

THE SPANISH ARMADA.

Seizure of Thirty Spanish Gunboats by the United States Government.

Rigid Enforcement of International Law.

Rumor that Belligerent Rights Will be Granted to the Cubans.

The Tammany Sachems Flanked by the Administration.

Great excitement was created throughout the city yesterday when rumor with its hundred tongues announced the fact that General and United States Marshal Barlow had made a swoop upon the numerous fleet of Spanish gunboats at present in progress of speedy completion in this city, and put them in charge of his deputies. The news was the more startling and astounding following upon the doughty achievements of the said marshal, in which he rendered buglary the mighty efforts of the Cuban Junta and their Generalissimo, the valiant Colonel Ryan, to send an expedition from this port to help the liberators of the Queen of the Antilles in their efforts to secure liberty and self-government. From this very seeming inconsistency of action on the part of the United States official may be deduced this consideration in their favor, that an official, while his acts may be unpopular and irritating to the public mind, he is, after all, but obeying the behests of a superior authority, and that he should not be held accountable for or indeed confounded, as is too often the case with the orders, whatever they may be, unless in the discharge thereof and with the fulfillment of his duty he transgresses his authority or acts in a specially offensive or over-zealous manner. This is at all times provocative of the worst feelings between those clothed with authority and the people, as is seen in the frequent conflicts between the myrmidons of Superintendent Kennedy and our citizens. But Marshal Barlow must be acquitted of any charge that on the late "war upon the Cuban Junta" he acted superciliously, offensively or over-zealously. The Marshal is rather a gentle and mild officer by nature, and were he to reverse his sympathies as an American citizen and as one who had himself served in the field, would naturally have toned down the official ire and ardor for distinction and caused him to have dealt mildly with the gallant fellows, who, taking their lives in their hands, went forth to a strange land to aid the cause of legitimate revolution. But a new and more favorable opportunity has been happily offered the Marshal and his deputies to exhibit the *esprit de corps* of their profession and calling. A fresh scent has awakened all the keenness of the chase within them, and now instead of running after Cuban expeditionaries they are hunting down and running to earth, with all the eagerness of sleuth hounds, the powerful toes of those very Cuban liberators. The Marshal has now directed the enginery of the law against the Spanish government itself, and storming with just indignation and official zeal he has as completely and efficiently scattered, captured and demolished this second Spanish Armada as the storm of the elements scattered and overthrew the Armada of Philip II.

FLEET OF SPANISH GUNBOATS.

It has been long known to the government at Washington that the Spanish authorities were having built here, and intended to fit out and equip on their completion with all the necessary material and enginery of war, a fleet of gunboats. The object of this great naval preparation, however it might have been really known and understood by the authorities, was winked at or quietly shelved out of sight. The unequal struggle between the liberators and their oppressors was still waging, but still inclining in favor of the oppressors, and in such cases made and provided there is little sympathy and less mercy for the oppressed. And so the work of building the great fleet was permitted, and Spanish gold, promptly and lavishly expended, was urging on the zeal of the builders, and everything bade fair for the successful launching and departure of the fleet. No less than thirty of these powerful gunboats—powerful considering the weakness and unpreparedness of those against whom they were destined to act—were rapidly progressing towards completion. But the fiat of the government at last went forth, and the hopes founded by the Spanish government and their paid officials here upon the speedy termination of the work and the application of the vessels to the contemplated service were by that fiat at once overthrown.

It was never sought to be concealed that these gunboats were intended to operate in the subjugation of the government of Peru to the imperious demands of Spain with regard to the Chincha Islands, and which Peru in resisting, a couple years ago, had two of her seaport cities subjected to bombardment by the Spanish fleet. It was with feelings of shame and indignation that the people saw the government tacitly permitting the preparation of these vessels of war, intended to be used by a stronger Power against a weaker and against a government and a people with whom this people and government were on terms of international comity and good will. The rigid enforcement of the neutrality laws on behalf of this same Spain against her struggling colonists of Cuba, panting after that independence and right of self-government which the Spaniards themselves had but so recently wrested from a tyrannical and hated government, drew the attention of the people to the supineness of the government in the matter of the Spanish gunboats. The Cuban Junta time and again called the attention of the authorities at Washington to the unjustness and inconsistency of these acts in the cases referred to. These appeals were made in vain for a long time, till some changes on the political chessboard opened the eyes of the government to the necessity of a change of tactics, and then came, as the first move in a new direction, the order for the seizure of the gunboats.

THE SEIZURE.

The order for the seizure was jointly received by United States District Attorney Pierrepont and United States Marshal Barlow a few days ago, and though the whereabouts of the vessels were at the time perfectly well known to these officers some little time was needed to lay their plans for the most perfect and efficient fulfillment of these orders in the premises. Yesterday morning everything was working well. General Barlow and a posse of deputies proceeded to the pier foot of Thirteenth street, and there, stretching some distance up the river, along the adjacent wharves, they found fifteen gunboats. Eight of these boats had their boilers in, and were having their machinery rapidly completed and fitted in under the personal superintendence and business promptitude of Mr. Delamater, the first builder of the Ericsson monitors. The work, for the purpose of despatch, and which we specially note for the benefit of the government, was divided among several shops. The manufacture of the boilers of these vessels was contracted out by Mr. Delamater to a firm in Newark; so that the completion of the boats was going on simultaneously in their various parts in different places at one and the same time. It may be here remarked that no expense was spared on the part of the Spanish government for the speediest fruition of their intentions and desires with regard to these small but most perfect and formidable vessels-of-war. The best efforts and most urgent appeals of the Peruvian Minister were of course not wanting in representations to the government as to the actual object and proposed determination of the Spanish government with regard to the special services to which these vessels were to be put. But for some considerable time, as before remarked, the authorities at Washington were deaf to all these representations and remonstrances, till quite suddenly and all at once the order came to this city a few days since for their seizure. But besides the capture of these fifteen vessels here in the city the Marshal has sent, in the charge of proper officers, the mandate of the government for the seizure of fifteen other gunboats, which also, under Spanish contract, were being then built at Mystic, Conn. These vessels have, therefore, also been seized, making thirty in all. Four of these were already launched, and one, it is said, would have sailed out of the port on Saturday next.

This seizure entails no loss upon the contractors engaged in either constructing the hulls of the vessels or making the machinery. The Spanish government has been most liberal, even lavish, in its disbursements. A million dollars in gold arrived in

this city some two months ago, in the hands of a trusted emissary, to pay the installments agreed upon as the work progressed. According to this contract \$400,000 have been paid over every twenty days during progress, which amply indemnifies the contractors for the work done up to the present moment, so that no feeling of pecuniary loss comes on to mar the higher feeling inherent in the breasts of all American citizens at seeing a great undertaking designed to overthrow or crush the aspirations and struggles of a brave people after liberty has been brought to naught. The contract for arming these vessels was held by a firm at Cold Springs, but to all inquiries whether the seizure of the war material then ready and in course of preparation for the arming of these vessels was included in the order for the seizure of the vessels themselves it was impossible to get a positive reply.

It were needless to say that this tardy recognition of international comity as due by the United States government to the people and government of Peru, and of relative justice as between the patriots of Cuba and the Spanish people, has been hailed with heartfelt delight by the three nationalities most interested in the issue—by the people of the United States, who feared for the honor of their flag, apparently aiding the strong against the weak, as opposed to all the grand principles of the republic; by the Peruvians, who ask nothing but fair play and no favor, and by the brave liberators of Cuba, who had a right to expect sympathy if not support in their efforts for emancipation and freedom from an oppressive and hateful yoke.

On the other hand, the Spanish authorities here are as crestfallen and cast down as the opposing Junta are jubilant and elated. The flimsy subterfuge that these captured vessels were designed to be used in the expression of revolution in the ever-fatalistale having been seen through by the government and their true character recognized, even at the last moment, and the policy of the United States vindicated thereupon, has given fresh hope not only to Peru, but to the Junta.

BELLIGERENT RIGHTS TO BE GRANTED TO CUBA.
In this very act of the administration lies, like in a nut, the kernel of high aspiration, encouragement and hope to Cuba. Prominent officials are of course very reticent of such knowledge of coming events as may be entrusted to them in advance of actual facts. But notwithstanding the secrecy that hedges in the acts of a government, the throes of the partition under which the executive is laboring at the present moment with regard to its policy in Cuban affairs has been observed and noted. And now the opinion has gone abroad that the seizure of these Spanish vessels is but a prelude to the grand act that will accord belligerent rights to Cuba. Grant's mills grind slow but sure, and when he once moves upon the enemy's works he follows out in his own way the policeman's orders to "little Joe" by keeping "moving," no matter how long it may take him to fight it out on that line. Be this as it may, the belief that this is the coming policy of the government has gone abroad, and, like the rays of the sun lighting up a wintry landscape, it has diffused fresh hope, confidence and energy, not only in the hearts of those who enjoy liberty here, but among those who are striving to secure the same blessings for their native land. It were not only a delicate but a most sacred piece of political strategy on the part of the President for his own and the country's honor, and in behalf of the party who put him into power, to maintain intact the strictest principles of international law as between the governments of Spain and Peru, and to recognize the claims, after their long and indomitable struggle, of the Cubans to belligerent rights. In doing this he would take the wind out of the Tammany sails so naughtily thrown to the breeze the other night in favor of the rights of American citizens all over the world, and other claims of all struggling nationalities upon American sympathy and American support.

The Cuban Officers in Canada.

United States Marshal Barlow has received a joint letter from Colonels Ryan and Currier, dated from Niagara Falls, where the colonels are now sojourning on the Canada side, asking the Marshal's permission to return to New York city on their giving their parole to appear for examination or trial and to hereafter refrain from committing further violations of the neutrality laws. They say that they have pressing private business matters that require their immediate attention in this city, and that no harm can come from granting their request, as no more Cuban expeditions are fitting out or are likely to be fitted out in the city of New York for the present.

Some days since Marshal Barlow listened to a similar application made to him personally by Colonel Bocare on behalf of Colonel Ryan.

Marshal Barlow says that the requests of the colonels cannot be complied with, as neither of them is on the footing of the men just liberated from Fort Lafayette, none of whom had, so far as known, forfeited bonds to appear for examination or trial, or to refrain from violating the neutrality laws; whereas both Colonels Ryan and Currier had given, forfeited and violated bonds for these purposes.