

DESOLATION AND DISTRESS.

Situation in the Island of Cuba

Graphically Portrayed by Senator Proctor.

Misery and Starvation Everywhere Presented Outside Havana.

Terrible Picture Presented as the Result of General Weyler's Order Concentrating the People in the Cities and Towns.

WASHINGTON, March 17.—Senator Proctor of Vermont, who returned last Sunday from an extended trip to and through the island of Cuba, this afternoon made a statement to the Senate of his observations on the island. From many points of view the statement was remarkable. It had evidently been most carefully prepared. Every element of sensationalism had been studiously eliminated from it, and, except so far as the facts recited were sensational it bore not the slightest evidence of an effort to arouse the public mind, already keenly alive to the condition of affairs on the island. Calm and dispassionate to a notable degree, the utterances of the Senator aroused a breathless interest. Every person within the sound of his voice was convinced that he was putting his observations into careful terms, lest he might subject himself to the criticism of being emotional.

One of the characterizations of the statement was made by Senator Frye of Maine, a few minutes after its delivery. "It is," said he, "just as if Proctor had held up his right hand and sworn to it."

That was the impression the statement made upon the Senate. The scene in the Senate just preceding and during the delivery of the speech of Senator Proctor was almost dramatic in the intensity of its interest. The occasion of the address arose very unexpectedly. The national quarantine bill was under discussion, and Senator Mallory of Florida had been recognized for a speech in opposition to the pending measure. Frye entered the chamber, and interrupting Mallory, requested him to yield to Proctor, who desired to make a statement concerning his observations in Cuba, of interest to the Senate and to the country.

Instantly there was a commotion on the floor and in the galleries. It had been anticipated that Proctor was soon to make a statement, but it was not supposed that he would make it on the floor of the Senate. A call of the Senate was demanded by Chandler of New Hampshire, and in a few minutes every Senator in the Capitol was in his seat, and the word having been passed through the corridors, people flocked into the galleries until they were packed.

qualities are invaluable adjuncts to the equipment of our representatives in a country so completely under military rule as is Cuba. General Lee kindly invited us to sit at his table at the hotel during our stay in Havana, and this opportunity for frequent informal talks with him was of great help to me. In addition to the information he voluntarily gave me, it furnished a convenient opportunity to ask him the many questions that suggested themselves in explanation of things seen and heard on our trips through the country.

"I also met and spent considerable time with Consul Brice at Matanzas and with Captain Barker, a staunch ex-Confederate soldier, at Sagua La Grande, a friend of the Senator from Mississippi (Wathall). None of our representatives whom I met in Cuba are of my political faith, but there is a broader faith not bounded by party lines. They are all three true Americans, and have done excellent service.

MAINE DISASTER. "It has been stated that I said there was no doubt the Maine was blown up from the outside. This is a mistake. I may have said that such was the general impression among Americans in Havana. In fact, I have no opinion about it myself, and carefully avoided forming one. I gave no attention to these outside surmises. I met the members of the court on their boat, but I would as soon approach our Supreme Court in regard to the impending case as that board. They are as competent and trustworthy within the lines of their duty as any court in the land, and their report, when made, will carry conviction to all the people that the exact truth has been stated, just as far as it is possible to ascertain it. And until then surmise and conjecture are idle and unprofitable. Let us calmly wait for the report.

QUIET AT HAVANA. "There are six provinces in Cuba, each, with the exception of Matanzas, extending the whole width of the island, and having about an equal sea front on the north and south borders. Matanzas touches the Caribbean Sea only at its southwest corner, being separated from it elsewhere by the narrow peninsula of Santa Clara province. My observations were confined to the four western provinces, which constitute about one-half of the island. The two eastern ones are practically in the hands of the insurgents, except the few fortified towns. These two large provinces are spoken of to-day as 'Cuba Libre.'

"Havana, the great city and capital of the island, is in the eyes of the Spanish and many Cubans, all Cuba, as much as Paris is France. But having visited it in more peaceful times and seen its sights, the tomb of Columbus, the forts Cabanas and Morro, etc., I did not care to repeat this, repeating trips in the country. Everything seemed to go on much as usual at Havana. Quiet prevails, and except for the frequent squads of soldiers marching to guard and police duty, and their abounding presence in all public places, one saw little sign of war.

MISERY AND STARVATION. "Outside of 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 the trenches (trinchas), a sort of rifle pit, but constructed on a scale new to me, and being thrown up on the outside, and the barbed-wire fence on the other side of the trench. These trenches have at every corner and at frequent intervals along the sides what are called block forts, but they are really small block houses, many of them with a large sentry box, and with a guard of from two to ten soldiers in each. The purpose of these trenches is to keep the reconcentrados in and keep the insurgents out.

"In all the surrounding country the people have been driven into these block houses, and held there to subsist as they can. They are actually in prison yards, and not unlike one in general appearance, except the walls are not so high and strong, but they suffice, where every point is in range of a soldier's rifle, to keep in the poor reconcentrados within one of these block houses. Every railroad station is an armed guard. Every train has an armed freight car, loopholed for musketry, and filled with soldiers, and with, as I observed, usually and was informed was always the case, a pilot engine a mile or so in advance. There are frequent blockhouses inclosed by the trenches, and with a guard along the railroad track.

DESOLATION. "With this exception, there is no human life or habitation between the fortified towns, and throughout the whole of the four 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 trenches. There are no domestic animals or crops on the rich fields and pastures, except such as are under guard in the immediate vicinity of the towns. In other words, the Spanish hold in these four western provinces just what their army sits on. Every man, woman and child, and every domestic animal, wherever the columns have marched, is under guard and within their so-called fortifications. To describe one place is to describe all. 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 generally the rich tobacco country; east, so far as I went, it is a sugar region. Nearly all the sugar mills are destroyed between Havana and Sagua. Two or three were standing in the vicinity of Sagua, and part running, surrounded as they are by villages, with trenches and 'fort' palisades, the royal palm, and fully guarded. Toward the east, the Cienfuegos there were more mills running, but all with the same protection. 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 large forces of soldiers, but 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.

DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES. "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 of their stock, others working on estates and cultivating small patches; and even a small patch in that fruitful clime will support a family. "It is not true 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 miserable. They lived mostly in cabins made of palm or in wooden houses. Some of them had houses of stone, the blackened walls of which are all that remain to show that the country was ever inhabited.

"Many doubtless did not learn of Weyler's concentration order. Others failed to grasp its terrible meaning. Its execution was left largely to the guerrillas to drive in all that had not obeyed, and I was informed that in many cases they were applied to their homes without notice, and that the inmates fled with such clothing as they might have on their backs, their stock and other belongings being appropriated by the guerrillas. When they reached the towns they were allowed to build huts of palm leaves in the suburbs and vacant places within the trenches, and left to live if they could. Their huts are about ten by fifteen feet in size, and for want of space are usually crowded together very closely. They have no floor but the ground, and no furniture, and after a year's wear but little clothing, except such stray substitutes as they can extemporize. With large families, or with more than one in this little space, the commonest sanitary provisions are impossible. Conditions are unquestionable in this respect.

"From their homes, with foul food, foul air, foul water and foul fumes, what wonder that one-half have died, and that one-quarter of the living are so weak that they cannot be saved. A form of dysentery is a common form of disease resulting from these conditions. Children are seen walking about with arms and limbs terribly emaciated, eyes swollen and abdomen bloated to three times the natural size. The physicians say these cases are hopeless.

DEATH IN THE STREETS. "Deaths in the streets have not been uncommon. I was told by one of our Consuls that they have been found dead about the markets in the morning and where they had been seen the evening before. Some straggle bits of food from the early hucksters, and that there had been cases where they had dropped dead inside the market, surrounded by food. These people were independent and self-supporting, and were Weyler's order. They are not beggars, even though there are plenty of professional beggars in every town among the regular residents, but these country people, the reconcentrados, have not learned the trade. Rarely is a hand held out to you for alms when you are passing, but the sight of them makes an appeal stronger than words.

"Of the hospitals I need not speak. Other have described their condition far better than I can. It is not within the narrow limits of my vocabulary to portray it. I went to Cienfuegos with strong conviction that the picture had been overdrawn, that a few cases of starvation and suffering had inspired and stimulated the press correspondents, and that they had given free play to a strong natural and highly cultivated imagination.

TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DEATHS. "Before starting I received through the mail a leaflet published by the 'Christian Herald,' with cuts of some of the sick and starving reconcentrados, and took it with me, thinking these were specimens got up to make the worst possible showing. I saw plenty as bad, and worse; many that could not be photographed and shown. I could not believe that of a population of 1,600,000, 200,000 had died within the Spanish forts, practically prison walls, within a few months past, from actual starvation and diseases caused by insufficient and improper food. My inquiries were entirely outside of sensational sources. They were made of our medical officers, of our Consuls, of city Mayors, or representatives of leading merchants and bankers, physicians and lawyers. Several of my informants were Spanish born, but every time the answer was that the case had not been overstated.

MISS BARTON'S GOOD WORK. "What I saw I cannot tell so that others can see it. It must be seen with one's own eyes to be realized. The Los Pasos Hospital, in Havana, has been recently described by one of my colleagues, Senator Gallinger, and I cannot say that his picture was overdrawn, for even his fertile pen could not do that. He visited it after Dr. Lassar, one of Miss Barton's able and efficient physicians, had renovated it and put in cots. I saw it when 400 women and children were lying on the stone floors in an indescribable state of emaciation and disease, many with the scintillating covering of rags, and such rags; and sick children, naked as they came into the world. And the conditions in the other cities are even worse.

"Miss Barton needs no endorsement from me. I have known and esteemed her for many years, but had not highly appreciated her capability and devotion to her work. I especially looked into her business methods, fearing there would be the greatest danger of mistake, that there might be want of system and waste and extravagance, but found she could teach me on these points. I visited the warehouses where the supplies are received and distributed. Saw the methods of checking; visited the hospitals established or organized and supplied by her; saw the food distributed in several cities and towns, and everything seen to be conducted in the best manner possible. The ample fire-proof warehouses in Havana, owned by a Cuban firm, is given, with a gang of laborers, free of charge, to unload and re-ship supplies.

"I have never had any communication, direct or indirect with the Cuban junta in this country, or any of its members, nor did I have with any of the junta which exists in every city and large town of Cuba. None of the calls I made were upon parties of whose sympathies I had the least knowledge, except that I knew some of them were classed as autonomists. My only informants were business men who had no sides and rarely expressly themselves. I had no means of guessing in advance what their answers would be, and was in most cases greatly surprised at their frankness. I could not but conclude that my only duty was to scratch an autonomist very deep to find a Cuban. There is soon to be an election, but every polling place must be inside a fortified town. Such elections ought to be safe for the 'ins.'

"I have endeavored to state in no immoderate mood what I saw and heard, to make no argument thereon, but leave every one to draw his own conclusions.

PROCTOR'S CONCLUSIONS. "To me the strongest appeal is not the barbarity practiced by Weyler, nor the loss of the Maine, if our worst fears should be justified, nor the spectacle of a million and a half of people, the entire native population of Cuba, struggling for freedom and deliverance from the worst misgovernment of which I ever had knowledge. Whether we have to scratch an autonomist by any one of all these things and if so, how far, is another question. I am not in favor of annexation, not because I would apprehend any particular trouble from it, but because it is not a wise policy to take in any people of foreign tongue and training, and without any strong guiding American element.

"The fear that if free, the people of Cuba would be revolutionary is not so well founded, as has been supposed, and the conditions for good self-government are far from wanting. The large number and educated and patriotic men; the great sacrifices they have endured; the peaceable temperament of the people, white or black; the wonderful prosperity that would come surely with peace and good home rule; the large number of Americans and English emigration and money; would all be strong factors for stable institutions.

"But it is not my purpose at this time, nor do I consider it my province, to suggest any plan. I merely state the symptoms as I saw them, but do not undertake to prescribe. Such remedial steps as may be required may safely be left to an American President and the American people."

Throughout the delivery of the address there was no interruption. At the conclusion there was a demonstration either on the floor or in the galleries, although Senators here and there about the chamber turned to one another, with such remarks: "A remarkable statement;" "a simple, straightforward statement of a horrible condition of affairs;" and similar comments.

Mr. Proctor left the Senate chamber soon after he had finished his address, but not before he had been heartily congratulated by many of his old colleagues.

DOINGS IN CONGRESS.

YESTERDAY'S PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE. WASHINGTON, March 17.—No political questions were discussed in the House to-day. The whole session was devoted strictly to the postoffice appropriation bill, which was taken up for amendment under the five-minute rule. The questions which consumed the major portion of the time related to the allowance for clerk hire at Post-offices and rural free delivery.

Speaker (R.) of Connecticut offered an amendment to increase the allowance for clerk hire from \$11,000,000 to \$11,300,000. The vote was a tie—85 to 85—and Hull (R.) of Iowa, who was in the chair, defeated it by casting his vote in the negative.

Another amendment to increase the clerk hire allowance \$200,000 was immediately offered, and in the course of the debate members representing rural districts seemed inclined to array themselves against those from the great cities. It was found that the appropriation for clerk hire was absorbed by the big offices.

Hepburn (R.) of Iowa gave notice that he should offer an amendment to allow the Postmaster-General, in his discretion, to use a half million of the appropriation in third and fourth-class offices. The amendment was strongly antagonized by the Appropriations Committee. It was defeated—48 to 60.

Hepburn then offered the amendment which he had given notice, and it was reported without a division. Babcock (R.) of Wisconsin moved to strike out the provision limiting the use of the \$150,000 appropriated for railroad free delivery to the payment of carriers and horse hire allowance. Loud and others, who opposed the amendment, said the money had been placed on the appropriation to prevent the use of this experimental fund for any except the actual work of delivering the mails in the country. Loud said not one of these appropriations should be used to pay political debts with. Every dollar should go for rural delivery, which had not passed the experimental stage. Rural free delivery was an unqualified success.

Babcock's motion was defeated. Stocks (D.) of South Carolina moved to increase the appropriation for free delivery from \$150,000 to \$200,000. After considerable discussion the amendment was adopted—108 to 37. At 5:10 p. m. the House adjourned.

SPANISH SHIP SEIZED. CHARGED WITH A VIOLATION OF THE NAVIGATION LAWS. PUNTA GORDA (Fla.), March 17.—The Spanish fishing smack Carmen was towed into this port by the United States revenue cutter Forward. She had been seized for violation of the navigation laws.

The Forward left Tampa to intercept a filibustering expedition reported to have been in readiness to sail from a point on the west coast of Florida, in the vicinity of Cape Romano.

At the entrance to Charlotte harbor, the Forward came upon the Carmen at anchor, making preparations to put to sea.

Captain Rogers sent an officer on board the Spanish vessel, ascertaining that the stranger had been there for more than twenty-four hours without reporting to the customs authorities, placed the Carmen under arrest, brought her to this port and turned her over to the Deputy Collector of Customs.

The Carmen had live and salted fish aboard, the result of her catch since leaving Havana.

Her master says he has only been engaged in fishing around the Tortugas and the waters of Florida Bay, having cleared from Havana for that purpose several days ago, and put into Charlotte harbor on account of stress of weather.

A Negro Fiedl Lynched. GRENADA (Miss.), March 17.—Alexander Anderson, a young negro, attempted to commit suicide as a school girl last night at 9 o'clock. Three hours later he was captured by a mob, confessed and was hanged. Anderson was made to climb a cottonwood tree with a rope around his neck. He was then pushed off a limb and strangled to death.

One Killed, Another Fatally Hurt. CHICAGO, March 17.—The two big columns forming the main support to the entrance of the Coliseum Building, destroyed by fire not long ago, collapsed without warning to-day, killing E. R. Baker and fatally injuring John Rice. Several others were slightly injured. All were engaged in clearing up the ruins.

General Panda's Whereabouts. HAVANA, March 17.—General Panda, concerning whose safety anxiety has been expressed in some circles, arrived this morning at Ciego de Avila, in the middle of the military trocha extending between Moron and Jucuran, province of Puerto Principe.

Provisions for Destitute in Cuba. NEW YORK, March 17.—The United States transport Kellet has sailed from this port bound for Matanzas, Cuba, with a cargo of provisions for the destitute people of Cuba. The greater part of the consignment was contributed through the Red Cross Society of Philadelphia.

New California Postmasters. WASHINGTON, March 17.—The President to-day sent these nominations to the Senate: Postmasters—California—E. S. Newcomb, Coronado; S. F. Kelley, San Bernardino; G. F. Wood, Modesto; G. B. Dexter, Santa Monica.

A Steamer Grounded. PHILADELPHIA, March 17.—The steamer Illinois, which sailed yesterday for San Francisco, is aground on the west side of the channel below Marcus Hook, and will probably get off at high tide.

Condition of the Treasury. WASHINGTON, March 17.—To-day's statement of the condition of the treasury shows: Available cash balance, \$226,139,532; gold reserve, \$170,332,070.

CHICAGO'S DEADLY FIRE. TWO CHARED BODIES TAKEN FROM THE RUINS. Eighteen People Yet Missing, One a Young Lady Formerly Residing in California. CHICAGO, March 17.—By the discovery to-day of the charred and dismembered body of a woman in the ruins of the Emerson building on Wabash avenue, the total of the known victims of yesterday's holocaust is increased to four. The missing number is eighteen.

With the break of day Acting Chief Engineer of the Fire Department directed the firemen to work on the rear of the ruins and the police were ordered to begin a search through the front. Twenty minutes after the police had begun lifting timbers and peering into the debris they found, wedged between two heavy beams, the body of a woman so crushed and burned as to be unrecognizable. The hands were clinched as in agony. The body was positively identified as that of Mrs. M. E. Harris by her thirteen-year-old son, who recognized his mother through the peculiar formation of her teeth. Mrs. Harris' father's name is Snoffer. He was at one time Mayor of Cedar Rapids, Ia. Mrs. Harris began work with the Commercial Scientific Company, a bookkeeper yesterday only a few hours before the fire started.

Shortly after the discovery of the body a piece of wood about ten feet long, when pulled out from the debris, was found to be saturated with kerosene, which had leaked out from one end. It had probably pierced some unfortunate in its fall.

Six of those reported missing last night were accounted for to-day. They are J. L. Thorburn, collector for the Comover Piano Company; Sol Grollman, Jr., and John G. Columbus, Jr., of Frank W. Peeples, William Anderson and Anna Guest.

Five names are added to the list of missing. Charles O'Hara, shipping clerk of the National Music Company, went back into the burning building for his coat and has not been seen since.

Miss Hattie Davidson, an employe of the Olmstead Scientific Company, has not been seen since the fire. Miss Davidson came to Chicago from San Francisco, where it is said she has a brother well-known in commercial circles.

Peterson, shipping clerk of the Olmstead Scientific Company; Mrs. Watkins and George Stiff, employe of the Olmstead Company, have also not been seen since the fire.

It was seldom during business hours that the salesrooms of the Olmstead Company and Sweet, Wallach & Co., did not contain a half dozen or more customers from other cities, and it is feared that some strangers were caught in the burning building.

This afternoon another body was found, the second to-day. The corpse was that of a man, and was discovered in the debris around the front elevator shaft. The body, which was removed with great difficulty, was crushed and burned in a horrible manner.

The Spanish Minister called at the State Department at 3 o'clock, and remained with Judge Day something (Continued on Sixth Page)

NEW SQUADRON NAVAL VESSELS.

Change in the Fleet on Florida Coast.

Massachusetts and Texas to Go to Hampton Roads.

Where Hereafter Five Formidable Warships Will Rendezvous.

Spain Will Indignantly Repel Any Demand for Indemnity Based on Spanish Responsibility for the Maine Disaster.

WASHINGTON, March 17.—The event of the day in official circles was the issuing of an order for the formation of a new squadron of naval vessels to be stationed at Hampton Roads. The squadron in the beginning will consist of five ships, all the best of their types. Two of them, the battleships Massachusetts and Texas, are withdrawn from the present North Atlantic fleet at Key West and Tortugas.

In ordering this movement the Navy Department is not animated by any purpose of yielding to representations or intimations that may have come from the Spanish Minister. On the contrary, the new squadron was brought about by purely strategic considerations, although it appears from the nature of the force so far under orders to rendezvous at Hampton Roads that their strategy is of the defensive nature.

The new squadron cannot be called a "flying squadron," because the association of heavy battleships with fleet cruisers like the Brooklyn, Columbia and Minneapolis reduces the available speed of the whole to the speed of the slowest vessel, and the squadron could not do much "flying" in the naval sense. The indications, rather, are that when reinforced by some smaller cruisers, the squadron will constitute an ideal naval defense.

In place of the cruiser New York the people of Key West will look upon the grim outlines of the big monitor Puritan, supposedly the most powerful ship in smooth water in the world. She will have to assist her on guard the double-turreted monitor Miantonomah and the monitor Amphitrite. The Puritan is now at Norfolk, almost ready for sea; the Miantonomah is at League Island, quite ready, and so is the Amphitrite at Port Royal, S. C., so the order in the end will result in the gathering of the pick of the North Atlantic squadron at Hampton Roads.

The point is said to be the best strategic point on the Atlantic Coast. It is almost centrally located, and the ships from that point can reach any portion of the coast in short order. Besides, the second best navy yard in the country is there to fall back upon for repairs to the ships. There is plenty of the best coal at Newport News, there is easy water to navigate, and finally the forts at Hampton Roads may serve as a base of operations in case of need for protection. These are the considerations which animated the Navy Department in making this new order.

It is announced that the commander of the new squadron has not yet been selected, and pending that selection or the arrival in port of Admiral Seward, it is expected that Captain Higginson, the commander of the battleship Massachusetts, and the senior officer, will hold the command of the squadron.

Remaining at Key West after the departure of the Massachusetts and the Texas, Admiral Seward will still have a fleet of his own in numbers, when the spectacle will be presented of a fleet and a squadron on one station, something not seen since the civil war.

The monitors which it is designed to send to Key West are said to be well fitted for the service. Owing to their light draught of from fifteen to sixteen feet, they will be able to navigate safely the shallow waters of the Florida Coast and will not be obliged, like the Iowa, to six miles out at sea from Key West to secure enough water under keel.

The zambout Helena reported to the department that she had sailed to-day from Funchal, Madeira, for Key West to join the squadron.

It is now said that it has been definitely determined to bring the battleship Oregon around South America to Key West.

The Navy Department has issued orders that such trial as may be made of the new torpedo boat Rodgers shall take place while the boat is under way Saturday next from Baltimore to Norfolk. She will also go southward to join the flotilla at Key West.