

# CUBA.

## Review of the Late Revolution in Havana—Its Inception and Causes—Demoralization of the Spaniards—Venality of Officials—Failure of Military Operations—Reaction Among Volunteers—Rodas Expected—His Reception—The Course of Dulce—Removal of Governors—Various Items.

HAVANA, June 8, 1899.

Now that the smoke of battle has cleared away, Dulce, driven from power by the citizen soldiery, has sailed away to the mother country, and his successor, only tolerated that a semblance of loyalty might be maintained, has quietly entered upon the discharge of his duties, we are enabled to look over the field, come to a conclusion as to the causes of this most strange revolution, and speculate with some degree of knowledge as to the ultimate result.

To people whose education and traditions are all based on monarchical institutions the principle of legitimacy, or what is the same in their vocabulary, legality, is essential to the preservation of peace and good order. Once cut them loose from this and chaos has come again, for, unlike the republicans, as they recognize no foundation of authority in themselves, so they are incapable of yielding to the abstract idea separate from manifestations of physical force. This theory has had its demonstration here within the past few months. The Spaniards of this island, with rare exceptions, of humble origin and without education, have ever been abject slaves to the authority in the person of royalty or its representative. Before the insignia of rank, civil or military, they have ever bowed with a lowliness of spirit which left little of humility for a higher power. To control them no arms have been necessary, but only the brass button of the officer or the lance and dark lantern of the policeman. An immediate change followed on the dethronement of Isabella. The pedestal set up within their hearts, firm (save a few slight shocks) for centuries, had been overthrown, and, the worse for previous restraint, they became riotous, turbulent, dangerous. Lersundi, ignorant of the ultimate effect of his course, or, if not, certainly with no great love for the revolution, formed them into a military organization, placed arms in their hands, and soon in every respect, save obedience to discipline, they became very tolerable soldiers. They soon became aware of their power and Lersundi, though he flattered, cajoled and was popular with them, learned to distrust them and left the island, uncertain as to the result of his action in thus placing all power in the hands of people unaccustomed to self-control and incapable of judging between liberty and license. They received Dulce kindly enough, inasmuch as he represented the power which had made them free; but they distrusted him concerning matters in the island, knowing his previous popularity with the Cubans. From the first he really ruled by the tenor of their will, and wherein he went counter thereto, he only succeeded by persuasion and entreaty. The great importance to them of suppressing the insurrection, as their property interest was all involved, kept them for the most part quiet and obedient enough and, as they for months readily accepted and believed all the stories of government successes, matters went on in the main quietly enough, with an occasional demonstration in test of their power. While these false stories, soothing enough at the time, were grinding out their inevitable meed of discord, another element of trouble was making itself felt. For years the residents of this island, Spaniards and Cubans alike, had groaned beneath the load of contributions necessary to replenish the ever exhausted treasury of Spain and keep alive the army of needy office-holders, which, like the locusts of Egypt, eat out the substance of the land. With Dulce, as with other representatives of a new administration, came a new army of employees, destined to root out the old and the more hungry from long fasting. This was not regarded as a sign of regeneration, and the complaints were loud and deep. It had been supposed that the number of officials would at once be materially decreased, thereby relieving the tax-crushed people of a portion of their burden, but there was not even the most remote sign of this. The new arrivals entered upon the discharge of their duties, and, uncertain as to the continuance of the government under which they served, set about making hay while the sun shone with remarkable energy. The old employees, thrown out of position by an authority they would have been glad to serve, but, failing this, could not recognize, were naturally inimical to the new régime. They became members of the volunteer organizations and, intimately acquainted with all the springs in the positions they had occupied, were enabled to expose the venality of their successors in the most glaring light. They were not slow to do this and thereby excited the intensest indignation of their companions in arms, who had little idea of the extent of official corruption here. The organ of these disaffecteds was the *Voz de Cuba*, a journal edited by displaced employees, and, while pretending to support the revolution, was very hostile to the administration here. It became very soon extremely popular with the volunteers, pandering to their passions and prejudices and commending and supporting them, whatever the course, they might see fit to pursue. It lost no opportunity to excite hostility to Dulce, and though hampered by the censorship of the press, managed to make attacks upon him as constant as insidious. Meanwhile, the truth as to matters in the interior began to leak out. It was seen that nothing was accomplished; that the commanders at the various points, instead of pursuing the campaign with energy, were more interested in accumulating money or worshipping at the shrine of Terpsichore and Venus. Astounding stories of venality were everywhere told and believed, and the volunteers throughout the island, shopkeepers, all began to fear for their wares and became demonstrative and threatening. Dulce, finally realizing the injury being done himself and his administration by the *Voz de Cuba*, determined upon the bold expedient of suppressing it and sending its people from the island. "I will let them know whether the Captain General has any authority left," he said. The arrest of the proprietor was ordered, but he evaded it by concealing himself. Of course the Chief of Police knew well enough where he was, but would not interfere with him. A commission from the company and battalion to which he and the editors belonged waited on Dulce and defiantly demanded that the order should be rescinded, stating that, if necessary, they would resist its execution by force. He held out for some time, but finally yielded, and in so doing surrendered up the last faint spark of power he held. His downfall dated from that moment, and the arrival of Pelaez, with the demonstrations following, but accelerated his surrender a few hours. This feeling of antagonism to Dulce and the working out of his results was not confined to the volunteers of Havana. It had its ramifications through all the principal jurisdictions of the island, and the fall of the Captain General was quickly followed by the displacement of his governors in Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Trinidad and other places. As yet the details of these are few, and owing to the care manifested by the authorities some time will doubtless elapse before they will be known.

The entire success of their revolutionary enterprise caused a reaction among the volunteers here, and with a consciousness of what they had done some of them stood almost appalled. In the first flush of victory a meeting was determined upon, to take place upon Sunday (last), to determine upon the course to be pursued, to consider the reception of Rodas and other matters. Reflection seems to have brought some troublesome qualms. A telegram from Minister Roberts at Washington, intimating that as between two sets of revolutionists in this island the sympathies of the government to which he was accredited were with the Cubans, and that the Spaniards were in a precarious position, deepened their reflection, and, laying aside their assumptions, they all at once became docile as lambs and entirely obedient to authority. A telegram from Madrid, addressed to the Segunda Cabo instead of the Captain General *ad interim*, showed them that their action was condemned at home. Nor did the report of the excitement consequent on an announcement of their action in the Cortes tend to allay their fears. The meeting was a failure and adjourned without action. As the result it is certain that no further demonstrations will precede the arrival of Caballero de Rodas and his 2,000 men. He will enter upon the discharge of his office without any interference. What further will happen can only be conjectured. Dulce has great influence at home; as much as any one, if not more. He contributed to the success of the revolution, he is not a man to forget, and though in the present unsettled state of this island a thousand contingencies may arise, giving unexpected shape to events, yet, as certain as opportunity affords, the proud old patrician soldier will have a fearful reckoning with the leaders of the shop keepers, who drove him from a seat entrusted to him by the nation.

General Espinar, in affixing his signature to official documents made public, gives himself no official designation, evidently not satisfied with the authority which made him Captain General. He has recently published an order declaring that in consideration of the services of those who have belonged either to the army, volunteers or militia, and defended with arms the integrity of the national territory, and become disabled thereby, shall have the preference in appointments to vacancies in the branches of government, finance and public works. This has caused much satisfaction among all classes of Spaniards, and the press gives it a very enthusiastic endorsement.

As stated, the telegram announcing the excitement in the Cortes upon the news of the excesses here caused much agitation. *La Voz de Cuba*, evidently quite uncertain of the future, endeavors to smooth over the matter in the following manner:—

"It was very natural that the news of General Dulce's delivering up of the command, given in a telegram, should have caused a profound sensation in the Cortes, and we can well understand that the chief of the executive power would move a suspension of public opinion until the details were received. The circumstance which took place in Havana was new and unparalleled in the records of Cuba. Pacific commissioners approached the authority to make known the wishes of the public, and that authority, who always understood their moral force, responded to them, thereby meeting all difficulties and transferring the

power intact to the worthy person called to succeed him by law. If the fact caused so great commotion in the Peninsula, the astonishment of our brethren beyond the seas will surely be greater when they learn that a few hours after realizing a measure of so transcendent importance the entire population of Havana gave itself up to rejoicing, occasioned by the arrival of the Basque volunteers."

As Dulce will himself carry a report of the action of those "pacific commissioners" and the "moral force" used, it is barely possible "our brethren beyond the seas" will look upon them in a different light.

The *Diario de la Marina* has an official telegram stating that Caballero de Rodas was to embark at once for Cuba with 2,000 troops. The press speaks in terms of approval of this prompt action.

"The National Conservative Committee" of Matanzas has issued a circular, dated the 5th, which, referring to the late removal of the Governor, says:—"There is no disguising the fact that the situation is serious and difficult; but it is not desperate, nor is it beyond saving if all good patriots unite as one, submitting their passions before the authority which wields the destiny of the island, and loyalty and its delegates in enforcing the laws. The past should therefore yield to finding a remedy for the future. Let us have nothing of tumultuous meetings, armed and anarchical manifestations; nothing by force and sedition—all for the laws and by the laws." The committee claims to be "liberal conservative," and maintains the right of petition, either verbally or written.

*El Republico*, of Pinar del Rio, says that Don Bartolome Ruiz, the commandant general of the Vuelta Abajo and Governor of said jurisdiction, left on the 1st for Havana, but does not know for what reason.

General Lesca and the Basque volunteers left on Sunday last for Batabano, en route for the Cinco Villas.

Under date of June 6 the *Gazette* publishes the appointment *pro tempore* as Secretary of the political government Don Ricardo de Guzman el Bueno y Padilla, he having recently been retired from active service. Don Pedro Fernandez de Castro having resigned the office of Censor of the press in the capital, Don Francisco Canprodon, lawyer and administrator of lotteries, has been appointed to succeed him.

Since the recent troubles a new exodus has commenced from the island, and both Spaniards and Cubans are leaving in large numbers.

Reports are in very general circulation and credited that a contest recently took place in Trinidad between the regulars and the volunteers and that the Governor was killed. While we have Cienfuegos dates to the 6th, we have nothing from Trinidad later than the 1st, and it is surmised that the papers and correspondence have been kept back.

Insurgent reports from Nuevitas say that the railroad between that point and Puerto Principe has been again cut.

Dulce went on board the steamer Gulpuzcoa at two o'clock Saturday afternoon, accompanied by a large number of friends. There were no demonstrations, everything being carried off very quietly. He sailed at four. Besides his family, the following accompanied him:—José M. Diaz, ex-Secretary of the government; Joaquín Escosura, Chief of the Administration Council; Juan Perez Calvo, Member of the Council; Domingo Sterling Heredia, a Cuban; F. Duranona, a captain of volunteers; Ramon Rodriguez Correa and several other friends of General Dulce.

On Sunday evening died Dr. Quinn, of the United States Navy, surgeon on the sloop-of-war Saratoga, of the yellow fever. Three other cases had broken out, one fatal, and the vessel went to sea on Monday afternoon. Dr. Quinn was buried here, his body having reposed for some hours in the vestry of the Cathedral.