

The Great Fight at Tunas—The Spanish Commandant in Havana—His Report—Tunas to be Made the Seat of Cespedes' Government—Proclamation of the Cuban President—Departure of General Lesca to Ciego Villas—Arrest of American Citizens—Trial of Udaeta—Surrender of Bayamo.

HAVANA, Sept. 2, 1869.

On Monday, the 6th, arrived here the steamer *Pelayo*, from various points along the north coast, bringing seventy-seven Spanish soldiers and nineteen officers. Of the former sixty-six are wounded men. Commandant Boniche, twice wounded in the head, is also among the passengers.

She brings information of a desperate attack by the insurgents on Las Tunas, and their repulse by the garrison of that place on the 16th of August. The delay in the transmission of the news was doubtless owing to the fact that the Cubans are in large numbers between Tunas and Puerto Padre and communication is seldom and difficult. We have as yet only the Spanish accounts, not a word having arrived through Cuban sources. These in the past have been by no means remarkable for their truthfulness, and should, therefore, be taken with many grains of allowance. The official report of Lieutenant Colonel Boniche, chief of the garrison at the time of the attack, appears in the *Gazette*. It is very long and unreasonably diffusive. His own force had been reduced to 400 men, while the insurgents, according to the statement of a prisoner taken during the fight, numbered between five and six thousand and one piece of artillery. About an hour previous to the attack 200 men of the garrison, under Colonel Favela, had gone out to collect cattle, leaving but 200 to receive the onslaught of the enemy. The attack commenced at half-past four A. M., on the eastern side of the town, where it was sustained for a few minutes by a small force there, quickly reinforced from the plaza. The Spaniards were fighting behind their trenches, it will be recollected. The attack soon became general at the four principal points of the town. Colonel Favela, hearing the firing from the outside, returned on the double quick, and entering the town from the north, attacked the enemy in the rear, causing him great losses. He seems to have succeeded in reaching the plaza without difficulty and his force immediately strengthened the weaker points. The fight continued with varied success at the different points up to half-past one P. M. At one time the insurgents had possession of nearly all the buildings in the southern part of the town and were working their way towards the trenches surrounding the plaza by cutting through the walls of the houses. As the attacks at the other points had mostly ceased the commandant concentrated his force and moved on the enemy in that direction, his men being subdivided into two divisions. The insurgents were protected by barricades of furniture, which were carried at the point of the bayonet, while the enemy from the house-tops and from other points poured down a deadly fire upon the charging column. The advance of the Cubans in that direction was checked, and the fight carried to another portion of the town. During the morning certain barracks occupied by the Spaniards were abandoned and burned to prevent their falling into the hands of the Cubans. At twelve o'clock the commandant set fire to eight or ten houses about the plaza, in order to surround himself with a more open space. Further details of the fight are given, but they are confused and without interest. At half-past one P. M. the insurgents retired towards the country, after having set fire to more than 100 houses, mostly thatched. During the fight the Cubans kept up a lively fire with their one piece of artillery, directed mostly against the church tower, beneath which the military hospital was situated and falling mostly in the court yard. No, says the report, the intention of the enemy in the attack was to capture the place and make it the seat of the republican government. This was evident from a proclamation of Cespedes, attached to the report, a translation of which I forward. Cespedes and Quesada, it is said, contemplated the action from a distant eminence, and near them, on the Principe road, was seen a train, doubtless containing the insurgent archives, brought up in the evident expectation that it would be an easy matter to take the town. The following is the proclamation of Cespedes referred to:—

SOLDIERS OF THE CAMAGUEY AND OF TUNAS:—

To you has been confided one of the most important operations of the campaign. Confronted that you will soon exceed yourselves in the compliance of your duties the supreme government comes to contemplate you.

Soldiers, you have an intelligent and brave general. His orders will lead you to victory. To you is entrusted the assuring of it by your bravery, your constancy, your subordination and your discipline. Soldiers of Cuba, your cowardly enemy trembles behind his entrenchments. For sustaining his position he confides only in your inexperience and want of resources. Posttasting to-day an excess of military practice and of material of war causes him to see that after the results of campaign you know how to place an immense distance between this day and the 13th of October, 1867. For at that time you were the raw recruits, to-day you are the veterans of liberty.

Viva the Cuban army! Viva the Commander-in-Chief! Viva the republic! The President. C. L. CESPEDES.

Such is the official report. Private accounts through Spanish sources give little additional. The loss of the troops is set down at 100 killed, no wounded given. A letter from an officer says:—"At one time the prison building was like to fall into the hands of the enemy, and to prevent the escape of the inmates they were all shut up and the edifice burned." It is supposed many perished in the flames.

Doubtless some time will pass before the facts of the engagement are known. As was stated, the commandant, Boniche, comes wounded on the *Pelayo*. He makes his report here, and of course as favorable to the Spanish side as possible. The large number of wounded here and others coming with him from so small a garrison, certainly looks suspicious. The Cubans, though without information, are confident that they have won a victory and have either taken or destroyed the town. Among the trophies of the engagement brought here is a splendid Cuban flag, said to have cost \$3,000. It has three blue stripes on a white body, parallel with the lone star. It was exposed to public gaze in front of the palace for the last day or two, and attracted much attention. The flag was captured by first sergeant Martin, of the Second battalion of Havana, who was afterwards killed. Since his arrival Boniche has been the recipient of a serenade by the volunteers of Havana.

General Lesca, commanding in the Ciego Villas, having recovered from his rheumatism, leaves for his headquarters to-day in the steamer *Nuevo Almirante*, accompanied by a battalion of the "Guas de Rodas." There was recently read to this officer, by an American friend, an account of his poisoning, as published in a newspaper of the United States, by the same direction as was administered to the unfortunate Carlotta, with the extremely sensational account of the manner in which the poison is prepared in Mexico, Cuba and South America. To all of which he listened with much gravity, and at the end, exclaimed, "*Que mentira!*" What a lie.

An American citizen named F. H. Schultz, a contractor on the railroad, was recently arrested in Madruga, his effects searched and all of his private letters read. He was taken to Matanzas, where the Consul, Mr. Hall, immediately took cognizance of his case and telegraphed to Mr. Plumb, in Havana, who procured an order for his release from the Captain General. He was guilty of no offence and his arrest seems to have grown out of some jealousy in social matters entertained by the volunteers of Madruga. The official report accompanying him to Matanzas spoke of some private marks on his arm of a suspicious character. They were in India ink, representing a star, and that they should have been received as evidence of *influencia* is ridiculous enough.

Emilio Silva, a native of Cuba, but an American citizen since 1864, and a resident of the United States up to 1862, from Binghamton, N. Y., was imprisoned on suspicion by the authorities of Nuevitas on the 4th of August, and kept incommunicado for fifteen days, after which he was sent to Havana. The matter was represented to the American Consul in Nuevitas, who gave notice of the case to the Consul General here, and the immediate release of Silva was ordered. In this connection I may say that, while American citizens are occasionally arrested through the suspicion of subalterns and without just cause, yet they are invariably released and with much promptitude when the cases are called to the notice of the Captain General.

To-day the court martial for the trial of Udaeta, the Spanish commandant, who surrendered Bayamo, is sitting in the palace. The Captain has invited all the volunteer officers to be present, from which it is inferred that he is likely to be acquitted, and the Captain General desires to show that the trial is fairly conducted.

Treatment of American Citizens by the Volunteers.

A correspondent writing from Matanzas, Cuba, gives a shocking account of the acts committed by the volunteers. From his statement it appears that all who wish to live without working join the so-called defenders of the Spanish authority. Profiting by their newly acquired position they levy black mail on all, under threats of having them registered as insurgents. Every atrocity committed by these lawless bands is allowed to go unpunished by the competent authorities, who rarely if ever allow justice to citizens. Many victims of their infernal actions are either killed by them or publicly shot, and in some instances the executions have reached some twenty per day. Many quiet, peaceful citizens are obliged to fly from their homes on account of these persecutions, and prefer suffering hunger and misery in a foreign country to submitting to dishonor at home.

Spanish Trophies and How Obtained.

HAVANA, Sept. 11, 1869.

It is a fact well known by many persons in this island that the flags which every now and then are sent as trophies to the Captain General are all manufactured in this city by certain members of the