

Battle at Pozo Almonte.

On Saturday morning, March 7th '91 the Government forces under Colonel Robles were routed at Pozo Almonte by the Opposition levies under Col. Canto. Both these leaders are ~~both~~ men of experience, having seen much service in the war with Peru '80. Robles had a force it is computed of something less than 1800 men, nearly all regulars, belonging to the 5th. Santiago, the Angol, the 4th, and the Civico Regiments. His machine guns were damaged and useless, but eleven field pieces, posted on two hills within his position, did considerable service till his ammunition was expended. His position was good for defence, the hills being from 150 to 200 feet high, and 4 or 500 yards apart.

The Opposition forces under Col. Canto numbered nearly 2000 men under arms of all sorts, - some of the 4th. Regiment, a large number from the Pisagua, the Taltab, and the Charraral regiments, with the newly raised Iquique Battalion and a party from the Squadron in the Bay. This force came northward from Iquique by the Railway track, and debarked at about two and a half miles South of the Railway Station and town of Pozo. They formed a long line east and west, and were followed by a number of enrolled men to whom no rifles had been supplied, also many peones hung about their rear. The artillery on this side consisted of two long muzzle-loading Armstrongs - 12 lb. pounders. - with Gatling and Nordenfolt mitrailleurs with some field-guns and a large

supply of ammunition.

A light breeze was blowing, the air was fresh, and a cloudy sky prevented the intense heat usual at this season, when at 8. A.M. the whole line of Castro's army advanced, it was a rough line as the ground was broken with gullies and workings for Nitrate, but still the white coats kept well abreast of each other, the Armstrongs began at long range to play on the hills of Robles' position, and as soon as within range the rifles opened fire. No volleys were given worth mentioning, from first to last it was an indiscriminate fusillade, all the time advancing. The first heavy work was at Carmen Dajo, on Robles' left, where the resistance was stubborn, and on the front of the Western hill the battle raged furiously. At this time an Iron-clad Engine and barge, carrying infantry and machine guns - advanced up the Railway towards the centre of the defence, and rendered great assistance, the men fell in ~~heaps~~ great numbers, in places where the artillery and machine guns could attack, the Government men lay in heaps, and as fast as the Opposition men dropped, their unarmed reserves and the Perros ran in, picked up the rifles and cartridge cases, and filling up the ranks advanced with the rest fighting.

The battle by eleven o'clock was at its height, Robles' artillery had no more ammunition, and two companies of the 5th Santiago Regt. threw up their rifles and went over in a body to give in. Soon after this Robles was wounded, the second time, and he was carried away to Buen Retiro Oficina, in rear of Pto., to get his wounds

dressed. The Government troops were now retiring, firing in the direction of the town, though a detachment of 300 or more formed in close mass and retired in order to the Pampa, the few cavalry of their enemy, being unable to break or disperse them.

In the town the fugitives hid themselves in houses and sheds, but were hunted out and killed wherever they made any resistance, many small batches surrendered themselves here as prisoners, as well as on the battlefield. And a party of Gauto's men burning with a desire to avenge the slaughter of prisoners at Huara by Robles a week or two ago, hunted him out at Buen Retiro, dragged him, — wounded in two places, from his bed, and riddled him with bullets. —

By noon the rout was complete, guns, baggage, cattle, rifles, etc were in the hands of the Opposition. Mendoza, Commander of the 5th. was killed, and many other officers on both sides. The Sons of Buen Retiro got arms from the field of the fight, and attacked and looted the Officer's Stores, destroying everything there, also the Bodega of Señor Willis.

Col. Gauto managed to draw off the majority of his forces in fair order, but some 2 or 300 got loose and plundered the whole town of Pto. Three poor people who tried to defend their goods were shot down by the drunk-branded soldiery, and loose civilians who joined them. Col. Holley, Lieut. Robinson, and some others were heroic in their attempt to keep order, and several of the Opposition's Officers were killed by their own men while looking for drink.

The night was a terrible one for the poor people

of the town, 84 women and children crouched in darkness under tables, etc, in the Railway house, and mercifully escaped the fury of the drunken crew, who fought among themselves over the booty.

Several were put to death by the officers, for their brutality, but it was not till Sunday morning that Comandant Lopez with a large force of orderly troops put an end to the orgie.

Since the battle Iquique has been receiving train after train of wounded, 375 of the "Goblor-nistas" were taken on board the "Isis", sent from Valparaiso with a staff of medicos, many however remain here still.

Last week the Opposition sent all the Government wounded South, by ship to Caldera, a port in the hands of Government, but the Bahrracedist party by the President's order would not receive them, and so they were sent back to the tender care of their enemies. As soon as this was known in Valparaiso the people there chartered a ship and sent it north for these same wounded; she arrived just in time to take on board the sufferers from Pozo.

Four or five hundred wounded on the Opposition side are in the Iquique hospitals - in large and well-ventilated buildings. Within 8 hours of the close of the fight, 40 miles away, these wounded soldiers were lying in clean and comfortable beds with every attention that medical skill and careful nursing could supply. The dead are not counted, but it is supposed that as many as 500 have been killed.

At this time, March 13th, the Congress party is
in full possession of the Province of Tarapacá.

Chilean fleet

Arturo Prat. armour clad. turret ship. steel. 6800 tons - 325

4-9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " breechloaders. 8 small. 4 quick firing. 8 ma.

8600 H.P. - 17 knots.

Huascar armour clad turret ship. iron 1740 tons. 200' x 35'. 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ draught. 1 screw. 1500
4 $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 3". 1 turret. 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " armors. 2-8" 13 ton breechloaders. 2-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " breechloaders. 2 small guns.
1050 H.P. - 12 knots. 250 tons coal capacity. 2 masts. 1 funnel

Blanco Encalada. armour clad. central battery. iron. 3450 tons. 210' x 45'. 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ draught. 2 screws. Belt arm.
9"-4". Battery breastwork citadel 8"-4 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". deck 3". 6-8" 13 ton breechloaders. 4 small guns
3000 H.P. - 12 knots. 500 tons coal capacity. Barque rigged. 1 funnel.

Cochrane - same as Blanco except that guns are 4-9" 13 ton breechloaders. 2-7" breechloaders.
4 small guns. Speed 13 knots.

Esmeralda deck protected cruiser steel 2810 tons 270' x 39.5'. draught 18 $\frac{1}{2}$. 2 screws. Deck steel 1".
2-10" 24 ton breechloaders. 6-6" 4 ton breechloaders. 7 machine guns
6500 H.P. - 18.3 knots. 600 tons coal capacity. 2 masts. ^{2 funnels} 3 torpedo launching tubes

Almirante Lynch.

Atcao unprotected corvett. composite. 1070 tons. 227' x 29'. draught 15.5. 1 screw. 1-70 pounder. 4-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " breechloaders
1000 H.P. 9 knots. 300 tons coal cap. Barque rigged 1 ~~main~~ funnel.

Chacabuco unprotected cruiser. wood. 1000 tons. 218' x 33'. draught 12.3. 1 screw. 3-8" breechloaders. 4
4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " breechloaders. 1100 H.P. 10 knots. 400 tons coal capacity. Ship rig. 1 funnel.

Magellanes. unprotected. ram. composite. 800 tons. 190' x 27'. draught 14.9. ^{2 screws} 1-7" breechloader. 1-64 pounder
muzzle loader. 3-20 pounders breechloaders. 1240 H.P. 11 knots. 300 tons coal cap. Barque rig. 1 funnel.

O'Higgins unprotected. ram. wood. 1100 tons. 210' x 33'. draught 17.4. 1 screw. 3-7". 4-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ " breechloaders.
1100 H.P. 10 knots. 500 tons coal cap. Ship rigged. 1 funnel.

Pilcomayo. unprotected. ram. wood. 600 tons. 171' x 27'. draught 11.8. 1 screw. 2-70 pounders. 2-4 $\frac{3}{4}$ "
breechloaders. 1880 H.P. 9 knots. 200 tons coal cap. Barque rig. 1 funnel.

There are also 12 torpedo boats. Cangamos dispatch vessel. Chile & Tolken transport. Toro, Lautaro, Valparaiso, Patriota gun boats. 4 sailers
& 4 ships building.