

The Cuban Republic and Its President

National Progress No Safeguard Against the Popular Taste For Revolution



The So Called "Americanization" of the Island Has Worked Wonders in the Way of Its Development, but the Cubans Are a Jealous Race and Do Not Take Kindly to a Prosperity Which Has Been Brought About at the Expense of Commercial Independence.

At the time of the establishment of the Cuban republic there were few so sanguine of its perpetuity as to regard it as more than an experiment. That was certainly the belief of those of other countries who had made a study of the conditions prevailing in the island, and it is altogether probable that the Cubans themselves have always shared in the general uncertainty. Recent events in Cuba have gone far to justify this skepticism.

That is not to say that there are no Cuban citizens who have wished ardently that there were no room for speculation; and a universally satisfactory state of affairs. There are numerous patriots of the right sort in the island, and they have never ceased to hope. At times the course of the present government has seemed to be directed toward final stability. Sometimes the business of living and prospering has assumed an almost normal aspect. The spirit of revolution has seemed to be withdrawn from active service.

But not for long. The habit of centuries is not so easily put off. Political unrest is one of the baneful heritages of Spanish domination in America. All of the emancipated South and Central American states have been shackled with it, and Cuba, the very last to break the chain, still has all the symptoms of the inherited disease.

By the terms of the famous Platt amendment, which is the vital base of the constitution of the republic and a constituent part of its organic law, the United States becomes the protector of the young state at the first warning signal of foreign intervention. It is the exclusive privilege of the greater republic to cry "Hands off!" to all the hostile world.

But Cuba's foes do not come from abroad. They are from within. The unscrupled demon of political unrest is the ever present danger which threatens to disrupt her. Prosperity does not banish it. The rapid development of the country but furnishes new opportunities for its maintenance. Even the rapidly so called "Americanization" of the island has failed to work a cure. Although one-third of the island is now under American industrial control and over \$100,000,000 of American capital is invested there revolution is still possible.

It is possible—that is, if the Platt amendment is not sufficiently comprehensive to prevent the Cubans from doing themselves mortal injury. At the present time there is scarcely a subject in the island, from public works to the minutest details of the daily life, that has not been carried out with American capital. It may be said that at the price of political independence, real or imaginary, as the case may be, Cuba has put herself at the mercy of the hands of her more powerful neighbors. Is it not equally true that as a result of its

neighborly interference the United States has ventured largely, with ample confidence in its own power to safeguard its interests in the island?

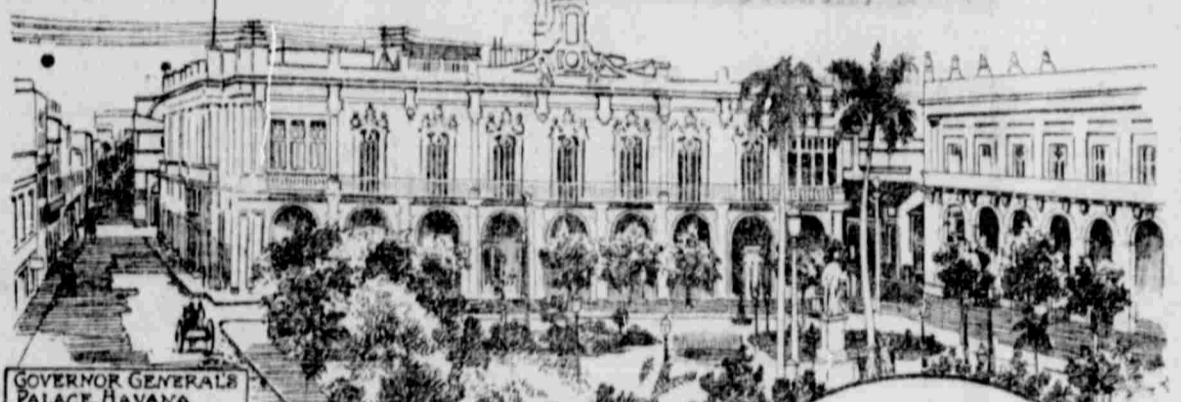
The Cubans are jealous as a race—another heritage from their peninsular forbears. Not unnaturally, they resent to some extent American supremacy in the island—American industrial supremacy, that is. It must be admitted that they have some reason to fear from it. If they were inclined to believe that the citizens of the great republic were engaged in an act of the most beautiful philanthropy the world had ever known, the Isle of Pines episode must have convinced them of their error. In that charming islet, claimed by every Cuban as a legal and logical part of the new republic, it happened that as soon as American interests became predominant the newcomers flung out the stars and stripes and declared themselves American citizens on American soil.

This is the feeling that is always uppermost in the mind of the average Cuban, and there are abundant evidences that it is shared by the government, which proves that the latter is not, as has been alleged, "the tool of

anybody." Anything that interferes with the working out and profitable development of the numerous great enterprises established by American commercial ambition is a matter of very serious import to the authorities in the island.



CUBAN SUGAR AND FLOWMAN



GOVERNOR GENERAL'S PALACE, HAVANA



GROWING TOBACCO IN PINAR DEL RIO



STREET IN PINAR DEL RIO, SEAT OF REVOLUTION

Tomás Estrada Palma, for eighteen years country schoolmaster in New York state, who was transformed suddenly into the first president of the Cuban republic. He was installed on May 20, 1902, but for thirty years previous to that time he had believed himself to be the legal possessor of the title. He had been elected formally by the revolutionaries in the Ten Years' war between skullduggies with the Spanish oppressors. He accepted the dignity and never yielded it. When he was captured during the early part of his career and taken to Spain and imprisoned, he claimed the title even in his captivity. In the progress of a census at his battlemented prison among the Pyrenees an officer demanded his occupation. "I am the president of the Cuban republic," he replied.

So he looked on his election after the Spanish-American war as a vindication and restoration of his rights. Without any sign of elation he ex-

plained why it is that he has succeeded so long in avoiding political disaster.

Notwithstanding his own freely expressed opinion to the contrary, the president of the Cuban republic is a remarkable man. He declares that capable leaders were so few in Cuba at the time he obtained his foothold that any man of moderate talent was bound to take a leading place in the councils of the new government. "There were no few strong men among us," he once remarked, "that any one who stepped to the front was obliged to become at least a general, and quickly." Yet no one who has ever known him has been convinced of his mediocrity.

Now in the first half of his second term as president, Señor Palma is in his seventy-second year. He is a native of the Cuban province of Bayamo. His father was a man of great wealth, the owner of an immense landed estate and one of the largest cattle breeders on the island. Young Palma was reared in luxury, educated by tutors at home

of Spain. Thereafter he cast his lot with the revolutionists, giving them everything he could obtain and fighting with them whenever the opportunity offered. His energy and his devotion to the cause soon raised him to the leadership. He first became a deputy and finally president of the provisional republic. It was a migratory affair, this government, moving its headquarters as often as the enemy compelled. Many of the native Cubans recognized it, however, and looked on Palma as their chief, with General Maximo Gomez as his secretary of war.

One day while on the march with a body of troops Palma was captured. After a few days spent in Morro castle, Havana, he was sent to Spain. There he lived ten months in various prisons. When he was released the Ten Years' war was over, and Spain had so tightened her grip on Cuba that he could not return to the island, but made his way to New York. He did not remain long on that first visit. He did not know the language and no opening seemed to offer. Gomez had taken refuge in Honduras, and he urged his chief to join him there. Palma went finally and found aid and sympathy in abundance. He married the daughter of the president of Honduras and in time became postmaster general of the republic.

He could not forget Cuba, and the island of his dreams was always Cuba Libre. He acquired the English language while in Honduras, where he remained until 1883, when he once more came to the United States, this time bringing a wife and children. He settled in Central Valley, a small village ten miles over the hills from the Hudson river, and with David Cornell established the Instituto Estrada Palma, a school for Cuban boys.

For eighteen years he lived this quiet pedagogic life, all the time growing in the affections of his neighbors. Five children were added to his family fold in Central Valley, and as the years passed the Palmas became Americans to all intents and purposes, with nothing to suggest that the reserved and simple mannered schoolmaster was destined to be raised to a more lofty dignity.

In 1895, while he was busy with his school, Palma was called on to assume the direction of the junta, the group of men in this country who were awaiting an opportunity to wrest Cuba from Spanish tyranny. He at once abandoned his work at Central Valley and went to New York city, where he established himself in a dingy little office and went to work tooth and nail. When the island was freed and the junta's work was done, he returned again to the obscurity of Central Valley and waited. Those who know him believe that he would have been content to remain there, but when Cuba called him he regarded the summons as right and proper and responded without delay.

Palma began his administration as the most popular man in Cuba. That he has not been able to retain this popularity is no fault of his. It is his unflinching integrity and his dogged resolution to make his government live up to its pledges that have given offense to the revolutionary element. As it is, he has accomplished wonders. What other Cuban could have curbed the racial unrest of the islanders for so long a period?

Dr. Domingo Mendez Capote, the vice president, is a patriot of a younger generation and a typical Cuban. Doubtless he is more of a favorite among the rank and file of modern Cubans than if he had lived the best part of his life in an obscure American hamlet.

GEORGE H. PICARD.



WORKING SCENE ON BONIATO ROAD



SCENE ON TOLEDO SUGAR ESTATE, NEAR HAVANA

changed his humdrum life in his Central Valley schoolhouse for the imposing Havana palace once occupied by the haughty Spanish governor general. He went about his task of running a complex government with all the ease and confidence he had manifested in his private academy for the sons of Cuban patriots in the sleepy New York village.

Whatever may be the shortcomings of Tomás Estrada Palma there is no lack of dignified self possession in his makeup. It must be admitted also that he has shown himself to be skilful at organization and that he is tireless in his efforts to advance the interests of his country. That he has been shrewd enough to combine personal modesty with mental fitness and to preserve unflinching politeness explains, perhaps,

and sent to the great Spanish university at Seville to complete his studies. He was a remarkably diligent student and attracted much attention from the university dons, who were surprised that such a scholar could come from America. He was graduated from the university and returned to Cuba a full fledged lawyer.

But he never began the practice of his chosen profession. When he reached home he found many changes. His father had died, and he had succeeded to a great estate. The preliminary agitation that preceded the coming struggle for liberty had begun, and he entered into it with all the ardor of his youth. The war came. The Spanish confiscated his estate, carried off his mother and tortured her to death. This made him the implacable foe

An Unusually Ill Fated Line of Senatorial Succession; A Series of Misfortunes Has Followed Its Representatives

WILL Senator Alfred W. Benson of Kansas escape the mysterious fatality of the "Lane succession?"

The seat in the United States senate occupied by Judge Benson for a few days last spring, and to which he will return at the next session of congress, is called the "Lane succession" because it was first filled by Colonel James H. Lane in 1861, after Kansas had been admitted to the Union. Disaster and in several cases death have overtaken the ten occupants of that seat, from Colonel Lane, who committed suicide, down to Joseph Ralph Burton, who was convicted for abetting a fraud against the postal department.

The other Kansas line of succession in the United States senate, now occupied by Senator Long, has moved with dramatic exposure of Senator Pomeroy in 1865, and nearly all of Kansas citizens have been elected. Lane was much loved and nearly all of Kansas citizens have been elected. Lane was much loved and nearly all of Kansas citizens have been elected. Lane was much loved and nearly all of Kansas citizens have been elected.

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many persons came to believe them to be true. It was in vain that Lane denounced these underhand methods of attack on him and demanded that his opponents make specific charges. Goaded to desperation, one day in the spring of 1866 he stepped from a buggy in which he was driving with a friend at Leavenworth and, without a word of warning, drew a pistol from his pocket and blew out his brains.

The next man to fill the seat that has become known as a mysteriously ill fated one was Edmund G. Ross, appointed by Governor Crawford to fill the unexpired term. Ross was a prominent newspaper editor and enjoyed great popularity. What gave promise of being a fine career was abruptly terminated with the impeachment proceedings against President Johnson. Kansas was a unit for the impeachment of the chief executive, but Ross did not believe that he was guilty and declined to vote against him. The senator was bitterly attacked even by his former friends, and at the end of his term of office he left the state, practically an exile. He soon suffered financial embarrassment and found difficulty in obtaining the employment to which a man of his ability was entitled. At times he had to work at the printer's case in small offices for a mere pittance. He died in Texas, alone, in poverty and almost unknown.

Alexander Caldwell of Leavenworth was elected by the legislature, in 1871, as Ross' successor. He escaped the Lane hoodoo for two years and then was forced to resign by a storm of indignation caused by accusations of conspiring to defeat the will of the majority in the stormy campaign that had resulted in his election. He, too, fell into obscurity, a political wreck.

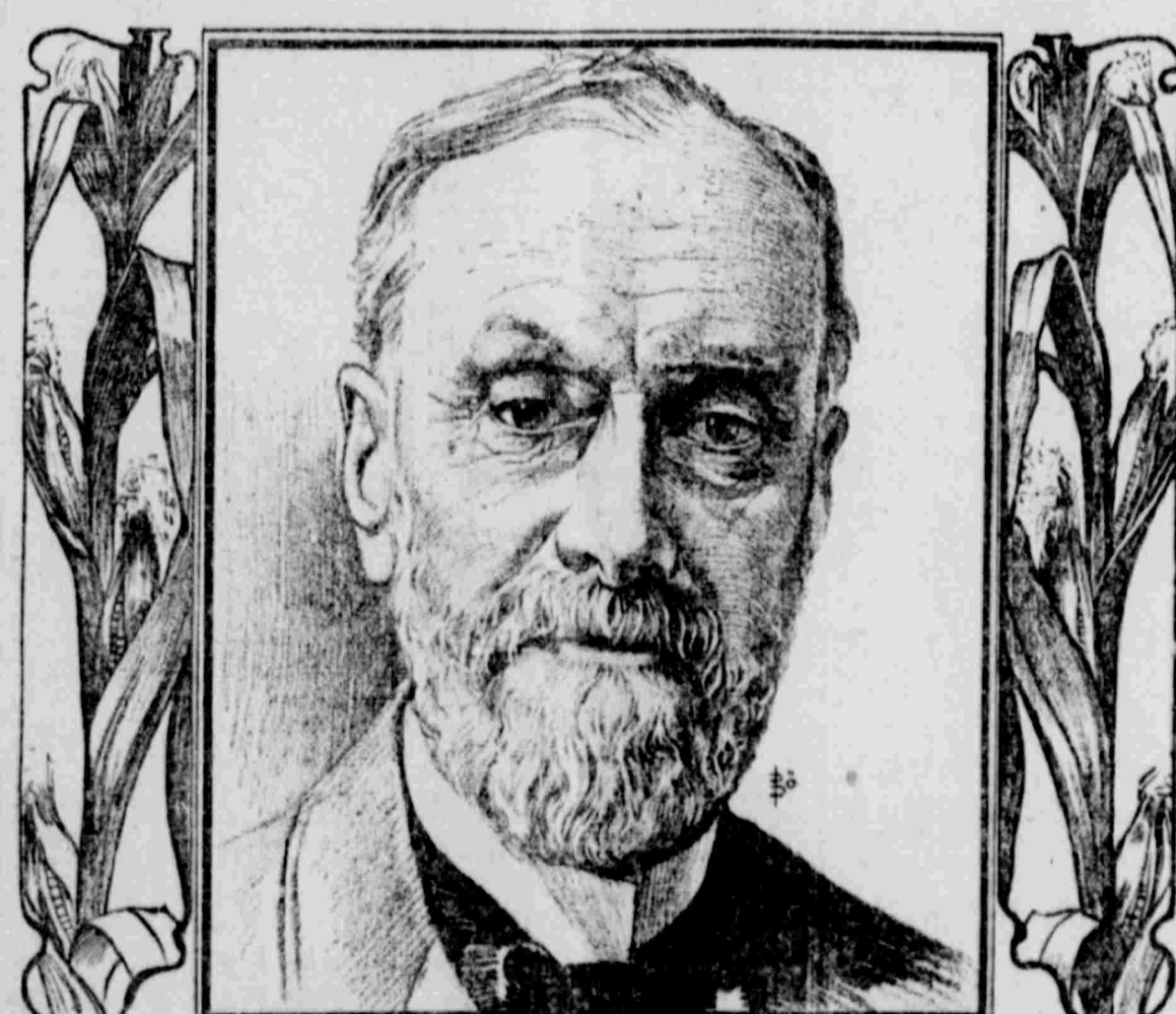
Judge Robert Crozier, who was appointed to serve out Caldwell's unexpired term, immediately became involved in a series of political feuds which stripped him of prestige and re-

sulted in his ignominious defeat for re-election. James M. Harvey, who had been a popular governor, and who was selected to succeed Caldwell, had no sooner taken his seat in Washington than his health began to fail and he had to retire at the end of his term a physical wreck. His political career ended, Preston B. Plumb, the sixth man in the fatal succession, withstood the mysterious influence of the office much longer than any of the others, but when the stroke came it was an unusually severe one. Wealthy, a great power in his own state and to some extent in the senate chamber, and apparently in the best of health, Plumb dropped dead in the streets of Washington during the second year of his third term.

The following newspaper dispatch sent out from Washington tells the story of the case of Bishop W. Perkins, who was appointed by Governor Humphrey to succeed Plumb. "Perkins, the new Kansas senator, who was sworn in today, was not very warmly received by his colleagues. His appointment has disgusted most of the Kansans, as well as the Republicans who served with him in congress. After a long career in the house, in which Judge Perkins showed himself an able man, he blotted his record by participating in the Choctaw and Cherokee land steal which went through the last congress." Perkins was ostracized by the other senators throughout his term, at the end of which he retired a broken hearted man, and he died within a short time.

Judge John Martin, a Democrat, was the next incumbent of the hoodoo seat. He was elected to the office by the Populists in the Kansas legislature and from that time on was known as a Populist, although he never declared himself one. But his influence in the Democratic party was gone, and he soon degenerated into a political defect.

In 1895 the Republicans regained control of the legislature and State Senator Lucien Baker was chosen for the Lane succession. It is said he feared it and that he took the precaution to carry a rabbit's foot during his term. In any event, he became exceedingly unpopular, and after entering a contest with J. R. Burton for re-election withdrew two weeks before the vote was cast.



SENATOR BENSON OF KANSAS.

J. R. Burton had a more terrible experience than some of the others who had tempted the hoodoo of the ill starred seat. He brought disgrace upon himself and his state, as well as on the senate, by attempting to shield a St. Louis get-rich-quick concern from the wrath of the postal department. Following his conviction and sentence to imprisonment, he resigned his seat.

Such is the record of disaster in the fatal Lane succession. It has struck heavily here, and lightly there, but it has always struck. The lifetime of service in the senate customary in so many states has contrasted strangely with the short terms and ruinous history of this ill fated seat in the upper branch of congress.

Senators Veal and Cokrell in the neighboring state of Missouri were contemporaries of most of the men of the Lane succession. Senator Cullom of the nearby state of Illinois saw more than half of the occupants of the Lane seat come and go. Senator Allison of Iowa served with great distinction for thirty consecutive years, while the Lane succession furnished a new man almost every term and one to whom either death or misfortune came, and in several cases both.

"Are you not afraid of the Lane succession?" Judge Benson was asked by a friend when Governor Hoch offered him the seat made vacant by Burton's resignation.

"No, I don't believe in magic," he replied. But he laughed nervously and refused to discuss the subject further. But others have talked of it, including members of the senate, men who believe only in the magic exerted by wealth and power. Some of them have said that they would rather retire from the senate than have to serve in the Lane succession.

Judge Benson has a distinguished record as a jurist. His nerves are good and there is little likelihood of his worrying over what may befall him.

HAROLD B. GREGORY.

to drive away evil spirits. Funeral bells are known to have been used by the church in the sixth century, A. D. Reports for the year show that in railway construction North Dakota stood first in the whole list of states, with \$25 million of new track, and Minnesota ranked fifth with \$91 million.

Chinese students in American high schools, colleges, universities, professional, technical and trade schools

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