

"The Pearl of the Antilles."

During the twelve years which have elapsed since the Spanish relinquished control of Cuba, that island has been pretty thoroughly discussed. Countless articles have been written, setting forth the richness of her soil and the salubrity of her climate, and not a little political history has been written.

What the public now wants to know is whether Cuba is going to "make good;" whether she will show her ability to exist as an independent nation, or whether she will be compelled to confess to an inherent weakness, and become a dependency of the great nation which assisted her in separating from Spain.

The failure of the first experiment in independent government has caused grave doubt as to her ability to maintain a separate existence. The fact that so early in her career as a nation she began to follow the well known programme of the South American states, gave the impression that she was only one of the many, and that ultimately permanent occupation would be the solution of the Cuban problem.

That the first experiment in self-government was tried too soon is the opinion of those who are most familiar with the country and its people. It was hardly to be expected that a race that had suffered centuries of oppression, in a few years could acquire all the broad-mindedness and self-restraint necessary to self-government. A further period of tutelage proved to be necessary, and during this second period of instruction valuable lessons were learned.

Time has been shown to be necessary to evolve a satisfactory government. Indeed the early years of the great Republic to the north were not free from errors and consequent domestic strife. No nation has entered into independent existence with a perfect Constitution. That mistakes have been made in Cuba, and that they will continue to be made, may be taken for granted, but by what standard are we to judge a nation which only twelve years ago escaped the stultifying influence of centuries of oppression? Does the freed slave immediately become frugal and industrious? No! It is much more probable that, confusing freedom with license, he will plunge into many pleasures from which his former status debarred him. The officers of the army of the Cuban revolution well knew how to stir up the devotion of the ignorant negro insurgent, stimulating his imagination by depicting in glowing colors the life he would lead when independence should be finally gained.

It takes time for such newly enfranchised

citizens to realize the responsibilities that go with liberty. There exists even to-day in Cuba a large irresponsible element which has not yet learned this lesson; and in this lies Cuba's danger. But fortunately there are restraining influences. The right of intervention exercises a strong controlling influence. The strengthening of the army has put the government in a much better position to cope with local uprisings. In a recent number of Collier's Gasper Whitney says:

"The American Government stands committed to maintain a stable native government in Cuba, and I am of opinion that it will be able to do so by moral support alone, as Cuba is fast getting into position, if indeed it is not already, where it can well take care of its own internal disturbances. The development of all branches of the army is noteworthy, and its Guardia Rural, or mounted country police, is as fine in appearance and active in service as Canada's Northwest Mounted Police—which is praise enough."

A recent unwarranted terrorizing of the people of Santa Clara by the local detachment of the Rural Guards tends to modify in a measure Mr. Whitney's high estimate. Still the organization is, in the main, wonderfully efficient.

The remarkable material prosperity of the island, the rapid development of its industries offering employment to all at good wages should tend also toward political stability. Uncertainty as to the stability of the government, while it has made rather more difficult the obtaining of capital, has not seriously hindered the development of the country's resources. It is said that \$520,000,000 of American capital are now invested in the Island. The sugar industry is increasing by leaps and bounds, especially in the direction of the establishment of big *centrals*. The great Chaparra mill which recently announced the grinding of 500,000 bags of sugar during the present grinding season, and which is the largest sugar mill in the world, occupies a site which at the end of the Spanish-American war was an almost unbroken wilderness. At Mayari, the Spanish-American Iron Company is spending an amount which runs up into the millions in the development of its recently acquired ore deposits of which it has an almost inexhaustible supply.

Remarkable progress has been made in several directions. We have not space to enlarge upon these, but will indicate them briefly:

I. RAILWAYS.

These are radiating into all parts of the island. A recently acquired terminal on Havana harbor, with the erection of extensive wharves, will