

"Ah!" said Peabody, "that Mr. Ouvrard was a plain-spoken bis'ness man. I wonder if he ever visited the States, for that man had the science of one of our enlightened free citizens, who cares nothin' about royalty. How the Emperor Bony must have been onfakalised on hearing those words. *Sacre blue!*"

"Some of these military dictators," continued the monk, "have been the curse of Cuba. Only fancy unlimited power concentrated in one man, who has the right to do what he pleases; who may imprison persons suspected of liberalism, banish those whose influence over the masses may prove dangerous, and place the towns in a state of siege. As for the press, its liberty is a misnomer, it slumbers under the yoke of censorship. Cuba has a right to complain of its rulers and the laws which regulate its political and commercial interests. Almost all important and lucrative situations are filled by Christina's favourites, heedless of the claims of the creoles who have sprung from the same blood, and who in most cases are warmly attached to the Mother-country. The Cubanos never refused to help Spain when she was distressed; their reward has been oppression and taxation. The Cubano grins and bears all this tyranny, well aware that it were vain to petition for *reform*. As to *revolt*—though many would wish for a separation from the Mother-country, could it be effected without a general rising of the coloured population—revolt is out of the question, for they would have to contend against the Captain-General's well-appointed troops, and, as I have just observed, 800,000 slaves, who would not hesitate to cut our throats. Consequently, you see that the poor creoles have the sword of Damocles suspended over their heads. If it were not for the dread of causing a *casus belli* I think the creoles would throw themselves into the arms of the United States of America."

"Fray O'Donnell!" exclaimed Peabody, springing up and seizing the monk by the hands, "Fray O'Donnell, you are one of the keen-eyedest priests I ever came across. I'm a nigger if you wasn't born for the counter; why you onderstand business as well as our great guns. Give Cuba to America and she'll prosper, or else I snore! Do you know, Smith, and it's fact as true as gospel, that out of 379 vessels which loaded to Matanzas last year, between the 1st of January to the 1st of November, that 241 was Americans! You seem onfakalised: no wonder. Perhaps you will take it to be all bam when I tell you that there was only eight Britishers, and only eight Spaniards and eight French!"

"Goodness me!" exclaimed Mr. Smith.

"Ah! goodness and bless yoursel' as much as you like. It's no spekiation—it only shows what *we* could do with Cuba, in spite of Spaniards or Britishers, and tarnation knows what. It quite 'mazes you, Smith, don't it? Fire and tow! what a lot we should do in the coffee and sugar line, to say nothin' of segars. We'd onfakalise Mincing-lane—fact I assure you!"

"Well, I never!" said Mr. Smith, staring at Peabody.

"Pray proceed, Fray O'Donnell, or we shall never hear the end of Mr. Peabody's observations," said McGuinness, laughingly.

The Yankee gave the poet a contemptuous look, opened his lips as if