

## CUBA.

### Riot in Havana—Political Executions—Dreadful Scenes of Excitement and Confusion—Confiscation Proposition Tabled by the Administrative Council—Arrival of Troops.

HAVANA, April 9, 1899.

The readers of the HERALD will recollect that some two months since a depository of hidden arms was discovered by the police in Figueras street, that in removing them an affray occurred in which one policeman was killed and another severely injured. These were subsequently arrested.—Theodore Cabias, an American citizen; Francisco Leon, who had declared his intentions to become one, and Augustin Medina, a creole. On investigation the former was discharged. The other two were tried by due process of law, convicted and sentenced to be garroled. Great efforts were made in their behalf, particularly Leon's. The American Consul, Mr. Hall, interested himself in the matter and endeavored to obtain a commutation from Dulce, but without success. The day before the execution he telegraphed to the Washington government asking, through it, the intervention of Madrid in the name of humanity. All efforts were vain, however, and yesterday morning the two suffered the extreme penalty, amid a scene which was probably never equalled before on this Continent.

It is said that before Leon left the prison he shook hands with an insurgent there confined, who remarked to him, "Remember, Leon, what you promised us." The execution took place at the Punta, in front of the prison, at the very unusual hour of eleven. A large force of volunteers, cavalry and infantry was on the ground, and the open space around was completely filled by an immense concourse of excited people both creoles and Spaniards. Trouble had been generally predicted, but nothing could keep this excitable populace from a scene promising so much. Leon's bearing was the admiration of every one, both friend and foe. Reaching the scaffold, he ran up the stairs with a lively air and agile step, to the evident surprise of the priest who accompanied him, and whom he turned to assist to reach the platform. A slight altercation immediately took place between them. The priest was evidently dissuading him from speaking. He persisted, however, and, turning to the crowd, said:—"Repentance will allow me to address you. I have sinned against society, and I hope the public will pardon me for it. *Viva España!*"

This created the greatest astonishment, and the volunteers and Spaniards manifested their gratification by loud buzzes. This, however, turned out to be a mere stratagem to gain attention and to be allowed to speak. A silence most profound followed. Advancing, he exclaimed in a hurried but perfectly clear tone, "I am the victim of oppression, but I have done my duty to my country." Then raising his voice he shouted, "*Viva Cuba libre! Viva la independencia! Viva Céspedes!*" The drummers, ordered to drown any seditious remarks, were too much taken aback to perform their duty, and his speech was finished before they could recover themselves. The effect of his bearing and cries upon the Cubans in the crowd was magical; a hundred voices responded "*Viva Céspedes!*" "*Viva Cuba libre!*" The scene that followed beggars description, and can only be likened to those recorded by historians as taking place during the French revolution. The noise was like the roaring of waters; long, glittering knives, swords and bayonets flashed in the air, and troops and people seemed agitated by a very ecstasy. Soon the volunteers commenced firing, which was returned by some in the crowd, the greater portion of which began to melt away through the streets leading from the scene.

Meanwhile the execution was hurried through with. Leon, as he seated himself and the death collar was placed about his neck, seeming to glory in the confusion he had created. He gestured as he could with his bound arms and his mouth was seen to open until the executioner gave the fatal turn. Soon after his lifeless, bleeding body, which seemed to crouch and cower as it was removed, was placed aside for the other victim. He, too, was calm and collected and endeavored to make himself heard by the crowd, but in vain, as the noise was too great. He was hurried to the chair and when nearly seated, with that attention to minutiae sometimes noticed in those about to die, straightened himself, glanced at the chair, turned it a little with his bound hands and sat down. In twenty seconds he was a corpse. All this time the scene of confusion continued, maddened shouts and shrieks were heard, some were fleeing and others, thinking this the more dangerous, crowded near the volunteers, shouting "*Viva España!*" and making other demonstrations calculated to create the impression that they were good Spaniards.

A considerable number of dead bodies lay scattered around. One, that of a stalwart negro, naked to the waist, was riddled with bullets, fired into it by the volunteers as they passed, to such an extent that it had been set on fire, and the sturdy arm and leg were burning and frizzling where they lay. Numbers of the volunteers moved up one of the side streets, firing right and left. It is reported that several houses were entered and their inmates slaughtered. As ever on such occasions, acts of private vengeance were indulged in; among these was the killing of a young woman, a *confitera*, or camp follower, by a Yucateco of bad character and habits. She had obtained his ill-will in some manner, and, taking advantage of the mêlée, he killed her. He was immediately arrested and has been shot.

The number of killed was somewhere near ten or twelve and a considerable number wounded. This is as far as reported. Two of the volunteers were slightly injured, one by a pistol ball and another by a contusion. The prison front was soon abandoned after the execution and comparative order was restored, yet much agitation and excitement was felt during the day. In the evening a pistol shot was fired at a party of volunteers from the Louvre. They rushed in and captured some person, whether the guilty one or not is a question. Two or three have been arrested charged with shouting seditiously and have been or will be shot. A volunteer states that there were sixteen killed, among whom two were Spaniards.

As has been and will be, concerning anything short of a general massacre, the papers of the city praise the moderation of the volunteers. While it is doubtful whether any other nationality would have found it necessary to fire into a crowd continuously for several minutes I cheerfully record the fact that the volunteers really did behave far better than their antecedents would have led one to believe. As I close my account the city is quiet, nor are there anticipations of further trouble.

A meeting of the "Council of Administration" was held on the 6th, when the "Director General" proposed the confiscation of property of all Cubans who had gone from Cuba, been deported or might with reason be supposed to sympathize with the rebellion. Complete silence pervaded throughout the assembly. Your readers are aware that one or more members of this body are Cubans. When the "Director" resumed, and remarked that by their silence he concluded they acquiesced in his motion, Don Domingo Sterling y Heredia, one of the most eminent Cubans here, rose and proceeded to explain to his Excellency the Director that such was far from being the case; that, on the contrary, the entire silence on the part of all the members present was a most unequivocal manifestation of their unanimous non-approval of his Excellency's proposition, that the suggested measure appeared to be most unjust, and that the practice was not carried into effect in any civilized country at this date, and, in fact, it had proved a failure more than twenty years ago. To temporarily confiscate the property of persons actually engaged in armed hostility to the government might, if the authorities deemed it wise to do so, be resorted to; but it was but just and equitable, in that case, that all property thus confiscated should be accounted for to the heirs, on the simple ground that these could never be held liable for political offences committed by the original owners of the property. The rest of the members refrained from adding anything to what Mr. Sterling had just remarked, and the motion was laid on the table.

The Cubans claim that the artillery of the combined forces in Sagunaea did not enter the town, because the insurgents had so pre-arranged affairs that they would have fallen on it in overwhelming numbers and prevented the Spaniards from having extricated it.

The battery of artillery that returned from the field recently are being put into readiness to leave again; probably for Puerto Principe, although it is rumored to go to the Vuelta Abajo.

The English schooner George, which was taken into Batabano by a Spanish cruiser, simply because her fishing license was not entirely in order, has been given up and allowed to return to Nassau.

Captain Baker of the steamer Blenheim, arrived yesterday from New York; reports that when he was fifteen miles from Pickle Reef he saw a large ship under sail the morning previously and a small Spanish steamer, near that shore, and the movements of both were quite incomprehensible; owing to the hazy state of the weather and the early hour of the morning, the flag of the ship could not be discerned.

The Gazette of the 8th contains the official authorization for Mr. Leopold A. Price to provisionally fill the office of Agente Comercial (Vice Consulate) for the United States at Nuevitas during the absence of Mr. Richard Gibbs.

The steamer Rapido brought the following political prisoners from Espiritu Santo to Cienfuegos:—Luis Alcántara, notary public; Juan Marqués, jus-

tice of the peace in Nerva; Indalecia Salas, physician and alderman; Diego Echেমendia, physician; Abelardo Meneses, surveyor and volunteer ensign; Joaquín M. Cancio, sugar planter; Ramon Castañeda and Antonio Echেমendia, proprietors, also N. Gomez, who is said to be the manufacturer of the insurgent balls sent to Gibara, for which the lead was furnished by the padre Castillo, now on his way to Fernando Po (or Spain).

The Cadiz mail steamer arrived on Friday morning with 600 troops. It has been remarked how poorly clad are these men come from Spain, all to be provided for here—but if it is considered the wretched condition of the home finances, it is a wonder any men can be sent at all. However, it appears that there is enthusiasm enough here to celebrate the arrival of troops from Spain every time they land, and great preparations are now made, especially by the Catalan population in this city, to give a splendid reception to the 1,000 Catalan volunteers daily expected from Barcelona. Among them are 600 "Mozaes de Escudra." This organization, peculiar to Catalonia, constitutes the rural police in that province, under a sort of military discipline. They are an able-bodied, efficient and exemplary body of men, selected from the military men who have served out their time and have unblemished antecedents to recommend them. They are a model of discipline, and if several thousand of them were to come many people here would rejoice.

The Spanish war steamer Pizarro sailed for Nassau, N. P., on the 7th inst.

A Señor Acevedo has been arrested on suspicion of complicity in connection with the steamer Comanditario. It was reported yesterday that Don Inocencio Casanova had been released; but, were such the case, he would have shown himself in the city.

### Execution of a Youthful Insurgent—Troops Still at Mayari—Panic in a Religious Procession.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, April 5, 1899.

Since my last there are no operations to record. Colonel Macanas left here on the 24th ult. for a short expedition and returned on the 25th without meeting any insurgents. I hear it reported that they found the bodies of four soldiers, tied hand and foot and horribly mutilated, but do not know what credit to give the story.

A new detachment of paid volunteers, 200 in number, is being formed to co-operate with the troops in Brazo de Canto. They are officered from the army, and will probably start in a few days. The cholera has almost entirely disappeared from this city and neighborhood, and Guantanamo is also free from it, though several estates have suffered in the neighborhood. On Tuesday morning last a young man named Felix Tejada and a free negro were shot, having been sentenced by court martial the previous week. Tejada was a youth of about twenty years, belonging to one of the most respectable families of Cuba. He was captured in Cobre some time since during the forty days amnesty. He was very firm and but for his stubbornly adhering to his revolutionary ideas might have been saved. He made a short speech, declaring that Cuba would be free and that he was willing to die as a victim of her independence. His death caused a profound sensation in the city. The *Diario de Santiago de Cuba* on the previous day contained a telegram copied from the New York Herald, stating that the provisional government of Spain had sent out orders to Dulce by telegraph to suspend all political executions, but it was not sufficient to save his life. Other movements of the government have contributed to keep the excitement alive here; among them are several arrests, generally, however, resulting in the release of the parties. The Chief of Police and a citizen named Don Juan Valliant were recently taken in custody, the former being confined on board the frigate Carmen and the other in prison. Two days after they were released, and the Chief restored to his position.

The troops are still in Mayari, and the steamer Tomas Brooks is about sailing for that point with provisions. A great panic recently occurred during a religious procession here, consisting of more than two thousand people. A regular stampede took place, and the screams of women and children were fearful. One child was killed and several were injured. Order soon followed, and the procession reformed. What caused the panic is difficult to tell, and the only solution is in the fact that a negro was arrested that night and executed the next day, charged with having shouted seditiously.

The commandant of Cobre recently captured a man named Luis Guerra, said to be an agent of the insurgents. He was shot, and important papers were found on him.

Yesterday a junta of planters was held at the Palace at the call of the Governor. His Excellency used very strong language, accusing them of contributing to the maintenance of the insurrection.