

CUBA.

Enthusiastic Demonstration in Favor of Independence.

Great Mass Meeting at Cooper Institute.

AMERICA TO THE RESCUE.

Speeches by Mr. McKee, Mr. Woodford, Mr. Townsend, Rev. Mr. French, Mr. Fellows and Others.

Last evening the Cooper Institute was crowded to the doors, the occasion being a grand demonstration in favor of the independence of Cuba. The utmost enthusiasm prevailed. It was truly a great manifestation of popular feeling, for the entire assemblage went heart and soul with every patriotic expression that touched upon the rights of the much cherished isle. It is certainly some time since the spacious hall was so densely packed, and that, too, not by curiosity seekers, but by a sterling, earnest and determined audience. Long prior to the hour announced for the commencement of the meeting the space in front of the Cooper Institute was crowded by a very energetic assemblage, and when the doors were thrown open a continued rush speedily filled the hall. The decorations were handsome as they were appropriate. Beautifully entwined flowers wreathed in lengthened strings hung gracefully beneath the well executed portraits of Washington, President Grant, Admiral Farragut, General McClellan and Governor Hoffman. Besides these ornamentations the platform was otherwise gaily festooned; flags and banners were tastefully suspended, among them being the flag of Cuban independence, but conspicuous was the silken streamer representing the stars and stripes. Neatly executed garlands dangled from the chandeliers, and altogether the decorations were rich and well designed, sufficient at least to add a something to the general feeling which characterized the unanimity of the meeting. Stands were erected outside the building and congregated around them in dense masses were those whose tardiness or lack of crushing powers deterred them from obtaining space inside. Fireworks wriggled about in all directions, and when well executed or unusually brilliant elicited great cheering from the crowd. There was no lack of open air orators whose remarks generally elicited much cheering.

At eight o'clock the meeting was called to order by Mr. W. L. McMartin, and nominated Mr. Charles A. Dana as chairman.

Mr. J. E. Buck read a list of names, which he presented as vice presidents and secretaries, which were unanimously adopted. He also submitted the following:

As citizens of New York, without distinction of party, we have assembled to make declaration of our opinions in relation to the Cuban revolution for freedom and independence. The Cubans possess territory, population and resources sufficient to enable them, if independent, to discharge all domestic and international obligations which devolve on every State. For generations they have been a helpless dependency on Spanish monarchs, by whom they have been despoiled of their treasure and denied every vestige of political liberty. Whenever their aspirations for freedom have been awakened by the example of our country Spain has strangled them in blood. A few months ago the Spaniards revolutionized their own government, dethroned their Queen and changed their whole political system. In all this they did not consult or consider the wishes of the Cubans, whom they would still hold as dependents, without any rights save such as Spanish caprice would concede. Against this the Cuban people have revolted in favor of a republic, equal political rights, independence in government and freedom for all the population. This patriot revolution, already maintained for many months, will, we believe, result in the establishment of an independent Cuban republic. Impelled by these considerations, recognizing our duty to favor the cause of political freedom and responding to the Cuban appeals for our sympathy, we hereby declare:—

First.—That we heartily sympathize with the Cuban people in their war for independence, and in the grievances to which they point we find full justification for their revolution.

Second.—We will support the President in recognizing the Cuban revolutionary government, so as to secure to it the rights of a belligerent nation and to give heart to a brave people who are struggling for republican institutions and for those principles of freedom, progress and humanity, the establishment of which will make Cuba a worthy sister republic of the United States. (Cheers.)

SPEECH OF MR. JOHN MCKEE.

Mr. John McKee was then introduced to the meeting and proceeded to make a stirring speech. He said that when he received the invitation of the friends of Cuba in this city to attend that meeting he deemed it not only a duty to obey their call but a great pleasure. (Cheers.) The resolutions which had just been read conveyed to them the importance of the occasion which had called them together. It was that a portion of the American people might express their sympathy with a people struggling for freedom and independence. (Applause.) An occasion like the present involved a responsibility which was not only shared by them, but by the government. In a government constituted like ours the responsibility reached not only from the people up to the government, but from the government down, and it was eminently proper that they should on this occasion express their wishes and point out the course which they wished their public agents to pursue. Whatever trouble came on the country came on the people ultimately.

The occasion which has called you together is the present revolution in the island of Cuba, and you are called upon not only to express your sympathy with that movement, but also to point out to our public agents the policy which ought to be adopted by the government of the United States. I need not tell you that the contest in Cuba is the death-struggle between the representatives of a foreign despotism in Spain and the natives of the island of Cuba. The people of Cuba are denied freedom of the press—denied the right of petition, the right to acquire or dispose of property except under certain restrictions—denied the security of person from illegal arrests—denied the right of representation, whilst robbed by the taxation of the home government in Madrid. In a word, not a grievance enumerated in our Declaration of Independence but exists at the present time in Cuba. The oppressions have for years past given cause to uprisings of the people, but never has the opposition to the government taken such shape of power and capacity of resistance to the armed force of the government of Madrid as at the present time. From all we can learn the war which is waged against the men struggling to give independence to their native isle is carried on by the provisional government in Spain with a spirit of savage ferocity revolting to every sense of humanity. (Applause.) The supreme authority in the island is nominally in the Governor General Dulce, but he is nothing more than a puppet in the hands of the hordes of volunteers, who are the outpourings of Spain, sent to pillage and murder the unfortunate native Cubans. If no other reason existed, we should insist that a war should be put to a policy which is calculated to dishonor the age in which we live. If the civilized world years ago interfered to prevent barbarities being practiced on the Greeks by the Turks, is it not just and proper that we, the neighbors of a civilized community, should cry out in horror against a war which is characterized by a barbarity to which the Turks never approached. The American people have declared their sympathy with classic Greece, with Poland, with Hungary, with Ireland, within a few months past with the little island of Crete—far away in the Mediterranean, with a population about the size of one of the wards of this city—in one word with every people on this Continent and in Europe struggling against despotism. And now you are asked to declare your sympathy with the Cubans. I cannot be mistaken when I answer that the heart of the American people beats in unison with the patriots of Cuba, and the voices of the American people will be raised in one grand chorus of support for the cause of Cuban liberty and independence. It is, on such occasions as the present, easy to deal in general principles of devotion to liberty, and in good round phrase speak of the great ideas involved in contests similar to that now being waged in Cuba; but my purpose looks to something more. I propose to examine what our duty as a nation is at the present moment; what are our rights under the laws of nations, and then to say to the world in the language of President Adams, in 1826, to Congress, "that the United States must still, as heretofore, take counsel from their duties rather than their fears. (Cheers.) In order to show the deep interest the United States have taken in Cuba it is only necessary to refer to our diplomatic history. It will be seen that we have assumed that the right of self-protection authorized us to pursue a policy in respect to this island which we would scarcely presume to enforce in relation to any other territory. We have uniformly held the doctrine that no power but Spain should hold the island—a doctrine which is an exception to our general policy, which has been that every nation has a right to dispose of its territories as best may suit its interests. Let us refer to some facts in our history. Mr. Adams, writing in 1823, as Secretary of State under Mr. Monroe, says:—"The transfer of Cuba to Great Britain would be an event unpropitious to the interests of this Union. The question, both of our right and our power to prevent it, if necessary, by force, already abroad itself upon our councils; and the administration is called upon, in the performance of its duties to the nation, at least to use all the means within its competency to guard against and forestall it." (Cheers.) In all the European wars the

belligerents have resorted to this country of late years for arms and other supplies. The question now presented to us is, simply, will we sell to the oppressor and refuse to sell to the oppressed? If such should be the policy of any administration, I am satisfied it would soon be overwhelmed with the indignation of the American people. While we are hesitating as to what course we should pursue the news reaches us that England is about to give belligerent rights to the Cubans, and that Mexico has already granted them. We have no authentic information; but supposing the news to be true, what cause of offence could such recognition give to Spain or any other nation? I take, for instance, the case of the Fenian invasion of Canada, and the attempted uprising in Ireland within the past few years. Suppose the friends of Irish liberty should hold for six months the interior of Ireland against the British government, would any one complain if the revolutionists should be recognized as belligerents by us or any other power? The policy of England at the present time is to put a stop to this war in Cuba, as it is constantly exposing her to demands by the United States. For every violation of our flag on British waters in the West Indies we have a right to look to Great Britain in the first place for any damage done American commerce, and she is compelled to look to Spain for indemnity. The case of the General Armstrong, sunk in the harbor of L'ayal during the war of 1812, has settled the principle that a neutral must look to the sovereign within whose territories a wrong may be done to him, provided he does not take the law into his own hands. Moreover, England is fully aware that we will not permit a surveillance of the seas in the vicinity of the West India islands. Some years since, when it was intimated that England, France and Spain intended to order fleets to cruise in these waters to intercept vessels carrying contraband goods and men, our government protested against converting those waters into a *mare clausum* and the project was abandoned. Every day this Cuban war continues the prospect of trouble with foreign Powers increases. The government at Washington must act, I will admit, with great caution and circumspection. I am not disposed to add to the difficulties of their position. Yet who will venture to say to them that no belligerent policy of prudence and regard to the wishes of any foreign Power will be weighed in the balance by the American people with what is due to our own interests and our own honor as a nation, while we act within the limits of the laws of the civilized world, and known as the law of nations? The people of America recognize the appeal of a people struggling to be free. It comes from the land where rest ensurined, in the old cathedral of Havana, the ashes of Columbus, who gave a new world to Castile and Leon. Americans will not permit it in silence to be dishonored by the thralldom which degrades the great race on which Columbus conferred undying glory. (Cheers.)

Mr. Stewart L. Woodford next addressed the meeting. He said he did not come with the fervor of poetic words to stimulate the feelings of this assemblage for it was in fever heat already—(applause and laughter)—neither to demonstrate the right or justice of the cause, but simply, in brief terms, to enlist their sympathy as men, as Christians, as freemen, upon this cause of liberty, free government and free religion. In October last the telegraph flashed to our city the tidings that an insurrection had broken out in Cuba. It did not appear to be the result of a preconceived plan so much as a spontaneity on the part of those who rose against oppression. Between six and seven months that insurrection had been waging, and now assumed not only the form of an organized rebellion, but that of a *de facto* government. What was the cause of such rebellion? It was simply the cause of justice. Whence came the right of Americans to rebel against England? Just because they had a right to do so. (Cheers.) They had a right to establish a government. From our own history we had come to know that no government had a right to be recognized that failed to support the interests of the citizens. The Spanish government had failed to give freedom to its subjects, having, among other things, denied the freedom of the press. But the Cubans had the rights of humanity in their hands. (Cheers.) The Cuban saw that while he was willing to take his heel off the neck of the slave he also saw that he would remove the heel of the Spaniard from his own. (Cheers.) It was a grand sentiment. With the justice of God upon their side they had advanced rapidly and had succeeded, for the progress of the age had gone too far that any country that struck for liberty should not succeed. (Applause.) But what had Americans to do with it? Our existence as a free people was a temptation to those struggling under burdens to strike for freedom. (Cheers.) It was a grand thing to be freemen, but there was a responsibility with it, for it called on those enjoying it to do everything for those that were struggling to be freemen. (Cheers.) It was certain that Cuba must eventually drop out of the hand of Spain. The question was whether the United States should say it believed in fair play. If we sell powder to Spain we must sell powder to Cuba—(cheers)—only we will sell the Cuban powder a little cheaper and give them longer credit. (Cheers and laughter.) In this struggle there must not only be fair play, but there must be hands off; otherwise the United States must step in; and by the God of Nations she would stand by her. (Cheers.) Mr. Woodford continued his address, referring principally to the various causes which incited the insurrection, and advertising strongly on the Spanish rule, and asserting that the hour of deliverance was close at hand. His observations were at intervals loudly applauded.

Mr. Townsend, of Staten Island, then addressed the meeting. He was conscious of fidelity to his country, and he was assured that no one present would leave such an enthusiastic assemblage without the conviction that Cuba was safe. His devotion to Cuba was founded upon three principles—humanity, honor and, lastly, our interests. (Cheers.) There was no preventive from Cuba being independent. (Applause.) If freedom were refused to the Cubans at this hour let the word liberty be torn from all spelling books. (Loud cheers.) He did not propose to speak the sentiments of the meeting, but he was assured that the Cubans were resolved to have their independence.

Mr. Townsend delivered a very earnest address which was most cordially received.

Rev. Mr. French next addressed the meeting and read the following passage from a letter he had received from General M. Quesada, Generalissimo of the Cubans:—"Providence has directed us to be free, and the chains which heretofore enslaved us are soon to be cast away forever. They have even now commenced to snap. It could not be otherwise. The example of the people of your great nation is always before us, and we will follow it. Our success, my dear friends, you, no doubt, know, will depend on the aid which we confidently expect from that noble and great nation?" (America.)

Ex-Lieutenant Governor Stewart L. Woodford then read letters of sympathy from Wendell Phillips and ex-Governor Fenlon.

Mr. Fellows, Assistant Corporation Counsel, was the next speaker. He alluded in strong terms to the rights of the Cubans, holding that when America was struggling for independence Spain appreciated her efforts to gain her freedom, and that now, following the example taught by Spain, America should be among the foremost to recognize Cuba.

During the evening the following speakers addressed an audience of nearly 2,000 persons outside the building:—Mr. Algernon Sullivan, Rev. Mr. French, Captain McClellan, Mr. Levy, Mr. McMaster and others.

Mr. Sullivan, in a few remarks, brought the meeting in the Cooper Institute to a successive close.