

OUR DUTY TO CUBA.

"These islands [Cuba and Porto Rico] from their local position are natural appendages to the North American continent, and one of them, Cuba, almost in sight of our shores, has, from a multitude of considerations, become an object of transcendent importance to the commercial and political interests of our Union. . . . Such, indeed, are, between the interests of that island and 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. . . . Cuba, forcibly disjointed from its own unnatural connection with Spain, and incapable of self-support, can gravitate only towards the North American Union, which by the same law of nature cannot cast her off from its bosom."

"If the war should continue between Spain and the new republics, and those islands [Cuba and Porto Rico] should become the object and theatre of it, their fortunes have such a connection with the prosperity of the United States that they could not be indifferent spectators, and the possible contingencies of such a protracted war might bring upon the government of the United States duties and obligations, the performance of which, however painful it should be, they might not be at liberty to decline."

THESE two quotations are taken from letters addressed by American secretaries of state to ministers of the United States in Spain. The author of the first was John Quincy Adams; of the second, Henry Clay. Both these eminent men having lived sometime ago, and being now dead, may be safely called statesmen. If they were alive and gave utterance to such sentiments to-day, they would be denounced by some select persons as "jingoes" and "politicians." Mr. Adams, it will be observed, goes indeed much farther than any one in our public life has gone at the present time, by boldly declaring that the annexation of Cuba will in the natural course of events become essential to the Union. I have cited these two expressions of opinion not merely because they were uttered by two of the ablest and most patriotic of American statesmen, but because they show that the Cuban question is not a new one, and that even at the outset the wisest and most far-seeing among our public men formally declared to the government of

Spain the firm position and profound interest of the United States in regard to Cuba. I do this because in certain quarters at the present moment it seems to be supposed that the Cuban question is quite novel, and also because many excellent persons, who know nothing of the history of their own country and acquire their knowledge of current events from the headlines of one or two newspapers edited by aliens, appear to be laboring under the impression that the Cuban question has just been precipitated upon us for the first time by a few violent and dangerous men in both Houses of Congress. As a matter of fact the Cuban question is both an old and a sad one, and the attitude of the United States in regard to it has hitherto been consistent and well-defined. Every Administration, until we reach the one now in power, has declared in the plainest terms to the government of Spain and to the world that the condition of Cuba was a matter in which the United States had a vital interest and which could never be disregarded; or, as Edward Everett put it, that the Cuban question was a purely American one.

From the time of Clay and Adams down to the present day American secretaries of state have announced in the most formal manner, and Senators and members of Congress have repeated, that the United States would never suffer Cuba to pass into the hands of any other European power. Not once, but many times, it has been officially announced to our ministers abroad that any attempt on the part of Spain to transfer that island to another European power would be regarded by the United States as an act of war. In the repeated uprisings which have marked the history of the island since 1825 the sympathies of the American people with the Cuban patriots have always been strongly manifested. These revolutionary troubles led to many diplomatic representations on the part of our government, and, during the war of 1868, to an offer from the United States to pay a large sum of money or to guarantee the debt of the island if Spain would grant independence to the Cubans; also, later in the same war, to a threat of intervention.

Such in brief has been our policy in regard to Cuba; and, when we are called upon to deal again with this recurring problem, it is well to know what our policy has been and to follow the lines marked out by some of the ablest men who have been charged during this century with the conduct of our foreign relations. Every reasonable man who gives any thought to this subject will admit that the fate of Cuba is of great importance to the United States; that under no circumstances

should we permit Spain to transfer the island to any other European power; and that when war has broken out in the island the problem becomes acute, presents issues which we must not neglect, and is likely at any moment to give rise to responsibilities which, as Mr. Clay said, we could not decline. These three points are so obvious and so clearly right that it is not necessary to enter into any argument in their support. They may be taken for granted. Then comes the immediate and practical question of what we ought to do at the present time. To be able to decide intelligently we must look first at the history of Cuba and then consider what action is demanded of the United States—not merely by her own interests but by the far broader and deeper interests of humanity and civilization.

When the other Spanish-American colonies revolted from the mother country Cuba remained faithful, and no revolution broke out in the island. The success, however, of the continental colonies in establishing their independence gradually made itself felt. In 1825 Bolivar offered to invade the island, where numerous societies were formed to support him; but the invasion was checked by the intervention of our government, which advised against it. Spain acted after her kind. Instead of ignoring the evidences of sympathy which had been shown toward Bolivar's proposed invasion, the Spanish Government, by an ordinance of the 28th of May, gave the Captain-General all the powers granted to the governors of besieged towns, that is to say, it put the whole island under martial law. With this piece of sweeping and needless tyranny resistance to Spain began in Cuba and has continued at intervals to the present day, each successive outbreak becoming more formidable and more desperate than the one which preceded it.

In 1826 an insurrection broke out, and its two chiefs were executed. Soon after came another known as the "Conspiracy of the Black Eagle," which was also repressed, and those engaged in it were imprisoned, banished, or executed. In 1837 the representatives of Cuba and Porto Rico were excluded from the Cortes on the ground that the colonies were to be governed by special law. In 1850 and 1851 occurred an expedition for the liberation of Cuba, and the death of its leader, Narciso Lopez. There were also expeditions under General Quitman and others, and in 1855 Ramon Pinto was put to death and many other patriots banished. After this, for a number of years, the Cubans attempted by peaceful methods to secure from the government at Madrid some relief from the oppression which weighed upon

them and some redress for their many wrongs. All their efforts came to naught and such changes as were made were for the worse rather than for the better.

The result of all this was that in 1868 a revolution broke out under the leadership of Céspedes. The revolutionists did not succeed in getting beyond the eastern part of the island, but they were successful in many engagements. They crippled still farther the already broken power of Spain and they could not be put down by force of arms. The war dragged on for ten years and was brought to an end only by a treaty in which Martinez Campos, in the name of Spain, promised to the Cubans certain reforms for which they had taken up arms. In consideration of these reforms the insurgents were to abandon their fight for independence, lay down their arms, and receive a complete amnesty. The insurgents kept their word. They laid down their arms and abandoned their struggle for independence. Spain unhesitatingly violated the agreement. With a cynical disregard of good faith her promise of amnesty was only partially kept and she imprisoned or executed many who had been engaged in the insurgent cause, while the promised reforms were either totally neglected or carried out by some mockery, which had neither reality nor value.¹ The result of this treachery, of the bloodshed which accompanied it, and of the increased abuses in government which followed, was that the Cubans began again to prepare for revolt, and a year ago last February the present revolution broke out. The struggle now going on has developed much more rapidly than any which preceded it, and has been marked by far greater successes than the Cubans were able to obtain in the war which lasted from 1868 to 1878. In the preceding rebellion, which was maintained for ten years, the insurgents never succeeded in getting beyond the great central province of Santa Clara, and their operations were practically confined to the mountainous region in the eastern end of the island. It is not my purpose to enter into any discussion of the details of the present war. The Spanish bulletins which have been issued from day to day have been shown by events to be false and therefore worthless. I will lay them and the Cuban reports aside as unworthy of consideration, and confine myself to certain decisive facts of public notoriety which cannot be disputed.

¹ See pamphlet by Adam Badeau, Consul-General in Cuba, 1885 ; also statement of General Tomaso Estrada Palma, printed for use of Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 1896 ; and article by Clarence King in *THE FORUM* for September, 1895.

A little more than a year ago General Gomez landed with 500 men at a point to the north of Santiago de Cuba, at the extreme eastern end of the island. He and Maceo and the other insurgent leaders are now in command of forces which the Spanish accounts admit to be not far short of 30,000 men and which could be easily doubled if arms could be obtained. During the past year the insurgents have marched six hundred and thirty miles, from the extreme eastern end of the island to the extreme western point. They have passed over and through La Trocha without difficulty. They have swept over the provinces of Santa Clara and Matanzas. They have marched back and forth through the entirely flat and open country of Pinar del Rio, the extreme western province, and they are to-day, and have been for some time, moving about with entire freedom in the immediate neighborhood of Havana—where they have on more than one occasion, as may be seen from the Spanish bulletins themselves, raided the suburbs of the capital city. They have cut all the railroads and have passed without difficulty through the lines which the Spaniards have drawn for the purpose of shutting them up in the western part of the island. The whole of the interior of the island is absolutely in their hands. The Spaniards hold nothing except the principal seaports, where their ships are at anchor, and the few scattered towns, where their troops are encamped. In view of these facts it is idle to waste time in discussing the results of particular actions. When the insurgents have shown themselves capable of marching from one end of the island to the other, of capturing towns, destroying railroads, and preventing the grinding of the sugar crop,—a perfectly legitimate war measure,—it is clear that the rebellion has been successful thus far and to a degree which the most sanguine friends of Cuba never dared to anticipate.

In the meantime the insurgents have formed a provisional government, held two elections, and adopted a constitution. The government has been duly inaugurated and the civil offices all filled. All the military officers hold commissions from the civil authorities. The officers of the provisional government are Cubans, white men, and of good family and position. Among the principal military officers there are only three of negro blood,—the two Maceos and one other. A great deal has been made of the point that the insurgents have no fixed seat of government. As their successful march across the island has been so rapid, it is not remarkable that the seat of government should have been moved; but it has been for some time established at Cubitas, in Cameaguey, and has never been attacked by the enemy.

It has also been urged against the insurgents that they have no port. This is due to the fact that they have no ships and, although they have taken several of the seaport towns,—Batabano quite recently,—they have been unable to hold them, because they did not have command of the sea and were without heavy ordnance. The smaller ports are all open to them and they have thus far found no difficulty in landing arms whenever a vessel with munitions of war has been able to escape from United States ports. These facts, which are established by all the despatches and by the inspection of the map,—which shows where the battles are fought,—are enough to demonstrate the great success of the insurgents and the utter failure of Spain, although she has sent 120,000 troops to the island, to even check the progress of the revolution.

It is not easy to procure disinterested testimony as to the condition of affairs in Cuba, but such unbiassed witnesses as we have corroborate the insurgent accounts and not those of the Spanish. The Hon. Hubert Howard, the son of the Earl of Carlisle, passed five weeks with the insurgent forces last autumn and published an account of his experiences in the January number of "The Contemporary Review." He entirely confirms the insurgent reports as to their early actions with the Spaniards, and he was present when the army received a visit from the officers of the provisional government, who had just been elected. Mr. Howard testifies to the success of the insurgents, to the fact of their having a duly elected civil government, and to their successes in the field, concluding with an expression of his earnest wish that the United States would recognize them as belligerents. The reports of our consuls, which have been submitted to the House,—although they do not come down to a very recent time,—substantially corroborate the insurgent account of the early operations of the war. American correspondents, who have sent out reports which were not submitted to Spanish censorship, give the same view as to the condition of affairs and prove the falsity of the statements emanating from Spanish sources. For sending such despatches one newspaper correspondent was banished from the island, and another imprisoned in the Moro castle; but, thanks to their efforts and to those of others, some despatches have got through without being edited at Spanish headquarters, and they depict the situation in accordance with the general claims of the insurgents and not at all in accordance with those of Spain.

The situation which confronts the United States is, then, briefly stated, as follows :

The island of Cuba, which lies but a short distance from our coast, is now again, after recurring revolutions and disorders extending over seventy years, the scene of a revolution more formidable and successful than any which has preceded it. American property in the island is being destroyed and our commerce with Cuba is being ruined. The ablest and most humane general in Spain, who brought the previous insurrection to a close by judicious concessions, has been recalled,—which is in itself a confession of failure,—and has been replaced by a man notorious for his ferocity and brutality. This new general, Weyler, has reverted to the methods of warfare employed by the Duke of Alva in the Netherlands three hundred years ago, when the ruin of the Spanish Empire began; which is very characteristic, for the Spaniards, although they learn nothing, have, unlike the Bourbons, forgotten many things. For many years it has been clear that Spain could not hold the island. If this war fails, it will be followed by another a few years hence. But it seems tolerably clear that Spain is unable to suppress this insurrection. She may complete the ruin of Cuba, but she cannot conquer the Cubans. The present war therefore is as useless as it is bloody and savage.

Under these circumstances the question arises, and cannot be put aside, as to what is the duty of the United States. Three courses are open to us. We can recognize the belligerency of the insurgents; we can offer our good offices to Spain to secure the peace and independence of the island; or we can do both. As to belligerency, it is a mere question of fact to be decided by the nation which has been asked for recognition and the proclamation thereof made at such time as the recognizing nation may see fit. Recognition of belligerency is not a *casus belli*, and any nation is at liberty to give it whenever it determines that it is proper to do so. The general facts known to the world and set forth in this article seem to me to establish clearly the fact of belligerency, and our government should have recognized this fact long ago. We are under no obligation toward Spain to withhold our recognition of the belligerency of the Cubans. On the contrary we have practised a forbearance in this respect which Spain did not show to us. In the language of Mr. Fish in a letter to the Spanish minister, dated Oct. 13, 1869:—

“This concession [of belligerent rights to the South] was made by Spain on the 17th day of June, 1861, only sixty-six days after the assault on Fort Sumter, the outbreak of the rebellion, and which was the only combat or conflict of arms of which any account had reached Europe at the date of Spain’s action in the

matter : a single and bloodless combat, an attack upon a handful of half-starved men being the extent of war on which Spain based the 'fact of belligerency.'"

During the ten years' war from 1868 to 1878 we withheld our recognition of Cuban belligerency. During this present war the insurgents have been in the field more than a year. They have established a government, fought many battles, and have overrun the island. If we are to be guided by Spanish action toward us, we are infinitely more justified in recognizing Cuban belligerency than Spain was when she recognized the belligerency of the Southern Confederacy.

The other course is that of using our good offices to secure the independence of the island. This was the policy pursued by Mr. Fish, who endeavored to purchase Cuban independence from Spain. It was approved at that time by Mr. Sumner, although he felt a very natural reluctance to extend any help to the Cubans while negro slavery still existed in the island. At a later date, in 1876, Mr. Fish declared that the United States would intervene unless the war was brought to an end,—a declaration that undoubtedly hastened the concessions which stopped hostilities. This policy of Grant's Administration has far stronger reasons for immediate adoption and vigorous enforcement now than it had then.

So far, however, nothing has been done for Cuba except the expression of profound sympathy adopted in different forms, but by overwhelming majorities, in both branches of Congress. If the Administration had shown the slightest sympathy with the struggling Cubans or had given any evidence of an appreciation of the importance of the Cuban question to the United States and of our previous policy in regard to it, I, for one, should have been averse to even the expression of an opinion by Congress. But the Administration, not content with manifesting great indifference to the question, has thus far ranged itself upon the side of Spain. It has gone beyond its plain duty of preserving neutrality. It has seized vessels, carrying merely munitions of war and unarmed men, which it had no right to seize and which the United States courts in more than one instance have promptly released. It has gone even farther than this. While it may be the duty of a neutral power to pursue a ship, supposed to have an armed expedition on board, from the port from which that expedition set forth, it is not called upon to send out ships to intercept vessels on the high seas where it has no jurisdiction. Direct pursuit from the point of departure, of a vessel believed to have violated the law, is one thing and no doubt permissible; but to undertake to police the high

seas and intercept such a vessel is not neutrality, but taking sides with one party in the war, and is unwarranted. Yet this is precisely what our present Administration did when it sent out the "Raleigh" and "Montgomery" to intercept the "Hawkins" and seize her on the high seas. This was not neutrality; it was taking part with the government of Spain and assisting that government to put down the Cuban insurrection.

It was this attitude of the Administration which forced Congress after three months of waiting to give expression to its own sentiments and to those of the great body of the American people. With an Administration which up to the present time has shown itself hostile or indifferent to the Cuban cause, the action of the two Houses of Congress had little practical value; but it served at least to call the attention of the American people more sharply to the condition of affairs in Cuba and to inform them more fully as to the facts. This is all that can be hoped for from the government, unless the Administration sees fit to change its present course; but it may be safely predicted that the American people will not long suffer the Cuban war, as it is now conducted, to go on indefinitely without any attempt on their part to bring it to an end.

In 1869 Charles Sumner said of the war then raging in Cuba:—

"For myself I cannot doubt that in the interest of both parties, Cuba and Spain, and in the interest of humanity also, the contest should be closed. This is my judgment on the facts, so far as known to me. Cuba must be saved from its bloody delirium, or little will be left for the final conqueror. Nor can the enlightened mind fail to see that the Spanish power on this island is an anachronism. The day of European colonies has passed—at least in this hemisphere, where the rights of man were first proclaimed and self-government first organized."

Mr. Sumner's words state the larger aspect of the question exactly as it is to-day. The danger to American property in Cuba, the ruin of American commerce, the immense field which would be opened to American enterprise, and the market which would be secured for American products by Cuban independence, as well as the enormous geographical and political importance of the island,—are all weighty reasons for decisive action on our part. But these reasons are pecuniary, material, and interested. That which makes action imperative on the part of the United States in regard to Cuba, rests on a higher ground than any of these. Such a war as is now being waged in Cuba—unrestrained by any of the laws of civilized warfare and marked

by massacre and ferocious reprisals at every step—is a disgrace to civilization. It is as useless as it is brutal. Spain is in truth “an anachronism” in the western hemisphere. It is impossible that she should long retain even this last foothold. Spanish-American governments have no doubt fallen far short of the standards of the English-speaking race, but they have been an immense improvement on the stupid and cruel misgovernment of Spain. It is no argument to say that, because the Spanish-American governments are not up to our standard, the Cubans should be compelled to remain crushed beneath the misgovernment of Spain,—especially when we remember that, although there are many negroes and mulattoes in Cuba, the whites are whites of pure race and not mixed with Indian blood as on the continent.

This is a world of comparative progress, and freedom from Spain would be to Cuba a long step in advance on the highroad of advancing civilization. The interests of humanity are the controlling reasons which demand the beneficent interposition of the United States to bring to an end this savage war and give to the island peace and independence. No great nation can escape its responsibilities. We freely charge England with responsibility for the hideous atrocities in Armenia. But it is the merest cant to do this if we shirk our own duty. We have a responsibility with regard to Cuba. We cannot evade it and, if we seek to do so, sooner or later we shall pay the penalty. But the American people, whose sympathies are strongly with the Cubans fighting for their liberties, will no longer suffer this indifference toward them to continue. If one Administration declines to meet our national responsibilities as they should be met, there will be put in power another Administration which will neither neglect nor shun its plain duty to the United States and to the cause of freedom and humanity.

H. C. LODGE.

THE QUESTION OF CUBAN BELLIGERENCY.

THREE causes have contributed to create in the United States a special interest in the Cuban question: first, sympathy with the idea of Cuba's independence of Spain; second, the oppressive character of Spanish colonial rule; and, third, the desire to annex the island to the United States. Against the combined operation of these causes, of which the last has at times been exceedingly influential, the Government of the United States has often found it difficult to preserve an attitude of neutrality. That it has succeeded in so doing is a fact that bears ample testimony to the consistent determination with which our Government has sought to discharge its international obligations. Nor have its efforts been confined to restraining the lawless impulses of some of its own citizens. In many cases it has been required to repress flagrant attempts to violate its statutes by persons of Cuban origin, who sought to aid, and sometimes to create, insurrection in the island by means of hostile expeditions set on foot in the United States in defiance of our neutrality. That such attempts were made is not surprising; but that it was the duty of the Government to repress them is unquestionable. Nothing could be more unworthy of a great government than a fraudulent neutrality, carried out by conniving at the violation of its own laws.

The Cuban question, after slumbering for nearly twenty years, is again to the front. The insurrection which began more than a year ago still continues; the columns of the press are daily filled with rumors, often palpably sensational, as to the progress of the conflict; and the vigilance of our authorities is constantly exerted to prevent attempted violations of our own laws. On June 12 last the President issued a proclamation calling attention to the prohibitions of our neutrality statutes, and warning all persons to abstain from breaking them. He has also declined to recognize the belligerency of the insurgents; and in his annual message to Congress on December 2 last he declared that whatever might be "the traditional sympathy of our countrymen as individuals with a people who seem to be struggling for a larger autonomy and greater freedom, deepened as such sympathy naturally must