

A FOREIGNER AMONG THE INSURGENTS.

The Character of Spanish Operations—Their Want of Success Explained—The Insurgent Mode of Warfare—Their Condition and Modes of Life—Heroism of the Cuban Women—Approach of the Rainy Season.

A gentleman, not a Cuban, recently arrived in this city from Cuba who resided in the island both previous and subsequent to the insurrection and became well acquainted with the character of the Spaniards and natives. He has had peculiar facilities for learning the style of operations and their results, the disposition of the leaders and the customs and mode of life of the people in the insurrectionary districts, hemmed in as they are by the Spanish military and marine forces. He was at one time with the insurgents, though not serving in their ranks, and was among those who on a certain occasion found it convenient to present himself for fear of a worse fate. After many difficulties and dangers, which it were not prudent to recount, he succeeded in making his way to Havana, and thence to New York. With no interest in the success of the insurrection beyond what every republican should feel for a people struggling for liberty, he has recounted a plain statement of facts, which, while it does not place the Cuban cause in as favorable a light as its friends could wish, plainly demonstrates that the insurgents can continue their present style of warfare for an indefinite period, and that the suppression of the insurrection is at all events a thing of the remote future.

In an interview with our reporter he started off by saying that the prominent Spanish leaders and officials, from the Captain General down, are greatly deceived, not only as to the details of the operations in the insurrectionary districts, but as to the results of them, and consequently do not comprehend the actual situation. There are two reasons for this:—First, the chiefs of columns, who are naturally ambitious of satisfying their superiors and accomplishing their own advancement, are accustomed to make the most exaggerated reports of their doings and successes. Innumerable encounters are reported, based only on the killing of a few innocent country people or the firing upon an imaginary enemy in the woods, and a march of four or five days, which is actually barren of results, is represented as prolific of most important successes. In the second place, entirely erroneous ideas are entertained of the feeling and condition of the people owing to the false representations of Napoleon Arango and others, who are anxious to justify their own recreancy and please the Spanish authorities.

The winter campaign in the Camaguey under Puello and Goyeneche was an entire failure, not so much owing to the disastrous defeat of the former by Jordan on the 1st of January and any military operations against the latter as the utter inability of those leaders to find any enemy to attack, though the enemy really existed and always appeared somewhere when it was possible to do the Spanish cause an injury. The Spaniards were in despair when the Captain General arrived at Puerto Principe in March. Though he inaugurated much greater activity, improved the condition of the city and by his favorable reports of affairs inspired confidence, he has done little more. The insurgents may have been disturbed at various times in their encampments, many innocent persons certainly have been killed or captured and called *presentados* and this is the sum. The number of killed and captured of insurgents in arms since the arrival of the Captain General in Camaguey would not make up a respectable corporal's guard. Those of the insurgents proper who are killed or taken are of the class known as *Mijas*, from a certain kind of snake—men who abandon the party to which they belonged, despairing of success and anxious to separate themselves from the insurrection, and fearing to surrender or ignorant of the method of doing it. These are occasionally surprised, captured and killed, and, aside from the non-combatants, these only.

The cause of the barrenness of operations is that the Spanish columns as a rule never leave the roads, the exceptions being when they are led to some encampment or rendezvous by a *presentado*, but this is seldom. The contra-guerrillas sometimes deviate a little from the road, but never far enough to accomplish any practical result, fearing ambuscades. Generally, however, some objective point is laid down—a rancho or estate, for example—and the direction taken at once indicates this to the insurgents, who quietly keep out of the way. Often a column will pass within sight of a considerable body of Cubans with no suspicion of their whereabouts. Arrived at the point a short rest follows, and the return is made by the same route. More than this the columns cannot do. Worn out as the men are by the fatigue of marching under the broiling sun, it is all they can do to march along the beaten roads, the game of hide and seek with the rebels in the woods being entirely impracticable, and not likely to have important results if it were. The fruitlessness of the operations has been demonstrated in the Eastern Department, where Valmaseda commands. That officer has, and justly, won the execrations of mankind by his wholesale butcherings of non-combatants; yet it is true that he has done the insurgents more injury than any other man in the island. From the first he adopted the system now in vogue in the Camaguey of sending out columns to hunt through the country, and as the result claimed, with what seemed to be truth, that he had cleared the districts of Santiago de Cuba, Bayamo, Holguin and others of insurgents, and completely pacified them. True, it was known that very few insurgents were captured or killed, yet they had disappeared from their old haunting grounds, and that was accomplishing much. Of late, however, the insurgents have returned to these jurisdictions. Modesto Diaz is running over Bayamo. Marmol is in considerable force in Santiago de Cuba. Peralta is still active in Holguin, notwithstanding his reported defeat; and Valmaseda, who claimed to have his end of the ship at anchor and was quietly moving up to Puerto Principe to see how his superior was getting on, was compelled to turn tail and hurry back with all speed. In his reports, too, he far surpassed De Rodas in the number of victories pretended, and with him too great capital was made from them. Whatever the number really was it is now certain that it indicated nothing, and thereby the insurrection was not at all weakened.

As it well known the policy of the insurgents is not to fight. It is a mistake to call them cowards. When called upon to do so they will stand up manfully and be shot at, or readily charge upon the Spaniards, despite their superior armament; but they have very express orders not to fight, to keep out of the way, the leaders realizing that no good can result from the killing of a few on each side, and are satisfied with the continued wearing and expensive operations the Spaniards are compelled to keep up, and by which they are hopeful of tripping out their enemy. At present they are awaiting the rainy and sickly season, close at hand. Already the Spanish soldiers are beginning to feel the effects of the climate. Even during the healthy season they have been fearfully decimated. Many of the battalions which came out last fall have not half their complement of men for service. The insurgents say, "Once let them get their feet wet and we have nothing more to fear from them during this season."

In the central and eastern departments are long ranges of lofty hills hardly of sufficient altitude to be called mountains. These are covered by virgin forests, through which there are no roads nor pathways. Here the insurgents have retired, safe from the pursuit of the columns, which seek to penetrate where they are only in rare instances, and not until, under the system of outposts, abundance of opportunity has been afforded to escape. Here are Cespedes and the members of his government, certainly not fugitives wandering from place to place as has been represented. Here are many of the more prominent families of Puerto Principe, such as the Molinas, Adanae, Agramontes, Reclus, Betancourt and others. They live in guano huts, numbers of which are built in different places, in order, if compelled to vacate one by the approach of the troops, they may find shelter in others. Here ladies, born to wealth and accustomed to every delicacy, to whom even the mildest labor was unknown before the war, cook their own food, and, from the scantiest materials, prepare the clothing of themselves, their fathers, husbands, sons and brothers in the field. No greater heroism was ever displayed than here. From these delicately nurtured women, living in the woods, ostentatious with no more clothing than modesty demands, no word of complaint is ever heard, and the suggestion of submission made by the dearest friend would only be met with scorn and indignation. They are not unhappy. Indeed, they profess and seem to be perfectly content. One might fancy that the old wandering instincts of the Indians, whose blood flows in their veins, had been brought to the surface, and away from civilization, under the bread canopy of heaven, and the very trees through which their ancestors roamed, they had found that happiness unknown before and which the advancement of the European never could give them.

The extent of country in which the insurgents are is very great, covering vast leagues, to occupy which it would require many times the number of troops now on the island. As is known, the Cubans have manufactories of various kinds, and many of the necessities are supplied by them. Tanneries have been established, and an excellent quality of leather is made. There are but few shoes, however, as mechanics are very scarce. Sandals are generally adopted. Powder in small quantities has been manufactured, but under difficulties, owing to the want of material. With them, as ever, necessity has been the mother of invention, and the makeshifts which have been resorted to are wonderful. Salt is no longer a scarce commodity, as it is made in abundance along the coast, and is sold at three dollars per hundred weight; sugar has been manufactured on a few estates, and is sold to the people for a reasonable price. Our informant mentioned that many articles of necessity and luxury had been furnished the Cubans by the Spaniards at various times. But he, upon being asked if such Spaniards were officials or private parties, he became reticent and said did not care to speak further on the subject. The great want has been of clothing, of which there is some, but a very small supply. It can be

obtained, but only at a price which places it beyond the reach of all but the wealthy. The currency in general circulation is of the notes of the republic, samples of which were shown our reporter. They are of different sizes, according to their denomination, and were evidently engraved in this city. There is, however, a large quantity of gold among the people.

Our informant had learned while in Puerto Principe that a quiet but very strong effort was being made to bring about the presentation of some of the more prominent and popular leaders preparatory to officially declaring the insurrection closed. He was very certain it would not succeed. He referred to the fact that the Captain General had revoked all permissions to reside in the country, and commanded everybody to come in before the 1st of June under penalty of being considered enemies, and stated that the soldiers were under the impression that after the date mentioned they were privileged to kill every person met on their marches, and he was certain that they would do so irrespective of age or sex. Fortunately, however, the rains would prevent their going about much. The barbarities which have been so often referred to he fully confirmed, and said they were like to increase rather than otherwise. He added:—"The course of statesmen is often incomprehensible, but how the civilized nations can stand by and see such horrible cruelties practised is wonderful." The Cubans are fast becoming as bad as their enemies: at first they were inclined to be merciful, and the prisoners were not only spared but well treated; many of them were released, though it was known that they would be compelled immediately to take up arms again. This has changed now, owing to the utter want of every sentiment of humanity manifested by the Spaniards, and one of their seldom falls into the hands of the Cubans save he is executed at once. There are, however, certain of the leaders who try to avoid this, but with little success, as their death is demanded in retaliation. Among these are mentioned Vicente Garcia, Cornelio Dorro and Bernabe de Verona, alias "Bembeta." He saw Napoleon Arango in Puerto Principe. It was evident, he said, that he was despised by every one save the Captain General, who had built up great hopes on his influence in bringing the insurgent leaders to submission. He evidently was deceived as to the position Arango occupied in the insurrection. He is a man of small vigor and determination and was not at all trusted by the Cuban leaders. His manifesto had been scattered through the country, but excited only disdain. The reported death of his brothers was referred to. He thought this not improbable, but, if true, must have followed upon an attempt to present themselves.

In conclusion, he expressed the opinion that no capture of prominent leaders or presentations, short of all the principal chiefs acting in concert, would have any effect on closing the insurrection; "not even though Cespedes, Aguilera and his whole Cuban Congress were captured," he said. Cespedes had lost much of his prestige, he continued; but his name has become so identified with the insurrection that the moral effect of any change might be disastrous, and he would therefore continue to hold his position.

The Spaniards' War on Women.

An anonymous correspondent, writing from Havana under date of Havana the 18th, says that about half-past one this afternoon eight ladies, who were made prisoners in the Cinco Villas district, were marched unaccompanied through the streets of Havana to the prison. The writer says that this was a species of cruelty which even those holding the poorest idea of Spanish magnanimity believed the Spaniards incapable of. Every creole is regarded as a suspicious character, and consequently fears for the worst.

Another Account of the Execution of Golcoursia.

[From the Key West (Fla.) Despatch, May 14.]
By the steamer Florida, which arrived here on the 5th inst., we received a letter from Havana, dated the 7th, the contents of which we epitomize as follows:—To-day there has transpired an event which is the occasion of much mourning among the patriotic Cubans. Mr. Domingo Golcoursia was cruelly garroted yesterday on the outskirts of Principe fort, in the presence of some 2,500 criminals of the worst type. But that this martyr died game is attested by even these wretches themselves. The last words from his dying lips were cheerings for Cuban liberty. He was denied food during the two days preceding his execution, in order that his voice might be so weakened as to prevent his speaking on the scaffold. In spite of this, however, he had the power to articulate these words:—"I die for Cuba! because I am assured that she can and will be free! Free!—yes, at no distant day! I am rejoiced now in the thought that I have labored for Cuba for thirty long years. God bless and keep Cuba! Long may she live!" &c. Here the attending Catholic priest crammed his pocket handkerchief in the mouth of this brave man, whereupon the drums began to beat and then the iron necktie was adjusted to the throat of the victim. A few minutes and all was over with the noble man who freely gave his life-blood as a libation for freedom's altar.