THE HURRICANE IN CUBA.

The Hurricane in Matanzas—Report of an Eye Witness—The Inundation—Fearful Loss of Life and Property—Destruction of the San Luis Depot—Agonizing Scenes—The Dead Washed from Their Graves—Action of the Authorities—Shooting of Robbers—The Dead—Estimate of Damages—Subscriptions for the Sufferers—Damage to Shipping—Reports from the Country.

MATANZAS, Oct. 15, 1870.

Though it has been my fortune to witness on other occasions the dread effects of a hurricane, though familiar for years with fields covered with dead and dying and all the accompaniments of devastating war, I sit down to write amid scenes of ruin and desolation far beyond anything heretofore known in my experience. Matanzas is in mourning for hundreds dead, while the destruction of her property and commercial interests is beyond calculation. So great is the devastation caused by the combined influence of the wind and water, so heart-rending the scenes on every hand that one scarce knows where to begin a description or to form a correct and intelligible statement of the occurrences. I essay the task, though doubtful of my ability, to give yourreaders any definite idea of the reality.

On the night of Friday, the 7th, the wind set in from northeast, blowing with great violence until nine o'clock on the following morning. At this time a heavy rain commenced and continued until four P. M., when the hurricane broke loose, raging with unexampled fury. And then began the horrible catastrophe. The wind driving the water into the harbor in huge volumes prevented the rivers San Juan and Yumari—flowing on either side of the city—from discharging their waters, which, in conjunction with the rain, caused them to burst their bounds and sweep over a good portion of the city, carrying death and destruction in their track. Let it be borne in mind that Matanzas is situated on a peninsula formed by the rivers mentioned, the Yumari on the north and the San Juan on the south. The surface of the city is varied, some points being much higher than others. At the southwestern part of the city proper, near the Plaza de Villanueva, the San Juan makes a sharp turn, changing its direction from north to east. As the banks overflowed the current moved forward in a direct line through the avenues of the city until it commingled with the waters of the Yumari, and, sweeping down towards the bay, flooded all the northeastern part of the city and a portion of the suburbs of Versalles, opposite. Below the turn of the river San Juan the water rose with equal rapidity, passing the streets Rio Medio, and reaching to Cetapert, near the centre and highest point of the city, while the suburbs of Pueblo Nueve, on the opposite side of the last named river, was completely delnged. The most frightful results followed. People abandoned the lower portion of their houses as the water entered them, moving to the roofs and second stories, when the combined action of the two elements would crush the buildings to the ground or carry them into the river and out towards the bay, with resultant death to every inmate. Children were struggling in the water and parents, powerless to render them any assistance, saw them sink but a few moments before sharing their fate. Persons standing upon the high ground saw their friends and neighbors borne down the torrent, unable to respond to their agonizing shrieks for aid. Many, clinging to planks or whatever else they could lay hands on, gained a short respite ere being swept out into the wild waste of waters never to be heard of more. At the Havana Railroad station, near the bend of the San Juan, a frightful disaster occurred. The 2:40 train from Havana had just arrived, and a considerable number of passengers had gathered to take the train about starting for that place, when, by the sudden rising of the waters, the building was swept away, and citizens, employés, cars, machinery, everything it contained, disappeared in a moment. It is stated that more than forty persons perished here. Three or four managed to save themselves, though how it was impossible to explain.

The warehouses on the banks of the San Juan river being entirely surrounded by water and threatened with destruction, the laborers, negroes and Chinamen constructed rude rafts, to which they committed themselves in hopes of reaching a place of safety, but were carried out into the bay and drowned. At the depot of the Bay road to Havana in Puebla Nueve, not far from the shores of the harbor, the water rose to the cornices of the columns, and the houses in the vicinity and throughout a good part of the suburbs were destroyed, and whole families perished. A portion of the suburb San Francisco and that known as Ojo d'Agua, being in the line of the sweep of the San Juan as it passed across the city, suffered immensely, many houses being carried away and their inmates drowned. That portion of the suburb Versalles nearest the Yumari also suffered in a similar manner.

The horrible night passed slowly away with the terror-stricken, sleepless inhabitants. When morning came the wind had shifted to the north and the water had somewhat abated, though its work of destruction still continued in undermining the foundation of houses and carrying them away as they fell. Not until the day was well advanced did the wind and water so moderate as to enable the people to breathe more freely and look about on the scene of devastation around them. The authorities, backed by the more prominent and wealthy citizens, immediately set about succoring the houseless, who were gathered into the public buildings and other large edifices and their immediate wants supplied. The volunteers patrolled the street in preservation of order, and details were set to work to collect and bury the bodies of the dead. Many were the heart-rending scenes which presented themselves in this search for bodies. A man, whose wife and six children had been swept to death before his eyes, eagerly glanced along the line of mutilated corpses in search of the remains of his lost ones, unrecognizable, though there, to the fond eye from which affection ever looked. Another had lost four children, his all; another his wife, who had been torn away from him in the fearful struggle with the waters. "I held her as long as I could," he piteously exclaimed. Everywhere were seen tearful, dejected faces, in search of husbands, fathers, wives, mothers and little ones. Among the more horrible incidents was the sweeping away of the coffins, containing the bodies of the dead, in the cemetery. These, floating out on the waters, lodged here and there, and as the waters receded created a horrible exhibit. They were gathered and interred as soon as possible for fear of pestilence. Of the number of dead it is even now hard to speak with any certainty. The estimates during the past few days have been, naturally enough, greatly exaggerated, being placed as high as 2,000, and there are many who will not admit that it is less. As usual, the authorities furnish no information that can be relied on. It is known, however, that 400 bodies have been collected and buried. Many have been washed upon the shores of the bay, and it is safe to conclude that of the great numbers swept into the harbor and out the mass will never appear. Doubtless near a thousand have perished.

The damage to property is estimated at $5,000,000. The stock of sugar and molasses in the warehouses was very small and the loss therefrom, of course, trivial. The principal loss is in dwellings, warehouses, boats, lighters, &c. The Bridge of Jaillery, a magnificent structure over the San Juan, not far from its mouth, costing more than $100,000, was destroyed. The bridge over the Yumari, leading to Versalles, was also washed away. The San Luis bridge, near the Havana Railroad station, still stands, though much damaged. Of the 800 street lamps in the city not more than fifty remain standing. Of the buildings destroyed and washed away it is impossible to give a list, owing to their number and character. A great variety of incidents occurred, but they are hardly of sufficient interest to justify the space. The residence of Señor Catalina Fernandez fell on the day after the storm, crushing a number of servants; the family, fortunately, was absent. A family residing in a country residence not far from the city, fearing it would be blown down, adjourned to an outbuilding of a stronger character, which they had scarcely reached than the abandoned dwelling fell with a crash.

The most stringent police regulations have been adopted here to prevent robbery and loss of property to owners. All unclaimed property is sent to the various police headquarters, and those caught stealing are summarily tried by court martial and shot. Two persons, named respectively Jose Perez and Antonio Eouez, have been thus executed.

Some of the provision stores in Pueblo Nueve and Versalles attempted to take advantage of the recent disasters to raise the price of articles of food, but were prevented by the authorities. Funds are being rapidly raised for the relief of the sufferers, and, as we are informed, large sums are being subscribed in Havana and other places.

The scene in the harbor during the storm is described by those who witnessed it as one of terrific grandeur. The strength of the wind, combined with the tremendous influx of water, drove the most securely anchored vessels from their moorings and hurled the greater part them, dismasted and sailless, on the shore. I am furnished with the following report:—

Schooner Edwin lost her anchors; was thrown against some of the coasting schooners, sinking them; taken from her moorings and went ashore. Captain and mate saved themselves.

Brig Mary A. Chase, dismasted; lost two anchors and all her rigging. She saved some six men, who were floating about in the harbor.

Brig G. W. Baxter, driven ashore near the promenade.

Schooner Frank Palmer lost her bowsprit; bows badly smashed.

Bark George S. Hunt lost masts, rigging and anchors. Saved a negro woman floating in the harbor.

Brig Liberty escaped uninjured. Saved the night watchman of the San Luis depot.

Bark St. Mary, bowsprit torn away; rigging destroyed.

Brig A. B. Bradshaw, aground near the promenade of Versalles. These are American.

The Italian brig Sicilia and the coasting schooners Primera Illigria and Buen Viage have disappeared from their berths in the San Juan river, and their fate is unknown.

The ship Burdston, an iron vessel, was thrown upon the coast, but the change of wind blew her off with slight damage.

The British brig G. V. Nichols was very badly damaged, and will probably prove a total loss. This vessel saved seven persons from drowning.

British brig Manlius lost one of her masts, and is badly damaged. She picked up in the harbor three whites and two negroes.

Bark Evening Star aground; lost one mast and otherwise badly damaged. She was got afloat by her British Majesty's gunboat Myrmidon, which safely outrode the storm.

Brig Fairlena, much damaged.

The schooner Helena, from new Orleans, entered this port on the 19th, badly damaged.

From the country we learn in general terms that the estates and cane fields have suffered great damage, though few details are given. A small estate on the San Juan, not far from the city, was overflowed and some forty employes drowned. On the estate of the Widow Scall the sugar houses were blown down and the cane greatly damaged.

On the plantation of Santa Clara, owned by E. Bailet, the cane is all cut to pieces. On La Reina, cane down, buildings destroyed.

To add to our horrors a number of deaths from cholera have occurred within the past few days, and the cases are said to be rapidly increasing.

Effect of the Hurricane on the Crops—Sugar Plantations but Little Damaged—Reports from the Various Localities.

HAVANA, Oct. 17, 1870.

We are delnged with accounts of the recent hurricane from those localities which suffered by it, but they are far from being consistent or methodical in their character. As well as we can judge the storm extended from longitude 79 30 west to 82 15, exhausting itself on the northern and central parts of the island.

Before proceeding to notice its effects as described by correspondents at various points, I am happy to be able to record that the effect on the sugar crop is not likely to prove as disastrous as was originally supposed. It is undoubted that great injury has been done to many buildings on the estates and to the cane moreover; but these are mostly confined to the precincts near the northern coast, in the vicinity of Matanzas and Cardenas for example; but even here, for the most part, nothing worse than the bending of the cane has occurred—a thing which can be remedied before the grinding season sets in. Such are the advices received by the prominent mercantile houses here, and are no doubt reliable.

MATANZAS.

This city, owing to its peculiar situation, suffered more than any other. I leave a description of the sad scenes which occurred to your correspondent there. The Captain General has decreed an appropriation of $400,000 for the relief of the sufferers by the storm, the greater part of which will be devoted to Matanzas. Subscriptions for the same purpose are being made in Havana, and large sums have been raised. Several mercantile houses have contributed $1,000 respectively.

CARDENAS.

Accounts from this city state that during Thursday, the 6th, the barometer fell very rapidly, and as night came on every appearance of a hurricane was presented. During Friday the wind blew violently from east-northeast, accompanied by occasional gusts of great power, which caused immense destruction both on land and in the harbor. At half-past seven o'clock Friday evening the wind shifted to the east, augmenting until it blew a hurricane. At eight A. M. it had reached the south, blowing hard, with violent gusts. During the day the water in the harbor rapidly receded and some of the vessels were for a time left aground. On the morning of the 9th the wind had subsided and the danger was over. The following report of damages appears in the *Boletin Mercantile*—

The roof covering the wharf was thrown down and much of the flooring torn up. Many of the residences and warehouses in the city were unroofed. The trees, flowers and shrubbery in the parks and private gardens have been completely destroyed. Most of the lampposts have been thrown down. The beautiful market building was slightly damaged. The gas factory, though not much injured, was compelled to suspend operations for several days. A great quantity of water entered the church, and the high altar suffered seriously. The Government House, bank, Casino Español, the college and other edifices were somewhat damaged. A Chinaman, mulatto and negro killed make up the casualties. The trains were suspended for a time and telegraph lines down.

The following marine disasters are reported from Cardenas:—The American schooner Talvia was wrecked on the north coast. British brig Equator lost foremast and received heavy damages. British bark speedaway dismasted and aground on Boca de la Manil. British bark Rosedale dismasted in the bay. Spanish bark Pepita dismasted. Spanish brig M. W., which had left for Falmouth, was wrecked near Faradero. The captain and five of the crew perished; mate and six men saved. Spanish brig Chispa dismasted and badly injured. Rosita wrecked on north side of the bay. Dutch bark Cardenas and American brigs C. F. Dunbar and J. C. Labor, unhurt. Several coasters have been wrecked.

The following is a report of injuries to estates in the vicinity of Cardenas:—Estate San Vicente, owned by Messrs. Pailleuongo & Sourno; sugar house greatly injured; chimney thrown down and other buildings unroofed; entire place inundated. Estate San Pablo, same owner; sugar house damaged; chimney thrown down; other buildings in ruins. Estate Union, owned by widow La Evere; the dwelling and negro quarters entirely destroyed; overseer killed. Estate Pastina, owned by Señor Arguelles; chimney destroyed. Estate Esperanza, owned by Señor Penzor; inundated. On the estate Ocoto all the buildings have been greatly injured and the cane cut to pieces and pulled up by the roots. Other estates in the vicinity have been more or less damaged.

THE VALLEY OF GUINES.

According to the accounts of eyewitnesses this beautiful valley now presents a most deplorable aspect. The inundation has been general, particularly throughout the district of Catalina, and very little of the fruits and vegetables remain. In the districts of Nueva Paz and San Nicolas the loss has been terrible. Many well to do families have been reduced to poverty. In Rosario more than forty families have been rendered homeless. So great is the destitution that in some places the women have been compelled to don men's apparel for want of any other.

BEJUCAL.

In this district the plantain groves, and the early crops have suffered greatly and many trees have been destroyed. More than fifty houses have fallen, principally in San Antonio de los Vegas.

COLON.

Great number of houses destroyed in this jurisdiction, and especially in the village of that name. On the 9th the various suburbs were overflowed, the inhabitants having abandoned them. Sickness has increased materially since the storm. Telegraph lines interrupted and roads impassable. The estates in vicinity have suffered greatly.

JARUCO.

In the place of this name a portion of the smaller residences have been destroyed. The church lost one of its doors and was injured somewhat inside. In San Antonio de Rio Blanco many houses have been destroyed, including the police headquarters. The families of the poor have been collected and assistance furnished. In Balnoa forty-one houses destroyed, and the other small villas in the jurisdiction have suffered in like manner.

In Motruga more than a hundred houses of the smaller class have been destroyed. No loss of life reported.

From San Jose de Los Lajas we learn that rich section has suffered great losses. The rice fields have been destroyed, and there does not remain one plantain tree in the ground. Many of the poor have been reduced to the greatest misery.

SANTA CLARA.

Dates from this city are to the 11th. It seems to have been on the outer edge of the hurricane. Great quantities of rain fell and the wind blew with great violence. The plantain groves generally were blown down. The river Ocnoa was overflowed, and communication with Remedios intermitted.

Loqua, Cienfuegos and other cities were visited by heavy winds, but suffered no material damage.

The Hurricane at Trinidad de Cuba—Execution of One of the Crew of the Salvador—The Insurrection Unchanged.

TRINIDAD DE CUBA, Oct. 13, 1870.

We have had a storm on us the past week, commencing on the 12th and lasting till the 13th, and it blew and rained like the old Harry.

On the 12th one of the crew of the Salvador, named Perez Rodriguez, of Havana, was shot on what they call in this country, "verbal," and he died like a hero, telling them to point well and not miss, and for all that they massacred him, as they had to fire the second round at him. There will be another one shot in the course of a day or two—taken when the same expedition was landed—without any trial whatever.

The insurrection is about the same, and no prospect of its getting over. There has just been a fresh batch of soldiers gone by in a steamer for the east end of the island, where they will leave their bones.

No vessels in port.