

No! unless the advantages be mutual, unless there be a free interchange betwixt the mother and her children, the link is an unnatural one. The children are aliens, the mother is a despot; such a tie cannot be binding.

Spain still continues to pursue an erroneous course with respect to her Colonies; experience of the past has not opened her eyes to the present, nor to the future. She withholds the reform sanctioned by the Cortes from her Colonies, which are oppressed and heavily taxed; in short, such is her fear of losing the few possessions which she still retains, that she adopts the most tyrannical measures to keep the poor creoles subservient. Is this just, is it reasonable? Perhaps the Spaniards imagine that the creoles are no longer Spaniards; that they are aliens, that they have lost the rights of Spaniards; and yet, whenever the Cubanos petitioned for the reform of antiquated abuses, it was done with the view, not only to benefit themselves but the Mother-country also.

Owing, it is said, to the influence exercised by the advocates of anti-slavery here, there have been numerous risings of the black population in various parts of the island. Many of these outbreaks were attended with serious loss of life and the destruction of valuable property to a fearful extent. To protect themselves, it was natural that the inhabitants of the rural districts should come to the determination of arming themselves, so as to defend their persons and property in case of rebellion. They petitioned the Government to allow them to form a sort of militia or rural national guard, but the Government, ever suspicious, strenuously opposed the idea, preferring, no doubt, to allow the Colonists to be butchered than to form battalions which, they imagined, might some day oppose their tyrannical decrees and oppressive taxation.

Were it not for the dread of a rising of the slaves, I am convinced that the Cubanos would long, ere this, have shaken off the yoke, and declared themselves independent. They are subjected to all sorts of abuses—prerogatives of their municipalities were destroyed—their *junta de fomento* lost all its attributions—justice is administered in the most iniquitous and deplorable manner by a parcel of rapacious judges, who are suffered to enrich themselves with impunity—the safety of the rural districts is intrusted to a set of Spanish adventurers, principally officers without fortune, who, having no stake in the country, and no fixed salaries, care only how they can enrich themselves at the cost of the inhabitants, whom they oppress in every possible manner, whilst their subordinates derive an existence from the fines they inflict, or the bribery they pocket.

As an example of the honourable way by which these honourable men gain a livelihood, I shall explain to you in what manner they proceed whenever a crime has been committed in their neighbourhood: these arbitrary hidalgos commence proceedings by intimidating those whose purses are well lined with golden ounces. Whether the presumed delinquent be innocent or guilty, his first step is to purchase *silence*, and gold buries the accusation in oblivion. If the guilty party be wealthy, you may be certain that he will escape the fangs of justice; but if he be a poor man, woe betide him, for he is imprisoned or banished.