

THE CUBAN REVOLUTION.

The Recent Massacre Near Bayamo—Letter from the Victims to the Foreign Consuls.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17, 1869.

The following paper is a translation of a document forwarded to the Department of State by one of the United States consular officers in Cuba. The persons whose names are appended to the petition were among those who were afterwards shot at Jiguaní:—

PRISON OF SANTIAGO DE CUBA, }

July 29—9:30 P. M. }

TO THE CONSULS OF ENGLAND, FRANCE, PRUSSIA AND THE UNITED STATES:—

GENTLEMEN—A person in citizen's dress, who, as he said, was an adjutant, this day verbally directed us to prepare to go as prisoners to Manzanillo, in accordance with superior orders. This announcement surprised us, because, according to the circular of General Caballero de Rodas, no one can be arrested on mere suspicion, and in case of there being sufficient cause the arrest shall be made after due verbal process, after due verbal process, by placing the presumptive offenders at the disposal of the Captain General; that is, in cases of political offences. Several of us were put upon trial some days since, on the supposition that we were guilty of the crime of high treason, and these proceedings having been instituted the government attorney was of the opinion that they ought to be quashed, with which the associate judge (who, in Spanish courts, is the responsible one) agreed; hereupon the Governor General of this department, although complying with the letter of this decision, demanded bail of the accused, thereby showing an inconsistency which can be justified neither by the keenest reasoning nor by any sophistry or subtlety of interpretation.

Others were yesterday morning placed in solitary confinement, without any reason for their arrest being assigned, or grounds stated for the order of their departure, and even without due form of law, which requires such a thing to be done by the attorney of the government and not by a person in citizen's dress. The person delivering the message presented it as a polite and delicate mark of attention on the part of the Governor. The others—Asencio de Asencio, Baño Collazo and Andres Villazana—are awaiting a reply to letters of inquiry which are said to have been sent to the military authorities of Bayamo. The cases of these persons were originally under the jurisdiction of the Governor General of this department. It is, therefore, contrary to law to force them to undertake a journey which removes them from the judge to whom the trial of their cases belongs. It is, moreover, a violation of the order of Caballero de Rodas, according to which we, the prisoners, should have been placed at his disposal, & due account of the proceedings being sent to him or we going in person to Havana. Such legal informalities, the neglect of so many requisites, such haste for our departure, such mystery regarding its cause, the many rumors which momentarily reach our ears, overwhelming us with grief and causing bitter tears to be shed by tender and virtuous families, who have no protection in the world but that of their fathers, brothers and kinsmen, who to-day are thrust into prison, to-morrow to be exposed to a hazardous journey, to the perils of a civil war and of an epidemic which is now causing fearful ravages throughout the country—all these things have caused a dreadful apprehension to arise in our minds as to what will be our fate and that of our families—those poor, defenceless families now overwhelmed with such profound sorrow. This apprehension has increased since we have been informed that our destination is not to be Manzanillo, but that we shall thence go on through an uninhabited region to Bayamo, a distance of fourteen leagues, over a road which, as you are aware, is in a most wretched condition; and this apprehension is converted into a horrible fear when we call to mind that imprisonment, with the circumstances of which you are acquainted; that deed which, had its full intent been carried out, would have deprived several innocent men of their lives, men whose removal was wrapped in mystery like our own; and this fear is converted into a terrible reality when we reflect that in a lonely region, in the midst of a civil war, we, accused of political offences which have never been proved, may meet our death from an attack, an encounter, a simple skirmish, a mere suspicion arising against those having us in charge; for then there would be nothing contrary to the laws of war now prevailing on this island.

We do not fear the sentence of the authorities; we do not fear to stand before any tribunal; we do not fear the rancorous hatred of our enemies, nor the slanders so freely circulated against us for the crime of daring to be liberals, of being Spaniards who hailed with delight the standard raised at Alcolea; of enthusiastically rejoicing at the September victories. We do not fear the accusations so carefully prepared for our destruction; we do not fear persecution; but this word has no place in the Spain of to-day, for that Spain has guaranteed individual rights, has abolished inquisitorial power, has put a stop to the wreaking of private vengeance and party animosities; has closed the door to despotism, has forever crushed secret proceedings and intrigues and has declared that the shedding of blood must cease. That Spain has told us through the lips of Caballero de Rodas two words which give comfort to our souls and encourage us to hold fast to our sacred principles, viz., justice and morality. She has told us, besides, that the complaints of the poorest laborers shall be heard as well as those of the most powerful nobleman. No, a thousand times no! Would to God that we were in Havana; would to God that we were in Madrid. We would then ask an audience of the illustrious and worthy regent of the kingdom, and we would say to him, "Sir, we are dragged from our homes, we are led to prison, we are mysteriously exposed to the perils of a journey, in contravention of all law, without any regard to our previous record, without any regard to the effect produced by these measures in the public opinion, without any regard to the groans, the tears, the sorrows of distinguished families and of the people at large; deign to grant us justice." And the illustrious victor of Alcolea would grant it; he would not expose us to the perils of a journey; nor would he be deaf to our prayers. He is a generous and great son of the people, and the representative of a democratic nation, and would severely punish the upholders of such despotism, which is a cancer worm to Spanish influence in this island. What we do fear is, to speak frankly and plainly, that we shall perish on the road, either by the bullets of the soldiers of one or the other party, by the prevailing epidemic or by the deep, horrible and indescribable horrors and apprehensions which have assailed us since the history of certain deeds has been made known to us.

We therefore appeal to you, worthy representatives

of powerful nations. Visit the Governor of this department, tell him of our fears, use your influence with him, demand of him the security of our lives, or in case any calamity befall us report to your governments what has been done. You will thereby render a service to the cause of civilization, to your fellow nations, and to Spain herself, who cannot suffer such acts to be committed.

Receive, Messrs. Consuls, the assurances of our highest consideration.

PEREZ Y FERNANDEZ.

RAFAEL ESPIN.

ANDRES VILLASANA.

JOAQUIN ROS.

BALVADOR BENITEZ.

JOSE ANTONIO COLLAZO.

BRUNO COLLAZO.

ASENICO DE ASENICO.

We, the undersigned consuls, certify that this is a copy of the original document deposited in the archives of the British Consulate at Santiago de Cuba.

A. E. PHILIPS,

Acting United States Consul.

TED W. RAMSDEN,

British Vice Consul.

ADO. KEINERS.

Consul of the North German Union, ad interim.

E. ARNAUD,

Acting Consul of France.