

# C U B A .

## American Reports from the Field of Revolution.

### PROCLAMATION OF VALMASEDA.

### THE CONGRESS AT SIBANICU.

### SPANISH ACCOUNTS.

The mail steamer *Eagle*, Captain Greene, arrived yesterday from Havana, via Nassau, with mails and passengers. The news from the scene of revolutionary events in Cuba is full and interesting, as will be seen by our correspondence given below.

**Arrival of Engineers from the Insurrectionary Districts—Life Among the Patriots—Grand Congress at Sibanicu—The War Declared to be for Annexation—The Sugar Crop.**

HAVANA, April 30, 1892.

On Wednesday last arrived here from Nuevitas on a sailing vessel three American engineers, named Orlando C. Smith, of Newark, N. J.; Alexander Crumble, of Newburg, N. Y., and Virgil C. Wheaton, of Cape May, N. J., they having been employed on certain sugar estates in the jurisdiction of Puerto Principe from last fall up to the early part of the present month. They were among those American citizens spoken of by Rear Admiral Hoff in a communication to the Navy Department, and concerning whom he had applied to the Captain General, who sent orders to his officers in that section that they should facilitate the coming to Havana of such Americans as much as possible.

These engineers were on estates situated some fifteen and twenty miles, respectively, from Puerto Principe and owned by Cubans taking an active part in the insurrection. From the opening of the grinding season up to the 3d of April operations on the estates were actively carried on, the negroes, though informed they were free, working on as usual. At the time mentioned orders were issued by the insurgent authorities for them to be taken from the estates for service in the field, which was accordingly done, and all work at once ceased.

The engineers referred to received nothing from their employers, as owing to their long non-communication with the outer world they were without money. They expressed great regret at this, and hoped that the time was not far distant when their claims could be settled. The engineers made their way from Puerto Principe by a circuitous route—in order to avoid the military operations on the railway—to Nuevitas, and thence shipped on a schooner to this place. During the time they were at work the estates were not molested either by government or insurrectionary forces, though some ciners in the vicinity were destroyed, the sugar manufactured being fed to horses, who eat it with avidity, or scattered upon the ground. One of these estates was owned by the brothers Arteaga. One of them, in the early part of December, called his slaves together and informed them that they were free men and at liberty to go wherever they chose. He would prefer to have them remain with him until the crop was in and he would pay them for their labor meanwhile. They received his announcement with much enthusiasm, and unanimously decided to remain. As with all the negroes, when called upon to join the insurgent ranks, they manifested their entire willingness, shouting, "*Viva Cuba Libre!*" "*Viva Cespedes!*" and other patriotic cries.

From the statements of these engineers it is evident that the numbers of the concentrated bodies of insurgents, with arms for aggressive or defensive warfare, have been greatly exaggerated. No such force as 5,000 and 10,000 men have ever been collected, nor is it probable that such number of effective firearms can be found in Camaguey. The truth is, now, as in the early part of the insurrection, the rebels go about in small bands, numbering from fifty to seventy-five, very many of them but poorly armed and with little or no discipline. Like the old Highlanders of Scotland, as described by Scott, the fight being over, each one returns to his native glen, if it so suits him, to look after his business or family interest, always ready at any moment to catch up his weapon again at the sound of the pibroch. Animated by a genuine spirit of liberty and fiercely determined never again to submit to Spanish domination, they seem not to appreciate the necessity of organization and discipline—all are equal, and orders are obeyed as they jibe with the individual will. Though thus scattered over the country the aggregate of the insurgents is very large, and for any operation a considerable force can be easily collected. There opposed Lesca in his march from Guanaja to Puerto Principe 800 men thus collected; but as they were without organization and unaccustomed to acting together, even under the advantages of position they could not oppose the disciplined troops. About the same number were gathered to oppose the convoys of provisions from Santa Cruz to Puerto Principe; but the same causes operated against the insurgents, and, though they caused the Spaniards heavy loss, they were unable to impede the progress of the train. It is related that upon the return of the last convoy from the coast it was arranged to stampede a large herd of cattle upon it and follow it up by an attack in the confusion. A lookout was placed in an elevated tree commanding a view of the road, with instructions to give a signal at the proper moment. Seeing the troops in the distance and becoming alarmed for his own safety he signalled too soon. The stampede, as such, was a success; but the road was entirely clear when the troops came up.

In an attack upon one of these convoys Colonel Porro, a brave insurgent chief, was wounded. My informants had a conversation with him at a point on the road, in which he expressed his intention of taking the saddle again very soon.

In the early part of April a grand junta or Congress was held at Sibanicu, where were gathered representatives from all parts of the island, even from the vicinity of Havana. Cespedes was present and presided. Quesada was, by a vote unanimously, elected commander-in-chief of all the forces in the island, and a resolution was passed, without a dissenting voice, declaring that this contest is for annexation to the United States. Other details of the action of this body are not given, but all its members were sanguine of success and determined to prosecute the war. In their hopes and prospects they reason as follows:—The United States, in order to nation and complete her position as a great maritime nation, and for her safety in case of foreign war, needs Cuba, and must ultimately have it, and we can and will hold out until something turns up which will cause her to interfere in our favor. Both the sympathies and the interests of the people of the United States are with us, and they will assist us with means and men, independent of their government. In Camaguey, where lies the chief strength of the patriots, the rainy season is at hand. Once opened, the Spanish troops will be unable to move from their encampments or barracks in the cities, nor can they transport provisions from the coast save by railroad. Thirty thousand men along the line of the road between Principe and Nuevitas cannot keep open the communication long enough to supply Principe for the rainy season. We are concentrating every available man to oppose the repairs of the road and the transportation of provisions, and either by preventing the repair or by subsequently cutting the road we shall prevent the supplies getting in. Once the trains commence and all communication ceases, the troops will soon be starved out from the interior and Puerto Principe and other cities of importance will fall into our hands. All operations against us must cease, and by the time the season is over we shall be well supplied with arms and ready to meet the Spaniards in the open field. Again, the sickly season is upon us and the vomito is certain to make deadly havoc in the ranks of our enemy, particularly with those recently arrived. Again, Spain will not be able much longer to carry on the war against us. She is bankrupt now, and matters are growing worse every day. Even though she should send 50,000 additional men against us we can hold out for two years, and long ere that her efforts must cease from mere exhaustion.

The fact is undoubted that the great mass of the Cubans were opposed to initiating the insurrection at the time it opened. It was thought better to wait until the present crop was in, the proceeds of which would enable them to supply themselves with arms. Meanwhile the necessary organization is going forward. Once prepared they could have precipitated themselves on the few troops on the island and gained advantages which could not subsequently have been wrested from them. Nevertheless Cespedes and his immediate coadjutors raised the standard and the patriots have been compelled to meet the operations of the constantly increasing forces, powerless to do anything, for they were waiting for arms. Much ill feeling has been the result, yet all are agreed upon the main issue and all confident.

When Quesada was placed in command Napoleon Arango withdrew and endeavored to get up another party, and subsequently to arrange peace. Arango remains under arrest in Gibanicu, and naturally curious stories are told about him—such as that he is a traitor; that at one time he had Valmaseda surrounded and without ammunition and that he permitted his escape, inducing his men to withdraw by informing them that a cargo of arms was about landing and it was necessary they should go to protect and receive them. It is, however, probable that he is guilty only of a difference of opinion and that he will be released.

The engineers mentioned state that the largest force yet concentrated is now collecting on the line of the road; that negroes and white men are rapidly marching to the scene, including 1,400 men from the vicinity of Havana, recently arrived, but without arms, and a desperate encounter was anticipated. Cespedes, Aguilera, the Marquis of Santa Lucia, Quesada and all the prominent insurgents were there.

The following items of interest are furnished me:—Owing to the scarcity of provisions the women and children are being rapidly sent from Puerto Principe. They go to the plantations in the vicinity, and when the troops appear they flee to the woods, where the Spaniards dare not follow

them. Immense quantities of sugar and other valuables are concealed in these forests, where the soldiers, though constantly taunting the patriots for not coming out, are afraid to enter. Several cases of starvation have occurred in the city.

The insurgents are all mounted, are very magnificent horsemen, and under proper discipline would make some of the finest cavalry in the world.

Sixty thousand hogheads of sugar are raised in the section of which Nuevitas is the outlet annually. This year not a hoghead will be sent out.

The insurgents are amply provided with food. They have immense herds of cattle within their lines, and bananas, sweet potatoes, yams, varieties of fruit and small stock are abundant. Coffee and rice were rather scarce.

Many of the families have houses in the dense forests, where they reside in perfect safety and in plenty, and music, dancing and the other refined pleasures of social life are freely indulged in. Everywhere and among all classes is expressed the intensest bitterness toward Spain and the determination never again to submit to Spanish rule.

Americans are suspected and feared by the Spaniards in Puerto Principe, and the utmost circumspection is necessary. The engineers were arrested once or twice on suspicion of being spies, but were afterwards released.

It is stated here that there is in Principe an engine which can be easily placed in running condition, and that it will be used on the road after being repaired. My informants deny this, and state that the only engine in the jurisdiction is in pieces; that there is no one who can repair it, save some Americans, who will not do it, and that the trains will have to be drawn by cattle or a locomotive sent out from Havana. Transportation will be provided for the engineers, and they will leave for New York soon. They express great obligation to Admiral Hoff for his kindness and courtesy toward them.