

Affairs at Gibara—Evacuation of Holguin—Burning of the Town—Condition of the Country.

GIBARA, Jan. 2, 1869.

On my arrival here I found that the troops were having a fight with the insurgents about a mile from the town. They attacked the place, and had it not been for the artillery in the trenches they would have taken it. Gibara is the only place in this vicinity that the Spaniards hold. Holguin has been taken, and the insurgents have started a paper there called *La Estrella de Cuba*. Many of the Cubans have been arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the revolution.

The Spanish troops from Holguin were not able to return here by the direct road, but were forced to come by an out-of-the-way route; nevertheless they lost 150 men on the road. A Spanish captain remarked in my presence that to put down the revolution in the Eastern department would require 30,000 men, and that Spain could not dispose of so many just now.

The town of Holguin has been nearly destroyed by fire and the remaining houses were sacked by the Spanish troops. The place is ruined and probably will never be rebuilt.

At this place the Spaniards have constructed trenches, which enclose the town, and five forts. All beyond the trenches is held by the insurgents, who also possess the river and the side of the harbor opposite the town. There are about 800 Spanish troops in garrison here, and the officers openly state that the insurgents number 8,000 men.

The defence of Holguin lasted forty-five days, during which the troops got out of food and were obliged to kill and eat four horses. Here the garrison are beginning to get short of supplies, as all communication with the interior is cut off. The cavalry have to forage a mile out to get grass and they are often driven back into the town.

At the present moment the troops are afraid to leave for Holguin, as the trenches on the road are too strong for them. The jurisdiction is ruined. You will see accounts in the Havana papers of occurrences here; but they are not at all correct, being full of Spanish lies. I have told you what I have seen.

The New Electoral Law—Qualifications of Voters—Electoral Districts.

HAVANA, Jan. 20, 1869.

The *Official Gazette* of January 23 publishes the long looked for Electoral law, from which I extract the gist as follows:—

The Colonial Minister says he has applied the same electoral legislation to Cuba and Porto Rico as to the Peninsula. In order that the elections be made with complete freedom, he has suspended the royal decree of 28th May, 1825. The present decree contains two articles imperiously demanded by circumstances—the first authorizes the political governors to suspend the elections in one or more contingencies, should this step for reasons of public order be unavoidable; and by the second the provisional government reserves to itself the designating of the time when the elections should take place, in order to allow opportunity for forming the census, which has to precede that most important act.

According to the decree the basis for the formation of the electoral districts will be the fiscal division now existing, grouping (for constituting these) the territory of the financial administration nearest, thus:—

Cuba—First district, the administrations of Havana and Pinar del Rio. Second, Matanzas, Villa Clara and Trinidad. Third, Puerto Principe and Santiago de Cuba.

Each will be divided into as many electoral districts as it may have of municipalities, and each municipality into as many sections as there may be justice courts, provided they have a number of electors not less than fifty.

To be an elector it is required to be a Spanish subject and more than twenty-five years of age, in full enjoyment of all rights and paying twenty-five dollars taxes. The right of voting is confined to the place of residence.

The members of scientific and literary corporations and economic societies, doctors and licentiates of all professions, the regular clergy, the employés of government, general officers and chiefs of the army, militia and navy, the directors of industrial and commercial establishments, including those not possessed of property; painters and sculptors that have obtained prizes in the exhibitions, and the professors and masters of education in public establishments, all will have the right of voting.

Every elector may be elected, excepting in special cases, as in the Peninsula, and of incapacity or incompatibility—for instance, those who have ever been condemned for offences punishable by the decree repressing the slave trade. The deputy who may have been elected by two or more provinces or electoral districts will take option at the presentation of his last acts by the province he desires to represent, the others thereby becoming vacant.

Considering the exceptional circumstances in which the island of Cuba finds itself and the necessity of allowing time to form the electoral census, the provisional government will decree the time when the elections for deputies to the Cortes should take place.

Schedule of the free population for the election according to the census of 1862:—Havana, 238,032; Pinar del Rio, 74,099. Total, 302,131. (Seven deputies.) Matanzas, 124,842; Villa Clara, 147,676; Trinidad, 63,220. Total, 335,745. (Six deputies.) Puerto Principe, 107,934; Santiago de Cuba, 160,035. Total, 258,019. (Five deputies.) Grand total, 653,793. (Eighteen deputies.)

The Capture of Bayamo—An Inside View of the Insurrectionary Government—Céspedes' Reasons for Burning the Place—Women, Children and Prisoners First Sent Off.

(From the *Diario de la Marina*, of Havana, January 23.)

Last evening we received a letter from Batabano, containing several interesting details of the evacuation of Bayamo, and also some of the circumstances that preceded the event. After beating the insurgents at Salado and in the Canto del Embarcadero, and completely dispersing them, General Valmaseda continued advancing till he reached Bayamo, which city he found almost reduced to ashes. Not being able to camp there he proceeded towards the sugar estate of Las Mangas, owned by the insurgent Figueredo, and from thence sent the communications to our chief authorities by the Lieutenant Governor of Manzanillo, which have already been submitted to our readers. This communication was conveyed to Manzanillo, as already stated, by Don Pedro Ramirez. This gentleman is nearly related to Don Carlos Manuel Céspedes, and had been with the insurgents since the *pronunciamento* of Yara, but not voluntarily, as it would appear from what he asserted before several persons, on giving the following information. On Mr. Ramirez being asked by the Lieutenant Governor the reason of his absence from Manzanillo since the events of Yara, he replied that when they occurred he happened to be at Bayamo, on the side of the government, but did not take any active part and could not retreat from the vicinity, to prove which he presented a form of attestation on the part of the Lieutenant General of that city and jurisdiction, which office was then filled by Mr. Udaeta. He acknowledges having been all the time at this gentleman's side, whose whereabouts since the fall of Bayamo he ignores.

Mr. Ramirez mentions that Messrs. N. Grau and Ignacio Casas, merchants of Bayamo, and also a military doctor, presented themselves to his Excellency General Valmaseda, as the only persons who had not followed the insurgents, and whom he had left in the village of Datil, likewise fired by the numerous bands dispersed in all directions. The day previous to the last encounter with the column of General Valmaseda, they made all the women, children and prisoners leave the city, including the commander, Guajardo, who was wounded in one of the first encounters, and the family of Colonel Villares. Mr. Ramirez does not say anything about Commander Mediavilla; who, it will be recollected, went to relieve Mr. Udaeta, as lieutenant of the jurisdiction. Mr. Ramirez further states that on several persons opposing the burning of Bayamo Don Carlos Manuel Céspedes replied that he could not waver, besides he and his own family would be the principal losers, and moreover that Bayamo was an old city and it would be better to rebuild it. At all events, if the reasons were not convincing brushwood and force were, and Bayamo was burning during three days. Here our correspondent mentions in particular that besides a few Dominican and Mexican leaders, the rebels beaten by General Valmaseda were peasants from the neighborhood, accompanied by a few colored persons. At the moment of the attack by the expeditionary force it is said that Don Carlos Manuel Céspedes had ordered 8,000 men into the district. They were divided into several parties, and a great number were but badly armed. Doubtless many of these would already have submitted themselves, had they not been held back by the calumnies published and repeated by the organ of the insurgents, assuring the fact that the peninsulars shoot all prisoners or those that fall into their power by other means. This belief is so deeply inculcated with the sensitive peasants that they have been heard to say that if they were assured a thousand times over they would still prefer dying under arms. The insurgents of Yara and Bayamo will, doubtless, have commenced to undeceive themselves, like those who devastated the district of Santiago de Cuba.