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SLAVERY

IN

THE SPANISH COLONIES.

DEPUTATION TO

EARL GRANVILLE, K. G.

NEW YORK :

M. M. Zarzamendi & Co., Printers, 10 & 42 Broadway.

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For the information of all who are interested in the cause of liberty in Cuba, we republish the following interesting report forwarded to us by our worthy and respected friend, Joseph Cooper Esq. Hon. Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

The proofs are many and unmistakable of the sincerity and earnestness with which our friends in England are working to put an end to the miseries which afflict the Spanish Antilles and enable the people of those islands to accomplish the grand work in which they are engaged of securing liberty and citizenship for all their inhabitants.

The noble and philanthropic sentiments which stimulate the efforts in behalf of our country of the worthy and distinguished members of important Societies in England, and inspire the earnest and manly protests of the English press against Spanish oppression and cruelty, deserve from us as men and Cubans our grateful and hearty acknowledgment which it gives us great pleasure to offer. We believe at the same time with good and sufficient reason therefor that a strong and united effort upon the part of the true philanthropists of the old world and the new, will at no distant day convince our generous friends on the other side of the Atlantic that their labors have not been in vain!

JUAN MANUEL MACIAS.

New York, March 1872.

SLAVERY IN THE SPANISH COLONIES.

DEPUTATION TO EARL GRANVILLE, K. G.

On Tuesday, January 23, an influential deputation waited on Earl Granville, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to present an Address of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, and to urge upon the Government the necessity of using its influence with Spain, in conjunction with the United States Government, to secure the emancipation of the slaves in Cuba and Porto-Rico. Among others the following gentlemen attended—the Hon. A. Kinnaid, M. P.; Dr. Brewer, M. P.; C. Gilpin, Esq., M. P.; T. Hughes, Esq., M. P.; E. A. Bowring, Esq., M. P.; A. Johnstone, Esq., M. P.; W. McArthur, Esq., M. P.; Samuel Gurney, Esq., President; W. Allen, Esq., Treasurer; Edmund Sturge, Esq., and R. Alsop, Esq., Hon. Secretaries; the Rev. B. Millard, Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society; the Rev. J. O. Whitehouse, of the London Missionary Society; Mr. W. Tallack, Secretary of the Howard Association; Mr. F. W. Chesson, Secretary of the Aborigines Protection Society. Letters were received from Sir

T. F. Buxton, Dr. E. B. Underhill, the Rev. Messrs. Arthur, Luke W. Wiseman, Horace Waller, also from J. Whitwill, M. P., B. Scott (the Chamberlain of London), John Holmes, M. P., Samuel Morley, M. P., F. Wheeler, Esq., &c., &c., expressive of their regret that owing to other engagements they were unable to attend, and of their sympathy with the object sought.

The Hon. A. Kinnaird, having introduced the deputation to his Lordship, the Secretary read the following Address:—

“TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE EARL GRANVILLE, K.G., HER MAJESTY'S
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

“MY LORD,—The Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society begs respectfully to call the attention of Earl Granville to the fact that, on a recent occasion, the delegates from the Island of Porto Rico to the Cortes in Madrid presented an address to King Amadeus I., soliciting His Majesty to aid their efforts to get rid of the curse of Slavery, and that the delegates have also presented a bill to the Cortes for the immediate and entire abolition of Slavery in that island.

“The Committee has also been informed that the project will meet with the determined opposition of that powerful and opulent party in Madrid which, till a comparatively recent date, carried on the slave-trade from Africa to Cuba, which statement derives material support from Her Majesty's representatives in Cuba, contained in the last published Blue-books, as to the intention of the Spanish party in Cuba to revive the slave-trade whenever opportunity may occur.

“In view of these things, and of the treaty rights of Great Britain with Spain, the Committee feels that it would fail in its duty to the sacred cause of humanity were it not again respectfully to entreat your Lordship to use your powerful influence with the Spanish Government in favour of the entire abolition of slavery both in Porto Rico and Cuba.

“Signed on behalf of the Committee,

“JOSEPH COOPER, }
“ROBERT ALSOP, } Hon. Secs.
“EDMUND STURGE, }
“BENJAMIN MILLARD, Secretary.”

MR. EDMUND STURGE referred in feeling terms to the death of Lord Clarendon. About a fortnight after the last deputation had waited on his lordship on the subject of Spanish Slavery, and also to the fearful war between Prussia and France, which so absorbed public attention as to exclude this important subject

from due consideration. He regretted that at present the question of emancipation of the slaves in the Spanish Colonies had not advanced, and the present fearful struggle of parties in Cuba would only be terminated by the abolition of slavery in that island. Few persons could realise the state of things, and the number of deaths in Cuba. As an illustration he would read an extract of a letter from Nicolas Petrovich, a professor of Natural History, who had visited that colony. Under date of May 19, 1870, he says:

“Under any circumstances, the vast number of lives which have been lost in Cuba from the beginning of the troubles until now, cause us to wonder if the neighbouring States are fully informed of all that has occurred. There are three Consuls-General in Havana—French, American and English. Do these officials report to their respective Governments all that passes before them? It seems strange that the great American Government, to whose realms Cuba almost adjoins (for only a few dozen miles of smooth sea separate them), should contentedly look on, and witness atrocious and barbarous spilling of human blood for months and years.

“If we regard the numbers who have died on both sides since the insurgent Cubans rose against the Spanish rule, we shall certainly be shocked and astonished. I was informed by a French subject, long resident in Cuba, that by fevers and other maladies, by fightings and by wounds, by military and civil executions, and by starvation and misery in remote parts, more than 70,000 (seventy thousand) individuals have died! On conversing on this alarming assertion with a Spanish naval officer, he expressed no surprise, and appeared to suppose that the Frenchman was perhaps in the right. He said, ‘What we Spanish officers most regret is the shooting of prisoners and suspected country peasants by the volunteers without our sanction or approval. This is to us regulars very loathsome; but what can we do? We have given these ruffians arms, and they will now never give them back to us. They are the masters of the situation, and they number more than 60,000 (sixty thousand) well-armed Spaniards, who are exasperated against the Cubans, and who avowedly wish to exterminate them all.’”

Mr. STURGE observed further that when the deputation waited on Lord Clarendon, on June 15, 1870, the interposition of Government on behalf of the Spanish slaves was asked on the ground that “a large proportion of the negro population now in bondage is so held in violation of international faith—that Great Britain

had paid Spain £400,000 to compensate for any losses she might sustain by the suppression of the Slave-trade—that since 1820 the importations of negroes into Cuba have exceeded more than two-fold the number of slaves now officially reported as existing in that island—and that the Spanish Government had failed to carry out its pledges in 1808 in reference to the work of Emancipation.” It is to be lamented that since the time of that interview nothing effective has been done by our Government to influence the Spanish Cabinet to abolish slavery in the Colonies, but the strife as between slavery and freedom has continued to rage. Upwards of 70,000 troops have been sent out from Spain to Cuba, but Spain seems to be plunging deeper and deeper in the fatal course on which she has entered, and the position of the question of Emancipation, so far as the Government of Spain is concerned, remains unchanged.

The Anti-Slavery Society is made acquainted from time to time with every thing that occurs in Spain respecting the slavery question, and has sources of information much greater than those which are open to a Foreign Minister whose diplomatic position necessarily limits his means of knowing much that transpires. From letters received only yesterday, it appears that public meetings have been recently held in Badajoz, Leon, Salamanca, Barcelona and other places: that a crowded meeting has been held in the Theatre del Reereo, in Madrid, at which resolutions were passed calling upon Government to carry out the principles of the Revolution of September, 1808, and the giving absolute freedom to the slaves; tendering thanks to the Porto-Rico Deputies who have recently presented to the Cortes a plan for immediate emancipation, and expressive of approval of the editors of the sixty-nine newspapers who have not accepted the subvention of the pro-Slavery committee, but continue to advocate the total abolition of Slavery. From this it is *clear that the people of Spain desire emancipation*, and it is felt that the British Government, through its representative in Madrid, should strengthen the hands of the friends of freedom. Mr. Sturge expressed the sentiment of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, that Mr. Layard had not done all that should have been done in the furtherance of the cause of freedom in Madrid.

Mr. Sturge further observed that the published despatches of the United States Government to its representative in Madrid on the subject of slavery in the Spanish colonies, were clear and decisive. In evidence of this, he quoted the following extracts from diplomatic correspondence of Mr. Hamilton Fish, the Secretary of State, to General Sickles, Minister in Madrid:—

“ June 29, 1869.—The President therefore directs you to offer to the Cabinet at Madrid the good Offices of the United States for the purpose of bringing to a close the civil war now ravaging the island of Cuba, on the following basis:—1. . . . 2. . . . 3. The abolition of Slavery in the island of Cuba.” “ Madrid, December 29, 1869.—N^o. 45 The British Minister, Mr. Layard, informed me night before last that he had been instructed by Lord Clarendon to second my suggestions to this Government in relation to the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Porto-Rico. I replied that all I had said was unofficial, and so understood by the Cabinet; that I had furnished the Colonial Secretary with a memorandum of the history and results of emancipation in the United States.”

Mr. Fish writes to General Sickles, in reply.—

“ Washington, January 26th, 1870. In your interview with Mr. Layard, I notice that to his statement that he had been instructed by Lord Clarendon to second your suggestion to the Spanish Government in relation to the abolition of slavery, you replied that all you have said upon the subject had been unofficial. This naturally causes some surprise in this department, where, from the commencement and through all the stages of negotiations and correspondence, the instructions to make the abolition of slavery a *sine qua non* have been given in the most positive manner. It is not to be supposed that your remark to Mr. Layard was intended in the broad sense in which it may be interpreted as implying an absence of instructions from the Department on this important subject. If, when the offer of our good offices was withdrawn, you were not instructed to continue to urge the abolition, it was because your dispatches indicated that the Spanish Cabinet were not then in a mood to listen to suggestions from Washington. I have regarded it, and still regard it, as your duty, under existing instructions, at all times whenever in your judgment a fitting opportunity offers, to do all in your power to secure complete emancipation, not only in Cuba, but also in Porto Rico. It becomes more apparent every day that this contest cannot terminate without the abolition of slavery. This Government regards the Government of Madrid as committed to that result.

You have several times received positive assurances to that effect from more than one member of that Cabinet. They have also promised large and liberal reforms in the Spanish colonial policy. As late as the 3rd December last the Foreign Minister thought these promises of enough importance to make them the subject of a cable telegram. You will therefore, if it shall appear that the insurrection is regarded as suppressed, frankly state that this Government, relying upon the assurances so often given, will expect steps to be taken for the emancipation of the slaves in the Spanish Colonies, as well as for the early initiation of the promised reforms, and you will then communicate to Mr. Layard the fact that you have done so."

Again, Mr. Fish writes to General Sickles, under date of June 20, 1870:—

"It is with regret that we fail to find in the scheme of Emancipation which is forwarded in your No. 116 evidence of the earnest purpose to abolish slavery for which your previous dispatches had prepared us. It may rather be called a project for relieving the slave-owners from the necessity of supporting infants and aged slaves, who can only be a burden, and of prolonging the institution as to able-bodied slaves."

It was satisfactory to observe that the American Government spoke in terms that could not be misunderstood, and he concluded by saying that it would have been satisfactory to have found that Mr. Layard had spoken in the same earnest tone; a duty which it may be presumed has been delayed lest it might embarrass the Spanish Administration carrying out their political and dynastic arrangements. This, however, he must view as a grievous and fatal mistake, and he trusted that Mr. Layard would at length be instructed to speak in terms which cannot be misunderstood, and that Her Majesty's Government would now interpose for the termination of the bloody strife in Cuba, and rescue Spain from the fatal course to which she is now committed.

C. GILPIN, Esq., M. P., in addressing his Lordship, begged to bear his testimony to the respectability and reliable nature of the source of the information his relative, Mr. E. Sturge, had given respecting the state of things in Spain. Personally, he

thought that Mr. Layard was a true anti-slavery man, and in sympathy with anti-slavery efforts; but he, in common with some of his friends, did not think that Mr. Layard had done all that he should have done as the representative of a free nation, and of a Government that advocated abolition principles. We had, he thought, a strong case, as in 1818, the British Government, under terms of a treaty, had paid Spain £400,000 to compensate her for any supposed loss she might sustain by the abolition of the Slave-trade. Moreover, it was further proved that, according to returns, the illegal importation of slaves into Cuba was more than double the number of slaves now existing in that island, and this country had a right to press for emancipation in the Spanish Colonies.

Dr. BREWER, M. P., followed with a few remarks, and the Hon. A. KINNAIRD expressed the hope that Government would exert its influence in the direction of the Abolition of Slavery in the Spanish Colonies.

Earl GRANVILLE expressed his regret that his indisposition had prevented him from receiving the deputation before this time. He concurred in some of the statements made by gentlemen, admitted that we had treaty claims on Spain, and that the efforts put forth to secure the emancipation of the slave population in Cuba had not been successful. At the same time he wished to assure the deputation that he believed Mr. Layard had acted as energetically and judiciously as possible under the circumstances. He (Earl Granville) feared that the pro-slavery party in Spain did not believe in the benevolent object professed by some in seeking abolition, but suspected them of other and ulterior designs. In this matter, the English Government desired to act on all suitable occasions; but in the present strife between Spain and her Colonies, he felt that it was a very delicate matter to interfere. As to the atrocities in Cuba, he put aside the question of any interposition on our part altogether. He had been in deliberation with some members of the Government on the state of things in Cuba, *but was not at liberty to announce any particulars of the discussion to the public.*

Mr. W. TALLACK, addressing his Lordship, referred to the successful efforts of Mr. Gladstone in exposing the cruelties in

the Neapolitan prisons, which he visited some years ago; how that these roused the British nation, and obtained an earnest protest against, and the removal of, these evils. Then how much more determined should be the efforts of the British Government to bring to an end the fearful atrocities in Cuba, where eight medical students had lately been shot, and a number more had been sentenced to various terms of penal servitude, professedly because they had desecrated a Spaniard's grave, and where the Captain-General had lately issued a proclamation that after January 15 every insurgent should be shot. With Naples we had at the time referred to no treaty. With Spain we have treaty rights, and he hoped that the eminent statesman who was now at the head of the Government would exert himself more effectively on behalf of the oppressed and enslaved in Cuba than his Lordship had given the deputation reason to look for.

The deputation thanked his Lordship for receiving them, and then withdrew.

