

A CUBAN INTERIOR TOWN

POPULATION REDUCED BY STARVATION FROM NEARLY 8,000 TO 1,800.

Hard Conditions That Follow the War - The Red Cross to the Rescue of Homeless Children.

Special Correspondence Indianapolis Journal.

CATALINA, Cuba, April 28.—After Dr. Hubbell, the Red Cross field agent, assisted by three American ladies and a Cuban physician, had been working a fortnight in Guines and Catalina I came over from Havana to see what progress they had made.

Guines (pronounced Wee-nis) is the largest town, next to the capital, in Havana province. It lies southeast from Havana city about forty miles by rail, and Catalina is fifteen miles beyond. The United Railway of Cuba having rudely given half-rate transportation to Red Cross members, I took my printed order for mitad de precio (mitigation of price) to the "Jefe de la estacion" and paid \$2 for half rate to Catalina, receiving therefor a three-cornered bit of paste-board, which the accommodating "Jefe" cut crosswise with a pair of shears from the regular ticket. Thus a little mental arithmetic will show that full fare for the short journey, in the coin of the country, minus 20 cents on the dollar, exchange, is \$4.50. Rather expensive traveling is this in Cuba, all things considered! The ramshackle old cars, discarded years ago from some ancient road of England or the United States, are labeled first, second and third class. With the second and third classes one may be left to conjecture. Those of the alleged "first" grade are about like emigrant cars on our Western railways, except that these furnish no drinking water to thirsty travelers, or other conveniences whatever; no train boys sally through, bringing books, fruits and gum, and in some cases there is no glass in the windows—only wooden shutters, which, when closed to keep out dust, exclude the blessed air as well, to say nothing of the pleasant prospect.

Barring railway discomforts, the journey to Catalina is delightful, leaving Havana at 1 p. m., changing cars at Guines and reaching the destination not far from 5 o'clock. The face of the country differs greatly from that seen along the other branch of the United Railway leading to Matanzas and Cienfuegos. The scenery is more beautiful. Cuba is not unlike that of Ohio and Indiana—except for the absence of cultivated farms and the continual presence of royal palms, long lines of them, trending off in all directions like plumed soldiers on dress parade. There are clumps of banana trees, too, their leaves arched wide, and rows of pink-tinted pineapples plants, bristling like clustered bayonets. Here and there hedges of yellowish-green foliage, resembling the Osage orange, remind one of the great prairie farms of Illinois, and flocks of piled-up stones speak of thrifty New England. Clear streams are frequent; corn is knee-high in a few scattered fields, and the thick, coarse grass of the meadows raises anew the old query, why, in this land of condensed milk and rank, imported butter, dairy farms are not established.

CHANCE FOR AMERICANS.

Of course, we know that all the cattle of the island were killed and eaten during the war, but now that peace is restored why do not some sensible Americans awake from their never-to-be-realized dreams of amassing colossal fortunes in Cuba, and come down to the simple and feasible business of making butter, raising chickens and cultivating market gardens? Poultry sells in Havana to-day at prices unheard of in the United States—the smallest and scrawniest fowls bringing from \$1.50 to \$3 each. Eggs cost \$3 the crate, cows' milk 20 cents the quart, and most of the common vegetables are not to be had for love or money. This valley of Guines is one of the richest sections in Cuba, which formerly sent to the Havana market onions and boniatos (a kind of sweet potato) to the value of \$3,000,000 a year, to say nothing of its corn and sugar cane. Nowhere else does the landscape show such brilliant coloring, in the dark-red earth, bright blue sky and deep-green foliage. It is a very paradise of climate, with soil of unparalleled richness, but desolated by war's relentless hand. Not a farmhouse is left standing, none having escaped destruction by one army or the other. Only an occasional hut is seen in the open country, shaped like an inverted V, its thatched roof and palm-leaf walls forming a picturesque feature. It is worth knowing, in a commercial sense, that two crops a year of corn, onions and Irish potatoes are here grown and marketed. This is an absolute certainty, independent of any freaks of the weather, the water supply being regulated by irrigation. They say that three crops in a year are possible—but surely two, in such generous proportion, with an uninterrupted succession of vegetables, ought to satisfy any reasonable man.

RAVAGES OF WAR.

There are a great many small stations along the railway route to Catalina because in Cuba's golden days of rich plantations roads were built expressly to accommodate the planters, each of whom was as a king in his own domain, his casa and sugar mill being the center of a village of serfs. They are now mostly kings deposed—their fields laid waste, mills and houses burned, and only the serfs remain to beg of passing travelers. Every station is thronged with mendicants, mostly women and children, whose pitiful rags and emaciated faces accentuate their tales of woe. Each village is surrounded by a cordon of Spanish block-houses, small ones guarding all cross-roads and crowning every eminence, and larger forts near the railway depots. Every village church is still inclosed within a barricade of stones, hastily erected when the Spanish army took possession. They stabled their horses inside, knocked down the saints and holy altars, used the belfry for a watch tower and punched holes in the walls through which to poke their guns. Such desecration was the more remarkable, since the Spanish army, to a man, was Roman Catholic, with the hereditary veneration strong within him for so-called sacred things. A great many negroes are seen lounging around the railway stations, most of them wearing the light cotton uniform and turned-up-in-front straw hats that distinguish the Cuban soldiers. "Othello's occupation's gone," and he handles his beloved Remington or Mauser—probably stolen from some dead Spaniard—as if longing for another job of the same nature. Each station is also the residence of its "Jefe," and affords glimpses of family life to the passing traveler—rocking chairs and sewing machines and beruffled beds, and scenerias idling behind the window bars. Another odd thing is that the shabby little depots are provided with the low, swinging doors of stained glass, set in patchwork patterns, which form such a distinctive and highly ornamental feature of Cuban casas of the better class—beautiful to look, but much too frail, one would think, for every-day hard usage in public places.

Catalina shows the ravages of war much more plainly than the larger cities, having had, until now, no outside assistance. It is a typical interior town, and one of the cleanest I ever saw. Its low houses of unplastered boards, set close together in straggling rows, are whitewashed inside and out, and each is faced by a rude veranda. The streets, with grass and weeds growing thickly among the stones, have a broad, deep ditch along each side. The verandas come up even with the ditches, and each house door is reached by a large, flat stone or plank, which answers to the drawbridge

across a moat. Streets and verandas are swept scrupulously clean, though chickens wander in and out at will, and occasionally a fat, black mother pig leads her interesting family across the bridge to pay a social visit. The terra-cotta colored earth is a brighter red than even the "sacred soil" of Virginia, and the empty, grass-grown streets somehow remind one of down-at-the-heel old Alexandria, near Washington, D. C. Three years ago Catalina had something over 8,000 inhabitants and to-day has barely 1,800. This calculation does not include the reconcentrado influx, but reckons only the normal population. Where are the rest, do you ask? Gone to glory, my friends, by the slow but sure route of starvation, assisted for a time by smallpox. During the latter scourge the authorities thought to stay its ravages by compulsory inoculation, with the result that hundreds of the poor creatures died of it, being too feeble to endure vaccination.

CHASTLY REMINDERS.

The quaint old village church, with its stone stairs outside leading up to a dilapidated tower full of rusty bells, is in a more deplorable state than most of its neighbors, having longer stabled the Spanish horses. The interior is a total wreck, floors entirely gone and altars broken into kindling wood. Of all its sacred belongings but one thing is left—a painting of the Virgin and Child, placed too high upon the wall to be easily reached, and as we entered the dreary ruin a ray of sunlight from the open door illuminated the infant Christ as with a halo—an omen, let us hope, of blessings to come. From among the debris of human bones, bits of harness and broken horseshoes scattered under foot I picked up a skull—evidently that of a half-grown youth, one side gone, cut smoothly off by a saber or machete stroke.

Later we walked down the weedy road to Campo Santo, at the edge of the village. It is a tiny God's acre, with walls of plastered stone and a larger and later annex fenced with split palm trunks set upright in the red earth. A row of black vultures, perched above the arched gateway, gazed at us with speculative eyes, but did not stir—having probably made too many hearty meals on the human species not to regard them with favor. The gate to this poor little "field of saints" was tied with a bit of rope and its red soil, without a blade of grass or green thing growing, has been rounded up into regular mounds. It was swept as clean as all the rest of the village—barring an occasional scattered rib or bone. There are a few rather pretentious graves, each surmounted by a glass-faced box containing the hideous wreaths of black and white beads which find such favor in the eyes of mourning Spanish-Americans. Other graves were marked by black painted wooden crosses, but the great majority had only two sticks, tied together cruciform fashion, laid on top or stuck in the earth at the head. Vagrant breezes and passing footsteps soon disarrange this symbol of the Christian's hope, which some stricken heart has placed above its beloved dead, and though the emblem means, personally, little to me, I have hundreds of times stooped to replace it and tie the cross piece more securely.

The alcalde, or village mayor, who accompanied me to the cemetery, pointed out two rough boxes, one long, the other shorter—which stand on end inside the gateway and remarked that in them more than six thousand of his friends and neighbors had been brought to their eternal rest within three years. Out among the weeds of an unfenced field, a few rods away, stood a heavy, two-wheeled ox cart, huge tongue high in air—the village hearse, in which the six thousand had taken their last short journey. Across one corner of the cemetery a second wall is planned, enclosing a triangular space, which is filled to the brim with human bones, partially burned, but by no means reduced to dust. In front of this was the most ghastly sight of all—a fresh lot of miscellaneous bones, skulls, coffin boards, shrouds, shoes et cetera, lately evicted from rented graves and made ready for the semi-annual burning. Many of the skulls had hair clinging to them. One I noticed was thin and gray, as of an old man; another was almost a chestnut brown, and on top of the head, close by the trunk of a body still wrapped in a half-decayed blanket, lay a mass of shining jet-black hair, loosened from the head to which it had belonged, but yet confined in a coil by rusty pins. To us it seems strange indeed that our Spanish-American neighbors attach so little sacrosanctity to the "earthly tenement" after the soul has left it.

PITIFUL DESTITUTION.

As we are readily imagined, Dr. Hubbell and his assistants found dreadful conditions in Catalina. The remaining handful of population has suffered so many woes and are so utterly destitute that they are like one stung by a series of blows, with neither hope nor ambition for the future. It was the children especially whom the Red Cross came to rescue, and many helpless wails were found without a living relative. In several cases two or three children were huddled together in an abandoned building subsisting on wild bonias or whatever scraps they could pick up, like prowling dogs. There were young girls, absolutely without protection and almost without clothes, sleeping on the ground at night and unable to wash their filthy rags, having nothing else to put on. One woman past thirty years of age, crippled with rheumatism so that she could not walk, but got about in a half sitting posture, as some babies creep, had nothing to cover her mature nakedness but part of an old shawl. All these were speedily collected by the Red Cross workers and given the first square meal they can remember. A house was at once set apart by the mayor for use as an orphanage, and part of his own house turned over to Dr. Hubbell and the ladies for their residence. Cots, bedding, whole bolts of calico and unbleached muslin and a few ready-made garments were immediately provided. The first thing was to give each orphan a thorough bathing and attend scientifically to his or her ticks, lice, sores, etc., then all their vermin-infested rags were burned and they were put to bed until garments could be had. The poor creatures were so weak from famine and so utterly exhausted from the hardships borne, that simply to lie still, sure of shelter, safety and food, left them nothing to desire in all this weary world. I regret to say that our supply of ready-made clothing, sent by auxiliary societies in the North, is exceedingly limited; so that a hundred calico dresses and cotton trousers and blouses of assorted sizes had to be made with all possible speed. The ladies of the village tendered their services, brought their sewing machines and worked with a will. As such well washed child emerged from its chrysalis of filthy rags and appeared in decent raiment, with nourishing food in its long-famished stomach, the transformation was so marvelous that if our good friends of the North could see it they would never

relax their efforts in behalf of Red Cross supplies until the good work is carried to the remotest corner of the island.

FANNIE BRIGHAM WARD.

SUBURBAN SOCIETY NOTES.

Brightwood. Miss Putman, of Danville, Ill., is visiting Miss Emma Meadows on Steward street. Mr. S. Galkey had three fingers of his left hand badly mashed at the Big Four shops Wednesday.

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist Church will meet next Wednesday afternoon at the church. Mr. I. W. Huff, of Pendleton, Ind., is visiting his daughter, Mrs. W. Oldridge, on East Twenty-fifth street.

Mrs. Turner, of Martinsville, who has been visiting Mrs. E. Traub, on North Station street, has returned home. The Ladies' Sewing Circle of the Congregational Church met Friday afternoon with Mrs. Shoemaker, on Adams street. Mrs. Stanley were pleasantly surprised by a number of friends at their home on Morris street.

Mrs. Mulholland, of Delphi, O., who has been the guest of her son, Edgar Mulholland, on North Station street, has returned home. Nekomis Tribe, Red Men, have invited Tish-i-mingo Tribe to give adoption to three candidates next Wednesday evening at Association Hall.

May devotions are being held Sunday evenings during this month at St. Francis Catholic Church, on Depot street. The church is also arranging to give a festival soon. The social which was to have been given last Tuesday evening by the Junior Endeavor League of the Congregational Church was postponed until next Tuesday evening on account of the inclement weather.

Rev. L. N. Jones, of Irvington, will deliver a lecture at the Methodist Church on "Lessons from a Clock Factory" Wednesday evening, under the auspices of the Junior Epworth League. To-day the Epworth League of the Methodist Church will celebrate its tenth anniversary. Special services will be held in the morning, and in the evening there will be a talk by the president, Robert Kemper, Rev. Mr. Titus and the pastor, Rev. W. W. Reynolds. The officers for the ensuing year will be installed. The officers are as follows: President, Robert Kemper; first vice president, William Preston; second vice president, Daisy Thompson; third vice president, Anna Titus; fourth vice president, Lottie McConnell; secretary, Mary Patton; treasurer, Floeste Schoeridge.

Next Sunday the children of St. Anthony's Catholic School will receive their first holy communion. The choir of the King-avenue M. E. Church was entertained Friday evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Tibbs, on West Michigan street.

Rev. Father Dowd, pastor of St. Anthony's Church, is contemplating a few rather practical improvements in the church and school. He intends to add two schoolrooms, thereby enlarging the auditorium part of the church. The school is in the basement of the church. The annual festival is also being arranged for an early date.

Member of the Ladies' Aid Society of the Methodist Church living on Germania street entertained the society Wednesday afternoon at the home of Mrs. J. W. Wood, who was assisted Mrs. Greg were Mrs. A. W. Wood, Mrs. Samuel Barile and Mrs. Medsker.

West Indianapolis. Mrs. Laura Backhouse, of Connersville, is visiting relatives. Mrs. Reis, who has been visiting in Jonesboro, is home again.

Mrs. W. F. Barnkamp, of Division street, is visiting relatives in Terre Haute. Mrs. P. H. Young, of Kokomo, who has been the guest of Mrs. B. Treat, has returned home.

Mr. J. Q. Jennings, of Jonesboro, who has been visiting friends and relatives, will return home to-day. Mrs. Watson, assisted by her pupils, will give a recital at Spencer's Opera House next Wednesday evening.

Mrs. Webb, who has been the guest of Mrs. Geddes and Mrs. Wash, will return to her home in Kokomo next week. The Ladies' Aid Society of the Pilgrim Congregational Church will give a social Friday afternoon in the parlors of the church.

Rev. Andrew Ayers, formerly pastor of the Congregational Church here, now of New Chicago, is visiting relatives on Hadley avenue. Miss Jessie and Nathan Thompson, of Danville, Ind., who have been the guests of Mr. and Mrs. L. Thompson, have returned home.

The next meeting of the W. C. T. U. will be held at the home of the president, Mrs. Hattie Moorman, on Silver avenue, Tuesday, May 30. The nickel social given by the Women's Relief Corps at the home of Mrs. Benson on Blaine avenue, Thursday afternoon, was well attended and financially successful.

Mrs. John W. Byrkit will entertain a few friends at dinner this evening. The guests from the city will be Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Coburn and Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Caldwell. The Epworth League of the Trinity Church will hold special services this evening when the officers for the ensuing year will be installed by the pastor, Rev. Lon Duncan.

Prof. Barton's Mandolin Club is planning to give an entertainment at St. Joseph's Hall in the city and for the benefit of St. Joseph's Catholic Church the latter part of the month. The Afternoon Club enjoyed a social day with Mrs. Sheridan, on West Washington street, Thursday afternoon. The guests were Mrs. Young, Mrs. Ballinger and Mrs. Webb, of Kokomo.

The Ladies' Aid Society of the Pilgrim Congregational Church will present "The District School" at the Opera House for the benefit of the Women's Relief Corps Wednesday evening, May 26. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Castrop, of St. Louis, who are on their wedding trip, will be the guests of Mrs. Castrop's niece, Sister Placida, at the Assumption Academy Friday. Mr. and Mrs. Castrop left Friday evening for Cleveland, Ohio.

A musical and literary entertainment will be given by the Epworth League at Wulfe's Hall Thursday evening, May 25, under the auspices of the Rathbone Sisters. One of the features of the program will be "The Ladies' Drill and Tableau." Refreshments will be served.

Mrs. Sarah Thompson, who died last Monday at the home of her daughter, Mrs. W. McGrew, was taken to Everton for interment. Her daughters, Mrs. Avery Van Wye, Mrs. Fillman Dickinson, and Mrs. J. W. McGrew, accompanied the remains. Mrs. Thompson had been ill for several months and was well known in the city.

Rev. John Gordon, pastor of the Pilgrim Congregational Church, handed in his resignation last Sunday, which will be accepted this evening. Mr. Gordon will go to his home in Addison, Mich., to-morrow. The members of the church, without any exception, regret Mr. Gordon's action, as he was well liked and has been pastor of the church for only a short time. A minister will come next week for trial.

Mrs. G. S. Leachman and Mrs. Kuhn gave a surprise party in honor of their mother, Mrs. Long, at the home of Mrs. Kuhn, on Prospect street, in the city, Friday afternoon. The event being the seventy-third birthday anniversary of Mrs. Long. Dinner was served at 1 o'clock and covers were laid for twenty. The guests were Mrs. Joel Baker, Mrs. Lawrence Thompson, Mrs. W. Alexander, Mrs. Gould, Mrs. Givens, Mrs. Dean, Miss Georgia Jennings, Mrs. Prosser, Mrs. Wagner, Mrs. Trotter, Mrs. Moore, Mrs. Hester Smith, Mrs. Kuhn, Mrs. Patton, Mrs. Meakey and Mrs. Hollands.

Where Praise is Due. Ours are exalted, sheltered so That no rough winds upon the blow, Thy wants supplied with tender care, What wonder thou art sweet and fair!

But thou, O lowly, wretched flower, A bare subsistence all thy dower, Prates to thee because thy face Smiles bravely from thy barren place.

—Margaret Manning.

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ALL estimates from reliable sources, both governmental and private, give us the greatest assurance that the net returns will be many times greater than any returns we calculate on. "Coffee pays from 100 to 200 per cent. profit." Bulletin 41, Department of State, Bureau of American Republics. "Coffee pays an annual net profit of 90 per cent." Matias Romero, late Mexican Minister to the United States. "One hundred thousand rubber trees the first year's harvest will yield \$120,000." British Foreign Office Report, No. 385, Page 27. Over \$500 an acre. "A rubber plantation in full bearing, say the eighth year, should yield anywhere from \$250 to \$350 gold profit per acre." Wm. P. Wilson, Sc. D., Secretary Philadelphia Museums.

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