

THE SCOURGE FOR CUBA.

THE FLOTILLA TO SAIL TO-DAY.

Exciting Scenes at Thirteenth Street.

A SPANIARD THIRSTING FOR BLOOD

Bold Plot to Destroy the Gunboats.

Three other gunboats were yesterday afternoon added to the fifteen already flaunting the flag of Spain in the North river, and to-day eighteen Spanish war vessels, built of American material by American constructors, equipped with American cannon and officered by American engineers, will steam away to crush a little republic almost in sight of the shores of the United States. It will be an interesting spectacle to see this American squadron leave New York on such a mission. There will be a great crowd on the wharves, and as the officers of the vessels shove off from the pier there will be tearful farewells and sobbing among women, like those when the volunteers marched away to the war eight years ago. But there will not be any cheering; there will be no hearty shouts of: "God speed," no exultant thrills of sympathy and hope for success. It would be profitable to interview that crowd. Its language will interpret the sentiments of the whole country, and however much it may endorse the impartial enforcement of the laws by the President, it will give no uncertain sound respecting statutes which allow the United States to be made the workshop, arsenal, recruiting ground and base of operations by oppressors against a sister republic. The emotions of those spectators will be but the culmination of the feelings which have attached so much interest to the history of these gunboats, and which alone have made their construction worthy of comment. Ever since the announcement that the gunboats would be allowed to depart every incident connected with them has been anxiously searched out by the public, and as the work progressed each day added to the number who thronged the docks about Thirteenth street. On no occasion has the excitement been greater than that which characterized

THE SCENE YESTERDAY.

Standing upon the pier at the foot of Thirteenth street, it was not difficult to imagine one's self in a Spanish navy yard. A Spanish war vessel, with coal barges alongside, lay at anchor in the stream, fifteen Spanish gunboats swung with the tide on the left, rowboats with Spanish officers and bearing Spanish flags moved to and fro across the water, Spanish voices gave orders among all the din and confusion around, and even the roar of furnaces and clank of hammers in the workshops seemed to sound in the tones of Spain. Practically it was a Spanish navy yard. Captain Aragon, the agent of the Madrid government, was imperial in his supremacy.

The most delicate intimation of the Spanish Minister was a command, and Captain Navarete, the secretary of the Spanish Admiral at Havana, received no less solicitous attention. Naval buttons, bearing the crest of Spain, and gold-laced caps adorned with gilded crowns glistened in all the avenues about the place, and Spanish sailors lounged upon the timbers, chattering their jargon as contentedly as if on their native shore. Curious spectators found it more agreeable to stand outside of the Spanish possessions and watch the operations from neighboring lumber piles, as the authorities in command were not amiable to American citizens unless they worked in a gunboat or wanted to enter the Spanish service. They felt that they were masters of the situation, and their looks and actions did not belie their feelings. They were in great haste. The barrels and boxes of provisions could not be handled fast enough to suit their impetuous nature, and the barges seemed to them to require an eternity for discharging a hundred tons of coal into a gunboat. Work on the three unfinished vessels amazed them by its prolongation, and every movement, from the painting of upper work to the hoisting of gun carriages, was closely watched with impatience. The engineers and firemen engaged on Monday and Tuesday were overwhelmed with instructions, and ordered to be on board this morning at seven o'clock; and the former agreed to obey, provided some arrangements were made for their subsistence on the gunboats. This had not been attended to in the contract, and after considerable consultation they were promised \$17 10, in gold, extra, for subsistence money on the trip. The firemen will draw rations. No American coalpassers were taken, it having been finally decided to detail men from the Pizarro for that duty. Four pilots, one for each five vessels, were engaged, the last orders for supplies, &c., were given at sundown, and as the flags go up to the peak this morning the decks of the flotilla will resound with the sounds of departure. All the necessary Custom House preliminaries have already been attended to. On the 13th instant the Spanish Consul sent to Collector Grinnell eighteen different certificates of transfer of the Spanish gunboats from No. 1 to No. 18. The Collector thereupon detailed an officer to inspect them and certify on the face of each of the transfers that he had visited and identified them. In consequence of this no obstacle will be offered by the Collector to the departure of the boats, which, as vessels of war, require no clearance. Mr. Hopper, Superintendent of the Coastwise Department, identified them yesterday morning as those to which the certificates applied.

THE UNFINISHED VESSELS

are being hurried to completion no less rapidly than those just delivered. All the workmen that can be conveniently employed on them are hastening their outfit, as if the gunboats were required to protect New York from an enemy, and the decks are covered with tackle, hammocks, cables and other paraphernalia of a man-of-war. These boats all lie in the dock between Thirteenth and Fourteenth streets, and are guarded day and night by a large number of watchmen, armed with revolvers. Every stranger who approaches them is closely watched, and in most cases is denied admission to the boats unless provided with a pass. These vessels will all be completed by the 1st of January, and will immediately proceed to Havana, convoyed by the Spanish frigate Isabel, now on her way to New York with officers and men for them. It is understood that several other Spanish war vessels will be constructed at the same establishment, although Mr. Delamater states that no contract has yet been entered into.

AN EXCITED SPANIARD.

Among the swarthy lookers-on in citizen's dress at the Delamater works yesterday was a tall Spaniard, elaborately attired, who seemed to gloat on the progress of affairs. The HERALD reporter politely asked him how Spaniards in New York regarded the attitude of the United States respecting the gunboat question.

SPANIARD—Oh, Señor, zee government of zee United States ees all right. We never supposed zat zee goonboats would be stopped. Zee law was vary plain.

REPORTER—But did you not think that the sympathy of the people for Cuba might influence Congress to detain the vessels?

SPANIARD—We was not affra-ed of zat. Zee government of Spain was ready to det if zee boats was seezzed, and zee United States cannot have a war now. A Spanish fleet would come to New York if zee boats was not let go.

REPORTER—Are the people of Spain ready for war with this country?

SPANIARD—I tells you zee would be no war. But if zis government did make war, zee Spanish peeples is ready. Zee never was much friendship for zee United States in Spain. Zay always believed zat zee Yankees had zer eyes on Cuba, and zat zee United States was zer enemy in every question zat affected zee provinces of Spain in America. Besides zat, when zee Queen was in Madrid zee American papers called her bad names, and before zee revolution made zee Spanish peeples vary mad. How would you like it if zee papers in Madrid said zat Meeses Grant was a bad woman?

REPORTER—But you know she is not. Americans think that the Spanish government ought to feel very amicably towards the United States, especially since the Cuban expeditions have been broken up and your gunboats released.

SPANIARD—Perhaps it does, but zat is not much. We had zee right to come to New York for gunboats, and Spain has plenty of ships to make zee United States give zem up. It was a question of honor, and if it was necessary zee fleets of Spain would bombard New York. Zee United States has got very few ships, and cannot protect herself against a foreign attack. Before making war, viz Spain now, zee Americans will do all zat is asked or zem. We will build all zee goonboats zat we want in New York and we will do as we please viz zee rebels in Cuba. Zee Spanish peeples in New York has no fear zat your government will interfere in zee Cuban question, and when zee rebels are put down zee Yankees in zee island must get out of zat. We know zat zee Americans have no love for us and we will not let zem stay in Cuba unless zay behave zemselves.

A BOLD PLOT

to destroy the gunboats has come to light within the last few days, and would no doubt have proved successful but for the sudden change in affairs upon the release of the vessels. Three Americans conceived the plan, and without communicating their intentions to the Cuba Junta, but trusting to Cuban liberality for reward if successful, secretly prepared to blow up the gunboats with torpedoes. These were constructed of tin with capacity for fifty pounds of powder in each. The cases were snaped like a flattened pyramid, and were to be attached to the bottom of the gun-

boats by two men in diver's dress, who would enter the water at Fourteenth street, come down under the boats, and by means of a sharp-pointed screw, which would be driven through the copper with a blow from a hammer, fasten the torpedoes firmly to the hull. Each torpedo was to be connected by a wire with a galvanic battery, and had a space of about six inches between the powder and apex of the case, so that, with the resistance of the water on the broad, flat bottom, the whole force of the explosion would be directed against the bottom of the boat. It was calculated that two men in diver's dress, supplied with air by the third man, concealed with an air pump at the foot of Fourteenth street, could attach torpedoes to all of the boats in three nights, and when all was ready a dash from the galvanic battery would blow up every vessel. The position of the gunboats as they lay together in the dock, the character of the wharves, the intricate passages among the neighboring lumber yards and the dark nights all favored such an attempt, and it is probable that if the gunboats had remained a few days longer in the position where they had been so long the scheme would have been successfully carried out. The leader in the enterprise has no similar experience, no less difficult and dangerous, during the war, and with his coolness, energy and courage would undoubtedly have destroyed at least part of the flotilla. The rapid movements being made from place to place about the docks by the several gunboats prevents the execution of any such plan now, but it is possible that some other scheme may be devised to prevent a portion of the vessels from ever leaving New York. There is a rumor that the Cubans are preparing to astonish the community by a *coup d'état*, and the flotilla now ready for sea may have trouble before it gets out of sight of Sandy Hook.