

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## EVERY-DAY AFFAIRS IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA.

Santiago, Aug. 18, 1893.

Today I accompanied Miss Barton and her aides to San Luis, a neighboring village, whence had come an appeal for help, for 10,000 starving people. It was a glorious morning, of warm sunshine and soft breezes; and to escape for a few hours from the horrors and tragedies of Santiago, into God's green country, made us feel like prisoners respited from the chain-gang. San Luis is the terminus of the railway, forty miles inland—or rather upland. The train was scheduled to leave at 8 o'clock, which the Spanish-American means it is always 8 till 9." It actually did pull out about 9:40, which brought us into the midst of the daily down-pour we had hoped to avoid. In these regions, where the year is divided into two seasons, the wet and dry, sophisticated travelers calculate their movements so as usually to escape a wetting. Hereabouts in August and September it rains every day with the regularity of clock-work, beginning a little after noon; not slow constant drizzles, like autumn rains in the North, but sudden, violent showers, washing the face of nature clean, converting the streets into rivers and sending a hundred miniature Niagras coursing down the hillsides. On general principles it is the pleasantest part of the year in southern Cuba, in agreeable contrast to the parched verdure and clouds of white dust which make life a burden at other times. But there are exceptions. Just before we reached a loud break in the railway, where some insurgent knight-errant of vagrant patriotism had burnt the bridge—the windows of heaven were opened, the rains descended and the floods came. Umbrellas are of little use in a tropical down-pour; the unhoused are sure of a wetting to the skin. There was no help for it but to pick up our petticoats and tramp a quarter of a mile, ankle deep in mud or knee-deep in wet grass, to the waiting train at the other end of the breal.

San Luis is a tropical interior village of southern Cuba—its narrow, stony streets, palm-shaded plaza, antique churches, tiled-roofs and tumble-down casas, all quaint as quaint can be; but the pleasing picture spoiled by abounding filth, squalor and distress. Upwards of 10,000 people are here, lacking the barest necessities of life, many of them absolutely without food. They thronged the streets and swarmed the railway station, in all their misery, rags and tatters—a sight to make the heart ache. Hollow-eyed, emaciated wretches, with famine written on their faces, followed us silently from street to street, with that pathetic patience which distinguished this class of Cuban non-combatants.

Breakfast—so called—served for the party in the "posada," which does duty as an inn, was an event of consequence in the annals of the village, particularly to the landlord, who managed in the matter of charges to reimburse himself for many a long day's lack of custom. It does seem queer that these Cubans, whom we have come to help, instead of assisting our philanthropic efforts in behalf of their own people, in almost every case charge us the highest possible price for everything that we are compelled to buy of them—making selfish and exorbitant profit of us at every turn, while taking our free gifts by the hundreds of tons.

Breakfast over and the field thoroughly canvassed, Miss Barton engaged a ware-house of M. Rosseau—an elegant French gentleman who resides in San Luis and does a flourishing mercantile business in business times. To him—in course of a week, when the bridge is repaired—the Red Cross will send a liberal invoice of food and clothing for the needy. How the hungry ten thousand will subsist in the meantime is as much a mystery as how they have managed to sustain life during the past three years of famine. The fact remains that many thousands of them have failed in the effort and are now at rest in the over-crowded Cam-po Sante on the hillside. By the way, why will Spanish-Americans invariably persist in establishing their grave yards immediately above the abodes of the living, knowing that tropic rains must wash the drainage down into their wells, to the augmentation of typhoid and other fevers? The Red Cross gift above mentioned will be large enough to supply the country back of San Luis for thirty miles or more, the people coming in for it on pack mules and M. Rosseau taking charge of its distribution.

Another good deed which Miss Barton has lately accomplished is the shipping, by railway, to Formosa, of supplies for the 500 people who are there awaiting the opening of the Uruguay Iron works. The superintendent and owner came down to Santiago and implored help in holding the men until he could get things started—when they will be able to take care of themselves. It is a grand work, to furnish employment to so many, and we are glad to be able to assist. Otherwise the waiting laborers would have to troop back to Santiago, to be fed with the rabble in the streets of that city; and it is far better to ease them along where they are, until they can be again self-supporting. Indeed, there is hardly a business concern in this part of Cuba which the Red Cross has not helped to get on its feet, in one way or another. Everybody realizes this and regards the beneficent institution—not as a trifling affair for encouraging beggary and feeding the irresponsible, but as something which comprehends the business needs of the nation and the best methods for upholding the impoverished and getting them into avocations which they can follow. Whatever may be Captain General Blanco's views, at the other end of the country, Santiago knows that the Red Cross is strong as the everlasting hills, far-reaching as the arm of Uncle Samuel and powerful as his government.

Miss Barton wants very much to reach Gibera and Baracoa, whence come direful tales of distress and people perishing by thousands; but it is impossible at present, as she has no means of transportation. Col. Humphrey has full charge over all Santiago's shipping, and has seized upon everything that floats for the homeward transportation of troops. This is well—but hardly warrants him in taking possession of the Triton, chartered by the Red Cross. The wheel within a wheel of many matters inexplicable to the casual observer may be traced to the lack of union between Generals Miles and Shafter. Col. Humphrey is Gen. Miles's man; hence he feels that his boss is the biggest, and he is as arbitrary with Generals Shafter and Wood as with anybody else—rather more so, in fact in order to show his "little brief authority." One can see with half an eye that any larger charge than that which this pompous official

now enjoys would burst him, like an over-inflated balloon. He even refused the Red Cross the use of an old leaky lighter, which lies day after day doing nobody any good, when Miss Barton wanted to borrow it to get a few mules ashore. People speak of it under their breath and devoutly hope that the exodus of the troops will take away this mis-manager as well. As to the four-legged mules above mentioned, a cargo of splendid fellows—full of life and handsome as mules can be—arrived some time ago, consigned to Miss Barton. Could she have had them at Siboney, they would almost have saved the army. There was never anything so dreadfully needed as those mules and a few good army wagons in those first awful days after the battle. If the Red Cross had them just now in Havana, with the privilege of a little land, it could feed the whole country—in spite of Blanco. Just now the animals are not of much use in Santiago; but there will be no difficulty in selling them, at their full value. Four-legged creatures of all sorts are extremely scarce in this end of Cuba. When hard times came, wise owners hid their mules, horses and cattle in the hills of the interior, where they mostly fell into the hands of the insurgents. All that remained in Santiago were taken by the Spaniards, or starved to death. A belated lot of ambulances came here for the Red Cross on the ort Victor; but they were packed at the very bottom of the ship-load of goods, and as the captain was ordered to take his whole cargo back to New York, the ambulances went with the rest.

Returning from San Luis in the early evening, Santiago looked more unsavory and hopeless than even in contrast to the open country.

One of the worst needs of this dirty old town is water. With a daily deluge of rain and the great bay glistening in front, it is often another case of "water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink." The city has a primitive sort of waterworks system and most of the houses are piped to receive it; but for some unknown reason the supply is so scanty that usually after 10 a. m. no water runs at all till the next morning. Sometimes it remains cut off for 48 hours together; and then great is the suffering, particularly among animals, for which no Cuban cares so long as his horse, or mule can be made to work. Every house-holder who is not rich enough to own a fountain in his patio, with reservoir attached, must provide himself, with barrels or similar receptacles, to hold several days' supply. The natural consequence of stagnant water in every house is a pest of mosquitoes, if not an increase of malarial poison. Gas is another need of Santiago. The streets are dimly illuminated, or rather their darkness is rendered visible by the pale glimmer of kerosine, in lamps attached to the fronts of the houses, which in these hard times are generally unlighted. The news of the day, as related to us over our late dinner in the Nurses' home, is not enlightening. They tell us that only ninety burial permits were issued in the city, between the rising and setting of the sun; and that the one new cemetery, lately laid out, received today its first tenants—fifteen American soldiers. Another tid-bit of information concerns our august neighbor, the archbishop of Santiago, whose "palace" adjoins our modest casa. He went today to the American authorities to enquire about the continuance of his salary, and incidentally to collect a few thousands of back pay, due