancing on board with Cuban ladies, or took long period of leave on

shore. This did not please Tacon, and he accordingly issued commands

that they suppress the smugglers at all costs. But the smugglers carried

on their operations from small coves and inlets, in little crafts which

did not draw much water, and the clumsy and half-hearted efforts of the

Spanish sailors to apprehend them filled their leaders with mirth. There

are many tales of the impudent daring with which these outlaws operated

under the very noses of those who were sent out to capture them.

At last Tacon, who had an abounding belief that every man had his price,

and perhaps had heard enough of the character of the men he was hunting

to gauge it correctly, offered a reward for anyone who would desert and

inform the government of the pirates. A much larger and more tempting

sum was offered for the delivery of Marti, dead or alive. These offers

were posted throughout the country.

For some time nothing happened, and then one dark night, when it was

raining copiously, a man evaded the sentinels before the main entrance

to the governor's palace in Havana. He stole through the entrance, and

hid himself among the pillars in the inner court. Next this man silently

crept up the staircase to the governor's apartments. Here he met a

guard, but he saluted, and passed on with such nonchalance that he was

not challenged, and entering the reception room of the governor, found

himself in the semi-royal presence. Tacon was alone, busily writing. He

promptly inquired who his visitor might be, and was informed that he was

one who had valuable information for the Captain-General.

"I am the Captain-General," said Tacon.

"Your excellency is desirous of apprehending the pirates who infest the

coasts of the island?"

"You must have been reading the proclamations," jocosely suggested

Tacon.

"And you wish to take Marti, dead or alive?"

Tacon signified that such was his purpose. His strange visitor then

exacted the Captain-General's promise that he would be granted a free

pardon in return for the valuable information which he was about to

divulge. When this promise was given he said:

"I will lead you to the strongholds of the smugglers."

"You?" cried Tacon. "Who are you?"

"I am Marti!" was the reply.

Marti, who so calmly and unscrupulously betrayed his followers, was of

course a welcome visitor to the Captain-General, and one worthy of his

warmest co-operation and friendship. He was placed under surveillance,

and was obliged to remain in the palace for the night, but the

Captain-General refrained from telling anyone his identity. On the next

day he acted as pilot for one of the Captain-General's boats, and after

the course of several weeks he had exposed every hiding place of his

men. The amount of money and property thus secured and appropriated by

the Captain-General cannot be estimated, but it was very great. A great

deal of it never found its way into the treasury. Marti was a scoundrel

so much to his liking that the Captain-General decided not only to give

him a free pardon, but an order on the treasury for a large sum of

money. However, Marti had his own ideas of what he desired. In place of

the money he chose the absolute right to fish the waters surrounding

Havana, to the exclusion of all fishermen who were not in his employ. He

had in his wild career marked for his own all the best fishing grounds

in the harbor. This concession granted, there must naturally be found a

market for his fish, and thus the fish market project was born. Then

fishing made Marti so wealthy that he now had time for more elegant

occupations, and turned his mind to theatricals. He is said to have

obtained some sort of monopoly from the government over theatrical

performances in the island, and then the public theatre idea was formed.

Tacon had as many press agents as an opera singer, albeit they had no

methods of getting their material into public print and disseminated it

by word of mouth. His agents told many stories of him to illustrate his

love of justice, his wonderful generosity, and his many other admirable

traits, for which he was in reality only negatively to be celebrated.

The one which follows is merely illustrative of the others.

In the first year of his rule there was a young Creole girl, of

surpassing beauty and modesty, of the name of Miralda Estalez. She was

an orphan of seventeen, and kept a cigar store, which her beauty and

grace made very popular with the young men of Havana. Miralda, like all

proper heroines of fiction or fairy stories, was good as well as

beautiful, and although many of the young bloods sighed for her, her

glance fell with favor only on a handsome but, of course, poor and

deserving young man, of the name of Pedro Mantenez. Pedro was a boatman,

which is a most romantic and fitting occupation for an impoverished but

righteous hero. He was more than this. By his wit and sagacity--which as

we have seen failed to line his coffers, but if they had done so he

would have been out of drawing in this affecting picture, since he would

no longer have been poor but deserving--he was a leader among the other

boatmen and beloved by all. The records of his noble and

self-sacrificing deeds would have filled a volume as large as an

unabridged dictionary. Miralda loved Pedro, and Pedro loved Miralda, and

all was going as merry as a marriage bell, when entered the villain, a

famous roué of the name of Count Almonte, who liked Miralda's cigars and

cast melting glances at Miralda herself, but all in vain, because, as we

have said, Miralda was good as well as beautiful. Finding that he would

have to do something more substantial than make eyes, the worthy count

offered Miralda a costly present which so affected her that she fainted,

not with joy, but with horror. Then she ordered the count from her shop,

but he refused to go and continued to hang around and buy her wares.

Next the fine count offered her money and lands and rich clothes and

what not, but the pure-minded young girl righteously spurned his offer.

Acting quite in character the count then decided to kidnap her. His

plans were ingenious, but in order to gain popularity for Tacon it was

necessary that not far from this point he should get into the story.

One afternoon, just at twilight, that fine hour for abduction, a

lieutenant--probably in Tacon's pay--stepped into the store and demanded

that Miralda go with him, by order of the Captain-General; which does

look like the cloven hoof in the velvet glove, or something of the sort.

But instead of taking Miralda to the Captain-General she was conveyed to

the count's country estates, where she was kept a prisoner, although of

course not harmed--in fiction the villain never harms the heroine before

the hero arrives even if he is a bit late at the appointment. Pedro, by

that wit and sagacity which had made him a master boatman, discovered

the count's treachery. He disguised himself as a friar and went to the

count's gate every day and slipped notes through the cracks to Miralda,

thus cheering her exceedingly. Then entered the most high excellency,

the Captain-General, that defender of those who loved liberty in Cuba,

that builder of prisons and master genius in filling them, that

despoiler of rich and poor alike, and thus the man most likely to help

defenseless virtue. Pedro's excess of wit and sagacity led him straight

to the spotless Captain-General. After trying three times to get an

audience, for governing the island and putting down rebellions kept

Tacon reasonably busy, Pedro succeeded in getting into the presence of

the lord of Cuba. When he had told his story, and sworn to his honorable

intentions toward his fiancee, Tacon sent his soldiers to the count's

estate to bring him and Miralda into the sacred presence. When the

Captain-General had demanded to know, and the count had assured him,

that Miralda was "as pure as when she came beneath my roof," Tacon

immediately produced a priest and married Miralda to the count, much to

the astonishment and chagrin of the faithful Pedro. But Tacon the Just

was not through. He was ever on the side of the oppressed, when his own

interests leaned that way. The count was ordered to return to his own

plantation, without his bride. While on the way he was shot in the back,

after Tacon's most pleasant manner and by his orders. In one record it

is hinted that his estates were pleasant picking for Tacon, but the

story which is most current leaves out that interesting detail. Tacon's

version is that he gave the count's estate to the widow; and at any rate

Pedro and Miralda were married and lived happily ever afterward, and

Tacon gave them his blessing with the high-sounding pronouncement: "No

man nor woman on this island is so humble but that they may claim the

justice of Tacon."

Tacon's rule, one of the worst that the long-suffering Cubans had to

endure, finally came to an end, on April 16, 1838, when he was succeeded

by Don Joaquin de Espeleta. The latter had been born in Cuba, and it is

a mystery why he was ever appointed, for Spain was not wont to accord

honors to Cubans, or to confer the high rank of Captain-General on one

who might naturally be expected to have Cuban sympathies. He had been

for some time connected with the government in a subordinate capacity,

being inspector-general of the troops, and second cabo-subalterno. From

all accounts Espeleta was an excellent governor, and must have afforded

the harassed Cubans a much needed breathing spell after the misrule of

Tacon. But he was not long allowed to rule Cuba. Spain began to suspect

that the Cubans were being treated too well, and that trouble might

follow. Indeed, Espeleta was reported to be conciliating the people,

and holding out hopes of great reforms. This in itself seemed to justify

his removal, and so, in 1840, he was succeeded by the Prince de Aglona.

During this administration the Royal Pretorial Audience, a high court of

appeal to which all civil cases might be taken, was established. If this

had been kept free from deleterious influences, it would have been a

most beneficial thing for the oppressed Cubans, but the royal favorites

dominated it, as they did pretty much everything else.

CHAPTER XXIV

General Geronimo Valdez, who succeeded the Prince de Aglona as

Captain-General in 1840, probably endeavored to rule wisely, since he

was by nature a rather gentle and just man; but he had absolutely no

chance with the power of Spain against him. It was during his incumbency

that the first of the alarming slave uprisings occurred, and the Spanish

officials were so frightened that they counseled the most violent

methods of subduing the offenders, to which as we shall see General

Valdez at least shut his eyes. For he was weak and indecisive, and had

not the power to rule insurgents or to keep his Spanish colleagues

within bounds.

The British consul, David Turnbull, of whom we shall hear more later,

was unpopular with the planters, who accused him of inciting their

slaves to rebellion. Certainly he was an ardent advocate of

emancipation, and a book which he wrote about this period was filled

with denunciations of slavery. Valdez tried to placate both him and the

planters, and between the two promptly fell down and won the enmity of

both. His numerous grants of freedom to negroes were another cause for

complaint. The planters combined and caused his downfall, and he yielded

his office to one better suited to Spanish standards. Some years later

they secured the recall of Turnbull. It is said of Valdez that he

departed from Cuba no richer than when he had come, and if this is

true,--it sounds almost impossible,--then he stands unique in an

assembly of "grafters."

In 1843 George Leopold O'Donnell took office as Captain-General. No

despot who had preceded him surpassed him in cruelty. He turned every

possible happening to his personal advantage, and lined his pockets with

Cuban money. It was during his tenure of office that the most

wide-spread and most dangerous of the insurrections among the slaves

happened. Of the methods used in subduing this we shall write in another

chapter, but they were the most disgraceful that have blotted the pages

of the history of any nation. General O'Donnell himself, his wife and

daughter were said to have profited by the slave trade. The wife of the

Captain-General, by the way, seems to have had a painfully itching palm.

It is told of her that she had a number of loaves of bread left after a

reception, and that she sent for the baker at three o'clock in the

morning, to require him to take back the surplus. When he demurred, that

he could only sell it for stale bread, and would thus lose money on it,

she said: "Oh, I sent for you early because now you can mix it with the

other bread, and sell it to the masses, and no one will know the

difference." She is accused of having been engaged in all kinds of

schemes by which she profited in an illegitimate way. She dabbled in the

letting of contracts for the cleansing of sewers and for the removal of

dirt and manure from the city streets, demanding her bonus from the one

who secured the contract, and these municipal operations stained her

hands with illgotten gains. It is said that O'Donnell, who had a large

interest in marble quarries in the Isle of Pines, had his agents select

able bodied laborers, and trump up charges of treason against them. They

were then sentenced to deportation to work in the Captain-General's

stone quarries, and thus solved the problem of low priced labor.

O'Donnell was fertile also in inventing new taxes and new methods of

extorting money, which of course brought him into high favor at court.

So pleasing was his rule to his masters and to his aides that he was

allowed to stay in office longer than usual, and was not succeeded until

1848.

One of the most ridiculous figures in Cuban history came next, in the

person of General Frederico Roncali. Some 400 Americans had taken up

their abode on an island far distant from Cuba. Rumors reached General

Roncali that they intended to free Cuba from Spanish rule. He promptly

marched 4,000 picked soldiers to garrisons in Cuba, and promised them

double pay if they would fight bravely when the enemy landed. Of course,

the enemy never came, and General Roncali presented a foolish figure.

But after all there was a portent in this of the fear which the

Spaniards were beginning to entertain, that the end of their rule in

Cuba was at hand.

While the slave trade had been made illegal in 1820, it flourished with

more or less vigor until the end of the Ten Years' War in the latter

part of the century. Spain officially frowned upon it, but unofficially

the Spanish crown is said to have been financially interested in the

slave trading companies, and to have shared largely in their profits. To

add to this incentive for the continuance of the trade, the

Captain-General had his own reasons for not suppressing it. He was paid

a fixed bonus for every slave imported. Indeed, the post of

Captain-General of Cuba was one not to be despised by any soldier of

fortune. The perquisites of the office are said to have been--of course,

not from the slave trade alone--close to $500,000 a year. The

Captain-General is said to have received "half an ounce of gold" for

every "sack of charcoal," as they facetiously dubbed the negro, allowed

to pass into the country.

Although no excuse of expediency can be urged for the enslavement of

human beings, no matter what their color or race, it remains a fact that

the sugar plantations of Cuba required laborers in great numbers for

their development, and the easiest and most profitable way to obtain

that labor was through the employment of black slaves. It would probably

have been impossible to obtain a sufficient number of white men at that

time to do the work required, especially since when an attempt was made

to import white men for work on the plantations, the owners who were of

Spanish birth brought every influence possible to bear on the government

to make such laws and regulations for that kind of labor that, if it

could be procured, its retention was well nigh impossible.

The blacks were naturally not satisfied with slavery. In their

association with their masters they acquired just enough information and

knowledge to make them dangerous. And at this time the blacks, free and

slave, were a large majority of the population. The negro race in

captivity was always difficult to manage. They were affectionate and

responsive to good treatment but when their rage was aroused by hard and

unjust treatment they reverted to habits of the jungle. The Spanish

planters believed that the way to keep the negroes quiet was to keep

them under with a strong hand and consequently overseers were frequently

brutal.

There began to be a strong undercurrent of unrest among the negro

population, and an equally strong fear of them among the whites.

Sporadic uprisings occurred, which were like the overflowing of a

boiling caldron, not organized, and not well prepared, and therefore

easily put down by the authorities. A description of a typical uprising

of this character is contained in a work called "The Slaves in the

Spanish Colonies" by the Countess Merlin, published about 1840. It

relates the experiences of one Don Rafael with a mutiny of his slaves.

"The slaves lately imported from Africa were mostly of the Luccommee

tribe, and therefore excellent workmen, but of a violent and unwieldly

temper, and always ready to hang themselves at the slightest opposition

to their way.

"It was just after the bell had struck five, and the dawn of morning was

scarcely visible. Don Rafael had gone over to another of his estates,

within half an hour before, leaving behind him, and still in tranquil

slumbers, his four children and his wife, who was in a state of

pregnancy. Of a sudden the latter awaked, terrified by hideous cries and

the sound of hurried steps. She jumped affrighted from her bed, and

observed that all the negroes of the estate were making their way to the

house. She was instantly surrounded by her children, weeping and crying

at her side. Being attended solely by slaves, she thought herself

inevitably lost; but scarcely had she time to canvass these ideas in her

distracted mind, when one of her negro girls came in, saying, 'Child,

your bounty need have no fears; we have fastened all the doors, and

Michael is gone for the master.' Her companions placed themselves on all

sides of their female owners, while the rebels advanced, tossing from

hand to hand among themselves a bloody corpse, with cries as awful as

the hissing of a serpent. The negro girls exclaimed, 'That's the

overseer's body!' The rebels were already at the door, when Pepilla

(this is the name of the lady) saw the carriage of her husband coming at

full speed. That sweet soul, who, until that moment, had valiantly

awaited death, was now overpowered at the sight of her husband coming

unarmed toward the infuriated mob, and she fainted. In the mean time,

Rafael descended from the vehicle, placed himself in front of them, and

with only one severe look, and a single sign of the hand, designated the

purging house for them to go to. The slaves suddenly became silent,

abandoned the dead body of their overseer, and, with downcast faces,

still holding their field-swords in their hands, they turned round and

entered where they had been ordered. Well might it be said, that they

beheld in the man who stood before them the exterminating angel.

"Although the movement had for a moment subsided, Rafael, who was not

aware of its cause, and feared the results, selected the opportunity to

hurry his family away from the danger. The \_quitrin\_ or vehicle of the

country could not hold more than two persons, and it would have been

imprudent to wait till more conveyances were in readiness. Pepilla and

the children were placed in it in the best possible manner; and they

were on the point of starting, when a man, covered with wounds, with a

haggard, deathlike look, approached the wheels of the \_quitrin\_, as if

he meant to climb in by them. In his pale face the marks of despair and

the symptoms of death could be traced, and fear and bitter anguish were

the feelings which agitated his soul in the last moments of his life. He

was the white accountant, who had been nearly murdered by the blacks,

and having escaped from their ferocious hold, was making the last

efforts to save a mere breath of life. His cries, his prayers, were

calculated to make the heart faint. Rafael found himself in the cruel

alternative of being deaf to the request of a dying man, or throwing his

bloody and expiring corpse over his children: his pity conquered; the

accountant was placed in the carriage as well as might be, and it moved

away from the spot.

"While this was passing on the estate of Rafael, the Marquis of

Cardenas, Pepilla's brother, whose plantations were two leagues off, who

had been apprised through a slave of the danger with which his sister

was threatened, hastened to her aid. On reaching the spot, he noticed a

number of rebels who, impelled by a remnant of rage, or fear of

punishment, were directing their course to the Savannas--large open

plains, the last abodes resorted to by runaway slaves. The Marquis of

Cardenas, whose sense of the danger of his sister had induced him to fly

to her, had brought with him, in the hurry of the moment, no one to

guard his person except a single slave. Scarcely had the fugitive band

perceived a white man, when they went towards him. The marquis stopped

his course and prepared to meet them; it was useless temerity in him

against such odds. Turning his master's horse by the bridle, his own

slave addressed him thus: 'My master, let your bounty get away from

here; let me come to an understanding with them.' And he then whipped

his master's horse, which went off at a gallop.

"The valiant José, for his name is worthy of being remembered as that of

a hero, went on toward the savage mob, so as to gain time for his master

to fly, and fell a victim to his devotedness, after receiving thirty-six

sword-blows. This rising, which had not been premediated, had no other

consequences. It had originated in a severe chastisement inflicted by

the overseer, which had prompted the rebels to march toward the owner's

dwelling to expound their complaint. They begged Rafael's pardon, which

was granted, with the exception of two or three, who were delivered

over to the tribunals."

This specimen of the fine writing of the period has hidden within it two

truths which stand out in the history of the difficulties between the

blacks and the whites on the island of Cuba. First, although we must

discount a bit the Countess's account of Rafael's valor, and the ease

with which he subdued the uprising, by taking into account the fact that

he was her cousin, and that therefore she naturally looked at him with

over-favorable eyes, nevertheless the fact remains that the blacks were

usually amenable to the commands of their owners, unless aroused to an

unusual pitch of ferocity, and were, through fear or respect, not

difficult to reduce to control.

In the second place, it has been the history of the relations between

the blacks and whites in every country that with anything like fair

treatment those who worked about the house, or acted as body servants,

became personally attached to their masters--to whom it is true there

was often a tie of consanguinity--and showed the same spirit of loyalty

which was displayed by Pepilla's women slaves.

Shortly after this insurrection, reported by the Countess Merlin, there

was another near Aguacate, which was more formidable and more difficult

to subdue. Meanwhile, the government was handling the matter of slave

insurrections in a vacillating manner. Laws were made which granted the

slaves a right to assemble and to establish societies, even to form

military bodies for the public defense; actually giving them greater

rights than white laborers; and this went hand in hand with such cruel

injustice as public whipping posts. The white population, on the other

hand, even in localities where there was a great preponderance of

blacks, could not form a militia.

Turnbull, the English consul, fancied that he saw in these slave

insurrections a chance to advance the interests of his country. It is

claimed that he also had visions of a republic in which the blacks ruled

with himself as president. He was \_persona non grata\_ with the

aristocracy of the island, and is supposed to have been actuated in part

by a desire to avenge social slights. He was charged with planning to

effect a huge black uprising, to seize and execute enough of the white

population to cow the rest and then to set up his black republic. But it

is impossible to determine the truth or falsity of these accusations.

Turnbull had many enemies who were only too glad to charge him with any

crime.

In 1842 there was an insurrection in Martiaro, and it was with

difficulty suppressed. Then evidence began to be seen everywhere of a

systematic propaganda among the slaves on plantations scattered in

widely separated parts of the island. A negro mason accidentally dropped

an incendiary proclamation from his pocket, and it finally reached the

hands of the captain of the district. The negro was tortured, but would

not divulge the source of the paper. An itinerant monk went through the

country ostensibly begging alms for the church, but in reality

prophesying to the blacks that in July, 1842, they would, on St. John's

Day, rise and obtain their freedom. The wholesale insurrection did not

occur, but there were uprisings in July in various parts of the island,

and the slaves of an estate near Bemba murdered their master and a

neighbor, and were only subdued when the militia had been called. In

January, 1843, an official of the government was murdered by the blacks.

A colored man secretly gave evidence against the slayers and in some

manner fell under their suspicion, and soon after was assassinated by

one of his own people, who afterward was tried for the crime, but

committed suicide in jail, before he could pay the death penalty. In

March, 1843, near Bemba five hundred negroes rose against their white

masters, and it was only after considerable bloodshed that they were

subdued. No sooner was this trouble quieted than there was another

uprising on a plantation in the neighborhood, and still a third one the

same year, the exact details of which are lacking. Then followed, at the

close of 1843, the most serious trouble of all, when, in November, the

negroes near Matanzas revolted and went on an orgy of murder and rape,

ravishing and killing women, and murdering white men. Turnbull was

accused of being the brains behind these troubles, but it was impossible

to fix the guilt on him. If he was guilty he was not a good organizer,

for none of the revolts had any national effect. They were all local in

character, and all unsuccessful in attaining any lasting results.

After the insurrection of November, 1843, a meeting of planters was

called in Matanzas, and the government was asked to take steps to make

further revolts impossible. But in 1844, near Matanzas, occurred another

serious insurrection, and it was reported that the negroes on all the

plantations in the neighborhood were organized and were planning a

wholesale revolt, which would bring about the realizations of Turnbull's

dreams. It was then that the government decided to act ruthlessly, and

methods which would have done credit to the old Spanish Inquisition were

promptly introduced.

In March, 1844, the Captain-General, O'Donnell, addressed a letter to

General Salas, who was the head of the military tribunal, in which he

counseled drastic and violent measures against any insurgent blacks. He

suggested that all blacks, slave or free, who were suspected of treason

to their masters, should be apprehended, and if they refused to give

information as to the extent of the organization and their associations,

the knowledge must be wrung from them by torture. The slaves were to be

tried in the district where they were taken. The officer in charge of

each district was promptly given full power to apprehend and punish the

plotters as he saw fit. The Spanish officers were often cruel and brutal

men, who exercised their authority in the most revolting manner. The hue

and cry went from hut to cabin and no black man was safe at his own

hearth. Opportunity was taken in some cases to work out a personal

grudge and gain freedom from an enemy. No one, not even a white man,

dared publicly to raise his voice to expostulate, for he was promptly

dubbed an abolitionist and thrown into prison. If a negro had a little

money saved to buy his freedom, or, if he was a freedman, to obtain a

little business, he stood a better chance of his life. He might buy his

tormentors off, but all too frequently when he had paid, he was murdered

lest he might tell of the man whom he had bribed.

One tender hearted Spanish judge, Don Ramon Gonzales, is reported to

have condemned his victims to be taken to a room, the walls of which

were already dripping with the blood and shredded flesh of previous

victims. There they were tied head down to a ladder, and flogged by two

Africans until they were dead. To make their torture the more

excruciating, the thongs with which they were scourged had on the ends

small buttons made of fine wire, which bit into the flesh. When several

freedmen had been executed in this pleasant fashion, and when public

opinion dared feebly to protest at such atrocities, death certificates

were made out by unscrupulous physicians, reporting death from some

simple disease, and under this authority the murdered negroes were

quickly buried.

A second kind judge seized on some pretext a freeborn negro, an old man,

who was gentle and inoffensive, but who had incurred the judicial

displeasure, and had him tied to the ladder and flogged on three

separate occasions, without even going to the trouble to bring an

indictment against him or divulge the nature of his offense. Another

free negro was taken by this same official, hung by his hands from the

ceiling of the torture chamber, and left there all night, while he was

at intervals whipped. At length this poor victim succumbed to the

treatment and gave information of a comrade, who was promptly taken out

and shot without a trial.

Another officer, Don Juan Costa, had a record of ninety-six negroes

killed by the lash, of whom fifty-four were slaves and forty-two

freedmen. The record shows the following entries, which gives an inkling

of the colored man's powers of endurance and of what each must have

suffered: "Lorenzo Sanchez, imprisoned on the first of April, died on

the fourth. Joseph Cavallero, imprisoned on the fourth, died on the

sixth. John Austin Molino, imprisoned on the ninth, died on the

twelfth." There were similar laconic entries for the whole ninety-six.

Don José del Piso, a fiscal officer, was responsible for the flogging to

death of a negro a hundred and ten years of age, too old and infirm to

be an active conspirator. This was within the walls of the Matanzas

jail. The poor victim was so lacerated that he was hardly recognizable

as a human being. This del Piso had a pleasant form of afternoon sport

which he conducted to the great edification of his brother

inquisitioners. He would have his victims tied to the high limb of a

tree, and then cut the rope and watch them writhe when they fell. Don

Ferdinand Percher fell slightly below the record of his colleague, Don

Juan Costa, for he could boast of only seventy-two deaths to his credit.

Then there occurred to these just men and true a new and exceedingly

fine way of adding to their revenue. Don Miguel Ballo de la Rore

extorted from the negroes on a certain estate, in the absence of their

owners, affidavits accusing their master of treason; and the latter was

notified through his overseer that unless he paid two hundred ounces of

gold forthwith he was a condemned man. However, the correspondence fell

into the hands of General Salas who had the grace to put an end to the

matter.

But not only the blacks were victims. A white man who had incurred the

displeasure of the minions of the government was never safe. One Spanish

officer had a grudge against a young Englishman and accused him of

inciting the negroes on an estate to poison their master; and the

Englishman paid the forfeit of his life for a crime of which he was

entirely guiltless. The fiscal officers ranged the island, looking for

chances to murder, obtaining false testimony, seizing property, cattle,

furniture, horses, the property of freed blacks, which they sold,

converting the proceeds to their own use. This record seems incredible,

but it is vouched for beyond question. Furthermore, at this time no

comely colored woman was safe. If she happened to attract the lustful

eyes of a Spanish general, her husband or father or brothers were

seized, and she herself was delivered up to be ravished and then slain.

One of the episodes of this campaign was a largely attended ball, at

which no white woman was present, and at which all the colored women

were obliged to appear in the garb of Eve before the Fall.

[Illustration: JOSÉ ANTONIO SACO

One of the greatest of Cuban publicists, José Antonio Saco was born at

Bayamo on May 7, 1797; studied philosophy and politics, and succeeded

Varela as Professor of Philosophy at the San Carlos Seminary, Havana. In

1828 he founded in New York the "Mensajero Quincenal," and four years

later in Havana became editor of the \_Revista Bimestre Cubana\_. Because

of his defense of the Academy of Literature, Captain-General Tacon

banished him to the island of Trinidad. In 1836 he represented Cuba in

the Spanish Cortes, and afterward travelled in Europe. In Paris he

published a treatise of Cuban annexation to the United States, and after

the Lopex expedition he wrote again on the political situation in Cuba.

He was a member of the Junta of Information in 1866, and a Deputy to the

Cortes from Santiago de Cuba. He died at Barcelona, Spain, on September

26, 1879, and his body was returned to Cuba for burial. His greatest

literary work was a monumental "History of Slavery," but he wrote many

others on political, economical, social and literary subjects.]

The fiscal officers were able to carry out these infamies because they

were at once prosecuting attorney, judge and jury. They obtained

testimony, apprehended, imprisoned, condemned and executed. The

testimony which they extorted was taken without witnesses. They

themselves wrote down the declarations, distorting them to suit their

own purposes. The blacks seldom knew how to read or write, and they were

obliged to set their mark to anything which the fiscal officer chose to

record. Not even the notary who swore the witness was allowed to check

up the declaration with his knowledge of the statements. The Spanish

government had for a long time played the most corrupt and petty of

politics in apportioning the smaller offices on the island. Political

hangers-on, with little education, no moral sense and no honor, were

paid for their loyalty to Spain with these positions. The records show

that during this reign of terror one thousand three hundred and

forty-six people were victims of the inquisition.

But Spain in her campaigns of cruelty was only laying up trouble for

herself. She was raising a storm which would never again be completely

quelled until Cuba was free. The abolitionists and the liberals, or

those who longed for freedom from Spanish rule, began joining forces.

The cause of freedom for the slaves, and of separation from Spain, were

curiously interlaced. The country was worn out with turmoil and eager

for peace, but there could be no peace, it was believed, while Spain and

the Spaniards on Cuban soil ruled with such cruel measures.

The problem of how separation might be obtained was capable of either

of two solutions, by annexation to some other country, or by

independence. The cause of independence had at this time for its leader

a Cuban of the highest type, José Antonio Saco, who had traveled all

over the world, and was a man of fine education and great culture. The

larger proportion of those Cubans who were intelligent, and who were

thinking out for themselves the problem of the fate of Cuba, accepted

him as their leader. Of course, it is understood that all organization,

all plans and almost all conversation, except in whispers behind closed

doors, or in corners of cafes which seemed safe from surveillance, had

to be secret. To come out openly for the salvation of Cuba from Spanish

rule meant banishment or death.

Saco's ideas were well known to the Spanish governor, for in 1834 he had

been exiled because of them. But he was prudent, and was not disposed to

do anything that would hurl Cuba into the throes of revolution. He felt

that a revolution at this time, with the blacks subdued but not

conquered, might mean a race war which would be the most disastrous

thing that could happen to the island. He also opposed annexation to any

other country, particularly to the United States, because he felt that

Cuba, being in such close proximity to the latter country, would lose

her individuality, be absorbed and become Anglo-Saxon. In 1845 he wrote

on this subject, as follows:

"If the slave trade continues, there will be in Cuba neither peace nor

security. Their risings have occurred at all times; but they have always

been partial, confined to one or two forms, without plan or political

result. Very different is the character of the risings which at brief

intervals have occurred in 1842-43; and the conspiracy last discovered

is the most frightful which has even been planned in Cuba, at once on

account of its vast ramifications among slaves and free negroes, and on

account of its origin and purpose. It is not necessary that the negroes

should rise all at once all over the island; it is not necessary that

its fields should blaze in conflagration from one end to the other in a

single day; partial movements repeated here and there are enough to

destroy faith and confidence. Then emigration will begin, capital will

flee, agriculture and commerce will rapidly diminish, public revenues

will lessen, the poverty of these and the fresh demands imposed by a

continual state of alarm, will cause taxes to rise; and, with expenses

on the one hand increased, but with receipts diminished, the situation

of the island will grow more involved until there comes the most

terrible catastrophe."

[Illustration: GASPAR BETANCOURT

CISNEROS]

Again we find in a letter to a friend, Caspar Betancourt Cisneros,

written a little later than the former communication:

GASPAR BETANCOURT CISNEROS

Scion of a distinguished stock, Gaspar Betancourt Cisneros was born

in Camaguey in 1803 and was educated in the United States. In 1823

he went with other Cubans to Colombia to confer with Bolivar on the

theme of Cuban independence, and remained there for many years. In

1837 he began a notable series of papers in the Cuban press, on

familiar economic and educational topics, signing them El Lugareno;

under which pen name he became famous. He established schools and

agricultural colonies, and built the second railroad in Cuba. In

1846 while he was in Europe he was suspected of revolutionary

conspiracy, and his property was confiscated. He then became a

teacher in the United States, but returned to Cuba in 1861 and

became a journalist. He was too ill to accept election to the Junta

of Information, and died in 1866.

"Let there be neither war nor conspiracies of any kind in Cuba. In our

critical situation either one means the desolation of the country. Let

us bear the yoke of Spain. But let us bear it so as to leave to our

children, if not a country of liberty, at least one peaceful and

hopeful. Let us try with all our energies to put down the infamous

traffic in slaves; let us diminish without violence or injustice the

number of these; let us do what we can to increase the white population;

let us do all which you have always done, giving a good example to our

own fellow countrymen, and Cuba, our beloved Cuba, shall some day be

Cuba indeed!"

On the other hand the Annexationists were waging a vigorous though quiet

campaign. On April 20, 1848, a proclamation urging the Cubans to make

every effort to add their island to the United States appeared. It was

signed simply "Unos Cubanos," and urged opposition to Saco and his

sympathizers and a concerted effort to gain the political and civil

rights which were enjoyed by Americans. "Amalgamation of the races," ran

the proclamation, "would not extinguish Cuban nationality, for every

child born in Cuba would be at once a Cuban and an American. Cuba united

to this strong and respected nation, whose southern interests would be

identified with hers, would be assured quiet and future success; her

wealth would increase, doubling the value of her farms and slaves,

trebling that of her whole territory; liberty would be given to

individual action, and the system of hateful and harmful restrictions

which paralyze commerce and agriculture could be destroyed."

But no matter what the Cubans themselves might dream of or hope for,

Spain had not the slightest intention of surrendering Cuba without a

struggle. No country, not even one more altruistic in its policies, and

more highly civilized than Spain had shown herself to be at this time,

would be eager to relinquish a colony which brought her in a revenue of

three and a half millions clear, and which in the twenty years from 1830

to 1850 had poured over $50,000,000 into her coffers. Spain therefore

cast around for any expedient which would enable her to retain her last

possession in the new world. Roncali during his term as Captain-General

very clearly expressed his views as to where the Spanish interests in

Cuba lay:

"Among the considerable elements of power with which Spain counts in

this island, ought to be mentioned slavery. Permit me, your excellency,

to explain my belief in this regard. The interest in preserving their

fortunes and in developing the rich crops from which they spring causes

all the wealthy inhabitants of the country to fear the first whisper of

conflict which may relax the discipline of the slaves, or threaten

emancipation. From this fact I infer that slavery is the rein which,

through fear and interest, will keep in submission the great majority of

the white population. But if the event should arrive of foreign war and

of inner commotions such as to threaten the dependence of the island,

what should be the conduct of the Captain-General toward slavery? I, my

noble lord, state my solemn belief that this terrible weapon which the

government holds in its hand might in the last extremity prevent the

loss of the island, and that if the inhabitants are persuaded that it

will be used they will trouble and renounce every fond illusion rather

than draw down such an anathema. The chance is remote without doubt, but

that very fact makes me express myself clearly: the liberty of all the

slaves in a day of gravest peril, proclaimed by Her Majesty's

representative in these territories, would re-establish superiority and

even strengthen our power in a very real way, based as it would then be

on that very class which it seems best today to keep submerged. But if

that last resort should prove insufficient, or if it did not suit Spain

afterward to retain her hold, it may always be brought about that the

conquerors shall acquire Hayti instead of the rich and prosperous Cuba

and that the bastard sons who have brought down that calamity by their

rebellion shall meet in their complete ruin, punishment and

disillusionment. A principle of retributive justice or of harmony with

the maxims of modern civilization, to which it is so customary now to

appeal, would also call for general emancipation, at the moment when,

for whatever reason, Spain should decide to renounce the island.... So

far this trans-Atlantic province is still strongly attached to the

mother land, and thanks to the wisdom and material solicitude of Her

Majesty, I believe that the bonds of union will be still more

strengthened; but if the fate of nations brings to this land a day

pregnant with such circumstances as to threaten its loss, their national

honor and interest alike would demand that every recourse and means be

exhausted, without saving anything. If, even then, fortune should

abandon us, we should at least leave it written in history that our

departure from America corresponded to the heroic story of its

acquisition."

CHAPTER XXV

The era of Cuban history which embraced part of the seventeenth, the

eighteenth, and part of the nineteenth centuries, and which we have

endeavored to review in this volume, presents a striking and almost

unique contrast to the customary course of human affairs. The normal

order of civic development begins with the rise and confirmation of

nationality, and thence proceeds to international relationships and

cosmopolitan interests and activities. Such was the record of other

American states which grew up contemporaneously with Cuba. Such was

notably the course of the United States of North America. In their

colonial period they were intensely local, parochial, in sentiment and

spirit. In their revolutionary era they began to manifest a national

entity. It was not until long after their establishment of national

independence that they fully realized their international status.

In Cuba the order was reversed. At first, as a colony of triumphant and

masterful Spain, the island had neither national sentiment nor

international interests. In the second stage, however, it became a pawn

in the great international game which was being played between declining

Spain and her increasingly powerful neighbors, actually for a time

passing from Spanish to British possession, and often being regarded as

likely to pass permanently into the hands of some other power than

Spain.

These circumstances had a marked effect upon the whole genius of the

Cuban people. It gave them international vision before they had learned

to discern themselves even as a potential nation. It gave them a degree

of cosmopolitanism such as few comparable colonies have ever known. It

divorced them in sentiment from the Mother Country to an exceptional

degree. They were made to feel that Spain meant little or nothing to

them. She had planted them, it is true. But she had given them little

cultivation, little protection. She had looked to them for more help for

herself than she had herself given to them. She was unable to save them

from the danger of being passed from hand to hand, from owner to owner.

At the north, England had not governed her Thirteen Colonies well. But

she had at least protected them. There had never been on their part any

fear that she would abandon them to some other conqueror, or that they

would be taken from her by force, or sold or traded away. The British

colonists knew that in the last emergency the whole power of the United

Kingdom would be exerted for their protection. Yet even so they revolted

against misgovernment, and declared their independence.

How much more, almost infinitely more, cause had Cubans for alienation

from Spain! She had given them no such protection. Her policy suggested

always the possibility of their transfer in some way to some other

sovereignty. And her misgovernment had been immeasurably worse than that

of England. If Cuba was more patient than the Thirteen Colonies at the

north, that was another of the paradoxes of history--that the impulsive,

hot-blooded Latin of the south should be more deliberate and

conservative than the cool and phlegmatic Anglo-Saxon of the north.

This very quality of patience was, indeed, the saving virtue of the

Cuban character. Quijano Otero wrote of Colombia, at the very time of

her revolt against Spain and the establishment of her independence, that

she "had lived so fast in her years of glory and great deeds that,

though still a child, she was already entering a premature decrepitude."

Not so Cuba. It is true that, as we have seen, she had imbibed enough of

the spirit of Spain and of other lands to be measurably saturated with

their customs, even their luxurious vices and follies. Yet she did not

live fast. She did not grow prematurely old. In so far as she adopted

the customs of Europe, she adapted them to herself, not herself to them.

The result was that after three centuries, she still had the

ingenuousness and spontaneity of youth. She might almost have said, in

paraphrase of a great captain's epigram, "I have not yet begun to live!"

Half unconsciously, however, she had made an exceptionally complete

preparation for the life that was to come as a nation. She had already

become international in the scope of her vision, in the range of her

sympathies, and in her intellectual and social culture. Many of her sons

had studied abroad, acquiring the learning of the best European schools.

If the world at large knew little about Cuba, Cuba knew much about the

world at large.

Though indeed the world did know something about Cuba, and took a lively

and intelligent interest in her. This we have endeavored to indicate in

these pages by our numerous citations of authorities, observers and

writers of various lands, who found in the Queen of the Antilles a theme

worthy of their most interested attention. More and more, as the

unimproved estates of the world were partitioned among the powers, the

transcendent value of this island was recognized, and more and more

covetous gaze was fixed upon it by the nations which were extending

their empires instead of losing them.

So at the close of the eighteenth century it was apparent that another

epoch in Cuban history was at hand. North America had been swept by

revolution. South America was at the brink of revolution. Europe was

convulsed with revolution. Amid all these, Cuba was like the calm spot

at the centre of a whirlpool. Changes had occurred on every side, but

she had been left unchanged. Yet every one of those changes had, deeply

and irrevocably, though perhaps imperceptibly, wrought its effect upon

her.

The potency and the promise of national life were within her. Thus far

everything that she had accomplished had been accredited to Spain. But

the time was at hand when she would claim her own. During three

centuries Cuba had produced the flower of the Spanish race; as indeed

from time immemorial colonies had been wont to produce stronger men, in

their comparatively primitive and healthful conditions, than the more

sophisticated and often decadent Mother Countries. But they had all been

reckoned Spaniards. Now the time was coming, and was at hand, when

Cubans would be reckoned Cubans, by all the world as well as by

themselves.

The errors of Spain were not of Cuba's choosing. The disasters of Spain

were not of Cuba's inviting. The decadence of Spain was not of Cuba's

working. If in the downfall of Spanish power Cuba saw the opportunity

for her own uprising, it was not that she herself had compassed that

downfall, but only that she chose not needlessly to let herself be

involved therein. As Spain weakened, Cuba girded and strengthened

herself, and made herself ready to stand alone.

THE END OF VOLUME TWO

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