

# OUR SPANISH-AMERICAN LITERARY SOCIETY.

Organization Composed of Distinguished  
Representatives of All the South  
American Republics.

NEARLY EVERY MEMBER A POET.

Men of the Republic of Letters Asso-  
ciated to Promote Good Will Be-  
tween All America's Republics.

Nowadays there are clubs for women, for poli-  
ticians, for actors, for men about town and clubs  
for literary people.

One of the most remarkable of these organiza-  
tions is the Spanish-American Literary Society, of  
which very little is known to the average New  
Yorker. This society is composed of the most dis-  
tinguished representatives from our sister repub-  
lics on the lower half of this continent that live in  
this city.

In fact, to become a member of the society it is  
necessary to have been born in a republic on the  
Western Hemisphere and to profess republican  
ideas of government.

A large number of the members are Cubans, but  
these gentlemen maintain that Cuba is a republic  
and is only waiting for a favorable opportunity to  
shake off her foreign rulers and set up a govern-  
ment of her own.

## CLUB MEN WITH AIMS.

Almost all the South American Ministers to  
Washington, and Consuls, and well known com-  
mission merchants in the  
Spanish-American trade  
here, are members of the  
society. Many of them  
are men of letters and  
poets of continental  
fame, whose writings are  
as celebrated in their  
own countries as those  
of Longfellow, William  
Cullen Bryant and Father  
Ryan are in the United  
States. Besides, a num-  
ber of them are known  
to us by their military  
exploits.



PRESIDENT JOSE MARTI.

The objects of the so-  
ciety are to cultivate lit-  
erature by debates and essays on social, historical  
and political questions, and by the reading and  
criticism of contemporaneous poets and poems.

The aims of the society are eclectic and far  
reaching, and are not limited to one country, but  
they strive to unite the whole of Spanish America  
in mind, purpose and constitution, by bringing  
together the representative literary men of  
all those States, and through their combined  
efforts, make known to the world, and the United  
States in particular, the real spirit and powerful

impulses for social and  
political advancement,  
for which the republics  
in the South are now  
struggling.

They also desire to  
make known to the Eng-  
lish speaking race their  
literature, which is rich  
and varied, and es-  
pecially abundant in his-  
torical, scientific and  
poetical works.

To us the customs of  
these countries are very  
different to what they  
are represented to be.  
Their very wars, which  
are but the natural con-  
vulsions in a struggle  
for progress, cannot be  
properly understood by  
people who have been  
accustomed to almost  
two centuries of politi-  
cal autonomy. Not to raise barriers but to put down  
those obstacles which now exist from the mutual  
unacquaintance of the two nationalities is the main  
effort of these gentlemen.



GENERAL N. B. PERAZO.

The founder of the society, which is now in the  
fifth year of its existence, is Santiago Perez Triana.  
Mr. Triana is a son of a former President of the  
United States of Colombia and is engaged in the  
commission business in this city. He is also the  
consul of Salvador at this port. He was the first  
president of the society and was re-elected twice.  
He resigned the office a short time ago on account  
of a prolonged visit to his own country. He is a  
poet of great ability and is an excellent linguist.  
He began his education in this country while his  
father was minister to Washington from Colombia,  
and afterward graduated with honors from the  
University at Leipzig.

Jose Marti is now the president of the society.  
He was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1853. He ranks as  
one of the best linguists and most intellectual and  
advanced thinkers of Spanish America. He is the  
Consul at this port for the  
Argentine Confederation  
and holds the  
same office for Paraguay  
and Uruguay. He is also  
a delegate to the Mon-  
etary Conference and  
Minister Plenipotentiary  
from Uruguay. He is  
recognized as the leader  
of the revolutionary  
party in Cuba, and is a  
distinguished lawyer,  
poet and journalist. He  
is the author of "Econo-  
mista Americano" and  
"Idad de Oro;" besides  
he has translated into  
Spanish the works of  
Thomas Moore and  
many other English  
books. His own poems,  
under the title of "Is-  
maelillo," are shortly  
to be translated into English, together with sev-  
eral plays. Mr. Marti is the correspondent of sev-  
eral newspapers in Buenos Ayres and Mexico.

Nestor Ponce de Leon, who was elected president  
of the society to fill out Mr. Triana's unexpired  
term, is a Cuban, well known in New York as a  
lawyer and literary man. He is a Mason of  
high degree, and has been the treas-  
urer of the Scottish Rite, Royal Arcanum, for  
the past ten years. He was secretary of the  
Cuban revolutionary Junta during the last rebel-  
lion there and was sentenced to death three times  
by the Spanish authori-  
ties. His family is one  
of great antiquity, he  
being a descendant of a  
younger branch of the  
De Leon family, whose  
representative visited  
Florida and who died  
there while in search of  
the fabled fountain  
which would restore old  
age to the vigor of  
youth. Mr. de Leon is  
the author of a techno-  
logical dictionary of  
arts and sciences, and  
is now at work upon the  
early history of America  
for the Geographical So-  
ciety, of which he is a member. Mr. de Leon is also  
a member of the Numismatic Society and is a part-  
ner in the law firm of Daly, Hoyt & Mason.

Climaco Calderon is the vice president of the  
society. He is the Consul General of the United  
States of Colombia, and is also a delegate from that  
country to the Monetary Conference. He is a man  
of extensive literary ability and stands high in the  
politics of his own country.

Benjamin Giberger, of the commission house of  
Tallado, Giberger & Co., is one of the organizers  
of the society and was  
elected its first treasurer,  
a position he held until  
last year. Mr. Giberger  
was born in Matanzas,  
Cuba, about thirty years  
ago, and since the age  
of seventeen years he  
has been called the  
poet laureate of his na-  
tive home. He gradu-  
ated with high honors  
at the University of Bar-  
celona, in Spain, and is  
the author of a volume  
of poems, which has  
been translated in many  
languages. He conducted  
a daily paper in Havana  
for many years, and is  
now the correspondent  
of several South American newspapers and maga-  
zines. Mr. Giberger is the president of the Entre-  
Nous Society, a social club composed of the  
younger members of New York's best Spanish-  
American families. Mr. Giberger is a member of the  
New York Consistory of Thirty-second Degree  
Masons, a senior warden of the Star of Cuba  
Lodge, as well as a member of the Nobles of the  
Mystic Shrine. Mr. Giberger's brother is one of the  
few liberal members from Cuba to the Spanish  
Cortes.

Benjamin J. Guerra is a member of the tobacco  
importing firm of M. Barrianco & Co. He is well



B. GIBERGER.

well known as the author of "The Cuban Heroes of  
the Revolutionary War" and other works of equal  
merit. He is the vice president of the Cuban revo-  
lutionary club Los Independientes. Mr. Guerra  
is treasurer of the society and is a member of the  
Board of Trade.

## VENEZUELA'S STATESMAN.

General Nicanor Bolot Peraza, who is the present  
Minister to Washington from Venezuela and delegate  
to the Monetary Conference shortly to be held in  
this city, is one of Venezuela's most distinguished  
statesmen, generals and writers. Under Guzman  
Blanco's administration General Bolot Peraza was  
Minister of the Interior and a member of Con-  
gress, but when President Blanco commenced  
the establishment of an absolute power Gen-  
eral Bolot Peraza withdrew from his Cabinet  
and became the leader of the liberal  
party and the rebellion against him. When his  
party was defeated General Bolot Peraza was  
forced into exile and came to New York, where he  
became prominent from his writings and as the  
editor of *La Revista*. When Blanco retired from  
power a year or two ago and went to France the  
liberal party of Venezuela elected General Bolot  
Peraza's father-in-law President of the republic.  
General Bolot Peraza is considered the most bril-  
liant and perspicuous of Spanish prose writers, and  
his speeches delivered when he was delegate to the  
late Pan-American Conference were said to have  
been the finest ever heard from any South Ameri-  
can representative.

Alberto Falcon was born in Lima, Peru, and he  
held more responsible positions than usually fall  
to the lot of most young men of his age. Mr. Fal-  
con studied law in Chile and received the degree  
of B.A. in 1879. When the war broke out between  
Chile and Peru he returned to his own country  
and became the private secretary and custodian of  
the war records, under Dictator Piérola. He was  
at that time but nineteen years of age. In 1880 he  
was sent to the Peruvian Embassy at Washington,  
but a short career of diplomatic service showed  
him that commercial interests had more weight  
than all the laws and treaties between nations. He  
then determined to follow the mercantile profes-  
sion, and entered the large commission house of  
W. R. Grace & Company, and now he has an inter-  
est in that firm. During the Pan-American Con-  
ference Mr. Falcon acted as secretary for Dr. T. G. C.  
Zegarra, the Peruvian Minister. Besides being one  
of the most popular South Americans in New York  
Mr. Falcon has the reputation of being the best  
posted man on Spanish-American affairs. His  
father was Treasurer of Peru, and is said to be an  
able financier and a most distinguished political  
economist.

## CIRILO VILLAVEDE.

Cirilo Villaverde, the famous Cuban writer and  
author of the celebrated novel "Cecilia Valdes,"  
is an honored member of the society. Mr. Villa-  
verde has contributed much toward Spanish  
literature and is now the editor of a Spanish-  
American newspaper in this city. In the novel  
"Cecilia Valdes" he depicts in a masterly style the  
horrors of life spent in a modern Spanish colony  
and tells of the sufferings endured by the patriots  
who have taken part in the different rebellions  
against the Spanish yoke. Mr. Villaverde married  
Emilia Casanova, who is known in Cuba as the  
modern Madam Roland, but who has fortunately  
escaped the tragic fate of her namesake. Madam  
Villaverde was considered the most energetic  
organizer in the revolutionary party in Cuba, and  
during the rebellion there she spent a large por-  
tion in equipping soldiers and fitting out expedi-  
tions against the power of Spain.

Gonzalo de Quesada is the Consul at Philadelphia  
for the Argentine Confederation, and is a trustee  
of the Spanish-American Literary Society. He is a  
young Cuban writer and an orator of great ability.  
He graduated a few years ago at the College of the  
City of New York with high honors, and is re-  
markable as an organizer of college student so-  
cieties.

One of the most popular members of the society  
is R. de Castro Polomino. He has been re-elected  
three times to the post of secretary of the society.  
Mr. Polomino was born in Cuba, and was active  
in the revolutionary party there. He came to this  
country during the rebellion, and has been the  
secretary of several revolutionary clubs, whose  
aims are the independence of Cuba. He was the  
founder of the Spanish-American illustrated  
monthly *La Americana*, and is well known as the  
author of "Tales of To-day and To-morrow."

Manuel de J. Galvan is the Chancellor of the  
Consulate of Santo Domingo. He is an author of  
ability and is the son of the author of the cele-  
brated historical novel, "Enriquillo."

Felix Fuentes is a Cuban patriot, who gave up his  
fortune and home to establish a republic. He was  
president of the Cuban revolutionary Junta, and  
fled to New York when the war of the rebellion was  
over. He is a prolific writer of prose and poetry,  
and as a linguist commands all the living lan-  
guages. He is the author of an improved arith-  
metic and a reformed system of bookkeeping, and  
is regarded as an authority on all mercantile ques-  
tions.

Mr. S. Samper is the patriarch of the Colombian  
trade in this city, and while he is not known as a  
literary man he is a strong sympathizer in the  
efforts of the society.

Fidel G. Pierra, who was the secretary of the Pan-  
American Conference, is the head of the well known  
commission firm of Pierra & Company, and a prom-  
inent member of the society.

Mr. Quintana is the representative of a large  
banking house in this city and was born in Colom-  
bia. His uncle was the Count of Casa Moré, and  
was the leader of the Conservative party in Cuba  
for many years. His father was an eminent jurist,  
and was Chief Justice of Cuba for many years.

Mr. Perez is a celebrated poet and prose writer  
and is at present the secretary of the Venezuelan  
Legation at Madrid. He is a valuable correspond-  
ing member of the society.

## EMILIO AGRAMONTE.

Emilio Agramonte is best known as a composer  
and orchestral leader. He is also a lawyer and poet  
and a writer of great ability. His uncle was the  
Commander-in-Chief of the Cuban revolutionary  
forces, and the whole family took an active part in  
the struggle.

S. J. Godoy was a judge in Cuba, but came to New  
York some years ago and began the publication of  
the Spanish-American newspaper *La Americana*.  
Mr. Godoy is also connected with the Spanish-  
American department of a large insurance company  
in this city.

Dr. Farraga is a veteran of military fame. He was  
a colonel in the Cuban revolutionary army, but is  
now a practicing physician in this city. He is a  
skillful elocutionist and frequently recites at the  
entertainments of the society. Dr. Farraga is best  
known to the poor of New York, to whom he devotes  
much of his time and money.

Enrique Trujillo is best known as the author of  
a pamphlet opposing the annexation of Cuba to the  
United States. He is a fierce opponent to Spanish  
rule in Cuba, and has suffered long periods of im-  
prisonment while maintaining his opinions. He  
conducts a Spanish-American newspaper in this  
city.

Diego V. Tijera was the first secretary of the  
society. He is a writer and poet of some celebrity  
and is at present the private secretary to Señor  
Emilio Terry, the millionaire member from Cuba  
to the Spanish Cortes.

Manuel Barranco is a tobacco merchant in this  
city, and is a poet and prose writer.

Dr. M. Zeno is a graduate of the Madrid Uni-  
versity, and has the reputation of being the most  
inspired of the modern poets of Porto Rico, an  
island of poetry. He is also a prose writer of fame.

F. J. Amy is a writer of great ability. Many of  
his works have been translated into English.

Mr. Ubarrios is the Bolivian Minister to this  
country, and is a member of the Monetary Con-  
ference. He is a writer of great merit, and is held  
in high esteem by his fellow countrymen.

Mr. De Lima is a commission merchant in this  
city, largely interested in the Venezuelan trade.  
He is one of the pioneers in the business and is a  
highly respected member of the society.

Pedro Salazar is noted for his skill as a violinist  
and is said to be the equal of Sarasate.

Dra. Miranda, J. J. Luis, G. J. Quesada and D.  
Portuondo are all graduates of New York medical  
colleges, and, as members of the society, are es-  
teemed for their literary abilities.

The home of the society is at No. 62 Madison av-  
enue, and besides the regular fortnightly meetings  
they give receptions and dinners at stated inter-  
vals.



N. PONCE DE LEON.