

## AFFAIRS IN CUBA.

**Hopes of the Ravenese—Raising the Black Flag—Affairs at Santiago de Cuba—Revolutionary Exploits—Threats Against the American Consul—Gen. Dulce's Programme.**

From Our Own Correspondent.

Havana, Saturday, Dec. 26, 1893.

The proximate arrival of Gen. DULCE, with his official wallet plethoric with liberties and concessions for the children of the Gem of the Antilles, is eagerly looked for by the Cubans, and eyes are strained anxiously to witness the first gleam of sunshine which is to break forth so suddenly and light up so brilliantly a political horizon murky with the gloom of the unjust and oppressive laws which have hitherto frowned upon it. Already eager hands are outstretched to grasp the golden fruit, and imagination revels in contemplating prospective enjoyment. In the midst of this general hilarity, however, would it not be well to inquire how much of it is real—how much affected? Are there no spasmodic attempts at cheerfulness—no ghastly welcomes through which the skeleton of the past peeps gloomily on the child of the future and progress? Are there no strange anomalies even in the party which has arrogated to itself the titles of free and progressive; whose mouths give utterance to doctrines which their actions belie; who cry liberty without seeming to understand its broad meaning; who shout progress and remain still while its swift current sweeps past them? The answer, painful but true, must be, there are. The first party, fearful of becoming engulfed in the great tidal wave of civilization, which, with giant strides, comes rolling onward, obliterating in its progress the old landmarks of superstition and ignorance, feebly pretends to welcome reforms that it cannot successfully oppose, and whose usefulness it insidiously attempts to deprecate. Under the specious cry of patriotism it would engender a complete forgetfulness of human rights, an obliviousness of human suffering, and an indifference, if not hostility to human progress. With reference to the "Glorious Banner of Castile" it would instill vigor and enthusiasm in the breasts of those who live under its shade and claim the protection afforded by its folds, and would have its followers forget that its refulgence has been obscured by the sombre clouds of Torquemada, the inquisition and the horrible persecution of the Jews. It would resuscitate the fragmentary glories of the past to the admiring gaze of beholders, and attempt to dazzle men with their brilliancy, intoxicating reason and stifling reflection. Vauntingly it points to the countries it has civilized and the Christianity it has bestowed. True, its galleons of old went out ballasted with civilization and religion (?), and returned laden with the spoils and treasure obtained by the torture of the natives; it bestowed on them the civilization of freebooters and the religion of a licentious priesthood. It would inspire terror of liberty and free institutions by drawing parallels between what they are pleased to call the failure of the United States Government and the evident success of their own, whose history is written in blood and rapine, to whose statutes civil and religious liberty have been strangers, up to the recent formation of the only free Government Spain has ever enjoyed. This party has assumed the name of Conservative, and these are, doubtless, the "glories" which it wishes to conserve. Their ill-concealed hatred of the order of things recently established in Spain, becomes more and more apparent at every fresh outbreak that occurs in the Peninsula. It regards universal suffrage as the acme of political woes; free discussion as an evil to be dreaded and carefully guarded against, and a Press, untrammelled by tyrannical restrictions, as the culminating point of political insanity. Ideas like those proclaimed by JEFFERSON in which he gives utterance to the sentiment that "error ceases to be dangerous when reason is left free to combat it," are considered by them as some horrible propaganda not at all to be tolerated. The principles and ideas above enumerated constituting the political faith of the Cuban Conservative Party, it is hardly to be wondered that they should view with alarm all innovations on their cherished system of a past age, and the rags and tatters of old feudalism, with which it is yet adorned, before which they throw themselves in all the ecstasies of which adoration is capable, and scarcely to be expected that they should become the mouthpieces and champions of the new era.

What, however, shall be said of the other party, formed of disciples of the most advanced ideas and most liberal principles, the professed champions of liberty and progress, who look forward with eagerness to the coming blessings; to the time when military commissions for the trial of civil and political offences will be numbered among the things of the past, and trial by jury assume the place usurped heretofore by courts-martial and individual military magnates; when amid free discussion reason will hold court and argument decide upon the merits of proposed measures of public welfare; when the masses will exercise the right of franchise, and their voice be heard on all questions affecting the general, national and local interests; when their votes shall favor or condemn the expenditures of the public wealth, contributed by them in the form of taxes; in a word, when the Cuban *liberos* and *veguros* shall emerge into the broad daylight of political freedom, snapping the bonds of the old Cuban feudalism, now so irksome, and never again to be united? What programme have they inscribed upon their banner concerning the political and social questions now agitating the island, from the "centre to the sea"? Do they recognize, with GRANT, that "the principles of human liberty are the only true foundations of human government," irrespective of color or nationality? Have they declared open war against the feudal system of land tenure in Cuba and condemned it as immoral and degrading? As yet they have done none of these things; as yet no well-defined policy on the great questions of the day is theirs. They would make compromises with slavery; they would remain quiescent in that which pertains to the political raising up and social regeneration of their poorer and more unfortunate fellows, and leave them wallowing in ignorance and gross superstition to work out their own salvation as best they may, and then, after the result was accomplished, claim the honor of the victory and hold themselves up to the delighted gaze of an admiring world as the social and political regenerators of the Island of Cuba, of whose population *eighty-five per cent.* can neither read nor write. What a satire on the Progressive Liberal Party of Cuba! What a field for their social apostles to work in! What a shame for the blatant leaders of a progress which their acts prove they do not understand!

### SUMMARY OF REVOLUTIONARY INTELLIGENCE.

The latest advices from the revolutionary districts are comprised in the following summary: Information having been received by the Spanish commander at Gibara that a force of some 500 insurgents had taken up a position on the main road from Gibara to Holguin, in front of the sugar estate Chaman, he ordered a column of troops, composed of infantry and cavalry, and two pieces of artillery, to attack the front of the enemy's position, and he sent another column to take up an ambuscaded position on the Gibara River for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the insurgents. The necessary disposition having been completed, the first column commenced the attack by a couple of discharges from the two howitzers, and, charging at once with the point of the bayonet, succeeded in dislodging the rebels, who retreated in great disorder in the direction of the Gibara River, where they were received by the troops in ambush with close discharges of musketry, and compelled to precipitate themselves into the river, crying, "Quarter! quarter!" without, however, being able to save themselves from the certain destruction which awaited them. Not a single man of the whole party escaped.

Between Holguin, held by a Spanish garrison, and Gibara, there is a rebel army of upward of 2,500 men, and the whole district of Holguin, comparatively speaking, is under their control.

At Manzanillo, the state of affairs has undergone very little change since I last wrote. The garrison holding the town still remains on the defensive, and the place is yet besieged, though apparently not very closely, by a large force of revolutionists. A fight recently occurred outside of the town, between a force of Spanish troops and a force of

ing of ninety men with a mountain howitzer, and a small portion of cavalry, and a force of 1,000 rebels. The Spaniards were surrounded, and an attempt was made by the rebels to capture the piece of artillery, but the troops succeeded in maintaining possession of it, cutting their way out, causing a loss to the rebels of eleven killed, and capturing two prisoners, one of whom was wounded. Strange to relate, they only suffered a loss themselves of one officer, and one man slightly wounded. The two prisoners captured were tried by court-martial and condemned to death, the sentence being carried into immediate execution on one of them. The other has been reserved to die of his wound, which is mortal, in obedience, as the account states, to the dictates of humanity. A Spaniard, who effected his escape from the rebels at Bayamo, and had arrived in Manzanillo, describes the situation in the revolutionary stronghold as anything but flattering for the rebels. He stated that there existed a great scarcity of provisions, meat and vegetables being brought from a distance of twelve or fifteen miles to supply the wants of the inhabitants, as everything in the way of provisions in the immediate vicinity had been exhausted by the rebel forces. A great number of women had taken refuge in Bayamo, and were being furnished with rations by the rebel authorities. The rebel forces that suffered defeat in front of Manzanillo had arrived and been ordered back immediately, with many sarcastic allusions to the bravery displayed by them. A Major and Captain of the Spanish force that surrendered Bayamo were shot by the insurgents for refusing to sign the articles of capitulation. Another Spanish Major, MEMIAVILLA, captured on the Bayamo road when going to take command of the City of Bayamo, was held a prisoner, handcuffed and leg ironed, and the soldiers composing the garrison were being employed by the rebels in detached parties on the earthworks and fortifications, and as street scavengers, presided over by the most abject of society.

The main body of the rebel forces is said to be concentrated in the triangle formed by Tunas, Holguin and Manzanillo, and it is expected that in this neighborhood the first battle of any consequence will take place.

### THE BLACK FLAG.

The accounts received, both through governmental and revolutionary sources, agree in stating that the fighting had assumed a character totally at variance with all the received principles in the code of civilized warfare. The execution, by the rebels, of two Spanish officials, at Bayamo, and a like act on the part of the Spanish commander, at Manzanillo, prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that the system has been fairly inaugurated. The revolutionary party charge the Spaniards with committing numerous cruelties, and even the killing of defenceless old men and estate operatives, whose only crime has been their presence in the districts held under revolutionary sway. The Spaniards, on the other hand, accuse the rebels of being guilty of the commission of all the crimes contained in the criminal calendar. According to the Government statements, rape, arson and murder are the main objects of the revolution, and liberty and independence altogether minor considerations. Charges of this kind should always be received with caution, as a great many of them are engendered by the animosity entertained against one another by both parties, and the wish to hold each other up to the execration of civilized people. There, however, appears to be some truth in the charges made by the Cubans against the governmental party, as the following incident of the late engagement at the sugar estate "Trapiche," translated *verbatim* from a relation contained in the *Diario de la Marina*, of the 21st inst., will show.

"Postmaster FAUSTINO CUERRO ARANGO distinguished himself very much while a prisoner in the hands of the enemy, as he rejected all solicitations made to him by the rebels to join the bad cause which they were defending, and replied that he would prefer death first. At 10 o'clock, on the morning of the day on which the insurgents were defeated, he was to have been shot, but by extreme good fortune he was rescued a few hours before, although even then his escape was miraculous, as the soldiers, not knowing him, fired several shots at him, even after being under the protection of Señor SANCHEZ LAMELA and in close proximity to him. Before this several bayonet thrusts were made at him, which he was able to avoid with the aid of a door, behind which he took shelter."

Another account which appeared in the *Prensa* states: "That, so blinded with rage had the soldiery become, it became necessary for the Lieutenant-Governor to place his military cap on the head of the postmaster, to save him from their fury." In the attack on Cobre, when the Spanish forces entered the town, two unfortunate non-combatants had taken refuge in the chapel under an altar of the Virgin Mary, in order to escape the fury of friend and foe alike; they were found, however, by the Spanish soldiery, and bayoneted on the spot in the sanctuary they had chosen. Acts like those cited above, be they committed by or whom they may, are a disgrace to the civilization of the age.

### SANTIAGO DE CUBA.

An English correspondent, writing from Santiago de Cuba, thus describes a *retrota* which recently took place in that city, and the uproarious scenes which followed:

"The evening was fine, the band of the Cuba regiment was present, and the Catalans mustered in great force, many in the volunteer uniforms, with their bayonets at their sides. Nine o'clock arrived, the few ladies who were present cleared out one by one, and by 10 there was not one in the square. At 10 o'clock the usual gay Cuban dance, with which they finish up, was played, and the band marched round into the street in front of the Palace, and the "Himno de Riego" was played, the band moved off, and a few feeble *vivas*, and everything was quiet, when from a side street issued forth the irrepressible volunteer cavalry, and passed in front of the palace, yelling out 'Viva España!' and making a disgraceful uproar. At once a scene of the greatest confusion occurred. The negroes, who had mustered very strongly in the vicinity of the square, took to their heels, yelling 'Viva.' The people in the square also shouted, and the valiant cavalry volunteers charged into the square to drive out the people. The confusion was tremendous, cavalry flourishing their sabres, infantry volunteers fixing bayonets, negroes running, doors slamming, and everybody talking at once. Fortunately, by the energetic conduct of some army officers, order was restored without any accidents, but the volunteers in general, and the cavalry in particular, are the laughing-stock of the town, since none of these Catalan heroes who so distinguished themselves, charging on unarmed and peaceable citizens, have ever thought of offering their services to the Government to go out from Cuba to fight the insurgents, and in the present instance were actually the promoters of the whole riot which they rushed to put down with such alacrity.

### REVOLUTIONARY EXPLOITS.

The correspondent referred to above in speaking of the situation and prospects around Santiago de Cuba says:

"The insurrection is all over (what a relief it would be to foreign vessels, if I were able to pause here, but unfortunately for them, I have not finished the sentence yet!)—all over the eastern department of the island? The rebels are "looting" around our town in every direction. Their numbers have greatly increased, but their object is not very clearly understood. Some persons think the insurgents meditate an attack upon the town as soon as their forces are suitably concentrated. If this be their intention, they had better carry it out without delay, before the expected reinforcement from Spain arrives. At present they have directed all their energies in consuming the provisions at the country stores; destroying property and inconveniencing our peaceful inhabitants. Their chief exploits have been the destruction of the railway lines, the burning of two railway bridges near St. Jago, and the cutting off of the aqueduct which supplies our town with water. They have certainly done very little toward the cause of liberty and the progress of the country by these mischievous acts. They have only succeeded in putting their countrymen to great inconvenience and impoverishing the needy."

### THE AMERICAN CONSUL THREATENED.

Some time ago a party of twelve armed men were arrested at San Cristobal, and among them was a Mr. SANTA ROSA. They were attempting to inaugurate a revolution, and were brought by the Spanish authorities to Havana, where they are held in prison as rebels against the Government. There is nothing informal in their arrest, but one Mr. E. P. REXNAUD, in New-York, does not happen to think so, and has telegraphed to the American Consul that the Spanish authorities were ill-treating his friend, Mr. SANTA ROSA, and informs him that should said Mr. SANTA ROSA depart this life suddenly, he (REXNAUD) will hold him (the American Consul) responsible for his friend's demise. Mr. SANTA ROSA has lost all rights of citizenship in the United States by embarking in a movement contrary to the express orders of his Government. All that Mr. SANTA ROSA can claim, and which he undoubtedly has the right to demand, is that he be afforded a fair trial, and that no injustice is done him while imprisoned. I do not suppose that a worse fate will be meted out to Mr. SANTA ROSA than to the rest of his comrades in arms, who thus far have not been poisoned, but have been tried by a military commission and condemned to three years' penal servitude.

### REPORTED LANDING OF FILLIBUSTERS.

The brig *Sir Robert Peel* is reported to have landed 200 men with arms and munitions of war, from New-

Orleans, at Santa Teresa, Coobhino Bay, in the district of Qapata. This bay has enjoyed considerable notoriety heretofore as being the point at which slavers formerly ran in and disembarked their living cargoes with considerable impunity, owing to the fact that the country is very sparsely populated in that section, and eminently favorable, from its position, to similar enterprises. As if to corroborate the statement of the landing effected, a revolution is reported to have installed itself in Jaquay Grande, a town situated in the centre of the Qapata district, and in close proximity to the southern terminus of the Cardenas Railroad. It is distant from Cardenas by rail some forty miles, and from Havana between ninety and one hundred, and is a town of very little importance as far as population is concerned, although its possession by the insurgents will, from its locality, prove considerable of a thorn in the side of the Government party.

### SUPPRESSION OF NEWSPAPERS.

The Cuban Government has prohibited the circulation in the island, of the *Voz del Siglo*, a newspaper representing the interests of the Cuban Radical Party, edited by NICOLAS AZCARATE, and published in Madrid. The last number of the *Cronista*, from New-York, was also prevented from circulating here on account of an obnoxious article it contained, and the Press generally is subject to the most rigorous censorship. The *Pais* newspaper, frequently referred to in my former letters, has suspended its further publication. In its valedictory to its subscribers it says: "Circumstances well known to all, and causes entirely foreign to our wishes, oblige us to suspend, for the present, the publication of this journal. Not being permitted yet to treat with ample liberty the questions which we consider most important and vital for the country, rather than vegetate in the impotency to which we have been reduced, we prefer to maintain the most absolute silence." The *Prensa*, in commenting on the above, says: "We believe that ample liberty to treat of every class of questions is a thing met with in very few countries, and never in those in which exist men in arms and men conspiring to overthrow the constituted Government, and deliver over to foreigners a part of its territory." I will not extend these extracts further, as the whole gist of the articles is contained in the above two paragraphs.

### GEN. DULCE EXPLAINS.

Mr. FELIX BONA, the Madrid correspondent of the *Pais*, wrote to Gen. DULCE, stating that as he had become aware that he (the General) was authorized by the Provisional Government to grant certain liberties and concessions to the Cubans, he would like to be informed what they were, so as to be able to communicate them in advance, for the benefit of the readers of the *Pais* in particular and Cubans generally. Gen. DULCE replied that it was true he was clothed with ample powers, and was taking out concessions and *certain* (?) liberties to the Cubans, but that these concessions and liberties will only be granted when the insurrectionists laid down their arms and peace was thoroughly restored.

QUASIMODO.