

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS OF CUBA AND UNITED STATES.

BY

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SPRING TERM.

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The Diplomatic Relations of Cuba and the United States.

In the beginning of our study concerning the relations of Cuba and the United States, let us first take a brief review of the relations of Spain and the United States. Spain had acquired a great amount of territory in the Western Continent; at least one half of this continent was owned by her. In 1800 she ceded Louisiana to France. This was the first of her losses, the rest follow, one after another until no Spanish possessions remained in the New World except Cuba and Porto Rico. It was Cuba which caused the years of trouble between Spain and the United States. During these years Spain was constantly growing weaker while the United States was increasing in strength and becoming one of the greatest nations in the world.

Three times before the war of 1898 Spain and the United States were at swords points: (1) during Jefferson's administration, (2) in 1854, when the Black Warrior was fired upon and (3) in 1873 when Verginins was captured and some on board were executed.

Cuba, situated as it is at the mouth of the gulf, seemed destined to fall into the hands of the United States. If this island were held by an enemy our western commerce could easily be blockaded. Cuba had patiently borne the injustices Spain had inflicted upon it during the years of Spanish Government. They had been very severely oppressed and taxed.

In 1812 a somewhat consistent constitution was originated

for Cuba but it was never put into effect. Cuba's only constitution in 1825 was a royal order. This decree gave the captain general the entire authority. Cuba was a very productive country and so Spain reaped an abundant harvest at her expense. The Indian population became extinct in 1553 and after this slaves were imported. This was one of the causes of the complaints of the United States. The degradation of the Cuban population was due to the mismanagement of Spain. Even though they were so badly treated the Cubans held Spain in high repute for many years. It seems strange to us, who live in a free country where all are equal, that human beings can be satisfied to be trampled under foot by a class of conceited people.

I do not argue that Spain should have set Cuba free but she should have at least dealt honestly with her. It would probably have been impossible for the Cubans to have exercised self government, but they surely could have been taught and elevated. But instead of this they were only pushed deeper into the mire by their Superiors.

Through many of these evil years the United States had stood quietly at one side and, "waited for the fruit to ripen and fall into its lap." Spain had received a guarantee from the U.S. in which the United States promised to befriend Spain in case our help was needed. In 1822 Cuba was refused any promise for annexation on account of our obligations to Spain.

There was some talk of an international guarantee. It was proposed in the tripartite arrangement but so many objections were raised that it was never carried out. The United States

said that they would prevent Cuba changing hands " at all hazards." The argument against any foreign power was based mostly on the Monroe Doctrine. The purpose of the doctrine was to show foreign powersthat they were not to meddle in American affairs.

Conditions in Cuba grew worse and worse and Spain's conduct toward the United States was very disagreeable. During the time of the revolution she had interfered with our commerce. She had hindered the western trade through the Mississippi and opposed the transfer of Louisiana to us. It would be tedious to enumerate the various occasions which Spain had taken to show her hostility toward the United States. But even though Spain had treated us so shamefully we held honestly and truthfully to our agreements. Another most irritating policy of Spain was her delays in the settlement of questions concerning the United States. It often took months for the United States to receive answers even to the most important questions.

By the time of Jefferson's administration our relations with Cuba were serious. As much as Jefferson desired peace with all the foreign nations it seemed impossible for him to succeed in obtaining it. American trade suffered severely from the restrictions laid upon it. A proclamation was issued to exclude the United States from the West Indies but it was impossible to enforce it.

In 1809 the West Indies were suffering greatly for provisions and the people looked to the United States for protection and help. Napoleons appearance in Spain made Jefferson hope that he might obtain a settlement of Cuba with

little trouble. She was mistaken however, because Napoleon was desirous of Cuba for himself.

In 1812 Spain freed herself from Napoleon. Then an assembly was called to make a new constitution. Three deputies from Cuba were there and took part, standing for the rights of the Cuban's. Cuba demanded equal rights with the mother country .

The United States was in great uncertainty as to its conduct toward the revolting colonies. Ofcourse they were in sympathy with the revolting colonies but still it was necessary to keep the manifestation of this sympathy within the proper bounds. What occasioned much of their indecision was the fact that yet many of the questions between the United States and Spain remained unsettled.

Between 1809 - 20 the commerce in Cuba had increased. The United States were often frightened for fear England would try to obtain Cuba. It could not be ascertained as to wether Spain would give up Cuba or not. Cuba would have been satisfied if Spain would have given them a peaceful economic government and the right to deal with other nations.

After the cession of Florida, all nations were interested in the future of Cuba. Spain was dying and they saw that it would be necessary for Cuba to change hands, yet each was fearful that some one else would get possession.

Cuba began to think of her future political condition. A liberal government was planned but quickly suppressed. When secret societies were organized and uprisings began. None of these were effective. In 1822 oppression was so great that

Cuba thought of independence if she could rely on the support of the United States.

In 1823 Morales was sent to the United States as an agent from the Cuban liberals to consult with the government regarding its mode of securing independence; at this time Cuba's Government would admit no United States consul into Cuba and our vessels could not sail through the gulf without danger.

During Polk's administration there was a great deal of talk concerning the purchase of Cuba but in the administration following thought of this method of obtaining it died away.

Filibustering began in 1849. Narcisso Lopez was the leader He had served in the Spanish army and lived a prosperous life until there was a change in the Governor of Cuba. After this he retired to private life and began his degrading work of filibustering. Many men of wild adventurous characters joined him and they caused a great deal of disturbance by their fearful expeditions. The last trip of Lopez was made in 1851. This was his second unsuccessful trip.

The Tripartite Treaty was proposed but the United States would not agree to it. England and France were very much displeased with our conduct but the government thought it was better not to enter into any alliances. Everett stated five circumstances under which the United States might take Cuba; (1) change of circumstances (domestic), (2) Purchase from Spain, (3) Conquest (4) Necessity of self preservation, although some said Everett had gone into detail too much yet he plainly showed that we should enter into no agreements which concerned our relations with Cuba .

Negotiations for the obtaining of Cuba began in the administration of Pierce. The principal posts were filled Buchanan being sent to London, Soule to Spain and Mason to France. They could do nothing satisfactory and it was finally decided to let Cuba alone in her relations with Spain unless the security of the United States was threatened.

The Ostend Manifesto (1854) was a measure to show that both the United States and Spain would be bettered if Cuba passed into the possession of the United States. If Spain would not consent to the change then the United States would be justified in forcing her to consent. This manifesto was sneered at and considered as a joke by both the old world and America although many were in favor of annexation yet some thought that such a step meant only misfortune for the Union.

At the beginning of Buchanan's administration the Cuban question still stood in a puzzling condition. In 1859 the restriction and taxes still remained although the country of Cuba seemed to be quieter. Slidell's bill providing for \$30,000,000 for the purchasing of Cuba was proposed at this time. There were many and various objections made and it failed to pass after a lengthy debate.

During the Civil War (1861-65) the Cuban question was still open. The south hoped for the sympathy of Spain and the privilege of having Havana as a retreat for confederate ships Spain admitted southern ships into her harbors but held that this was no sign of her friendship toward the south. She said that the blockade should have prevented these ships from sailing. Although during the first part of this war things looked

serious, yet in the last few months fear of Spain or Cuba friendship toward the South sub-sided. After this war our government realized more forcibly than ever what an advantage it would be to have a harbor in the West Indies.

In 1868 great imperial disturbances arose in Spain. The Throne was vacated and the United States rejoiced at the sight of Republic organization in Spain.

The Cubans arose against the remainder of the Isabella government, who was still attempting to govern them. They were little prepared for a revolt but they hoped to obtain help from the United States. They succeeded, and a Legislative body and a new government was formed.

This ten years war helped Cuba for a short time and then things turned back into the old channel. The Captains again obtained power, trade was hindered and the debt of the war was thrown on the shoulders of the Cubans.

From 1879 until 1894 relations of the United States and Spain were seriously strained; the duties which were levied on the United States were simply outrageous. For instance, one vessel which should have been taxed \$14.90 was forced to pay \$387.40. Spain had no respect for the United States and thought that she would make all off from them that she could. A Cuban delegation was sent to Madrid to urge Reciprocity with the United States. Cuba wanted to be on intimate terms with us commercially. Spain was afraid to refuse the request for fear annexation would be the result. In June, 1891, Spain promised to reform and many of the taxes were removed.

President Cleveland demanded a complete withdrawal of duties

in 1886. In October Spain suspended all duties between the United States, Cuba and Porto Rico. From 1876 until 1891, the United States had a balance trade with Cuba against them of \$735,192.512.

Cuba was not satisfied with her state and in 1884 preparations were made for another revolution. The Spanish minister complained that ammunition was being stored in our southern ports. The United States did their best in keeping down uprisings but filibusters escaped.

John Sherman came from Cuba in 1887 and gave a very accurate account of the state of affairs there. He said almost every Cuban was in favor of annexation yet he thought Cuba would be a great burden to the United States. He believed in reciprocity not annexation.

Cuba was constantly looking across the gulf, seeing and admiring our wonderful government. With this incentive she constantly gained ground at Spains expense. By 1896 more than one half of Cuba was in the hands of the insurrectionists.

A great deal of property was destroyed even railway trains were burned. More troops were sent from Spain and the Cuban received barbarous treatment. This moved the humane side of our nature very forcible. Congress held furious debates on the different policies under consideration. On April 9th word came from Spain to establish peace in Cuba on the promise of reforms.

Terms could not be made satisfactory to all so the war continued unabated.

American citizens in Cuba were treated in a cruel and

barbarous manner by Spanish authorities. When Pres. McKinley came into office he demanded release or trial of all the citizens held. They were released. A new Spanish ministry went into power and promised reform and betterment of conditions in Cuba. No one had any faith in its statements.

Cuban affairs did not improve and in December the Americans were again treated badly. On the 24th a Cuban Relief Committee was organized and provisions and money amounting to \$200,000 were sent from the United States to the suffering and unfortunate. Cuba was in a terrible condition of suffering. 400,000 had been turned from their homes and over one half of these perished from starvation. The American people were moved to their very depths at the sight of suffering humanity at our very door, minds were very much divided as to the solution of this problem.

The destruction of the Maine on Feb. 15th aroused Americans to the utmost. Spain deserved nothing but punishment for such a horrible and treacherous crime. Congress and the President after a number of meetings decided to recognize the independence of Cuba. Troops were called for and on April 25th war was declared

Well trained soldiers were sent to Cuba and the war was "on."

July 13th Santiago was surrendered and immediate preparations were made for its government. Expeditions were next sent toward Porto Rico. By July Spain decided that she was ready to make peace and negotiations began.

Terms were made on Aug. 12th. all the W.I, except Cuba was ceded to the United States and Spain withdrew from Cuba.

For these cessions the government paid Spain \$20,000,000.

Although this war had many good results. Among which was the rescuing of Cuba, the most important to me is the manner in which it has joined the North and South. It had the proper effects in destroying the ill will caused by the civil-war and uniting us as we should be.

The United States has aided Cuba in the founding of a republic and pressing toward a higher standard than it has previously held; nothing would be more pleasing to us than to see Cuba develop into a great and noble Nation.