

CUBA.

Early Peace Anticipated by the Spaniards—Views of an American in the Country—Organization of the Insurgents—The Siguanea Affair—Troops Still Going to the Field—Reported Victory of Quesada.

HAVANA, April 2, 1895.

The insurrection at present is at slack tide, and, as heretofore on several occasions, its speedy termination is generally prophesied. The effect of this is observed in a very general increase of confidence among business men and an improved state of the money market. Its cause may be found in the continued reports of success of the government arms throughout Cienfuegos, Colon, Trinidad, Villa Clara and other surrounding jurisdictions, by which large numbers of insurgents have been influenced to leave the field, and those remaining are extremely careful to keep out of the way. Another cause is the want of unity and organization among the insurgents, which is becoming painfully evident even to the warmest friends of free Cuba.

As bearing upon this point I quote the following extracts from a letter written by an American resident of a small town in the jurisdiction of Remedios. He says:—"The forces in the field are made up of peasants, negroes and Chinese, poorly armed with old pistols, blunderbusses, shot guns and cane knives. They have no funds, commissariat, ammunition or discipline; are without organization, nor have they conception of any, and they know nothing about the art of war. The country people who have not risen are greatly terrified and have abandoned their farms and fled to the woods, which are full of men, women and children fleeing from the insurgents. They have been badly whipped about here and throughout the whole jurisdiction, except in Sagua la Chica, where there are about a thousand of them, who have burned three sugar plantations and have not yet been attacked. No quarter is given and no prisoners are taken. My only fear now is that outrages may be committed by the small parties into which the insurgents will be broken, and that to revenge themselves they will fire the plantations." Under date of April 1 the same gentleman writes:—"The attempt in this part of the country by the insurgents, unprovided as they were with everything necessary to carry on war and completely ignorant of the manner of conducting it, was ridiculous in the extreme, and has ended, as I supposed it would, in the ruin of thousands of poor, ignorant peasants. Half of the insurgents left the ranks after the first fight and the others have been dispersed on four different occasions; and, having failed in an attempt to reach Puerto Principe, are going about in small bands. Garrisons are to be stationed at several points in the jurisdiction."

A much disgusted old Spaniard, of wealth and position, recently observed that the insurrection would have been put down long ago were it not for the love of money inherent in the hearts of the Spaniards. He intimated that if the fault did not lie at Madrid or in the Havana palace it was with the lieutenant governors of the various jurisdictions, who, coming fresh from Spain, with their fortunes to acquire, found it easier to do so amid turmoil and strife, and therefore made no proper efforts to subdue them. A fearful comment this upon the administration of affairs in this island by the Spaniards.

General Pelaez, in his report of the recent operations against Siguanea, which appears in the *Gazette* of the 1th, argues the practical termination of the insurrection. He says, in substance, as follows:—"As soon as the spies of the enemy heard that forces had gone from Trinidad, Cienfuegos and Villa Clara, and communicated the fact, the insurgents abandoned the extensive defenses which lead to their strongholds. In their precipitate flight they left undisturbed their wooden and stone parapets, after setting fire to some of the buildings of the towns and villages. Their numbers are reported as very great, but appear not to have exceeded 1,500 men. As prearranged the respective columns left Cienfuegos, Trinidad, &c., on the 24th ult., and despite heavy showers and the horrible state of the roads the combined forces arrived at Siguanea on the 31st. The road taken by Letona's command was intercepted by stockades and tree trunks at the narrow passes, which were crossed with great difficulty. In conclusion he says:—"The people will have observed that even in the most impregnable passes the insurgents cannot stand. We three generals (Pelaez, Letona and Buceta) after consultation have determined to return to our respective jurisdictions, deeming the insurrection overcome, and it now only remains to pursue the small bands still existing, whose dissolution may be considered immediate."

Like all questions, however, there are two sides to this one. The three generals mentioned seem to have an extremely limited range of vision and do not perceive that with the exception of Puerto Principe and the seaports well armed insurgents hold all the country from Cape Mayal to the bounds of their jurisdictions, and that for months the chief of operations in the Eastern Department has been shut up in captured Bayamo unable to do anything against the enemy. Until the insurgents in those localities, each day growing stronger by fresh importations of arms, are scattered, shot or hung a speedy termination of the rebellion can hardly be anticipated. Again, it is a significant fact that there is no suspension of effort on the part of the authorities. The artillery column which returned here a few days since, because "there was no further need of its services," said the Spaniards, is ordered to the field again, and volunteers are being mobilized and hurried off with the same energy as ever. The arrival of the Catalans, too, is anxiously looked for, and in everything is denoted arduous work in the future. The reader may form his own conclusions as to the prospects for peace.

Our news from the seat of war is unusually meagre and no encounters are reported.

The planters of Cardenas, Colon, Sagua, Remedios, Cienfuegos and Villa Clara have undertaken to maintain a special force of Guardia Civil, composed of 800 foot and 200 horse. The annual expense is placed at \$441,000. There are 850 estates in those jurisdictions. The contribution will amount to three per cent on the admitted profits.

At Villa Clara the 4th, the troops had returned from Siguanea. They found all the habitations in Seibabo destroyed by fire. The Padre Santa Ana, Don Frederico Jova and Don Rafael Rojas have been arrested and sent to Havana. The latter is the author of a pamphlet on autonomy.

Advices from Trinidad state that some of the negroes carried off from the coffee plantations by the insurgents were returning. General Pelaez arrived at Cienfuegos on the 6th from Siguanea with his staff, a section of artillery and two companies of chasseurs, with the squadron of mobilized cavalry of that city and the Guardia Civil infantry.

In Espiritu Santo, dates to the 3d. The Governor has prohibited the carrying of arms by citizens and ordered their surrender within three days. An account is also to be rendered by vendors of arms.

Cardenas, the 6th. Volunteers are moving over the country continually. Macaguar, Alavez, Yabuso, Santo Domingo and other points in the jurisdiction of Cardenas, Sagua and Cienfuegos, are now free from insurgent depredations. In Sagua Governor Trillo Figueroa has placed detachments of from seventy to eighty men at different points, which have been of signal service.

A report has been generally current in Havana, for the past day or two, that the column sent out by Lesca, from Puerto Principe to Santa Cruz, for provisions, had been attacked by Quesada, on its return, defeated with immense loss, and the convoy captured. The story is that this has been received officially.

General Escalante is reported to have been captured by the insurgents.