

Time is calling the roll of events which mark the decay of Spanish power in America with a rapidity that has no precedent in the history of the Spanish American colonies. On the 4th day of January of the present year General Dulce arrived at Havana full of high hope to assume the command of that important colony. Four months before that day an apparently unimportant revolution had broken out in Yará, which his predecessor had been impotent to suppress, and Cespedes, as the ruler of free Cuba, was then installed at Bayamo. General Dulce arrived when the Spanish power rejoiced in the full flush of its strength. Its army had not yet been depleted; the great sugar district of the island was just beginning to harvest its product and pour its wealth into the lap of the colonial power, and the Spanish population of the cities and the large towns had been recently organized in battalions, filled with enthusiasm and hope. The promises of peace which the words of Dulce bore to the revolted Cubans were sustained by the possibilities of a strong and rich administration, which seemed to have full power to enforce its threats and satisfy its vengeance.

But six short though eventful months have elapsed since we looked upon this picture, and again we behold the spectacle which attends the advent of a new Captain General. The wealth of men and resources which existed at the opening of the year has been lavished, but the enthusiastic hopes of the battalions of Spanish volunteers have not been realized, while the failure of Dulce has compelled his involuntary return to Spain. General de Rodas comes to take his place; but how different is the situation! The revolution has enjoyed a six months' longer lease of life, and life to an unsuppressed revolution means organization and an increase of power. The army has been depleted till it has ceased to be the hope and the reliance of the government. The harvest has been gathered and all its wealth expended without diminishing the needs of the administration. The enthusiasm of the volunteer battalions has been changed to discord and distrust, and the first act of the new commander is a significant order to the few hundreds of troops he has brought with him to march into the great fortress that commands the island capital and hold no intercourse with the volunteers or troops in the city.

After this General de Rodas lands and walks in solemn procession the distance of a few rods which lie between the landing place and the palace. Not a female face beams upon his arrival, and the grim and belted volunteers receive him with a few scanty cheers and an abundance of criticisms upon his bearing and his supposed intentions. They had violated all law in deposing his predecessor, and in the four weeks during which they had controlled the government they had learned the urgency of its needs, and had come to appreciate the great fact that their hopes could triumph only through succor from Spain. He is the first instalment of this succor and the depository of the power of the metropolis, and his words are waited for in anxious silence. These are soon heard, and they recognize that the hitherto derided insurrection is now the fearful calamity of civil war, and they express the hope of being able to triumph in the contest, through the "brave and disciplined army, and the armed volunteers, to whose determined spirit and efforts the salvation of the island is partly due." Then follow words of unqualified praise of the volunteers, who are declared to "deserve well of their country," and a proclamation to the army and navy, who are exhorted "to be faithful friends of the volunteers, now your brothers." These words of General de Rodas may be the words of wisdom or they may be those of policy and craft. His position is a precarious and a dangerous one. His policy, he tells us, is embodied in three words—"Spain, justice, honesty;" and he explains these to mean that Spain will find in her patriotism inexhaustible resources to preserve the integrity of her territory, will render an equal administration of justice to the high official and the artisan, and require honesty and strict economy in every branch of the government. All of this appertains purely to the Spanish population and officers, as the Cubans have no part or position in the colonial arrangements. Of other matters he says little. Reforms are postponed till the end of the civil war, and this he will accomplish at any cost. He recognizes the decline of commerce, the ruin of industry, the disappearance of property and the increasing emigration, which is rapidly diminishing the elements of wealth. If he fails to suppress the revolution through a united and desperate effort of the volunteers, in a campaign which must be made as soon as the rainy season is past, it will be the final failure. Spain must then turn to other views, for which she is already preparing. What success General Rodas will meet with we shall soon know; for he must move soon in support of the many harassed garrisons now holding precarious positions in the interior of the island. These must be partially relieved before the campaign opens, and time will soon show what events remain in store to mark the closing days of Spanish power in the New World.