

SIDELIGHTS ON CUBA.

A Returned Victorian Tells Something of the Conditions of That Unhappy Island.

Cienfuegos District Has Suffered Less Than Other Portions From Famine and Fighting.

Some interesting sidelights on the condition of affairs in Cuba are given by Mr. J. N. G. Williams, brother of Major Ben Williams, who has just arrived in town. Mr. Williams has for some years past been manager of one of the biggest plantations in Cuba. It is situated in the Cienfuegos district, some 15 miles from the city of that name. Mr. Williams stayed on the place and superintended its affairs until after the declaration of war, when the Spanish authorities intimated that he and his family had better leave the island, a piece of advice which he naturally took.

In spite of the stories that the whole of Cuba is a ravaged waste, Mr. Williams states that in the Cienfuegos district they were very little troubled by the insurgents and all the plantations had worked away there and crushed their cane, the crop for this season being 250,000 tons altogether, and really larger than last year.

Referring to the news now being received from Santiago, Mr. Williams said that the guns the Spaniards had mounted on the defences there were not powerful, most of them being smooth bores, unless, of course, the defences there had been more than changed lately in the defences. At the mouth of the harbor the passage was 600 yards wide and the channel very deep, so the very place where the Merrimac could have been sunk to obstruct the channel must have been three-quarters of a mile further inside the harbor at least.

The actual starving state of the reconcentrados was due not to the Spanish but to the insurgent tactics in burning the canefields, not that his own district suffered that, but that the insurgents were kept pretty well cleared out there. But by the destruction of the canefields the people were deprived of work and deprived of their means of support, usually expended for labor. It was only a half truth to say that the gathering together of the reconcentrados was the cause of the dreadful suffering and starvation that ensued. While Weyler ordered the people cleared out of the canefields, the Spaniards and insurgent forces he at the same time as he placed them in rear of the Spanish troops where communication was cut off from the reconcentrados ground that they might work it for themselves. For some months government rations were served to these unfortunate people, but either through inability to work or because they would not work, they did not cultivate the land given them and as there were no supplies to give them they starved or depended on public charity.

He feared, however, that by this time the reconcentrados were starved to death. He attributed the failure of the reconcentrados to keep thirty or forty families alive, but he feared that now with the more stringent times due to war that the people were starved to death. The plantations which he managed was outside the Spanish lines and he had a command of 150 men under his own command to guard the estate until he left. However, on the whole the condition of things all over the island is perhaps as bad as reported, for now the crops of corn and potatoes were ripe and this would furnish a good deal of food.

As to the stories of cruelty he could only speak of the experience in his own district of Cienfuegos. He knew of three or four pacificos who had been cut down by the Spaniards, but never any thing of the kind by Spanish regulars. He did know, however, of some dreadful atrocities by the agents, such as the hanging of the mail messenger a few miles from the plantation and he gave some instances of horrible tortures such as beating and inflicting on them frightful suffering that it made one shudder to contemplate.

Mr. Williams does not think that the insurgents will be of any very great assistance to the United States troops in the fighting. The majority of the insurgents would be found, however, in the mountains and allow the Americans to do the fighting. With the exception of Cienfuegos district there were no plantations working, with the exception of a few near Cardenas, Matanzas and Havana. In all the rest of the island the cane had been burned by the insurgents.

The Spaniards, he said, had in all some 150,000 troops, regulars and volunteers on the island, and while they were not equal to the Americans in a large scale fight, they would wait behind their entrenchments and forts and thus en masse would make a heavy attack on Cienfuegos, which was protected by some 8,000 or 10,000 troops and the harbor was mined with torpedoes. The bulk of the troops were, however, in Havana, which was very well protected both on the sea and land approaches.

He hardly thought that the Americans would land troops in the mountains, but they found it possible in that way to attack the Spanish fleet in the harbor, because Santiago was cut off from any of the other cities by a range of mountains, and he said that he had seen a number of balloons which were practically impassable. Besides, the Americans would find it hard to get across a range of mountains, and he said that the Spanish fleet was carrying by the Viscaya, Maria Teresa, Christopher Columbus and Oquendo.

FIGHTING BY BALLOON.

United States Likely to Adopt a Scheme Suggested by French Scientists.

Dr. Terwagne Tells of Plans for Coast Defence Laid Before General Miles.

The use of the balloon in warfare extends back quite a number of years, for it was at the siege of Paris during the Franco-Prussian war that attention was first generally directed to the matter. It seems now that the Hispano-American war is likely to lead to the use of the balloon in warfare to an extent that was merely dreamed of only a few years ago. Since Andree took his adventurous trip in search of the north pole, the most successful men more than ever have directed their attention to the problem of aerial navigation and would make the use of balloons as a means of gaining success in the art of war.

Dr. Terwagne, in connection with the French submarine boat, Cobe from Charroux to Paris. The party left this morning for Vancouver and expect to go North in a few days.

Some Naval Definitions. Fathom—A measure of six feet. The gunner's measure for the protection of the gunners. Armament—A term expressing collectively the guns of a ship. Ladder with wooden rungs and rope sides. Bow chaser—A gun mounted in the bow of a ship. Bulkhead—A partition separating compartments in a ship. Cable—A long, heavy rope used to retain a ship in place at anchor. Buoy—A floating object used to mark a point in the sea. Displacement—The weight in tons of the vessel, when fully displaced by a ship's hull.

MARRIED IN DUBLIN. Miss Maud Dunsinuir, of Victoria, the Bride of an Officer of Hussars. Miss Maud Dunsinuir, youngest daughter of the late Mr. Dunsinuir and Mrs. Dunsinuir of Craigmore, this city, was married at St. Peter's church, Eaton Square, Dublin, yesterday to Mr. Hussar, of the Hussars, by the Rev. Lord Roberts, and only son of Colonel J. W. Chaplin, V.C., C.B., late 8th Hussars, who was married to the late Mrs. Chaplin.

JAPAN'S STRICTNESS. She Would Not Allow Powder To Be Transferred to the Gunboat Petrel. The Japanese government is strictly enforcing the declaration of neutrality. In May 11 the Pacific mail steamer "Petrel," a British ship, was captured at Yokohama from a sloop, having in her cargo 21 cases of gunpowder for the United States gunboat "Petrel." The Japanese government is strictly enforcing the declaration of neutrality. In May 11 the Pacific mail steamer "Petrel," a British ship, was captured at Yokohama from a sloop, having in her cargo 21 cases of gunpowder for the United States gunboat "Petrel."

AUGUST IN DESPAIR. Spanish Governor Sees No Prospect of Holding Out at Manila. Madrid, June 8.—The following communication from Capt. Gen. Augusti, of Manila, to the Spanish government, published: "The situation at Manila is becoming more and more serious. The Spanish column defends the Zapote line to prevent the enemy invading the province. The situation at Manila is becoming more and more serious. The Spanish column defends the Zapote line to prevent the enemy invading the province."

DON'T BE IMPATIENT. Think How Long One Waited for News When Nelson Chased Villeneuve. The impetuosity of the present generation is interesting to contrast with the patience of the beginning of the century. On April 22, 1805, the British fleet passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and sailed from Cadiz on his memorable cruise. The vital importance of the following day is not known to Nelson till April 19, and he did not receive any news until May 6. In this country no news of the proceedings of the Franco-Spanish squadron had been received as late as May 6.

mental powers. No money is spared to bring this science to as great perfection as possible. General Miles, head of the United States military, has laid out his plan before him that he is greatly in favor of having balloon stations, both for defensive and offensive purposes. Just think of the powerless condition of a fleet or army with balloons floating over them and dropping down dynamite or other destructive explosive while the unfortunate below are unable either to flee or to destroy their terrible assailants. "Still this is no more wonderful than the use of submarine boats, quick-firing guns or fish torpedoes some years ago. By the way," said Dr. Terwagne, in connection with the French submarine boat, Cobe from Charroux to Paris. The party left this morning for Vancouver and expect to go North in a few days.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS.

Trustees Think Well of Cooking Classes—Condition of the School.

Superintendent Eaton of the city schools furnished food for the principal school board last evening. All members of the board were in attendance and there were also present in the interests of the Victoria Branch of the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, Rev. Dr. Campbell and Mr. Kitto. They asked permission of the board to establish bands of Mercy in connection with the schools, their aim being to organize classes to meet once a month after school hours. All pupils under the age of 18 would be eligible for membership, and the object of the work would be to inculcate in the minds of the young love for the dumb creatures which are now abused by many. The board favorably considered the proposition and granted the request.

Trustees Reports Submitted by the Superintendent for the Board's Consideration. Some \$75 will have to be expended in putting the premises in proper repair. The overcrowded condition of the two central schools makes it necessary in my opinion to appoint an additional teacher. But as there is no class room available on these premises the new class will have to be formed in the Spring Ridge building. This will require a special order for repairs or equipment except few desks. It would be well for the board to give consideration to the matter of giving notice to all children up to and including those in the Second Reader who live nearer to the Spring Ridge school are expected to attend there rather than at the Central school. This, I am aware, can only be a beyond question that, in a short time, probably within a year, the board will have to deal vigorously with the question of increased accommodation at the Central school. Indeed there is one room in the school which ought not to be used any longer as a class room. I refer to that occupied by Mr. Stephenson's class. No proper ventilation seems possible and the glass partitions transmit the sound from the adjoining class rooms almost as well as they do the light, so that it is impossible for the teacher to work with reasonable comfort. The realizable remedy is additional accommodation for the pupils in the rooms now occupied by the high school. In that case there would be no escape from the necessity of providing new and suitable quarters for the high school. My recommendation is that the changes described be made in the North Ward school and the additional teacher be appointed for the Spring Ridge school. I appended to this report is a tabulated list in each of the classes of all the pupils which are now in the school, and the list to be included together with the actual average per teacher for each of the last four months in the four larger schools. All of which is respectfully submitted.

FRANK H. EATON, City Superintendent. During the lesson period the girls not so selected and the boys of the mixed classes would go on with their regular work.—F. H. E.

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RETIRED OFFICIALS.

Officers of the Retired Association.

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