

PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF LOUIS SCHLESINGER, OF ADVENTURES IN CUBA AND CEUTA.*

I ACCOMPANIED the late Liberating Expedition to Cuba, by the steamer Pampero, under my heroic friend, General Narciso Lopez. I saw it all; had my share in it all; and mean to relate it all,—frankly, fearlessly, and honestly, of course; including what I saw and experienced in the famous Spanish penal fortress of Ceuta, in Africa, from which four of us had the good fortune to make our escape. The narrative might easily be stretched into volumes, for, though embracing a period not exceeding ten months, they have been ten months of pretty exciting and extraordinary adventure. But I intend to be brief, having undertaken the task with some reluctance, but on the urging of some friends who have assured me that my narrative, however simply told, might find readers who would be glad to retrace with me our steps on this well meant, but ill-starred, daring but disastrous, enterprise. I may perhaps be able to explain some things heretofore little understood; and to give some “experiences,” if not profitable, somewhat entertaining perhaps, from their novelty to the reader, whether kindly or unkindly disposed towards myself or the expedition in which I bore a part. But enough of preface. The age of prefaces has gone by. In these stirring days of steam, telegraphs, and revolutions, as the world has no time to waste in reading them, I will waste no more in writing one.

The news of the revolutionary movements which took place in Cuba in July last, found me at New York. General Lopez was at the time at New Orleans. My former relations with that noble patriot and heroic soldier had been such as to make me pant with eagerness at that moment to be by his side. I knew well that if he had to find the means of flying through the air, he would soon be in Cu-

ba; and I felt that, whatever might be the fate of the enterprise, I should never forgive fortune if I were to lose the opportunity of sharing with him its glorious dangers.

General Lopez had been at the head of a projected rising for the liberty and independence of Cuba, which was to have commenced at Cienfuegos and Trinidad, in the summer of 1848. An indiscretion on the part of one of his friends led to the discovery of the plan by the Spanish authorities in Cuba. By discovery the whole was necessarily frustrated, and the General was barely able to escape from the Island to the United States, for the purpose of organizing the means and mode of a more auspicious return. He was at this time a General in the Spanish army, though not in active service. His reputation as a cavalry officer was very distinguished, and he was commonly recognised as *la primera lanza de España*, “the first lance of Spain.” Personally, too,—and oh, most justly, as all who have been much near him will ever most cordially testify!—he was a great favorite with the soldiers; and he always counted considerably upon his ascendancy over them as an element of success in the revolutionary struggle of Cuba.

I have nothing to say of his attempt in the fall of 1848 to get off a joint expedition of about 1500 men from New York and New Orleans, with the steamers “New Orleans” and “Sea Gull,” at the former place, and the “Fanny” at the latter. Both at New York and at Round Island (between New Orleans and Mobile) this attempt was effectually broken up by the American government. Nor have I

* It is proper to mention that, in the preparation of this narrative for the press, in a language which I as yet speak and write but indifferently, I have had the benefit of the kind assistance of a literary friend, to whom I take pleasure in making this acknowledgment.

more to say of the next effort by which, in the following spring, somewhat better informed by experience in regard to the laws of the United States, he succeeded in conveying to the island of Contoy, on the coast of Yucatán, the men and materials for the expedition of about 600 men, with which, in the steamer "Creole," he effected a landing at Cardenas, on the 19th of May, 1850. His evacuation of that place the same evening, on the accidental failure of the special and dashing military plan for which he had landed there,—his attempt to carry his little band by a rapid counter movement to make another and final landing in the western part of the Island, while the government should be thrown into the presumption that he had gone to the eastward,—and the frustration of the whole enterprise by the refusal of his men to accompany him, without further reinforcement of ammunition, &c., to replace that which had been of necessity thrown overboard to lighten the "Creole," as she lay grounded in the Bay of Cardenas,—all this was anterior to my forming the acquaintance of the General. Indeed, it was all anterior to my own arrival in the United States, as one of the military refugees from the surrender of the fortress of Comorn, the last spot on which had floated the flag of nationality and freedom on the soil of my own dear and unhappy Hungary. I met General Lopez in New Orleans in January of 1851, where he was at the same time awaiting the result of Mr. Henderson's pending trial under the United States Neutrality Law for the "Creole" affair, and planning and preparing for another attempt, which it was not difficult so to combine as to avoid any violation of the laws of the United States. To sympathise warmly with the cause of liberty in Cuba was natural enough to any one; to offer it such services as my military education and experience might qualify me to render, was equally so to one thus circumstanced. The result followed readily. General Lopez was anxious to carry with him the next time, besides his expected American volunteers, a good body of experienced military men, accustomed to discipline and subordination, and he believed that a few hundreds of the refugee Hungarians and Poles would be a valuable element in his intended operations. They would also tend to relieve

his expedition from the character of being an American annexation scheme. I went to New York in the beginning of February to procure them. How their departure from that place was prevented by the United States authorities in April, is particularly well known to the United States District Attorney and Marshal for the Southern District of New York; to the Spanish Consul at that port; and to a vile scoundrel who acted as their spy and informer in the matter, with whose name, already sufficiently familiar to the public, I will not soil the fair surface of this page. An indictment followed, in which I had the honor of being included, for the (erroneously) presumed violation of the Neutrality Law; and under this indictment I was under \$5,000 bail, at the period above referred to, when in July arrived the news of the outbreak which had occurred in the neighbourhood of Principe and Trinidad, in the Central Department of the Island. The trial had, however, been postponed to the fall, so that I had ample time to try the hazards of accompanying the General to Cuba, if I could reach New Orleans in time; and either to return in season for the trial, or to have exonerated the generous friend who was my bail, by death on some field which I well knew would be, under Narciso Lopez, a well-fought and honorable one, on the soil of Cuba. The contingency of capture and imprisonment never entered into calculation, *quarter* in that event being certainly the very last thing imagined as probable; though even in that alternative no hazard could attend the liability of my bail. I felt, therefore, free to go, and go I did, by the most expeditious travel, day and night, regretting only at every step that the magnetic telegraph system was not yet sufficiently perfected to flash me bodily over the wires which stretched along the road, overhead.

I do not intend to intersperse this simple narrative with many reflections. I shall have more than enough of incident and fact to tell for the space and time at my command. One reflection, however, I will merely suggest, and then go ahead with my story as fast as I can. If General Lopez's plans had not been broken up as they were, by the United States government, presuming violations of law where none existed, or were deemed to

exist by the parties engaged in them, and acting eagerly on such presumptions, he would have landed among friends ready to receive him, and to rise at the signal of his appearance; he would have done so with a much larger and better organized force than that with which he did eventually land; that force would have been far better armed, equipped, and munitioned, and it would have been well supplied with field artillery. As it was, in despair of his coming at all, partial and ill-combined insurrections were made in the Island, which were then cut to pieces before he could come to their support. He, on the other hand, was thus precipitated into a hasty movement, which resulted in throwing him upon the shores of Cuba, not only in a very ill-provided condition, but also at the precise inauspicious moment when these attempts had just been crushed, and their leaders everywhere shot, imprisoned, or driven to escape from the Island. Other unhappy circumstances, too, were thrown into the cauldron of misfortune for Cuba, Lopez, and us who accompanied him, which I will speak of in their proper place. On the whole, it is quite as much to the American as to the Spanish government that the disastrous result of the late revolutionary attempt in Cuba is to be attributed. I say this neither to praise nor to blame, but as a simple truth before God and man. Different minds will judge it differently. The authors of the acts which I may be allowed at least to deplore for their consequences, acted, of course, honestly according to their reading of the laws, and their view of their obligations and duties, and no more can be expected of any man. But if they were in error in regard to those duties, as I believe they were, it was an error deeply and bitterly to be lamented.

However, this reflection—my first, and I hope the last of this kind with which I will trouble the reader for some time—is quite an anachronism at this point of my narrative. Very different thoughts, hopes, and expectations filled my mind as I was hastening on the journey from New York to New Orleans, at which I arrived on the 28th of July, rejoiced to find—and whatever I may have borne and witnessed since, I still rejoice—that I was *not* too late.

New Orleans, the gay and spirited metropolis of the South-West, I found all in a blaze of sympathising excitement about Cuba and for Cuba. The mere traversing of the streets revealed in a few minutes to the stranger the public sentiment by which the community was strongly moved. The Cuban flag (a white star in a red triangle, upon three broad blue stripes, separated from each other by white ones,) was to be seen in almost every direction, displayed in ample folds from buildings, or in miniature form in windows. Placards on the walls invited to public meetings, and Cuba, Cuba, Cuba, was the topic of the newspapers, the Exchange, the street corners, and the bar-rooms. It even ascended into the pulpit. The conflicting accounts from the interior of Cuba, between the exaggerations of the sanguine patriots and the systematic deceptions kept up by the Spanish authorities, to whom it was of vital moment to deny the existence of any disturbance in the "ever-faithful Island," kept the public mind divided between hope and fear. A wide-spread anxiety existed, and was stimulated by the exhortations of some of the ablest and most respectable men of the community, that succour should be sent to the insurgent parties, to aid them in relieving their country from a yoke universally known to be so cruel and oppressive as that of Spain; and at the same time to place Cuba in that position of national independence, from which her welcome entrance into the great confederacy of the United States was to be naturally looked to as the next step in the probable march of events. Lopez was, of course, the object of a general interest and expectation at such a moment.

I found the old chief in a state of eager impatience for his departure, chafing at the delay like an imprisoned lion. He had been anxious to go over to Cuba before the expedition on foot could be got ready, with only a few of his Cuban friends, who also had been willing to go in that manner, in a small fast vessel, which should throw them on the coast at some point from which he could make his way to some assembled body of the patriots. It was not without difficulty that he had been induced by his friends (in whose hands were all the means he had to act with) to forego this desire, and to wait a

little while longer for the completion of the arrangements they were hurrying forward as fast as possible. He was still an inmate of the pleasant, hospitable home of the Hon. L. J. Sigur, editor of the *Delta*, and a senator in the state legislature, a gentleman of superior talent and accomplishment, noble heart, high honor, and generous warmth of feeling. The General showed me much of his correspondence from the Island. It represented a pervading anxiety for his arrival on the part of the Creole population. His presence alone to head the insurrection, which would then become general, was all they called for; his presence and a supply of arms, of which they were totally destitute. The risings already made were highly colored in some of the communications addressed to him from sources of unquestionable sincerity. The General regarded these with much anxiety, fearing they would be crushed before he could arrive; though at the same time he saw that they greatly facilitated his getting off with an expedition of succour, from any point of the United States, and especially from New Orleans. He could now do so with a degree of openness, supported as he was by so strong and general a public sentiment, not to be ventured on without that advantage; at the same time that under the urgency of the occasion he did not now feel compelled to delay his arrival in the Island, by any arrangements for organizing his expedition at any point outside of the United States jurisdiction. As speedy preparation, and then as straight to Cuba as possible!—that was now the order of the day.

At the time of my arrival, he was hourly awaiting the return of the steamer Pampero from Galveston, between which port and New Orleans she had been for some time plying regularly as a coasting packet. She was a vessel of superior speed, and had been recently bought by the General's devoted friend, Mr. Sigur, at the sacrifice of the valuable property which he possessed in the New Orleans *Delta*. Her next trip was to be Cuba-ward.

That an expedition was on the point of sailing for Cuba, was notorious throughout New Orleans. Many hundreds of volunteers offered for it, and a force counting by thousands, rather than by hundreds, could have been easily raised for the pur-

pose, had the General possessed the requisite transportation. Exhausted by his past efforts, and their frustration by the United States government, of the means he had before possessed from Cuba, (to which the jewelry sent by the women had contributed,) he had unfortunately no other steamer at his disposal than the Pampero, whose size did not exceed four hundred tons. In spite of all efforts to secure secrecy, the Pampero was generally rumored to be destined to this purpose; and by the time she at last arrived, *with her machinery unexpectedly out of order*, so as to need several days of work for its repair, the Spanish Consul was able to call upon the authorities for her arrest and detention.

On the afternoon of Saturday, the 1st of August, the General received information, through Col. Crittenden, who held an employment in the Custom House, that the Pampero was to be seized on Monday morning. He immediately gave orders for the embarkation of the expedition on Sunday night. At all hazards and every cost this had now to be effected. The necessary repairs must be done on the way down the river, and at its mouth, before putting out to sea, workmen being carried down accordingly. The provisions and coal, &c., must be got on board by extraordinary exertion within that time. The officers must collect their men at Lafayette, where the steamer was lying, at 12 o'clock of Sunday night, and the absentees must lose their chance. The arms and munitions of war were to be on board of the tow-boat by which the Pampero must be towed down, to be transhipped at the mouth of the river.

The affair was executed accordingly, though of course extreme haste and confusion were the necessary consequence of the necessity existing for so abrupt a departure, and on a Sunday night. At one o'clock the General drove down, accompanied by General Pragay, the chief of his staff, and other officers of the staff, to which I had the honor to pertain as his second aide-de-camp, the veteran, worthy and brave Col. Blumenthal being his first Aid, until an occasion should arise for giving him a suitable command. He was in fine spirits, but with his accustomed calmness, and quiet energy. He went at once on board, greeted with wild hurrahs both from

the officers and men already collected on board, and from the thousands of citizens who were assembled to witness the departure. In truth all Lafayette seemed awake and up, and a good part of New Orleans was there to swell the crowd. The numbers present were generally estimated at from ten to twelve thousand. All was enthusiasm and exultation, and equally on the part of the spectators and the expeditionaries. Lafayette never witnessed such a scene before. The getting the coal and provisions on board detained us till four o'clock, when at last the order was given to cast off, and the Pampero and her tow moved off from the wharf in the midst of the most enthusiastic cheers of applause, good wishes, and farewell, from the crowded masses we left behind.

At about a dozen miles below the city we stopped to take on board the Cuban and German companies, which had been sent down the day before. After this we proceeded on our voyage without further interruption, arriving in the evening near the mouth of the Mississippi, where we came to anchor; and the repairing of our defective machinery was at once urged forward with all despatch, together with the transshipment of the arms and ammunition from the tow to the Pampero. On board of the Pampero were over five hundred men, and a large number more on board the tow, who had come down from the various motives of friendship, general enthusiasm, curiosity, or hope of being admitted at the last to take part in the Expedition.

On the decks of the steamer reigned of course an extreme disorder. To stow away there had been no time, especially with every foot of surface occupied by the unorganized crowd. Barrels, boxes, trunks, bags, knapsacks, &c. &c., were piled in heaps or littered everywhere about. In spite of all the General's previous advice, many of the officers, inexperienced in military affairs, and especially in such enterprises, had brought a great deal of worse than superfluous baggage. "Gentlemen," said Pragay, in the midst of a group of them, "I have been in forty-eight battles in Hungary, and I will show you all the baggage I ever took to the field, even for a long and uncertain period, and when I had the privilege of a carriage for my own use. It never consisted of more than I

have now, and that is, the clothes on my person, two shirts, two pairs of drawers and stockings, two handkerchiefs, a cloak, a pair of good pistols, (they are the same I used in Hungary,) this sword, which has faithfully defended me in all dangers, a spy-glass, and a pocket compass. This is all I have ever found necessary for a campaign, and it will not be long before you will regret that you did not leave at home nearly all the baggage you have loaded yourselves with."

The first order of the day was issued the next morning, Aug. 4th, requiring the officers to give in an exact statement of the number of men in their several commands. The General's next proceeding was to direct the officers to notify the men that any who should have the slightest motive for desiring it, should return to New Orleans by the tow-boat. The offer found none to accept it. On the contrary, the General had to determine himself to reduce by compulsion the number who should accompany him. This measure was indispensable in view of the overcrowded state of the Pampero. He caused all to be landed at the Balize; and, equally to his regret and that of those to be left behind, who were only consoled by the prospect of soon following in another expedition, he thinned out the ranks of the companies, dismissing for the most part the youngest, until he reduced the total number to a little over 400, the rest being sent back by the tow to New Orleans. It should be borne in mind that he had yet more men, besides arms, artillery, &c., to take on board in Florida before striking over for Cuba.

While this was in progress on shore, we had the pleasure of witnessing the passage of the steamer Cincinnati, bound to Havana, which we knew to have been bought by the Spanish Consul, and hastily despatched to carry to the Captain-General the news of the Expedition. She inspired us but little uneasiness, being a poor and slow old boat, unable at her best, without a fair wind, to make more than five or six miles an hour. In fact, in her purchase we regarded the Consul as having been quite as much sold himself as the vessel he bought. Accordingly, notwithstanding her two days' start of us, we overtook and passed her in the Gulf on our second day out; and when she did at last reach Ha-

vana, she certainly delivered very stale news indeed. The battle of Las Pozas had been fought before she brought the intelligence of the starting of the Expedition.

On the following day, Wednesday, the 5th, the repairing of the engine was at length announced to be finished. The fires were got up, and black volumes of smoke issuing from the funnel, together with the weighing of the anchor, announced that the hour of departure had arrived. Amidst the incessant cheering and waving of handkerchiefs, between the fortunate ones who were going and the unlucky ones who were left behind, the two steamboats turned from each other, and the tow-boat began to reascend the river, while the Pampero dashed down towards the Gulf, under the command of her gallant and fearless little Captain, Lewis, who was under the same bail with myself in New York, and who, like myself, had barely succeeded in reaching New Orleans in time to get on board. He had been heartily welcomed by the General, as well as his spirited young first officer, or second captain, Mr. Fayssoux. Both of these gentlemen had been with him in the former "Creole," or Cardenas expedition, and I do not doubt the perfect readiness of both to—but no, the past is all I have to do with here.*

It was certainly a noble spectacle to

behold that brave and chivalrous little band, thus enthusiastically going to dare such immense hazards, on a simple enterprise for the aid and support of a people known to be brutally oppressed by the worst forms of tyranny, and believed to be about to rise in general revolution for its overthrow. I claim small part of the praise I feel compelled in justice thus to bestow upon my gallant comrades in this brilliant though ill-fated enterprise. We refugee soldiers of Hungary are in a peculiar position, rendering supremely attractive to us any military adventure, honorable in its spirit and object. Any cause of liberty, of popular rising against despotism, was already half our own cause, on whatever particular spot of the globe the battle was to be fought. We were soldiers, and nothing but soldiers, and we were here in our natural position and element, following a leader who awakened our warm regard as well as admiration, to an enterprise commanding our truest sympathies. The Cubans, too, who formed a company of 49 by themselves, they were only in the line of their simple duty, though they deserve all credit for the way in which they sustained themselves in it. But the others, our high-spirited and generous American volunteers, whose impelling motive was simply a gallant enthusiasm to fight for liberty, in aid of a tyrannized people, against a grossly corrupt as well as oppressive despotism—who went with no stipulations of reward, but solely for love of the adventure and the object—and who competed for the privilege of going in a body of 400 raw and undisciplined volunteers into an island where the government was known to have between 20,000 and 30,000 of its best troops, together with impregnable fortifications,—what language could do justice to the admiration necessarily awakened, even in the minds of those who may disapprove the enterprise, at the spectacle of that little vessel and that devoted little band, as they issued from the mouth of the river in the afternoon of Wednesday, the 5th, and stood boldly out to sea, impatient only of the distance and time which yet separated them from the battle-fields of their destination!

* I leave this sentence as it was written, though in the interval of time since then, and now when it passes through the press poor Lewis has fallen a victim to a foe whom he had twice repulsed before. He died of yellow fever at Mobile, in the beginning of August last, much regretted by many friends. He had served with handsome distinction in the Texan Navy, as first lieutenant, and was a brother of the Captain Lewis who served in the Texan army, and who was one of the victims of the Alamo. His death has elicited numerous notices of obituary eulogy from the press. I take advantage of the occasion, to fix in this more durable form of publication than the newspapers of the day, the following resolution which was adopted by the Union Division of the Order of the Lone Star, at New York, on the 7th August:

"Resolved, That this Division has heard with deep emotion the painful intelligence just communicated to it, of the sudden death of a member of this Order, than whom no other could possess stronger claims upon its regard and gratitude, Captain Armstrong Irvine Lewis, late commander of the steamers Creole and Pampero; that in honor of our brave and worthy brother deceased the members of this Division will wear crape on the left arm for the period of two weeks; and that the Corresponding Secretary be directed to communicate a copy of this resolution to his widow, as an expres-

sion of the respect of this Division for the memory of her gallant husband, and of sympathy with her in her great affliction."

The entire force of the expedition, rank and file, was a trifle over 400.* It was divided into nine companies, and organized into three nominal regiments, which were to be filled up with recruits in the island. There was a First Regiment of Infantry, under Col. Downman, and Lieut. Col. Haynes, consisting of Companies A, B, C, D, E, F, the respective Captains of which were Ellis, Johnson, Brigham, Gotay, Jackson, and Stewart, 219 strong, all told. The First Regiment of Artillery, under Col. Crittenden, 114 strong, consisted of Companies A, B, C, under the respective Captains Kelly, Sanders, and Kerr. The Cubans, 49 in number, formed at once a company and a nominal regiment, called the First Regiment of Cuban Patriots. They were commanded by Captain Oberto. We had nine Hungarians and nine Germans, under Captain Schlicht. There were, besides, as officers of the staff, Capt. Radnitz, Lieut. Lewohl, and Lieut. Reken-dorf, and as Aids, Col. Blumenthal, Major Schlesinger, (my humble self,) and Lieut. Muller; with Dr. Fourniquet as Surgeon, and G. A. Cook as Commissary. The above numbers, added to Gen. Lopez as Commander-in-chief, and Gen. Pragay, as second in command, and chief of the staff, constituted the entire force of the Expedition as it landed in Cuba.

The different companies were distributed about the vessel by the staff, as comfortably as the case admitted of, each being restricted to its allotted space. Each man had a blanket to lie on. The officers, as far as was practicable, accommodated themselves in the cabin. The General and the staff occupied the small apartment constituting the ladies' cabin. He slept on a portable camp bed which had been presented to him in New Orleans, admitting of folding up into a small bundle (which on landing he gave to Mr. Fayssoux, by whom it is no doubt now possessed as a sacred relic).

Very soon on the voyage appeared the first instances of that fatal mischief to which much, if not all, of our eventual disaster is truly ascribable,—I mean, *insubordin-*

ation. The main bulk of the Expedition, officers as well as men, consisted of course of inexperienced volunteers, brave and spirited to a fault, if that be possible, but not yet trained to a proper appreciation of the absolute necessity, in military affairs, of strict obedience, and of the submission and sacrifice of individual opinions and wishes. Unfortunately, too many of the officers themselves were deficient in this the cardinal military virtue; and in this respect neither set a good example, nor exerted a good moral influence upon the men. This evil was perhaps inseparable from the circumstances of the case. It was a great evil in itself, and sad in its fruits. It showed itself signally in reference to the distribution of provisions. An economical system of distribution having been adopted, through the agency of a commissary, and navy rations being served out, it was not easy to procure submission to this regulation. Both men and some officers broke through all restraint, and would seize upon what they wanted, almost by force. Barrels and boxes were broken, and a great deal was extravagantly wasted. Some of the officers very improperly bought from the steward liberal supplies of articles which he had no right at all to sell. The General was compelled to address to some the most urgent representations about their behaviour, and severe warnings to bring them back to their proper duty. Some degree of ill temper too, arose perhaps naturally enough out of the as yet imperfectly organized state of the Expedition, the crowded condition of the vessel, and the heat of the weather. We, foreign officers of the staff, who were old soldiers, being not only in the closest personal contact with the General, but also principally engaged in the necessary duties of establishing order and some degree of discipline, became the objects of a little jealousy and temporary discontent, I believe. Our gallant and unfortunate Crittenden, too, was very much dissatisfied because the General on one occasion issued a general order through the veteran Col. Downman instead of through him, he (Col. C.) having understood from Mr. Sigur that he would be regarded as the superior or commanding officer of the American part of the Expedition. The General had some difficulty in appeasing these, and other similar

* The Spanish journals published one of the daily reports of Gen. Pragay, as chief of the staff, which were captured among the General's papers left with the baggage. I have now before me one of these documents, from which I have refreshed my memory in giving this statement of our force.

sources of trouble. It was an unfortunate circumstance that the General could not speak English, so as to have had facility for direct communication and intelligence with the whole of his little force, in which it was so important that there should exist that unity of spirit of which the chief is the centre and the representative, but of which a community of language at least, if not of nationality, is perhaps a necessary condition.

The muskets were unpacked and distributed on Friday (the 7th), and a busy scene ensued in the work of cleaning them for service. When all was done the companies were inspected by their officers, and reported to the General. The following were his dispositions for the event of our falling in with any Spanish cruiser, whose guns should control our movements. The tune of “Yankee Doodle” was the signal of alarm, on which all the companies were to disappear from the stations where they were exposed to view, and to collect, at what may be called quarters, on the lower deck, out of sight. This was to give the Pampero the appearance of an ordinary steamer, so that any cruising vessel would have to come very near to inquire into our character or overhaul us. Then we were to dash upon her and carry her by a sudden broadside of musketry and boarding. The men were repeatedly practised in this operation by false alarms, till they came to perform it very satisfactorily; and it was done whenever any sail came in sight, so that no extraordinary number of men visible through spy-glasses should awaken suspicion, and subject us to the molestation of a chase.

The General’s plan in leaving New Orleans was not to proceed at once to Cuba in the condition in which we then were. It was to go round to the neighborhood of the St. John’s River, in Florida, to take in a number more of men, including some of his principal Cuban friends in this country, who were there to meet him, and also a good provision of artillery, ammunition, rifles, extra arms for the people of Cuba, &c. &c., which he had collected there. Thence, and thus provided, he intended to land in the Central Department of the Island, where the several partial risings had already broken out, where the government was less strong

than near Havana, in the force which could be immediately hurled upon the Expedition, and where the population was thicker and riper for prompt participation in the revolution than in any other part of the Island. If he could have carried this plan into effect, I firmly believe that the Cuban flag would now have been floating in triumph over the battlements of the Morro.

But it was ordered otherwise. Whose the fault, or how it occurred, neither can I state, nor is it worth while now to investigate. The General was assured when he left New Orleans that the Pampero *was coaled for sixteen days sailing*, according to his requirement. This was a point which he had of course to take on the assurance of the friends who executed the arrangements for him. On the 10th, Monday, when we were very near Key West, being already five days out, Captain Lewis reported to the General that there was coal remaining *only for three days more!* This miscalculation proceeded probably in part from the haste with which the process of coal-ing had to be done, giving rise to mistake in the quantity believed to have gone on board, and in part from the unfortunate derangement of the machinery which took place just on the critical occasion of this trip, and which was repaired as well as practicable while we were lying at the mouth of the river, as was mentioned above. Prior to this mishap, the Pampero had been the swiftest steamer out of New Orleans, and had lately been running with striking speed and regularity between that port and Texas. She had been reliable as a fifteen knot vessel when pushed. We could now never get more than eight or nine knots out of her, and that only at the expenditure of a much larger daily consumption of coal to generate the steam than she had been accustomed to make. By the 10th we ought to have been in the St. John’s River, instead of still to the westward of Key West. Reduced speed, increased daily consumption of coal, together with probably some mistake in the quantity taken on board in that hurried night of our departure, under the pressure of the arrest impending the next morning—here is the explanation of the fact that our *sixteen* days supply of coal lasted only *eight* days.

In this there was certainly no fault on the General's part—perhaps on nobody's part—but it was both his, our, and Cuba's sad misfortune!

To go on to the St. John's was now equivalent to abandoning the expedition. No coal was to be had there, and though a supply might, perhaps, have been brought down from Savannah, it could not have been done without a fatal consumption of time, and without too dangerous a liability to interruption from Washington. The General promptly resolved to go straight across to Cuba with such force and armament as he had, and after landing to send the Pampero back after the volunteers, artillery, &c. at the St. John's, there to constitute a second expedition to land at the eastward, while he would engage the attention of the government at the western end of the Island. Being close to Key West, he put in at that port to receive the news to be learned there of the progress of the insurrection. He expected, too, to find there communications from some of his agents in the Island;—and moreover he hoped to find among the men employed on board the numerous wrecking and fishing craft of Key West some one who could serve him as a pilot on the opposite coast of Cuba; to which it is very well known that occasional visits are made from Key West for other purposes than to pay regular duties at custom houses.

The General's former efforts to get a pilot from the Island had failed, through detection of his agent engaged in that attempt, a fine devoted young man named Montes de Oca, who was garroted for the act, and died gallantly, refusing to make revelations for a pardon, and crying *Viva la Libertad!*

We entered the harbor of Key West accordingly, and without coming to anchor the General sent a boat ashore with Capt. Lewis, to communicate with his particular friends, and to endeavor to get a pilot. If we did not go to Key West, a part at least of Key West came out to us, for we were soon visited by small boats and a sloop with many of the inhabitants of the place, who had been prompt to recognize the expected expedition, as they were hearty in greeting it with hurrahs and waving of handkerchiefs, &c. Some came on board, felicitating us, wishing

success to our glorious enterprise, and at the same time giving glowing accounts of the reported progress of the insurrection in the Island. They reported that a large part of the troops had been sent to the Centre, the region of Principe and Trinidad, that risings had extended to the Vuelta Abajo, in the West, and that the Cubans generally were anxiously awaiting our arrival. I need not speak of the general enthusiasm awakened on board the Pampero by all this good news;—though it is a fact, which I must allude to because this narrative would be incomplete without it, that when we went to Key West, so much ill feeling had been generated, out of the discomfort of the crowded, hot and protracted voyage, together with some jealousies and dissatisfactions, that there were some of the officers, who seriously contemplated, and even talked about abandoning the Expedition. Others (among whom I will mention Col. Haynes,) remonstrated with them, and the thought was dropped.

In the mean time Capt. Lewis returned with the Pampero's boat, bringing with him no pilot, but some gentlemen of the place, warm friends of Gen. Lopez, whose acquaintance he had formed when he had been unwillingly brought to Key West on board of the "Creole" in May of the year before, one of whom was the Hon. Mr. Mallory, the Senator of the United States. A revenue cutter was lying at Key West, but we were assured that she was almost entirely deserted, and her presence gave us no alarm; nor did she give any sign of a disposition to interfere with us.

We took leave of the friendly visitors of Key West, with enthusiastic cheering on both sides. Mr. Mallory pressed on General Lopez's finger a hair ring which he hoped might be a talisman of success, as well as a pledge of friendship. Several of the officers had sent ashore for champagne, &c., and there was a genial flow both of the sparkling fluid and of patriotic sentiments among them and their Key West friends. The General himself, as was well known to his friends, never drank wine, excepting coloring a glass of water with a little light claret at dinner. He was always, by the way, simple and abstemious at the table, eating little, though a man of stout frame, and very great muscular development and strength. Many a time afterwards, in our wanderings on

the Island, when we were already on very short allowance, and precarious at that, would he give a part, or even the whole, of his own small portion to some one of his poor fellows who seemed to him to need it more than himself. For such acts, and the general character which showed itself in many ways during the trying times that too soon ensued, still more than for his bravery, I know that I am safe in answering for all of us who followed him on this expedition, that we will love his glorious memory to the last hour of our lives.—But I am again anticipating. We have not yet landed, fought or suffered in Cuba. We are just steaming out of Key West at about ten o'clock in the evening of the 10th, (Monday,) and exchanging parting hurrahs with our friends of that place.

Such was the inspiring effect produced on the men by the accounts reported at Key West, that without knowing the General's own already formed change of plan, nor the cause which had necessitated it, the men themselves were now impatient to strike straight across for the nearest part of the Island, and unwilling to go round first to the St. John's for the artillery, munitions and men there awaiting us, and several of their officers were sent by them to petition the General to that effect. He called a council of the principal officers, and communicated to them in substance the following views.

The military world would probably condemn him for landing with so small a force, no artillery, and so imperfectly provided as they were with ammunition and other supplies. But their position was exceptional. To go and get those supplies was now impossible. He had often effected great results with small means, intensified by the aid of dashing boldness. There was no doubt of the real wishes of the people of Cuba, by whom he had been so urgently called. Their prompt arrival was much wanted, and they would soon be strengthened. They were not expected in that part of the Island, and could effect an easy landing, and then be safe from the hazard of cruisers. The men and materials at the St. John's would soon be able to follow them, and either reinforce them or help the cause by a diversion in another quarter. Great promises had been made to him of a rising in the West, or the *Vuelta Abajo*, as well as

at the central and eastern parts of the Island. A considerable portion of the soldiers forming the garrison of Havana had been sent off to the eastward, to quell the risings in the Central Department. If only the half of the news reported at Key West was true, they had no more than the ordinary hazard of such an enterprise to fear in making an immediate landing. Under the circumstances he thought himself justifiable in doing so, and he proposed to push across this very night for Bahia Honda, about fifty miles west of Havana, where, even in the event of a sudden attack by an overpowering force, they could retire into the mountains, and maintain themselves till relieved.

Gen. Pray warmly seconded the General's plan, and remarked laughingly that he supposed that what he meant by 'retreating' was taking up good positions, and by 'avoiding danger' beating the enemy without unnecessary exposure of the troops; that in an enterprise like this an experienced soldier does not want to know the meaning of the word retreat. After a few more words from other officers, the General's proposal was unanimously accepted, and at about ten o'clock the men were informed, through their respective officers, of the intention to push across that same night to Bahia Honda, where it was expected that we would land early the next morning. This announcement was received with universal delight. No more sleep that night. No one was willing to lie down. The hours were spent in enthusiastic songs, talk, and laughter. We expected to see the Island with the early light, and all were bent on being the first to discover land.

Further detention, however, still grew out of the imperfect condition of the machinery of the *Pampero*, with which we had been compelled to start from New Orleans. In the course of the night it was found necessary to stop the engine for several hours. During that time the current of the Gulf carried us an unexpected distance to the eastward of our course. The working of the compass (as Capt. Lewis pleaded in explanation) was deranged by the proximity of so much iron in the musket barrels; and the fact was, that at about ten o'clock in the morning, while we were steaming on to-

wards the Island, now in full sight, we had the astonishment of finding that instead of being off Bahia Honda we were heading direct on towards the narrow entrance of the harbor of Havana! There was the Morro, the light-house, the signal flag-staff and by the time we fairly recognized where we were, and had put about, the sentinels could even be distinguished on the walls, and men at work on the shore! "Yankee Doodle" was immediately sounded, and the alarm promptly obeyed by the disappearance of all the men from the upper deck. Ammunition was served out, and every thing set in readiness for an attack. It seemed impossible that we should not have been observed and suspected, and we momentarily expected to see one of the fast Spanish war steamers stand out in pursuit of us from that narrow passage, not a quarter of a mile in width, between the Morro and Punta fort.* The Pampero had no such command of speed at this time as to make this a very comfortable situation, unarmed as she was, and incapable of resisting cannon shot from any enemy who should not indulge us with a chance of boarding. Anthracite coal was used in firing, to avoid smoke, a quantity having been brought for this use when we should be on the coast of the Island. Of course we stood off again in a northwesterly direction as fast as we could.

Some uneasiness was apparent among the men in this critical situation, but at the same time a good spirit and firm resolution to meet bravely any danger, and to prefer death, resisting to our best ability, rather than surrender to the enemy. The General's behavior was admirably adapted to impart confidence and courage to the men, if they had needed it. It was that

of a man familiar of old with danger, and personally insensible to its extremest degrees. Without affectation, but perfectly calm, resolute, and circumspect, he watched the coast and entrance of the harbor through his spy-glass with an impenetrable indifference. After a while we began to drop the land, no evidence of our being pursued appearing; and after speaking a few words with some of the officers, the General retired from his post of observation, highly pleased with the disposition shown by the men.

In a few hours we saw at some distance what the General was anxiously looking out for, a little coasting schooner, from which he wanted to take a pilot. There being very little wind, we easily caught her. She at first ran up the Spanish red and yellow flag, but as soon as the large number of armed men were seen on board of the Pampero, we were recognised by her captain as the Expedition, and that flag went down quicker than it had gone up. The General ordered the captain on board the Pampero, which the poor fellow obeyed very reluctantly. In answer to the General's inquiries for news of the Island, he said that he knew nothing; that there had been risings in different parts, but he knew no particulars, only that much movement of troops had been taking place, and that a great many from the garrison of Havana had gone off to the Central Department.

As soon as he was told that he must remain on board and serve us as a pilot, nothing could exceed his terror. Crying and weeping he implored permission to return to his vessel, vowing that he knew nothing of this coast, and that his government would surely kill him for such a service rendered to the Expedition. He was assured of kind treatment if he did his duty to the best of his ability, and promised a certificate of the compulsion under which he had acted. He was directed to order his vessel to stand after us, and meet him at a place named to him, which, however, was different from the point at which the General really meant to land. This precaution was for the event of the crew of the schooner falling in with some steamer and giving information about us. The schooner was soon dropped out of sight, and we kept on our course towards Bahia Honda.

* I afterwards learned that we were signalled as a steamer in the offing, but it was not till evening that the officer in charge of the signal station reported us as "*suspicious*." Our movements certainly were suspicious enough, since we first appeared heading straight for Havana, and then suddenly struck off on a northwesterly course. This notice of our presence on the coast unfortunately contributed to the remarkable despatch with which troops were sent after us so soon as the actual news of our landing reached Havana, by causing everything to be in a state of momentary readiness. The delinquent officer was punished, I believe, for the tardiness of his suspicions. If he had acted instantly, we could easily have been caught by any steamer of tolerable speed. I was afterwards told that there was one in readiness, besides a French steamer which had been placed at the Captain-General's disposal.

At this time were distributed the blue shirts and gray trowsers which constituted the uniform of the Expedition. The other equipments were a knapsack, and a pouch or sack for cartridges, both of india rubber, a slung flask for water, and a blanket. A musket and bayonet, with from 80 to 100 cartridges, completed the accoutrement. A few, chiefly the officers, had their own pistols or revolvers, bowie-knives, and side-arms. Of rifles there were not more than eight or ten in all.

The General went about among the men, amusing them with his phrenological opinions of the different individuals. He was habitually observant of men in this point of view, and as the troops pressed upon him for his inspection of their heads he very freely gave his judgment, which was often received with much applause. To many he spoke in flattering terms, to others somewhat otherwise. It was rather a novel kind of military review, but every one was anxious to pass under it. It had its good effects upon the spirit of the men, and upon the individual relations thus opened between them and their chief; as the General meant that it should.

The bay of Cabañas, a short distance to the westward of the port of Mariel, between it and Bahia Honda, was the first convenient place for a landing, and at about three o'clock in the afternoon we attempted it, but our purpose was prevented in a rather a startling manner. Its entrance, as it is approached from the westward, is covered by a range of hills screening it from view until you are close into the entrance. It is like most of the Cuban bays, which are generally entered by narrow passages, beyond which they widen out in irregular and winding forms, completely land-locked of course. After running along the line of the ridge just referred to, as we were turning into the entrance, we discovered two Spanish men-of-war at anchor in it, a frigate and a sloop. We were so near that we could easily distinguish their movements on board. The frigate immediately hoisted anchor and stood out to pursue us. Fortunately she had very little wind, or else it is very doubtful if, in our imperfect condition of machinery, we could have kept clear of her shot. Of course we stood off again, cracking on all the steam

we could make, and we rapidly gained on her, so that she soon abandoned the attempt, and we saw her turn back into the bay of Cabañas, no doubt for the purpose of despatching the intelligence to Havana.

Fortune gave us still another baulk before we at last effected a landing. It was now almost dark, when we stood in again for Bahia Honda. The pilot said he did not know the depth of water of its entrance. He was therefore sent ahead with Mr. Fayssoux and some sailors in a small boat to sound it. Presently they found themselves, to the pilot's own consternation, under the guns of a small fort, and hailed by its sentinels. Silently and with all despatch they put back, and related what had occurred. Lights were presently visible on shore. It was, however, too dark for the men and arms on board the *Pampero* to be seen from the land, and we stood off again unmolested.

Were these three warnings of Providence, against our landing on a coast destined to be so disastrous to so many of our gallant little band? Three times within that day, in our crippled condition in regard to speed, had we thus stood in straight upon destruction, coming first close within sight of the Morro itself, next almost under the guns of a Spanish frigate and sloop, and now again under the battery of a fort. If they were warnings, they were lost upon us in the enthusiasm which reigned among us. On the contrary, our good luck in escaping them all we regarded as a ground of exultation and good augury. There is something fascinating, too, to human nature, in thus playing closely with the sharp points and edges of peril. The spirits and confidence of the men rose instead of sinking. Their observation of the deportment of their General and other officers, as well as of themselves mutually, no doubt, contributed to this.

It was in the course of this afternoon that we made our first acquaintance with Death, with which we were soon to become so familiar. A young fellow, a German, who had joined the Expedition as a surgeon, (I forget his name,) had become perfectly crazy two or three days after our departure from New Orleans. He would spend the greater part of his time

in roaming about, knocking at doors and partitions, and talking wildly with imaginary respondents within. He was in high fever; sick, indeed, when he came on board; and it was on this afternoon that he at last died. Little heed, however, poor fellow, could be paid to such an event in the midst of the varied excitements of the time. The sea thus engulfed its one victim from our little band,—alas! for how many was the land to open its crimsoned bosom!

At about ten o'clock we again approached the coast, at a little hamlet called Morrillo, distant about sixty miles from Havana, resolved now to effect our landing at any price. At about half-past eleven we could distinguish, by the moonlight, two small sloops or launches lying in the bay loaded with wood. Presently, as we stood into the entrance, the pilot missing the channel, we felt that we had grounded. We were still about a mile from the shore, so that we had to effect the landing by boats; for which the requisite preparations were promptly made. We had grounded gently, so that not much apprehension was felt but that the steamer, when relieved of her load, would soon float again. Some persons, suspecting treachery on the part of the pilot, wanted to shoot him, but the General's ever kind humanity protected him. The poor fellow was frightened half out of his wits; and indeed, in the act of landing in the first boat, one of the men in the boat with him jokingly did fire his pistol over his head with pretended aim at him.

The hour had at last indeed come. But before a man was allowed to leave the vessel, the General again caused all to be notified, through their officers, that the opportunity of withdrawing from the enterprise was still open to anybody who might not be fully satisfied with it. Such should return to the United States by the Pampero. He thought it his duty before landing to call their attention to the following: As they had been told before they engaged to come, they were going to meet many dangers, and hard fighting with superior forces. Many fatigues and hardships lay before them on that shore before they should accomplish the object of their glorious mission. Above all, obedience and subordination were the first conditions of success and even of safety.

If they would obey him strictly, all would be well; otherwise, he could answer for nothing. They must remember, too, that they were going to a friendly, and not a hostile population, whom they came to assist in effecting their emancipation from a very hateful tyranny. They must, therefore, behave with strict morality and propriety, and give the lie to the slanders of their enemies, who abused as robbers and plunderers those who came only as the auxiliary soldiers of freedom, and ready to be its martyrs. Whoever was not willing to comply with these conditions, which would be strictly enforced, and whoever did not come resolved to submit to that perfect subordination indispensable for the good of all and for the success of the cause, or whoever should have left behind him any regrets, or reasons which he felt to call him back, should now remain on board the Pampero, and return in her to the United States.

Only two out of the whole number returned, and both of these were compelled by sickness. Notwithstanding their condition, wholly incapable as they were of landing and undertaking a march, the General had some work of persuasion to do with them, before they would consent to return. One of these poor fellows afterwards very narrowly escaped death from the sickness of which he was suffering. All the rest of the men, (though about 15 were on the sick list,) declared themselves determined to follow the General, and ready to submit to all orders from him. Unfortunately, with undisciplined volunteers, there is a difference between such resolutions of subordination and their fulfilment. And this, as it will be seen, was the rock on which our enterprise was shipwrecked.

It was twelve o'clock of the night between the 11th and 12th that the landing commenced. General Pragay, the chief of the staff and second in command, went in the first boat, with Captain Gotay's company,* and was the first to spring to the

* This was an American company, but commanded by one of the General's Cuba friends. Gotay was a native of Porto Rico, and had joined General Lopez at Cardenas, the year before. He was a tall, handsome, brave fellow, highly esteemed both by his own men and by all of us. No other company probably in the Expedition was in so good a condition of drill and order as Gotay's.

land he came to liberate. Alas! in less than forty-eight hours—but let me go on with events in their order. We watched the operation from the steamer. A few moving lights were visible on the shore. A few shots were heard. On the return of the boat we learned that a party of three or four men (custom-house and post-office officials, as we learned from a couple of countrymen) had fired on the boat as she approached, and had then galloped off, followed only by a few random shots in the dark from Pragay.

A few more boats were now brought off from the shore, and the men and effects were landed as rapidly as possible. The Pampero still did not float, but we hoped that she would do so with the rise of the tide. The General gave Capt. Lewis a clearance from the port of Morillo, as the then highest authority at that place; but directed him to burn the steamer and join him on shore, in case of not being able to get her off, rather than allow her to fall into the hands of the enemy. By four o'clock the disembarkation was completed, and the General then landed himself with the staff. He was dressed in a white jacket and pantaloons, the former buttoning to the throat, with standing collar embroidered with a single star. He wore a red General's sash around his waist, but no arms. Over his shoulder was slung a spy-glass in a leather case. His sword and pistols were with the baggage. His countenance was all aglow with a subdued enthusiasm. In spite of his gray mustaches and beard, he looked almost a young man again. We were all struck with his noble aspect and fine bearing. He parted cordially with Capt. Lewis and Mr. Fayssoux, hoping soon to see them again returning with another expedition. He sent back a brief letter to his friends whom he knew to be awaiting him at the St. John's river, advising them of his change of movement, and instructing them to proceed at once to the Central Department of the Island, in the neighborhood of Puerto Principe, with the auxiliary expedition, for which they possessed there all the requisite materials, consisting of what had been intended for ours.

This was surely a striking proof of General Lopez's single devotion to the cause of Cuban liberty; as well as of his con-

viction of the existence of ample elements for success to the revolution in the Island itself. Here was he landing in daring proximity to Havana, with about 400 ill armed and worse equipped followers. His instructions to his reinforcements were, *not* that they should hasten to his personal support, though his plan of operations was such as to make him expect to maintain a defensive position in the mountains for some weeks after landing. He ordered them *to a distant part of the Island*, to the aid and encouragement of the insurgent patriots of that quarter, where they would arrive after the government would have drawn off their disposable troops to attack *him*. He thus made of us and himself a sort of "forlorn hope," to take the worst brunt of the peril. Whatever our fate, the chances of *the cause* were thus increased, and the revolutionary fire would probably catch in the one quarter, if not successful in the other, beyond the power of the Spanish troops, distracted by the diversion, to extinguish it. Once well caught, he was confident of its burning on till the Spanish dominion of Cuba should be annihilated. Cortez burned his ships to impart to his soldiers the power of despair. Lopez sent his away to carry succor to the cause, in a region distant from that of his own personal presence and peril. Alike patriotic and heroic, and in truth well judged, (had not fortune been against him!) this was highly characteristic of Lopez.

On reaching the shore, the first thing that the General did was to kneel and kiss the soil of his "beloved Cuba," "*querida Cuba*." These were his words of first salutation,—alas! how soon were the same to be those of his last farewell, to the country he hoped to redeem, but could only die for!

He received from Gen. Pragay his report of the dispositions he had made in posting the troops, and taking the necessary military precautions; and then proceeding to inspect the different companies and (nominal) regiments, was received with a general hurrah. With the exception of the sentinels and outposts, the troops were then ordered to take a little rest, of which they were much in need. On the road leading inland to Las Pozas, an advance was thrown forward to a considerable distance, side guards being thrown out on a

couple of footpaths entering it. Our flanks were in similar manner protected against approach. Col. Crittenden with his regiment and a few others occupied the rear.

The effects landed consisted of four barrels of powder, two of cartridges, about 150 muskets, the flag of the Expedition, and the officers' luggage. The General's papers, printed proclamations, &c., with his own personal effects, were contained in one valise. For the conveyance of these some carts were needed. Morrillo being a little hamlet of only about four houses, afforded neither carts nor horses. The General therefore determined to proceed to Las Pozas, a village about three leagues, that is to say, nine or ten miles, distant, and to send back the first carts he could find to Morrillo, where Crittenden was to remain with 120 men on guard of the ammunition, &c., being ordered as soon as he should receive the carts to push forward and rejoin the main body as rapidly as possible. It was not imagined that the separation would be for more than a few hours. For most of those who then parted, it was for life.

We none of us had any idea that any troops could be down upon us within less than thirty-six hours from the time of our

landing. As we afterwards learned, Concha threw his first column of seven picked companies ashore at Bahia Honda within ten or twelve hours after our landing at Morrillo. The Spanish company is of about 125 men. These companies sent out from Havana, were strengthened by two or three more, drawn from Bahia Honda and San Diego, a neighbouring town, &c.*

Before starting for Las Pozas, between eight and nine o'clock, we had the joy of seeing the Pampero once more afloat. It seemed that there would be no end to the shouts of delight with which she was greeted from our ranks, as she began to move off with a freshening breeze, signalling to us her farewell. She was carrying home the news of our landing and our letters; we hoped that she would bring back more friends, especially our howitzers, field-pieces, rifles and more cartridges. Under the circumstances too, we all of course loved the Pampero. In whatever hands she may be, whatever waters she may plough, better luck go with the old Pampero than she that morning left behind with us!

* "Bahia Honda" means *Deep Bay*. It is also the name of a town at the head of the bay.