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SLAVE TRADE. No. 9 (1874).

PAPERS

RELATING TO THE

EMANCIPATION OF THE NEGROES

OF

PUERTO RICO.

Presented to the House of Lords by Command of Her Majesty.
1874.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

[C.—1065.] *Price 4½d.*

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Papers relating to the Emancipation of the Negroes of
Puerto Rico.

No. 1.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 5.)

(Extract.)

Madrid, January 2, 1873.

I HAVE the honour to inclose translation of a Law for the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Puerto Rico which has been published in the "Gobierno" newspaper, as a counter-project to that introduced into the Cortes by the Government.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Extract from the "Abolicionista."

(Translation.)

A PROJECT OF SENOR TOPETE.—We shall see great things. The newspaper "El Gobierno" publishes the following project which a Conservative Ministry had prepared for Puerto Rico and Cuba in due time:—

"Article 1. Slavery is declared to be abolished in all the Spanish dominions. After four months after the publication of this law in the 'Gazettes' of Cuba and Puerto Rico the slaves shall cease to be so taking the name of 'emancipados' and the owners that of 'patronos.'

"Art. 2. Those who become emancipados by virtue of this Law shall continue in that state for five years, during which their patronos shall pay them 2 dollars a month.

"Art. 3. After five years they shall lose the character of emancipados and take that of 'colonos,' which they shall preserve for five years more, during which their patronos shall pay them 4 dollars a month.

"Art. 4. When they have fulfilled five years as emancipados and five years as colonos they shall obtain their complete liberty.

"Art. 5. While those who are now slaves are working out their time as emancipados and colonos they shall continue under their respective masters.

"Art. 6. From the date of the publication of this Law in the official 'Gazettes' of Cuba and Puerto Rico all slaves shall be considered as 'coartados' at 500 dollars, diminishing every year 50 dollars of this sum, so that at the termination of the ten years fixed the slave has himself redeemed his entire value. Those who are already coartados for a less sum than 500 dollars shall continue redeeming themselves until the extinction of the sum they owe to their masters, in the same manner and proportion of 50 dollars per annum. The sums which, over and above the said yearly payment, may be given by the emancipados shall be received from them in payment of what they have to hand over to obtain their total liberty.

"Art. 7. The Government is charged with the adoption of the proper measures for the development of this law."

No. 2.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 5.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 2, 1873.

THE King, in replying yesterday to the address delivered by the President of the Senate on the occasion of the ceremony of New Year's day, spoke in the following terms of the project of law introduced by the Government into the Cortes for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico:—

“I consider, as an auspicious sign of the year which is commencing, the announcement which the Senate makes to me, and the hope that it expresses, that those men who still live in a condition of slavery in the loyal Province of Puerto Rico will soon obtain their freedom. So humane and Christian a resolution will be a glory for Spain, an honour to the Cortes, a lustre to my reign, and a bright spot for my dynasty. Civilized nations will see in it one more reason for self-congratulation at having recognized the work of 1868 from the very first. Spain will feel a natural pride at seeing herself the object of the esteem and applause of the world, and those who might show their suspicions will understand that it is not reasonable to fear that a work of humanity and an act of justice will be the cause of ruin and a source of perdition.”

To the speech of the President of the Congress, he replied: “The words of applause with which the Congress of Deputies, the immediate Representative of the Spanish people, greets the project for the abolition of slavery in the Province of Puerto Rico, are for me an auspicious presentiment that we shall shortly give consolation and liberty to several thousands of men, joy to our Christian souls, satisfaction to the country, and a ground for the just praise of all civilized nations.”

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 3.

Viscount Enfield to Consul-General Dunlop.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 7, 1873.

I AM directed by Earl Granville to transmit to you a copy of a despatch from Mr. Layard relative to the alleged export of slaves from Puerto Rico to Cuba.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) ENFIELD.

No. 4.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 16.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 13, 1873.

AN appeal to the Spanish nation against the introduction of the proposed reforms in Puerto Rico and the immediate abolition of slavery in that island has been published by the Madrid newspapers. It is signed by the Committee of the “Centro-Hispano Ultramarino” (Spanish Colonial Association), by the most important and influential leaders of all political parties except the Radical and Republican, and by the representatives of almost the whole of the Radical press. The only persons of any political importance who have declined to sign it are Admiral Topete and Señor Balaquer, who was Minister of the Colonies in Señor Sagatsa's Government, on the ground, I am informed, that it leaves untouched the question of the time in which the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico should be carried out.

This document has been drawn up by Señor Ayala, a gentleman of some reputation as a poet, who has been Minister of the Colonies on two occasions since the Revolution. It is so able a statement of the grounds taken by those who oppose the Government measure, and so important as a declaration of the policy of other political parties which may be called to power, that it will be necessary for me to send your Lordship a translation of it. Its length will, however, prevent my doing so by to-day's post.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

* See No. 62 of Class A for 1872 (C. 867).

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 16.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 13, 1873.

A DEMONSTRATION was held yesterday in this city in favour of the Government measure for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. It was respectably, but not numerously, attended. Between 3,000 and 4,000 persons walked through the principal streets with bands of music and banners, and speeches were made by one or two deputies and members of the Spanish Abolition Society.

The Pro-Slavery party declare that the demonstration was a complete failure. The Government appears to have done its best to make it as effective as possible; and the smallness of the number of persons taking part in it proves, I fear, how little real interest is felt by the great majority of the Spanish people in the question of the abolition of slavery.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 19.)

(Extract.)

Madrid, January 15, 1872.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 13th instant, I have the honour to inclose translation of the Appeal to the Spanish nation against the Government measure for the introduction of municipal reforms and for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. As I have already informed your Lordship, this Document is known to be from the pen of Señor Ayala. This gentleman, when Minister of the Colonies, in 1871, published the answer to a note addressed by General Sickles to Señor Sagasta, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the subject of the abolition of slavery and other reforms in Cuba and Puerto Rico. That note, dated 12th January, 1871, was included in papers presented to Congress by the President of the United States in the same year (p. 759). Señor Ayala announced the intention of the then Government to carry out municipal reforms in Puerto Rico, and to take steps for the immediate abolition of slavery in that island. He made use of these words:—"In addition to the law voted by Congress (that presented by Señor Moret for the gradual abolition of slavery) by which public opinion in all countries has learnt the intention of the Spanish Government to abolish slavery in its American Dominions, the present Ministry are carrying on an active correspondence with the Superior Authorities in the Antilles, with a view to effect the complete abolition of slavery, and with this object it has authorized meetings of the owners of slaves in order that they may discuss and propose a measure for its immediate realization." I need scarcely remind your Lordship that I received from the Ministry of which Señor Ayala was a Member, as I have received from every subsequent Ministry, distinct assurances to the same effect, and that the Puerto Rico Deputies themselves have, almost unanimously, demanded immediate abolition in that island. Your Lordship will be able to judge from these facts of the motives which may have induced those who have been Members of other Ministries since the Revolution, to connect themselves at this moment with the determined opponents of all reforms, including the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico.

The Manifesto of the Opposition is ably drawn up, and by dwelling rather upon the threatened destruction of the national integrity and upon the interference of foreign Governments in the internal affairs of Spain than upon the question of slavery, and by appealing to the national honour, is well calculated to enlist the feelings and prejudices of the Spanish people against the measures of the Government. As it contains almost all that can be said against that measure and in favour of an opposite policy, it is worthy of your Lordship's attention. It is scarcely necessary for me to make any comments upon it, or to point out the fallacies and misstatements which it contains. It asserts that all political parties in this country have the same intense hatred of slavery, and the same earnest desire for its abolition, and claims for Spain the merit of having passed a law providing for its certain but safe and gradual extinction, which has already led to the freedom of more than 40,000 slaves in Cuba and 10,000 in Puerto Rico, and in respect to which the British Government before Parliament did full justice to the Spanish nation. Yet the Appeal virtually defends the institution of slavery, and whilst describing the

condition of the slaves in the Spanish Colonies (a description it may be observed, totally at variance with that given by the Agents of Her Majesty's Government at Cuba,) declares that slavery in Spain "has a humane and Christian character," which distinguishes it from that institution as it has existed in all other countries in the world. The "Appeal" also forgets to mention that every pretext has been employed to prevent the carrying out of the law for which it claims so much credit, and that so far as public information goes, up to this very day it has not been enforced or even promulgated in Cuba.

It even appears to assert that the slaves in Cuba in the possession of the Government have been freed, a statement not justified by the reports received by Her Majesty's Government from that island. On the contrary, the slaves on confiscated estates have been retained in slavery, and, there is every reason to suspect, have in many instances been even sold by agents of the Government.

The document, while attributing to the enemies of Spanish rule in Cuba the difficulties thrown in the way of the Spanish Government in its attempt to introduce reforms in that island, omits to mention that the Volunteers, whose patriotism and services to Spain are constantly extolled, have resolutely opposed the introduction of those reforms; that they expelled General Dulce who, as Captain-General, loyally endeavoured to carry them out; have threatened with assassination those who advocated them; and have, in more than one instance, put into execution their threats; and, defying the Supreme Government, are virtually masters of Cuba.

The declaration in the "Appeal" that the Chambers cannot deal with the question of the introduction of reforms and the abolition of slavery into Puerto Rico until Cuba has sent its Representatives to the Spanish Cortes, that is, until the insurrection in that island is at an end, is simply an attempt to retain for an indefinite period the institution of slavery in the Spanish Antilles; and there is no doubt that the slave-holders look upon it in this sense.

The fact of Admiral Topete and Señor Balaguer, two of the most distinguished members of the Conservative party, having refused to adhere to this manifesto has not been without its effect upon public opinion.

Inclosure in No. 6.

(Translation.)

To the Nation.

A NEW misfortune, at the mere announcement of which the misfortunes which not long ago appeared to be unbearable have become secondary, shows above all things its fatal importance by unifying the will of all the Undersigned, who, being members and representatives of different political schools, give, by showing themselves united before the country, a clear proof that the matter which has so suddenly brought them together, causing them to pass the boundaries of each party, endangers the highest interests of our native land.

No person, who gauges the conduct of a Government by the most pressing necessities of the country governed, could surely expect at such a time the appearance of radical reforms in the Colonies. Never has a more grave question been brought upon the tapis in a more brusque and unexpected manner.

The form in which it comes, the occasion on which it presents itself, the recent promises it contradicts, the memories it awakens, all its accompanying circumstances, in fine, have engendered, as a natural consequence, the dark presentiment of the separation and ruin of our American Provinces.

The alarm is as deep as it is justified; never has there been greater cause for it. There is not a single one of all the incentives that can put a nation in commotion that has not been set going by the strange and hasty proceeding of the Government.

Could Spain have remained indifferent in the face of the grave danger to the Antilles, she must have fallen so low as to renounce at once her history and her future, her progress and her honour. She must have become indifferent to the annihilation of her navy, the abandonment of her ports, the interruption of her commerce, the death of her industry, the impoverishment of her agriculture, the diminution of her importance, the breaking of the communication with the world to which she gave her spirit and her blood, the loss of the work of three centuries, and even the eternal loss of the ashes of so many of her dear sons, without even the consolation of knowing that they rest under the shadow of her flag.

There are men, however, who, not finding in the peril of so many interests a

satisfactory explanation of the present disquiet, attribute it to political passion, to party hatred, to thirst for power, as the only motives powerful, in their opinion, for putting men's minds in commotion. The whole of Spain replies to them that there are other motives; however, let us give up the hope of convincing them.

What was the state of this question? What its antecedents? The statement of them is sufficient to show the world that Spain has not turned her back on any generous principle; that the extinction of slavery is proclaimed by all parties, is sanctioned by law, and is being carried out at this moment; that the state of our Colonies admits of no greater haste; that public opinion and justice are satisfied, but not the impatience of those who hate all temperate measures, and who, to convince themselves that emancipation is a fact, require to hear the roar of the catastrophe, and who leave it in perpetual doubt whether they have a passion for reform or for disturbance.

The simple relation of facts will cause the truth to defend us against our own countrymen and foreigners, for we live in times so wretched that there are Spaniards who appear to have an interest in keeping alive the errors and calumnies which redound to the detriment of their native land.

Already in 1866, without requiring the advent of most ample political liberties to give warmth and exceptional importance to Colonial questions, a Spanish Government declared aloud to the country that it was disposed to satisfy the desires of the Antilles so far as they were legitimate, and to march resolutely towards the abolition of slavery. A Congress was opened, at which representatives of Cuba and Porto Rico were present, and fully declared their persuasion. Severe laws repressed the Slave Trade, which from that time was totally abolished, not only in consequence of the new orders, but also on account of the laudable procedure of the cultivators themselves, who, things being in such a position, understood that the best way to serve Spain was not to put obstacles in the way of the fulfilment of the noble obligations she had contracted.

Such was the intention of the mother-country when, almost simultaneously with the Revolution of September, the insurrection of Lares in Puerto Rico, and of Gara in Cuba broke out, both with a similar tendency and prepared long before.

Public opinion being at that time stimulated by the dominating ideas, and clearly misled by the agents of the insurgents previously introduced into all veins of society, it was the common belief that, if the inhabitants of the Antilles were made to participate in the liberties proclaimed in Spain, they would lay down their arms, and accept the authority of the mother-country, and the conflict would cease.

The Government then in power was not ignorant of the true character of the West Indian insurrection; it did not allow itself to be drawn on by the force of public opinion, but it agreed to try liberal concessions, as the only means of proving the sincerity of its promises, and of justifying armed intentions, if necessary.

One of its first acts was to announce to the two Antilles that they would be represented in the Constituent Cortes on an equality with the other Spanish provinces. Almost all the chiefs of the dispersed insurrection of Lares submitted to the action of ordinary justice and of courts-martial, convicted of and confessing to offences punishable by death, were generously pardoned, as a proof of fraternity, and a sign of the new era then commencing. This conduct did not suffice to cause the Cuban rebels to lay down their arms, but their obstinacy did not prevent the Government from continuing in their policy of conciliation. The new Superior Governor of Cuba carried instructions to prove to the insurgents the intentions of the mother-country. He gave them a truce of forty days, he issued Decrees granting full liberty of the press and of meeting, and exhorted them, in every way that could be suggested by benevolence and patriotism, to lay down their arms and come to vote. If any shadow of good faith animated the conduct of the men, who, until then, called themselves reformers; if, in the change of system they had so ardently demanded, they sought the exercise of political rights, and not the surest means of attacking the integrity of the territory, that was doubtless the most propitious opportunity for proving it. They could bring forward no reason nor pretext for doubting Spain. They had at the head of the Provisional Government the statesman who had the most warmly defended their cause; the Government of the Island was entrusted to the authority who, on former occasions, had shown them the greatest affection; they could exercise in the Constituent Assembly the influence of their number, speech, and vote; they had, in fine, the guarantee of a revolution which, proud of its triumph, sought in liberty the antidote for all evils.

What were the results of this policy? We all know. Those insurgents who, according to their obstinate supporters, only desired to participate in our liberties, took advantage of the truce to carry the insurrection to the producing centres of the country; they exercised the liberty of the press to excite all those passions that could lead to independence; they

used the right of meeting to conspire against us, and procure resources for the rebels. The cry of "Death to Spain" was heard for the first time in the streets of the Havana, as a definitive answer to such generous conduct; adherence to our banner was considered a crime, and volunteers and soldiers were publicly assassinated. With blind fury, with an impatience which has become truly providential, they thought triumph secure, and they cast off the mask. Many of those who had been present at the Congress boasted in the enemy's camp of having advised and obtained the imposition of direct taxes, with the sole object of spreading everywhere discontent and hatred to the mother-country. With notable perfidy they availed themselves of the first moment of our benevolence to forge the first dagger with which they were to strike us. Since that time the truth has been so patent that error is neither possible nor allowable.

Public opinion reformed itself. The facts were of such a nature that there was no room for doubt. The patriotic silence of the most advanced parties showed that the conviction of the uselessness of fresh concessions was general.

We remained, then, in the presence of an insurrection openly secessionist, without excuse or justification in the minds of statesmen, for they could not palliate it even with the hope that, if it triumphed, it could make an independent nation. Once eliminate from that island the elements with which the mother-country gave it life, and affords it subsistence, and no one acquainted with the subject can suppose that the insurgents could organize their desired Republic with the remaining weak and contradictory elements; and supposing that they were to remain a long time their own masters, they would only succeed in raising a living monument to the weakness of Spain and to the misfortune of her degenerate sons. At this moment, while making war on us, and having recourse to devastation and incendiaryism, they have not been able to prevent during the last four years the constant progress of the prosperity of the island, and this is a sure proof of the small influence they have over its destiny.

The war in Cuba, in view of such data and with the consent of all, was handed over to the decision of arms.

The Puerto Rico insurrection had the same nature. It is set forth in official documents that, so early as 1866, its leaders had come to an understanding with the Cuban conspirators. In the Proclamations they made on taking up arms, they literally demand independence. They confess their crime in the trials that were interrupted by the amnesty, copy of the proceedings in which exist in the State Offices; and should such facts leave any doubt, it would be dissipated by the sack to which they condemned the houses of those who, in Lares, were most noted for their loyalty to Spain. In this they occupied the few hours of their holding the town.

Unprotected by the jungle, which is the true bulwark of the Cuban insurrection, and obliged by the nature of the country to fight openly, or submit unconditionally, they understood that it was not in the field that they could best serve their cause. They changed their tactics but not their intentions. This is proved by the effects of their conduct. Never since the amnesty have they given proof of a truly Spanish feeling. Far from helping us, as they ought if they were loyal, to put an end as soon as possible to the hazardous situation of Cuba, they have not ceased for a single day to bring forward their apparent tranquillity as an argument for demanding and working for the political and social reforms which would produce the greatest uneasiness among the defenders of Cuba, and afford the greatest stimulus to the rebels. The work is the same, the manner of labour different; but all tends to the same end. In Cuba exists the appearance of war, and in Puerto Rico the hope of victory.

We should keep prudent silence on this point, did we not see with surprise that there is an attempt to base a whole system of government upon the inconceivable error that in Puerto Rico there is no true secessionist party. Disastrous must be the consequences of such promises. No consideration obliges us in such a case to respect falseness and perfidy; everything, on the contrary, compels us to show the naked truth, which is the only foundation on which a firm edifice can be raised.

One of the most alarming symptoms of this unfortunate business, is the rash desire of persons in a high social position to persuade us that Puerto Rico is in its normal state, and quite independent of the conditions of Cuba. Rebellion appeared in both almost at the same time; their connivance has been proved, their mutual assistance is evident; their origin and laws have been the same, and so will be their future. No intelligence can be so darkened as to conceive our banner vanquished in one island and triumphant in the other.

Those who believed this in good faith, no doubt had their eyes opened when the Authority governing Puerto Rico, in spite of his radical ideas, and the sympathy he had shown for the reformers, and the applause he had received for such tendencies, refused, in

exercise of his right according to our ancient laws, to fulfil the Decree of 1870 for municipal organization, believing, like a good Spaniard, that it was incompatible with the safety of that land. His arguments were listened to, and there was reason to suppose that, in consequence of this, the supposed normal condition of Puerto Rico would not, for the present at least, again threaten the integrity of the territory.

The grave complications everywhere occasioned by any reform in the sad and lamentable institution of slavery are only too notorious. The time at which Spain began the solution of this problem excludes all suspicion as to the firmness of her resolution. We had in Cuba the same hostility as at present, and even greater hostility; the same secessionist spirit, watching for a favourable opportunity to override everything; we then, as now, required the produce of the island, the foundation and guarantee of the credit to which we constantly appeal, to meet the expenses of the war; any perturbation in labour would have produced difficulties hard or impossible to remedy. Under such crises no country in the world has attempted to abolish slavery. However, the Spanish Cortes voted the Law of 4th June, 1870. Those born in Spain since 1868 are already free, and no more slaves will ever be born in Spanish dominions; free are those who belonged to the State, and those over sixty years of age; corporal punishment is abolished, and the child and old man are efficiently protected. Thus did Spain act up to her obligations and her conscience. As an organ in this case of universal public opinion, a European Government, and precisely the Government which has of old most interested itself in this question, did us complete justice before the Parliament of its country.

This question remained satisfactorily solved until such time as the condition of those countries should change. The Constituent Cortes, understanding the urgent necessity of avoiding the perpetual alarm of so many interests, laid it down in Article 21 of the Law, that no new reform should be attempted until the Island of Cuba should be represented in Parliament. Besides this undertaking,—the most solemn obligation that can be contracted by a nation,—there are many protestations tending to the same object, made by the men who are now most influential in the Government of the State. The head of the Government declared before the Cortes, amid general approval, that the spirit which animated the Havana volunteers should animate his Colonial policy. With no less applause from the Chamber, another of the most important members of the Ministry declared that in his opinion there was no principle inferior to that of the integrity of the country, and that to this principle he was resolved to sacrifice all others. These opinions have been ratified in the present Cortes. Besides the speech made on 12th October last, by the head of the Ministry, the spirit and tendencies of which speech were warmly applauded and accepted by the most Conservative men in the Chamber, on the 14th of the same month, the Minister of the Colonies, *à propos* of an address concerning slavery, pronounced to the Senate the following words:—"If the Government be now asked to tell the Chamber its decision in this matter, I forestall its answer by saying to the Senate that the Government will do in the question of slavery nothing more than fulfil strictly the law and regulations; absolutely nothing more." And it cannot be said that the Minister did not faithfully interpret the decision of his colleagues. A person worthy of entire credit, fully authorized by all the proprietors in Cuba to state to the Government the necessities of that island, sent to the persons who commissioned him the self same assurances, previously read and approved by the present President of the Council of Ministers.

The lessons of experience, the precepts of the law, the solemn protestations, the confidential words, so many guarantess, in fine, inspired the consoling hope that the policy of the Government in the Antilles would, for the present, be confined to satisfying the most urgent of their necessities, viz., the termination of the war and the undeceiving of all the rebels.

Such was the state of things when a few days afterwards, suddenly, without any incident having occurred which might have made the inconsequence compatible with dignity, the most important individuals of the present Government, filled with an extravagant and immeasurable disquiet, and the true causes of which the Spanish people still ignore, declared that they were determined at once to enforce in Puerto Rico the decree on the organization of the municipality, stayed as being dangerous in the opinion of a radical authority, another decree, separating the civil from the military command, and the immediate and instantaneous abolition of slavery. Disastrous as similar measures are in themselves, they are the more so, and above all the more inexplicable, when the unhappy times are considered in which they are adopted. The civil war had already invaded the Provinces of Catalonia and menaced those of the north; the Federal party, in revolt in various parts of Andalusia, endeavoured to prevent the complete carrying out of the conscription, and to thin the ranks of the army. A loan was being effected, on the

realization of which the Government depended for the meeting of its engagements, as well as for its very existence. Such was the fear—such the heartrending dissensions—which surrounded the Ministry. Which of them was to disappear, even to be diminished by the Colonial reforms? Their bare announcement aggravated them all.

While contemplating such blindness the remembrance of the most lamentable events existing in official documents is awakened, which give an evident proof that there have not been wanting in the spheres of our Government persons who viewed these questions with a judgment odious and repugnant to the dignity and conscience of Spain. Those communications, in which the representative at this Court of the United States are involuntarily recalled to one's memory, in which he detailed to his Government that an important political man, then an intimate friend and supporter of the present Ministers, was prepared to open negotiations for the cession of Cuba for a satisfactory indemnity. Analogous communications are brought to memory, in which that same diplomatist, after that he had informed his Government of the projects respecting Puerto Rico, which one of the present Ministers entertained, added, albeit this was only his own idea, and anticipating the joyful news that, once realized, the prompt independence of Cuba would be inevitable. Such a prediction was not without foundation. The Decree of 1870, on Municipal Government, having been put into force with some slight alterations, the Spanish dominion in Puerto Rico remains defenceless, and dependent on the will of its enemies. All the channels of influence—all the social and political strings—become the attributes of those municipalities. They will pay the clergy, direct public instruction and beneficence, without State intervention. Among the number of their infinite attributes is that of appointing arbitrators without limitation on articles of primary necessity. By this means alone they can render unnecessary the communication of our ships with those ports. They are, moreover, empowered to organize and pay an armed force, and even to form associations and communities among themselves, that is to say, to group the municipalities in any number they may think fit, for ends in their exclusive interest.

Such measures, always dangerous in such a form, if we consider the time in which they have been decreed, appear more calculated to organize the rebellion than the municipality. And let it not be said that the Government was obliged by anterior laws to publish this decree. Article 108 of the State Constitution concedes to the constituent Cortes alone the faculty to reform the Government system in our Colonial possessions; the exception which it establishes in the following one, which forbade the administration of the Philippine Archipelago from being altered by means of a law, leaves its import so clear that it renders all controversy impossible. Certain, as is the case, that the fourth transitory order of the Municipal Law of the Peninsula imposes on the Government the obligation to apply it to the Province of Puerto Rico; those who imagine that the fundamental code can be changed without any other formality than the transitory disposition of a law, certainly show but small respect for it; but even going to the length of granting them this right, this same disposition, which has been invoked, has not as yet been respected, since it provides that, on the application of the Municipal Law to Puerto Rico, the Government should conform to the project of constitution presented to the constituent Cortes for that island: a project which, in laying down the conditions for the acquirement of the rights of an elector, requires that he should be able to read and write, or pay 8 dollars in taxes. This condition has been substituted in the Decree in force, by that of being able to read and write, or the payment of a direct tax to the State. So grave an alteration is one of the most essential bases of any law which has to do with the suffrage, completely nullifies the principle of conforming to the project of the Constitution of Puerto Rico, which, if it were imposed with any object, was precisely for that which it has not done.

The Government, then, availing itself of a transitory disposition of the Law of the Municipalities of the Peninsula, sets aside constitutional precept, while it infringes that same law, which served it as a pretext for the infringement of the Constitution. Apart from the confusion and disharmony with which the most arduous and important affairs of the Monarchy have been treated, it results from all this, that, without being forced to do so by the laws, but by disregarding the spirit and letter of them, the Government has succeeded in realizing a programme which, according to the opinion of a man so versed in American affairs as the United States' Representative, would lead, in a short time, to the emancipation of the Antilles.

A project of law, making its way through a series of obstacles, appeared at the same time for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. This question brought about a crisis; and, before the Crown had allayed it, before the Cortes had been consulted in the matter, and before public opinion in Spain would declare itself, that part of the Government which favoured immediate abolition, began by communicating its project to all the

Governments of the world. A proceeding so unusual and uncalled for was inevitably calculated to affect the value of the definitive opinion which the public bodies might arrive at in this affair. Could by chance the nature of the answer of the foreign Powers be doubtful? Who can doubt that they would contribute by their warm applause to immediate abolition? Applause, too, which was all the more spontaneous on the present occasion, since the injury or disaster which so premature a measure will occasion, was alone to be borne by Spain. Was it to be expected that a foreign Power would say to us: "You commenced abolition two years ago; you are engaged in a war; the disquietude of public opinion may occasion your ruin, look to yourselves." Who could expect that the foreigner would speak to us when the Spaniards, who now govern us, do not say so? But it was necessary to look for allies in order to remove the opposition which might oppose the project, and fearing, perhaps, that they would not be found in sufficient numbers in Spain, they were sought for abroad. They were sought for there, where an interest in our future and our existence would not render it an obstacle to find them.

While exciting the expectations of foreign nations, it has been attempted to restrain our liberty; respect for our independence has been lost, and our decision is asked for under such circumstances, that should it prove contrary to the project, everything has been done in order to make it appear hateful, and, if favourable, imposed. There are, however, still graver incidents which imperatively call for the attention of the country. Hardly had the first rumours of the projected reforms been circulated, when, to the surprise of everybody, with the exception of the Government, the President of the great American Republic dedicates in the interminable paragraph which, in the Message presented to Congress, treats of the affairs of Spain, and which, while it sacrifices somewhat to that spirit of conciseness, which is usual in documents of this nature, enters on considerations which, unfortunately, have been subsequently accepted and developed in speeches delivered in our Parliament. Surprise is expressed that hostilities in Cuba are prolonged, without taking into account how easy it is, owing to the inaccessible nature of the country, to keep up an appearance of resistance, which is, in truth, what exists there; while, forgetting that these same United States in Florida, Russia in the Caucasus, France in Africa, England in India, in a word, every nation has had analogous wars—wars of long duration and small importance—without scandal or protests from any quarter. The belief is expressed that this contest is sustained by slavery, thereby doing an honour to the rebels which they have never merited. In none of the manifests which they made known on rising did they proclaim the principle of emanipation; it was promised subsequently, with the undoubted intention of disturbing the public mind, and they have only succeeded in bringing to light the contempt which they inspire in these same men of colour, who have preferred to be the slaves in the service of their former masters to being free under the orders of such liberators. A conviction is expressed that new liberal concessions would be very much adapted for the re-establishment of peace, and concludes by prophesying with miraculous exactitude the conduct which the Spanish Government has subsequently pursued. By the name of coincidence, it has been attempted to explain the sad circumstances, that the President of the United States was the herald of projects which had to be presented, and were presented to our Chambers. In truth, a most lamentable coincidence! That only suffices, should it prevail, to destroy our moral strength in the new world, and to transplant from Madrid to Washington the direction and future destiny of our possessions in America.

The project for abolition has not been more respectful of our Constitution and laws than the Decree on the Municipalities. It annuls the promise held out in Article 21 of the Law of July 1870, that no fresh reforms would be attempted without the intervention of the representatives of Cuba; by virtue of this promise large interests have been called into existence which will be forcibly destroyed; and Article 14 of the Constitution, according to which nobody can be deprived of his property without having been previously indemnified, is rather set at defiance than fulfilled, for a considerable part of the indemnity which the new Law promises, the only one which will not be illusory, those who have been dispossessed will have to pay.

The disregard of the laws, the contempt for so many considerations, the thoughtless ardour with which social and political reforms are attempted in the presence of an armed enemy, and the separation of the civil from the military command is announced, greatly debilitating all authority at a moment when energy is of such paramount necessity, form a monstrous policy, that no antecedents can be found in any country in support of it, nor motives of public convenience in Spain which might justify it. Everything shows, everything convinces one that this most unfortunate negotiation has been concluded behind the back of the nation, in obscure councils, where neither the genuine representation, nor the interests, nor the independence, nor the prestige of the country had any true representation.

It is in vain that it is attempted to excite the imagination, and to create adequate con-

fusion in order to conceal the skeleton of our misfortunes, while invoking generous impulses, which no one gainsays. Who is opposed to abolition? We proclaimed and defended it, and it is only error or malice which can reproach us, that we would attempt to make it compatible with the integrity of our territory. The Law of July satisfies our present requirements. In Puerto Rico it has already freed 10,000 slaves, according to official data, and restored to liberty more than 40,000 belonging to the State and to private individuals in the Island of Cuba. It cannot be suspected that the nation which, in the midst of so many unforeseen accidents ("azares"), had the courage to settle in principle, and to commence to carry out in practice, the problem of emancipation, would retrocede in prosperous times. The resource of "coartacion," created by our ancient laws—a resource which is exclusively our own, by which any Spanish slave could always present himself before the Syndic, his bounden defender, cause himself to be valued, and acquires the right of freeing himself, according to the price; this lawful means, added to the custom of conceding to the slaves plots of land, and leisure to cultivate them on their own account, have left open among us the path of liberty to economy and labour. In our dominions, a fourth, and even a third, part of the people of colour has co-existed free by the side of the slave in proof of the efficacy of such measures. The permission to make wills ("testamentificacion") re-organized by the Tribunals, as regards the slaves, shows that at no time were they considered as chattels. Men of colour have risen to the highest posts in our militia, without inspiring repugnance or opposition. These circumstances have given to slavery in Spain a humane and Christian character which distinguishes it from all others from which the world has suffered. Will it not be allowable, while invoking these precedents, to apply the Law of 1870 with the tranquillity which a people necessitates in order to remain master of its actions, with that tranquillity at least in which Brazil, which has adopted it after us, realizes Emancipation, without anybody interfering with or molesting it, notwithstanding the normal circumstances in which it is, and though the number of its slaves amounts to a million and a half? May we not be permitted to imitate Lincoln? Gradual abolition has always been his intention; he offered the remainder of the century to his opponents in order to carry it out. He adopted immediate emancipation as the most tremendous and painful resource to which the war could force force him. Now this measure, which when applied against his enemies, when they menaced him most furiously, appeared painful to Lincoln, appears laudable to the Spanish Government when used against our brothers at the time when they are most stoutly defending us.

Even though it had not been shown that sudden emancipation has always been as fatal to the slave as to the master, though the Island of Santo Domingo and Jamaica itself were not the living witnessess of so many tragedies, we would oppose such fatal haste on the present occasion with all our strength, because there is no principle, there is no sentiment, however noble and enlightened it may be, which could oblige us to sacrifice our country to it, nor is there any people so destitute of the instincts of life that it should lend itself submissively to be the inert material of such sacrifices. Nothing is so afflicting as the consideration that the Cuban question derives all its importance and gravity from our own mistakes and weaknesses. No one on comparing the resources of Spain and those of the rebels can fear that the latter can ever be victorious by force of arms. It is evident that if some day they arrive at the terrible conviction that only by force could they attain their object, they would not be long before they abandoned the land they are devastating, or gave their obedience to the mother country. However, the war still continues; what do they hope? In what do they confide? They hope that want of forethought or malice may provoke questions which, by carrying division into the ranks of loyal persons, may destroy the powerful unity of their efforts. They hope that foreign diplomacy may create obstacles if it surprises a moment of weakness in our Government. And they hope above all that some imprudent reform in the law of emancipation may paralyse production and make the war impossible. In search of such efficacious resources their agents are moving on all sides; they flatter ignorance; they use indifference for their own ends; they make compacts with perfidy; they invoke humanity in order to facilitate treason to our native country; they cry aloud to foreign Powers, "Threaten Spain, for she appears to be desirous of being afraid;" they cry out to the reformers, "Settle in Puerto Rico the future of Cuba, without the intervention of Cuba; disturb its defenders who now remain united;" and they cry incessantly to the intrepid abolitionists, "Alter the law, disturb the plantations, destroy productions; quick, quick, for the Spanish soldier has bread and powder!"

The projects initiated by the Government will give no other fruits as we have shown than to place in the hands of the rebels the moral and political resources they require, in order to steal from us prestige, confidence, unity, bread, and powder.

The truth being known, the Spanish people must now appeal to all the legitimate

means in their power to prevent such powerful auxiliaries from reaching the camp of our enemies.

It will be a greater misfortune still for Spain to have shown herself worthy of losing the Antilles than to have lost them.

Madrid, January 10, 1873.

(Here follow Signatures.)

No. 7.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 27.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 24, 1873.

A LARGE and influential meeting was held yesterday in the Opera House, the principal theatre in Madrid, in support of the Government measure for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. Speeches were made on the occasion by Señor Gabriel Rodríguez, Señor Labra, Señor Carrasco, and other well-known members of the Spanish Abolition Society.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 8.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 28, 1873.

THE Report of the Commission, or Committee, on the Government Bill for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico will be read in the Congress to-day. The amendments proposed by the Commission are that the Law shall take effect in the island four months after its publication in the Madrid official "Gazette," instead of in the "Gazette" of Puerto Rico, a very important amendment, and that the Government shall indemnify the slaveholders by raising a loan of 30,000,000 pesetas (about 1,200,000*l.*), with interest and a sinking fund, assigning for that purpose an annual sum of 14,000,000 reals (about 15,000*l.*) in the Puerto Rican budget until the debt shall be entirely extinguished.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 9.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 28, 1873.

THE "Imparcial," of which newspaper Señor Gasset is the proprietor, publishes to-day the Project of Law for the gradual abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, which that gentleman, when Minister of the Colonies, proposed to submit to the Cortes. I inclose it, with translation, as a document of some interest, although no longer of any practical importance.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD

Inclosure in No. 9.

Project of Law.

(Translation.)

ARTICLE 1. Slavery shall terminate in Puerto Rico on 31st December 1878.

Art. 2. In order to carry out the above Article, the slaves existing in the island on the date of the publication of this law in the "Gazette" of the Province, and not yet "coartados," are declared to be so.

Art. 3. The "coartacion" shall be made by the State, which shall hand over to the owner 20 per cent. of the value of the slave.

Art. 4. The "coartacion" determines, not only a limitation of the price of the slave, but also a fraction of the unit representing his state of slavery ("sino tambien una fraccion de la unidad representativa de su estado de esclavitud"). Consequently the slave shall be entitled, out of the wages represented by his labour, to a part equal to that which, by the "contracion," he redeems from his slavery.

Art. 5. The part to which the slave may be entitled out of the wages represented by his labour shall be received by his owner, and shall be destined in the space of six years to the redemption of the slave, and to the formation of his stock of money ("peculio") in the manner ordered by the following Articles:

Art. 6. Within two months, counted from the publication of the Law in Puerto Rico, the valuation of the slaves mentioned in Article 2 shall be made, for the purpose of fixing the price of "coartacion" for each slave.

This price shall not exceed 1,500 pesetas.

The valuation shall be made in the manner prescribed by the regulations.

Art. 7. When the valuation has been made, the owners shall at once receive the sum mentioned in Article 3.

Art. 8. The slave being "coartado" at 20 per cent. of his value, the first year 15 per cent. of the wages represented by his labour shall be destined to his redemption, and 5 per cent. of the same to the formation of his stock of money.

The second year 20·718 (21) per cent. and 5 per cent., shall be respectively destined to the same purposes.

In the third, 28·617 (29) per cent. and 5 per cent.

In the fourth, 39·527 (40) per cent. and 5 per cent.

In the fifth, 54·597 (55) per cent. and 5 per cent.

In the sixth, 75·412 (75) per cent. and 5 per cent.

Art. 9. The redemption and formation of the stock of money of those under twelve years of age shall be performed by the State, until they reach that age and are fit for work.

Art. 10. For the application of the foregoing Articles, it shall be understood that the owner can only exact from the slave "coartado" one real ("un real fuerte") for every 500 pesetas of his value, according to that which is established by custom and the regulations.

Art. 11. The slave "coartado" may use for his redemption, besides the sums fixed in Articles 5 and 8 money that he may acquire by any other means, and when the rest of his value is paid he shall at once be free.

Art. 12. For the slaves who, counting from the publication of this law, may have for two years formed part of a family, and have lived in a separate habitation, and maintained themselves by their labour, 5 per cent. over and above the total value of the "coartacion" shall be paid to their owners.

Art. 13. The slaves shall be masters of what they may acquire by all legal means, and dispose of the same like free men.

The property of slaves who die intestate, without children, parents, or recognized collateral relation to be their heirs, shall pass to a common fund for the increase of the stocks of money.

Art. 14. As to slaves "coartados" before the date of the publication of this Law in the Puerto Rico "Gazette," it shall be understood that they are not "coartados" for a larger sum than the maximum of 1,500 pesetas fixed in Article 6, and the State shall supply the difference between the amount of their first "coartacion" and the sum fixed by this law for the same.

Art. 15. When the slaves shall have redeemed the total price of their "coartacion," they shall remain under the protection of the State, and subject to the orders which regulate labour.

Art. 16. The "coartacion" and the sale of slaves "coartados" shall be performed gratis; they shall be understood as being official, and the testimonies and certificates shall be given to the slaves on the proper stamped paper.

Art. 17. The orders and practices opposed to the letter and spirit of this law are abolished.

Madrid, December 1872.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received February 9.)

My Lord,

Madrid, January 29, 1873.

I HAVE the honour to inclose translation of the Project of Law for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, as amended by the Commission of the Congress to which it was referred. Your Lordship will perceive that several important changes have been made in the Law submitted by the Government to the Chambers. By the 2nd Article all slaves are declared to be free four months after the publication of the Law in the Official Gazette of Madrid, and thus the local authorities will no longer be able to defer carrying out the Law as they might have done had its publication in the Puerto Rico Gazette been necessary. By the 4th Article it is enacted that no obstacles which may arise in settling the indemnity to be paid to owners of slaves, or any other obstacles to the complete carrying out of the law, shall interfere with the execution of the 2nd Article, viz., the liberation of the slaves; and, lastly, the indemnity to the slave-holders is to be provided for by a loan to be raised upon the resources of the island.

It is expected that the discussion of this Project of Law will commence in three or four days.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Inclosure in No. 10.

Amended Project of Law.

(Translation.)

Article 1. Slavery is for ever abolished in the Province of Puerto Rico.

Art. 2. Those who are now slaves shall be free at the end of the four months following the publication of this Law in the Madrid Gazette.

Art. 3. The possessors of slaves shall be indemnified for their value in the space of time mentioned in the preceding Article, according to the dispositions of this Law.

Art. 4. The obstacles which may arise, whether on account of the indemnification or of the fulfilment of this Law, shall in no way impede the realization of Article 2.

Art. 5. The State destines 30,000,000 pesetas to the indemnification mentioned in Article 3. That sum shall be distributed among the possessors of slaves, taking into consideration the number, age, and individual capabilities of those slaves.

Art. 6. The distribution shall be made by a Junta, composed of the Superior Civil Governor of Puerto Rico, as President, three Provincial Deputies chosen by the Deputation, the "Sindico" of the municipality of the Capital, two proprietors chosen by fifty largest slave owners, and two others chosen by the fifty smallest slave owners. The decisions of this Commission shall be arrived at by a majority of votes.

Art. 7. The Government shall place yearly in the Budget of the island the sum of 3,500,000 pesetas for interest on, and amortization of, a loan of 30,000,000 pesetas in amortizable debt, the proceeds of which are destined to the indemnification established by Article 3. Should the Government not place the loan, it will hand over the bonds to the present slave-owners.

Art. 8. The Government will draw up the regulations necessary for the execution of this Law, without in any way attacking the freedom of labour.

(Signed) F. SALMERON Y ALONSO, *President.*

F. DE BONA.

A. RAMOS CALDERON.

M. MONCASI.

R. M. DE LABRA.

M. GOMEZ MARIN.

J. F. CINTRAN, *Secretary.*

Palace of the Congress, January 27, 1873.

No. 11.

Consul Cowper to Earl Granville.—(Received February 15.)

My Lord,

Porto Rico, January 19, 1873.

I AM happy to be able to inform your Lordship that the case of the French slave-trader Joseph Beaupied, to which I had the honour of directing your Lordship's attention in my

despatch of the 5th December last, has not only resulted in his discomfiture, but in producing the most salutary arrangements for the future.

I stated that Beaupied had protested against the forced purchase of the freedom of the three children whom he had attempted to transport to Cuba. I should have been more correct in saying that, although he could not oppose a proceeding altogether in accordance with law, he claimed the children as their "tutor," or guardian, under the provisions of the Preliminary Act of Emancipation, until they were eighteen years of age; but the Audiencia has decided that he has no claim, as he intends to remove them from the island, and would probably sell them upon their arrival in Cuba.

I am credibly informed that the following important Decrees are in the possession of the Government, although not yet published:—

1. The export of slaves from the island under any circumstances is prohibited.
2. All Cuban slaves in this island are free.
3. All slaves in Cuba who have been imported from Puerto Rico are free.
4. All slaves who have ever visited a free country (the adjacent islands included) are free.

It is with peculiar gratification that I am enabled to report these acts, as I have always done justice to the good faith of the Spanish Government in matters of Slave Trade, even when popular opinion was against it, knowing, as I did, the difficulties with which it had to contend; and now that it has adopted the only course which could have been successful, of separating the Puerto Rico question from the Cuban, and has introduced into the Cortes, on the 23rd December last, a project of law for the total and immediate abolition of slavery in this island, it has proved that my confidence was not misplaced.

Your Lordship will doubtless have received from Her Majesty's Minister in Madrid a copy of this proposed Law, but I nevertheless take the liberty of sending an abstract:—

Article 1. Slavery to cease to exist in Puerto Rico four months after the publication of the Law.

Art. 2. Proprietors to be indemnified within that period.

Art. 3. The rate of indemnity to be fixed by a Commission, composed of the Captain-General, the Intendente, the Fiscal of the Audiencia, three Members of the Provincial Deputation, and the three proprietors holding the greatest number of slaves.

Art. 4. Of the amount fixed, 80 per cent. is to be paid to the proprietors, half by the Central Government, and half by the Provincial, the proprietors losing the 20 per cent.

Art. 5. The Government to retain the right of carrying out the details.

It is indeed a matter of congratulation to the friends of freedom, and an honour to the Spanish Government, that it has had the courage to propose, and the Cortes the humanity to accept, this Act; for although, as I have before observed in former despatches, the Preliminary Act was sufficient for the sure but gradual abolition of slavery, yet, with all the loyal endeavours of the Government, the pace has been painfully slow, for during the year 1872, 555 slaves only obtained their liberty, namely, 410 by the operation of the Law, and 145 by self-purchase or gift of their masters, which is a singular confirmation of the calculation which I had the honour to submit to your Lordship in my despatch of the 26th March last.

It would be premature further to discuss this question until the Law has actually passed and is published; but I shall not fail at the proper time to inform your Lordship of its reception and probable operation. I will only add, in the interest of the labourers themselves, that I hope the Government in emancipating the slaves, will not include the idlers, but will keep the Librela Law in practical operation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. AUGUSTUS COWPER.

No. 12.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received February 21.)

(Extract.)

Madrid, February 17, 1873.

THE Executive Government of the Republic here have announced their intention of proceeding at once with the measure for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico proposed to the Cortes by Señor Zorilla's Ministry. The discussion upon it will probably commence to-day in the National Assembly.

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No. 13.

Earl Granville to Mr. Layard.

Sir, *Foreign Office. February 27, 1873.*
 WITH reference to my despatch of the 9th ultimo, I transmit, for your information, a copy of a further despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Puerto Rico, relative to the proceedings of Joseph Beupied, and to the question of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico.*

I am, &c.
 (Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 14.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received March 28.)

My Lord, *Madrid, March 22, 1873.*
 I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract, in translation, of an important speech delivered in the National Assembly yesterday by Señor Castelar, in support of the Project of Law for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico. The defence his Excellency made of the United States was in reply to an elaborate attack upon the policy of that country with regard to Spain by Señor Garcia Lomas, in a speech delivered on a previous day.

I have, &c.
 (Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Extract from the Speech of Señor Castelar on Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico.

(Translation.)

AND, Gentlemen, would it, think you, be possible that we Spaniards, after these great events in the world, should keep up slavery? Do you think this would be possible? What, then, is not slavery, apart from being a question of humanity, an international question for us? What, did not we, and if not we ourselves, that august King, Don Fernando VII, agree with England on the question of the Slave Trade, admit the right of search in his ships, institute Tribunals on our very territory, in which a foreign Power had a direct right of taking part? And those who represent the historical, the traditional, the monarchical element, are they astonished at the moral influence of a free people, when they wear branded on their shoulders the mark that England put there? And, Gentlemen, there has been no Session in the House of Commons or of Lords in which the political conduct now of the Government of Spain, now of the Captains-General with regard to the Slave Trade, has not been protested against, and there has not existed a Spanish Government which has not had to give satisfaction to England for these grave matters. England, moreover, has always spoken on this question with a sort of authority and imperious dictation, and Spanish Ministers have often thought it necessary to answer her humbly.

Well, then, Gentlemen, have the United States done the same? Ah! Gentlemen, let me here protest against those misplaced words, dictated by a great zeal, by a great feeling of patriotism, but still out of place, against those words which have been pronounced here with regard to the Representative of the United States, to that country, to its President. Let me protest, I say, in the name of this Democratic, this Republican Nation, which cannot do less than have a great admiration for the illustrious Nation which, in its life of somewhat less than a century, has known how to settle the problem in search of which we have so long wandered—the problem of uniting democracy with liberty, and the Republic with authority and government.

If, in addition, it be remembered that, in this general distrust which Europe evinces, and cannot do less than evince,—for I do justice to every sentiment that in this distrust which Europe evinces towards our democracy and our Republic, the United States hastened to recognize us, and to declare with her moral and material guarantee to the

* No. 11.

world that we are a people fit to govern ourselves, without fear that our actions would gainsay her,—ought not our gratitude towards this great Nation, which has such a high opinion of us, to be double? And if, in addition to this, the President of the United State, in a Speech, his own work, in a Speech for which he alone is responsible (for it is not necessary for him to consult even his Ministers, since it is a speech pronounced on the advent of his second Presidency), this illustrious man, who has fought on the field of battle, who has renewed the exploits of Alexander the Great, said: "I do not desire war, I do not want military rule, I do not demand conquests, all I ask for is liberty and democracy. I wish that all nations may be united under the same law." The man that said this, ought he not to be applauded by a Republican Chamber, and recognized as the Colossal figure which seals the time of conquests, and inaugurates the epoch of liberty and right?

Apart from this there are in that nation Cuban societies which it cannot prevent, as we cannot in any way prevent public societies with the object of changing the form of any foreign Government whatsoever, for our Constitution does not allow us. What then, in the face of our Constitution, do honourable members think that we could prevent here any public society, so long as it does not go beyond the limits of a moral propaganda against a foreign Government? We could not. What we could do, our Constitution allowing us, would be to prevent any *coup de main*, any invasion, any armament. Well then, the United States, under all its Governments has to the best of its power done this, and it is plain and easy to understand why, Gentlemen. They have an object of internal political interest in so doing.

In the time of a certain celebrated Minister, who hoped to attain the Presidency of the United States by annexing Cuba and Puerto Rico to the Southern States, so as to add two slave States to the Confederation, in that time one can understand and explain that the United States, and especially those of the South, would protect filibustering expeditions, and the Southern States did protect them, and then when the integrity of our country was menaced, when Cuba and Puerto Rico were threatened, that was in the time of the negroes, in the time of the Slave-States, of slavery, for it was greatly to their interest to have two States to weigh in the American balance.

But now, what interest could it have in the possession of Cuba and Puerto Rico? None—none—absolutely none. They would completely upset the equilibrium of the Confederation. They would introduce into it an element of reaction, they would import a race which would not blend with the Anglo-Saxon race, whose nature it is to fight with races not in affinity with itself, and would thus perhaps compromise the greatness, the order, and the peace of that people, and of that marvellous Republic.

And this the United States thoroughly understand. But, Gentlemen, as they have a frontier bordering on ours, as there has been an insurrection in Cuba, they, like England, have directed, not menaces, for they well know the dignity of the Spanish nation; no, not notes that could in any way exercise pressure on internal affairs; no, Gentlemen, they have addressed us that friendly, courteous advice which all Governments address to one another in that great Congress which civilized nations compose—(Senor Suez Tuelan:—And the note of the 29th of October.)—I will speak of that note. In the first place that note, although it said that the attitude was about to be changed, was not a note directed to the Spanish Minister of State, but a note directed to the Representatives of the United States in Madrid, and in that note he was not instructed to read it to, and leave it with the Spanish Minister of State. (A Representative:—And its publication?) The publication of it may have been abuse of confidence, or indiscretion. And I, myself, in the last few days have been on the point of being the victim of my indiscretion, and have cost myself great pains to prevent the publication of a note which, notwithstanding, was on the point of being published.

Further, if in consequence of the diplomatic traditions of the United States that note was published, the Minister of State knew nothing of it, and above all, officially nothing of it. It was never read or presented to him, it did not influence his determination, dictated as this was, only by his own conscience.

No, Gentlemen, no; let us not humiliate ourselves to this point. Let us not, to humiliate a party, humiliate the Spanish nation. The Minister of State of the last King was the Minister of State of Spain. His eloquence is our glory, his honour is ours, his name is our name; and, granted his patriotism, we ought to grant and confess that he did all he could to preserve untarnished the honours of Spain, which none will tread under foot whilst a patriot remains in this land.

No; that Minister did not know of that note, was not even aware of its existence, when he decided upon the abolition of slavery.

The Radical party has engagements with respect to the question of Cuba and

Puerto Rico! Have we none? And I, who as yet have had no conversation on American politics with the most worthy Representative of the United States, (who has come several times to see me, but with whom, owing to the pressure of events, I have not been able to speak), I assert that I am a partisan of the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, of its abolition in Cuba, the interests of all being taken into account. I am in favour of reforms in the Colonies, to grant to Cuba and Puerto Rico, as far as possible, all liberties; but if anyone were to come to me and remind me of those promises and impose them on me, I should say, I have made these agreements with my country and my conscience, and a foreign nation has nothing to do with them. And the most worthy Minister of the United States, who knows and esteems us, would never wish to impose on the Spanish nation and Republic.

And, Gentlemen, what did happen in the Radical Ministry was that immediately after succeeding to power it entered into engagements with the Spanish nation to alter the Constitution of the Antilles, and to do all it could to abolish slavery.

But, Gentlemen, did not the Ministers of the Conservative party,—perchance when notes were addressed to them in a certain sense, when friendly advice in a certain sense was offered them by the most worthy Representative of the United States in Madrid,—did they not speak of this, did they not give him certain indirect satisfaction, did they not say that certain reforms would be set on foot in certain periods of legislation? And notwithstanding nobody has thought, nor do I think, that because some nations interest themselves in the lot of others, nobody has thought, nor do I, that because some internal questions have some connection with external policy, that those Ministers have conformed the dignity and honour of their country. The question of slavery is in truth an international question, as I have before said.

What would the Government say, if any foreign Minister were to say how are you going to settle the question of the “foros de Galicia?” What are you going to do with respect to the “rabassa morta” of Catalonia? No foreign Minister will say such a thing, none could say it, for those are completely and absolutely questions for our own settlement; but as regards the question of slavery, granted human intelligence, the advancement of ideas, the engagements of Spain and her Treaties, that must be looked on in an international light.

And thus it is, Gentlemen, that on this question—and a frank policy is the best—that on this question all the Ministers of Spain, absolutely all, have received protests from England. There has been no Session of the English Parliament in which there has not been some protest against our Administration in Cuba; there has not been an English Minister who has not made some protest.

* * * * *

I did not set this reform on foot; I have not brought it on; I have guarded a patriotic silence; I have not agitated nor spurned on any Government; I did not wish that it should be possible to say of us that we were compromising the integrity of the country; but I must say one thing, which is, that if the project of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico is not voted, I decline before you all the responsibility of the consequences.

I decline them entirely. But if it is voted, then you shift the responsibility from your shoulders on to ours. We promise to die a thousand times rather than diminish by one atom the territory of the country. If the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico could bring dangers upon Spain, I swear that we Spanish Republicans would have the honour of dying in the tropics for the safety, liberty, independence, and integrity of the Spanish territory.

But, Gentlemen, if it is not voted, I will declare before Europe, before America, before the world, that it has not been voted because this Assembly, which came to birth under the Monarchy, and which under the Monarchy brought forward the abolition of slavery, has not thought fit to abolish slavery in order to compromise and even to dishonour the Republic.

No. 15.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received March 28.)

My Lord,

Madrid, March 24, 1873.

IT is with great satisfaction that I have to inform your Lordship that the Law for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico was yesterday passed by the National Assembly. I have the honour to inclose translation of it. Your Lordship will perceive that some

changes have been made in the Law as originally presented to the Cortes, and of which a copy was transmitted to your Lordship in my despatch of the 25th December last. Those changes consist principally of the 2nd Article, which provides that emancipated slaves shall be obliged to enter into contracts of apprenticeship for three years with their actual owners, with other persons, or with the State, of some modifications in the mode of indemnifying the slaveholders, and in the deferring until five years after the publication of the Law in the official "Gazette" of Madrid the full enjoyment by emancipated slaves of political rights. The 1st Article still declares that "slavery is for ever abolished in the Island of Puerto Rico."

In consequence of the absence of many Members of the National Assembly, and of the determination of others to throw out the measure by abstaining from voting upon it, no one believed yesterday morning that the Law would pass. The Assembly having, however, resolved in the afternoon to remain in permanent Session until the Bill had been disposed of, Commissions of the different political parties were named to confer together with a view to make such amendments in it as would be accepted by its opponents. A satisfactory result was the more easily arrived at as the Conservative party, which had most resolutely opposed the measure, began to fear that if it were not carried, a Cortes with a large Federal majority might hereafter emancipate the slaves without paying any indemnity to their owners, and as the Radicals, who had recently delayed the passing of their own law in the hope of bringing about a Ministerial crisis, were intimidated by the resolute attitude of the Government. Accordingly the amendments agreed to by the Commissions were unanimously accepted, and the law was passed without a division, and consequently without the necessity of one more than half the number of Members of the Assembly, as required by the Constitution when a vote is taken, being present. It was then resolved by acclamation that a marble tablet should be placed in the Congress to record this auspicious event.

The Government were right, in my opinion, in coming to a compromise. If the Bill had been lost, the settlement of this question might have been delayed to an indefinite period, and the agitation against it, which it was desirable in every respect should cease, might have increased. Several attempts had been recently made, and not without some prospect of success, to render the abolition of slavery gradual in Puerto Rico. It is now absolutely abolished, and the short apprenticeship extending over three years will perhaps be more beneficial to the slaves themselves than immediate unconditional freedom, if the Law be put into execution in good faith by the Spanish authorities. I am encouraged to hope by Mr. Cowper's last report, a copy of which was inclosed in your Lordship's last despatch of the 27th of February, that it will be. I have already had occasion to express to your Lordship my views as to the effect upon the Slavery Question in Cuba of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, and I am glad to find that they have now been generally adopted.

The history of the measure which has just passed will, I think, prove the difficulty of dealing with the question of slavery in this country, and the unreasonableness of those who maintained that it only required a word from Her Majesty's Government to put an end at once to this institution throughout the Spanish dominions. It has been my duty to report to your Lordship from time to time what has occurred here since Senor Zorrilla introduced his Bill for abolition in Puerto Rico some three months ago—the dangerous struggle which ensued, the successful attempts made to unite all parties and interests against it, the powerful league formed to oppose it, and the interference of the United States in the affairs of this country to which it gave rise. There can be little doubt that to the violent and unscrupulous opposition to which it led may be partly attributed the fall of the Monarchy. I trust that your Lordship will find that the course which I have ventured to pursue in this matter has been justified by the results. I hope that the time may not now be far distant when slavery will be abolished throughout the Spanish dominions, and that a question in which the English people have taken so deep an interest will be finally settled.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Law for the Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico.

(Translation.)

THE National Assembly, in the exercise of its sovereignty, decrees and sanctions the following law:—

Article 1. Slavery is for ever abolished in the Island of Puerto Rico.

Art. 2. The freed men are obliged to make contracts with their present owners, with other persons, or with the State, for a space of time which shall not be less than three years.

Three special functionaries, named by the superior Government, and called Protectors of the freed men, shall interfere in those contracts, as trustees of the freed men.

Art. 3. The slave-owners shall be indemnified within six months after the publication of this Law in the Madrid "Gazette."

Owners, whose former slaves will not make contracts with them, shall receive a bonus of 25 per cent. over and above the indemnification to which they would otherwise have been entitled.

Art. 4. The indemnification is fixed at 35,000,000 pesetas, which shall be realized by a loan to be raised by the Government, with the exclusive guarantee of the revenue of the Island of Puerto Rico. The sum of 3,500,000 pesetas shall be yearly included in the Puerto Rico Estimates, for interest on and amortization of the said loan.

Art. 5. The distribution shall be made by a Junta composed of the Superior Civil Governor of the Island, as President, the "Jefe Economico," the Fiscal of the "Audiencia," three Provincial Deputies chosen by the Deputation, the Syndic of the Municipality of the Capital, two proprietors chosen by the fifty largest slave-owners, and two others chosen by the fifty smallest.

The decision of this Commission shall be arrived at by a majority of votes.

Art. 6. Should the Government not place the loan, it will hand over the bonds to the present slave-owners.

Art. 7. The freed men shall enter upon the full enjoyment of political rights five years after the publication of the Law in the Madrid "Gazette."

Art. 8. The Government will issue the necessary orders for the execution of this Law, and for attending to the necessities as to charity and labour, which the said Law may bring about.

The Executive Power will take note of this, for its printing, publication, and fulfilment.

(Signed) F. SALMERON Y ALONSO, *President.*
 CAYO LOPEZ,
 E. BEUST,
 F. BALART, } *Secretaries.*

Palace of the National Assembly, March 22, 1873.

No. 16.

Earl Granville to Mr. Layard.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March 31, 1873.*

I HAVE received your despatch of the 24th instant, inclosing a translation of the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico, passed on the 23rd instant by the Spanish Assembly.

I need scarcely state that Her Majesty's Government have received the intelligence of the passing of this Bill with sincere gratification, and I have great pleasure in acknowledging the great tact and judgment displayed by you in the communications which have passed between you and the several Spanish Ministers with whom you have had to deal on the Slavery Question, and which have led to so satisfactory a result.

I have, at the same time, to request that you will convey to Señor Castelar and to his colleagues in the Ministry, the congratulations of Her Majesty's Government at the success of their endeavours to pass a Bill for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, a success which encourages Her Majesty's Government to hope will lead eventually, and at no distant date, to the adoption of measures for the abolition of slavery in all Spanish Colonies.

I am, &c.
 (Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 17.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received April 1.)

My Lord,

Madrid, March 27, 1873.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 24th instant, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Law for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, has been published in the official "Gazette" of yesterday.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 18.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received April 19.)

My Lord,

Madrid, April 13, 1873.

IN pursuance of the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch of 31st ultimo, I have conveyed to Señor Castelar, and have requested his Excellency to transmit to his colleagues in the Ministry, the congratulations of Her Majesty's Government at the success of their endeavours to pass a Bill for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, and I further expressed to his Excellency the hope of Her Majesty's Government that this success would lead eventually, and at no distant date, to the adoption of measures for the abolition of slavery in all the Spanish Colonies. Señor Castelar appeared to be much gratified by this communication, and begged me to thank your Lordship warmly for this expression of the approval of Her Majesty's Government, with which, he said, he would not fail to acquaint his colleagues. He repeated, what he had already told me, that the Government of which he is a member are resolved to introduce in the Cortes a measure for the abolition of slavery in Cuba as soon as possible. In the meanwhile the Minister of the Colonies, he informed me, has given orders that the "Moret" law is to be rigorously enforced. He, Señor Castelar, believed that if the provisions of that law are strictly carried out, and all the negroes who are entitled to their freedom as emancipados (liberated) there would only remain between 90,000 and 100,000 slaves in the island to be dealt with. He said that the principal slaveholders in Cuba have made up their minds that abolition is imminent, and are preparing themselves for it. Their great difficulty is now to obtain an adequate supply of free labour. I observed that the shameful manner in which the Chinese have been treated in Cuba had seriously discouraged the migration of free labourers. He admitted that such was the case, but he added that the Chinese hitherto imported were the dregs of the great cities, and not the class of men who ought to have been introduced into the Colony.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 19.

Earl Granville to Mr. Layard.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 23, 1873.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th of February, respecting M. Beaupied's transactions in slave-dealing, as reported by Mr. Consul Cowper, I have to inform you that I have received a note from the French Ambassador at this Court, stating that Mr. Cowper's account of M. Beaupied's transactions is confirmed by the French Consul at Puerto Rico, and that he has therefore been deprived of protection as a French subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 20.

Earl Granville to Mr. Layard.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 24, 1873.

I HAVE received your despatch of the 13th instant, reporting that you have conveyed to Señor Castelar the congratulations of Her Majesty's Government at the

success of the endeavours of the Spanish Ministry to pass a Bill for the immediate abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, and giving an account of a conversation you had held with his Excellency regarding the abolition of slavery in Cuba; and you will express to Señor Castelar the satisfaction with which his language on this subject is learned by Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 21.

Viscount Enfield to Consul Cowper.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 24, 1873.

WITH reference to your despatch of the 19th of January, respecting the proceedings of M. Beaupied, I am directed by Earl Granville to inform you that his Lordship has received a note from the French Ambassador at the Court of St. James's, stating that your account of M. Beaupied's transactions in slave-dealing are fully confirmed by the French Consul at Puerto Rico, and that he has been in consequence deprived of protection as a French subject.

I am, &c.
(Signed) ENFIELD.

No. 22.

Consul Cowper to Earl Granville.—(Received April 30.)

(Extract.)

Puerto Rico, April 6, 1873.

I HAVE the honour and satisfaction of informing your Lordship that upon the 30th ultimo the telegrams, announcing the abolition of slavery in the island, were received by the Captain-General, and that his Excellency immediately caused an extraordinary Gazette to be published, proclaiming the fact to the public, and communicating it officially to the foreign Consuls.

I addressed a few lines of congratulation to his Excellency, and called the same evening to renew them personally.

I have frequently expressed my conviction to your Lordship that this act of justice would be received by this essentially pacific people with satisfaction, and nothing could exceed the calm, but at the same time impressive, way with which it was hailed. There was a *Te Deum* in the cathedral, and the houses in this capital were generally illuminated for two nights: those of the leading Conservatives, and the Casino Español forming the marked exceptions. The Liberal journals expressed their gratification in appropriate terms, and I hear from the Vice-Consulates that the news has been received in their respective districts with general satisfaction.

I believe that the proprietors of estates, accepting the inevitable, have gone to them to make arrangements with their freedmen under the altered conditions of service.

With regard to the law itself, it seems to me that the obligation of the freedmen to engage themselves for three years will not prove successful; this sort of apprenticeship is no more likely to be so here than in the British Colonies; and, as they are allowed a choice of employers, the men cannot be expected to choose, and the women certainly will not choose, labour in the cane-fields where they are wanted, and will seek service in the towns where they are not.

I repeat my often expressed opinion that the agriculture of the Island will be very little affected by this Act, and although its commerce, from prudential motives, may be temporarily so, I believe that confidence will very soon be restored, and things return to their normal state.

Two not improbable events have to be guarded against, the kidnapping of negroes by unprincipled persons for exportation to Cuba, and an uncontrolled Coolie importation.

I take the liberty of offering your Lordship my congratulations upon another victory to the humane policy of Her Majesty's Government being gained; a victory which, apparently small in itself, is destined in its effects to annihilate slavery in every part of the Spanish dominions.

No. 23.

Consul Cowper to Earl Granville.—(Received May 20.)

(Extract.)

Puerto Rico, April 26, 1873.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the new Captain-General has lost no time in carrying the law of emancipation into effect, and has taken all the preliminary steps required for that purpose, he has called together the fifty largest proprietors of slaves, and the fifty smallest, who have chosen the four Commissioners, designated by the law to decide upon the amount of compensation due to the proprietors; two of these gentlemen belong to the Conservative party, and two to the Liberal, and appear to me to have been very judiciously selected. He has also appointed three Protectors of freedmen, with power to name assistants, to regulate the contracts entered into between them and their employers.

The regulations of the law appear to me, after a hasty reading, to be very favourable to the freedmen, but it requires further consideration before committing myself to an opinion whether the total abrogation of the Preliminary Law of June 1870, will or will not fall with special hardship upon the children, aged, and sickly, whose former owners will be relieved of their support.

Upon these and other details I shall have the honour to address your Lordship by the next mail, and, in the meantime, have the honour of assuring you that nothing can be more becoming than the conduct of the freedmen, and, I may in justice add, of their former masters.

No. 24.

Earl Granville to Mr. Layard.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 31, 1873.

I TRANSMIT herewith, for your information, copies of two despatches from Her Majesty's Consul at Puerto Rico, dated the 6th and 26th of April,* the former reporting the manner in which the telegram announcing the abolition of slavery in that island was received by the public and freedmen, and containing also some observations in regard to the effects likely to be produced by the provisions of the Law of abolition, and the latter reporting the measures adopted by the Captain-General for carrying the law of emancipation into effect.

It will doubtless be satisfactory to you to learn the success of the measures hitherto initiated for giving effect to the Law emancipating slaves in Puerto Rico, a Law, the promulgation of which is mainly owing to the energy and discretion with which you pressed it on the consideration of the Spanish Government.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 25.

Consul Cowper to Earl Granville.—(Received June 4.)

My Lord,

Puerto Rico, May 13, 1873.

AT this social crisis your Lordship will naturally expect from me frequent reports upon the working of the Act for the emancipation of the slaves, but so completely has that measure proved successful that I have fortunately little else to say. The law has been promptly carried into effect in all its details, and every living being in the island is free; even the contracts with the "libertos" are all made, but in so loose a way that they will not prove very binding upon them, although, in all probability, sufficiently vexatious to their employers.

My belief is that this part of the law will fall into disuetude, or will have to be repealed like the apprenticeship in the British possessions; it cannot be satisfactory to either party. The hardworking people do not require it for one reason, the idle for another, and the employers for both reasons, namely, that the good man will work without it, and the bad man will not work with it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. A. COWPER.

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No. 26.

Mr. Macdonell to Earl Granville.—(Received August 29.)

My Lord,

Madrid, August 16, 1873.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 27th of February last, respecting the proceedings of Joseph Beaupied, and to the question of the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, I have the honour herewith to inclose translation of a note I have received from the Spanish Government, containing the details of M. Beaupied's proceedings in the exportation of certain slaves from Puerto Rico to the Havana.

I have, &c.

(Signed) H. G. MACDONELL.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Señor Soler y Plá to Mr. Macdonell.

(Translation.)

Sir,

Madrid, August 6, 1873.

THE Minister of the Colonies, to whom the note from your Legation of 17th January last was in due course forwarded, has received information from the Captain-General of Puerto Rico, which he has been good enough to communicate to me, concerning the exportation of slaves from that island to Cuba, to which matter the Memorandum which accompanied the said note also referred.

From that information it in truth results that Don José Beaupied, an inhabitant of the Havana, applied on the 23rd September, 1872, to the Alcalde of the town of Tow Alta, in order that the latter might find out whether the slaves Gregoria, and her children Ramimedo, Marcos, Marcelino, and Aquilina were willing to remove to the other island in the same condition, and it turned out that the said Gregoria was willing to remove.

The proper case having been made out, the papers were sent to the Superior Civil Governor on 23rd September of last year, permission being granted for the removal, and the proper orders being issued according to the requirements set forth in paragraph 4, Article 68 of the Regulations of 18th June, 1869, approved for the application of the Law on the suppression and punishment of the Slave Trade.

In making this concession, the enactments of the Royal Order of 6th September, 1856, which provides that the passing of slaves from that island to the other should not be prevented, were taken into consideration, and not the Royal Order of 29th September, 1866, and subsequent orders, because they have no reference to this matter, or have been issued after the authorization granted to Beaupied.

As to the action taken by the Syndicate, it is also shown that it opposed itself to the embarkation of the slaves, and to gain its object it applied to the Office of the Corregidor of the capital, and demanded their valuation in order to redeem them, and this was done; but Beaupied refused to receive the price, and wished it to be understood that he gave the slaves their liberty as an immediate act of grace, and this gave rise (for the Syndicate did not accept it) to a question as to better right.

This detailed information will prove to the Government of Great Britain the legality of the Act in question, the result of which has been the liberation of the said slaves; and in having the honour of informing you thereof, I have also to state to you, at the request of my colleague the Minister of the Colonies, that in the office of the Captain-General of Puerto Rico no data exist concerning the suicide of slaves referred to in the aforesaid Memorandum, and that he would be obliged to you if you would afford him, if possible, details as to this lamentable event, so that the proper measures may be taken in view thereof.

I avail, &c.

(Signed) S. SOLER Y PLA.

No. 27.

Mr. Layard to Earl Granville.—(Received January 3, 1874.)

My Lord,

Madrid, December 22, 1873.

THE President of the United States, in his recent Message to Congress, seems to infer that the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, and the release of several thousand

slaves in Cuba, are to be attributed to the establishment of the Republic in Spain. Similar statements have been made, if I remember rightly, in other American official documents. It is but just to the Monarchy of King Amadeo to remind your Lordship that both these measures were presented to the Cortes during his reign. The Law for abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico was accepted, though not actually passed, by the Congress before the 11th of February. The release of the slaves took place under the "Moret Law," passed in July 1870.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 28.

Consul Cowper to the Earl of Derby.—(Received April 29.)

(Extract.)

Puerto Rico, April 8, 1874.

WHEN the Captain-General Sanz, took possession of the government of this Province in February last, he announced in a Proclamation, that although it had been currently reported that he intended to re-establish slavery, nothing was really further from his intentions.

Of course no one supposes that he intended doing so in name, but those who suspected that he would do so in fact, were not so far wrong, as the inclosed translation of a telegram from Ponce, which he caused to be printed, largely distributed, and published in the "Gazette," proves.

Your Lordship will understand, that the Law of Abolition obliged the freemen to contract themselves to their master for a term of years; I expressed my opinion at the time that this mitigated slavery could no more be carried into effect here, than the apprenticeship in the British Possessions, and in fact its operation was so unsatisfactory that it soon fell into desuetude, and when the benefits of the Constitution were extended to the Colonies, it was considered as finally abolished; from that period to the present, the abolition of slavery has worked harmoniously, without disturbance, and with perfect success.

However, the Captain-General has thought proper to decree the reimposition of the contract system, and if he can carry it into effect I shall be very much astonished, the incendiary fires of which we have just heard in Viegras, are a first warning that he must employ force.

Inclosure in No. 28.

Supplement to the "Boletin," of March 27, 1874.

(Translation.)

HIS Excellency the Vice-President of the Provincial Deputation received at 8 o'clock last night from Ponce the following most important telegram:—

"The Supreme Civil Governor is the President of the Provincial Deputation, Capital.

"The Government authorizes the exemption from direct taxes of persons who do not pay 11 dollars.

"The Supreme Government also authorizes the prosecution of vagrants with all the rigour of the law, and orders the strict application of the Law of Abolition as regards the contracting of freed men."

(Signed) JOSE L. LAW.

No. 29.

The Earl of Derby to Mr. Layard.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 5, 1874.

I TRANSMIT to you herewith, for your information, copy of a despatch from Mr. Consul Cowper, stating that the Captain-General of Puerto Rico had reimposed the contract system of labour in that island.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) DERBY.

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No. 30.

Mr. Layard to the Earl of Derby.—(Received June 14.)

My Lord,

Madrid, June 3, 1874.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of 5th ultimo, I have the honour to state, that I availed myself of an opportunity, when speaking with Señor Ulloa about slavery in the Spanish Colonies, to call his attention to the "Boletin" contained in Mr. Consul Cowper's despatch of 8th April, and to the endeavours of General Sanz to enforce in Puerto Rico the contract system, and the employment of "libertos," which had led to such serious abuses in Cuba, and which had been inevitably abandoned with the best results, by his predecessor, General Primo de Rivera. I pointed out to Señor Ulloa that any attempt to reintroduce slavery in Puerto Rico, under whatever form or pretence, must naturally be viewed by Her Majesty's Government with great concern; Her Majesty's Government having accepted abolition in that island as a proof of the good faith of the Spanish Government, and of its intention to abolish slavery in Cuba; and having, consequently, and in view of the present condition of that Colony, abstained from pressing the question upon the Spanish Government.

Señor Ulloa replied that, although, as I was aware, he and his political friends had been opposed to the measure of Señor Zorrilla's Government for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, yet that they had now changed their views, and were convinced, not only that that measure was a wise one, but that it must be extended to Cuba as soon as the state of the island permitted it. He knew General Sanz personally, and could not believe that he meditated the reintroduction of slavery, or forced labour under any form in Puerto Rico; but he would himself write to the General, and call his attention to the unfavourable impression caused by his proceedings with regard to the enforcement of the contract system.

Señor Ulloa added, that there were two parties in the Colony, one highly approving General Primo de Rivera, and the other very much opposed to him. The latter accused him of favouring that part of the population which was hostile to Spanish rule, and looked upon him with great suspicion as a Federal Republican. The General, he said, was a very honest man, but had probably by his policy given some grounds for these accusations, and he had consequently been recalled. I might, however, rest assured that the Spanish Government had no intention whatever of sanctioning anything at variance with the principles of the Law passed by the Cortes for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

No. 31.

Mr. Layard to the Earl of Derby.—(Received June 25.)

My Lord,

Madrid, June 13, 1874.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 5th ultimo, transmitting to me a "Boletin" of the Captain-General of Puerto Rico, relating to the employment of emancipated slaves or libertos, I have the honour to inclose an important article from the "Orden," a newspaper known to represent the opinions of Señor Castelar. Other Republican and some Liberal papers strongly condemn General Sanz's policy as a return to slavery in the Colony.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. H. LAYARD.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Extract from the "Orden."

(Translation.)

IF we could, without doing a wrong to feelings of humanity, suspend our proposed examination of the Decree of the Governor-General of Puerto Rico, which we consider hurtful to the rights of the Libertos and opposed to the law of abolition voted by the Cortes, we would do so; we are not moved to censure that order by a spirit of hostility to the person who is now at the head of the Government of the island; we do not agree

with his policy ; but, notwithstanding, we would remain silent, being convinced of the inefficacy of our words ; besides, the free inhabitants of the island have every kind of means for making themselves heard ; not so the poor Libertos, the dawn of whose redemption threatens to become thick night, without a ray of true liberty having shone forth ; therefore we speak for these, leaving the political question for better times ; and having said this for our conscience, let us continue the heavy labour we have voluntarily undertaken.

The Captain-General of Puerto Rico, Señor Primo de Rivera, being authorised, by the instructions issued by the Ministry of the Colonies on 26th March, 1873, to draw up the regulations completing the Law of Abolition of Slavery in the lesser of the Antilles, fulfilled immediately and satisfactorily the delicate task intrusted to him, and the Official Gazette published provisional regulations on 20th April of the same year, some Circulars being subsequently issued for facilitating the application thereof and the execution of the law.

On that provisional character of the said Regulations our colleague, "El Gobierno," takes its stand to defend the reform made by General Sanz, ignoring that when the Regulations were once approved by the supreme Government, as was the case, they lost their provisional character and acquired a definitive one. Nor could any functionary, even although possessing authority equal to that exercised by the present Governor-General of Puerto Rico, modify them, unless indeed he proceeded, as has been done, arbitrarily and in a sense contrary to law.

If we examine the Decree in question, after having pointed out the want of exactitude in the affirmations indulged in by the author in the preamble, to the great prejudice of his respectability, we see that its clauses, let "El Gobierno" say what it pleases, are completely opposed to the principle of liberty which is the basis of the law of abolition ; but there is still more than this, for to the obstacles placed in the way of free engagement we must add the grave damage to rights acquired under the shadow of the Regulations, and a violation of Civil law, as we will show by simply quoting some of the Articles of the famous Decree.

Art. 2. Contracts cannot by any means be rescinded at the will of the contracting parties, but only for a just reason, to be weighed by the local authorities, with the intervention of the proper Protector, or Syndic, and of the proprietor, and with appeal to the Superior Civil Government.

Art. 3. In the twenty days following the publication of this decree, a minute and careful revision of the contracts made before the respective local authorities and protectors, or Syndics of the municipalities shall be proceeded to.

Art. 4. Any contract not made according to the law, now in compliance with the formalities ordered in the Regulations of 20th April, shall be declared null.

Art. 5. The same shall be done to every contract in which the person who appears as having a liberto in his service is not a proprietor, a merchant, or a manufacturer in easy circumstances for the exact fulfilment of the contracts he may make. The local authorities, protectors and Syndics will keep a strict watch over this, and will be highly responsible, so as to avoid illusory contracts or immoral speculation."

Any one who knew the laws would have seen that this Article 2 is at variance with all principles hitherto admitted as to engagement ; that Article 3 establishes a fact constituting an abuse of authority ; and Article 4 a true intrusion upon the sphere belonging to the Courts of Justice, alone competent to decide in matters of right ; the arbitrary conduct is, however, gravest and most evident in Article 5. In that Article under the appearance of an unnecessary protection to the interests of the libertos which had in any case been already attended to by making the contracts with the intervention of the protectors named by the Superior Government, and acting as the guardians of the libertos ; in this Article, we say there is ordered the annulling of any contract made with a person who, even though a merchant, proprietor, or manufacturer, may not be in easy circumstances, which may allow of his fulfilling his obligations towards the liberto. Let the expression pass, so vague and obsolete, and therefore so unfit for an official document ; let it pass that a person established as a merchant or manufacturer, and above all, that a proprietor, should not have the means of fulfilling his obligations ; let it also pass that the protectors who intervened in the contract may not have done their duty faithfully, which is incredible in the case of persons who had in every way proved their honesty, and were well known to be favourable to the liberty of the slaves, which latter circumstance is unfortunately wanting in those who have replaced them in those posts ; lastly, let the circumstance very worthy of remark pass that the libertos are not "Bozales," like the majority of the slaves in Cuba, and that they are as civilised as the other free labourers, and can perfectly comprehend the contract they made ; let all this pass, which

ought not to pass ; but let us be allowed to ask what will be the result of the application of this Article? In all probability the monopoly of the majority of the elements of labour by the large proprietors, and the predominancy of the "plantocracy" over the other classes of society ; a mystification of the law for the abolition of slavery which will convert the liberto, by virtue of "the law of the box of sugar," into a servant of the soil, forced in all likelihood to work on the same land he tilled before his freedom, under the power of the same master, who, if formerly he got the labour out of him and punished him with the whip, will now force him to work by imprisonment, having as his servant those who are charged with the execution of the tyrannical order which we are examining. For in truth the former owners have lost the ownership, but the usufruct remains to them ; and certainly no one will doubt as to their availing themselves of it, seeing the customs established by a long period of slavery, and what we all know of that infamous institution. For the rest, the Decree gives them all the means they can desire to that end, as will be seen from the following Articles.

Art. 7. The Libertos cannot demand higher pay than that which is usual at each place in ordinary times ; if the proprietors undertake to feed and dress them, the cost of such feeding and dressing will be deducted from the pay.

Art. 8. The Libertos will be under the precise obligation of working on all days, not feast days, and at the customary hours of work for free labourers at each place and season.

Art. 9. The Libertos are obliged to fulfil and observe the rules made by the proprietors for the better ordering of the service engaged for, if not contrary to the spirit of the law of abolition, and the special clauses of each contract.

Art. 10. Vicious and immoral Libertos, who do not correct themselves in consequence of the exhortations of the proprietors or Alcaldes, will suffer imprisonment varying from eight to twenty days labouring at public works, according to cases and circumstances.

Art. 11. A similar correction will be inflicted on those who may not apply themselves to their work, and may not fully perform the service stipulated in the contract.

We see that the owner remains not only master of the work of the Liberto in the same way as when he was a slave, but also of his pay in a certain way. For according to Article 7 the pay is limited, and can even be diminished at the will of the proprietor by the deduction for food and clothes, if he undertakes to feed and clothe him. And will he not undertake to do so? Would the proprietor renounce this advantage, by which, for 8 ounces of "tasajo," and $2\frac{1}{2}$ of "boniates" per diem, and two "esquifaciones," or changes of clothes yearly, he can diminish by one-half the pay of the Liberto, already limited by the Decree?

With this régime, with the corrections for the disobedient and lazy, and the use of Cédulas, made obligatory by another Article, the changes from slavery to freedom will be effected by smooth transitions which will render the liberty hardly perceptible to the Libertos and will be of great advantage to the large proprietors.

Let us conclude once for all the examination of this Decree, but not without declaring all the gravity which in our opinion it possesses, without fear of insidious qualifications, and with the sincerity and honesty which belong to us.

The Decree issued by the Governor-General of Puerto Rico disfigures the principle of liberty which is the basis of the Law of Abolition of 22nd March, and converts the declaration contained in its 1st Article, according to which "slavery is for ever abolished in the Island of Puerto Rico," into a hideous sarcasm cast at the wretched slaves, who hear themselves proclaimed free men, while they still feel themselves bound like bondmen, and worked by the hardest and most insatiable cupidity.

After that, we have little to say. If, as it is stated, the Council of State has been consulted, let us await the report of that high Body, and the decision of the enlightened public man at the head of the Colonial Department, who is not ignorant of the great lessons contained in the history of the abolition of slavery, and who will not forget the deplorable events which took place under similar circumstances in the Danish Antilles, at Trinidad, at Jamaica, and in other British Possessions. Let us wait, then, tranquilly, now that we have done the duties imposed by humanity, and paid tribute to a high feeling of justice, and to that which public opinion demands of the worthy and independent Press.

APPENDIX.

Further Papers respecting the Emancipation of Negroes in Puerto Rico.

No. 1.

Mr. Macdonell to the Earl of Derby.—(Received September 6.)

My Lord,

Madrid, August 15, 1874.

WITH reference to Mr. Layard's despatch of 27th March, 1873,* I have the honour to report to your Lordship that the regulations, of which I inclose translation, have just appeared in the "Official Gazette," for giving effect to the Decree for the abolition of slavery in Puerto Rico, which passed the Cortes in March of last year.

As reference to Article 6 will show your Lordship that the fears expressed in Consul Cowper's despatch of 8th April last were not groundless, and that the contract system is again about to be enforced upon the freedman.

Señor Ulloa, however, to whom I have spoken on the subject, assures me, and begs me to convey that assurance to your Lordship, that nothing can be further from his intentions, or those of his colleagues of the Colonies, than to revert to the system of slavery under any disguise whatever; that the number of libertos in Puerto Rico does amount to more than 30,000; that the present measure has been found indispensable in order to avoid the misfortunes which have everywhere attended too sudden emancipation; that it is but a measure to prepare them for entire liberty, and that the Government only look forward anxiously to the day when the pacification of Cuba may permit them to carry out the same policy in the larger Antille.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. G. MACDONELL.

Inclosure in No. 1.

Extract from the "Official Gazette."

(Translation.)
Excellency,

Ministry of the Colonies.

THE President of the Executive Power of the Republic, in accordance with the Council of State, approves the following Regulations for the carrying out of the law for the abolition of slavery in your island:—

Article 1. In virtue of Article 1 of the Law of March 22, 1873, the Governor-General of the Province of Puerto Rico will at once make a Register of Freedmen, in which, making a distinction between the sexes, there shall be included in alphabetical order the name, age, and trade of each freed person, as well as the place from which he or she may come, and all other details worthy of being taken into account. The Register shall consist of two volumes, one for each sex.

Art. 2. Freed children, if they have a legitimate or natural father and mother, shall remain under the charge of the same, according to the Law, and the parents are under the obligation of caring for and educating their children.

Art. 3. Freed orphans and those freed persons who on account of age, or of a physical

* See page 20.

or mental defect, are incapable of earning their living, will, like free persons in similar circumstances, remain under the charge of the respective municipalities, until the Government of the Nation shall take the measures of charity announced in Article 8 of the Law. If, however, by mutual agreement with the former patrons or owners the freed person should wish to remain with the same, authorisation may be granted to that effect; but with the understanding that such a course does not prejudice the rights of liberty.

Art. 4. Every freed person will receive gratis a document, to be called, "Cédula de Seguridad y Contratacion," setting forth the name, sex, and age of the freed person, the name of the person with whom the freedman may have entered into a contract, and the other details mentioned in the annexed model.

These "Cédulas" will be purely local, and must necessarily be renewed when the freed person makes a change of proprietor or of residence.

Art. 5. Whenever a freed person may have to make a change of residence, whether permanently or temporarily, he must obtain a special pass, which will be provided to him by the municipal authorities of his place of residence, reckoning with the consent of the proprietor with whom the freedman may have made a contract, and with that of the Protector or Syndic of the respective municipality.

Art. 6. Every freedman of sufficient age and fitness is obliged to enter into a contract for his labour, according to Article 2 of the Law. The only persons exempted from this obligation are those physically or mentally incapable, temporarily or permanently, and those who, during the three years following the date of the Law, may not have completed twelve years of age.

The freed persons completing that age within the said space of time will make contracts only for the time wanting to complete the three years.

Art. 7. The former owners of the persons now freed will give the municipal authorities information in a written and signed document, of the physical or mental defect or incapacity of the freedman, and should the existence of that incapacity be proved, after investigation, it shall be set down with the name of the freedman in the register to be kept for the purpose.

Art. 8. Every freedman without a contract, or unduly contracted, will without delay enter into a contract with his former master or with another person, or will be employed, as contracted by the State, on the public works that may be in progress.

Art. 9. The local authorities will take care, and for this they will be most strictly responsible, that in their district all freedmen residing therein, who may be fit to work, be contracted.

Art. 10. The freedmen cannot exact higher wages than those which in ordinary times it is the custom in each place to give to the free labourer; the maintenance and dress of the freedman will be deducted from his wages, if the proprietor provides him therewith.

The proprietors on their side cannot exact from the freedmen heavier service than that performed in each place by the free labourer; but the freedmen are obliged to fulfil and observe the regulations that may be made by the proprietors for the better order of the service contracted for, if those regulations are not opposed to the spirit of the law of abolition and to the special clauses of each contract.

Art. 11. The contracts for labour shall be personal, and not collective; and three special functionaries named by the Governor-General of the island, and called Protectors of Freedmen, shall have intervention therein as trustees of the freedmen.

Art. 12. For the better discharge of the duties of those posts, the territory of the Province shall be divided into three Departments, the respective centres of which shall be the Capital, Mayagüez and Ponce, one of the said functionaries being at the head of each Department.

Art. 13. The following towns are included in each of those Departments respectively:—

In the first Department:—Aguas-buenas, Arecibo, Bayamon, Caguas, Camuy—Capital, Carolina, Ceiba, Ciales, Cidra, Corozal, Dorado, Fajardo, Guainabo, Gurabo, Hatillo, Hato-grande, Humacao, Juncos, Loiza, Luquillo, Manati, Manuabo, Morovis, Naguabo, Naranjito, Patillas, Piedras, Quebradillas, Rio-grande, Rio-piedras, Sabana de Palmar, Toa-alta, Toa-baja, Trujillo-alto, Trujillo-bajo, Utuado, Vega-alta, Vega-baja, Vieques, Yabucoa.

In the second Department:—Aguada, Aguadilla, Añasco, Cabo-rojo, Lares, Las Marias, Mayagüez, Moca, Rincon, Sabana-grande, San German, San Sebastian, Isabela.

In the third Department:—Ajuntas, Aibonito, Arroya, Barranquitas, Barros, Cayey, Coamo, Guayana, Guayanilla, Juana Diaz, Peñuelas, Ponce, Salinas, Santa Isabel, Yanco.

Art. 14. (This Article refers to the salary of the Protectors.)

Art. 15. The attributions of the Protector shall be confined to the contracting of the freedmen, and to their defence and protection in everything concerning the fulfilment, interpretation, and rescinding of those contracts.

Art. 16. By virtue of those attributions the Protectors will be present when the contracts of the freedmen are made, and will take the greatest care as to the settling of the clauses thereof; they will see that those clauses be set forth with the full knowledge and consent of the freedmen themselves, and that the will of the latter be in no way thwarted.

Art. 17. The Protectors will themselves perform their duties in their place of residence, and in the towns of their respective Departments; their Delegates shall be the Syndics of the Municipalities.

Art. 18. The Syndics, as Delegates, will exercise in their locality the same functions as the Protectors, to whom they will give information of all acts performed by them by virtue of the delegation. The office of Delegate shall be considered as Civic.

Art. 19. The Protectors shall make periodical visits to the towns of their districts for the performance of everything concerning the fulfilment of the duties assigned to them by these regulations; and they will inform the Governor-General of the Province of the result of their visits; at the same time they will hear and settle the complaints that may be made to them by the freedmen of their districts.

Art. 20. The labour-contracts of the freedmen shall be made in the Capital before the Governor-General, or a functionary delegated by him for that purpose, and in the other towns of the Province before the municipal authorities.

Those contracts shall set forth the name, sex, trade, and age of the freed person, the name of the person with whom the contract is made, the clauses thereof, and the penalty agreed to by the contracting parties.

The authorities before whom those contracts are made will write them out by order of date in a book, with the leaves numbered and signed by the said authorities, and stamped with the seal of the Alcalde's office; the contract shall be signed by the Secretary of the municipality, the Contractor, the Protector, and the Freedman, if he knows how to sign his name.

The municipal authorities will send two certified copies of the record of the contract to the protector residing at the centre of the Department; and when his approval has been obtained, or he has corrected the defects that are capable of emendation, one of those copies shall be placed in the archives of the Protector's office, and the other shall be sent to the Governor-General for the formation of the register to be kept by the Secretary's Department of the same.

Art. 21. The contracts shall be entirely free on both sides, but they cannot by any means be rescinded at will of the contracting parties, except for a just cause which, with the intervention of the proprietor and of the corresponding Protector or Syndic, shall be judged by the municipal authorities, with appeal to the Governor-General.

Art. 22. During the twenty days following the publication of these regulations, the Superior Authorities of the Island, or the functionary who may be delegated for that purpose, shall proceed to revise all the contracts hitherto made before the said authorities, or before the proper municipal authorities, the Protectors, and Syndics of the municipalities.

Art. 23. All contracts shown not to have been made according to the law, and not possessing the formalities prescribed by these regulations, shall be declared null and void.

The same shall be the case with contracts shown to have been made by persons not proprietors, traders, or manufacturers, in sufficiently easy circumstances to allow of the exact fulfilment of the obligations entered into. The local authorities and the Protectors and Syndics will take especial care as to this, and they will be most strictly responsible as to the prevention of deceptive contracts and of immoral speculations in this connection.

Art. 24. All contracts made by freedmen, in consequence of Article 2 of the Law, and at present in force, as well as those which may be made hereafter, shall be considered binding until 20th April, 1876, at the least.

Art. 25. Vicious or immoral freedmen, who may be notoriously idle, and those who may be found without the special document mentioned in Article 3, shall suffer, as a correction, a fine of not less than 12·50 pesetas nor exceeding 187·50 pesetas, and if they cannot pay they shall be imprisoned, and the Governor-General may make use of them on one of the public works.

Art. 26. Proprietors transgressing the letter and spirit of the contracts shall be liable to a like correction.

This correction shall be administratively applied by the respective Alcalde, with appeal to the Governor-General of the island.

Transitory Article 1. Doubts as to the interpretation and application of these regulations shall be decided by the Governor-General of the Province, with appeal to the Ministry of the Colonies, to be presented to the said Governor.

Transitory Article 2. The orders, issued concerning the matter forming the subject of these Regulations, and not opposed thereto, remain in force.

Certificate of Engagement.

<p><i>Magisterial District of</i></p> <p>Age, Stature, Colour, Condition, Employment,</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Department of</i></p> <p>inhabitant of the Law of 22nd March, 1873. Is engaged to D in the Ward of</p>	<p>, freedman of D , emancipated by , inhabitant of , for the term of</p> <p style="text-align: center;">by</p> <p>He is bound to live and sleep at the [plantation or house] of the person to whom he is engaged.</p>
<p>By order, &c. God preserve, &c. <i>Madrid, August 7, 1874.</i></p>		
		<p>(Signed) ROMERO ORTIZ.</p>

To the Governor-General of Puerto Rico.

No. 2.

Lord Tenterden to Consul Pauli.

Sir, *Foreign Office, September 14, 1874.*

I AM directed by the Earl of Derby to transmit to you, for any remarks you may have to offer thereupon, copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Madrid respecting the regulations for carrying into effect the law for the abolition of Slavery in Puerto Rico.*

I am, &c.
(Signed) TENTERDEN.

No. 3.

Consul Pauli to the Earl of Derby.—(Received October 28.)

(Extract.)

Puerto Rico, October 12, 1874.

IN accordance with your Lordship's directions, conveyed to me in a despatch dated the 14th ultimo, inclosing a copy of a letter from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Madrid, I have the honour to offer a few remarks on the regulations for carrying into effect the Law for the Abolition of Slavery at Puerto Rico.

I have spoken to persons of all political opinions on the subject, as well as to the foreign Consuls—American, German, and French, and all are agreed that the enforcement of the law of Contract, under proper restraints, was not only wise, but had become an absolute necessity.

The law of Contract does not appear to me to aim at more than to insist that all able-bodied "libertos" should work for their own subsistence, having power to choose their trade and masters, and to change at will with the sanction of the "Protectors of the Freedmen," and this for a space of three years, at the end of which time I presume they will be quite free of the control of the authorities, so long as they commit no crimes and avoid becoming vagrants.

By Article 26 equal penalties to those inflicted on the "libertos" will be applied to the proprietors who break the law of Contract in "letter or spirit." Those under contract are to be paid the current rate of wages, which is here much higher than in most British West Indian Islands, and as living and clothes cost next to nothing, an industrious man can earn sufficient during the term of his probation to start himself fairly in any trade he may fancy, or even himself to become a small proprietor.

* See No. 1, page 29.

I believe the present Government here intend honestly and fairly to carry out the provisions of the Act.

I see no causè at present to object to their action, and as to the reintroduction of slavery, I believe no such idea exists in anyone's mind.

Individual cases of hardship and arbitrary conduct are always probable in Spanish countries, but I know of two cases in which proprietors have been punished for harsh conduct to their people, so that, at least, it seems that Article 26 is not a dead letter.

I will continue to watch the working of the new laws and will report to your Lordship from time to time.

If circumstances should arise to cause me to change the opinions I have expressed I will not fail to inform your Lordship at once.

No. 4.

The Earl of Derby to Mr. Layard.

Sir, *Foreign Office, November 5, 1874.*
 WITH reference to Mr. Macdonell's despatch of the 15th of August, I transmit to you, for your information, a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul at Puerto Rico, remarking on the regulations for carrying into effect the Law for the abolition of slavery in the island.*

I am, &c.
 (Signed) DERBY.

* See No. 3, page 32.

SLAVE TRADE. No. 9 (1874).

PAPERS relating to the Emancipation of the Negroes
of Puerto Rico.

*Presented to the House of Lords by Command of
Her Majesty. 1874.*

LONDON :

PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.