

Practical Conscription in the Ever Faithful Isle.

Valmaseda's Recent Proclamation and

What is Thought of It.

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General Quesada Preparing to Attack Holguin.

The steamship *Cleopatra*, Captain Phillips, from Vera Cruz the 10th and Sinal the 14th, via Havana the 17th, arrived here last evening. She brought to this port for reshipment the unprecedentedly large sum of \$1,023,160 in specie from Mexico. The purser will receive our thanks for favors received.

The Propositions Concerning Cuba—The Feeling Among the Spaniards in the Island—Spain's Sincerity Doubted—The Press on the Question—Opposition to the Regency—Hopes from a King—Recruiting for the Volunteers—A Practical Conscription—Cubans Leaving—Official Reports from the Seat of War—Spanish Accounts—Proclamation of Valmaseda—Disposition of Political Prisoners—The Storm off Hatteras.

HAVANA, Sept. 16, 1893.

The propositions of the United States to Spain for the settlement of the Cuban question and the answer of the latter Power, as placed before the public in your Washington correspondence of the 6th inst., do not meet with favor here. Indeed quite the contrary; they excite a most unnecessary amount of indignation, unnecessary inasmuch as Spain does not intend to part with "the ever faithful Isle" until she is compelled to a thing not at present anticipated. Her treatment of the American propositions has all that air of plausibility and seeming acquiescence which has always characterized the best diplomatists in the world. It is a melancholy fact that Spain's success and advancement have not been commensurate with the talents of her sons in this line. But that only goes to show that truth is better than chicanery, and does not militate against their merits. It is not for the interest of Spain to make inquiries of the government on the projects of the United States. At this juncture anything rather than this, especially if it is in the diplomatic line, and so she accepts the mediation of the United States, thanks that government for the interposition of its good offices, and submits a basis of settlement. Firstly, of which is, "the Cubans to lay down their arms," which is cool, and thirdly, "Cuba to pay Spain for all the Spanish property in the island and for all the property of loyal Spaniards destroyed by the insurgents," which is freezing. That section referring to the return of sequestered property belonging to "disloyal" Cubans doth not yet appear, nor is it likely to. It is not necessary to go through the entire proposition of Spain—it is all of the same devious character; and Secretary Fish showed a very correct appreciation of it in paying no attention to it.

The feeling among the Spanish element here is very well portrayed in a leading article of the *Diario de la Marina* in its issue of the 15th, the gist of which is as follows:—

"We require patience to keep down the indignation which this story has produced in us and which inflicts not a few injuries on the dignity of Spain; but the knowledge of its origin has come to our aid, and, above all, the reflection with which the correspondents ends—that is, 'It is thought final action will be postponed until a king is selected.' Before this happens, and at the same moment in which these propositions and counter-propositions were crossing the ocean, there was being transacted what three to the ground and all reasons for such arrangements, as it put an end to the difficulties which were the motives of the intervention. On the 15th of last month the garrison of Tunas answered in advance, and eloquently, how the soldiers of Spain choose to make an understanding with the insurgents, and how well they know how to gain the appreciation of foreign nations. The assassination of a child of a few months old, the outrages of unhappy women, the flight of 4,000 men, provided with all that is necessary for fighting, before 450 tired soldiers, are the new titles which Quesada and his followers can send to the American government to induce it to favor the 'independence of Cuba.'"

It will doubtless be regarded as astounding that such stories as Mr. Jourdain's should be written, more so that they should be believed, and still more so that the result of such an action as that at Las Tunas should be regarded as rendering unnecessary all further efforts at peace. In this manner are the Spanish residents encouraged in this war of devastation and blood and incited to oppose any effort for its peaceful termination.

In this article not only is the feeling against the settlement of the Cuban question on the basis of independence manifested, but that hostile feeling very prevalent here against the regency. As stated in a former communication, there is great jealousy and fears of the Serrano government. Its needs are fully realized, and it is feared that, prompted by these, it may take untraceable steps toward the dismemberment of the national dominion. The *Diario* is rendered easy by the fact that the whole matter is to be postponed until after the election of a king, for it well knows that then the danger is over. His first duty and greatest glory would be to restore to Spain its brightest jewel, and it believes that having passed this Onany-bell there is no Syria beyond.

In this connection is the significant fact that the Spaniards here, rulers and people, implicitly believe that the insurrection can be suppressed, and soon. In speaking on this subject the Captain General talks with much apparent sincerity, stating that all of his information from the field makes him confident of an early termination of the war. What the character of this information may be it were hard to judge. There is certainly no encounter, however trivial and unimportant, resulting favorably to the Spaniards, but is made public in some way, and certainly they do not justify his conclusion. As to the disasters which occasionally occur to the troops, though the greatest efforts are made to conceal them, they are not likely to hasten a conclusion favorable to the Spanish cause.

The newspapers of the city in recent issues publish leading articles and a variety of documents on the now agreed upon project of forming three or four battalions of reserve, to consist of eight companies of eighty men each. They are to be formed, as says one of these journals, "of islanders and peninsulars, persons well known and of good repute, lovers of the country and the nationality, and in a position to pay for their uniforms and arms." And again, and not altogether consistently, "They will comprise all sorts and conditions of men, the old as well as the young, the poor as well as the opulent—all classes may acquire the right to use that honorable distinction, the noble cockade—symbol of our nationality, union and force." A central committee has been appointed of which General Don J. M. Zaryonitis is the president. While the standard of those expected to arrive is, in the newspapers, placed thus high, men have been appointed to take down the names of all liable to military duty, Cubans and Spaniards alike. Many of the former regard the thing as a conscription, since, if they refuse to enter the ranks they will be marked and ruined. Many are preparing to leave the island on this account. Subscriptions are going about for the purchase of arms of improved pattern for the volunteers, to which all merchants, native, Spanish or foreign contribute, as a matter of prudence.

In calculating as to the number of volunteers to be used in the forthcoming campaign, it should be borne in mind that considerable numbers of those outside of Havana—in the cities along the coast—cannot be depended on. Many of them are Cubans, who entered the ranks for the safety of themselves and their property, or to divert from them the odium of the Spaniards and the authorities. If called on to go to the field these would go over to the insurgents the first opportunity, while in any desperate strait they could not be left to garrison any city without Spaniards enough to guard them. A captain of volunteers in Cienfuegos recently remarked to a foreigner that of the 100 men comprising his company not more than ten could be trusted to go to the field.

The Foreign Legion, to be raised here, does not make any headway. The opinion, said to have been expressed by the French Consul here, that those of his countrymen who join this organization will thereby lose their right to protection from their own government, has thrown a damper upon the project. The English Consul too, it is said, does not favor the idea with regard to his countrymen. Thus far only the Germans have interested themselves in the matter, and, if it is ultimately formed, the Legion will be composed almost, if not entirely, of that nationality.

The National Committee of Matanzas complain that the volunteers are badly armed, and solicit subscriptions so that they may buy three thousand Remington rifles, in order that Matanzas shall not be behind Havana and Cardenas, which cities have already provided their volunteers with these arms. Information through Spanish sources is meagre and without importance. The *Gazeta* officially announces that General Simon de la Torre is relieved from the command of the Eastern Department on account of ill health. Count Valmaseda succeeds him in the government of the department. He also has command of the operating forces.

The following is officially reported:—The officer in command of the Cuatro Villas telegraphs that on the 13th, in Centro, and following day, in Sacramento, Captain Viscaino encountered the insurgents, under chiefs Hernandez and Torres, killed eleven,

wounded many, captured seventy horses equipped, different arms and other effects. A despatch from the same source says that a camp had been surprised in the depths of Cidia and destroyed. Six prisoners were taken and shot; among them one Spaniard. Twenty horses and forty-eight women and children were also captured. Other encounters are reported of even less importance.

The *Alba*, of Santa Clara, and the *Patron Nacional*, of Cienfuegos, of the 8th and 11th respectively, give accounts of certain small affairs in which a few rebels were killed and wounded, with a small loss on the Spanish side. The papers of Santiago de Cuba also report some unimportant skirmishes.

The *Voluntario*, of Manzanillo, in its issue of the 6th, gives an extract of what purports to be an official communication from Angel de Castillo to General Omeade published in *El Cubano Libre* of the 2nd August. It is as follows:—

EXCELLENT SIR:—The scouts which I have in this jurisdiction recently gave me notice that a force of ninety men, under the command of Colonel Portal, had left Ciego, d'Avila. I immediately made the requisite disposition to surprise them. I ordered the bands of Gomez and Maestro to unite with me, and with the united force of 1,305 men I waited firmly for the enemy, determined to defeat him. To effect this I ordered three trenches to be made within the wood, in front of the road by which the enemy had to pass. The result of these dispositions was as intended by us. The enemy arrived in front of the trenches about two in the afternoon, when we delivered a close fire, by which half of the force fell dead. Among the number we found Colonel Portal, whom I ordered shot immediately.

The *Fueral*, of Puerto Principe, states that the women of the insurgents have established military camps among themselves and without help of the spencer sex. Their dress consists of trousers (Moorish style), gaiters, fastened with a blue band having white points; cravat of Cuban colors, a lovely (*graciosa*) straw hat, and a pretty star-shaped cockade. Their arms consist of a handsome knife to stimulate "the mobilized" in retiring, a dagger and a revolver.

The manager of the Bank La Allicenza has addressed a communication to the political Governor, professing itself willing to advance any moneys which may be required for the support of the government, with same guarantees as those afforded the Banco Español. It goes even further, and says that in case of necessity it will contribute such sums as may be required without provision of repayment. The letter is very fulsome, and coming from a corporation mostly made up of Cubans, and one which has been under suspicion, doubts of its sincerity suggest themselves. Don Santi Espiritu comes a petition to the Captain General from the cattle breeders of that place asking for troops to protect them in conducting their fat beeves to the Cardenas, Matanzas and Havana markets. They say they have 50,000 head, worth \$1,000,000, now in prime condition, which will be worthless unless this protection be given them.

There are reports rife here that the insurgents have attacked Holguin in large force and have destroyed it. This is in keeping with the policy adopted to concentrate every available arm against these places occupied by the Spaniards, seize and destroy them and then retire. Holguin is the last of the cities occupying the points of a triangle, enclosing a fine area of country, destroyed by the insurgents, Bayamo and Las Tunas being the other two.

It is stated, and on good authority, here that Bonicha, who commanded in the recent affair in Las Tunas and is now here, is to be tried by court martial, the authorities after all, not being quite satisfied with his great victory.

Udarte, the Spanish Governor, who surrendered Bayamo at the outset of the war, has been sentenced to ten years imprisonment with retention.

The steamer *Moctezuma*, from Nuevitias and other ports on the north side, brought here D. Antonio Dario and D. Teopoldo Maduin, two prisoners, who came down by the *Ferit* expedition, which landed at Ramon.

The following is the proclamation of Count Valmaseda addressed "to the insurgents of the Eastern Department and to those of the jurisdiction of Las Tunas" on assuming his new command:—

His Excellency, the Captain General of this island, has named me commanding general of the operations in these jurisdictions and in taking charge of this important command we call upon you once more to fulfill those duties which you have forgotten to perform since the month of October last. You are in a considerable minority and are ruining your country. You have buried your families in misery and they are stricken with diseases and leprosy. Your sons cry daily for food and you are deaf to their lamentations, remaining blind to all these evils. The time has come for them to end and we are about to reveal to you your situation. There remain some insurgents in the jurisdiction of St. Jago; in Comecara, Sancti, Caliente and the Ramon. In Holguin there are very few at Batajagua, in La Guaya and the hills of Aimegui. In Las Tunas there are only those bands which occupy the savanna of that name, the "Mate" estate and Bridge of Bolado. Your resources, position, the chiefs who command you, are well known to me, and quickly my troops will go to search for you, and if you do not wish to suffer the punishment which are imposed by the order of his Excellency the Captain General on those who fight against the Spanish government present yourselves to the legitimate authorities, who have my orders to pardon all those who, compelled by circumstances, have fought as soldiers. Make good use of the time for clemency, and do not forget that as we know your hands were with reach you this my last call, as also will my soldiers search you and bring you to punishment for your obstinacy. COUNT VALMASEDA, Commanding General.

He also addressed a proclamation to his soldiers in the usual style.

The intention of the famous Count is doubtless to frighten some of the timid ones by an affection of knowledge of their armaments, numbers and resources. The Spaniards regard his exposure as a correct one, though with strange inconsistency giving the insurgents large numbers in every encounter reported; as for example, says the *Diario*—"6,000 at Las Tunas, provided with all that is necessary for fighting." The Cubans laugh at the proclamation, and say that clemency of the Valmaseda style is not desirable.

The following disposition of political prisoners is announced:—Sentenced to perpetual chains at Cueta—Rafael Lanza, Jose A. Lucena and Julian Sanchez Villavacencia. To chains for a term of years at same place—Isidoro Hernandez, Antonio Alva y Moreno, Meguil Estrada Miranda, Ramon Igrana Agromonte, Jose F. Donochea, Jose Ruiz Lopez, Leonardo P. Martinez. For a term of years in Havana—Manuel J. Fleitas, Pardo C. Gonzales, Pardo A. Schlad, Thomas M. Javiel, Maguil Fernandez, Melchor Valdez, Flore Barrera, Jr.; Enrique Rodriguez, Vicente Pallen, Manuel C. Quafiora. Also the following:—Banished to Mehille—D. Francisco Blandino. Sent to Peninsula for punishment—D. Gabriel Avila.

On her recent voyage to this city the steamship *City of Mexico*, of the New York and Mexican Mail Steamship line, encountered a heavy gale off Hatteras, by which she lost her fore stay-sail and jib.

A seaman named John Williams, said to reside in New Jersey, was lost during the gale. A purse of \$100 was made up for his family among the passengers.