

Spanish Ideas Regarding Probable European War—Slavery Question—Death of Mrs. Consul Biddle—Increased Wharfage Facilities for Vessels from Foreign Ports—War News.

HAVANA, July 20, 1870.

The Spanish element in Cuba treats the question of the expected European war cavalierly. Opinion is general that should the war begin Spain cannot be considered a party thereto. The light-skinned, blue-eyed Saxon refuses to link his destinies with his browner neighbors, descendants of those men who attempted to find it over his ancestors, this, doubtless, acting wisely, besides hugely pleasing the great majority of Spaniards, both in and out of the Peninsula, who, singularly, quite agree that in the matter of choosing a sovereign there certainly might be found a suitable man among themselves; and, verily, a nation, so many of whose sons have earned enduring places in history by reason of merit, ought to furnish its own ruler. These people know the value of biding their own time in business better than those of any other nation on the face of the earth, turning the delay to their own account. *Mañana*—to-morrow—is the first Spanish word a foreigner learns in Cuba, but sometimes they overdo the thing—precisely the case in the slavery question at present. Planters, sugar factors and all interested parties debate and wait. Meanwhile the rebellion continues, and the Peninsulares fail to avail themselves of the most powerful lever on the island—one ready to lift them from the mire of uncertainty—one, using which, would suppress, stamp out the insurrection.

A No. 1 negro sells to-day for less than half his value before the rebellion in the United States. "None so blind as those who won't see." White men have been employed on the wharves and on public works in Havana for many a year past, doing the severest physical labor, enjoying at the same time perfect health, and several sugar estates for some years have employed none but free labor, not Chinese, with good results financially. Freed men under a good administration would add largely to the productive capacity of Cuba.

Mrs. Sarah White Biddle, wife of the present United States Consul General in Havana, died Monday morning, July 13, at her residence in the Cerro, a suburb of this city, of yellow fever, after a sickness of but a week, and her funeral took place the same afternoon. The flags of the Consulate and American vessels in port were at half-mast. British Consul General Donlop read the Episcopal service at the residence in an impressive manner, the consuls of different nations residing in Havana being present, besides Captain General Rodas, represented by an aide de camp; Mayor Robert; General Rodas' political secretary, Mr. Cesario Fernandez; the Intendente, Mr. Santos, and many of the principal merchants of Havana. A procession of tropical flowers created a metallic column enclosing the corpse. A long procession of carriages filled with mourners followed the hearse to the cemetery, where the body was deposited in a niche. In accordance with custom no ladies were present. Mrs. Biddle leaves four children under eight years to mourn their irreparable loss. Scarcely does so imposing a cortege accompany one to Campo Santo in this city as in this case. Mr. Biddle has yellow fever, but is recovering, and will probably return north soon on leave of absence. The wife of General Carbo, second in command on the island, also has yellow fever, but is better to-day.

A junta of prominent merchants authorized to propose reforms in the Custom House met last Saturday at the Intendente's residence, with the object of creating greater facilities for discharge of vessels from foreign ports at different ports of the island. After much discussion it was decided to propose to General Rodas that vessels be allowed to discharge at the wharves in front of the Regia warehouses, bonding their cargoes there if desirable. This measure cannot be too much commended, as it will double the present facilities for discharging vessels from foreign ports. The wharf at Cardenas is also recommended to be lengthened. Loyal owners of properties destroyed by the insurgents during the insurrection are making a strong case, hoping to obtain indemnification from government, applying the proceeds of embargoed estates to that effect.

Mr. Salvador Casneros and Mr. Miguel Betancourt, members of the House of Representatives of the Cuban republic from Camaguey, the first acting as president thereof, have resigned, owing, it seems, to the fact that the House, after the previous resignations of Agromonte and J. S. Betancourt, saw fit to make some changes regarding the remaining deputies without calling an election to supply the places of the two who left. Dame Rumor says cruises with some South American flag are expected off the Cuban coast to annoy Spanish commerce.

Colonel Weyer, commanding the Valmaseda volunteer battalion, captured and shot the insurgent General Orduño, near La Soledad, and afterwards, on the road to Las Tunas, nearly captured President Cespedes.

Captain Thomas Bonza reports to General Valmaseda, July 1, that he met the insurgents at Pedro de Oro, surprising them completely, killing thirty-six, among them Major Antunez and Captain Jesus C. Jada, and captured in the surroundings fifteen soldiers.

In the Holguin district a fight lately took place, the particulars of which have not come to hand, though the result is said to have been unfavorable to the insurgents. Mayan letters of the 3d inst. report the death of Marmol.