

ABOUT THE WORLD

"ELECTRICITY, O! 'Lectricity, O! Here's your fresh fluid. Buy, O! Buy, fresh in the can, O!" That is the cry that would well typify the present way of selling electricity in the large cities. There are pedlars of the invisible energy as there are pedlars of milk and fish. There are routes that are served every day. Storage batteries are hung outside doors to be filled. The batteries are used to run fans in sick rooms, to play the piano or to work the pedals of organs. Theatres are regular patrons. The energy they buy is used by ballet girls in producing their wonderful parti-colored light effects. The battery is carried by the performer and must be small. The electric fluid pedlar is stopped often by bicyclists who want small pocket batteries, which supply their lights, replenished. These lamps will burn for ten hours.

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To fully understand the situation in Cuba one should be able for a little while to put himself in the place of a Cuban, and try to imagine what he would do about it. The Cuban who is born on the island, who nominally owns the country, can not only have no voice whatever in the government of his nation, but he must see himself ruled and taxed by men who have bought the privileges from the Spanish government as a specula-

tion, to see how much money they can make out of the offices.

If a Cuban owns a plantation he must pay thirty cents out of every dollar he makes, into the tax fund. If he kills an ox, he is taxed one dollar for the privilege. If he owns carts on his plantation or a carriage to ride about in, he must pay fifteen dollars for each one to the Spanish, every year. He cannot engage in business, he cannot build a house, he can do nothing, without going to the Spanish officers and buying permission.

A Spaniard usually comes to Cuba to see what he can make out of the country, and then goes back again. It has been a treasure house for Spaniards to visit for centuries, and the prime minister of that country says that so long as Spain has a man or a dollar the island will never be given up.

From 1868 to 1878, ten long years, the Cubans waged war with the mother country against fearful odds. When peace was concluded, the Spanish promised Cuba good roads, schools, and all sorts of improvements. Not one of these promises has been kept, and now Cuba will fight to the end, and it must be confessed that the advantages are mostly on the side of the islanders. If the United States would allow them to purchase guns and ammunition they would almost inevitably gain their liberty.