

CUBAN AFFAIRS.

Zenea's Mission and its Results—The Situation—French and Prussian Naval Movements—The Culture of Sugar on the Island.

From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Jan. 21, 1871.

One of the most delicate questions to be solved, and one which must necessarily have a very important influence on the Cuban question, is one which I have refrained from referring to until now, owing to the fact that only speculations and rumors were in circulation. It regards the capture, imprisonment and future trial of Mr. JUAN CLEMENTE ZENEA, who was captured at the same time with Mrs. ANETA CESPEDES, by Col. VERGEL. Mr. ZENEA is a Cuban by birth, and has always held himself aloof from the dancing, lazy and cock-fighting portion of his countrymen. Endowed with great natural abilities and with an earnest desire to acquire knowledge, he was, at an early age, known as one of the representative faction of the enlightened Cuban minority, and devoted in after years his education and energy to the laudable end of raising the moral and intellectual character of a majority of his countrymen. The man's motives were always respected, and at the outbreak of the revolution he held a very prominent position. In common with almost every other Cuban, he had a great hatred for the Spaniards. He desired his country to be free, but knowing the weakness of an independent Republic, having the Central and South American Republics as living examples before his eyes, he very wisely chose the only safe and prudent course in advocating annexation to the United States, a country which he loved, and wherein he had resided. Until lately he did not play a very prominent rôle, but the advent of the celebrated NICOLAS AZCARETE soon brought him before the public, and ZENEA was chosen by AZCARETE, who held powers and instructions from the Colonial Minister in Madrid to that effect, to go to Cuba on the part of the Spanish Government and use his best efforts in making an arrangement with the Cubans in arms, treating in person with President CESPEDES and his Cabinet. That his mission was not from the Cuban Junta, but was of an official one, authorized by the Spanish Government, and of which the Captain-General and the Home Government had been informed, is abundantly proven by the fact that he received a safe conduct, signed in the name of the Spanish Government by Mr. MANRICO LOPEZ ROBERTS, the Spanish Minister to the United States. Mr. ZENEA ran the blockade safely, and soon reached Cuban Head-quarters; what he accomplished there or what he said, is a mystery, except from what can be gathered from his papers. On this the Spanish Government, or rather the Cuban authorities and volunteer element will judge and attempt to convict him. Some of these documents prove beyond a doubt that the Government in Spain has very different ideas about Cuba from the Spaniards residing here. The former recognizes that Cuba is lost and that the *fuero* is merely a question of months; the latter do not even dream of the possibility of the thing, not only on account of their patriotism, but because they actually are not aware of the real condition of affairs. The Court-martial to try ZENEA will undoubtedly be formed at an early day, and the principal charge against him will be that he failed to act as an ambassador of the Spaniards, that he was false to his trust, and that in reality he only acted as an emissary to and from the Cubans. Among the documents captured is one from President CESPEDES, which exhorts all Cuban representatives abroad to make every effort in uniting to have the independence of Cuba recognized, and to have all Spanish America unite against Spain, in case the latter should delay any longer granting Cuba her complete independence. Another document demands from Spain that in the event of the proposed treaty of peace being carried out, and if armed opposition to Spain should cease, that Spain should withdraw her troops three months after the signing of the articles, and not six months later, as proposed. This proves two things, namely, that the Cabinet in Spain is anxious to come to an understanding with a powerful adversary, and that the revolutionary party is much stronger and fuller of confidence than the Havana journals would like us to believe. At any rate, the trial of ZENEA is something more than the trial of a man; it will be the trial of a nation's representative, and although the messenger may have, and probably has, failed in the carrying out his instructions, the result will be such as to clear away the false notions which the Spaniards have of an early close of the war.

THE SITUATION.

As a rule, the Spanish Press, and even the correspondents of foreign journals, lay great stress on the revolution in the Central Department and Puerto Principe region, as if the strength of the revolution was in that quarter. If the revolution could be once subdued in the Eastern Department, that of the Central would be an easy matter. The Eastern Department can hold out longest and offer the stoutest resistance. The Cuban Army in that part of the island is, in the first place, mostly composed of negroes, who worked as slaves on some sugar or coffee plantation. If peace should be restored, or if they should be captured, these men would again be reduced to a state of bondage, be whipped and ill-fed, bought and sold like hog or cow; they know as much, though ignorant and brutal in every other respect. They are officered by competent men, such as DIAZ and others. These soldiers need no incentive to fight, and the blandishments and bribes, which, when offered, may be accepted by a white man of much or medium education, are entirely thrown away on the blacks. Next in importance to the insurrection in the Eastern Department is that in the Cinco Villas, especially Villa Clara and Sancti Spiritus, where a similar state of affairs exists, but where the material of the army is mainly composed of whites. The army of the Camaguey has by far the largest number of educated Cubans in its ranks. Nothing can be said at present as to the probable course of the war within the next four weeks; the mere recounting of marches and counter-marches, skirmishes and scrimages, does not amount to much, and although the counter-guerrillas will be very active, and may possibly capture some important civil functionaries or members of the Cuban Chambers, the war will simply continue, particularly as long as the Cuban party in Madrid retains as much influence as it does at the present day.

FRENCH AND PRUSSIAN NAVAL MOVEMENTS.

Havana is virtually blockaded by a French squadron, and the German steamers and ships run the blockade whenever they enter port. The Bremen steamer *Hanover* left on Wednesday noon, and at nightfall returned to the harbor, having sighted two French men-of-war, which had been signaled by the lookout on the Morro Castle in the morning. The new steamer *Kohn*, of the same line, had arrived the same morning without encountering any hostile ships. On Thursday, after dark, both steamers left, the *Hanover* for Bremen, and the *Kohn* for New-Orleans. A schooner which arrived here saw the *Kohn* going at full speed, estimated at twelve knots, and a French man-of-war, (probably the *Talisman*), about seven miles behind her, and going at the rate of ten knots. If both vessels keep up the same rate of speed the Frenchman will hardly eat sauer-kraut this time. The chase of these steamers was a lucky thing for the German bark *Alma Carr*, which arrived yesterday morning from Holyhead, after a passage of ninety-five days. She had every stitch of canvas set when she ran toward the port, and at the rate she went with a favorable wind even a steamer could hardly have caught her.

THE CULTURE OF SUGAR.

The planters are making strenuous efforts to continue the production of sugar in the same quantities as hitherto, but they see that the want of laborers will sadly interfere with them ere long. If most of these planters had the slightest idea of what conscience, humanity or fair dealing meant, they could undoubtedly obtain the necessary help from countries where labor abounds. Africa is closed against them, and neither the United States nor England are on that account ever remem-

bered in the prayers of the planter. The Chinese are not anxious to come here, because they are better treated, fed and paid in any other country. Therefore, the planters have put a new dodge, or rather an old one renewed, into operation, several companies having been formed to bring Mexicans from the peninsula of Yucatan as *colonos*, thus arranging for contracted labor but slightly different from slavery. The first few contracts will undoubtedly be signed in a spirit of equity, but it is equally certain that ere long the old practice of robbing young men and women will be put into practice, and people being afterward sold and resold like so many negroes. Some ten years ago the Mexican Government prohibited this traffic, and it behooves the same country to look out for the liberty and interests of its citizens now. Mexico has had a fair warning, as the official *Gaceta* publishes the advertisement of Mrs. FRANCISCO DIAZ TORRIENTE, CELESTINO DE LA TORRIENTE, ANASTASIO DE LE CRUZ GARCIA, MANUEL GONZALES PALOMINO and JOSE M. SALINERO, announcing that they will bring *colonos* from Mexico, and the consent of the Government to carry on this traffic is appended. Some of these names given belong to wealthy planters and old slavers.

QUASIMODO.