

would look at the matter in the same way. We should all say at once that ours was not an independent country if any foreign ruler, however much we were indebted to his country historically for our independence, could, with the slightest claim of right, have made such pretensions regarding us at the time of our civil war. Yet, what we should have resented on the part of Louis Napoleon toward ourselves in the middle of the nineteenth century, we are applauding President Roosevelt for doing toward the Cubans at the beginning of the twentieth.

+

The only difference between President Roosevelt's action with reference to Cuba at this time, and such a supposition regarding Louis Napoleon with reference to the United States nearly half a century ago, is that the Cuban constitution authorizes the United States to intervene in Cuba under certain circumstances. But this clause was arbitrarily forced upon the Cubans by our government, and was finally accepted by them upon an understanding which leaves to us no more right to put down civil war in Cuba now than Louis Napoleon would have had to put down civil war in the United States in 1861-65.

+

Let us recall the circumstances under which the intervention clause of the Cuban constitution was adopted. As an amendment to the army appropriation bill in the United States Senate on the 25th of March, 1901, the following clause, paragraph 3 of what is known as "the Platt amendment" (vol. iii, pp. 762-63), was adopted as a condition of our assenting to Cuban independence:

That the government of Cuba consents that the United States may exercise the right to intervene for the preservation of Cuban independence, the maintenance of a government adequate for the protection of life, property, and individual liberty, and for discharging the obligations with respect to Cuba imposed by the treaty of Paris on the United States, now to be assumed and undertaken by the government of Cuba.

This clause was incorporated into the army appropriation law, and naturally enough the Cubans objected to it. Their objection was not only natural but it was right. For the United States had at the outbreak of the Spanish war solemnly declared that—

The United States hereby disclaim any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and assert their determination, when that is

accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people.

But upon representations officially made by President McKinley, through Secretary Root (vol. iv, pp. 104, 122), the Cubans accepted the superimposed conditions. These representations were to the effect that the Platt amendment had for its object simply the guaranteeing of the independence of Cuba, and did not "contemplate interference with its government or the exercise of a protectorate or of sovereignty," and also that intervention would take place only "when independence is endangered by outside powers, or grave interior disturbances creating anarchy" occur. It is now asserted, of course, that the Cuban civil war does create anarchy; or, as President Roosevelt puts it, will "assuredly throw" Cuba "into anarchy." But there is no more reason to anticipate that result in Cuba now, than there would have been in the United States in 1861. Under existing circumstances American intervention is equivalent to the establishment of an arbitrary protectorate. It is not improbably the forerunner of an application to Cuba of the colonial policy under which we govern the Philippines.

+ +

The Revolutionary Cause in Cuba.

That the Cuban revolutionists are not creating disorder wantonly is fairly evident from their address to the American people, in which they object to American intervention. The question is their question, they say, a question of their rights and duties, and one that they themselves must settle; and they ask us, and fairly ask us, to consider that this question is "fraught with more consequences to Cuba than momentary commercial loss or gain," for it involves their constitution and their liberties. We fear they are talking into wooden ears when they make this appeal. Most Americans, though not as much under the spell of the devilish type of commercialism as they were a few years ago, still find it difficult to realize anything more momentous to any people than commercial loss or gain. But it certainly is worth while for us, before intervening in this foreign family quarrel, to consider whether the Cuban revolutionists may not possibly be right. They justify their civil war upon the ground that under the empty name of a republic, the shackles of the overthrown Spanish dominion have again been imposed upon them, that their constitution has been cast aside with contemptuous egotism, that the royal laws of the ancient regime have been revived and issued with the very forms and words of the royal Spanish decree, and that absolutism

has again fastened itself upon Cuba. These things are possibly true. And is it for us to intervene for the suppression of a revolution vitalized by such a cause?

+ +

Annulling Cuban Independence.

Both in Cuba and in the United States, influences are evidently at work for despoiling Cuba of her independence, and making her a colonial appendage, like Puerto Rico or the Philippines, to the United States. The Cuban considerations are commercial and spring from the landed interests there that would be financially benefited by American control. Considerations in the United States are both commercial and imperialistic. In certain American quarters the recognition of Cuban independence has always been distasteful. The following quotation from the editorial columns of the Chicago Inter Ocean of the 15th, regarding our present military occupation of Cuba, faithfully expresses that spirit: "The American people have been shown how peace and order can be secured in Cuba, and some day they will insist that their government shall do there what should have been done in 1898."

+ +

Cuban Civilization.

In support of the policy of subjugating Cuba, the idea that Cuban civilization is inferior, doubtless has much influence. An instance is afforded by the Chicago Tribune of the 15th, which describes the revolutionists as "an undisciplined, turbulent, rebellious people," Negroes or half-breeds—"a Spanish-African blend"—who have a "chronic and constitutional aversion to work," and whom the United States ought to take hold of with a strong hand and shake into some kind of order. A sober commentary, unintended but direct, upon this superficial judgment, may be found in Cassier's Magazine for September. It is written by a mining engineer of large experience in the West Indies, who describes the natives of Santo Domingo, the same "Spanish-African blend" as the "turbulent" Cubans, in these favorable terms:

Though a mixed race, I believe the Dominicans are the best of the West India natives. Daily intercourse with them and their employment in large numbers have given me a high opinion of the Dominican "man with the hoe." Absolutely illiterate, and in some respects primitive as a savage, he is naturally intelligent, peaceable and hard-working. As is usual among mountaineers, there is good character here, and upon its development the future prosperity of the islands will depend.

This engineer evidently had no designs upon the

labor, the property or the liberties of the Dominicans. Otherwise he would have found them, as exploitationists always pretend to do, inferior to other races, and fit only for exploitation by the white race. It is hardly in the nature of a lazy white man to think of a "lower" race or group of people without itching to have them forced to work for him.

+ +

A Labor Union Problem.

In skilled employments in which men are hired by the day or the week, a perplexing question of wages-regulation is arising. All men in a trade are not equally skillful; and in most trades, perhaps, there is a class of lower grade men who can do, after a fashion, a large proportion of the work as it runs. These men tend to hold wages down. If unions established minimum wages on the basis of the value of the well-skilled men, employers would be driven to resist unionism because they could afford to pay such wages only for part, and a comparatively small part of their work. The result is a tendency under union rules to a low minimum. To obviate this difficulty, some trade unionists advocate a technical examination for admission into unions. This would certainly improve unionism in one respect; it would make membership a guarantee of good workmanship. But on the other hand, the less efficient workmen who were excluded would be a constant menace to the strength of the unions. Since they would be competent to do such work in the trade as does not require high skill (a large proportion in almost every skilled trade), their pressure for employment would probably be so great as to disrupt the unions. And if wages within the union were classified, supposing that to be possible, the first-class mechanic would be out of employment except when high grade work was demanded. As economic conditions now are, the only course consistent with the maintenance of unionism seems to be to stand firmly by the present policy of fixing a minimum wage and letting employers pay more if they wish to and when and to whom they wish.

+ +

So long as opportunities for employment are restricted by law, the supply of workers being thereby kept in excess of opportunities for work, trade unions can be only defensive organizations and at a great disadvantage at that. But let restrictions to employment be removed, so that opportunities for work will constantly exceed the supply of workers, and the adjustment of wages to competency will be a simple and entirely practicable