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ZERTUCHA, THE CUBAN JUDAS, AND HIS HISTORIC PREDECESSORS.



Judas Iscariot.
"And Judas said unto them, 'What will ye give me and I will deliver Him unto you?' And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver."
"Now, in that he betrayed Him, he gave them a sign, saying, 'Whosoever I shall kiss, that same is He; hold Him fast,' and forthwith he came to Jesus and said, 'Hail, Master,' and kissed Him. Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him."

John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough.
John Churchill grew to distinction under favor of James II. He was placed at the head of the army sent by James to repel William of Orange, and the night before the battle deserted to William's side and rode with him to victory. Among the other rewards this traitor got was his dukedom. He dickered with James to turn traitor once more, but James could not offer him enough to own him wholly again.

Benedict Arnold.
Disappointed in not securing advancement, and jealous of other commanders, Benedict Arnold got Washington to give him command of West Point, which was one of the key positions in the American fight for independence; and then, through his wife's relatives, bargained with the English to surrender it. His price was £6,000 and a General's commission.

Maximo Zertucha.
A Spaniard born, but a graduate of the medical department of the Havana University, he joined the rebel army about nine months ago. His appearance in the rebel camp caused some comment, because he was among those who had welcomed Weyler to Havana after Martinez Campos returned to Spain. But the Cubans needed a physician and accepted his protestations of fealty to his adopted country. It took him three-quarters of a year to get into the position he desired, and then he led General Maceo to where the great Cuban leader and all of his staff except the black-hearted traitor were shut in pieces in a Spanish ambulance.

Another name has been added to the roll of dishonor of the world's history. Dr. Zertucha is the last on the list who will be executed as long as history endures. There have been many instances of treachery in war, but these have nearly all been subordinate men whose defections produced only subordinate results. Such treason as that of the four who head this column is very rare. So these four names stand out in blackest relief on the roll of fame. There is something common about traitors whose infamy reaches the point of greatness. Churchill, Arnold, Zertucha, all young men, all men of brilliant parts and splendid promise, lacked only principle to have earned worthy fame.

Zertucha, in Havana, before the outbreak of the war, was a popular physician. His family is an old one and he was among the eminent in his profession. He was a society man and one of the few Cubans who were welcome in Spanish social circles. He had served in the last war—the futile ten-year war—but ended with the treaty of Zanjon in promises that were never kept. Zertucha did not fight this war out. He gave up to the Spaniards before it was over, but in that time of depression and despondency to the patriots there were many whose hearts were not stout enough for the strain and who surrendered themselves before the general word was given to lay down their arms. Zertucha served his time in prison, but there came some time of royal merrymaking, some Queen's festival or other, which opened the doors of the Spanish jail and Zertucha was free. The Cubans considered that the prison term had wiped out the stain of defection and counted the clever young doctor a patriot.

Then came this war. For a year it was waged with varying fortune in the eastern jungles of Cuba. The trocha then ran from Maron on the north to Juicero, on the south coast, and the fight was then to keep the flame of revolution in the eastern extremity of the island until it could be stamped out. Havana was lukewarm about it. The distance to the sphere of operations was so great and the Spaniards held the news so close that tales of Cuban victories came to hand confused and vague, and that Dr. Zertucha had not gone to the woods provoked no particular remark at that time.

But the fire of rebellion spread. Gomez and Maceo passed the eastern trocha as if it had not been there. Down they came with two armies through the very center of Cuba, burning the cane, harassing the Spaniards, fighting all the way. Town after town fell before them, until the Spaniards held only the ground on which they stood, and a zone of blackened field with the western end still blazing showed who were the masters of Cuba. Then Havana got desperate, and the Cuban army was swelled by the accession of the young fellows who had swarmed about the cafes and sidewalks of the capital. The star of Cuban independence was rising, and those whose hearts beat for their country, though possibly not as stoutly as the hardy patriots who had fought their way from Oriente, swarmed to the Cuban camp. Martinez Campos was still Captain General. He had come back from Peralta badly beaten, and the Spaniards in Havana were at last alarmed at the rebel progress.

Then, as now, the strength of the Cubans was attributed to Gomez and Maceo instead of to the spirit of freedom, which was as strong in the half-naked privates as in the leaders. Campos was discouraged.

The influential Spaniards of the capital were blaming him, though he had done all a soldier and a gentleman could do. There were conferences in the palace, and those influential men of Havana laid plans before the old Captain General. A banker, a merchant, a planter and a capitalist called on Captain General Campos and told him that the two rebel leaders must be taken from the head of the patriots' army.

"We will raise a million apiece for them," said the spokesman.
"There is not money enough in all Spain and Cuba combined to buy Gomez and Maceo from their commands," was Campos's recorded answer.
"Even two millions of dollars could be paid for the lives of these two men," persisted the spokesman. "The revolution will cost Spain a hundred times that if they live."

"Assassination!" said Campos.
The four men of money shrugged their shoulders.
"You could get men to do this thing?" asked the Captain General.
"We have the men."

"Then," said Martinez Campos, "you had better not tell me his name. Such a man is not fit to breathe the same atmosphere as men of honor. I prefer to see Spain in the abyss of defeat rather than stain my conscience and my name with such a crime."

The four men of money and respectability and prominence bowed and retired. On Obispo street, just around the corner from the palace, they met Dr. Maximo Zertucha, and the five went uptown together. This story was publicly told in Havana by men-

bers of the Captain General's staff. But as nothing came of it the Cubans rather attributed it to the officers' desire to paint the Captain-General's character in high colors.

Then Campos went away to Spain and Bureher Weyler came. Among the crowd that thronged his first levee was Dr. Zertucha. That fact by itself signified nothing. Many Cubans went there from curiosity. The palace was open, and the new Captain-General was there to be seen.

Meanwhile the rebels were almost at the gates of Havana. They had swarmed over Havana Province, and Maceo had crossed the line and was raiding in Pinar del Rio far to the westward. Havana was in an uproar. So consistent and steady had been the rebels' advance that nothing would have surprised the Havanaes. They even spoke seriously in their whispered conferences of a possible attack upon the capital itself. No one would have been surprised if the rebel armies had swarmed over the eadon of forts and fought the Spanish legions on the Prado itself.

No one knew exactly what Weyler was doing in those first days of his incumbency. Not even a traceable rumor exists in Havana that Zertucha, the now known traitor, entered the palace after the first levee. He was on terms of social intimacy with the members of the ultra-Spanish party, to be sure, but they constitute the best practice in Havana, and a physician was hardly to blame for extending his practice among the best paying patients in the city.

All this time the rebel band were being augmented by accessions from the young men of Havana, and in one of the parties that skulked out on the road that skirts old Principe was Dr. Zertucha. The fortress slumbered above them. The sentries in the road did not see them pass, and presently the news drifted back to Havana that Zertucha was with Gomez, and the Cubans lunged themselves with delight. He was a recruit worth having. Men were more willing to expose themselves to Spanish bullets and Maceo's bullets when they knew that Zertucha's skill would make their wounds well again.

Dr. Zertucha had one quality that is as detrimental to his 'villainy in a great villain as it is to a true man in his good fame. He was a drunkard. The stringent regulations in the rebel camp, however, kept him away from liquor most of the time, and when he did succeed in getting it Gomez merely prevented him exercising his surgical knowledge, and overlooked it for the sake of what he could do when he was himself. And he seemed a true and brave surgeon when he was at work. Numbers of officers and scores of men passed under his hands, but his chance to earn the price of treason had not come. Neither Maceo nor Gomez was ever more than scratched, and had Dr. Zertucha done the assassination with a lancet, even the cover of his profession would not have saved him.

Though they had nothing positive against him, and the leaders themselves combated the unfavorable opinion, Zertucha was never really accepted as a whole-hearted patriot while he was with Gomez. Gomez was not sorry to let him go to Maceo who the great General of the West asked for more surgeons. Maceo was given a full account of the man. He laughed at the suggestions, and was grave over the drunkenness, but he said, "He is a good surgeon and I will take him," and he made him second under Surgeon-General Hugo Roberts. Roberts was wounded, and Zertucha had charge of all the surgical department in the Western army.

He conveyed the information of his accession to power to Weyler in Havana. The message was brought by a peasant of Artemisa. At least the Cubans have learned that such a man told of getting a gold centena for delivering a sealed packet to the commandant in the town. Then Weyler went to Pinar del Rio and took with him Senior Barrera, the chief of the Havana police.

Meanwhile the negotiations between Zertucha and the Spanish Government were carried out. Colonel Tort, of the Spanish Army, is understood to have performed the mission of bringing Zertucha's acceptance to the proposition of Marquis of Alameda, who was in command at Havana in Weyler's absence. Of course, Weyler's word would have gone for nothing with Maceo, but when he received a communication stating that the Marquis desired to meet him with a view of talking over terms of peace, or rather to arrange a truce for that purpose, he listened. The message was brought by a Spanish officer. The flag of truce under which he came was recognized by the rebels and the officer was allowed to deliver his message to Maceo and return entirely unharmed.

Maceo's answer was that he would consider the thing and give an answer. Maceo called his staff for a conference. Brigadier Miro feared a trap, and advised Maceo not trust himself in the Spaniards' clutches. But Dr. Zertucha said he knew the Marquis; that the Marquis was a man of honor, and that his name was a guarantee of the genuineness of the proposition. But Maceo heeded Miro's argument, particularly as he said that the proposal would have to go to General Gomez, any way before it could be accepted; without Gomez's consent Maceo would enter into no treaty. So Zertucha's first plan failed.

Then came the news that Gomez was again coming west, and Maceo's generalship taught him that his place in such an advance was not in the remote western province, but that he should be at Gomez's side when the big demonstration was made. The trocha could not be forced except by a great sacrifice of men, so Maceo decided to pass it with a few in the night. There were plenty of men for him to command in Havana province. On the 2d and 3d of December, Maceo's scouts reported that the trocha was not well defended a little south of Mariel, and on the night of the 4th Maceo, with his staff, crossed the trocha, leaving General Luis Rivera in command of the Cuban forces in the western province.

No one but Maceo's immediate staff knew of his intended movements. But the Spaniards were kept informed. In view of subsequent events it is morally certain that their information came from the surgeon. Maceo notified the Cuban Junta in Havana on the 5th that he had crossed the trocha. The next day, with a very small staff, only half a dozen men, among them Brigadier Miro, Maximo Gomez's son and Zertucha, Maceo rode into Havana Province.

Zertucha told Maceo that he knew every foot of the country, and pointed out a hidden path through a cane field as the easiest and safest way for Maceo to reach the main body of rebels in Havana.

Maceo listened to him and they passed into the cane, riding single file. They had hardly reached the thicker part of the cane field when Zertucha's saddle slipped under him and he alighted to clutch it up. The rest of the party went on ahead.

Suddenly out of the cane on either side rose 500 Spanish soldiers, commanded by Major Clujeda.

"Surrender!" cried a voice in the rank. "We offer you life and an honorable treaty."
"Viva Cuba Libre!" was Maceo's answering cry.

He dashed his horse in the direction of the voice. Out of the cane came a volley, and Zertucha had won the price of the most black-hearted piece of treason the world has ever seen.

Of the six men who rode into the cane Miro was the only one who escaped. Zertucha was taken, and, contrary to all precedent, was set out to pieces. He was delivered to Colonel Tort, in San Felipe.

And Dr. Maximo Zertucha, acting surgeon-general of the Western Army of the rebels, was promptly given his liberty. It is understood he goes to Spain to live with \$50,000 in gold in his satchel as Benedict Arnold went to England with the 6,000 British guineas more than 100 years ago.

ZERTUCHA.