

Antagonism Towards Captain General De Rodas.

Its Causes and Probable Effects—Excitement Over the News from Europe—News from the Insurrection—Insurgent Successes—Explosion in Havana—Criticisms on the Darien Expedition—The West India and Panama Cable.

HAVANA, July 13, 1870.

The capital of this Antille has remained quiet since the return of the Captain General. The *ayuntamientos* of the more prominent cities of the island have telegraphed their congratulations to his Excellency on his safe return from the campaign, and these have been published in the *Oficial Gazette*. Necessarily to the satisfaction of the loyal one would think, and yet though it were difficult to find its justification, the feeling against General de Rodas among the Spaniards in this city is very strong. This has its foundation—first, in his failure to suppress the insurrection, as promised, and the leniency in which he saw fit to indulge by pardoning certain insurgents or commuting their sentences. His escort, called "Guías de Rodas"—as say his enemies—report that in Puerto Principe he spared the rich and sacrificed the poor, leaving the inference to be drawn. Secondly, he has created many enemies in his efforts to initiate reforms and put a stop to the systematic robberies which have been so long carried on here. The Spaniards, holding official position in the island, come out from home for the purpose of making a fortune in the smallest possible time, and they are not delicate about the means employed. In his efforts the Captain General is met and opposed by some of the more prominent of these, whose place is secured to them by family influence or other causes, and who, devoid of all principle, pander to the baser instincts of the volunteers and stir up a feeling of antagonism against him. What follows is a "house divided against itself" in the government here, which must, sooner or later, fall, and either the Captain General or his enemies withdraw.

In common with all the world the intensest anxiety is felt here concerning the situation in Europe. The telegrams sent us are very meagre, and have done little more than excite curiosity and fear. The candidature of the German Prince is not at all well received here, and the leading journals, in discussing the question, unite in saying that Spain would obtain a sovereign at too dear a price if thereby was brought about a war between France and Prussia. It is thought General Prim has not yet announced the person who he really intends shall become King of Spain. It is stated that an election for members of the Cortes will soon take place here.

The news from the insurrection remains without special interest. The papers of the city having one week ago published an account taken from the *Bayamese Español* of a fight between the combined columns under Valmaseda and the insurgents, commanded by Modesto Diaz, this morning have an account of the same fight, taken from the *Voluntario* of Mansanillo, thereby creating the impression that a new battle has been fought and a new victory been won. In Santa Teresa, jurisdiction of Moron, the insurgents recently surrounded a party of eighteen Spanish soldiers, commanded by an Ensign Patiño, and killed every one of them. Their bodies were discovered a few hours after by a larger force, amid evidences of a very desperate conflict. At Trilladeritas, in the same district, a fight took place on the 11th, with results favorable to the Spaniards, as reported by them.

The Commanding General of Santi Espiritu, under date of the 6th, telegraphs that, on the previous day, 200 insurgents attacked the small village of Chambar and were repulsed with considerable loss by the garrison of the fort. Among the killed was a partisan chief. The insurgents burned some thatched houses in the outskirts of the place and killed two sick volunteers. The Commandant of Moron had gone out in pursuit. The Commanding General of Santi Clara telegraphs that information has been received there of the return of Bambeta into the jurisdiction of Puerto Principe.

A gentleman residing in Guayama Grande, recently arrived here, reports matters in a horrible condition in that locality. Bands of insurgents are moving about, taking every opportunity to attack the troops when in small numbers or at a disadvantage. No successful have they been in their operations that the Spaniards dare not go out save in detachments of from 100 to 500 men. They seldom encounter the insurgents in such cases, and to revenge themselves they pick up ignorant and innocent country people, whom they shoot and call incorrects. Slaves and Chinamen are closely confined to estates, and if one of them is found outside he is either shot or returned to his owner, who is mulcted in a heavy fine. A general reign of terror exists, and no one feels safe.

Brigadier Don Manuel Portillo has been relieved from command of the Cinco Villas at his own request, made on account of his health. It is stated that Brigadier Don Gonzalez Goyenechea will succeed him.

The following are on trial before courts martial for disloyalty:—In Matanzas, Don Solandro Dominguez, and in Cienfuegos Don Miguel de los Santos and his son Luis. On the 10th was shot in Trinidad Don Francisco Mendieta for the same offence.

Considerable excitement was caused throughout this city on Saturday evening by an explosion which took place in the sewer in Obispo street, in front of the Palace, and which was followed by another on Sunday morning. It was doubtless caused by a leakage from the gas-pipes, which cross the sewer and connecting drains at several points in the vicinity. It caused a noise like the firing of artillery and threw up the pavement of the street and walk in several places and also the tile floors of the coffee houses opposite, laid over drains leading into the sewer. Fortunately but one person (an American) was injured, and we but slightly. Naturally the rumor was started that it was an attempt of the Laborantes to blow up the palace, and several houses were designated as those from which the mining took place. The truth was, however, soon understood, and the excitement allayed.

Yesterday morning the frigates Almanza, Gerona and Saragossa (iron), the corvette Isabel La Católica, and three gunboats, intended to leave the harbor for a short practice cruise. While getting under way the Almanza (flag ship) having the Admiral of the station on board, broke her discharge valve about eighteen or twenty inches in diameter, and she began to fill with great rapidity. She was towed to a sandbank at the northeast corner of the bay, and there sank in shallow water. Had the accident happened an hour later this splendid frigate would, doubtless, have been totally lost. As it is, she can be put afloat again without great difficulty.

Men of science and practical knowledge of the subject express the opinion that the expedition sent out by the United States government to explore the Isthmus of Darien for a ship canal route has proved a grand fiasco, and not that a feasible route does not exist. As they say, the effort should have been preceded by a careful examination of the archives at Madrid having reference to explorations on this Isthmus, which can afford valuable information on the subject, and, as some of the more sanguine insist, will make success an easy matter. A knowledge of the character of the country, of the language, and, above all, the peculiarities of the climate is essential. That the expeditionists had not these is evident. On their arrival at Caledonia Bay, near the end of the dry season, precious time was lost in determining the geographical position of a spot which no one knew to a certainty would be the initial point of the canal. The wet season began and the route proposed was found impracticable. A hiatus in the rains, such as almost invariably takes place in that climate, followed, and advantage was taken of it to continue the effort. The condition in which the explorers found themselves when the rains recommenced shows how great was the lack of everything essential to success, and why the project was abandoned. It is believed here that a good practical engineer, with the knowledge obtainable before starting out, acquainted with Spanish, understanding the varieties of climate thoroughly and accustomed to it, could, with fitly men, easily locate a practicable line.

Sir Charles Bright, having in charge the laying of the West India and Panama cable line, arrived in Havana yesterday, and is making arrangements for the landing of the cable at Batabano, where it will be buoyed. He will then return to Cienfuegos. Twenty-five miles of heavy cable is now being coiled on board of two vessels of light draught from the steamer Suffolk. This is to be laid in the water at the head of the Gulf of Ozones, which is too shallow for larger vessels. Those containing it will be towed over the ground by two Spanish gunboats, which have been designated for that purpose. The ends will be buoyed. This accomplished the Suffolk will proceed to Rastabano and lay the cable to the western end, thus buoyed. The Dacia will commence at the eastern buoy and lay to Santiago de Cuba. After which the line will be laid to Jamaica. The steamers will then fill up with cable from the Medicine (salting vessel) and start for Aspinwall, laying it on their return to Jamaica. They will then take to board the steamer Bonaventura and lay to Porto Rico and St. Thomas. At the latter place the steamer Titian is ready with cable, and, together with the Ben Ladi at Barbados, has undertaken to complete the line through the Windward Islands to Demerara.

The cables at Cienfuegos will not be established for the present and until it shall be shown that the business will justify it. The Governor at Santiago de Cuba has ordered that the office of the company should be located in the government palace. This is, of course, a very desirable, and as he provisionally has a right to the concession, he threatened that if the company was insistent, not to hand at that point. The operations will be for the most part Eng-

lish and will receive by sound from bells, the new invention of Sir Charles.

On the arrival of the steamers at Cienfuegos a grand demonstration in honor of Sir Charles and the expedition took place. Never before had such heavy draught vessels entered the harbor, and they were for hours surrounded with small boats filled with natives from the shore.