

CUBA THE ISLE OF BLOOD

THE story of Cuba is a tragedy, a tragedy so black that the pages of history, not excepting those upon which is written the diabolical doings of the Spanish Inquisition, contain no counterpart. It is a narrative which had its beginning in the discovery of America; it was rooted in Spanish tyranny, transplanted into centuries of treachery and oppression, reared in intestine strife, and matured in this revolting war and its attendant horrors, which have wrested from Cuba the proud title, "Pearl of the Antilles," and earned for her the name of "Isle of Blood."

The revolution was organized by Jose Marti, a Cuban exile in this country and a man of genius and courage. He organized here what is called the Cuban Revolutionary Party, an association of clubs of Cuban political exiles, for the purpose of raising money to free their country.



Poor as were the majority of the few Cubans who lived in the United States before the beginning of the revolution, they listened to the eloquent appeals of Marti and gave him all they had on earth to liberate Cuba from Spain. Marti was appointed delegate of the party, and his faithful friend, Benjamin J. Guerra, was made treasurer. There was not much money then in the pockets of the afterward famous Junta and their funds were soon exhausted by an unsuccessful attempt to start an expedition from the South. But Marti had obtained the co-operation of Gen. Maximo Gomez and Gen. Antonio Maceo, two veterans of the last war. He knew that the discontent against Spain was deep throughout the island. He had important connections with conspirators in all the provinces. He gave without hesitation the orders for the uprising and went to Santo Domingo to join Gen. Gomez and take with him, the field.

At that grave and decisive moment the total funds of the patriots amounted to not more than \$70,000. It is wonderful that with a sum, comparatively speaking, so paltry for so great a purpose, a war should have been raised which cost Spain up to February, 1898, besides the sacrifice of so many of her soldiers, \$250,000,000 and caused in the United States a net loss in trade and business of \$300,000,000.

On May 19, 1895, Marti was killed in the engagement at Dos Rios, but his work had already been done. He had landed on April 11 with Gen. Gomez at Sabana Mar, on the southern coast of Cuba, after issuing at Monte Cristi a revolutionary manifesto, and had had time before his death to evince the representatives of all the Cuban provinces to a general assembly to elect a provisional government and frame a constitution. If this was not done until later, in September of the same year, at the town of Jimaguayu, it was not the less true that from the first days of the revolution the desire of Marti, as of all the patriots, was to organize a republic with popular institutions.

Two months before Marti's death Gen. Antonio Maceo had landed at Duaba, near Baracoa, Santiago de Cuba province. With a handful of men and a few rifles and cartridges, a small open boat brought him to Cuba from Jamaica. But his name and his presence were enough to make Spain tremble. He and his heroic brother, Jose Maceo, were surrounded by superior Spanish forces on the day of their landing. They broke through the Spanish lines and made their way into the country. In a few days, as soon as the news spread of their arrival, the province of Santiago de Cuba rose in arms and Antonio Maceo had around him more than 10,000 Cuban soldiers.

The revolution was saved. The few patriots who took up arms on Feb. 24 at Baire and Manzanillo had courageously resisted under Gen. Bartolome Maso, now Cuba's president, the attacks of the columns of the Spanish Gen. Lachambre, as



DEAD WAGON ON ITS ROUNDS.

well as the proposals of peace from the captain general of the island, Don Emilio Calleja. The envoys of the captain general told Maso that the revolution was a failure. The provinces of Pinar del Rio and Havana were entirely quiet. A few unimportant bands in Matanzas and Santa Clara had been dispersed or had surrendered. Puerto Principe was unanimously in favor of peace. But Maso, knowing well how to receive such reports, refused to yield. He had confidence in the landing of Maceo, Marti and Gomez. He knew the great moral effect that the presence of those leaders in the field was going to have on the Cuban people; and Spain knew it also. The news that Maceo was in Cuba reached Madrid shortly after the overthrow of the Sagasta cabinet.

Canovas, then in power, resolved to fight the revolution with the first of the Spanish generals and with all the resources of the nation. Gen. Calleja was recalled and Gen. Martinez Campos was sent to Cuba with 25,000 soldiers.

Martinez Campos landed in Guantánamo, Santiago de Cuba, on April 16, 1895. His first impression was pessimistic and his long chain of defeats inflicted upon his command until December of the same year proved how right he was in believing from the first day of his arrival that this was to be more important than the previous one of 1895. He wasted a great deal of time in useless trips by sea to Havana and again to the East. Maceo was preparing in the meantime his men and Gomez was formulating the plan of the great invasion of the West in order to carry the revolution to all the provinces and establish in each one a regular body of the Cuban army.

July 13, 1895, is the memorable date of the battle of Peralejo. The war had been until then confined almost to the province of Santiago de Cuba, with some small bands of patriots roaming through Puerto Principe and keeping up only an unimportant guerrilla warfare. But Maceo had already obtained some notable triumphs, and Martinez Campos decided to carry reinforcements to the Spanish towns in the interior which were in great danger of attack by the insurgents. While Martinez Campos was on the way to Bayamo, Maceo offered him battle near Peralejo.

The engagement was a pitched battle, and the Cubans, not numbering 6,000, carried the day. Gen. Stauleides fell dead near Gen. Martinez Campos. The Spaniards lost all their ammunition and their horses. Completely routed, a body of them, availing themselves of the darkness of the evening, fled to Bayamo, carrying Martinez Campos on a stretcher borne by four soldiers. He was exhausted by fatigue and filled with despair. More than 300 Spanish soldiers were left dead on the field. With the splendid booty secured by him, Maceo completed the arming of his patriots.

From April to October Gomez successfully carried the war through Puerto Principe province and laid his plans for the invasion of the west. On Oct. 22 Maceo, having received orders from Gomez, who was appointed commander-in-chief of the army, in September, by the assembly



A SCENE AMONG THE STARVING RECONCENTRADOS.

of representatives, started for the east with 2,000 of his men. On Oct. 30 Gomez invaded Las Villas. Maceo joined him on Nov. 29 near a place called Los Guaynos. From there they began their triumphant march. On Dec. 3 the Spanish Col. Segura was defeated by the insurgents at Iguala and had to leave his dead on the field, together with a great supply of arms and ammunition. On Dec. 15 the Spanish battalions of Canarias and Trevino were routed by Maceo at Mal Tiempo, after the most gallant charge with machetes of the Cuban cavalry, led by Maceo himself, that has ever been seen in the Cuban wars. On Dec. 21 the victory of El Desquite cleared the way for the invaders to the province of Matanzas. Martinez Campos then made a desperate effort to check the two Cuban leaders. Until that moment he had been receding before the invaders with his columns, hoping that they would stop. But he saw that each step of the patriots to the west was a decisive triumph for their cause. The enthusiasm of the revolution was growing day by day throughout the country. The Cuban ranks were filled by volunteers from all the cities and towns by which Gomez and Maceo passed. Martinez Campos rallied his almost dispersed men and presented battle at El Coliseo on Dec. 23.

The action was sharp and decisive. Martinez Campos behaved bravely, leading one of his wings in a charge against Gomez, but Maceo, falling on the Spanish, won the day for Cuba and compelled Martinez Campos to retire. The captain general hurriedly entered Havana, making preparations to defend the city, and he confessed his defeat to the astonished Spanish volunteers and residents of the capital.

Spain Sends Weyler. On the night of Dec. 27 the captain general made that awful. A few days later the rabid Spaniards of the city compelled him to tender his resignation to Madrid. They demanded from Canovas a captain general framed in the old iron cast of the Spanish conquerors, not to fight battles and risk his life on the field, but to exterminate the native population. In their belief, women, children, every one born in Cuba, should be held responsible for the situation. They did not like a soldier with a gallant career and personal courage. They wanted an executioner. Canovas satisfied them and appointed Don

Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau to succeed Martinez Campos.

The question may be asked why the patriots, after so many victories, did not invest the city of Havana and end there with the Spanish dominion. The answer is very clear. After the battle of Coliseo Gen. Gomez reviewed his troops and found that each soldier had only three cartridges. The Cubans in the United States were making vain efforts to send a big expedition to the patriots. But if the Spanish army was defeated in the fields of Cuba, Spanish diplomacy was triumphant at Washington. At Guira de Melena on Jan. 4, 1896, the patriots had to fight with their machetes to enter the province of Havana. For such a state of affairs Gen. Gomez considered his best plan to be to organize armies in all the provinces invaded, so far as his resources permitted him to do, and try to raise the war in Pinar



CUBA'S GEOGRAPHICAL RELATION TO THE UNITED STATES.

del Rio province. At Garro Jan. 8 the patriots routed a Spanish column and entered Pinar del Rio. Gen. Gomez then withdrew to the east while Maceo proceeded to the west. On Jan. 17 he obtained another victory at the very gates of Pinar del Rio city and on Jan. 22 he took the town of Banes at the western extremity of the island, three months after his departure from Baragua in Santiago de Cuba. On Feb. 12 Maceo returned to Havana province. Gen. Weyler publicly declared Pinar del Rio pacified, and the gallant Cuban leader returned to that province on March 15.

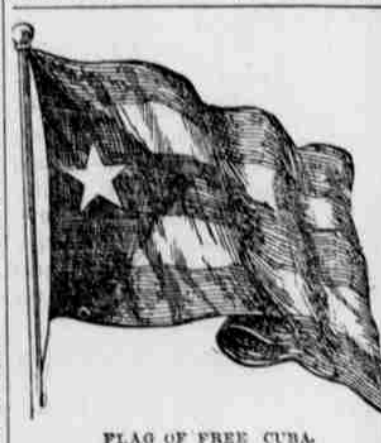
Before this Weyler had already shown his sanguinary spirit and plans of murder. Prisoners of war and innocent persons unjustly charged with aiding the rebellion were shot every day in Havana,



WATCHING HER DYING BABE.

and the most summary court martial preceded the executions as a mere formality. In other cases the victims were murdered in cold blood in their dungeons or thrown alive into the sea during the night at the entrance to the harbor to feed the sharks. The horrors of the Council of Blood under Alva took pale when compared to the crimes of Weyler. In the country his troops had orders to kill every non-combatant without regard to age. In the cities he appointed as inspectors of police the most infamous murderers and thieves from the Spanish penal colonies in Africa. In a short time more than 100,000 persons emigrated from Cuba panic-stricken.

But Weyler was not satisfied. He intended to destroy the country and to exterminate the natives. Seeing that the executions in the forts were too slow a method and that the destruction wrought by his columns was not enough to ruin the island, he conceived one of the most monstrous crimes ever committed against humanity. On Feb. 16, 1896, he issued his two famous decrees of concentration. By them every human being in the country districts was compelled to leave his home, after it had been destroyed by the Span-



FLAG OF FREE CUBA.

ish columns, and go to one of the fortified towns under the vigilance of the Spanish soldier. With the homes of the reconcentrados their cultivated lands were to be devastated and around the towns where they had to live not a piece of bread was to be given to them. In this manner, under pretext of a military operation, half a million people, most of them

women and children, were condemned to die from hunger.

Wholesale Slaughter. From the date of those decrees until November, 1896, 300,000 people were murdered in Cuba. Since November, as a result of Weyler's sanguinary orders, the number has been increased to 400,000. What monster in history ever did so much against humanity and civilization? Nero, Caligula, Tamerlane, Torquemada, Alva, when compared with Weyler, appear mild and humane. A peltroon, besides being an assassin, he never offered battle to the Cubans or took the field to fight. In his time Spain sent 200,000 soldiers to Cuba. He kept them inactive guarding the trocha from Mariel to Manana in Pinar del Rio province or from Juere to Moron in Puerto Principe. At other times from his palace in Havana, following on a map the imaginary positions of his enemies, he ordered his columns to make combined movements that always resulted in defeat.

One instance of the stupidity and cowardice of Weyler occurred on May 1, 1896. He ordered one of his favorite combinations of columns against Maceo at a place called Canarjeara in the province of Pinar del Rio. The result was that the forces of the Spanish Colonels Inclan and Gelabert were shattered by the Cuban leader, and the havoc made in the Spanish lines was so great that the Spanish soldiers, panic-stricken, threw themselves into the sea to escape the Cuban machete. Weyler, as in all other cases, accused his subordinates of not having obeyed his orders exactly.

On Dec. 7, 1896, Maceo, after having crossed Weyler's famous trocha and entered Havana province, was assassinated in an ambush near Punta Brava. The revolution lost in him a great patriot and a heroic soldier. But Weyler soon understood that the murder of Maceo was not the death of Cuba's cause. In March, 1896, Gen. Calixto Garcia landed in Santiago de Cuba. He soon replaced Maceo as a dashing fighter and a brilliant commander. At the same time Gomez in Santa Clara had won the important battle of Saratoga and controlled the whole province. The battle of Juan Criollo in February, 1897, was another of Gomez's important victories, and in Santiago de Cuba the latter part of the year was made conspicuous by the triumph of Gen. Garcia at Victoria de las Tunas.

Weyler was recalled in November, when, after the death of Canovas and the fall of the short-lived Azcarra cabinet, Senor Sagasta was selected as prime minister by the queen regent. It is a well-known fact that Weyler's recall was imposed upon Spain by this country. Gen. Don Ramon Blanco, who was to change the sanguinary methods of warfare of his predecessor, entered Havana Nov. 29, 1897. Spain granted to Cuba an autonomist system, which has been declared a mockery by all impartial judges. The Cubans rejected it, and the new



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