

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE COLONIES OF SPAIN

(Continued).

THE grandiloquence of Spain is perceptible in every direction. Retaining only the Philippines and Marianas in the East, the Governor of Manilla is called "Commander of Asia," and General Clavería, with his small insular administration, has a higher title than Sir Henry Hardinge, with his gigantic sway over millions. By a recent decree, the Minister of Marine was authorised to construct six war-steamers, especially destined for the Philippines; but this colonial steam-navy will doubtless exist only on paper.

The Marianas are mere specks, north-east of the Philippines, near Japan, which are of no use except as penal settlements, and as producing some spices. Some convicts are likewise transported to the Philippines, and their labour applied to public works.

During the past year the Spanish flag has been planted in the islands of Fernando Po and Annabon, possessions originally discovered by Spain, but of very slight importance, and whose value may be estimated from the fact of their having been abandoned by the Portuguese. Placed at the innermost part of the bend in the western coast of Africa, within four degrees on each side of the equator, they are extremely ill adapted for European occupation, and their pro-

ductions little suited for export. They are entirely out of the line of navigation for ships going round the Cape, and will be scarcely used at all for victualling or watering. Fernando Po is a trifle larger than St. Helena, while Annabon is the mere speck in the ocean that Ascension is, without the advantages of its position. The Portuguese did their best to cultivate the former, but found it unprofitable work; and the principal wealth which the Spaniards have secured in this occupation is 17,000 negroes, who, according to the government account of the appropriation, "*may be made very useful.*" I beg to recommend this obvious hint to the notice of our cruisers on the African coast. It is of course equivocal, and may be meant to apply to the development of local agriculture; but the unsuccessful labours of Portuguese agriculturists render it improbable that these islands will be devoted by their Spanish successors to plantation; and a voyage across the Atlantic, if less advantageous to the negro's health, would be more productive to his master's pocket. 17,000 able-bodied negroes, at 500 dollars per head, would produce, upon safe delivery, eight millions and a-half of dollars, or near two millions sterling. The intention is said to be to colonise these islands immediately, and send out missionaries. The interjacent colonies of Prince's Island and St. Thomas's, situate directly under the line, and with the two new Spanish islands as their outposts, have made little agricultural progress, and their continued occupation by Portugal seems much more a point of honour than of interest. Indeed, excepting the indigenous negroes,

guano, a new-found but short-lived treasure, appears to be the principal resource; and it is to be lamented that the slight surviving spirit of the Conquistadores is not rather applied to the amelioration and development of their five subsisting colonies, than to the seizure of barren tracts in the recesses of the pathless ocean. Better make the Philippines productive to the full extent of their capacity, than plant the crossed Lions and Castles upon a hundred Annabons.

At the occupation of Fernando Po an extraordinary sight was witnessed. A negro was found by the Spanish commissioners within a large and ruinous building, going through some rude ceremonies with a damaged and broken chalice, in the presence of a large concourse of the natives. It was a solemn burlesque of the mass—their traditional imitation of the rites performed a century before by the Portuguese missionaries. No wine was used, but they conceived the chalice to possess a talismanic virtue.

Although the Canary Isles are but five degrees south of Madeira, the difference in climate and productions is considerable. The animal and feathered tribes in *Las Islas Afortunadas* are much more tropical than in the *Flor do Oceano*.* The heat is far more intense, the plumage of the singing-birds more gay and lively, and the camel is an indigenous animal. The palm-tree waves its fan-like coronal in every part of these islands, in *Teneriffe* as well as in *Palma*, and the general aspect does not differ much from the cultivated parts of the neighbouring coast of *Morocco*.

* Madeira is so called by the inhabitants.

The Canaries are precisely equidistant from Madeira and the tropic of Cancer, and their greater proximity to the latter makes all the difference in their wines. Too much heat is as prejudicial as too little, to the quality of the grape: the reputation of Canary wine has long since passed away, and the value of the possession has become proportionally impaired. The wine exportation, however, still constitutes the principal commerce of these islands. The chief shipments are to England, and these have unhappily been decreasing for the last quarter of a century. Previous to 1821, there was no separate record made in our annual customs' return of the quantities retained for home consumption, and accurate classification was therefore before that period impracticable; but the returns have since been very accurate, and the following is the number of gallons of Canary wine on which duty was paid in England from 1821 to 1842 inclusively:—

1821 .	160,350	1829 .	101,699	1836 .	54,584
1822 .	129,620	1830 .	101,892	1837 .	42,146
1823 .	123,036	1831 .	94,803	1838 .	97,979
1824 .	117,428	1832 .	72,803	1839 .	35,178
1825 .	167,108	1833 .	69,621	1840 .	29,489
1826 .	134,445	1834 .	62,186	1841 .	25,772
1827 .	152,938	1835 .	52,862	1842 .	21,169
1828 .	137,553				

It is highly probable that the exportation of Canary wines to England will entirely cease, in the event of the expected reductions taking place in the white wines of Xerez, Madeira, Lisbon, and Sicily; and Teneriffe being admittedly an inferior article to any of those just mentioned, our sole consumption of it will be in our colonies. The same doom of exclusion

from the British market impends over our own Cape, should the duty upon other wines be considerably diminished. This falling off of 85 per cent. in our consumption of Teneriffe is unexampled in the whole circle of our wine trade, and covering such a number of years, and being so gradual, it may fairly be assumed as permanent. The large importation of 1838 was accidental, and arose from an insufficient supply of Madeiras and Marsalas in that year. The only *large* import we have lately received from the Canaries was some camels for a menagerie.

The loss of her South American colonies may be little felt by Spain, if it have the effect of concentrating her energies into an entire dependence upon herself, and into a development of her great internal resources. The remembrance of what the Moors were in Spain should shame the Spaniard of the present day, and a glance at their astonishing achievements should be the strongest stimulant to exertion. Enduring monuments of their minute toil, their untiring industry, and prodigal magnificence, have survived the wreck of centuries, in the Alcazar of Seville, the Alhambra of Granada, and the Arizapha of Córdoba. The ordinary revenue of Abderrahman III., Caliph of Córdoba, in the 10th century, according to the testimony of an Arabic historian, amounted annually to 12,945,000 dinars, or about 144,000,000 livres tournois—a sum surpassing the united revenues of all the Christian monarchs his contemporaries; and (if the difference in the value of money be allowed for) more than sixfold the revenue of modern Spain, even before she lost the mineral wealth of Southern America.

It was from the mineral wealth of Spain herself that these mighty stores were extracted—a wealth so far from being exhausted that in truth it is not half explored, and no country in Europe is believed to contain in every direction such valuable ores of all descriptions. It is fit that Spaniards be roused from their inglorious slumber, their fitful dreams, or waking madness of feud and party strife; that they be twitted with the exploits of their infidel predecessors, the recital of their indefatigable toils; and that proud and lounging beggary be started by a thrilling trumpet-blast. Where squalid rags and lazy penury affront the passing eye to-day, and where there is hardly sufficient revenue raised to pay the dishonest custom-house officers and keep the roads in repair, the Caliph of Córdoba a century after Tarif's invasion never moved abroad without an escort of twelve thousand horse, the girdle and scimitar of each rider blazing with gold. His seraglio was composed of six thousand three hundred persons. The presents made to him by his favourite, Abou-Malec, on being promoted to the post of Grand Vizier, consisted of four thousand pounds weight of pure gold, four hundred and twenty thousand sequins in silver ingots, five hundred ounces of amber, three hundred ounces of camphor, thirty pieces of gold tissue so rich that a Caliph alone could wear it, ten robes of Khorassan marten and a hundred of other furs, forty-eight caparisons and gold and silken harnesses, four thousand pounds of silk, fifteen steeds of the finest Arab race with trappings and housings complete for royalty, besides a quantity of Persian carpeting, coats of

mail, swords, bucklers, and lances—borne in long and magnificent procession, and followed by forty male and twenty female slaves of rare beauty, whose collars and bracelets sparkled with priceless pearls. A eulogistic poem was likewise presented by the new minister, but of this we shall only say that it doubtless smelt of the amber.

This monarch, to whom but a limb of Spain gave such enormous wealth, built within a league of Córdoba the palace and garden of Arizapha or Zehra, in honour of his favourite sultana, whose name this marvellous retreat bore. The most celebrated architects from Constantinople sketched its plan, and the ablest artists assisted in its execution. A hundred marble columns adorned the interior of the edifice, the materials having been transported from Africa, Greece, and Italy. The Grecian marble was a present from the Emperor. The hall of audience was of incredible splendour; its walls incrustated with gold and precious stones. As in all the Moorish palaces, there was a fountain in the centre, with an extensive basin, adorned with figures of birds and quadrupeds, of wonderful execution and immense price; while overhead was suspended a pearl of extraordinary size, and of value defying computation, which, to secure the Caliph's courted alliance, had likewise been presented by the Emperor. This wonderful summer palace and its gardens took nearly a quarter of a century to complete, and upon their construction and adornment was expended the enormous sum of seventy-two millions of livres tournois. The city of Córdoba contained six hundred mosques, nine hun-

dred baths, and two hundred thousand houses ; and the caliphate comprised eighty large towns, and three hundred of the second class ; while the banks of the Guadalquivir, from the Sierra, which borders on La Mancha, to the ocean, were cheered and gladdened by twelve thousand villages, where now there are scarcely twelve.

It was from the mineral wealth of their compact little kingdom that the Abderrahmans chiefly extracted all this prosperity. Quicksilver, iron and copper, were raised in great quantities, and exported daily to Africa and the East. The ports of the Greek empire were constantly resorted to by the merchants of southern Spain. The silks of Granada, and the cloths of Murcia, had then the highest reputation ; and these and other requisites of luxury were in great demand amongst the opulent residents of Byzantium. Of the treasures amassed during centuries a large portion was thus transferred to Spain. The wealth and expensive indulgences of Alexandria gave likewise encouragement and development to Hispano-Moorish commerce. The tempered steel of Córdoba and Toledo was in great request in a chivalrous and warlike age, and the Saracens of Africa purchased their cuirasses as well as their scimitars from their brothers in Spain. The whole Mediterranean seaboard was strewn with treasures, as the interior was filled with mineral wealth. The rubies of Bajar and Malaga, the amethysts of Cartagena, the pearls of Catalonia, and the coral of Andalucía, were highly esteemed throughout Europe and the East. Amongst the natural productions thus

shipped in large quantities from the Peninsula, were amber, myrrh, saffron, sulphur and ginger; and amongst the principal sources of the Córdovan Caliphs' wealth were the mines of gold and silver with which their dominions abounded, and of which the value cannot be defined. It is idle, without energetic action, to expect to restore this El Dorado. Golden showers of wealth do not fall any more than of manna; no capons, ready roasted, flew through the streets of Córdova; the Moors had neither gold for a wish, nor silver for a sigh, nor comfort nor luxury without active habits of exertion. Their steel was more heated and hammered than any other in Europe, if it attained to a higher temper. Their gems were not formed from the morning dew, but gathered from the depths of ocean; their silk was not the offal of a worm, but the produce of a thousand looms. They were men to neither lounge nor despair. There is a talisman within the grasp of the Spaniard of the present day, which, if he strongly grasp it, may yet revive these marvels. That talisman is enlightened commerce; that charm is honourable industry.

The isolated points which Spain retains on the northern coast of Africa, and which, from their limited extent, can scarcely be called colonies, have been reduced to the verge of ruin, as well as the Philippines and Canaries, by prohibitory laws and miscalled protective duties; and the Ayuntamiento of Ceuta has just forwarded a memorial to the Government, imploring it to declare that town an open port under reasonable conditions. There seems, indeed, to be

every likelihood that the force of circumstances will compel, ere long, the adoption of moderate free-trade principles, not only in the colonies, but in all the ports of Spain. The recent dispute with Morocco will probably have the effect of making the emperor forego the rather absurd idea that the Spanish crown is his tributary for its African possessions, together with his claim to pretended arrears. The strip of territory, too, as far as Serra Bulbones, will probably be definitively annexed to Ceuta, as stipulated between General Bution and Cid Mohammed Omimon, Pasha of Tangier. Three strong forts should be here erected by Spain for the defence of her line. Vellez, La Gumera, and Alhucemas, will be of little use, unless a league at least of neutral territory be marked off for purposes of traffic, and the Maroquins bound, by treaty, neither to construct works nor carry arms within it. At Melilla likewise Spain should be empowered to re-establish the advanced forts of S. Lorenzo, S. Miguel, and S. Francisco, and annex a strip of territory of at least a league. The garrison of Chafarinas (the Zafarine islands) must have the right to cut wood on the adjoining lands, and the possession of the island of Peregil be respected, or the African colonies of Spain will be a profitless burden. The Caracoles islands, which she likewise holds, are of inconsiderable value.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

COLONIAL SLAVERY—THE CONSPIRACY OF
MATANZAS.

THE energy of O'Donnell's character, and the activity of his mind and habits, would make him an extremely good governor of such a possession as Cuba, but for the unhappy obliquity of vision which leads him to regard the slave-trade with favour. "*La traite*" has seldom, of late years, been more successful than under the rule of this governor; and but for the activity of our cruisers, the sale of black flesh on the Cuban coast would be as common as that of black puddings in the ventas of Spain. By one of those singular, but never-ceasing agencies of Providential retribution, which commend the drugged chalice to the poisoner's lip, and hoist the engineer with his own petard, the greater Spanish Antilla has become convulsed with more than its usual eruptiveness under the sway of the most prominent of slave-trade rulers, and the conspiracy of the present year (1844) at Matanzas, will be long remembered with shuddering. I notice this movement, because its causes are old and deeply seated, and because last year those seeds were plentifully scattered by O'Donnell, and others, which have led to such disastrous results. The unbending military character of O'Donnell's mind and government, caused great and striking seve-

rities to be practised amongst the negro population; the idea indeed generally prevails throughout the island, that no rule but that of terror can repress, to the due limit of innocuousness, a population in which the black and coloured races so immensely preponderate; and if love and kindness be practicable agencies in the intercourse with a race which it is determined to continue enslaved (a postulate, perhaps, which may be denied), the Cuban planters, and present governing body, are not the men to exhaust, or to try fairly these milder means. The island has now, for ten years, (during which the neighbouring British Antilla—Jamaica—has enjoyed the blessings of emancipation,) been like a country abounding with volcanic formations, bursting forth into eruption after eruption, and giving a glimpse of the terrible destruction which may one day light upon all its white inhabitants, when a vent shall be found for its hidden fires. One must have been a resident for some time at Havana to be fully aware of the horrid fear of its black population which lurks in the breasts of its scattered whites, of the perpetual dread of a midnight rising, the blenching lips and pallid cheeks produced by every unaccustomed sound which is borne on the island breezes, and the feeling of which none but dare-devils can rid themselves: "*Incedimus per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.*" England is, of course, intensely hated by the slave-dealers all over the world, for that truest of all reasons, because she spoils their trade: in Cuba she is hated with a peculiar bitterness. Our great, and on the whole, successful experiment of freedom has been tried and completed at their doors.

Vice detests the rebuke of its neighbour, Virtue; but, above all, they are swayed by a deep-seated resentment against us for inspiring their wretched bondsmen with the taste for liberty. The Cuban negro has heard of his Jamaica brother, and of equality, justice, and the dignity of man; he has heard a whispering about free blacks cultivating their own farms, and driving their own gigs; the Cuban too is human, fired with human cupidity, and with human ambition; is it strange that the Cuban planter, who is still determined to be served by lashed hounds in the guise of his fellow-men, should be unable to sleep one night in the year in security? Blame not English justice, weak, misguided man! but blame yourself and the odious policy of your country.

This hatred of England, arising from our indirect interference with their system of predial servitude, has become so marked and blinding, that, at every fresh negro insurrection, a large direct share in the origin of the disturbances is attributed to our countrymen; and we were charged by the entire press of Spain, with a leading part in the recent revolt of Matanzas. "The movement," said these honest and dispassionate witnesses, "was directed by a committee of five members. Placido was the president, and the four others were two mulattos, and two Englishmen. This latter circumstance is worthy of note." It is worthy of note as being an utter falsehood. Under Providence it does seem that the sense of fear will eventually rid this island of the curse of slavery; and that Brazil will be indebted to a similar cause for the emancipation of her black population. The groundless persuasion of

selfish interest would probably never yield to any powers of reasoning or considerations of religion; it is human passion that will vanquish human passion, cupidity will be overcome by fear. "Soon," says Cooper's old hunter, "you will see fire fight fire." The murders of inoffensive proprietors in Brazil by servants, denaturalised and demoralised by the taint of slavery, and the incessant risings and massacres in Cuba, will do more to extinguish this inhuman institution, than the efforts of zealous thousands of emissaries and lecturers.

It is the boast of Spaniards, sitting and writing in Madrid, that the vigilant intelligence and compact union of the whites render triumph to the negroes impossible; that they may revolt as often as they please, and slay defenceless isolated whites, burn plantations and ingenios, and make the diabolical efforts at universal destruction which characterise their risings, but that their attempts will never succeed. There is a brutality in this familiar boast, and in the mode of urging it, which negro brutality can scarce eclipse; and the mind which can coolly contemplate the incessant recurrence of such horrors little deserves to be envied. The boast, however, is quite misplaced; and the danger which Madrileño pamphleteers so fondly depreciate is, in truth, appalling. Facts speak for themselves. The peace of the island is maintained only by the perpetual presence of a large military force; every considerable town is a garrison, and the selected governor is always an eminent military commander. An active and unrelaxing system of freemasonry, which buries all feuds in whatever relates to this question of life and death, has perpetually to be

maintained amongst the white population; and with all the diligence of watch-and-ward which is observed upon every plantation, with the large supplies of fire-arms with which locked recesses of the sugar-house are supplied, with the abundance of active zeal with which the communications are kept up from one plantation to another, and between the various plantations and the nearest military stations, no rising ever takes place that several whites are not horribly butchered, usually in the midst of sleep, and without power of resistance though a park of artillery were at hand. The feverish anxiety which this begets, the nervous and besetting insecurity, the waking sounds and hideous dreams at the solemn dead of night, the wear-and-tear of human life, of human hearts and happiness, is too frightful a price to pay for the maintenance of an accursed code; and turning even upon the question of interest, many years cannot elapse before the last trace of slavery in Cuba is abolished.

Each new conspiracy is more skilfully organised than its predecessors, and realised on a larger scale. The sway of human passions, boundless and unscrupulous, suddenly let loose, and tremendously active in proportion to their previous constraint, characterises these fearful heavings and upturnings of human society. Like the carnival of the nations of Southern Europe, in which they clank their moment-loosed chains in the ears of their despotic rulers, the negro insurrection is a savage orgie, but, unlike it, mirth is not here a safety-valve. Blood and destruction are the only thoughts of these

————— "Children of the Sun,
With whom revenge is virtue."

The scheme of every negro conspiracy is total spoliation and extermination of the whites. The spirit of De Balzac's "*Vautrin*" is theirs:—"Let us plunge in a bath of blood and gold—we thus shall wash out every stain." With them it is the stain of birth and race; and their feelings, like those of the wild horse towards his cruelly goading rider, are savage, fierce, and pitiless—a hoof in his heart and a crunch at his skull!

The leading man in the recent insurrection of Matanzas was a mulatto named Placido, a name not wholly unknown in Spain; for in the early part of 1843 there appeared in most of the Madrid journals some verses by a Cuban poet, verses full of literary errors, but inspired by an ardent imagination, and impregnated by an almost savage sublimity of thought. In short, they were the verses of no common man, and evidently directed to no common aims. The author of these poems was the mulatto Placido, who figured as the head of the Matanzas conspiracy. He it was who organised the recent great rebellion, and verse was one of his means of inciting the black population to revolt. To a rare energy in composition, Placido, whose name could only be deemed characteristic in the spirit of the proverb, that "smooth water runs deep," united great powers of persuasion, a fiery imagination, a rapid, and vehement, and irresistible eloquence. Yet he was also a politician, and could bide his time. He seemed born for a revolutionist. His person was very commanding. In the admixture of races which formed his blood the white slightly predominated, and he joined European intel-

ligence to African fire. His face is described as of uncommon beauty, his colour a rich brown, his eyes large, lustrous, perhaps rather too fiery, his teeth most regular and of shining whiteness, his mouth well-formed, though the lips were slightly swelled, and with a touch of cruelty. His manners were winning and popular, his influence over the coloured classes of Cuba unbounded, his allusions to their degraded state incessant and goading,—in all respects he was a most dangerous character. He was one of the few accomplished agitators who have united pre-eminent powers as a revolutionary poet, as a writer of songs for the people, that he might afterwards write their laws, to great and unrivalled capacity as a man of action. He was adapted alike for the closet and the stage (rare versatility of genius!) for the rehearsal and performance of the drama of life, and shone not more in theoretical disquisition than in practical illustration and development. The union of such qualities in any walk of life is rare, but, in a revolutionist, tremendous. And, from a cursory perusal of his poems, and of the doctrines with which they are impregnated, I may congratulate the Cubanos that, owing to the turn of events, they were not exposed for more than a few hours to the dictatorship of the poet, Placido.

Throughout the whole of last year, this accomplished mulatto of Matanzas was laying his foundations, deep and wide. He was forced to work in secret, entirely by sap and mine; but the feelings of intense hatred which actuate the black and coloured races towards the white respected the mystery of Placido's move-

ments, and prevented his cabala from being revealed. His plans were grand and comprehensive. The entire white race throughout the island was to be exterminated at one fell swoop! a republic, another and more perfect Hayti, was to be raised on the ruins of Spanish domination; the civil offices and military commands were to be filled by mulattos, and the blacks were to form the standing army. The scheme, it must be confessed, was a plausible one, and the distribution of place and power judiciously conceived. Printing-presses, powder dépôts, and collections of arms, were to be seized simultaneously—all the elements, in short, of modern and enlightened administration (be sure that the poet would not forget the press); and so frightful was the danger which the white Cubanos ran, so horrid the abyss into which they were on the point of plunging, that, according to the strongest and most conclusive appearances, there was not a single coloured man throughout the island who was not affiliated to the conspiracy. The mulattos were invariably assigned as leaders, and the blacks as the brute instruments. The ramifications of the plot extended into every family, and the most trusted coloured servants were to be the agents of domestic murder. A taste of the sweets of slavery!

The Thursday in Holy Week, when the churches are filled with the white population, was fixed for the scene of swift and general carnage. The signal was to be given simultaneously throughout the island by the burning of all the sugar-canes, and of most of the principal houses. The cañaverals and the dwellings on the plantations were to be indiscriminately devastated by fire.

For the rest, the word was "*la muerte y la destrucción!*" The Spaniards themselves, when they escaped from the horrid crisis, admitted that the plan was admirably conceived. The cooks were to poison their masters, and the caleseros, with their coach-horses, to form a corps of cavalry. The premature discovery of the plot was owing to no treachery, but to the conversation of some of the conspirators being by chance overheard, and to an obscure warning from a young female slave in love with her European master. The alarm thus conveyed was not given till the morning of the day which was fixed for the insurrection, and the soldiers were privately planted in their barracks but an hour or two before the time. Matanzas was the centre of the insurrectionary movement, and was therefore fixed to lead it off. So much of the secret conversation had been caught, that the names of the leaders all transpired, and they were arrested as the first firebrand was applied. 500 prisoners were instantly made, and the arrests were for the moment suspended, because the carcel of Matanzas would hold no more.

The negroes, finding themselves discovered and exposed to the imminent peril of death for their share in the conspiracy, resolved to slay, in the first instance, as many of their antagonists as possible. Two entire families in Matanzas were poisoned by their slaves; but two hundred slaves were butchered *en revanche*. Matanzas became indeed "a place of slaughter." * Even after the discovery was made, and all the secret machinery of the conspiracy was laid bare to whites and blacks, the insurrection continued in some ingenios,

* Such is the meaning of the name, in Spanish.

and overseers were flung into their sugar-boilers. Other arrests were made; straggling parties of black and coloured men were remorselessly shot down; of those who were seized living, many were put to the torture, with a view to extract from them the names of their associates, and not a few expired beneath the infliction of the lash. Such atrocious severities naturally produced a re-action. The third day there was an outburst in the district of Palos; the fifth there was one within four leagues of Havana. These isolated insurrectionary movements were of course eventually put down; but during the interlude of anarchy the blacks supped full of horrors. The planters, whom they could reach, were massacred; and those whom they could not reach, had their property destroyed. Terror, instead of restraining, stimulated them to fresh daring; during one day the panegyric of slavery might be read by the light of full twenty plantation-fires; the laws which give man a property in man received their comment in the destruction of all property. In one day, too, six eminent commercial houses were utterly broken, and failed for immense sums. Premature disclosure alone prevented tremendous results. From every side arose a plaintive cry of unmistakable terror: "*Dios salve la isla! Dios tenga misericordia de nos!*"

Two barrels of arsenic were seized, which were designed to poison the troops; the white women were to become the negroes' wives; and the King, a mulatto, who bore his own portrait with a crown and mantle, was arrested! The power of this formidable conspiracy was greatly augmented by the impulse which

Governor O'Donnell's protection gave to the slave-trade. Within the few previous months more than 3,000 additional slaves had been imported, and the island, at the period of the rising, was surrounded with slave-ships. The mulatto leaders, too, were known to be in correspondence with the free black republic of Hayti, and the negro hatred of Spaniards, in both islands, exploded simultaneously. In revolutionised Hispaniola the instruments of extermination were to be the bullet and the sword; in Cuba, the torch and arsenic. The affrighted Spaniards had recourse to measures of extreme cruelty. 800 slaves and mulattos were thrown into the dungeons of Matanzas, and 200 of these were shot without legal trial! The rest were for the most part strangled in prison. In Havana 260 were arrested for affiliation to the general conspiracy, and the grand total of prisoners was eventually 2000. The planters, poor men, deplored the losses entailed by "indispensable chastisement;" each strangled slave being worth 500 dollars, and no compensation from the state!

Amongst the heads of the conspiracy, all mulattos, a calesero, or calèche-driver, was led before a file of soldiery, and shot upon the instant. The most conspicuous of the other leaders were, the owner of a spirit-shop in Matanzas, the brother of a dentist there in extensive practice, and, transcendant above all his colleagues, the poet-revolutionist, Placido. He was armed to the teeth, ready to emerge as chief leader of the enterprise, and destined, doubtless, in his own mind, for prime minister, when the officers of the law and military fell upon him. He made a tremendous

struggle, fired three pistols, killing or wounding a man at each discharge, and then hacked and hewed away with his sword, speedily making for himself a ring of more than its span, and clearing a space around him as rapidly as an Utreran bull when he rushes into the circus. But a soldier's musket soon brought him to the ground, and bleeding and faint he was flung into the Matanzas carcel.

Both mulattos and negroes at first were obstinate, and declined to make any revelations. Then, in the year of grace, 1844, was resorted to by free and enlightened Spaniards the horrid process of torture, to wring from agony the truth or falsehood (as the case might be) which would make sufficiently wide-spread the circle of vengeance. For many years past every species of torture has been prohibited by Spanish legislation; and from Asturias to Andalucía there is no vecino who will not tell you that "*el tormento* in whatever shape is repugnant to the spirit of the age." Colonial practice is somewhat different from metropolitan theory. Both the negro and mulatto prisoners were lashed without exception and without mercy, until they consented to make some sort of disclosure, or fainted under the infliction. Human nature for the most part yielded. The bulk of the prisoners confessed, the secret springs and ramifications of the conspiracy were all disclosed, and the plan was acknowledged to be of ancient date. From many a quivering lip came forth the name of "Placido!" Let not those condemn too readily their weakness who know not by experience the horrors of the torture. According to the municipal law of the Spanish Antillas