

## THE ORDER OF THE LONE STAR.

THERE is not, perhaps, a more generous sentiment, or a more refined and unexceptionable impulse, than that which impels men to assist each other in the achievement of liberty and political independence. If it is true, that there is in the United States an association which owes its existence to these refined and brilliant passions of the soul; if it is true that this association does not owe its rise to any base and mercenary motive, or if it originally did so, that the majority of its members have not joined themselves with it from such motives; this association, now become a numerous organization, ready at any moment to carry out such designs as may be agreeable to the Constitution and public policy of the United States, deserves the highest praise, but at the same time excites reflections disparaging to the government under which it has sprung into existence.

It is a surprising, almost an unaccountable phenomenon, that our government should appear to many of our citizens, in fact to the great majority of them, as altogether repressive, and a hindrance. It is a painful and injurious reflection; and as it has led to the formation of a power within a power, of a formidable organization called the order of the Lone Star, we may conclude with certainty that there is a serious defect in our home and foreign policy.

The government of the United States ought of itself, and within itself, to represent every principle of action necessary to the general progress of the Republic and its legitimate extension. A bold and respectable diplomacy, a vigilant bureau of foreign information, a journal which shall be the confidential friend of the Executive, and the trustworthy informant of the people; a stream of information sent in from the American Consulates, at whatever expense, from all parts of the world, diffused every day over the entire nation; leaving no citizen at a loss what opinions he ought to entertain in regard to foreign nations, and their behavior amongst each other and towards ourselves; an undisguised declaration of sentiment on all occasions, at home and abroad, in favor of republican institutions; a strict observance of those natural and moral laws which assert the liberty of States; an active and vigorous repulsion, by the naval and military arm, of every kind and appearance of encroach-



ment, either upon our own territory, or the continent itself; a jealous regard of foreign influence at the centre; more especially of that foreign influence which, by a species of religious diplomacy, has flooded the North with incendiary abolitionism; are not all these conditions and actions imperative upon the government of the first nation and the sole imperial Republic?

We say it is the defect, the want of these conditions, which has given rise to that association which calls itself the Order of the Lone Star. We sincerely regret the defects, the slackness, the timidities, and improprieties which have given rise to that association, as the want of sunlight and of solar heat gives rise to our puny domestic fires.

We have no knowledge of the secret principles, as we have not been honored with the membership, of this celebrated order. The regions, however, which gave birth to it, are not apt to generate principles adverse to the safety of the Union. New Orleans is not "a hot-bed of abolitionism." Had the Order of the Lone Star taken its rise in Cincinnati or in Boston, we should have said that this new machinery was an invention of the radical mind, under the stimulus of fanaticism, and with views of general and promiscuous emancipation. We should have called upon the powers that be, and that are to be, to bring down the full weight of public authority upon its emissaries, and to surround it with extreme and vigilant prevention.

Such, however, cannot be the purposes of this association. It is not consistent to suppose so. It grows, as we have already said, out of a *supposed* incurable imbecility in the general government of the Union; and were that imbecility a fixed fact, inherent in the system, associations of this kind would, perhaps, be necessary to keep up the enthusiasm of liberty, and preserve the traditions of '76.

We understand the purpose of the Lone Star to be, first and foremost, the liberation of Cuba from the despotism of Spain *and her allies*. It is sincerely to be hoped that no hasty or ill-considered movements will be made in that direction. Private enterprises of war are rarely successful, not from want of valor or wisdom on the part of those who conduct them, but through the want of that divine feeling of nationality—that impulse of millions—that voice of God issuing from the hearts of the people, which sanctifies war, and invests its violence with the color of right.

Events are in preparation which will remove all necessity for violence in regard to Cuba. The Order of the Lone Star



has done well to manifest a manly sympathy with the sufferings of that unfortunate island, but it will not be called upon to exert itself openly. The spirit of the people is averse to violence. If Cuba can be secured by purchase, it will be the glory of the next Democratic administration to accomplish its liberation.

Not that we ourselves, who write this, do not claim at this moment, not only the privilege, but the absolute right, of going with arms in our hands to any country, and throwing away our lives in the service of liberty. It is not necessary to have been born upon the soil of freedom, to acquire the right to defend its principles. Every alien who looks forward with proud satisfaction to the day of his citizenship in this, his chosen country, has a right unquestionable to take arms in its defence. No man will dare to gainsay either the intention or the accomplishment of such a wish. The Englishman who leaves his native country with a view to the liberation of another, of Canada, for example, or of Australia, where he wishes to found a new empire of freedom in the Southern Seas, is not morally, though he may be technically, accountable to his government for such an intention. The practice of all mankind, in all ages, has established the right, by usage, of lending aid in time of war, according to the sympathies of the lender. It is one of the first necessities of society that the right of giving aid should be imprescriptible, and a portion of the liberty of the individual and of the State. It is only when the citizen, or when the State, have bound themselves by a solemn league and covenant before God and the face of all men, not to act separately, but to act in union, and as one nation, that they are restricted from this exercise of a natural right.

The States of the Union are bound by a league and covenant of the utmost solemnity, not to engage in war, saving for their own immediate defence: but when the strangers who have taken refuge with us declare their intentions to become citizens of the United States, they do not resign the right, as the States have resigned it in their corporate capacity, of giving aid to their friends. But if the Government of the United States have bound themselves by treaty with Spain, or with any other country, not to allow ships or munitions of war, or bodies of organized troops, to be carried from their ports for the purposes of revolution, it is clearly a necessity imposed upon the Government to prevent it. To do otherwise, would be to declare open war against half the world. But the freedom of individuals is not thereby in the least impaired. If any one man, a citizen of the United States, in a foreign



country, renouncing the protection of his own government at home, shall have the courage and the talent, he and his friends, to rescue his adopted land from the hands of despotism, let him have the same praise and in the same measure which belonged to the heroes of the Revolution of '76.

Again we find ourselves involved in the great question of the age, for Americans, and, perhaps, for all the world : that of the liberation of Cuba. Let us touch what point we please in political discussion—follow it only a little way—and we find ourselves again in the presence of this great problem. Of precipitation, as of delay, we have an equal dread. Are the people of America deficient in that greatest of all qualities, decision of character? Are they irresolute? are they afraid to act when their interests and duties are clear before them? The very supposition is absurd. American will is pre-eminently strong; American conduct always firm and direct; it is the judgment that is not satisfied, and the judge men alone. We are anxious to avoid confusion; we abhor mistakes; we regard blunders as crimes. A foolish and head-long enthusiasm is as contemptible to us as an unmanly timidity. We must be satisfied as to the result, as to the propriety and connection of successive steps, the adequacy of the means, the certainty of success.

Fortunately for the members of the Lone Star Association, there is no reason to believe that the incoming administration will find itself under the necessity of violating treaties—for the acquisition of Cuba on the one side, or of painfully suppressing irregular demonstrations of sympathy on the other. All things turn towards a pacific adjustment of this momentous question. Cuba is no longer a source of revenue to the Spanish Government, and the necessities of that government must finally compel it to accept our reasonable offers for the purchase of the sovereignty. Under the administration of Mr. Polk negotiations for purchase were begun; under that of General Pierce there is reason to believe that public opinion will advise their recommencement. Spain is not the only party interested in these negotiations. They concern the peace of Europe.

Four hundred of our bravest citizens have already perished under the cruelties of Spanish despotism, cruelties unexampled save in the warfare of Asia: unworthy any nation, much less of one that calls itself Christian and enlightened. The men who landed upon the Island of Cuba imagined themselves the allies of a Republican army: they found no such army; they were deceived, and they perished: they ought not to have perished as they did: they were invited into



a pit-fall and torn to pieces in a den of tigers: they should not have been invited: they should not have been received as they were. Was it politic, was it humane, was it to be forgiven on the part of the Spanish government, that they received these men as pirates, and treated them like a band of private robbers? A single judicious word, spoken by the Envoy of the Spanish Governor, meeting these men at their landing, and showing them the futility of their enterprise, might have prevented all that followed: but no; they were received like prisoners set upon a tiltingplank, and invited to walk over the battlements; to fall upon the bayonets of an infuriated soldiery.

The effect of this conduct on the part of Spain has doubtless been more unfavorable to the continuance of her rule in Cuba than all that series of domestic atrocities for which she has been so blamed: and yet *her* folly must not be made a lever to precipitate *ours*. We are not to seize hold of red-hot steel which a cruel foe holds out to us. It is not the age of martyrdoms, and we are not the people to undergo them. The management of this affair of Cuban liberty, which devolves in so large a part upon ourselves, is but one-third ours; the rest belongs to Cuba and to Spain.

We have been assured that the Order of the Lone Star proposes not to revolutionize, but to assist those who are engaged in revolution for a good cause. If such be its object, we can only wish it all prosperity, and desire that it may preserve a sound mind, and commit none of the follies which have depreciated the credit of like associations in other parts of the world.

We have heard very grave and cautious people condemn this association, because it is a combination, a power within a power, whose effects must be felt in other lands. It is said to be too heavy a responsibility for a few thousand\* individuals to assume. In point of fact, however, it assumes nothing, if we may trust the representations of one of its most influential members. "The object of this order," writes our respectable informant, "is the extension of the area of liberty. They will assist any people struggling for freedom, *wherever they can do so, without violation of their duties and obligations as American citizens.*" So writes, to this journal, one of the leaders and organizers of the order. If they maintain the ground they have adopted, "not to violate any of the duties or obligations of American citizens," but to square their course

\* The order, it is said, numbers 28,000 members.



by the good will of the Government and *the favor of the nation*, we bid them God speed.

It is necessary, previous to the discussion of a particular enterprise, like this for the annexation of Cuba, to define the duties and functions of the general government as the representative and agent of the national will. General sentiments of liberty of a theoretic character, ought not to make their appearance either in Congress or in the councils of the Executive. If they consult upon a measure of foreign policy which has something aggressive in its character, they are driven, by the circumstances of their position, by that general neutrality of sentiment which results from the fusing of so many opinions in one governmental power, to lay aside every consideration, except those which arise from interest—that is to say, the interest of the whole people, in their commercial and pecuniary relations, and in point of honor among other nations. It is not permitted to the Congress of the United States, or to its Cabinet Council, either to represent or to discuss general views of a theoretic character. The moment they begin to do this, furious contentions arise, and the dignity and power of the Government is destroyed. Those theoretic forces which inspire a certain life and vitality into the republican system, belong to the individual, and their discussion is secured to him by freedom of speech. Within the limits of a State, general theoretic considerations may give rise to laws; whereas in the council of the general government, they produce only constitutional diseases, and the most deplorable distrust and inquietude. The interest of the nation—we mean its interest and honor—strictly speaking,—and not the vanity of its proselyting spirits, are to be its guide. A citizen of the United States, laying aside his theoretic persuasions, will approach this question of Cuban liberty and annexation, as statesmen approach every question, with a cold and *calculating* mind. He will ask himself whether the advantages of the measure in view are to be balanced by any serious disadvantages; whether the *cost* of the enterprise will be greater than its profit; whether the price paid—so many millions for the purchase—will be returned to the people, as a good investment, within a reasonable term. If the measure is adopted, and successfully carried through upon a basis of pure interest, the whole world and all the people will join at length in approving it. But it is unnecessary to enlarge farther upon this topic. The time for entering minutely into the discussion has not yet arrived; when it does arrive, we shall approach it without passion and without fear, as a mere transaction of commerce.