



AN OUTSIDE EXPLOSION WRECKED THE MAINE

EVIDENCE OF TREACHERY IS CONCLUSIVE

OFFICIALS NOW ALMOST CONCEDE IT

Grave Fear Spain Will Not Be Able to Punish the Guilty.

Upon the Strength of the Sagasta Ministry Will Depend the Contingency of War Between the Two Nations.

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HAVANA, Feb. 23.—There is now little doubt that the report of the board of inquiry investigating the cause of the wreck of the Maine will be to the effect that the prime cause of the explosion was a submarine mine or torpedo dragged under her keel.

The board can hardly come to any other decision from the evidence that will be placed before it. The unofficial testimony of those officers who gave it as their belief that something from beneath had caused the explosion of the forward magazine has been borne out by the reports of the divers from the first day they went down into the forward part of the ship.

Operations yesterday were conducted under improved conditions and the evidence gathered was more convincing. Of course, the deliberations of the board of inquiry are in absolute secrecy, but I am in a position to state that they yesterday obtained most important evidence.

Among other things found at the bottom of the harbor were several cans of powder, perfectly intact. Had the explosion first occurred in either of the forward magazines every grain of powder, it is argued, would have disappeared, but if the explosion first came from the outside the cans might easily reach water without exploding.

Besides powder cans the board may have other evidence. It is impossible to say just what evidence they do obtain, for the Spanish officials are constantly at the wreck and jealously watch what the divers may bring up and eagerly hear what they have to say.

The divers, however, make all their reports on board the Fern, and all suspicious finds are merely located and not brought to the surface yet.

At the bottom of the harbor they are waist deep in mud and searching is slow work. There is only one diver's lamp at present available. The man at the bow of the Maine used this yesterday. He was below fully three hours in the afternoon. Part of that time was spent in examining the hull of the ship.

The investigations are being watched here with great interest, and in some quarters with alarm. The

AN ABSURD RUMOR.

NEW YORK, Feb. 23.—A Washington special to the Herald says: Reports that Senator Proctor had gone to Cuba on a special mission for the President are officially and emphatically denied at the White House and the State Department. The Senator left here about a week ago for a fishing trip in Florida waters. He said at that time he might go to Havana if he could find some congenial friend to go with him. The authorities here do not know whether he has gone to Havana, and pronounce as absurd the statement that he is to meet General Lee for the purpose of bringing confidential reports to Washington. They can see no reason for making messenger-boys out of United States Senators, especially when Consul-General Lee could readily secure the detail of a naval officer if he wished to send anything he was afraid to trust to the regular channels.

official and conservative element prefers to not talk of war openly—at any rate, till there is proven good excuse for it, but Weyler's old officers and friends would welcome war with the United States. Captain-General Blanco wants peace, but he is placed in a very trying position. If foul play to the Maine is proved he may have to bear the responsibility, without having been in any way to blame. I do not suppose he knew there was a mine in the harbor.

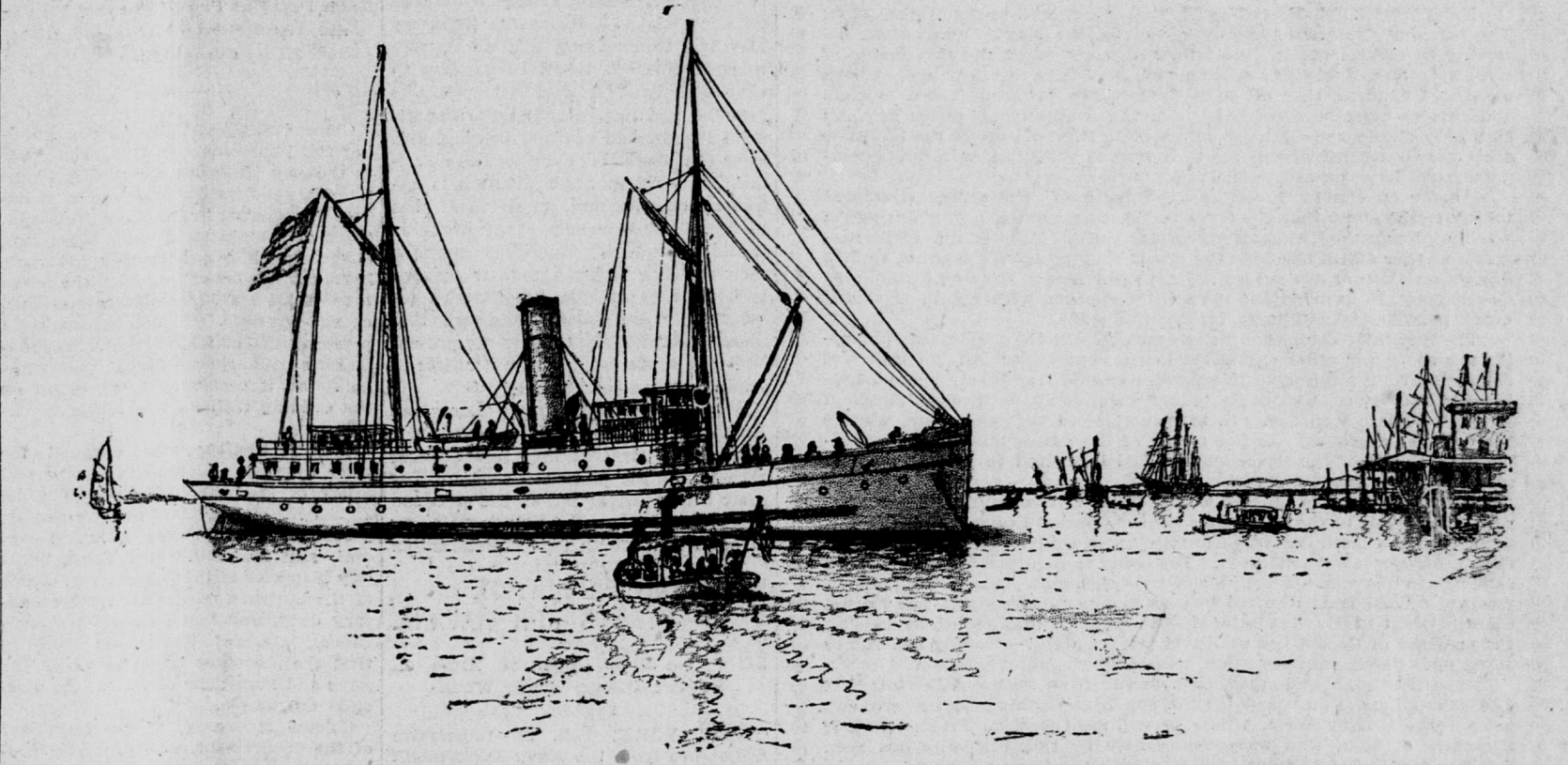
If there are mines they were laid in Weyler's time, and, as I cabled the Herald on Sunday, when Weyler left Cuba he carried away all the plans and records from the palace.

Judging from reports received from the country towns some of the Spanish officers stationed there are eager to fight the United States. They firmly believe they could easily down the stars and stripes both on land and sea.

"If Spain could send 200,000 men to a small island like Cuba," they say, "how many could she send to the United States?"

Most of these officers served under Weyler, and were promised promotion by him before he left. While there may be but little danger of conflict between Spain and the United States, yet Americans residing here take the matter seriously, and all the more so for the reason that now they are absolutely unprotected should there be any outbreak of the mob.

The naval court of inquiry into the Maine disaster, on whose deliberations



The United States Lighthouse Tender Mangrove, on Board of Which the Maine Board of Inquiry Is Conducting Its Investigations in Havana Harbor.

RETIRED OFFICERS SUMMONED.

PHILADELPHIA, Feb. 23.—Following the report that an order had been received at the United States Embassy at London, directing all officers of the United States at present in England on leave to return to their ships at once, it was learned to-day that all retired naval officers of the United States had received notice from Secretary Long, directing them to place themselves in communication with the Navy Department.

A retired naval officer of this city, who has served under Admiral Farragut, said that the notice applied to about 300 naval officers throughout the country on the retired list. It was of a confidential nature, but its provisions were to the effect that officers under 62 years of age who could pass a physical examination showing themselves to be fit for duty would be required to hold themselves in readiness for service at a moment's notice from Washington.

All who received the communication were asked to acknowledge its receipt immediately, giving any prospective change of address, and placing themselves unreservedly at the disposal of the Government.

are centered the eyes of the civilized world, will probably conclude its work in Havana to-morrow night, or Friday at the latest. Its conclusion will be unanimous, the court being composed of three members apart from its judge-advocate, Lieutenant-Commander Marix, who, under the prevailing naval custom, will not have a voice in the decision.

Under the evidence there is no possibility of so inclusive a result as a deadlock, such as might occur where the verdict depended on the votes of four men.

But it is possible to-night to state not only that no deadlock is possible, but that there is no the slightest probability of there being a dissenting minority report filed in behalf of even one member of the board.

The work of the naval experts appointed by the Secretary of the Navy to probe the Maine disaster has been done thus far thoroughly and expeditiously. There has been no undue or unseemly haste. A detailed stenographic report of each day's proceedings has been read carefully at the opening of each succeeding day, and full time has been given to the hearing of the evidence of every witness. But the number of witnesses whose testimony is pertinent to a just conclusion is limited, and most of them have been heard already. It is for this reason, and this only, that the court sessions in Havana are not likely to be so protracted as the general public was prone to believe. The probabilities are that all the members of the Board of Inquiry will go to Key West within forty-eight hours. Its sittings will be resumed there, but the testimony there elicited, it is believed, will not be of a character either to add materially to the facts already established or to alter the conclusions already practically reached. It is just possible that the court's stay in Havana may be extended a few days longer should important discoveries be made by the expert divers of the Merritt-Chapman wrecking tug, the Right Arm, who arrived with their vessel from Key West and began work this morning.

THE MONTGOMERY ORDERED TO SAIL TO CUBA'S CAPITAL

She Will Take the Place of the Ill-Fated Maine in the Harbor of the Hostile City of Havana.

TAMPA, Fla., Feb. 23.—The United States cruiser Montgomery, Commander Converse, arrived at Port Tampa at 9 o'clock this morning and Captain Crowninshield, Chief of the Bureau of Navigation, who was on board, left at once for Washington, shortly after Commander Converse notified the department of the arrival of the vessel. He received orders to coal at once and leave as soon as possible for Key West and then proceed to Havana, unless otherwise ordered upon arrival at Key West.

While the vessel was coaling I went on board and talked with the officers. They said the vessel left Key West three weeks ago for Matanzas, Cuba. Captain Crowninshield was on board, and the object of the cruise was to ascertain the most available point for a coaling station. From Matanzas the Montgomery proceeded to Santiago, and the officers say that at both places they were received with the utmost courtesy by the Spanish officials and the citizens generally. They left Santiago on the night of the disaster on the Maine, but heard nothing of it until they arrived in San Domingo last Friday, when the United States Consul informed Commander Converse he had been advised that the Maine had been blown up in Havana harbor.

None of the officers were disposed to believe the report, and they knew nothing of the particulars until they arrived here to-day. While Commander Converse and the other officers are not disposed to express an opinion as to the cause of the disaster, the men talk freely and express the opinion that it was the work of Spaniards. All of the men are anxious for a fight. Captain Crowninshield was the first commander of the Maine after she was commissioned, and was shocked this morning when he heard the story of the accident and the large number of men killed.

"I am thoroughly familiar with every detail of the construction of the Maine," said he, "but I do not care to express an opinion as to how the casualty occurred, as Captain Sigbee has declined to express an opinion. I do not believe any other officer of the navy will venture one. The Maine was a fine vessel and her loss is a severe blow to the navy, but the loss of so many brave men is a far greater blow."

On board the Montgomery are ten men transferred from the Maine just before that vessel sailed for Havana. These men shed tears when they learned the fate of so many of their former comrades. The Montgomery will leave for Key West at 5 o'clock to-morrow afternoon. In entering the bay of a small port on the coast of Hayti she ran aground on a sand bar, but was got off without sustaining any damage.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 23.—Simultaneously with the departure of the Texas and Nashville from Galveston for Key West the Marblehead will leave New Orleans and the Detroit will leave Mobile for Key West. These movements are part of the orders given early this month before the Maine disaster. The Navy Department has received no notification of the actual sailing of the four ships up to noon, but this was expected to come during the day in view of the definite orders heretofore given for their sailing on the 23d.

The result will be to bring together again a large number of vessels under Admiral Sigsbee at Key West and the immediate vicinity. They will be the New York, Indiana, Massachusetts, Texas, Iowa, Marblehead, Detroit, Nashville, Montgomery, Ericsson and Cushing.

The torpedo-boats Porter and Dupont are in the dry dock at Mobile, and are not expected to be ready to go to Key West for several days. The Brooklyn is cruising in the West Indies, at present en route from St. Thomas to Vera Cruz.

TERROR AWAITING ORDERS TO SAIL

Remains at Her Dock at the Norfolk Navy-Yard Under Full Steam.

NEW YORK, Feb. 23.—A Richmond (Va.) special to the Herald says: A state of expectancy, not to say surprise, pervades the Norfolk navy-yard, at noon to-day the Secretary of the Navy was notified that the Terror was ready for sea, and an immediate response was expected that she would be notified to sail for New York. The vessel lay at her dock the whole afternoon under full steam, momentarily expecting orders that did not come. Captain Ludlow, her commander, was on the dock most of the time, and, while supervising tests that were being made of the ammunition hoist, was asked when he would sail.

"I would like very much to know myself," was his response. "The vessel is ready to move at a moment's notice and you know as much about it as I do." Commodore Farquhar, the commandant, said: "Yes, I have reported the Terror ready for sea. Her orders to leave the yard will come through me, though any sealed orders may be sent direct to her commander. At this time no one here knows what the orders will be or whether the vessel will be sent. She may leave this afternoon, or she may not leave this week." Referring to the fighting qualities of the Terror and ships of her class, Commodore Farquhar said: "I have the highest confidence in the ability of monitors as defenders. In still water they are splendidly effective. The Terror is, I consider, under favorable conditions the finest