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## THE BIRTH OF THE CUBAN REPUBLIC

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"Viva Cuba Libre!" "Viva la Republica de Cuba!" These were the exclamations of delight and of patriotism with which the Cuban people greeted the 20th day of May, the day upon which the American government of intervention formally transferred authority to the newly formed Cuban government.

For days the city of Havana had been busy with preparations for the great event. Fifty thousand dollars had been contributed by the citizens and spent in decorations. Triumphant arches towered above the streets; large Cuban flags floated from the flagstaves of the business blocks and little flags fluttered from bamboo poles; streamers covered the buildings and patriotic mottoes and pictures of dead heroes recalled the struggle of more than thirty years, so full of sacrifice and so replete with valor, just now culminating in a glorious victory. Everywhere were evidences of joy and exultation.

From the time the president-elect landed at the wharf of Havana the people were in a state of suppressed excitement, impatiently waiting the hour for which they had looked and longed. The most notable event of the week preceding the inauguration was the banquet tendered by the Cuban veterans to Governor General Wood on Friday evening, May 16. General Maximo Gomez, the greatest of Cuban generals, the hero of the war for independence, the idol of the Cuban patriots and the trusted friend of the new president, sat at the head of the table. On his left was President-elect Tomas Estrada Palma and on his right General Leonard A. Wood. At the same table sat the principal military and civil officials of Cuba, mingled with the officers of the United States army. The banquet tables were made to form a shield and occupied the entire floor of the Tacon Theatre, while the five galleries of that splendid auditorium were crowded with ladies in party dress. The banqueters below and the spectators above presented a combination of bravery and beauty ever to be remembered.

### AN INSPIRING SCENE.

General Gomez being a man of action rather than of words, called upon Senor Gonzalo de Quesada to act as toastmaster, and that the latter discharged his duty well was evident from the manner in which his introductions were greeted. Brief speeches were made by Senor Mario Garcia Kohly, General Fernando Freyre Andrade and myself. Then Governor General Wood was presented, and the entire audience arose and stood while he expressed in modest but felicitous language his appreciation of the courtesies shown him and his good wishes for the Cuban republic. It was an inspiring scene, the like of which has been rare in the world's history—the representative of a great and powerful government voluntarily surrendering into the hands of a comparatively small nation an authority that might have been withheld had the United States been actuated by the motives which control most nations that go to war. It was an act of magnanimity and of fidelity to principle that raised higher the flag about

to be lowered—it was a moral victory more potent for good than any triumph of arms.

General Wood has had a difficult task, and while mistakes have been made and an occasional criticism is heard, these are outweighed by the positive good that has been done.

The Teller resolution, which was added to the resolution of intervention, contained the following words:

"That the United States hereby disclaims any disposition or intention to exercise sovereignty, jurisdiction or control over said island except for the pacification thereof, and asserts its determination, when that is accomplished, to leave the government and control of the island to its people."

If any American citizen has regretted the making of that promise or has favored its violation he would have been converted had he attended the banquet given by the veterans on Friday evening. He would have learned that love is better than homage and that our nation enjoys a greater reward than it could possibly have secured by conquest or violence.

### GENERAL WOOD'S FAREWELL RECEPTION.

On the Saturday night following the banquet General Wood gave a farewell reception in the same theatre, with President Palma as the guest of honor. An immense crowd was in attendance. On the same evening the leading Spanish society of the city celebrated the coronation of Spain's young king by a grand ball in the Casino Espanol. Here, amid the waving of Spanish flags and the perfume of tropical flowers, the elite of the Spanish element met and drank the health of Alfonso XIII.

At midnight on the 19th the bells rang, the engines and boats whistled, cannons fired and each person seemed to try to make more noise than his neighbor. From that time on, for several days the city was given over to rejoicing and to the heartiest manifestations of delight. Firecrackers were exploded everywhere, and that, too, with a recklessness that would have done credit to the American small boy.

When the Spaniards evacuated Havana the beautiful statue of Queen Isabella, which stood in the centre of the most prominent park, was taken down, but the pedestal was left standing. The Cubans, to signalize the change which had taken place in their government, secured a statue such as is used in the United States to represent the Goddess of Liberty and, on the forenoon of the 20th, this statue was placed upon the pedestal. The crowds that surged by it noted and commented on the transformation that had taken place in the ideas for which their government stood. At night a light was placed in the uplifted hand of the goddess, and the Western Hemisphere beheld a new "Liberty enlightening the world."

As the hour of noon approached the human tide that had ebbed and flowed through the streets began to form a stream, and this stream, passing through Central Park, divided, one part going in the direction of the Palace, where the formal transfer of the government was to take place, and

the other passing down the Prado to the point opposite Morro Castle.

The American soldiers occupied the Placa de Armas just in front of the palace and kept clear the street between. The people filled all the other streets around, and looked down from windows and from the roofs of the neighboring buildings.

In the reception room of the palace gathered those who by special invitation were permitted to witness the simple ceremony which preceded the retirement of General Wood and the inauguration of President Palma. The room was not a large one and the number of persons admitted did not exceed one hundred and fifty or two hundred. The members of the cabinet, members of the supreme court, members of the Cuban congress, the archbishop of Cuba and his escort, the governors of the various provinces, mayors, magistrates, and a few officers of the American army and navy, with members of the diplomatic corps, newspaper men and less than a score of others gathered about the centre of the room.

I found that but few Americans outside of the military and naval officials were present. Senator James K. Jones of Arkansas, chairman of the democratic national committee; Senator Money of Mississippi and his son, Senator Mason of Illinois and wife, ex-Senator Thurston of Nebraska and wife, Congressman De Armond of Missouri, Governor Jennings of Florida, his wife and son, a few without title and the photographers represented unofficial America. That the United States, which appointed three special envoys to witness the coronation of Edward VII. of England and one special envoy to witness the coronation of Alfonso XIII. of Spain, had no envoy to testify to the interest which our people felt in the birth of a republic whose very existence was due to American intervention, was a fact frequently commented upon by both Cubans and resident Americans.

### THE CHANGE OF FLAGS.

At about five minutes before twelve Governor General Wood and President-elect Tomas Estrada Palma took their positions in the centre of the room. General Wood inquired for General Gomez, and, a messenger having been sent to bring him from the rear of the room, he was asked to take a position next to the president. These three, together with the president's secretary, constituted the inner group. In a circle just outside this group stood Captain Scott, the adjutant general of the department of Cuba, the members of the supreme court, senate and congress and the archbishop, while crowding around these without regard to position were the remaining guests, each anxious to be near enough to hear the words spoken by the principal participants. Mrs. Palma and family stood a few feet to the rear of the president and General Wood, while General Wood's wife and the other ladies of the company occupied vantage ground near the windows.

Just at twelve a cannon shot fired at one of the forts startled the audience. It was followed by another roar and then by another. Then the whistles of the ships lying at anchor in the harbor