

[1851? Apr.? Lamar, Mirabeau Buonaparte], Philadelphia, [Pennsylvania], to [Narcisco Lopez? New Orleans, Louisiana?]

Philadelphia.

My dear Sir and friend:

Persecuted and outlawed [as you are] for your liberal principles and patriotic love, I cannot but feel some anxiety for your safety and happiness. In truth, I am much interested in your welfare. Perhaps you will think that it is unbecoming in me to interfere in the political affairs of Cuba, and even more improper to interpose in your private affairs. Nevertheless, I am resolved, at the risk of being considered impertinent, to venture some observations & reflections which have occurred to me on contemplating the revolution which, it is said, is bound to occur very soon in that turbulent Island. Pardon me if, my zeal, I express myself with too much boldness. Your situation, like that of your country, is extremely critical, and every consideration for the truth, for friendship ^{and} for humanity obliges me to speak candidly and without dissimulating anything, I trust that you will not take my frankness ill, and that my language, strong though it may seem to you, will merit some indulgence and find exculpation in consideration of my sincere desire to be of service to you and also to the noble cause to which you have consecrated yourself. I beg you, to remember that the good of others, ^{and} not my own interests, is the only motive which has induced me to write this letter.

The liberation of Cuba from the heavy yoke of Spain is an undertaking of great magnitude--one of the most noble that a patriot can undertake. What thing can be more sublime than breaking the chains of despotism ^{and} giving freedom and a good govern-

ment to half a million people? But such a work is not exempt from great danger (for there are always dangers in revolutions) and it cannot be effected without means proportionate and equivalent to the greatness of the objective. In all attempts of this nature two things are indispensable to assure success: first, money to defray the expense of war, and second, virtue and example on the part of the inhabitants. Cuba does not lack money, because there is abundant wealth in that Island--her resources are unlimited--but as regards the other requisites--to wit--the moral and intellectual qualities so indispensable to success. I am not [certain] whether they exist there. On this point I have some doubts. Vain would be her wealth if the Cubans lacked the principles of evangelic morale and good sentiments of honor and patriotism. Without these good qualities nothing can be done.

The great Napoleon said, "the nation which wants to be free, is free,"--words full of meaning--laconic and clear, and very characteristic of the one who proffered them. However, I believe it better to say that "the nation which determines to become free, succeeds, without doubt, because the mere desire to attain something and the fixed determination to obtain it at any cost are two distinct things." "Give me the ready hand rather than the ready tongue." Consequently, I have adopted the unequalled maxim that no nation can become enslaved that is determined to be free. In order to be free, it suffices that the nation be resolved upon it. It is morally impossible by mere physical force to hold in slavery a people who are sufficiently enlightened to understand their rights, and who have the strength to vindicate them. With the will to be free there will never lack the means of obtaining freedom. Moral strength is always superior to brute strength. The bayonet is bound to succumb to virtue, because God is always on the side of the just and the downtrodden, and he

never permits the tyrants of the world to oppress those whose virtues make them creditors to his goodness and protection. That which enslaves man is stupidity and vice--not the force of arms. It is easy to break the chains of political tyranny. Just give a single blow and the bars will fall. It is not so with the adamant chains which ignorance, wickedness and superstition throw about the understanding and conscience of man. To shake these a nation requires the experience of many ages dedicated to the slow acquisition of knowledge until it reaches the stage of elucidation which is necessary for a free government.

There is no doubt but that the Cubans have a vehement desire to be free, happy and independent, because this is natural for all men, but the question is whether they are or are not prepared and ready for a revolution. I ask, "Do they in reality have the qualities, already indicated, of heart and knowledge-- I wish to say--the understanding necessary for such a contest? Has the desire for a revolution become general among them? Are there no divisions or dissensions among them? Will they work with one accord, in good faith, and with courage and spirit?" It is very necessary that these questions be answered. Liberty is not cheap. It cannot be bought at a low price. Its price is human life and millions of the public treasury. The stones of the Temple of Liberty must be cemented with the blood of its friends. Who shall pay this price? Do the Cubans want to do it? Are they capable of sacrificing everything, even life, if necessary, for the fame and glory of their country? I believe not, and I shall soon tell you on what I base my belief.

The Cubans have very powerful motives for starting a revolution. There is no people on the face of the earth whose rights and liberties

are as trampled upon as theirs. The government of Cuba is, without doubt, the most cruel and despotic in the world. The nature of man cannot invent a more infernal and diabolic system. It is the height of all that is wicked and atrocious. See the inhabitants groaning under enormous and onerous exactions. See the public officials, civil as well as military, lolling in vice, diversion and luxury at the expense of the public misery. See the poor converted into beasts of burden and driven at the will of the rulers. See the grandees and high personages violating the laws with impunity, lording it over the lower classes. See also a clergy, more ferocious than all the others, living off the credulity and ignorance of the people, deluding the populace, deceiving the unwary, and robbing all of the bread which they earn with such difficulty and by the sweat of their brows. In order to preserve their power more securely and practice their deceptions with impunity, behold them persecuting ^{the virtuous and intelligent, suffocating} all liberal investigations, and taking vengeance on those who do not wish to admit their fictitious stories and false theories and submit to their enormous atrocities! I am not surprised, then, that the people of Cuba, tired of that state of affairs, should wish to establish (if they knew how to do it) a ^{government} ~~govt.~~ more liberal, just and humane, and less cruel, despotic and sanguinary. I am only surprised that they have dragged the chains of tyranny for so long a time without arising 'en masse' and humbling in the dust their haughty oppressors. Why have they not done it ere now? Why do they not leap now, like so many lions, on their enemies, and avenge themselves of their injuries and wrongs which their country has suffered for more than three centuries? I will tell you why. It is because the Cubans lack one thing-- to wit--spirit. They do not have that noble disinterestedness, that

loftiness of spirit and that manly courage which always characterizes real patriots and without which no people can acquire liberty nor be worthy of it wither. Liberty is the gift of God to the valiant and the virtuous. No nation can receive it without first meriting it, and a timid and apathetic people can never hope to obtain it, if it believes war a worse evil than slavery, and prefers to live ignominiously to dying gloriously. The Cubans have not yet manifested any inclination to unsheathe the sword, and until they make some demonstration of this nature it is futile to try to help them and to give freedom to them as we would give rewards to children.

I already know that you are persuaded to the contrary of all this. You believe that the people of Cuba are like a magazine, full of combustible elements, capable of being set on fire with the least little spark and of causing a great explosion.

You are certain that a revolution is developing everywhere, and that if you could land on the coast of Cuba at the head of ^{five-hundred} ~~500~~ American Volunteers, the natives, inspired and animated by such a demonstration in their favor, would gather about your standard instantly and proclaim the independence of the country. But as for me, I cannot see any reason for you to harbor such an opinion, for what I consider incomprehensible is that so few soldiers could produce such great results. It sometimes happens that ^{by} ~~[trying to] progress~~ too much, nothing is proved. It seems to me that if the appearance and presence of five hundred men in arms (and even these five hundred can not be organized in all of that island) should be sufficient to start a revolution, what rational deduction could be made from such a state of affairs except that the fears of the people predominate over their courage & patriotism.

and as a consequence, they do not want to become involved in war. If this is not the case, if I ~~am~~ not right, why, then, did the Cubans permit your enemies to persecute you to the extent of forcing you to flee ^{and} seek safety in the ^{United States} U. S.? You have the honor of being the first patriot who has openly and publicly dared to defend the freedom of your country. And how has your patriotic zeal been recompensed? Your reward has been exile, the confiscation of your property, and a high price put on your head by the Government of Spain. If your compatriots ~~actually~~ possess the virtues which you ~~concede~~ to ascribe to them, why is it that they did not support you when you took such a bold step in favor of their rights? That was a very opportune occasion to begin the war, but instead of doing it and rushing to your defense, they forsook you at the moment that you had great need of their assistance and protection and left you to escape in the best way you could. And now, sir, permit me to ask you what motive or reason you have ^{for} in believing that the same people who abandoned you then would want to support you now? Their weak conduct on that occasion should open your eyes to the true state of affairs in that Island.

Believe me, my dear friend, you deceive yourself in this particular if it were possible for you to take a sufficient force to Cuba to liberate the country without compromising the safety of the inhabitants, or placing their lives and fortunes in any danger, they would in that case, doubtless cover you with eulogies and honors. They would greet you as a great champion of liberty and as the benefactor of their country; they would praise you to the skies and sing hosannas to you; but, on the contrary, if you should land there with a handful of foreign volunteers--they would be weak ^{and} insignificant to fight their opponents, [and even] counting upon the cooperation of the natives of the country, I am certain that your ruin ^{and} that of your valiant companions would be inevitable, because no one would come out to your assistance, nor even lift a finger in defense of you or your cause. In the hour of danger the terrified inhabitants would seek their own safety, and deliver you and your courageous army over to the government, and you, for-

saken and deceived by the perfidy of pusill-animous friends, would be hanged as a criminal, and with you would perish the best hopes of the country. Nor would you even perish with the honor of a martyr. Condemned and executed as a traitor, you would descend to the grave without a single friend to eulogize you or vindicate your fame, tormented in your last moments with the bitter reflection that you have sacrificed your life for an ungrateful people who are incapable of appreciating your virtues or of avenging your death. Such is the destiny of all patriots who have attempted to give liberty to a nation not prepared to receive it. He who serves an ignorant and weak people is rewarded with bitter sorrow and eternal shame.

Considering the matter under discussion in this light, I cannot advise my friends ^{and} compatriots to go with you to Cuba until the inhabitants have first proclaimed their independence. If the Cubans wish the Americans to assist them in a revolution, nothing is necessary except for the war to begin, and very soon the citizens of the ^{United States} ~~U. S.~~ will be seen forming in battle array and radiant with joy; but in my opinion, it would be indiscreet for them to go to Cuba for the purpose of commencing a revolution which the natives do not themselves want to commence. The people of Cuba should recall the fable of Hercules and the wagon driver, who, finding himself mired in a bog from which it was difficult to escape, begged Hercules to help him, but that divinity smiled at the impertinent petition and told the driver that before asking assistance of someone else, he should first try the efficacy of his own strength. Accordingly, the driver put his shoulder to the wheel of the cart, and giving a strong push forward, he, with the assistance of his horses, pulled out the cart without further difficulty. If the Cubans would do likewise, the result would be similar.

I have not yet seen any indication of resistance on the part of the inhabitants of Cuba. There is no disturbance in the country. Show me the any signs of an eruption. I can discover none. On the contrary, the country is as tranquil and serene as a sky without clouds. The bare mention of war--the slightest indication of a revolution--is enough to strike fear and horror into every heart in such a way that all flee from him who has the courage ^{and} & fearlessness to speak on such dangerous subjects.

What hopes, then, can you place in such a people? And how can you expect the Americans to fight for them when they will not fight for themselves? As I have said before, once the fight is begun, the Cubans will find in the ^{United State} U. S. ^{and} Many loyal & valiant friends who will give them any aid that they might require. Raise the standard of independence in that island and thousands will flock there. The North-Americans, having been born free and independant, have no fear of tyrants, and, being very prosperous under their happy institutions, their generosity is equal to their valor. Their help has never been asked in vain, and not withstanding the many viciitudes which they have suffered-in spite of the numbrous and heavy penalties and work which they have experienced in vindicating the rights of others, until now they have never failed to assist all who have asked their aid, and in nearly every case in which they have fought in defense of the oppressed, their toil and sufferings have been rewarded by ingratitude. They followed Miranda to Venezuela, and were unfortunate; they accompanied Mina to Mexico and were destroyed; they sailed with Mexia to Tampico and were inhumanly shot. They fought with Canales, Melano and others in the war of the Federation beyond the Rio Grande, and in the end they were sold to the enemy; and now, Sir, in case they went with you to Cuba and should find, on their

arrival there, that the natives do not want war, what could save them from other misfortunes similar to those which their unfortunate predecessors experienced? How could they hope to escape complete destruction? These misfortunes did not proceed from lack of any talent and virtue on the part of the aforesaid commanders, because, with few exceptions, all of them were wise, just and energetic men, but the only reason for the failure of their enterprises was the cowardice and contemptibleness of the people whom these brave adventurers went to liberate. The same, perhaps, might happen with you. Who knows? In truth, I am fully convinced that you will not find in Cuba the enthusiasm and cooperation which you have imagined, and that you will find yourself surrounded by obstacles which it will be impossible to overcome.

You should not infer from what I have said that I am disposed to underrate and defame the inhabitants of Cuba. Such a thought is far from me. I do not wish to say that there are no elements of liberty in that country. Cuba can with reason be ^{praised} ~~proved~~ of having many wise, valiant and patriotic sons who know how to appreciate liberty and who are quick to die for it, but these are few and they cannot start a revolution by themselves. I only wish to say that the greater part of the population does not possess the virtues necessary to obtain independence and establish a good government. I grant that they have all the virtue compatible with ~~their~~ political and social condition, but it is undeniable that a despotic cruel ^{and} corrupt government is not the most adequate to the perfect and vigorous production of the moral and intellectual qualities required for attaining and conserving social liberty. In truth, the character of a people is formed by the institutions of its country. There is no clearer and better founded truth. If

the latter are liberal and intelligent, the former will be valiant and virtuous, and if, on the other hand, they are despotic, cruel and superstitious, the people will necessarily be that also. It cannot happen any other way, because the government and the people exercise a reciprocal influence over one another, and, consequently, they cannot fail to have the same character and nature. One cannot be good and the other bad. The nature of tyranny is to enervate and destroy all that is grand and sublime. The soul becomes debased, the mental faculties of man are dulled and he is reduced to a mere machine or automation. The inhabitants of Cuba are not exempt from these mournful consequences. The influence of despotism on its character is clearly manifested in the fact that while they consider themselves the most oppressed people in the whole world, they nevertheless suffer their grievances more peacefully than any other people while cheerfully kissing the hand of their oppressor. The truth is that they have been burdened with heavy chains for such a long time that habit has become with them second nature. The custom of obeying, inherited from their ancestors, has made a law so inexorable that no one dares to break it. Their religion also inculcates the principles of passive obedience without objection. It teaches them that they were born to be slaves, that they were destined by ^{God} God to a state of servitude, and that to suffer the yoke is not only a political obligation but also a religious duty, and consequently, that any attempt on their part to destroy their chains and better their conditions would be as much a rebellion against God as against those who tyrannize them. What a beautiful condition for liberty! A similar state affects not only the Cubans but also the inhabitants of all nations in which the Church and ^{Government} govt. unite in their attempt to deceive and barbarize

the people by dominating them ^{and} robbing them of their pleasures.

I do not blame the inhabitants of Cuba as much as I pity them. It is her fate. Superstition has blinded her reason, clouded her mind and deprived her of the faculty of seeing things in their true light and as they really are. Servile through custom and education, they do not know the first principles of liberty, nor have they the least idea of what constitutes a good and liberal government. They believe that the lawful and sole purpose of the government is to impose taxes, enrich the favorites, and punish the poor, and with respect to religion, they believe that it consists in obeying the priests, in maintaining them in leisure and luxury, and in kissing the ground they walk on. The esteem as the most precious of all privileges, ^{the} giving ^{of} free rein to the physical pleasures common to brutes, and if they are allowed pleasures of this kind, they consider themselves contented and happy, ~~without desiring anything more.~~ Inured to their hard fortune, they scarcely know that a better one exists, and as the nightingale flits and sings in its cage without desiring freedom, so they dance to the sound of chains, without craving any change in their condition, or at least, without wishing to run any risk to better their fate. Such is not the character of the entire population. I have said before that Cuba does not lack illustrious men whose wisdom, integrity and valor do them honor, and I duly appraise them for their virtues; nevertheless, it is my opinion that if the Cubans in masse were asked the question whether there should be established in Cuba a religious tolerance, granting to each person the right and faculty of worshiping his Creator as his conscience dictates, the majority of them would certainly reply in the negative. And why? Simply because the priests have made them believe that the religion which they profess is the only

true religion, and that the toleration of any other would be a crime against the Pope and against the Godhead--a crime too enormous for their redemption. The political emancipation is longed for by many, but none wants to shake the ecclesiastical yoke *but also in reality the soul and primal cause* which is not only the most intolerable of all oppressions, of nearly all the evils which afflict that unfortunate country. Without the help of the church, with its tendency to sell the people, [thus] leading them toward evil, the despots of Spain could never have oppressed and enslaved that beautiful island. The clergy rob the people in the name of God, and the government with the sword and with chains. And which is worse? As much as the Cubans profess to hate their political tyrants, it is very evident that they adore their religious oppressors, and that they would be horrified at the mere idea of disputing their authority and resisting them in anything. Those who lick the foot that tramples them cannot boast of having very high ideas of liberty.

And now, my friend, do you not see in these inconsistencies or in similar irrational conduct on the part of your fellow-citizens their total inaptitude for a free government, and the impossibility of inciting them to the vindication of their violated rights? The fact that these are too blind to see their real situation, tied [as they are] like tame oxen to the cart of the religious despot, "is the best proof of their total incapacity to create a revolution and gain their liberty by means of arms."

Would you, perchance, compel them to be free, whether they want to be free or not? This is impossible also. Where light is lacking, force is vain. You cannot do good to those who do not want to receive it, nor is it possible for liberty to be conferred upon a nation whose population lacks the spirit and courage to strike the first blow for it. I repeat that I have not the slightest hope

that the people of Cuba will support and sustain you in your undertaking and labor, to better their condition and promote their happiness, and it is to be feared that you will learn, when it is too late, that you have undertaken a task that cannot be accomplished except by time and intellectual development. It is to be hoped that finally truth will vanquish this cloud, and that the day is not distant in which the inhabitants of Cuba will come to reason and glimpse the truth.

I do not want you to believe that I am destitute of sympathy and friendship for the Cubans. On the contrary. There is no one more prompt and disposed than I to do anything that is lawful and within the limits of possibility to promote their well being, and when they wish to have their independence proclaimed and unsheath the sword in defense of their rights, I shall be ready at the first notice to draw mine also, ^{and} I hope to find myself among the first on the battlefield. Nevertheless, I believe, as I have indicated, that unless they do something for themselves by taking some measures for their own alleviation, all of your efforts in favor of them would be futile, if not worse than futile. Where ignorance thrives there can be no liberty, nor can it live for very long even where there is enlightenment without the help of virtue. The life of liberty is in wisdom, purity of habits, courage, and the union of the people. These are its soul and support. Does this beautiful state of affairs exist in that down-trodden island? Without the least doubt I reply "no". Well, Sir, on what foundation are your hopes for a happy outcome of your solicitude and your untiring labors based? I do not wish to blame you for them. My purpose is none other than to convince you that you are not taking the best route to accomplish your noble end.

In the majority of cases, and, according to the ordinary course of events, nations situated like Cuba will have to do many things beforehand and preparatory to the reception of liberty. ~~These~~ reforms are requisite to its acquisition, and in all of them there is none as difficult to effect as that which concerns religion. This is still indispensably required. Before a people, debased by superstition and humbled by tyranny can shake the yoke of their oppressors and establish themselves as a free and independent nation, it will have to abjure all preoccupations, renounce all irrational pretensions, and follow the example of the most enlightened nations, studying their institutions, adopting those which are good and discarding those which are not. In a word, if it hopes to obtain its freedom and support a form of government consistent with the enlightenment of the ^{United State} U. S. and civilized Europe, it is necessary that it acquire beforehand some of the virtues of those nations and place itself on a level with their learning and customs. This cannot be done all at once, but gradually--it has to be the work of time. The eradication of any kind of error is always a difficult task, but it is doubly so when that error is stamped on the heart, considered a duty, and hallowed by time. The habits of a people, their customs, modes of thinking, their superstitions and all the ills of a pernicious education cannot be changed and corrected in an instant as though by magic. They have to be eradicated slowly and gradually, and sane and healthful reforms in all departments, in the government as well as in the church, have to be introduced, almost imperceptibly. All who for that reason wish to liberate their enslaved country, should look first to the betterment of their social and moral condition, enlightening the mind of the people with new knowledges and instilling in their hearts the eternal principles of truth, justice and urbanity.

And should the Cubans continue in their present oppressed condition until the day that they arrive at that state of civilization and political instruction which so eminently fits the North Americans for a republican government? They will never obtain that benefit while tyranny prevails in that country.

How can they undertake an illustrious career while the government and the clergy oppose everything that tends to this end and severely punish those who dare to undertake the thorny task of making the people recognise their rights? Is there no other means of obtaining liberty and independence than by this slow and even impossible system of advancement of learning? I reply that there is, and that means is the annexation of Cuba to the American Union. This measure would put a speedy termination to all her ills, and the Cubans can at once commence a career of glory and happiness.

I present these two propositions, which I consider true, without the least doubt. First, that the Cubans are not even prepared for a revolution; and, ^Ssecond, that, supposing that they could shake off the yoke of Spain, they do not yet have sufficient experience to support themselves as a free and independent nation. Every attempt that is conducive to this end would be futile. Her fate would be like that of Mexico, and perhaps worse because of her greater weakness. Let us turn our attention to that ruined republic. What a melancholy idea of poor nature--deplorable human condition of that nation! Mexico broke the bars of her ultramarine tyrants, but she could not strike a single death blow to the religious despotism which for so many centuries has held the human intellect bound by the chains of ignorance and superstition. She attained her political independence, but she did not insure her mental liberty, and for lack of this, she has not been able to make any perceptible advance in her condition. She has done no

more than change one class of oppressors for another--she has exchanged the repose of despotism for the turbulence and murder of anarchy. For thirty years she has been a republic, and what has been her history during ~~that~~ period? Rapine, desolation and blood. Instead of having been placed on a par with other civilized nations from the beginning, she is still in her cradle launching disturbances of civil tumult; and until now sanguinary conflicts of a most ferocious character are all that have been seen in the country, converting the most ~~fertile~~ countries of the world into a horrible pandemonium. We see that unfortunate nation divided into sanguinary factions, fighting one against the other, not for the sacred rights of man, but for the corrupt exaltation of ambitious aspirants, seeking their glory and aggrandizement at any price, even at the cost of ruining their country. And what is the cause of so many evils? The fault of religious liberty. The country has not been able to emancipate itself from the adamant chains of a corrupt ^{and} tyrannical clergy whose device is "open and eternal warfare against the liberty of the people--entire protection of wrong-doing and ignorance". This has suspended and impeded the progress of understanding, has restrained free investigation, has increased and patronized the deprivation of the public morale, has kept the nation in a state of turpitude and superstition, and has made the inhabitants the horrible victims of their oppressors. What is there then that can prevent the Cayans ^b from falling into the same error? What will they win by cutting the cable which ties them to the throne of Spain, if they ^{are} still ~~remain~~ joined to the triumphal Car of the King of Rome? Even if they could shake the yoke of the political tyrants, they would still have fixed in their hearts their ancient superstition and intolerance, and they would continue being the miserable slaves of the clergy, who would not

fail to keep them in the same degraded condition of the people of Mexico, for like causes should produce like results. The nature of things cannot be changed by decrees ^{and} constitutions; time and enlightenment is needed for that. *

To these considerations naturally occurs the question of what shall become of the people of Cuba? Shall they remain eternally in such a miserable condition without making the least effort to destroy the chains of tyranny? It is to be hoped not. I have already indicated the only and true remedy of their ills--to wit--their annexation to the United States, a measure not only attainable, but one that can be effected without difficulty or delay, not in a filibustering way, because I have already said that the Cuban people are not prepared for that, but rather by the intervention of the ^{United States} ~~U. S.~~ government. You tell me that the present administration is opposed to the independence and annexation of Cuba? I do not deny it, but that does not matter. The people are more powerful and omnipotent than the cabinet at Washington. I should advise you, for that reason, to appeal to those same people, because I believe that there exists a general tendency on the part of the American people to take this matter into their own hands, and all that is necessary to stimulate them to immediate action is to present the question clearly to their sight. This can easily be done by means of the press and by public discussion. The days of the present administration are numbered, and I do not doubt that at the expiration of its term, the people, from one end of the union to the other, will make the clamor for the annexation of Cuba resound as they did for that of Texas. My advice, therefore, reduces itself to the establishment of news papers in Washington and in various other parts of the Union, especially in the South, for the purpose of presenting the question before the nation and

stimulating the people to think and take action upon it. In that way I am of the opinion that it can identify itself with the coming presidential election, and the candidate who manifests tendencies toward the popular will ~~be~~ elected with the same ease with which Mr. Polk was elected when the question of Texas was raised as an equivalent in his election. The annexation of Cuba is a measure of great importance and should be postponed for a longer time. As a measure of self defense, the United States should possess the island, either by force or by treaty (R 288), it should take possession of that island whether by means of purchase or by force, and those who wish to facilitate the accomplishment of this measure, cannot do so in a more efficient way than by agitating the question thru the public press, [thus] instigating the people to take part in the question. This would be the course which I should pursue, and the one which I should advise be carried out as the most convenient in the matter.

I wish it to be understood that I am not attempting, by this letter, to dishearten you in your noble enterprise of freeing your country from the claws of despotism. I would feel it deeply if what I have said should make you abandon the cause, or should have the effect of dampening your ardor or of decreasing your efforts. No great and good object can be effected without enthusiasm, strength, and perseverance, three virtues (no less rare than precious) which you possess in an eminent degree and which I have no desire to weaken or quench in your heart. It would be good for Cuba if the majority of her inhabitants possessed these virtues. I have no other motive in writing you this letter than to persuade you not to work precipitately and fall into errors from which you cannot escape. We should be careful not to take too rapid strides.

The efforts of patriots, in order to assure happy results, should be guided and directed by prudence as well as by valor. Falstaff believed that discretion is the greater part of valor, but without going as far as this famous gentleman in my appreciation of this quality, I will yet forbear running to the other extreme and saying, as the courageous General Lee says, that all prudence is nothing more than abject virtue. The union of these two qualities (prudence and valor) make the real hero. A heroism that is gigantic and not guided by the times nor by circumstances, exposes him who possesses it to the imputation of Quixotism, and many times it is the reason that many reformers do not realize the good which has been proposed by them, and they have been condemned to see the failure of their projects. In truth, my friend, your plan to invade Cuba with a small party of Americans--a handful of men who do not know the language and ^{who} ignore the customs of the country, has much the appearance of running after a chimera, and I am almost certain that you cannot do anything worthy of your character, or which would contribute to the most noble end to which you have consecrated yourself.

In conclusion, I will repeat what I said in the beginning, that is, that you must pardon me for the frankness with which I have expressed myself, and also for having occupied so much of your time and attention with a letter of such great length. I have extended my observations beyond what I had planned in the beginning, and, doubtless the reading of this letter has caused you more trouble than the writing has cost me, and that has been no little because of

my limited knowledge of the Spanish language. If I have not attained the end which I proposed, I have done at least as much as I was able, and I hope sincerely that my good intentions will make me merit the indulgence of him for whom I feel sincere friendship and high esteem.