

# CUBA.

## Spanish View of the Situation—Peace Re-established—Difficulties of Operations—Report of Operations in the Various Departments—Fight with the Catalans—Arrival of Troops—The Iron-clad Saragossa—Detail of the Various Iron-clads in the Forthcoming War—Outrage on American Seamen.

HAYANA, NOV. 30, 1869.

The *Diario de la Marina* in its fortnightly review of matters in the island, prepared more especially for circulation in Spain, opens by saying—"With letters of gold we should print the words with which we begin this review, peace is 're-established.' In the article which follows, the journal very forcibly demonstrates that peace is not re-established. It deplores the misfortunes occasioned by this civil war, and admits that it has nothing further to recount than has been heretofore given, that is 'seemingly unimportant engagements, which though small and not productive of immediate results, show the impotency of the rebellion, and are paving the way for the pacification of the country.'"

*La Prensa* recounts the events of the past fifteen days, as reported through Spanish sources familiar to the readers of the *HERALD*. In concluding it says:—

That our friends of the Peninsula may form an idea of the difficulties which offer to following the insurgent bands of Cinco Villas, a large part of whom are negroes and peasants well acquainted with the roads, it will be enough to say that in those parts of the island where operations are being carried on the distances are very large, the country almost without population and the roads impassable in time of rain. A few examples will suffice. From Havana to Santiago de Cuba and Guanatanamo there are 197 leagues that are not passable for carriages, the balance of the distance is by railway. Between Trinidad and Santi Espiritu there are eighteen leagues and but one small village and one estate; from Trinidad to Villa Clara there is a stretch of twenty-five leagues, within which there is an estate seven leagues from Trinidad—the small place of Manicaragua, nine leagues further on, and nothing more. Considering that in tropical climates it rains daily during seven months in the year, and how dense are the forests throughout the country, it is possible to appreciate the difficulties to overcome in passing between the mountains by those unaccustomed to this class of campaign.

The reviews of these journals are, of course, highly favorable to the Spanish cause, and point to an early suppression of the insurrection.

Official reports of recent operations in the Eastern department, under Valmesada, are published. Lieutenant Colonel Campillo had reconnoitered the Tolquin road from Galado to the Canto river, where he surprised and took a rebel camp, inflicting a loss of seven to the insurgents. Major Quesada, with a strong detachment, in a reconnoissance over the country about Altagrafia, to the north of Fray Juan, and also to the southward of the Contramaestre river, met only small parties of insurgents. Many families had presented themselves to Colonel Ahren. Colonel Hidalgo had destroyed seven rebel encampments near San Francisco and Niguahio. Colonel Camara had planned an attack against Mogote, a position strongly fortified by the insurgents. No details of the action had been received, though it is reported as having been very severe.

This latter is the engagement reported in detail by your correspondent at Santiago de Cuba, and in which the Spaniards were severely worsted.

The Spanish report of the engagement at San José, on the line of the railroad between Nuevitas and Principe, described by your correspondent at the latter place, gives the number of insurgents at 2,000, and of the Catalans garrisoning San José at ninety-two. The reconnoitering party of eighteen were cut off by the rebels and only seven of the men returned, the others, with the officer, being cut to pieces. From the fire of the soldiers upon the flag of truce under which the insurgent chief Bembeta was conversing with the Colonel three of Bembeta's companions were killed. The papers, while careful to make little mention in detail of this glaring and inexcusable act of treachery, practically commend and applaud it.

The Commanding General of the Cuatro Villas, under date of the 27th, telegraphs that the civil guard had surprised a body of insurgents, killing three and capturing a quantity of arms and ammunition. The column operating in the Sierra on the 17th destroyed an encampment near "Mamon" with like result. The column Perez Vega had destroyed an encampment in the Seborucal, the haunt of the Chief Kamo, and benevolence to be inaccessible to the troops. Other equally uninteresting operations are reported from same vicinity.

A gentleman from Sagua states that on account of the recently discovered conspiracy among the laborers on estates near there twenty-seven negroes had been shot and a large number whipped in the severest manner. Several white men and free negroes had been arrested and taken to Sagua for trial.

The Chief Francisco Barro, captured in the mountains of Guines, was tried by court martial on Thursday at half-past ten o'clock A. M. and executed at half-past four P. M.

The First battalion of volunteers, of Matanzas, is about to proceed to the parish of Boloudron, in the district of Guines, there to remain a month protecting estates. They will be followed by the Second and Third in rotation.

The steamer *Canaries*, from Spain, reached here on Sunday morning with the battalion "Voluntarios de Madrid," composed of two chiefs, forty officers, thirty-eight sergeants and 942 corporals and soldiers. They were received by the Fifth battalion of volunteers and the usual street decorations were exhibited.

The Spanish iron-clad *Saragossa*, from the Peninsula, entered the harbor last evening. She is a vessel of magnificent appearance, and is said to be more formidable than the *Victoria*. As stated, to her has been assigned the capture or demolition of Philadelphia in the forthcoming war with the United States, while the *Victoria* disposes of New York and the *Numancia* of Boston.

A party of volunteers from Regla, opposite Havana, went on board the American schooner *Thomas J. Frazier* on Sunday evening, and, after severely mistreating a number of the crew, cutting two or three of them with bayonets, arrested three charged with striking a police officer while on shore during the day. On Monday afternoon they were marched to Guanahacoe, a distance of five miles under the burning sun, though suffering from the injuries they had received and were there imprisoned. The men declared their innocence and the gerrano or police officer upon being confronted with them stated that they were not the men. Captain Madge, of the schooner, applied to Mr. Plumb, the American Consul, to take cognizance of the matter and obtain their release, but he refused to have anything to do with it, of which the Captain, naturally enough, makes loud complaint.

The government here is making quite extensive purchases of arms; 1,200 Peabody guns have arrived within the past two weeks; 600 more have been contracted for and the agent of the company, Mr. Benton, now in Havana, expects shortly to conclude a contract for 7,000 additional.

## Successful Landing of Filibusters at Nipe—Fight at Mogote and Repulse of the Spaniards—Valmesada's Report Couleur de Rose—Seizure of Mules by Authorities.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, NOV. 23, 1869.

There is a well authenticated statement of the landing of a body of filibusters, with a large quantity of military stores, at Nipe. The steamer which landed them is said to be the *Teaser*, and the stores have already reached a place of safety.

There has been some pretty severe fighting lately near here, and on Saturday, the 20th, the Spanish arms suffered a reverse at Mogote, where an attack upon a fortified position of the insurgents was repulsed with loss. The troops were commanded by Colonel Camara, and the attack commenced by throwing in shell, which was followed by a bayonet charge. The Cubans, however, stood firm; and after a desperate fight the Spaniards were repulsed. No details of the losses are known, but they are heavy on both sides. General Valmesada publishes a despatch this morning detailing the operations of the past fortnight, in which everything is *couleur de rose* and the attack at Mogote a complete victory, with a loss of one man killed and two wounded. Nothing is said to account for the crowd of wounded men who have been brought in during these last three days.

Yesterday the government had men in the streets seizing mules, which were taken without any remuneration. Many cases of great hardship resulted—among them that of a poor negro, who had come in from the country with eight mules—all of which were taken from him. What makes this action for the authorities worse is that when the animals are no longer required they are not returned to the owners, but sold for the benefit of the military administration, thus constituting an open and high-handed robbery of innocent people.

## Attack of the Insurgents on San José—Flag of Truce—A Reconnoitering Party Cut Off—Valor of the Cubans—Excitement Over the Affair—The Catalan Colonel to be Court Martialed—The Situation Gloomy—Scarcity of Food—Sufferings of the Inhabitants.

PUERTO PRINCIPE, NOV. 24, 1869.

The monotony which has hung around this jurisdiction of late has been interrupted by an attack of the insurgents on the plantation San José, situated on the line of the railroad, eighteen miles from Nuevitas. It is well entrenched and fortified and garrisoned by several companies of the Catalan volunteers, commanded by the colonel of the regiment. The attack has created considerable excitement here, and, judging from the exasperation of

the Spaniards, the Catalans must have been worsted. Naturally their account is as favorable as possible. The following details are furnished me by an officer of one of the companies and present on the occasion. On the 20th inst., early in the morning, a negro brought in the news that the "Platanal" estate was full of insurgents. The colonel immediately ordered an officer and twenty men out to reconnoitre. None of them returned, being cut off by the insurgents, and eight of their bodies, including the officer's, were found on the "Platanal" next day. About eight o'clock A. M. large parties of insurgents made their appearance, commanded by Quesada, Bernabi de Varona, alias "Bembeta," and Cornelio Porro. They immediately opened fire on the Catalans and a fight of an hour continued, in which the latter lost two killed and seven wounded. The insurgents then raised a white flag, which was responded to in the same manner by the colonel commanding San José. Hostilities were suspended and "Bembeta," with four men, approached close to the trenches and asked to speak with the Colonel. That officer came forward, when he stated that they knew the Catalans were brave soldiers; that they were republicans at heart and that they (the insurgents) were struggling for the same liberties which the Catalans had lately fought for at home; that he wished to avoid bloodshed, and asked the Colonel to deliver up the arms of his men, who would be at liberty to go where they chose. This was followed by a volley from the soldiers without orders, from which two of Bembeta's fell. The struggle was renewed and continued for an hour after, when the insurgents, advised by their scouts of the approach of reinforcements from Las Minnas and other points on the line, withdrew. My informant states that they fought bravely, many of the men endeavoring to scale the entrenchments and very nearly succeeded in taking them; had they persisted a short time longer they would have done so, as the ammunition of the garrison was nearly exhausted. In the train which leaves to-day for Nuevitas goes the major of the Catalan regiment, who goes to relieve the Colonel, he having been ordered to Havana to be court martialed, from which it would seem that the defence did not add much to the lustre of Spanish arms in Cuba. Fevers still continue here unabated, and the men that arrived here last spring, full of vigor and elasticity, have dwindled to mere shadows. The situation is not improving. The products of the country are very scarce, and the most we eat is brought from Gibara and Nuevitas. There is a good deal of misery among the inhabitants that remain. Sadness hangs over the city and increases daily. No foraging parties go out now, as they have been invariably worsted by the insurgents.

Preparations are being made to receive the Captain General, who is expected to make his promised visit to this city.