

The Commoner.

Inviting Trouble.

Suzerainty For Cuba. There are indications that administration politicians are paving the way for trouble in our affairs with Cuba.

The Washington correspondent of the Chicago Tribune says that there is "an increasing sentiment in favor of a declaration in regard to the international relations of Cuba." This correspondent explains:

There could be a declaration by Congress, assented to by the Cubans in their constitution, giving the United States the exclusive right to conduct the international negotiations of Cuba, or a clause might be inserted in the Cuban constitution giving this government the rights of a protectorate over the island in this respect.

There should also be a pledge, many Congressmen assert, on the part of the Cubans to abide by any decision this government might make in regard to any international contentions. For instance, if a subject of Great Britain or Germany should be injured in his person or property rights in Cuba and a claim presented, the State department at Washington should have the exclusive right to investigate and determine what ought to be done in the matter of reparation. When this question is determined the Cubans should be required to comply with it instantly and without any discussion.

This looks very much like a disposition to stir up fresh trouble for this Nation. There is not the slightest danger that, in its international relations, Cuba would do anything distasteful to the United States. If the people of that island would not be restrained on this line from motives of gratitude, they would be governed by consideration of the mutual interests that must exist between the people of Cuba and the people of this country. It is not necessary that the United States formally establish a protectorate over any republic on American soil. For all essential purposes the Monroe Doctrine provides adequate protection.

Like the British Plan. The plan outlined by The Tribune correspondent is very much like the plan insisted upon by the British ministry in its relations with the South African republic, and the world knows the result. It is not likely that the Cubans would agree to any such plan when they have so recently observed the license which Great Britain took under a similar provision.

As a matter of fact, the United States has no more right to insist upon a clause in the Cuban constitution formally giving suzerainty to this Government or conferring upon it any power as to the foreign relations of the Cuban government than it has to deliberately annex Cuba to the United States.

The war resolutions declared that the United States, "hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island, except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is complete, to leave the government and control of the island to its people." That declaration is plain and simple and requires no interpretation. There is but one way to carry out that pledge, and that is to carry it out in perfect candor.

Free and Independent. It, as the war resolution declared, "the people of the island of Cuba are and of a right ought to be free and independent" then the application of

that right operates as much against the United States as against any other power that might seek "sovereignty, jurisdiction or control" over that island.

The Cuban republic will never work out its destiny if it is hampered as the South African republic was hampered. In order to inspire the Cuban people to struggle for the best in the details of government they must be left as the war resolution declared them to be, "free and independent."

The American people have had assumed for them sufficient obligations. They have already on hand more trouble than they can conveniently dispose of. The people expect that, so far as Cuba is concerned, the administration will fulfill the pledge made in the war resolutions and reiterated in the last republican national platform. There is no necessity for piling on fresh obligations or adding new conditions. As soon as the Cuban constitution is adopted and a stable government organized, we should withdraw our forces from that island and permit the new republic to work out its own destiny. Let the people of that republic understand that the responsibility for good government rests upon them, and responsibility in such cases is usually productive of wisdom.

The Cuban government will not be perfect in the beginning. The constructive period will be full of difficulties for the statesmen of that island, exactly as our own constructive period was full of embarrassments for the statesmen of the American colonies. But the people of Cuba must tread this path exactly as the people of new governments have been compelled to do in all the history of the world. They must learn and improve by experience.

Give Them a Good Example. If we would give the people of Cuba the best possible start on the road to good government we could begin no better than by dropping all excuses and all pretenses, and fulfilling the pledges made in our war resolutions. The Cuban people would be benefited by this good example. Our concern for their future could be best shown by setting them a pattern in all of our public affairs, showing them that the duty of a republic is to enact and execute laws for the benefit of the whole people, and to protect the national reputation as carefully as the individual would protect his own reputation.

The administration politicians will do well to move cautiously in their relations with the people of Cuba. There is nothing in the history of that island, there is nothing in the character of that people, to warrant the belief that our nation can safely violate the pledge of the war resolutions, or deny the truth of the statement that the people of the island of Cuba "are and of a right ought to be free and independent."

A Severe Indictment.

Governor Pingree, upon retirement from office, submitted a few remarks on the growing influence of organized wealth over government. His message should be read by all who think that the people have nothing to fear from the domination of politics by corporations. Governor Pingree is himself a man of considerable means, and, therefore, cannot be accused of hostility to

wealth when it is properly acquired and used. His long connection with the republican party, and his experience as mayor of a great city, and afterward as Governor of a great state, enables him to speak from actual knowledge. He has studied politics close at hand, and has observed the methods employed to outwit the people and secure special privileges. He says:

My experience during my political life, extending over a period of twelve years, has convinced me that in order to secure the full commendation of those who consider themselves the "better classes," the Governor and other high officials must do nothing to antagonize the great corporations and the wealthy people. I am satisfied that I could have had the praise and support of our "best citizens" and our "best society," and of the press of the State generally, if I had upheld those who have for years attempted to control legislation in their own interests, to the end that they might be relieved from sharing equally with the poor and lowly the burden of taxation. I would have been pronounced a good fellow and a great statesman.

The memory of the treatment of General Alger by the press of the country, and his removal from the cabinet, is fresh in the minds of all. I was informed by General Alger himself that one of the main reasons for the opposition to him was because he had ignored the claims of the great steamboat interests with representatives in New York city. The matter of sending something like 50,000 Spaniards to Spain came up, and the General advertised for bids for transportation. The tenders of the different companies, submitted by their New York representatives, were exactly alike—so much for officers of certain rank, so much for other officers, and so much for privates—showing a combination and agreement between the companies. The bids which the General received from Spain were less than half of those offered by the New York syndicate, and the contracts were therefore awarded to Spanish vessels. That was the turning point in the assault against the General, because he would not toady to the companies represented in New York and show them special favors. The press directed its venomous attacks at me because I defended General Alger.

I use this as an illustration to show how powerful is the influence of those who have resolved on the policy of rule or ruin.

This experience I had while I was mayor of Detroit. This has been my experience while holding the office of Governor. Every large interest that I have antagonized has been arrayed against me, and the allies of those interests, the newspapers of the State, have lost no opportunity to attempt to draw the minds of the people from the real issue by making personal attacks on me and publishing malicious and willful libels, and to belittle my efforts and bring me into disrepute, in order that the present system of unjust, inequitable and iniquitous laws might still remain in force, to the detriment of the great masses of the laboring classes and farmers and those of small properties who are unable to speak and act for themselves.

The Ivy Green

By Charles Dickens.

Oh, a dainty plant is the ivy green,
That creepeth o'er ruins old!
Of right choice food are his meals I ween,
In his cell so lone and cold.
The wall must be crumbled, the stone decayed,
To pleasure his dainty whim;
And the mouldering dust that years have made,
Is a merry meal for him.

Creeping where no life is seen,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Fast he stealeth on, though he wears no wings,
And a staunch old heart has he.
How closely he twineth, how tight he clings,
To his friend the huge Oak Tree!
And slily he traileth along the ground,
And his leaves he gently waves,
As he joyously hugs and crawlth 'round
The rich mould of dead men's graves.

Creeping where grim death has been,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.

Whole ages have fled and their works decayed,
And nations have scattered been;
But the stout old ivy shall never fade,
From its hale and hearty green.
The brave old plant in its lonely days,
Shall fatten upon the past;
For the stateliest building man can raise,
Is the ivy's food at last.

Creeping on where time has been,
A rare old plant is the ivy green.