

# CUBA.

## SPANISH VIEW OF THE SITUATION.

### The Town of Taguayabon Burned by the Insurgents.

### General News of the Progress of Events.

The steamship Columbia, which left Havana on the 20th inst., arrived at this port yesterday. Her mails are dated up to day of sailing. The purser's favors are acknowledged.

**The Captain General's Report of His Visit to Cinco Villas—The Real Situation—Operations of the Insurgents—Burning of Taguayabon in Remedios—News from Various Parts of the Island—Quesada's Order for the Destruction of Guaimaro—Cholera in Santiago de Cuba—Havana Press on the Annexation of St. Domingo.**

HAVANA, NOV. 17, 1893.

His Excellency the Captain General returned from his visit to the Cinco Villas and other points on Saturday last. Through his secretary, Don Cesario Fernandez, he publishes in the various papers of the city a report of the situation, according to which there is nothing left to desire. As explanatory of his Excellency's ideas, either affected or really entertained, I translate the report as it appears in the *Voz de Cuba*. It states:—

General de Rodas has returned to this capital very well satisfied with his tour of inspection to the various districts which form the Central Department of the Island of Cuba. In the general terms of Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Trinidad and Sancti Spiritus, enthusiastic and disinterested patriotism show themselves in acts worthy of the attention of those few who, giving credit to the intentionally false notices of the insurgents, might doubt the unanimity of sentiment, the resolution on the part of all to excel each other and the firm determination that islanders as well as peninsulars have of aiding, in all possible ways, the authorities in putting an end to the insurrection of Yara. But this loyal spirit of the inhabitants is not particularly worthy of note in the towns mentioned, for the same exists in all parts of the island. The municipal authorities, volunteers, residents in mass, corporations of all kinds, as one person, have offered their lives and property, should they be required, to sustain the national integrity against enemies even more serious than those waging a guerilla war in the interior. And this is not a vain offer; it proceeds from honorable motives. General de Rodas has been agreeably surprised—and this deserves particular attention—to observe that the country—the populated as well as unpopulated—where at one time, on account of the want of troops, the rebels made their headquarters, is now devoted to agriculture, the land being actively worked by its former occupants, who were obliged shortly after the beginning of the rebellion, to flee before the insurgent forces. In many places new buildings have been constructed much better than old ones which they replace. In Villa Clara, Esperanza, Las Cruces, Ranchuelo, Palmira—those places which have suffered so much—are seen no traces of the damage done by the incendiary corps of rebels. Relying on the protection of our soldiers, more than 10,000 souls who fled from their homes from fear of the rebel hordes have returned to them, and now feel assured of reaping the fruits of their labor in the very promising state of the crops throughout Central Cuba. The same change has taken place in Sancti Spiritus, another of the districts which has suffered severely from the insurrection. Families and individuals are daily returning to their homes, having been attracted to the ranks of the rebellion by promises unfilled or brutal threats. In the districts above named it is seen that the so-called Cuban army is reduced to scattering parties, who find their safety in the mountains and who retire upon the approach of the small columns of troops which pursue them. If they descend from the mountains it is by night to procure food, or to show the inhabitants, by the incendiary torch, that they still exist. General de Rodas has been able to see for himself, not only the satisfactory change which has taken place in the island, and which confirms him in his plans for the active winter campaign, to take place upon the arrival of expected troops from the Peninsula, but also the necessities of the different towns and what is most necessary for their welfare and advancement, which data he will make use of in his proper season in carrying out his plans of government.

By order of his Excellency this notice is published for general information.

The Secretary CESARIO FERNANDEZ.

HAVANA, NOV. 13, 1893.

Doubtless this report is as near correct as commanding officers are in the habit of giving concerning operations in the field, but still the evidences are plenty that it is far from giving a correct view of the situation. The insurgents in the Cinco Villas are variously estimated at from 5,000 to 15,000 men. It is true they are separated into small parties, but this is for convenience in obtaining supplies and to enable them the better to carry on the war in the manner they have adopted, viz.:—to keep the Spanish troops actively employed without sacrificing themselves, leaving to the climate and to disease the task of killing them off, and to ruin the Spanish exchequer by putting an end to agricultural operations in the island. It is true the Spanish troops cannot find them in any numbers, but they are kept in constant motion. Large numbers of them are constantly being sent to the hospitals in the cities, wounded in small encounters or sick, while the continued destruction of estates all through the section, from Cienfuegos up to the line of Puerto Principe show how powerless these troops are. Another point, as insignificant, as the Captain General makes out the insurgents to be in the localities he has visited, constant additions are found necessary to the large government forces there, and one or more battalions of volunteers from this city are to be sent at once. It is an admitted fact that the insurgents are struggling under the greatest disadvantages, but reliable information confirms the idea of their entire confidence in ultimate success. As to the idea advanced by his Excellency that all citizens, islanders as well as peninsulars, are ready to aid the government in putting an end to the insurrection, it is the sheerest nonsense in the world. There probably never was a great struggle in the world, where, upon the main question, there was greater unanimity of sentiment than in this war. The Cubans, almost to a man, are opposed to Spanish rule, though differing as to the best means of putting an end to it. Sure, many of them are in the ranks of the volunteers, but it is sufficient to say that no one of them would be placed in any position of trust without at least two Spaniards to watch him, whatever might be his professions.

Among the estates more recently burned in the Cinco Villas are the Rosita, in Villa Clara, Ponvert partially burned and Horniguero—belonging to a New York gentleman—in Cienfuegos. From the estate La Rioja, in the latter jurisdiction, the insurgents, after burning it, subsequently carried off all the officials and laborers.

The situation about Remedios is regarded as alarming. The insurgents have appeared in large numbers in that vicinity, and have burned Taguayabon, a small village in that district. Concerning this *El Adrielito*, of Remedios, in its issue of the 12th, says:—

The passenger train which left yesterday for Taguayabon returned in a few minutes, having met D. Eustasio Mendez, the chief of that district, who made signals for the train to stop. He stated that he and the four men who accompanied him had just exchanged shots with the advance of a large party of insurgents who had passed the town. The Lieutenant Governor, upon learning of the affair, immediately started the train again with troops, which, however, arrived too late to prevent the complete destruction of the place. The insurgents, who numbered from 400 to 600, entered the village from four different points, meeting with only sixteen volunteers, the balance having gone to the bridge of Camajuani. This handful of men fought for four hours with the enemy, which retired as soon as the troops arrived from here, but not before several were killed or wounded, whom they carried away with them. There were but two houses left in the place. The freight cars at the depot, containing tobacco, Indian corn and other things, were also burned.

From the Cinco Villas the usual encounters are reported. A careful reconnaissance had been made over the coffee plantation of Gonzalez in search of the chief Villamil, reported encamped in that vicinity, but without finding any traces of him or his force.

The *Voz de Cuba* of the 16th publishes a letter from Bamba, the 14th, in reference to the advance of the government forces on the Cienega de Zapata. Up to that time nothing further had been done than the formation of a line of circumvallation to prevent the escape of the insurgents, supposed to be in a certain place, though, says the writer, "it is more than probable that they have heard of our approach and escaped." The food of the troops is represented as very bad and the water infernal. They were compelled to sleep on the ground, wet everywhere, the heat of the day unsupportable and the nights freezing, while, to complete it all, the enemy were nowhere to be met with.

Dates from Gibara are to the 10th and report nothing of importance. The steamer Barcelona had arrived from Havana, bringing sixty-three artillerymen and nine soldiers, who proceeded to Holguin. A letter from the latter place, dated the 8th, says that four or five leagues from that city a party of rebels had shown themselves, apparently from the jurisdiction of Santiago de Cuba, and fleeing before the bayonets of Valmaseda's troops. Two hundred men went out and encountered them, causing them some loss and capturing five prisoners, who were brought in. Dates from Puerto Principe to the 11th announce the death of Senor D. Diego de Varona y Varona, a member of one of the old families of the country. Troops had been out in persecution of the rebels, but without result. A gentleman recently returned from the Pinar del Rio reports that the utmost activity prevails among the residents there in organizing and drilling for defence against the insurgents. The Cubans are compelled to enter the ranks, and once there a most careful watch is kept upon them. This is an important sugar-growing district, and the people express the determination to prevent any uprising there. All the roads throughout the jurisdiction are patrolled daily.

The papers here publish the following order of Quesada's, purporting to have been captured by the troops:—

HEADQUARTERS.

Chief Commandant of Guaimaro, JOSE MANUEL DE LA TORRE:—Immediately and under the strictest responsibility you will burn the town, which is under your command, so that one stone may not be left upon another. The citizen Colonel Emilio Valdes will proceed with a party of a hundred free working citizens to assist you in the complete destruction of the place. I suppose you are not deficient of the necessary men and spirits to afford you sufficient aid. Give two hours notice to the families which are in the place. I expect you to yield to this order the most exact fulfillment. Patria and Liberty!

M. QUESADA, General in Chief.

From Santiago de Cuba, the 8th, your correspond-

ent writes that much indignation was felt among the foreign residents because Valmaseda had refused to grant a passport to an Englishman, named King, to go to Jamaica, without entering into a bond of \$5,000 for his good behavior abroad. The British Consul has satisfied the commanders at Port Royal and Mr. King has protested, claiming damages. The cholera was still making great ravages among the Spanish troops, particularly at Givilia and Aserradero. The white forces are being withdrawn and a lot of unfortunate black soldiers are being despatched to take their places.

The volunteer organizations of Havana recently cast lots to decide which one should first proceed to the field. The Second, under command of General Julian Zulueta, was the fortunate one. It goes to the Vuelto Abajo to relieve the troops there who are to be sent to the battle field. It will garrison the towns and villages, protecting estates. It will be relieved by another battalion in fifteen days, which in turn, will be relieved by another until all have been out.

The battalion "Tiradores de la Patria," recently organized here for the field, will proceed to the Cinco Villas this evening. It is mostly made up of old soldiers.

The Spanish mail steamer arrived here this morning with about 500 troops.

The *Voz de Cuba* understands that there will soon appear in the *Gazette* a decree of the Captain General ordering that in grateful remembrance of his recent visit to the Cinco Villas a fifth part of the sentence of common felons, who have been imprisoned two years from the 1st of November, in Cienfuegos, Villa Clara, Trinidad and Sancti Spiritus, and have conducted themselves well, be remitted. The like grace will be extended to those imprisoned in this city.

The Havana papers are much excited over the proposed annexation of St. Domingo to the United States. The *Diario* cannot believe it and *La Voz de Cuba* promises some tremendous writing against it, for which General Grant had better wait.

Yesterday (the 16th) was celebrated as St. Cristobal's day—Patron of Havana. There was the usual suspension of business and processions in the evening.

**Spanish Official Report of Victories—The Spanish Commander Wounded—Paucity of Troops—Change in Valmaseda's Plans—Sickness Among the Forces—Case of Mr. King—Shooting of a Frenchman.**

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, NOV. 13, 1893.

Yesterday were published in the journals here two official despatches, descriptive of a like number of additional victories. One of these was by the "Reus" regiment, under command of Colonel Corchado. It numbered 200 men, and met 1,030 insurgents, strongly posted at Juraguas. The fight lasted for an hour, when the usual "bayonet charge" caused the usual "complete dispersion" of the rebels. They were only saved from complete annihilation by the roughness of the ground, which favored their escape and enabled them to carry off their dead and wounded; so their losses could not be ascertained. Among the casualties of the Spaniards was a severe bruise by the colonel, who was brought into town yesterday and carried to the hospital in a litter. The other victory was at Santa Rita, under Cañizal, and was of like character. So complete was the dispersion of the insurgents that their killed and wounded could not be found.

The original paucity of troops and the great losses from sickness prevent Valmaseda carrying out the policy he originally intended, and the campaign will be by no means as effective as was promised. The Count has, either purposely or otherwise, not been fairly treated by the government, some of the troops promised him having been diverted to other points, among them the battalion which bears his name, and which have been sent to the Cinco Villas.

The sick and wounded continue to crowd into the hospital, particularly from the "Aserradero" neighborhood, where all the troops have suffered more or less. Captain Jerez, of the engineers, wounded in Canto Abajo during Major Izquierdo's expedition, died on Thursday, after severe suffering.

The case of Mr. King, a British subject, refused a passport to go to Jamaica without giving a \$5,000 bond for his good behavior, presents no new features; he still remains here under large expense. The more feeling exists among foreigners here from the fact that a passport was readily granted to an American who desired to go to the United States but recently.

The execution or murder of M. Gireau, a Frenchman, administrator of the Santa Isabel coffee estate, is reported to-day. He was shot on suspicion of complicity with the insurrection. He was sixty-five years of age.