

# SHIP BLOWN UP

## Cruiser Maine Destroyed in Havana Harbor.

# GREAT LOSS OF LIFE

## Two Hundred and Fifty-eight American Sailors Dead.

# SUSPECT THE SPANIARDS

## Belief That the Terrible Affair Was Not Accidental.

# WILD TALK OF WAR.

## Many Americans Would Wipe Spanish Off the Earth.

Powerful United States Naval Vessel Sent by This Government to Cuban Waters Lies at the Bottom of the Bay a Charred and Torn Hulk—Catastrophe Took Place at 10 O'clock at Night, When All the Sailors Except Those Detailed for Duty Were Sleeping—Explanation Which Seems to Best Fit Circumstances Is That a Torpedo Was Exploded Under the Ship.

THE United States battleship Maine lies at the bottom of Havana harbor, a charred and torn hulk, and a tomb for over 250 of her crew. She was blown up about 10 o'clock Tuesday night by a terrific explosion said to have been an accident. The explosion occurred in the bow of the vessel and at an hour when the honest sailors had retired, while most of the officers had returned from the gayeties of the city. Whether the magazine of the ship was fired by accident or treachery, whether bomb or torpedo placed beneath the bow sent the Maine to the bottom of Havana bay and its blue-jackets to their long home perhaps no man shall ever know. All that sailors and officers of the frated craft could say was that there was a crash and a roar—that men were hurled headlong from their bunks upon the cabin floors, and that out of the darkness, the grinding of bursting timbers, the surging of the water rush-



COMMANDER SIGSBEE.

ing back to fill the great chasm torn by the explosion, came the screams of wounded men and long red jets of flame.

Ten minutes later and the Maine, all afloat from stem to stern, began to settle in the water. Over the side went the sailors, half clad or clad not at all, flinging themselves into the bay, still dazed, bruised and bleeding. Out of the red murk and the horrible uproar could be heard the loud voices of officers, ordering and directing, cool and plucky in the face of death, showing even in that hour of horror the grand courage and the steady discipline that won at New Orleans and Mobile—the grandeur of Farragut, the iron nerve of the Kearsarge's crew upon the rock of Roncador. There were no weak souls nor cowards there; the officers held place and power even as at a dress review, and to their coolness and their courage is due the fact that the panic did not result in even heavier loss of life than the explosion and the water caused combined.

The nation mourns for those who perished with the Maine. Such a startling vision of sudden death has not for years been presented to the public mind. The tragedy appeals to all American hearts. For all must feel that the lost stood ready at an instant call to make of their bodies a rampart between their country and their country's foes. There have been few such disasters in modern times. The catastrophes to the Royal George, to the Victoria, and, in Apia harbor, to the Nipsic, the Vandania and the Trenton are among the few comparable to it.

A dispatch from Havana said that the wildest excitement prevailed in the city. The wharves were crowded with thousands of people. There was a rush and hurry and it is claimed that the Spaniards lent every energy to the saving of the doomed Americans. Out from the great black sides of the Spanish warships, says the dispatch, flew boat after boat and the Spanish sailors never pulled faster oars. Over the bay they skimmed, seizing here an arm extended from the water in the last struggle of the drowning man, grasping there a drenched blue-jacket, until the boats were full of rescued men and no more living bodies could be found upon the surface of the water.

The shock of the explosion wrecked every window in Havana. Capt. Gen. Blan-

# TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT AMERICAN SAILORS DEAD. COURT OF INQUIRY.

## Terrible Destruction of the Magnificent Battleship Maine Was the Greatest Calamity that Has Ever Befallen the Navy of the United States.

## NAVAL BOARD TO SEARCH OUT THE FACTS.

## Several Days May Elapse Before a Verdict Is Reached, but There Will Be No Unnecessary Delay—Investigation to Be Rigid.

### Four Men to Decide.

On Thursday the court of inquiry to investigate the cause of the Maine disaster was called to meet in Havana by Admiral Sicard. It is composed of the following officers: Capt. William F. Simpson, Capt. French E. Chadwick, Lieutenant Commander William P. Potter and Lieutenant Commander Adolph Marx, judge advocate. The verdict of these four naval experts, writes a Washington correspondent, may mean war with Spain.

Under the direction of Admiral Sicard, says the correspondent, writing immediately after the calling of the court, the members will hear evidence and examine the debris. The splintered and twisted hulk is expected to tell its own story. The plates will be bent in or out. If all point outward, the disaster was caused from carelessness or probably treachery on board the ship; if they point inward, then to Spanish treachery from without. Beneath the waters of the harbor the divers will turn their electric searchlights as they search the deep for the submerged debris of the once mighty battle ship.

They will report speedily to their superiors. There will be no unnecessary delay. Public opinion will not stand indefinite suspense. The verdict of the court of inquiry will go to the Secretary of the Navy and to the President. There will be a cabinet meeting. There will be no splitting of hairs, no quibbling over official etiquette. This matter is executive; it will not follow precedents; there are none to follow.

### AS VIEWED BY EDITORS.

#### Opinion of Leading Metropolitan Papers Upon the Maine Disaster.

It seems sufficiently clear that our navy is lacking in discipline.—Cincinnati Volksblatt.

Either a great crime has been committed or there has been an amazing piece of blundering carelessness.—Chicago Record.

If the Maine and 250 of her men have been lost through Spanish treachery let Spain take the consequences.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

To attempt to pass judgment on the Maine disaster with the present information would be the height of folly.—Detroit News.

The first duty of the country with regard to the terrible tragedy is to keep cool, that we may learn the facts.—Boston Transcript.

There is nothing in the reports to offset the fearful suspicion that the Maine was deliberately destroyed by a Spanish torpedo.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

No possible explanation can stifle the voice of the people calling for intervention in the interest of Cuba by our Government.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

The American people should decide whether playing at war is not too expensive an amusement when it entails such a terrible cost.—Chicago Chronicle.

The people believe the burden of proof rests upon Spain to demonstrate beyond cavil that the blowing up of the Maine was an accident.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Many modern battle ships have been wrecked in a similar way and just as suddenly without any reasonable ground for suspicion of an attempt at wholesale murder.—Chicago Staats Zeitung.

All this occurred in the harbor of a "friendly nation." Now let the Spaniards prove their friendship by absolving themselves from all responsibility for the catastrophe.—St. Louis Republic.

There are scores of possible explanations, each of which would seem more reasonable than the base insinuations against the nation whose hospitality our representatives were enjoying.—Philadelphia Record.

The disaster to one of the finest ships of our navy and the sacrifice of so many brave lives, not to the formal defense of the country, but to a strange and horrible fate, casts a gloom over the whole nation.—St. Paul Globe.

The American people are not so calloused by prejudice as to close their eyes and ears to the probability that the explosion was due to causes with which the Spanish Government could have no remote connection.—Detroit Journal.

Sober second thought will carry conviction to all fair and open minded men that it is better to await the results of an investigation before jumping to the conclusion that Spanish malice is at the bottom of it.—St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Has treachery been added to duplicity? will be the almost universal inquiry, to which a reply will be awaited with the deepest interest throughout the nation. If such were the case it would rank as the crime of the century.—Chicago Tribune.

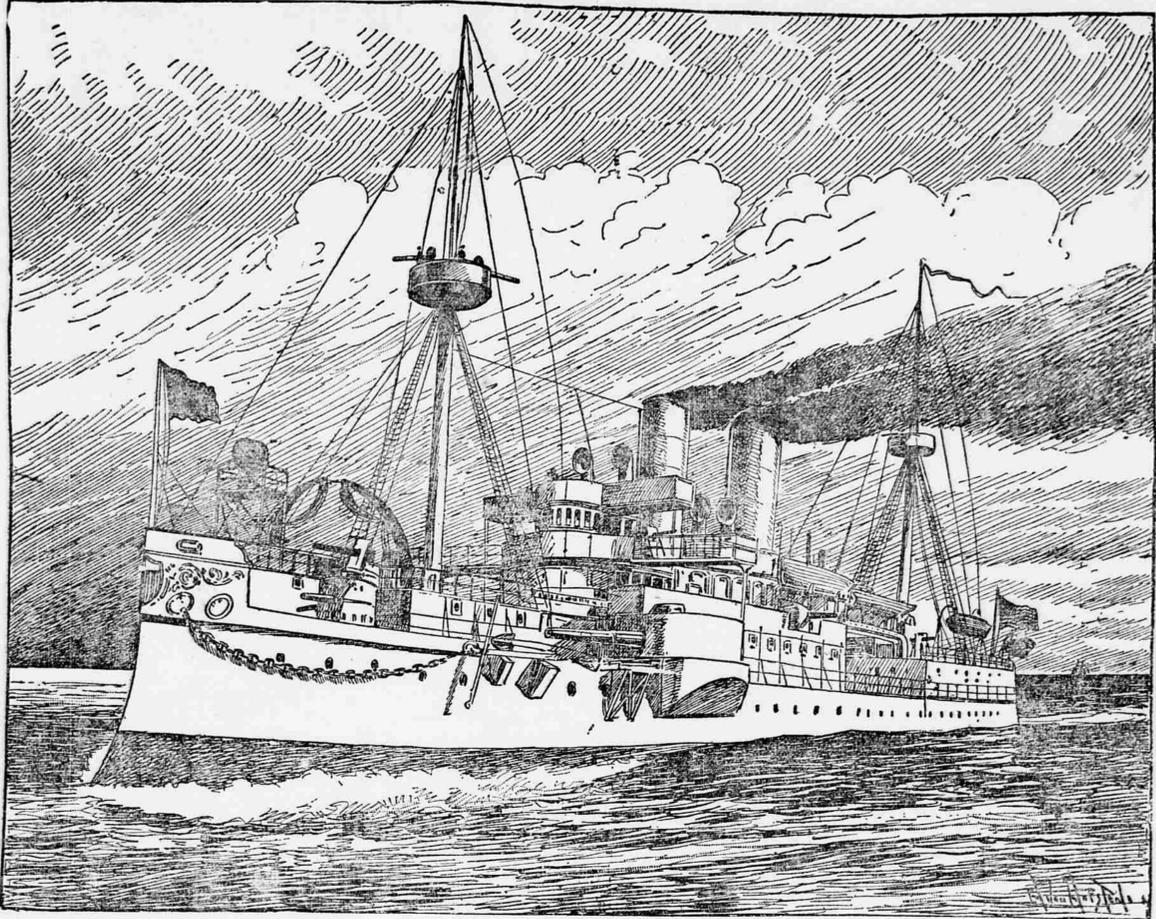
The suspicion of Spanish treachery exhibited by a section of American opinion looks ill beside the accounts of the splendid gallantry of the suspects in saving drowning Americans, and it indicates an ugly temper toward Spain.—London Daily Mail.

It is impossible to refrain from the suspicion that the explosion may have been caused by foul means. That this terrible event should have occurred in the harbor of Havana renders a solution of the mystery of international importance.—London Globe.

If Hidalgo hated of Americans blew up the Maine then the price of every life must be paid for in Spanish gold. The amount of such damages might reach \$25,000,000, but it would have to be paid in gold or the bill paid in blood.—Cincinnati Evening Post.

It is not surprising that there should be many wild rumors afloat, for in the present strained relations between this country and Spain there will be a natural tendency to attribute the explosion to the Spaniards—if not to the agents of the Spanish Government.—Indianapolis News.

As disastrous things as an annihilating explosion have happened to American battle ships through accident or mismanagement, and the terrible incident in the Havana harbor may be but another of the long series of misfortunes that have befallen our navy in the last few years.—Detroit Free Press.



co was among the first to realize what had happened, and he spared no exertion to aid Capt. Sigsbee's men. Admiral Manterola and Gen. Solano proved worthy coadjutors, and the Spanish sailors and soldiers alike did all that was in their power. Capt. Sigsbee was not hurt, although the earlier dispatches represented him as severely wounded. The explosion took place directly under the quarters of the common sailors, missing the officers' cabin by many yards.

The wounded sailors in hospital declared that they were utterly at a loss as to the cause of the explosion—that they were all asleep when the crash came, and that all they could do was to pick themselves up from the floor, grope their way amid falling timbers, smoke and flame and take to the water and the Spanish boats.

Capt. Sigsbee says the explosion occurred in the bow of the vessel. He received a wound in the head. Orders were given to the other officers to save themselves as best they could. The latter, who were literally thrown from their bunks in their night clothing, gave the necessary orders with great self-possession and bravery. The first theory was that there had been a preliminary explosion in the Santa Barbara magazine, with powder or dynamite, below the water. Admiral Manterola believes that the first explosion was of a grenade shell that was hurled over the navy yard. When the explosion occurred Captain Sigsbee was below, but he rushed up on deck in his shirt sleeves and gave orders. Efforts were at first made to save the vessel, but when Captain Sigsbee realized the extent of the damage done and that many casualties had occurred he bent all his energies to assuring the safety of his men.

### Report of Captain Sigsbee.

The Secretary of the Navy at Washington received the following telegram from Capt. Sigsbee: "Maine blown up in Havana harbor 9:40 and destroyed. Many wounded and doubtless more killed and drowned. Wounded and others on board Spanish man-of-war and Ward line steamer. Send lighthouse tenders from Key West for crew and few pieces of equipment still above (water). No one had other clothes than those upon him."

"Public opinion should be suspended until further report. All officers believed to be saved. Jenkins and Merritt not yet accounted for. Many Spanish officers, including representatives of Gen. Blanco, now with me and express sympathy." "SIGSBEE."

### WE ARE READY TO STRIKE.

#### Within 24 Hours Our Ships Could Blockade Every Cuban Port.

A New York dispatch says: Three flag officers of the United States navy are watching events at Washington, Madrid and Havana with great interest. They are Rear Admiral Montgomery Sicard, commanding the North Atlantic squadron; Rear Admiral John A. Howell, commanding the European squadron, and Capt. Colby M. Chester, senior officer in command of the South Atlantic squadron. Each of these three commanders received telegraphic orders to hold his ship in readiness for active service and to keep it fully coaled and provisioned at all times. There is an American flag floating over frowning broadsides of guns within easy striking distance of every port on the northern and southern coasts of Cuba.

### HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTIONS.

#### Sympathy Expressed for the Families of the Dead.

In the National House of Representatives Wednesday Mr. Boutelle, chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs, offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, That the House of Representatives has learned with great sorrow of the calamity which has caused the destruction of the United States battle ship Maine and the appalling loss of more than 250 lives and the wounding of many others of the gallant defenders of our flag, and that the House expresses its sympathy for the injured and its sincere condolences with the families of those who have lost their lives in the service of the nation."

### WAR SPIRIT AT WASHINGTON.

#### Feeling That the Maine Disaster Resulted from Spanish Treachery.

Washington was aflame Wednesday with the war spirit. Everybody eagerly read the extra newspapers carrying latest dispatches from Havana and the strained efforts of those high in official life to show the blowing up of the Maine to have been an accident only added to the impatience of the general public. Both houses of Congress assembled at noon under the most exciting conditions since war times.

"From the advices received from Lee and from other sources in Havana," said Secretary Long, "I am not inclined to think it was an act of Spanish hostility. I have no explanation to make, but the fact that Capt. Sigsbee has asked that public opinion be suspended leads us to believe that those who are in a position to have the best information do not regard it as a hostile act. The dispatch from Consul General Lee says the cause of the explosion is yet to be investigated, but it also says that the Spanish have rendered all possible assistance. Nothing yet received indicates that the disaster was the result of Spanish treachery, and we will proceed with care until we have further particulars."

Public opinion, however, refused to be suspended, and to say that the capital was excited over the report of the destruction of the Maine is but to give but a meager and inadequate idea of the real condition of affairs Wednesday. It was the only topic of conversation. There were extra papers on the streets every fifteen minutes, people wildly shouted their opinions of the catastrophe, and on all hands were talk of war and demands for more information. Treachery was the word on all lips. No one could be persuaded that the affair was not of Spanish origin. It was thought that some Spanish agent secured access to the vessel and exploded a grenade near the ammunition magazine.

If Spanish treachery did not destroy the magnificent battle ship Maine and mur-

der more than 250 American seamen, Spain must produce the proofs that the Maine was blown up by some other power than that of a Spanish torpedo. Washington advices on Thursday stated that officers of the navy did not believe that there could have been an accidental explosion on the Maine from spontaneous combustion or any other cause, when the battle ship was lying at anchor without steam in her boilers, or coal in her forward bunkers, and with only projectiles and such ammunition as might be exploded by concussion in her forward magazine. While some officials at the Navy Department talked of accidental explosions, there were few of practical experience who did not privately scout such theories, and said that to advance them means to condemn the modern war vessel. The corps of constructors at the Navy Department insisted that the explosive power must have come from the outside of the vessel, because it is their business to prevent accidents of this kind occurring within the hull, and they claimed that it is impossible for the vessel to have been destroyed by an explosion in one of the magazines. Chief Naval Constructor

Hichborn said that an accidental explosion was impossible, leaving the inference that he believed the explosion to have been due to treacherous hands.

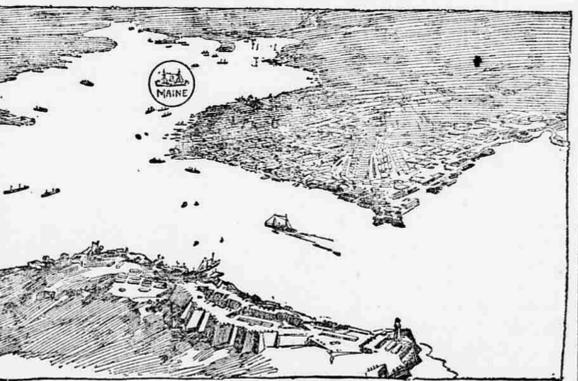
The President and his cabinet tried to keep down the excitement until full reports could be received from Captain Sigsbee. They did not care to base their judgment on dispatches that must be passed upon by the Spanish censors in charge of the telegraph wires at Havana. They therefore followed the theory of an accidental explosion because it would be very serious for the administration publicly to assume that the Maine could have been destroyed in any other way, until they had the full details of this affair from the commander of the ship.

It is asserted by naval officers that the harbor of Havana is full of submarine torpedoes, which need only an electrical connection to make an explosion possible. The theory that the Maine was destroyed by a torpedo found ready believers. Nobody was willing to assert that the Spanish Government was primarily responsible for touching off a torpedo, but among the hotheads roaming the streets of Havana in the state of excited feeling now existing there are many, it is believed, who would not hesitate to commit such an outrage.

### COUNTRY GREATLY EXCITED.

#### Seems as Though Providence Were Leading Our Countries to War.

The agitation and suppressed excitement that prevail throughout the country are shown by the telegrams of inquiry that have been received at the various departments and newspaper offices and by members of Congress as to the probable cause of the explosion. And it is clear that, however it may be explained, this awful calamity must seriously increase the tension between the United States and Spain by provoking excitement, suspicion and irritation. The comments of many public men as furnished in the press dispatches cannot be overlooked by



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE HARBOR OF HAVANA.

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the Spanish. And if the explosion is not satisfactorily explained it may be expected that similar opinions will be offered in Congress and elsewhere in such form as to give great provocation. The feeling in Congress has reached a more acute stage than ever before. The Dupuy de Lome incident intensified the prejudice against Spain and developed a hostility that was never so bitter as to-day in any quarter and is particularly pronounced among those who have been preserving an impartial judgment and a conservative attitude. The excitement from one incident does not subside before another even more aggravating occurs. And it seems as if Providence were leading both countries into war.

### WAS A FLOATING FORT.

#### Maine One of the Best War Ships in the American Navy.

The great explosion that rattled the foundations of the Cuban capital and struck terror to the heart of every human being in Havana at the same time, in a few seconds obliterated nearly \$5,000,000 worth of public property and rendered use-

less the great mass of steel that had been called the battle ship Maine. She was a proud, strong ship, and she will go down into history alongside the Royal George, the Victoria and other men-of-war which were wiped out of existence with their crews under appalling circumstances.

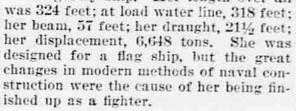
The Maine was one of the best ships in the American navy. In an up and up fight she would have stood her own against any boat of her class afloat. She was not a cruiser. She was built to fight, and she was a floating fort. All the ingenuity of modern naval architecture was brought to bear upon her construction.

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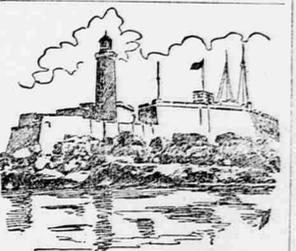
CONSUL-GENERAL LEE.

For six years the labor of men was put into her. Her keel was laid in the Brooklyn navy yard in October, 1888. She was launched on Nov. 19, 1890. The construction of the Maine was authorized by an act of Congress passed Aug. 3, 1886. The act provided that the new boat should cost \$2,500,000, and over that sum was expended upon her. In size the Maine was a goodly ship. Her length over all was 324 feet; at load water line, 318 feet; her beam, 57 feet; her draught, 21½ feet; her displacement, 6,648 tons. She was designed for a flag ship, but the great changes in modern methods of naval construction were the cause of her being finished up as a fighter.

### MORRO CASTLE.

#### Frowning Guardian of Havana's Gateway and Home of Its Uses.

Morro Castle, the guardian of Havana's gateway, stands upon an imposing height at the east entrance of the harbor. Havana was founded eighteen years after Columbus visited the island, and the site of El Morro was the earliest location among fortifications. The castle, of solid masonry and stone parapets, looks secure against all oncomers. Less a fortress than a prison, however, is the Morro Castle of to-day. It has ramifications under the sea and chambers that have not been explored for a hundred years—at least by others than Spaniards. The castle has come to be used principally as a prison for political offenders, and its moldy, draughtless cells are a horror to Cubans,



MORRO CASTLE.

who, of course, are the political offenders. It is the place of execution when political prisoners are not to be shot publicly.

### Flags Half-Masted.

President McKinley has ordered the flags at all navy yards and on naval vessels, at posts, army headquarters, and on all public buildings, at half-mast.