

THE PRESIDENT'S CUBAN MESSAGE.

The Long Expected Document at Last Laid Before Congress.

SLIGHT NOTICE OF MAINE WRECK.

The Message Chiefly Embraces a Detail of the Horrors of the Cuban War—Lengthy Extracts From Messages of Presidents Grant and Jackson—Opposes Recognition of Cuban Belligerency or Independence of the Cubans—Recommends That the President be Authorized to Intervene to Put a Stop to the War.

(Washington, April 11.—The president today sent the following message to the congress of the United States:

Obedient to that precept of the constitution which commands the president to give from time to time to the congress information of the state of the union, and to recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient, it becomes my duty now to address your body with regard to the grave crisis that has arisen in the relations of the United States to Spain by reason of the warfare that for more than three years has raged in the neighboring island of Cuba. I do so because of the intimate connection of the Cuban question with the state of our union and the grave relation of the course which it is now incumbent upon the nation to adopt must be needs bear to the traditional policy of our government, if it is to accord with the precepts laid down by the founders of the republic and religiously observed by succeeding administrations to the present day.

The present is but the successor of other similar insurrections which have occurred in Cuba against the dominion of Spain, extending over a period of nearly half a century, each of which, during its progress, has subjected the United States to great effort and expense in enforcing its neutrality laws, caused enormous losses to American trade and commerce, caused irritation, annoyance and disturbance among our citizens and by the exercise of cruel, barbarous and uncivilized practice of warfare, shocked the sensibilities and offended the humane sympathies of our people.

HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

Since the present revolution began in February, 1895, this country has seen the fertile fields of Cuba ravaged by fire and sword in the course of a struggle unequalled in the history of the island and rarely paralleled as to the number of the combatants and the bitterness of the contest by any revolution of modern times. The production of sugar, the chief industry, its fields laid waste, its mills in ruins and its people perishing by tens of thousands from hunger and destitution. We have found ourselves constrained, in the observance of that strict neutrality which our laws command and which the law of nations commands, to police our own coasts and watch our own seaports in prevention of any unlawful aid in aid of the Cubans. Our trade has suffered; the capital invested by our citizens in Cuba has been largely lost and the temper and forbearance of our people, which has hitherto found its expression from time to time in the national legislature so that issues wholly external to our own body politic engage attention and stand in the way of that close devotion to domestic advancement that becomes a self-contained commonwealth whose primal maxim has been the avoidance of all foreign entanglements. All this must needs awaken and has indeed aroused the utmost concern on the part of this government, as well during my predecessor's term as in my own.

In April, 1896, the evils from which our country suffered through the Cuban war became so onerous that my predecessor made an effort to bring about peace through the mediation of this government in any way that might tend to an honorable adjustment of the contest between Spain and her revolted subjects. It failed, through the refusal of the Spanish government then in power to consider any form of mediation or, indeed, any proposal which did not begin with the actual submission of the insurgents to the mother country, and then only on such terms as Spain herself might see fit to grant. The war continued unabated. The resistance of the insurgents was in no wise diminished.

HORRORS OF RECONCENTRATION.

The efforts of Spain were increased, both by the dispatch of fresh levies to Cuba and by the addition to the horrors of the strife of a new and inhuman phase, happily unprecedented in the modern history of civilized Christian peoples. The policy of devastation and concentration, inaugurated by the captain general's bando of October 21, 1896, in the province of Pinar del Rio was thence extended to embrace all of the island to which the power of the Spanish arms was able to reach by occupation or by military operation. The peasantry, including all dwelling in the open agricultural interior, were driven into the garrison towns or isolated places held by the troops. The raising and movement of provisions of all kinds were interdicted. The fields were laid waste, dwellings unroofed and fired, mills destroyed,

and, in short, everything that could deplete the land and render it unfit for human habitation or support, was commanded by one or the other of the contending parties, and executed by all the powers at their disposal.

By the time the present administration took office, a year ago, reconcentration—called—had been made effective over the better part of the four central and western provinces, Santa Clara, Matanzas, Havana and Pinar del Rio. The agricultural population, to the estimated number of 300,000 or more, was herded within the towns and the immediate vicinity, deprived of the means of support, rendered destitute of shelter, left poorly clad and exposed to the most unsanitary conditions. As the scarcity of food increased with the devastation of the rural areas of production, destitution and want became misery and starvation. Month by month the death rate increased by an alarming ratio. By March, 1897, according to conservative estimates from official Spanish sources, the mortality among the reconcentrados, from starvation and the diseases thereto incident, exceeded 50 per centum of their total number. No practical relief was accorded to the destitute. The over-burdened towns, already suffering from the general dearth, could give no aid. So-called "zones of cultivation" established within the immediate area of effective military control about the cities and fortified camps proved illusory as a remedy for the suffering. The unfortunates, being for the most part women and children, with aged and helpless men, enfeebled by disease and hunger, could not till the soil, without tools, seed or shelter, for their own support or for the supply of the cities. Reconcentration, adopted avowedly as a war measure in order to cut the resources of the insurgents, worked its predestinated course. As I said in my message of last December, IT WAS NOT CIVILIZED WARFARE; IT WAS EXTREMEDINATION. THE ONLY PLACE IT COULD BEGET WAS THAT OF THE WILDERNESS AND THE GRAVE.

Meanwhile, the military situation in the island had undergone a noticeable change. The extraordinary activity that characterized the second year of the war, when the insurgents invaded even the hitherto unharmed fields of Pinar del Rio and carried havoc and destruction up to the walls of the city of Havana itself, had relaxed into a dogged struggle in the central and eastern provinces. The Spanish arms regained a measure of control in Pinar del Rio and parts of Havana, but, under the existing conditions of the rural country, without immediate improvement of their productive situation. Even thus partially restricted, the revolutionists held their own and their conquest and submission, put forward by Spain as the essential and sole basis of peace, seemed as far distant as at the outset.

In this state of affairs, my administration found itself confronted with the grave problem of its duty. My message of last December reviewed the situation and narrated the steps taken with a view to relieving its acute and opening the way to some form of honorable settlement. The assassination of the prime minister, Canovas, led to a change of government in Spain. The former administration pledged to submission without concession gave place to a more liberal party, committed long in advance to a policy of reform involving the wider principle of home rule for Cuba and Puerto Rico. The overtures of this government, made through its new envoy, General Woodford, and looking to an immediate and effective amelioration of the condition of the island, although not accepted to the extent of admitted mediation in any shape, were met by assurances that, home rule, in an advanced phase, would be forthwith offered to Cuba, without waiting for the war to end, and that more humane methods should henceforth prevail in the conduct of hostilities. Coincidentally with these declarations, the new government of Spain continued and completed the policy already begun by its predecessor, of testifying friendly regard for this nation by releasing American citizens held under one charge or another connected with the insurrection, so that, by the end of November, not a single national entitled in any way to our national protection, remained in a Spanish prison.

PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS.

While these negotiations were in progress, the increasing destitution of the unfortunate reconcentrados and the alarming mortality among them claimed earnest attention. The success which had attended the limited measures of relief extended to the suffering American citizens among them by the judicious expenditure through the consular agencies of the money appropriated expressly for their succor by the joint resolution approved May 24, 1897, prompted the humane extension of a similar scheme of aid to the great body of sufferers. A suggestion to this end was acquiesced in by the Spanish authorities. On the 24th of December last I caused to be issued an appeal to the American people, inviting contributions in money or in kind for the succor of the starving sufferers in Cuba, following this on the 8th of January by a similar public announcement of the formation of a committee to receive contributions, with headquarters in New York city, composed of three members representing the American National Red Cross and the religious and business elements of the community. The efforts of the committee have been untiring and have, accomplished much. Arrangements for free transportation to Cuba have greatly aided the charitable work. The president of the American Red Cross, and representatives of other contributory organizations have generously visited Cuba, and co-operated with the consular general and the local authorities to make effective distribution of the relief collected through the efforts of the central committee, nearly \$200,000 in money reached the sufferers and more is forthcoming. The supplies are admitted duty free, and transportation to the interior has been arranged so that the relief, at first necessarily confined to Havana and the larger cities, is now extended through means of hot air boats to the towns where suffering exists. Thousands of lives have already been saved.

The necessity for a change in the condition of the reconcentrados is recognized by the Spanish government. Within a few days past, the orders of General Weyler have been revoked; the reconcentrados are, it is said, to be permitted to return to their homes, and to resume the self-supporting pursuits of peace; public works have been ordered to give them employment, and a sum of \$100,000 has been appropriated for their relief.

The war in Cuba is of such a nature that, short of subjugation or extermination, a final military victory for either side seems impracticable. The alternative lies in the physical exhaustion of the one or the other party, or, perhaps, both—a condition which in effect ended the ten years' war by the truce of Zampon. The prospect of such a protraction and conclusion of the present strife is a contingency hardly to be contemplated with equanimity by the civilized world, and least of all the United States, affected and injured as we are, deeply and intimately by its very existence.

Realizing this, it appeared to be my duty, in spirit of true friendship, no less to Spain than to the Cubans who have so much to lose by the prolongation of the struggle, to seek to bring about an immediate termination of the war, without prejudice to the rights of either party, and in accordance with the proposals to the Spanish government looking to an armistice until October

measured words, uttered in 1876, when after seven years of sanguinary, desolating and cruel hostilities in Cuba, he reached the conclusion that the recognition of the independence of Cuba was impracticable and indefensible; and that the recognition of belligerency was not warranted by the facts according to the tests of public law. I commented especially upon the latter aspect of the question, pointing out the inconvenience and positive dangers of a recognition of belligerency which, while adding to the already onerous burdens of neutrality within our own jurisdiction, bore not in any way extend our influence or effective ounces in the territory of hostilities. Nothing has since occurred to change my view in this regard—and I recognize as fully now as then that the issue of a proclamation of neutrality, by which process the so-called recognition of the belligerency is published, could of itself and unattended by other action, accomplish nothing toward the end for which we labor, the instant cessation of Cuba and the cessation of the misery that afflicts the island.

THE QUESTION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Turning to the question of recognizing at this time the independence of Cuba, the present insurgent government in Cuba, we find precedents in our history from an early day. They are well summed up in President Jackson's message to congress, December 21st, 1836, on the subject of the recognition of the independence of Texas. He said: "In all the contests that have arisen out of the revolution of France, out of the disputes relating to the crowns of Portugal and Spain, out of the separation of the American possessions of both from the European governments, and out of the numerous and constant occurring struggles for dominion in Spanish-America, so wisely consistent with our just principles has been the action of our government that we have, under the most critical circumstances, avoided all sequestration and estrangement of good will in those against whom we have been by force of evidence compelled to decide. It has thus made known to the world that the uniform policy and practice of the United States is to avoid all interference in disputes which merely relate to the internal government of other nations, and eventually to recognize the authority of the prevailing party without reference to our particular interests and views or to the merits of the original controversy. . . . But on this, as on every other trying occasion, safety is to be found in a

IMPORTANT EVENTS OF THE DAY.

- The President sends his Message to Congress. He opposes Recognition of Cuban Belligerency or Independence.
- The President asks Congress to authorize him to put a stop to the War in Cuba, without intimating in favor of which party he will act.
- There was a serious Riot in Madrid Sunday night.
- Minister Woodford does not expect to have to sever his relations with the Spanish Government.
- Our future relations with Spain and Cuba now depend on what action Congress will take.
- Consul General Lee's Journey North from Tampa yesterday was a triumphal tour, enthusiastic crowds being in attendance at every station where the train stopped. He expects to reach Washington at 2 o'clock this afternoon.
- The President's Message is read in both Houses of Congress and referred to Committees.
- Senator Butler introduces Resolution for Cuban Independence.
- The Reports of Cuban Consuls is laid before Congress.

LET FOR THE NEGOTIATION OF PEACE WITH THE GOOD OFFICES OF THE PRESIDENT.

In addition I asked the immediate revocation of the order of reconcentration, so as to permit the people to return to their farms and the needy to be met by the means of bringing about peace in Cuba, to confide the preparation thereof to the insular parliament, inasmuch as the concurrence of that body would be necessary to reach a final result, it being, however, understood that the powers reserved by the constitution to the central government are not lessened or diminished. As the Cuban parliament does not meet until the 4th of May next, the Spanish government would not object, for its part, to the preparation of a preliminary peace in Cuba, to confide the preparation thereof to the insular parliament, inasmuch as the concurrence of that body would be necessary to reach a final result, it being, however, understood that the powers reserved by the constitution to the central government are not lessened or diminished. As the Cuban parliament does not meet until the 4th of May next, the Spanish government would not object, for its part, to the preparation of a preliminary peace in Cuba, to confide the preparation thereof to the insular parliament, inasmuch as the concurrence of that body would be necessary to reach a final result, it being, however, understood that the powers reserved by the constitution to the central government are not lessened or diminished.

The reply of the Spanish cabinet was received on the night of the 31st ultimo. It offers, as the means of bringing about peace in Cuba, to confide the preparation thereof to the insular parliament, inasmuch as the concurrence of that body would be necessary to reach a final result, it being, however, understood that the powers reserved by the constitution to the central government are not lessened or diminished. As the Cuban parliament does not meet until the 4th of May next, the Spanish government would not object, for its part, to the preparation of a preliminary peace in Cuba, to confide the preparation thereof to the insular parliament, inasmuch as the concurrence of that body would be necessary to reach a final result, it being, however, understood that the powers reserved by the constitution to the central government are not lessened or diminished.

The proposition submitted by General Woodford and the reply of the Spanish government were both in the form of brief memoranda, the texts of which are before me—and are substantially in the language above given. The function of the Cuban parliament in the matter of "preparing" peace and the manner of its doing so are not expressed in the Spanish memoranda, but from General Woodford's explanatory reports of preliminary discussions preceding the final conference, it is understood that the Spanish government stands ready to give the insular congress full powers to settle the terms of peace with the insurgents—whether by direct negotiation or indirectly by means of legislation does not appear. With this last overture in the direction of immediate peace, and its disappointing reception by Spain, the executive was brought to the end of his effort.

My annual message of December last, I said: "Of the untired measures there remain only: Recognition of the insurgents as belligerents; recognition of the independence of Cuba; neutral intervention to end the war by imposing a rational compromise between the contestants, and intervention in favor of one or the other party. I speak not of forcible annexation, for that cannot be thought of. That, by our code of morality, would be criminal aggression." Thereupon I reviewed these alternatives, in the light of president Grant's

rigid adherence to principle. In the contest between Spain and the revolted colonies we stood aloof and waited not only until the ability of the new states to protect themselves was fully established, but until the danger of their being again subjugated had entirely passed away. Then, and not until then, were they recognized. Such was our course in regard to Mexico herself. . . . It is true that with regard to Texas the civil authority of Mexico was defeated, the chief of the republic self captured, and all present power to control the newly organized government of Texas annihilated within its confines. But, on the other hand, there is, in appearance, at least, an immense disparity of physical force on the side of Texas. The Mexican republic, under another executive is rallying its forces under a new leader, and menacing a fresh invasion to recover its lost dominion. Upon the issue of this threatened invasion, the independence of Texas may be considered as suspended; and were there nothing peculiar in the relative situation of the United States and Texas, our acknowledgment of its independence at such a crisis could scarcely be regarded as consistent with the prudent reserve with which we have hitherto held ourselves bound to treat all similar questions.

Thereupon Andrew Jackson proceeded to consider the risk that there might be imposed upon the United States motives of selfish interest in view of the former claim on our part to the territory of Texas, and of the avowed purpose of the Texans in seeking recognition of independence as an incident to the incorporation of Texas in the union; concluding thus:

"Prudence, therefore, seems to dictate that we should still stand aloof and maintain our present attitude, if not until Mexico itself, or one of the great foreign powers shall recognize the independence of the new government, at least until the lapse of time or the course of events shall have proved beyond cavil or dispute the ability of the people of that country to maintain their separate sovereignty and to uphold the government constituted by them. Neither of the contending parties can justly complain of this course. By pursuing it, we are but carrying out the long established policy of our government, a policy which has secured to us respect and influence abroad and inspired confidence at home."

These are the words of the resolute and patriotic Jackson. They are evidence that the United States, in addition

CUBANS IN THE HANDS OF CONGRESS.

Future Events Depend on Action This Body Will Take.

DIVERGENT VIEWS OF MEMBERS.

Criticism of the Message by Congressmen—Committees of the Two Houses Trying to Draft Resolutions Which Will Please all Parties—Consular Reports, Portraying Horrors of the Cuban War, Laid Before Congress—Governor General Blanco's Order Suspending Hostilities Throughout the Island.

(Washington, April 11.—The future of the relations of the United States with Spain and Cuba now rests with congress, the representative body of the American people. What course the elected men composing it will pursue cannot be foretold tonight. The foreign committees of both houses now have the subject in their control, and after due deliberation, will report to their respective branches what they consider should be the attitude of the United States on the grave question presented. Early action by the committees is expected, but exactly when it may be looked for is not now determinable. The full responsibility of the subject was placed upon congress when President McKinley today transmitted to it a carefully prepared and anxiously awaited message relating to our negotiations with Spain as to its warfare in Cuba and drawing therefrom his personal conclusions and recommendations.

His message in recent years, not even that of President Cleveland on Venezuela, nor President Harrison on Chile, caused such widespread and intense interest. That it did not create profound enthusiasm may have been due to the fact that its main features had been accurately forecasted in the Associated Press dispatches, or to a disappointment among those who wanted Cuban independence and immediate reprisal upon Spain for the destruction of the Maine. For a long time a large majority in both houses have favored recognition of the independence of Cuba; for more than two years, as evoked in resolutions passed by congress, the recognition of belligerency has been sought. Both of these propositions were antagonized in the message, and consequently in this regard the message did not accord with the majority sentiment. The message left congress very much at sea, because of the "paragement" in views between it and the executive, an obstacle hard to surmount, unless, as now seems possible, congress sees its course to lie in accord with the president's recommendation. It is generally believed that the president would have been authorized to intervene with the army and navy, had it not been for the concluding paragraphs of the document which announced the latest phase of diplomatic negotiations.

IN THE SENATE.

The senate committee on foreign relations immediately went into session but reached no definite conclusion. From the fact that the republican members held a consultation after the meeting adjourned and from what was said regarding it, the inference was drawn that some strong measure was necessary in order to carry any action by the committee through the senate. A declaration of war was talked of and a declaration that the people of Cuba should be free, coupled with authorization to the president to bring this about by armed intervention, was suggested. It is well-known that any proposition advanced will be met in the senate with an amendment declaring the independence of the present government, and to so frame a resolution as to carry a majority of the senate into the same time meet the recommendations of the president, is the result which the foreign relations committee is trying to secure.

The conservative senators also met in the afternoon and determined to oppose any radical measure, if it should be reported by the senate committee on foreign relations.

HOUSE COMMITTEE.

The temper of the house could not be accurately determined, but there, as in the senate, the proposition for Cuban independence has to be met. Any report from the committee on foreign affairs that does not carry with it the feature will be antagonized by an amendment and the prospects are that nearly all the democrats and many republicans would favor it. Efforts have been directed all day toward action which will secure the solid support of the republican organization and republican majority of the house. To this end the republican members of the house committee, to whom the message was referred, were in conference during the day and night.

Outside of the capitol the same intense interest was everywhere manifested in the president's message. . . . Even at the White house there was a full in the excitement which was centered there for the last fortnight. The president saw several of his cabinet advisors early in the day, but there was no cabinet meeting. The message left the White house shortly before noon in order to reach congress promptly on its assembling. This done, the president joined his family at lunch with evident satisfaction at having the tremendous strain and burden of recent days, in a measure, removed. There was an aspect of holiday safety surrounding the White house, as Easter Monday was observed as usual by the egg rolling gathering of thousands of children in the grounds in the rear of the executive mansion. The Marine band furnished music for the youngsters.

remined at the legation during the day sending and receiving many dispatches and conferring with his advisors. He called the entire president's message to Madrid, except the historical references to General Grant's message to Texas, etc. The minister said he must decline to make the slightest public allusion to the president's message as any remark from him would be inconsistent with his position. It is known, however, that Senator Polo is keenly sensitive to the language of the message. What its effect will be upon his services here is not known, for no word has yet come as to the effect of the message upon the authorities at Madrid. Up to tonight Senator Polo received no instructions in withdrawal, nor was there any intimation of such instructions.

At the other embassies and legations the message aroused the greatest interest, but it cannot be said to have been received with satisfaction. In other high diplomatic quarters some question was expressed as to the portion of the president's message in which the "theory" of applying the war to Cuba, and the intention was made that the great powers of Europe, so far as they represented civilization, did not support this view expressed by the president. There has been no further conference between the ambassadors and ministers of the powers, nor is there any present indication of further action from that quarter.

The new diplomatic phases of the question developed today at the state department. Secretary Sherman said he would not be surprised if the Madrid report proved true that Minister Woodford was about to leave Madrid. At the same time the state department was without a minister, who had actually had been taken. General Lee is en route here and it is expected that his arrival will be the signal for a notable demonstration. The war and navy departments continued their active preparations today. While eventualities are being prepared for, the sentiment in army and navy circles is that war is not so imminent as is seemed to be a few days ago. It can be stated on authority that no communications have yet been given to the withdrawal of the United States fleet at Key West, as the administration holds that the situation has undergone no change which makes this withdrawal necessary or advisable.

CUBAN CONSULAR REPORTS.

The consular correspondence with regard to the situation in Cuba, which was transmitted today, was prepared in response to resolutions of inquiry adopted by the house and senate. The reports deal largely with the distress and sufferings which exist in all the districts, but General Lee reports quite fully upon the decrease of the army, with regard to autonomy and other political phases of the situation. In preparing the correspondence for transmission to congress considerable attention was given to the marked confidential, are committed to General Lee's correspondence runs over the period from November 17th, 1897 to April 1st, 1898.

Under date of March 27th, General Lee enclosed a statement from gentlemen whom he knew as men of veracity, telling of the condition of reconcentrados in "the ditches" on the outskirts of Havana. Among them were an American woman and her children, giving relatively, it is stated, ten days of life for each person. "In one crowd," says the report, "a poor woman was lying surrounded by her children who contemplated their sacrifice, without a lament or shedding a tear, they themselves being real spectres of hunger emaciated in a horrible manner." Again it is said: "If any young girl came in, any way nice-looking, she was impolitely welcomed to the most abominable of traffics. Between August and November all but 397 of 1,700 people who entered the ditches, had died."

On December 1, 1897 General Lee telegraphed the parliament from the consular office at Matanzas an "extensive and dangerous conspiracy" there under the ex-governor of the province directed against Americans. "Action against the," says General Lee "to be continued upon movement of the United States government in favor of independence of Cuba."

Two days later General Lee sent a mailed report saying: "I still think that two warships, at least, should be at Key West prepared to move here at short notice and that more of them should be sent to Dry Tortugas and a coal station established there."

March 14th General Lee enclosed a letter from Consul Barker of Sagua, who requested him to transmit the following letter, which is addressed to him (General Lee): "Dear Sir:—I will thank you to communicate to the department as quickly as possible the fact that the military commander and other officers of the military positively refuse to allow the reconcentrados to whom I am issuing food, in its raw state to procure fuel with which to cook the food." Consul Brice, at Matanzas sent in

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