

Much of what I have written respecting Cuba, was at the time when the question of the purchase of that island was agitated in the American Congress. But time, like the river mentioned by Horace,

"Labitur, et labetur in omne volubilis ævum,"

and what to day is a matter of interest to all, may tomorrow be buried in the obscurity of the past.

So much has been written and re-written about America and Yankees, that I had some little hesitation in taking up my pen to indite the latter part of this volume.

One subject, however, I have selected mainly from the paucity of information which you would be likely to obtain about it in the old country; that is, the "Ice trade of the United States." For a good deal of my information on this topic, I am indebted to some admirable articles which appeared a short time ago in the New York "*Tribune*," also to personal observation, enquiries on the spot, and the kindness and affability of the officials of the different companies; although this is a subject which may have little or no interest for the many, still it may add somewhat to your general stock of information.

In conclusion, I set my little barque afloat, trusting that the harsh winds of criticism may blow gently upon it; and