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LAST COMRADE OF LOPEZ.

A. A. Pomeroy's Story of a Cuban Expedition.

Troy (Pa.) Correspondence of the New York Sun.

Augustus A. Pomeroy, the seventy-year-old court crier of this town, is said to be the last survivor of the last expedition led to Cuba by Narciso Lopez. Of an adventurous spirit, he early became a wanderer, and when barely past his majority found himself in New Orleans on his way overland to the newly discovered gold fields of California. There his money gave out, and with a companion, Harry McDonald by name, he took up the trade of house painting, which he followed until his love of adventure made him a member of the expedition.

"Lopez," said Mr. Pomeroy, "was not a Cuban. He was born in Venezuela, and for many years was a general in the Spanish army performing service in Cuba. In the course of time, by reason of his popularity with the Cubans and his American origin, he fell into disfavor with the Spanish authorities, and in the end was removed from his post and dismissed from the army. That was in 1848, and, smarting under the injustice done him, he at once devoted himself to the cause of Cuban freedom. The first uprising planned by him came to nothing, owing to the treachery of a rich Cuban, who, afraid of losing his property, gave information of it to the authorities. Lopez made his escape to the United States, but many of his associates were arrested. The Spanish captain general treated them with great leniency, and they were released after a brief imprisonment. When Lopez fled from the island he made his way to New Orleans. Here he at once set about the organization of an expedition, and although entirely without financial aid from Cuba, in less than two years he succeeded, with funds furnished by Louisiana planters, who were secretly anxious to have the island annexed to the United States, in organizing an expedition, in May, 1850, in which left New Orleans with a force of 300 men, and landed at Key West, Florida. The landing of this expedition, which was officered partly by Americans, was made at Cardenas, on the north coast, and although this place was fairly well garrisoned, no opposition was made and at the end of a few hours the governor of the place surrendered. But the native Cubans failed to come to the support of Lopez, and after holding Cardenas for a day, he determined to re-embark, intending to land at some other point on the island. This plan fell through, owing to the pursuit of the Creole by a Spanish warship and a lack of discipline among the invaders. In the end the expedition disbanded at Key West, and its ship and boats were confiscated by our authorities.

In no way discouraged, Lopez returned to New Orleans, and immediately set about plans for another descent on the Cuban coast. My friend McDonald and I attended some of the meetings, and soon made up our minds to join the expedition, which, in its final shape, embraced a motley collection of Cubans, Hungarians, Germans and Americans. Among the last were many Kentuckians, and these had for a leader Colonel Will Crittenden, past question the bravest man I have ever known. Lopez himself was then about sixty years old, with long hair and

flowing beard, both snowy white; piercing black eyes, and erect military bearing, and of charming address.

"No attempt was made to conceal the plans of the expedition, and when it was ready to sail it got away without delay or misadventure. On the night of August 3, 1851, the steamer Pampero, left her dock at New Orleans, drifted out into the Mississippi, and headed for the Gulf. On board the Pampero were 400 men and a good supply of arms and ammunition. A few days later we touched at Key West, where news was received that there had been a fresh uprising in Cuba, and that our coming was eagerly awaited by the insurgents, and where we also took on board a pilot for the remainder of the voyage. Various causes have been given for the speedy failure of the expedition, but it was due in the main to the treachery of this pilot. He promised Lopez to land him among friends, but instead guided the Pampero to a part of the island swarming with Spaniards.

"On the evening of the eighth day after leaving New Orleans we effected a landing at Playtas, a small coast hamlet, to the west of Havana, but so near to that city that the captain general found it an easy matter to concentrate a force of 1,000 soldiers to oppose us. For the moment we were ignorant of our whereabouts, and Lopez, as he stepped ashore, fell upon his knees and kissed the earth, saying: 'Nuerida Cuba!—Beloved Cuba! The men, as they came ashore, found temporary shelter in a group of sheds near the water front, but we had landed only a part of our ammunition and baggage, when a Spanish warship steamed up from the east and began an attack. In the face of which the Pampero hastily put to sea, and we saw her no more. Meanwhile, Lopez, with about 300 of his men, had started inland, marching toward Las Pozas, a small village twelve miles away. McDonald and I went as members of his bodyguard.

"Crittenden and a detachment of 118 men were left behind as a rear guard, and it was not until long after that we learned the full story of their unhappy fate. Crittenden's first move after we parted company with him was to seek the shelter of some deserted buildings about a mile and a half from the shore and out of range of the Spanish gunboat. Then, marching slowly inland, he was met by a force of 500 Spaniards. Crittenden and his men, taking advantage of the chaparral, fought with stubborn valor, and when they finally fell back, left 30 men dead on the field. They retreated to a deserted building, intending to make a second stand there, but seeing the hopelessness of their position, finally resolved to get out of the island as best they could. Accordingly, Crittenden sent out scouts to the east and the west to gather in all the boats they could find. Fifteen boats were got together after long searching, and in these, scantily provisioned, they set sail for the Florida coast. They had not gone far, however, before they were overhauled by the Spanish steamer Hibanero, and compelled to surrender. They were landed at Havana, and, bravely admitting that they were filibusters, were tried by drumhead court-martial and sentenced to be shot. This sentence was executed on the Point, the open parade ground opposite Morro Castle, on the morning of August 18, 1851. Crittenden exhorted his men to be brave and die like heroes, telling them they were laying down their lives for liberty and sowing seed of which the future would reap the fruit. When ordered to kneel by his executioners, he refused to do so, proudly declaring: 'We Kentuckians kneel to no one but God!' And so, erect and smiling, he met death like the lion-hearted hero that he was.

"General Lopez had reached a place

called Murillo, when we were met and charged upon by a large body of the enemy. Although we finally drove the Spaniards off with a loss of about 200 men, we ourselves lost 35 men killed and as many wounded. These wounded men we were compelled to leave behind when we continued our march toward Las Pozas, and they were all murdered by the Spaniards. On August 24, while in camp at Las Fritas, we were attacked by 1,200 Spanish troops and, although outnumbered six to one, inflicted heavy loss upon, and, in the end, drove off our assailants. But up to this time not a single Cuban had come to our aid, and after another fight at Las Pozas, General Lopez, seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, called a council of war, and tearfully informing us that we were no longer bound to follow his broken fortunes, urged us to seek safety by scattering in the mountains until we could find some way to get back to the United States. Then, bidding us farewell, he attacked us with a handful of followers in the hills. There he wandered, evading arrest, until one morning, while at breakfast in the house of one of his sympathizers, he was surprised and captured. Taken to Havana, he was sentenced as a criminal to the garrote and executed on the parade ground at Morro Castle.

SOME PAST FILIBUSTERING.

The history of some past movements with a view to the acquisition of Cuba have a peculiar interest just now. While such movements have necessarily involved certain relations with Cubans seeking freedom and independence, our relations with that question, both official and on the part of adventurous spirits, have had steadily in view acquisition. Spain has been officially notified of our willingness to buy the island. It has been fully advised that when its occupancy ceased the United States regarded themselves Spain's successor. Lying just off our coast, too important commercially to be allowed to pass into other hands, or to be misused and abused by incompetent native attempts at government, Cuba would have been ours long ago but for the civil war and the years since of occupation with purely domestic issues.

The instinct which forced American statesmanship to acquire the Mississippi to the mouth, the great Louisiana territory, to acquire Florida, Texas and the vast territory gained from Mexico, has never neglected Cuba. Its command of the Gulf of Mexico and of all ways to and from any canal across the isthmus make it essential to our commercial future.

One of the striking expeditions to Cuba was that in which Lopez and Crittenden lost their lives in 1851. A member of that expedition, a prominent citizen of Nashville, furnishes me with a few facts about the movement. As a student in Mississippi, he went to Mobile, where his party joined Capt. Ed McDonald's company, who with his brother Charles were Kentuckians, who had lived for some time in Mobile. Going to New Orleans they found some 2,000 men awaiting transportation, under the leadership of Lopez, a Spanish officer, and Crittenden, of Kentucky, a son of the Kentucky statesman. Lopez had had a brilliant career as a Spanish officer abroad and in the Carlist war in Spain. He left Spain and its civil service because of refusal of the Cortes to admit Cuban representatives. He is described by my informant as a noble-looking man, with a benevolent face, large and powerfully built and looking more like a fine looking Tennessean than a Spaniard. About 3,000 men were collected and formed into three regiments, with Pickett, of Kentucky; Bob West—after Colonel of the Louisiana "Tigers"—and Bell, of Mississippi, as Colonels. In the command was Capt. Howell, brother of Mrs. Jekerson Davis. One of the Lieutenant-Colonels was Hawkins, who served afterwards on Gen. Breckinridge's staff, known afterwards as "Deadly-Smooth." Lopez, Crittenden, Victor Kerr and McDonald left on the steamer Pampero for Cuba, leaving Pickett to follow. My informant was for-

fortunate enough not to get to Cuba. The expedition touched at Key West and took on several hundred Cuban patriots. Disorganization seemed to rule from the first. Wine was plentiful. The officers were in a continual state of disagreement about command. False reports were sent to Lopez and he was induced to land, it is supposed, just where the Spaniards wanted him. He left Crittenden with a small command a few miles from Havana and pushed on to the interior. Crittenden was soon captured; Lopez's command was scattered and he fled to the mountains, where he was captured. Lopez was garrotted and Crittenden shot.

Kerr was a Creole and a typical figure. He was nicked on a steambath between New Orleans and New York and had been principal and second in more duels than any man of his age. Before leaving New Orleans the expedition had been advised of their certain destruction by Gen. Joe Lane, of Oregon, who was afterwards candidate for Vice President with Breckinridge. He was on his way from California, and in thorough sympathy with the movement. When the news was left behind heard of the loss of their leaders, they attacked the Spanish Consul's office and several Spaniards were killed, who were afterwards paid for by the United States. McDonald and all the Americans except Crittenden and Kerr, were sent to Spain, where they suffered miserably in prison until released during Filmore's administration.

This was Lopez' third expedition. In 1849 he landed from La Belle Creole and re-embarked and escaped after a brief engagement, having with him most of the officers who served on his last expedition.

The next American, after Crittenden, to attempt the liberation of Cuba was Gen. Jordan, formerly of Beauregard's staff. He waged war for several years with varying success and final collapse of the whole movement under the Spanish leadership of Campos.

In 1873 Capt. Joseph Fry, commanding the Virginia, was captured by a Spanish gunboat and suffered death, with 63 of his men, chiefly Americans. Fry was a man of splendid bearing and noble character. He was brave, upright and pure. I knew Fry at Wilmington, N. C. But for the timely intervention of Capt. Sir Lambert Lorraine, of the British man-of-war, "Nobe," ninety-three more Americans would have suffered death. To Burriel's unsatisfactory reply, Capt. Lorraine announced that in the absence of an American man-of-war he would protect American citizens, and he did.

These are a few hasty notes of Cuban expeditions during fifty years. In the main they were conducted by men who afterwards became distinguished in war and became prominent business men after the civil war. Many of them were adventurers, of course, but it is the adventurous who pioneer great movements. These men merely gave expression to a sound American judgment that an island, so valuable, so important, so necessary to complete enjoyment of our own, and so racked and ruined and made an ulcer and an eyesore by Spain, must belong to the United States. The less we have to do with ragamuffin Cuban Juntas, representing ragamuffin Cubans, a riff-raff of negro, half-breed and Spaniard, the better.