

## CUBAN AFFAIRS.

### The Part of the Island—The Choice of De Rodas—The Slavery Question—De Rodas' Downfall—The War—The Casino Espanol.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Dec. 3, 1870.

The duplicity of Spanish statesmen and the vile conduct of the so-called Liberal faction of that party, which has governed Spain for the past two years, has come to light, not once, but very often since they have been in power, and if corruption or any other disreputable attribute of those which the Ministers of the Spanish realm have generally been accused of, are taken in consideration, the fact is self-evident that PRIM, MOKER & Co. are a bigger set of rogues than NARVAEZ or MARFORI ever could have been. Not in vain did the old party clamor that the governing power in this Island be distinctively divided between a civil and a military leader, each one to perform the functions only pertaining to their respective portfolios. But let nobody suppose that this was done in order to lessen the power of the so-called military satraps; not in the least. It was simply the fear that by chance some military man might reach the position of a Captain-General of Cuba, who, proud of his soldierly qualities and reputation, would act honest and fearless, thwart the machinations of the rulers and favorites of a Court, and refuse to act as the cat's-paw and fence of a lot of ambitious and avaricious politicians. The old régime, under the gay and festive MARFORI, set up a horrid groan of agony and woe when LERSUNDI, during his first term, refused to obey their behests, and the consequence was that LERSUNDI was recalled. The revolution of September, 1868, resulting in the downfall of Queen ISABELLA is too fresh in the memory of all to require recapitulation, and the liberal officers of the so-called Liberal Government were so contrary to what the Spanish people had been accustomed to that the Conservatives shook their heads in wonder, Republicans became Socialists, and those well acquainted with Spain, its people, traditions and customs, indulged in a fantastic mental arithmetic, calculating how long it would take before John had bought a palace and Robert laid up a handsome reserve in the three per cent., and according to the length of time they reached in their minds, that length was given as the duration of the new régime. The breaking out of the Cuban revolution was for a time the death-blow to the avaricious and hungry politicians of the higher class in Spain, but after the first fright was over, matters were so arranged as to bring the old system into use again by slow, but sure methods. The old practice of telling the people one thing and doing another, of publishing a law and never enforcing it, or of hampering it with so many editious and annoying conditions, that even the bravest would not dare to take advantage of it, were again put in practice. Ostensibly a liberal Government and free of guile, it was simply the same old cloth, only turned inside out; a new set of politicians had sprung up to eat some of the pap which their predecessors had grown fat on, and the old Spanish saying, "Et mismo perro con otro collar," (the same dog with a new collar,) was again verified in this instance.

#### THE CHOICE OF DE RODAS.

But the Ministers and lobbyists made a grand mistake in selecting CABALERO DE RODAS as Captain-General of Cuba. With a military reputation second to none in Spain, as the hero of the hour after repressing the republican manifestations of Jerez and Cadiz, with the necessity of sending a determined man to Cuba, where affairs were then in a very critical condition for the Spaniards, there was no other alternative for the knowing politicians than to agree to his appointment, they flattering themselves at the same time with the idea that they had got rid of a powerful enemy at home, whose weight and personal influence might at any time turn the tables against them. Everything worked smoothly for a few months, but the moment RODAS got the "hang" of affairs here, he told the Madrid Government plainly that he was Captain-General of Cuba; that he knew what the people wanted, and that he would act in accordance. Several pets of the Ministry who came to Cuba with an appointment to some lucrative position, and whose only qualification consisted in their ability to draw their salaries regularly, were sent back, and after awhile the Government allowed Gen. RODAS to have his own way for a time.

#### THE SLAVERY QUESTION.

But that curse of humanity, the slavery question, was the *cheral de bataille*. Every slaveholder in Cuba, with rare exceptions, moved heaven and earth in order to retard any and all action which might possibly affect their interests. Emisaries and hundreds of thousands of dollars were sent from Cuba to Spain, all for the purpose of filling the pockets of the Cuban and Spanish slave-owners, and preventing the colored race from attaining any privileges. The Government in Spain, bound by its programme and professions, and its promises to other Governments, could not possibly do anything openly to favor the slave-owners, who were in reality the governing power. Their gold and influence was everywhere. The Emancipation proclamation was delayed from day to day until the Ministers at last made up their minds to free the infirm over sixty years of age, and all infants born after the passage of the act. I am particular in stating the infirm over sixty, as a hearty and healthy negro could never reach that age. The readiness and anxiety of RODAS to put this decree into force was apparent, and basing his action on the old census, he shocked the fine sensibilities (I mean the pockets) of the slave-holding crew. The screws were put on tighter at Madrid, while, in the mean time, Gen. RODAS unconditionally freed ten out of the thirteen thousand negro *emancipados* in charge of the Government. He is now freeing the remainder. Slavery stood aghast! The idea of paying a salary of from \$10 to \$25 per month to a negro who, hitherto, had only received \$4 monthly! CALYO and others, who bitterly resented in Madrid, complained bitterly of this cruel injustice to their constituents, and RODAS was "hauled over the coals." But he refused to serve as a cat-paw for men who wrote officially, "free the negroes and carry out the accompanying law," but who in private wrote him, "Civilization and the eyes of the world compel us to issue laws; if you don't carry them out, we won't blame you; and you need not be in a hurry to act on these laws, as we would rather see you disobey us than bring down upon us the wrath of the wealthy slave-owners, and prevent us from keeping on good terms with them." But another fear overruled the Ministers for a short while.

#### POSITION OF RODAS.

They knew the violent and firm temper of RODAS, and his determination of not stopping to look at the consequences when roused. They feared that in the event of their electing a King of their own making, and if by accident RODAS should then be resentfully inclined, he would fail to proclaim the fact in Cuba, and perhaps do something which they had not counted upon. Rodas knew this, and felt hurt. He remarked to a friend, "Do they think that I am like them—a politician who can be bribed by money, a decoration or a position? These rogues are not accustomed to deal with honest men, however, and they ought to be forgiven, as they know no better." RODAS proclaimed AMARDO in due style, just as he would have proclaimed the King of Dahomy or WILLIAM M. TWEED. The Spanish camarilla sent him a telegram asking him to delay his anti-slavery practices. RODAS, however, only issued new papers of freedom, but seeing that his position had become very unpleasant, he sent a peremptory telegram to Madrid on Tuesday morning, stating that his resignation was to be accepted before forty-eight hours. On Tuesday, at noon, the answer came that his resignation would be accepted, and that Gen. VALMASEDA would take charge temporarily. The written order will reach here about the 15th, so that RODAS will leave here about the 20th. His departure will be regretted by all men who love honesty, and by every colored man and woman in the Island, who have lost the only protector they ever had. Even the so-called republican Cubans were slave-holders,

and they were not, as a rule, among those who treated their slaves the best.

#### RODAS' SUCCESSOR.

The successor of Gen. RODAS is the well-known Gen. VALMASEDA. Why he is so well known, nobody can exactly tell. He was one of the first who commanded the Spanish troops when the insurrection broke out, and has since been in the field—that is to say, he commanded the troops who were in the field, having gone out himself several times. VALMASEDA is the idol of the volunteers, a staunch adherent of the fallen dynasty, and very pious. He knows the island and its people well, but is very easily led by those in whom he confides, and he is not the man who ought to have charge of Cuba at the present day, if the Spaniards intend to restore peace to it once more.

#### THE WAR.

Excepting the capture and surrender of several prominent personages among the insurgents, but few items of interest present themselves. The reinforcements which have already arrived from Spain and those now at sea, are sent to the interior as fast as they can be armed and equipped. The only engagement of any importance was that of Col. MARIN, in the Central Department, who killed, according to his statement, fifty-two insurgents and captured Mr. CRISTOBAL MENDOZA, who was formerly the Cuban Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Previous to the war Mr. MENDOZA held a position on the staff of the Havana *Siglo*, and was universally respected for his talent and gentlemanly qualities. The insurgent leader, QUINTILO VILLAREAL, was killed near Holguin, his father, ANTONIO, having been killed some months ago. Col. GERMAN BARNIOS, the Chief of Staff of the Cuban Gen. ADOLFO CAVADA, was also captured and executed at Cienfuegos; he was related to many families in Cienfuegos, and his death caused much excitement there. A number of contrite insurgents surrendered in the five villas, among them Col. GERMAN CABRERA, who commanded the party of JESUS DEL SOL, since the latter's illness.

#### THE CASINO ESPANOL.

The Casino Espanol, the Spanish political club, has at length finished the counting of about seven hundred votes, a number of gentlemen being engaged in that laudable task for over a week. The ticket elected is a curious mixture of ultras, so-called conservatives, Spanish-thinking Cubans, and newspaper men. The list of names elected to serve as an executive committee reminds me forcibly of BARNUM'S happy family. To those who know Havana politicians, the conglomeration of such persons as J. M. Villergas, J. F. Tabernilla, Pedro Sotolongo, Pablo Dardet, Segundo Rigal, his Excellency, Ramon Herrera, Francisco Calderon, and J. M. Arendano, can only appear supremely ridiculous. Birds who are not of one feather sometimes do flock together.

QUASIMODO.