

THE KEY WEST TRAGEDY.

Full Particulars of the Shooting of Gonzalo Castanon—His Departure from Cuba—Determination to Fight a Duel—Backing Out—The Shooting in the Hotel—Great Excitement in Key West.

KEY WEST, Fla., Feb. 3, 1870.

The following are the full particulars of the bloody affair which took place here on the 31st of last month, in which Señor Castanon was killed and two of those who figured conspicuously in the transaction were wounded:—

Gonzalo Castanon, late editor of the Spanish paper *La Voz de Cuba*, published in Havana, landed here with four more Spaniards from Havana, on the morning of the 29th ult. Castanon was expected that day, for he had previously published a challenge in his paper, addressed to the editor of the *Republican* (a Cuban paper published in this city), and an answer was sent by the cable accepting the duel. As soon as the steamer came along side the wharf two Cuban gentlemen of good appearance went on board and inquired for Señor Castanon, who received them very politely. These two Cubans represented themselves as the seconds of the man that was going to fight a duel with him. Castanon was asked by the Cubans if he was the author of such and such articles published in his paper and if he had come to Key West to fight a duel like a gentleman, and he answered in the affirmative. Castanon and party then came on shore and took lodgings in the Russell House.

Señor Castanon soon found out that the editor of the *Republican*, who had accepted the duel, was a poor fellow, unfit to fight a child ten years old. He is a man about fifty years old, quite small in size, half blind, and his name is Juan Mary Reyes. Two hours after they had been in the Russell House Castanon and party sent for Juan Mary Reyes, who, although knowing that he had nothing to do with them, was foolish enough to have started immediately to the Russell House. When the little old Cuban appeared before Castanon the latter attacked him like a coward and began to beat the poor old man. Some parties interfered and he was soon parted from him.

A short time after this occurrence Castanon received a call from another Cuban, and a duel to death was agreed upon. Great excitement was created all over the place, and Castanon was taken before the court, where he was released on \$200 bail. The Cubans, naturally, were furious. All knew that the organ of the volunteers of Havana had come over to American soil to fight, and it was resolved that Castanon should fight. That same day (Saturday) the duel was prepared and it was announced to take place on the following day. Castanon and party, however, showed signs of fear. Many excuses were given, and the Cubans who had the affair in hand resorted to every possible scheme to carry on the duel, which Castanon had offered from Havana, and had come to Key West with the sole purpose. Next day, very early, the steamer from New Orleans to Havana was signaled, and Castanon and his four friends prepared to take their departure by her. About half-past twelve P. M. two Cuban gentlemen, who had never fought a duel before, repaired to the Russell House and inquired for the Spanish gentleman stopping there. A few minutes after Castanon and two more Spaniards—big, stout fellows, one his doctor and the other a commander of Spanish volunteers—came down stairs. One of the two Cubans who had called and were waiting for them had a revolver; the other had no weapon at all. Once down stairs in the front parlor, the unarmed Cuban told Castanon he wanted to arrange matters for the duel. Castanon answered he was not going to fight a duel; he had slapped the face of a Cuban and felt satisfied. The Cuban then called him a d—d coward. Castanon raised his hand and hit the Cuban. His friend drew the revolver he had in his hand, and the unarmed Cuban snatched it from his hand. While this was going on Castanon took two steps backward, drew his revolver and fired at the Cuban, without effect. The Cuban then fired his first shot, and Castanon, who was standing by an iron safe, fell on his knees, and in that position fired the second time. The Cuban then fired again and brought Castanon flat on the ground, where he received two more shots. As soon as the firing commenced Castanon's two friends abandoned him and fled to the stairs, firing as they retired. One of them in his haste fell and hurt his shin. I think the other is badly wounded.

The Cuban who had killed Castanon in the contest came to the street, with a firm countenance, and, brandishing his revolver, said, "Cubans, you are revenged. *Viva Cuba, libre!* The instigator for the murder of all Cubans is dead."

The following Cubans were soon after the tragedy arrested:—J. Botella and brother, V. Moreira, F. Aceituno, J. Barcea, P. Oajores and A. Agüero. The three last named have been released. Several houses have been searched. A colored man has also been arrested.