

VARIOUS

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WORLD AND WHAT IS
GOING ON IN IT, VOL. 1,
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The Great Round World and What Is Going On In It, Vol. 1, No. 55, November 25, 1897 / A Weekly Magazine for Boys and Girls

This has been an exciting week for Cuban matters.

We told you that we might expect to hear more from Mr. Taylor's article on Cuba in *The North American Review*.

We were quite right in our supposition.

The Madrid papers took the matter up indignantly, and it has been the main point of interest during the last few days.

If you remember, we told you that Mr. Taylor said, in his article, that Spain did not seem able to settle the difficult Cuban question, and that in his opinion it was clearly our duty to interfere.

One of the Spanish Senators, Señor Salvani, wrote an angry letter to the Madrid papers, in which he said that when Mr. Taylor was minister to Spain he appeared most anxious to preserve the friendliest relations between the two countries, and that he repeatedly declared that there was no fear that the United States would interfere with Cuba.

On seeing this letter, Mr. Taylor wrote one on his own account to the American papers.

In it he said that his experience had been that the Spanish authorities were unreliable, and according to his way of thinking the only way to put an end to the war, which was costing this country so much from destruction to commerce, was for the Government to take a firm stand with Spain, and insist that if the war wasn't ended by a certain fixed date we would end it for her.

To prove the truth of his assertion that Spain was unreliable, he stated that during the term of his official service in Madrid he had become convinced that Cuba would never yield, but would fight till her last drop of blood had been spilled.

Thinking it a great pity to allow such a valuable property as Cuba to be allowed to go to ruin, he decided to make an effort to bring the war to a close.

He was acquainted with Señor Castelar, who was a close friend of Canovas, the late Premier. Señor Castelar was President of Spain when it was a republic, before the young King's father was put on the throne by the aid of Canovas. At an informal dinner-party at Señor Castelar's, Mr. Taylor begged the Señor to talk to Canovas, and convince him that the war in Cuba was only a cruel waste of life and useless waste of money, as the Cubans would not submit. He asked Señor Castelar to suggest to Canovas that an attempt to pacify the island should be made by offering them liberal Home Rule.

Señor Castelar agreed with Mr. Taylor, and promised to speak to Canovas.

A few days later he sent word to Mr. Taylor that he had brought Canovas around to his way of thinking, and that Cuba was to be given Home Rule.

Mr. Taylor was very happy over the result of his efforts, and shortly after an offer of Home Rule was made to the Cubans.

It proved, however, to be Home Rule only in name. Spain was to keep control of the army, the navy, and the courts; the only privilege given to the Cubans was to be that of paying taxes to support the Government.

This offer was not acceptable to Cuba, and nothing further came of it.

When Mr. Taylor found that this was all the Home Rule Spain meant to offer the Cubans, he became discouraged, and concluded that Spain did not mean to do anything for Cuba, and that the offer was not sincerely made, but merely to gain time in the hope that the Cubans would run short of ammunition and be obliged to surrender.

Mr. Taylor has been severely criticised for making these statements.

The Government in Washington feared that serious trouble might result therefrom. What Mr. Taylor knew of the matter was learned while he was acting as an officer of the Government, and it has been thought that he should not have made his knowledge public.

The most alarming rumors grew out of the disclosures. People feared that war would be the result, and for a few hours there was a war scare. Prices of stocks fell, and one enterprising paper got out a "special," stating that war had been declared, because Spain had claimed the right to search American vessels on the high seas for arms, or what is called contraband of war.

The spread of the alarm was increased by a report that the Chamber of Commerce had once again issued a warning to the Government that the harbor defences of New York city were not strong enough, and had asked that they be strengthened.

Twice before in the history of our country that body has warned Congress: once before the outbreak of the Revolution, and again just before the Civil War.

As the members of the Chamber of Commerce had been right on both of the previous occasions, the people looked on them as prophets, and a war scare spread over the country, which caused the greatest uneasiness.

The feelings of the people were, however, calmed by an announcement from Washington that there was not the slightest cause for alarm. The governments in Washington and Madrid understood each other perfectly, and President McKinley intended to allow the promised reforms time to take effect before he even considered the idea of interference. In the announcement it was added that the warning from the Chamber of Commerce would be taken into consideration, but that there was in it nothing to throw the country into a panic.

The sudden fall in stocks was declared to be a trick on the part of some Wall Street speculators, and to mean nothing more serious than that a few sharp men had made money out of a good many foolish ones.

In regard to the threatened searching of American vessels—an action which would certainly oblige us to declare war on Spain—it was stated by those in authority that Spain does not contemplate any such course.

American vessels have a perfect right to carry arms to Cuba and fulfil any orders they may receive for such goods, as long as Spain persists in saying that war does not exist in the island. It is only when men accompany the arms that Spain has a right to protest; otherwise it is a mere carrying of merchandise from one port to another.

It is felt that while Spain has cause for anger against the American sympathisers who have sent over so many filibusters, she has none against the United States Government, which has done everything in its power to prevent the despatching of these unlawful expeditions.

Before he left Havana Weyler made a speech in which he is reported to have made remarks which have annoyed the Spanish Government. This appears to have created trouble for him.

The Spanish ministers have talked the matter over, and decided to demand an explanation from the ex-Captain-General.

The commanders of each of the ports in the Spanish kingdom have been instructed to ask the General what these remarks were the moment he sets his foot on Spanish soil, wherever that may be. If his statement agrees with the reports of his speech, he will immediately be arrested and tried by court-martial.

The particular remark reported which so offended the Government was in reference to his being certain that no other minister would keep him in office after the death of Canovas.

General Blanco is endeavoring to establish his government in Havana.

He is not having an easy time of it, however. The Spanish ministers were led to believe that there were a great number of Cubans who were desirous of seeing Home Rule established, and who would come to the assistance of Spain if she attempted to do this.

One of the proposed changes was that certain of the offices should be filled by Cubans. From the accounts given. General Blanco expected to find no difficulty in getting the Cubans to serve under him.

To his dismay he has found that the reported strong Home Rule party does not exist, and that the Cubans decline the honors offered them. He had to threaten one man with banishment from Cuba before he could persuade him to take any part in the establishment of the reforms.

The war is being actively pursued all over the island. General Garcia has, it is said, captured Holguin and Mayari in Santiago de Cuba.

At Pinar del Rio City the insurgents defeated the Spanish troops and took from them some guns and a large store of ammunition.

It is said that a million dollars, sent over to pay the Spanish army, has mysteriously disappeared from Havana's treasury, and the soldiers are extremely indignant over it.

The desperate want of money among the troops is leading to some very reprehensible acts, if we are to believe what we hear.

It seems that some soldiers brought their colonel word that they knew where they could lay hands on \$14,000, and they said that if they were allowed to go and seize it they would bring it to the colonel to pay the regiment, which otherwise would mutiny.

The colonel allowed his men to set off on their shameful expedition, and learned that sure enough they had obtained the money. What was his surprise and indignation to find that, instead of bringing it to him, they had deserted to the Cubans with their booty.

While the promised reforms are being put into practice without delay, the new Captain-General is, it is said, making active preparations for war. The winter campaign against the rebels is to begin at once, and it is believed that severe fighting is ahead.

It remains to be seen whether the soldiers will do better under General Blanco's leadership than they did under Weyler.

You will be interested to know that the trial of the *Competitor* prisoners takes place in Havana this week.

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