

scene of barbarous cruelty to animals which one is continually obliged to witness makes one's heart ache and blight the fairest landscape. The local ear is so accustomed to the sound of blows that it never seems to hear them; even gentle women give no heed to the spectacle of some poor beast being lashed upon a raw and bloody back, or having fallen from exhaustion under a too heavy load, being kicked and pounded by brutes in human form. Oh for a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals! If Cuba ever does come under the rules of Uncle Samuel and such a beneficent society is established here, it will require years of fines and imprisonment and perhaps a few generations or so, to effect much change for the better. At present there is no use in protesting against any case of cruelty. The law says that a man is absolute owner of his beast and may kill it by any prolonged torture, if he so desires.

Now-days the better class of Havanaians do not join in the carnival festivities. A few of the belles and beauties are out, including all the demi-monde—in decoctette toilettes of white satin, pink, pale blue, with uncovered arms and heads, and matrons in badly fitting gowns and lace mantillas, a comparatively small number wearing masks and dominoes. There are many horsemen in the procession, mostly the "young bloods" of the capital, who excel as equestrians; and one solitary seniorita in the saddle, in a surprising habit of sky-blue satin. The bull-fighters are out, in full force and astonishing array, with the great Mazzantini—said to be the best (or rather the worst), torreador in the world—at their head. There are several carriage loads of them, fresh from the gory spot of the bull ring, where every Sunday, and every afternoon during the carnival week, twelve worn-out horses and six wild bulls are butchered for the amusement of the rabble. The picadores and torreadors—all swarthy fellows from the south of Spain, with their "back hair" tightly braided over wire into a funny little queue which turns up at the end like a pig's tail—wear the most exaggerated costumes of their kind, yellow satin and scarlet velvet, lace ruffles and gold braid galore, white silk hose gorgeously embroidered with patterns of satin and velvet and numerous jewelled decorations—the rewards of previous acts of cowardice in slaughtering defenseless animals in the ring.

Just now the procession was broken by a regiment of Spanish soldiers straggling through. They are returning from an expedition into the interior—tired, dusty, footsore and weary; with faded and bedraggled uniforms of blue denim and swords rusty with nobody knows what innocent blood. The rank and file of the royal army are not to be blamed whatever they do. They are compelled to come, and to obey orders. The conscription laws of Spain in her present extremity, exempt no males between the ages of 15 and 50. They are treated like dogs by their superior officers, hard worked and miserably fed, beaten with whips and belabored with swords for any petty offense. I am told that the Spanish heart is aflame with patriotism; that boys barely out of petticoats are wild to come to Cuba, or to fight the United States for alleged interference; and that mothers, who have already lost sons on the battlefield and in the hospitals of this refractory island, are eager to give all the rest in defense of the honor of Spain. But the soldiers themselves do not look it. Undersized, undrilled and dispirited, their appearance is not calculated to strike terror to the hearts of any foe. On the contrary, many of them are really pitiable objects. Of the 40,000 Spanish soldiers who are now in the hospitals of Cuba,

more than half are there from weakness and exhaustion, the result of insufficient nourishment. They have not been paid for months, and it is impossible to find food for all in this overcrowded and impoverished island. It is a common spectacle to see a beggar in the uniform of the royal army; and often when the starving reconcentrados have received their week's supply from the bounty of the United States, it is taken from them by physically stronger, but almost equally hungry soldiers. Yet 40,000 new soldiers are expected to arrive this week from Spain and preparations are now being made to receive them with the usual fuss and feather. Always when a new regiment comes the houses of Havana are bedecked with flags, bands play, men embrace and kiss one another after the effusive Spanish fashion and shouts of "Viva espana!" fill the air. The newly-arrived officers are wine and dined and each private is presented with a silver dollar. Poor lads! It is the last proso they will see for many a day and more of them will succumb to small-pox, yellow-fever and calentura than will die on the field of battle—far more than will ever see home again.

There is always more or less yellow fever in Havana, but at this time of year it is not considered contagious. In the hospital de San Ambrosio, where I have gone every day for a week to visit the few wounded men of the Maine who yet remain here, there are at present only five cases of yellow fever in its wards—much below the usual percentage, it is said. As to small-pox, there is today hardly a case of it in the city; yet, "for the protection of the United States," so says the extremely impolite outdoor in charge of that branch of Uncle Sam's interest—all persons leaving for that country must be vaccinated four days in advance of departure, or exhibit satisfactory marks of recent vaccination. Nobody's word for it will answer, nor the certificate of any reputable physician; each must go to the consulate and expose him or herself then and there, or remain in Cuba. If that sort of thing is insisted on the year around, proper conveniences should be provided for the victims, at least a private room to which ladies may retire while taking off their basques. The office is a large public room on the ground floor, with windows open to the street, clerks sitting at desks and men constantly coming and going, the only attempt at privacy being a little screen behind which one may partially hide.

Yesterday I went out on the bay in a steam yacht, with a party of Cuban ladies and gentlemen, to get a near view of the wreck of the Maine. Such a melancholy heap of old iron as is our once beautiful war vessel, with a single spar standing upright, on which a ragged American flag floats at half-mast. There are yet bodies underneath it, probably fifty or more, and the swarm of black vultures, the scavenger-birds of Cuba, which circle around it and perch upon every available point, offer gruesome suggestions. A diver was going down as we approached, after the two officers who are supposed to lie near the strong box, and a near-by boat bore several coffins, ready to receive any remains that might be brought up. It is inconceivable how the big, beautiful war vessel could be reduced in the twinkling of an eye to such a pile of rubbish. The great catastrophe is still the talk of the hour in Havana and has greatly intensified the bitter feeling between the races. Many declare with certainty that the Cubans did it in order to force the U. S. to make war upon Spain and so aid the cause of Cuba Libre; while others assert with equal positiveness that the Spaniards

were responsible for the disaster with the same end in view, because—since they cannot overcome the rebels, they wish to lose the island with less dishonor to Spain, through being conquered by a stronger foreign power. Officers of the Maine say that it was not possible for a bomb to have been put beneath her large enough to have any effect upon the enormous mass of steel and iron, as her keel lay within two feet of the mud at the bottom of the harbor. On that dreadful night of the explosion, when the air was filled with the shrieks of the wounded and groans of the dying, some lunatic on the wharf raised the cry of "Death to the Americans." There are cranks everywhere, you know, and a nation cannot be made responsible for them. But since then many Spaniards have been heard to say exultantly that now "the Yankees" have no more gunboats than Spain. The masses are too ignorant to comprehend the resources of the United States, and it is an actual fact that the majority of Spaniards in Cuba seriously contemplate going over to whip Uncle Samuel as soon as they can find time!

The absence of the Stars and Stripes from the grand official funeral has been remarked in many quarters. One small, inconspicuous American flag was all that appeared in the whole spectacular affair, but the red and yellow banner of Spain—the ugliest on earth—figured largely. Surely there were enough American flags in Havana, in the consulate and in the houses of American subjects resident here to have at least covered the coffins; and if it is true, as some believe, that our boys were the victims of Spanish hate, to decorate their corpses with the red and yellow was indeed a travesty.

On the sad evening of the funeral, a party of young Americans went to dine at a fashionable restaurant of the city. Calling for menus, what was their horror and indignation to read among other items of the bill of fare "Pollos fritos. (fried chicken) a la Maine—infamous reference to the burned and dying seamen. It is needless to add that the Americans collected and destroyed all the menus, and would have wiped the dirty floor with the proprietor had he not discreetly kept out of the way.

Washington's birthday did not pass altogether unobserved by our wounded boys in the San Ambrosio, though one of their number died in the early morning. Their country-women in Cuba carried them flowers and grapes and made them as comfortable and cheerful as possible.

An hour ago the doctor of the Maine brought me the information that another of the men is dying today—George Holger of New York City. When I visited him yesterday he looked up brightly and talked for a moment of his sweetheart and brother, to both of whom I have twice written, and inquired whether letters might not be expected to arrive that day; then his mind wandered and he begged me to pick the green out of the foot of his bed. I pretended to comply and with a satisfied smile he lapsed into unconsciousness.

Toward evening on the 22nd of February I drove out to the Cemeterio de Christoval Colon, to lay a few flowers on the graves of our men in honor of Washington's birthday. The place looks doubly bare and desolate in the midst of the splendid monuments of that beautiful cemetery—merely a great pile of freshly-turned gravel, with a few half-dug pits at one side for the reception of other bodies that may die in the hospital or be brought from the sea. The negro in charge pointed out the exact dimensions of the eight wide graves into which the first thirty-two coffins were placed.