

THE CUBAN QUESTION.

Correspondence Between Spain and the State Department.

An Authentic Account of Affairs on the Island.

Character of the Spanish Volunteers.

The Speakman and Wyeth Executions.

Views on Independence, Annexation and Belligerency.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—The President today transmitted to the Senate a voluminous document in reply to the resolution calling for information with regard to Cuba. Vice-Consul-General HALL, in a letter to Secretary SEWARD, Nov. 18, 1868, quoted the views of a conservative Cuban, namely: The news of the Spanish revolution is enthusiastically received in Cuba, and stating the views of the Cubans as to slavery as diverse. Some desire immediate, and others the gradual abolition of slavery, while not a few desire the continuance of the institution. The insurrection in the Eastern and Central Departments is represented to be formidable. Mr. HALL adds, that good order prevails in his department. In another letter dated Dec. 17, 1868, he says that the insurrection is gaining strength. The condition at Matanzas is general distrust and paralysis. In February, 1869, he transmits a letter from the Consular Agent at Sagua La Grande. The state of things there is much exaggerated and he sends particulars. Mr. HALL transmits to the Secretary of State, Mr. WASHBURN, March 11, 1869, what purports to be a decree of the insurgent assembly, abolishing slavery. Mr. HALL, March 27, 1869, transmits to the Second Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. HUNTER, the decree of the Captain-General, dated March 24, authorizing captures on the high seas of vessels carrying men, arms, munitions or effects in aid of the insurgents, and directing the execution as pirates of persons so captured. Secretary FISH informs Minister ROBERTS that United States citizens have the right to carry on the high seas articles destined for the enemies of Spain subject to seizure of such as may be contraband of war, or to capture for violation of a lawfully established blockade. It is consequently hoped the proclamation will be recalled, or such instructions given as will prevent its illegal application to citizens of the United States or their property. A contrary course might endanger the friendly and cordial relations between the two Governments, which it is the sincere desire of the President should be maintained. Mr. HALL, under date of April 2, 1869, transmits a letter from Remedios, and says the majority of American merchants agree with the writer, who states that American born citizens were well treated by the Spanish authorities.

VALMASEDA'S PROCLAMATION.
Mr. HALL, to Secretary FISH, April 30, transmits Count VALMASEDA's proclamation of April 4, that every man over fifteen found away from home may be shot; that every unoccupied house and every house not flying the white flag may be burned, and that women living at home or with their relations may be carried forcibly to Jiguaní or Bayamo; also informing the Department that Count VALMASEDA was moving his forces into the country. Secretary FISH, May 10, 1869, protests in the interest of civilization and humanity against Count VALMASEDA's proclamation. Secretary FISH to Mr. HALL, May 11, directs him to make representations to the Spanish Government against Count VALMASEDA's proclamation.

GENERAL DULCE AND THE VOLUNTEERS.
Mr. PLUMB to Secretary FISH, June 2, states that the volunteers have forced General DULCE to resign. Mr. HALL informs Secretary FISH, June 3, of the lawless conduct of the volunteers at Matanzas. Mr. PLUMB, June 4, acquaints Secretary FISH of the deposition of the Captain-General. The insurgents he says, are mostly creoles. The Spanish residents, with the business and prosperity identified with the island, are dissatisfied with the conduct of the Government. They wish the war was ended. Those who conduct the war and hold the offices are sent out from Spain, and have no interest in the island. The Spanish residents, though disagreeing as to the future, have deposed General DULCE. They may do the same with the new Captain-General, if dissatisfied. The volunteers number about 30,000 on the island. Two thousand of them are in Havana. They are unpaid and furnish their own arms. The Government depends upon them to enforce its decrees. The organization is officered by men of position; the men in the ranks are reckless. The volunteers are intensely loyal. At present it is reported that negotiations are pending between the Captain-General and the Cubans. Mr. PLUMB speaks of the violence of the volunteers and the frequency of collisions and insubordinations, and gives an account of the events that preceded the resignation of General DULCE and his speculations upon what may follow.

THE SPEAKMAN AND WYETH EXECUTIONS.
Mr. PLUMB, June 24, incloses a letter to Mr. FISH from Mr. PHILLIPS, Acting Consul at Santiago de Cuba, giving information of the summary execution of CHARLES SPEAKMAN and ALBERT WYETH, citizens of the United States, and their dying declarations. Secretary FISH, Aug. 10, instructs Minister SICKLES to demand compensation for the families of SPEAKMAN and WYETH; to require that citizens of the United States shall be invested with as broad rights as those of other countries, and to protest in the name of the President against longer carrying on the war in this barbarous manner. Minister SICKLES incloses a copy of his note, Sept. 8, to Mr. BERGUEIA, as to SPEAKMAN and WYETH, &c. Under the instructions in Secretary FISH's note, a report has been called for in these cases and reparation will be made if the facts are as alleged. Mr. SICKLES incloses a copy of Mr. SILVELA's note and of his rejoinder. The Spanish Minister says SPEAKMAN was executed in conformity with law.

THE SEARCH OF AMERICAN VESSELS.
Secretary FISH, July 16, addresses a communication to Minister ROBERTS, calling attention to the Captain-General's proclamation of July 7 as to rights claimed over vessels of the United States on the high seas under treaty of 1795, &c. It assumes power over the commerce of the United States that can only be permitted in time of war. The United States will not yield the right to carry contraband of war in time of peace; will not permit their vessels to be interfered with on the high seas except in time of war. The treaty of 1795 confers no rights over vessels of the United States in time of peace. If Spain is at war, it should be known, in order that notice be immediately given of the restrictions that such state entails upon the commerce of the United States. Mr. FISH asks whether Spain recognizes a state of war as existing, and states that the continuance of the decree, or an attempt to enforce it, will be regarded as a recognition by Spain of a state of war with Cuba. Mr. PLUMB, to Secretary FISH, July 21, transmits the modification of the Governor-General's decree of July 7, as to the search of vessels on the high seas; also the general order of the Captain-General for the conduct of the war with more humanity.

THE SPANISH VIEW OF THE REVOLT.
Minister SICKLES, Aug. 12, to Secretary FISH, communicates his conversation with the Spanish Minister, saying:

"The Minister, interrupting me, as if he thought I had gone quite far enough for the present, at least, acknowledged the sincere and legal manner in which the Government of the United States had fulfilled its international duties in regard to the Cuban insurrection. In former days when the Pro-Slavery Party held the reins of power, there was some anxiety from time to time lest the recklessness of filibusters should involve the two nations in difficulty; but since the victory of the national cause the laboring people of Spain have come to regard the United States as their national friend. The common question was one of the utmost gravity and delicacy. It was the intention of the Spanish Liberals, who initiated and executed the revolutionary movements which have given to Spain its new political life, to make at the earliest moment provision for guaranteeing self-government to Cuba; but this fatal insurrection broke out the very moment when it was becoming possible to give to Cuba all the rights she desired. The cry of 'Death to Spaniards' was heard in Spain and it became impossible in the face of civil war to carry out the beneficent plan they had formed. The Liberal Party in Spain finds itself, to its own infinite regret, forced to a seeming sympathy with the revolutionary party in Cuba, and the Liberals of Cuba, who ought to be the firm friends, are converted by the fatality of the situation into its bitterest enemies. There is no sentiment dearer to the hearts of the Liberal leaders than that of freedom to all men; yet they sinew themselves being

the world in this Cuban conflict as opposed to self-government and resisting the abolition of slavery. He considered the insurrection as a most deplorable misfortune and mistake, both for Cuba and Spain. If a way could be found to settle all these questions in such a manner as to justice to Cuba without infringing upon the honor of Spain, the Government would be greatly gratified. There is no intention or desire among the Liberals of Spain ever again to work the Island of Cuba on the old slavery system. It has been their constant wish to grant to the Cubans the administration of their own affairs and the full favor of their own liberty, preserving their commercial connection and some shadow of their political relations."

GENERAL PRIM'S VIEWS.
Minister SICKLES to Secretary FISH, Aug. 14, incloses article 108 of the Spanish Constitution about Cuba. Mr. SILVELA regards it as preventing action upon Cuba till Cuban deputies arrive at the Cortes. Minister SICKLES also communicates, Aug. 20, a conversation he had with General PRIM, in which the latter said, with great earnestness and emphasis:
"Let the United States be assured of the good faith and the good disposition of Spain. Formidable as the insurrection may become, it has not yet reached the proportions of any of those conflicts in which Governments have found themselves constrained to treat during hostilities. The Cuban insurgents hold no city or fortress. They have no port, no ships. They have no army. They do not presume to offer or accept battle, and now, before the period arrives for active operations, when Spain will send the ample reinforcements she holds in readiness, it is only necessary for the Cubans to accept the assurance of the United States, given on the faith of Spain, that they may have their independence by laying down their arms, electing their Deputy, and declaring their right to be free by a vote of the people."

Minister SICKLES again writes to Secretary FISH, Aug. 21:
"The President of the Council said, 'there is a vast difference between the present insurrection in Cuba and the revolutionary movements by which the Republics of the American Continent gained their independence. In those days negotiations were resorted to, after campaigns had been fought, and battles lost and gained. They had armies in the field and organized Governments supporting them. We see nothing of this in Cuba; only mere roving bands, who fly when they are pursued, and have never been found in number sufficient to give or accept battle. It is very possible that in the lapse of time the insurrection may become more formidable. It may raise armies, it may take cities and fortified towns, it may demonstrate what has not been before demonstrated—that it is supported by a majority of the population. In that case Spain will have something tangible to treat with. But we hope to avoid all this bloodshed, disorder and ruin by making some amicable arrangements now.'"

ANNEXATION AND INDEPENDENCE.
Minister SICKLES to Secretary FISH, Aug. 24, says:
"In general I find less susceptibility to the idea of a transfer of the island to the United States than to a concession of the independence of Cuba. There is an apprehension that the persons and property of the Spaniards in Cuba would not be safe under Cuban control. This impression I hear prevails in Catalonia."

BELLIGERENT RIGHTS.
Mr. ROBERTS to Mr. FISH, Sept. 18, submits various considerations and arguments against what he understands to be the settled purpose of the United States to accord belligerent rights to Cuban insurgents. Mr. FISH replies under date of Oct. 13, and, after stating that Mr. ROBERTS' letter was not received until Sept. 25, when just leaving Washington, says:

"It might be sufficient answer to say that no intention to grant belligerent rights has been announced; it is a more perfect answer to say that no such intention has been reached by the United States. Mr. FISH is pleased that Mr. ROBERTS draws his authorities from the history and the statesmen of the United States, and reminds him that Spain conceded belligerency to the South sixty-six days after the bloodless assault on Sumter. The United States have frequently remonstrated, in the interest of humanity, against the manner in which the Cuban contest is waged. The present state of affairs cannot be indefinitely prolonged and the United States reserve the right of future action. Unlawful expeditions in aid of the Cuban insurgents have been planned and one succeeded, but the United States has always been ready to act on information furnished by Mr. ROBERTS, and has acted on such information even when it has proved erroneous."

EVIDENCE OF A STATE OF WAR.
Copies of a number of affidavits submitted by Messrs. LOWRY and EVARTS to establish the existence of a state of war and an independent Government in Cuba, are furnished with a letter dated Dec. 15, from Mr. LOWRY to Mr. FISH, stating that the Attorney-General had declined to consider said affidavits good evidence, and had clearly expressed the purpose of the Government.

Arrival of the Crew of the Lillian at Savannah—An Appropriation by the City to Send them Home.

SAVANNAH, Ga., Dec. 20.—The United States flagship *Severn* Rear-Admiral POOR, of the North Atlantic Squadron, arrived off Tybee Bay yesterday with the officers and crew of the Cuban privateer *Lillian*, who were captured by the British authorities and released. They were brought from Nassau, N. P., by the United States steamer *Powhatan* to Key West, and there transferred to the *Severn*, by which steamer they were brought to this point. The steam tug *Christiana* brought them to this city yesterday afternoon. This morning the City Council held a meeting, and appropriated a sum of money to send the released men home. Most of them are from Northern States.

CUBAN MAIL NEWS.

By the arrival of the steamship *Bienville* at this port we were in receipt, last night, of late mail intelligence from Cuba. Purser ALEXANDER once more aided the prompt transmission of the TIMES correspondence, printed below.

The Slavery Plot—Rods to the People—War News—More Troops from Spain.
From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Thursday, Dec. 16, 1869.
The project of reviving the slave trade, of which I made an extended mention in my last, has received a terrible blow in its infancy. The subject was too tempting a bait for the Liberals, and the pamphlet was so palpably wicked that it even failed to meet the unanimous approval of the Diario party. The Captain-General appears to have been taken in; he now explains himself officially to convince the people that he neither approves or could aid such a plan as that proposed by the Sparrowgrass party.

The following is his letter on this subject:
His Excellency the Captain-General having learned that a certain plan of Dr. ESPARRAGO is circulating in Havana, stating to have been approved by the authorities, it is hereby proclaimed that said project has not the General's approbation even in thought or practice, and that said Dr. ESPARRAGO has only been authorized to communicate his plan in a private manner. CESAREO FERNANDEZ, Secretary.
Exit ESPARRAGO and fellow slave traders; may they soon be Christianized and civilized, and may the signers born in Cuba remember that they are not Cubans, and not recognized by their fellow countrymen as such, while the world at large will look on the whole slave trading crew with the scorn and contempt they so richly merit.

WAR NEWS.
A résumé of the operations carried into effect during the past week will show no really decisive results favorable to either of the combatants, save in a negative sense, in which view the advantages are undoubtedly in favor of the Spaniards. President GRANT's message, the release of the gunboats, the almost daily arrivals of reinforcements from Spain, the dry cool weather with the consequent prospect of an active campaign—all these causes tend to render buoyant the hopes of *los Peninsulares* in Cuba. In the Eastern Department General VALMASEDA, after the different actions on the banks of the Cauto River during the last days of November, continued scouring the hills and mountains adjacent, and captured a rebel partisan named CODINA, among others of minor importance. Colonel CAMARA assisted by Colonels HIDALGO and RABOUL, with some 2,000, took by storm the intrenched insurgent camp at Mogota, with, as they claim, but small loss to their troops, while the rebel loss was heavy. Cubans do not deny the main fact, i. e., the capture by the troops of the intrenchments and camp, nor that their loss was great, but say they yielded to superior force, and not then till Spanish soldiers dead and dying laid in heaps in front of the ditches. General VALMASEDA is making vigorous efforts at Santiago de Cuba to clean out *once more* the rebels that won't stay away from between that city and Manzanillo. General PUELLO is heard of but little. Strong parties from his command have plenty to do guarding the Nuevitmas and Puerto Principe Railroad, while he with several regiments, of which 1,000 to 1,200 are sick in hospitals, remains at Puerto Principe, subject to orders from General CARBA, the new commander of the Central Department. At Enernojada, on the Sagua Railroad, the mounted rural police destroyed some huts made of palm leaves that were being occupied by rebel families. The insurgents in their faling cane fields have continued

themselves mostly to the neighborhoods of Trinidad and Cienfuegos.

MORE TROOPS.
A Spanish transport landed to-day 1,133 volunteers from the Province of Catalonia. This afternoon they are running about the streets of the city like a parcel of half-crazy beings, looking up countrymen among the shopkeepers and tradesmen of Havana, which is no difficult matter, for they are a handy, patient, frugal, industrious race, foremost in every trade and occupation in Cuba. *Los Catalanes* are known as the Yankees of Spain, though their habits of economy and patient toil for years to be enabled to then gather the ripe fruit of their industry, would put Yankees to blush. The Catalan Volunteers, with bare feet half covered with hempen sandals, pantaloons of striped linen, with the bottoms inclosed tightly by russet-colored leather leggings fitting to the ankles and reaching nearly to the knees, a red sash about their waists holding their shirts down, and the whole attire finished off by a long red woolen clownish-looking cap—such is their uniform—look comical enough. UASIMODO.