

**Valmaseda an Aspirant for the Captain Generalship.**

**Intrigues in His Favor—De Rodas Growing Weary of Them—His Reported Defeat—Latest from the Camaguey—Bloody Encounter in Trinidad—Insurgents in Cienfuegos—Council of War—Insurgents in Sagua la Grande.**

HAVANA, April 23, 1870.

For a considerable time intrigues have been carried on here having for their purpose the elevation of the Count Valmaseda to the position of Captain General. Originally an Isabelino and sent out here by the unfortunate Queen he has seemed to realize that his only hope of being retained in position or for advancement was in remaining constantly in the field. Since his departure from here in November, 1868, he has visited the capital but once, and then but for a few hours and in order to confer with his superior. His operations in the field and particularly the sanguinary disposition he has shown in the Jiguani massacre and on other occasions, has made him very popular, particularly in the eastern end of the island, where he has been *féted* and feasted *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*. Indeed, there and elsewhere in the island his name has come to excite the utmost enthusiasm. As it is known that De Rodas is the right hand man of Prim and is very popular with the army, his recall has been expected in order to assist Prim in maintaining his supremacy at home, and great efforts have been made by the friends of Valmaseda to accomplish his succession. During his absence in the country his wife has remained here, and has used such influence as she could wield to win over the more prominent officials to the cause of her husband. In this, however, she has not been successful, as Valmaseda, independent of his connection with the old régime, is not regarded as possessing either the judgment or capabilities for the post. The Countess recently left for Spain, doubtless in her husband's interest, after an interview with him at Manzanillo.

While little is positively known, it has long been whispered that the feeling between the Captain General and the Court was never very good, and there is good authority for saying that the former has become weary of the plots and intrigues concerning his succession. As the result of this it is stated in the streets and generally repeated among the Spaniards that Valmaseda has been relieved and ordered home. Connected with this story is news concerning the recent defeat of the troops under his command near the Cauto. The details of the engagement, in so far as they have reached us, are already familiar to the readers of the HERALD. It is evident they had nothing to do with his belief, as the order, if issued at all, must have come from Spain, as in the present condition of affairs here the Captain General would hardly assume the responsibility of relieving him from his command.

It is now known that his Excellency, the "First Authority," will not return from Puerto Principe as soon as he anticipated. Evidently the work of suppressing the insurrection does not go on as bravely forward as was hoped, necessitating a probable stay of from four to six weeks. Meanwhile and during his absence everything remains very peaceful and well ordered here, rendering his presence not at all requisite.

The government officials in the cities bordering on the insurrectionary districts are much disturbed on account of the large number of women and children either coming voluntarily or brought in, and who have to be fed. A great moral effect has been attempted from the *presentados* who were only a burden to the insurgent's in arms, and now the government binds itself very much in the position of the man who drew the elephant. Rations are necessarily dealt out to satisfy immediate want, and in the vicinity of Puerto Principe the lands which have been embargoed or abandoned are to be let to the use of those who will cultivate them, the first year for no rent, and thence forward for one tenth of the products paid to the government or proprietor. Similar or other means are being adopted in several localities to bring the land again under cultivation, and as no change of season intervenes here this can be very quickly done.

The latest piece of information to which his Excellency, the Captain General, has treated us, is through a telegram of date the 21st, which says:—"The column of Colonel Aguilar has caused the enemy fifteen deaths and thirty prisoners; among them Prefecto, who will be shot to-day; 580 head of cattle were brought in. Manati has been occupied, and there have gone from here the materials and effects to establish the place and warehouses. Weather magnificent, health good." Manati is a small seaport east of Nuevitas, which was some time since abandoned by the Spaniards.

By the arrival of a coasting steamer at Bahama we have dates from Trinidad to the 20th. According to the *Imparcial* a bloody encounter had taken place between the contra guerillas "Gulas de Rodas" and the insurgent's on the high ground near the estate "Catahan." The former had been in pursuit of the rebels for several days without success, but finally captured a runaway negro, who guided them to their hidden locality. Extravagant accounts of the number of dead are given. The bodies were collected and laid in rows, but were not buried, as it was necessary to continue pursuit, which, however, was not continued. A woman was found who was charged to advise the insurgents to bury the dead. Another was seen running through the woods, holding up her dress, and was not fired at, which is wonderful. The names of the dead were not known, though it was thought, from papers discovered, one was a certain Fortun, from Puerto Principe, and another a man named Gomez. Later in the account it is stated that fifteen were killed and five seen to be wounded.

The same journal states that in the environs of the city and estates are being concealed a number of insurrectionists, who are employed in obtaining catanias, salt and other necessities. Another force had made a reconnaissance in the hills with favorable results, but the details are not given.

Dates from Cienfuegos are to the 20th. The estate "Cometa," belonging to Señors D. Manuel Rodriguez Somonte and D. Jose Vives, has been totally destroyed by insurgents. The small garrison upon it, consisting of seven mobilized volunteers and some of the employes of the estate, defended it for an hour, but could resist no longer, as the buildings contiguous to the small fort containing them were on fire. The same party carried off sixteen negroes from the estate "Flora," in the vicinity. On the 14th four of the Havana "bomberos," now stationed at "Las Lajas," not far from Cienfuegos, with an officer, started for this city to obtain some effects, and on their return were attacked by insurgents, who killed the officer and three men; the others escaped. Forces were sent out from Las Lajas, but the rebels had disappeared. On the 17th, as says the journal mentioned, at six in the evening, the horizon was illuminated so brightly as to cause a belief that it proceeded from the aurora borealis—a phenomenon seldom witnessed in this country. The Governor sent out twenty men to discover if any estates were on fire, who returned with the information that two cane fields on the estate "Josefa" were burning, causing the brilliant light.

The United States man-of-war Yacht "had" arrived at Cienfuegos, in furtherance of her mission of taking deep sea soundings between Santiago de Cuba and Bahama. Sr Charles Bright had also arrived there. It is understood there will be a station at Cienfuegos. The company to stretch the telegraph line on this island as possible, and would avoid it altogether were it practicable, owing to the unpertinent and vexatious interferences with the business of the company in which Spain, with her antiquated notions, is constantly indulging. A council of war was sitting for the trial of seven persons from Las Lajas, among them one lady and two boys of ten and twelve years old.

The gunboat Contramaestre has of late been guarding the coast on the south side, between Cape Cruz and the port of Santiago de Cuba. The mountains are in close proximity to the shore in that locality, and it is very favorable to landing, one or two of which have taken place there. A detachment was sent out at the points called Boca de Callo, Guanou and Papayito, and dragged a few old men, women and children from their homes.

A band of insurgents appeared near Alvarez, in Sagua la Grande, on the night of the 19th. This place is near the boundary of the jurisdiction mentioned and Colon, and not far from Macagua, the terminus of the railroad from Havana. The Governor of Cardenas sent out a detachment of the chapelgorins in pursuit.

A council of war sits in Havana to-day for the trial of D. Antonio Sirvent y Duran, charged with insurrection.

**Jordan at Nassau—Reported Capture of a Spanish Frigate.**

HAVANA, April 23, 1870.

The British gunboat Lapwing has just arrived here from Nassau. Her officers state that General Jordan, of the Cuban army, had arrived there.

A rumor is current here that the Spanish frigate Eleana has been captured in the harbor of Montevideo by rebel sympathizers, and it is said the Gerona will sail immediately for that port.

Rumors of a determination on the part of Spain to give up the contest in this island are current.