

CUBA.

ARRIVAL OF THE HAVANA STEAMSHIP COLUMBIA.

The steamship *Columbia*, which left Havana on Jan. 1, reached this port yesterday. The purser is once more entitled to our thanks for the prompt delivery of our letters and papers.

Carlist Plans—The Military Situation—Island Parties—The Casino Espanol—Who Rules Cuba—Advice to Prim—War News and Miscellaneous Intelligence.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Jan. 1, 1869.

There is every reason to believe that the climax of the revolution is fast approaching and that the fate of the island and its future destiny will not be solved by arms but by diplomacy. When some weeks ago I informed you that the Carlists were at work here and gaining proselytes in addition to the immense number they reckon already in their ranks, the generality of the people smiled at the assertion, simply because their information and the means of acquiring it did not extend beyond the confines of their home or the columns of the *Diario*. Perhaps they do not know that such influential Spaniards as DURANONA, ZULINTA, CARRERAS, PADRO, MORER and many others have always been members of the Carlist party. The people in Europe are better informed, and the Bourbon party, or rather that of ex-Queen ISABELLA, has become alarmed, and, in order to increase their effectiveness, they have sent the ex-Governor of Havana, GUITERREZ DE LA VEGA, as a Commissioner. This gentleman has already begun sounding and finds that he has to contend with the Casino Espanol, which will not listen to VEGA, whilst such men as the above mentioned control its acts, and may at any time pronounce in favor of Don CARLOS—that is, whenever a revolution breaks out in Spain. The Captain-General and nearly all the employes belong to the so-called *progressistas*, or Union Liberals, involved in the September revolution and acting in concert with SERRANO and PRIM. It is asserted that, within the next two months, RODAS will be elevated to a Dukedom and be hereditary Grandee of Spain of the first class. All the military leaders, who belong to this party and were sent from Spain to this island, whence all had to return in disgrace, have received favors and a higher rank in the service—such as BUCETA, PELAEZ, LESCA and others. VALMASEDA, who is a strong partisan of the ex-Queen, and who has done more work than the rest of the Generals, remains as he was, and, if his stubbornness had not compelled him to remain at Bayamo and defend himself at all hazards, there is very little doubt but what the actual Government would have been rather pleased to see him defeated than otherwise.

But there is still another and more important question to be discussed behind the scenes—the early cession of the island to the United States. There is hardly any doubt that the actual Government in Spain is in treaty with the insurgents and the American Government. To mention this fact openly would be the signal of their downfall, and the immediate entrance of Prince ALFONSO as future King of the Spaniards, with CERSUNDI as Regent during his minority. There is only the diplomatic way to arrange and finish the Cuban question; mere feats of arms will not do it, and although the war bulletins give almost daily accounts of skirmishes and engagements, the end of the rebellion is as far removed as it was a year ago. Over 34,000 men have arrived from Spain since the beginning of the revolution. Many Spaniards and Cubans have died since then, but I cannot see any material change in the situation. Only three months are left the troops before the climate puts an end to military operations, and there is no evidence that the troops can master the revolution in that time. The soldiers are perhaps the best in the world, and their discipline and bravery cannot be surpassed; but they have to fight too many enemies, the most terrible of all being the Medical and Quartermaster's Departments and that inveterate pursuer of Europeans, Yellow Jack. Slight advantages have been gained lately, (given under the caption of war news,) but the seat of Government or rather the headquarters of the insurgents remains at Gualmaro, and the troops have not yet taken Cascoro, Sibanicu, Guamarillo or Palo Quemado, although all these places are within short distances of the Spanish strongholds, Puerto Principe, Ciega de Arila, Nuevitas and Las Tunas. Naturally, the Spaniards must have work enough within the immediate vicinity of their strongholds, without the necessary elements to extend their field of operations. Time will tell, however, and that shortly; if the Spaniards don't quell the insurrection before the 1st of April, they never will.

REPUBLICANISM.

Speaking about the different parties I omitted the Republican Party, which exists, but dares not acknowledge its existence openly, because the populace considers the Republican Party of Spain and the insurgents in Cuba one and the same thing, although they have but one idea in common, that of improving the people and doing away with old abuses and prejudices.

THE CASINO ESPANOL.

But the strongest party here, and one composed of men belonging to the different parties of Spain, is the association known as the Casino Espanol. It in reality governs the island, and, if any reforms are granted by the Captain-General, the Executive Committee of this Casino has nearly always been consulted previous to the adoption of the measure. It has been known for some time that the Casino sent a lengthy statement to PRIM on the 15th of November last, but until this week the document was not published, the members of the Casino having sworn not to divulge its contents. This document is of paramount interest and importance, as it shows conclusively the aims and objects of the Spaniards in Cuba, their views and ideas. The following are extracts from the letter to PRIM:

* * * "The creation of the Casino Espanol of Havana is the result of the closest union between the Spaniards, it being the centre of all noble sentiments and ideas and that whence incessant action departs towards the end we desire. And as the Government here cannot alone and by itself determine all reforms or solve other questions, we beg to advise your Excellency of the necessity not to decide upon anything prematurely, in order not to effect the close union which exists here at present. Your Excellency is well aware that this island, owing to its peculiar circumstances, cannot be governed like the peninsula. The Government over which you preside has been too lenient, and we all have deplored this clemency, which may, however, do well in Spain. The Casino also objects strongly to the Cuban Clubs in Spain, and requests that the Government punish the journalists who are writing so freely under the protection of the laws of Spain. We have learned with astonishment that a Spanish journal has spoken about the sale of the island, and are aware that you will not consent to it. If at some future time another Government should be compelled by the misery of the mother country to offer this island for sale, we will state that the Spaniards in Cuba may be conquered, but never sold; Cuba will remain Spanish, or else we will leave it converted into African ashes."

The document then continues to state that notwithstanding the reports to the contrary, the Spaniards are anxious to reform the existing Government, and desire a good administration; it regrets that the events on the island have created the so-called Spanish party, and that the larger majority of native Cubans is with the Spaniards. This is false; not over five per cent. of the Cubans are with the Spaniards, and if the corrupt and stupid aristocracy of wealth or title be deducted from this total, but few native Cubans will be found among the Spaniards, although some of this class are also to be found among the Cubans. The assertion that they will have Cuba converted into African ashes is another proof that the Spaniard born in Spain and the Cuban born in Cuba are about the same, and that their train of ideas and aims runs in the same direction. Incendiarism and cruelty are peculiar properties of the race, and unless the Anglo-Saxon element preponderates to such an extent as to defeat and neutralize its many peculiar characteristics, it would be a matter of general benefit to either leave Spaniards and Cubans altogether alone in the island, or else to take the island and compel them to live according to American laws and ideas. CADADAS' and CESPEDES' incendiary proclamations both find an echo in the assertion of the Casino, all men here know how

to destroy; but they need the Anglo-Saxon race to teach them order and how to maintain it.

INCENDIARISM.

The *Gazeta* publishes a lengthy order from RODAS intended to prevent incendiarism and fires. The most important points are:

"Planters will inform the authorities of the number of armed men on their places; all armed persons will require permits from the Captain-General; the owners and overseers on each place are ordered to report to the authorities immediately any disturbance on their places or in the vicinity, or else be liable to be tried as accessories to the crime. The employes on the plantations may detain any traveler who may be found on any plantation without the permission of the owner, and conduct him to the nearest authority; and also such as may be found about the places talking to negroes or Chinese. The roads to the places will be barred during the grinding season, and carrying of matches or smoking in the vicinity of the sugar house is strictly prohibited. Fifteen metres of space must be cleared all around the plantation, and the cutting of cane will begin around the mills and purging houses."

This order, if properly carried out, will prevent the total destruction of any plantation which may be set on fire either purposely or by accident.

WAR NEWS AND MISCELLANEOUS.

Engagements in the Cinco Villas are increasing in number, and if the telegrams are correct, the Spaniards have gained some slight advantages, but not a sufficiency to amount to much at present, unless the murdering of men should continue to a great extent, and thus deprive the Cubans of fighting men and abettors. About seventy-five insurgents have been killed during the week, and a hundred and fifty have presented themselves to solicit pardon. To give the same old details of these skirmishes would be uninteresting. The result summed up is, a few Cubans killed, the troops, according to their own story, always victorious, and the insurgents remaining in the field as before. Letters from Trinidad and other points announce, however, that the insurgents have been compelled to abandon their encampments in the immediate vicinity of the cities, their posts being now about two miles from the towns.... A number of insurgents from Puerto Principe are marching towards Sancti Spiritus, and another from Villa Clara in the same direction. It is rumored that CAVADA will place himself at the head of the combined parties to attack some of the Spanish detachments and destroy the plantations in the Valley of San Luis.... Many plantations in the jurisdictions of Trinidad, Cienfuegos and Villa Clara have begun grinding, and out of the 160 plantations in the jurisdiction of Matanzas 140 are at work. The Governor of Matanzas has issued an order requiring all citizens to deliver up their arms within twenty-four hours; if after the expiration of that time a house is reached and arms are found the owners will be tried by Court Martial.... Mr. PLUMB, ex-United States Consul, returns today to the United States. The merchants signed a letter, thanking him for his conduct while in office.... The Cable Company have made a reduction in their rates to the United States.... The most daring and successful leader of guerrillas in the Spanish army operating near Santiago de Cuba, is Major FRANCIS O'CALLAGHAN, an Irishman, who has been a merchant in Santiago. Several of his relatives have joined the army and the Cubans call him the ferocious Irishman.... New Year's was celebrated last night by a conflagration, supposed to have been the work of an incendiary. QUASIMODO.

Another Cuban Expedition—Departure of the Transport *Bedcol*—She Carries Ammunition and Arms—Three Cuban Privateers at Sea.

The English brig *Bedcol*, which has been lying at Pier No. 47 North River for some time past, was chartered by the Cuban Junta, it appears, to carry arms, ammunition and men to Cuba. She is a Clyde-built brig of 200 tons burden, and sails well. She came to this port in the first place from England, with an assorted cargo consigned to a prominent firm in New-York. It was discharged and the vessel repaired, after which it was reported that she had changed hands and hereafter would fly the American flag. A cargo was then put on board of her for Nassau, it was said, but in reality for the Cubans. Her destination really is Cuba, on the coast of which at the same place as, and under the convoy of the steamer *Anna*, the privateer whose departure was announced in these columns, her freight is to be discharged and transferred to the filibusters. It is believed that there are three Cuban privateers at sea to cooperate with and protect the *Bedcol*. The vessel does not go to sea entirely unprepared to do battle for her own safety if need be. She carries a crew of eighty men, two-thirds of whom are Americans, the rest Cubans. On deck, amidships, are two pivot guns, which can be worked if necessary. Her cargo consists of 102 cases of guns, 900 cases of cartridges, 25 cases of miscellaneous ammunition and 340 kegs of powder. Yesterday, at 4 P. M., she went to sea with an American clearance and under the American flag. Everything that could be done to keep the object of her voyage secret was attempted by the Cubans in this City. They are working hard to aid their struggling friends, and their operations are not confined to New-York alone.

The Spanish Gunboats—The Vessels Leave this Morning—Rumors of Mutiny Among the Firemen—Desertion from the First Squadron.

The Spanish flotilla lying off Staten Island were to have departed for Havana yesterday at 2 P. M., but their supply of fresh water did not reach them until a late hour in the afternoon. The water boats were brought alongside of the vessels and the work of filling up the tanks was carried on until a late hour last night. At sundown the *Isabel Catolica* hoisted the signal to prepare for sailing at 7 A. M. to-day. It was answered by each vessel of the flotilla and they will probably get under way by that hour. This flotilla will proceed to Havana, and will not put into any port on the route, if possible, to prevent the desertion of any of the firemen, who have, as already stated, received their advance wages. Some of the men of the first squadron that left this port did desert. The vessels put into Charleston, where a number of the Americans got leave to go ashore. Having received their due bills before leaving, which, a week having elapsed since their departure from New-York, were cancelled, the men thought it was a good chance to make a short and remunerative trip. Some of them returned to New-York, and applied for positions on board of this section of the fleet. They were recognized by Mr. PENTZ and rejected. Nothing was done to punish the deserters.

Rumors of mutiny on board the gunboats were circulated on Tuesday, but the truth is that no such thing occurred. It appears that two of the assistant engineers on gunboat No. 24 wanted to come ashore for the purpose of signing their contracts with the Spaniards and to obtain their due bills. They were refused permission by the officer commanding the vessel, who, not understanding English, thought that the men had already received their money, and only wanted an opportunity to desert. In consequence of some display of impatience on their part, the officer put them under arrest, from which they were released at the solicitation of Mr. REXNOLDS, of the Delamater Iron Works. The men were afterwards discharged and others shipped in their places. The men, however, were not unwilling to go in the fleet, and applied for transfers to other gunboats. The Spaniards refused to take them at all.