

UNDER THREE FLAGS IN CUBA

ABRIDGED AND ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL
PERSONAL ACCOUNT OF THE CUBAN INSURRECTION
AND THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

BY
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Author's Note

From his birth in 1874 until he answered the Reaper's call in 1932, George Clarke Musgrave's time in this world carried him through the great challenges and changes of the reigns of Victoria, Edward VII and George V. His life, his travels, his work and his writings, though, were always more closely aligned with the reformers, the heroes, the visionaries and the Empire builders of the 19th century, than with the dour and stifling traditionalists of the 20th. But, dear reader, it is you who must decide whether the soubriquet of "Victorian Adventurer" that he has acquired is appropriate.

In any event, it is the sad reality that he is no longer here to recount his life and times to you in person. That task has slipped several branches down the family tree to myself and it is with some trepidation, and a fervent desire to be faithful to his memory, that I have dedicated myself to channelling for you the stories of my great-uncle, the fascinating, multi-faceted, complex character, George Clarke Musgrave: author, war correspondent, journalist, soldier, hero and family man.

ADRIAN MUSGRAVE

Foreword

“Under Two Flags in Cuba” was to have been published in the spring of 1898; but the manuscript, together with three hundred photographs illustrative of Weyler's regime in Cuba, and some historical letters that had passed between the Captain-General and Premier Canovas, were seized in Havana with my effects when I was deported to Spain at the beginning of the war. Thus the circulation of that work was limited to General Blanco and those of his officers who understood English.

After witnessing the triumph of the American army at Santiago, I prepared the present work, “Under Three Flags in Cuba,” during a prolonged attack of fever contracted in the campaign. But again fate, acting now through the pistol of an incensed Spanish officer, delayed publication. During my convalescence from the wound, a number of books on Cuba were issued from the pens of gifted writers. In each work the primary cause of the war is omitted, and frequent criticism of the Cubans, based entirely on misconception, has tended to raise doubts of the justification of American intervention in the Island.

Landing in Cuba, a warm sympathiser with Spain, to write upon her military failure for a British service publication, and enjoying at various times exceptional opportunity to study the question from both a Cuban and Spanish standpoint, my heart went out to Cuba in her struggle. While I held a commission in the Cuban army, stories of my fighting prowess that appeared in various Spanish papers were absolutely false. When travelling across Cuba, I was at times involved in skirmishes, and participated in larger fights when visiting other commands, but I was an observer as much as a warrior. I have endeavoured to write the simple story without bias. Thrice a prisoner in the hands of the Spaniards, they treated me with a surprising consideration; and now that Right has triumphed and Wrong is overthrown, we can feel sympathy with the humiliated nation that, blinded by traditional pride and patriotism, cloaked and defended the policy of a corrupt faction, to its own undoing. But by that policy thousands of innocent women and children have been starved to death, and a bloody era of history has been achieved.

On the ashes of a glorious country the United States stands as foster-parent to a new nation. Russian aggression liberated Bulgaria; American aggression, if you will, freed Cuba. But under the present regime, the Cubans have fears of the curtailment of the freedom they have given their all to achieve. As a people, they are not ungrateful; they do not ask for the cisalpine independence guaranteed at Campo Formio. But they have seen motives of patriot husbands and brothers impugned by descendants of Washington's followers, they have been condemned for the effect of environment from which they have been lifted. Thus they fear that the hierarchy of General Brooke is permanent, and joy at their release from Spain's mailed hand is marred by the dread of a rule by American bayonets.

Thus I venture to hope that a plain story of the sufferings and sacrifices of the Cubans for their freedom may be of interest. A knowledge of their struggles will create an appreciation of their aspirations, and I would that an abler pen than mine had pictured them.

GEORGE CLARKE MUSGRAVE

October 1st 1899

Landing in Cuba

When we first sighted Cuba, the sun was setting in tropical suddenness, like a globe of fire extinguished in the sea. The declining rays, scintillating in multi-coloured beams across the water, revealed a low-lying coast, fringed with palms and backed by distant hills. Bathed in crimson light, the land appeared a paradise, and it seemed impossible that in such magnificent setting a tragedy of two nations was being enacted, and a whole people were writhing in the throes of despair, oppression, and bloody death.

In speedy transformation, as the stage limelight is shut off to turn the day scene to night, a black veil seemed drawn across the heavens, and darkness supervened. A faint sprinkling of stars shone feebly down, and then gradually the face of the heavens became bespangled with constellations, and the luminous beauty of a clear night in the tropics was revealed. On the distant coast lights flickered, while blazing above the horizon rose the Southern Cross, typical of the sacred emblem to which the struggling Cubans had so long appealed.

Suddenly a long beam of light quivered across the sky and swept to right and left along the coast, and we were awakened with a shock to the dangers of our enterprise. A Spanish warship was watching for filibusters, and we well knew the summary justice meted out by Spain to those taken in the act. We had left the Florida Keys in the tight little schooner, but not as a regular expedition. Ostensibly on a fishing-trip, we were carrying a few cases, stores, and ammunition to Pinar del Rio, where I expected to effect a landing. We did not forget the "Virginus" massacre nor the treatment of the "Competitor" crew. There was no distinction in those precedents; sailor and Cuban, armed or unarmed, were treated alike, and our faces blanched at the thought of capture. We sprang to the tell-tale boxes, ready to hurl them overboard; but the cruiser held to her course, the blinding glare still searching but never resting on our craft, and as the distance widened between us we breathed more freely.

It was eight bells when we drew in near shore and prepared to land just west of the Bahia Honda Point. Jose, the practico, or guide, was a coal-black Negro born in slavery in Cuba, but he had lived years in Jamaica, and proudly asserted he was an Englishman. As he spoke both languages fairly, and knew western Cuba like a book, I gladly reciprocated his assurances of friendship and brotherhood, and a true friend did he ultimately prove. He had piloted the ship to a nicety, and after the cases had been handed over to the gig, we took our seats and rowed silently ashore.

A flash and loud boom to westward forced us to ply our oars rapidly, and at first we thought the ship was discovered. Probably it was the night gun from the warship in the Bay, for nothing transpired to confirm our fears. We ran into a sandbank and, braving sharks, were forced to drop over and haul the boat across; but finally, wet and tired, we had everything on shore. The boat returned to the ship, and Jose and I struck out for the interior, to find a Cuban camp and warn the guardia costa of our advent.

I was in no enviable frame of mind when we plunged into the bush. This was a venture of my own choosing; but I had heard stories of these Cuban insurgents, "Negro and half-bred cutthroats, a scum gathered for loot, murder, and robbery, under the guise of patriotism," said my Spanish friends, and even allowing for their prejudice, I was extremely apprehensive. "Would they steal my effects? How would they treat me? Probably my good clothes would excite cupidity, and they would hang me as a spy to legalise the murder. It had been done in Central America, and why not here?" Such were the forebodings that flashed before me that night, for of the Cuban question I was absolutely ignorant. Far from civilization, in darkest Africa, I had not been aware of a Cuban revolution until reaching the Canary Islands. Here I saw weedy conscripts dragged from sunny valleys and driven to the transports for Cuba, their arms shipped on separate vessels to prevent mutiny. Weeping mothers told in awed whispers of their boys murdered by these ferocious insurgents, whom, in their misled innocence, they

believed to be fiends incarnate; and even the kindly old Commandant of Las Palmas told me such a history of the ungrateful colonists that my sympathies were awakened for Spain. When Canovas, in his leonine power, issued his fiat, "last peseta, last man," before he would grant reforms to the island, she had shipped an army of 200,000 men across the Atlantic. In proud assent the Spanish nation continued to expend blood and treasure, though the result was as water poured on the Sahara.

After describing the raising and equipment of the conscript hordes in Spain, I was asked simultaneously by the editors of a London daily and a review to outline the military situation and method of warfare in Cuba. Such a mission guaranteed interest and adventure, and finding that under no circumstances could I join the Spanish forces in the field, I was now en route for the insurgents. I had been warned previously that even if the rebels did not eat me - for the ignorant Spaniard even credits them with cannibalism - I must expect no quarter if captured by the Imperial troops, so enraged were they against the insurgents and those who cast in their lot with them.

Jose and I marched painfully up a rocky track in the darkness, stumbling at every step. From the row of forts around Bahia Honda rose the shrill "Alerta!" of successive sentries, a few campfires gleamed fitfully in the distance, and tolls of the cracked bell of the little chapel, merry laughter, and the strains of a hand-organ in the city were wafted over on the still night air. Around us all was silent as death. "Alto! Quien va?" came the sudden challenge. "Cuba!" responded Jose, with alacrity; and in a moment two dark figures sprang at him. My revolver was out in an instant, but they were only embracing my guide and vigorously patting him on the back, a mark of deepest affection among the Cubans. The two sentinels brought their horses from the field, and courteously insisted that I should mount, while one rode forward to apprise the camp of our arrival and send men to the beach for the stores.

I was loath to rob the soldier of his horse; but he insisted, marching ahead on foot, and cautioning us to keep absolute silence. I scrambled into the saddle, and we jogged along for perhaps a league, when we reached the Cuban outposts. Round the campfires were grouped picturesque-looking bandits, Negroes to a man. By the flickering light they did not look prepossessing, but they greeted me effusively, and gave me a palm leaf shelter to sleep under. Being worn out, I gladly crawled in, and keeping my revolver handy, was soon asleep.

A hand on my shoulder, a strange voice - the robbers, I thought. I sprang up only to be blinded by brilliant sunlight, to find a ragged "asistente" had brought a cup of delicious coffee, and stood grinning at my confusion. Jose came soon after, and said we must be moving, for we were too near the city for safety, and I found the outpost had waited an hour rather than wake me. The officer, a commandante or major, was a half-caste named Gonzales, and through the medium of Jose, he welcomed me to Cuba Libre, adding that General Rivera would be glad to see me. He was sorry he had no breakfast then to offer, but the Spaniards had been very bad there and nothing was left in the country. Later, however, we would reach a prefectura and perhaps find food. He insisted on my keeping my mount, and the owner thereof tramped along gaily, telling me he, his house, his horse, and his all, were at my service. These rebels were certainly interesting fellows, and apprehensions as to my reception soon vanished.

Crossing hills and skirting woods, we reached a wilder district and finally the insurgent camp. The colonel was a black of gigantic proportions, with one of the finest faces I have ever seen. His features were small and regular, of the Arab or Houssa rather than the Negro type. He was a veteran of the ten years' war, bore numerous wounds, and was one of the most trusted officers in the brigade of General Ducasse. His manly bearing was impressive, and he neither boasted of his prowess nor related horrible massacres by the Spaniards that could not be verified - two common failings in west Cuba.

I had been sitting in camp but a few minutes when I was addressed in perfect English, and met my first white rebel gentleman. Major Hernandez by name, a graduate of an American college and a law student. He explained that he was on a commission and had stayed in camp for the night.

Friendships ripen quickly under such circumstances, and we were soon exchanging confidences. In half an hour I had received some new ideas of the Cuban revolution. "Todo mambi negro," laughed my friend, "just here and in some other places, yes, but members of the best white families in Cuba are in the woods." And as I talked with that young patriot who had given up a good home and pleasant surroundings for a rough life of danger and privation, I began to realise there was something in the cause of Cuba Libre. I had been given to understand that no white colonists of repute, no true Cubans were engaged in the uprising, that it was simply an extensive brigandage, a western "Francatropa" or "Cincearotti." How soon I found it was the whole Cuban race writhing and struggling against a fifteenth century system!

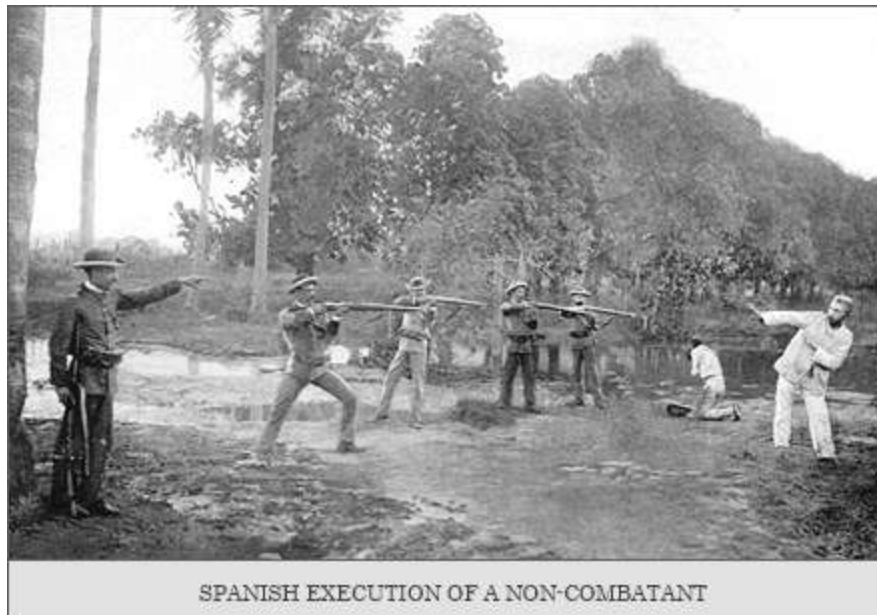
The winter campaign of '96 was just closing, and the insurgent army of the West was never in a worse condition. Antonio Maceo had been killed but a few days previously, and the province was flooded with guerillas, and soldiers flushed with this success. Rivera crossed the Mariel Trocha early in December, and was in command near Artemisa, toward which Hernandez was going. I was anxious to accompany him, but he persuaded me against it, pointing out the innumerable dangers and hardships of travelling poorly mounted through a district so strongly invested by the enemy. He advised me to go to a certain prefectura in the hills, where I could secure a guide and good horses, and join some force when things grew more settled. There were a few Americans in Pinar del Rio, he said, two correspondents, and some artillerymen. I met but one, some time later, a man named Jones, in the last stages of consumption; the correspondents, Scovel and Rea, had gone to visit Gomez. I reluctantly said farewell to Hernandez, and later reached the prefectura.

The prefect was a white man of considerable intelligence, a guajiro, or farmer. His house had been destroyed by Maceo's order, to prevent its conversion into a fort, and the Spaniards had looted his cattle; but with true Cuban philosophy he explained that boniatos (sweet potatoes) were easy to raise, and when Cuba was free all again would be well. His residence was now in the hills near La Isabella, a mere bohio of clay, thatched with palm. In the deep gorges below, the Guardia Civil, the local guerilla, and sometimes columns operated, but fearing ambushes, the hilly trails were usually given a wide berth by the Spanish regulars. To the west lay the fertile valley of La Palma, now simply a blackened desert right up to Pinar del Rio City. The valleys to the south were in even a worse condition; many residences had been destroyed by Maceo, and later Weyler with his columns had swept the country with fire and sword until it was a desert of ashes.

I had a sharp attack of fever in the prefect's house, and was exceedingly well treated. When, after several days' hospitality, I moved on, he was grossly insulted because I offered him money. Many days had passed uneventfully in the district. I rode around occasionally, but in the valley the columns were operating, and guerilla raids took place too close to us to be pleasant. I had a narrow escape one day, several shots being fired after me by a marauding party, and I soon witnessed many phases of the horrible warfare Spain was waging. No important insurgent force came in our district, only small rebel bands; and becoming impatient we finally marched across country toward the Trocha, a mule having been secured for Jose and my own sorry steed exchanged advantageously.

After crossing the hills to the once glorious valley to the south, Weyler's brutal measures were in evidence on every side. Following Maceo's death, he had redoubled his efforts to subdue Pinar del Rio, and each day we came across smouldering houses, rotting carcasses of cattle, wantonly slaughtered, and blackened stalks of burnt crops. For miles we

rode without meeting a living soul; but later, striking the woods again, we found Cuban families camped in the thickets, subsisting on roots, and living in constant terror of the guerilla. These cut-throats raided and looted at pleasure, driving into town the fugitives they captured, killing the men and frequently outraging women.



Raid followed raid, the pacificos, or non-combatants, being ruthlessly slaughtered if captured too far from the town for convenient transportation, or upon attempting to escape from the soldiery. Five miles from Mariel, not twenty feet from the camino Real (Royal highroad), the bodies of two women and four men, all killed by the local guerilla, lay for three weeks unburied, and probably the remains are there yet. In the hills just north of Candelaria I was shown the ruins of a field hospital, and the charred remains of sick men, butchered and burned therein. Later, in the main road near Artemisa, we found the body of an aged pacifico, his head split in twain with a machete. Sylvester Scovel, who had spent weeks in the province before I landed, personally investigated the cases of over two hundred non-combatants murdered by Weyler's orders, in Pinar del Rio. This was but a fraction of the atrocities, and from the bodies I actually saw, and the cases brought to my notice in a regular journey through this district, I have no hesitation in saying that I believe Scovel's investigations to be correct, regardless of the attempts of others to impugn his veracity in these reports.

Exaggerated stories of Spanish atrocities have flooded the American press, until responsible persons are inclined to doubt the authenticity of every case ' reported; but in those early weeks I saw evidences of sickening horrors that turned me from a strong sympathiser with Spain to a bitter hater of everything connected with her brutal rule in Cuba. True, I also heard and verified stories of oppression and cruelty by individual insurgents in Pinar del Rio, notably of one Bermudez, a blackguard given a command by Maceo when officers were scarce. He, a Cuban, instituted a reign of terror in his district, equalled only by Weyler's rule. But Bermudez was soon disgraced, and finally hanged by Gomez, while the butchers in Spanish uniform were but obeying Weyler's implicit orders by the perpetration of outrages.

A number of desperadoes had joined the insurrection for loot, and in the rich West, Gomez and Maceo found constant crimes and other lawless acts committed by their followers, that terrorised the pacific Cubans. False leaders arose, and by carrying on a war of rapine under the guise of patriotism, greatly damaged the Cuban cause. These men were dubbed plateados, or plated Cubans; and Gomez for many weeks warred only against them,

hanging some convicted of flagrant outrage. So severe were the measures instituted by the old leader, that men were executed for petty theft, and false patriots deserted in dozens.

Several miscreants in Pinar del Rio, under Burmudez, and Colonel Murgado, who had also obtained a regular commission, were simply brigands. When Maceo broke up the gang, most of them reached Havana, and re-enlisted in the Spanish guerilla, where they could loot at will without the risk of being hung. Maceo then put his personal friend, the brave young Ducasse, in command of the perturbed district, and he gradually won back the confidence of the distracted pacificos.

Another colonel, named Nunez, was deprived of command and reduced to asistente rank for executing five Spanish cavalrymen whom he declared were caught burning a house. Lieutenant Castillo and Prefect Gonzales were shot for looting. These severe examples had a salutary effect upon the insurgent army. Gomez claimed that a revolution that became a refuge for those who wished conveniently to follow criminal and disorderly lives would not be justified, even for the cause of liberty. With such in their ranks, the Cuban cry, "Viva nuestra bandera sin mancha" (Long live our unstained banner), would be of nil effect. The insurgent forces were composed of all classes and shades of society; once wealthy planters, farmers, farm labourers, and ignorant negroes from the cane fields formed the bulk of the Army of Deliverance, students from Havana College, clerks, cigar makers, and a tatterdemalion scum from the slums adding a considerable contingent from the cities. Diverse as were these elements of the revolution, they were but local factors in the universal struggle of mankind for emancipation from the dominant creed, "Might is Right."

As the revolution gathered wider support, trade was brought to a standstill, and the enraged Spaniards in Havana, who naturally suffered loss of spoil, demanded that Premier Canovas should despatch a man to Cuba who would stamp out the rebellion at all costs. Campos had dared to suggest that genuine reforms would alone restore peace, but to this they would not listen. The old cry, "No quarter," was raised, and to satisfy the frenzy General Weyler was appointed.

Valeriano Weyler was but General of Cataluna, but he had the reputation of being absolutely unscrupulous, and was thus the man for Cuba. When he arrived in Havana, the intransigents tendered him an effusive welcome, especially the volunteers. Raising his effeminate and neatly gloved hand as he harangued the populace, he announced that Spain's enemies would find his hand gloved with steel. He came to make a pitiless war upon them, and pledged himself to speedily restore peace to the island.

His first policy was to strengthen the Trochas, or fortified barricades, one built across the narrow portion of the island from Mariel to the south coast, the other across Puerto Principe from Jucaro to Moron. Thus he hoped to shut Maceo in Pinar del Rio, Gomez in the Central provinces, the forces under Jose Maceo in the extreme east, and deal with each in turn. The Cubans showed their contempt by cutting their way through the Trochas repeatedly, though the barriers certainly hindered easy and frequent communication.

All cities and towns of consequence, and the railroad tracks, were fortified. Reinforcements also poured over from Spain, thousands of wretched conscripts being torn from their homes and shipped to Cuba. They were equipped with Mauser rifles, the most effective extant, and abundant ammunition; but the absolute lack of commissary, their cotton uniform and canvas shoes with hemp soles, the ignorance of the officers, and lack of drill, made the vast army so hurriedly mobilised, useless for extensive operations. It was effective, however, for Weyler's purpose of devastation, and the disintegrated duty in the thousands of small wooden block-houses that surrounded the towns and guarded all the railways in the island, with the aid of barbed-wire barricades built from fort to fort. Weyler soon had 200,000 so-called regulars in Cuba; 25,000 guerillas were also raised, chiefly from Negroes and half-breed scum in the cities, and freed criminals with previous military experience from Spain.

The Spanish volunteer organization throughout the island was 60,000 strong. This gave a command of at least 285,000 men.

It has been easy for writers to criticise Weyler as a brutal plunderer, who cared for nothing but blood and corruption. Brute he was, corrupt and absolutely unscrupulous, but he was by no means the sensual monster represented. His orders were explicit; to crush out the rebellion at, any cost and regardless of human sacrifice, and he accomplished wonders. His policy was extermination, and he neither denied nor cloaked it. His administrative ability was stupendous. With inadequate means at his disposal, he cut up the island in fortified sections, scattered part of his vast army as "beaters in," while with the remainder he attempted to kill off the hedged-in coveys in succession. He filled his own pockets, and those of his officers; yet gave his vast army enough food to keep them alive, subservient, and in some semblance of health, when food itself was terribly scarce. He planned and effectively carried out his extermination, murdering hundreds of insurgents and their sympathisers in cold blood, and starving to death thousands of innocents, whose nature and dearest associations had made rebels at heart. But for the marked steadfastness of the Cubans, their resolution to accomplish or die, and the influence of some of their leaders, Weyler could have crushed the revolution by force. Eventually he would assuredly have crushed it by extermination if Spain's finances could have sustained him.

In October 1896 all plans of the campaign were formulated, and on the 21st the following order was issued from the Governor's Palace, Havana, and spread broadcast throughout the country:

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I, Don Valeriano Weyler Nicolau, Marquis of Teneriffe, Governor-General, Captain-General of this Island, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, hereby order and command:

- 1. That all the inhabitants of the country districts, or those who reside outside the lines of fortifications of the towns, shall within eight days enter such towns occupied by the troops. Any individual found beyond the lines at the expiration of this period shall be considered a rebel, and dealt with as such.*
- 2. The transport of food from the towns, and the carrying of food from place to place by sea or land, without a signed permit of the authorities, is positively forbidden. All who infringe this order will be tried as aiders and abettors of the rebellion.*
- 3. The owners of cattle must drive their herds to the towns, or their immediate vicinity, where guard is provided.*
- 4. The period of eight days will be reckoned in each district, from the day of publication of this proclamation in the chief town in that district. At its expiration all insurgents who present themselves to me will be placed under my orders as to residence. If they furnish me with news that can be used to advantage against the enemy, it will serve as a recommendation also the desertion to our lines with firearms, and more especially when insurgents present themselves in numbers.*

Valeriano Weyler. Havana, October 21st, 1896.

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This was the initiation of his policy. Article 1 stamped the bando as worse than Valmaseda's proclamation of '69. The latter stipulated that men only should be treated as rebels, i.e., shot at sight; and the United States loudly protested. In '96 Weyler brazenly applied the same order universally; but the Washington Administration allowed such enforcement within seventy-eight miles of America's coasts without protest until too late.

The execution of Weyler's order commenced in Pinar del Rio. Immense columns of troops poured into the province, and operated in sections, driving the people from their homes, and looting and burning the houses of high and lowly. When the eight days of grace expired, all excesses were tolerated. Stock was seized, crops were torn up and destroyed,

cattle that could not be eaten or conveniently driven off were wantonly slaughtered; even the long grass was burned to make the country uninhabitable for the rebels.

Weyler had drawn lines which prevented the easy mobilisation of the scattered insurgent commands. Gomez had returned to Santa Clara, cartridges were scarce, and against so large an army Maceo and his small force could now only harass the enemy, and were powerless to prevent the great devastation. On the approach of the soldiers, many of the people fled in terror to the woods. Here the guerillas distinguished themselves by routing out the fugitives, hunting them like wild beasts with dogs (this I have personally witnessed), and frequently forcing into their camps such comely women as they could capture. If towns were handy, the terrified pacificos were bundled in unceremoniously; if not, the machete terribly and effectively cleared the country, though better fate a thousand times to be butchered in cold blood, and devoured by vultures and wild dogs, than to be slowly starved to death in the reconcentration quarter of the towns, and the younger women forced into degradation.

When Weyler's fiat was rigidly enforced near the Mariel Trocha, consternation fell on the inhabitants of the other sections of the West. In anticipation of a similar visitation, the panic-stricken people hurriedly made their decision. The men foresaw compulsory service with the Spaniards in the cities, and though until then they had no thought of joining the rebels, it was now the only alternative. The women, children, and old men, carrying their portable possessions, wended their way to the nearest township before the soldiers arrived to loot. The men gathered their livestock, took what food they could, and marched off to the hills to join their insurgent brothers. The order had the same effect in Havana, Matanzas, and Santa Clara provinces. Within three months it had driven the male strength of the island and an abundance of food to the insurgent ranks.

By Christmas of '96 Pinar del Rio was burned up completely, Havana Province was undergoing the same drastic treatment, and Captain-General Weyler cabled to Madrid that the West was thoroughly pacified. The rebels had only withdrawn to the mountains; and when the Spaniards evacuated one district, the Cubans moved in, leaving their base of supplies in the hills. Dumped by thousands in small towns, with the surrounding country a waste, the herded reconcentrados abjectly starved from the first. Weyler had destroyed their homes and crops, knowing full well the inevitable result.

"This is war," was his naive reply to either question or remonstrance on the subject.

Through the Spanish Lines

February of '97 was not an eventful month in western Cuba, and after witnessing several unimportant skirmishes in which the Cubans invariably retreated doggedly, being very short of ammunition and overwhelmed by numbers, I decided to try to reach Gomez in Santa Clara, where Weyler had mobilised his forces for an attempted pacification of that province. I hoped to cross the western Trocha, not a very formidable obstacle, but at that time strongly invested. An arrangement for me to pass it through the swamp at Majana failed, and realising that to go eastward I should also have to cross the strongly fortified railroad passing from Batabano to Havana, I determined rather to secretly enter the Spanish lines.

When camped near Cayajabos, Jose was wounded in the shoulder, and stayed behind for several days in a field hospital there. The surgeon in charge was a young Havana medical student, killed a few weeks later by the guerillas. With him Senora Valdez, a Cuban lady of repute, was sharing all the hardships of life in the manigua to be near her son, then in Havana Province. Entirely without drugs, and in imminent risk of capture, the hospital was kept up: and many were the inventions prompted by necessity, as remedies for the sick. Josh's arm was treated antiseptically with plain cigar ash, and he rejoined me nearly well.

Pending arrangements to enter some town on the Western Railroad, we were riding along the highway to Candelaria, keeping a sharp watch for the enemy, when we were suddenly halted from a side road, and discovered a detachment of guardia civil, resting by the way. Their horses were tethered near, and, but for stories of their never-failing machetes, I should not have attempted to escape. We turned and urged our jaded horses back; three of them sent a volley after us, the others mounted and galloped in pursuit. The horses of these men, the elite corps of Spain, are the best animals in the island, and even with our start the race was unequal. Their hoofs thundered on the camino close behind us, the thick bush and prickly wild pine on either side prevented our following the favourite ruse of plunging headlong into the thick vegetation and creeping to a place of shelter. As I spurred my gallant little beast forward, I could feel his sides heaving, and knew he was on his last legs. Shots whistled by: so, dragging out my revolver, I replied, but without effect. Then a bullet crashed through my bridle arm: I reeled in the saddle, and the end seemed near, when loud yells and vivas greeted us. Some of Ducasse's men were camped in the chaparral, and taking in the situation at a glance, they seized their rifles and sent a few shots after the now retreating guards.

One young officer I met in this camp was Lieut. William Molina, a young American Cuban from Florida, who had recently arrived on an expedition. He was subsequently captured, and when I next saw him he was proudly facing the firing squad, as he died for Cuba Libre.

General Rius Rivera was then expected in this district; but two days before he arrived, I squirmed through the Spanish lines at sunrise, and boarded a slow freight-train with the connivance of the Cuban engineer. Concealed in a car, I passed into the town of San Cristobal. A few weeks later came the disastrous battle of March 27th at Rio Hondo, between the sadly depleted forces of Rivera and a large column under General Hernandez de Velasco. Hemmed in by the Spaniards, and almost without ammunition, the Cubans were routed. General Rivera and Colonel Baccallo were both captured, seriously wounded, the latter while bravely trying to save his leader. Contrary to usual custom, they were taken alive and sent to Havana. General Weyler upbraided the humane Velasco for not killing these prisoners on the field, to save the complications which ensued. Velasco in his previous campaign in Sagua la Grande, and in every subsequent action, proved himself a brave officer and a gentleman. His duty to Spain made him war on her enemies, but he warred nobly and openly, ever remembering that the people had grievances that should be remedied. With a man of his

calibre as Captain-General, the island of Cuba might have retained the sobriquet "Ever faithful" to this day.

I found that I could move through the small cities of western Cuba with a greater degree of freedom than I had anticipated. Spies dogged one's footsteps on every side, and the advent of a stranger aroused the suspicion of the petty police inspectors, shabby, down at the heel men, of sneaking appearance; but their attention amounted to little. To photograph a fort meant certain imprisonment; but if I wished to take a portion of the Trocha, or any military position, two words to the commandante sufficed. The Spanish heart is susceptible to flattery. One had but to request the pleasure of photographing the brave officer and his men; out they would all tumble. Line them as you pleased. You not only took the coveted position in face of the smiling sleuth, but you had life in the picture, and had won the friendship of the military. Through my camera alone, I obtained introduction to most of the garrisons, and was a frequent guest at various Casinos Espanoles, the exclusive Spanish clubs that exist in most towns. Courteous, hospitable, and good fellows in their way, were most of the officers, and ready to heap attentions on the stranger; but beneath the polished veneer they were mostly brutes at heart, though I remember many exceptions - fine young subalterns who had come to Cuba as patriots to fight for Spain, and were horrified with the policy they were forced to uphold. The state of the reconcentrados was pitiful in the extreme. In every town from one to six thousand were herded indiscriminately. They built crazy bohios, or huts of stakes and palm-leaf on any waste ground available: frequently several families crowded into one shelter. Stone walls and barbed fences compassed the town completely, and forts were intersected at intervals, from which sentries watched to see that no one attempted to pass the barrier. Within this pen the town existed in isolation, save for the advent of the few heavily guarded trains that passed between Havana and Pinar del Rio. The condition of these people was hopeless from the first, and in March of '97 the unavoidable horrors of India's famine were being enforced upon a civilised people, with worse effect, and without effort to alleviate the suffering.

The pen fails to describe the scenes in any one of these reconcentration settlements; some thousands of women and children, and a few old men, hedged in by barbed wire, beyond which none may pass on pain of death. Huddled on the bare ground, or at the best with a heap of rags for a bed, the delicate wives and children of once wealthy farmers and planters were herded with Negroes who once were slaves on their now ruined estates.

There was an absolute silence in the camps - a silence bred of cruel despair, and broken occasionally by the pitiful wails of children, the frenzied shrieks of crazed victims, raving in delirium, or the heartbroken sobs of grief-stricken groups mourning over the body of some dear one whom kind death had released from suffering. Skin-clothed skeletons crouched helpless on the bare ground; babies, hideous mockeries of childhood, lay dying on the breast from which all sustenance had dried, their tiny bodies covered with the loathsome skin eruption that attacked all alike. Girls, still retaining traces of beauty, moaning with the pangs of hunger and without the clothing demanded by decency, begged piteously for relief from the passing stranger, or struggled and fought around the swill tubs for refuse that pigs would have rejected. They had the alternative of another fate; for an abominable traffic was carried on openly in mere children, who were taken, some through misrepresentation, others accepting the fate as inevitable, into houses of ill fame in the large cities, many passing on from Havana to Mexico and points in South America. Abductions by Spanish officers were not unknown, while in Artemisa, but a few days before my arrival, several orphan girls aged from thirteen to fifteen were sold by public auction to the highest bidders.

All these settlements were in a terrible sanitary condition. Absolutely no hygienic measures were enforced by the authorities, the starving people lived in a horrible state of defilement, and even the bodies were frequently left in the sun for days before the dead-cart

arrived on its rounds to dump the corpses in a common grave. Under such conditions disease naturally appeared, yellow fever and smallpox adding to the frightful horrors of starvation. If Epaminondas today would fail to recognise Thebes, and Cicero have little sympathy with modern Rome, we can imagine the feelings of Columbus, could he have viewed the ruins of his glorious discovery.

By May, Weyler had extended his "pacification" to the great Trocha. The provinces of Pinar del Rio, Havana, Matanzas, Santa Clara, and a portion of Puerto Principe were completely devastated, and considerably over half a million people rendered homeless and starving.

As I went by rail through these districts, stepping off at various places en route for Santa Clara, where I was again to join the insurgents, the shocking reality of the situation was revealed. The feeling of powerlessness in face of such human suffering which could not be alleviated, made one's heart ache, and I shuddered for the future. But as a ray of hope to gladden the souls of the perishing innocents, came the stories of growing sympathy in the United States. It dawned on the stricken people that the great country from which they had drawn their ideals of liberty might now prove their saviour. In the darkest hour of their distress they looked to America. Dr. Shaw, realizing the imperative necessity of action if these people were to be saved, opened his columns in setting forth their case. Mr. Bonsai, having personally visited the scenes of horror, returned to use his gifted pen in their behalf. The whole Country was aroused.

The Administration was just changing, but after the avowals upon the Cuban question made by the Republican platform, some expected the President, upon assuming office, to take instant measures to combat the stupendous evil that was only threatening when his party pledges were made toward Cuba. After the inauguration, however, the tariff question had to be settled first. Cuba was shelved, and the people starved on, close to the land of plenty. We may exclaim that we are not our brother's keeper, but had the people of the United States realised one half of the horrors of starvation in Cuba, I am assured that they would have enforced their ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity at any cost in the unhappy island. During the official procrastination at Washington the Cuban rural population was being exterminated, and the last residue disappeared as the late peace negotiations were being enacted. As I stood amid the appalling scenes of suffering, I must admit there seemed no excuse for the doubts of Cuba's need that existed in the United States. It was hard to understand why the Administration could not ignore both the clamouring jingoes and the selfish financiers, and after investigating the conditions, make a dignified demand of Spain to war only against the rebels and cease the extermination of the innocent. It was not a question of favouring either Cuban or Spaniard, but of the relief of starving women and children, whose condition was a disgrace to the boasted civilization of the era. An appeal to England, and possibly other powers, to co-operate in mitigating the horrors of Cuba, might have achieved more at the outset than the subsequent armed intervention.

Certain elements of the American people became convulsed over the condition of the Cretans, whom St. Paul characterised doubtfully. The half civilised Christians of Crete were oppressed by semi civilised Mohammedans. The powers of Europe stood by to see that they had a semblance of justice. Press and pulpit in the United States raved at the impotence of those powers, but within seventy-eight miles of America's coasts half a million Christian Cubans were being starved through the policy of Christian and most Catholic Spain. Truly, it is easier to see the mote in a brother's eye than the beam in our own.

I arrived in Santa Clara soon after Weyler had started to pacify that province. By columns of smoke by day and of fire by night, the constant coming and going of soldiers, the desultory firing, and the numbers of pinioned prisoners dragged in, I could tell that pacification, so called, was in progress, with its incumbent horrors. I crossed the Spanish

lines safely by night under the nose of the forts at Isabella de Sagua, and swimming the Sagua River, struck out southeast through one of the worst districts in Cuba.

Until a few weeks previous, the district east of the fortified railroad running from Sagua to Cienfuegos had been practically free Cuba, the people living on their farms as in times of peace. Now all was changed, and the Imperial columns could be traced by the trail of smouldering homesteads, rotting carcasses of cattle, and frequently the bodies of pacificos shot down when trying to escape.

In this district the famous Olayita massacre had taken place some months before. Banderas had camped on the Olayita sugar-estate, and was driven out by two Spanish columns. The Spaniards then accused the planter, a Frenchman, Monsieur Duarte, of assisting the rebels, and by order of Colonel Arc he was cut to pieces by machetes. The cavalry slaughtered the inhabitants of the estate; men, women, and children. The young daughter of the overseer threw herself on the prostrate body of her father to protect him from the cruel blades, and was cut to pieces with him, thus escaping a worse fate. Then all the bodies were placed in the engine-house, and the factory was set on fire. Being built partly of stone; the bodies were thus baked and preserved, and though the Spaniards have probably now destroyed the traces of their handiwork, the remains were intact a few months ago - a speaking tribute to Spanish rule.

Camped near Sito Grande, I took to the trees one morning to hide from some approaching cavalry who proved to be guerillas. Trembling with fear and horror, I managed to secure first a distant photograph of the two mutilated bodies bound on horseback, and later of a young woman, and two boys tied between mounted cutthroats. As they passed in the brilliant sunlight, they were silhouetted through a break in the trees, and the sharp Zeiss lens of my binocular magazine camera snapped two excellent pictures subsequently seized by the Spaniards. The chief at Sagua, Colonel Benito Carrera, was a Spanish officer of bloodiest repute and it was his practice to intimidate the Cubans by exposing the mutilated remains of pacificos, frequently those living by permission on outlying sugar-estates. These bodies were exhibited to colour lying stories of fierce battles with the insurgents. Colonel Barker, late United States Consul at Sagua, has undeniable proofs of these atrocities. I found in the district terrorised by Carrera's cruel raids, that murders were committed daily, while the Spanish commandante of the city allowed him full sway in running Cuban sympathisers to earth. In my final capture I lost my notes, papers, and pictures, from this and other parts of Cuba; but as I write, two of my photographs of this colonel's crimes are before me. One of these, the body of a Negro shockingly mutilated, is unfit for publication; the other, a young Cuban chained to a tree and used as a target until shot in a vital spot, was reproduced in the London "Graphic."

Carrera one day accused a woman of being the wife of a rebel. Her son, a bright boy of twelve, a cripple, answered him sharply, and was cut nearly in two by the Spaniard, who shouted "You rebel whelp, like father, like son!" Later, to force confession, he tore off with pliers the nails from seven fingers of an aged Cuban, charged with corresponding with rebels. Consul Barker reported these cases to the State Department.

Gomez was in the neighbourhood of Sancti Spiritus. Weyler with immense columns had hemmed him in, and daily sent confident reports of the impending capture of the old chief. It was easy now to understand the necessity for the insurgent tactics. Gomez had split his army into small commands. Robau, the Cuban-born son of a wealthy Spaniard, commanded the Sagua district, Miguel Gomez had a brigade in Las Villas; Carrillo led the forces near Santa Clara City, and in the Cienfuegos zone several small bands eked out a perilous existence. Maximo Gomez, with only his staff and escort of picked troops, about three hundred in all, constantly eluded Weyler, though always camping near him, while sympathisers in the cities carefully spread stories of his mobilisation of an immense Cuban

army, in preparation for a rush west to Havana. The reports misled Weyler, whose columns were fired upon night and day by invisible bands of rebels, frequently only five or six men, who would ride through the woods, marching and countermarching until the Spaniards greatly overestimated the force that they could neither locate nor engage in open battle. The Cubans often had but two cartridges apiece, and despite the bushwhacking character of such tactics, Gomez must be credited with out-generalling Weyler at every move.

I was amazed at the stoical endurance of the Cubans, who carried on the war without food or resting-place and at such odds. Sneer who may at Gomez for not fighting pitched battles, but his was positively the only warfare possible under the circumstances; and Weyler returned to Havana with an army decimated by disease and bullets, having accomplished nothing save the devastation of the province, and the starvation of the homeless pacificos rather than the insurgents. Outnumbered twenty to one, the rebel tactics inflicted a maximum amount of loss upon the enemy with a minimum expenditure of force. Even brilliant victories would in the end have proved disastrous to the rebels; the ability to endure until Spain's vast resources were exhausted could alone prove the factor for lasting success.

Gomez has the qualities and the failings of a great man, not least of which is a quick temper. He was the terror of evil-doers, and tolerated no laxity of discipline. Toward those who served Cuba well and faithfully, he was rather a brother than commander. The loss of his son Frank, who was killed with Maceo, was a terrible blow to the old chief, and his younger son told me that since the first-born's death, his father, like the English king of old, had never been seen to smile.

The story of Maceo's betrayal was false. It was evoked by Dr. Zertucha's conflicting stories after his ignominious surrender. The insurgents in the field told me but a few days after the occurrence, that he was killed in a regular ambush by the San Quintin battalion under Major Cirujeda. Maceo, Frank Gomez, and others were shot down trying to cut through the line; Maceo fell dead, young Gomez was badly wounded. Unable to move, he wrote to his father, "I die, but I did not abandon my general." Then the soldiers swarmed over the field, despatching the wounded and stripping the bodies. A machete blow clave young Gomez's head in two. Hearing the firing, Pedrico Diaz hurried forward with his force, and the enemy retired, the Cubans securing the bodies. Not until the Spaniards divided their loot that night, did they discover the identity of two of the dead; Maceo from papers in his clothing, Gomez from the F. G. on his linen, and the scrawled note to his father found by his side. This account does not differ materially from the Spanish official story. They admitted that they stripped the bodies, they even produced the farewell note of young Gomez, but never attempted to explain how or why they despatched him after he had written it.

Captain, now Colonel, Perez Staple, who carried the tidings to General Gomez, told me that it broke the old soldier's heart. Staple rode over to the general upon Miro's arrival, and at first could not control himself to speak. But Gomez' eagle eye divined bad news. "Why do you wait? Am I a woman that you fear to tell me ill-tidings?" he demanded. The captain in a faltering voice then told all he knew.

"Dios mio! My first-born and my dearest friend both! Oh, my poor boy! What will your mother say?" exclaimed the old man. He buried his face in his hands, his body was convulsed with sobs, and he turned in his hammock crying like a child. That night he paraded his men, and in broken tones said: "My grief is unmanly. I thought I was strong, but I am weak as a child. General Antonio and my dear boy have only died as any of us may die, doing their duty to Cuba: and before you all I thank God that they died bravely. My loss is doubly severe, but it is mitigated by that knowledge." Then the tears welled from under the gold-rimmed spectacles, and ran down the furrowed, weather-beaten cheeks, and he turned to his tent, heartbroken. Did space permit, I could add many stories that show the soft heart that beats under the rugged exterior of the old warrior.

Food rapidly grew scarce in Santa Clara, especially in the North. When the reconcentration was enforced, much stock was driven to the rebels, and with care might have been sustained by breeding. But reason gave way to hunger, cows and calves were slaughtered indiscriminately, and meat soon became scarce. Numbers of women and children had elected rather to be near husbands and brothers than to obey Weyler's fiat. Their homes were burnt, and they existed miserably in huts in the woods, in mortal terror of guerillas.

One prefect's family I knew in Santa Clara, once owners of a large estate, lost two daughters. They were pretty girls of thirteen and sixteen, and ventured early one morning in search of vegetables. Prolonged absence caused anxiety, and finally their dead bodies were discovered. I saw the remains before they were touched. They lay in a field on the outskirts of a wood, not a hundred yards from the highroad, their basket of vegetables beside them. Evidently they were surprised by a passing band, and were shot down from the road when trying to escape to the woods. This would justify their murder from a Spanish point of view. The stricken parents and the few neighbours who eked out an existence in the manigua divined a worse outrage, however, and as such it was reported to General Robau.

Prefecturas in Las Villas were not always available, and guides were scarce. My visit there afforded me enough adventure to fill a book, and sufficient privations and fever to reduce me to a skeleton and make it even chance if I escaped alive. There was little real fighting, but constant skirmishing, though fierce battles were daily reported by the Spaniards which misled credulous correspondents in Havana as to true conditions. During February, March, and April the insurgent army was greatly disintegrated in western and central Cuba, and so continued to the end. The eastern veterans of Maceo's invasion had been decimated in the severe campaign of '96, but hundreds of recruits flocked to the cause in each district. Rivera's capture, as he was reorganizing his shattered brigades, proved the futility of attempting organised aggression. There were less than two thousand armed Cubans in the Pinar del Rio division, about the same number in Havana Province.

General Rodriguez, who commanded the Sixth Army Corps, extended his forces, making small mobilisations when necessary. Alejandro Rodriguez, Diaz, the Ducasse brothers, Lorente, Torres, Delgado, Comacho, Varona, Perez, Vidal, Lopez, Campbell, Castillo, Acosta, Aranguren, and Arango operated with varying forces throughout the divisions of Pinar del Rio and Havana. Given food, arms, and ammunition, a force of ten thousand men could have been mobilised in the West within a week, but the armed strength of these brigades has been greatly exaggerated. The above leaders usually had a mere handful of men in their immediate commands. With these they skirmished or conducted daring raids, as the capture of the Regla train by Aranguren, and frequent incursions to the fortified suburbs of Havana.

Matanzas being flat and narrow, Weyler had swept the province with an unbroken line. The Cubans there suffered terrible privations from fire and sword, numbers were killed: and after Lacret went east, the revolution almost died out. Dr. Betencourt, a prominent physician, now civil Governor of the province, assumed command during the height of Weyler's devastation. By supreme effort he reorganised the depleted forces, and to the end sustained a small but effective division in the most difficult district in Cuba. In Santa Clara the commands in the cultivated sections were precariously maintained, larger forces operating in Sancti Spiritus. There were about 2500 armados in all and in each province there were hundreds of men existing in the field, collecting food for the army, or supporting their families in the woods. Armed, this impedimenta would have increased the effective strength of the rebels threefold. Unarmed, they were still virtually part of the revolution. For actual fighting strength, though, a certain percentage must be deducted from the rolls of any army, as detailed for duties created by the exigencies of the situation.

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