

## CUBAN AFFAIRS.

### ARRIVAL OF THE STEAM-SHIP BIENVILLE.

The steam-ship *Bienville*, from Havana July 13, arrived at this port yesterday. We are indebted to the purser, Mr. A. T. ALEXANDER, for the early receipt of our mail packages.

**The Slavery Question — A Political Change in Prospect — Cuban Representation in the Cortes — Its Probable Results — A Spanish Frigate in Sinking Condition — The Panama Cable — Miscellaneous.**

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Wednesday, July 13, 1870.

One of the most feasible, humane, and at the same time judicious plans regarding the institution of slavery in the Island of Cuba, is under consideration, and no doubt will be adopted. The action of the Cortes and the proposed law to abolish Spanish West Indies slavery, would not be productive of any good results, either to the planter or the negro. A document was forwarded by the last Spanish mail steamer to Cadiz, signed by many of the wealthiest slave-owners in Cuba, and approved by the Captain-General, wherein the following propositions are made: All slaves at present existing in the Island of Cuba, irrespective of age, sex or color, to be registered; slavery to disappear altogether in ten years, by freeing one-tenth the number of slaves every year, by a drawing or lottery, of one-tenth of the number of names, the owners be recompensed by an amount for each slave not exceeding \$400 out of a fund to which every slaveholder shall contribute proportionately, the country at large contributing one-fourth, if the people should so decide. This plan has met with some opposition, because it was considered the work of a clique representing but a small portion of the slave-owners, but in order to grapple more fully with the question and place it on a secure footing a general meeting, called by the Captain-General, was held at the Palace on Monday noon. The Captain-General presided. There were over 150 of the most prominent and wealthy slave-owners, both Cubans and Spaniards, present. Several speeches were made, but in order to secure direct and immediate action, a Committee of twenty-five was appointed, who shall receive all plans proposed and report the essence of all to a general meeting, whose action shall be submitted to the Spanish Cortes for approval. A few ultras were chagrined at the anxious desire of the majority to get rid of slavery in a becoming manner and at the earliest moment.

#### ELECTION FOR DEPUTIES.

The slavery question, which was the cause of the war between the North and South, and produced the important social and political changes which have taken place in the South, will also be the cause of a great political change soon to be inaugurated in the Island of Cuba, namely, the presentation in the Cortes of Spain. The step which has been taken thus far, has been a letter from the Captain-General to the Government in Spain, announcing that the time has come to hold elections for Deputies in this Island, and giving as the principal reasons the decline of the revolution, and the possibility to hold elections undisturbed almost in every section of the country, excepting a few mountainous districts, and besides the importance of dealing with the slavery question. The latter cannot well be solved without some legal representation, or an appearance thereof, of the people of Cuba. There is therefore only one thing requisite to the holding of the election, namely, instructions from the home Government as to the manner of holding the elections, and a definition of those entitled to vote. The importance of the coming election cannot be too highly estimated, as it is likely to effect a complete revolution in Cuban affairs. In the first place, it will break the autocratic power of the Captain-General, not as commander of the army, but as the Civil Chief, or Supreme Governor. He and other high functionaries will be careful as to their deeds and misdeeds and be subjected in future to the scrutiny not only of the Cortes, but also of the people who will insist on having justice and equal rights, should they be denied by the authorities of the Island. It will also place the Cubans in a different position. Unless they should abstain from voting, they greatly outnumber the Spaniards, and are thus enabled to send a hostile delegation to Congress. Well-informed and thinking people believe that in according an election for Deputies, the Spaniards will effect more toward pacifying the insurgent districts of the island than they can by the efforts of the army. The reasons are obvious. Many Cubans at present hostile to the Government would become either neutrals or adherents of Spain, provided they see that in future they will be treated and looked upon as citizens of the country, instead of being ruled as hitherto like inhabitants of a conquered country, or inferior beings to their fellow-citizens who were born in old Spain.

#### A SINKING FRIGATE—NARROW ESCAPE.

The Spanish men-of-war in this port were ordered on Monday morning to proceed to sea for heavy gun exercise. The *Almanza*, a beautiful wooden frigate of forty-eight guns, had barely left the harbor when it was discovered that she was leaking at a rapid rate and was settling down. In twenty-five minutes the water had washed the fires and extinguished them. The water continued to gain rapidly, notwithstanding the exertions of the crew at the pumps, and the fleet was signalled, and several ships took the *Almanza* in tow and steamed rapidly into the harbor, anchoring her near the dock, where the ship continued to settle down. A steam pump and several hand pumps, in addition to those on board, were immediately set to work, and the water kept from increasing. The frigate has not touched bottom. Her stores and guns, together with her masts and rigging, are now being removed, in order to lighten the ship. The reported cause is stated to be the breaking of the escape valve of the propeller. If the accident had occurred at sea, the frigate would have gone down within an hour beyond a doubt.

#### WAR NEWS.

The news from all sections of the country announces but few and only unimportant operations, although the Spanish columns are kept in almost continual motion, and quite a number of insurgents and Spaniards lose their lives every week. The weekly mortality by the bullet among both factions is from one hundred to two hundred men, exclusive of those who are taken away by disease. Gen. RODAS has pardoned nineteen insurgents, who were taken prisoners and sentenced to death at Puerto Principe. Gen. GOYENCHE has relieved PORTILLO, in the command of the Cinco Villas. VALMASEDA will make his head-quarters at Santiago de Cuba, and Gen. AMPUDIA, one of the best Generals in the Spanish army, has assumed command of the Bayamo, Manzanillo and Jiguani districts. In Havana the war is but little spoken of now, and if it were not for the continuous arrivals of sick and wounded soldiers, a person would be hardly aware of its existence.

#### THE PANAMA CABLE.

The cable steamers *Dario* and *Suffolk*, accompanied by the British gun-boat *Vestal*, arrived at Cienfuegos on Sunday. The Chief of the Panama cable expedition, Sir CHAS. BRIGHT, arrived here last night, accompanied by Mr. JAMES GALL, of Jamaica. The land line between Havana and Batabano is in perfect working order, and the laying of the cable between Batabano and Santiago de Cuba, and thence to Jamaica, will be begun immediately.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The news of an approaching war in Europe has produced great excitement in Havana. A member of the French Volunteer Legion has published a card in the *Diario*, desiring to be informed as to the status of Frenchmen in Cuba in case of a war, and hopes that his countrymen will be respected and treated as foreigners. That Frenchman is evidently scared, and has but little confidence in Spanish generosity....Sailing vessels are now arriving from different ports of the United States, having been kept on the banks by calm, some after a passage of over forty days....The steamer *Governor Marroñá* will make weekly trips to Cedar Keys, Fla., in connection with the Florida Railroad. Passengers will reach New-York by this line in less than four days.

QUASIMODO.