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***The Army of Pacification***

***The occupation of Cuba—Splendid appearance and discipline of the American troops.—Was the course adopted by the Administration consistent and logical, or merely expedient and diplomatic?***

Havana, October 15, 1906

AS a man running after his hat is regarded as comic, there are certain other stock situations which have become accepted as dramatic; the woman galloping to the gallows with a reprieve, or the relief of a besieged and starving garrison. On such occasions human beings, as a rule, exhibit great emotions; relief, excitement, joy; and help to make the occasion interesting. We have come to expect it. Under the same conditions people always have acted in that way. And so, when they act in an entirely different way that is even more interesting and much more dramatic.

Once I had the good fortune to inform a murderer that the Governor of New York had decided not to hang him the following morning, or, indeed, ever. One rather expected an explosion of some sort, but the man only said deliberately and thoughtfully: "Well, that's pretty good, isn't it, that's pretty good?"

When General Buller, after two months of very hard fighting to relieve Ladysmith, rode into that city, those correspondents who were not present told how the women of the besieged city wept, and cried: "God bless you!" and even caressed the horses of the men who had rescued them. That is what always had happened when every other besieged city had been relieved. What really occurred was that the women and young girls of Ladysmith, who were nice, middle-class Colonials, were so afraid the men from the outside would presume upon the unusual occasion and speak to them without being introduced, that they kept their eyes modestly cast down and proudly passed us by.

The landing of an army on a foreign soil would seem distinctly to be among those events that possess the dramatic element.

***Apathy of the Cubans***

IMAGINE an army of pacification marching up Broadway carrying a strange flag, and issuing commands in a foreign language; and by its mere presence telling the people of New York they no longer were their own masters, that the invading arm had come to rule them, if necessary to shoot them. From the spectators on the sidewalks one might fairly expect some show of resentment, a few taunts and curses; with so many new buildings going up, some one might be excused if he threw a brick. But here in Havana, when our navy landed the marines,

and the army landed the Fifth Infantry and a battalion of engineers, the Cubans exhibited no more interest, less, in fact, than they show in a few hundred "Seeing Havana" tourists from a visiting steamer.

And our own men were equally matter-of-fact. Even the regulars, to whom foreign ports are not as old a story as they are to the bluejackets, accepted Havana as they might Brooklyn. They did not see themselves as *conquistadores*. They did not swagger, or laugh and talk loudly, or show any consciousness of the fact that what they were doing was for the moment conspicuous, and for the future a date the school-teacher would expect their grandchildren to know.

The Paula Wharf, where they landed, faces a convent, and as they stood at ease under the corrugated zinc of the wharf, what they saw of the new world they had come to administer was the yellow wall of the convent and looking over it a row of little girls, who are at school there, and the nuns holding them by their skirts. The little girls were the only Cubans who looked twice at the soldiers, and the soldiers, as soon as they were seated in the trolley-cars at the end of the wharf, were chiefly interested as to whether or not the trolley-cars had been built in St. Louis. One of the soldiers pointed out that the cars must have been made in Cuba, because, while the language of St. Louis is German, the regulations painted in the car against smoking and talking to the *motorista* were in Spanish. This deduction gained him many followers. But others maintain the signs could have been painted in the cars after they reached Cuba.

According to the writer of fiction, the invaders should have been thrilled with the fact that for the first time many of them were putting foot upon an island they had wrested from Spain, and which, no doubt, they soon would take over for themselves. But what really occupied their minds was who built a trolley-car that they never had seen before, and would not see again.

## Eight Years After

TO any one who in the campaign against Spain watched our troops embark at Tampa and land in Cuba the improvement the landing of this week showed over the one of eight years ago seemed almost as important as the act of intervention. I am not comparing the actual landing eight years ago on a bare beach through a heavy surf with the present one at a wharf in a land-locked harbor; I refer to the general moving of the army then and now. There was all the vital difference of the work of an amateur and of a professional.

Before the days of Tampa Bay, in transportation the army had no greater experience than the moving of a troop or a regiment by train over different parts of the same country. The difficulties of transportation were solved by the train-dispatcher; the commissariat problem was met by halting at railroad lunch-counters. Since the war with Spain the army has had to move, not troops and companies, but brigades and army corps, not from Fort Sill to Fort Riley, but half around the world. Having landed them there, to the number of sixty thousand, it has had to fight them, feed them, clothe them, doctor them, reinforce them with as many thousand more, and, over the second half of the world, conduct them safely home. The result of this eight years of unceasing active service, and also of the wisdom of Secretary Root in establishing the General Staff, is an army in organization second only to that of the Japanese, and in personnel to none. This is no prejudiced boast. Before the war with Spain our recruiting officers were accepting thirteen of every hundred men who offered themselves for enlistment. Then the American Army consisted of twenty-five thousand men, and we could afford to pick and choose. At that time in

Europe recruiting officers were accepting by enlistment or conscription ninety out of every hundred. The contrast was so marked that when the regulars were arriving at Tampa the foreign military attaches were always asking one: "Is this your *corps d'elite*?" "Is this the President's body-guard?" They could not believe that in our army every man was a picked man. Two ears after the war with Spain, when our army was enlarged to sixty thousand, and need of men for the Philippines was urgent, the standard was woefully lowered. The enlisted men looked like messenger boys. The ranks were filled with pimply-faced, stoop-shouldered youths who should have been wearing the uniform of the hotel hall-boy.

## **Our Troops are an Army of Giants**

BUT in the last six years these unpromising specimens developed to their full height and girth, the immediate need of men of any condition for the Philippines passed, and again the recruiting officers could pick and choose. There has been again a selection of the fittest, and today the enlisted men, although the army is more than twice as large as in 1898, are the same stalwart, but alert and active, giants that caused the foreigners to think each regiment was the "President's Own." In the line of business I have seen nearly every army in the world, and, than the men landed here this week, I have not seen finer soldiers.

There are two contrasts between the Army of 1898 and the Army of Pacification that most impress one. The first is the youth of the company officers. In 1898 there were first lieutenants of forty-five, and some captains of fifty-five. Today you would not dare to call any one under the rank of a general middle-aged, and these boy captains are all veterans. Many of them in the Philippines commanded a regiment, and some, as Military Governors of provinces, held absolute authority over one hundred thousand natives.

The other change one noted between the two armies is that where the older officers of 1898 were harassed by the new problems the war presented, and only at peace when they got to fighting; these same officers, and the new officers, with the advantage of eight years of training, now refuse to see that there are any problems to solve. The days when an officer of the Quartermaster's Department abandoned the army to find its way to the transports, while he slept on board of one of them, and would not disclose the number of the transport because he "did not wish to be disturbed"; when artillery was loaded on one transport, the caissons on another, the ammunition on another, and the men on a fourth; when brigadier-generals of the Volunteer Army turned for advice to first lieutenants of the Regular Army, and medical supplies were stored in the hold, and troop horses on the deck above them, it is safe to say, are over.

The advance guard of the Army of Pacification came in groups of young men in civilian "whites," tan shoes, and straw hats, who sat around the Cafe' of the Miramar with apparently nothing on their minds save the proper adjustment of Bacardi with lemonade. It is true, half of them had already served in Havana "with Wood," and to them in the situation there was nothing new. But the other half had not, and in the unusual surroundings they found nothing to disturb them except the beauties of the sunsets behind Cabanas Fortress.

## **The Men Who Paved the Way**

TRY to compare the work they had before them with your own difficulties, when, before returning from the summer's vacation, you set about putting the town house in order. There were servants to engage, rooms to repaper, carpets to be laid, curtains to hang, the coal bins to fill, the grocer and the wine merchant to be consulted. You made out long shopping lists, estimates; and quite lost your temper. Had you been forced to make the same preparations in a foreign country it would have been much worse. You were trying to put but one house in order; these young men in the Panama hats had been forwarded by telegraph to a foreign country to start housekeeping for seven thousand men, to lodge them, feed them, clothe them. Two days after they had landed they began taking from their pockets contracts calling for hundreds of pounds of fresh meat, fresh fish, fresh fruit, for two thousand horses, for lumber and cement, for iron water-pipes, smoking tobacco, "soft drinks," leases for wharfs, or whole blocks of office buildings, for private residences, for lighters and tramp steamers. No one was excited or peevish, no one lost his temper, his sleep, or appetite. They all worked together as smoothly as the separate parts of an automobile going downhill.

The marines were just as offensively at ease. But of the "handy man," that is now taken for granted. The day I visited Santiago de las Vegas there were four of their officers assisting Major Ladd in disarming and disbanding the rebels. Major Ladd told Captain Feland to entrain two hundred insurgents and two hundred ponies. Two things about which a man from a battleship might excusably show ignorance are railroads and horses. In the daily routine of a ship neither hold an important part.

But in a moment we saw Captain Feland shunting and backing freight-cars, coupling and uncoupling them, swinging himself to the cowcatchers of moving engines, heading off frightened ponies, rounding up the runaways in the corral, and driving them kicking and bucking up the steep gangways and into the cars. You would have thought all of his young life had been spent as master of a freight-yard, or as foreman on a ranch.

What Congress may have to say about the manner in which the representatives of the Administration—Secretary Taft, Assistant Secretary Bacon, Mr. Morgan, the American Minister, and Mr. Steinhart, the Consul-General—handled the crisis one can not guess. But had the members of Congress dropped in at the Legation, or into the patio of the Spanish home of Mr. Morgan at Marianao, where the Peace Commission held its session, and which was within three hundred yards of the rebel outposts, and listened to the problems that demanded to be happily and quickly settled, they would have been glad that some one else had the settling of them, and they would have rewarded our representatives with a vote of thanks.

Until the State Department publishes the entire correspondence no one will know how very difficult and unpleasantly delicate was the position in which Mr. Taft was placed. The patience he showed, the tolerance and common sense, were admirable.

But there is no question that the course we chose was a compromise.

## **A Complex Situation**

THERE were two courses to follow: to support the Government or to support the rebels. To get at what we should have done, we should clearly understand what was our duty in Cuba. Was it to place one faction or another in office? It certainly was not. It was to preserve the Republic of Cuba, and, to do that, to uphold the Government. As it happened, the party in power was of our own choice. Palma was our candidate. General Wood was accused even of forcing

him, as a safe man and as a friend of the United States, upon the Cubans. But, friendly or unfriendly, his was the established government. Opposed to him were self-declared rebels and revolutionists. Whether the Government was or was not corrupt was not the question. It was our duty to maintain it, not because it was Palma's Government, but in order to show the Cubans that, of more importance than anything else is it that they should obey their own laws and constitution. To teach them that if they elect a man President of Cuba it is better he should remain President, no matter how bad a chief executive he may be, than that they should run him out of office with machetes and threats of assassination. Had we said to the rebels: "This man is your President; if necessary to maintain the Government and to keep order we will support him with the entire forces of the United States, and next term, if you elect your man to office, we will give the same protection to him," we would have stood for law and order. As it is, we have placed a premium on rebellion.

Of the two courses the one we adopted was the "safer" course. If it were necessary for us to have peace at once to save the crops, and without regard for the future, it was the course to follow. But by following it, in the eyes of the Cubans, the United States gave its official approval to revolution.

Mr. Taft's explanation of the situation is like this: "The Platt Amendment does not say we must interfere; it says we may interfere. So, before intervention, we asked the Government if it were strong enough to suppress the rebellion, or, if not, could it come to some compromise with the Liberals. The Government assured us it was not strong enough to put down the rebellion. We could see for ourselves that it was not. And it would not agree to a compromise. It then resigned, leaving the island with no one to govern it. We came in, much as does a receiver of a wrecked bank or railroad, to put it in working order again."

What also seemed to weigh with Mr. Taft against the Moderates, or Government Party, was that the elections which brought that party back to office were grossly fraudulent. He felt reluctant to sacrifice United States troops to support in office a government that was not honestly entitled to that office. In supporting the Moderates, there also was the danger of provoking much bloodshed. Before our troops could have reached Cuba, there is no question but that the rebels might have taken Havana, and we would have had either to recognize them or to fight them for several months. The fighting need not have been serious, but to kill the men for whom a few years ago the same soldiers were offering their lives was impossible.

By following the course we did we avoided shedding the blood of either Cubans or Americans, brought about a temporary peace, did no harm to the great and good work Root had performed in South America, and preserved the traditional friendship of the President for Cuba, a friendship of which he must be growing rather tired. But there are many who believe that we should have stood resolutely by the recognized government, that our first duty was to teach the Cubans they must not resort to rebellion, that by revolution they can gain nothing.

Personally, I believe there was not the slightest danger of bloodshed, that the rebels would have surrendered to ten marines as quickly as they did to the threat of seven thousand regulars, and that had we sent ten marines to "Pino" Guerra, and told him that there were many thousand more at home like them, and that we had declared for the Government and would arrest him, he and all of his generals would have cried: "Don't shoot, Colonel, I will come down."

As a matter of fact, when at the request of President Palma our Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. Jacob Sleeper, ordered a hundred and fifty marines on shore to protect the Palace, the rebel generals fell over each other in hurrying in to surrender. Because the landing of the marines

looked like intervention and because at that moment, to the President, intervention, on account of Mr. Root's mission of goodwill to South America, was most unpalatable, he ordered the marines back to the ship.

By the State Department Mr. Sleeper was not commended, but, as a matter of history, Sleeper's "mistake" was what first laid bare the fact that the rebels, instead of wanting to fight, wanted to surrender to any one wearing the United States uniform.

Later, when they had increased in number, they got out of hand, and the chance was lost. But Sleeper had blundered in upon the psychological moment, and had the President, instead of virtuously withdrawing the marines, leaped upon Sleeper's "mistake" and turned it to his own advantage, Palma would still be in power, and we would not have assisted in a revolution against him.

But post-mortems as 'to what might have been or should not have been are of little consequence in the light of the fact that the end must be the same. No matter who is elected, a "general" of the opposite or even of the successful party will take to the brush against him, again there will be civil war, and the next time we will annex Cuba.

The stupidity and the lack of patriotism of the Cubans will force the island upon us. If we do take it, we will be called hypocrites; we can not persuade Europe that with Cuba a free and orderly republic we were better off. The foreign press still calls Taft and Bacon "greedy annexationists" and "land-grabbers"; and as one reads this it is interesting to remember them at work here, striving for peace, with no afterthought than to bring quiet to Cuba, to save her crops, her credit, and her national life. Here in Havana Mr. Taft has about as much time to think of annexation as a doctor cutting out an appendix has leisure to think of the stock market.

At home we see our public men too closely; not as they really are, but as they appear in the caricatures, and exaggerated by the newspaper searchlights. Mr. Taft at public banquets acting as press agent for the Administration, has not always seemed to me an impressive figure. Caricatures of him, ponderous, smiling, with a palm-leaf fan, seated on the Philippines, on Panama, on Cuba, singing: "There Was I, Sitting on the Lid," while they do not hurt him, do not help us to take him seriously. But Mr. Taft at work down here—honestly frightened at the difficulties of the job, without a thought for Europe, without an eye for the reporters from the home papers waiting in the patio, treating treacherous, tricky Cuban "statesmen" and vain, jealous Cuban "generals" as courteously as he would a British Ambassador, weighing, balancing, laughing off the little troubles, astutely meeting the real ones—loomed a large and interesting man.

Sooner than lose the ball, he made a "safety," to gain temporary peace be sacrificed a principle, but as two years from now the end will be the same, what does it matter? We were lucky in having as good a man "on the job." His value to the United States always will be his genius for common sense.

### *The Last Chance*

WHAT is going to happen in Cuba in the next six months no one can tell until the next six months have passed. At present in Havana the tip has been given out to treat the Cubans like superior beings, if possible, to take them as seriously as they take themselves; if a negro on a mule, with two hundred other negroes on stolen ponies, says to one of our officers: "I am a general," the orders are to answer heartily: "Sure! You are a major-general!"



We have been very tolerant with the rebels. Perhaps, in order to get them to disarm and to disband it was wise to be so. But in seeking not to hurt their finer feelings we have sacrificed some of our own. For one thing, we have allowed each insurgent to take home the pony he stole while in the brush, so laying up against the Provisional Government countless lawsuits and claims, and, what is more important, giving both horse-thief and horse-owner a puzzling idea of our honesty. And those Rural Guards paid by the Government to protect it, and who, with arms and ponies deserted to the rebels, we have reinstated. What an incentive that offers to those who remained loyal! What an absolutely incorrect idea it teaches of our own rules of discipline! The rebels have had a very pleasant run for their money, and it is necessary that better late than never they should be taught that what they did was naughty; and that if it happens again they will lose their pretty island.

From now on it would be better if there were less of the hand of velvet and more of the carpet slipper.

While it lasted they had a very good time. Each of the men in the ranks, nine-tenths of whom were negroes, stole all the food he wanted and a horse, and occasionally took a shot at a Rural Guard, not from a position near enough to hit the Rural Guard, or to be hit by him, but as a sign of his contempt. And the generals, as soon as peace was declared, pinned stars on themselves, draped gorgeous silk kerchiefs over their shoulders, and galloped into Havana, halting only to order a field-uniform before taking up their permanent headquarters at the cafes. There they have their reward. There everybody embraces them, and everybody treats the dare-devils to their favorite stimulant of sugar cones dipped in chocolate ice cream. These are the men who wish to control the destiny of Cuba. One of them told the correspondents that the Liberals had been undecided whether they should rid themselves of Palma "by the Brazilian or the Servian method." When the Americans expressed their bewilderment, he explained that the "Brazilian method" was removal by force to a ship, the Servian, assassination. He had previously informed me that the Liberals had never thought of assassination. But five minutes later, thinking to impress men who were new to Cuba, he boasted of this horrible plan to murder. Assassination! For a well-meaning old man like Palma! Were they not so idiotic they would be tragic.

Another patriot statesman, Mendez Capote, Vice-President is quoted by the "Herald" correspondent as saying to him: "Other nations have navies besides the United States. If you press us too far, we will dynamite German warehouses or English banks, and then there will be here a British squadron and a German one also, and the United States will have to fight them." The astuteness of observation, the profundity in this remark, the grasp it shows of international relationships and usage makes the recent removal of Senor Capote from office a loss not only to Cuba but to the world. Such are the men who for four years have tried to govern Cuba. Once I was a Cuban patriot, too. First, twenty years ago, I knew the Cubans as friends and acquaintances at cafés and clubs, and I much admired them. Then I saw them in the field dying for their independence, and I admired them much more.

But under this last test, when they were asked to govern their own country and themselves, to be honest in administration, to obey their own laws, they showed themselves incapable, incompetent, and, what is worse, to all these facts indifferent.

We are to give them another chance. It is well they should understand now that after this there will be no more chances.

For Cuba this is the last call for dinner in the dining-car.