

VARIOUS

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GOING ON IN IT, VOL. 1,
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The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1

It is said that the Sultan of Turkey has at last made up his mind to do something for the Armenians, and has ordered that a commission visit the villages that have suffered from the massacres, and make a careful note of the schools, churches, and monasteries which have been destroyed.

This Royal Commission is composed of two Mussulmans, three Armenians, and one Greek.

It is to start immediately, and the Sultan has ordered that a careful note of all the damage done shall be taken, and a full report rendered to him. It is his intention to reconstruct every building that has been destroyed.

In addition to this, he intends to erect orphan asylums for the children whose parents were killed during the massacres.

If this report is really true it will greatly rejoice Europe as well as the unfortunate people it is intended to benefit, for the impossibility of making the Sultan do anything for the Armenians has been worrying the various European governments considerably.

There is nothing new to tell about the peace negotiations.

England insists that the Turks shall leave Thessaly, and it seems as if the other Powers were willing to agree with her. The Sultan has thus far raised no new objections, and it looks as if peace would be concluded within a very short time.

The Cubans are rejoicing over the news which we have to tell you this week.

They have won a great victory which is of the utmost importance to their cause.

Under the leadership of Gen. Calixto Garcia, the insurgents have taken Victoria de las Tunas, a large town in the province of Santiago de Cuba.

This town was considered one of the great Spanish strongholds in Eastern Cuba. At the beginning of the present revolution it was freshly fortified, and at the time of its capture was defended by seven forts, which were armed with first-class guns.

It was garrisoned by a force of three hundred soldiers, but after a fight which lasted three days, the commander surrendered.

The loss of this town was such a severe blow, that the moment the bad news reached Spain a Cabinet Council was called, to discuss the situation. It was decided that the Spanish cause must be upheld at all hazards, and that fresh troops must immediately be sent to Cuba, to strike some decisive blow which shall offset the triumph of the Cubans.

The capture of this town is of great value to the Cubans for several reasons, one of which is that it breaks the strength of Spain in Eastern Cuba.

We have told you before that this part of the island is now known as Free Cuba, that the insurgent government controls it, and that there are no Spanish troops marching through it, ravaging it or laying it waste. What soldiers Spain still keeps in this part of the island are shut up in a few large and important towns.

These towns are, however, more of a burden than a profit to the Government, for the Spaniards dare not venture out into the surrounding country, the Cubans being too strong for them.

They are thus practically besieged; their supplies have to be sent to them from Havana, and they are entirely dependent on the main army for support.

For months past the great object of the Cuban troops in Eastern Cuba has been to waylay the baggage-trains carrying these supplies. Again and again they have been attacked, the guard slaughtered, and the provisions captured. The Cubans have begun to boast that such comforts as their army is now enjoying have been supplied to them through these forays on the enemy.

Bayamo, one of the towns that especially depended on the convoys, is in a state bordering on starvation, as the last three trains sent to her relief have been captured.

The Spaniards declare that a force of ten thousand men is necessary to take provisions to Bayamo in safety.

But it is not alone the importance of their victory which pleases the Cubans in the capture of Las Tunas. Their great cause for rejoicing is that at this battle the Spaniards for the first time accorded them the rights of belligerents. That is to say, the Spaniards treated them as soldiers engaged in legitimate warfare, not as brigands and bandits.

The Spanish commander himself requested that the Cubans should consent to an exchange of prisoners.

That you may understand the importance of this request, you must remember that there are especial rules and laws which govern the conduct of a war, and from which no nation dares depart, unless it wishes to be branded as inhuman and savage.

One of these laws relates to the care of prisoners. Prisoners of war must not be treated like criminals, for they have done no wrong. The patriotism that makes a man willing to give his life for his country is a virtue, not a crime, and therefore prisoners of war must always be treated as honorable men. Nothing should be done to them but to keep them in confinement, and prevent them from fighting.

As every prisoner captured weakens the fighting force of the enemy, all armies try to take as many captives as they can. During a war it is customary frequently to exchange prisoners; that is to say, each side gives back the prisoners they hold, in exchange for their own soldiers who are held by the other side.

Brigands, bandits, and rebels are not considered prisoners of war, and when captured are treated as criminals.

Up to the time of the capture of Victoria de las Tunas, the Spaniards utterly refused to exchange prisoners with the Cubans. They have insisted that the Cubans were rebels, and have shot their captives without mercy.

The Cubans have tried in every way to get the Spaniards to treat them fairly and acknowledge their rights as a nation at war, but have been unable to do so.

Now the situation is changed, and Spain has at last acknowledged the belligerency of Cuba to a certain extent.

When it was found that Las Tunas could hold out no longer, an unarmed officer was sent out to parley with the Cubans. He said that the commander would surrender if the Cuban General would consent to spare the lives of the garrison, and grant them their liberty in case an exchange of prisoners could be arranged.

General Garcia was only too pleased to agree to these terms, and the forts were delivered over to him.

Eighty-seven Spaniards were afterward exchanged for an equal number of Cubans.

It is thought that the Cubans will endeavor to improve the advantage they have gained by holding the city of Las Tunas, and establishing their government there.

One of the reasons why both Mr. Cleveland and President McKinley have hesitated to acknowledge the war rights of Cuba was that the Cubans did not hold one important city in which to

establish a government. Their government was carried on in secret and hidden places, and the army wandered from camp to camp, without one stronghold to call its own.

Should the Cubans fortify Las Tunas, all these objections will be removed, and the United States may be able to grant these brave people the rights they ask for.

Once recognized as belligerents, they will be able to buy what they need in our ports, and fit out a navy to fight Spain.

The Spaniards are fearful that some such action will be taken. The Government in Madrid has cabled to Weyler that Las Tunas must be retaken at any cost.

An attempt has already been made on the town, but the Spaniards were routed by the Cubans, who still retain possession of their prize.

The Spanish prisoners who were exchanged have been put under arrest for surrendering. They will be court-martialled, that is to say, tried by military court, and called upon to explain why they gave up the town.

From the Cuban accounts that have reached us, it seems that they attribute the victory to the fine work done by a new artillery corps which General Garcia has just organized. An artillery corps is made up of a number of cannon, each having its regular number of gunners to serve it. The artillery is a very valuable assistance in all warfare.

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