

"CUBA—ITS HISTORY AND ITS DOPES."

Lecture by Rev. George H. Hepworth.

Rev. George H. Hepworth, D. D., delivered an interesting lecture last night on the above subject, in the large hall of the Cooper Union, for the benefit of the Cuban Charitable Aid Society. There was a fair attendance on the occasion.

The lecturer, in opening his discourse, said that on the threshold of the tropics, and within speaking distance of our own continent, lay 40,000 square miles of the most ill governed land in the world. Discovered in 1492 by Christopher Columbus, Cuba had ever been a rich and juicy land, which all nations had tried to pick. The crime of Spain was that she cared only for what she could get out of Cuba and not for what Cuba was. In 1524 slaves were first imported from Africa to the island. For sixty years this was carried on under the home government, but in 1790, in order to enrich herself, declared the slave trade free to all adventurers. Since then England stretched out her mighty hand and Spain solemnly swore that from that moment no black man should be imported. But Spanish word was not worth the breath that uttered it, and no sooner had she signed the treaty that the traffic should cease than she renewed the slave trade and in less than five years three hundred and thirty five thousand black slaves were imported into Cuba. In 1833 a captain generalship, so called, was established. It was only another synonyme for universal despotism. He had the power to send the most respected man in the country into exile if he chose to do it. No black man treaded the shore of Cuba but put a couplet into the pocket of the Captain General. There was scarcely a boatman on the water or a cartman in the streets who was not a Spaniard, and Spain had organized an army which it denominated its volunteers. These were simply the personified scum of society. They were men who failed to get an honest living in the Old Country. Their sole object was "ooty and beauty." They neither respected the sanctity of home nor the innocence of childhood. The spirit of Cuban independence to-day was the spirit rocked in the cradle of Plymouth Rock and which at last achieved our national independence. (Applause.) As he looked upon Cuba it seemed to him she had put off her passive and servile obedience. She no longer took off her hat to the home government, but said, "Now I will be free or find my grave." God bless Cuba for adopting that as her motto, and allowing it to burn in her heart. (Applause.) In October, 1868, the rebellion again opened. How few their numbers were the audience knew. Now the Cubans had lifted their banner again, bearing on it the words "Liberty or Death." (Applause.) In April, 1870, Cuba declared freedom of discussion and freedom in religion, two things which Spain had never allowed; and, better than that, she declared that a slave should never enter the Ever Faithful Isle." (Applause.) And having done all that she, turn their looking eyes to us. To whom should the oppressed look if not to us? If we are true to our own antecedents we should send our "God speed you" to Cuba and give her our popular sympathy. They had a right to look to us, for America was responsible for liberty the world over. (Applause.) And so the papers had taken a noble stand on the question. The papers were the intellectual artillery in the matter. They told us if we help Cuba there will be a war with Spain. Spain might bluster awhile, but she would not budge an inch. They told us at Washington it would interfere with the Alabama claims. But he had a motto which was engraved on our flag—"Pro Justitia Cælum Teuam." Having pitched into the action of the government of the United States in protecting the thirty Spanish gunboats built here, while they took the poor little Hornet and let her rot, the lecturer concluded by saying that Cuba needs free schools, a free press, free speech and toleration in religious matters. It was not for us to send our armies to Cuba—that was not asked of us—but we ought to give to Cuba our moral sympathy and spend our dollars to help them.