

THE REVOLUTION IN CUBA.

History of the Efforts of Cubans to Redress their Grievances.

[Correspondence New York Tribune.]

An account of all the officers made by prominent Cubans to obtain political rights from the mother country, is a story of humiliations and disappointments. During the reigns of Philip II. and Philip III., it was officially declared that Spain and her American colonies ought to be ruled by laws as equal and convenient to both as possible; the political condition of Cuba and Spain being then entirely alike.

In 1811, Spain enjoyed, for the first time, the blessings of a Constitutional Government, and Cuba was entitled to have two representatives in the Spanish Cortes. Three years after, the despotism of Fernando VII. was established, and again overthrown by Riego in 1820. Louis XVII. of France sent his nephew with a powerful army to replace Fernando on the Spanish throne, and then commenced that period which recalls the rule of Philip II. Fernando died in 1833, and the nation was divided into two parties; one defending the principles of fanaticism and absolute power, the other the doctrine of political liberty for the people. The liberal party was victorious after some years of civil war, and then the *Estatuto Real* was given as a political start to the Spaniards, being introduced in Cuba with such alterations that the Captain Generals remained in full possession of the autocratic authority. Although the Cubans were greatly displeased on seeing that they were considered inferior to the inhabitants of the Spanish Provinces, they sent their representatives to the Cortes. The *Estatuto* was still-born. In 1836 the Constitution of 1812 was again proclaimed in Spain, and the *Cortes Constituyentes* agreed, after some hesitation, that Cuba should send a representative for every 50,000 inhabitants.

On the 24th of October, 1836, the *Cortes Constituyentes* assembled, and Cuba had in them four representatives. These presented their credentials, and, not receiving any answer, Deputy Saco urged the examination of said documents. In February of 1837 a committee proposed to the Cortes a resolution "that in the future no representative of the colonies shall be admitted to the Cortes. The elected deputies drew up a dignified protest, but the Spanish government, nevertheless, confirmed to the Captain General "all the powers granted by the royal ordinances to the commanders of besieged places."

The news of the Constitution being proclaimed in Spain was brought to Santiago de Cuba the 26th of September, and the Governor, General Lorenzo, proclaimed it in that Department. Captain General Don Miguel Tacon, a sworn enemy of all constitutional liberty, sent an armed expedition against the Governor of Cuba, and the latter, without making any resistance, was obliged to leave the country, followed by all those who were known by their liberal principles. The Spanish Government approved Tacon's conduct, without listening to the just reclamations made by Deputy Valiente, who had been sent to Spain to defend the proceedings of General Lorenzo.

In 1854 prominent persons in Cuba, well-known by their talents and wealth, asked representation for the island in the Spanish Cortes. A Spaniard, editor of an official paper, wrote a paper in favor of the proposition, but its circulation was prohibited by the Captain General. The writer was the author of that memorable phrase, "Cuba must be Spanish or African."

In 1859 another Spaniard, in a pamphlet entitled "The Aspirations of Cuba," defended the rights of the Cubans to send their representatives to Congress, but all these efforts were unsuccessful.

In 1861 Marshal Serrano was appointed Captain General of Cuba, and encouraged the party called *Concesionista* to a new trial of patience by asking the desired political rights. Notwithstanding the opposition of the Spanish papers in Cuba, General Dulce, the successor to Serrano, authorized by the Minister of the colonies, caused the Common Councils of Cuba to elect Commissioners to be sent to Spain. The Captain General appeared in a decree issued by him, in which it was plainly seen that the electing of said Commissioners was so as to diminish the number of real estate owners, increasing that of the persons who were against the reforms. At last sixteen commissioners were elected, and they departed for Spain. On the 30th of Oct. the first session took place, under the presidency of the Minister of Colonies. The 14th of November every member received a printed circular with an introductory concerning "the best ways and means to regulate the labor of the African and Asiatic population, and the immigration more convenient for the provinces of Cuba and Porto Rico." To treat such questions the Commissioners had left their homes and traveled hundreds of miles. The President denied them even the right to discuss on the order of the questions asked, and they had to form four committees to give information about the proposed points. It would be tedious to give a report of the sessions, in which nothing was said about political rights. The Commissioners came back to their country with the sad experience that the Spanish government was more reluctant than ever to grant Cuba the least particle of liberty. Whether to punish the insolence of the Colonies, or to throw upon the Concessionists the responsibility of the new state of things, Cuba was overburdened with heavy taxations, which, having exasperated even those who wanted peace at any cost, have given the patriots encouragement to shake off the yoke of the colonial government.

Let not the American people be misguided by false representations from the Spanish organs, representing the Cuban revolution as an unlawful rebellion against a paternal government, or as a premature outbreak of political impatience. The Cubans are fighting for the American principle, represented by the United States, and every republican nation must take an interest in the triumph of the revolutionists. Let the American people take into consideration that the idea of antagonism to the Saxon race has never existed in Cuba, and that the name of the United States is more respected in that island than the boasted glory of the Spanish ancestors.