

CUBA.

The Revolution as Seen by an Eye Witness.

CONDITION OF THE INSURGENTS.

THEIR POLICY AND MEANS OF WAR.

We have received the following statement of affairs in Cuba from Mr. Charles McCormack, who has resided for several years in the city of Puerto Principe, where he was employed as master machinist of the Puerto Principe and Nuevitas Railroad. Mr. McCormack having travelled on horseback from the place of his late residence through the heart of the island to the first railway station from which he could take the cars to Havana, and passed through the insurgent and Spanish lines, a distance of more than one hundred leagues, during which time he held frequent intercourse with all classes of the population, has had the opportunity to form a valuable appreciation of the revolution now on foot. He tells us that when he reached the lines of the insurgent forces besieging Puerto Principe he was favored with much information by a number of officers of rank, who requested that he should furnish it to the *NEW YORK HERALD*, which is his motive for making the present statement. The long distance he was compelled to travel on horseback makes his dates not so late as the news we have published, but as an inside view of the revolution it will be found interesting.

PERSONAL STATEMENT.

The occupation of the line of railroad from Puerto Principe to Nuevitas having left me without employment I determined to return to the United States. I procured the necessary papers from Colonel Mena, the Spanish Governor of the city, and started with a companion, on horseback, by land, for Havana, on the 12th of February last.

At that time the native male population, with the exception of the small children and very old men, had entirely left the city in consequence of the revolutionary movement. The native Spaniards, mostly shopkeepers, had enrolled themselves in the volunteer corps, and were exceedingly bitter in their hostility to the Cubans. These, with the small number of regular troops in the city, gave Colonel Mena a force of about 3,000 men, well supplied with arms and ammunition and a few field pieces. There had been a regiment of colored troops in the garrison, but these had nearly all deserted to the insurgents, taking their arms with them. The roads leading into the town were all barricaded by the Spanish troops in the outskirts. Operations against the insurgents were confined to an occasional foray of the troops for provisions and forage, which were usually made in strong force and encountered little open resistance, though on every occasion they encountered a constant ambuscaded fire both in going from and returning to the town.

The feeling of the natives of all classes is very decided for the revolution, and young and old, rich and poor have gone into it. General Dulce's proclamations of amnesty and reform at first produced some effect, and many were in favor of accepting them. Among these were one, if not two, of the Arango's, and one of them had begun negotiations to that effect. For this purpose he had held communication with Colonel Mena, and appointed a day when he would come in unarmed under a flag of truce to confer with him. It was stated in Principe that Colonel Mena's orders to the squad sent to meet Arango were to bring him the corpse of that rebel. The fact was that he was shot as soon as he approached the suburbs of the town, and the remains were hacked and disfigured after death. This event stopped entirely the feeling in favor of accepting the amnesty and reforms among the Cubans.

The insurgent force gathered round Puerto Principe amounts to about 7,000 men, and I was informed that 8,000 more were holding the line of railway between that city and Nuevitas. They are very enthusiastic in the cause, but are badly armed, and ill supplied with ammunition. Their only cannon are a few pieces of iron pipe well plugged and bound round with banded strips of the hard woods of the country. Every available instrument was applied to the making of a weapon for offensive purposes, and a lance and *machete*—a short, heavy sword—were the general armament. A few had breech-loading rifles captured from the Spaniards, but the want of the proper ammunition rendered them of little service. An old fashioned flintlock muzzle-loading musket was the favorite arm, as it could always do service whether there were patent cartridges, percussion caps, &c., in camp or not. Whoever had one of these prized it above all the patent arms to be had.

There was but little organization among the forces of the revolution, although General Quesada was recognized as the chief in command. Every leader had raised and kept together what men he could, and the camp seemed more like a gathering of private bands than a regular force. General Quesada was laboring to introduce regimental and brigade organizations. It was this reason, the absence of regular organization and military rule, which prevented General Quesada from attacking Puerto Principe, which he could undoubtedly capture if he could control his force so as to bring them to act on a general plan.

There are many negroes among the insurgents, most of them from the towns, or who were previously free. The plantations have all stopped work, but the slaves have either gone into the towns to seek protection, or have fled into the woods, where they remain. Few or none of this class of the population side with the Spaniards.

The war is carried on by the Cubans more as a guerrilla war than by regular operations. Whenever a force of Spanish troops appears anywhere the Cubans scatter from its front, and seek by ambuscading behind trees and in the thick woods to annoy the troops and diminish their numbers. The great object among the insurgents in these encounters is to get hold of the musket and knapsack of every one they can wound or kill. In this they will run extraordinary risks, three or four running out from the bush at every Spaniard who falls. The Spanish troops generally behave well in these ambuscade encounters, and whenever forced to halt or form during their march, will roundly abuse their unseen foes, styling them cowards, and calling upon them to come out of their hiding places and show themselves.

The feeling among the Spaniards is very bitter indeed. They formed almost entirely the trading population of the country, and every crossroad and country village was occupied with their shops. These are now abandoned wherever the insurgents have appeared, and their owners have withdrawn to points held by the troops. Thus the country is bare of goods. At first a lenient policy towards the prisoners prevailed, but the Spanish volunteers have now become so violent that they shoot nearly all they capture, calling them leaders. At the time I was with the insurgents they had not executed any prisoners, but the feeling in favor of retaliation was becoming very strong.

No regular civil government exists in the districts held by the insurgents, and no formal attempt has yet been made to organize one. In the Central Department General Quesada's authority is respected, while in the east General Cespedes is looked upon as the leader. There is little communication between the several departments and no concert of action. The only aim seems to be war with the Spaniard. The insurgents in the Villa Clara district hold their organization distinct from those of Cespedes and Quesada.

From the insurgent camp around Puerto Principe we rode through Ciego de Avila, Espiritu Santo, Villa Clara and Macagua to Colon, where we sold our horses and took the cars for Havana. Wherever we stopped among the country people the same feeling against the Spaniards and confidence that their rule is approaching its end prevailed, while in the towns the Spanish traders, armed and organized by the government, entertain the most violent feelings against the Cubans. No attempt to injure us was made by either party when we encountered them, although both my companion and myself were searched on several occasions. The Spaniards were always distrustful

of us; but the insurgents in every instance gave us good treatment because we were Americans.

It is my belief that the insurrection cannot be put down, and that it will continue to spread until it involves the whole island; but to take the fortified ports and towns the insurgents need better arms and organization than they now possess.