

Imprisonment and Assassination of Prominent Cubans—Intervention of Foreign Consuls.

From Cuban patriot sources we have received full particulars of the most flagrant crime committed in Cuba by the Spanish authorities since the revolution began, demonstrating how utterly valueless is De Rodas' promise of justice and fair trial.

On the 29th of last June the eight Cuban gentlemen whose names appear in the subjoined memorial to the Governor of that district were arrested on the affidavit of one Casanova, a Spaniard of long residence in Santiago, at the instance, it is supposed, of Lieutenant Colonel Palacios, an intimate friend of Casanova, who a few days previous had gone to Bayamo. On July 2 a commission of citizens of Santiago de Cuba went to congratulate General de Rodas on his arrival on the island. When the vessel reached Cienfuegos the *Pabellon Nacional* of that city had published the arrest of several of these men five days previous to the date of their arrest, showing that the whole crime portrayed in what follows was a premeditated, cold-blooded murder. These men were kept in close confinement fifteen days by order of Colonel Marcanaz, the Fiscal. At the end of that time Marcanaz went to Havana, when the Governor appointed another Fiscal, who on examining the prisoners recommended their release, since he found them innocent of the charges preferred against them. The Governor then released them on bail. Six days afterwards they were again arrested and imprisoned. A few days later they ascertained that they were to be sent to Bayamo to be tried before Count Valmaseda. The prisoners realized the dangers they had to meet and drew up the following memorial to the Governor of Santiago de Cuba, which was presented by the Consuls of England, France, the North German Confederation and United States, and by them placed on file in their respective archives. The following copy was furnished by the United States Consul at Santiago de Cuba:—

PUBLIC PRISON OF SANTIAGO DE CUBA,

July 23, 1893.

Rafael Espin, M. D., José Antonio Perez, M. D., and Don José Antonio Collazo, Don Ascencio de Ascencio, Don Joaquin Ros, Don Salvador Benitez, Jr., Don Bruno Collazo and Don Andres Villasana, all citizens of this city, most respectfully supplicate:—We are your prisoners, having been apprehended on suspicion that we are disloyal to the government of Spain, and having been informed by your order that we are to be sent to Manzanillo to-morrow by the steamship *Villa Clara*, and from thence on foot to Bayamo, with the intention of being there tried for treason, we would represent that this order places us in a most agonizing situation, because the majority of us have no ready means with which to defray our necessary expenses and to leave provisions for the support of our families, who, consequently, will be greatly distressed, and at present are greatly alarmed at the disposition made of us by your orders. The dangers which threaten us are not on the passage to Manzanillo, but from thence to Bayamo, through a district infested with revolutionary bands. It is over that road, a distance of fourteen leagues, that we have fears to go, and in which all our families and numerous friends most sensibly share. While they, like ourselves, have unbounded confidence in our innocence, they nor we cannot but apprehend the most terrible result of that march, and in this respect we beg to call your attention to the admirable circular of Captain General Caballero de Rodas, of the 1th inst., in which he declares the policy of the government to give every right of person and property, without distinction of class, but that the guilty shall be punished with the utmost rigor.

We do not in the least desire to place ourselves in antagonism to your Excellency, but call to your mind the fact of the law that none can be legally imprisoned on mere suspicion; and further, it is against the expressed conditions of the law that we are to be sent to a distant city for trial when we all belong in Santiago de Cuba, where we are accused. The guarantee of a fair and impartial trial is taken from us the moment we are sent from this city. We are charged with disloyalty here, and our proofs that the charges are false and that our accuser has perjured himself are here, and according to law and also in compliance with the terms of General de Rodas' circular we ought to be tried here. It is a most terrible resort in that you have ordered us to Bayamo, for the reasons that we have stated and many others equally as plain to yourself. We supplicate that you revoke this order; if, not, that you will either order that we shall go no farther than Manzanillo, or that our escort from thence to Bayamo shall be numerous and commanded by some officer in whom you and we also have perfect confidence. We will mention the names of Colonels Julian Amado Salazar, Jose Rodriguez Guiso and Lorenzo Cremata. In conclusion, our fear is not that we shall be convicted, if tried, but that owing to the turbulent condition of the territory through which we have to pass something will occur on the road which will give the escort an excuse to take our lives; and we ask this that you take every precaution to insure our safe transit from Manzanillo to Bayamo.

The Governor replied that he could not revoke his order for their removal, but would grant their second request by detaching Lieutenant Colonel Julian Amado Salazar to command the escort which would be placed over them from Manzanillo to Bayamo. This reassured both the prisoners and their friends. They arrived safely at Manzanillo and thence to Bayamo. Colonel Salazar and eight soldiers constituted the escort.

Their fears were over as soon as they appeared in sight of Bayamo. They were placed in close confinement on arrival there until the 2d inst., when they were apprised by Valmaseda that he had determined to send them to Jiguaní for trial, and with them Don Manuel Fernandez, Don E. Alvarez, Don José Benitez and Dr. Perez. Seven Cuban gentlemen of Bayamo determined to accompany them to Jiguaní, when all learned that Colonel Palacios, the

instigator of the accusation against the citizens of Santiago de Cuba, was to command the escort.

They left on the morning of the 3d inst., and at three P. M. the escort of about fifty men fell upon them, shot them all—both prisoners and friends—mangling their bodies with their bayonets, after ridding their pockets of \$1,500 in money and jewelry. There were twenty in all. The eight from Santiago de Cuba were among the most prominent citizens of that city. There were four wealthy men, as prisoners, from Bayamo, and one servant, and the seven gentlemen who volunteered to accompany them. News of the assassination reached Santiago on the 7th. The letter containing this information was written on the same day. A copy of the above memorial was obtained from the United State Consulate, enclosed with the letter and sent by our Consul in his mail to this city, which he mailed on the 8th inst., per the Pajaro del Occano.

The report made by Colonel Palacios was that his prisoners revolted on the road, attempted to escape, and, to save himself and men, as well as to prevent the escape of his prisoners, he had to shoot them. It is the repetition of an old Spanish custom in Cuba of ridding the island government of obnoxious persons. It satisfied Valmaceda, and all things connected with it show that it was premeditated, even before the arrest of the unfortunate Cubans at Santiago de Cuba.