

FIGHTING CUBA.

An Uncompleted March with a Spanish Battalion.

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THE MYSTERIOUS COUNTERMARCH.

An Impartial Portrayal of Passions and Opinions on Both Sides.

SANTIAGO DE CUBA, Jan. 20, 1873. In view of the impossibility of obtaining any reliable information relative to the insurrection at Santa Clara, owing to the disappearance from the district of the larger insurrectionary detachments, I proceeded by way of Cienfuegos to Santi Espiritu, where I hoped to find the operations of the campaign on a larger scale. The scenery along the coast to Trinidad was singularly impressive and appealed to the imagination in all the majesty of utter desolation. Before the war the lower hills and the valleys near the coast were highly cultivated, but during the struggle all the estates have been abandoned or destroyed. So far as the eye could reach nothing was visible but dark masses of forest-clad hills, whose awful stillness was unbroken by any sign of habitation. Until a late period the almost inaccessible mountains and forests in this region gave shelter to important bands of insurgents; but the construction of the trocha southward had the effect of causing the majority of the bands to go southward from fear of being cut off from their friends in the southeastern departments, where the chief strength of the insurrection has been from the outset.

THE ADVANTAGE OF THESE TROCHAS has been clearly shown in the comparative tranquillity of the district west of Moron. Although the Cuban sympathizers with whom I had come in contact admitted the actual state of affairs with a certain amount of frankness, I was unwilling to accept anything on mere hearsay, and therefore persisted in my intention to go to Santi Espiritu. A fog detained us some twelve hours beyond our time, but at last we arrived at Tunas, an embryo town situated on a tongue of land, which is the seaport of Santi Espiritu. As there is only one train a day each way, I was obliged to put up at one of the tiendas for the night. In the morning I found that the hour of starting was entirely dependent on the amount of freight and the more or less industrious frame of mind of the colored man whose business it was to load the wagons. About two o'clock in the afternoon we steamed out of the station, which is about a quarter of a mile distant from the town, in the midst of a salt swamp. Here

THE GUARD OF SOLDIERS CAME ON BOARD and disposed themselves about so as to have a good view of the country—that is to say, of the woods and bushes, that after a few miles of sand and swamp extend for leagues on all sides until we have passed about three-fourths of our journey, when the country becomes more open and signs of cultivation appear. On the way I managed to get into conversation with one of the guards, who appeared to me a likely subject to know something about the war. He was just the sort of fellow to drive a martinet to desperation—antidly and with a suspicion of the piquetness of dirt about him, but

A DEVIANT-GLANCE LOOK IN THE EYE and a certain half-expression about the mouth, which was drawn at the corners. He had been inspecting me rather attentively, and I was expecting every minute a request to exhibit my papers—a formality which I confess I dislike heartily. A lucky stopping of the train in a deep cutting to take in wood for the engine furnished me with a pretext to inquire the cause of the delay, and once the ice was broken the soldier and I got on very well together. He informed me that he had been over three years in active operations, and that it was pretty tiresome work. Like most of the Spanish soldiers whom I have met with, he entertained a supreme contempt for an enemy that never fired except from an ambuscade. He had been engaged with them any number of times, but had very seldom seen any of them.

"THEY LIE IN WAIT," he said, deprecatingly, "in the forest, and fire just one volley, when they run, and as they know all the paths in the forest they generally get away. However, most of the white men have been killed or have surrendered themselves, and there are only the negroes in the woods now. It is very difficult to find them, for they might be lying at twenty yards' distance in the forest where we pass by without our discovering them. In the interior of the woods the brushwood is so thick that we are obliged to cut our way through our machetes. WE HAVE NOW GOT THROUGH BROADWOODS, however, he said, with animation, "and we can follow them into their hiding places." In answer to an inquiry as to what they did with their prisoners the soldier simply said:—"Nearly all the white men have presented themselves and we do not take many black prisoners; they are generally killed if found with arms, but if they present themselves they are sent back to their masters. When the blacks catch a white man they kill him." According to this man's computation the number of refugees in the woods was not more than one hundred, and these, he said, were divided up into small bands, who never attacked any party of armed men, but cut off strangers and travelers without mercy. Even

when cornered, as some times happened, or surprised by parties of troops sent out in their pursuit, these negroes did not offer any very desperate resistance, but seemed to endeavor to escape to their hiding places until the danger was past. The soldier made this statement frankly, and without any view to my character which might have induced him to color the picture. As we approached Santi Espiritu we met a few large Cuban villages, in each of which were stationed a party of troops, occupying a kind of block house. Scarcely from the railway, was there anything particularly noticeable in these places, but I was afterwards informed that the larger part of the inhabitants were in a state of destitution bordering on starvation. If this be true I must say they have

THEMSELVES IN GREAT PART TO BLAME, for land is very easy to be had and scarcely claims any labor from the peasant. In the town of Santi Espiritu there is also great suffering caused principally by the war. Strings of poverty-stricken women were to be met from time to time going from house to house to beg a little rice to keep soul and body together. In the faces of many of these could be read tales of sorrow, and the brow of many a one among them was darkened by the impending shadow of the angel of death.

In order to discover the exact line of demarcation between the Spanish and Cuban territories I was anxious to pass from Santi Espiritu to Puerto Principe by the land route, but the difficulty of procuring horses and a guide willing to accompany me forced me to abandon this idea. None of the Spanish party would venture alone with me into the neighborhood of the insurgents, who seemed to be

EVERYWHERE AND NOWHERE, and no Cuban would expose himself to the suspicion of the authorities by accompanying me. Nothing remained, therefore, but to take the steamer to this place, and try if fortune had anything better in store for me. The evening, or rather the night, of my arrival here I was presented to the Governor of the town,

BRIGADIER GENERAL MORALES, on the public square by Mr. Ramades, the British Consul, as a gentleman traveling through the island. The General was already aware that I was the representative of the HERALD, and as it was difficult to talk freely among the crowd of promoters General Morales invited me to the Palace. He expressed himself

DESIROUS TO BE OF SERVICE TO ME and enable me to see the exact state of the island for myself. I thanked him for his kindness and assured him that I was very anxious to avail myself of whatever facilities he would be pleased to afford me. He then stated that a column would be leaving in the morning on an expedition that would in all probability last for ten days, during which time I would have ample opportunity to observe the operations of the campaign. I said that I was most willing to accept the offer, but that, unfortunately having arrived only in the morning, I was not provided with a horse for myself, nor with the means of transport for the necessary provisions. The General at once informed me that the column would give me a horse, and that the officers would supply the commissariat department. He then introduced me to

LIEUTENANT COLONEL SOSTRADA, the commander of the expedition. This gentleman expressed himself well pleased at having the representative of an impartial journal to accompany the Spanish troops and give a fair account of the war. He told me the troops were ordered to march at half-past six o'clock in the morning, and that it would be necessary to be at the railway station at that hour. He also advised me to provide myself with a hammock and blanket—no easy matter at half-past ten o'clock at night. As it was necessary to make some hurried preparations, I took my leave of General Morales and Colonel Sostrada, and went in pursuit of the hammock and blanket which, thanks to the good services of a friend, I secured. It was still dark when I started in the morning under the guidance of one of the servants of the hotel; for, in his anxiety to have me in time, the proprietor roused me up some hour and a half before it was necessary. Arrived at the station I found it already occupied by troops belonging to the mounted contra-guerrillas. All was stir and bustle. The embarkment of the horses was proceeding rapidly and without confusion. The men who were not engaged in this service were gathered round a vendor of coffee and cognac, who had improvised a restaurant on a rough deal table. I watched the proceedings with considerable interest, and found commendable order and organization to exist. These irregular troops are the scouts of the army, being in large part

RECRUITED FROM THE NATIVE POPULATION and surrendered insurgents. It is said that they render invaluable service on account of their knowledge of the mode of warfare carried on by the Cubans, as well as their acquaintance with the country. For the most part they are armed with Remington rifles, and all of them carry the formidable machete. The uniform worn by the troops on campaign consists of a coarse linen trowsers and blue cotton jacket, with a broad brimmed straw hat, sometimes covered with white calico, and ornamented with a red or green band. As the contra-guerrillas moved out of the station the regular infantry arrived and took their seats in the train. They appeared to me to have seen much service, but in the dim light of the morning it was not possible to examine them very closely; besides, I was resolved to form my judgment of them more by their actions than their looks. A few moments later I encountered Colonel Sostrada, who recognized me and ordered one of the soldiers to take charge of my very slim baggage. As soon as everything was ready the Colonel invited me to take a seat by his side. The other officers of the battalion occupied seats in the same carriage, but no introduction was tendered to them, a circumstance which I was surprised to see, but the explanation was soon forthcoming.

THE OFFICERS WERE IN FIGHTING TRIM, offering rather a strange spectacle to one only accustomed to see the pomp and splendor of the parade ground. All the little adornments of the person in which gallant militiamen delight had been laid aside; even of the insignia of rank there was only retained the absolutely necessary. There was scarcely any pretense of a uniform, and even the showy sword had been exchanged for the more useful machete. A few wore the regulation cap, but by far the greater number wore straw hats, which were more useful than ornamental. From these signs I had hopes that serious work was intended, and that if fortune favored me I was going to be present at that somewhat intangible thing called a Cuban battle. After a toilsome ascent to Christo the train stopped to take on board the remaining companies of the battalion. As this would occasion some delay we got off the train. Here the Colonel called the officers of the battalion together, and formally introduced me as the representative of the HERALD, specially recommended to them by General Morales to be looked upon as

UN SUENO COMPANERO. The officers, who appeared to be a good set, bowed to their new comrade, and afterwards I was free of the conversation. This ceremony through, we embarked again for St. Luis, the terminus of the railway. The voyage over the railway from Santiago de Cuba to St. Luis is one of the most interesting that can be made. The grade is so steep that for the greater part of the way it is with difficulty the engine can drag its freight up the incline. The track lies along the side of steep mountains, crossing deep valleys, on wooden trestles work, where the slightest accident would hurl train and passengers to inevitable destruction. The scenery is very beautiful, the wild grandeur of the mountains being relieved and softened by the cultivated llanos, where the sugar cane and cornstalk gave evidence of human interest. For the most part the mountains are clothed to their tops with the palm, the sacra and the mango, which rise above life until they seem lost in the clouds, as they often are. The chief characteristic of this place is savage grandeur, and it appears to me exceedingly strange that the insurgents do not take measures to destroy a line which it would take thousands of troops to defend from a bold and enterprising enemy. It is true that the Spaniards

have the line strongly occupied, but the line has so many weak points that if it were vigorously attacked it must be crippled. I expressed these views to the Spanish officers and they were of my opinion, and they adduced the fact as a proof of THE ABILITY OF THE CUBANS TO MEET THE SPANISH ARMY.

In anything like an open fight. All the points of vantage along the line were occupied by little wooden forts, which appeared at a distance like huge pigeon boxes. In some instances they were surrounded by a shallow ditch, and at others a weak and totally ineffective chevaux de frise of bamboo had been constructed. Small openings were left to enable the soldiers to fire through, and on the top of each was a square frame with shutters, capable of being raised or lowered at will by the sentinel, who from this elevated point kept watch and ward over the country. The first impression made on the mind by one of these structures was tinged with a sense of the ridiculous, for they almost certainly suggested a living jack-in-the-box. As a matter of experience, however, they have been found to answer admirably the purpose for which they have been constructed. I was assured by every Spanish officer to whom I spoke of the matter that in no instance had one of these towers been captured by the enemy when defended by the troops—a circumstance which appears to me very strange, as most of those which I saw could not fall to be destroyed by a determined and intelligent attack. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the fact that they are VERY UNPROFITABLE SUBJECTS, as they contain little else than a few days' provisions for the garrison, and the insurgents may think that *le feu ne vaut pas la chandelle*.

By the time we arrived at St. Luis the morning was far advanced, and the sun shone out with tropical intensity. Under these circumstances the Colonel ordered the noonday halt, in order that the men should be able to breakfast and repose during the great heat of the day. I had now ample opportunity to observe

THE APPEARANCE AND CONDITION OF THE MEN. For the most part they were worn, but still strong and vigorous. The effects of the climate and the constant fatigues to which they were exposed were, however, visible in a great number of faces, whose expression showed clearly that the constitution was already undermined. For the most part these men had suffered from the fevers of the climate, brought on by exposure to the weather, sleeping in the damp woods without any other protection than a blanket afforded, for the troops are wholly unprovided with tents. I was surprised also to notice that although we were within two hours' ride by rail of St. Luis the troops were obliged to eat biscuit—a circumstance that reflects very little credit on the administration of the Spanish army. In connection with this subject I have since made many inquiries and have been informed that, had as the Commissariat Department is at present, it is an immense improvement on what it was some time ago. In all countries the Commissariat Department is the favorite refuge of rogues; but I doubt if the soldiers of any other army would continue to support the great fatigues to which these Spaniards are exposed on such poor food.

THE FAULT IS NOT WITH THE REGIMENTAL OFFICERS, for I believe they sympathize with the men whose sufferings they were often obliged to share, but with the higher officials, who grow rich at the expense of the poor fellows who are daily exposing their lives in defence of the honor and integrity of Spain. It has always appeared to me a strange contradiction that while the private soldier who, prompted by hunger, steals, is severely punished, the well paid officer who robs him not alone escapes hanging, but is received as an honored and worthy member of society. I have been informed by many credible persons that more than one Commissary General has returned rich to Spain after a sufficiently short term of office, yet no inquiry has been instituted as to how he managed to acquire a fortune while living in a style that must have absorbed the whole of the revenue to which he was honestly entitled. It is true that in our own war this kind of dishonesty was very rare, but the soldiers were so much better paid that they did not need to resort to the means of the thief. Matters had reached that stage when a change becomes necessary when the late commander, General Riquelme, arrived, and as he was convinced that unless the soldiers were fed they would die he introduced considerable reforms, which while they leave much to be desired, are yet an immense improvement on the old supply department.

On leaving the train the men stacked arms and rested in the shadow of the houses until their simple meal was cooked. There was no hurry, and the officers informed me that, except in case of necessity, they always allowed the men to

REPOSE DURING THE NOONDAY HOURS, a precaution which tends to alleviate the severity of the climate. Colonel Sostrada, having some matters to attend to in relation to his command, left me in charge of the doctor of the Battalion Francisco y Diaz, but the soldiers found an agreeable and intelligent companion. With him I had an opportunity of seeing the sick. Some few men were suffering from fever, and had to be left in the hospital; others were suffering from old wounds or accidents. In all cases the men seemed to receive careful attention and humane consideration. What struck me most was the absence from the *visite* of the *carrotier* class, or those feigning sickness. Nearly every man who appeared bore in his face the confirmation of his story, and there were many men, even in the ranks, who, from appearance, I thought ought not to have been taken into the field. As soon as the Colonel had given the necessary orders he returned and requested me to accompany him in a visit to the Colonel commanding in St. Luis, to whom I was formally introduced. At breakfast I was given the place of honor, and on that and all subsequent occasions I was treated with an attention and courtesy that will remain engraved on my mind for ever.

Towards two o'clock in the afternoon the troops were ordered to fall in, and some minutes later were marching before me. The Colonel placed at my disposal his horse, and having selected one I took my place with him at the head of the column. We were accompanied by the commandant, the adjutant and the doctor, who made up our party or mess during my short stay with the Spanish forces. We were now ready in campaign, and at night would reach the edge of the territory where Spanish power claims to rule without dispute. From the moment we left St. Luis we marched with all the precautions of war, and two negroes carrying stretchers reminded one that disagreeable accidents might happen at any moment. These negroes had been captured during the war and had attached themselves to the battalion, refusing to leave. One of them had been decorated for courage on the field in succoring the wounded under fire. The country through which we passed was cultivated at intervals, but some of the estates were abandoned. The cane continued, however, to grow, though the careful husbandman was no longer present to care or to reap it, and the harvest seemed to reproach proud insensate man for his violence and senseless ambition. As we moved into the interior the country became wilder, and we passed through large districts of wooded country.

OUR FIRST HALT was made at the Ciudad, an estate of medium extent, in full operation. It was guarded by soldiers, as all the estates in this district are, to prevent the insurgents from destroying them. Here I was shown the process of sugar-making, all the details being carefully and minutely explained. Leaving this estate we directed our march to Santa Anna, the last estate in this district now in operation. It is situated to the northeast, at the apex of the triangle formed by the range of mountains known as Dos Iucas and the prolongation of the range to which the Gran Piedra belongs. Here we were to halt for the night, and in the morning plunge into that mysterious land of unknown dangers known as Los Montes, or, contemptuously, La Manigua. These are covered by dense forests, where the insurgents, or patriots, as they are variously styled, according to the sympathies of the speaker, defy the power of Spain. From what I saw of the paths of wooded country through which we passed I was able to comprehend the difficulties that lay in the way of the pacification

of the island by force. Many of the points on the march, if properly taken advantage of and well defended, could only have been forced by superior numbers at a great sacrifice of life. However, nothing occurred during the day to spoil the picturesqueness of the scene by introducing the horrible.

THE COLUMN EN MARCH. The long line of soldiers on either side of the road, that now dipped into valleys through which flowed shallow streams, now wound with serpentine course over a hill, marched along silently and patiently, their blue jackets and white pants dotting the valley's sides, producing a very animated and pleasing effect. More than once I turned in my saddle to enjoy the scene so full of life and color. No painter could transfer it to canvas, for its subtle pleasure lay in the constant change of color and grouping occurring every instant, presenting to the eye new combinations. Quite a number of these transverse valleys cut the road, and had we been burdened with artillery or wagon would have offered considerable difficulties to our march. On the road I learned that the battalion with which I had the honor to march was known as

THE ST. QUENTIN. It was one of the first to leave Havana for the war. It had continued in campaign during the four years of the insurrection. During that period it had been engaged more or less seriously with the enemy in more than ninety engagements. In some of these the battalion had suffered heavily, but had always managed to repay with interest the attentions of the enemy. If I had been searching for a representative corps I could not have chosen one more worthy of sustaining the honor of the Spanish arms. This was just what I wanted, as my desire to see both sides at their best, and I knew that my presence would be an incentive to every soldier in the battalion to perform his duty to the best of his power. We reached Santa Anna about five o'clock in the afternoon, and in company with the Colonel and the director of the estate I visited the Quasimodo River, which is remarkable as the haunt of an immense number of alligators. On the opposite bank of the river we could see the dark masses of buildings belonging to an estate that had been destroyed by the rebels. One of the ruined estates belongs to one of the leaders of the insurrection. The crop on this estate is

BURNED DOWN REGULARLY EVERY YEAR to prevent the Spanish authorities deriving any benefit from it. Before the war there were on the estate of Santa Anna some four hundred slaves, but the insurgents carried off the greater part. Many of these were either recaptured, or, having no stomach for fighting, returned voluntarily, so that the estate could now muster some eighty hands. While I was making the round of the buildings with the director the preparations for dinner were completed, and on my return I found the mess waiting for me. During dinner I was again the object of the most delicate attention, nothing being neglected to make me feel

COMPLETELY AT MY EASE. Our dinner was quite a *recherché* affair, and by far the best I had eaten since my arrival in the island, and it had the advantage of being seasoned with the spice of good-fellowship. After the cloth was removed most of the officers of the battalion assembled round the table to while away the time, chatting and recounting stories of accidents by flood and field. We would have had songs also, but the only guitar of which the battalion boasted had come to grief. Before the evening was over I was on the best footing with all the officers. The subject of my mission and its fulfillment was discussed, not with the company, but at intervals with some of the officers with whom I had established more intimate relations. All were

ANXIOUS THAT A FAIR AND IMPARTIAL STATEMENT of the status of the insurrection should be given to the world. They were especially desirous that the impression that had gone abroad about the Spanish army should be corrected. At the same time there was not the slightest apparent desire to interfere with the independence of my judgment or the free expression of my opinions. The statement that the Spanish troops killed all their prisoners was strenuously denied. It was claimed that all prisoners taken are given up to the higher authorities, who, of course, dispose of them as they think fit. This, I believe, is now the rule, and so far as I can learn, the practice of shooting all prisoners taken was discontinued in this department as soon as General Riquelme took the command. He not alone endeavored to improve the condition of the soldier, but tried to put the war on a footing more in keeping with

MODERN IDEAS OF CIVILIZED WARFARE. Before his time, however, there is no question that not alone were the prisoners taken in arms executed with very little ceremony, but that citizens simply suspected of connection with the insurrection were taken from their homes and shot after a form of trial before a court martial. So many instances have been adduced of this both by respectable foreigners and Cubans that I have no hesitation in asserting that this charge is proved against the Spanish. The opinions of the officers of the battalion St. Quentin reflect honor on them, but they are by no means shared by all the officers of the army. On the contrary, it is no means an unusual thing to hear the opinion openly expressed, even at the hotel table, that until the shooting of the civilians is recommenced the department will never be pacified. Last evening one of the officers who dined with me went so far as to suggest that

THE FAMILIES OF ALL THE MEN KNOWN TO BE IN THE FIELD should be exterminated. I remarked to him that such a course would, no doubt, be effective, but that the civilized world would not permit it to be adopted. From this it will be seen that there exists considerable difference of opinion as to the measures that should be adopted to stamp out the insurrection, and as I wish to mirror faithfully the exact state of the island I feel it my duty to give all views that I find entertained by considerable numbers of people. While the Spanish supporters point to the men that have been pardoned, the Cubans recount the long list of the men slain in cold blood. The executions of the past have unquestionably

COWED THE CUBAN POPULATION, but they have also deepened the hate and detestation with which the Spanish government is regarded, and if by any chance the Cubans ever get the upper hand I believe they will exterminate the Spanish population. That reminds me that the officers of the St. Quentin battalion were particularly desirous of impressing me with the opinion that the people of the island were in favor of the Spaniards. With this view they named numbers of gentlemen serving in the army, whom I was assured belonged to the *crème de la crème* of Cuban society. My own experience, however, contradicts this, for nearly all the young men of intelligence with whom I have come in contact hate the Spaniards with inconceivable bitterness—so much so that, as I have before stated, I expressed to many among them my surprise that men with their sentiments were not fighting with the insurgents. And again I record my opinion that this class of the population is, to my mind,

THE MOST CONTEMPTIBLE OF ALL. On the Spanish side there suffers little in this question a sentiment of patriotic pride that, however mistaken, is still respectable. Sometimes an houring leads to the commission of acts that when the hour of passion and excitement has passed, even the ultra-Spaniards regret; but whatever wrong is done by the Spanish soldiers they, at least, expose themselves boldly to the consequences. This, of course, is not a justification; but it shows an earnestness and a belief in the justice of their cause that we may look upon as political fanaticism, but cannot despise. So far I have only seen the least impressive side of the Cuban cause; and, as I condemn what I find weak and unworthy in it, so I will speak as unsparingly of whatever virtues I may find in that mysterious and unknown land which we call Cuba Libre. In my conversation with the Spanish officers the points on which they principally laid weight were that the insurgents possessed

NEITHER LAND NOR TOWNS, and were totally unable to offer effective resistance to the march of even one Spanish battalion. Like all regular troops they complained bitterly that the insurgents would never allow themselves

in the open field, but fired from ambuscades, and then retreated. It never seemed to strike them that an enemy has a right to choose whatever tactics he pleases, and that there is no law, moral or international, that compels a soldier to stand just in the position his enemy wishes to attack. Each Spanish soldier is provided with 130 rounds of ammunition, besides having a reserve supply on the mules, while I have no doubt there are moments when there are not a thousand rounds of ammunition in a Cuban battalion. This fact may have something to do with

THE TACTICS OF THE CUBAN TROOPS. A Spanish officer related an incident to me the other day which illustrates this. A volunteer in the direction of Cerroado suddenly found himself confronted by four Cubans, who presented their rifles, ordering him to surrender. Not relishing the idea he declined, and prepared to defend himself with his machete. The position became at once complicated, for the Cubans had not a single cartridge between them, and were obliged to cut the volunteer down with their machetes. The appearance of a party of troops prevented them finishing the work and the plucky volunteer escaped with a severe wound on his lower jaw. Little incidents of this kind enable one to form a pretty accurate estimate of the condition of things in Cuba Libre. If the insurgents could be completely cut off from communication with the outer world their position would indeed be desperate, but the arrival from time to time of even small supplies will enable them

TO HOLD OUT INDEFINITELY. In order to note how these expeditions were regarded by the Spanish army I informed a number of officers at dinner of the safe arrival of General Agtiero with a considerable supply of munitions of war.

THE EFFECT WAS ELECTRIC. The officers had been chatting and joking in quite a merry mood, but the news acted like an extinguisher on their good spirits. There was not much said, but pretty decided opinions were expressed as to value and activity of the navy. One officer stated his firm conviction that if he lived he would see the twentieth year of the independence of the Cuban Republic, as he had seen the fifth. Unless things change considerably I am very much inclined to agree with him. The Spaniards constantly assert that the insurrection is contemptible, so far as its means of resistance or power of aggression is concerned; but when asked why they do not suppress it they point to the difficulty of crushing an enemy that only fights when he pleases. In this lies the greatest danger to the dominion of Spain, for it is impossible to conquer an enemy that can accept or refuse combat as will. It is now pretty generally felt that in attempting to reconquer St. Domingo Spain has brought upon herself a severe punishment. It was that campaign that taught the Cubans how they could free themselves from the sovereignty of the Peninsula. From whatever point of view this struggle is regarded, the result seems to me to be the same—a disastrous ending for the Spanish army. If the question were to be settled by an open war the Cuban Republic would soon be counted among the things of the past; but it must be decided by the power of endurance of the hostile parties. The position is this. The Cubans possess a small army in the field, but behind that army are hundreds of thousands of sympathizers, from whom the losses by disease and death are constantly repaired. As the natives do not suffer much from the diseases that are so fatal to Europeans the principal gaps in the ranks are made by the

BULLETS OF THE SPANISH SOLDIERS; but as these, according to their own account, never see the enemy, even when engaged with him, the losses from bullets cannot be very heavy, and are easily made good. On the other hand, the Spanish troops are constantly on the march, exposed to the inclemency of the climate and the special diseases of the country. How fatal these prove, aggravated by the fatigues undergone by the troops, may be judged from the statistics furnished me by officers of the *Regt Mayor*. Since the outbreak of the rebellion it appears from the official record that 100,000 men have been sent to Cuba. Of these there remain to-day some 20,000 men.

SIX THOUSAND OFFICERS have fallen victims to disease and bullets in the same period. These are not the statistics of Cuban sympathizers, but have been furnished to me by officers in the army, the most determined in their resolution to suppress the insurrection. From this it will be seen that if the power of the insurgents in the field has diminished the means at the disposal of the government for their suppression have diminished to a still greater extent. There is another reason, also, why the chances of putting down the insurrection are lessened by time. In the beginning the Cubans knew little about war, and though numerous, were by no means formidable enemies; now, however, the men in the field have acquired considerable skill in the use of their arms and the habits of obedience and control so necessary in warfare. The troubles in Spain, it is felt, will so paralyze the government as to prevent the despatch of reinforcements to Cuba. In view of all these difficulties it is no wonder that even among the Spanish officers there is growing up a feeling that the war will be interminable—that is, if Spain can find the men and money to continue the struggle. It is a strange commentary on human intelligence that under the specious plea of patriotism a people can be induced to make so great and so appalling sacrifices in order that some few hundred men may continue to enjoy their ill-gotten wealth; for there is no escaping from the fact that

THESE CATACOMBS OF SPANISH DEAD and the wasted millions wrung from a people sunk in poverty and wretchedness have been spent in defence of a few hundred slave-owners. The Spanish nation derives no profit from the connection with Cuba; at most a few government employes become rich by stealing from the government they are supposed to serve. These people are the very lowest in their professions of patriotism, and all the time they are crippling their country by putting a no inconsiderable portion of the revenue into their own pockets. This is a fact so notorious that I do not suppose the gentry in question will even be angry at my stating it. My authorities are almost every man who has any dealings with the government employes. On the question of their rapaciousness there is no second opinion. Men have told me of transactions in which they were themselves engaged which appeared to me incredible, but, coming from sources beyond suspicion, I have no alternative but to believe them. Of course I have no means of verifying the allegations made on this head, but the testimony on the point comes from men of all parties and all conditions.

THE DISCUSSION OF MY MISSION and the state of the island was carried on by the officers of the St. Quentin battalion in the best humor and with marked delicacy. There was evident a strong desire to present the Spanish side of the question in as favorable a light as possible. The points presented were, however, nearly all the same. On the side of Spain were to be found all the valor and humanity, while the insurgents, as at present constituted, were principally ignorant and ferocious bands of men not fit for freedom, but a war of extermination against the whites. In so far as this touched my own safety I was pretty generally assured that if I had the misfortune to fall into the hands of any of the bands of negro marauders my character of neutral correspondent would avail me little. There must be some truth in this statement, for even the *laborantes*, or Cuban sympathizers, tell me the same thing. However, this is to my mind a land of *croque-mitaines*, where EVERY DANGER IS MAGNIFIED A HUNDREDFOLD by the fears of the inhabitants, who live in a state of mental darkness. The slightest occurrence assumes awful proportions, because there is no means of throwing light on the shady places, and, as I have before remarked, the government, even when it tells the truth, is never believed, not even by its supporters. This is the natural result of the efforts constantly made to present a *couleur de rose* view of the situation. The presence, therefore, among the soldiers of a fair representative of the HERALD, which was felt not alone to be free to express its opinions on all

that passed, but also to be tinged with sympathy for the Cuban cause, excited no little interest. The officers have from the first expressed themselves pleased that I should accompany them on an expedition, and there was a universal wish that the enemy would allow himself in order that the world might receive an impartial account of a Cuban battle. I went to bed full of hope that the morning would see us on our way to those mysterious woods where the insurrection has its headquarters. In this I was destined to disappointment, for when I issued out of the little room which had been kindly placed at my disposal Colonel Sostrada informed me that during the night he had

RECEIVED ORDERS TO RETURN in the direction of St. Luis and await further orders. This news quite threw a damper on all our enthusiasm; but as it was looked on only as a change of direction the circumstance was not much thought about. The halt was made at the Ciudad estate, where I was told the column would remain until further orders. Colonel Sostrada, accompanied by the adjutant, rode to St. Luis to communicate with the General by telegraph, and returned in a few hours with news that the battalion would remain stationary until further orders. Colonel Sostrada told me that I was

AT LIBERTY TO REMAIN OR TO RETURN to Santiago de Cuba. This surprised me, as I had not spoken a word about leaving. I told him that I had come out to make the expedition with the battalion, and was inclined to remain until it was ended if my presence was not inconvenient. He replied that the officers of the battalion would be delighted to have me remain. There was no definite reason given for the sudden abandonment of the expedition, and as I considered the subject a delicate one I did not make any pressing inquiries. It afterwards became known, however, that as soon as the battalion marched north a portion of the insurgents marched south and others appeared threatening the plantations. In view of these movements the battalion was ordered back

TO PROTECT THE HARVEST. Since it appeared the battalion would not move I determined to return to Santiago de Cuba. A letter had been sent by Colonel Sostrada to me to the General, but no reply was received to it. The general opinion being that the column would remain stationary for some time, I decided on returning. On taking leave of the officers Colonel Sostrada expressed the regret of himself and the other officers that I should be obliged to leave so soon. He seemed to be very anxious lest I should go away with the impression that the column had retrograded from fear of the enemy, or that there was any force in front capable of barring the passage of the battalion. When I assured him that I did not entertain this opinion, and that I comprehended that the return was due to

SOME CHANGE OF PLAN on the part of the General, he replied:—"I know you are too polite to express such an opinion, but I fear that such has been the impression made on your mind by the sudden return of the troops." I again assured him that I believed the retiring of the column was due to the exigencies of the war, and that I was perfectly convinced that the battalion would go wherever it was ordered. He evidently felt only half-satisfied, and was as much annoyed as I was at the unexpected termination of the expedition. I then took leave of the officers, whom I was really very sorry to quit. During my stay with them I had been the object of unceasing attention. Nothing that could add to my comfort was neglected, and I was treated more like a spoiled child than the special correspondent of a paper which is assumed to be hostile to Spanish rule in the Antilles. Commandant Lopes, one of the most distinguished officers of the battalion, accompanied me to Santiago de Cuba. We rode from the encampment at Ciudad to the station of Christo—a distance of five long leagues—without any guard. The surprise was a little, as the district is very wild and mountainous, and at times we rode through the brush for miles without meeting any living thing. We passed many a point where one cool old shotgun and a taste for hedge shooting,

could have disposed of both of us before we could have pulled rein, but fortunately we arrived at the station of Christo without encountering any enterprising nabobs. From this point we travelled by the railroad on a hand car worked by two negroes to Santiago de Cuba. The work was not difficult, for after the first few hundred yards we were on an inclined plane, and our only trouble was to keep the drag on so that the car would not rush down with dangerous velocity. The evening of my arrival I presented myself at the palace. General Morales was absent, but the chief of staff expressed regret at the termination of the expedition, but promised that I should be notified as soon as the next column was sent to Cuba. Of these there remain to-day some 20,000 men.

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