

Sharp Attack by a Madrid Paper on the Administration in Cuba.

The Island a Prey to a Number of Families—
The Recent Debate in Congress—Its Effect
Here—The Spanish Press on the Alleged
Cruelties Practised by the Troops—
The Proposed Commission—
News of the Insurrection.

HAVANA, June 4, 1870.

Considerable stir has been made here by an *exposé* of matters in this island by the *Sufragio Universal*, a paper recently established in Madrid evidently in the interest of the republicans. The Spanish motto in Cuba at present is, "He who is not with us is a Laborante," and of course the journal mentioned is stamped as the organ of the Cuban insurgents. Extracts from its articles, taken from various issues, have been collected by the government and are republished by the city journals at the request of the Captain General's secretary. Evidently this is with a view of counteracting their influence, on the principle which actuated the husband, who himself told all his peccadilloes to his wife, making them out so dreadful that she didn't believe him or his enemies when they repeated them. The articles refer to the odious and tyrannical administration of affairs in this island, extending through so many years, and the anomalous relation which revolutionized Spain now holds towards it. The reign of cruelty existing here and the malign influence of the volunteers upon the colonial government are severely animadverted upon. The journal says:—

By the hand of fate which fell upon Cuba the families of Rodas, Lopez Roberts and Santos and their descendants are filling the office of a vulture over a dead body. What follows in the administration? That the Auditor of War, the Chief Inspector of Customs, the administrators of the Post Office and the archives are all Rodasas, and, like him, all work for themselves. That the Governor, Lopez Roberts, is more occupied with the subscription of the *Diario Español* in Havana than with his duties, leaving the law for the embargo of properties belonging to disaffected and suspicious persons to become converted into a plague, confiscating, as is well known, even the property of paupers; all this for the purpose of increasing the figures. And shall we say nothing of the Senor Intendente, who gives, removes, changes and sells official positions, leading the life of an incense bearer, and not only praising himself in the Havana journals, but sending correspondence favorable to himself to the press of this capital? Is it inquired, then, what is the pathological condition of Cuba? By reading the reverse of what is stated in the fortnightly review (*Quincena*), which is nothing else than the organ of a mutual admiration society, will be explained the sad existence which the Antilles are dragging out.

Many satirical questions, and difficult to answer, concerning matters here are propounded.

With these extracts is published an article from *El Diario Español*, of Madrid, defending Rodas and the other officials assailed. Everybody is reading and commenting upon them, and though the *Sufragio Universal* in its articles may be controlled by prejudice and opposition to the existing government, and may do injustice to the persons referred to, if it succeeds in arousing a spirit of inquiry in reference to the true condition of affairs here good must result.

The recent debate in the House of Representatives on the Cuban question, following on the arrival of Mr. Phillips, late Consul at Santiago de Cuba, naturally excites much interest here. The foolish embargo on American papers continues, but a great many get in despite of it, and they are sought for and read with tenfold avidity. As the result, the report of Jordan, the comments of the press on the execution of Golcouria and the brothers Agüero, and the recent debate referred to, are more thoroughly understood than they otherwise would have been.

The animus of the latter is considered very unfriendly, and among the more thoughtful much anxiety is felt. The *Voz de Cuba*, the organ of the more bigoted Spaniards, devotes full three columns to the subject, as usual laudatory of Spain and abusive of everybody else, particularly the *HERALD*, to which it applies a variety of discourteous names. It makes at least one good point, as follows:—

The Spaniards do not destroy. The Spaniards rebuild. As knows the *HERALD*, and all the periodicals which, like the *HERALD*, prostrate the sacred character of the press to gold, our generals and soldiers are very far from proposing to themselves for models the heroes of the Shenandoah.

The conductors of the *Voz de Cuba*, like all Spaniards, seem to have such a high idea of the power of gold and the propriety of being influenced by it that they invariably attribute the opinions and actions of their opponents to it. It denies that Mr. Phillips was in any danger in Cuba, or that the treatment he received affords any base of complaint.

The alleged cruelties practised by the Spanish authorities and troops in this island are being commented on extensively by the press of Spain, and naturally this has called out the journals here. These pronounce the statements entirely false in general terms, without mentioning what they are. The simple fact is, all prisoners of war are put to death. This is the rule and the exceptions are rare. If peradventure they are brought into the cities by the columns in operation a summary court martial follows, but as preparations for their execution are generally going on at the same time perhaps it is not too much to pronounce such a trial farcical. By far the greater number are, however, not brought in. After being questioned by the commander he signifies to his subaltern to take them on in advance of the column, where they are shot down and left there food for vultures. Very often these prisoners are innocent country people—that is, innocent of any overt act and not taken with arms. The quick, remorseless choking to death of Golcouria and the brothers Agüero, and the more recent shooting of the young son of Cespedes, are fresh in the mind of Christendom. There are well authenticated accounts of horrible cruelties practised by contra guerillas and certain battalions enlisted for the war and made up of the very scum of the island—the majority criminals; but these are condemned by the government and the very great mass of Spaniards, who cannot be made responsible for them, further than they are naturally encouraged by the indiscriminate massacre of all prisoners of war. This has been going on for nearly two years. They are facts as well known as possible. The killing of prisoners is admitted and justified. They say "the insurgents are not belligerents, but bandits and assassins, outlaws whom any one is justified in killing." As to the proposition to send a commission from the United States to the Island to get at the truth, it is an excellent one, provided it be permitted to go among the Cubans to take testimony. Otherwise it is of course ridiculous. It is not probable any killing would be gotten up for the benefit of the members of the commission.

The news from the insurrectionary districts is of little interest. In furtherance of his preparations for coming home the Captain General sends to the *Gazette* an extended and very detailed account of operations in the Camaguey, from which as a conclusion is drawn the "total annihilation of the rebellion." In some of the encounters it is admitted that the troops met with determined resistance, but the usual victories are in the end reported. Among the presented and captured are the wife of Ignacio Agramonte and the families of Argüello, Guerra, Caneros, Simón, Stephens and others of Puerto Principe. The killing of the chiefs Goyo Mola, Enrique Mora and Joaquin Guzman is reported. Some correspondence of Agramonte of interest was captured. Oscar Cespedes, son of the President, was shot on the 29th.

In the Eastern Department the insurgents are holding their own, and seem to be inflicting considerable loss on the Spaniards. On the 10th of May Marcano attacked the tenancy called Congo, which he burned, killing four volunteers. According to Spanish accounts the contra guerillas marched out in pursuit of his party, and succeeded in killing the chief, Gabriel Perez, and eleven men. They also came upon a hospital containing twenty sick and wounded. A fight had taken place near the river Bury, which the insurgents, under Modesto Diaz, were about crossing. The Spaniards acknowledge a loss of seven wounded and four confused. In the jurisdiction of Santiago and in Las Tunas small encounters are reported. In Cienfuegos D. Higinio Moreirio Espinosa has been sentenced to death for the crime of disloyalty.

So much criticism has followed on the manner in which embargoed properties have been administered that the Captain General has seen fit to address a circular to the commission, which consists of nine articles explanatory of the duties. Under these the members are held to a strict accountability, and if they are carried out will put a stop to the dishonesty which is so generally believed to exist.