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HONOLULU, HAWAIIAN ISLANDS, SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1898.

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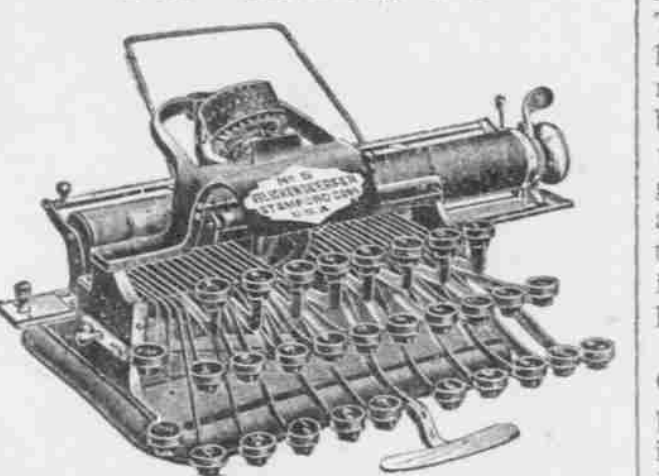
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HE TALKS OF CUBA

A Honolulu Man Graduate of Havana University.

BUT HE WAS BORN IN SPAIN

How Gomez Has Changed—Sugar Trust—People Not of Republican Timber.

Of all the people in Honolulu keen for news of Cuba, Spain and the attitude and purposes of the United States in the difficulties and questions pending it is not likely that one has so deep and intense a personal interest as Dr. L. F. Alvarez, the practitioner and Board of Health specialist. The gentleman was born in Spain, went out to the island of Cuba with his parents when a quite young child and was educated at the University of Havana, finishing off professionally, however, in institutions of the United States, notably the Johns Hopkins University. At his office on Emma street Dr. Alvarez yesterday conversed freely on Cuban and Spanish affairs.

The Honolulu man left Cuba in 1874 and returned for a short time four years later. In 1878 the ten years war, led by Gomez, who today commands the insurgents, ended. At other times Gomez, who, by the way, is not a Cuban, was at the head of revolutionists in San Domingo. Another man in the highest councils of the outbreak on the island is a Russian. Dr. Alvarez calls attention to the change of tactics in Gomez campaigning since 1868-78. In the war of ten years property was safe at all times. Incendiarism and robbery were punished by the rebels the same as by the civil authorities, or even more severely. The cultivation of cane, the production of sugar, the growing of tobacco and the manufacture of cigars continued though the ten years of fighting without any interruption. Dr. Alvarez says that both the Spanish and French papers state positively and reiterate from day to day the charge the Sugar Trust induced Gomez to issue the decree prohibiting the operation of plantations under pain of death to the managers and employees. There was no firing of cane fields during the ten years war. Now a Cuban proceeds to the edge of a field with a cage of rats. The rodents are doused in kerosene, touched with a match and turned loose in the cane when the weather is dry. Dr. Alvarez says that people unable to read the comments of the Spanish and French press on the conduct of the insurgents with relation to the industries of the island cannot appreciate much of the bitterness that is felt against the rebels and those who assist and encourage them. The man who ended the ten years war was Martinez Campos, by many considered the greatest of soldiers Spain has produced this century. When the present revolution broke out Campos was sent again to the island, but failing to speedily end the revolt was succeeded by Weyler, who in turn was followed by Blanco. In former operations in Cuba Weyler had gained the reputation of being a man entirely without mercy. But even his vigorous policy—strong and positive to the extent of cruelty, failed this time.

Dr. Alvarez says the Spanish and French papers dilate at length and continuously upon the part the United States has taken in the present revolution. The arraignment begins with accusation of the private enterprises, next the Trust and finally the administration itself. There is cited the Alabama claims case, followed with inquiry or suggestion to the effect that filibuster expeditions correspond in every way to the operations of the Alabama. Reliable advices from Cuba are to the effect that the insurgents have so many friends in the United States that the armies or columns or squads or details of Gomez have really more arms and ammunition than they need. They have thousands of rifles and perhaps hundreds of thousands of cartridges buried, while they have no trouble in securing small artillery. Gomez, who is now above 70 years of age is greatly admired for his boldness and ability. He says that he does not sleep twice in the same place and the Spanish papers and officials concede that his capture is most unlikely.

Slavery was abolished completely in Cuba in 1878. The final step was approached gradually. In 1860 there was issued a proclamation that all persons born in Cuba should be free. A few years later there was another royal proclamation to the effect that slaves of the age of 60 years and over should be liberated. The last slaves were

brought to Cuba from Africa in 1855. When Cuba had a population of 1,000,000 there were of "Cubans" 700,000. The Cubans as listed were former slaves and full-blood or mixed-blood children of the Africans. It is claimed that Cuba has now 1,500,000 population, but this is doubted. Dr. Alvarez says that these Cubans are certainly not the people to have a democratic government any more than were the Hawaiians say seventy-five years ago. Autonomy was advocated by the better classes on the island and has always had strong advocates at Madrid. The Spanish and French papers now say that autonomy has been choked to death by the United States. The Sagasta Cabinet of the Queen Regent agreed to autonomy only under heavy pressure and seem to find that even this sacrifice has been made too late. It was proposed by the radicals at all times to first conquer the insurgents, then make terms or arrangements as to autonomy or something of the sort. To the continental press the middle now appears almost hopeless unless the United States will permit Spain to handle the revolution for herself for a few months.

Dr. Alvarez says the Spaniards are proud and glory in the record and traditions of their country. They spurn any thought of selling Cuba or any other colony to the United States or any other country. They stand on ceremony and sentiment. Spain has had a grand people. William Cullen Bryant said after a sojourn on the peninsula that "even the beggars of Spain were gentlemen." S. T. Alexander, of the Island of Maui, this group, has toured in Spain and speaks enthusiastically of the characteristics of the people as a whole. The air of the haughty Don permeates all classes and Spain is the only country of the continent where to travelers "tips" are unknown. In the war with the Cubans Spain has already given 200,000 of the youth the country and has a temper that would go to the last man and the sweepings of the treasury before thought of the defeat would be entertained. But even friends and ardent admirers and partisans of Spain begin to think that probably European intervention will force a close approach to an humbling.

A brother of Dr. Alvarez has property in Havana, but being faithful to the mother country, remains away from the island. Dr. Alvarez dwells particularly upon what he calls the impossible political plans of those who propose a Republic for Cuba. He grants earnestness and character and capability to a large number of men in the movement, but points with significance to the tremendous percentage of unavailable composition.

At the Japanese Legation.

Minister Shimamura said at the Japanese Legation yesterday that he had nothing new from his home Government, concerning the immigration dispute between this country and Japan. There has been no communication on the subject since January last. Mr. Shimamura remarked that no answer had been received from his last letter to the local Foreign Office. Of course there had been an acknowledgment, but no "reply." Mr. Shimamura supposed that the Government officials here were busy with the Legislature.

The Japanese Minister is very much interested in the Eastern situation, which he says is delicate and complicated.

In Vanity Fair.

Mrs. S. M. Damon entertained the Whist Club at her beautiful country home in Moanalua yesterday.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Hubert Vos will receive in the studio at Holani Pa, Richards street, this afternoon.

There will be a birthday party at F. A. Schaefer's, Waikiki, and another at H. Lewis', this afternoon.

Mrs. W. G. Irwin gave a lunch in honor of her mother, Mrs. Ivers, of San Francisco, on Thursday. Those present besides the guest of honor were the following: Mrs. Sewall, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Hayward, Mrs. J. G. Spencer, Mrs. Emily Judd, Mrs. Fuller, Mrs. Swanzy, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. J. S. Walker, Mrs. Neumann, Miss Newlands, Mrs. Charles Carter.

Mr. Dole's Birthday.

Today is another anniversary of the honored President of Hawaii, Sanford B. Dole. Early this morning the President will be serenaded at the Executive mansion on Emma street by the Government band. There will be no formal celebration of the birthday of the President, though he will doubtless receive the warm congratulations of friends throughout the capital. A year ago Mr. Dole was given a surprise by some intimate friends in old time native style, but no such program has been arranged for today.

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COFFEE MAN TALKS

Prices and Markets the Subjects of His Communication.

SUPERIOR HAWAIIAN GRADES

What the Tenderfoot Should Know. Local Production Better Than Central American.

MR. EDITOR:—In your issues of 18th, 22d and 25th of March, I notice your editorials on the coffee industry and the value of Hawaiian coffee.

In the first article you challenge the Bulletin to publish some of the account sales returned by Folger & Co., San Francisco, to some of our coffee shippers, while in another you criticize a statement, made by the same paper, that Kona coffee will command 8 cents per pound more than Brazilian.

Now, Mr. Editor, as I have been engaged in active coffee planting for over 15 years, in this country and abroad, and claim to know something about the proper preparation of the bean, for the market, and moreover as I aspire to the distinction of one of the "experienced" men whom you would desire to see annihilated; please allow me to make a few remarks and furnish some statistics and facts in regard to the true value of Hawaiian coffee in foreign markets. Although, I quite agree with you in your comments on the "boom" pest, and the misleading statements which are published in regard to coffee planting in Hawaii; I beg to differ with your views and criticisms on the value of the bean, and particularly your sneers at the "ever present experienced man" as you are pleased to term him.

I have found that there are two kinds of this class in these islands. First—Those who possess the actual knowledge, acquired by many years of hard and active toil in coffee planting, and who can make their representations good on investigation. Second—Those who profess to know all about it, and talk as though they had been born and brought up under a coffee bush; but who in all probability, never saw a coffee tree before their arrival in these islands.

I venture to say that if Hawaii had possessed a few more of the despised individuals representing the first class; the value of coffee abroad would have been established long ere this, and the tons of rubbish which have been picked up, along the Kona coast in particular, would never have had an existence.

I have not seen the article in the Bulletin which you criticize in your issue of March 22d, but from the statement you refer to, I presume that paper was praising the quality of Kona coffee; and I must say I heartily endorse such an opinion.

Whether Kona coffee will command 8 cents per pound more than that from Brazil, I am not prepared to say; but of one fact I am assured, viz: that such coffee will not only command a higher price than Brazilian, but as I can show from an authority, will realize more than that obtained from the best Central American varieties. But you must bear in mind, Mr. Editor, that the coffee I have referred to is the one prepared by the experienced man, whether he possessed that experience before his arrival in this country, or acquired it here by experimenting on samples at the expense of others.

The statement you make, that Kona coffee at the normal price of Central American will pay well, is not only misleading but is inconsistent with the facts.

With the price the coffee planter of these islands has to pay for labor, as compared with that ruling in other coffee countries, in order to insure success, two conditions are necessary, viz., a greater yield from the trees and a superior quality in the bean. So far as my observation goes with the coffee trees in this district, during the past seven years, I am led to believe that both these conditions exist.

If the coffee to be finally shipped from these islands is to rank with some of the Central American varieties, then the sooner we shut up coffee planting in Hawaii the better.

The test which you suggest, and on which you express your readiness to stake money, is no test at all, so far as the commercial value of the bean is concerned. "You venture to say that if four cups of coffee be prepared using Brazilian, Salvador or other Central American with Java, and ten hab-

itual coffee drinkers were asked to pick out the Kona (you do not mention Kona coffee in the mixture) after tasting each cup without having knowledge of the kind it contained, six out of the ten would not pick out the Kona coffee." I will go further and venture to say that not one out of the ten could tell you which was Kona, or which the Brazilian, while many out of the millions who habitually drink the so-called beverage, could not say that it was coffee at all.

Likewise with the test made with the cup of supposedly adulterated Kona coffee on the individual, who claimed to have been a coffee drinker for 40 years, and who pronounced it the most excellent cup he had ever tasted; and at once placed a high value on the bean. Had he been an habitual drinker for 140 years, the result would have been the same, his opinion would have been worth nothing in connection with the commercial value of the bean; but might have served as a good advertisement for Kona coffee.

Fortunately for the coffee planter the profits which will accrue from his years of hard work and perseverance, will not be based on either of the tests you mention above. He had nothing to do with the varied and nasty mixtures, which are prepared and sold under the name of coffee; to be concreted into that so-called cup, of a muddy consistency, one finds on one's travel throughout the world. This department is left to the dealers, who buy their coffees in the bulk, blend them, mix them, or adulterate them to suit their fancy, or the tastes of their consumers. I do not mean to say there are no honest dealers in the world, but it is a well known fact, once a demand sets in for a good genuine article, let it be coffee, tea or pickles, scores of spurious imitations will follow in its wake.

The coffee planter will sell his produce by the cwt. or ton in the open market, and the price he will realize will be decided on the merits of the bean as to size, color and uniformity; and this by experts who have made it their special business. Of course, supply and demand will always cut some figure; but it is my opinion the genuine article will invariably come to the point, and when once a name has been established for a certain brand, and the reputation for that particular brand is maintained, it will hold its own in the face of substitutes or an inferior article.

Your simile with reference to the difference of opinion between men in the coffee trade and amateurs, and that of the epicurean taste of the oyster fender only serves to further strengthen my argument. When an inferior, in place of the genuine article, can be palmed off on those who consider themselves connoisseurs, and partaken of with relish, shows that both the opinion of the amateur and connoisseur, or habitual consumer, are of no value; and it takes the expert or experienced man after all to detect the real article and set a true value on the commodity.

From the foregoing remarks I do not wish it to be inferred that the cup quality of the bean, plays no part in the value of coffee; for most certainly this does, and any coffee which could pass a good examination on its technical merits, would possess more or less a fine aroma. At the same times this feature may be due, to some extent, from local conditions as to soil, climate and especially elevation, and not as might be supposed, entirely from the fact of superior methods employed in the preparation of the bean.

This is an item in coffee planting of which all practical planters are aware and is not only confined to countries, but to different districts in the same country, and to different localities in the same district.

In the prosperous days of Ceylon, the product of the various plantations was sold in the London market under one name, viz.: "Plantation Ceylon," but entirely on the merits of the bean. Although the methods employed in cultivation, and preparation, were almost identically the same throughout the island, the prices realized were not so; the coffee from one locality commanding a higher figure than that

(Continued on Second Page.)

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