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NO. IV.

A LETTER OF INTEREST.

T. L. Lowe, Secretary to Major General Bates, of Cienfuegos, Cuba, Writes.

Special Correspondence.

CIENFUEGOS, CUBA, JAN. 8.—Believing that the good people of Watauga and Mitchell would appreciate some news from this quarter of the globe, I find will devote a few moments of my Uncle's time to what I consider in the light of both a pleasure and a duty.

Not unexpected were the orders from the War Department as they came during the Christmas holidays to the Division Headquarters at Macon, Ga., and gladly were they received as the boys were all anxious to go to Cuba.

Tuesday, Dec. 27th, everything ready for the journey. At 2 p. m., all on board the cars bound for Charleston, S. C., en route for Cienfuegos, Cuba.

Wednesday, Dec. 28th, arrived in Charleston, and after remaining in town all day, went aboard the U. S. Transport Minnewaska. It was the Trans-Atlantic liner, Persia, and was bought by the government at the beginning of the war, and converted into a transport. It is 492 feet long, and is the most substantial transport in the service.

Thursday, Dec. 29th. All in hurry and bustle on board the vessel. Stevedores loading ship with every conceivable thing necessary for a campaign in a foreign country; quartermaster's supplies, hospital stores, private baggage for the officers, provisions for the soldiers, guns and equipments, horses, mules, wagons, ect., aggregating many million pounds, and all on one ship. Its capacity seems inexhaustible.

The 6th Ohio Volunteers joined Division Headquarters at this point and are to accompany the movement. Major General J. C. Bates, and staff are on board. Gen. Bates is to be the Military Governor of the Province of Santa Clara. Weather very fine.

Friday morning, Dec. 30th. The morning broke clear and bright, with slight wind from the east. During the night a case of pneumonia developed on board. Private Charles P. Driggs, 2nd Ohio, Volunteers. He was sent ashore. At precisely 7 a. m., could feel a slight movement of the vessel. At 7:15, under a full head of steam she is making out to sea. At 7:45 we are passing Fort Sumpter. The garrison are cheering. The wind is increasing, and the ship is going out across the bar. The shores of America are lessening in the distance. The last thing that we saw this morning was the long rocky bar at the entrance to Charleston harbor. The land has long since disappeared. The sea is before us, the wide waste sea!

At 1:30 a squall struck us from our star-board quarter, causing a slight heaving of the vessel. As far as the eye can see the white caps are glistening in the sun-light,

making a picture of surpassing loveliness. Great schools of porpoise are sporting in the water a-long side the ship, and occasionally the flying fish rise out of the water and skim a-long above the water for quite a distance.

Two ships sighted this afternoon. Ship sailing dead against the wind.

Saturday, Dec. 31st. Rain fell this morning at 4:30. The wind is blowing dead a-head, causing the ship to heave. Some of the soldiers are suffering with sea-sickness. This is our second day out, and as some of the knowing ones say, about 400 miles from our starting place. There are sixteen stewardesses from the Hospital on board, going to Cuba to nurse the sick soldiers, if any are so unfortunate as to get sick. They are all nice appearing girls, and deserve great credit for their lives of self-sacrifice. They are nearly all catholic. The weather is as warm as summer. For the last two nights I have slept on deck with only one blanket.

Sunday morning, Jan. 1st. Early this morning we sighted the Island of San Salvador. It is said to be the first land that was trod by the foot of white men in the western world. It lies low, and is as green as a garden. There is a light house on the upper extremity. There were several residences in sight; we were 8 or 10 miles away.

At one o'clock we passed Crooked Island. It belongs to Great Britain. In a splendid grove of palms, is a light house. A great many islands dot this sea. Our course is south of east. About five o'clock, just as night was falling, we passed a light house on Ackland island, and it was visible for two hours from the stern of the ship. We are making about 14 knots an hour. A knot is a nautical term, and is about 1 1/2 miles. We are now entering the Windward Passage. The wind is increasing and a slight rain falling. In the surge a long the side of the vessel, gleam beautiful phosphorescent lights called by sailors St. Elmo's fire. The same kind of lights were observable, as the history shows, during the voyages of Columbus in these same waters during his first voyage.

Monday, Jan. 2nd. At 2 a. m., we passed Cape Macey Light, the most eastern end of Cuba. At daylight we are in sight of land on our star-board quarter. Can see mountains apparently 20 miles away. They are covered with clouds, indicating that they must be at least 1,500 or 2,000 feet in height. At 8 we changed our course to west. We are in the Caribbean Sea. At 10 we came in sight of the iron pier where Gen. Shafter landed his first troops before the battle of Santiago. About two miles and a half further on is Siboney. The balance of the troops were landed here, and marched across the table-land, through chapparal and thorny cacti, to win glory or the grave in the trenches at El Caney and San Juan hill.

We are now in sight of Morro Castle, at the entrance of the harbor of Santiago de Cuba, where Admiral Sampson and Cervera and his fleet bottled up last July. This is also the scene of Lieutenant Hobson's heroic attempt to close up the harbor by sinking the Merrimac, which only met with partial success. We could not get a glimpse of the Merrimac, but under the very guns of the Morro lies the Reina Mercedes on her star-board side. On the morning of the battle all the Spanish vessels had cleared the harbor except the Reina Mercedes, and at precisely 9:15 the American fleet began firing, the Mercedes was sunk before getting out of the harbor. Then began a running sea fight. About 5 miles further on, the Almirante Oquendo is lying in about fifteen feet of water, and a little further down, say two or three miles is the once proud Viscaya, lying in a little cove burnt to the water's edge and rusty red, living monuments of the stirring times of just six months ago. A sad commentary on the pig-headedness of the Spanish nation, which led her into the error of going to war with the greatest nation on earth, and as a consequence has forever lost control of one of the fairest portions of God's creation, the "Gem of the Antilles."

All day long we passed lofty mountains rising abruptly from the sea. At 4:20 a small skirt of cloud spread its mantle on the distant mountain, and a fine gray mist covered the landscape. Rain fell as far out as the ship. At night pale, orange-colored lightning flashed on the southern horizon. At 7:30 we passed the light on the southern coast of Cuba. At 9 the light can be plainly seen. It is now flickering above the waves. At times it seems entirely gone, like a candle burning low in the socket, then again it flares up bright and red like a baleful star. Now it has gone down for the last time. It does not re-appear, and we are in the darkness. We are in Manzanillo Bay. Here are the region of the south-west tradwinds; the sea is rough and down below, among the horses and mules, the air is stifling hot. Let us sleep.

Tuesday, Jan. 3rd. Wind still blowing, and a choppy sea; air full of flying mist. Wind dying out toward noon. At 12:35 p. m., nearing Cienfuegos. At one o'clock a flag was run to the masthead and pretty soon the pilot was seen coming in a little white skiff. Up the ladder springs the pilot, takes the ship's wheel and away we go into the narrow harbor. After a while it opens out and becomes quite extensive. At 2:40 we dropped anchor, and are now in the harbor of Jagna. On account of shallow water the ship cannot go to the docks.

The city is two miles away, but in full view. It has a good water front, and but for the shallow water would at some future day be a sea-

port of considerable importance.

Cienfuegos, (pronounced Thee-en-fue-gus, literally means "a hundred fires") was founded in 1819, destroyed by a hurricane, and rebuilt in 1825. It is 189 miles south-east of the harbor of Havana by railroad, and is united to the main railroad system of the island. It is located on the east side and midway of the harbor of Jagna, which the historian Las Cases called "the most magnificent in the world" it is certainly one of the most beautiful. It is commercially the most important port of entry on the southern coast. The town is only about 8 feet above the sea at the water-front, and gradually slopes upward to about 75 feet. There is still higher ground, but not yet built up. The site of the town was once a mangrove swamp. The streets are wide, and while they are not paved, are well macadamized, and as hard as a bone. There are many mean, wooden frame houses, and as everywhere in Cuba the floors are level with the streets.

The harbor is first class, and affords safe anchorage to vessels of the largest class. It is about 11 miles long by from 3 to 5 miles in width. It is entered from the south by a narrow channel. It never gets cold here, Frost and snow are unknown. Except in the rainy season one can sleep the year round in the open air. The climate is delightful.

On the 4th day of January at 11:30 the auxiliary cruiser, Mayflower, (Goellet's converted yacht) lying in the harbor gave a salute of 13 guns in honor of Gen. Bates, and immediately we went ashore. We got here too late to see the flag-raising, as that occurred on the 1st.

I am now ashore. Everything has a foreign aspect. Went into a Cafe and had a cup of good coffee, the natives call it "caffae." I am getting on to their language, and they are very anxious to learn to speak English. They seem surprised to hear us call it English as they call it "Americano." If you speak to one, and he does not understand you, he merely says, "no comprendre;" means he does not comprehend.

Gen. Bates' headquarters are situated in what was once a swell hotel. The windows are large, so as to admit plenty of air. The panels in the doors are glass with rich etchings, representing various Spanish scenes and landscapes. The finer ones show the shield and coat of arms of Spain. Everything is made of Mahogany wood. Even the docks and railroad ties are of the same material. It seems to be almost indestructible.

Just across the street from headquarters is the Plaza, or public promenade, where all the pretty girls, and every one else as to that matter, go to promenade of an evening. There are many pretty girls, called here "senoritas" with a roll of the r's under the tongue.

A Call for Mass-meeting.

To the Voters of Watauga County:

The undersigned earnestly desiring to reflect the will of the majority of the people of the county in the enactment of a road law, does hereby respectfully ask that a mass-meeting of the representative men of each township in the county, without regard to party or political affiliations assemble at the court house in Boone on the first Monday in February next, to consult together and agree, if possible, upon the legislation desired in that behalf, and by petition, resolution or otherwise, instruct me, as your representative, as to the kind of road law most desired by the people; and I do hereby earnestly invite correspondence from the citizens of the county, upon the subject.

Respectfully,

W. B. COUNCILL, JR.

The senator seem pleased when spoken to in their own tongue by an American. Very few speak English, but seem anxious to learn it.

If the houses are not built for beauty, they are at least built for comfort and that is the main thing in a hot climate. I expected to find the people much poorer than they are, and was agreeably surprised at the evidences of former wealth.

Prices of everything to eat are very high; for instance eggs are worth 80c. per doz., and a common gauze undershirt sells for \$1.50. Let our merchants take heed unto themselves lest they be left.

Some of the Cubans are intelligent and fairly well educated, and all are extremely friendly to the Americans. They seem to appreciate the disinterested friendship of the United States in its efforts to relieve them from an intolerable condition. A great many are anxious for annexation, and predict such a state of things in the near future.

This is destined to be a great country. With more natural advantages, and fewer disadvantages than any country I have ever seen—in my humble opinion it cannot help being a great country. With the liberties of the country secured—the stain of official corruption forever banished, and a constitution provided for the people of the island, which will be a benefaction to all who come within its protection,—agriculture, commerce, and education will go hand in hand—being the brides-maids of toil, poverty and wretchedness will disappear, and in its place will come peace, happiness and the love of a country.

This is quite enough for this time. With kind wishes to all, I remain Very truly,

T. L. LOWE.

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NOTICE.

Having qualified as Administratrix of L. L. Greene, deceased, late of Watauga county, N. C., this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of the deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned within twelve months from the date of this notice or it will be plead in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment. Dec. 15, 98.

MATTIE J. GREENE, Adm'x.

NOTICE.

Having qualified as administrator of Pinky Underwood deceased, all persons having claims against his estate are notified to present the same duly authenticated within 12 months from the date of this notice, or it will be plead in bar of their recovery. This Jan. 2, 1899.

C. J. COTTRELL, Adm'x.