

SPAIN.

The Cuban Question—Press Opinions—Mr. Paul Forbes, the Cuban Negotiator—Montpensier to be King—The Monroe Doctrine to be Squashed in the Gulf of Mexico—Sketch of Don Carlos VII.

MADRID, August 18, 1899.

Now that the long list of Carlist motives has dwindled from a recapitulation of facts into stale rehearsals of what would but interest a petty village in Spain, I may, I hope, without being called a bore, touch upon matters of general interest—for instance, the Cuban question, which seems to engross largely American columns. It is only lately that Spanish journalists have condescended to give their readers an idea of the feeling created in Spain by the cry of "Sell, sell Cuba," bruited in ultramarine countries. Slight hints merely had been given heretofore of their knowledge of foreign arrogance and of their acquaintance with what they called "insolent interference of foreigners with Spanish matters;" but the deceptive tints and colorings which government *précis* generally have have in a measure awakened the people to a desire to know the exact state of the Cuban revolution, and day by day we are profusely informed by all classes of journals of what transpires in Cuba. We dare not say that we get the precise, truthful facts, but we have the opinion of the journalist spread out in columns of print every morning. Furthermore, I am informed by other means of what the government thinks of the Cuban question—I, e., as regards its sale to a foreign power—and for once I will even give reign to necessity and permit you to have unvarnished what opinions I have gleaned by means of my seven senses.

The Ministers forming the present government under the regency, composed of Prim, Bocerra, Topete, Silveira, Ardanaz, &c., would word their opinion about the sale of Cuba in this manner, to wit:—We are very willing—that is, would be willing—to sell Cuba to Anglo-America or any other country, did we dare to, but *querido mio*, we dare not do it, nor even think of it. Though we are strong to-day, ay, stronger than any party which has had possession of governmental offices since Charles III. died, the simple announcement to the commonalty that we entertained the project of selling the Pearl of the Antilles would raise such a storm above our heads as we could not breast one hour. You would see Madrid people, in our living stream, weeping towards the government building and, perhaps, in a short time, you would see seven Spanish ministers dragged through the streets by the crazy populace, and, Carramba! Caballero! think you we would risk our lives to please Anglo-America, or any other country? Señor, mio; we know all you would urge upon us; we know well what considerations incline our ears to a competent understanding and comprehension of Anglo-American ideas of Cuba; we have traced the bearings of the question to every point; we know that Spain suffers from her impecuniosity; we know that the United States government is well able to buy Cuba and pay a round sum for it; we know also that, by and by, we will lose Cuba; but it is all in vain. To stand well in the eyes of Spaniards and retain our places we must send 20,000 more troops to Cuba, and if they are not enough send more; send all the army, all the navy, then send our militia—our women are well able to keep the peace on the peninsula. The cry of Spaniards to-day is, and always was, "*España con honra*!"—Spain with honor. Why, Señor, neither you nor your countrymen know anything of policy if you imagine that seven Ministers and a Regent can work in opposition to a united nation, when, with an epigrammatic fervor, it pours out such a strain as "*España con honra*." We know that at present we have great influence, but our influence is not sufficient to broach the subject of the sale of a portion of Spanish territory. Whatever party proposes it is dead from that moment. Do you know why? It is because the common people have got it into their heads that Spain, being the most powerful nation in the world, should not listen to any degrading proposals from other countries lest it might be supposed that she was selling because she could not conquer the rebellion. This is a matter which touches our honor, our national pride. The countrymen of Alphonso the Wise, of San Fernando, of the old, of the "Great Captain," must not, cannot bear of such a thing. When we have conquered Cuba, subdued fully the rebellion, then, and not till then, will the time arrive when your countrymen may broach the subject with a chance of success, and the chiefs of the nation listen and entertain such a proposal with a chance of their lives being safe and of its acceptability by the people.

The above is an epitome of the feeling of the Ministers upon the Cuban question, and I verily believe that whatever Minister of Foreign Power who proposes either directly or indirectly to the government of Spain just now for Cuba will not receive the information I give above as kindly as I received it. Much of what I heard I have been obliged to forego, but what is above set down is the embodiment of national thought upon the subject. But lest you imagine I may have misconceived it, here follows a literal paragraph from Prim's organ, issue of this morning, entitled "*La Cuestión de Cuba*." It says:—

We have read with much pain an article in *La Patrie*, a French imperialist organ, which we reproduce that our readers may acquaint themselves with what foreigners think of Spain. (Then follows *La Patrie's* article, counselling Spain to sell Cuba.) Once more we are obliged to repeat that arbitration of any Power cannot be accepted. It is our firm conviction, our provision which we will not forego until we hear a Madrid Cabinet resolve otherwise. It is not in the destiny of Spain to renounce just yet Cuba. Nor is it in the natural order of things, as foreign periodicals have been pleased to say, to renounce Cuba as Spain renounced Peru, Chile and Mexico, and the inalienable colonies of the New World, as England will sooner or later have to renounce Canada, as Portugal has renounced Brazil. But for the sake of argument admitting this hypothesis, here is the solution which the New York *HERALD* and other prominent Anglo-American journals offer: The United States government to serve as arbitrator between Cuba and Spain; the rebels to consent to purchase their independence by means of \$100,000,000, which payment is to be guaranteed by the United States. We ever such an arrogant proposition offered to a nation proud of its honor and of its good name as this? Here we had foreign journals with barefaced insolence offering to a high-minded, chivalrous nation unasked-for counsel concerning the sale of a portion of its territory. The London *Times*, we see, comes out with something of the same nature. What would England think were Spain to offer to buy Ireland from her during one of the intermittent rebellions on that isle? What would France think if we offered to buy Algiers from her during a rising of the Algerines? What would the United States have thought if we had offered to be mediators between the two parties that not long ago were engaged in civil war? The answer is that they all would have haughtily denied our right to mediate or to concern ourselves in their respective affairs; and that is precisely our answer, as haughtily given now to England, to France, to America and to all other Powers, powerful or weak. We say they have no right to interfere with our affairs; we say we do not want their interference; we say we will not have it. Our honor is at stake, and such propositions are an insult to Spain, come from whatever quarter they may. When America was plunged in civil war we forbore to interfere, though requested by France to do so. We kept our neutrality. We prohibited the ports of Spain to the Southern cruiser, the hunter. We did all that lay in our power towards preserving our neutrality. We ask no more from America. As we were forbearing, we ask America's honorable forbearance now.

La Discusion, Revino's old democratic organ, now republican, demands from the government a full and truthful exposition of its mysterious silence concerning Cuba. It mentions that with the 72,000 men, composed of soldiers and volunteers, that there are in Cuba now in the service of the Spanish government, 20,000 more are to be sent in the coming month of September, and fervently hopes that with such a vast sacrifice of men and money the result will be not sterile. "It sums up the position of Cuba as a grave one; that its condition is almost hopeless; that the danger of forever losing it is imminent; that the Justices going on there are a stain to humanity; that the blood of brothers is being poured out like water."

Still keeping on this Cuban question, long ago settled by the clubs and cafés as a subject undebatable, but which will, nevertheless, crop up to the surface, be ventilated in the newspapers and whisked across land and under sea to England and America, let me explain one further fact connected with it. There have been telegrams sent to London and New York about a Mr. Forbes, of Boston, as having come over expressly to Madrid to purchase Cuba; as having cultivated boon friendship with General Sickle, and made himself peculiarly sweet in upper tendom, that is around quarters of the Ministry. Now Mr. Forbes may have done each and all of what Spanish journals accuse him of, but I do not believe that he has done anything with a view to the purchase of Cuba. There is something in it to me especially ludicrous, in hearing a private citizen—Mr. Forbes, of New York (not of Boston)—spoken of as a negotiator to purchase a commonwealth, a large island like Cuba, and this bear in mind, in the presence of a newly accredited Minister, who before all others should reasonably be expected to know more of it than any other. Mr. Forbes, unless I am blind, has come over to Spain on private business. He came to Spain in May last, had seen Prim while he was in exile, and of course, being a man of wealth and position, burnished up his acquaintance with that General. He left Madrid for a month or so and returned again a short time before General Sickle's arrival. When the new Minister arrived Mr. Forbes, who was acquainted with him previously in New York, was on hand, and of course they met as friends generally meet. When the American Minister went to La Granyá Mr. Forbes accompanied him, and though not of the Legation was presented to Marshal Serrano by General Sickle. On his return to Madrid, Mr. Forbes breakfasted once or twice with General Prim, and I have seen him very well received by persons of celebrity and non-celebrity. When I add that I have spoken to Mr. Forbes—Mr. Paul Forbes—about politics and

Cuba, and say that he seemed to be an intelligent gentleman who has travelled with his weather eye open, I have said honestly all I can say of him. These goings out and comings in may be very suspicious. They may refer solely to Cuba; they may not. This private gentleman American citizen, may be a negotiator for Cuba. However, should he turn out to be the actual Cuban negotiator, and not a private American citizen on a tour of sight-seeing, I will forever believe Mr. Paul Forbes, of New York, to be the first diplomat in the world.

La Política and *La Iberia*, two most important Union liberal organs in Spain, have had dreams, and it is necessary you should know them, for they have struck a thoughtful chord throughout Spain, even from *La Iniquera* to *Santander*. *La Política*, under the heading of "Castles in the Air," relates its dream, the summary and pith of which is that Don Antonio, Duke of Montpensier, courteous and clever prince, will, before the present year is out, ascend the Spanish throne as King Antonio I. Antonio is the representative of a policy opposed to Isabel II., as his cousin, the Count de Paris, represents the antithesis of Henry V., candidate of the old régime. Don Antonio I., king by the revolution, the negation of the right divine, of theocratic influences, of absolutism, has been taught by the terrible end of his grandfather to march concurrently with constitutional government, to obey with impartiality the dictates of a parliament, and to conform to public opinion as the popular dynasties of England and Belgium do, the nations of which look on their sovereigns as the palladium of their liberties and the symbol of their sovereignties. The illustrious gentlemen, the Duke de la Torre and the Conde de Reus, having terminated their great task of regenerating the country, will stand on his right and on his left as the champions of Spain, princes of the militia, armed custodians of the new monarchy, live monuments of the revolution and supporters of the constitutional democracy of 1862.

The President of the Council of Ministers will be he who was the prophet of the revolution—he who foresaw the coming tempest, he who prepared all things, he who was first and foremost in it—that good man, Nicolas Maria Irujo, Mayor of Madrid and President of the Cortes. Irujo's vast intelligence is alone equal to the task of forming a Cabinet and meeting the wishes of the nation. For Minister of War we shall have the soldier of Alcolea, the leader in the Seville insurrection, General Izquierdo. Señor Ilos Rosas, the mediator of 1855, will have charge of the portfolio of Grace and Justice, as that office harmonizes with his well known ability and talent. Señor Oozaga will fill the Ministry of State, Admiral Topete must not be suffocated within the Ministry, but shall breathe the pure sea air and the powder-smoke of naval combats, imposing the fraternity of Spain upon the republics of America, and annihilating forever in the Gulf of Mexico the invasive doctrine of Monroe. Mendez Nunez, the hero of Callao, shall, therefore, occupy the Ministry of the Navy. Progressistas, unionistas and democrats, according to their particular aptitude and special talents, and not according to numerical symmetry and exigencies of party, may fill up the other Ministries; the same rule to be observed with secretaries, chiefs, with directors, &c., and ambassadors. Men must suit their positions and not positions suit the men, and in a few years Spain will be the principal nation on earth.

La Iberia agrees with the *Política* except in the minor nominations; but both agree that Prim and Serrano shall officiate only as armed champions of Spain, with no particular office, and that the principal progresistas shall go "to grass." What Prim and Serrano may think of being put on the shelf so quickly can be better imagined than noted. And poor Topete, bluff sailor Topete! to be drowned in the Gulf of Mexico in the effort to teach obdurate, stiff-necked Yankees how to crow milder, is a hard fate indeed for the initiator of the revolution. Sagasta also to be burned! Why Sagasta will kick up a greater fuss than all of them together; but we shall hear more of this dream of *La Política* and its contemporary yet. The republicans, as a matter of no moment, are to be annihilated, shipped to Fernando Po, tied up in sacks and drowned.

As I have seen some very wrong statements about the present Don Carlos in American journals, I take the liberty of making a note about him. Charles IV., King of Spain, had two sons—Ferdinand and Carlos. Ferdinand ascended the throne after his father as Ferdinand VII. Before his death Ferdinand VII. revoked the basic law, which occasioned a war when Isabella became queen. The contestant was Carlos V., Ferdinand's brother, who by right should have been King of Spain. Carlos V. died soon after the termination of the seven years' war, which ended June 30, 1808. Carlos V. had three sons, one of whom went under the name of Carlos VI., the Count of Montemolin. In 1808 this Carlos IV., Count Montemolin, made an attempt to seize the Crown of Spain. General Ortega, commander of the Balearic Isles, endeavored in vain to win the help of his troops in proclaiming and upholding Carlos. On their refusal he fled, was taken prisoner and executed. Carlos VI. and his second brother were also taken, but were released and allowed to quit Spain on signing an act of renunciation of all pretensions to the throne of Spain. This act was, however, repudiated by the Count in a letter written to the Queen of Spain from Cologne in June, 1809. But shortly after these two princes died suddenly, suspected to have been poisoned; thus there remained but the youngest brother, a wild, harum-scarum rake, named Juan de Bourbon. In 1808 Juan de Bourbon, brother of the defunct Carlos VI., abdicated his pretensions to the Spanish throne in favor of his own son, who is known now as Carlos VII., who is twenty-two years old, whose title is Duke of Madrid. Carlos has married Marguerita, the daughter of the Duke of Modena, who is said to be the richest prince in Europe, and who has lately given his son-in-law \$2,000,000 to help him to gain the throne. Carlos was brought up by his aunt, the Duchess de Beira, at Trieste, in Austria. The Duchess de Beira is the worst bigot in Europe, and this fact explains the way and wherefore young Carlos believes in the right divine of kings, and thinks himself engaged in a holy war, for his cry is, "*Viva Dios! Viva Religion, Jesus y Maria! Viva el Rey!*" which is, in English, "Live God! Live Religion! Jesus and Mary! Live the King!" Such is a brief sketch of the "*Nino Teno*," or "Handsome Boy," as he is called.