

C U B A I

PHILOSOPHY OF THE OSTENDE CORRESPONDENCE.

WITH PORTRAITS FROM LIFE.

NOTHING so strikingly substantiates the traditional reputation of Spanish diplomacy as the late brilliant exploits and wonderful successes of that nation in the Cuba question. If this weapon, in the hands of a power so weak and so debauched by the lowest degrees of political prostitution, could so signally defeat the demands of insulted America, represented too by a minister of nerve, tact, and talent, and intimately familiar with the court of Madrid—what may we not believe in relation to those wonderful things recorded among the triumphs of Spanish diplomacy in the past? "The Tower of London" has been read as a romance. Verily it is a reality.

The publication of the Ostende correspondence and accompanying documents presented to the public a curious history. Will you permit your contributor the liberty of submitting a few conclusions, not hastily formed, but drawn from a personal knowledge of most of the parties engaged in the correspondence, which irresistibly force themselves into consideration? The subject is deeply interesting to the whole country; for on the Cuba question turns an event of the most important magnitude—the triumph of England's free negro policy. England seeks to pauperize and Africanize free labor in America, and, if she succeed in Cuba, we shall have the next battleground in our own Southern States. If we acquire Cuba, she will have to fight us in Jamaica. The island of Cuba is, therefore, the pivot-point on which turn four questions of great moment to this country.

1. Free negroism in the tropics.

2. British supremacy in the Gulf of Mexico, South and Central America.
3. The abolition of negro servitude in the Southern States of America; and, as a consequence,
4. The abolitionizing and Africanizing of Northern free labor by the hordes of liberated negroes.

Leaving the contemplation of the laboring classes—the people of the North, let us return to the Spanish mission, the Cuba affair, Ostende correspondence, Mr. Soulé, and the "accompanying documents."

It is unnecessary, of course, to speak of Mr. Soulé's position as a Democratic leader, a distinguished orator and influential Senator, when the Democracy last met in convention to nominate their Presidential candidate. The ardent Frenchman did much to secure Mr. Pierce's nomination before that convention, and certainly did more in bringing the thorough-going State-rights, or commonly called Southern-rights party of the South, to his support. But the great card of Mr. Soulé was his move in the United States Senate, on the fishery question, the very winter before the last Presidential nominations. Every one recalls the excitement at the North, and in the New-England States, incident to the encroachment of England on the rights of our fishermen. That question touched the pocket, and consequently influenced the patriotism, of a large proportion of the people of these States. They petitioned their own Senators and Representatives in vain. Many semi-English individuals could not be brought to see the gross wrongs heaped upon our sturdy fishermen, or lacked the nerve to apply the proper remedy. One fine day, to the astonishment of every body, the amazement of the New-England men, and the frantic delight of the people of the North and East, Mr. Soulé dashed into the matter, in his usual elegant style, followed by Mr. Mason of Virginia, Mr. Butler of South-Carolina, and "cunning" John Davis, of Massachusetts, bringing up the rear. Whoever was within the House at the time must well recollect the effect of the "hit" on all present. Mr. Soulé had struck upon a happy idea. He took up the cause of the very constituents of Sumner, and brought the whole force of the Southern vote to bear on the question. England was given to understand, in the significant tone of 1812, that she must cease her encroachments upon our Northern and Eastern fishermen. From that day, Mr. Soulé became a great man at the North. Letters came pouring in upon him from all directions. Mr. Sumner, in one of his impulsive moods, which lasted for several weeks, wrote most in-

dustriously private letters in every direction, applauding Mr. Soulé, while thousands and thousands of the latter's speeches were circulated freely, under Free-soil franks, to the abolition districts of the North. When the Presidential canvass opened, Mr. Soulé was delegated, at the suggestion of Mr. Sumner himself, to take the Eastern States in hand. He did so splendidly. Mr. Sumner took good care to prepare the way. In the meanwhile, it must be remembered that Mr. Soulé was on the committee which waited on General Pierce at Concord, to tender him the nomination of the National Democratic party. His tour, therefore, in General Pierce's own region—his influence manifested under his own eyes—his eloquence—the excitement he produced wherever he went—and his undoubted success in “starting” that “ball” of public sentiment, which rolled along in so overwhelming a manner to the end, were well calculated to make Mr. Soulé an important man with the President elect. *And so he was.* His power was almost supreme. He indicated the foreign policy of the Government; and having selected Cuba as his own peculiar mission, set out for Spain, having his instructions safely in his pocket, and relying upon the devotion of the President, and the friendship and coöperation of the Democratic Senators. Mason, Butler, Hunter, and Atchison he felt would never desert him; while in the House he had hosts of friends. Burns quaintly has it, that the best laid schemes of “mice and men” often fail. So in this case. As before stated, Mr. Soulé went joyously to Madrid with instructions—drawn up upon his own basis—in his pocket, with Cuba before him, the President behind him, a full treasury behind the President, and an expectant manifest-destiny progressive, all-powerful, and excited Democratic party in the rear of all.

It is time to take the portraits of the principal characters, who have figured prominently in this matter.

First, *Calderon de la Barca*, the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Madrid during Soulé's first movements, and formerly the Spanish Minister near this Government. Mr. Calderon is between fifty-five and sixty years of age, a Catholic, and devoted to the bigoted traditions of Spain. He lived very handsomely at Washington, his “receptions” being considered the “best” in the metropolis. They afforded one of the most certain avenues to good society, and were always attended by the distinguished and fashionable people. He gave good dinners, drank good wines, and the flavor of his “pure Habanas” seems to linger yet around that quarter of West-end. He is a rather

small man, inclined to be fat, with a good head, a dull heavy face, but “great expression of eye,” as *Punch* has it. He was particularly intimate with the *Intelligencer*, whose editors shared his full confidence. That paper was, indeed, always regarded as his organ. Mr. Calderon married a Scotch lady, at the time a resident of this country. He speaks English fluently; kept up with the news of the day; read most of the leading papers; watched the debates in Congress; was under the impression that he comprehended fully the vastness of our country, its power, progress, and destiny; and, after many years of residence, returned to Europe our sworn and eternal foe. Mr. Calderon entertained two peculiar ideas. *First*, he considered the views of the “Whig press” as the real sentiment of America—a very common and fatal error among European diplomats and statesmen by the way; and, *secondly*, he considered *the dissolution of this Union easy through the slavery question.* There can be no doubt that while he was outwardly simply the Minister of Spain, he was, in fact, the spy and agent of England, France, and Spain, to watch this country, and ascertain our weak points. Mr. Calderon was avaricious, and a most intensified social aristocrat and political monarchist.

Pierre Soulé has marked and peculiar characteristics. He resembles the Spaniard more than the Frenchman. His personal appearance is extremely prepossessing. His intellect, determination, courage, and acquirements are well known. The trait, however, which is less known, and the one which was the cause of his failure in the Cuba mission, is his intense personal ambition and personal vanity. This peculiarity has been more than once remarked in the Senate; but the dignified atmosphere of that august body checked its development. In Europe it found a wide sweep, and was stimulated by association and peculiar wants. Soulé became a hero. He was so in a two-fold sense. He represented European and American democracy. He returned to the scene of monarchical tyranny whence he had once been driven, the representative of the greatest republic of the world, and the second, if not first, power on earth. He returned with reputation and reputed wealth. He had the world for a stage, and was performing, before a delighted audience, three characters at one time—the ideal of Republican Democracy in the palace of power; the Representative Extraordinary from America to Spain; and the French Republican defying the French Emperor. He would not allow his difficulty with the head of the French na-

tion to be one between Hon. Pierre Soulé, Minister, etc., etc., from the United States, and Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor, etc., etc., of France. No. It was simply a *personal* affair—a matter between P. S. and L. N. B. He snubbed his Highness, designated him as a nonentity and impostor, and, in fact, succeeded so well in irritating that august individual, that the Emperor forgot himself eventually, and came near having Jonathan down upon France in warlike attitude. Mr. Soulé, thus heroized, so to speak, ceased to place a check upon his inordinate vanity; and, imagining that he held the peace of Europe in the palm of his hand, went to Madrid, and with a grand air informed Calderon that he had arrived.

William L. Marcy is the exact opposite of both Calderon and Soulé, in almost all points. He has the nerve of either, and the intellectual capacity of both. He is a peculiar man, and his peculiarities have so displayed themselves in his administration of our foreign affairs, that it is not amiss to go into details about him.

If you ask one of the old diplomats what he thinks of Everett or Webster, he will smile and pay a compliment. But ask them of Marcy. What a change of expression! They look grave—particularly the French Minister. There is an anecdote going the rounds in Washington, which may explain this. It appears that when Mr. Marcy came into possession of the seals of state, he determined to simplify the usual mode of transacting affairs of importance, and consequently made up a short speech, somewhat in this style:

SIR: You are the Minister from ——. I am the Secretary of State of the United States. I am no diplomat. I shall not countenance diplomacy toward me or the Government. I shall never say what I do not mean, and mean exactly what I say. I shall never assume a position for the sake of argument, or take a higher position than is justified to settle at last on middle grounds. These tricks and antics of diplomacy I shall ignore. I commence with cordial esteem for the diplomatic circle in Washington; but I will not subscribe myself with feelings of "high consideration," or any thing of the sort, when my confidence is gone. When I make up my opinion—there is an end of the matter. When I receive one from the other side, I shall deem it final, and forthwith close negotiations one way or the other. I represent the interests of a Republican Government, am heart and soul a Republican myself, and intend that the administration of our foreign affairs, so far as I am concerned, shall take the same tone.

This plain, blunt way of considering matters, as the story

goes, threw the gold-lace gentry into the most intense excitement. They approached Marcy as they would a surly bear, ready to growl at a moment's warning. Soon came the instructions about costume abroad. The representatives of several of the more influential governments called on the Secretary to protest, and to say that the rules of their courts would not tolerate such republican simplicity.

"Very well, gentlemen," replied the Secretary, "we will see. I am of opinion that the instruction will be carried out without any trouble. I have only to say, however, that, in every case where this courtesy is refused to our representatives abroad, the representative in Washington of such country refusing shall conform *here* to our rules, and only be received in plain black!"

This was a poser. The idea of giving up their finery was horrible to the foreign gentlemen. They ceased to protest here, and no doubt exerted themselves at home to have the instructions carried out.

The state papers of Mr. Marcy are scarce surpassed, and the English government finding their Minister here (Crampton) a mere child in the American Secretary's hands, have taken the "replies" into consideration at London. Mr. Marcy is rather advanced in years, walks with a stick, and looks at you from under his long gray eyebrows, with an intensity which is uncomfortable. He is a cordial friend and a hearty enemy. He never compromises. His rule is that he is either right or wrong. If wrong, he yields—if right, the world can not move him. Yet mixed up with all this is the most extraordinary talents for political intrigue, matured and finished in that wonderful school—New-York politics. His life has been one of constant responsibility and contest.

James Buchanan is a mild, amiable gentleman, who has always been giving way for his friends and forgiving his enemies, until at last he finds himself "exiled," or forced to enter hastily into combinations for the presidency. Mr. Buchanan wants the presidency, and would make a most excellent chief magistrate, during times of quiet at home and peace abroad. He is a bachelor. His person is tall and commanding, and appears to have a good stock of that "Democratic blood" in his veins, about which, in his young days, he was so anxious. His hair is nearly white, and contrasts finely with his hale, ruddy complexion. He has a squint in one eye, or rather a habit of "cocking" it, as the English say. The general expression of his face is one of gentleness and benevolence.

James Buchanan will always rank as one of America's great statesmen of the school of Franklin and Webster. No one can know him without admiring his estimable character and conscientiousness. He is a safe *conservative* Democrat of the State-Rights school. He has, according to appearances, determined to enter the field for the presidency in '56, which may explain why he came into the Ostende matter.

Mr. Mason, our Minister to France, is a thorough-bred Virginia gentleman—a Jeffersonian Democrat, and believes in the resolutions of '98 and '99. It can be said with perfect confidence, that he commands more popularity and has more influence at Paris than have been enjoyed by any other American since the days of Franklin. He has more influence there than any other foreign representative in France. He is a sound lawyer, a reliable Southern man, and has no ambitious ends in view. He is a fine specimen of an American gentleman.

Having *mis en scène* the principal actors in the Ostende performance, we will now proceed with our narrative of events.

Mr. Soulé had not been at Madrid two weeks before he managed to turn the Cuba question into a personal affair, and make himself occupy the attitude of victim or hero of a great question of public concern. First came his difficulties of a personal nature in Paris. Every thing he did there was as "Soulé." Then came his difficulties at Madrid—his social troubles—his duel (in which, by the way, he was right)—his reported flirtation with the Queen—the newspaper and letter-writers' accounts of his "grand entry" into the Spanish capital—similar accounts of his personal appearance and personal demonstrations at concerts and balls—and so on for months and months. It was *toujours* "Soulé." The interests of the people and government of the United States as such, seem to have given way, as by magic, to the personal demands, and we may add, the long-slumbering personal animosities of Mr. Soulé. The idea of "minister" even was lost to the public eye, and at last the catastrophe was brought about, not so much because the question could not be settled satisfactorily to the government of the United States, as because it could not assume the appearance of a "Soulé settlement." He wanted to humble in that settlement his personal enemies of old and early standing. He wanted his republican associates in Europe to look on and witness the humiliation by him of the representatives of monarchy. He wanted to gratify his own revenge; and giving way to this feeling actually at last regarded the conduct of our Government as compromising *him* (Soulé)—as

injuring *him* in the eyes of Europe—and giving *his* "personal enemies" the cause for rejoicing! Therefore he tendered "his" resignation! (*See the details in the Ostende Correspondence.*) That Mr. Soulé did right in maintaining his personal rights, all will admit, and none will hesitate to applaud his gallant conduct when his honor demanded vindication. He displayed unflinching personal courage. But nevertheless it was his own fault that led to these necessities—his own sensitiveness and morbid jealousy of the aristocratic classes of Spain and France. His career as minister may be summed up as follows:

Vanity and personal ambition got him into scrapes and compromised the dignity, and injured the interests of this country; his courage enabled him to fight out of difficulties, and his brilliant talents made the most of the matter.

But there were influences to work at Madrid, which seem to have escaped even Mr. Soulé's keen eye. It should be remembered that two important national elements existed to affect the Cuba negotiation. One was a determined public sentiment among all classes in Spain against the sale of the Island to the United States; the other was an impending revolution. This gives the key to the repeated and premeditated insults of Spain heaped upon this country. The Spanish ministry foresaw the approaching storm of revolution. Following in the footsteps of the French emperor, they determined on diverting public attention from their own crimes and abuses. The only plan was to bring about a war with the United States on such grounds as to give England and France the excuse for aiding her. It may seem incredible to many that any set of men would deliberately instigate war for political purposes. But those who are familiar with the history of Europe or the corruption of political leaders, know too well that wars for political purposes are very common. The Spanish ministers having these examples before their eyes, determined to bring about hostilities with this country, at any cost to their country, well knowing that it would save *them*, and stave off the impending revolution. They insulted us—outraged our flag—annoyed our commerce—held dominion of our own coast. They spat upon us. They kicked us—but we were not to be kicked into a war, and Calderon and his friends, after trying every expedient to get up a fight abroad on the popular Cuba question, had, at last, to breast the storm at home. The revolution came and they were overwhelmed. Espartero came into power, and Calderon escaped as a waiter, glorious in napkins

and pastry. The main difficulties to a settlement of our affairs with Spain being thus removed, matters assumed a middle ground. Mr. Marcy's arguments opened the door, but Mr. Soulé closed it with a slam, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. He determined on the "purse or sword" policy: hence the manifesto from Ostende. The principle of that manifesto is correct, but it bears the evident mark of hasty composition. It is rambling, abrupt, and inconclusive. The occasion and the subject preëminently demanded a great and thorough exposition of our relations with Spain, and the American doctrine as laid down by Monroe. The occasion was lost and the subject slighted.

Mr. Buchanan was dragged into it, through his ever-yielding nature, while Mr. Mason indorsed it, we suppose, on account of its Southern tone.

The silent manner in which an opposition of policy grew up between Mr. Marcy and Mr. Soulé, can not be traced to any one particular cause. It is possibly the effect of two contending minds, each desirous of power—each braced by a determined will, and each conscious of playing a great part before the civilized world. The Nebraska issue may have first alarmed the President. The sudden and unexpected advent of the Know-Nothings might also have influenced circumstances. This opposition of the Department of State at Washington to Mr. Soulé's policy, was first indicated when the promises and procrastinations of Calderon were listened to, and his diplomatic intrigues treated with respect. Mr. Soulé saw through them, and he became impatient at Mr. Marcy for not throwing the brand of war at once into Madrid—just what Calderon wanted. But Mr. Marcy was not on the ground, hence could not see so clearly as Mr. Soulé. Besides, Mr. Marcy has a great respect for the "commercial and industrial interests" of the country, and preferred using mild means with long time to the "sharp and severe" remedy of the sword. But from this contest of policy between the Minister and the Secretary, grew the usual "personal" idea of the former. That which originated as a simple difference of policy upon a subject of mutual concern and cordial sympathy, ended in political hostility. Mr. Marcy's course was plain. He at once asserted his authority as the head of foreign affairs. The position of the President (whose individual action we now for the first time approach) was extremely embarrassing. General Pierce is a highly conscientious man. We do not believe he has once acted without the greatest solicitude for the good of his coun-

try and anxious regard for his oath. He is a warm-hearted, generous, confiding man, of strong friendship, slow to form a harsh opinion of any one and but too quick to forgive those who have wronged him. His domestic character is amiability personified. He is genial and kind, and to use a common expression, is as "honest as the day is long," and we might add, as pure as it is bright. But General Pierce is not the equal of Calhoun in intellect and learning, or of Jackson in intuitive comprehension and indomitable will. His feelings and opinions can be influenced by those in whom he has confidence. He is not cold and selfish enough for a great leader. He has too much of the milk of human kindness about him, to sternly put his heel on an enemy and crush him. He is too anxious to do right, to assume a questionable responsibility. When, therefore, he came between the two energetic and uncompromising minds of Mr. Marcy and of Mr. Soulé, he found himself ground up as in a mill. His devotion—personal and political—to Soulé, had undergone no change, and to this day is probably undiminished. But he could not resist the powerful and overbearing will of his premier.

If the President has a weakness which is positive and unredeemed—it is his anxiety for the *success of his administration* in a strict *party* sense. This is his great idea. Consequently, when he had to decide against Soulé or Marcy, he weighed the effect the decision would have on his administration at home. The resignation of a foreign minister is an ordinary matter. But the resignation of Mr. Marcy, he feared, would lead to the immediate dissolution of his Cabinet—the abandonment of the Democratic organization, and the failure of his administration as a "party" measure. And here, *en passant*, we might suggest lay the great error. Mr. Pierce came into power emphatically the *people's* candidate, but he has conducted his administration purely as a party man. Scarce an appointment has been made or a step taken during the two years last past with a view to the good of the country and that alone. Being a strong "party man," and believing that the Democracy as a *party* could alone serve the country, he has turned his whole attention to harmonizing various cliques and factions which might better have been left to themselves, and he has thereby sacrificed the interests of the *people*. This is the key to many of the difficulties which have surrounded and continue to embarrass the present administration, and it is not the first instance in our national history of unsuccessful attempts in that direction.

While returning to the Cuba question, let us at this early day chronicle a prophecy of Mr. Everett. When, in a late conversation, his opinion was asked as to the fate of the administration and the destiny of Cuba, he replied as substantially, that the Cuba question would not be settled *until toward the end of the presidential term*, when the matter will be pushed to a final conclusion."

"Even to ———"

"Yes, war if necessary," he replied: "and the excitement of such a war, in such a cause, will possibly swallow up all other issues and carry the administration again into power." Or if we may be allowed to condense Mr. Everett's words: "We will acquire Cuba, towards the close of the term of this administration—peaceably or by war."

When Mr. Soulé returned to the United States, he resumed his former intimate relations with the President. Mr. Marcy he did not call on, *still making a personal affair of his resignation*. The Secretary meanwhile continues his diplomatic labors, new issues are made, and new points raised, thus perhaps commencing the delay predicted by Mr. Everett.

It is too much in advance of the next presidential election for an "extra session," or it possibly would be called. There is no telling, however, how these things will result. The death of the late Emperor of Russia may have a bearing on the question. Peace in Europe would probably lead to an attempt on the part of "our Transatlantic Cousins" to put in execution threats, originally intended only to intimidate. Late occurrences in Europe have prepared us to receive without astonishment any new move on the part of the Allies.

In any event, the acquisition of Cuba by the United States is fixed as fate. It remains to be seen if, according to Mr. Everett's prediction, Cuba is to be held back as a trump-card in the grand game of the election of 1856.

S O N G .

PHILANTHROPIO AND PIRATICAL.

Wa've borne too long the idiot wrong of Cuba's tyrant masters,
And tamely ta'en from shattered Spain dishonors and disasters.
The camel's back at length will crack—nor are we like dumb cattle:
Our patient strength has failed at length—peace only comes by battle.
Ring out the bells! our banner swells, in Freedom's breezes blowing;
To arms and up! this bitter cup is filled to overflowing!

Nor pray nor speak, but let us seek redress in tones of thunder!
They slew our brave who went to save the land they rob and plunder.
Around the Moro's grim *facade* the soul of Lopez wanders,
And Crittenden, a glorious shade! beside him walks and ponders.
O God of Peace! that such as these, like dogs should be garrotted;
Choked out of life by Spanish beasts, fierce, bloody, and besotted.

To arms and up! we brim the cup to vengeance and to glory!
By western zeal let "Old Castile" be taught a different story;
Let Spanish Dons now learn for once how great the power they've slighted:
By guns and swords, not pens and words, must Cuba's wrongs be righted.
They've chained our men, they've seized our ships, their yoke around us twining;
Our "Stars" are in a long eclipse—we'll bring them forth more shining.

What pulsing starts from youthful hearts to hear the tocsin pealing!
Their glittering eyes, their fierce replies, bewray the inward feeling—
The hidden thirst of vengeance, nursed through years of mute restraining.
Hurra! that torrent forth has burst, no more in meek complaining!
The "One Lone Star" shall not be far from our immortal cluster;
The Southern Queen shall soon be seen arrayed in Western lustre.

Then, brethren, up! one parting cup to Washington and Jackson.
Our sprouting tree of liberty no Spaniard lays an axe on;
By Freedom's God! our lavish blood shall water it to blossom!
No foul garrotte shall press our throat, though balls may pierce our bosom!
Ring out the bells! our banner swells, in freedom's breezes blowing;
To arms and up! this bitter cup is filled to overflowing!