

CUBA.

Departure of Political Prisoners—Their Destination—Details of Encounters—Bravery of the Insurgents—Mexican Citizens in Cuba.

HAYANA, March 20, 1892.

The sailing of the political prisoners for Fernando Po or elsewhere is set down for to-morrow. It has for more than two weeks past been the principal subject of conversation and speculation among all classes. Though there is a possibility that the vessel may be still further delayed, it cannot be long. The ship selected, after considerable difficulty, is the Francisco de Borjas, a Spanish war vessel with two guns and eighty men. She is commanded by Commander Heres. The orlop has been divided into three compartments, each to contain 105 prisoners. They will be subdivided in accordance with their position in life. They have been permitted to provide their own mess and to engage a cook. Mena, Edouard, of the French Hotel Legrand, has been selected. Each prisoner has contributed sixty-eight dollars towards the common fund. Private subscriptions have been made for the poorer prisoners, who are comparatively few. The cost of the provisions, wines, &c., provided amounts to \$10,000. The money which the prisoners take with them, independent of the letters of credit, reaches the sum of \$300,000. It may be doubted if a ship load of prisoners were ever better provided before. They are to be guarded by 100 volunteers, who are paid as follows:—Two dollars per diem to the sergeants, one dollar and a half to corporals and one dollar to the men. Among the officers going is one Martel, who is a person of some means, and whose hatred to the Cubans is such that he accompanies the prisoners, as he says, to treat them as severely as possible and to make sure that they are taken to Fernando Po.

Commander Heres is an officer of the Spanish navy and is represented to be a humane gentleman. He goes under sealed orders, with instructions to open them upon the high seas, and this confirms the idea, extensively entertained, that the prisoners will be taken to Cadiz; or at least those guiltless of any offence, comprising the majority. It is thought probable that the ship will touch at the Canary Islands. Most of the prisoners that have means have given powers of attorney for the transaction of their business to their friends, and many have made their will. Among the latter is Don Carlos del Castillo, who bequeaths \$1,000,000. It is stated this morning that their destination is Canary Islands.

News of encounters between the troops and insurgents continues to reach us as usual. From Cienfuegos, the 17th, we learn that the artillery column, under Morales de los Rios, with a squadron of cavalry, had come up with 2,000 rebels of Villa Clara, at Potrerillo, under Morales the Pole, Villamil and others, and had completely routed them, killing 205, wounding 300 and capturing twenty-one prisoners, some horses, arms, &c. Thirty Spanish prisoners were also retaken. The troops lost one lieutenant and one man. General Pelaez and his staff arrived at Cienfuegos on the 14th. The main body of his command was at Arimao, to which place he had sent supplies for 2,000 men. In his march he found the town of Cumannayagua deserted, having been sacked by the rebels. The only point where the rebels found any refuge was in Siguaneya, where, owing to the ruggedness of the road, he could not take his artillery, and he did not care to pursue them without it.

General Letona arrived in Villa Clara on the 14th. He had a number of encounters with the rebels, in all of which he punished them severely. The shops in that place had been closed for a month, but upon the arrival of Letona with his chasseurs they were again opened. It was expected that the railroad to Cienfuegos would be repaired soon.

Dates from Trinidad are to the 17th. Colonel Bascura, commanding the column operating in this jurisdiction, had been slightly wounded in an encounter, but had recovered and was in the field again. The rebels had burned the estate of Señor Esquera, a Spaniard. The rebel chief Rojas was killed in a fight near Guaranabulla.

From Espiritu Santo dates are to the 12th. Several parties of rebels had passed the borders of that jurisdiction from Moron, Remedios and Villa Clara. Poello was expected back soon from his excursion in the direction of Moron. It is thought he extended his march to the confines of Puerto Principe. Nothing was known of his movements. An early restoration of telegraph communication was hoped for.

Sagua dates are to the 15th. The insurgents, being hotly pressed, had returned to Alvarez, and on their way had destroyed the railroad and telegraph. A column of 800 volunteers was expected. Between Sagua la Grande and Sagua la Chica the insurgents have burned five sugar estates after carrying away the negroes, whom they armed with machetes. On the estate "Gesoria," belonging to Don Fabian Garcia, 350 hogsheads of sugar were destroyed and eighty slaves taken off. Later dates say there have been two very bloody actions in Alvarez, thirty miles from Macagua. Large forces of insurgents have overrun the country. A band of 1,000 men had appeared at Macagua. On the 17th a party of 500 invaded the territory of Cardenas, and in the vicinity of a town called Motimbo some fighting had taken place. Two estates belonging to Spaniards had been burned. The government had directed the concentration of all its forces in the Villa Clara district, including those under Letona, Pelaz and Poello, with the artillery column of Colonel Morales de los Rios and a considerable force of cavalry, estimated to number in all 10,000 men. The insurgents, in despite of their inefficiency and the disadvantage of want of organization, arms and artillery, were fighting with great bravery and desperation. The nature of the ground is such that encounters are very frequent.

A fight is reported in Remedios on the 15th, when 3,000 rebels were defeated by a few volunteers and 135 killed, while the latter lost but two wounded. Five chiefs were taken and immediately shot.

In Colon on the 17th the express train had arrived, with 400 troops and a section of militia cavalry under Colonel Araoz.

Excessive rains throughout the jurisdiction had caused suspension of grinding on all the plantations.

Brigadier Lopez Pinto has been appointed Commandant General and Governor of Matanzas. He has assumed office. A rising was reported in Bolondron.

Commandant Obregon, second in command of Benegas's "order column," has been named Lieutenant Governor of Holguin, in place of Señor Campa.

Letters through Spanish sources have been received here from Puerto Principe. They state that Lesca left Guanaja with 1,800 men and arrived with less than half that number, having lost the balance on the route. It was supposed the provisions he left at Guanaja fell into the hands of the rebels. Many of the women of Puerto Principe had gone out with their children to join their husbands, fathers and sons in the insurgent ranks. Lesca had issued an order directing their return within a certain time on pain of being made liable under military law. He wants them to prevent an attack on the city by the rebels.

Regarding the fifty prisoners recently brought here *La Voz de Cuba* says:—"We cannot but censure Señor Moreno Villar, the Governor of Remedios, who is known for decision and energy, for having committed the error of sending hither men whom he could have tried himself. The trial of supposed criminals should take place in the locality of their alleged offences. If innocent they suffer less; if culpable it is proper that they should suffer on the spot where their crimes were committed." The meaning of which is that Governor Villar should have shot them. Probably, however, that gentleman is not willing to do his share of that bloodletting which Dulce so lavishly lets out to his subalterns, in order that his own name may not be stained. Commissions of volunteers from Remedios, Trinidad and Santiago de Cuba have arrived here to represent the situation in their respective jurisdictions; they state that the forces in those places are far from sufficient to protect the people against the enemy who is everywhere presenting himself.

The Mexicans resident in Cuba are in a very bad way. They are everywhere objects of suspicion, no matter how innocent. A fortnight ago they applied to the American Consul for protection, but of course he could do nothing. There is no Mexican consul here. Numbers of them have been arrested and are now incarcerated, with no one to speak in their behalf. Two of them, who arrived here on the American steamer City of Mexico from Sisal, were arrested as soon as they reached the shore. Señor Ojeda, a Mexican, was recently released, after having been confined twenty-nine days without any knowledge of his offence.