

gratifying state of affairs in the internal economy of the Association; the increase of membership during President Ely's administration being especially encouraging. For the ensuing year, Professor Seligman succeeds to the presidency, Professor Fetter becomes permanent instead of acting Secretary, and Professor Hollander takes the chairmanship of the Publication Committee.

A GLIMPSE OF CUBA.

December, 1901.

It is perhaps owing to our habit of looking at the West Indies on maps which cover a great area, that the visitor who travels through the island is surprised to find it so big. It is larger than Pennsylvania or Louisiana, almost as large as England, and much bigger than all the other West India islands put together. In so wide an area there are diversities of physical character and aspect so numerous that no tourist, unless he had spent many months in journeying to and fro through the country—a slow process where railways are few and roads bad or wanting—could undertake to render a general account of it. But a few general impressions may be worth giving, so scanty is the knowledge which most of us have about the island whose fate now lies in the hands of Congress.

Broadly speaking, it is a country pleasing to the eye and often very pretty. It is verdant, being for the most part well watered; and though there are large tracts of nearly level ground, one is seldom out of sight of some hill sufficient to relieve the monotony of a flat. Where there are pastures, the grass is luxuriant. Where there are woods, the trees have the rich luxuriance of the tropics. Many bear clustered flowers, others support climbing plants gay with brilliant blossoms. The most romantic regions are to be found in the southeast, where some of the mountains reach a height of eight thousand feet—a height all the more imposing because several of the highest tops rise not far from the sea, and thus display the full stateliness of their proportions. But, both in the west end of the island and in other places here and there through it, there are fine groups of hills, whose boldness of line and profusion of wood make them beautiful objects. Some parts of the south coast, such as that which stretches east and west from the city of Santiago de Cuba, are specially charming, for here are bold cliffs and rock-encircled bays, with forest slopes above. In other places the shore is bordered by a fringe of coral isles, usually called cays, all thickly wooded, through which the coasting steamers thread their way, happy in having no longer to fear the buccaneers, or, in later days, the coast pirates, who found in this maze of islets safe retreats whence they could issue to pounce upon a passing vessel.

It is also a healthy country. The yellow fever which used to give it a bad name has now been discovered to be a preventible disease. Already the efforts of the American administration have, for the moment, practically stamped it out in Havana and Santiago; and there is reason to hope that if the measures now taken are rigorously maintained, this deliverance will be permanent. Malarial fevers occur in some places, but are apparently less fre-

quent and formidable than on the Gulf coast of the United States and of Mexico. Now that they too have been ascertained to be mainly, if not wholly, due to infection through a mosquito, they too may be largely averted. Almost everywhere one is struck by the freshness of the air, which is far more agreeable and invigorating than that of Florida or southern Alabama. One has a sense in the aspect of the sky and the feel of the breeze of being within reach of the sea; and there are indeed few parts of the island which are more than forty miles from salt water. Thus the heat, having regard to the latitude (for nearly the whole of Cuba lies south of the Tropic of Cancer), is moderate and bearable. Sunstroke is said to be extremely rare.

Further, it is a naturally rich country. In the plains and undulating regions the soil is usually deep and fertile; and the rains of the hotter months (for there is no very great difference between the temperatures of summer and winter) are sufficient to make artificial irrigation needless, except in comparatively few places. Nearly every tropical or sub-tropical crop can be grown in one district or another. There are immense stretches of pasture-land, covered by luxuriant grass. There are vast forest tracts, chiefly on the mountains, some of which remain almost unexplored to this day, because the cost of transportation in regions ill supplied with roads or railways has made it not worth while to cut the wood. There are mines of iron, copper, and manganese, and there may well be other minerals also, for the resources of the island have been very imperfectly ascertained. Few countries make upon the passing traveller a stronger impression of great natural wealth.

But Cuba is an empty country. In its 46,000 square miles there are only some 1,600,000 inhabitants, against 6,000,000 in Pennsylvania. Porto Rico, with only 3,600 square miles, is less than one-twelfth in size, but has about half as large a population. One is everywhere struck by the fewness of the inhabitants. It is not only that vast tracts of mountain and forest remain in their primitive wildness. Even level and open regions, fit for village or pasture, are practically a solitude, with only a few negro huts here and there. One sees deep-soiled plains without sugar-plantations, luxuriant meadows and grassy hillsides without cattle. This desolation is no doubt partly due to the too protracted insurrections, in which many plantations were laid waste, many sugar-factories destroyed, and nearly all the cattle slaughtered. But, even before war came in to devastate the land, the country must have had a population far beneath that which it could support. Agriculture and stock-keeping would alone, without counting mining or any kind of manufactures, provide employment and food for at least five millions of persons. There is only one considerable city, Havana; and only three or four others with populations exceeding thirty thousand, all of them on the coast. The interior has scarce anything to show but wretched villages composed of the huts of colored people.

How far this desolate condition of a land which nature has blessed is due to Spanish misgovernment, how far to the inferior quality of the inhabitants, it would need many pages to discuss. That there was

deplorable and long-continued misgovernment, and that the present inhabitants are slack and backward, has been amply known to all the world. The presence of a large number of negroes, and the existence of slavery (though in no very harsh form) down to a recent date, account for a good deal of slackness in the people; and this fault was intensified by misgovernment, while it tended to perpetuate that misgovernment itself, for a more energetic race would not have so long borne with the corruption and maladministration of Spanish officials. At present one of the crying wants of the country is more labor and better labor. The colored population seems to occupy a sort of middle place between the intelligent and industrious negroes of Kentucky, Tennessee, and northern Alabama and the half-savage negroes of Hayti. They are not sunk deep in sloth and superstition, but they are not progressive; and if Cuba is to become prosperous, it will hardly be through them. The hopes of the better class of Cubans are chiefly fixed upon immigration from old Spain. This immigration is now proceeding at a great pace, but, unfortunately, the immigrants, who are mostly thrifty and hardworking fellows from the northern provinces of Spain, do not generally bring women with them, so it is feared that they will, through intermarriage with the blacks and half-breeds they find in the island, decline in a generation or two nearer to the level of that inferior element. Besides, it is hard for any European race, even for a race from southern Europe, to retain its vigor of body and mind under a tropical climate. It will be interesting to see what the results are; but those results can hardly be estimated before the end of the century on which we are now entering.

There is also another impression which the visitor receives and by which he is startled: Cuba is not a good country for insurrections. Except in the east, in parts of the southern coast, and in a few districts of the west, the country is generally pretty open and level and comparatively easy for the movement of regular troops, and comparatively unfavorable to insurgent bands. It is true that the source and the strength of the rebels lay in the mountainous and forest-clad east, where the negro population is largest. (The bands were chiefly composed of negroes, though many of the leaders were whites or mulattoes.) But in the last rebellion the rebel bands were practically in command of the level and undulating parts of the interior to the south and southeast of Havana and Matanzas, though it ought to have been easy for the Spaniards to hold these districts. The Spanish Government had a vastly preponderating force, exceeding (as one is told) 200,000 men, while the strength of the insurgent bands, who were, moreover, armed with inferior weapons, seems never to have reached 30,000 at any one time. Besides, the Spaniards had complete command of the sea—an enormous advantage in a country with bad roads, and most of which lies within thirty or forty miles of the coast. These facts make it all the more extraordinary that the two great insurrections should not each of them have been quelled within a few months, or at any rate driven into the less accessible parts of the island. People in Cuba explain the phenomenon by saying that the Spanish officers, or at any

rate some important persons among them, did not really wish to stamp out the insurrection, whose continuance gave them opportunities of enriching themselves through extra pay and through contracts for military stores and supplies of various kinds. If this be true, these officers overplayed their game with a characteristic want of foresight, for any one might have predicted from the beginning of 1897, if not earlier, that foreign intervention was approaching. It is, at any rate, clear, that, if the Spanish officials really wished to suppress the insurrection, there must have been extraordinary incapacity and probably a great deal of corruption among them, for the balance of military strength was altogether in their favor, and a large part of the population was always on their side.

During the last few months Cuba—that is to say, the intelligent part of the Cuban population, and especially those who have something to lose or to gain—has been agitated by two questions: the promised departure of the American administrators and the promised arrival of Sir William Van Horne, the Canadian railway magnate, who has undertaken a large scheme for the construction of a trunk line through the east and east-central parts of the island. These two events are intimately connected, for with the withdrawal of American administration a new chapter in Cuban history will open, and no one knows what sort of government will be created, what sort of order will be kept, what sort of facilities for agricultural and commercial development will be provided. Yet it is largely upon these things that the success of railway schemes must depend. Whatever opinions any one may hold as to the need for American intervention in 1898, or as to the policy which Congress and the Executive have followed since then, there ought not to be any difference of opinion as to the admirable spirit in which Gen. Wood and his principal subordinates have discharged their difficult task, or as to the substantial value of the work they have done for Cuba. But these topics are too large to be entered on at the end of a letter.

Correspondence.

CANADA AND ALASKA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: Your correspondent, T. W. Balch, states that there is nothing to arbitrate in the dispute between Canada and the United States over the boundary between Alaska and our northwest territories. Whether this is so may be learned from the notes exchanged between the United Kingdom and the United States upon the subject up to and including those of October 20, 1899, fixing a provisional boundary. Here it will be found that the problem at issue involves the interpretation of a treaty made between England and Russia in 1825, whose terms are ambiguous, requiring for their true construction a consideration of the state of geographical knowledge at the time the document was signed, a reference to the correspondence which led up to it, and the application of well-known principles of international law.

Article iii. of the treaty provided that, from a certain point at 56 degrees north

latitude, "the line of demarcation shall follow the crest of the mountains situated parallel to the coast, as far as its point of intersection with the 141st degree of west longitude." The whole region is highly mountainous, and the question arises, what are the mountains whose crest is to be followed?

Article iv., section 2, provides that where the crest of the mountains is more than ten miles from the shore, the line shall be drawn parallel to the sinuosities of the coast, but never to be more than ten marine leagues from it. Upon this ground the United States raises the contention that the boundary is intended to be throughout not less than thirty miles from the ocean, whereas the language of the document is "not more than."

Further, the question arises, what is the "coast" spoken of? In the negotiations which preceded the treaty of 1825, the Russian plenipotentiaries distinguished between the "coast" of the main ocean and the shores of inlets. Canada takes her stand upon the sense in which the term was used by those who drew up the treaty. Is that position so clearly wrong that it is not even open to argument?

Your correspondent says: "The evidence in the case is all in favor of the United States, and shows that they are entitled, by long, uninterrupted occupancy and other rights, to an unbroken strip of territory on the mainland from Mount St. Elias down to the Portland Canal." Why, then, is the United States unwilling to submit its claims to an impartial tribunal?

Canada sought to have this frontier ascertained in 1872, shortly after the purchase of Alaska by the United States, but without success, although Hamilton Fish, the Secretary of State, was favorable. In 1892 an international survey commission was appointed to ascertain facts and data, and the commission made a joint report on December 31, 1895, accompanied with elaborate maps and photographic views. Up to this time Vancouver's maps, made in 1792, were the standard and only original authority, except that the shores of the Lynn Canal had been surveyed in 1881. In 1898-99 the British delegates to the International Commission, including Lord Herschell, offered certain terms to the United States, and, in the event of these not being acceptable, they expressed their willingness to refer the whole question to arbitration on the lines of the Venezuela boundary treaty. That treaty provided that adverse holding for fifty years should make a good title, and also that such effect should be given to occupation for less than fifty years as reason, justice, the principles of international law, and the equities of the case required. The United States Commissioners refused both offers, making, however, a counter-proposal that, in the event of their consenting to arbitration, it should be provided beforehand that the settlements on tidewater made on the authority of the United States should continue to be American territory, even though they might prove to be on the British side of the line. In other words, they demanded that Canada should yield her rights as a preliminary condition to having those rights determined.

The claims put forward by Canada are made in good faith, and based upon grounds which, if disputable, are none the less solid. The issue is precisely of the kind to which

arbitration is suitable. Yet the United States, which insisted upon arbitration in the Venezuela boundary difficulty, refuses it here, acts as judge and advocate in its own cause, and decides that there is "nothing to arbitrate."

R. W. SHANNON.

OTTAWA, CANADA, January 11, 1902.

STERNE'S INFLUENCE IN FRANCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In reviewing last week (January 9) the December meeting of the Modern Language Association, "N. M." says: "Professor Baldwin showed that the influence of Sterne's works upon French literature had been much underestimated." This conclusion would hardly be possible, in view of the studies of M. Texte. At any rate, my point was, that the influence of Sterne in France, being the influence almost exclusively of 'Tristram Shandy,' and leading only to a certain kind of imitation, could hardly be called literary. Of Sterne's best art, the 'Sentimental Journey,' the only direct literary influence known to me, in spite of the many French translations, is the 'Voyage autour de ma Chambre' of Xavier de Maistre. Instead of "underestimated," therefore, the word should be *misinterpreted*. I shall be obliged by this correction—the more, if it lead to any suggestion of further evidence for or against my actual conclusion.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN.

YALE UNIVERSITY, January 11, 1902.

Notes.

Mr. Clarke Conwell, The Elston Press, Pelham Road, New Rochelle, N. Y., will publish directly 'The Art and Craft of Printing,' by William Morris, being a complete record of Morris's speeches and writings on this theme and his work at the Kelmscott Press, with reproductions of many ornaments and sample pages. Mr. Conwell also announces as in press Morris's 'Some Notes on Early Woodcut Books.'

A study of Robespierre, by Hilaire Belloc; 'The Apostles' Creed: Its Origin, its Purpose, and its Historical Interpretation,' by Dr. Arthur C. McGiffert; and 'Through Science to Faith,' by Dr. Newman Smyth, are forthcoming from Charles Scribner's Sons.

D. Appleton & Co. open, this month, their "World Series" with 'Britain and the British Seas,' by H. J. Mackinder; and will also have ready 'Financial Crises and Periods of Industrial and Commercial Depression,' by Theodore E. Burton.

'The Life of a Century: 1800 to 1900,' by Edwin Hodder (London: Newnes; New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), is a popular compilation, occupied mainly with the history and development of the British Empire during the period which it covers. Its record of mechanical progress takes a wider range, including even an account of the steel skyscrapers of New York. The book makes no pretension to philosophical or literary value, but it is likely to answer well enough its purpose of supplying "a readable narrative," and it is, in the main, accurate, though not quite free from political partisanship. It contains over five hundred illustrations.