

## CUBAN AFFAIRS.

### Matters at Puerto Principe—Engagements, Surrenders and Prospects—News from the Cinco Villas.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Tuesday, May 24, 1870.

After an ominous silence of a week, we have of a sudden been flooded with a mass of war news, its very quantity as given by the Puerto Principe journal, and the cautious official dispatch, making its value extremely doubtful. Private letters change the official version considerably, and as the former are written by Cuban sympathizers and the latter by Spaniards, both being interested parties, it is extremely difficult to get at the exact truth. A close examination of both versions and the testimony of an eye-witness enables your correspondent to furnish as reliable an account as can be obtained. All accounts however, agree in the main fact, that the insurrection in the Camaguey district is no longer powerful, although sufficiently strong to hold out for a long time to come against the Spaniards, and that the principal families who, until the present, had cast their fortunes with the insurgents and suffered great hardships, have been compelled by general want and misery, and by the active movements and persecutions of the troops, to abandon their male relatives and seek comfort and shelter under the protection of the Spanish troops. The insurgents have their hands full in defending themselves from the attacks of the troops, and are not sufficiently strong to protect their families at the same time without exposing them to unnecessary and incessant danger. The Spaniards see the early closing of the rebellion in these surrenders, and they are partly right; but the surrender of armed insurgents is really very small in extent, and bears no proportion to the number of aged women and children who have taken this course. It appears that the insurgent leaders accompany their families close to the Spanish lines, and then return to the woods; but this proves also that the insurgents have no fear that their families will be treated with violence or insulted by the Spaniards. Hence we see that the charges of cruelty and of the assassination of women and children made by prominent Spanish and Cuban organs against their respective opponents are greatly exaggerated, and only written and invented to produce effect abroad and arouse sympathy for one side and hatred toward the other. I do not mean to say that either Spaniards or Cubans are guiltless of cruel and sanguinary acts, examples to the contrary are only too numerous; but the real truth has been magnified and distorted by partisans. The insurgents and their families who surrendered in the Camaguey are well treated and not molested by the Spaniards, but this does not apply to any prisoners whom they capture. In the field only does the black flag fly; if a prisoner's life is spared for the moment, it is only in order to find out something from him, and to execute him afterward at leisure, and at the same time afford the generous public a little diversion, *vide* the cases of GOICOURIA, of the AGUIROS, and of the seven men to be executed today at Puerto Principe. But I must recur to the operations effected in the Camaguey region, giving them without the usual extras, as they appear in the island journals, and limiting myself only to the gist of the matter. The column of Col. BERGEL, over 400 strong, returned to Puerto Principe on the 15th bringing sixty-five so-called *presentados* (voluntary surrendered persons, generally women and children.) BERGEL left Fort Minas, on the railway line, on the 12th, arriving on the following day at the Saramaguaran plantation situated on the banks of a little stream bearing the same name, which had been transformed into a regular river by the recent rains. On the opposite shore the Cubans had thrown up a poor breastwork, from which they fired on the troops for a little while. A portion of BERGEL's command crossed a short distance below, and the opposing forces, numbering only about sixty, who had observed the maneuver, abandoned their position and allowed BERGEL to cross. One Spaniard and two Cubans were killed in this encounter. BERGEL continued his march, a tropical rain falling all the time, to Las Calabaras, where a slight skirmish took place, and three Cubans and two Spaniards were killed. Thence BERGEL marched to the Laguna and Riosero plantations, the latter the property of the Cuban General Porro. Here they found some sugar and salt, which was destroyed, with some parts of the machinery, to prevent the Cubans from using the engine. Four Cubans and one Spaniard were killed during this march, and a number of families, composing sixty-five persons, taken to Puerto Principe, the column being harassed until within a short distance of the city. On the 17th, BERGEL returned to Las Minas. The combined columns of Cols. CHINCHILLA, FAJARDO and MONTANA left Puerto Principe on the 13th, numbering about 1,100 men. The roads were almost impassable, and the troops could only move forward by superhuman exertions. Five Cubans were killed on the first day, the combined columns arriving at Cirga de Najara on the 14th, where they captured ten and killed three insurgents after a sharp but short engagement, the troops losing two killed. On the 15th, the columns of BEMBETA and AGRAMONTE began to harass the troops, and but slight headway was made, the troops encamping on the Quemado, having killed that day a Quartermaster and three other officers of the Cuban forces. A short distance from the Quemado the insurgents under BEMBETA had hurriedly erected an entrenchment, and, as usual, when BEMBETA commands, the resistance was tenacious and firm. The troops made four distinct attacks on the breastworks, and were repulsed every time, when Col. CHINCHILLA, one of the bravest officers in the Spanish Army, a nephew of SERRANO, and only thirty-one years of age, placed himself at the head of his battalion and, with a shout, attacked the intrenchments. The soldiers did not heed the flying bullets, but followed their Colonel, and in less than five minutes the intrenchment had been taken, the enemy retreating quickly and the troops pursuing. But the attack had cost the Spaniards dear, Col. CHINCHILLA falling severely wounded, other officers and many soldiers being wounded, and seventeen killed. A portion of the command made a *reconnaissance* on the following day, destroying some huts and provisions of the enemy, but without meeting any insurgents. The troops captured an American horse in the engagement on the 16th, said to be the charger of Gen. IGNACIO AGRAMONTE, and some articles belonging to BEMBETA. The Spanish column reached Puerto Principe on the afternoon of the 19th, bringing Col. CHINCHILLA and the rest of their wounded with them. Later telegrams, dated from Puerto Principe on the night of the 22d, announce that Col. FAJARDO's column had returned, having killed seventeen and captured six insurgents, and bringing 140 *presentados*, among them men of some importance, who had fought in the ranks of the insurgents, such as the families Guzman, Varona and Sanchez Recio. The night previous, fourteen persons presented themselves at the volunteer fort on the outskirts of Puerto Principe, consisting of Ex-Major-Gen. MANUEL ARTEAGA BORRERO and family, and FRANCISCO DE QUESADA, alias Pancho Iobabo, a brother of the ex-Commander-in-Chief. A correspondent of the *Voz de Cuba* adds that these persons report the insurgents flying in all directions, and that the most complete anarchy reigned among them.

#### THE CINCO VILLAS,

especially about Sancti Spiritus, are as disturbed as ever. The insurgents appear to go and come as they please, and, although the Spanish journals are pretty silent, enough is known to convince even the most credulous that the work of pacification has not made much headway in that region. QUASIMODO.