

CUBAN AFFAIRS.

ARRIVAL OF THE EUTERPE AND COLUMBIA.

The steamships *Euterpe* and *Columbia*, the former from Havana Oct. 27, and the latter from the same port Oct. 30, arrived here yesterday. The pursers of both vessels are once more entitled to thanks for the prompt delivery of our correspondence and files.

Condition of the Island—Swelling Hopes of the Spaniards—Freedom of Worship—The Promulgated Decree—Views of De Rodas—Assassinations in Colon. From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Oct. 30, 1869.

Are the Spaniards correct in claiming an early *finale* for the revolution inaugurated at Yara, or is this merely a lull before the storm? The Spanish element is more sanguine of success than at any time within the past ten months; not only the authorities, but also the public at large are confident of an early termination of the war. The cause of this peculiar confidence arises principally from the attitude taken by the United States Government on the Cuban question, the seizure of the *Hornet*, and the hitherto unlanded cargo of the *Lillian*, have produced a hundredfold greater effect than any which might be secured by the winning of an extraordinary bloody Cuban battle—that is to say, a battle in which, according to that parody on Don Quixote, the *Diario*, about four soldiers were killed. The news from the seat of war, if that peculiar locality, wherever it may be, should it at any time receive a name, has, however, also exercised a certain influence. The insurrection in the Cinco Villas presents no longer any alarming proportions, the Cuban forces amounting at the utmost to 1,500 men, of which number but few are natives of foreign countries. The bulk of the insurgents remains at Guaimaro, and from Sancti Espiritu toward Cape Maisi and St. Jago de Cuba. But there are other causes which give rise to this confidence, and which are self-evident proofs that the Cubans are not making much headway of late. They have failed to extend their field of operations, and it is an undeniable fact that insurgents in small bodies, and singly, are presenting themselves daily to the Spanish commanders in the field soliciting pardon. The number of these Cubans is not very large, yet sufficiently so to produce a moral effect, and pave the way for others to follow. If the financial *status* of a country, or the value of shares and stocks, be taken as a criterion, the theory of the Spaniards that the rebellion is decreasing receives another accession. Business is more brisk, country and retail merchants in the cities are liquidating their indebtedness to the importers, paying cash for new purchases, while the shares of the Spanish Bank, which in June and July could be purchased at par, and even at one or two per cent. discount, are held and sold at from fifteen to eighteen per cent. premium. The shares of other institutions have also increased in value during the past four months, and holders are not very anxious to part with them, as they all expect to sell them at a much higher rate than at present, or else retain them as an investment. Last of all is the manner the Cubans themselves—that is to say that portion belonging to the republican faction and opposed to Spain and Spaniards—have of expressing their opinion regarding the probable exit of the war. They consider the "game up," and think that the back bone of the revolution is broken; that the Cuban forces will not be able to withstand the Spanish army unless the United States should recognize them as belligerents and enable them to introduce arms and men. The action of Congress and the Senate, on its assembling, is anxiously looked for, and if they will not recognize the Cubans, it would be an act of humanity and charity to interpose its influence on behalf of the defeated Cubans, not so much against the general government of the island as against the lawlessness and brutality of the lower classes, who don the uniform of the famous, and, in some cases, infamous volunteers.

ASSASSINATION.

The news of the Colon assassination is confirmed. The Chapelgorris were commanded by the Administrator of JULIAN ZULUETA'S plantation, a man who has been instrumental in sending many a Cuban (and among them some who were innocent) to their last home. The Captain-General has removed the Governor of Colon and Mr. ZULUETA insists that his Administrator and all persons concerned in this cowardly and contemptible assassination should be tried. It now remains to be seen whether Rodas has the power to bring these bloodthirsty brutes to justice, or whether the power of the Chapelgorris is such as to defeat the ends of justice, reason and humanity. The Chapelgorris claim that they were only eight in number to guard the immense number of nine prisoners tied together by cords; that five of this number escaped into the bush, and that in self-defence they were compelled to kill the four who did not run away in order to enable them to pursue the five others, whom they caught and shot. This escape story is an old and favorite one with Spaniards, and hundreds have been shot through the back after receiving a kindly pat on the shoulder from the commanding officer, and the assurance that he might go in peace, or as the Spanish phrase has it, *Vaya usted con Dios amigo*. Go with God, my friend, on which particular road they send him with lightning speed, through the agency of a Minie ball.

RODAS' OPINIONS.

General Rodas continues his humane policy and does his best to conciliate the people, an endeavor in which he succeeds only partially. He expresses the opinion that the revolution is on its last legs and cannot last much longer, owing to the continual and weakening decrease in numbers, to the private quarrels among the insurgents and to the great increase of Spaniards. His opinions are confirmed by the Havana Press and letters from the Interior. On Friday, the General pardoned Mr. MACOREGOR, an American, who had been sentenced to death for alleged complicity with the rebels.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

The great event of the day, although expected for some time, has been the promulgation of the decree establishing religious liberty in the islands of Cuba and Porto Rico. General Rodas turned a deaf ear to the threats and entreaties of the priesthood and to the whining of the *Prensa*. Convinced that sooner or later, that is to say within a period of a few months, the privilege of worshipping God without the accompaniments of bell, incense and candle, would be demanded of him and the Government he represents, he took time by the forelock and promulgated the decree voluntarily, without awaiting the epoch when such a concession would no longer appear as the enlightened idea of a nation struggling to escape from the thralldom in which it had been plunged by an ignorant, arrogant and superstitious priesthood, but as a bribe thrown to the discontented masses to keep them from revolutionizing. The question naturally arises, what benefit may and can be derived from the concession just granted, and whether the non-Catholics will embrace the opportunity of establishing Protestant or other churches, or the Jews that of erecting a synagogue or temple. The number of Protestants in the island may be arrived at when we take the number of Americans and Germans into consideration—about 1,500 in all—of whom about 150 are likely to attend divine service. The remainder belong to the Cuban religion, which is professed by nineteen-twentieths of the Cubans, Spaniards and other foreigners in the island; also by the negroes, excepting some few in the cities, and by 60,000 Chinese. This Cuban religion consists simply in being baptised by some Catholic priest, and growing up a scoffer at everything divine—in fact a thorough Atheist. Any stranger, visiting a church in Havana, (excepting on Good Friday,) will rarely meet more than from fifty to 200 or 300 persons in the largest place of worship; as, for instance, the Cathedral. The assemblage is composed principally of decrepit old ladies, old maids whose spring of life has passed, a large number of aged persons of color, and a few recently arrived Spaniards, fresh from their home, where habit alone, if nothing else, compels people to go to church; it is sprinkled besides with Government officials of the lower class, who expect to advance their interests by enjoying the aid of the priesthood. In other ways the religious feelings of the people are very strongly developed; nearly

every house has its wooden image of some patron saint, or one of the many virgins, either universal or peculiar to this island. Pictures of saints are found in every dwelling, and if any prayers are offered, they must of necessity go through the medium of the particular saint whose benign countenance beams forth from the gilded frame in all the glory of the brightest yellow, blue, green and red. Often these saints, when considered derelict of their duty as guardians of the family, are ignominiously removed and replaced by some other, who has been very generous to some neighbor's family. Your correspondent once saw an old lady friend in high dudgeon with her favorite St. Francis under her arm, in the act of giving him away to a poor negro woman, remarking that this saint had cost half a dollar; that she had burned a taper in his honor daily for the past twelve months; that she had said hundreds of aves and paternosters before him, and that she only expressed the wish of winning over so small a prize in the lottery; this half-a-dollar saint had suffered insult to be added to injury in her case, as her neighbor, who owned only a St. Raphael with his face damaged, had just won \$50. So now she would no longer have the scurvy fellow in the house. But let the religious element and inclinations be of whatever nature imaginable, it will be altogether impossible to spread or exercise any other religion than the Roman Catholic at present, and even then the rites must be administered by Spaniards. The Government would not interfere, but the lower classes, especially such as are considered the scum and disgrace of the volunteer forces, would.

The text of the promulgated decree runs as follows:

REGENCY OF THE KINGDOM.

The most sacred right of those who form the human family, and liberty of religion unanimously exacted by the different juntas, has at last found its legitimate sanction in the democratical Constitution of Spain, which plainly says that the State could not penetrate into the innermost of the spirit or impede manifestations which are foreign to it. The natural spheres of religion and politics thus separated, the pious will no longer fear a strange power which would dictate perhaps useful laws, but such as carry with them the denial of religion which they pretend to aid, thus leading us to believe tacitly that said religion has really no reason to exist. * * * Spain, on the other hand, cannot remain separated from the general movement in Europe and the world. It would be useless and unwise to sustain artificially as a universal belief that which would be unacceptable to the intelligence of all Spaniards. * * * These facts are of still more importance when applied to the inhabitants of the Spanish Antilles. Close to a continent where freedom of religion is established to a powerful Republic, whose very liberal constitution is only resembled by that which in Europe is enjoyed by the Spaniards, the necessities of emigrants to populate its fertile but abandoned soil, its island position in contact with all nations, it would be unjust to refuse the foreigners, whose intelligence, labor and capital contribute to its envied prosperity, the right of manifesting their belief.

The document continues in the same strain, and ends with the following law:

ARTICLE I. All inhabitants of the Spanish Antilles are guaranteed the free exercise in public and private of the religion they profess, without other limitation than the universal rules of morality and right.

ART. II. The obtaining and holding of all public offices, as also the acquisition and exercise of civil and political rights are independent of religious belief.

ART. III. The Government will, in due time, inform the Cortes of this decree.

Signed by SERRANO and BEYANO.

QUASIMODO.