

## CUBAN AFFAIRS.

### ARRIVAL OF THE HAVANA STEAM-SHIP MORRO CASTLE.

The Havana steam-ship *Morro Castle*, which left Havana on Feb. 18, reached this port via Nassau, N. P., yesterday. By the courtesy of Purser R. W. ALBERT, our special correspondence was promptly at hand.

### The Curse of "Consejos"—Havana "Shoddy"—the Labor Question—The Persecuted Chinaman—Brief Mention. From Our Own Correspondent.

HAVANA, Saturday, Feb. 18, 1871.

All wars afford opportunities to commit frauds and do injustice. Numberless crimes and wrongs take place which are never punished, the law generally failing to reach the perpetrators; but it is very rarely that the Government of a nation appoints a Commission to rob its people or allow the most contemptible tricks to be perpetrated by its employes without taking any steps to check the abuse. Such is, however, the case in Cuba. I refer in this instance to the so-called Council of embargoed properties (*Consejo de bienes Embargados*.) which is beyond a doubt the best managed institution for the interests of the chiefs and employes and the worst for the Government or people, in the world. It is barely possible that the abuses committed by this *Consejo* could have gone so long unpunished did not the higher officials of the Government wink and connive at the process. That a regular "Ring" exists in connection with this *Consejo* is very well known, and this Ring is composed of persons in every rank of life. The seized property of the Cubans is simply a fee for the present, as but few estates have been confiscated. The products of these embargoed estates nobody ever hears of, and it is only necessary to drive on the *paseo* on a Sunday afternoon, and see the carriages which formerly belonged to the intelligent PONCE DE LEON, the would-be financier MIGUEL EMBIL, the erudite CISNEROS, the humane DELMONTE and the slave-driving ALDAMA, occupied by some Government employe, military official, or pompons-looking grocer, to be enlightened. The *Voz de Cuba* has taken up the cudgels, and belabors the *Consejo* as much as the censorship will permit, laying particular stress on the appointment of Mr. GEORGE CRABB, a quasi American, formerly the bosom friend of ALDAMA and chief administrator of his estates. CRABB is a very intelligent planter and is now holding a position as inspector of seized plantations under this same *Consejo*, at a salary of \$6,000 per annum, while other inspectors receive but half of that amount. It was rumored that the volunteers would make some collective demonstration against the *Consejo*, but those who are posted concerning Havana affairs, saw at once the impossibility of the thing. If the Casino which commands the volunteers does not do anything, the volunteers will remain quiet; most of the employes of the *Consejo* are volunteers or volunteer officers, and the Ring is principally recruited from the same element. Strong efforts are being made to seize all the embargoed estates and sell them for the benefit of the Island Treasury and reimburse the losses caused to Spaniards and loyal Cubans during the war, but VALMASEDA cannot countenance such proceedings at present, as they would destroy his plans and prevent many Cubans in the field and others now in foreign countries from coming again within the Spanish fold. If some of the New-York Cubans knew how many wealthy men have made underhand propositions to the Government through third parties, and have sounded the opinion of the Government as to whether they would be allowed to come back, be unmolested, and have their property returned, some astonishment would undoubtedly be caused. They see that no matter how the war may end they will be ruined, because the *Consejo* appropriates what the Government does not legally seize. The row which the *Voz de Cuba* has begun promises to be interesting, and if carried on with vigor some queer developments may be expected.

### THE LABOR QUESTION.

The problem of the future of Cuba, the labor question, is always on the tapis, and the most chimerical plans are proposed and resorted to to supply the want of field hands. Shades of departed slaves, what memories they awakened in the minds of the former slave-dealers and planters, and how they curse the nations which were instrumental in abolishing the traffic. The plan to bring Indians from Mexico must fail, because the Mexican Government, feeble as it is, can never permit that its citizens be sold into worse than slavery. Another project is to bring coolies from British India; but many planters say that they would never purchase any of that class, because the coolies would not allow themselves to be treated like negro slaves, and would undoubtedly rise when least expected. The latest plan is to import the subjects of the King of Anam, and the reason for their alleged usefulness and superiority is based on the fact that they are Christians. The introduction of a bona fide Christian element might be very beneficial to the island, as it is possible, although almost improbable, that the Anamites might convert the Cubans to Christianity. Else history would again repeat itself, and make Christians in the nineteenth century slaves of atheists and heathens. These are all plans, however, and none have been put into effect; therefore the planters try to make the most of the material on hand, and the manner of doing so is not particularly looked into. The Chinese who have served their contract time, (by no means a term of pleasure,) occupy themselves largely in trade or in commerce on a small scale. They have almost entirely absorbed the sale of cooked meats, the peddling of tin-ware, and analogous methods of earning a livelihood. As cooks the Chinese are preferred to all others, on account of their cleanly habits. Their bad habits are opium-smoking and gambling, and these vices are very prevalent among them. But I am wandering from the labor question. The *Voz de Cuba*, as the organ of the Cuban planters, published an editorial on Wednesday demanding a complete change of the laws and systems governing the Chinese in Cuba. The *Voz* wants some remedy against the demoralization of the Chinese, that is to say, against the running away of the Chinese from their owners; but it fails to state the causes which produce this mis-called demoralization, though it asks for a reform of the establishments wherein runaway Chinamen are confined. A runaway is captured somewhere in the interior, and is then placed in the nearest depot for such offenders. If the owner is not forthcoming within two or three months, he is sent to the central depot at Havana, where he is fed and clothed, and pays for his maintenance by working on the public roads and streets. The *Voz* complains that the Chinamen in the Government depot smoke opium; but why do the employes not stop it? The idea of the business is to send these Chinamen to the plantations, but the best way to avoid the demoralization of which the *Voz* complains would be for the Spaniards to stop buying, selling and importing them. Every crime brings its own punishment, and it is neither fair or logical to visit the sins of the planter on the heads of the Chinamen.

### "REWARD OF MERIT."

The Government is now working to obtain the title of Grandee of Spain of the first class to the Cuban Marquis DE SAN MIGUEL as a reward for his fidelity to the Spanish cause, and for his fame as a successful ex-slaver, a hard task-master to his slaves, and a shining light on the Chinese question and in the council of the ultras. Several other men of the same ilk are to receive decorations.

### BRIEF MENTION.

VALMASEDA arrived at Cienfuegos on Friday night, and was received with a great deal of enthusiasm by the population. He was closeted for over an hour with several Cubans, who lately surrendered. DURING VALMASEDA'S absence the Segundo Cabo, Gen. CARBO has charge of the Government.... Among those killed who came in the *Hornet* were Mr. TOMAS ARCAJO, a Venezuelan, and NICOLAS TANCO, most probably a Cuban. Masonic documents found on their persons proved Mr. ARCAJO to belong to a Lodge in

New-Granada, and Mr. TANCO to have been a member of St. George's Lodge, New-York. The surrender business has extended to the Eastern Department. According to a telegram from Santiago de Cuba, fifty-six insurgents surrendered to Capt. GUZMAN at Manzanillo. The telegram gives the names of three, viz.: VICENTE CABALLERO, AGUILERA and FRANCISCO MORIANO.... The surrenders to Major ARAGON continue, twenty-five persons having surrendered to him on Thursday, of whom ten had been members of the band of JESUS DEL SOL.... According to a telegram from Sancti Spiritus, published in the *Diario*, it is reported by surrendered Cubans that President CESPEDES, with a few followers, was making desperate efforts to leave the island by the north coast. This report has been stated so often, and always remained a report, that it is difficult to place any confidence in it. The other portion of the telegram, which states that dissensions exist among the Cuban leaders in the Central Department and Cinco Villas, is much more likely to be true.... Three more negroes, two men and a woman, have been arrested as supposed accomplices in the assassination of the German, Mr. OBERBANER.

QUASIMODO.