

CESPEDES.

The Herald's Secret Commissioner in the Cuban President's Camp.

CUBA LIBRE MILITANT.

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At the time of my leaving Santiago de Cuba for the insurgent lines it was believed by friends there that Cespedes was in the camp of Calixto Garcia, or at least a few miles from there. Hence it was a great disappointment to find, upon my arrival, that he had left some time before for the district of Bayamo, and it being his custom to stay but a few days in each halting ground, it was impossible to say at all times where he could be found. The officers, and even the soldiers, nearly always knew that the President was in a certain part of a certain district, but not the precise locality. This circumstance arose from the distance between Garcia's camp and that of Cespedes, and did not originate in a desire or attempt to conceal the movements of the Executive. For instance, in Gu, where I saw Cespedes, his camp was at a distance of about three leagues from the general headquarters of Modesto Diaz, and every soldier, or camp follower for that part of it, knew very well just where the President was.

on the road, one would naturally expect that some preparations would be made for taking food along with the party; but the Cubans seldom think of such material matters, and on the present occasion, if the commissary department was not altogether neglected, our route lay for a short distance along the north bank of the Cauto. We passed, intact, Calvar's camp, which was abandoned on the 23d of March. The little huts were undisturbed as when we left them, but the silence and loneliness that reigned around in that calm, quiet evening struck a sad and melancholy feeling to the penitent heart, as though we were traversing the deserted streets of a CITY OF THE DEAD.

About an hour's travel east of the Dos Bocas, and of the junction of the Cauto and Contramaestra Rivers, we passed the former stream for the last time. My servant carried me across on his back. We were now on the borders of Jiguani and Santiago, but soon took leave of the latter district and entered definitely the territory of the former.

Night soon overtook us, but as there was a glorious moon, whose silvery light sometimes penetrated the depths of the forest, we determined to continue the march by the additional light of crude wax candles, of which there were a few among us. This determination became all the more imperative from the fact that day.

THE SPANISHS, was reported near the abandoned camp of Dos Rica, though which we must pass. This place we entered after having reconnoitered it, after ten o'clock at night. It had been a large, square camp, evidently constructed with care. We found it burned to the ground, a deserted and desolate mass of cinders and ashes. A few weeks ago it afforded quarters to 300 Cubans, but was abandoned by them and burned during the late operations by the Spaniards. We intended reaching El Salado, about twenty-five miles south of the La Yaya, but, having to make a long march on the morrow, deemed it best to

Striking, therefore, on the trail, we cut away about two hundred yards into the masses of the forest, and, clearing a space, hammocks were slung and a fire lighted. General Garcia had sent to my servant before starting several strings of dried beef and some sweet potatoes, a present to himself from Colonel Sanchez. This enabled the officers and myself to have a splendid meal, after which we slept as soundly as tops, forgetting the probable proximity of the Spaniards and the consequent dangers that surrounded us. The ensuing morning we were on the road at half-past five o'clock, and reached El Salado near nine. At one time there had been families and homes in the Salado, but they were things of the past; they had been swept into nothingness by the tide of war, and now the name merely signified a locality. But there was a Sub-Prefecture established in the woods near here, that only our guide could find.

is a personage of the utmost importance in Cuba. Without him nothing can be done, the setting out on a march, the changing of a camp, the movement and route of the troops—all must depend on the guide. Without him, not knowing the miraculously intricate windings of the paths and trails of Cuba Libre, one might as well sit down in despair on the road. From point to point he is changed, and the guide of to-day delivers the party he has charge of into the hands of another to-morrow, and returns to his post. Our guide here, after some beating about in the woods, found the Sub-Prefect, who was to guide us in the afternoon.

We had a long march to make, in order to reach the "Camino Real de la Isla"—the high road of the island—and leave it behind as far as possible. It was one of the most dangerous crossings on the march and had to be approached with silence and caution; for it is constantly patrolled by the Spaniards, who had a series of detachments planted along it.

TO CLIMB THE LINE OF TELEGRAPH constantly threatened and frequently cut by the Cubans. One o'clock P. M. saw us upon the road, through an open savannah among the tall guinea grass that reflected with terrible force the vertical rays of a tropical sun.

Passing along again under the cool arcade of this sheltering woods and along towards the high road, at an angle in the trail, suddenly the soldier we had in advance shouted

"HALT! WHO COMES THERE?" and brought his piece to the ready. His movement was quickly imitated by the others, who quickly put themselves in a posture of defence, thinking that the enemy were upon us. The party challenged also prepared for fight, and responded with the glad words,

"CUBA LIBRE!" The parties remained in this attitude while their respective corporals advanced towards each other to satisfy themselves that all was right, and in a few minutes were mixing with each other in the most fraternal way. The new comers were a small detachment escorting a courier with correspondence from Cespedes and from Modesto Diaz to Calixto Garcia. They were under command of a negro lieutenant, and had been eleven days on the road from the seat of government, near Zarzal. They confirmed the truth of the report that the volunteers of Fort Calisto and Congo had passed over to the Cubans, with their arms and ammunition, &c., bringing with them as prisoner their commander, a Spanish major.

CROSSING THE HIGH ROAD. Approaching the high road, the guide and two men were sent forward to reconnoiter. The road just then was clear, as it happened, and we passed without any adventure. It was picturesque, doubtless, the manner of our crossing. The road ran broad and grass-grown, between forests far extending on either side; our trail crossing it obliquely, was faintly marked, so as hardly to be perceived. We crossed rapidly, following each other in single file, each man with his arms prepared for instant action. On the roadside, opposite to our entrance, separated by the trail, the Corporal and a soldier were in a kneeling position, one behind a little bush and the other in the clear space, still as statues of stone, with rifles prepared in the attitude of breathless watchfulness, scanning the road in different directions, while we slipped through between them, they closing up the rear when we had passed. We plunged into the forest with a speed that threatened danger can only impart, and rapidly put leagues between us and the "Camino Real de la Isla," or high road. After nightfall

direction of Jiguani town, on the right, and on the left into a system of high mountains and deep ravines, whose sunlit faces and shady sides were here and there scarred and furrowed by the increasing clearings of the numerous Cuban families who had sought refuge in these fastnesses. These people were

MAKING THE WILDERNESS BLOOM with rich crops in places where the Spanish soldiery never set foot; places whose approaches and whose only means of access were to the Cubans, but whose rapid and unobtrusive resources would enable the patriots to maintain unfurled the banner of Cuban autonomy.

THE SPANISHS OF THE WAR. APRIL 8.—We reached the headquarters of Colonel Benjamin Ramirez, commanding the sub-district of South Jiguani. This officer is intelligent and energetic. He has been two years in the clearing (or *instancias*) where we found him. He has caused his men and the many families living in his district to cultivate clearings as he has done. They have cheerfully followed his good example. The result is that the mountain sides are fertile to the very tops and blooming with flourishing crops of sweet potatoes, yuca, corn and tobacco, and families formerly starving, whom the vengeance of Valmasoda drove into these arid desert places, are now in a position to not only hear Arrayon, but to lend some aid to their fellow patriots in the field. This system of cultivation receives the protection of the Cuban government, and is gradually extending itself into the other districts where it is practicable. When, in addition to this means of support, it is considered that the Cuban forces endeavor to live as much as possible by foraging from their enemies, it will be readily understood how they have been able to keep the field for nearly five years, and why their means of attack and chances of success are

EVERY DAY BETTERING. Ramirez has established a powder factory. He showed me some of the grains. It certainly was not of the finest quality, but answered pretty well in case of emergency. For this purpose he had a lot of men engaged in extracting saltpetre from guano, found in large quantities in the caves of certain localities. It was this officer who escorted Mr. O'Kelly from the camp of Calixto Garcia to the near Arrayon, where he met Cespedes. The next day two leagues' travel over terrible mountains brought us to the house of Palenque, at the foot of the mountain known as the Giant, and said by those who live nearby to be next to Turquin, the highest mountain in Cuba.

APRIL 10.—We left Palenque at six o'clock A. M. and soon reached the foot of the Giant. Before starting I had a slim breakfast on CHOCOLATE AND COLD ROASTED SWEET POTATOES. At nine o'clock we reached the River Guisa. Here we had a rest, and the guide went and found some wild honey, upon which I fed sumptuously. Passing around the feet of the terrible Giant, over his forest-covered legs, up his rock-bound, rugged sides, mounting his pine-clad chest, wearing a turban of his tangled beard, and showing with perspiration and panting for breath, now struggling with hand and foot—fighting the monster "tooth and nail" as it were—until at last, fainting with fatigue, but triumphant with success, we planted our aching feet upon

THE GIANT'S FORECASTLE HEAD. Near the summit of the Giant, through openings between the branches of the tall trees, some of which looked like shrubs in the distant depths of the abyss beneath our feet, the several towns and cities of Bayamo, Holguin, Jiguani, Guisa and even Tunas, were pointed out in the great valley below that spread out before us like a bird's-eye view of a whole kingdom. It took us a struggle of five long hours to successfully wrestle with this colossal mountain. Even at the summit of the Giant an elevation that was not less than six thousand feet—the character of the trees, plants and shrubs seemed to differ but little from that of the vegetation found in the valleys below. And even almost so high as the head peak of the Giant I have been told that crops of all kinds raised on the island could be cultivated. A good way down the western side of the Giant I observed a large clump of pine trees, which I had rather expected to see at the top of the mountain. Both the ascent and descent are extremely difficult and toilsome. In the afternoon we reached the Guama River and camped at a rancho in a secluded and picturesque spot on its eastern bank.

THE NEXT DAY'S MARCH, from Ceboilla Blanco to Hormas, on the Guama River, was not less interesting or picturesque than the journey of the day before. Our line of march lay down

THE BED OF THE GUAMA RIVER, over such rocky angles and boulder-blocked passes as only those who have seen California or the Rocky Mountains could imagine. We had to leap and spring over pointed rocks and slippery stones, swing ourselves over deep chasms and leap swift torrents, in a fashion that would be no disgrace to an acrobat. My stout New York gaiters, although heavy and wearisome—they were the only boots in the party—had protected my feet well along the road. This had been noticed by an envious young Imp of a negro soldier, who saw me slipping and struggling over the abrupt rocks, when he showed his ivory tusks in a broad grin, maliciously exclaiming, "Ah, *hoy*, *señor*, *señor* los zapatos no talen." "Ah, *hoy*, *señor*, *señor* no uss here, sir."

But I paid the wretch off in the afternoon, for when he slipped from a mossy stone and plumped into the pool beyond, I exclaimed, "Ah, *hoy*, *mi amigo*, *no descastas aqui no calen."* (My friend, barefooted people are no use here.) He good naturedly joined his companions in the laugh that was against him.

ON THE NIGHT BEFORE WE HAD THE HEAD OF THE PALM-TREE TOP FOR SUPPER. This morning a little piece more of it and a drink of water for breakfast. About the middle of the day we came across a sweet orange tree loaded with its yellow, luscious fruit, nodding to the breeze, that would have set crazy the caterer of Delmonico. In a trice the fruit and the branches bearing it were cut from the mother trunk and devoured with avidity.

Arriving at Hormas there was no guide to take us on to Corajo, and there was a prospect of being detained on that account, perhaps, ten or fifteen days. The next morning a messenger was sent back to Ceboilla Blanco to try and get a guide there. On the way the important person sought for was met and brought back to camp in triumph. He gave us fresh news of the whereabouts of Cespedes, saying that the President was

passing this point, and two or three little ravines and intervening hills, we took a newly cleared path in the direction of the mountains. Proceeding along this trail for a mile or two we came upon the advanced guard of

THE PRESIDENT'S ESCORT. We were received with much military precision and conducted to the hut of Lieutenant Colonel Ismael Cespedes, nephew of the President, and commander of his escort. This officer received me very cordially. His hut and those of the escort were near the part of the camp where we entered. I was now conducted for about two hundred yards along the pathway, on either side of which were, at intervals, a few huts, there being six or eight of them in a cluster at the very head of the pathway, beyond which there was no road or trail—nothing but the unbroken depths of the forest. There was one hut at the top of all, nearest the unbroken forest; not much bigger or better constructed than the others. It was the Executive palace and mansion house of

CARLOS MANUEL DE CESPEDES, President of the Republic. An officer who speaks English, mentions my name, motions me to step forward, saying in English, "MR. HILLER," and I am face to face with the famous Cuban, who bows very graciously, gives me a cordial and warm shake of the hand, saying he was glad to see me—an expression of good will for which the HERALD correspondent thanked him, saying that the feeling was mutual in the extreme.

Cespedes is fifty-four years old, about five feet six inches in height, slight of build and spare of flesh. His complexion is light for a Cuban; his hair dark, mixed with gray. There is a small bald spot on the upper back part of the head. He wears his hair of medium length, very smoothly and neatly kept. He has a high and well developed forehead, features regular, with nose rather sharp, and has a splendid set of teeth. The firmness of the mouth is partly concealed by thick, long, flowing iron-gray beard and mustache. The cheeks are shaven to the point of the jaws; eyes small, bright, and keen, of a decidedly grayish-blue color. He is a lawyer—having been educated for the Bar in Spain—gentlemanly, polite and impressive of address, and a native of Bayamo. He is careful of speech and converses with deliberation and sententiousness. When I saw him in his rancho he was attired in a suit of straw-colored linen—pantaloons, vest and sack. He had on a light-colored pepper-and-salt cap; wore a black watch guard, but no appearance of other jewelry. He wore patent leather leggings, sitting down closely over a well shaped foot. His hands are small and rather bony. He impressed me as

A SHERIFF MAN, WELL BREED AND WELL READ. I have been, perhaps, needlessly minute in describing the person and appearance of Mr. Cespedes. My reason for doing so is that his identity has been questioned, and I have tried to draw his portrait so that his friends cannot fail of recognizing the likeness. We entered the Presidential hut. Cespedes sat in his hammock while I was seated on a little seat made of small sticks placed horizontally together over a frame formed by driving four forked stakes of the required length into the ground, laying transversal pieces across these and horizontal ones over them, binding the whole with majagua bark. A little table for all uses, so to say, at my elbow, was made in the same way and had a similar seat on the opposite side. The hammock is slung on the west side of the rancho; the table and seats are on the opposite side. At the foot and head of the hammock are several small tables, mostly containing papers and documents. A revolver, in a plain cover, attached to a gold-embossed belt, hung within reach over the hammock.

THE INTERVIEW. CESPEDES—Mr. O'Kelly has been here and gone. The Spaniards have him a prisoner in Manzanillo. We did not expect to see another HERALD Commissioner so soon.

CORRESPONDENT—I am very sorry for my friend O'Kelly, and hope he will soon be released. Should he not, it will be my duty also to present myself. As to my presence here, I presume that the HERALD was determined to throw

LIGHT AT ALL HAZARDS on the Cuban question, and thought it would be more difficult for two correspondents to be silenced than one, and that if one failed reaching your camp the other would succeed.

The President here asked me some questions as to how I managed to escape the vigilance of the Spaniards, or if they knew of my coming to the Cuban camps. He also referred to the case of Mr. Henderson; said that gentleman had given a report flattering to the Cubans, but regretted that he had injured its usefulness by stating

WHAT WAS NOT TRUE. Mr. Henderson undoubtedly saw Agramonte and some of the Camagney cavalry, but he had not seen him (Cespedes), for at the time of the visit he was in the direction of Barajagua with Calixto Garcia, a distance of fifteen days' march to that part of Camagney where Agramonte then was, not including the time requisite for a courier to advise the President of Henderson's presence.

While on this subject I may as well state that the Secretary of War, by order of Cespedes, allowed me to copy

THE REPORT GIVEN BY GENERAL AGRAMONTE to the President by Mr. Henderson's visit to Puerto Principe. Cespedes then said that he could not see what was to be gained by my putting my head in the trap as well as Mr. O'Kelly; that it would be better for me to go to Jamaica, to which he thought I could be sent in a few days, as there was a boat already on the coast. Besides, Mr. O'Kelly would doubtless be released in a few days, as the Spaniards could do nothing to him. He had acted openly, and they knew what he was going to do. With me it was different, for as I had not revealed to the Spaniards the nature of my mission, if caught, they might construe with severity against me the rigorous spirit of military law. I said that there was another question at stake, to test which I would willingly risk a good deal; that was, the amount of protection that

THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN RESPECTIVELY accord to their citizens and subjects. It was therefore agreed that in case of Mr. O'Kelly's speedy release I should go to Jamaica, but if he continued a prisoner, with the probability of being tried, then I should go and

PRESENT MYSELF TO THE SPANIARDS in Manzanillo. CORRESPONDENT—Do you think, Mr. President, that it is possible that any pacific arrangements could be entered into between the Spaniards and the Cubans, so as to put an end to this war? CESPEDES—No arrangements can be entered into with the Spaniards so long as they pretend to rule the island. INDEPENDENCE OR DEATH IS THE ULTIMATUM OF THE CUBANS. CORRESPONDENT—But at least some understanding might be arrived at for the purpose of softening the rigors of the war and conducting it on a footing more in conformity with the usages of modern warfare. CESPEDES—I regret that the Spaniards, by committing outrages on women and children and non-combatants, have raised the black flag, and created the present atrocious condition of a

WAR WITHOUT QUARTERS. The Cubans have frequently made overtures for the purpose of conducting the war on a more humane footing, but the Spaniards, saying that we are only so many banditti, have refused to entertain any propositions from us.

CORRESPONDENT—Have you any idea, Mr. President, that the war will soon come to a close? Do you still believe that the Cubans will triumph? CESPEDES—We are now going on to five years engaged in this struggle, and it can terminate only with Cuban independence or Cuban annihilation. When the end will be it is impossible to say. The Spaniards believe that

IF I WERE DEAD THE WAR WOULD CEASE, and they have sent no less than six different parties from Havana to assassinate me. Some of those parties have never been heard of since sent out, others have died and one was discovered by Quesada, in Camagney, and put to death after confessing the whole plan. The Spaniards are mistaken; the continuance of the war does not depend on my existence. Were I dead to-morrow the struggle would go on all the same. Some one would be elected to fill my place. The idea we contend for can never die. One Cuban never asked

another, "Shall we win?" They never doubt that. But the question was frequently asked by officers and men, "How long will the war last—what time must elapse before we triumph?"

BEYOND INDEPENDENCE. CORRESPONDENT—Could not some diplomatic arrangement be entered into by which the Cubans would agree to pay an indemnity to the Spaniards provided the latter would evacuate the island? CESPEDES—Overtures of that nature were made. General Sikes intimated in Madrid that \$100,000,000 payable in twenty years, would probably be given by the Spaniards, without further blood, consented to recognize the independence of the island and leave the public buildings, fortresses, arsenals, &c., in the position in which they might be found at the time of the treaty. It was also intimated that, if necessary, the United States would guarantee the payment of the

INDEMNITY. But nothing had come of this proposition. Since then a good while has elapsed, the phase of the war has entirely changed, and while I have no doubt but the Cubans will still allow

A HANSOME INDEMNITY TO SPAIN if she would consent to put an end to a war that in the end must prove disastrous to her; yet not so large a sum could now be given as that formerly offered. The island is now in a far worse condition than when property continued to be destroyed and the material wealth of the country is passing away. This lessens the resources of the Cubans, makes it more difficult to pay a large sum and lessens the value of the consideration for which they would pay it. I think sixty-five or seventy millions of dollars would be the probable sum we could now offer as indemnity for the close of the war.

DESERPTIONS TO CUBA LIBRE. While at this part of the interview the President received news that several families and seven armed volunteers had presented themselves in the camp of General Diaz.

CORRESPONDENT—A good deal has been said on the subject of annexation. I would like, Mr. President, to report your views on this important matter to the HERALD for the information of the American people. CESPEDES—At the outbreak of the war there was undoubtedly a grand majority of the people in favor of the annexation of the island to the United States. I was never a great supporter of the measure and never opposed it; but I am only among so many hundreds of thousands. The people and the army at one time had a grand demonstration in Camagney for the purpose of ventilating

THE ANNEXATION DOCTRINE. Resolutions were passed endorsing it and sent to the Chamber of Deputies, then and there in session. The Chamber, unanimously adopted the resolution in favor of annexation. The paper, which immediately received a thousand or more signatures of the people, was sent to New York to be forwarded to Washington, but its receipt by the State Department there has never been acknowledged. This slight, together with the fact of the American government, so far from granting belligerent rights to Cuba, had put themselves on the side of the Spaniards, had to a great extent

COOLED THE ANNEXATION ARBOR of the Cubans, who now entertain no thought but that of beating the Spaniards. These once expelled from the island, then, if the people choose to become a part of the United States, their will is supreme and I would not only not oppose it, but give the measure my support as one of convenience for the future of the island. The Cubans are of

A PACIFIC DISPOSITION AND EARLY GOVERNED. Their past history and every day of the present struggle proves this. It is possible, therefore, that we could be able to sustain a government of our own, which of course would be preferable to annexation even with the United States. The Cubans justly feel aggrieved at the policy which Mr. Plan is observing towards us. At the commencement of the revolution the Spaniards were allowed to build thirty gunboats in New York, and also to supply themselves with arms and ammunition, while the Cubans were excluded from either of these privileges. Even Remington was forced to break his contract with the Cubans because it was an infernal infringement of neutrality. Also President Grant, in one of his annual messages to Congress, inadvertently rather bluntly on

OUR INABILITY TO MEET THE SPANIARDS IN THE FIELD, and characterized us as a fugitive mob flying from place to place, or something of the kind. The policy adopted in Washington is not neutrality; it is absolutely taking part with the Spaniards. The case of the Pioneer was conspicuously one wherein the authorities of the United States did the greatest injustice to us.

A STRONG STATEMENT. Some officers and crew of that ship either served the Cubans or they were pirates. If the former, and their national banner was not yet recognized by the United States, all that that power could do would be to warn the ship of the coast and compel her to keep clear of American waters, as the English in Nassau did with the *Lilian*; but if pirates, then all the hands found on board should have been executed as common criminals. In neither case were the United States entitled to libel the ship and sell her as a prize. It was clearly the reason of superior force that enabled them to do it. Still, notwithstanding these grave reasons for complaint, we

LOOK WITH ANXIOUS EYES TO AMERICA, to the great representative nation of our Continent, for recognition and support. We know that the warm sympathies of the American people are with us; but that strange policy of General Grant's government is execrable, inexplicable, unjustifiable and a wrong to the Cuban people, who entertain so much sympathy and good will toward the great country of Washington and of Lincoln. It would be extremely injudicious at this moment to revive the question of annexation at a time when nobody thought of aught else but conquering the independence of the island. It would at this particular juncture

PROVE A FIREBRAND to distract and weaken the Cuban efforts against the common enemy. BELLIGERENT RIGHTS. CORRESPONDENT—The Cubans, I believe, expected a recognition of belligerency by the United States. CESPEDES—We fully expected to be recognized as belligerents by the Americans. We are an American people, fighting for freedom and emancipation—those are principles for which the people of the United States have sacrificed so much. A number of lukewarm patriots joined us because they were sure the United States would promptly step in to our aid. Seeing their hopes not realized and

NOT POSSESSING THE STAMINA to go through the hardships of a war of independence, they either presented themselves to the Spaniards or fled to foreign parts, where they are now living. But the cooperation of this class of people does not amount to anything; they can be readily whittled back on the first slight turn of fortune.

A CONFEDERATION SCHEME. CORRESPONDENT—I heard something in General Garcia's camp in connection with a scheme for forming a confederation of the Antilles. CESPEDES—Yes, such a scheme was at one time mooted, but the plan terminated in smoke. The idea was to form a Power under the style of the Confederation of the Antilles, composed of Cuba, St. Domingo and Hayti, Porto Rico and Jamaica. The English, who at first favored our cause, it seems, would have sacrificed Jamaica in order to COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN IDEAS in the West Indies by the formation of this new nation at the very door of the United States.

THE ARMED SITUATION. CORRESPONDENT—I would like, Mr. President, to be able to report something about the military situation of the Cubans. CESPEDES—The Spaniards say that we have no military organization, and are willing to the facts that all the grades among the officers are well recognized and respected among themselves and by the men throughout the forces; that there exists among us both subordination and order, and that each class

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