

# CUBA.

## A Letter Which the Government Censor Has Not Garbled—The Execution of the Patriots Leon and Medina—Wholesale Butchery of Non-Combatants—Butcheries Without Number.

We have received the following interesting letter from one of the victims of the Spanish tyranny and barbarity in Cuba. It is dated April 9, from his cell in one of the filthy dungeons in Havana:—

**DEAREST FRIEND**—From the same prison from which I wrote to you last I now write to relate to you some of those melancholy scenes—scenes of grief and blood—which, unfortunately for civilization, have always marked the annals of Spanish rule in America.

To-day, at eleven A. M., the Cuban patriots, Leon and Medina, were murdered on the vile garrote. This instrument consists of the framework of a gallows, but, instead of life being taken by a rope around the neck, the victim is placed in a sitting posture and an iron ring attached to a post is adjusted around his neck. On the opposite side of the post is a lever, which the executioner turns in such a way that the vertebrae of the neck are broken, causing death. This is considered by the Spaniards the most ignominious of all modes of execution, and hence only malefactors are executed in this way. The behavior of these our brothers in their last moments was so heroic that I cannot omit the details.

Leon, on nearing the bench, turned to the people, who in great numbers surrounded him, and addressed them in a firm and manly voice, telling them that he was going to die with pleasure, because he already knew that the revolution was gaining ground every day, and that Cuba at last would be free. Much more that he said was drowned by the beating of drums by the Spanish soldiery. There was, however, a pause of the drumming, and then were heard the words uttered by Leon as the ring was put around his neck. He repeated again and again, "Hurrah for Cespedes!" "Hurrah for Cuba!" In the multitude, which consisted mainly of Spaniards, there were about 2,000 or 3,000 Cubans, who, carried away by their enthusiasm, took up his cry, "Hurrah for Cespedes!" "Hurrah for Cuba!" and made the welkin ring with their hurrahs. The Spaniards, without waiting to ascertain who had raised this cry, turned and fired upon the spectators, killing seven, among them a woman, and wounding more than forty.

As soon as quiet had been restored, and the dead and wounded victims of this barbarous outrage had been carried away and cared for, Medina, the other prisoner, was conducted to the place of execution. As he approached it he shouted forth in stentorian tones, calling the attention of his friends to something he had to say; but the volunteers, maddened already by the previous carnage, became fiends, and without warning or provocation, or without giving him the privilege of speaking, shot him dead.

What is your opinion, dear friend, about these bloody scenes? Does not Quesada act justly in shooting all the prisoners who fall into his hands? Do these Spanish hyenas deserve any better treatment than they give?

You are probably already aware that Quesada has taken from the enemy of liberty three convicts, and in the last capture, which happened on the 21st ult., he made 200 prisoners, whom he shot. You have heard that Juan Osorio, the purser of the steamer Comandante, conceived and carried out the bold idea of taking possession of that vessel. He sailed away with her; but the Spaniards afterwards recaptured her, near New Providence, W. I. And this they did notwithstanding the protest of the commander of an English gunboat, who ordered them to return her to the Cubans, as she carried the Cuban flag and her name had been changed to the Yara.

If this act of the English captain is not a recognition of our independence of right it is at least of fact. It is said that the English commander made a design of the Cuban flag and threw it on the deck of the Yara in token of his sympathy with the Cuban cause.

It is now past eight o'clock, evening, and I have just learned that twelve bodies have been found, most of colored persons, who were slaughtered by the Spanish volunteers, principally belonging to the Fifth and Sixth regiments. The Spanish fiends penetrated the streets adjacent to the place of execution, firing indiscriminately upon all who approached them. They also entered private residences on their bloody errand. They visited the house of the distinguished lawyer, Valdes Tipla, in St. Lazaro avenue, whom they found dangerously ill, and, contrary to their natural propensities, they spared his life; but they destroyed all his furniture, library and papers.

I have to record yet another outrage. At five o'clock this evening a white man and a colored man were shot, having been captured by the Spanish volunteers, who acted both as accusers and judges. What do you think of this? Does history present in its annals another man so infamous as General Dulce, who allows these outrages to be perpetrated? A volunteer in liquor or in his senses may kill any Cuban and remain unpunished for his offence by giving as his reason for the crime that the patriot has hurried for Cuba and for liberty.

## Cuban Revolutionary Address to the People of the United States.

Señor Valiente, the general agent for the Cuban republican government, has prepared the following address to the people of the United States, setting forth the causes and prospects of the existing revolution in Cuba and the claims of the struggling patriots upon Americans:—

### TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES:—

Seeing that frequent misrepresentations of the revolutionary movement going on in Cuba are made through the press, I beg leave to answer them by laying before the public a brief statement of facts connected with that movement.

Revolutions never go backward. They may be checked for a shorter or longer time, but finally burst forth with irresistible impulse and roll on to a successful issue. So with regard to Cuba, which has failed in several attempts to overthrow the tyrant over her, but is likely to succeed now in the struggle for freedom and self-government. To review her efforts for national existence and sketch the grievances which justify the revolution going on within her borders are the purposes of this address, which is respectfully submitted by the undersigned, as general agent of the Cuban revolution.

Ever since the close of the war of independence in South America the Captain General of Cuba has been clothed by special law with all the powers given to commanders of besieged places. This severe measure arose from the revolutionary attempt which was then defeated through the interference of the United States government, lest universal freedom in slaveholding Cuba should affect slavery in the Southern States of this country, as Mr. Clay remarked at the time, in explanation of his opposition to the military expedition which Venezuela, then at war with Spain, was fitting out to help Cuba to achieve her independence; so that Cuba has been since that time groaning under a relentless tyranny, but still endeavoring now and then to shake it off. Her endeavors have brought about not only the persecution or execution of many illustrious Cubans, but also that of many high-minded Spaniards, such as General Lorenzo, who, while Governor of Santiago de Cuba in 1836, proclaimed there the liberal constitution promulgated in Spain, and was persecuted by Captain General Tacón, who sent from Havana a heavy body of troops against him and his constitutional followers. Several years later many Cubans who remonstrated against the slave trade were persecuted for having done so, and nearly all of them driven into exile. Shortly thereafter military commissions were set at work all over the Western Department of Cuba to suppress an alleged conspiracy among the colored people. The guilty parties were found chiefly among the rich free colored men, whose property was, of course, confiscated and their lives taken by wholesale on the scaffold, while not a few of them died under the lash, which was freely and mercilessly used to compel them to confession. The suppression of this alleged conspiracy was followed a few years later by a real conspiracy of the white people, under the lead of General López, who being detected before his plans were matured for an uprising in the central part of the island, fled and came to the United States, whence he sailed in 1850 at the head of some 600 men and landed at Cardenas. He failed in his attempt to free Cuba and returned to the United States. During the subsequent year partial uprisings took place and López sailed for Cuba once more with about 450 men, to assist his friends in their efforts to achieve Cuban independence; but he again failed, and himself and many of his followers were executed. However, the Cubans, persevering in their determination to be free, renewed their plans to that end, and a well organized movement was started under General Quintan, but fell through, in 1855, with the loss of valuable lives and the banishment of a great many distinguished Cubans, to say nothing of a heavy outlay of money. Yet, nevertheless, the Cubans, not despairing, a few years afterwards began to work again for their freedom, and when the late Spanish revolution broke out they were finally maturing their plans to free Cuba from the military sway of Spain. That revolution improved their opportunity, and on the 10th or 10th of October last they rose up in arms, as appears from the following extract of their declaration of independence, dated at Manzanillo on that day, viz.:—

In arming ourselves against the tyrannical government of Spain we must, according to precedent in all civilized countries, proclaim before the world the cause that impels us to take this step, which, though likely to entail considerable disturbances upon the present, will insure the happiness of the future.

It is well known that Spain governs the island of Cuba with an iron and bloodstained hand. The former binds the latter down from political, civil and religious liberty. Hence the unfortunate Cubans, being illegally persecuted and thrown into exile or executed by military commissions in times of peace. Hence their being kept from public meetings and forbidden to speak or write on affairs of State; hence their remonstrances against the evils that afflict them being looked upon as the proceedings of rebels, from the fact that they are bound to keep silence and obey. Hence the never ending plague of hungry officials from Spain to devour the product of their industry and labor. Hence their exclusion from public stations and want of opportunity to skill themselves in the art of government. Hence the restrictions to which public instruction with them is subjected, in order to keep them so ignorant as not to be able to know and enforce their rights in any shape or form whatever. Hence the navy and standing army, which are kept upon their country at an enormous expenditure from their own wealth to make them bend their knees and submit their necks to the iron yoke that disgraces them. Hence the grinding taxation under which they labor, and which would make them all parish in misery but for the marvellous fertility of the soil. On the other hand, Cuba cannot prosper as she ought to, because white immigration that suits her best is artfully kept from her shores by the Spanish government, and as Spain has many a time pronounced us Cubans to respect our rights without having hitherto fulfilled her promises; as she continues to tax us heavily and by so doing is likely to destroy our wealth; as we are in danger of losing our property, our lives and our honor under farther Spanish

domination; as we have reached a depth of degradation utterly revolting to manhood; as great nations have sprung from revolt against a similar disgrace, after exhausted pleadings for relief; as we despair of justice from Spain through reasoning, and cannot longer live deprived of the rights which other people enjoy, we are constrained to appeal to arms to assert our rights in the battle field, cherishing the hope that our grievances will be a sufficient excuse for this last resort to redress them and secure our future welfare.

To the God of our conscience and to all civilized nations we submit the sincerity of our purpose. Vengeance does not mislead us, nor is ambition our guide. We only want to be free and see all men with us equally free, as the Creator intended all mankind to be. Our earnest belief is that all men are brethren. Hence our love of toleration, order and justice in every respect. We desire the gradual abolition of slavery, with indemnification; we admit universal suffrage, as it insures the sovereignty of the people; we demand a religious regard for the inalienable rights of man as the basis of freedom and national greatness.

Such are the facts showing the oppression of Cuba and her efforts to be free up to the 10th of October last. Since then the Cuban liberating army has been gradually increasing, notwithstanding the losses consequent upon a steady campaign, and now comprises some 42,000 men under C. M. Cespedes, who is the commander-in-chief of that army and the head of the republican government duly established within the lines of the liberators. Their lines run in a westerly direction from the eastern end of the island to Sagua la Grande, without reaching the seaboard, either North or South, for want of the requisite armament to hold it. But the territory pointed out is nearly two-thirds of the area of Cuba, in which slavery has been abolished, and in which the Spanish control only the ground where they are kept at bay. This has been done by the patriots in a comparatively short time, notwithstanding their sad deficiency in war material, and leads to the belief that if they had been tolerably supplied with such materials their movements would now cover also the remainder of the island, where no uprising has yet taken place from utter want of arms, while their enemies are fully armed with the best approved weapons of the United States. But such are our neutrality laws. They allow a European Power to obtain war materials freely from our workshops to crush a people struggling for freedom in the very heart of America, and prohibit the same people from supplying themselves with similar materials from us to carry on their struggle against that Power. Yet the Spanish hirelings, in their misrepresentations of the Cuban revolution, frequently assert through their editorial columns and otherwise that the laws referred to have been violated. Let them bear in mind that from the foregoing statement of facts no other conclusion can be drawn but that Cuba is fairly started in her way to national independence; that her sons have been manfully fighting for it these six months, without having yet violated our neutrality, despite their lack of arms, and are therefore entitled to the earnest sympathy of our people, and the more so as their struggle involves a great American principle—namely, that no European Power shall longer control any country upon this hemisphere.

J. VALIENTE.