

## THE SITUATION IN PUERTO PRINCIPLE.

Effort to Close the Struggle—Conciliatory Policy—Address of Cubans to Their Brothers in the Field—The Campaign—No Fighting—Arrests—Retrograde Movements by Valmaseda—Insurgents All Moved to the Eastern Department.

PUERTO PRINCIPLE, April 21, 1870.

A great change has been wrought in this (the Central) department and city since the arrival of Captain General de Rodas. From the breaking out of the insurrection here in November, 1868, both have suffered comparatively more than any others. Before the Captain General reached here this once flourishing and lively town had the appearance of a cemetery. The streets were deserted, entire quarters of the city were abandoned, sickness in all its phases, want with all its horrors, desolation and mutual distrust affected in one way or another the whole population. Great and noteworthy has been the change. The conciliatory measures adopted are gradually restoring confidence, and the many and necessary reforms, supplanting the ill advised measures of previous governors, give faith and hope to those who doubted the near approach of peace. Hundreds who had shut themselves up in their houses now venture forth, and the grand plaza of an evening is gay with the crowds of people listening to the music. Many of those who had come in from the insurgents and accepted pardon, and did not venture to show themselves fearing insult, now go freely about and no one offends them. For all this the policy of the Captain General is entitled to the credit. There has come to be a strong desire for peace on all sides, and efforts are being made by those Cubans who remain in the city to bring the struggle to a close at an early date. They have issued an address to their compatriots and friends in the insurrection, a translation of which I append. It is signed by some of the few Cubans of distinction who still remain in the city, among them the father and father-in-law of Angel and Nazario Castillo, who have both lost their lives in this rebellion. Angel, who made himself most conspicuous in the beginning of the insurrection, was killed in an attack near Maort. I may remark *en passant* that his wife died on the 8th inst., a victim to grief. She took to her bed from the moment she heard of her husband's death, and lingered along, falling daily until she died. She leaves behind her five young children.

As to the campaign, columns are operating in every direction, though as yet without any palpable results. The country is being militarily occupied, garrisons being established at all the prominent points, from which the troops in small detachments persecute the insurgents. Columns leave and return to this city, scarcely ever exchanging more than a few shots with the rebels, who are divided into small parties in this jurisdiction and do not seem inclined to fight at present. In reference to the insurgents a Spanish officer recently remarked, "It is strange with what valor and enthusiasm these people die when caught and executed, and how cowardly they are in fighting."

It is rumored that negotiations of importance are about to take place, and undoubtedly efforts are being made to that end. Strong hopes are entertained by the knowing ones that these negotiations will prove successful. If not, and the Captain General's conciliatory policy brings forth no good results, we are promised war and coercion, though it is hard to tell how these are to be increased.

From Nuevitas I hear that out of the twenty-one lately tried by court martial there, six have been condemned to death. It is, however, rumored that Napoleon Arango is using his influence with the Captain General to have them more leniently dealt with, and, no doubt, he will succeed, as his Excellency is very benignantly inclined. More arrests have lately been made in that city, among them Don Juan Bayes and Don Augustin Alvarez. I regret to announce the murder by the Spanish troops of Don Pablo Villegas, formerly a merchant at San Miguel and doing business with some New York houses. He was at his plantation, "Santa Margarita," proceeding on the porch of his house, with two others, when a detachment of the Contra Guerrillas de Valmaseda rode up. He showed them his safe conduct from the Captain General, notwithstanding which he was bound and taken about half a league from the estate and then cut to pieces with bayonets. His wife and children were stripped and their clothing burned. The house, too, was fired. The Spanish story is that Villegas made use of his safe conduct to serve the insurgents, furnishing them with clothing and powder, instead of working in the interest of the government, as he agreed to do on being set at liberty by the Captain General when imprisoned at Havana.

As I close this letter I learn through a trustworthy source that Valmaseda has again made a retrograde movement toward Bayamo. It seems that two large parties of insurgents got in his rear and compelled him to change front. It is now stated that the great mass of the Cubans in the Cañabuy have gone to the Eastern Department, which accounts for the quiet here.

A Cuban, by name Varela, sub-prefect of the jurisdiction of Sibanicu, has been captured by one of the columns, tried by court martial and condemned to be shot. The column which brought him in saw several small insurgent parties, but they did not show fight. It executed five persons picked up while on the march.

## ADDRESS OF THE CUBANS.

The following is the address of the Cubans in Puerto Principe to their brothers in the field:—

COMPATRIOTS AND FRIENDS—It is now eighteen months since we have been contemplating, with an anxiety more of the heart than the head, the revolutionary movement of this department. Strangers to all sectional or political banners, with no passions or hatreds to gratify, with no other interest than that of peace, and as far from sympathizing with the insurrection as from applauding, without reserve, the action of the government, we have remained until to-day patient and mute spectators of the terrible struggle whose scenes of destruction and blood hold the country in consternation. But the revolution has continued, naturally bringing about a situation which involves the total ruin of the soil. The bloody drama of the insurrection of Camagney is approaching its solution, and our love of country, the interest of all, together with the ties of friendship and blood, impose upon us the duty of speaking to you in the supreme hour of danger. It is not the time to review actions, of which history will judge later. In referring to them we only wish to draw from them reasons which will serve to give resolution and determination to your conduct in the present crisis.

Excepting a few blind fanatics, your wish on the breaking out of the revolution was to obtain from Spain some enfranchisements and liberties which would make labor more productive and give more importance to the citizen. The rising of Cadix, breaking through secular traditions and creating a new political era in Spain, made practicable what before was impossible, and offered to Cuba more liberties than many of Cuba's best sons would have asked for her. The majority of the country was overjoyed with the event, and seemed to have no other desire than to see the reforms put in practice; but the few and badly disposed overcame the many and well-intentioned, as happens in revolutionary times, when the latter hesitate in their determination for want of union and character. Presumption and malice instilled words of falsehood in the ears of the innocent, and credulity and anxiety to improve changed the situation and accomplished the rest. You were told that Spain was impotent to grant her domination, that the United States, natural protectors of all oppressed people, and particularly interested in ours, would give you her aid. To be free it was only necessary that you should want to be so, as the sympathizers of the civilized world would be on your side. You fell into the temptation, and not listening to the advice of more than one of us, you launched into the struggle and lost yourselves, compromising the future of the country.

Impotent Spain has sent 40,000 soldiers to Cuba, and can send as many more as may be required, and to-day more than 80,000 men have arms in their hands, guaranteeing the nation's integrity. American assistance has reduced itself to mere complaisance in badly disguised plans to try fortune at the cost of others. Then hundreds of thousands of dollars have been consumed, taken away from our industry, and with the disappearance thereof also disappears the sympathies which were—like the American chiefs—bought with gold, and the Cuba of the patriot, the new political and social order, which should appear at the first blow of the sword from the first soldier of liberty, has become converted into chaos. Seduced by the startling vision of liberty, you threw yourselves after her without reflection, you said that you wanted to be free, and you commenced by calling to your aid a foreign country, which is an abdication of all dignity and a renunciation of independence. You make profession of republican faith, and without wishing it you have established the most absolute despotism. You proclaimed inviolable all rights, and circumstances have obliged you to respect none. You invoked material and moral progress in all its forms, and by an inconceivable mistake in sentiment and idea you have burned towns, desolated the country, caused a cessation of labor, stopped religious culture, related obedience and attacked the family circle. You rose in arms against the government to make the happiness of the country, and you have caused her only misfortune, as it is against her you have combated. Great, immense is the damage which has been done, but still greater is the one which now threatens, because all is not lost yet, and as animosity increases with strife and disasters, the means of destruction are multiplied and rendered more active. Believe us on our lips, this cannot be a threat. The government is getting ready to give the blow of grace in this department, after annihilating the insurrection in the Oriental Department and the Ciego Villas. An active and vigorous prosecution will make your rest impossible. Eleven thousand Spanish soldiers, anxious to terminate the factions, will follow you into the woods, overrunning the valleys to take all resources from you, a chain of iron will tighten your position daily, and will derive you of all exterior help and all hope of salvation. An honorable retreat is your only chance, now more than justified by circumstances. Give up, then, and say, imitating the great monarch who sent the "Invincibles," "We have not gone out to realize impossibilities."

Two things make men morally great—constancy in all good purposes and the recognition and retraction of errors. If you lose the occasion, make yourselves admired by all sensible men, lay down the arms which you should never have grasped. Properties still remain, as yet there are families, a patria still remains to be saved. Renounce the irrational purpose to seal one error with another and to abandon both with the ruin of the country. Retire to your homes, so that joy may again light up among you, so that you may again see the green of our fields, peace in the cities and abundance in all parts.

Your brothers, ruined by the war, call you to participate with their poverty, and the government which you have offended and combated extends a generous hand and offers you forgetfulness of the past and prospects in the future. God has not wished that in Cuba there should be misery without war. Come and make peace and join the government in the reconstruction of our common country. Under

the shade of authority and law all passions will be calmed, confidence will be reborn and enjoyment return with the gifts of liberty and order.

The presence of the General Caballero de Rodas in Puerto Principe is a happy circumstance, of which you should make use. He has guaranteed life to you if you lay down your arms, and we respond that there is no grace which does not fit in the nobleness of his character and the elevation of his political ideas.

CARLOS VARONA Y DE LA TORRE.  
MELCHIOR BATISTA Y CABALLERO.  
PEDEO DE AGAERO.  
MARTIN CASTILLO.  
FRANCISCO DE QUESADA GUERRA.

PUERTO PRINCIPLE, April 10, 1870.