

MISERY AND DISTRESS.

Senator Proctor's Statement In Congress About Cuba.

He Gives an Interesting Account of His Non-Official Trips Over the Island.—Mis- erable Condition of the Naturally Fertile Country.

Quite recently Senator Proctor of the U. S. visited Cuba. On his return he submitted to Congress, the result of his impressions. Among other things he said:—

There are six provinces in Cuba, each, with the exception of Matanzas, extending the whole width of the island. My observations were confined to the four western provinces, which constitute about one-half the island. The two eastern ones are practically in the hands of the insurgents, except the few fortified towns. These two large towns are spoken of today as "Cuba Libre."

Havana, the great city and capital of the island, is, in the eyes of the Spaniards and many Cubans, all Cuba, as much as Paris is France. But, having visited it in peaceful times, and seen its sights, the tomb of Columbus, the forts, Cabanas and Morro Castle, etc., I did not care to repeat this, preferring trips in the country. Everything seems to go on as usual in Havana.

Outside Havana all is changed. It is not peace, nor is it war; it is desolation and distress, misery and starvation. Every town and village is surrounded by a trocha (trench) a sort of rifle pit, dirt being thrown up on the inside and a barbed wire fence on the outer side. These outer trochas have at every corner and at frequent intervals along the sides what are there called forts, but which are really small blockhouses, loopholed for musketry and with a guard of from two to ten soldiers in each. The purpose of these trochas is to keep the reconcentrados in as well as to keep the insurgents out.

From all the surrounding country the people have been driven into these fortified towns, where they subsist as they can. They are virtually prison yards, and not unlike one in general appearance. Every railroad station is within one of these trochas, and as an armed guard. Every train has an armored freight car, loopholed for musketry and filled with soldiers and with, as I observed usually, and was informed is always the case, a pilot engine a mile or so in advance.

There are frequent blockhouses, inclosed by trochas and with a guard, along the railroad track. With this exception, there is no human life or habitation between these fortified towns and villages, and throughout the whole of the western provinces—except to a very limited extent among the hills, where the Spaniards have not been able to go and drive the people to the towns and burn their dwellings—I saw no house or hut in the 400 miles of railroad rides from Pinar del Rio province in the west across the full width of Havana and Matanzas provinces, and to Sagua la Grande on the north shore and to Cienfuegos on the south shore of Santa Clara, except within the Spanish trochas. There are no domestic animals or crops on the rich fields and pastures. In other words, the Spaniards hold in these four western provinces just what their army sits on. To repeat, it is neither peace nor war—it is concentration and desolation. This is the "pacified" condition of the four western provinces.

West of Havana is mainly the rich tobacco country; east, so far as I went, a sugar region. Nearly all the sugar mills are destroyed between Havana and Sagua. Toward and near Cienfuegos there were more mills running, but all protected by trochas and guards. It is said that the owners of these mills near Cienfuegos have been able to obtain special favors of the Spanish government in the way of a large force of soldiers, but that they also, as well as all the railroads, pay taxes to the Cubans for immunity. I had no means of verifying this. It is the common talk among those who have better means of knowledge.

All the country people in the four western provinces, about 400,000 in number, remaining outside the fortified towns when Weyler's order was made, were driven into these towns, and these are the reconcentrados. They were the peasantry, many of them farmers, some land owners, others renting lands and owning more or less stock, others working on estates and cultivating small patches, and even a small patch in that fruitful clime will support a family. It is but fair to say that the normal condition of these people was very different from that which prevails in this country. Their standard of comfort and prosperity was not high, measured by our own. But according to their standards and requirements their conditions of life were satisfactory. The first clause of Weyler's order reads as follows:

I order and command, first, all the inhabitants of the country, or outside of the line of fortifications of the towns, shall, within the period of eight days, concentrate themselves in the towns occupied by the troops. Any individual who, after the expiration of this period, is found in the uninhabited parts will be considered as a rebel and tried as such.

The other three sections forbade the trans-

portations of provisions from one town to another without permission of the military authorities; directed the owners of cattle to bring them into the towns; prescribed that the eight days shall be counted from the publication of the proclamation in the head town of the municipal district, and state that if news is furnished of the enemy which can be made use of it will serve as a recommendation.

Many, doubtless, did not learn of this order. Others failed to grasp its terrible meaning. Its execution was left largely to the guerillas to drive in all that had not obeyed, and I was informed that in many cases a torch was applied to their homes with no notice, and that the inmates fled with such clothing as they might have on, their stock and other belongings being appropriated by the guerillas.

When they reached the town they were allowed to build huts of palm leaves in the suburbs and vacant places within the trochas, and left to live if they could. Their huts are about 10 by 15 feet in size, and, for want of space, are usually crowded together very closely. They have no floor but the ground, no furniture, and, after a year's wear, but little clothing, except such stray substitutes as they can extemporize, and with large families, or with more than one, in this little space. The commonest sanitary provisions are impossible. Conditions are unmentionable in this respect. Torn from their homes with foul earth, foul air, foul water and foul food, or none, what wonder that one-half have died, and that one-quarter of the living are so diseased that they cannot be saved? A form of dropsy is a common disorder, resulting from these conditions. Little children are seen walking about with arms and chests terribly emaciated, eyes swollen and abdomen bloated to three times the natural size. The physicians say these cases are hopeless. Deaths in the streets have not been uncommon. I was told by one of our consultants that they have been found dead about the markets in the morning where they had crawled hoping to get some stray bits of food from the early hucksters, and there had been cases where they had dropped dead inside the markets, surrounded by food.

These people were independent and self-supporting before Weyler's order. They are not beggars, even now. There are plenty of professional beggars in every town among the regular residents, but these country people, the reconcentrados, have not learned the art. Rarely is a hand held out to you for alms when going among their huts, but the sight of them makes an appeal stronger than words. It is said there are about 60,000 Spanish soldiers now in Cuba fit for duty, out of the over 200,000 that have been sent there. The rest have died, been sent home sick, or are in the hospitals, and some have been killed, notwithstanding the official reports. They are conscripts, many of them very young, and generally small men. One hundred and thirty pounds is a fair estimate of their average weight. They, I believe, would fight fairly well, but not at all equal to our men. Much more would depend on the leadership than with us. I saw perhaps 10,000 Spanish troops, but not a piece of artillery nor a tent. They live in barracks in the towns, and are seldom out for more than a day, returning to town at night.

They have little or no equipment for supply trains or for field campaign, such as we have. Their cavalry horses are scrubby little native ponies, weighing not over 800 pounds, tough and hardy, but for the most part in wretched condition. Some of the officers, however, have good horses. On both sides cavalry is considered the favorite and the dangerous fighting arm.

The tactics of the Spanish, as described to me by an eye witness and participant in some of their battles, is for the infantry, when threatened by insurgent cavalry, to form a hollow square and fire at will and without ceasing until time to march back to town. The Cubans are well armed, but very poorly supplied with ammunition. They are not allowed to carry many cartridges, sometimes not more than one or two. The infantry, especially, are poorly clad. Two small squads of prisoners which I saw, however, one of half a dozen in the streets of Havana, and one of three on the cars, wore better clothes than the average Spanish soldiers. Each of these prisoners, though surrounded by guards, was bound by the arms and wrists by cords, and they were all tied together by a cord running along the line, a specimen of the amenities of the warfare.

About one-third of the Cuban army are colored, mostly in the infantry, as the cavalry furnish their horses. The field officer, an American from a southern state, spoke in the highest terms of these colored soldiers, that they were as good fighters, and had more endurance than the whites, and could keep up with the cavalry on a long march. The dividing lines between parties are the most straight and clear cut that have ever come to my knowledge. It is Cuban against Spaniard. It is practically the entire Cuban population on one side and the Spanish army and Spanish citizens on the other. I do not count the autonomists in this division, as they are so far too inconsiderable in numbers to be worth counting. Gen. Blanco filled the civil offices with men who had been

autonomists and were still classed as such. But the march of events had satisfied most of them that the chance for autonomy came too late. It falls as talk of compromise would have fallen in the last year or two of our war. If it stands, it can only be by an armed force; but triumph of the Spanish army and the success of the Spanish arms would be easier by Weyler's policy and method, for in that the Spanish army and people believe. The army and the Spanish citizens do not want genuine autonomy, for that means government by the Cuban people. And it is not strange that the Cubans say it comes too late. I inquired in regard to autonomy of men of wealth and men as prominent in business as any in the cities of Havana, Matanzas and Sagua, bankers, merchants, lawyers and autonomists officials, some of them Spanish born but Cuban bred, one prominent Englishman, several of them known as autonomists and several of them telling me they were still believers in autonomy if practicable, but, without exception, they all replied that it was "too late" for that.

Some favored a United States protectorate, some annexation, some free Cuba. Not one has been counted favoring the insurrection at first. They were business men, and wanted peace, but said it was too late for peace under Spanish sovereignty. They characterized Weyler's order in far stronger terms than I can. I could not but conclude that you do not have to scratch an autonomist very deep to find a Spaniard.

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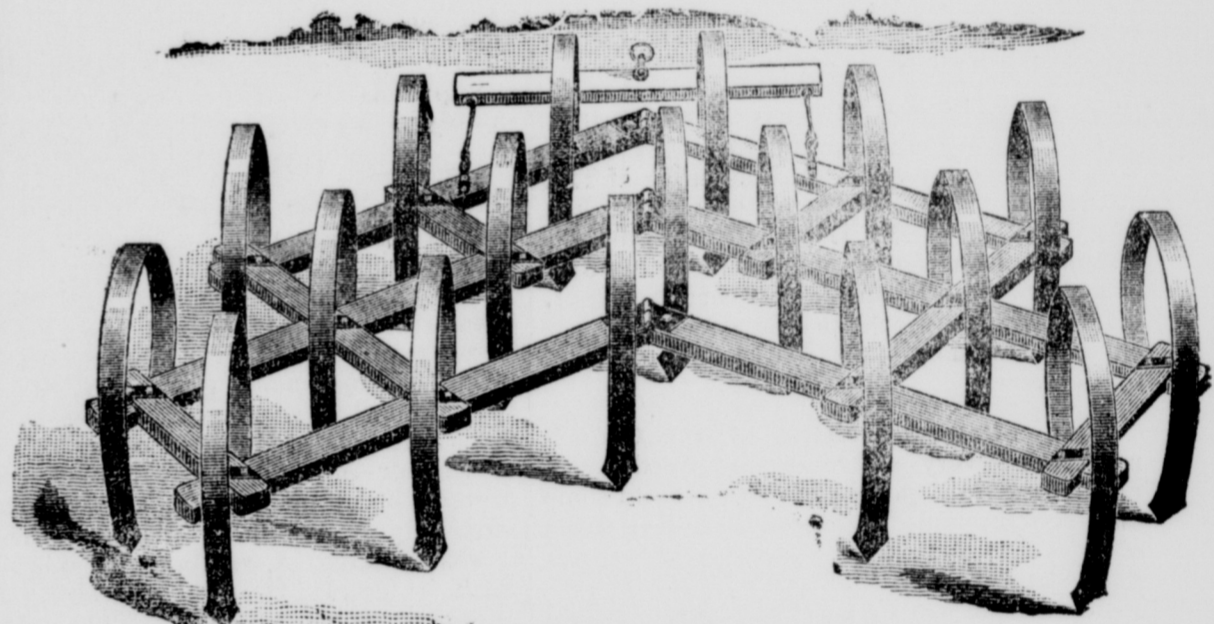
PETERBORO, ONT., Canada, Oct. 13, 1877. "I was foreman in the lumber shanty when I was taken sick, and being anxious about the work, I exposed myself greatly, caught a severe cold, and after recovering took a heavy relapse, which terminated in inflammation of the lungs. The doctors all gave me up. One of the most prominent said it was impossible for me to get cured, or even get better, and all that any one could do for me was to give me something to ease me the little while I could live, and had me make my will. The 23d of January, 1873, I took my bed in Peterboro, and on the last of the following August, I was drawn homely on a bed, and three doctors gave me up after I came home. An abscess formed at the bottom of my left lung and discharged outwardly from that time until May, 1876. At the time I got your medicine, it was getting worse every day. Every one thought, and so did I, that death alone would end my misery. I commenced using CANNABISS SATIVA the first of February, 1876, and after using three or four packages of the Remedy, the discharge was checked, and I was able to get out of bed alone for the first time in more than three years and three months.

"For from the 23d of January, 1873, to the 15th of May, 1876, I never was able to get in or out of bed once alone, nor never lay ten minutes off my back, nor never was out of bed one-half day at a time, and spent upwards of \$1,400 without much if any benefit, and I only used a few cents over \$20 for your medicine till I was well.

"It is now exactly eleven months since I left my bed, and I am smart and healthy, and without pain or ache, or any symptoms of the disease. For the past six months I have been able to make a good living for myself. Last fall I cradled and drew in grain." ROBERT A. HAMILTON, Sept., 1877.—Mr. Hamilton's health still remains good.

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