

LETTER IX.

ON BOARD THE STEAMSHIP "CUBA,"

Feb. 8, 1867.

We made an early start this warm morning, and before seven o'clock saw our worldly effects safely perched on the heads of two negro porters, who walked so erectly to the quay under their burdens that I make a note of the value of this sort of exercise in imparting strength to the spine and to the muscular system, and recommend it to youthful gymnasts. Taking our places under the canopy of one of the long line of gondolas, we were soon on the deck of the "Cuba," and by nine o'clock we hear the welcome sound of the whistle to move on. In a few minutes we are disengaged from the fleet around us, and taking a last look at the beautiful basin, and the white houses and green trees of Havana, all serene in the soft sunlight, and passing rapidly (with ring of saluting gun) by the solid walls of the castle, we plunge into the Gulf stream. This rapid transition from the always placid harbour is not always so agreeable as upon this fine morning, for when there is a sea running one is apt to plunge rapidly into a state of sea-sickness; this morning, however, we merely pass into a fresh atmosphere that is exhilarating, and gives us a better taste for breakfast after our long morning a-foot and afloat. We make directly for Key West, where we arrive about five p.m.—eighty miles from Havana. As we approach the low island (about six miles in length,) Fort Taylor looms up, a solid structure, presenting two tiers of guns in its wall, and mounted on top by a number of "Parrots" and "Columbiads" (we are told) of formidable appearance. At a point of the Island, about four miles distant, are two huge Martello towers in

course
two mi
battalio
Tortuga
their fi
Tortuga
the Gul
yacht in
Here th
confined
line, ab
dreary m
weather
breeze
distance
Clyde-b
runner,
Govern
having
too caro
The tov
sand th
course
the sco
breeze.
bloom
here in
of a fe
The po
the for
industr
and sor
the pri
comme
our ves