

SPAIN.

The Cuban Revolution and the State Policy— Formation of Volunteer Corps to Suppress the Revolt—The Appointment of Escalante as Commander.

MADRID, Feb. 17, 1869.

The Cuban question still continues to agitate the public mind. Every day's intelligence is more unfavorable to the cause of government than that last given, and it is believed that we do not yet know the worst. The government has adopted a very childish and foolish policy of publishing only such news as it thinks favorable to its position, or such as must come out through other channels. Nothing could be more damaging to its prestige, and nothing could be less effective for its ends than this same policy. The people want to know exactly how affairs stand in Cuba, whether the island is really attempting to gain its independence, the forces it has at its command, the strength of the government army, the locality and extent of country dominated by the insurrection; these and a hundred other facts are demanded by the people, but they get very little satisfaction.

The other day the government was assuring the journals that there was no change in affairs in Cuba, and no news of importance, when a telegram via England was published announcing that martial law had been proclaimed by General Dulce over the entire island. This was most grave intelligence, because it already showed that the Captain General was convinced that only the strong hand of the soldier could grapple with the conflict, and that the time for a peaceful treatment had forever passed. The government finally acknowledged the truth of the statement that martial law had been proclaimed, and that General Dulce had begged for reinforcements in men and ships of war and a large sum of money. All these aids the government has promised to send with the greatest promptitude, and the people are satisfied that they are in for an expensive war, which may be successful and may not. All recognize the fact that the result is exceedingly doubtful; but most of the people will give their support to war measures, because the cry for the retention of Cuba is now placed on the ground that the honor of Spain would suffer should it be lost. We hear very little now of the moral interest involved in the question. It is the honor of Spain, and nothing else, that would be wounded by an unsuccessful effort to crush out the "rebellion of the impatient fanatic," as some of the papers term it. Under this cry the people will doubtless rally strongly in support of the most vigorous measures on the part of the government to quell the insurrection and save the island. Already we hear of volunteering going on among the Basque provinces, which are connected by important commercial ties to the island, and the Catalans are to send a contingent of volunteers. Two thousand Catalan volunteers have already been accepted, it is said, by the government, and steps have been taken to equip and prepare them for the voyage, which must begin before the 8th of March. Six thousand regular troops will be sent off before that date, among whom will be a regiment of mountain artillery, expressly organized for Cuban work. The Pacific squadron, which is now in the waters of the South Atlantic, have been ordered by telegraph, via the United States, to proceed at once to Cuba and join the squadron there. The latter will be still further augmented by the despatch of two iron-clad frigates and a number of smaller vessels for coast service.

General Dulce will have received altogether more than 20,000 reinforcements of land troops before the 1st of April, and a powerful addition to the naval forces. It is hoped by the government he will be able to crush out the rebellion with those means and to accomplish its purpose before the advent of the sickly season, which is naturally greatly dreaded for its destructive influence on the health of the new and unaccustomed troops. Other persons, perhaps quite as well informed of the situation as the government, and but less sanguine, assert that Spain must send at least 40,000 men before she can put down the disturbance, and many doubt whether that force will suffice. All this will entail a terrible expense, and one does not quite see how Spain can afford the outlay in the long overworn condition of her resources. There are much cheaper ways of arranging the difficulty to the benefit of both sides, but just now there is not the slightest possibility of their receiving a moment's attention. "The honor of Spain is involved," and that settles the matter once for all. She will send her last man, spend her last drop of blood and spend her last dollar before she will consent to give up the claim of the Antilles at the demand of the armed colonists. That is the almost universal sentiment now, and you need look for no change unless something extraordinary should occur to bring it about.

Among the generals to be sent out is Escalante, the fiery fellow who commanded the people at the outbreak in Madrid at the beginning of the revolution. He is a brave, reckless, independent sort of man, that the government is very glad to send abroad. His presence here, where his influence with the volunteers and people is all-powerful, is a constant menace to the provisions, who dread him. He speaks his opinions freely, and does not hesitate to express his views on the character of the members of the government in the most uncompromising but forcible language. He entertains a particularly mean opinion of General Prim and the present President of the Cortes, Rivero, whom he used to denounce publicly with terrific violence. He has more than once publicly threatened to hang Prim with Rivero's bowels and drag them through the streets. In return for all these violent attacks against the leaders of the revolution in power he has been made a general of brigade, and will, no doubt, reap larger honors in his new head of service. Prim and his friends regard any reward cheap that will enable them to get rid of Escalante. He will, no doubt, make his mark or find his grave in Cuba.