

# CUBA.

## CONFEDERATION OR ANNEXATION.

### Present Status of the Insurrection.

#### Report of the Revolutionary Junta of Havana.

**The West India Confederation Scheme—What Is in the Future—Reasons for American Sympathy.**

HAVANA, Jan. 2, 1869.

The editorial in the HERALD of the 20th ult., in reference to Cuba and annexation to the United States, has created much interest and comment here. The annexation and West India confederation schemes are not considered incompatible. A prominent Cuban and a sympathizer with the revolution, in a communication to your correspondent touching this subject, says:—"The Cubans are, first of all, desirous of breaking the Spanish yoke and then to become a free and independent State in the American Union. They do not sympathize with the tendency towards centralization of power now manifested there, and they desire to become part of the great republic under the system which has existed since its foundation. They fear the interminable revolutions from which other Spanish-American countries have suffered, and so desire annexation, that they may live at peace under just and equitable laws of their own making. Nor is this annexation incompatible with a West India confederation. We believe that the ultimate absorption of all the West India islands by the United States is 'manifest destiny.' Cuban independence must be the first step, and after this a confederation, which, by its reflecting influence, shall restore peace to all of these war-wasted islands, afford them a stable government, and so prepare them for their legitimate position among the free and independent States which compose the American Union. There is not one of these islands but would be gratified could it be admitted into the Union without prejudice against its people and with that magnanimity which a great people should show in so important a matter.

The war cry of the Cubans is "Liberty," their banner that of "one color," with American colors, indicating that it is Cuba's desire and intention to become one of the American States. But the policy of the people of the United States, as represented by Mr. Seward both in Europe and America, is hostile to this, and in such desire the Cubans are compelled to combat this hostility, may be in such a manner as shall raise new complications, to the postponement of the annexation scheme in the interest of a nation less ready to assist our enemy and less chary of "intervention." In Europe Mr. Seward is not the friend of liberal ideas, but of Russian despotism; in America he is the beloved of immoral and tyrannical Spain and inimical to Cubans fighting to be free.

The people of the United States should not withhold their sympathy from the Cubans because they are slaveholders who want to be free without liberating their negroes. They are all abolitionists. They would like a sudden change in the condition of the slaves without the entire ruin of the country, if possible; but ultimate abolition is recognized and approved by all.

Permit me to add a word. Admiral Farragut recently visited Europe with a large fleet. When the question has been asked why the American government directed so expensive a trip, it has been responded that it was for the purpose of protecting and advancing liberal ideas. Why has not an American fleet been sent here for the same purpose? Why is it that Admiral Hoof is here only to protect the interests of a few American residents? I've thought and free speech, the right of association, the right to govern ourselves, now as ever denied to us, should not their legitimate representation in the great American republic, nor should longer exist the monstrous anomaly of a great and free people in sympathy with tyranny and furnishing weapons for its use.

**The Cuban Idea of the Present Status of the Insurrection.**

HAVANA, Jan. 2, 1869.

The revolution in this island is at present at a very critical point in its history. All the Eastern Department is in arms against the Spanish government, which has sent there 10,000 men, with many pieces of artillery and excellent American arms (Remington and Peabody rifles). If the patriots receive the arms they are expecting via Nassau they will be able to oppose a successful resistance to the troops, and not unlikely assume the offensive. If, however, they are so unhappy as not to receive them, they will avoid any decisive battle, and, dividing into small bands, will continue the contest through guerilla warfare until the arrival of the warm season, when the Spanish soldiers, and especially the new arrivals, will be unable to make any movements and will be killed off by the *Yombos* and other malandras. *Yombos* go patriotes has passed into a proverb in this island, and on it Cuban patriots, fighting for freedom, depend against Spanish soldiers and American weapons.

It is certain that the government will make the greatest efforts to suppress the insurrection before the summer arrives, and it may succeed if it sends to the seat of war five or six thousand more men. It has no money to meet such an expense; but the wealthy Spanish residents will probably assist it in the emergency. The course of events will probably be as indicated if the revolution is limited to the Eastern Department. But if, as is very likely, the flame of independence shall extend to this department it will result in the total devastation of the country and the downfall of Spanish dominion in the West Indies.

It is certain that the revolution would soon be extended through this part of the island if the Cubans had arms. The want of arms has prevented all movements near the centre of the Spanish power, where so many thousand Spaniards are well armed and ready to suppress any movement against the national integrity. The insurrection has the earnest sympathy of all Cubans.

It is true that military operations may change all the probabilities of the war. In 1848 General Kladsky closed the Italian revolution by his victory in Novara, and it is possible that Valmaseda may do the same here, though the guerillas are not so easily vanquished in a short time.

General Espinar, who recently arrived here to take the place of Valmaseda as Segundo Cubo, does not intend to take command of the troops in the field, but remains here playing cards every night in a gaming house called the "Casino."

General Simon de la Torre, who recently left here to assume command of the Eastern Department, is a member of the progresista party, and is more decided to fight than General Espinar. They both remarked soon after their arrival here that upon their departure from Spain they did not know of the condition of the island. They evidently expected on their arrival here to lead an easy life, drawing their large salaries and doing nothing, and the error has caused them much annoyance.

The last mail steamer from Spain brought a large number of officials to cat out the substance of the island; but none of the promised liberal reforms, whose first effect would have been to do away with the hungry office-holders which have so long preyed on the lifeblood of Cuba. Among the hundred who have arrived one of the most important is Don Manuel Toledo, Auditor de Guerra, one of the highest positions under government. This man was, six years ago, a judge at Puerto Principe and Trinidad, and was condemned for some malpractices by the court and sentenced to jail for several years. He fled to the United States and might have returned two years since, he being a particular friend of Valmaseda. He is also a friend of General Prim, and therefore has been appointed to the position mentioned. Don Juan Perez Calvo, a public writer of extremely questionable antecedents, has also arrived as Consejero de Administracion. An honest Spaniard recently remarked that the appointment and arrival of these two persons were of themselves sufficient to justify the Cubans in inaugurating a revolution.

General Lersundi has sent to Spain Don Francisco Keller, editor-in-chief of *El Puro*, condemned to imprisonment by the court martial. He has liberated the greater part of the political prisoners and will set them all free before his departure. No Spaniard in America has ever manifested so much humanity in revolutionary times. Valmaseda is shooting his prisoners, it is said, and the war has assumed a ferocious character.

Many wealthy young gentlemen of this city and other places disappear every day, going to take part in the insurrection.

he must fight or retreat; an engagement took place, and his army was so badly cut up that he ordered an immediate retreat to Nuevitas, the point from whence he had started. At last accounts he was in full retreat, and so sorely harassed in all directions by the patriots that it was a matter of doubt whether he would ever reach Nuevitas.

The patriots who occupy La Villa del Cobre, in the vicinity of Santiago de Cuba, are actively engaged in casting cannon at the copper mines, until recently worked by an English company. Since the severe repulse the Spanish troops experienced in their attempt to drive the patriots out of the town of Villa del Cobre they have made no further attempt, nor in fact could they, as they are effectually blockaded in the town of Santiago de Cuba.

A cargo of arms and ammunition was successfully landed on the coast last week. Part of the cargo consisted of a battery of fieldpieces, of which we were much in want.

The greatest enthusiasm and determination prevail among all classes of Cubans. A popular subscription has been started, the subscribers engaging each to pay ten cents per day to form a fund for war purposes. You may imagine what a large part of the population takes part in this patriotic scheme when I inform you that by this means about \$150,000 are collected monthly in the island. The fair sex have taken part and are the best and most active collectors.

An imposing demonstration of popular feeling was made on the 31st of December on the occasion of the funeral of the patriot Camilo Cspedes, who was taken prisoner while fighting in the patriot ranks and brought to this city, where he died in the prison from the effects of cruel treatment. The patriot dead was followed to the last resting place by between 4,000 and 5,000 of his fellow citizens. Gentlemen alternated in carrying the coffin. The procession marched behind four deep, with uncovered heads, and as the corpse passed all who met it uncovered. I send you on another sheet a full account of the funeral from a gentleman who helped to bear the honored dead.

Enclosed I beg to hand you a copy of the *Republican Bulletin of Havana*, which we commenced to publish this week; also a copy of an address to the Peninsulars, or native born Spaniards, which we distributed on the 29th of December.

HAVANA, Jan. 2, 1869.

This Junta has just received news of the total defeat of Colonel Lobo at Las Tuñas. He left 300 men on the field; and among the trophies of the victory are 420 muskets, captured by the patriots. Thus the Spaniards are checkmated in all directions. Count Valmaseda marches to join Lobo, is prevented from so doing and defeated. In the meantime while he has been endeavoring to effect his retreat to Nuevitas, Lobo is attacked and totally routed, only owing his own escape to the neediness of his horse. A strong detachment of patriots is in Valmaseda's front, (the same that defeated him at Cascorro); a formidable force is in his rear between Cascorro and Nuevitas; so unless he succeeds in cutting his way through one of the two patriot forces he must surrender.

The Spanish authorities of this city (*ad interim*) have this day circulated a small handbill (of which I enclose a copy marked No. 3) calling upon the Spaniards to volunteer to form a battalion of "counter guerillas." This will be the second battalion, and to fill the ranks it is to be presumed that they will, as on the occasion of forming the first battalion, have to appeal to the patriotism and love of liberty of the charr gang. Of those who were taken out of the prison on the former occasion sixty-five deserted before they reached their destination.

By letters written from New York to persons in this city, and more particularly by one received by a friend from a gentleman connected with one of your leading papers, this Junta hears with surprise and indignation that said person and many others in the States are under the false impression that the abolition of negro slavery is not one of the articles of our political creed. In answer to this I am requested to inform you that the two principal chiefs of the revolution (Carlos Manuel Céspedes and Francisco P. Aquilera) liberated from the very outset their slaves, some 600 in number, and their example has been followed by many in the Eastern Department.

You will also note that the motto at the head of the *Republican Bulletin of Havana*, published by the Junta and generally approved of, after being fully discussed in a large and influential private meeting, is as follows:—"Abolition of independence! Down with the Spanish government! Liberty for all; universal fraternity! Cuba free for all freemen, without distinction of nationalities or race." We are not so ignorant of the signs of the times as even to dream of sustaining slavery. When Lee surrendered to Grant the death knell of slavery sounded not only for the United States, but also for Cuba.

ANTONIO SUCHÉ, Secretary.

**News of the Revolution in Cuba Supplied by the Revolutionary Junta of Havana to the New York Herald.**

HAVANA, Jan. 2, 1867.

My last gave you an account of the disastrous retreat of Count Valmaseda to Nuevitas and of his arrival in this city in search of reinforcements. I now have to inform you of another and still more disastrous defeat sustained by the same General. On his return to Nuevitas, with the reinforcements obtained here, he undertook to march to Las Tuñas, to form a junction with Colonel Lobo's detachment, and, having effected this, the combined forces were to march on Bayamo, the seat of the Provisional Cuban government. He had proceeded but a few leagues when he began to experience serious obstacles to his march, his troops being continually harassed by the patriots. On reaching Cascorro he found the patriots in force, advantageously posted, so that