

## Determined Struggles on the Road to Las Tunas.

### The March of a Spanish Convoy Opposed by the Cubans.

### Valmaseda Promises Another Proclamation.

The steamship *Morro Castle*, which arrived here yesterday, brings us the following letters from Cuba up to the 15th, the date of sailing from Havana. Purser Albert will receive thanks for favors received.

**Passage of Convoy to Las Tunas—Severe Fighting and Loss of Officers—Nothing yet Heard of Puello—The Spaniards Fear a Disaster—Official Reports from Various Points—Combined Operations Against Camagüey.**

HAVANA, Jan. 15, 1870.

Through Spanish sources we learn of the arrival at Las Tunas of the convoy which recently left the Cauto river for that place. The account is contained in correspondence of the *Diario de la Marina*, dated Guamo, the 2d inst., and is so incomplete as to leave considerable to the imagination of the reader. The force accompanying the convoy was very considerable, subdivided as follows:—The vanguard, consisting of one regular and one volunteer regiment, one piece of artillery and twelve riflemen; the centre and guard of the convoy was composed of the Marine battalion and two pieces of artillery, the rear guard of eight riflemen, one piece of artillery, a company of marine infantry and the battalions of Havana and San Quintin, all under command of Colonel Velasco. Lieutenant Colonel Enrique Boniche, the hero of the fight at Las Tunas some months since, was with the column, and commanded the rear guard.

As on the previous passage of a convoy the insurgents had opposed an obstinate resistance at a point called Miquiabo. A reconnoitering party was sent out to that place, starting at dawn on the 27th ult. It arrived there without hindrance, but the advance had scarcely passed the river Aguas Blancas when the Cubans opened fire. A bayonet charge followed, by which they were driven from their intrenchments, when they moved around to the rear of the vanguard and opened a heavy fire, causing the Spaniards seven deaths.

The account in the correspondence here abruptly halts, and mentions those of the column who particularly distinguished themselves, and adds in general terms, that the enemy being dispersed along the entire line the force returned, arriving at its starting point at two P. M. Immediately on their return the colonel gave the troops an extra ration of wine, and issued an order complimenting them in the usual bombastic manner. It is evident that this reconnaissance is the advance of the convoy referred to in private advices from Manzanillo, mentioned in a previous despatch, and from which, owing to the determined opposition of the insurgents, it was compelled to return. The 20th was devoted to rest. At twelve (midnight) of that day half of the regiment of España moved out on the road to Las Tunas, and joined the convoy at six in the morning—evidencing that it had before started from Guamo. The march commenced immediately, and continued without obstruction past the point of the reconnoissance on the 27th. On reaching Ojo de Agua the enemy opened fire on the advance, from behind some intrenchments, but fled before a bayonet charge. Thence to Las Arenas there was very little firing. Here camp for the night was established. The following morning at dawn the march was resumed and the river Arcuas was passed without a shot; but at the point called Cañon de las Arenas a severe fire was opened on the left. The first, second and third companies of the regiment España successively charged with the bayonet and succeeded in driving the insurgents from their position, losing a captain wounded and an ensign and soldier killed. The march then continued without obstacle until the plain of Muñoz was reached. Here the insurgents had concentrated in large numbers, but were put to flight as usual. At three P. M. the vanguard arrived at the Plains of Piedra and were there fired upon by the insurgents stationed on an elevated point. The inevitable bayonet charge followed in which the Spaniards had one officer and one soldier wounded and one sergeant killed. One hour afterwards the train entered Las Tunas. The insurgents kept up a desultory fire on the rear guard, but without result.

On the 1st the convoying force started on its return, accompanied by fifty six persons from Las Tunas. It was harassed at various points all the way, now on the right and now on the left. In the pass Las Arenas the Señorita Mercedes Varona, who was accompanying the column from Las Tunas, going to Manzanillo, was shot in the heart. At half-past three P. M. of the 2d, the column arrived at La Avanzada, near this place (Guamo). The convoy carried 30,000 rations, material for 20,000 more and 100 quintals of *casajo* (jerked beef).

The steamer *Noctezuma*, from Nuevitás and other points on the coast, arrived here yesterday morning. Data from Nuevitás and Puerto Principe to the 12th make no mention of Puello and his column, and nothing whatever had been received there. The *Diario de la Marina* says that a rumor was in circulation in Nuevitás that Puello had encountered the insurgents fortified in an estate called Zaldivar, a short distance from Gibanica, and had routed them, causing 560 deaths. There was no base for the rumor, however, and it may be doubted if it existed. Whether for good cause or not some of the more thoughtful Spaniards are a little fearful concerning this commander and his force. He had with him but eight days' rations, and up to the 12th had been out eighteen days. True, he might manage to subsist on the country, but only with great difficulty, and it is known that he was marching through the country occupied by the largest and best equipped force of insurgents in the island. It is, however, useless to speculate at this time, as a few days will doubtless bring news of him.

The report of the commanding general of Holguin, under date of the 3d, says that all that part of this jurisdiction comprehended in Bariay, Sama, Bijaru to the encampment of Tacamara (where the report is dated) and to Barajagua remains free of insurgents. Small bands are in the vicinity of the river Nipe and about 100 men under Maximó Gomez are in the mountains of Gulral, Camasau and Baguano. "All the others have fled affrighted before our brave troops in the direction of Las Tunas." Seventy-two deaths in the roads are reported, among them an apothecary of Holguin, D. José Guerra Almaguez, President of the Revolutionary Junta in this jurisdiction. Among the prisoners is mentioned D. Bernardo Millares, formerly Secretary of the Lieutenant Governor of Holguin before the war, and who commands the forces in Yeguita. He was shot. Also D. Eladio Cabrera, secretary of the Junta in this jurisdiction. It was found necessary to abandon Bijaru on the 21st of last month, but a strong force had been sent to reoccupy it. Two thousand persons had presented themselves since last report, but no men in arms are mentioned. There had been some difficulty in sending supplies from Holguin to the troops at Tacamara.

From Santi Espirita we learn that Goyeneche is extending his lines from Ciego de Avila to Puerto Principe, intending to co-operate with Puello. From his report, dated at the former place on the 6th, it would seem that the insurgents in that jurisdiction were also reduced to small bands, to suppress which no co-operation with wagons would be thought necessary. No operations of moment are reported. Some points in the mountains had been reconnoitred and a few killed.

Lopez Camara, in Santiago de Cuba, as says the *Foz de Cuba*, is also extending his lines to Camagüey. A letter from the former place, dated the 5th, says that the insurgents recently attempted to surprise the detachments of troops nearest the city, but were driven off. A number of the Spaniards were killed.

The *Bandera Española* announces that the commanding general (Valmaseda) will soon report to the Captain General the complete pacification of the territory within his command. The insurgents under Figueroa, Marmol, Gomez, Rustan and others have been completely dispersed or driven out of the jurisdiction, and there remain only very small bands of malefactors, against which the government is launching various detachments of brave soldiers for the completion of tranquillity.

Ferrer, from Puerto Principe, reports a few small affairs, giving them a most undue importance, as is evident from the tenor of private advices received here.

From the official reports sketched it would appear that the additional 1,000 troops which recently started from Spain will not be required to suppress insurrection.

The *Imparcial* states that Casilda, who supports Trinidad, is the refuge of many persons who support the insurgents of the jurisdiction with many articles, and it is suspected that they facilitate by sea intercourse with those of Santi Espirita.

The *Aurora* of Matanzas has a communication from Sagua La Grande announcing the capture of the chief called Ferralengo. A convoy of provisions moved out from Santa Clara on the 13th to supply the forces in Manicaragua, Canniato and the detachments in the vicinity. A notice has been received here from the Pinar del Rio, where the volunteers of Havana are protecting estates, that some ten or twelve persons in that locality have been arrested. The cause is not stated; but as these volunteers are given to executions, which they consider "service to the country," they will probably be shot.

The third battalion leaves this city to-day to relieve the first in that locality.

Much activity is observable in the arsenal here in completing the fitting out of the gunboats.

### Military Operations at an End in the East—Review of the Campaign—Nothing Accomplished—The Insurgents as Strong as Ever—Disgust of the Catalan Volunteers.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Jan. 7, 1870.

We have no further military operations to record. The Spaniards claim that the insurrection in this locality is suppressed and it is hinted that the great Valmaseda is about to announce officially that peace is restored within his command. Were this true it would be a fitting termination to the campaign inaugurated by so great a flourish of trumpets some weeks since. In reviewing it, having for a base the accounts furnished through Spanish sources, it is evident that absolutely nothing has been accomplished toward ending the insurrection. A considerable number of encounters have taken place, but, gratifying them all the importance claimed for them by the Spaniards, they have been nothing more than encounters, and of no practical importance whatever. The principal fighting has been in the Mogote, where the insurgents had an extended line of fortifications; these the Spaniards claimed to have taken. Allowing this to be true—which is by no means certain—it was with insignificant loss to the insurgents, who, if they have not reoccupied their old positions, simply have not chosen to do so, there being nothing to prevent them. Neither there nor elsewhere have the losses of the insurgents sensibly diminished their numbers; no leaders have been killed or captured; the few who have presented themselves have been, from their character, age or sex, of no use as soldiers. So, if they have been compelled to move from one place to another it has not been to the diminution of their numbers, struggle or powers of resistance. In the face of these facts, which come to us through Spanish sources entirely, it can be seen with what truthfulness the Spaniards claim the complete pacification of the district. Meanwhile their own hardships and the peculiarities of the climate and from bullets, have far exceeded their enemy's.

The reported capture and execution of Jesus Perez, one of the most able of the insurgent leaders in the Cauto district, resolves itself into the murder of some members of his family, including, it is said, a child five years of age. This is in keeping with the policy indicated by an eminent Spaniard at the opening of the insurrection in the remark, "The safest way of getting rid of lions is by killing the whelps." The government organ is, the *Bandera Española*, is a firm supporter of this policy, as it needs must be to represent the people among which it exists. It devotes a few paragraphs every day to an amateur conscription list which its editors keep and which comprises principally women, who it demands of the government should be sent either to an asylum for prostitutes or to Fernando Pó. It has thus far failed in having its demands carried out, but last night succeeded in exciting a mob against an estimable family here whose house was surrounded, a most hideous row created and the ladies insulted with filthy and disgusting language. This grew out of the fact that one of these ladies smiled at the rather ostentatious display in church of a ribbon of the Spanish colors made by a lady to show it had been presented by a Catalan volunteer, on the occasion of the reception of the battalion here.

The Catalans are in the country and are very much disgusted. Thirty of them recently deserted and came here without their guns, which, they vaguely say, they left somewhere in the country. They assert that they were cheated into coming here, being led to believe it was quite a different style of warfare from the reality. On the occasion of their leaving some of the more knowing ones declined to go altogether, and it was only with the greatest difficulty that they were found and forced into the ranks.

Yesterday was King Conro day, and Valmaseda in person chose a king for the negroes, who, it appears, are more easily suited than the Spaniards.