

# THE DAILY FREE PRESS.

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W. S. HERBERT, - Editor.

## NEWSPAPER RELIABILITY.

We print the following from the Raleigh News-Observer, because it so well expresses our feeling:

"As a rule, our experience is that the tendency of the bulk of the news of a respectable newspaper is toward the truth. It must not be overlooked that in their desire to serve the public, enterprising journalists try to be first in getting the news.

"Take, for example, the handling of the war news for the last few weeks. Even the report of the Maine court and the president's message came as no surprise. They had been outlined and with practical accuracy by men who had gotten the results with toil and vigilance of which critics do not dream.

"Again, the newspaper, more acutely than any one else, feels most chagrined at denying its printed story of the previous day. And if it has been led into an error, it is to its credit that it comes out promptly and frankly with the correction.

"There is no desire among respectable newspapers except to print the truth and on the whole they do so. In the midst of a mass of news to be handled in say eight hours one cannot be expected to get out a Revised Edition of the Bible. But do not be hard on your paper, dear reader; what it tells you is pretty nearly right."

We wish to add to the above the thought that during the recent numerous conflicting reports regarding the war situation, these conflicting reports were largely because of President McKinley's vacillating course. We have no doubt that he told the representatives of the money power that he would exhaust every resource at his command to maintain peace; and, on the other hand, told others that the honor of the American nation would be fully vindicated. And this, we think, largely accounts for the conflicting reports sent over the wires during the past few weeks. And we think the reports hereafter—now that McKinley has sent in his message—will be more in accord with actual facts.

What the United States does in the interest of the island of Cuba she needs to do quickly. With the withdrawal from Havana of Lee and the Stars and Stripes came the withdrawal of Clara Barton and the Red Cross. The starving multitudes are being no longer fed. The absence of Americans removes all restraints to the satiety of proverbial Spanish cruelty and blood-thirstiness. The main purpose of our intervention is to stop an intolerable condition in the island. Hence we need to make haste. The Red Cross, as Miss Barton points out in a letter, must follow not precede the guns. And Cuba's crying need is the presence and ministrations of Miss Barton and her like.—Charlotte Observer.

The Wilmington Star firmly sticks to the opinion that there will be no war. It said yesterday: When Spain has been driven to her last resort, she will listen again to the Pope and the European powers, and they will whisper in her ear: "Cuba is already lost to you. Abandon the island and save Porto Rico, the Philippines and your present dynasty." The Star thinks that then Sagasta will yield to the inevitable. The Star evidently believes that Sagasta is sagacious.

The Catholic Pope has done all in his power to avert war. He is reported as greatly upset over the almost certainty of conflict, and is said to have prayed God to avert the war, otherwise to let him die that he may not behold such a sight.

Pugilist Jim J. Corbett is a candidate for the Democratic congressional nomination in the Harlem district.

## GRIFTON ITEMS.

April 14, 1898.

Miss Ella Bland is visiting Mrs. Sarah Hellen.

Mr. W. S. Blount was in the village Wednesday.

Mess. Jacob and Wade McCotter went to Greenville Monday.

Mrs. May Hellen has gone to Richmond to purchase her spring stock of millinery.

Mr. Henry Crawford and family spent Saturday night and Sunday with Mr. W. G. Garris.

Mr. W. A. Tingle died at his home near here Tuesday. He leaves a widow and five children to lament their loss. He was sick only a short while. His remains were taken to Vanceboro for interment.

# LEE ON THE DISASTER.

Says Man Who Blew Up the Maine Was No Novice.

## BLAMES THE WEYLERITES.

In His Testimony Before the Senate Committee He Exonerates Blanco From Complicity and Discusses the State of Cuba—Havana Starving.

Washington, April 15.—The testimony taken before the senate committee on foreign relations in connection with the investigation into the relations between the United States and Cuba was made public today. It constitutes a book of about 650 pages and includes not only the testimony taken since the disaster to the Maine, but also much that was taken before and running back for a year or more. The statement which contains the greatest current interest is that made by Consul General Lee on the 12th inst. In this statement General Lee said he was informed on very good authority that the Spaniards had placed two rows of torpedoes at the mouth of Havana harbor, by Morro castle, within the past two months, or subsequent to the Maine disaster, and that the switchboard is in a room in the castle. He said, however, that he had no information of the placing of any torpedoes before the Maine was destroyed and none in regard to the purchase abroad by the Spanish authorities.

"Have you any reason to suppose that the harbor was mined at all before the blowing up of the Maine?" asked Senator Frye.

"No, sir; I had no reason to suspect anything of the sort up to that time." He then went on to say that General Weyler's letter to Santos Guzman had led him to believe that mines might have been placed there previous to the Maine incident, and he said that this supposition was strengthened by a telegram from General Weyler of which he had cognizance. Upon the whole, he thought the Weyler letter (the Laine letter) was a correct copy of the genuine letter. The telegram to which he referred was addressed to Eva Canel, a noted Spanish woman and an admirer of Weyler, and to Senor Guzman, and it read as follows:

"Grave circumstances cause me to ask you to destroy the last letter, of Feb. 18."

General Lee said that this telegram had never before been published, and he found in it strong confirmatory evidence of the genuineness of the Weyler letter.

### No Doubt About External Origin.

With reference to the responsibility for the destruction of the Maine, General Lee said:

"I am satisfied the explosion was from the outside. I cabled the state department a few days after the board assembled that it was almost certain that the explosion was from the exterior. I have always had an idea about the Maine that, of course, it was not blown up by any private individual or by any private citizen, but it was blown up by some of the officers who had charge of the mines and electrical wires and torpedoes in the arsenal there who thoroughly understood their business, for it was done remarkably well. "I do not think General Blanco, the present captain and governor general of the island of Cuba, had anything to do with it. I do not think he had any knowledge of it. I saw him just shortly after the occurrence. I was sitting in my room at the hotel, and from the balcony of the hotel I could hear this. I heard the explosion and saw a great column of fire go up in the air. A few moments after ascertaining that it was the Maine I went right down to the palace and I asked for General Blanco. He came in directly by himself. He had just heard it and was crying; tears were coming out of his eyes. He seemed to regret it as much as anybody I saw in Havana, but I think it came from some of the subaltern officers who had been there under Weyler, and who were probably anti-Blanco anyhow and who had full knowledge of the business."

General Lee said that he had seen a copy of a telegram from Admiral Manterola, dated in Havana, prior to the explosion of the Maine, to the Spanish commission in London, asking the commission to "hurry up the electrical cables." "Whether that referred to wire for submarine mines or torpedoes, I do not know," he continued. "I tried to ascertain if any of the wire or electrical cables had arrived there, but they came on Spanish ships and I could not find out."

General Lee said that this testimony in regard to Manterola and also that with reference to the Weyler telegram had been furnished to the court of inquiry which investigated the Maine disaster, but had not been sent to congress or published because of a request of his made to the state department not to make them public, "as I was afraid the Spanish papers there would republish it, and they would probably kill the man that gave it to me."

General Lee then made the statement, already reported, about the electric

lights, stating that not more than one or two had gone out. He had not felt the shock of the explosion at his hotel.

### Was an Expert's Work.

The following colloquy between Senator Foraker and General Lee brought out some further opinions of the general in regard to the destruction of the Maine:

Senator Foraker—You think that no novice could have destroyed the Maine? General Lee—Oh, no, sir! The man who did the work was an officer thoroughly acquainted with explosives of all sorts and knew all about them. It was very well done.

Senator Foraker—A man who had expert knowledge necessarily? General Lee—Yes, sir.

Senator Clark—And who must have had knowledge of the location of the torpedo?

General Lee—Yes. I never have been certain that the submarine explosive was placed there prior to the entrance of the Maine into the harbor. It might have been done afterward. The Maine was anchored to a buoy by some little chain. A vessel swinging around that way sometimes gets at various places all around the circle. When she would swing off that way, with the bow next to the buoy and these boats plying about the harbor all the time, anybody could go pretty well in front of her on a dark night and drop one of these submarine mines of 500 pounds. They have fuses, as it were, and as the boat goes around it would touch the fuse, which makes contact and explodes the mine. That might have been done after the Maine got in there and not be discovered. One or two men rowing quietly in a boat could drop it off the stern of the boat on a dark night, though Sigsbee had his patrols out. A boat would not have been noticed, because boats go there always to a late hour of the night. The harbor is full of these little boats. A mine weighs about 500 pounds, and I suppose it would take two or three men—one man to row and probably one or two to handle the mine.

### Spanish Population Not Hostile.

In reply to a question from Senator Gray General Lee said that the Spanish population is not especially hostile toward the United States, his language being as follows:

"I do not think they are now. They were, but the Spanish portion are principally the merchants, commission merchants and shopkeepers, and all this agitation is affecting very much their business. A great many of them, while they give expression to great loyalty, are really annexationists because they think it is the only way out of the trouble, as they would much prefer annexation to the United States to a Cuban republic, fearing that discrimination would be made against them in some way, and would rather trust to the United States than to the Cubans."

Senator Lodge asked, "What does this cessation of hostilities spoken of in the last few days amount to?" to which General Lee responded: "Nothing, practically nothing—the armistice amounts to nothing. I saw General Blanco's proclamation, which said the queen regent, at the request of his holiness the pope, had issued an armistice, but that is not worth the paper it is written on, because a truce or armistice between two contending forces requires the consent of both before it can be of any practical effect, and it will not have the consent of the insurgents."

In response to an inquiry from Senator Frye as to his reasons for saying that the insurgents would pay no attention to the armistice General Lee said:

"Because every attempt so far to make terms or to make peace or to buy the insurgents or their leaders has met with signal failure, and whatever may be said about old General Gomez, he is, in my humble opinion, fighting that war in the only way it can be done—scattering his troops out—because to concentrate would be to starve, having no commissary train and no way to get supplies. They come in sometimes for the purpose of making some little raid where he thinks it will do something, but he has given orders, so I have always been informed, not to fight, not to become engaged, not to lose their cartridges, and sometimes when he gets into a fight each man is ordered not to fire more than two cartridges. When General Weyler was there, he went out after him sometimes, and they would move up a column and fire, and sometimes the flank of the column and the Spanish soldiers would deploy and throw out skirmishers, and the Cubans, like Indians, would go into the woods, valleys and mountain sides and scatter out and wait until the Spanish troops were gone. The Spanish troops would counter-march, and go back to town, 2 men killed and 10 or 12 wounded. I do not think it would be safe for any Spanish officer to go out under a flag of truce. They could not buy the insurgents. Every time they went out to buy them they (the insurgents) killed them."

Senator Mills asked: "How much provisions have they in store for the army? How long can they maintain their forces there without bringing in more provisions?"

### Havana Is Starving.

General Lee replied: "They are living there almost from hand to mouth—the Spaniards and the citizens in the town of Havana also. I made some inquiries on that point just before I left. They

have a good many barrels of flour and a good deal of rice and some potatoes, but not a great many, and a little lard; but everything that the town of Havana has received in the last four or five or six months has been from the United States by steamers from New York, New Orleans and Tampa."

Senator Mills asked, "Can they get no subsistence from the islands?"

General Lee answered: "Nothing more than from the floor (indicating). The way the insurgents do is this: They have little patches of sweet potatoes—everything grows there very abundantly in a short time—and Irish potatoes and fruits. They drive their pigs and cattle into the valleys and hillsides, and they use those and scatter out. That is the reason why they all scatter out. A great many are planting. They insurgents plant crops in many parts of the island."

"Suppose Havana was blockaded," said Senator Mills, "so that no provisions could go in, would the people there have any way to get any?"

"None whatever," responded General Lee. "The town would surrender in a short while."

"Are all the Cubans friendly to the insurgents?" asked Senator Foraker. "I never saw one that was not," responded General Lee.

He then went on to depict the impoverished and weakened condition of the Spanish soldiers. Nobody, he said, ever saw the Spanish soldiers drill. He stated that the Spanish appropriations to relieve the distress looked big on paper, but would amount to nothing. He could not see any possibility of Spain conquering the insurgents.

In response to an inquiry from Senator Lodge for his opinion of the insurgent government General Lee said:

"I have never thought that the insurgents had anything except the skeleton form of a government—a movable capital. I asked them one day why they did not have some permanent capital, and I think they gave a very good reason. They said it would require a large force to protect it and defend it and they could not afford to mass up their men there; that the capital and the government offices had to move where they could be safest."

In response to questions from Senator Daniel, General Lee said that an American army of occupation could go into the island with safety now.

"I mean on account of climate and so

on," said Senator Daniel, to which General Lee responded, "Account of the climate and on account of everything else."

General Lee said that when he left Havana the Spanish troops had not been paid for about nine months, nor the Spanish officers for about four months.

## WILMINGTON AND WELDON RAILROAD.

CONDENSED SCHEDULE.

TRAINS GOING SOUTH.

DATED	No. 23, Daily.	No. 24, Daily.	No. 25, Daily.	No. 26, Daily.	No. 27, Daily.	No. 28, Daily.
Jan. 17th, 1898.						
Leave Weldon	12 00	P. M.	9 43	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
Ar. Rocky Mt.	1 11	10 38				
Leave Tarboro	12 38		6 00			
Lv. Rocky Mt.	1 15	10 38	6 45	5 40	1 10	
Leave Wilson	2 15	11 16	7 19	6 32	2 37	
Leave Selma	3 15	11 59				
Lv. Fayetteville	4 45	1 07				
Ar. Florence	7 35	3 15				
	P. M.	A. M.				
Ar. Goldsboro			8 00			
Lv. Goldsboro				7 01	3 20	
Lv. Magnolia				8 05	4 24	
Ar. Wilmington				9 30	5 50	
				P. M.	A. M.	P. M.

TRAINS GOING NORTH.

	No. 76, Daily.	No. 102, Daily ex. Sunday.	No. 28, Daily.	No. 40, Daily.	No. 48, Daily.
Lv. Florence	A. M.		P. M.		
Lv. Fayetteville	9 45		8 15		
Lv. Selma	12 18		10 19		
Leave Wilson	1 47		11 30		
Arrive Rocky Mt.	2 35		12 09		
	P. M.		A. M.	P. M.	P. M.
Leave Wilson	2 35	5 38	12 12	11 20	12 55
Ar. Rocky Mt.	3 29	6 15	12 47	11 57	1 37
Arrive Tarboro			6 45		
Leave Tarboro	12 38				
Lv. Rocky Mt.	3 29		12 47		
Ar. Weldon	4 39		1 42		
	P. M.		A. M.	P. M.	

Train on the Kinston Branch Road leaves Weldon 3:55 p. m., Halifax 4:30 p. m., arrives Sootland Neck at 5:20 p. m., Greenville 6:57 p. m., Kinston 7:55 p. m. Returning leaves Kinston 7:50 a. m., Greenville 8:52 a. m., arriving Halifax at 11:18 a. m., Weldon 11:38 a. m., daily except Sunday.

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J. R. KENLY, Gen'l Manager  
T. M. EMERSON, Traffic Manager

1882. 1898.

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