

CUBAN AFFAIRS.

ARRIVAL OF THE HAVANA STEAM-SHIP COLUMBIA.

The steam-ship *Columbia*, which left Havana on Oct. 1, reached this port yesterday. Her purser is entitled to thanks for the prompt delivery of our Cuban letters and papers.

The Question of Emancipation—Decree by the Cortes—The Garrote—Sickness in Havana—Arrest of Senor de Conto.

From our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Oct. 1, 1870.

The law enacted by the Government at Madrid, and published this week here, tending to the ultimate extinction of African slavery in Cuba, will scarcely fail to have an important influence, not only in determining the present insurrection, but also the future of the island. Slavery is officially doomed, and planters generally can now imitate some among them more prudent than the rest, who, for some time past, have been putting their houses in order in anticipation of the coming event. The law is as follows:

EMANCIPATION OF SLAVES.

Don FRANCISCO SERRANO, Regent of Spain, &c., &c., orders to be executed the following law decreed and sanctioned by the Constitutional Cortes of the Spanish nation:

ARTICLE 1. All children of slave mothers born after the date of the publication of this law are declared free.

ART. 2. All slaves born between 17th September, 1868, and the publication of this decree are acquired by the State on payment to their masters of \$25 each.

ART. 3. All slaves who have served under the Spanish flag, or have aided the troops in any way during the present insurrection in Cuba, are declared free, as also all those who may have been freed by the Captain-General of Cuba. The State will indemnify their value to those owners who may have remained faithful to the Spanish cause; if they belonged to insurrectionists there will be no indemnification.

ART. 4. Those slaves who, at the time of the publication of this law, have reached sixty years of age, are declared free without compensation to their owners. Those who reach this age henceforth will enjoy the same advantages.

ART. 5. All slaves pertaining to the State, from whatever cause, are declared free. Those who, under the title of *emancipados*, were under the protection of the State, will at once enter into full enjoyment of their rights as freedmen.

ART. 6. Those free by virtue of articles 1 and 2 of this law will remain under the guardianship of the owners of their mothers, indemnification being paid them, as prescribed in article 11.

ART. 7. The guardianship to which the preceding article refers imposes on the guardian the obligation of maintaining his wards, clothing them, and aiding them in sickness, and giving them primary instruction, and an education suitable for some trade. The guardian acquires all the rights of tutor, and can profit by the labor of his ward without recompense until his eighteenth year.

ART. 8. At eighteen years of age the freedman will be entitled to half his wages. Of this amount one-half will be given him at once, the other half being reserved as hereinafter determined.

ART. 9. At the age of twenty-two years, the *emancipado* will acquire the enjoyment of his rights, the guardianship ceasing, and his wages reserved, as before stated, will be given over to him.

ART. 10. The guardianship will also terminate: first, by the marriage of the *emancipado*, in case of females after the age of fourteen, and in that of males after eighteen; second, by proven abuse of the guardian in punishments, or by a thorough neglect of his duties, as set forth in article 7; third, when the guardian takes the honor, or favors the taking of the honor of the *emancipado*.

ART. 11. The guardianship is transmissible by all means known in law, and renunciabile for sufficient causes. The legitimate or natural fathers, who may be free, can recover the guardianship of their sons by insuring the guardian an indemnification for expenses made on account of the *emancipado*. Future decrees will fix the base of indemnification.

ART. 12. The Captain-General of Cuba will provide, within a month from the publication of this law, lists of those slaves comprised in articles 3 and 5.

ART. 13. Freedmen to whom the last article refers will remain under the protection of the State, which is obliged to protect and give them means to gain their livelihood, without this in any way affecting their liberty. Those who prefer to return to Africa will be taken there.

ART. 14. The slaves to whom article 4 refers can remain in the houses of their former masters, who, in this case, will acquire the position of guardian to them. When they shall have decided to remain in the houses of their guardians, it will be optional with the latter to pay them wages or not; but in all cases, and especially in that of physical inability to maintain themselves, the guardian will be obliged to feed, clothe, and assist them in sickness, as he will also have the right to employ them in work adapted to their capacity. Should the *emancipado* refuse to work or make disturbances in his master's house, the authorities will decide in the matter after hearing the *emancipado*.

ART. 15. If the *emancipado* withdraws of his own will from the guardianship of his former master, none of the obligations in the preceding article will be binding as regards the guardian.

ART. 16. Government will acquire the necessary resources for the indemnifications to which the present law will give rise, by means of a tax upon those remaining still in slavery (paid by their masters) between the ages of fourteen and sixty.

ART. 17. Cruelty to slaves adjudged and punished by the Courts will result, as a consequence, in the liberation of those who suffer the injustice.

ART. 18. All concealment which impedes the application of the benefits of this law will be punished according to article 13 of the penal code.

ART. 19. All those slaves who do not appear inscribed in the census taken in the Island of Puerto Rico Dec. 31, 1869, and that which should be finished in Cuba Dec. 31, 1870, shall be considered free.

ART. 20. Government will dictate a specie loan for the carrying in effect of this decree.

ART. 21. Government will present to the Cortes, when the Deputies from Cuba may have been admitted thereto, a project for the emancipation of those who may still remain in slavery after the enforcement of this decree indemnifying the owners. Meanwhile punishment by whipping, which chapter 13 of the laws of Puerto Rico, and its equivalent in labor authorized, shall be suppressed. Neither can children under fourteen be sold separately from their mothers, nor can slaves united in marriage be separated.

All sorts of opinions are expressed regarding the foregoing decree, though everybody seems to agree in one point, that it is a master stroke of policy on the part of Spain to gain sympathy abroad, and that it assures Cuba to the Peninsula. Cuban sympathizers condemn it as falling short of what it should be. Parties most interested—planters—accept the situation, and think it a wise law. Not one word of comment regarding the law has appeared in the city journals. They are afraid to meet the matter squarely.

LABORERS FOR CUBA.

Some time ago Gen. RODAS, knowing the lack of laborers and artisans on this island, gave an order that the commander of a Spanish man-of-war then in one of the ports of Venezuela should offer free passage to any possessing any art or profession, who might be desirous of coming to Cuba to earn their living, and now the result is becoming manifest. Saturday morning the *Pizarro*, a Spanish frigate from Venezuela, brought a number of families, 166 persons in all, mostly farmers, who will find no difficulty in obtaining employment at once.

THE GARROTE.

Last Saturday morning, Don LUIS AVESTAREN was garroted back of Fort Principe, in this city. Taken prisoner for political offenses, a Court-martial was held on the day of his arrival in Havana, and he was sentenced and murdered on the following morning. He met his fate calmly and with unostentatious bravery. Spain will never conquer the rebellion in Cuba by garroting the prisoners her soldiers may take. AVESTAREN was related to some of the principal families in Havana, and ended his career at the early age of twenty-three.

ARREST OF DE CONTO.

Gen. RODAS ordered the arrest of FERRER DE CONTO, editor of the *Cronista*, of New-York, one day this week, for having posted about town some notices over his signature, to the effect that those persons who wished their conversations should not reach the ears of the Captain-General should avoid talking with De so-and-so, and branding the person in question as a busy body and tattler. A sharp private letter to the Foreign Minister at Madrid, which Caballero FERRER wrote, had been printed and circulated here, and aggravated his case.