CUBAN SKETCHES

BY

JAMES W. STEELE

"In a free country there is much clamor, with little suffering; in a despotic state there is little complaint, but much grievance."

CARNOT.

"Woe to the centuries without Quixotes! Nothing remains to them but Sancho Panzas."

A. DE GASPARIN.

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TO

JOHN JAMES INGALLS

PREFACE.

A large number of men and women have gone forth to Cuba with diaries, and have, after some days or weeks, returned again, bringing their notes with them. Some of these excursions have borne fruit in books, accurate and entertaining, and otherwise, in their descriptions of life among our next-door neighbors. This small volume is one of these, excepting from the points of resemblance the unimportant items that the author never made any memoranda, did not visit the country for the purpose of describing it, wished himself somewhere else while there, and while he staid was chiefly occupied in collecting—and distributing—the princely income of an United States Consul.

So it comes that the following chapters are the recollections and conclusions, in brief, of some years' residence; the results of having slept in the Cuban bed, and eaten at the Cuban table, and of having been much sought after by the tropical mosquito.

Among their many imperfections that of a seeming incompleteness may seem the most prominent. That the details of the sketch are left to be filled in by the reader,

and something is to be inferred from a few facts distinctly stated, I am aware, but I am not sure it is a fault. It is not a guide-book. Many of the statements made will be politely doubted, or denied *in toto* by those who have themselves lived in Cuba. For, to every clime and kindred there are lovers, haters, and the totally indifferent;—those who see nothing, and those who see and infer too much. I have met persons who had never seen the island, to whom I have been happy to concede the fact that they knew more about it than I did. I am, indeed, less satisfied with the form and matter of these sketches than I should be had I written them some years ago, for then I had quite made up my mind about the country and its inhabitants, and with entire satisfaction to myself. I have, however, so far revised some of my yearling conclusions as to have quite forgotten the several items of them.

These sketches are but brief and perhaps rambling statements of unavoidable conclusions formed by personal experiences, and simply attempt to describe the Cuba of to-day or of last year. In their composition I have not made use of a book of any kind, and have not attempted any statistical or commercial information. Believing that the men and women, the fishermen, farmers, and shopkeepers, the streets they have made, and the houses they live in, the horses, dogs, and donkeys, tell the true story of a country, I have written of them, and having reference to no special locality have set down nothing I do not myself believe.

To conclude, I believe that a certain essential in narratives of this kind is oftener overlooked than remarked. That is, that nothing is strange in the customs of a people save by comparison. The Spaniard in the United States may, and does, find as many things to remark as strange, ridiculous, uncivilized, inconsistent, immoral, etc., as an American may in Cuba or in Spain. All that follows in this little volume might as well have been named, "Cuba as it appears to an American."

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CHAPTER I.

GOING THERE.

IN these days of almost universal wandering, a sea voyage is one of the commonest of experiences. Thousands of men and women, and even children, every year become acquainted with the sensations induced by finding themselves rocking upon that vast and wandering waste, which is, with its deceptive smiles and shining depths, the type of remorseless and irresponsible power. The sailor, taken with all his peculiarities one of the queerest of those mortals who are educated by circumstances, is to a great extent master of the sea. The landsman is its almost invariable victim. Even after the first spasm—if that can be called a spasm which often lasts a week—the pallid faces and languid bodies that gather on deck, and sit disconsolate in the shadow of a sail or the lee of a smoke-stack, rejoicing in the calm and sunshine that always succeed the storm, tell plainly the misery endured in those narrow cabins and shelf-like beds. Mysterious in all things, even the punishment inflicted by the sea upon those who rashly trespass upon her domain is a mystery; an infirmity without an explained cause or a proposed remedy. It passes, and people endure it again and again, because it is not fatal. It has three pronounced stages, gliding imperceptibly one into the other. In the first the victim is afraid he will die;

in the second he does not care whether he does or not; and in the third he is afraid he will not die.

A landsman's acute nose is apt to detect a faint and by no means appetizing odor about the cleanest of steamers. If he is quite green, he sometimes asks what causes it. Sailors, when they do not deny its existence absolutely, and look with an amused and weather-beaten face of pity upon the questioner, merely remark that it is "bilge," and waddle away, and, of course, one understands at once all about it. This is the beginning, the first sensation, and one of the little things longest remembered. For the peculiar sea smell penetrates the state-room, and saturates the clothing, and lingers between the leaves of books, and reminds one of the voyage a year after.

One is apt to enter his state-room, and look about him the first time with a feeling very different from that with which he inspects his room at the hotel. He knows, without putting his thought into terms, that this narrow chamber is going to rock and sink and slide and tip-tilt with him for many days. It is to be his refuge at times when he will not particularly care to be visited and congratulated, and when he will be content to leave the details of navigation to the captain, and the bill of fare to the steward. He is to lie there and listen to an incessant rumble in the ship's bowels, and to the wash and splash of the waves when they rise up and insist upon doing the whole of the deck-washing. He is to see its floor at all angles with the horizon, and his discarded garments making semicircles on the leaning wall. On one side he finds two berths, like shelves, and at the head of each a very clean pillow. In the corner there is a miserable little washing-stand, in and about which may sometimes

be found water enough to bathe his face. On the wall there is a printed notice, which warns him, in case of disaster, to betake himself to boat No. 2, on the starboard side. He thinks he will do well to remember this, though a little dazed as to which side relatively "starboard" may be. He is, by a second notice, duly advised that there are life-preservers under the bed, and is desired to try one on. This he sometimes does, only to be convinced that in case of use it would be likely to drown him.

The regret at leaving a season so delicious as May in the United States, was tempered by the thought that we were going to a land where May could not be regretted; to the home of eternal spring-time, where it would be impossible to feel the loss of that compensation which every Northerner feels is due him after "the hardest winter since 1840."

Nor were we to be taken by surprise, on arrival, by any strangeness of the land. For I had read Robinson's red-bound volume, and Thompson's as well, and had glanced at Furguson's, each of whom, as all men know, had been to the island and had written a book about it. I, at least, knew where and to whom I was going; I even imparted to others considerable information upon the subject before leaving.

We had, in effect, chartered the steamer, for there were, besides ourselves, only one lady passenger, half a dozen Cubans, and a baby. It rained dismally, and I remember the unhappy feeling with which, as the dreary evening fell, I heard the rumbling of the screw, and saw the shore fade in mist and darkness, with all the sea before us, and a long residence in an untried country, beneath an ugly red-and-yellow flag, in prospect. There

is a regret at leaving the land where we were born, not inconsiderable at the moment of departure, and so deepening as time passes that it becomes strong enough at last to bring even criminals back to sentence and punishment.

I believe nobody has ever quite satisfactorily painted sea pictures. I am told that the most successful efforts to represent a wave on canvas have only been applauded because a little more like it than other similar attempts have been. To cause a careering mass of water to stand poised in white-and-green upon canvas, is much like carving a stone cataract. Nor has anybody ever succeeded in describing the sea. She presents the spectacle of an ever-changing monotony. With the limited experience of a few voyages, one may remember her so placid that the vast surface appears like oil, and the rim of the horizon and the verge of the sky are indistinguishable. In an hour the decks will be untenable, even for sailors, and successive waves wash them from end to end. Then is the landsman's winter of discontent. Being a landsman, such times dwell in my memory. Then, after rolling off of the cabin sofas, passengers are often content to lie on the floor, as helpless and indifferent as basketless potatoes. Sometimes, during what sailors are in the habit of calling "fine weather, sir," a sudden upheaval of the ship's quarter will occur, as though a whale had put her shoulder under. There are then in order various shrieks of dismay from the female portion of the passengers, a sudden and futile snatching at something to hold on by on the part of everybody, and a general tumbling of passengers, chairs, and every thing movable to the lower side of the deck. Presently she rises slowly, rights herself, and the regular swing, up, down, right, left,

begins again. But, once begun, the huge gymnastics are apt to be overmuch repeated, and one or two of the grand rolls are a sign for the immediate thinning out of the deck party.

Imagine a perpetual earthquake. Fancy floors, walls, ceilings, doors, windows, beds, and the dining-table, swaying and sliding, oblique and aslant, for days and weeks without a moment's rest. Nobody would choose a residence like that, yet that is what it is to be "rocked in the cradle of the deep." It is a strange statement that after a while you cease to be conscious of it. You become accustomed to the ceaseless restlessness of the unstable element upon which you pass your days. After you go ashore the walls, windows, lamps, and doorways sway and swing for a day or two.

Nevertheless, the laws of gravity still remain in full force and effect. One midnight the deponent hereto found himself, as nearly as he could tell in the darkness, describing a parabola from the edge of the upper berth to the further side of the state-room. When I alighted, it was upon the edge of a trunk that had slidden to that place on purpose. The lady who occupied the lower berth I found located upon the same trunk, having arrived there just before me. By the time we were both fairly awake, the ship was going right on, with the air of one who was not aware that any thing unusual had happened. It seemed as though something ought to be said, and I remarked that I supposed *that* was one of the old thing's lurches. The remark elicited no reply from the dim and white-robed figure by that time in the farthest corner of the lower shelf, and I climbed back to my niche, longing for some means to tie myself fast.

The ladies—the two of them on board—having nothing

else to do, and having formed a travelling acquaintance, proceeded to beam upon the captain, and make that sea-dog amiable, and to require an answer to sundry questions of him. They used to go forward to his especial domain, and ask him to enlighten them upon this and that topic,—questions he had doubtless heard from the same class of voyaging innocents hundreds of times before. He lent them his glasses, and told them the names of the light-houses on the Florida coast, and how far it was to so-and-so, and in four minutes, more or less, they asked him again, having by that time forgotten. One desired to be told what the wheel was for, and it was duly explained to her, and she remains to this day sweetly ignorant upon every thing connected with that or any other wheel. The other was anxious to know how the man who turned the wheel knew where he was going, especially in the night, though she had doubtless been familiar with the miracle of the mariner's compass since her school-days. These two balanced upon their noses a pair of green spectacles big enough for a horse, and glanced quizzically across the vast expanse, holding them on with both hands. After a while they would saunter away, only to return and propound interrogatories as time grew heavy and dulness prompted.

There were sometimes fire-drills, occurring always when no one was thinking of fire.* The ladies grew accustomed to such things, and hardly gave so much as a passing glance at the hurrying men. But one day there *was* a fire, or the beginning of one, and the bell rang in earnest. And these two sat complacently sewing on the after-deck, and when, some time afterward they were told of it, they tried to look interested, and said "indeed?" But there

* The steamer "City of New York" was afterward burned at sea.

would have been two very much less complacent ladies had they known it in time.

For myself, being of the unfortunate gender that is not permitted to ask questions, I used to wander about the vessel at all hours, and amuse myself by drawing my own conclusions. Sometimes at night I stood at the door of the pilot-house, long after everybody else was asleep. It was a comfortable place, with its floor of colored woods and its leathern upholstery. The main feature was the wheel; the central point of interest in all the ship as well. It was of polished mahogany, brass-mounted and shining, and it interested me to reflect that from the moment the vessel made the first turn of her screw until she dropped her huge anchor at the end of her voyage, day and night, in calm and storm, there was always a brawny hand upon the spokes, always an eye upon the little floating disc hanging before it. At night it was very dark and silent there, with only one slanting lance of light streaming out of the gloom upon the binnacle, and the single lantern high aloft before the topmast, a sign to passing wanderers. The great hull plunged forward into the foam and darkness, swinging her tapering bows above the surge, her decks forsaken, her saloons dark and deserted, her passengers asleep, upon a course as unerring as the flight of a bird of passage. Forward upon the bows stood always a silent figure one would hardly have seen at first, gazing out upon the dim sea.

The lonesomest of all things are the light-houses. I wondered if ever I could become so tired of the vanity of all mundane things, so disgusted with my kind, so glad of quiet and peace, so enamored of melancholy, as to desire to go and keep a light. They are desolate even in sunshine. The tall white tower is an isolated monu-

ment, with changeless surroundings of rock and sand and sea. Some of those on the Florida coast stand *in* the sea, and there can come no change to the lifeless monotony save when the winds of a stormy coast fling the sea against them with a force that must make them reel upon their sure foundations. The night, I suppose, must be the light-keeper's lively time. He must have a sense of the responsibility of his position, as he sees his beacon shine afar, slowly closing a blood-red eye, and suddenly opening a white one upon leagues of dancing waves, and knows that his light is noted from the deck of every phantom wanderer that flits by in the gloom. I am acquainted with a considerable number of persons for whose sake I would that I had all the lights on the Florida coast in my gift. They would take them or nothing, and I would gladly bestow them.

Finally, the time came for us to cross the Gulf Stream. It was almost the last thing we did on that voyage. It reminds me that you cannot go into a company of intelligent people anywhere, and ask a question about this celebrated current just for something to say, but that three or four of them will be ready to tell you all about it, while the rest look pityingly at the spectacle of ignorance exhibited by you in these days of free schools and cheap "institutes." Everybody knows all about it. But having been through and over and across it a great many times, I have really grown unsettled in my opinions with regard to it. The boundaries of its ink-blue waters are so well defined that one can see the stem in the sea and the stern in the stream. It is deep, warm, and of vaster volume than all the rivers combined. Where does it have its source, and what mysterious gravitation causes its ceaseless and mighty flow? Why do its tepid waters

refuse to mingle with the others? Whence does it come, and whither go? What *causes* it? It was explained when it was first discovered, and has been quite well understood ever since. The explanations have all been specially constructed to suit the fact. But, it spite of it all, it leaves the impression that it is an unsolved mystery. We know what it does, and the good it does, and what an illustration it is of the wisdom, goodness, and perpetual care of the Creator. I have no theories to advance upon the subject. I only know it is there, a gigantic warming apparatus for one-half of the civilized world.

We used sometimes to discuss among ourselves, as we passed by, what it was that Florida was probably made for, judging from her coasts. That it was hardly intended for the use of man was a point conceded, and none of us possessed an acquaintance with natural history and the habits of animals accurate enough to precisely say which of them ought to be happiest there. Possession seems to be divided at present between the graceful and pensive pelican and the sportive turtle. Sailors are generally of opinion that the coast, whereas it was once a good place for the wrecking industry, is now an admirable one for light-houses.

There was a passenger who seemed to have more subtropical experience than the rest of us. He told us of "hummock" and "pine-barren," which two classes of land left no room for any other save pure sand. He stated that the oldest town in the United States was there, though it seemed not to have grown much for a century or so. It seemed as though this man was prejudiced, and it finally transpired that he had once lived in this balmy region, and been the proprietor of an orange-grove. It is said to be an enticing and romantic branch of agricul-

ture, but our fellow-passenger did not seem to be impressed with that view of it. He said it did not pay. But it is a historic region. Poncè de Leon set the illustrious example of not finding what he went there after, a long time ago, and Billy Bowlegs held his own against the whole force of the United States for fourteen years. And now the Yankees go there, partly for health and partly for material for illustrated articles for magazines.

About this time it began to be remarked that it was growing warm, with a peculiar warmth unlike that of the land we had left. The captain said, in answer to the questions of his two tormentors, that in less than twenty-four hours we should see Havana. Turtles, said to be asleep, became frequent alongside, and sometimes the hideous dorsal fin of a shark cut the calm water in huge circles. One night, a night as soft and sweet as though storms had never blown there, they told us that the light that was at intervals glaring fiercely at us, and then suddenly looking away as though it turned a living head, was the last glimpse we should get of any thing pertaining to the coast of the United States. Cuba lay just beyond the horizon. We crept into our respective shelves for the last time, and one of us at least went to sleep with a vague apprehension of what was yet to come. It was eight years ago. Numerous voyages have made it an accustomed thing. The scenes that were then only in apprehension have long since become old and familiar. But the sense of homelessness which that night suggested was never lessened. The recurring desire to make the last voyage, and know it was the last, has been accomplished. Amid the pleasant lights of home, these wanderings over familiar waters are reminiscences only. I do not want to go any more. To abandon the scenes the

succeeding pages will describe as accurately as it is within me to describe them, I performed a heroic act. I have demonstrated, to the end that the characters of a long-suffering class may be vindicated in me, that the witty remark of the statesman, that "they seldom die and never resign," was *only* a witticism. I determined to do it, though at the cost of a monumental act of self-abnegation. I did resign, and the sea shall know me no more. I am not of the aquatic kind, and am glad our country is a big one to wander over with a steady footing, at no greater risks than those attending collisions, misplaced rails, bad bridges, and other unimportant and common accidents of that class.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

EVERY man has an idea, more or less vivid, of lands he has never seen. It is an image stored in some corner of the imagination, adequate and satisfactory for all his personal uses. Whether it be the desolate hills of Greenland, or the valley of the Amazon, he has no difficulty in presenting it to himself without so much as an effort. If he never sees the original, the picture will remain with him as long as he lives. It was painted without design, by a process of which he was not even conscious. No one else has a similar one. He cannot easily describe it, or sketch a copy, or give it away, and, finally, does not know he is possessed of such a work of art. The imaginary landscape comes mysteriously and stays persistently, the only specimen of a thing that is inaccurate, deceptive, and frequently the opposite of all it purports to be, and that yet serves its owner a useful purpose always, and is practically as good as a photograph.

It would have been better for me if I had never possessed such a picture of the Island of Cuba. But I had grouped the West Indies under a general head, tropical, beautiful, and there was an orange tree, a field of sugar-cane, and a group of negroes each with a hoe in his hand, with a thatched cabin as a centre. It is possible

the scene sometimes glowed with a lurid sky, or trembled with a cyclone. There was probably a background;—a scene of trailing vines, monstrous masses of vegetation, vast spreads of foliage, hanging moss, brilliant birds, and vivid bloom. Perhaps, to finish the piece, there was a serpent, a colony of monkeys, and an alligator. This is the natural tropical picture, and I still maintain that it is what Cuba should be and is not. There was never a place more destructive of a well-drawn geographical imagining. I had rather have my baseless vision back again if I could, than keep the genuine one I have got in its place.

It is true, however, that notwithstanding our preconceived ideas of a country, we are always at a loss to know what to expect when we find ourselves nearing the shores we have had upon our minds for some days as the object of a voyage. I had been reading books about Cuba, and while I could hardly point out the precise pages whereby I was deceived, I was, nevertheless, much misled by them. They may have stated, for instance, that the breezes from these happy shores were laden with the odors of spices far out at sea. I remember that, because what I did smell when I came near enough, was not by any means spicy, though of volume and pungency sufficient to justify the statement that it could be smelled at sea. I also looked to see rising out of the deep, a land that, whatever its special features might be, would give the approaching voyager an impression of greenness and shade, the almost inevitable features of a winterless land. I hoped for more from the blue hills I saw upon the horizon, until, coming nearer, I knew how bare they were of forest, how bald the naked ridges seemed, what a sad brownish-green the slopes had. I did not then know that even

this sickly greenness was not grass, but only a hideous chaparral.

But the palms marked the place as different from all I had known before. They stood in groups on the hills, and in lines and avenues on the lower ground, and gave the whole an especial and romantic character. They were associated in my mind with stories of regions strange to me and to all my ancestors. They had decorated my pictures of Palestine and Syria and the Nile, and were in the background of all I ever imagined of Olivet and Jerusalem. I thought of the oriental tent pitched under the palm tree as its natural place, and their plumed heads fringing the scant streams of thirsty lands, and making lovely and enticing the sterile regions through which wandered the fathers of the human race. No disillusion of actual experience has so far deprived the palm of its associations in my mind. As it was the first feature of Cuba to entice me, so it will be the last to leave my thoughts in my recollections of her. The gray-white trunks in ranks and rows, the stately and plumed heads of the veterans of the roadside and the field, will present themselves first to me in all my retrospections. Every country, doubtless, has these emblematic features that dwell long in the memory of the sojourner. The maguey of Mexico; the endless barrens of cactus and mezquite of Arizona; the rocky ledges and sage-covered hills of the great plains; and the long green swells of Kansas, with their vales and tree-fringes lying between.

The first glimpse of the island was a contradiction of all I expected to see; a couple of knobs of land, as bald as a monk's pate each one, called the "Pan of the Matanzas," because the twin hills are imagined to resemble in shape those little brown, crusty, cold biscuits they know

as bread in Cuba. By the time, however, you have duly enquired about them of the captain, as it is every passenger's duty to do, you are very near "the finest harbor in the world," and find various other things to call away your attention. No one entering the narrow strait of green water into the harbor of Havana for the first time, realizes the striking peculiarity of the situation that occurs to him very prominently afterward. You are only ninety miles from the winking light-houses and sandy shore of Florida, but you have entered dominions as foreign, as different, as full of strangeness, as though you had sailed around the world to find them.

A low-lying city of parti-colored architecture, whose walls are red, blue, green, and yellow, lies before you; a city in which there is not a chimney, a cooking-stove, a hotel-elevator, a four-story house, or a sidewalk three feet wide, and yet a city of near three hundred thousand souls. I may as well proceed from this, and remark also that there are no glass windows, and not a night-latch in the place, nor a hair mattress or a carpeted room. When, after a bustle and strife and competitive swearing unparalleled, you get your baggage down over the side by a line, and yourself and your belongings ashore in a crazy and comfortless boat, you wonder when you are to emerge from the maze of what you take to be alleys and by-ways and enter the open street. But you finally discover that these alleys and by-ways *are* the streets, and deemed magnificent avenues.

It is not far from your own country, it is true, but it is not near enough for anybody to have learned your language. Nor can you discover any American modes and fashions. When I went to Cuba, "peg-top" pantaloons were as things lost and forgotten in the mists of years

with us, and we had just begun in the important matter of long-tailed coats. I remember how queer seemed a whole city-full of people wearing pantaloons that would have held many pairs of such legs as seemed common, and coats that displayed in the cut of their skirts a scant conception by the tailor of the geography of an important part of the wearer's person.

Strange-looking people I found them at first sight, and I lived many months in the island before I became accustomed to their faces. To the last I could not tell whether to regard it as a good or bad type of physiognomy, though I concluded in a short time that they were at least not the faces of friends and brethren of the Yankee, or of kindred and bosom friends of mine. Turning from faces to figures I am equally puzzled. The whites of Cuba are Spaniards of old Spain, or Cubans, sons of the soil, very much differing from each other in person and political belief, yet alike in the general characteristics which come of blood and race. It is not a great matter, but if any stranger can finally become accustomed to the long, brown, skinny hands of the Cuban, with the nails of extraordinary length, trimmed to points like birds' claws, he will succeed better than I ever did in paying no regard to small things.

Among first impressions, I can mention no more striking item than that disagreeable feature of a human habitation, an iron-barred window. You see them on every hand. They are all so. Jails and lunatic asylums are seldom visited except from necessity, or a very peculiar kind of curiosity. They are avoided whenever it is possible to do so, if only from a feeling that one may come to them soon enough any way. We are at least not liable to enter them unawares, and imagine we are in a

friend's house or a hotel. But here every window is barred from top to bottom. It is so in the dwelling, the mercantile house, the hotel, everywhere. The paneless, cheerless openings to the sunshine and air seem the homeliest necessities of tropical life, and only habit after a while relieves you of the thought, as you awake in the night and see the bars of your cage between you and the outer light, "I wonder what I am in for?"

One who is of the most modern of peoples just across the Gulf Stream, now finds himself in the midst of those genuine Bourbons, "who never learn, and never forget." In an hour you may see more ancient things in the common uses of life than you will in Cairo. You will observe that the horses are all little and the carts the biggest and clumsiest of their kind. You will be compelled to remark that while the sidewalks are little ledges of stone upon which two men cannot walk together, every third man you meet is carrying something, and the fat local washwoman comes bearing down upon you with a basket four feet wide upon her head. You will be led to imagine that there is, by comparison with this, a spruce and green newness hanging about the oldest town you ever saw in the United States. You fancy that you see here a beginning, far advanced, of the process by which the cities of the ancient world were gradually covered up by layers and strata of refuse, so that they have to be dug down to by the searcher after antiquities.

All this you may quietly cogitate upon until you see your first volante. Then you will realize that you are not in any of the ancient places, and that this is very Cuba. For the volante is the sole and only Cuban invention. It is a cross between a mule-litter and a wheelbarrow run backward, and possesses the great advantages

of both. It is not patented, or especially protected by law, or forbidden to be exported. There are no societies, though there ought to be, for its gradual suppression as a horse-killer. The remarkable feature of it is attenuation. It is a vehicular review, a procession on wheels. It may be said to be several moments in passing a given point. In many streets it cannot be turned for want of room, and timely decrees have been issued by a paternal government forbidding the attempt. When there is a purpose in the mind of the driver to turn a certain corner, he drives past, stops, wheels majestically on a pivot, and grazes opposite walls with the wheels and his horse's nose.

If you do not carefully bear in mind that you are still hanging upon the verge of America, you can easily imagine yourself in Seville or Granada. There are numberless houses that to all appearances belong there. There are huge doorways flanked by pillars and surmounted by ponderous lintels, and opening upon open, rambling, paved courts. There are open arches, and balconies, and an indescribable air of decay about old-fashioned and crumbling decorations. Besides, it is a profoundly dirty city. A variety of costumes, which, though they may have little of the picturesque about them, and attract only a passing glance, yet serve to give emphasis to the strangeness. There are stockingless feet thrust into canvas shoes, remarkable trousers, blue and scarlet caps, and things suggestive of the Spanish peasant in all his Catalonian and Biscayan varieties. There are the rounded shoulders, wide chest, and bandy legs the laboring Spaniard is apt to have, and which place him in strong contrast with the generally storky and attenuated Cuban. On all sides you hear a language very plenti-

fully interspersed with lusty *carambas*, or something a shade wickeder, and songs that may be like those sung by the Troubadours, and, if they are, you are glad the Troubadours are dead. The mules, knee-sprung and toiling, are decorated with bells and tassels, and, as is evident, get more thwacks than oats, after the Spanish fashion.

As you wander around with a feeling creeping over you that you wish you had not come, you encounter odd bits of ancient and battered wall, with the remains of bartizan and parapet still visible in decay, overgrown with ivy and ferns. A long time ago, these were the defense and pride of the walled city of Havana. There is a huge and dismantled church now used as a custom-house store-room, but in its day a pretentious structure, desecrated and rendered unfit for holy uses by having been used as a stable by the irreverent English during their occupation of the place. There is another church, where you may see a small, square stone tablet in the wall, behind which are said to lie the bones of Columbus. There is an unsatisfactory uncertainty about it now, as well as a church quarrel, for they have found the tomb and coffin of the renowned explorer in another church, upon the island where he died and was buried. However, it is of no consequence. He was the man, wherever he lies, who, with the genius and daring to cross an unknown sea and discover a world, with a crew of sailors who believed they were constantly in danger of getting too near the edge and sliding off, yet died without knowing what he had discovered, or even that Cuba was an island. Cervantes and Columbus are the two great men of Spain. There is a statue of one or the other, or both, in every plaza on the island. Yet

one of them was not a Spaniard, and the final resting-place of the renowned author of "Don Quixote" no man knoweth.

It is impossible to avoid the impression, during the first few days, that the weather will surely change. Perhaps you left the snow falling beautifully in the North, and a nor'easter howling, and it is difficult to realize that any thing so cutting and powerful can have no effect except within limits that seem disproportionately small. There is something new, and not agreeable, in your sense of the untimely heat, and the air that never felt the purifying touch of frost seems to you not quite fit for human breathing. The smells assail you, and, while they are not of Araby, yet seem to have no definite place in any catalogue known to you. In the huge and bare apartment in the hotel in which you are to begin to learn to sleep in a Cuban bed, you gaze despairingly into trunks that contain nothing you can wear. Your boots hurt you, and seem to make a noise like the tramp of a troop of cavalry over a bridge as you pace the tiled floors. In your total unlikeness and inhability to all your surroundings, it requires some degree of self-respect not to begin to regard yourself as a monstrosity. You have the idea that the natives are thinking you a fair specimen from the barbarous hordes of the Arctic Circle. The cries of the street fall upon your ear, and cause within you a disagreeable apprehension that some one is being murdered. But it is only one who sells eggs.

In the morning the breakfast hour eludes you, not because it is too early, but because it is too late. Ere it comes you feel that you are likely to starve. This is at first. Afterward it becomes, like all other breakfasts with reference to your habits, quite early enough. When at

last the hour arrives, very nearly a New York lunch-time, there is nothing to eat that ever you ate before. The cut-glass before you contains oil, and the first dish you taste, and every one that comes after, has been cooked in the same. There is also, perchance, a spice of the delightful vegetable that, as is said, every thing Spanish smells of. There is no butter, and will never be; no fresh bread, and none of any kind that can be bitten or broken. There is no use in trying to change any of these things, for it is not a country favorable to reforms. "Pies an' cakes," and the long array of things that suffer under the easy and general accusation of being "indigestible" in the United States, and are long since incorporated in the phraseology of your country, are here unknown. A few years' residence in Cuba will give you "a realizing sense" of how good they are. But, meantime, you may partially comfort yourself with the idea that people are quite as bilious here as elsewhere, notwithstanding the deprivation.

One essential item of daily comfort and necessity will call for the pilgrim's serious attention ere he is safely through the first twenty-four hours,—the bed he is to sleep in. There are those who like it, but I regard it, and have always, as too thin. It is merely a sheet of linen stretched as tight as a drum-head between four posts. A couple of sheets and a very undowny pillow complete the luxurious couch. But the bed is nothing, as you learn after a while,—nothing comparatively. It is the mosquito net that is essential. When, in the stillness of the night you hear the hum of the gathering hosts, you are disposed to be quite content with any thing that is inside the net. If you are inclined to entomology, you may easily learn that this is no ordinary mosquito, and that, besides other in-

teresting characteristics, he has stripes upon his legs that you can count.

There are parks in Havana. They mention them often, and speak of them with pride. There are in these, statues of Columbus and Cervantes, some artful little trees, a fountain or two, and some dusty walks. They are the barest and dustiest efforts after pleasure-grounds ever made. There are hardly ten yards of shade, unless it be the shadow of a building, and there is no green grass or any thing that looks or feels cool. It is an interesting fact that the Spaniard hates trees, and after an indiscriminate slaughter of them in all regions he has ever occupied, they decline to grow for him when he plants them in a park. Yet, it is a climate that has hardly a vicissitude. The whole year is summer-time, and the soil is rich beyond any other. I do not know why the places of resort in a land where life might be passed out of doors, should depend for their attractiveness upon gas-light and a crowd. The queen of the tropics is essentially a sad and lonesome city, though as rich, as frivolous, and as wicked, as was Pompeii.

There are essentials in which all the cities of Cuba are alike. This will, perhaps, appear in future chapters. There are other respects in which the city of Havana is unique. Representatives of every race and clime may be found there, and the flags of every nation float in her harbor. The streets are as busy as Babel, and business has been found so remunerative that her citizens are the most extravagant, as a class, in the world. But nothing has changed in the least degree the ancient Spanish character; nothing ever will. Individuality is the strong characteristic of the Latin, the Chinaman, and the American Indian.

The bay of Havana almost is, as they are fond of saying, the finest in the world. It lies in the figure of a man's hand, the opening at the wrist, and the fingers extending in all directions. The anchorage is good, and the water deep and nasty. A canal was begun a long time ago that, when finished, will allow a current to pass through the bay, and mitigate or banish the perpetual scourge of yellow fever. But it was never finished, and will never be. In all the magnificent haven there is not a landing-pier, quay, or dock, or a decent landing. All vessels, except small schooners under the Spanish flag, load and unload in the stream. It is not deemed prudent to permit foreign vessels to come too near. No one but a Spaniard may engage in the occupation of lightering, or loading and unloading vessels, and if there were quays, this occupation and its attendant fees would be lost. The government stands in this representative foreign capital in the position of "hands off," and warns all mankind that she does not propose to take any risks of foreign contamination.

Sunset is the hour for closing business at Moro Castle, and no matter what storms may be brooding outside, no vessel may come in until the following day. This is an ancient regulation of the place, without regard to the fact that a harbor is, in a certain sense, the property of the world, not to be closed like a shop when the owner retires. Parallel with this is the fact that, after nigh three hundred years' possession, the Spanish government does not own a custom-house building on the island, or any others, save the "palaces" and jails, and a dilapidated barracks, and a hospital or two. Moro Castle carries the only light-house, so far as I ever heard, upon a coast indented with innumerable bays and lined with

shoals. The old times, the ancient slowness, the time-honored inefficiency, are visible everywhere. Sick soldiers beg in the streets. Ragged battalions of boy recruits come over from Spain, hatless, shoeless, and destitute. And yet, military display is a passion, and the Cubans pay twenty-four millions a year for the support of an army to keep them on the under side.

But everybody enjoys himself in Havana. Laziness is natural, universal, and reputable. The avoidance of heat, worry, work, and perspiration, and good judgment as to the shadiest side of every way of life, are the essentials of tropical happiness. Clothing is airy, and the body at ease, through the absence of the bundlings and wraps necessary where the snow flies. The necessity for manual labor is a disgrace and misfortune combined. *Los negros* were designed for that, and the white is expected to see it done, and be the beneficiary. There is no other city that has so many youth engaged exclusively in smoking paper cigars and fondling canes, to whom life is a dream, and personal adornment the sole ambition. Foppery is so common that it does not exist, indolence so natural that it excites no remark, and ambition and endeavor are follies.

How tiresome it grows! These are not those of whom the kings of men will ever come. It is a people of smiles, glances, easy talk, time-killing, dilettante. Except those who are obliged to work, and they are beneath consideration.

CHAPTER III.

IN GENERAL.

THERE are those who, in a general way, seem to have got all the tropics classed under one head, as I had. Either Brazil or Central Africa stands for and represents the whole. This is the result of those pictures, of domestic manufacture, before referred to. Afterward, they are apt to take the country they have visited and personally inspected, to judge the others by,—as I do. If I now hear any remarkable stories of forests, heat, birds, turtles, alligators, snakes, and monkeys, I hear with a sad doubt,—unexpressed. There is only one thing I unhesitatingly believe, and that is the story the bronzed wanderer may tell about the ways of a cyclone. I have seen that. The wind, I acquiesce in.

I hazard the statement, to begin with, that Cuba is, so far as the face of the land is concerned, a very commonplace region. The commonness and tameness begin just out of Havana, and extend, as far as my observation does, throughout the island. The only feature that saves it from an entire lack of the picturesque, is the palm. For, as already stated at some length, mere heat is not picturesque, nor is rain in vast quantities, and a western cornfield in the full glory of waving blade and plume and tassel, is a more beautiful thing than a cane-field. You may wait patiently and long for the train to pass through

a tropical forest, but often as you may fancy that now it is entering the bushy outskirts, and skirting the preliminary brush, it never does. You begin to understand, after a while, that the country which needs it most, has not even shade. There are hill-sides more or less bare and rocky, such as you may find even in New Hampshire. There are dells and depressions, which may contain a little water and some coarse grass. There are trees, such as a man from Indiana would describe as "bresh." There are cultivated fields, in which the growing vegetables do not seem likely ever to become premium turnips and mammoth beets, and others, in which the corn-stalks look like mementoes of a Kansas drouth. There are patches of woodland, in the whole extent of which could not be found what they would call in Maine a saw-log. The chaparral is low, tangled, and thorny. Woods, in Cuba, mean nothing more than an impenetrable thicket.

Nor is it the land of rural wealth and comfort, as we understand the term, notwithstanding the prolific soil and plentiful rains. The total want of the appearance of it is impressive. The farmer lives in a cabin of the rudest construction, and is himself as rude and poor as his dwelling. Those who are able to recall the cuts in the school geographies of twenty years ago, may possibly remember the representations of certain little thatched huts, whose roofs looked very much like a last year's hayrick. In front were depicted some naked little negroes, and in the background two or three palms. These were graphic pictures, and the very same may be seen to-day. They are the dwellings of the Cuban farmer and his family. White houses, hedges, blooming plants, green grass, smiling fields, are unknown. Any thing that looks like home is wanting in the landscape. I should con-

clude that farming in Cuba did not pay. If there is any money in it, it is not expended upon luxury. There are a few people around these wretched *sitios*, and they gave me the idea of serfs. Their hats are bad, their pataloons are shabby, and their faces are seamed, worn, hard, and hopeless. In a land celebrated for its easily acquired fortunes, the farmer is universally ignorant, invariably poor. He may not be unhappy, for he is of a class to whom a condition of semi-wretchedness has been for generations an accustomed thing. He is used to hard work and an unchanging condition. The reader will understand that I am not now speaking of the great sugar plantations, whose existence has helped to produce this state of things, and whose management can in no case be called farming.

These pictures of rural life must dwell in the memory of every one who has seen Cuba. The miserable little house, with its palm-leaf roof and earthen floor, is unfit for a cattle shed, and a degree worse than a Nevada "dug-out." There is a piece of broken fence that never was whole, or oftener, a ragged and briar-covered cactus hedge. There are no outhouses or conveniences. The cocks and hens saunter in and out of the open door, and a lean goat or two stand in profound reverie. Pigs, lean and hairless, with their broken tethers adorning their necks, wander here and there in search of what a pig may fancy. Perhaps a bullock stands tethered by the nose amid plentiful stones and scant grass, and a sad-looking cow keeps him company. Naked children play beside the door, and squalid and half-clad women loaf promiscuously about the premises. Away in the fallow-ground the man of the place struggles to make a long scratch on the ground with his yoke of oxen and his Egyptian plow

made of the crotch of a tree. As he walks beside its one handle, and urges his lean cattle with strange cries and a long stick, and creeps to the end of his inadequate furrow at a snail's pace, you wonder to think that the father and grandfather of this genius of famine did the same before him, and his son will do it after him, and probably none of them ever committed suicide.

You meet this man in the early morning on his way to sell his produce at the nearest town. It is green corn-stalks, or melons, or, perhaps, two paniers of yellow oranges, or green grass, or milk in stone jugs stoppered with an ear of corn,—whatever it may be, it is always carried pack-fashion on horses. Wagons are not practicable on the Cuban roads, and a long and plodding string of animals, laden until only their tails and noses are visible, is the commonest of sights on the highway. Horse and man are stained alike by the deep-red mud of the country. Horse and man alike are lean in flesh, and intensely, ploddingly, laboriously occupied with the work in hand. They have daily gone the same paths for years, bearing the same burdens, and seemingly without any reward. Life is not necessarily easy and indolent where the plantain grows, as we have so often heard it is.

This peasant, a son of the soil, and the man who, except the negro, has lived the longest and worked the hardest on it, has no connection with, or interest in, the tall white chimneys that here and there appear across the landscape, and represent the great industry of the country. For hundreds of acres around them grows the cane. Hundreds of unpaid toilers feed their fires and caldrons from January to May. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are invested in the industry of which these monumental chimneys are the centres. These planta-

tions grow nothing but cane. They do not generally so much as produce the corn eaten by the oxen and negroes. Every energy of every man and animal is concentrated upon the task of producing as many pounds as possible of the sugar which, for many years, has paid the largest profit of any known production of the soil, and paid it at the general cost of the whole country, in its morals, its education, its general happiness, its healthy growth, and the manhood and independence of its people. The decay of the many, and the enriching of the few, is ever the direct result of the production of one great staple by slave labor.

Thus it is, that the man who comes to Cuba for the first time, does not find the Cuba of his pictures and dreams. He has not encountered the deep stillness of a tropical forest. He has been charmed with no landscapes that regaled his senses with the pleasure of something new. He has seen no gaudy and screeching birds flying in fiery flashes from tree to tree; but instead, only the sailing buzzard, or an occasional coal-black magpie by the roadside. He finds that there are more flowers in a single woodland field in the North, than he has known in all Cuba. He has seen no visions of comfort, or of the beauty of thrift and taste. It is summer without the hay-making; May, lacking the freshness and flowers. Even the foliage and grass have been a delusion, and he begins to understand that where leaves and grass are growing and decaying by a continuous process on the same spot, they can never be entirely green. Nature, in the tropics, never permits a clean sod to please the eye. She needs the space for vines and thorns. She chooses to glare and effectually does it. She never sleeps and awakes refreshed. She has no holidays. She never puts

on the fresh and perfumed garments of spring; there is no spring. She is coarse, and delights in big leaves and few of them, and piece by piece renews herself, and has in all her finery, never a garment that is not patched. Noon lies panting in shadowless heat. Night falls as suddenly as the curtain when the play is done. Morning flashes in a moment upon a world that is bathed in a chill and clammy dew. As you sit fanning yourself in a windless time, you wonder if it has always been so, and life and its functions still gone on. There is a knowledge, but not a realization, that these airy habitations will never be closed for stress of weather, that the gathering of a household in the firelight will never be seen, that summer means only the monotonous splash of endless rain, seas of mud, and limitless mustiness and green mould; and that winter is only a little more wind, boundless dust, and the ripening of the orange. The pilgrim recalls then, with hope and longing, his climate of endless vicissitudes and compensations, and begins to believe that falling snow is the loveliest of nature's displays, and biting wind and cruel frost necessary to happiness. Thus, the Northerner was never quite contented in the tropics. It is hard to blunt the recollections and associations of youth, or destroy those pictures of life in which there is winter, but also spring, and cold, and snow, but also hearths and fires.

Cuba is a hill, rocky, ridged, rough, with the very rich and the entirely worthless in soil curiously interspersed. Though there are no elevations of greater dignity than local ranges of hills, the roads are generally the worst imaginable. Road-making is not a lost art among the Spaniards, but, rather, an art not yet acquired. Any

thing that a mule can traverse gives general satisfaction to the community. Ledges and steps of stone extending for long distances, the strata lying as undisturbed as nature made them, are daily traversed by hundreds of people, without an idea that such a *via dolorosa* could be improved. Sometimes, not often, there is a bridge, occasionally a grade. It is amusing to note how the road starts out of town good and smooth, and stays so for about a league, and drops off into mud, stones, hill-side boulders, and general unevenness, and finally degenerates into a path.

The soil is divided into two classes, the black and the red. There is a controversy going on between the proprietors of these two kinds as to which is the best. They are both muddy in summer and dusty in winter, and both rich enough to produce cane for fifteen or twenty years without replant or change. So it is likely the controversy will go on for some time to come. The great desideratum is something rich enough to produce the great staple from year to year without fertilization, sometimes almost without cultivation.

But cane is by no means the only thing produced. There is a vast array of vegetables. The "sweet potato" here acquires an enormous size and another name, and there is a varied and extensive family of yams. The plantain, of all domestic productions, holds the first place in the Cuban household economy. Nobody tries to live without *platanos fritos* for breakfast and dinner, and as there is never any supper, one may be said to get it at every meal. There are also corn-fields,—corn-fields that cause a Westerner first to smile and afterward to pity. The stalks are as much as three, and sometimes four feet high, with a melancholy little tassel, and a gloomy knot

of wiry silk, and spindling stem and leaves, with, finally, a miniature "nubbin" of the yellow flint variety. The curiosity of this crop is that it grows all the year, and is fed green and in the stalk to the gentleman's horse in town to whom it is brought every day and sold by the armful. This *maloja* is the cargo of many a long train of horses, whose burdens scrape the passengers upon the sidewalks.

A sleepy dulness pervades the land, compatible with the climate and suited to the people. I feel it creeping over me as I close this chapter, and know that the tale of it is commonplace and dull. Under the head of "In General," one might go on like the brook. It is all in general, as I look back upon it and try to recall individual features. Something specific must undoubtedly be dragged forward and made to stand up, and if it is for the specific purpose of being admired, I know of none more willing than the distinguished individual who shall be the subject of the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CUBAN AT HOME.

HE who shares with the Spaniard in Cuba the felicity of being considered white, and who, generally speaking, is upon the social level of a man who has family, friends, and certain rights not inalienable, is the Cuban himself. These two, the Spaniard and he, occupy as strange relations and expend as much ill-feeling upon each other as two men or classes can who continue to live together in the same country. The native is as remarkable in his way as the Spaniard is in his, and deserves a special biography as a man without a prototype. Theoretically, as Americans are English, so should the Cuban be a Spaniard. If he has any admixture of blood not Spanish, it is not German, French, or Irish, nor even Indian, but must be traced to sources nearer the equator and the Guinea coast. We will endeavor to see him as he is, the Creole, the tropical white man, possibly entitled to be regarded as the founder of a race.

He appears to you at first a man all hair, eyes, teeth, and shirt collar. It is not precisely the correct view, but such is apt to be the impression conveyed to a conservative and doubting mind. After better acquaintance he gives you the idea of a man who is at least *sui generis*, with an unique form of body and a hitherto unclassified type of mind. After a year or two he begins to seem to

you to be a rather clever fellow, with traits that are seldom observed to exist in a character otherwise excellent, but an agreeable man in many respects. To a countenance always expressive of a certain refinement, often of great beauty, and almost never coarse, angular, or hard, he joins a physique the thinnest and most attenuated ever found compatible with locomotion and the general control of a muscular system. His legs are spindles, his arms much like flattened sticks somewhat enlarged at the articulations. Of stomach he usually has about as much as birds of the crane species are remarkable for, and is seldom disposed to undue enlargement in the region of the waistband. His shoulders are thin and sharp, and if he stoops slightly it need not necessarily be regarded as an indication either of scholarship or disease of the lungs. His complexion is seldom fair, and generally of a not unhandsome swarthiness, though sometimes approaching a hue that, by the present opinion of prejudiced mankind, is not exactly a society color. But I have never seen a Cuban with what we call a "dumb" face, or an unintelligent eye.

This man is the born dandy. He wears jewellery like a woman, and like a woman's. He pinches feet that are small enough naturally, into agonizing shoes. He wears collars monstrous in size or ridiculous in smallness, with shirts of dazzling colors, and cut so very *décolleté* that you may observe the sharp ends of his collar-bones and the very bottom of his thin throat. At the date of this writing he goes about the streets with pantaloons that hang upon his little legs like bags, and flap and yaw in the breeze. His coat seems to have been made for a taller man, whereas, a year ago, it had a tendency to creep upward toward the back of his neck. But the centre-

piece and glory of his costume is his hat. Where such fashions in headgear as he delights himself with really have their origin, I know not. As the climate is warm, and seemingly for that reason, the hat is narrow, black, heavy, and shaped like an inverted stove-kettle. This man sometimes attends a ball in a black dress suit, a white necktie, and a green shirt. A Cuban town is full of such figures, and few of them are, by any chance, at work at any thing. Born in a slave country, the presumptive, probable or actual heir to a share in some sugar plantation, or, if not, living by his wits or upon his relations, the young Cuban imagines that his destiny is to ornament the tropics; to be a thing of beauty, and kill time while he is thus elegantly occupied. He adorns a pair of the leanest, skiniest hands,—hands that remind you of those of a maiden lady in ill health,—with rings set with high-colored gems. He leaves the nails to grow long like those of a Chinese nobleman, and trims them to a point. One can forgive his face, weak as it often is, and moulded in its effeminate features by the things he thinks about. The smile at his costume may be, with some difficulty, suppressed. His dandyism may be endured. But one never learns quite to admire the Cuban hand. When I shake hands with him I have ever suppressed a strong desire to crush the limp and useless thing into a yellow and distorted mass; to cause him to go home and bandage it, and have it pain him about a year.

If ever you see a Cuban on his way to the railway station, you will notice that a little negro is carrying his travelling-bag. When he reaches his journey's end, he hires another to carry it out of the car for him. He would very much dislike to be caught in the street carrying a package. He is averse to any burden but a cane.

He does not like to be taken for a person suffering from any necessity common to impecunious people. Reduced to want, he lives as long as he can by borrowing, he pawns a little, and what finally becomes of him one can hardly tell. As a rule, experience in life subdues his airs, but gives him no financial skill. When the Guinea-grass has overgrown his plantation, and the pecuniary difficulties that happen to men everywhere beset him, he is, as a rule, helpless and hopeless. He mopes, and is disposed to suicide, and abandoning all gayety, seems to be, after a fashion, desirous of calling the widest attention to the misfortunes with which the saints afflict him.

For many years the Cuban has been a skilful contriver of schemes for the good of his country, and has the reputation of being excellent at intrigue. But none of his schemes have had any result, except, perhaps, the imprisonment or flight of himself and friends. He could plot exceedingly well, but he could not keep the secret. The insurrection was begun and almost entirely sustained, so far as action was concerned, by Cubans in the interior and of the country districts. The towns of western Cuba, filled with the people I have described, did little or nothing for the cause, except personally, and very privately, to wish it success. What was done by those actually engaged, no man has yet, so far as I know, fully and truly told. There are only a few facts from which persons who desire information can judge. The Spaniards lost in the contest one hundred and sixty thousand men, near seven hundred million dollars, and acted upon the defensive nearly altogether during the nine years in which they were engaged in the struggle. It was a question who could endure the longest, and wear the other out, and, perhaps, there never was a war that lasted so

long with as little blood actually shed on the field of battle, with as little outlet for impetuous and burning valor on either side, and with so much uncertainty as to result after the bushwhacking, scares, and skirmishing had gone on for so many years.

It was a war of suspicion, of suppression, of words. The Spaniard seemed, in the waste and middle of it, like an old man, cowering in his corner, shaking his crutch, and threatening to rise up and grasp the sword of his youth, and chastise rebellious sons. He talked of glory from the beginning. He pretended to be victorious, and gratified himself with the imagination. The Cuban, on the other hand, was wrestling with a situation too strong for him, without a treasury, without arms, with a travelling capital and a nomadic legislature, and the president of his republic in the United States. He was unaided by his kindred in the richest part of the island. He talked of invading Havana, and, instead, invaded New York thirty thousand strong. As for his friends, here and there, they talked; they were valiant in devising movements for others to make; they speculated and hoped. The young men went away to where it was safer to be, and where they could avoid service in either army. There is a good deal of entertainment to be derived from merely imagining the town Cuban as a soldier. I should very much like to see some of the young gentlemen of my acquaintance with muskets on their backs. I think it would be something like plowing with cats.

The great difference existing between these rival claimants and antipodal neighbors, in personal characteristics, I take to be this: the Spaniard, as an individual, has a strong and decided character; the Cuban a weak and vacillating one. The former, in private life, and consid-

ered as an individual, is the better man, and usually acquits himself in that most common and most satisfactory test of a man,—that he will do as he agrees. He is the family man of the island. His wife and children he has a true regard and respect for, and his house is his home. He does not suspect the honor of his sister or his mother, and has no suspicions as to his own paternity, all of which a Cuban may do, and not be regarded as very eccentric. He is faithful in an unusual degree to the ties of blood and kindred, and pompous braggart that he is, venerable and changeless Bourbon, he is true to his country under all circumstances. Indeed, as stated in a later chapter, patriotism is his vice, and in her name he is sanguinary, unjust, and often cruel. But he has a character, and it is easier to respect a certain conscientious badness than to admire a weak, amiable, and vacillating goodness.

After all I have said of the average Cuban young man, and his appearance and physiognomy, the reader who puts his trust in that science may desire no further history of his mental traits. But he is not unvarying as a subject of study. As a husband, he is striking; if there is a relation of life in which he shines, it is as a married man. It is often a lurid glare of matrimonial unfaithfulness from the very wedding day. One of the worst qualities of the Cuban is that he seems not to believe in the faithfulness and honor of any woman, while he ought to know, as the rest of the world knows, that there is no more faithful and loving wife, and no better mother, than the woman of Cuba. I have often seen the unfortunate American girl, who had chosen a husband from among the invaders of New York, wandering among the cities of Cuba in search of a truant husband who had grown tired

of her and returned to the dusky loves of his youth. Indeed, some of the greatest of matrimonial follies are committed by my country-women, partly, as I suppose, because they believe these young men when they describe, in broken English, their homes in Cuba, as the gardener's son described his to the Lady of Lyons, and partly because there is a certain piquancy about marrying a foreigner.

As the Cuban is in respect to his matrimonial affairs, so is he with many a thing besides. Oily and smooth as his father, the Spaniard, in making his bargains, he is very artful in avoiding his obligations afterward. I am at a loss for words to truly describe the peculiar unreliability which seems a part of the man's character. He is trivial, and it may consist in that. He is wanting in appreciation of manliness for its own sake, and it may consist in that. But it has seemed to me that the childish egotism of pure selfishness was his great underlying trait. He is flaccid, without fibre, and poor, even to beggary, in strength of character. I marvel at the finished address, the intelligent face, the polish, the quick perception, and the air of respect for himself and others, which exist as the concomitants of this.

The question probably occurs to the reader: 'What will this man do with his country when he shall some day acquire control of it?' It is a fate in the future. Often in the history of mankind, the talent for government has grown with the necessity for it. I have hinted that the Cuban was perhaps destined to be, if he be not already, the founder of a race, if he did not first miscegenate and hybridize. It is an *if*, that like so many of its fellows in this world, deserves to be spelled with a capital "I." At some time the greater Antilles will

come under the dominion of the African. He thrives here, and he alone; the white men's descendants decay. His tribe increases; he is healthy, active, strong. These shining seas are his natural surroundings, and he basks beneath a blazing sun, where others wither and decay. There is a limit of adaptation beyond which men cannot go. I believe the Cuban, as he is, to be as much the outgrowth and product of climate as he is of Spanish ancestry. In Cuba the very sheep change their wool and their color for the hair and the spots of the goat. Where the banana grows, men do not grow, unless they are black.

There has been courage in danger, and there have been calm and heroic deaths for "Cuba Libre." Some of those have fallen who, with any other people or surroundings would have "lit a candle that shall never be put out." I do not know of what stuff martyrs are made, but some of those who have died hopeless and unshriven have met their fate with a serenity that has half redeemed the fame of all their fellows, and rescued from pity or ridicule the story of the last and longest of the struggles of the sons of Cuba for the land in which they were born. But it seems to me at this moment, that when the political misery of a people is beyond remedy by themselves, it is also beyond hope and discussion. Many a year will elapse before the Cuban will make a successful effort for liberty, if ever. They left their battles to be fought out by a handful of countrymen, while the great majority of the ablest among them were inside the Spanish lines, and were glad they were. These now claim to have been beaten by superior force after doing the best they could, and as you hear them talk, you know that Cuba is as surely as ever the property of Spain.

It is almost useless to remark, after the foregoing, that society in Cuba is in a peculiar condition. It is, indeed, in that state in which it might certainly be predicted of it, that it must change, and take upon itself a settled form. Yet it does not change, and has been in its present state a very long time. The changeless antagonism between two classes leaves them to live together and hate each other from year to year, to follow the same avocations, to speak the same language, practise the same religion, and walk together upon the same streets, yet without association, friendship, or kindred sentiment. The Cuban girl steels her heart against the young Spaniard, though often gallant and handsome, and sometimes rich. She may, and does, sometimes marry him, for women are women, but it is against remonstrance and in defiance of scandal. The Cuban mamma does not invite him to her house unless it is quite well understood that he has undergone a change of heart. The island is full of uniformed, inchoate heroes, but the feminine fondness for the gilt button does not often cause the dark-eyed damsel to relent. The Cuban and the Spanish boy attend the same school, and play together through youth, and when they attain to manhood each goes his way with his kind. Yet there is a certain concealment about all these things. Society goes on with a great deal of real and much pretended gaiety, with this big worm always at the heart of it. A thousand loves and hopes are bounded by a line that cannot be gone over or around, and men and women curb and restrain the most natural and useful desires and inclinations of life to comply with a rule no man has made and everybody is guided by, that succeeding generations have scarcely infringed upon, and that seems to have no limit set upon its strange and binding force.

The Cuban at home, ought, by all rules, to be a very unhappy and discontented man, because of the universal dissatisfaction with his political status. An American would be. He is not the man he believes he is entitled and competent to be. There are no lines of ambition open to him, no avenues of endeavor, save in a commercial or industrial way. He may and does write a little poetry, and, if it be ever so good, it is read and praised only locally. If he is an artist it is with the same result. He may make all the money he pleases, and is able to appear in the best possible clothes, silver-plate his harness, and live in a tile-roofed palace, and he may be called "Don," and bowed to by his fellows. But he can never be governor of his jurisdiction, or senator from his district, or take part in making the laws, good or bad, he lives under. His influence must be only of a social kind, and his power over his fellow-men only that which comes of personal surroundings.

Long years of this kind of life have made of the Cuban a peculiar kind of aristocrat. If he be a man of brains and intelligence, he knows that he is so in spite of his surroundings, and makes the most of it in private life. If merely a man of wealth, as he often is, he surrounds himself with all the tinsel state he can, leans back upon himself, and installs himself a potentate amid his dependants and surroundings. He is never greeted by acclamations, or carried in a chair, or called upon to express his views of public measures in a speech. But he is so accustomed to the deprivation that he never thinks of it. He comforts himself within himself, and calms his longings by a serene contemplation of his own dignity.

It may seem, and justly, that thus far I have found little to say in praise of the Cuban. I have personal

friends whom I might take as examples of something better than all this, and write of them only. I wish I could. I write generally of a class, and I believe with truth and soberness, and as I have described him I believe the Cuban will find himself considered, when at last his islandic fetters shall be broken and, as the governor of his own country and the manager of his own political fortunes, he shall be called upon to mingle with the inhabitants of a world bigger than his own. He has virtues. He is, in the course of time, destined to be individually changed by education acquired outside his little island. His graceful suavity and pleasant temper, his quick intelligence, his tolerance of ignorance and foolishness on the part of others, his unwillingness to be outdone in courtesy, his fair acceptance of kindly overtures from whomsoever they may come, render him a pleasant companion at least, if not very nearly what we mean when we use the expression "a gentleman." I would he were less that, and more a man. I wish I could remember oftener to have seen the flush of conscience upon his face, and the quick anger of honesty in his eye. If he meant his compliments, or believed in his own kindness, or would keep his little promises, any or all of these, I should love him,—a little.

CHAPTER V.

THE SPANIARD IN CUBA.

CUBA can boast as motley and parti-colored a population as ever were gathered together in as small a country. Spaniards, Negroes, Cubans, and Chinamen constitute her permanent population. It is hard to tell whether the white, the black, the white-and-black, or the genuine and unadulterated yellow, are in the majority. All these elements of humanity are very different, one from the other. The Spaniard and Cuban are hardly upon speaking terms any time these thirty years, and there are no common traits to unite the Negro and the Asiatic. But it is an interesting congregation of humanity. Nearly or quite two-fifths of these people are slaves absolutely, and of the remainder a large proportion have declared vehemently, and for a long time, that they are slaves politically. The only man who is half content with himself is the Spaniard, and he would be happier if he were not constantly apprehensive of a struggle to maintain his rule of the island and his peculiar ideas of government.

Away from Cuba, the differences between the Spaniard and the Cuban are not very perfectly understood, nor is there any immediate necessity for studying them. I have frequently been asked by persons in the United States questions which led me to infer that if the people of the

island were not all Cubans they must necessarily be all Spaniards, and that at least the terms were interchangeable. But these two, as a matter of fact, imagine themselves the antipode the one of the other, refuse to confess that they are relatives, and have been indulging themselves in a general, mutual, and cordial hatred of each other for a long time. Living in the same streets and in adjoining houses, associated necessarily in business, religion, and language, they yet do not commingle as the same people. They believe they understand each other too. If the reader will have the goodness to follow me for a few pages I will endeavor to describe this anomalous relationship of the Spaniard in Cuba and the Cuban at home. It is probably worth a few moments' study merely as a curiosity of society.

The two look askance at each other, and each, the Cuban especially, is inclined to gratify himself with a grimace behind the other's back. Yet they live together, and take coffee at the same tables in the same *café*, and meet a hundred times a day. There is a distinct understanding that the one hates the other, and it is the only point they have agreed upon entirely. This condition of things is quite apparent to one who has been on the island for three weeks, and as time passes, and one lives longer between the two smoldering hatreds, it begins to excite surprise that the difference never goes any further. One wonders within himself why they do not quarrel personally, and collisions take place every day in the year, and why they do not, at least upon rare occasions, go around the corner and fight it out. They never do; I remain surprised at this date, with the same surprise that first came to me, at a condition of things so unlike human nature, as that mixture exists in other regions and races.

By a Spaniard is meant always a man of Spanish blood and born in Spain. His son, born in Cuba, is a Cuban, and usually so in sentiment as well as in fact. The history of the Spaniard has been so well studied that it has percolated into the channels of universal knowledge. If you say of one that he is a Spaniard you at once describe a peculiar man with a character unique, of whom it is apt to be concluded that he may be a very good kind of a fellow, but,——. If you are with him you keep an eye on him for a good while. There is no superfluous confidence between the Saxon and him. For something like three hundred years he has been making himself an international reputation, and has succeeded remarkably. It is not a story of weakness or cowardice. From the beginning he took a leading part in that history of change and progress on the continent of Europe, which is one of the most touching in the annals of the human race. He won vast dominions on this side the sea with a contemptible handful of adventurers, and held them until a time within the memory of living men. By heroism and treachery, by an utter want of conscience and honor, and a display of the highest virtues of a soldier and explorer, by an unhesitating use of any means whatever, he conquered Mexico and Peru, and by the same means, transformed into causes, he lost them at last. For he has never changed, in his true self, from what he was in those early times. But he was never a coward, and has not to this day lost aught of his dignity, his courage, his conservatism, his pride, or his entire inability to compromise with the people of the colonies he has planted by changing those forms and traditions of government that were quite the thing for provinces three hundred years ago, but are very much out of date for a century past. This chapter

is written with a knowledge, more or less accurate, of the terms upon which peace was made with the leaders of the late insurrection, and of the change in the policy of the government of Cuba, temporarily apparent to everybody. But it is also written with the knowledge that both parties are dissatisfied, and neither sincere. The Cuban still feels that he has not got what he ought to have, and the Spaniard hates himself for not having been able to fully keep all that was his. Spain is in honor bound to carry out the terms of the agreement she made. But, should the usual thick-headed Spaniard come and take his place as Captain-General, it will again be found that tradition is stronger than treaty, and that the Spaniard is incapable of change.

Yet, there is another side to the Spanish character, even in Cuba. That just mentioned is his historic character. It is the collective, aggregate Spaniard, and does not describe the man as you meet him in the street. "Three of us make a lunatic," he says of himself, and the use of the proverb betrays a consciousness that the traits of the individual do not conduce to make him a calm man in a crowd. Then, he is prone to begin to talk about "nosotros," and to be carried away by that maniacism of his about Spain and every thing Spanish. On this point every Spaniard seems to have been born crazy. The rulers of Spain, the country itself, can consider certain the blind devotion of every subject wherever found. His history is glorious, his country the richest in Europe; he has made every thing, done every thing. His literature is self-glorifying to a degree ridiculous and disgusting. He believes a Spaniard invented the steam-engine, discovered electricity, and made the first steamboat. In the preface to a volume before me, on the industrial

arts, and intended for use in schools, the author states that he has been criticized for not stating that the Spaniards invented printing; that he did not do so because there was some doubt upon the question of who did invent it, and that he is happy to state, at least, that his countrymen were the first to use it!

After a few moments' conversation of the stimulating kind hinted at above, with two or three of his fellow-countrymen,—and they cannot avoid getting at it,—he begins to wish to do something. He is ready to begin the much-talked-of operation of "dyeing the Gulf of Mexico with his blood." The great provocation, the universal red rag, is the Yankee, sitting upon the opposite side of the narrow water, and calmly smiling at his perils and struggles in Cuba, the predestined heir to all he may be obliged to abandon on this side the Atlantic. In ordinary times he will speak calmly of the failings and follies of his race and his system. In ten minutes thereafter he will be gesticulating and storming. He gets into conversation with some of his countrymen, and "nosotros" creep in.

I may as well remark here, and have done with it, that what this neighbor of ours needs to cure him of all this folly, is a neat thrashing at the hands of some foreign party.

The man of Spain in Cuba presents a marked contrast to his descendant, the native-born inhabitant of the island. He came here for money, and, as a general rule, he has succeeded in getting it. No man is more capable of hard work and great frugality, and no man is more accomplished in the art of keeping all he gets. I once had a door-servant or *portero*, a Gallego of the Gallicians. Every day he ate what was brought him from a small

and nasty *bodega* at the next corner. It was never any thing but soup. He never had, and never needed, a knife and fork. He was not only content, and in good health, but hospitably inclined withal, and, after the custom of his country, asked me to partake of his fare if I passed near him I have long ceased to take observations of this luminary of economy, but presume he is still eating soup, and still content. The greater portion of the Spaniards, working men in Cuba, live like him.

For several centuries Cuba has been the Spaniard's oyster. It is his, with a government after his own heart, and custom-house regulations specially framed for his benefit. The poorest and most ignorant goatherd in all Spain can come to Cuba and experience one delightful sensation. He may eat thin soup, and still realize that the negro is lower than he. He becomes "Don," and is thus addressed by a large class not white, and has a realizing sense of his dignity and likes it. But it never keeps him from going to work at any thing he can find to do. Men who are now well-known as examples of a combination of wealth with great illiteracy, began by carrying a baker's basket upon their heads from door to door. There are always young Spaniards passing through this stage, and they make the land seem a piece out of old Spain. This kind is as ignorant, hardy, and adventurous as ever was follower of Pizarro, though he has ceased to bear an arquebuse and wear an iron pot on his head. His feet are clad in canvas shoes with hempen soles. He claps any thing he happens to have upon his skull, and his sleeves are rolled high, and his shirt is open. He is hardy, and if he does not die of fever when he first arrives, all the vicissitudes of climate affect him not. He is a roller of hogsheads, a lifter of iron bars, a digger of

drains, and layer of pipes. He becomes anon the captain of a lighter, a sugar-weigher, a stevedore, a boatman, a fisherman,—any thing.

But it has often seemed to me that the great ambition of this man, beyond which there was to him nothing more, was to be a *bodigero*. A *bodega* is a wine cellar, the hold of a vessel, or, lastly and most commonly, a corner grocery, wherein is sold two cents worth of any thing that belongs in the catalogue of eatables, but which has become mouldy, ancient, and unsavory. To be the owner of one of these dusty little depositories of indigestibles is the bright hope of the lower class Spaniard. So many have engaged in it that the reputation of the business is a kind of monopoly with them, and the name *bodigero* has become descriptive of a class. "*Como un bodigero*"—like a man who keeps a *bodega*—ignorant and blustering, has become a phrase.

Spanish economy is eminently adapted to the advancement of one of this kind in the world. There are no boarding-houses in Cuba, and none in Spain. The blessed fact stands alone in social annals, and shines afar in a hungry world. It is a startling statement, but is true, for there are no boarders. Pass a store or a shop at meal-time and you will observe a long table set forth in the middle of the sales-room, in the midst of merchandise or tools, and all the employés of the establishment at dinner. At bedtime each man finds his cot, places it where there is most room for it, and goes to bed. In some corner of the establishment the viands are cooked over a little charcoal fire, and the store, the warehouse, or the shop, is home to all in it. The boarding-house business, common, aristocratic, and medium, is thus rendered impossible, and such an institution is unknown.

While the laboring Spaniard is the sturdiest, the most contentedly illiterate and the most faithful of men, his educated compatriot reads Don Quixote and regards it as the quintessence of all wit, not at all conscious of the fact that *he* is Don Quixote, modernized, and his laboring brother almost Sancho l'anza, bandy legs, broad shoulders, thick head, content, philosophy, and all. Were he only taller it would be hard to find a better physical man than this same Sancho. His pectoral muscles shake as he walks, and his sturdy legs bear him through thick and thin. He has lived simply all his life, and is of that fortunate class who for generations have lived and died untormented by hopes and desires for things grander and better than their fathers knew. He has eaten and slept well. He is the man for driving donkeys and climbing hills, singing rude songs, and relishing hard fare, and taking an honest pleasure in common things. When he is old, whether bodigero or landed proprietor, he is still the same, ignorant, happy, healthy, until he begins to talk of Spain and "nosotros," and then he becomes all that the better-bred and better-educated Spaniard is famous for, with all the added ignorance of his class.

The other variety of Spaniard in Cuba may be said, both at home and here, to belong to the governing class. He is town-bred, and comes hither as a clerk, or the incumbent of a petty subordinate office, or as an officer in the army. It is surprising to note the general physical difference between the two varieties, the one from the hills, the other from Madrid. This last is disposed to shankiness, and more or less length and narrowness. Sometimes, in contemplating the Spaniard in Cuba, I have been reminded of the two grand subdivisions of horses: draught and roadster. When this last-mentioned

Spaniard is old he is very wrinkled and generally bald. He is mincing, fussy, and disposed, without meaning any thing in particular, to assume an expression of countenance that you would imagine indicated the irruption of a disagreeable odor. He is the possessor of that particular air of personal dignity which he alone seems to have letters-patent for. He has a peculiar gait, and sometimes is the ideal of a beau; a kind of elderly dandy, even while still young. His face is sometimes such a quaint one as is seen in old portraits. When he talks there is no end to the gestures with which he accentuates his commonplaces. He rises, and stands over his victim threateningly; he lays his folded hands upon his beating heart and looks upward; he extends his arm grandly, appealing to all the centuries and all the pyramids; he leans forward, with bent knees, like one on the alert for a fugacious hen, and in this posture places his two hands before him, palms inward, and waves them violently forward. It is "No! a thousand times no! Go; leave me alone in my contest for the truth!!" And what can all this terrible thing be he is talking about, that he seems to live, a brand snatched from the burning, to relate? Nothing; the commonest and tamest thing in life. As, for instance, there were two ladies on the plaza last night, sisters. One is homely and known to be amiable, the other beautiful and something of a vixen. The homely one, he says, he much prefers to the other. Thereupon he drops into the chair behind him, dull, undisturbed, and even sleepy, and lights a paper cigar. This is a specimen of what you may see and hear, if you care to, twenty times a day.

I trust I do not give the reader the impression that this is a personally disagreeable man. He is not that,

for he comes of a race among whom courtesy and deference, soft words and an amiable demeanor, are cardinal virtues. When this man enters the dining-room of a hotel, where is not one whom he ever saw before, he salutes the company generally. If he meets you in the hallway, or upon the stairs, or in any situation where he must pass you, he says his *Buenos dias*, as though he had a personal interest in your welfare. When he comes to your office, he stops at the door until he is requested to enter, takes off his hat, seats himself if invited, and not otherwise, and proceeds to explain his business with an insinuating sweetness. If you explain to him that you can't, or won't, he does not argue the case strenuously, but is very apt to come the following day, with some new view of the case, or some more persuasiveness. He is, as a countryman of Quixote, so much of a philosopher as to be the most agreeable of travelling companions, and he does not ask you where you came from, and whither you are going, and how old you are, and whether you are married. He is a fluent man, speaking rapidly and correctly the magnificent tongue about the spelling and pronunciation of which there has long ceased to be any dispute. He is as incapable of slang as a man might be expected to be to whose mother-tongue it is impossible. But he is quaint in his modes of expression, and often uses phrases which savor strongly of what we would call westernism, and which have the flavor of that dry humor which is peculiarly Spanish. Profane he can be, in plain words and very explicitly, but what we call "swearing,"—meaning the terse blasphemy of the English-speaking world,—he has no words for. But, as a compensation, he can make us ashamed when he will by interspersing his remarks and spicing his discourse with a lingual filth

of which only he, and his son, the Cuban, are capable. The vilest of personal vices, the lowest of habits, he uses as by-words. Things that exist never to be mentioned, are his adjurations. The class who "swear" in English, have their equivalent class who make human speech seem hideous in Spanish.

This man possesses all the qualifications that have made him, in due time, the capitalist of Cuba. He is a trader, which the Cuban never is. The stores are all his. The warehouses, containing thousands of hogsheads of sugar, he built and manages. The banks are under his control, and railways are owned principally, or, at least, are managed by him. Generally, he has every thing in his hands except the sugar plantations, and seems to be rapidly getting those also under his management. As an artizan, or dealer, or business proprietor, the Cuban is a failure, and it is seldom he tries any thing of the kind. He cannot buy and sell; he has no talent for making shoes and shaping coats, and the only mechanical field open to him seems to be dentistry.

These two classes, the official and the *bodigero*, are the masters of Cuba. It is their last possession but one on this side of the water, and they seem to endeavor to make the most of it while it lasts. It is their system of thus making the most of it, that seems to the foreigner and American the most peculiar of all. It is a system based, in brief, upon these two or three maxims: (1) That the provinces of Spain are for Spaniards, and for nobody else; (2) That the people who are most interested in these provinces, the children of the soil, the permanent residents, are, by reason of these facts, unfitted for taking any part in the government of them. The origin of these maxims lies somewhere in the obscurity of the sixteenth

century. At this date they are entirely Spanish, and the persistence with which they are insisted upon and believed in, constitutes fair matter for astonishment to everybody not a Spaniard.

He who has not lived in Cuba can have no idea of the sensation of having the fact dawn upon him, and day by day become more plain, that a three-hundred-year-old system, with a military governor-general, imported district governors and all their lieutenants, judges, justices of the peace, and even constables and policemen, all foreign, all Spaniards, and all acting under edicts and decrees, not statutes, is the government of an island not a hundred miles from the Great Republic. All these things are dear to the Spaniard, and thoughts of them inflame his ardor when he begins to talk of "nosotros." The peace has come, and there is, for the present, a much-talked-of change. But there is no noticeable change in these respects. The Spaniard is, and will remain, the governor, and the Cuban the governed. Above all things avaricious, this man will never relinquish the means by which he makes the island exist for Spain. Courteous, and even polished, as he may seem to one who has no interest in his ideas of government and power, he appears to every Cuban as the personal representative of arrogance and injustice. As he believed the people of Peru to be his slaves by right of conquest, and drew the line at Spanish birth, so he really believes with regard to Cuba, and would, if he could, carry the idea out in its entirety. He never really changes. He is the same man, even in physiognomy, he was three hundred years ago. He lacks the prestige and the power now, and has grown weak at home and abroad. But fatuous to the last, he pays little heed to the disintegrating ele-

ments that are undermining his power in Cuba. The crime of treason, to him, may consist in words, and even thoughts, and the shadow of disloyalty is as much as the proven crime. He loves a king. "*Pan y Palos*" is his epitome of the theory of government. He wonders at the system, and much more at the fact, of republicanism, and believes it to be, in the end, impossible.

Sometime, in the slow grinding of the gods, he will abandon Cuba. When he does, it will not be worth the keeping. A fearful rate of taxation is strangling every industry and crippling every vast resource, and there is no prospect of any change. Of all the millions wrung, one-half never reaches the treasury, and the half that does is spent uselessly and extravagantly. His little wooden wharves are rotting and will never be repaired; his rented buildings are falling down, and his very "palaces" going to decay. His modes were always primitive, and latterly they are the primitive-decayed. The trouble he has in keeping himself straight is wearing him out. Inter-official disputes, wranglings, and broils go on endlessly. A captain-general's tenure of office is about four months, and every captain-general retires wealthy, or is greatly lied upon. As the barbarians outside are constantly increasing their domestic product of sugar, and more and more contracting their demands upon Cuba, so a slow suffocation settles down upon the land, and by and by the little island will produce plantains and eat them, and life will, to every free islander, go on very much as it does in a back-woods settlement.

CHAPTER VI.

LA SEÑORITA.

IN my various conversations with those of my countrymen who have unfortunately never been to Cuba, there has always been at least one of the company who, when the topic seemed quite exhausted, was sure to ask: "Well, how about the women?" or something to that effect. I am about to endeavor to briefly answer this person.

The lady of the tropics was one of my own objects of solicitude upon arrival. I wished to see her for the satisfaction of an honorable curiosity. I have seen her, but have not satisfied the curiosity. I do not seem to catch her general ideas. I cannot say that I have ever held a conversation with her. I have heard her voice, even, at times, a little too much of it, for it is of an astonishing *timbre* to issue from such a throat. Of these things anon.

The first female I saw in Cuba, to particularly observe her, was such a being as one remembers ever after. I was not charmed with her. She wore a gown of faded stuff, and a dingy shawl over her head. I saw, without any obtrusive endeavor to see, that she wore shoes and no stockings. Her mouth considerably resembled a crack in a fallen cocoa-nut, and there was a mole, the size of a blackberry, beside her nose. She unhesitatingly opened a

conversation with me upon the subject of lottery tickets. She was evidently not a *Cubana*, as the greenest of strangers might perceive, but as Spanish as about forty years in the back room of a bodega could make her.

The next I saw within speaking distance was seated in a landeau beneath the gas-lights in the Prado. She was of a mature beauty, fair-haired, rosy, and vivacious. I caught the Spanish name, but was addressed by her in pure and unaccented English. She was an American as much as I was, and had been the heroine of a much bewritten "diamond wedding" in New York some years before.

I continued to look for the Cuban lady, and was assisted in my search by eyes equally as inquisitive as my own, belonging as they did to one of the sex that is at present under consideration, and that have ere now discovered things that I cannot say I had myself endeavored to place in a clear light before them. I finally saw my first Cubana one evening in the parlor of a friend's house. My hostess informed me that she had reached the mature age of fourteen years. She was of large size and quite mature. She is, as I sometimes see her now in the year 1879, rather past the days of her youth, having been thrown upon the market early and disappointed in love. Her eyes were big and very black, her hair a coarse and shining mass, her complexion dark, her hands long, and such a varied assortment of jewellery I have seldom seen at one time outside a shop window. I was never informed whether she had it all at that moment upon her person;—there was enough.

By and by this young woman laughed. If a peacock could indulge in merriment it would be such a note of gladness as hers was. There was that reedy quality in it

that the voices of tropical birds and women are prone to have. She talked, and I thought of how beautiful an adaptation to nature it would be if her vocation had been to sell lottery tickets. She was very handsome, without dispute, but her adornment, her hair, her voice, somehow caused me think *la hija del pais*,—the veritable Cubana, a type, though not an exact similitude of all her sisters—an exuberant production, even for Cuba.

I do not think there is a land in the list of civilized countries that produces women so generally comely as the daughter of Cuba is. As a rule, she has a round figure, not large, but inclined to dumpling-shape. Whatever else she may be, she is never what the Americans call "scrawny." But her face, while seldom wanting in intelligence, is hardly ever vivacious. A sameness, a desert-like monotony of expression, pervades the sex. Strong traits of individual character are rarely indicated. If the reader has ever seen a flock of ducklings on their way to the nearest water, he has a fair idea of this little woman's gait and general air. Her hair is often a "glory" to her, and is sometimes of that blue-black shade only possible with the daughters of southern Europe and their descendants, though occasionally the Cuban girl varies the program by being a blonde, and, to be plain, rather fat.

This lady is often a woman at twelve, and the mother of a large family at nineteen or twenty. So pretty in her youth, in age she becomes either lean and dried, or fat and unwieldy. She fades early, and, for want of strength of character, is apt to lose control of her husband, who, nevertheless, still continues to need such control as badly as any man of his times. But whatever she may grow to seem, her eyes never fade. To the last, through all vicissitudes, they are big and black.

The Spanish race is, in fact, remarkable for the beauty of that feature. Even the males possess eyes that often, though not always, set them apart as handsome men. But I have learned that it means nothing, not even great intelligence. It does not indicate character of any stronger or nobler kind than any squint-eyed person may possess, and is far from being an indication of either mental force or moral courage.

The Cuban woman is the victim of a peculiar education, acquired in the school, the family, and the church. She believes, as did her mother before her, that when she goes out alone, or is necessarily in any male haunts, all baggage is at the risk of the owner. She is sure that men pretend to great gallantry, and are fond of paying outside regard to the fair ones, and are civil and polite, all as a mere blind. She has no silly belief that a *gentleman* would not do so and so. If he catches her alone, she is a ruined female from that moment. She must always have somebody with her who is not of the dangerous sex. There is a procession formed when she wishes to go a few blocks, as follows: First, two or three young ladies, the more the better. Second, a mulatto or negro servant, or, if possible, two or three, the more the better. Sometimes there is only one young lady and one servant. This is a case of great emergency. Man is a roaring lion, seeking some unprotected female of his species continually. No little miss ever goes to school alone, and cannot and must not pass along the street without a guardian.

The Cuban woman is timid and guarded in the presence of every man. A foreigner, speaking the language, and ignorant of these peculiarities, sometimes ignorantly endeavors to be civil. He is lucky if, to all he may say,

he gets any answer at all. She to whom he speaks regards him as by nature a designing wretch, whom she is to avoid, to never see, to ignore entirely. Ancient maidens, long since become a perfect guaranty in their own persons against any imaginable familiarity with them, act in the same way, and never get over it, and keep a keen eye upon the younger ones. Until one grows accustomed to it, it seems one of the most ridiculous of all the follies of the *ancien régime*.

Yet they are justified in much of this by their experience with the males of their race, to whom an honest and protecting gallantry is quite an unknown sentiment, and who are accustomed to stare into the faces of women on the street and consider it a masculine privilege.

One pities the Cuban young man who is in love. He cannot see her alone, and cannot come regularly to the house until a fair understanding of his intentions is arrived at. And when at last he has attained the felicity of being daily expected, he must do all his courting in the presence of the family, and utter his sweetnesses across the critical ear of his future mother-in-law. Until they have been to church, they two are never left alone. The whole family take sly turns in watching them. There is a regular detail made, I think, from the older servants of the house, to keep an eye upon them.

But there is human nature everywhere, even in Cuba, and the two are always getting off to a window-seat or a distant pair of chairs, though, with equal certainty, somebody sidles off in that direction and mounts guard. The smitten pair do not walk together in the evening. He does not accompany her to the theatre or to mass. They enjoy all the bliss they can under great difficulty, and with all mankind looking on.

The indirect result of all this espionage, of course nobody in this land of custom has ever observed. There are a great many small intrigues and innocent endeavors to circumvent the detectives. There are eloquent glances, signals, fan-talk, and the sly interchange of notes. Then the iron-guarded window, instead of being a protection, becomes a great convenience. It is more than the front gate is with us. She knows when he will pass by, and stands inside with a fair hand clasping the bars of her cage, and waits for him. They stand there with the iron between them, and talk. Every day it is so, and if mamma wishes to stop it, she must come and stand in the window also.

There are other respects in which the young man has a hard time. He must come every day. He *must*, and she holds him to the strict letter of this law. He is bound to show, by every means in his power, that he holds all other women in contempt and detestation. He must not dance with any other, and had better not be caught holding on to any other window bars, in any other street. He tells all his friends about it, and she all hers, and the matter is diligently discussed. If he should fail to come around regularly every day he has to tell a satisfactory story. I have known her to send her brother after him. He takes his revenge after marriage.

When the Cuban lady becomes a wife and mother, then all her traits develop. She is domestic, faithful, patient, and her lord's absolute property to an extent unknown among northern people. She thinks she ought to obey him, and he agrees with unanimity. She does not seem to know that she is oppressed, and has never made an effort toward emancipation. She does not

know any thing about coöperative kitchens, or the Sorosis, or her inalienable right to serve on committees, edit newspapers, and lecture. There never was a woman's rights' convention in this happy land, or a Dorcas society, or even a crusade.

But she has a trait that enables her to make herself very uncomfortable at times; she is insanely jealous. When she suspects nothing and nobody, she still keeps a wary eye for a possible slip. She wishes her husband to come and sit by her, and follow her about, and mutely beg her to smile upon him. When he goes out, she wishes to know where he is going and when he will return. When he returns, she asks him where he has been. She does not like him to dance with other women, and would blindfold him, if she could, to keep him from looking at them.

Spain, I believe, never attempted to compete for a prize upon school systems, or to exhibit a model schoolhouse for a medal. The stranger in Cuba may easily see why. It is only in countries where the dominant influence is Protestant, that female education is a matter of public solicitude, interest, and care, equally with that of males. The Cuban girl and boy are educated, as a matter of fact, by the church. The girl is taught embroidery and behavior as the chief things. There is no system of public education that can be called a system, and the only schools that can be considered free, are usually under the care of priests and nuns. Those who cannot afford to pay large tuition fees are at liberty to keep their children at home. The sexes are rigorously separated, and mixed schools are unknown. The little girl learns this above all things, that the other sex are creatures she must avoid, distrust, and never seem to have any thing to do with.

This lady grows up the greatest stickler for proprieties the world ever saw, yet, after, all, like all other women. Beware of two things: that you never propose an innovation, and never joke with her. The first she refuses, no matter what it is; the last she does not understand. She expects all males to talk to her with great earnestness. A joke, or a play upon words, a pun or a double meaning, she has no understanding of, and looks upon any man who practises them as a bad and an insincere person. Her life is taken up with very small things. She reads little or nothing, and her neighborhood is her big world. She is one of the most thorough and incurable of provincials; stereotyped and ancient in all her views of life, afraid to violate a single rule of custom, prone to believe undoubtingly without the thought of enquiry or investigation, and dying at last as she has lived, she is comforted immeasurably by the rites of the church and the thought of a respectable funeral.

This is the Cubana as I have known her, and as she casually seems. I have only an item to add to a dissertation which, to the feminine reader, must seem a tedious characterization. Women are women, even in Cuba and Turkey, and I have known dames here who, but for the standing interference of the captain-general, were capable of governing the island, including their husbands, and others who were statesmen-like judges of the affairs of the neighborhood. Confined to such topics of conversation as are common between women who do not talk much with men, the talent for gossip becomes greatly developed. The voices that lisp in gentle monosyllables when there is a male object of dread and terror about, resound through the house at other times. The slippered ease, the flimsy and draggled gown, the

untidy hair and unwashed faces, the ceaseless rocking to and fro, the general idleness, have their fitting concomitant of talk. Yet she is a woman entirely, with many a grace and charm to counterbalance her insipidity. With more tidiness, less leisure, and more the air of having been shopping, or cooking, or even dusting the furniture, she would be one whose restrained life and ridiculous education would not have entirely spoiled as a very charming woman.

CHAPTER VII.

SPANISH RULE IN CUBA.

THERE are about forty million people on this side the Atlantic who speak the Castilian tongue. The list of countries whose laws, language, religion, mode of thought and domestic habits are essentially Spanish, is a long one. Both in the old and the new worlds the experience of the Spaniard as a ruler has been long and varied enough to have changed his state-craft to a very different thing from what it is, and to have guided him at last to a change in that strange colonial policy which has cost him all his western possessions save Cuba and one other little island, her neighbor.

Doubtless more elaborate information as to his characteristics as a ruler can be gleaned from a single graceful and elaborate chapter of Prescott, and from the story of those long years of tyranny, conspiracy, suspicion, and blood in Mexico and South America, than from a hundred such dissertations as this on the Spaniard as the ruler of Cuba in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and eighty-one. He has not changed much in all the time that has passed since the day when that remarkable goat-herd, Pizarro, died on the staircase, kissing the cross he had marked on the dusty floor with his own blood, and of his general character not much more remains to be said than that which mankind have long

since learned by heart. Nevertheless, from my first acquaintance with him, the Spaniard in Cuba appeared to me as a peculiar person, actuated by remarkable views of his mission there. As he now appears to me, after considerable time passed in rather close association with him, I purpose to speak of him here, begging the reader to remember that I describe him only generally, and that there are individual exceptions to the general class. But these exceptions shine as rarely as real diamonds in the crown of a tragedy queen.

Fresh from the United States, and having all my ideas of government formed by the institutions and laws of the only—thus far—successful republic, I was not three weeks a resident of the island before I had discovered the cause of the Cuban war. Anybody would do the same, for if there had been no war, I should have wondered why there was not. The causes are everywhere, n every thing. It is a government of the Spaniard, for the Spaniard, and by the Spaniard. And yet, what I have stated I discovered so easily, I believe the Spaniard himself does not know. Many an honest bodigero heaped anathemas upon the heads of the insurgents because he believed they began a war, merely from a desire to rule or ruin, against a government the most benign, just, and glorious heaven had ever given to man. The wonder that at first possessed me at this astonishing obliquity of the Spanish mind, at this utter disregard of the lessons of the centuries, has not passed away with custom, but has rather grown upon me.

The usual Spanish official presents himself to my mind as a rather attenuated individual in a linen pin-striped uniform, with a white cap that has a tortoise-shell visor, with a little straight sword at his side, and a bamboo

cane in his hand. He is most constant around custom-houses, the "palace"—they have a great many palaces in Cuba, just as every primary school there is called a "college,"—and the hotels. He seems to have little to do, and not to be paid much for doing it, and to be constantly seeking an opportunity for small speculation. By leaving off the initial "s" of the word, perhaps it would be as correctly spelled.

This member of the civil service is supposed to have his humble situation for life or during good behavior, after the manner of the servants of a king. But I am afraid that, as is often the case with the American official, eternal vigilance is the price of office. His place, as all offices in Cuba, is eagerly coveted in Spain. Somebody is always wishing to get it away from him, and I state it as a thing often told me by officials themselves, that they have frequently to pay to their patrons the whole of the salaries received by them. It is the understanding upon which political influence is exerted for them. The accompanying understanding is, of course, that he must make the situation pay him by his own ingenuity, and he generally does.

The first essential to the transaction of business in any government department, is to have an understanding with the necessary official. Because you do this prudent thing, it does not follow that you wish to violate any law. You must see your man, or you cannot do any business at all. The Spanish civil service is the best trained in this respect of any in the world. There is nothing equal to the perfect understanding each public official has of this branch of business.

If you are going away, or coming back, and wish your trunks despatched quickly, your plan is to walk

boldly up to the examiner and give him a couple of dollars, and he will chalk the baggage, and pocket the money as though he had lent it to you a long time ago, and was agreeably surprised at ever getting it again. Wander where you will around the quays and wharves of any Cuban seaport, and you will see guards whose business it is to perform the double duty of smuggling and preventing it at the same time. Places of this kind are eagerly sought for, and could easily be filled without any salaries being paid.

The governors of Cuba are all, and always, military men. Every monarch of all he surveys in a district is a brigadier. The captain-general has no claims to his place as a statesman, but only as a soldier, and often he is neither statesman nor soldier in point of fact. But life, liberty, and property are as much at his disposition and will, as they are in Persia at that of his majesty the Shah. The laws of Spain, as that recognizing the validity of civil marriages, liberty of worship, and similar liberties, have never been in force in Cuba, because they lacked the approval of the captain-general. The island is governed by "decrees," which are curious pieces of law literature. They read thus, for example:

"Juan Buenavantura and Piedra, Brigadier of the national forces, decorated with the grand cross of San Hermenegildo and other orders of honor, for acts on the field of battle; Civil and Military Governor of the District of Colon."

Then comes the decree in long-winded Spanish, tedious and grand, ending with the name of the distinguished gentleman who has been set forth at length in the preamble. This is a law. The captain-general at Havana, for his part, promulgates these decrees when he wishes,

on his own authority and by virtue of his office. The brigadiers, who are really nobodies, notwithstanding the grand cross of San Hermenegildo, always quote some reason or authority.

There is a fashion in Cuba, strangely at variance with the origin and growth of our common law, of permitting many of these decrees to fall into desuetude while still unrescinded. They seem in many instances to have been made to be disregarded. People forget all about them, for there is no such thing apparently as a statute-book or a code. In a few weeks, that which was solemnly proclaimed becomes obsolete. Then, after a long time, some man who has violated it because everybody else did, or because he never heard of it, gets himself into trouble about it.

I do not know what the salary of a brigadier in the Spanish army is, but as governors they surround themselves with dignity and honor, and soldiers and aids-de-camp. He always lives in "the Palace," which is usually a tolerably large building. A few scattering and untidy soldiers are always on guard at the entrance, and he who is especially on duty drags his piece around after him, talks, smokes, leans against the walls, and takes off his coat. I never knew a guard in Cuba to seem to add much to the grandeur or security of the thing guarded.

All things in and about the palace are ceremonious. The herd, who exist for the purpose of being governed, must stay out. The brigadier holds "audiences" with officials, and sends for whom he will. There is a deal of bowing, and standing with the heels together, and distant talk, and polite and insincere solicitude, and walking backward. It is noticeable to frequent visitors that His

Excellency holds much converse with his Chief of Police, and wishes every day to know how things are going on among his natural enemies, the governed.

The king's saint's day must be observed by holding a "Court" at the Palace. Every official and all the sham dignitaries, such as Gentlemen of the Bed-chamber, Apothecaries to the Queen, etc., and all the Consuls, dress in "strict etiquette, or uniform," as the invitations say, and go and stand in a row in a long room, while His Excellency passes in review down the middle and back again. When the king's birthday comes, the same stupid ceremony is gone through with again by all concerned, and so on for the whole royal family. There are no refreshments.

The love of arms, and the delight in military display and parade, still live in the constitution of the Spaniard. We know how far the warlike spirit has carried him in the past. He has been a great and most successful campaigner, undaunted by peril, hardship or disaster, and enduring to the end and victory. But the ability to take the hard knocks of real war, seems to have departed from him. A commission and an uniform, a place in the chief in importance of the bodies of the state, pay, authority, cheap glory and a tin cross, are things desired above all others by the ambitious young man in Spain. Yet it is to be justly suspected that the Spaniards are the most unmilitary people in Europe at this moment. Cuba is full of volunteers and regulars. I have seen some of these latter battallions when they landed in Havana to take part in campaigns against the insurrectionists. They came from Spain hatless, shoeless, and wanting even whole breeches. They were a destitute crowd of undisciplined conscripts, young, green, awkward, and in all re-

spects to be pitied. It is well enough to speak of such being good enough as "food for powder." The purpose of these, and all other troops, is to defeat the enemy. These, without any prospect of ever being of any good, had no chance of dying by bullets. They were the predestined food for disease, and long ere this have gone the way of many battalions.

The military organizations of the "home-guard" variety have been in existence many years, uniformed, armed, and drilled. Yet, if this page should fall under the eye of a military man, he will be surprised at the inevitable conclusion of inefficiency to which the most superficial description of their movements must lead him. They are the best-trained bodies on the island, and are the boast of themselves and their compatriots, yet they march through the streets at a gait they could not sustain for two miles. Some of their pieces are at half-cock, some at full-cock, and some, as a glance is sufficient to demonstrate, would be hard to cock at all. There is not a bright bayonet or a clean barrel among three hundred men. Some of them will be seen marching by the left foot, and some by the right. If you step behind the column of fours, moving up the street, you will see that no two muskets have the same slant upon the shoulder, and look like quills upon the fretful porcupine. At the command, "Halt," every man brings his piece to an "order," with an awkward, circular, let-go-and-catch-it-again *bang* upon the ground from the right shoulder, and I have seen the command given for a change of front, the dressings or alignments, and even the "forward march," and the movements executed, with the musket still on the ground. Out of curiosity I have attended guard-mount many times, and to this day have never

seen an inspection of the arms. I never saw a soldier, either regular or volunteer, whom you would have recognized as one out of his uniform. The indescribable military bearing that usually marks the trained soldier, is unusual even among the brigadiers and field-marshals. Yet these "volunteers" are the organizations which have ejected at least one captain-general from his place, have caused such massacres as that of the students at Havana, and are always spoken of as brave, efficient, distinguished, gallant, etc. They are often under arms, are always being marched and counter-marched up and down the street, assist at all feast-day ceremonies, and are before the public continually. It is one of those countries where about every fourth man you meet on the street is in uniform, where the military element predominates, and where most that is done is expected to be done by arms, pomp, military parade, and a brass band.

Somewhere in these pages I suppose I have alluded to the form of government of Cuba as being inquisitorial. The mere use of the word may not convey a clear idea of the actual thing. Every citizen lives under a kind of espionage. It is a government conducted by the police. If the law were enforced as it stands no three persons are allowed to converse together on the street, and this, not to the end of dispersing the shade-seeking idlers, not a decree against "loafing," but to prevent the discussion of politics and treason. Every man who changes his residence from one ward to another must report the change to the police. If one, upon business or pleasure, finds a journey necessary, he must carry a pass with him, setting forth his name, age, occupation, social condition, and residence, or run the risk of arrest as a suspicious character. All social entertainments are looked after jealously, and

a gentleman cannot give a ball at his residence without police permission and surveillance. The government knows, or has a right to know, the contents of telegraphic messages, and forbids the use of cypher to all except foreign officials to their governments. Persons are arrested and placed in jail for receiving contraband newspapers from the United States, and the opening of private letters is a right always existing, even if not often exercised. As I write this there lies beside me a newspaper in which is printed a "decree" that hereafter persons will not be allowed to carry their dead to the cemetery in the family or any other coach, but must employ a hearse from an undertaker; this, of course, in the interest of the last-named lugubrious gentlemen, who have doubtless been complaining that their occupation was departing from them. It will be seen that the duty of a paternal government is also to protect industry in special and local cases.

A man's house is not his "castle" to any great extent under Spanish rule, either in theory or in practice. The illustration used by a western jurist, a friend of mine, that "the winds of heaven may whistle round it, but the King of England can*not*," is not in point. No warrant of search is necessary. It is a place where he is permitted by the government to reside under certain restrictions and conditions. His family is only his own in a certain sense, and the governor may order the marriage of his daughter to the man she wants, and papa does not want, if only the church will sanction and sanctify it.

Mercantile and other establishments may be opened from time to time, as trade and industry demand. But the police department, the proper officials, the governor, and all hands, including competitors and rival houses,

must first be consulted. In a word, there is nothing in all mundane affairs, or connected with the interests of men, that the government may not prevent, order, or modify. It embodies the only ideas of rule, law, order, and political happiness the Spaniard knows. He, as a Spaniard, lives as happily under it as we do under ours, and so would the Cuban, were he not discriminated against and treated as one who has no part in it except to pay taxes, without any of the privileges and "*fueros*" which, few as they seem to us, the Spaniard highly values. I have asked certain Spaniards why, Cuba being a bilious country, the government did not issue a decree that the inhabitants should take a general depuratory once a month. They said, solemnly, they did not know, and seemed to wonder why indeed. As a joke, it failed, as usual, to have its intended effect, and, I believe, rather left the impression that in the United States we have such regulations.

A very prominent piece of history is the *Stamp Act* of the British parliament, talked of ever since 1765, the cause of the tolling of the colonial bells in token of the "funeral of liberty," and the calling to order of Patrick Henry in the Assembly of Virginia. The Stamp Act, which has been in force in Cuba this century past, or more, has had no such effect, though a precisely similar measure. Time immemorial every man who has had any use for a contract, a deed, an affidavit, has had to pay extra for his stationery. And "without representation," too, but nobody has ever thought of complaining of it. The greater grievance consists in the fact that no Cuban may hold any administrative place or office. He may sometimes be a clerk in governmental employ, no more. He is told plainly that he has no part in the government of his country. The doctrine of Spanish statesmen is

that those most interested in the welfare of a colony are, by that interest, rendered unfit to govern it. Cuba exists for the benefit of Spain, and is skilfully managed to that sole end. The companion doctrine is, that no subsequent right, no change, can ever impair the supreme right acquired by conquest. The Spaniard is an unconverted feudalist of this century. Cuba is a possession to him, not a country, He does not pretend any excuse of necessity, but sits squarely down upon his right as lord and master. He says distinctly that there are no rights, and nothing but duties, for what socialists call the "people." Representation in the Córtez, such as it is, is a Spaniard's privilege, and the payment of taxes a vassal's duty. He is arrogant about it, and bears himself in all his words and ways accordingly. Does the government of Palestine by the Romans, in the days of Christ, offer any contrast to this? Was the government of Britain by the Normans essentially different?

Though the war was a failure, or will prove to have been a failure, the mother-country has made, or is said to have made, some concessions to bring it to an end. No matter, the theory of the government remains the same, and in a year or two the fact of it will be found to be unchanged. You cannot find in all the island a Spaniard so far-seeing, so wise in his generation, so learned in the common wisdom that experience brings, as to know the direct and sure result of a colonial policy of the sixteenth century. He is oblivious to the lesson of his loss of all his South American and Mexican Empire. He will lose Cuba;—with all the patched and inconsistent concessions he may have lately made to the insurgents, he will sometime lose it, and it is hardly worth while longer for him to defend his ancient doctrines by force either of argument or arms.

CHAPTER VIII.

WAR-TIME AMONG THE NON-COMBATANTS.

THERE was a period of the Cuban war, some three or four years ago, when you heard every day something about the "Trocha." This was a line more or less like the equator in being imaginary, and was drawn across the island from north to south, duly garrisoned and freely picketed, and beyond which it was said the rebels should never come.

But they did come. Wherever or whatever the "Trocha" was, and I confess to some vagueness on the question myself, they carefully looked for, and found it, and came over among us non-combatants. There is no "Trocha" now. After the rebels demonstrated that it was easy to cross a theory, armed and defended in theory, it faded from the nomenclature of the country. But while it existed one was constantly hearing the remark that such and such things did not exist this side of the "Trocha," meaning the side upon which the Spaniards, and I, and all the observant and non-fighting people, were. If a man was missing, it was said of him by his bereaved neighbors that he had gone to the "Trocha," as the barbarians of the territories say, "gone up the flume," or we, refined, say poetically, "where the woodbine twineth." But while this celebrated line of demarcation existed, whatever sanguinary scenes may have

occurred on its other side, there were certain scenes and incidents, doings and feelings, on this side, which I purpose to try to sketch, being my nearest approach to the "war correspondent" during the nine years' struggle.

Western Cuba is quite as full of Cubans born and educated as the eastern half of the island is, where the insurrectionists had it quite their own way for so long. These of western Cuba are also rebels. I never heard of a Cuban who was not such. They confess it—among themselves; the Spaniards know it. But they kept rather quiet. The government was apt to arrest them on suspicion, and while it may not have angered them, it certainly annoyed them, and they usually tried to avoid any cause of offense.

I have heretofore in these pages given my impressions of the amiable town youth of the tropics, his manners, appearance, and clothes, and it cannot be expected by the reasonable reader that I shall describe him now as breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the Spaniard. He hated the latter all the same though, and was willing to sacrifice all his country relations in the cause.

There are Cubans enough in every town, and scattered throughout the country, to occasionally do something terrible, and at least to make the minority fear them. I do not believe there is another country in a single northern state, where two classes, feeling as these do toward each other, could live together calmly through a single summer. There was no serious obstacle to hinder any Cuban who wished from joining his brethren in the field. With a little vigilance and pains, he could always have done so. But he preferred joining his brigade in New York, staying a few months or years, getting his

documentary evidence of United States citizenship, and coming back again exempt from any and all military service on either side, and thereafter fighting his battles with the Spaniard in a consulate of his adopted country, and quarrelling with him upon every pretext, through and by the disgusted victim of all parties and all follies, the American Consul.

I have frequently heard that money, arms, and other necessary things were liberally supplied by the people of western Cuba to their struggling brethren in the field. But I believe even the Spaniards did not give themselves any great uneasiness about these iniquitous little treasons. They may have been sent; I am not denying the fact, and am merely, after an inward struggle, allowing myself to have a small and insignificant doubt upon the subject.

There is one fact which is very nearly conclusive as to the interest in, and sacrifice for the war, felt and made by the city Cubans: I never heard of a girl having a lover in the insurrection who dreamed and prayed and waited for her hero while he fought for his country. It was a bad sign.

If ever the fight is fought out, if ever Cuba is won for her own people by force of arms, it will be by the mountaineers and men of the chapparal. It will be the victory of the *Guajiros*.

Notwithstanding all this, the mere fact of the existence of a hatred which is universal between Cubans aud Spaniards, brought even these non-combatants into some connection with the last great struggle for independence. The episodes which mark this connection are innumerable, extending through all the relations of private life. The murder of the eight school-boys in Havana, for the

alleged offense of breaking the small glass pane in the monument of a noted Spaniard, is a story that hardly needs to be recounted here. Incidents very serious in one view are quite ridiculous in another. These young victims of fanatical revenge are not the only school-boys who have been in political difficulty in Cuba.

In a certain college at Havana there was a print of the then Queen of Spain, *Ysabella Segunda*,—the notorious Isabel, mother of King Alfonso, sometimes privately called by the Cubans "Alfonsito." One day the glass fixed over her majesty's picture was found broken, and a zealous inquiry was at once instituted. It was found that the sacrilege had been perpetrated by one of the two or three youngsters who had been playing with a ball. It was also discovered in the course of the examination that some points of the shattered glass had cut the paper and torn the effigy of the royal Bourboness. Thereupon a jury of medical men was called to decide whether the cuts and scratches, made by the said broken glass, ruptured by the said boys, were or were not upon vital parts of her majesty's person as represented in said print. The intention was to convict and punish with a severity proportioned to the danger to the queen from the wounds inflicted by an attempted assassination in effigy. I forget if the doctors quarrelled as usual, or if they decided that the wounds had torn only her costume. At any rate, the regicides escaped with life. It was a calm and judicial trial. The gallant volunteers do not seem to have gotten it into their hands.

I knew of an old lady, the mother of several sons. Some of these had gone from home, and one or two still remained with her. From one of the absent ones she received a letter once a week, which was read to her, she

being quite aged. He stated from time to time that he was coming home erelong, and his mother was comforted, not expecting to live long, but still hoping to see her son again. But he never came, and his mother died. Then, for the first time, the neighbors dared to speak of the deception that had kept a pang the less from her last days. The absent son lay buried in the sand of a lonely coast, killed by the Spaniards as a member of one of the numerous Cuban expeditions. His brother had written all his letters in the very house where his mother received them, for the mother's sake pure fiction, every one.

From the beginning of the insurrection to November, 1874, about four years, there had been killed by the Spaniards, not in battle, but as civilians, five thousand nine hundred and seventy-two persons. Of this number the church has record, as having afforded them her ministrations as to those about to die. How many more died who were left where they fell, and of whose death there is no record, the reader can guess quite as approximately as I can. It may be that civil war brings such results naturally and inevitably. But five thousand people, in a little island, tried, if they were tried, and shot to death for suspected disloyalty, or for giving aid and comfort to rebellion, is a fearful record.

Apropos of trials for treason, inciting insurrection, and giving aid to rebellion, I am reminded of the story of the advocate. This man was called by way of pseudonym, "*El Citado*"—the called, or cited. A certain mulatto was tried for inciting the negroes to insurrection, and this advocate, or fiscal, was acting as prosecuting attorney, and gave great zeal to his side of the case. As was to be expected, the mulatto was found guilty and condemned,

wrongfully, as was generally thought. When he was called to hear his sentence, and was, according to custom, asked if he had any thing to say, he rose and turned to his prosecutor, and with the certainty of death to add solemnity to his words, addressed him thus: "I go to my death, and as to my guilt or innocence, I have no useless words to say; I am already condemned. But you, Señor Don José M——, I do summon and demand to appear with me and answer before the bar of God!!"

The scene and the words turned the attention of all present toward the advocate. The incident was not forgotten, and invested the lawyer with a superstitious interest. The boys in the street used thereafter to whisper mysteriously: "There goes *El Citado!*" and in less than a year Don José obeyed the summons. So the story lives.

I know of Cubans whose deaths go far toward redeeming the fame of all their brethren. The little, long, ungallant, unmilitary war, has been accentuated by vindictiveness, persecution, and revengeful brutality, and illuminated by instances of individual heroism. One, going to his death, loaded with manacles, accused his guards of cowardice. "It requires eight of you," he said, "to keep one man, chained as I am, from getting away from you," and he harangued the Spanish soldiers thus, much to the delight of the populace, until his tongue was stopped by bullets. From the beginning to the end, if indeed it is the end, "*Cuba Libre*" has been a cry as stirring as "*Santiago.*" The dream of freedom, brighter in the thoughts of men than dreams or hopes of aught else, has been as much an incentive to enthusiasm as was ever the anthem of Rouget de Lisle.

On July 4, 1877, Luis Morejon, an officer in the insurgent army, was shot by order of a court-martial. He had been captured after being severely wounded a few days previously. He had a brother, a man well known to me, to whom he wrote a last letter, short, unsentimental and pithy, so far as it was legible. He said he had no regrets in dying; that he had been right in taking arms against the Spaniards, and that, while obliged to them for their offer of religious consolation at the hands of a priest, he had declined it because he did not believe their religion.

This letter was forwarded to its destination, but previously was changed, not by substitution or erasure, but by mutilation of the characters; making "i" to seem "t," and "u" to seem "o," and so on through the whole, with such care and pains that at first view it was a mere jumble of meaningless characters and nonsense. Upon the manliness or decency of killing a man and then mutilating his last letter, still sending it, comment is unnecessary.

Two Cubans, acquaintances of mine, one Sunday morning discovered themselves to be invested by the police in their office. As was afterward known, they were entirely ignorant and innocent of any offense against the government. But knowing, as they must have known, that there was some mistake in the proceedings, and no cause for arrest, they acted as though they had been discovered in the perpetration of a capital crime. One of them bestirred himself to get out of town, and going to a friend's house, was taken by a negro and secreted in a cave. The other was actually arrested, but gave his parole that he would not escape, and was not guarded. In about three minutes thereafter he was also gone, and having found means in a friend's house to disguise

himself as an old negro, finally reached the same place of refuge with his companion. A week or more passed. Diligent search was made for them without any result, and they were fed and guarded by the negro, whose knees they embraced, whose hands they wrung, and whose freedom they promised to buy for him, begging he would not betray them.

Finally, the adventurous skipper of a little schooner agreed to carry them to the United States for a certain sum, if they were placed on board of him during the night, and they were taken off a stormy coast, at great risk of swamping the boat, and put on board, ragged, forlorn, scared, and willing to do any thing, pay any thing.

But the same night the vessel was searched by the police, and one of them found and brought on shore. He then insisted that his companion was on board, and must also be brought. But a further search failed to reveal him, and the vessel sailed. The captured one within an hour had told the story of the cave, who the friend was who had assisted him to disguise himself, and all who had aided and assisted him in any way, including the men who had risked their lives in getting him on board.

In a month the affair had blown over, being a mistake, and the man whom the police really wanted having reached New York about the time they began to want him. The fugitive came back from the United States, and both recovered their usual sleek demeanor. But the boatmen were never paid; the slave whose hands they kissed with tears and pleadings is still a slave, and they do not know him at all.

Yet the man of these two who desired to tell, even before he was asked, the doings of his friends in his behalf, and implicate them with him, and who was even

very anxious that his partner should not escape, and who, when he was free again, repudiated every promise made while in distress to poor men, even to a slave, was the brother of him who was shot on the fourth of July, and the same who received the mutilated last letter.

Of such incidents the history of this strange little war is full. As I write these lines I know that peace is said to have been won and the insurrection crushed. There are fifteen hundred soldiers in the town, fresh from the field, without tents or rations, and billeted upon the inhabitants. To one battalion of them alone the government owes a million dollars back pay. There will never be written any history of what has passed. The struggle has had no interest from a military point, and its operations have not been stategic. It is a war that has been fought out without bayonets and without artillery. Whoever may have won or lost, there was no question about the balance of power, or the re-partition of territory. That it was a just and legitimate struggle for independence there is no question, and this kind of contest is usually a war of hate as well. I do not know the terms of peace,—only what it is said they are. A year or two, or ten, will pass, and then reprisals, prescriptions, and revenges will begin again. "Nosotros" will come forward refreshed. The great model of the longing Cuban heart, the Republic of the United States of America, will still, God grant, sit secure across the narrow water, and by her example urge the islander to another effort to make for himself a little government like her. The people of the wood and mountain, the hope of Cuba, who have fought once, may fight again. Calm consideration of the past may be useful in preventing a repetition of the experiment on a day's notice, without concert, supplies, plans, or experience.

Yet this, with such a beginning, lasted nine years, cost seven hundred millions, and killed one hundred and sixty thousand Spaniards. The Cuban may find means to do better next time. Ten years hence there will still be men who have lived in the woods, who have ambushed convoys and burned sugar-houses, who have cloven skulls with the machete at *Las Tunas* and *Palo Seco*, and who may succeed in another trial.

That these are mere speculations I shall not deny. The difference between ourselves and the Cubans is naturally and unchangeably such that we cannot judge him. Time often brings changes which all the strenuous efforts of armed force failed to bring. I only add one reflection: the Cuban *can* win his own island if he will, and can hold it until it becomes a black republic or a government of some kind in which the negro shall have turned master. The grist is in the mills of the gods already, and he who invented that apt simile has also said that they grind slowly, and exceedingly small, and every grain.

CHAPTER IX.

CUBAN TOILERS.

IT would be the repetition of a very trite axiom, to say that the negro in every country is a peculiar character with a strange history. Except the old story of the Jews, his is the most pathetic in the annals of mankind. Wherever he has been carried, he has remained in all essentials the same. He retains, with his color, all the African nature, and, at the same time, travesties all the ways of the superior race. To him, in our own country, may be traced a school of song which is the only distinctive American music,—sweet, melancholy, sentimental, and, at the same time, grotesque. To him is due the dialect, the modified English pronunciation, of the cultivated people of the Southern States, and in Cuba he speaks the Spanish with the same elimination of harsh sounds, and the same leaving off all unnecessary syllables, with the quaint forms of expression which he would invent upon the basis of any living language.

The negro is very tropical. Though we may lose sight of the fact in the North, it is his great characteristic. If he had lived in Labrador for ten generations, he would still be found to be as black as ever, and with the same love for a degree of natural heat which enables him to dispense with a shirt. In Cuba, he lies sleeping in the full blaze of a sun that would cook beef. On our western

plains, as a soldier, he shivers around a scanty camp-fire of buffalo-chips and sage-brush, cheered by the idea of heat where there is nothing but smoke. Clumsy and shuffling in gait, he can dance the legs off of any other man, and conspicuously inadequate in the matter of calves, and often naturally malformed in the shape of his feet, he has yet done more hard work, and been kept more constantly at it, and has received less for it, than any other in the history of the human race.

Cuba is a strange combination of misery and happiness to the African. It is a natural place of residence for him. He grows strong physically, and is a man robust and splendidly developed. He eats well and sleeps well, and, under favorable circumstances, is prolific beyond example. With the slightest excuse for being so, he is happy. The climate and every thing about it agrees with him. He finds his natural surroundings in these thick and tangled woods, and among palms, plantains, and cane. If you should discover a troop of monkeys, or a flock of paroquets, clustered among the bare and sighing branches of a Canadian forest, you would behold a no more really incongruous picture than when you see a black man amid northern frost and snow.

There is this difference between our country negro and his brother in Cuba. The first is, often without knowing it, unhappy all his life because he is cold; the latter, treated infinitely worse than a mule, a mere human animal in common appreciation of those who own him, is comparatively happy, without knowing it, and without knowing a moment of peace.

I am not able to state what proportion, in point of numbers, the negro bears to the whole population of the island. I should judge from general impressions that

Cuba was nearly one-half black. In the towns large numbers are free, and all are less subject to perpetual and grinding drudgery than in the country. There is a peculiarity of the Latins in their association with the negro. They are the most exacting taskmasters and relentless slave-drivers in the world, and yet, there does not exist among them that class feeling, or, in other words, that hatred of the negro because he *is* a negro, so common among very good people in the United States. I have never heard here the equivalent of that frequent expression of the old times among my high-toned ancestors, "a miserable free nigger," except from an American or Englishman who had attained the dignity of superintending an engine on some plantation, or of a mariner's gin-mill in town. A negro once free is presumed to have the right to be so. His children may go to school if they like, and all occupations are open to him, so far as I know. There is no law against his riding in a cab if he has got the requisite twenty cents, and musicians who have studied in Paris sit beside him in the orchestra and fiddle operas. The special amusements of the free negro are left to him in peace, and his special occupations he pursues in company with all other laborers. There are some things he doesn't do, for while adult white men are sometimes boot-blacks, the negro never is. He is often a skilful stevedore or stower of ships' cargoes, and while a large number of white men follow the same occupation, I have never heard of any persistent effort to drive him off.

I do not mean to say there is no social distinction against him. He lives and has his pleasures apart, but is not shunned, hated, driven from the enjoyment of public resorts and occupations, because he is black. Nor is the man who chooses to associate with him, as many do more

or less, abandoned, shunned, and forsaken on that account. Miscegenation is going on so continually that the character of the island is rapidly changing in point of population. It is the inestimable privilege of every white man who chooses to incur the responsibility of a colony, to have a family of mulatto children, almost regardless of his other and more proper family relations. Very many have only the tan-colored family with a black mother, and seem content. I have seen men walking among the brilliant crowds of the Plaza with black women. A father may be seen taking his mulatto family for an airing, and acting very much as any father would. There is many a family in Cuba, of social position and wealth, whose members have a certain look about the eyes and lips, to say nothing of the complexion, that is not Spanish.

In a hundred years the probabilities are that Cuba will be a black country. The negro is physically strong and prolific, and happy enough to crowd out the pure white element, which decays in a country never intended for white men. The process is going on much more rapidly than many a social revolution is of which people speak every day, and are sure of.

To return to the present life of the negro in Cuba, nothing about him attracts the notice of the stranger so quickly as his amusements. I write the word in the plural, though he has really only one,—dancing. The peculiar negro dance seems to solace him amid all his sorrows. Any Sunday evening you may see him at it, and if you do not see him you may hear him. I think if there is any faculty which the negro has to perfection it is that of musical time. I do not say tune, though, in many instances, he is also a musician. His music in Cuba—that which you

hear, and thereby know he is having a good time—is only a drum, and one that he made himself. The man who does the drumming does not do it for hire. There is no piper to pay after the fun is over, for he seems to enjoy himself more than any other man in the crowd. He holds the drum between his legs, and beats it with his open hands. He rides it, as it were, and at a furious gait. He writhes and wriggles with the exquisite pleasure it gives him, and the perspiration trickles from all the prominences of his body. In the meantime, a buxom wench and a bare-footed laddie are dancing a kind of African can-can in the little open space left free for them by the crowd. She, it would seem, is coy; he is amorous. Many times they wriggle and shuffle round the footpath, and, finally, it ends as it began, and pair number two stand up. There is no skill in it, and no beauty. The pleasure, which is evidently very great, is derived from the act of moving the body in time with the melancholy and monotonous notes of the drum. But the country-dances of the whites distinctively are the same thing. They are willing to dance all night, in couples, in any country village, to a tune of only five notes repeated over and over upon a battered guitar.

Sometimes I have heard the Cuban negro sing. It was ever a lugubrious performance, and had the semi-religious or solemn refrains which are characteristic of plantation melodies and revival hymns. Like our own fellow-citizen, this one is always either singing or "talking to himself." You hear the same animated discussions, too, among knots of them gathered on the shady side of a building; dogmatic assertion by one, dogged and contemptuous denial by the other; solemn and weighty arguments, in turn scouted and ridiculed. "Can

the Ethiopian change his skin," or, we may add, his docile, wordy, gandiloquent, merry, unsubstantial character?

But this is the man who, on the plantation, is driven every night to the square barracks that are his quarters, and locked in, like pigs to herd together, he and his fellows, until morning and toil come again. He is one of a "gang," and the emblem of authority under which he works is a long whip. Among his familiar things are stocks, manacles, and the whipping-post. Mules and oxen are often treated with some consideration; slaves never. The annals of every sugar plantation are written in red. The overseer is professional, as a drover or butcher is, only he drives men and women. I have seen and grown used to the chain-gang. I have read of the French galleys. But it seems to me there is no being so hopeless, no mortal who drags out so cruel and cheerless an existence as the Cuban slave. This is a statement that every interested man will deny, but never explain how it is that a situation which tells its own story has so deceived your eyes and ears. Perhaps the howls of whipped slaves, that you have heard, are happy cries. Perhaps as thankless and utterly unrewarded toil as a mule's is, from early infancy to old age, is a happy lot. The man who tells you so, being interested, as nearly every man in Cuba is, possibly believes it, but it does not seem probable. By and by they begin to speak profoundly of the incapacity of "the nigger" for any thing better, and so excuse what has already been denied. I do not like to write of the institution as I have seen it about me every day. They may talk of "free Cuba" as they will; slavery is as dear to the heart of the Creole as it is to the Spaniard, and as dear to

John Bull and the Yankee as to either. The horrors are unmitigated to this day. There are tales to tell, and I could tell them, as could any man who has resided on the island. I have seen the bleeding backs myself, and in the streets of Cuban towns the wretches who wore upon their necks the pronged iron collars which made it seem as though they must sleep standing. Negro women have described to me the days when they were laid upon the ground with their bodies in a shallow excavation, and thus whipped, to prevent the destruction of *two* lives. Some of the young heroes and statesmen whom I have described in a previous chapter are supported by the labor of women whom they own, and whose wages they promptly collect. Though the law declares that every slave who has attained the age of sixty years is free, and every child born is free, there is no plantation-master who would not smile at your suggestion that he did not own every "hand" on his place. The old man who has worked all his life for others may decline to be turned adrift when he is old, and leave his master to say thereafter that he likes his doom. The decrees alluded to are, and were, and always will be, a blind and pretence that everybody understands.

I mentioned, in a former chapter, the fact that there was a great deal of rocking-chair and not much thrift in the Cuban woman's life. But the inquisitive reader asks: Who, then, orders the household? I answer, the servants. There are usually enough of them to do it. This is the town, and not the plantation. Five of them here are as one anywhere else in the world. They literally "run" the establishment. They nurse the babies, attend to the marketing, order the table, dust the furniture, and make the beds. They all eat, too, and all have friends.

Perhaps it is cheap, but it does not seem so, and people cling to the system, "the institution," when they have it, as the greatest of blessings and chiefest among ten thousand missionary charities.

On account of this great charity, however, viewed in another light, the debauchery of this island is nearly complete. Were it a theme for ears polite, I might devote a whole chapter to "The Quadroon in Social Ethics." But nobody seems to realize in it a social and moral curse. We did not when we had it, and refused to listen to any such maudlin-sentimental view.

The great day of the negro in Cuba is the sixth of January of every year,—"All King's Day." This, by an immemorial custom, they have all to themselves. They parade the streets clad in the barbaric and hideous finery of Africa. They dance to the monotonous thumpings of the African drum, and with savage gestures and contortions. They dance and beg from door to door, and it is "nigger's day" without any admixture. It is quaint and strange the first time, to the extent of causing one to rub his eyes and wonder where he is. But afterward it is an unmitigated bore to all but the interested parties. There is no spectacle like it in any other civilized region. The slave-trade was active twenty-five years ago, and many of the Africans yet speak the language of their tribe. On this day they are simply recalling the songs and scenes of Guinea. I have frequently heard people say: "Now look at those niggers; if they were let alone, they'd go straight back to barbarism." I have heard ten people make the same wise remark in one day, meaning thereby that slavery and the slave-trade were Christianizing and humanizing agencies. And they never thought of the fact that these people were, most of them, barbarians in

their youth, and were beating their drums, and dancing their dances, and clad in their barbaric finery, for only one day in the year. All the rest of the time they are as civilized as slaves ever have any inducement to be. But I suppose on this day they ought to put on clean frocks, and sit down quietly, and read nice books, and converse, and sing hymns, and deliver addresses, and give tea-parties. Then they would show that they were human.

A great contrast to all this, is the negro's fellow-toiler, John Chinaman. He is also, to all intents, a slave. Neither can he change his character in any country. He is our antipode. He never can learn to drink whiskey, never wants to fight all mankind in the open street for love of the species, never acquires the way of spending in one glorious night all he has earned in a month. He has here, as in California, three great characteristics: he is always sober, always at work, and is the most devoted and inveterate gambler alive.

I may have occasion hereafter to allude to the Chinaman as a plantation-slave, and any thing further I shall say here concerning him, has reference to him as having passed safely through the snares set to lengthen his term of service, escaped the chain-gang, and as being finally at work for himself.

He has not yet, in Cuba, succeeded in becoming a washwoman. The man is not yet come who is capable of taking that business out of the hands of the coal-black negress, who can take a shirt in a moderately crumpled condition from the hands of its owner, wear it herself until it is in a fit condition to command her high skill at the tub, and afterward make it whiter and smoother, and tear the sleeves out of it quicker, and gen-

erally make it go to the old linen faster than any other being in any other land. Her performances in this line have the shine of genius.

The Chinaman in Cuba has three specialties: he cooks, he peddles sweetmeats, and he keeps a fruit-store. In this first department he may be considered as fairly established, and it is a wonder to see how he can attain the peculiar Cuban style of street "dulces," and even do it better. At first he was a failure in the business, because he had not the lung-power to bawl his wares through the streets, and did not sell any thing for lack of *viva voce*. But he conquered the difficulty, and now you meet him everywhere with a long red box upon his head, which he beats constantly with a small stick. You are hardly ever out of hearing of this wooden tinkling, and it has become the trade-mark of the dulce business. It is of no use any longer for anybody to howl and cry up and down the by-ways of mankind that he is selling guava jelly, and grated cocoa-nut, and "milk-cream" of the very best. It is a country of custom, and the custom is to wait for him who passes by smiting a box.

But it is John's fruit-store that is the queerest of mercantile establishments. His genius specially assists him in this avocation, and he gains money thereby. His "store" is generally the smallest, not the largest, he can find, and he and his numerous friends and acquaintances keep it always full. You cannot tell who is the head of the house, though there is such a head. You may examine it carefully, and not be able to tell where it is the proprietor sleeps and eats. It is dirty and bad-smelling and close. But when the master sallies forth into the street he is as clean as though he had just emerged from a clean business and a model establishment. He is al-

ways neat, and his house is always dirty. It is among the contradictions of his character.

The choice of a small house in place of a large one, shows that the Chinese necessity of crowding a dense population into a small space, as is the case in Chinese seaboard cities, has become an inherited habit that clings to him wherever he goes. The same necessity makes him an economist of the first class, and enables him to work for less wages and make more money than any other man. All his national habits cling to him. When he first arrived in Cuba, a miserable stranger in an inhospitable land, bound besides to a term of slavery, his pig-tail was cut off, and he was called by a new name, after some one of the saints, as José, or Crispin, or Diego. After some manner he was made to renounce his paganism, and fit himself for a residence upon holier soil than China, and altogether may be said to have been fumigated thoroughly. Yet, if you enter the back room of his store, you will find there enthroned in a red shrine the deity he still believes in, with every appurtenance of his peculiar worship. It is all wrong, and the height of unconverted and unregenerate paganism in a country devoted to the true church. Yet where, either in our own land or Cuba, can you find another man who keeps his God so near his business, and is religious enough to make his shop a temple.

During all his residence in Cuba, which in most cases is perpetual, John Chinaman sees the slant-eyed beauties of his own race only in his dreams. She has not been allowed to accompany him hither. No man can tell whether he longs, or how much, for a sight of one of the little queerly-dressed, short-footed, moon-faced beauties of his own country. No one knows any thing about his

emotions, or if he has any. He never complains, never cries, seldom sings. But he is human, and womanless, and therefore either very happy or quite miserable, according to his youthful experiences.

But not quite always. There are cases where he has managed to kindle a flame in the dusky bosom, and where such is the case, it is commonly believed she has a good and easy time of it. I know two or three such families, and affairs seem to go on with them in much the regular way. I have seen John, *pater*, giving his eldest-born a turn at spanking with a barrel-stave, for naughty and disrespectful language to his said papa. That was regular. This morning I saw a natty and clean young Chinaman passing along the street with an equally good-looking girl. She was young and vivacious, and they evidently belonged together. But the girl's eyes and color showed that she was the daughter of a Chinaman herself, and a quite plausible argument in favor of the mixture of the Asiatic and the negro. I know a Chinaman who has toiled for years to buy out of her original condition of servitude his very dark-complexioned wife. He has succeeded in doing so, and meantime they have reared quite a family. But all the time she has been in the habit of irrigating her voluptuous system with *aguardiente*, and has raised the deuce with her long-suffering husband, and has even, 't is said, on sundry occasions, conciliated him with a good-sized club. This was not regular.

I once heard some Chinese laborers singing. It was in a lonely place, and while I do not know what possessed them to so forget themselves, I presume they thought no one was nigh to listen. It was peculiar music; five falsetto voices pitched at a high key, and the little tune

ranging through only four or five notes of an octave. It was doleful, melancholy, croaky, froggish, and yet at the end of a stanza there was sometimes a little weak laughter. They were having a tremendously hilarious time for Chinamen. Before that time I had never heard John either sing or laugh. I have never heard him since.

I differ with some observers in believing that the Chinaman has no emotions. He only conceals them. They are named in his language, and there is even Chinese poetry. The peculiar thing about him here and everywhere is his changelessness. He will serve civilized people who use knives and forks, and will lay a dining-table as though born to the manner, and will cook the most appetizing dishes after the fashion of those whom he serves. If, after a long time, he changes his garments for those commonly worn, you will never surprise him with a red neck-tie, or a striped vest, or a green shirt, or any thing loud or barbaric. As in his management of the kitchen or the dining-table, he seems to have a rare faculty of understanding the proper white-man's rule. But all this is not John as he actually is. Some day you will find this same man among his countrymen, dressed in his tunic and wide trousers, with slippers on his feet made of straw, and a shining coil wound about his skull, eating strange dishes made of unknown things, and conveying soup to his mouth with two small sticks. You may convert him, and he will still offer the worship of fire to his hideous deity in his joss-house. Accustom him to airy apartments, and clean floors, and all the ways of beauty and comfort as long as you will, and as soon as opportunity offers he will go off and enjoy himself amid the reek and slime of a little hole so full of his own fellow-countrymen that no more can enter.

Whenever, in the time to come, the Chinaman shall have gained over a district of the New World to himself, —and he will dŏ it,—he will make that district like Canton or Macao, in no way modified save by climate and resources. There will be no horses there, and few animals of any kind. It will be full of fanciful little houses, and there will be red signs, and dragons and griffins on the gables, and swallow-tailed flags, and very narrow streets, and wicker fences, and gardens that will smile with dwarfed trees and strange roses. There will be ditches there, and bare-legged, silent, and incessant toilers beside them. There will be jog-trotting bearers of burdens threading the highways, and unintelligible jargon spoken, and a steady looking at the ground by everybody. There will be no anniversaries, no Sundays, no Fourths of July, no fuss about any thing which has any of the nonsense of glory, or pride, or mere feeling. There will be no discussions about the government, and all that the community will desire will be to be let alone, and if it should be so left alone, the colony will increase and multiply, and spread by a steady and contiguous growth. There will be peace there, brooding over all, year after year, undisturbed and serene. There will be no labor unions, no strikes, no tramps, and by way of a public edifice only a jail.

And through all his residence there, the colonist will still think of the flowery kingdom, and still intend to go back, and never become a citizen of the country which surrounds his temporary home. When he dies, his friends will get the flesh off his bones as quickly as possible, and double him up and send him back in a sack.

There are governments which would be richer and more prosperous and populous than they are, if a community

such as this were settled within their borders. While the conditions of life are almost changeless with the Chinaman, yet very industrial virtue dwells with him. There will come a time, even in Cuba, when the question of what shall be done with him must arise. Even the dance-loving negro will join in the cry. The strangest of modern social spectacles is now offered to the moralist, the social economist, and the humanitarian. It is that of a peaceful man who will not drink, will not fight, wants no holidays, works all the time, and with skill, and for low wages, takes no part in politics, is in no sense dangerous, and yet for these virtues is hated, mobbed, and must be prohibited and driven away.

But there is a consolation which John will carry back with him when he goes: he will not have been converted. He came, and will have gone, a heathen. It is to be feared that his personal experiences among Christians will not have had the effect of softening his heart toward their faith. Henceforth, seeing that we have had him right where we could preach to him and influence him by example besides, and have failed to change him, we shall have a good excuse for not subscribing any more to foreign missions. I believe that in Cuba Jesuit acuteness perceives that it is no use, and the church has fallen back upon the conclusion that he is an animal, and shrives all the numerous faithful who treat him as such.

CHAPTER X.

THE CUBAN TOWN.

THERE is little hope of giving in words a correct picture of the tropical town. Neither the railway villages of the Western border, nor the adobe towns of Mexico, nor any other nondescript collection of human habitations were ever accurately presented to the imagination of one who had never seen them, and whose ideas of a town had been formed by different types. The *sensations* of a place cannot easily be conveyed to others, and mental impressions are seldom transmissible. The Cuban town is a harder piece than any of them, and as I begin the attempt to describe it I perceive the difficulty of placing it before the reader.

Imagine a town built by modern and enlightened people, who live in America, who are subject, as one would imagine, to modern influences, and who have yet made these fortuitous clusters of dwellings without any attention or forethought, and afterward have concluded to let them stand as they are. At least such seems to have been the plan. They are a general mixture of irregularities, though the streets may run at something like right angles, and have names and grades.

With the exception of Havana as seen from the sea, the Cuban town from a little distance looks something like a brickyard. There is not enough white in its

composition to add any cheerfulness to the view. The houses being mainly of one story, the place has a square look, as though it were made up of drab-colored deal-boxes. As you come nearer you are surprised at the shabby look of the place. I presume it would look ancient and littered if it had been built all at once and by contract only last year. There are no cottages in the suburbs, no door-yards, no roses and sod, no white fences, no homes of a tidy and prosperous middle class. Pigs, goats, and chickens act as members of the community in these outlying regions, without any accompanying obligation to act as decent citizens. They pass in and out of the open doors with an air of independence and leisure that is charming, and as those should who have always lived there. There are hordes of children, most of them naked as when they were born, and who have been so during all the intervening time. There is a general disposition of the walls to peel in patches and spots, and appear as though recovering from a recent eruptive epidemic. Advancing age seems to have overtaken every thing, and yet it seems to have been so always. The hand of woman has never been busy there, for there is no pretence of adornment or even of cleanness, and a general mouldiness overspreads all.

At every corner, or oftener, there is a little bodega, very dingy, with its sunken floor, its dilapidated old counter, its strings of onions and beggarly show of salt cod, and its row of dusty black bottles of aguardiente. Then comes the shoemaker's, where are made the natural and especial Cuban shoes, constructed so as to be crushed down at the heel, run over at the side, thrust upon the bare and stockingless feet, and worn as long as they can be made to hang upon the great toe by dint of persistent

scraping at every step. Then comes the "Tienda,"—the store,—neither a country nor a city establishment, but a thing of its own kind. All these places have, not numbers, but names: The Pearl, The Industry, etc. Here and there upon the broken wall grows a cactus, with its impenetrable armor of thorns; here and there some scrubby and neglected green thing, that owes its existence to the fact that the goats do not like the taste of it.

Loungers are everywhere where there is any shade, and the gamin has a whole year of sunshine and every day a holiday in these blessed retreats. Thus happy, besides being comfortably off in the way of having no clothes to speak of, he improves each shining hour with playing at marbles, stoning goats, training puppies, and the general system of inane and objectless running and whooping, which is a fashion of the small boy in all lands.

These are the suburbs of the tropical town. As you pass on the scene grows grander. Presently there is a continuous sidewalk as much as a foot or fourteen inches wide. The houses seem more generally to have had the eruption cured. There is not so much of absolute indifference to piles of garbage. The colors begin, as, first, a house of a bright yellow color, paired with one that was once darkly and deeply blue. Then yellow again, a favorite color, then green, and so on. Through the paneless and iron-barred windows you begin to see pictures of family life. A family picture is invariably this: two long rows of rocking-chairs, exactly opposite each other, with a rug of carpeting between the rows, the whole piece of right-line domestic happiness being laid perpendicularly to one of the open windows. The men being then placed in one of the rows of chairs, and the women in the other, the sociability begins. This is not the

casual arrangement of one house, but of all. Any innovation would be discountenanced. They do not wish to mix the sexes in Cuba, and for a man to cross that rug and seat himself between two ladies,—it is not possible!

Presently you come to the streets proper, long lines of compactly-built, low, square houses. The stores and shops are here, where the beauty and style of the place may be seen, accompanied by the requisite old woman or mulatto girl. But they are queer-looking stores until you grow accustomed to them. These establishments in any other country are built with the end upon the street, and you are invited to "step back" when you wish to examine an article. Here, however, shops stand sidewise to the street, and a meagre display of wares is made, in rather a small room. The adornments are as cheap as the display is small. There is something of the Bazaar about the place, for the Spaniard has a good deal of the Moor in his composition, and I have heard the regret expressed that he had not more. So strong is the disposition to follow one style of architecture, that any one of the shops and stores might be used as a dwelling, and *vice versa*.

There is another feature of the mercantile establishment that particularly seems strange to the foreigner. They are all called by some specific name, and numbers seem to be of no value except for dwellings. "My Destiny" on one side of the street, and "My Star" on the other, seem to leave you little choice. "The Looking-Glass" is a caprice in naming that is mere sound, and in rows stand "The White Deer," "The Golden Lion," "The Pearl of Cuba," "The Golden

Cup," "Norma," "The Novelties," "Things Precious," "Things Delicate," "Sea Foam," and so on *ad infinitum*.

It requires a continuous residence for a considerable time, to become accustomed to the scenes and sounds of the street They are such as have no place this side the Atlantic, and belong rather to Tangiers and other ancient localities. A grotesque population passes to and fro all day, and the air is full of strange cries from hoarse and screeching throats. Every second man of the population seems to have taken to peddling for a livelihood. They are selling every thing, though nobody ever seems to wish to buy. There are horse-loads of green cornstalks, and the animals stagger by with nothing of them visible but their noses and tails, urged and guided by words uttered in a tone which is like the last cry of despair. The charcoal-vender has also his long procession of animals, each one with his nose tied to his predecessor's tail, and jostling the fodder man with the only and universal fuel of the country. There is the man with the pig slung across his shoulders. The animal is half-grown, lean, and quite hairless, and is proclaimed through the streets by the combined voices of himself and his owner. There is one who drives before him a flock of panting turkeys, who manages to make them go where he will, and when he stands still, they all by one consent sit down in the middle of the street. Here comes one, vociferating, who has a motherly goat tied to the tail of his horse, and he declares that she is capable of nourishing a family. But the two kids who follow behind, brokenly pleading, do not by their appearance indicate that state of things. If it be early morning, you will encounter the milk-man, driving a herd of milch-kine through the streets, and

drawing the fluid into a glass tumbler at the front door of his customers' residence. It is a good way; the family are getting the unwatered article, which can be afterward diluted to suit themselves.

There is a wandering genius who is called *Barratillador*. *Barato*, means cheap; *barratillo*, a cheap little thing (*illo*, *ito*, *ico* being the diminutives, or *littles* of the Spanish); and *barratillador*, "a seller of cheap little things." This is a lesson in Spanish which may serve to illustrate the capacity of the language, and for which no extra charge is made. However, he has two huge red boxes, with glass ends, hung upon each side of a long-suffering horse. It is noticeable that it is invariably a horse; a mule would not stand it. This animal he leads from door to door, and as he goes he puts his hand beside his mouth, and makes the very echoes to know the immense variety and cheapness of his needles, pins, buttons, tape, etc. Sometimes he has an assistant, a stentorian forerunner, to go ahead and assist him to bawl. All these hundreds of venders seem to believe that their sales and profits depend entirely upon the noise they can succeed in making with the living voice. The town is full of hideous noises that are heard again in dreams, they are so hoarse, discordant, unearthly, grotesque, with strange accents and sing-song intonations.

Most numerous of all the wandering venders are the lottery-ticket sellers. They are also the hoarsest. All day, and far into the night, you hear the cry of "*catorce mil ocho cientos viente y tres*," or some other number of all the thousands. Every one of the host who is not selling something else, is undoubtedly a vender of lottery-tickets. The Royal Havana Lottery has been in existence and active operation for longer than any of the present gen-

eration can remember, and pays a large revenue to the government. It absorbs all the earnings of the poorer classes, and is one of the curses of the island in an economical and pecuniary, to say nothing of a moral, sense. There are immense sums of money squandered in it every month, and large numbers of persons have spent in monthly dribblings no one knows how much money, who never own a house, or two coats, and have never drawn a cent in all their lives.

Through such narrow, perspiring streets, the anxious throng passes all day long, while overhead hangs the fierce and relentless sun, and the very stones are warm. The scene is picturesque enough. There is a certain oriental flavor about it all, and an old-world changelessness. But it grows monotonous. It is sad to reflect that no driving blast will ever cause a change in the vestments of the coatless and stockingless crowd; no eddying smoke hang over the house-tops, or frost congeal the familiar public perfumes. It is a continual and monotonous fervor. The smells go up forever, and feast-days are the only epochs.

If there is any thing that, more than another, should indicate the actual grade and standing of a people, it must be the houses they live in. This is the theory, but scarcely true in fact. The dwelling-house indicates only the pecuniary condition of a people, and the exigencies of a climate. I have already mentioned the miserable habitation of the country Cuban. Its opposite is the Cuban town-house. Usually it has only one story, and in its plan displays the remains of a semi-oriental taste and fashion, with some dim ideas of modern convenience. Outside it is severely box-shaped, with a front door that you invariably enter from the street, by simply stepping

across the threshold. It is a rule that the floor must be level with, or lower than, the sidewalk. It is a house not architecturally pretty, and when ornamented at all, it is usually in the way of lurid outside color. It is always a hollow square, and the square, paved court in the centre, called the *patio*, is invariable. Round this square are always ranged the rooms of the house and offices of the family. The Cuban will tell you that his house is so constructed on account of the climate. But if so, it is difficult to see why the same plan should be followed alike in Madrid and in northern Mexico. The idea originally was, in all structures of this kind, the safe-keeping of the animals and goods of the household; the square was the nightly fold of the goats and donkeys. So it is yet in rural Spain, and in portions of Mexico, and even sometimes in Cuba. The plan is simply adhered to because this is a man who does not change any thing once established.

This house has huge openings, extending from floor to ceiling, considered to be doors and windows. The last are iron-barred, without sash or glass. There is one great door, through which a column of infantry might march, and through which the family carriage has its entrances and exits, horses and all. Every thing that goes and comes must pass by way of this stately portal. By it enter the marketing, the charcoal, the baggage, and the horse-feed; the doctor, the visitor, the young man who is in love with Dolores, and the tax-collector. Out of it, and into the street, go the stable and kitchen refuse, the beggar with his alms, the visitor with his hat in his hand, the bride to church, and the coffin to burial. It has a key like a gridiron, that no man would think of carrying to the lodge with him, but which must be carefully taken

charge of when the door is locked, and the family out. There is no back entrance, and it is the key of the castle. I once saw a blooming girl from the country in town with all the family on a feast-day. She it was who carried the key of the house. You might have seen it across the street under her pretty tulle bodice, for it was hung round her neck by a string, backward, and lay fairly between her shoulder blades.

Within, the establishment is arranged for the country and the climate. In the hall stands the family volante aforesaid, together with the horses, and you can hear the latter from your chamber, quarrelling over the question of an equitable division of the provender. The animals pass several times a day across the space where the dining-table stands at meal times. On one side of the hall is the parlor, the room of state, often paved with marble, cool, airy, spacious, and, as it would seem to my countrywomen, somewhat unfurnished. There are no stuffed sofas or chairs, no fleecy rugs, no mats and thick carpets and table-covers, nothing that is soft and warm. All is cane-seat, wood, and cold stone, as bare and hard as possible. There is no fire-place or furnace-grate of course. Such a suggestion would be intolerable. But consequently there is no family "circle," as we aptly express it, though there may be a family parade in the two rows of chairs.

I wish to whisper a word in the reader's ear; if you are to eat in a Cuban house, never visit the kitchen. Not that the cookery is not clean in its processes, but because there is usually so close a connection between the kitchen and some other indispensable household offices, that an inference of some connection between the two is almost unavoidable. I cannot say why it is so, unless it be that

there is not that refinement in the association of ideas that there might be. Sometimes there is between the two only a partition open at the end, like two rooms in a stage scene.

Now that I have mentioned the kitchen, a thing no man has any business to meddle with, I may as well describe it. It looks something like a forge. There is a flat slab of stone, some five feet long, placed table-wise in a corner. In this there are several square openings, with a grate at the bottom of each. In each of these is kindled a charcoal fire, and pot, kettle, and frying-pan sit comfortably over their several coals and holes, while the ashes fall through the grates to the floor. I have said there were no chimneys in Cuba; the smoke from this unique range, if there be any, bloweth where it listeth.

Cuba is, by repute, a fever-haunted region. It is hot, damp, mouldy, bilious. Of course drainage is carefully looked after? Well, it is not; drainage, on the contrary, looks after itself, as it usually does in the warm climates. Nobody flies in the face of Providence by attempting to turn aside the natural currents of foul water. In the midst of the court-yard, in every house, there is a cess-pool. It will be observed that it is in the centre of the house, surrounded by walls, and fairly located, so that if there is any disease bred from it all can have a fair chance, and no favors shown. Every thing liquid goes into this well; all the sink and rain-water pipes, and the drainage from the stable. It is covered, and has a waste-gutter leading under the floor and into the street. You often see a green and slimy stream trickling over the side-walk. No one need know the direction and final distribution of its pestilence,—it runs over like a full basin, and evaporates in the sunshine.

Quite as unique as the house itself, is the life that goes on within it. Here is leisure and time-killing. There is a certain word, one of the most expressive of the English tongue, that in one syllable tells most there is of the secret of domestic well-being. It is "thrift." It seems to mean a happy, skilful industry, an unhurried looking after the ravelled edges which is not labor, but only occupation. If there is any such thing practised in the Cuban house, it is not usually by the mistress of it. There is a languid rocking to and fro in the ranked rocking-chairs, slippered and untidy. There is a time-killing that consists in doing absolutely nothing. The occasional diversion is piety, especially during what may be termed the religious busy season, about Good-Friday week, Christmas, and the season of Lent, going to mass at six o'clock in the morning and again in the evening. The busy throngs that patter about our streets on errands of extravagance are never seen here. The Cuban lady has a long code of social proprieties, and never to be seen upon the street is one of the binding rules.

The place of universal resort in the Cuban city is the *Plaza de Armas*. There is no town so miserable and abandoned as not to have this open square in the centre of it. It is a place of foliage, lamplight, and flowers, and in the tropical evening presents one of the most brilliant social spectacles to be found in any land. All who have any claims to beauty and wealth are there, together with many who have not. It is a scene of shoulders, arms, trains, jewels, and *cascarilla*.

There are the most elaborate piles of back hair the world ever saw. There are all the colors except black in a grand display of ball-costume out of doors, and the crowd marches round and round the little

square ceaselessly. The young men are apart and the young ladies are apart, and only look at each other. There is no laughter, no gaiety, no young people's fun and social enjoyment, no family parties with brisk conversation. It is a social walk-around. You can hear the scraping made by the trains of gowns, and it sounds like falling rain. There is the patter of foot-falls and a general rustle, but not the sound of voices. A fine dust rises like the dust of a ball-room, the band plays, the small boys in the outskirts yelp and chatter, the loungers, seated in hired chairs, suck their canes and stare. So it goes on for two or three hours, until ten o'clock, when the crowd vanishes like magic, and there is nothing left but bits of lace, the shreds of torn garments, the fine dust, the few loafers who are sorry it is over, and the people who are counting the receipts of peanut stands.

If mass and the plaza constitute the amusements of the women, there is another equally quiet and harmless for the men. It is the café, and this seems to be, more than his house, the Cuban's place of rest and enjoyment. There is an assortment of marble tables, and a cheap glitter of mirrors and cut-glass. Here the family-man, the bachelor, the man of business, and the man about town, sit and drink black coffee, smoke endless paper cigars, twiddle their legs, and talk endlessly and rapidly. There are many animated discussions about every thing but actual politics, and even these are touched upon *sotto voce*. Principally the discussions are about things that three old ladies would be ashamed to display much interest in. I may give the reader an idea that this café is a kind of gin-palace, but though there is plenty of gin, the place is hardly indoors at all. It is merely an interior, and part of it is usually under the sky. It is the

club-room, lodge, and corner grocery all in one. There seems to be a necessity for men to have some such resort in all countries. We are a band of brothers, and must herd. It keeps us from interfering in affairs of which the ladies have rightfully the exclusive charge. By the sign of the café, I know that these children of the sun are our brethren.

But the Cuban does sleep at home. I do him no more than justice by the statement, though his house is often the establishment he keeps up for the benefit of others whom he has placed himself in the position of having to take care of. I have, however, sometimes heard of eccentric Cubans who took all their meals at home. It is an unexplained occasional freak of tropical humanity.

These are some of the features of tropical life in the town. There is, as in all countries, a certain inner life the stranger and foreigner never sees,—the life of the feelings, domestic affections, and family intercourse. Over all I have attempted to describe, there hangs a certain intense and inscrutable provincialism, which makes the people the most content, complacent, and self-satisfied in the world, happy in a life that is perfect, homes that need no new beauties, and a little island they fully believe to be a continent. The only thing of discontent to most of them is the government. The people are, and will always be, strangers to the Saxon, and he to them. Not one of them was ever happy in a life away from these peculiar scenes. The North American may, some day, change the outside of Cuba to his peculiar ideas, but he will never change the people, or the life of the Cuban town.

CHAPTER XI.

RURAL CUBA.

YEARS hence, when these rocky hills and long and level fields of deep red earth shall have become to me the dimly-remembered scenes so many others are, the words "Rural Cuba" will bring up a picture very different from that I once imagined, and be recalled all the more easily for that reason. It was from rural Cuba that I expected so much, and regretfully confess that I received so little, for I thought that nature would assert herself, and lend a charm the hand of man could not destroy.

Let us look at a country village, or small town. It is no matter whether it be Bolondron, or Jibaro, Limonar, or the famed Madruga. Any one of them is a fair example. There are squalid towns in all lands, and even Stratford-on-Avon, and Lecompton, Kansas, have been in their time denounced by the wandering vagabonds who did not happen to like them. But the villages of Cuba are painfully alike. They are all of a kind, all constructed upon the same model, and all "run" remarkably "even." The ancient, tumble-down, muddy, crockery-strewn, shabby, and dilapidated congregations of shanties that lie sleeping in the sunshine and mouldering patiently in the rain here and there all over the island, are so nearly alike that it is safe to give the subject a general consideration.

There were never such in any other land. Tartary, Switzerland, the banks of the Missouri, mountain regions, plains-countries, and the remote and uncivilized parts of the earth, have their peculiar hamlets. These of Cuba are like none of them. There are features possessed by the villages of the lower Rio Grande that might possibly indicate that those and these were made by people of the same race. Otherwise there is no likeness to them in the earth. I have said they were shabby, and have added some other descriptive phrases. But they have not risen like an exhalation in a day and a night, as our shabby and slab-built "cities" do at the terminus of some western railway line. The shadow of antiquity is upon them, and their rambling streets have been trodden by the slip-shod feet of many generations.

The Cuban village has been there some hundred or more years. Bayamo, Baracoa, and others were actually founded by the followers of Diego Velasquez somewhere about 1500, and the rest came stumbling along after. It would excite the surprise and pity of the whole population if anybody were to speak of founding a city now. The preposterousness of the idea would send the projector to a lunatic asylum, if there were any lunatic asylums. A Cuban Rip Van Winkle would have no difficulty in recognizing his native place if he should unfortunately awake and come back again. There is about them all a certain quality of changelessness. I have passed through some of them at intervals of two or three years, and while I beg pardon of their oldest inhabitant for mentioning so trifling and unimportant an interval, it seemed to me that the same untidy women were standing at the doors in the same gowns. The same old men, with the same shirt worn outside of their pantaloons, were, I

fancied, still crying the same lottery tickets. The same forlorn row of mosquito-bitten horses, with the same old pack-saddles on their raw backs, were still standing with closed eye and hanging lip, asleep under the same shed, in front of the same old whitewashed, weather-beaten grocery. I know they were the same goats, the same cocks and hens, the same pigs; and the same incomparable, indescribable sense of loneliness hung over all; the same as ever, the same for always. The mystery of drowsiness, idleness, poverty, and content, pervaded the air and possessed the people, and they were all unchanged.

A peculiar feature of a Cuban village is a certain stickiness. It is a sweetish mixture, largely composed of spilled molasses and the drainage of sugar-hogsheads, with rain-water. The whole country has a faint odor as of a molasses-cask. The natural article of mud is red, brilliant brick color. Of the dust likewise. It rains and is muddy seven months out of the twelve, and is dry and dusty the remaining five months, so that the red color prevails most of the time. It gets smeared in streaks and patches, or a brilliant body-color, over every thing, and gives a distinctive character to the region. There seems to be no good reason for whitewashing, which always seems to have been done some years previously, unless it be to show by more striking contrast the gory streaks incarnadine. The mud is not of the kind that comes off when it dries. It will wash, and every hairless and vagrant pig who has slipped his tether and regaled himself with a bath, and then has neatly dried himself against a warehouse or a railway station, leaves there his indelible mark. Every old gray horse's tail is of a fine red that glistens in the sun, and his master's linen garments have a thick and polished coating of it.

All the houses of the place, inside and outside, and even the furniture, are stained and dried in this universal pigment. The sifting dust and tenacious mud of an age have produced a color that does not show dirt, and enables the people to avoid overmuch scrubbing and brooming. All the houses stand flat on the earth. They are not high, but they are endless sidewise and illimitable endwise. There is much door, and a great deal of window and shed-in-front, unless they are very small to comply with the humble tastes of the proprietor, in which case they remind one of the decayed out-buildings of a farm-house in Virginia. I have never seen a building in process of erection in one of these villages, and never met a person who had. They were made and finished long ago, and now they do not seem any more to be even repaired.

This is the railway hamlet, the one the traveller oftenest sees, and that may be observed by anybody. It is, however, not a town made by the railway, as ours often are, but one the line happened to be built through. I must ask the reader to exercise his imagination upon the genuine inland country place, away from everywhere, where the steam-whistle is never heard. The age, the dulness, the infinite peace which broods over one of these, are nearly indescribable, and where these things come and abide I have observed that the inhabitants are happy. The roads that lead to them are, like the roads of Spain, impracticable for any thing greatly wider than a mule. Ambition has never entered here. The world is bounded by the sound of the church-bells. There is nothing more exciting in all their annals than the common accidents of every-day life. The thousand anxieties of the world poison no lives; there is no discontent.

Even the climate is changeless, and cold and the driving blast can never make the straggling street more quiet than it is. The happy varlet whose lines have been cast here, is rich with a single pair of trousers and a speckled shirt, and an aristocrat when he goes abroad in his coat. Recall all the villages you ever visited, all the post-offices and cross-roads, all the mountain hamlets, and you will still lack something that only climate can make. This is of the tropics. Over all, the palm lifts its head, and the plaintain, like a huge cereal, shakes its wide, torn leaves in the idle wind. It is blood-warm. The fierce sunshine glares upon the scene every day, and the dew soaks it every night, and happy, half-clad, basking laziness abides forever.

I wonder is there a common kinship among all the tribes of toil and ignorance all over the world? For this villager's house, his life, his surroundings, remind me of something I have read of villages far enough away,—in Western Asia, perhaps, or in Japan. This Cuban has all he wants, and understands what he does want. Upon his floor of earth, the pigs, poultry, and dogs have as much place as he himself has. They pass in and out with a loafing, hands-in-the-pocket air. His table, when he has a table, is well supplied. He lives well, though a liking for his dishes is a matter of education. He has a great affection for the small-fry of domestic animals, and the cock crows with impunity from the door-sill to celebrate the laying of an egg in the cupboard by the hen. He has no stable, no haystack, no crib. He does not need any of these things. The dense chaparral begins where his native village ends. Every one whom he knows, he has known always, and none of his acquaintances are aristocratic. When he dies, and the priest-fettered soul

goes to find out the truth of all his unquestioned articles of faith, he is carried to the little desolate *Campo Santo* at the village-end, and perhaps talked of more and remembered longer than many a statesman is after he is dead.

There is another *Guajiro*, who is, even more than this villager, a rural specimen. His house is such as you see standing alone upon its hill-side, all over Cuba. It is the poorest of human habitations; four posts, with a roof of palm husks, and its wattled sides are a delusive refuge against a windy rain. It is only a local habitation, a place to go. Sometimes it is so poor in its surroundings that there is not even a goat. This man's days are spent in burning charcoal, or in raising a few vegetables for the nearest town, or he is a milkman, or a peddler of eggs. Whatever it is, he seems to toil all his life and gain nothing. You hear him pass by in the early morning, vociferating his unearthly ejaculations and horse-talk to his string of laden beasts. I have often wondered why he did not stop work, and defy fortune to do any worse for him than she had done. But he too seems happy enough, and the sum of his life is doubtless the same to him that the sum of ours is to us.

Yet all this is not the rural Cuba that most people care to see and write about. There is another view of the picture. There have been many magazine articles written, all more or less rose-colored, about life on the sugar-plantation. It is nearly all that a great majority of visitors see or care for, and all that any one they know cares for. To speak truth, to all the world Cuba is sugar. It is the great industry, and all other business clusters around it, and lives by it. Let us leave the discussion of the man who is poor because he is not a planter, and turn to him who is wealthy because he is.

There are few small plantations except comparatively as regards the very large ones. A business that yields such returns, in a country that has been discovered to be especially adapted to it in season and soil, has absorbed all the energy, interest, ambition, and capital. Thousands of fertile acres lie around the tall white chimneys of the boiling-house, green and dense with a waving wilderness of cane. As far as the eye can reach there is nothing but cane. It is not the beautiful picture of plenty the northern cornfield is, but it is as green as emerald, and thick as a brake, and represents a fortune in the value of the great staple whose uncrystallized juice is as plentiful as water in each thick and jointed stalk.

On the sugar plantation the point of interest is the *Batey*, the square in which stand all the buildings, machinery, and residences of the place. There was a time when all the cane was crushed in what is now spoken of contemptuously as a "bull-mill,"—upright wooden rollers, with oxen at the sweep, between which the cane was passed stalk by stalk. Their striking peculiarity consisted in the facility with which they were wont to break down, and the infernal noise they made. Then came a time when planters began to use steam in a small way, and mills with horizontal rollers came into use. I do not believe there now exists a bull-mill in all Cuba. Still, for a long time after steam and powerful rollers came into use, all sugars were made by boiling in what is called the "Jamaica train,"—three or four huge kettles in a row, set in masonry, with a roaring fire beneath, where the green juice foamed and bubbled, and was dipped and strained, and passed from kettle to kettle, and skimmed and stirred until it had attained the

granulating consistency. But now the more enterprising planter has arrived at the labor-saving and scientific stage, and while the "Jamaica train" still foams and splashes and boils over on the smaller estates, with old-fashioned and conservative owners, very many have set up and are using an elaborate and nickel-plated machine, called a "vacuum-pan." In these the juice is boiled by steam in a cleanly, quiet, and economical manner, run off into vats to cool, and finally passed through wire screens, and the sparkling, square-grained product is forthwith emptied into hogsheads to be carried to market.

I am not in the least tempted to display my practical knowledge of the processes of sugar-making by the insertion of a dozen or two technical words, and the giving of dimensions, capacities, densities, and degrees Fahrenheit. There are rows of steam-boilers, about like those of a good-sized flouring mill as nearly as they may be described, and they are kept foaming and raging by means of *bagazo*. Bagazo is the crushed cane, dried in the sun, and an admirable fuel. There are endless pipes, and cocks, and shut-offs, and the set of "vacuum-pans," shining with bright metal and covered with varnished wood. These last stand so quietly that you would think they were cold, whereas they are foaming inside. There are handsome and costly engines to drive water and air, and do a hundred things. There are the ponderous rolls, which take in the cane fed to them by an endless apron, endwise, crosswise, or in bulk, as fast as it pleases to come, fat and juicy as it goes in,—a mere mass of rags as it comes out. The groaning and whining they make as they ponderously turn, is one of the characteristic sounds of the plantation. There are the whirling centrifugal machines, that in three minutes make the

ugly brown mush that enters them to grow fair and glistening and palatable. There are molasses-vats, juice-tanks, and, in fine, the costly machinery of a manufacturing establishment. A sugar-plantation *is* a factory, and perfectly capable as I am of doing it, I must decline to describe further the processes of a factory.

Sugar-making at night, in the old-fashioned Jamaica-train way, is a scene of fire and toil, flashes and shadows, only equalled by a midnight scene in some huge foundry, or by the pyrotechnics of a rolling-mill. There is the fierce glow of great fires, and clouds of steam, and crowds of bare-legged negroes and Chinamen, moving to and fro, and stirring up the process with long poles and demoniac movements. There are cries, yells, screams, and a scene that might serve for a representation of that old-fashioned hell our fathers died hoping to escape on the slender chance of not having been foreordained thereto. Every toiler is an imp of darkness, rendered all the more fearful by the glimpses one may catch of the whites of his eyes, and to complete the fearful picture, there are continual shrieks for "*mas candela!*"—more fire.

Yet all this has rural surroundings. Vast green fields of cane lie leagues around on every hand. It is often miles to the nearest village. It is a species of concentrated manufacture without any of the signs or surroundings of traffic.

On some plantations are still to be found the huge and shed-like buildings called purging-houses. Here, in frames made for their reception, stood large numbers of funnel-shaped sheet-iron vessels, small end downward. These being filled with crude sugar, three or four inches of clay were plastered over the top of the funnel. The water from the clay, together with the crudities in the

sugar, drained out at the smaller end. Wet clay was applied several times, and, in the end, the core of sugar was turned out, hard and white in proportion to the number of times it had been clayed. When I first saw these cores, it reminded me of the glistening white pyramids that I knew as a child in my mother's store-room, and I understood for the first time how and why they were made so.

Much has been said and written of the great scale upon which farming operations are sometimes carried on in the West. The most extensive of these do not equal the operations of a sugar-estate in magnitude. Some of them "work" from five hundred to seven hundred "hands," and employ four hnndred head of oxen, besides mules and horses. They make their own coal-gas, and their own lime and bricks, keep smiths, carpenters, and engineers, build aqueducts and railways, and spend two hundred thousand dollars a year in running expenses. They often produce one million five hundred thousand pounds of sugar, with molasses as drainage, worth, at the nearest seaport, five cents per pound. These figures do not pretend to absolute exactness, but are not extravagant. It is rather a small estate whose expenses are only fifty thousand a year, and I have known of administrators,—managers for the owners,—who pilfered a hundred thousand or so in two or three years, and nobody hurt. The magnificent machinery of a first-class estate often costs a quarter of a million to place it there.

The appearance of a plantation, agriculturally considered, is peculiar. There are no fences except the boundary, and these are of cactus, or else a kind of quick-set of trees that in the woods grow to a considerable size. The huge squares of cane are separated by open

roads called *guarda rayos.* These radiate like spokes from the "Batey." The green expanse of cane is sprinkled here and there with palms, and there seems to exist a kind of superstition with regard to cutting down these trees, though each one kills the cane for a circle of twenty feet around it. There is also a huge and useless giant called the *ceiba*—the lonesomest tree that grows,—desolately lifting its braced and columnar trunk and horizontal spread of scant foliage, high and huge against the sky, in the brief, gray tropical twilight.

There is doubtless such a thing as "the pleasures of melancholy," else the poets had not sung it. But to get enough of it, and grow tired of sweets, one needs but to come to Cuba and live on a plantation. They whose lives are spent in climes of ferocious change and contrast can have no idea of how monotonous the white sunshine of Cuba may become, glittering eternally upon the same unchanging scene. When at last the glare fades and the red ball sinks in the horizon, night falls at once. Morning comes again as suddenly, to begin another changeless day. There is nothing to attract the eye in the level scene that knows no winter. The hills that were blue or brown yesterday are blue or brown to-day. The clustering palms and solitary ceibas are the same from month to month. The scene that at first may have attracted by its novelty, becomes very tame as the days pass. There are no October days, no brave and blustering Januarys, no delicious Mays, to make you glad you are still alive. Through all the years you hear the clang of the plantation bell, and see the mustering of slaves, and watch the shadows lengthen, and perspire and fan, and eternal warfare wage against lassitude and mosquitoes. You want

to go away somewhere; you long for cold, and dread it, and often, with the selfishness common to a sinful nature, wish you could have the felicity of meeting some old inhabitant who would tell you of a frost once upon a time that killed all the cane. You would give all your interest in the sticky product you see and smell so much of for a branch of apple-bloom. And, when at last you get back to your seaport town, you wish you had stayed in the country. You long for freezes and thaws, hard colds and an overcoat, your native land and mother-tongue, and are fortunate if at last you do not get the disease you have not had since you were away at school, and grow sick with the remediless nostalgia.

CHAPTER XII.

TROPICAL WEATHER.

THE weather that stirs the blood and arouses in men a feeling of jubilant antagonism; the gray skies from which shall fall in the watches of the night a stainless garment for all the hills; the sullen mist through whose curtain struggles the faint and yellow sunshine; that ice-clad realm of beauty where all creation is transformed and glitters with white brilliants, and the keen air tingles, and the low sun of the south tinges and brightens, but does not warm; those roaring northers that roll the cloud-masses across the sky and threaten unutterable things; that bitter and biting cold, still, cruel, and calm, that sears like red iron where it touches,—none of these things have the residents of the tropics to give contrast to the seasons of a changing year, which in all its moods must still be tepid.

The above sentence would, but for its length, be hard to exclude from any collection of extracts from the English classics, and I should not be surprised myself to see it in the school readers in a few months. It is the most elegant thing I have ever done by myself, and was written to illustrate the pleasures of retrospect. That is the way one thinks of the northern climate when he is languishing by the month in Cuba. He is sure it was like that, and even better, and he wonders he did not appreciate it when he was there.

Yet everywhere Nature has her ceaseless changes and her countless moods. In other lands she is sparkling and cruel, grumbling and threatening even while she smiles, and looking black even when she means no harm. In Cuba she is a tearful dame, and illustrates all her emotions by copious floods. I believe there are, generally speaking, only two changes of weather possible. One is rain, the other a "norther." It is sometimes said to be cold, and people go about with what are considered to be overcoats, and wrapped to the eyes. But it is a foolish thing to one who knows what cold is, for the mercury at such times seldom falls to seventy. It is also sometimes said to be warm, and that is when the south wind careers over the narrow land, and the mercury is at ninety-eight, and, so far as known, ever living thing has a headache and a feeling of tiredness and lassitude. Wet days do not excite remark. They are by far too common a phenomenon. Two-thirds of the population were probably born on rainy nights. Every change brings rain. The "temporal," a hurricane that bends down to the earth every living thing with its steady pressure, is also a rain. The "norther" begins with rain. Wet, a long drizzle or a steady pour, comes between every course.

There is nothing more prosy and uninspiring than the tropical morning. I write this advisedly, knowing that Aurora and her dews and blushes were never in any other land called stupid, and that all the poets are against me. Five o'clock shows to the man who has risen to catch the train, either a pallid and ghostly gibbous moon, with a damp chill in the air which causes one to long for the sun, or else a deep blackness in which all the stars hang like burnt-out lamps, or a fog hanging in gray and heavy folds over land and sea. There is no blush, no faint and

rosy light stealing up out of the east, and transforming nature for that fleeting and beautiful moment when it is neither night nor day. After the chill and darkness, almost before you know it, suddenly and without warning, it is broad day. It is a flash, and every star is gone as though it had been turned off, and his blazing majesty is risen and perceptibly warm. You cannot feel that something which is like the fleeting of ethereal presences before a warning messenger. There is no noiseless passing of a winged and shadowy army westward before the growing light. Nothing sparkles; there is no rejoicing. It was night; it is day. Cuba never produced a poet that I ever heard of whose lines will live. She never will; there is no poetry in her climate.

There have been those who described with such naturalness a tropical noon, that the reader could imagine himself there, thirsty, drowsy, perspiring. That must have been the Brazils. Animals, birds, and men are but little quieter at high noon in Cuba than at any other time of the day; there is only a little dulness in the street. The steady glare begins in the morning and ends at night, and no part of the day may be considered noisy. The laborer digs away at whatever he is engaged upon, and does not stop for nooning unless it rains. The *siesta* is a fiction, only indulged in by people who cannot stay awake and have nothing else to do. The few ugly and tuneless birds there are, are as busily engaged in quarrelling, screaming, and flying from bush to bush, as they are at any time of the day. Nobody minds it because it is a tropical noon. There is not even lunch.

There is a charm in the Cuban evening. It is rest. The sun sinks as suddenly as he rose, and there is no gloaming, no lingering gorgeousness in the west. But

there is shade. The fogs and chills have not yet risen. The stars tremble and flash in the fathomless sky, and sometimes the Southern Cross hangs pale above the horizon, while the Pole Star gleams faint and far in the north. Mars flashes blue and crimson, and Venus in her seasons blazes like a white torch. There are seven sisters in the Pleiades, as there were when they were named, and Aldebaran glows like a beacon. Perhaps, as you sit pensive on a broken pier, the moon comes up out of the sea; the same moon you have always known, with the same smutch on her face that was ever there, but bigger and whiter, with a certain glow behind her, and a radiant path before her across the water, in which are mingled that rich black-and-gold never described and never imitated. The sky above, in which are set all these brilliants, is blue-black as the deep sea is. The world seems a vast mass of shadow, with here and there a twinkling light, a ghostly streak of wall, a dead-black clump of trees, a pale road winding long and far, and Parthenons and palaces where in the light of day are but the stucco fronts of common dwellings.

Yet nature is weeping as usual. The dew is like rain as far as dampness is concerned, and the drops gather and trickle upon any inclined surface. A peculiar moisture penetrates your clothes and affects your throat, and chills you. To stay indoors at night and out of the sunshine during the day, is the health recipe of Cuba. People are not tempted to sleep under the sky by any heat, as they do in other countries. The fair moon is a deceiver. Nobody stays in the moonlight, and the born Cuban would as soon think of taking poison. She spoils fish, and is baleful even to the beasts of the field, who are said to lie down under shade at night, as naturally as

they do at noon. (I wish to remark here that I do not believe it myself.) Scattered through the country is a liberal sprinkling of persons with mouths, arms, legs, distorted and awry, and who are, besides, imbecile or lunatic. The moon did it while they incautiously slept in her beams. Go out in the rain if you must, and the wetter you get the better, if at all. Let the lightning strike where it will you can't help it any way. Sleep in a house without sides or ends if necessary. Eat bananas and drink gin. But stay out from under pale Cynthia. How often, on an evening of perfect witchery and calm loveliness, have I heard the fond feminine voice sharply calling, "Child! come right in out of the moonshine!" Balconies that were made for witching hours, high above the street, calm retreats for courtship and contemplation, are deserted on the fairest nights of the year.

There is, perhaps, no charm that darkness can bring, more enticing than a January midnight in Cuba, unless it be the midwinter moonlight of the far north on a boundless field of snow. I have sailed in these bays when each dip of the oars was a flash, and a line of pale fire trailed behind the rudder, and the water was like pale green oil. The hull of each vessel lying at anchor was a black and silent mass, and the tapering spars stood clear and gigantic against the sky. Headlands and coasts could be imagined rather than seen, and it seemed as though the sounds of the oars in the row-locks might be heard for miles in the silence. In the middle watches of the night a peculiar and melancholy softness broods over these tepid waters, and you could imagine that tempest and storm had never stirred them.

But they do. There is other weather than that I have

described, and a great deal of it. Comparatively, it does not rain in any other country. Sometimes it begins on Sunday, and rains until the next Sunday. The tireless drip makes dryness an impossibility. Wherever they may be stored, your belongings are damp. Your shoes that stand a-row by the wall, become covered with a green mould. Your bed becomes damp, and every garment you have is limp and half dry. Nails rust off in the wall, and scissors and knives look as though they had been fished up from a wreck. Books mildew on the shelves, and all the conveniences of life are attacked by a malady of discoloration and general decay. Walls are wet, and all creation sodden and mildewed. Then the trailing cactus upon the wall, creeping in and out of the fissures and looking like a long dead snake for half the year, changes its dead brown to green, and actually blooms, and creeps a yard. Then the green-and-brown landscape washes itself of dust, and smiles like honest grass, which it is not. All the time the sun is creeping higher and higher in the north, and what was your shady side of the street is no longer so. Against sun or rain, or both, each man carries an umbrella, which proves an inadequate protection from either. The prevailing color of the country soil is displayed upon the linen breeches of every countryman who comes to town, and upon his horse's tail as well, and he and all his personal belongings present the appearance of having been profusely but inartistically daubed with red paint. There is no comfort in it all, but people grow accustomed to it.

The end of these months of humidity is usually, though not invariably, one of those storms for which the West Indies are celebrated. I believe I am using the appro-

priate term for something that blows for twenty-four hours, and which you can lean your back against as you could against a post, though I have never heard a sailor say "storm" in my life. I have one such in my personal experience—a rather mild one—and know many such by tradition. One morning in October I awoke rather earlier than usual, and became aware that something was happening. The floor was strewn with glass, as I discovered by contact with bare feet, and water in undesirable quantity was coming from somewhere, it seemed to me from everywhere. I tried to make a light and failed, and discovered that there was also wind. Outside in the darkness there was a continuous roar that could hardly be called a noise, steady and ceaseless. Creeping around in the immediate neighborhood of a moist bed, amid broken glass and much wet, I essayed to find and put on my boots. This essential part of my costume I found it necessary to forego. I never could put on a wet boot when I really desired to do so as quickly as possible. But I found a pair of Chinese slippers made of straw, and conveniently constructed with nothing but soles, and these I utilized. Many a time in my life I have been intimate with wet garments, but I always liked to begin in the morning with them dry. But, having managed with the slippers, I felt that disgust with my immediate belongings and surroundings, that I crept blindly down-stairs into the desolate hall of a big and lonely house. It was wet too. I believed it was three o'clock in the morning, and as I found under the staircase some bales of hay, only a little moist, I deposited myself upon them. I remember vividly recalling, as I lay there, the old times when a bed of leaves on the lee side of a fallen tree made me a monarch with nothing to desire. I

could at intervals hear something creak and crack, and sounds like breaking crockery in the street outside. The big front doors seemed to be having water thrown against them with a hose, and I fancied they were bending inward. Nevertheless, I went to sleep there, with that feeling of content a man sometimes has under circumstances where comfort is out of the question.

When day came the wind had changed, and now came from the opposite direction from the first, and the front doors were opened. No man ever painted so desolate a sky of smoky blackness, with its whiter clouds flying like hurrying squadrons, and the rain, broken into fine mist by the strong wind, driving horizontally across the scene and seeming not to fall, but only to be driven in a steady course. No man could describe the desolate town, swept clean for once, and untenanted by a living thing. But that which occupied me most was the want of a cup of coffee, and the undecided question of breakfast. With my headgear made fast by a chin-tied handkerchief, and a huge pair of boots that never were mine, I sallied forth, resolved to get the most out of my first hurricane. At the first corner I became aware of the force of the wind, for I could not cross the street, and was drifted diagonally to the opposite corner. When at last I reached the wharf I beheld one of those scenes which ought to, but which never do, inspire the mind with a feeling of sadness. The fishing vessels were piled up in a corner of the bay, as nearly as I could judge about three deep. A good-sized schooner had intruded her nose into terrestrial affairs, and was obstructing the front street with her bowsprit. Another was industriously sawing herself into two equal parts across the sea-wall. Large vessels had dragged all their anchors and imbedded themselves in convenient

mud. The sea-spray was flying over the housetops. Lamp-posts were leaning, trees had the appearance of umbrellas blown wrong side out, and every thing had an air of being irretrievably ruined.

Yet there was no flurry about it all. The bent attitude of creation seemed to be a permanent position. The wind did not come by dashes and rages, but was a steady pressure. It was cold, or seemed so, and the desolateness of all things was grotesque.

I found, huddled in a dry corner of a miserable little fruit-store, an old negress with a brazier of coals. I sat me down upon a bench there, and the crone and I became friends. It is best not to put on airs even in fair weather. Yesterday I would have smiled at the idea that this poor old Guinea woman had any thing I wanted. I remarked that it was a bad day. She echoed the sentiment by rolling up her eyes and ejaculating, "*Ave Maria Purissima!*" I asked her how she got her living, and she answer simply "*aqui*,"—here. As I was leading up to a subject that lay very near my heart, I asked her if she thought she would make any money to-day, and she answered by the peculiar gesture which means "*quien sabe?*"—who knows? I questioned her as to whether she would like to do so, and she smiled, showing every yellow tooth. I told her I would give her a dollar for a cup of coffee, and she rose up with a grunt of assent and an air which seemed to say that the dollar was nothing, and began giving orders to a boy in an inner room.

By and by the coffee was made, and drunk without sugar, and I think I shall remember it as long as I live, partly because it was so bad, partly because of the good it did me.

From such observations as I was able to make, I became convinced that there was little or nothing in all that town to eat; yet my inclinations led me in the course of the forenoon to drift, as best I might, toward my boarding-house. I passed by the Plaza, and the trees there were down excepting two or three. The tiles from the buildings were falling here and there at intervals. As they weigh four or five pounds each, I thought of the possible contingency of one of them alighting edgewise upon my hat.

I had my sustenance at that time in the family of a kind lady who was the only Cuban I have ever known who, for love or money, would receive a boarder. It was a private residence, and as I crept along I questioned within myself whether I could effect an entrance, as the wind was then blowing against the front door, and once opened it would require more force than the household could muster to close it again. However, I knocked, and as no one seemed to hear, I pounded. Then I heard, dim and far, the muster of the forces. There was a calling for Francisco and Pastor and Pepe and Juan, and soon there was considerable noise inside of props being removed and barriers taken away, and the drawing of bolts. Presently the wicket was opened a crack, and I sidled in. There were five men holding the door, and it was all they could do, with the aid of a thick pole, to get it together again. I was hailed with acclamations, and at the same time informed that the baker had not come, neither the butcher, nor the usual fish. I said cheerfully that I was very sorry, and thought of button soup as a last resort.

An hour after there was heard another knocking at the door, and it was again opened. The untimely visitor

was an ancient African, and he took the liberty of riding into the house, astride of an unhappy-looking and draggled little horse. But in his hand he held aloft four chickens. "Are they alive?" was questioned on all sides, and he said they were. But they were not. I saw the corpses as they passed by, and they were dead enough for all our purposes,—drowned, every one of them. We wanted them dead, and I ate a small piece of one of them a half-hour afterward—say about half of it. The lady's son, a gentleman living a short distance in the country, had sent them to us, and thereby averted possible cannibalism.

The rest of that day I spent in monkish quietness, watching the wind veer, and all the changes and casualties of a day of turmoil, through crevices and cracks in windows. There was not a dry tile in the house. Everybody walked about with hands in pockets and yawning, and everybody's feet, clothes, and spirits were damp alike.

A big tree that had stood in the yard at my place of business for perhaps a half century before I was born, fell during the day, narrowly escaping the roof that covered my office chair. One cannot be too careful where he sits. It was a warning to me.

During the day there were invalids borne from tumbling houses through the storm, and children born almost in the street. There were flying missiles, and inundations, and hasty changes of residence. All the features of a *temporal* that did its best for fifteen hours were present. Yet, so far as I know, not a life was lost. In the previous one of 1870 there were three hundred people lost out of the same town. For my part, I did not get any raiment dry for a week, and my couch retained its

humidity so long that I grew accustomed to the clammy sensation. If I do not some time have a rheumatism by way of *recuerdo*, I shall continue to believe that after all a *temporal* is merely a piquant variation of the monotony of Cuban weather.

CHAPTER XIII.

DOMESTIC INSTITUTIONS.

THERE are certain institutions known under the general and indefinite name of "Domestic." They indicate very truly the life of a people, and show the modes of thought by which a community may be said to govern itself regardless of the government. The school, the newspaper, the theatre, and the courts of justice, though they may seem rather incongruous as the subjects of a chapter, have grouped themselves in my mind as the things from which, above all others, the public morals and general character of the people of Cuba might be judged. I do not believe in the ballad theory, or that a nation's songs indicate its genius, for the Spaniard has been a singer of gentle ballads from time immemorial without its having affected sensibly his real status, and "Shoo Fly," can hardly be regarded, as the sign of a nation's frivolousness, any more than "Sweet By and By" can be of universal religious sentiment.

The school, the theatre, and the court of justice are the three modern indices of a certain grade of civilization, though they by no means go together, or accompany each other in the march of progress. But while you may be deceived by all other indications of national character you may hardly be by these.

Schools in Cuba possess a striking feature to begin

with,—striking, at least, as compared with our own system of public education. The sexes are always separated. Very small boys and girls are studiously kept apart. The children of a family must attend two schools unless they are all of one sex. It is the system which may be considered inseparable from the race, and nobody has, as yet, been bold enough to intimate that there is any useless trouble or expense about it. The Spanish mind is firmly fixed in the idea that when the male and female of the human species are thrown together, there is sure to be mischief of some kind concocted. It is probably true.

The schools are all managed by the Church; this of course. It is to obtain this management that a constant struggle is going on in the United States. It is one of the fixed ideas of the hierarchy. Take away the direct influence of the priesthood from the youthful mind, and the grand opportunity is lost. Mix the church—the confessional, the lives of the saints, and all the general religious doctrines—daily with all that is taught upon other and very different themes, and the mind of the pupil unconsciously imbibes the idea that it is *all* true alike, and belongs together. Geography,—Maria; mathematics,—the quarterly confession; natural history,—the *credo* and ritual; history,—the lives of the saints; and so on through the course. This is the education of the Cuban boy, when he gets any, for there is no system of public schools, and probably will never be any.

There are generally several pedagogic priests about every boys' school. The education of the girl is conducted under the direction of some order or sisterhood of maiden ladies, who are distinguished by the wearing of rosaries and serge gowns. None of the questions

regarding the education of youth which have been extensively agitated in nearly every other country, are matters of thought or discussion in either Spain or Cuba. The question is settled. Things are as they should be. Education is a boon for the benefit of the sons and daughters of those who can pay for it. That it is a means of preventing crime is not believed, and the idea is scouted as an absurdity. The girls principally learn needlework and embroidery, and it is notorious that the bright and pretty Cuban miss often ends by not even knowing that.

I have already had something to say of the Cuban young man. I have not observed any pale students. The oratorical and essay-writing future statesman is unknown. The ambitious youth here desires clothes, tight boots, an extraordinary hat, a cane, a big watch-chain, and a package of cigarettes. Of course statesmen are growing up on all hands, and it is sincerely to be hoped that when they come round to it, they will distinguish themselves in the better management of their island.

I would that one or two of that peculiar class who have their field of usefulness in the Great Republic, and of whom it is so frequently remarked in the county newspaper, "He is an accomplished educator," could examine, for a candid opinion theron, for example, the school-readers used generally in Cuba. He would find a cross on the title page, the Virgin and child at the heads of lessons, and cherubim and seraphim for tail-pieces all the way through. He would not find any choice selections from Cervantes or Lópe de Vega, neither from Castelar, but instead thereof dawdling little moral essays from the pen of some pensive priest. Here and there, by way of redemption from perfect stupidity, he might encounter a

versified fable about the ant and the butterfly, or the fox and the lion. Then again, a catalogue of the virtues of a good child, principal among which is reverence for Holy Church. Then a sorrowful story of the orphans of the man who was killed fighting against his country, and how Maria and all the saints regarded his act of treason, —fighting against his country, meaning to join the Cuban cause, and go bushwhacking back of Cienfuegos.

Noticing casually the system of education in Cuba, I have wondered what, besides mischief, might have been the themes of study in the ancient and famed universities of Salamanca and Cordova. Pursuing the theme, it has sometimes seemed to me that Church and State had undoubtedly combined to force a flimsy and inadequate system upon Cuba, the main purposes of which should be political and religious. If such is the case the plan is a manifest failure; they have never made of a Cuban schoolboy a Spaniard, or a very religious man.

I am forced to call the daily issues of the press in Cuba *news*papers, but I do it with a perfect consciousness of the ridiculousness of the misnomer, and only because it is the custom. There is not such a thing on the island as a daily, weekly, or monthly journal, that independently prints *news*. I have known a murder to occur in the Plaza, under circumstances strange and atrocious enough to make a valuable stick-ful at least. There was not so much as a hint of it in the morning's *Aurora*. I have known of an old gentleman taking strychnine in large doses because he was desirous of avoiding the payment of taxes, and ridiculously fail to die after making himself the talk of the town. There was no mention of it in any newspaper. A man one morning sent for his lawyer, and then and there, beginning as was

proper, with the lawyer, killed everybody in the house including himself. But the papers never so much as mentioned the quintuple tragedy. I have known a whole series of grim assassinations in the public streets,—four or five in as many nights,—but did not learn a word of it from the public journals. Accidents and casualties pass unnoticed also, the pretext being the avoidance of public alarm.

This is something like what they do publish:—"War Notices.

"First Lieutenant Pedro de los guardias de los Reyes,"—this being said lieutenant's resounding name, —"with thirty men, in pursuit of a party of rebels, in the zone of Remedias, captured two women, one man without arms, a negro, a machete, a mare, and one shoe.

"A band of rebels being in the eastern district of Pinos del Rio, the gallant, estimable, and highly appreciated Señor Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment of Covadonga went in pursuit of them, and it is probable has driven them away."

Or this, by way of variety:

"Don Francisco Botija Verde, having absconded without the knowledge of this court, is required within nine days from the date of this note to present himself, in which case full justice will be done him, or otherwise to know himself condemned."

Or this:

"The Most Excellent Señor Don Juan Nepomuceno Burriel* y Linch.

"Field Marshal of the Royal Armies, formerly Governor and Commandant-General of this jurisdiction, who

* The Governor Burriel of the famous "Virginius" massacre at Santiago de Cuba.

died in Madrid at half-past twelve o'clock on the morning of December 24, 1877.

"R. I. P.

"Many of his affectionate friends, with the Curé of the parish church of St. Peter of Versailles, have arranged funeral honors for the ease of his soul, which will take place in the said temple at 8 o'clock on the morning of Monday, February 4th, and they affectionately pray the assistance at ceremonies so religious, of the many friends of the general."

But what may an editor do when deprived of the privilege of writing political leaders? He does daily what would be regarded as a burlesque in any other region. I take up this morning's little flimsy sheet, ugly, useless, poor, and dirty. The leader is headed "*Los Pajaros*,"—"The Birds,"—and the gentle editor discourses for an hour and a half about the little creatures who strangely flutter in all parts of the world, and cheer men's hearts. It is not badly written either; it is quite interesting.

I turn back over the files—for of course I have always kept a file of these four-page journals,—and find for successive days these subjects: Virtue, Sociability, The Domestic Hearth, The Mechanic Arts, Temperance, and so on for days and days, until, I was about to say, you can't rest. But you can, and even go to sleep, so I forego the slang.

This is the Cuban newspaper. In the Havana journals, there are, necessarily, scissorings, notices of last night's opera, and commercial quotations. The whole is skilfully done, to the extent that no man could do it who had not had a very long practice in a land where actual liberty of the press is as nearly unknown as snow is. The most enlightened of Spaniards would consider liberty of the

press to mean only the liberty to publish a newspaper at all.

There is a tradition that, in the days of Captain-General Dulce, at the beginning of the insurrectionary war, liberty was given to whomsoever would, to publish a newspaper. There were dozens set a-going in a week. Every man who had money enough to set up a press did it, and proceeded to say to the public what he thought of every man whom he did not personally like, to print scurrilities and indecent jokes, and generally to follow the instincts of that kind of freedom which means license. The scandal grew very warm within a brief period, and those who did not themselves stop, had to be stopped. Of course the illustrious Dulce, being a Spaniard, did not understand that in the course of a few weeks the evil would find its own remedy. But it illustrated the Cuban and Spanish idea of the liberty of the press.

There is a Censor, and the existence and supposed necessity of this official explain every thing. The government is managing editor. Therefore all newspapers are of the same political complexion, all have the same general ideas, and all agree in praising or blaming the same things. Of course there are editors of my acquaintance in the United States who seem not to need any official to look over the proof-sheets. They are all the time in dread of public opinion, and hasten to discover and place themselves upon the side that is going to win. But this is a government whose soul and strength lie in inquisition. It has always been so, under whatsoever form of Spanish monarchy it was conducted. It prefers to take care of every thing; to prevent, suppress, and to guide by its own hands absolutely.

This fatherly care and solicitous looking after things, which is considered very parental, is especially exhibited in the theatre. All plays, old and new, must have the approval of the governor of the town before they can be placed upon the boards for a given evening. The whole program for any evening is subject to his approval. Once announced, the play must be played. Every evening there is a "president" of the performance, who sits in a prominent box, and when an actress is encored she must not appear a second time until the clamors of the public have induced the president to ring his hand-bell. If a song or scene is desired again by the people, the president is the judge, acting for the government, as to whether it shall be given or not, and the hand-bell is called into requisition if it is considered good for them All the ladies and gentlemen who are in the boxes and parquette, and all the hoodlums who are in the galleries, are children, who do not know what is best for them. Their tastes and desires, and morals and behavior, are constantly looked after by a paternal government.

The theatre in Cuba is a queer place anyway. The "Tacon" in Havana is the third in size in the world, and some of those in the smaller towns are handsome and costly structures. But in the matter of amusements they offer the public they are still unique. The Spaniard, who acts more than any other man off the stage, acts less than any other man upon it. He loses his vivacity, and becomes awkward and stereotyped. As a tragedian he is almost a failure. The *zarzuela*, not the legitimate drama, nor yet opera, but consisting of both, —the original melo-drama, in fact, is the almost universal play, and seeming to require no special talent, almost

anybody can do it. Any Spanish woman who can sing a little, can take the part of "La Marsellesa" or "Marina," and any comic actor can put in the part generally spelled on the bills "Sanmartin."

The most prominent figure on the stage is a huge white, bonnet-shaped hood, with the open side toward the actors, and placed at the footlights. Nearly all the dialogue is spoken within a few feet of this hood, for in it are the prompter's head and shoulders,—two heads and four shoulders in fact,—a man for the male parts, and a woman for the female characters. These two, sitting cosily together, read the whole dialogue in a running monotone, sometimes quite as loud as the voices of the actors, who do not seem to think it necessary to learn their parts before going on the stage.

Like the French, the Spaniard must have something distinctly and broadly nasty as an after-piece. Often the dialogue is such as to cause a suspicion that his Excellency either had not read it when he gave permission to play the piece, or else had proved unfaithful to his solemn charge of the morals of the people. The can-can, genuine, and not any pretence of it, is a favorite among theatre-goers. Any vulgar dance, outside of all the decencies of the regular ballet, is hailed with delight and applause. The nearest approach to a riot I ever saw in a theatre, occurred one night on the refusal of the governor to allow a nasty little one-act drama, called "Polichinela,"—Punch,—to be played.

Nowhere is there a better illustration of the ways of society than in the theatre. The Cuban lady will not sit in what we call the orchestra chairs,—the whole semi-circular space in front of the stage,—because it is a place frequented by men. It is not the fashion, and she

won't do it, though accompanied by her husband and though ladies born in Spain go there frequently. All balcony seats are square boxes rising one above the other, furnished with chairs, and sold as boxes are with us. Our Creole must sit in these, and as there is a gallery passing outside of each tier of boxes, all the world may pass by and look at her. This is the thing to do, and everybody does it. The house is regularly emptied between every act, and the whole throng adjourn to the galleries to smoke, saunter from box to box, and leisurely survey the blooming array of false hair, arms, and shoulders, and other lavishly displayed female charms. It is a tropical crowd, and there is a certain shade of the gaslight which shows every chalky dab of *cascarilla* in every face. Those that are covered with it look like corpses, while some have only a patch on each cheek, giving them a grotesque look like the face of the clown in a pantomime. There are those, however, who are beautiful, notwithstanding this powder of egg-shells.

It is at the theatre the Cuban woman blooms. Her dress is of all colors, and crimson, white, scarlet, and blue, make the homely square boxes seem like parterres of flowers. She wears no bonnet or hat, and it will be a pity when, among other Americanisms, she acquires the fashion. She expects, and wishes, to be gazed at, and never seems conscious of it. She cannot talk, and, as upon other occasions, says "*si-i*" with a sweet rising inflection, and smiles just wide enough to display an exceptionally regular mouthful of teeth.

From the gayeties of the theatre to the solemnities of a court of justice may seem a long step, but as remarked at the beginning of it, I am devoting a chap-

ter to the themes which indicate the social and intellectual condition of all classes. To begin with, it is very hard, for an American, to understand that the tribunal that is actually a court in Cuba possesses any of the lawful attributes of such a thing. There is no jury, there are no witnesses being examined and cross-examined, and worried and harried in open court. In criminal cases there is no prisoner, he being all the time in his cell, as ignorant of what is going on as if he had no interest in the case. There is no *Habeas Corpus*, no action for false imprisonment, no process by which the accused can compel the attendance of witnesses, no writ of error.

The *Fiscal* is a prosecuting attorney. He concocts a charge, or "process," against any individual whatever. This being done, the person is thereupon arrested, and without preliminary examination put in a safe place. He may stay there a month, without knowing what he is charged with, and be finally discharged from custody and never know. After the process, or accusation, comes the examination of witnesses for the government. Their statements are all *ex parte*, and obtained in private, and all their declarations taken together form the bundle of papers called the *sumario*. This is handed to the *Alcalde*, or judge, for his investigation. There is no notice to take testimony, and no cross-examination. The process seems to be generally kept as quiet as possible. After the witnesses for the government, those for the accused are examined, if there be any, but not unless the government wishes, for the theory is that a witness is a witness if he knows any thing whatever about it, and the *sumario* is supposed to present the whole case. Of course, if the prisoner has money, he

has his lawyer attending the sessions of the Alcalde and the Fiscal, called a court.

After due consideration, requiring sometimes two or three years, the prisoner is either turned out and requested to go his ways, or is called for sentence. There is some formality about the last, but as the case is already determined there is not much use of it. All this time the prisoner has been required to *prove himself innocent*. His accusation raises the presumption of guilt. The maxim of the civil code, as the Spaniard practises it, being precisely the reverse of the maxim of common law,—that every man is innocent until proven guilty.

This is, in brief, and in its general features, the Spanish criminal court. It is easy to see that in most cases the government can convict when it wishes to do so. It is meant that it should, and the native of the old country is not shocked at all when you call his attention to the fact. He believes the government ought to have the advantage, and tells you that while many a man has gone free who ought to have been garroted, there was never a man executed who was innocent. But if the reader has ever perused the pages of Prescott's conquest of Peru, he may remember the process, all legal and technical and correct, by which the Inca was brought to his death in the camp of Pizarro. The whole *modus operandi* remains unchanged to this day.

During all my residence in Cuba, watching as vigilantly as I might the drift of events, I have never known a man who had money to suffer capitally, though they sometimes remain a long time in confinement. There has always been a terrible drag in their cases, but they finally went free. But I have seen the swift punishment of negroes, Chinamen, and the general scum. The consciences

of the officials are duly awakened when they can afford to make an example of somebody. When a negro who has killed an overseer one morning is led out and shot the next, when you may go out in the street and take the census of the chain-gang and find in one division of it sixty Chinamen, eighteen negroes, and no white men, and when you know at the same time half a dozen men who have testified absolutely to the intentional and premeditated killing of people before the Fiscal, and know that the subjects of this uncontradicted testimony went free, and when this kind of thing passes under your observation for years, and nobody ever denies it, and everybody considers it a matter of course, it begins to seem as though there were a peculiar fatality in color and accompanying poverty.

I have mentioned the chain-gang. It is the Spanish penitentiary, and the lineal descendant of the galleys. The prisoners are used in the making of roads, and in general public slavery. They are usually chained in couples, otherwise the prisoner usually carries his leg-chain over his shoulder, or slung to his waist, and has his ulcerated and iron-eaten ankle wrapped in rags. They go clanking along the streets, and it seems as though you were never out of hearing of the horrible tinkling. Punishment for crime is undoubtedly necessary, but a system which parades its chained, beaten, half-starved, ragged, and squalid penitents in gangs upon the streets does not seem the best system. But it is better than the galleys.

Since the beginning of the Cuban war, the course of criminal justice has drifted almost entirely into the military courts. These are institutions entirely to the liking of the rulers of the island, who are soldiers. Civilians do not understand them. Their course of justice is of the

"drum-head" order, so swift that there is no time for question or appeal. It is a good way to be rid of bad men. Death and the chain-gang end all. Its sessions are secret, and its members not in any way responsible to the rest of mankind. For years all offences criminal have had their adjudication between two rows of colonels, captains, and lieutenants sitting at a table behind closed doors.

Yet these do sometimes bring forth strange verdicts in trying the offences of their own class. There was a certain church that, as is not unusual, had its own especially well-beloved image of the Blessed Virgin. But what is much more unusual, this virgin had upon her wooden finger a diamond of good size and brilliancy, and genuine. Every morning the sacristan used to pass by and reverently inspect her ring-finger. The priests too, as they passed to and fro, had a fashion of glancing that way.

One morning the ring was gone. Theft and sacrilege had been committed during the night, and church and police both went vigorously to work to discover the thief. The ring was found in the hands of a pawn-broker, who declared it had been sold to him by a certain soldier. It was a case for a military court, and the defender of his country was called upon—after having been convicted—to make his declaration as a matter of form, and this is the story he told.

His family was very poor, away off in the hills of Asturias. His parents were ill, and had written him often to come to them, or at least to send money. Being a soldier, he could do neither, and in the want of all human help, he had been three nights in the church praying to the Virgin. The third night he had prayed long, and was utterly alone, he and the Virgin,

and was sad of heart. Every worshipper had retired, and each candle burned low in its socket. Still he prayed, and begged the Queen of Heaven to help him. He saw her glass eyes move and fix themselves upon him in infinite pity, and being thus encouraged he prayed harder than ever. And then she took the precious ring from her finger, stepped down from her canopy, and gave it to him as he knelt. He went away rejoicing, and sold it, and sent the money to his family. It was a miracle. He was happy in his faith, and the court might do as it liked with him.

Then arose the quandary of the quorum. It would never do to discredit a miracle; though some of the court might in their secret hearts doubt the story in its affecting entirety. Besides, they had the ring again. They called for the soldier, solemnly directed him never again to take a ring under such circumstances, and bade him go. It is a generally accepted miracle by everybody but the pawnbroker, who is affected by the fact that he lost his money.

So much, as an illustration of the wisdom sometimes concentrated beneath half a dozen military hats. To make the parallel complete, I will briefly narrate an example of the ways of justice in a quiet action for debt in a civil court.

A man known to me bought of a certain tailor about five hundred dollars' worth of mourning clothes, and failed to pay the bill. Continually failing to do so until the process had become monotonous, the man of the scissors finally cited him. Defendant went into court, and made the following showing: That, at the time the said tailor's action was brought, he, the said defendant, was about completing the purchase of a valuable property, and the

transaction would have resulted in his great pecuniary benefit. But the terms of the sale contemplated a deferred payment by the said defendant, and the party selling, hearing of the action of the tailor against this defendant, had declined to negotiate further, fearing that if he could not pay his tailor, there was small chance of his making good his agreement in the much greater sum of a payment on real estate. Therefore, this defendant and man of mourning says he is not only justified in not paying the said tailor and plaintiff for the said clothes, but is entitled to damages against him for spoiling a profitable transaction. Result: the tailor lost his five hundred dollars, and was mulcted in damages to said defendant two thousand dollars.

Since this case came to my knowledge, I have distinctly understood that there is no such maxim in Spanish law as that "a man can not take advantage of his own wrong." Such are some of the incidents of the course of justice in the island of Cuba. I only add that all the intelligent natives with whom I have conversed with regard to the case last mentioned, seem to regard the finding of the court as very reasonable, just, and wise.

CHAPTER XIV.

MUNICIPAL CONVENIENCES.

THERE was once a philosophic Chinese who, on arriving in Cuba from his native land, and surveying his future residence, was heard to say that it seemed a peculiarity of the country that every town contained two principal buildings, one of which, the church, was always open and always empty, and the other, the jail, always closed and always full.

I used sometimes to visit the jail, unaccompanied, of course, by the police. There was generally somebody there I had business with, and who had the privilege of speaking through a substantial wicker-work of iron that guarded his retirement from intrusion by outsiders. While within the picturesque enclosure, I sometimes fell into conversation with persons with whom I had no business whatever, and sometimes they told me strange stories, which would lack interest to my readers, but by them I learned more than I wished of the workings of the Spanish judicial system. One item easily discovered was, that the Cuban legal fraternity, conjointly with *alcaldes* and *fiscals*, have a way of wearing a man out by uncertainty and confinement, and forcing him finally to buy what he despairs of getting any other way. It is admirably done, and there is nobody to help it, and no remedy.

The *cárcel*, or jail, existing in every town, serves all the purposes of our state penitentiary. It is the home of the chain-gang. From one point of view the system excels our own. The prisoners serve out their sentences in building bridges, making roads, and in cleaning the streets, and each large town has all work of this kind done at the mere cost of the tow-linen clothes the prisoners wear, and the thin soup they eat. As mechanical and manufacturing enterprises are not attempted, there is little doubt of the system paying. Their labor is entirely expended for the public good, and the work is slowly done under the direction of engineers, and lasts long.

I have seen as many as three hundred people in the jail of a Cuban city of forty thousand population. They needed to have a large one. The building with its appurtenances usually covers the space of about a square, and is surrounded by a high wall. It contains cells whose dimensions are of the smallest, and halls, passages, and court-yards. A large class of prisoners are not confined, and are at liberty to gossip with visitors through the iron bars. Others may walk the court-yard as much as they please, but it does not mean they shall any the sooner get out. Still others are debarred from every thing but air, and have little enough of that.

As the government of the Spaniards is entirely inquisitorial, much depends upon the police. Yet, I was a long time in finding out with any certainty who the police were. The *Sereno* was the first member of the force whose acquaintance I made. He is usually a superannuated and under-class Spaniard, illy fitted to chase an able-bodied thief, and whose only uniform is a glazed hat. I heard him first under my window, startled by the first

nasal notes of his shaky song of *sereno-o-o-o-o. Las diez y media, y sereno-o-o-o-o!* The strange tune he sang to these simple and pathetic words every half-hour, the long-drawn, final "o," and the ancient savor of the custom, caused me at last to go and make his acquaintance.

I found him standing at the corner, armed with a blanket, a lance, and a lantern. I suppose the mountain villages of Spain have had for three centuries watchmen who looked and sang like these. I could not imagine a man more poorly equipped to frustrate the designs of the evil-doers of the night. Is a house-breaker going to wait and be covered with a pole six feet long, and too big to use with one hand, especially when he can tell by the twinkle of his lantern just where that particular *Sereno* is, and dodge him?

This policeman goes on duty at six o'clock, and stays at his post until six in the morning. Sometimes he has a stool to sit upon, furnished at his own expense. At half-past ten the cry is vigorous and prolonged all over the town. At eleven likewise. At twelve you hear a few, and at one, hardly any. I presume this man knows the softest door-steps anywhere in four blocks, and gets a good five hours' rest every night. The same fate of never being where he is needed attends him, as it does our own guardian of the peace.

Another policeman is a military man, an imitation of the French *Gen d' arme*, and called a *Guardia civil.* He is universal and ubiquitous on all railway trains, at every depot, at the theatre and the bull-fight, and in couples on the streets. You meet him, mounted, in the country road, and he has a right to ask you for your pass, which he rarely does unless you look as though you had just come out of the chaparral. It is his business to officially

go through all passenger cars. In the first-class he takes off his hat and walks through with a deprecatory air, hardly giving you a glance. In the second-class he keeps his hat on and scowls, and in the third-class he stares savagely at the crowd, and singles out one or more individuals as special objects of suspicion and distrust.

It would seem that by thus using every vigilance the government ought to keep itself very well informed as to the character of persons who enter its dominions. On the contrary it does not. All this pass-carrying and formal permission by the government to reside within its jurisdiction; all the petty laws for every thing, is nonsense prompted by traditional and inherent jealousy. The authorities of the island do not know the character and designs of either natives or strangers. It is perhaps a little easier to catch a thief or follow a conspiracy in any other country.

Among municipal conveniences, the railways of Cuba deserve special mention. It is a very good railway considered as an iron track, and very shabby in all other respects. A first-class passenger car is of that class, age, and general appearance that one of our western railways would not hitch it to the rear end of a cattle train. It is only about one half the length of an American first-class coach, is flat in the roof, has uneasy cane seats, seems made without springs, and is generally rattling, ragged, blistered, and dirty. They are, however, all built in the United States, by special plan and contract.

But the first-class car is a thing of magnificence as compared with the second and third-class, as may be perceived the moment of entering, say the third-class. In this, there are only benches without backs, and no upholstering of any kind, or any pretence of ornamentation.

It is purposely made as bad as possible: a great deal worse than a "caboose" on one of our freight trains.

You cannot check any baggage in Cuba. They charge you so much,—as much as they please,—write a receipt for the trunk and money in duplicate, give you one and paste the other on the trunk, and occupy ten minutes in the process.

They do not take up the "tickets" on the train. When you wish to enter, you are required to form one of a procession, take your valise in one hand, your indispensable umbrella under your arm, and any other impedimenta between your teeth, so as to have a hand free to show your ticket as you pass through a door with all the rest. When you are seated in the car, the conductor looks at the pasteboard, punches it of course, and hands it back to you. When you arrive at your destination, you do as aforesaid with your belongings, and give the man who stands at the gangway your ticket: then you go and hunt up a man to haul away your baggage, make a special contract with him, deliver to him your little inconvenient square receipt, make him agree to bring it to you at once, and receive it in about one to three days afterward.

Every time the train stops, there is a vigorous ringing of a hand-bell to start it again. A Chinaman rushes up and down the platform swinging the sounding brass with great vigor, and everybody who has left the car to take a *penales*, climbs on again. There are no patent safety platforms, no air-brakes, nor any thing that is modern. The lean old Chinese Mercury divides his time between twisting up a creaking brake, and again untwisting it, and ringing his bell,—what time he is not occupied in lighting a little smoking kerosene lamp placed in a box, if it be

dark, and which is always getting itself jolted out or blown out.

The freight carried by these roads consists of empty sugar hogsheads one way and full sugar hogsheads the other. This is putting it as briefly as possible, and very nearly expresses the nature of the business. The railways of Cuba are said to pay.

If I were to describe the passengers on one of these trains, I should very likely repeat something already trite to the reader. It is the same Panama-hatted crowd, linen-clad and thin-legged, one sees everywhere in Cuba. A warlike cock with his legs hanging down through holes in a kind of sling, or chicken-hammock, may be observed as an article of baggage. If you see a man with a roasted *jutea* tied up in a handkerchief, with the rat-like claws visible to class it by, it will not be a matter of surprise or remark. I do not know whether a *jutea* is a rat, or rabbit, or cat. It looks very much like a brother of him of Norway, during life, and with its hair on it. But as it is the only game quadruped common on the island, and is considered a delicacy roasted and tied up in a cotton handkerchief and brought from the country, let us forego condemnation merely because of a hair and a claw.

From a discussion of the railway, nothing is easier than a digression to the mail service and the post-office. It is not to be expected that these should as yet have attained to full efficiency and usefulness in Cuba. They are things that rather exist under protest among all Spaniards. In the mother country roads for wheeled vehicles may almost be called an innovation, and wherever the Spaniard has wandered over the face of the earth, he has still carefully preserved to himself the char-

acter and habits of the old land, and of a man who does not much care for the ways and doings, news and thoughts, of the rest of mankind. The full mails which come from the United States to the comparatively few natives of that cold land who are scattered abroad through Cuba, and the packages of letters and papers to the various Consulates, are sources of great trouble to the post-office people. Besides, they are generally directed in English—a language that a respectable Spaniard seldom learns to speak or read. The mails which come to a city of forty thousand population in Cuba daily, are about equal to those which are distributed in a town of five thousand in the United States. As you cannot tell within a day or two when your trunk will be delivered to you from the depot, so you cannot prophesy with certainty when you may receive the letter that was sent to you. If on the same day a mail has arrived from both Spain and the United States, the task of distribution is too great, and letter-seeking parties must wait until the morrow. *Mañana* is the most convenient word in the language. "There has always come a to-morrow, wet or dry," says the proverb.

To illustrate the slowness of a system which with us requires limited mail trains and every means of despatch, it is only necessary to state that the post-office employees find time to write out and post on the wall a list of all persons not holding boxes, for whom letters have come. It is surprising, too, how often letters directed to Trinidad, go to Cienfuegos, or those to Smith and Jones, find their way to Brown and Robinson. A letter directed plainly to any point in the United States, except perhaps New York, is almost certain to go to England or France. These annoyances, arising, no doubt, from the natural

contrariety of inanimate things, happen so often that everybody has grown accustomed to it.

I have never heard of anybody being arrested or tried for robbing the mails, yet nobody has any confidence in the probability of a letter containing any valuable thing going fifty miles safely. There are no detectives and mail agents in Cuba, travelling incognito, with a weather eye on the mail-bags. It is wise and far-seeing state-craft not to have them, for it is likely they would rob the mails themselves. If the reader shrewdly imagines that I have been having my letters miscarried, the reader is very right.

There are two express companies, to my knowledge in the island. One of them is the "National and Foreign," and the other is the "Bombalier." There are probably one or more in every sizable town. I know these two wealthy and far-extended corporations one from the other, when I see them coming, by the fact that one has a crazier wagon, if any thing, and a leaner old crate of a horse, than the other, which is saying a good deal. Each of these two uncommon carriers is the owner of two or three dilapidated boxes the size of a trunk. Into these they put certain small packages intrusted to their care, lock them up, and pay the railway company so much for carrying said box to its destination, and there delivering it to a man who also has a sleepy horse and an ancient vehicle, and who opens the box, takes out the packages, and delivers them to the parties interested.

I once saw a friend making a small package to deliver to one of these companies. He was industriously putting a square thing into a round box, and I enquired the cause of it He said: "Well, you see, I don't want them to know what it contains." I asked him why, and he

smiled a knowing smile. I then said that perhaps it would be better for him to go and carry the thing in his pocket, and he answered he could not very well, as he had nobody to leave in the store. This choice between the mail, the express, and going one's self, is often made in Cuba. Any man who had a thousand dollars to transmit from Matanzas to Havana, would undoubtedly carry it, and make the journey on purpose.

It may seem that this chapter upon municipal conveniences presents the arrangements for intercommunication in Cuba in rather a bad light, and that such a condition of things could not be long endured in a civilized country. So it may seem to an American, for the contrast between such things here and the indecorous and undignified haste seen everywhere in the United States is very great. But there is no complaint whatever. Things are thought to be about as they ought to be, and there is even serene content. It is not a hurrying country. It requires three weeks to mend a shoe, two months to make a coat, a year to build a house, and a century to produce any change of any kind. Everybody falls into that way of thinking and doing. The Yankee frets and worries for three months, and then subsides into calm endurance of what cannot be cured. There is nothing certain but final dissolution, and nothing carried into effect at the time stated but the sentence of a court-martial.

CHAPTER XV.

PASSIONS AND AMUSEMENTS.

THERE is no country lacking in its peculiar amusements, pastimes, and passions. Sometimes they may be specially worthy of attention as indicating the national character. Often, they are less characteristic. Among the older races they do not so often take the forms of mere whimsies and fashions like base-ball and polo. Where they are as ancient as the circus, the horse-race, or the bull-fight, they are entitled to a certain respect, because they indicate national character.

Gaming runs in the Spanish blood. As a man, he must gamble as he must eat. As the more respectable class of Spain are averse to emigration, and large numbers of men in Cuba are unrestrained by associations that generally influence them at home, the second-class café in a Cuban town is a scene worthy of study every night in the year.

The place is full of tables and there is a crowd at each. The game is dominoes, a childish thing enough for grown men to occupy themselves with, but a game of chance, and therefore a passion. They are hard-featured people, sun-browned and hard-handed, tangled-haired and uncouth as animals. They gesticulate and dispute, and say naughty Spanish words, the worst they can think of. The rattle of the pieces, the absorbed attention, the in-

terested countenances, the hard faces wrought into intense thought, the flaring lights, altogether make up a strange scene. It would seem that some of these men do nothing all their lives but play at dominoes. If they win it is but little, and they lose again. The game is small, just big enough to be "interesting." Yet they are animated by undying hope. If one loses a currency dollar, he makes an oration about it, and explains it, and the man who wins pockets the money with a grin. There is nothing fashionable about the crowd; there is no back room and no mystery. It is like a gathering of fishermen on some lone and sea-beaten coast, and yet is in the midst of a prosperous town. They do not get drunk. You are surprised to hear, in a company that seems made up of excited cut-throats, so many calls for coffee.

It is not thought in this country that gambling is any offense, much less a vice that is likely to lead to ruin. Only the celebrated game of *monte* is prohibited by law. There is no game of chance that is wicked, or, because it is a game of chance, that is incompatible with exemplary piety and all the virtues. The Spaniard believes, and says, that what he gains by luck is his by the gift of God.

Gaming for money by means of dominoes is not, however, the supremest enjoyment. There is need of something bloody, combined with chance. There is a pastime that, in a Cuban sense, is a national passion. Nor is it disreputable either, nor indulged in by a hard crowd, nor attended by the police. It is the gentleman's Sunday game of cock-fighting.

A cock-pit and its scenes, looked upon for the first time, make an impression. It is not the "main" of the United States, but a building, sometimes of fancy architecture and goodly size, to which hundreds resort,—Dons

and Caballeros, fishermen and peddlers. If you go there on off-days, you will find an extensive yard full of coops, in which are all varieties, sizes, and colors of the game-chicken. They are carefully tended, awaiting the day when near neighbors who have crowed at each other for weeks, may get together and fight it out.

I regret that I cannot profess myself an expert with regard to the game-cock. In my life I have never acquired the name applied to any particular variety, or heard discussed the valor and virtues of any especial breed. There doubtless are such breeds and varieties, but I am inclined to believe the Cuban is with his cocks as he is with his horses,—disposed to let nature take its course, and accept contentedly such as the gods provide.

But I never knew until I came to Cuba how strange a bird the barn-yard fowl might be made to look. Our trotting-horse can be transformed into a creature of which you may scarcely guess whether the quality of speed dwells in the horse or in the fixings. But the Cuban fighting-fowl is a still greater curiosity. Imagine a bird that has his tail trimmed to a triangular hatchet-shape, and whose comb has been curtailed in his infancy so that his antagonist may not have the belligerent right of pecking it. Down the middle of his back there has been trimmed a swath about two inches wide, with the special purpose of making him handsome to look upon. His rear view presents a circular spot two inches in diameter, and of a brilliant red color. I cannot truly testify as to the purpose of this remarkable tonsure, but I have to inform the reader that the male chicken, denuded of his plumage, is a cardinal red. I used myself to imagine he would be white.

There are preliminaries to all battles, but more of them in a cock-pit than anywhere else. The ring is a circular space of some twelve feet in diameter, and here the arrangements which are sure to end in a fight are made. First, the fowls are weighed carefully. After a deal of talk, or, more correctly, of vociferations and gesticulation and yelling, of rising up in seats, and frantic declarations by everybody of a burning desire to bet their undermost dollar, the fight begins. The umpire puts on each bird a pair of "gaffs," with cutting edges, and long enough to stab a man with. Then ensues the usual rooster-tactics: pretence of great indifference, futile pecking at imaginary corn, leisure and unconcern. But they are sure to fight, and when they get within striking distance there is a simultaneous attack. Armed with the steel gaffs, the contest usually lasts about ten seconds, and the bird who strikes first is almost certainly the victor. Often both birds are killed, in which case the money is won by the party whose bird is the longest in dying.

Without the gaffs, the battle may last half an hour. Eyes are pecked out, necks pierced, wings broken. It is small game, but as cruel as any combat of animals can be, and disgustingly bloody. The excitement is immense. Ounces change hands rapidly; men scream and cheer, or say bad words, and throw down their money angrily.

There is another amusement that is, in the mind of the reader, perhaps the first association called up by the name of Spain. It is in its decline after a career of centuries, though still one of the chief amusements, not only of Spain, but of Cuba. It is astonishing that a refined and highly civilized people should find rapturous enjoyment in the bull-fight, though cruelty and the delights

of torture are amusements with a certain class in all countries. But in Spain and her colonies the most ferocious and cruel of amusements is permitted by the Church, licensed by the government, and enjoyed by all. Fathers take their children, gentlemen invite their friends, and all the hard seats of the amphitheatre, called the *Plaza de Toros*, are taken. Only the Cuban women refuse to go, and this more because it has ceased to be fashionable to do so than for any good reason.

The bull-fight has been described a thousand times. But the stranger to its fascinations needs to see it once. He must carry away with him a picture of the circular seats, crowded with human faces, tier upon tier; the waving hands and hats, and the universal mouth open with one continual cry. He must needs remember the procession of *picadors*, *banderilleros*, and *matadors*, as it enters and files before the president's box, as the gladiators once did. He will remember how he has seen the picturesque costumes in pictures, and will note that they are now, alas! tawdry and faded imitations of the rich cloaks and laced jackets of the ancient bull-fighters. He will never forget the moment of hushed suspense while the door stands open, or the cry that greets the thick-necked little bull as he dashes into the arena with an angry snort, and looks about him, ready and anxious to begin the cruel battle which always ends with his death.

He has not long to wait. A nimble-footed *banderillero* glides from behind a barrier and flings his cloak in the bull's very face. As he turns to chase his first tormentor, a second appears, and a third, and in a few moments his nostrils are distended, and his enemies have goaded him to the highest pitch of fury.

Then come the *picadors*, or lancers, mounted upon horses which are lame, blind, old, weak, and almost past any fear of bulls or death, or any desire for life or provender. The picador uses as a lance a pole with an awl inserted in the end,—something to catch and hold, not to kill. The charge of a vigorous and angry bull upon a blind or blindfolded horse is something sickening. The picador receives him upon the point of the lance, usually inserted in the shoulder. In the majority of cases he pays no attention whatever to it, and gores the horse. In such a case the spectator may be treated to the sight of a charger staggering around the arena with his entrails dangling from his belly, and is at liberty to call it pleasure if he so regards it. The crowd cheers lustily when the bull makes successful plunges into the bowels of a horse, which he often does in two or three instances in succession, and in as many seconds.

There are a few notes of a bugle, and the picadors retire to give place to the first tormentors, the banderilleros. These appear again armed with sticks, in the ends of which are barbed points, and which are adorned with colored paper. The bull makes a charge, and with a quick and dexterous movement, sometimes astonishing in its boldness and celerity, two of these are inserted in his neck, near the shoulder. Presently he receives two more, and his rage and anguish are terrible. I have seen two such instruments of torture inserted in a bull's neck, high up over the shoulder, which were no longer than a common awl, and by a man who must necessarily place himself in front of the raging animal to do it.

When a bull is disposed to avoid fighting, the barbed sticks are rockets which ignite when they are inserted in the flesh, and burn him to agony and fury. This pleases

the public, and is considered fair enough treatment for a bull who is not disposed to fight desperately.

Finally comes the scene for which the public has waited impatiently; the skilful and mortal thrust that ends all. The *matador* appears and flings his tasseled cap into the ring, and bows to the president and people. He carries only a straight sword and a red cloak, and advances toward his antagonist as one certain of victory. He exasperates the animal by flinging his red scarf toward him, dares him, tantalizes him, and, finally, as he lowers his head and charges, thrusts the blade to the hilt obliquely downward between the shoulder-blade and the spine. There is a gush of blood from the nostrils. The big animal looks at his puny antagonist with glazing eyes, calmly lies down as if to rest, and dies like Cæsar. The three little mules, gaily caparisoned, come prancing and kicking in; he is ignominiously dragged out by the head, the door is again flung open, and in rushes another, scorning the very ground, to undergo the same torture and die the same cruel death, to please a crowd which, with its shouts of "*bravo toro!!*" "*bien pegado hombre!!!*" reminds the unaccustomed stranger of all he has ever heard or read of the brave days of Nero, and sunny afternoons in the crowded Coliseum.

This is the famed bull-fight which has for so long delighted the land of cavaliers and crusaders, as nearly as I can describe its incidents. They say it has decayed, and tell of the times when the matador went to his business in his coach, and Ysabella the fair applauded his feats of agility and daring. I do not believe the arena ever differed much from its present state. It is like the circus, unchanging forever. Bulls are bulls, and could not well be more active, angry, and courageous than I have seen them.

There is a general indifference to animal suffering prevalent among all people of Spanish origin. The little Cuban horses, lame, sore-backed, weak, and altogether sadly maltreated, are lashed to frantic exertions every hour of the day, and beaten mercilessly for mere amusement. Kids and pigs are left an indefinite time with all their feet tied together by a thong. Fowls are carried many miles to market swinging head downward under a horse's belly. Oxen are yoked together by the head, and through all the hard labor they are used for cannot do more than wink, and the flies cluster in their eyes in swarms. A dog rushing through the streets with a tin utensil tied to his loins is a delight to the whole population. Any animal struggling in a paroxysm of rage or terror gathers an amused and enjoying crowd. Maniacs, who are generally allowed to wander at will through the streets, are tormented by men and boys, and with impunity and gusto. Shouts of derisive laughter greet those pitiable scenes which occasionally occur in every community, and which, in other lands, incite to help, pity, and tears.

Desesperado is a Spanish word in its present form, and means, as with us, a man desperate, unrestrained by the fear of consequences, or by a sense of right. There are enough such to give the word a wide use. The model desperado is an angry Spaniard of the lower class. He has a sneaking fondness for assassination by the knife; for the *duello con las armas blancas*,—the "white arms," —as he calls it. I have known four men murdered in the streets by unknown hands, in as many consecutive nights, in a Cuban town, and the police never discovered who did it. The fatal stab from behind, under the shoulder blade, has sent many a Spaniard to his account ere now, and

many an one who deserved it. Two men sometimes meet face to face in the street, and fight it out with hideous knives. If for any reason they part, they fight on sight every time they meet. The dagger and the passions of the Latin lie close together. Among the Saxon races the man who carries a knife is regarded as a kind of assassin, while even a gentleman may sometimes have a pistol in his pocket and thereby cause no remark. It is because the knife is the emblem of assassination, of quick, silent, gliding, treacherous death, of a wound for which surgery knows no remedy.

There is, I believe, an essential race difference in the methods of hating, loving, and revenge. There are men who desire to fight and not to kill; these are Saxons. There are those who desire only to kill; these are Latins. There are those with whom the love of woman puts jealousy far off and out of mind, and with whom love is faith; these also are Saxons. There are those with whom suspicion walks ever by love's side, in whose passion there is no mixture of confidence, and who nurse in their hearts a demon and an angel together. This is the Latin. In this, as in other things, we have only to cross the Gulf Stream to find our antipodes.

CHAPTER XVI.

MOTHER CHURCH.

THE most remarkable feature of the Constitution of the United States is seldom thought of by her citizens. It is that she has no religion of the State, and no Church established by law.

There are lands where Church-and-State rule has held for many centuries, but where it has at last become a mere form; a nominal and theoretical thing that is advocated by one party for the sake of grandeur and tradition, and opposed by another for the sake of opposition and a desire to change. But there are other regions where it is not by any means a form, but a vital principle of government. One of these is Cuba, and the stranger may soon discover it to be the case. After breathing the freer air of heresy all his life, he feels to a degree stifled—religiously choked. For no man can escape the pressure. You cannot, without the consent and assistance of the Church, marry anybody whosoever or at all; and, if you are a Protestant, you must actually unite with it before you can be permitted to exercise the right of choice among the ladies of your acquaintance. You cannot conveniently be born without the Church, and can prove your legitimacy by no means outside of her records, and without her you had better not die.

The Mother Church is the mistress of ceremonies of all kinds. She owns the cemeteries practically, is interested in the sale of coffins and management of hearses, buries the dead, licenses the inhuming and exhuming of all bodies, and is a kind of orphans' court for the benefit of herself and the surviving heirs. In every village she erects her cross, and jangles her bells, and issues her pious and salutary decrees. Everywhere, more common than even doctors, are her black-robed and solemn-visaged servants. Holding fast to the end of all things with a tenacious grasp, making herself the great indispensable in every thing that men desire most to attain and enjoy, she is, by the consent and assistance of the government, more strong than the government itself, and closes the long list of her powers and terrors by a dread jurisdiction over the world to come.

It is the old Church, the Church "Romana, Apostolica, Catholica," *the* Church as she is and was meant to be in southern Europe, that holds sway in Cuba. The man who begs leave to exercise his wicked reason, and has the temerity to doubt a dogma, who fails to see the truth of a statement or the foundation for a pretence, cannot be otherwise than in some sense opposed to her. She has her will in most things, and takes no pains to conceal the fact that she considers a heretic already doomed, and that she will not believe him under oath. She pervades the land, and in a sense she owns it. She has an essential place in the police system, and is an ingredient and necessary part of every thing.

I grieve to state, however, that notwithstanding all this, the Church in Cuba seems to be poor. Pecuniarily she has fallen upon these later and evil times in which dying sinners are not permitted by heirs peacefully to

endow and die, even if they would. Her buildings, while many of them are venerable, are none of them palaces, and some of them are greatly in need of plaster and paint. Her vestments are cheap, her jewels are tawdry, the lace is cotton, the gold is brass.

The church edifice of the Cuban town, of the dilapidated character already alluded to, is a peculiar building within, though doubtless much like all others in Spanish America. Its most peculiar characteristic is a want of any thing that can truly be called magnificence, with a vast and futile attempt at something like it. There are, of course, no seats. The worshippers are not to be accommodated with the irreverent appliances of ease, but are expected, once for all, to bend their legs and keep them bent. This gives rise to a curious scene of every-day occurrence. Only women go to church as worshippers. The males usually attend for the purpose of seeing them worship. Each pious dame brings a little carpet, or rather a small-sized negro brings it for her. She kneels, but in the course of a few minutes sits. An ill-bred person would say, squats. Tired with the course of the ceremonial, she at length reclines. In the middle of the service the floor is strewn with a choice assortment of ladies' dress-goods with the ladies inside of them. At certain places in the ceremonial, it is necessary for everybody to place themselves again in a kneeling posture, and there is a general struggle to attain this end. To see two or three hundred women scrambling at once from a reclining to a kneeling position, has a tendency for the moment to destroy the solemn feeling one should have under the circumstances.

The ultramontane theology is fully illustrated by the decorations of the walls, especially the pictures. Some

of these last are little less than horrible, both as objects of worship and as works of art. For instance, I remember one, and indeed very vividly, the lower half of which represented a large number of nude people walking about in the midst of flames. Some of them are infants, and some, old parties particularly bald and wrinkled. They do not seem to be squirming and howling as much as they ought under the circumstances. They are more like people astonished at finding themselves in an exceedingly disagreeable predicament. But above, in the upper half of the picture, is the Virgin, with a sentimental smile on a very common physiognomy, looking down "from the gold bar of Heaven" upon the flame-clad crowd of unfortunates. They are plainly in Hell, these people;—none of our modern, rather dreary, but not-so-bad-as-it-might-be hells, but the old-fashioned, genuine, literal locality. There is conveyed to the mind of the devout Catholic the idea that they are roasting, and ought to be. I have imagined, as I contemplated the picture, that the Virgin was saying to one of her companions in the beatific upper half of the picture, a bald and homely seraph: "Don't you imagine, Zacharias, that they are quite cooked by this time?" I am aware that this is very, very wicked, and an illustration of all the good it does to a miserable Protestant to hang up pictures in churches. But I am determined not to be frightened into being good, though I am convinced that but for a strong resolution of that kind, the pictures of a Cuban church would do the business.

Here and there through the building there are boxes with glass sides, and a candle burning within, transparently painted with skulls and cross-bones, and other mortuary emblems. I do not know what these death's-head

lanterns are for, and frankly confess my ignorance of what they are called. But people crawl from one to the other on their knees, and pray to them, as they do to every other object in the building. There is a life-size image of the Man of Calvary, stretched upon his cross, dreadfully realistic in its representation of a dead man who has suffered torture. The knees are bloody and abraded, the wound in the side runs blood, and each scar made by nail and thorn and scourge is there. It is horrible. There is young Saint Sebastian, looking very smiling, with his body stuck full of arrows like a pin-cushion. There are a large number of Virgins, assorted sizes and moods, sad, glad, or merely complacent, for the wonderful woman has the faculty of being four or five hundred women at once, suiting herself to all climes and races. There are a dozen or so of the regular dried saint in glass cases, all bald, all clad in red and purple gowns, all having the general look of having been made in the same factory, after the same general model, and all producing the vague impression that if they are in heaven and look like that, one does not wish to go there.

At intervals stand the confessionals. These are wooden boxes, with a comfortable seat inside for the priest, and sides of perforated tin. At almost any hour, you may see some sin-stricken soul kneeling on the floor with her lips to the tin partition, pouring her iniquities into the ear of a red-faced priest. And here we arrive at the secret of the whole business, and obtain the key to the power of Roman Catholicism. The shames, crimes, and unhappinesses that come to the ear of the Church, the causes for assassinations, jealousies, hatreds, suspicions; the secret springs and motives of life and society; the nameless things that mothers, husbands, and brothers do

not know: all these things Mother Church knows. It was a shrewd invention of the fathers. By it she indeed holds the keys, and is infallible, if infallibility means not guessing, but knowing.

There is only one occasion, however, upon which the average male Cuban or Spaniard goes to confession. That is, when he is on the eve of matrimony. If he declines to do so, then the Church declines to marry him, and as there is no such thing as a civil marriage he has no remedy. Thus, once in the life of almost every man, the long-delayed penance is sure to fall, the long-retained fee sure to be paid. Then, in many cases, the hardened sinner goes away, and tells the boys what the priest asked him, what he answered, and how he did not do any penance whatever. It is sadly true that it is the feminine soul, and not the masculine, that respects the sacraments. The great majority of men cherish an ill-concealed dislike to the faith of the fathers, though refusing to countenance any other. He is disposed to have a private opinion of the infallibility of the Church, the purity of the priesthood, the divine authority of dogma, and the pecuniary disinterestedness of the whole sacred college. He believes a little competition is necessary to enliven ecclesiastical routine and reduce the fees.

I have said that the Church in Cuba seemed not to have attained great wealth. I have never yet attended services where the establishment was rich enough to afford an organ. In the little towns of Mexico the band and instruments of the last night's *baile* are good enough for choir-service the following morning. It is not greatly different here. The unsanctified cottage "organ" so called, the *quincum-quancum* of country churches, the musical sister of the sublime accordeon, is the ordinary

devotional instrument. But there is nothing strange in the celebration of mass without a single worshipper. It is all the same. The church is always open, and something is always going on. An old cock-fighting *roué* may be off at one side repeating an assorted selection of prayers to atone for misspent Sundays and ounces, and a gay mulatto, burdened with more amours than she can carry, which is saying a great deal, kneels at the confession cupboard. Idle boys play here and there, and grown-up vagabonds loaf around, apparently engaged in counting the candles. Occasionally there is an old woman of the humbler class, going from picture to image, and taking all as they come, saying a prayer to each, and giving her moral nature a regular cleaning up. If it is not piety it is penance, the salutary dispensation of the man in the cupboard.

There are seasons of the year when religious matters are more lively than at other times, and the languid zeal of the flock is stirred up. There are, or should be, half a dozen bells in every church steeple, of all sizes, kinds, and tones. These they ring at such times,—begin early and ring pretty much all day, and ring them all at once. The tune is slam—bang,—bang, bang, bang, and *da capo;* slam—bang,—bang, bang, bang. They are all slam-banging, big and little, of all sizes and keys, with all grades of harmony and dissonance. Nobody wishes to live within a mile of the church.

Feast-days, "*fiestas*," are a special and characteristic institution. They are a remarkable feature of religious life to the man from active and go-ahead regions like the United States. There are twenty or more of them in the course of the year, and Holy Week is a continuous seven of them at once. They could not be endured in any ac-

tive northern country, and Mother Church seems to leave them out of the calendar in her dealings with the irreverent and money-getting Yankee. Everybody stops work. All the laboring classes are religious then. You must wait for your shoes, your coat, and your washing until a working-day comes again. All this time Sunday counts for nothing. There is, indeed, a little more activity and frolic than on other days. Even during the sadness of Lent, Sunday is counted out, and everybody may dance, sing, eat meat, trade horses, and fight cocks with a clear conscience. There is no Sunday in the year, and Good-Friday is the nearest approach to one. The Cuban lady sews and darns on Sunday with especial industry, if ever she does.

With the numerous feast-days comes the procession. There is a mania for processions, and no end to them in point of numbers and kind. I do not know what they are good for. They are not pretty, or solemn, or of pecuniary benefit, or aids to holiness, and remain in my mind unclassified, save that I am disposed to include them under the general heading of mummery. There is a long one in May, for the especial honor of the Virgin, in which the ladies take part. Such is the theory. But the "ladies" are usually a shade darker than is fashionable. There are other processions in which only gentlemen—the military especially—march. Then you may see the Virgin, escorted by soldiers and a band, pass by, while the Dons come after, clad in their best clothes, each carrying a candle, and each doing his best to keep the wax from falling on his best coat.

On Good-Friday the religious season and the processions reach their culmination together, and thereafter decline. From ten o'clock on Thursday until the same hour on

Saturday, is a period of solemn and ostentatious mourning. Carriages and horsemen are suppressed by law. The streets are nearly deserted and the shops are closed, except that you can enter by the back door, and everybody who has any idea of doing the correct thing is attired in solemn black. All the day of Friday, you are distressed by a peculiar hammering sound, a noise as of continuous knocking. The devout are engaged in pounding upon boards and boxes with sticks, as an expression of grief. All the neighborhood is at it, and they keep you awake until midnight with the performance. But the church bells are not rung, which may be regarded as some compensation. About eight o'clock in the evening the grand display begins, and I can easily see how, to these people, it is a most impressive scene.

First in the procession comes a youth carrying a wooden box containing a big stone, and this he shakes and rattles vigorously until he is tired out, when another takes his place. Then comes Pilate, a tall negro in a tail coat and cocked hat, the only emblem of his distinguished nationality being a Roman sword, worn as Pilate never wore his. After him comes Judas, carrying a ten-foot pole, streaked red and white, precisely like a barber's emblem, and on the top of it a conical box containing the thirty pieces of silver. Judas' mode of progress is very peculiar, and to me quite unaccountable. He takes one long, stiff-legged stride, then he brings the other foot up at right angles with the first, and at the same moment strikes the ground vigorously with the end of his pole, making the aforesaid silver pieces rattle and dance as a warning to all men against the currency of the fathers. Then come the bearers of the cross, a toy cross, with the nails, the hammer, and all the horrible paraphernalia of

the mighty tragedy that was the turning-point in the destiny of mankind.

After these is borne the figure of the Victim, dead and pale, upon a bier beneath a purple canopy, and surrounded by scores of candles. A priest walks before, chanting in lugubrious tones the service for the dead, and a band comes after, playing a dirge. The multitude line the streets or follow the procession, carrying innumerable candles.

The Virgin cannot be left out of any religious ceremony, and presently she also appears. She stands gazing upward, sad and tearful, her waxen hand upon her heart. She seems, indeed, to have more followers than the dead Christ. She is accompanied by "that other Mary," equally sorrowful. This is the only instance in the Romanist ceremonial in which the Queen of Heaven appears otherwise than decked with roses, and smiling.

You look after the pageant when it has passed, and see the thousand candles gleam through dust and distance, and it seems tawdry and childish. The impression it makes is fleeting. It is no more than as if a regiment of the line had passed. The passion of the Son of Man is not to be illustrated by a torchlight procession. I have seen a deeper effect produced by the common service of a little church in the far frontier of our country, aided only by the homeliest surroundings and the home-brewed eloquence of a circuit-preacher who, inspired by his theme, knew how to talk of Calvary and its victim. The parades of Mother Church, with all their images and candles, and the realistic display of the instruments of judgment and crucifixion, are in vain.

It seems to me, after having seen it often, that the Church procession is a thing out of date. Savages who

would believe, as the Church desires that all should, in the actual sacredness of the things carried about, and who would not be required to regard them as emblems only, might be strongly impressed. The Church is the most successful of missionaries, but she fails largely among highly educated and, therefore, sceptical people, who are disposed to see the difference between a spectacular display and an abstract truth. The Church does insist that *things* are holy, that water may be blessed, that forms are potent. She has relics enough to save all mankind. But in these days many a Cuban negro understands that the spectacle is wax and wood, and that in the matter of display the Church cannot compete with the theatre.

The large number of priests in a single ecclesiastical jurisdiction is astonishing. They seem to have the same monkish disposition to congregate they had in early times. They live in the Church and by the Church. They are, as they assert, married to the Church. They wear everywhere the garments that proclaim them. But they are not particularly ascetic, or else asceticism agrees wonderfully well with their systems. They do not seem to be men of fasts and vigils. They can be seen at any time, when they are off duty, in the barracks they occupy in the rear of the church, with their robes tucked about their knees, their chairs tilted backward, smoking and gossiping like other good fellows. They tell unholy stories, too, and laugh as men may laugh who have an assurance of a life situation, plenty to eat, and genteel clothes of a specific kind.

But I cannot see how any man, with a man's feelings, can consent to wear all his life a priest's hat. It is some three feet wide, with the brims rolled up at the sides like a scroll. All the rest one might agree and consent to, in-

cluding the shorn spot on the crown, the size of a dollar.

There is no doubt that the Church has a large portion of the community pretty well scared all the time. She begins at the beginning, and sends the infant into the world with a ceremony and accompanying documents without which it is impossible at any time thereafter to prove legitimacy. She afterward solemnizes a marriage for him, which no other has the power to do, with accompanying documents, and by a ceremonial which lasts an hour, with the bride, groom, and whole party on their knees, each with a candle in his hand. Every thing is absolutely necessary, and every thing costs something. There seems also to exist within her scope the power to do things which she herself forbids. A marriage forbidden by her rules may be nevertheless performed if the parties can offer inducements to that end. The laws forbid anybody to be interred in holy ground unless the deceased was a son of the Church. Yet it can be done for an ounce, more or less. The priest in Cuba does not seem to regard the brethren in the United States as being any better than they ought to be, and thinks the Spouse of Christ there somewhat demoralized. This a priest once told me, and added that the difficulty consisted in the Church not being a part of the government. He evidently thought it might be, as easily as not. This man, a Spaniard, had under his shovel-hat no more idea of the nature of said government, or the conditions under which his or any other Church exists there, than he had of domestic felicity.

Dying is quite a serious business anywhere, but it becomes doubly so when a son of the Church comes to his end. I have often seen passing by, first, a man ringing a bell, second, two youths carrying candles, third, a street

cab containing two priests, and, last, a rabble of small boys following from curiosity and vague horror. The rule is that he who hears the bell shall kneel in the street, though a compromise is usually effected by taking off the hat. These priests are on their way to shrive a dying man, and carry with them the host,—the veritable body of Christ! They go by one street, and return by another. They must ride and not walk, and it is presumable that if the person dies before they reach the house it were better that he had never been born.

Yet, strangely enough, I have never seen a priest at a funeral, though it is the fashion for the attending physician to punctiliously attend. Funerals are remarkable pageants, and Cuba can boast the most hideous hearses in the world. It is huge, tawdry, dingy, an old catafalque of ancient times, the thought of which must add terror and gloom to the parting hour. The attendants are negroes, clad in cocked hats and coats of the "claw-hammer" variety, made to fit anybody. The whole apparatus seems to have been used a thousand times. At a funeral everybody begins to smoke as soon as they get into the street. The bearers smoke as they walk beside the hearse, and the negro smokes who is driving the catafalque. My advice to everybody has always been, "Don't die in Cuba," and everybody has always answered that they would not if they could help it. To close what I have to say in connection with the funerals of the faithful at the cemetery, I have seen the coffin broken with an axe, and the clothing of the body ripped and slashed with a knife, preparatory to its deposition in the tomb. The dead are sometimes robbed for the coffin and clothing, and it was a thing once considered indispensable to so mutilate both as to render them valueless. I say it *was*

so considered. I have my personal opinion as to the existing necessity of the custom, but as the statement may seem rather strong, I am willing to state only what I have myself seen, with the hope that by this time grave-yard-employés have reformed.

Strange notices sometimes appear in the Cuban newspapers in the form of advertisements. One very common one reads that on such a date, the —th anniversary of the death of Señor Don Fulano de Tal, all those who shall appear at the parish church and pray for his soul, shall be paid the just and full sum of two dollars each. It plainly appears from this, that the more money and other good things a man has been possessed of in this life, the better his chances are to curtail his punishment in the next, which is hardly fair. It would also seem that the Power who hears and answers prayer, is as much affected by the petition made for the sake of earning two dollars, as by the prayer of faith, hope, or penitence. I am not discussing doctrines; these are merely the inferences of one of the wicked.

At certain seasons of the year a notice, like Luther's theses pasted upon the church door, tells the wayfaring sinner that he who shall say so many *Paters*, so many *Ave Marias*, etc., for so many days, shall have absolution for sixty days. By order of his Excellency, the Most Reverend Bishop of Havana.

I have said there was no Sunday, and that the only day at all like it was Good Friday. If the idea gathered from this should be that Mother Church is an intentional teacher of Sabbath-breaking, the inference would be a mistaken one. Such is, and has always been, the Sunday of Catholic countries. The idea that there is any harm in it, does not occur to any one. Go to mass in the

morning, and you may do what you like afterward. Sunday is the reception day, the dinner-day, the day for parades and reviews. Sunday evening is the gayest at the theatre and the Plaza. The bull-fight is in full career, the cock-pit crowded, and no soul doing any harm. Any attempt to deprive the laboring class of their holiday, would produce riot and disorder.

Such, in some of its features, is the Mother Church in Cuba. It is not such as ours, and either takes its character from the people among whom it thrives, or else has given the people their remarkable character. She has had and still has her vast influence, notwithstanding that the women only, as a rule, are faithful. A great part of the wit, the talent for ribaldry of the Spanish mind, is directed against the Church. Even in a country where freedom of speech and of the press is scarcely known, the shop-windows are hung with pictures that broadly burlesque the shovel hat, the monastic abstemiousness, the vow of chastity, and the confessional. Yet the great organization retains her peculiar power. Protestantism is in its organization weak, as compared with this most ancient and most cunningly devised of human institutions. Through all, she remains unimpaired, unchanged, mighty. Not by virtue of the truth that is in her, but by mystery, majesty, the element of fear, and the assumption of truth without reason, argument, or denial. She represents a power beyond human judgment, and holds the keys of Heaven.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT WE EAT.

THE Doña Vicenta lives beside the highway, and is the mistress of a lonesome bodega, One of her chief means of livelihood is the manufacture of *butifarras*, which she sells in the neighboring town. She is a dumpy, bright-eyed little Catalan, many times a wife and widow, cleanly, talkative, and not likely to starve. She has a great deal of custom among charcoal and fodder carriers, cartmen, and passing soldiers, and deals out her little glasses of *aguardiente* with many a blandishment and smile.

As I passed her little hostelry in frequent journeyings, I one day observed a sick ox beside the road. He was down; he could no longer raise his head; he was beyond medicine or fodder. He had an ulcerated sore neck, his eyes were glassy, and each protruding bone and rib was visible under his stretched skin. He was a lost ox.

The following morning when I passed by, the brute was dead. As several persons were busy about the remains, including the Doña herself, I accosted one of them. "Muchacho," I said, "you are going to eat that ox?" The varlet grinned. "Why not?" said he, "he didn't die,—we killed him this morning."

I tell this little story, absolutely true in all its details, to illustrate the fact that in Cuba you do not always

know just what you are eating by the name of the dish. Along the same road beside which the ox died, I have seen hundreds of cattle going to the slaughter-house. Every ox so lame, so sore-necked, so lean as to be absolutely useless for any other purpose, was on his way to the market, and was next day eaten. Every cow, a great-great-grandmother of her kind, long since calfless, toothless, and milkless, was on her way to the same fate. I long ago paid a visit to the shambles and discovered that the question in regard to beef-kine was not, is the animal fat enough? but, is he lean, sick, vicious, useless enough? I had long since ceased to eat beef. The people believed I had a *promesa*,—a vow registered with the Virgin,—and could see no other reason. *They* don't mind such little things, such American caprices about the value of fat ribs and good health in a beef-ox.

The reason why this is so is, that Cuba, at least all civilized Cuba, is a miserable cattle country. An ox is valuable and expensive. There are no imported breeds, and if there were, for four or five months of the year there is nothing for him to eat. He is valuable, and almost exclusively used as a draught animal in town and country. When he is good for nothing else, and would die anyhow, then they eat him.

If he was slaughtered ever so fat it would make but little difference. The vender of meat has a quarter on a hook, and slices it down to suit the weight his customer requires. He cuts other pieces endways, sideways, in long and ragged strips, or in bloody chunks, just as it happens. The primest piece you can find at the hotel is the large muscle out of the thigh, cooked so, brought to the table, and cut crosswise into small

round chips. This is "ros-bif." There is no juice, fat, or tenderness. It is just the same as fried heel-taps.

This deficiency in beef, for which, after all, there is as large and constant a demand as in any country, is largely supplied by the substance called *tassajo* (Eng., tess-*ah*-ho). This is the dried cow of South America. It seems that in those prolific regions south of the equator, the animal is killed, the hide and head taken off, the bones extracted, and the flesh, in huge slabs, dried upon the sand. Cuba is the great market for this product. You can smell a *tassajo* warehouse three blocks. But, well-cooked, it is pretty good. The animal was not sick, and once in a while you encounter a a little fat in it. Ships come loaded with it. It is handled like leather, and flung around loose in sides and backs and slabs. It is not cheap, neither. At this writing it is worth more per pound than American beef is in England.

This dish you encounter on every table, at every meal, and, accompanying it, another staple called *Bacalao* (Eng., bac-al-*ah*-o). This last is merely dried codfish, and the great market for it also is Cuba. I beg leave to correct the popular opinion that it is because it is a Catholic country. If there are those in Cuba who abstain from meat during Lent, or even Holy Week, I have not met them. It is because they are used to it, and like it, and eat it at all times. A meal never is complete without it. It is scarcely considered fish, for the bountiful supply of the latter, yielded by all the bays and inlets of the coast, does not affect its consumption. The modes of its preparation for the table are in some cases similar to our own, and in some a great deal better. They are infinite in variety, dry, wet, piquant, taste-

less, hard, soft. If any disease should appear among the codfish, the calamity would be first felt in Cuba.

As I recall the Cuban table, I am always reminded of the error that a tropical country is necessarily a bountiful one. When you sit down to a meal you are surprised that all the essentials are of foreign production. An absolute necessity is rice. As the American consumes potatoes, so do these consume this tasteless dish. At a Christmas-eve supper, eaten at twelve o'clock at night, the company will regard but indifferently the sliced ham, boned turkey, and cold confections, if the huge dish of boiled rice is not there to accompany them. If you see a gentleman with a lunch on a railway train, you will be amused to observe that it consists mainly of cold rice,—insipid and unpalatable in the last degree to one not accustomed to such gastronomy, and quite as clammy as cold boiled potatoes.

All this, with the exception of the beef such as Doña Vicenta made sausages of, is of foreign production exclusively, and to the list bread is yet to be added. The tropical bread deserves an entire and separate chapter to do it justice. Notwithstanding the inevitable rice, it is, among the better classes here as everywhere, the staff of life. I warn the intending visitor to these realms that it is the thing he will find at first most objectionable. He can get it only in one unvarying form,—a little muffin of oblong shape, dry, and so hard that it requires both hands to crack it. To be good it must be mainly crust. It is always cold and always stale. The batter-cake, the warm roll, the biscuit, are all unknown. The vast variety of the products of the flour of wheat known among us, were never heard of here. It goes hard with the beginner, goes easier after a while, and finally becomes his choice.

Soup is always at the Cuban dinner-table; thick stuff that must be eaten rather than taken as a liquid. Nine times in ten it is what they call *fideos*, being a slushy mess of stewed vermicelli, without taste or flavor; a dish and not an appetizer. The word *soup*, as understood elsewhere, has no application in Cuba. It is rather in the form of a *mess*.

It is easier to catalogue the Cuban larder by stating what they have not, and never heard of, than by stating categorically what they have. It is a country without small fruits, without apples, peaches, pears, any of the berries. "Pies" are greasily made of meat, with a crust half an inch thick. Butter, and even the common product of milk which we call cream, is unknown. They get a dim and inadequate idea of some of these things by importations. They will eat butter that is beyond hope and call it good, and believe that canned peaches and strawberries have the genuine flavor of the tree. Sometimes a very small quantity of milk-butter is made in the country. It is white and thin and soft. As a consequence, the Cuban lady refuses to believe that naturally yellow butter is made anywhere—it is, it must be, deleteriously colored.

After the same manner, this lady has acquired the idea that any piece of beef with a bone in it is, and must be, not a steak, but "ros-bif." These notions, and such as these, go to make up the sum of life's small difficulties in a Cuban restaurant.

I have frequently heard, and once believed, that there was a very limited consumption of meat, and especially of pork, in warm countries. I was surprised to find that Cubans were so carnivorous as to excel even Americans both as to quantity and frequency. They take it

roasted, stewed, fricasseed, deviled, and boiled, and pig holds the place of honor. Of the roast variety of that delicious and much-abused dish I was ever fond, but never met with a Cuban lady who could not easily vanquish me in eating pig upon festive occasions. She will cause a pile of bones to grow up beside her plate with a facility only equalled by an American girl with chicken at a Sunday-school picnic.

This, notwithstanding the fact that the Cuban porker is a queer-looking animal, rather built for running than to be eaten. When he is fattest he is gaunt, long of visage, sorrowful, thin-legged, the farthest possible remove from a marketable pig. He is carried on horses, tied by the leg and driven, cried and crying through the streets on men's backs, tethered to a stake, and sparingly fed, and yet is the darling animal of the populace. Half the time he goes wandering about the country-house, his triangular visage inserted into every opening, his useful nose in contact with every thing that is not his, and bringing fleas to be added to the countless thousands already domesticated in the household. But the Cuban is patient of the flea, having long since discovered that he cannot be induced to desist by *carambas*, or even naughtier words.

After its peculiar style, the Cuban table ought to be the most plentiful in the world. It often is so to the extent of fifteen or twenty dishes for breakfast. Of these, rice, bacalao, and tessajo, are invariably the principal and indispensable. Then there is sometimes a little fresh beef, dear and bad as it is, and, at especial times, roast pig, a dish to be remembered. Eggs appear constantly, generally hard-boiled. The Cuban hen has no cold weather to afford her an excuse for restraining herself in her useful mission, and keeps steadily on in her laying of

small eggs with pale yolks. Sometimes there is an extraordinary dish of green corn, half-filled, and quite hard. It seems difficult to catch this succulent dish at the right stage for cooking. I have always maintained there was something wrong about Cuban corn, green or ripe. They, however, excel us in one aspect of the question, for they call it by its name—*maiz*.

There is a dish, which is the only one in the long category of Cuban dainties that I have never tasted. It is called "anjiaca" (ang-he-ac-ah), and is a green-looking, watery compound of all the vegetables that grow, boiled together. This is the mixture so loudly extolled by the Cubanized American, and is served in vast quantity in a huge dish. It is amusing to see the Cuban lady in delicate health eat of this preparation on account of its delicacy and wholesomeness.

The root crop is truly varied and extensive. The yam grows as large as a man's arm, and loses in taste what it gains in size. It is much better degenerated as it is with us into the "sweet" potato. There is a large assortment never enumerated by me, that does not usually appear upon the table of towns-people, and is indispensable to the countryman upon whose board bread is never seen. They are the necessaries of his daily life, and, accustomed to them from early infancy, he has no taste or desire for any thing else. "Boniato" was the food of the Cuban insurgents. Growing all the year and found in every field, it was a substitute for bread, beans, and potatoes. That unfortunate rodent, the *jutea*, was their meat whenever found. The two together are reported to have constituted the revolutionary commissary department.

Eating in Cuba occupies a more prominent place in each day's program than it does with us. Breakfast does

not come until ten or eleven o'clock, the later the better. Dinner is the end of the day, occupies two hours, and is due at five to six. It is a family good time, and nobody is in haste. Toward the end of it the red wine begins to circulate, and the cigar is lighted. The ladies stay, and either the Cuban female is less sensitive to the fumes of smoke than others, or the large open rooms render it less offensive. In any case, it is here as elsewhere the weed that is the emblem of sociability and peace. The meals of the family are pictures of social life that would be charming in any country. The members of the household indulge in argument, criticism, gossip, laughter, and endless small talk. It is the only place where you may see a reserved people as they really are.

Finally comes the indispensable cup of coffee,—such coffee as I believe is unknown elsewhere,—brewed generally by some member of the family, served in a little cup, and taken by sips and spoonfuls. I do not know the secret of its deliciousness. It seems to be in taste and aroma the very essence of the Arabian berry. An examination of the kind used discloses the fact that it is a small, dark-green berry, looking very much like what we call second-class Rio.

The lateness of the breakfast has brought about the commendable habit of doing most of the work of the day before that meal. But early rising is not, as I have so often heard, the preëminent virtue of Southern people. After sunrise is considered quite early enough. The first thing, then, is the cup of coffee, and equally necessary the long and strong cigar. Then the Cuban proceeds to occupy himself, if he is ever occupied. For three hours there is great activity. At ten there is a sudden quietness. The universal and ubiquitous street cab ceases its rumb-

ling. The sellers of fruit, charcoal, and lottery-tickets at last give the nerves a needed period of rest. Through every open window may be seen, often embowered in vines and flowers, the long breakfast-tables and gathered families. Near twelve o'clock the bustle begins again, subdued and more quiet now on account of the heat, but still a movement. The day has begun again its tyranny of heat and lassitude, and every thing drags until before breakfast again.

But where is the "siesta,"—the much talked of afternoon snooze? Candor compels me to state that I never knew an instance of it, and, as a custom at least, it does not exist in Cuba. What there is of it, comes after dinner. As remarked elsewhere, there are no hearths and fires, no domestic circle. Reading is too active an employment to be engaged in generally except before breakfast, and the "evening lamp" is perhaps considered as too enticing to the universal mosquito. I have been amused at the universal prevalence of drowsiness when the dinner festivities are once over. As one passes along the street, rows of nodding people are seen through every window. They even sit under the trees on the plaza and sleep. The community is in a somnolent state until about ten P.M., when one begins to hear a general banging of big front doors, and may take it for granted that it has gone to bed in earnest.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ISLAND IDEAS.

IT has often been said, and is probably true, that the thoughts of an islander differ in size and character from those of people who inhabit regions of wider extent. Evidences of this appear daily to one who has gone from the United States to Cuba, and thoughts and language present themselves to him in social intercourse and daily association that sometimes cause him to wonder, sometimes to smile.

This chapter, as a study of island ideas, the reader will find rather a statement of disconnected facts than a continuous narrative.

Those who will read these pages have been accustomed to life in a land an idea of whose vast territory, great wealth, and increasing power, has of late years dawned upon the world at large like a revelation. People speak now of the United States with a look and tone of which they are not conscious, but which are indicative of the feeling of the intelligent foreigner toward the land whose vastness is but thinly occupied by fifty millions of people, whose bread is eaten in all lands, and whose manufactures are extending themselves for the common uses of mankind. This country, great, peaceful, and republican, is strongest in the moral force whose influence is felt everywhere on the side of law,

order, and liberty. She has her friends and foes, those who hate, and those in whose dreams she stands as the ideal land, foremost and happiest of the earth. But no man speaks ill of her, save sometimes the Cuban and his self-sufficient relative the Spaniard. To these it seems that the destiny of the Saxon is likely to be swayed by a weight hanging heavily upon her uttermost border,—a weight six hundred miles long by about forty wide.

For the island idea is that Cuba is a continent, perhaps not literally, but in effect. Havana *and* New York are capitals of the world. They are reluctantly willing to divide the honors. A certain inner consciousness of the Cuban islander makes him believe that only adverse circumstances, such as want of money or want of knowledge, prevents every man from emigrating to Cuba. The idea of cold is terrible to him, and he fancies it must be so to every human. It is a climatic egotism especially islandic in form. He does not say so, but nevertheless believes, that in climate, soil, intelligence, wealth, and *size* his country leads the van.

After one is satisfied with the occupation of seeing all there is to see, the question arises, "What and how do these people think upon ordinary topics?" It is a species of knowledge not easily obtained. Modes of thought must be inferred from a thousand acts, a thousand speaking silences, and from daily converse with many persons. The good, the bad, and the indifferent, one finds to be merely relative terms. Abstract justice and right differ so widely in their application that they finally seem to be merely matters of habit and education, and it would seem there is no such thing as absolute truth.

I made an attempt at an early day to find out if the

Cuban was as religious as he seemed. For appearances indicate that he is intensely so. There is but one Church and one form of worship. Priests and persons professionally connected with the Church and its forms, were plentifully besprinkled everywhere. The bells were always ringing, processions always marching, and church spires appeared above the irregular line of roofs on every hand. I encountered a number of persons named Jesus, and perceived a passion for saints and saintship even in the signs and advertisements. Hotels, steamboats, sugar-plantations, streets, roads, bridges, hospitals, regiments, corrals, brick-yards, quarries, jails, are all named after some saint, or some virtue, or some religious idea. The Trinity (La Trinidad) figures everywhere, the commonest and most tiresome of designations, as its excessive commonness misleads. So great is the desire not to miss an opportunity to name streets after some canonized being, that they sometimes appear in duplicate, or oftener, in the same town, and must have the title supplemented by adding "of the mercies," or, "of the sorrows," or, "of" something else, so that the wayfarer may not be misled. "The Conception" is a favorite designation for any thing from an estate to a fishing-smack. "The Nativity" goes for any thing down to a tobacco-shop. Charity, Hope, Holy Faith, Penitence, Compassion, The Sacrament, appear everywhere in variety endless and confusing. There is a street, "Obrapia,"—Pious Work Street.

Religious ingenuity has been well nigh exhausted in the fit naming of innumerable sugar-plantations. In regard to these the saints have no rest. Nearly all are "San" or "Santa" something, and those that are not are called by names as amusing as the others are religious, as Peace,

Hope, Glory, Central China, etc. Schools invariably are designated by a name implying sacredness, being usually called after a female saint, if a girls' school, and after a male, if a boys', and the day of the year set apart for this especial holiness is observed as a holiday.

Every girl is named Maria. It is Maria Teresa, Maria Dolores, Maria Mercedes, Maria any thing, but always Mary. If there be no opportunity to have a Mary in the family otherwise, a boy is so named. José Maria is one of the commonest of these masculine-feminine apellations; Salvador (Saviour), Manuel (Emanuel), and others of similar character are also usual as the names of boys. It seems impossible to get far away from something religiously suggestive, for, wander where one will amid the great number of common names, one finds the greater portion of them to belong to a canonized person of some age of the Church.

It remains to add, that notwithstanding all these *prima facie* evidences of religious feeling, it is not a religious people. The idea does not grow out of zeal or devotion, but rather out of a habitually careless use of the names of things sacred. Reverence is perfunctory,—a matter of form rather than an actual feeling. Ladies in good society will not say *caramba!* but ejaculate "*Dios mio!*" "*Jesus!*" "*Ave Maria Purissima!*" The reader may imagine how strangely such expressions would sound from the lips of a lady in the United States, at her own table, for instance. To these it is not even irreverent. It is, by the habitual mode of thought in Cuba, impossible to be profane. *Por Dios!* is upon the lips of little children from the time they begin to lisp. Translated into English, it is one of the most odious adjurations of the vulgar. Religion is a system of ceremonies rather

than of beliefs. They have familiarized the Catholic mind with the names of sacred things, with the offices and functions and forms, while the Puritan has been trained to believe that religion is a thing of the mind, of understanding, of feeling.

Another island idea is that things, localities, persons, may be sacred of themselves. The Church edifice is holy. Blessed water, the vestments of priests, the vessels of ceremony, images, relics,—all are holy. *Campo Santo*, the resting-place of the bodies of those who died Catholics, is holy ground. It is useless to state that these are island ideas exclusively, as they are undoubtedly common to all Catholic countries, but it has seemed to me that there is no other region where they have obtained so great a hold upon the general mind.

I have taken the liberty, in a former chapter, of alluding to the fashions in dress prevailing in the cities of Cuba. Strange as they sometimes are, they do not originate on the island. They are rather the fashions of others copied to the extent of burlesque. The natural dandyism of the native islander keeps him from abating an inch or a jot from what he imagines to be *la moda*. When the use of false hair became general in France and the United States, or rather, a year or two after it became so, the vast piles of jute upon the heads of Cuban ladies became monumental. The coiffure was of the proportions of a good-sized basket, and made the wearer appear as though she was carrying, with toil and patience, a burden of fifty pounds upon the back of her head.

I was not on the island in the days of hoops, but the "pull-back" came in last year. It ceased then to be the custom of ladies to sit down. Half a foot or so was an immense stride. A fashion no more unbecoming in itself

than a thousand others have been, degenerated into a binding of the lower limbs together, and a swathing of the person in fetters of cloth. Only the universal good taste of women who understand the art of dressing as well as any in the world, saves them from French extremes that would burlesque the name of taste, and scandalize beauty.

Men go further. It is rare to find a masculine under fifty with sense or courage enough to refuse to be made a spectacle of by his tailor. Queer hats, remarkable shirts, strange boots, fill the streets with grotesque figures. With these things the population is exceedingly contented. No sober second thought persuades them that they are not appearing precisely as is required. The ignorant foreigner's smile, if seen, is regarded as an evidence of his own inaptitude or ignorance. The islander believes he is right, in this as in all things. The narowness of his horizon affects him. He is confident, and even criticises the garb and demeanor fresh from Chestnut Street and Broadway.

There is no feature of provincialism more strangely marked than the Cuban's dividing line between himself and the foreigner. There is a shade of reproach in the very name, and a half distrust lurks in the demeanor of all toward the unfortunate outside barbarian. An American goes among his acquaintances under the title generally of "*Esa Americano*," or "*El Americano*." The German is designated as "*Aquel Aleman*," and so on through all kindreds and tongues, The islander finds it almost impossible to speak of a foreigner without mentioning the fact that he *is* a foreigner, and it is not in his bones to like him.

I do not understand the reason or motive of the uni-

versal coherence of islander to islander. No Cuban was ever the real friend of any but a Cuban. The Spaniard, his relative, is far outside the pale. The American, from whom he has more to expect than from any other, is "*un de los brutos Americanos*,"—a man who is barbarous, ignorant, and a foreigner. The German and Englishman fare no better, and the Spaniard worst of all. The islander desires no annexation, no connection with any stronger power, no change, no influence from outside. Where he imbibed the idea that he is a nation, containing within himself all the facts of greatness, I know not. When at last the boon of independence and the opportunity for self-government come to him, I fear he will find it a harder task to organize his policy, lay the foundations of national credit, create a statute-book, and insure to every man the justice he dreams of, than he now knows.

I sometimes doubt if there is any such thing as conservatism—that disposition to leave unchanged systems that have been tried for which the Englishman is distinguished—existing in the United States. It is not an acquired quality. It goes by blood and race. It means a refusal to experiment, and, in a great degree, a refusal to learn. But we may borrow of the Cuban. There is no way in which you can bore, torment, and distress him more than by trying to teach him a new way to an old thing, or to convince him that something is better than he has known. It gives him infinite pain to be required to acquire a new idea. He will buy and use machinery, after a long time, and when finally convinced that it is impossible to do without it. But his slavery to custom is nearly absolute and abject. It would be impossible, in the course of half a century of steady endeavor, to

change the hour of dining, or the preparation of a single dish he likes. The cooking-stove he declares to be impossible, because it would give the cook "spasms." I do not understand how, or why, but it is what he says and believes. Yet it requires from five o'clock in the morning until ten of the forenoon to prepare the family breakfast, and all the rest of the day to get the dinner, and three or four able-bodied persons to do it. For many years he would not touch iced-water, or any other thing that was not tepid. He insists upon sawing his boards backward, and cutting his wood with a mediæval axe. A wheel-barrow is his aversion, and he is content with one tenth of the result of a hard day's work, if only he can be allowed to painfully carry dirt in a little box. The antique shapes of his hardware would give his hinges, latches, keys, and locks a place in a museum. It is very lately that he acquired the use of the American broom in place of a bunch of scrub. Roast beef, beefsteak, and all bovine preparations he speaks of familiarly, without any idea of what they actually are. Indian meal bread he prepares for dessert. Samp, hominy, oatmeal, cracked wheat, he will have none of.

His diseases are, he believes, produced by unique causes. He must, on pain of death, eat certain things only at certain times; he cannot tell why, but holds to his views with childlike faith.

His horse equipments are as ancient as Spanish *caballero* tradition and fashion can make them. He rides a huge saddle with holsters at the sides for pistols, and uses a bridle heavy with metal and terrible with jaw-breaking arrangements, for the management of a steed that generally requires considerable persuasion.

He insists upon selling chocolate at a silk-store, in

buying his brooms at a shoe-shop, and his ready-made clothing at a jewellery establishment. He uses only charcoal, because it is the custom, and costs more, and because there is no chimney to carry away the smoke of any other species of fuel. His wife and daughter refuse to use rain-water for bathing, and insist upon its uselessness for cleaning purposes. So great is his fondness for rice that he carries it with him on his journeys. He smokes three or four times during the progress of a meal, and takes coffee from six to twenty times a day.

His ailments are frequent and his doses drastic and innumerable. Cuba is a blissful region for doctors and druggists. He has no ideas of hygiene as a science, cares nought for smells, is oblivious of drainage. He closes tight all the openings of his bedchamber, and avoids a draught as he would poison. He complains of cold with the mercury at 75°, and bundles and wraps in the temperature of June. He is full of care about the little things of life, and full of gossip about the small torments of others.

These, categorically, are some of the symptoms of the manner of thought that governs the life of our island neighbor. He can give no reasons save that so and so is "the custom of the country," the Latin's most potent law. The end of it all is, that there is no new thing. The spirit of inquiry is dead. Changes do not come until the old way has died the natural death of an useless or inadequate thing. I cannot convey to the reader any idea of the effect upon the man and his surroundings, of this dead and changeless conservatism. You know, every hour of your association with him, that he is religiously believing and practising obsolete "isms" and mouldy conceits, the falsity of which ought to have been discovered

a century ago. I shall never understand how it is that practical demonstration will not convince him that a man may shave while suffering with a cold and not die, or that a glass of water after coffee does not kill, or that the free passage of air in a chamber does not produce his dreaded "spasm."

It follows that there are no Cuban inventions. There is no patent-office in Cuba, or need of any, or any thing approaching it in the most distant manner. The islander does not understand a machine, and seems incapable of catching the idea. His plow that was, and often still is, a sharpened stick, has been changed here and there for something of iron and a little less clumsy, made at Pittsburg. Yet in deference to his peculiar prejudices, and to induce him to buy it, the "beam" is long enough to reach the yoke of his oxen's necks, instead of the usual short beam and chain. A genius from Yankeedom has been building wind-mills for the pumping of water, and it was as much a revelation as the steam-engine must have been to the original Creole, as motive power for a sugar-mill.

There is a time coming, in which these things must change, or the Cuban must go to the wall, and the negro take his place. The rich little region cannot be sleeping forever beside her dominant neighbor, uninfluenced by the strong life that overflows its boundaries like a flood. Time will come when he must imbibe the idea of a free school and a free church, a jury system, Habeas Corpus, and trial by law. Whether he will or no, he must take in the idea of at least one railway through his island from end to end, mail-service in postal cars, an express company, letter-boxes upon lamp-posts, postal cars, and three-cent postage. He will be called

upon to grow accustomed to a telegraph system in which the operator shall read by sound his instrument, and he can send his messages without the intervention of a government official. By force of circumstances he will be required some time to change his ancient customs, and arise betimes and stir up the energies of his tailor, his shoemaker, and his wash-woman, and betake himself to the depot without the formal grandeur of a bearer for his grip-sack. I dare hardly prophesy so far, but hope there will come a day when his daughter may walk the street unattended by a brigade, and his wife may go her ways among the shops and leave the negroes to their occupations at home.

For, during six years' residence I perceived a slight change, an almost imperceptible widening of ideas. The telephone began to be spoken of as having begun its mysterious whisperings at the capital, and the American bicycle perambulated in retired streets. There was awakening a new spirit of inquiry in regard to such conveniences as office-desks, plated ware, cutlery, and calendar clocks. During that time the city postmaster improved his office conveniences by ordering from New York a set of lock boxes, and selling them at twenty-one dollars each. Strangest of all, a hat and feather could be seen at long intervals upon ladies' heads, and Yankee calico became common for dresses. The last time I received a receipt for my baggage and paid the usual fee therefor, I was told by the agent that his company contemplated the use, at an early day, of the American system of brass "check-es." The celebrated woven wire mattress was exposed for sale in hardware stores, and a bridge was built across the creek called Yumuri, of iron arches made at Paterson. It is true they were four years at it, and

made what could readily have been contracted at forty thousand dollars, cost about two hundred thousand.

By and by they will cease to contract molasses by the keg, for the reason that it was some thirty or forty years ago brought to market in kegs on the backs of pack-mules, and sell it by the hogshead as it is. Sugar may also go by the pound instead of by the arroba, and save the trouble of an extra problem in division. Already the dollar is a coin, and the decimal system of money marches side by side with the *real*, *escudo*, *doubloon*, and *onza*, one being in bills and the other in gold. The volante is going out and the four-wheeled carriage coming in.

There are hopes of the final overthrow of some items of ancient conservatism, as is plain from the foregoing narrative. Evil times have fallen. Prosperity and easy wealth are things of the past. There is nothing that will so quickly change a system as its ceasing to "pay." It is very certain that almost every thing in Cuba *has* ceased to pay. A few people, principally women, have gone to work now who never worked before. Dandyism has begun to look "seedy." Costly houses are changing hands. Belles of fashion whom I knew five years ago, live now in by-streets, and their husbands have retired from the plaza and the café. The great effort of the planter is to borrow money to pay taxes, and the great industry the collection of the same. For the revenue is "farmed" to capitalists, and an army of collectors makes life a burden. Cuba is a sick man, of whose recovery there are doubts,—sick from war, misgovernment, slavery, extravagance, and the want of men of the middle classes who are humble enough to work and intelligent enough to govern. No man can live long in Cuba without carrying away with him some enduring memories of its people, which soften

as time passes. No man can do other than hope for its emancipation from Church, State, and Custom. But no reader of these pages can live to see such a result, even in the brightest, richest, and most hopeful of all Spanish American colonies.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE AMERICAN IN CUBA.

SO nearly at the end of a series of desultory sketches of the Latin as he is among his gods at home, it has occurred to me that the American in Cuba is too interesting a subject to be passed without his appropriate chapter. He commands upon alien shores his due share of attention from those of whom I have thus far written. He is a figure in the community as strange, sometimes as grotesque, as those with whom he mingles seem to him.

The relations of the American to the Spaniard are antipodal. It is plain that they will never be brought to think alike, and that they have separate worlds of desire, of endeavor, and of belief. As haste is the characteristic of one, so is slowness of the other. If the usual American does not see a thing in half a minute, the chances are he will never see it, though it is but fair to say that he usually does. The Cuban or Spaniard waits, deliberates, goes slow, ponders, and the opportunity usually goes by him. The ways of the American fill his Spanish friend with concealed astonishment. He never gesticulates. He will sit quietly and look calmly in the face of his interlocutor, growing angrier every moment, and never move until he means to break something. He sometimes commits the unusual offense

of carrying his hands in his breeches pockets. Sometimes his hat is observed to be perilously perched on the forward corner of his head. He walks at a gait destructive of personal dignity. He is often guilty of the atrocity of whistling the airs of his childhood in the street. He will not submit to custom, and makes an unseemly disturbance about the quality of his cocktail, his coffee, and his beef. His clothes fit him like the clothes of a soldier, and he is addicted to straw hats, thick-soled shoes, and a suicidal indifference to draughts of air and cold water. His demeanor indicates a bold indifference to public opinion, and a careless disregard of what the islanders may perhaps think of him and his ways. It must be confessed that he is somewhat exasperating. He is of a land where there are no princes, about which there are no traditions, and very little history. His country has no conquest in her record. She is free and great by chance, and has become so outside of all ancient rules and precedents. He lacks taste. His is not the land of song, and dance, and wine. The universal Yankee is a mechanic, a man interested only in machines. He cares no jot for art, for the music of the guitar, for stories of glory. He is as out of place among the Latins as a newly-painted frame-house would be. He hates papers and passports, the surveillance of the police, and the gracious permission of petty functionaries. He conveys the disagreeable impression of one who proposes to go where he pleases, and do very much as he likes. There is in his demeanor too much self-reliance. He is at no pains to conceal his contemptuous opinions of much that passes around him. He looks what he does not speak, and has the reputation of being a quietly dangerous person. If the cab-horse balks with him, he will seize his

belongings, and walk the remainder of the way. If he wants any little thing he will go and get it for himself. He disobeys police regulations in small things, and sometimes has come into actual collision with the guardians of the public peace. He hates the everlasting to-morrow, and believes in to-day; and to-morrow is the talisman of Cuba.

Such, in general outline, is the American as he appears to the Cuban and Spaniard. He has unconsciously impressed himself upon them as a person *outre*, lawless, uncultivated, ill-tempered, impolite, disregarding those things deemed absolutely essential by the majority of mankind—Spanish mankind. Even that typical American, General Grant, left behind him, after a visit that gave the rulers of Cuba a great deal of trouble, a vague impression not satisfactory. He was not suave enough, did not pay sufficient regard to detail, and went away evidently thinking of something else.

Thus have we gained for ourselves a reputation in the land. So far as the foreign idea of us is concerned, it is evident that we care as little about it as possible. The fault lies in the peculiar circumstances to which every American is born. We are natives of a region so vast that not one European in a hundred has any conception of it, and the Spaniard least of all. It is a country whose laws, language, religion, social customs, and dress, are the same from end to end. Her citizens have placed her in the foremost rank of modern greatness by means of the personal characteristics that are criticised abroad. The impatience, the want of attention to small things, the indifference to mere form, the contempt for mere ceremony, the disregard of every thing that does not "pay," the impatience under new and useless forms of legal restraint, the

especial restiveness under the demands of the "paternal" form of government, whose guardianship extends to the commonest duties and necessities of life,—all this is natural to the American, by no fault of his, and even with credit to himself and his training.

But there are differences between the American and those whom he visits that are not so easily enumerated. It is natural for our visiting brother to believe that if the foreigners do not all speak English they ought, and that they are much to blame for the delinquency. His inability to order his breakfast, to cause any person in the establishment to understand his commonest wants by frantic pantomime, or any other means, exasperates him. Nor does he find that foreign ideas of comfort are coincident with his own. It seems to him impossible to live amid such surroundings as are considered sumptuous, or to relish the tepid and tasteless dishes served to him as prince's food. For some unexplained reason he is prone to expect something better than he ever gets, or, at least, the appetizing feature of novelty, and is disgusted to find it as bad as possible, and tiresome after a day. So he becomes ill-natured, and believes, and too often says, that his landlord is an animal and his associates no better.

After a while he becomes in some measure accustomed to his disagreeable surroundings. He acquires a smattering of the language with three times the facility with which any foreigner, except the German, learns English, and becomes very much at home among those for whom in his heart he cherishes a feeling of mingled indifference and pity. He often improves a favorable opportunity of expressing with a strong accent his opinion of the country. He begins to astonish conservative na-

tives with innovations. His table-waiter is his first and last victim, whom he causes to lead a miserable life, but whose allegiance he still maintains by means of liberal fees. After a while comes a time when he is liked, and not liked. His courage, plainness, ingenuity, and activity are admired without any intention of imitating them. His evident determination to get what he wants, despite custom and precedent and the trouble it costs, is disliked exceedingly. To the tailor and the shoemaker, he becomes a marked man. Their astonishment is at first very great, at the encounter with a man who disregards fashions, despises prevailing styles, and establishes a school of cutting and fitting for himself, and will have no other.

The feminine American, when she finds herself upon these shining shores, fares worse. An idea that the cookery might be cleaner prevails in her mind. She finds it impossible to endure quietly the new code of female deportment of which she has become a subject, and desires to go where and when she will. She tries it once or twice, refusing to credit stories of the consequences, but afterward is willing to comply with the social code, and be quite miserable. But she persists longer than the male species in her endeavor to reform the country. She changes her hotel once a week, and finds each one worse than the other, and still insists that something can be found which does not exist. Finally, she retires into a state of quiet Saxon endurance, makes the best of her martyrdom, but still casts her eye in the direction of the kitchen and the cook, and chooses her dishes at the table with perspicuous intelligence.

The American who comes to Cuba to stay a week invariably departs in disgust. Very many who came "to

escape the cold," and make the tour of the island, leave by the same steamer, within a week, and without having gone away from Havana. That brilliant town seems to be considered entirely satisfactory and sufficient without further journeying. He who comes on business, and is obliged to make a virtue of necessity and content himself with what he finds, generally makes himself a reputation ere he departs. His fresh northern face, the cut of his clothes, his gait, and the noise he makes with his boots, mark him as the "Jankee" wherever he goes. It has seemed to me sometimes that only the queer American visits Cuba, it appearing to require a peculiar cast of character to enable a man to carry out so singular a caprice. Some of the strangest geniuses that the soil of the United States ever produced are stock characters in Havana and Matanzas every winter. Some of them have acquired an amusing way of speaking Spanish, much to the annoyance of the hotel servants, and their own satisfaction. They have a certain round of business, which they are supposed to attend to every day. Others are the habitual consular visitors, specially mindful of the entertainment of that official during his office hours. Others are of that peculiar class of adventurers who have no money, no occupation, no particular errand anywhere, yet who live, spend, dress as the lily, and are happy.

The quite young man is frequent, and amid these contrasting surroundings is a study of what young America actually is as compared to young Cuba and young Spain. He seems to be somewhat defiant in his attitudes, looks the "hard bat" awaiting a favorable opportunity to figure prominently in a difficulty, and presents a certain squareness of visage and hard look of the eye to the whole tropical community. Yet at home he is only an ordinary, mild-

mannered boy, like most of his race and kind. The contrast he presents to most of his class here, he is in no way conscious of, and one sees in him the strongest possible illustration of the effect of climate and race upon every line of the figure and every unconscious movement.

There is the American abroad who will never return. He came originally, he says, to avoid the rigors of the northern climate. He cannot stand cold. He has remained so long that he has become a mixture of Cuban, Spaniard, and Yankee. He speaks the language quite as well, perhaps, as he ever spoke English. He has grown fond alike of the dishes and the customs of the country, and has fallen into all the bad and none of the good habits of those among whom he has cast his perpetual lot. He neglects his "papers" of citizenship for years at a time, and only comes to reclaim his status to prevent the eldest of a mixed and numerous offspring from being drafted as a soldier, or some such emergency. Long ago he has passed through all climatic diseases and dangers, and grown accustomed to deleterious beverages. The same thing has happened to him that does to all who live long in the country; he has become incurably indolent. He has changed his complexion to coffee-color, his vigorous gait to a shamble, his figure to a confirmed stoop, and his tastes and desires to the standard tastes and desires of one who has ceased to be particular and takes life as it comes.

During all this man's residence abroad he never ceases to talk of the fact that he is a Yankee of the Yankees, and that he means to return to the land of his nativity. He never does return, it is true, and is no longer capable of a residence there. It is merely one of his diversions

to make himself believe he will. His country has gone away from him; it is amusing to note how little he knows now about it. Notwithstanding his foreign affiliations and tastes, he is always to be found with others of his kind, or fraternizing with the similarly situated Englishman. He and this Englishman, whoever he may be, do not agree. The disputes about relative merit, institutions, manufactures and their quality, the conditions of society and capital, and all the ancient themes, occur daily. But I have noticed that the two are, notwithstanding, generally to be found sitting upon the same bench at the same café, dinging their national prattle with much earnestness into each other's unwilling understandings. It is useless to talk of the essential differences existing between the Briton and his relative on this side. They amalgamate whenever opportunity offers. Foreigners do not understand the difference, or the differences, between them, and the American and Englishman seem, in Cuba at least, to be essentially the same.

This man who has lost his country practically, is usually another illustration of the effect of the climate of the south upon northern blood. Indolence is not his only or most striking characteristic. He attains at last a comfortable laxity of moral fibre. Right is nothing, convenience every thing. His great desire is to pass dull time away. How much an object this last may become, one who has never lived in Cuba cannot be made to understand. Dulness has long ago settled down upon the land. The days follow each other in dreary procession, and the end and the beginning are the same. There is nothing to do but to fall into bad habits, to take endless *refrescos* and smoke innumerable cigars, and try to find cool places wherein to lounge. I should say that ten

years were enough to do the business for any ordinary mortal, and that fifteen or twenty were sufficient to undermine an original case of Spartan virtue.

Why this man does not become a member of society, interest himself in local questions, become part of the community, and cease to be so conspicuously and always a foreigner, is but a natural enquiry. In rare cases he may, and in some measure does. It is never his fault that he does not. Cuba is not, by an inconceivable and measureless distance, a republic. There are no local questions in which it is of any use for even the ordinary-born subject to interest himself, much less a foreigner and a man who has democracy and the republican idea in his bones and blood. He may marry as many times as he possibly can, and each time a daughter of the country. His children he may enumerate by the half dozen. It does not alter his status. It anchors him very firmly where he is, and that is the only effect of it so far as he is personally concerned. He begins the usual tropical process of vegetation and simultaneous decay. There is a curious law of human nature that finds one of its numerous illustrations in him. As the Indian was never made a white man of, but the white man has in a thousand instances been perfectly Indianized; as the northern vine will flourish in Cuba to monstrous size and bear only leaves, while the tropical plant dies in the north, so may the northern man become Cubanized. Away from his natural surroundings he will go downward unless he is very careful, but never upward without constant and great endeavor. The Cuban himself is a deteriorated Spaniard, though he may not know it, and will never believe it.

There are instances in Cuba of Americans of education and fine natural talent, safely and for all time anchored

to a growing family, who, conscious of a mistake beyond repair, make the best of it, and dignify the creeping indolence which daily possesses more and more of them by the name of philosophy. So it is,—the philosophy which does not care what comes, and reduces life to a series of involuntary bodily functions.

So it comes, that to the American in Cuba, there are two results. If he goes and returns, he never wishes to go again. If he goes and stays, he locks and seals against himself the door to all endeavor. The government is to blame, his liver is very culpable, and an insidious climate wraps him in a tepid bath. Laziness supervenes and becomes chronic, and the entire want of something to strive for that is worth an effort, completes the business. He may get money, and money alone is by no means worth the pains it costs. But in nine cases out of ten he does not get so much as that, and of late years he has in most cases been deprived of even that he had. He has learned the fatal lesson, to endure with apathy. Contrary to the general character of the man at home, I have never known a broken American in Cuba to regain his losses, or to recover his health or his character.

Last scene of all comes the foreign "bummer," often the outcome and the natural result of what has already been described. This is a man who in a long time has not cared whether he has had any occupation or not. He has had his day of uselessness and enjoyment, and now lingers about the café most frequented by Americans and English, intent upon finding an opportunity, favorable or unfavorable, to refresh himself. The climate is kind to him in his worst case. There is no cold, and a dilapidated condition entails no personal discomfort. He has ceased to care for the rest. At irregular periods he

visits the American Consulate, declaring that it is a matter of high importance that his "papers" should be looked after and regulated, entertaining the official with inconsequent narratives gathered not so much from a long and varied experience in Cuba, as from a grotesque and tedious imagination, and finally ending with a request for the loan of three dollars.

The American in Cuba may undoubtedly, as he appears in this last stage, be found also at home. But the various stages through which he has passed to arrive at his last and most enduring condition, the causes of his dilapidation, the peculiar tone of his mendicancy, make his case peculiar. He is a history of Cuban life, a lecture upon the effects of climate combined with gin, but more, a sermon upon the subject of hopelessness. For a long time he has had nothing to live for, no projects however foolish, no ambitions however petty. The same man may go the same road at home, but never so easily and uninterruptedly, never without some occasional intervals of repentance, and some futile efforts at reform.

Often, as his end approaches, I have known him to make an expiring effort to go back to what he still calls "home." Amid a general wreck of hopes and faculties, there is still an object worth an effort. Even he does not desire to die in Cuba. Some charitable sea-captain takes him on board, and he drops out of the life that has known him so long as completely as if he were already dead. Nobody cares or cries, and few reflect upon the fact, of which he is conclusive proof, that nearer than wife, home, or friends, the last thing loved and longed for is the land of our nativity, the home of the race from which we spring, the soil wherein it is blessed to lay even our useless bones.

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