

MATTERS IN CUBA.

The Slavery Question—Project to Revive the Slave Trade—Cubans and Spaniards Together in the Plot—Their Published Manifesto.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Dec. 11, 1869.

A bold attempt is making here to revive the slave trade under an assumed name. Several pamphlets have been secretly circulated, in one of which JOSE ESPARRAGO Y CUELLAR boldly declares as the founder of a new journal (*El Español*) and a new party composed of the old traffickers in blood, that the only immediate and collective immigration which suits the Island of Cuba at present, and always, is the African. Frightened at the idea of losing their slaves, some of the old slave traders and wealthy planters have sent a circular to all such as would be apt to join in anything which might destroy the proposed freeing of the slaves, and have just held a meeting at No. 23 Obispo-street, in the house of Mr. FRANCISCO MIGURZ DE SOTO. At this Messrs. COSME DE LA TORRIENTE, *Juan Aguirre*, RAFAEL TORRICES, CAMILO FREJO DE SOTOMAYAR, *Anto. de la Torriente* and JOSE MARCOS were the presiding elders. (Those marked in italics are Cubans.) The result of their deliberations was the preparation of a pamphlet, which has been published with the consent of the authorities. Extracts from this are as follows:

The question of slavery is one of life or death to Cuba; of life if well resolved, and of death if badly resolved. If the project of Mr. ESPARRAGO is adopted it will be well resolved. The principal condition of this is that the owners of slaves receive no indemnity, but that the *slaves after being freed be compelled to remain with their masters*, and that a bank be organized under the following conditions:

Chapter I. The Government to decree the immediate abolition of slavery, without indemnifying the owners; the slaves between ten and sixty years to remain under the patronage of their ex-owners as bound servants, who are to give them the same privileges as when they were slaves, (which was two suits of clothes, insufficient food and very cruel treatment, &c.,) and pay in addition to those between ten and twenty, one dollar monthly; those between twenty and forty, two dollars, and those between forty and sixty, three dollars monthly. The freedmen who will not conform to this are to be banished from the island. In order to raise the idea of work in the eyes of the negro, their instructors (the plantation owners) will try to procure Europeans and Chinese, who shall also occupy themselves in field labors; only by these means the ex-slaves can be convinced that slavery and labor are not the same thing.

But now comes the cloven foot in chapter 2, which is headed, "On the Introduction of Savage Negroes into this Island to be Educated." To quote:

"At the same time that emancipation is decreed, a junta of 200 of the principal planters and merchants shall be formed, to be called, 'The Spanish Christianizing Society for the Free Savage Africans in Cuba,' which Society shall have the exclusive right during twenty-five years to bring them from Africa, convey the title to their teachers and the right to carry them to Africa after the first ten years of the apprenticeship. The free competition in such a delicate matter might cause great damage. The physical labor of these scholars would satisfy all the necessities of agriculture and commerce, and if applied on a grand scale will contribute powerfully toward the civilization of the whole world. Our Government (the Spanish) will establish at the most convenient points on the African coast numerous and powerful colonies to be called Spanish christianizing and ransoming colonies of the savage Africans. If these colonies should not furnish the sufficient number of Africans required in such a case, the Government and this society will ransom negroes for that purpose at Angola, Congo, Bengala, Loando and other places, where formerly the slave trade was principally in vogue."

Now comes another fine paragraph:

"The entire world knows that the large majority of Africans are little better than idiots, and that the making of a contrast with them is about equivalent to making it with a child of three years; nevertheless, if some who are a little bright and possessed of some sense should present themselves they may also be contracted."

This paragraph speaks for itself. The document then continues:

"The Colonization Society will pay the bank \$34 for every healthy African brought to Cuba. The instructors (the planters) will pay to the Society for every African from \$138 to \$170 gold, exclusive of the \$34 to be paid to the bank. All grown Africans to receive \$2 50 monthly, in order to resolve the grand idea of civilizing Africa in Africa and Africa in America; but this money is not to be paid to the African excepting one-fourth to every female and one-fifth to every male, the rest to be deposited in the bank."

The names which I gave above are to form the first Board of Directors, the document being also signed in addition by Messrs. *Jacinto Larrinaga*, *S. S. Lasa*, *Juan Antonio de la Torriente* and J. A. BANIES. (Those in italics are Cubans.)

Thus we see that the generally assumed theory that the Cubans and Spaniards are distinct peoples and possessed of distinct traits, ideas and ambitions, is a very fallacious theory and cannot be sustained by the slightest evidence. I cannot discover any other difference than that one faction was here in Cuba, and the other in Spain.

QUASIMODO