

THE CHIPLEY BANNER.

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BATTLESHIP MAINE BLOWN TO PIECES.

Catastrophe Occurred Without Warning and While Most of the Ship's Men Were Sleeping.

OVER 250 OF THE CREW ARE KILLED OR BADLY WOUNDED

Spanish Boats and Havana Firemen Go to the Rescue and Give All Assistance Possible--The Catastrophe Creates Great Excitement Throughout the Country.

The United States battleship Maine was blown up at 8:40 o'clock Tuesday night in Havana harbor and totally destroyed.

As yet the cause of the explosion is apparent.

According to a report to the navy department by Captain Sigsbee those known to be saved are: Officers, 24, injured; crew, 18 wounded, now on Ward line steamer, in city hospital and hotel, 58, so far as known. Others went down on board or near Maine. Total lost or missing, 253.

The explosion occurred under the main quarters, well forward. The vessel lies with her bows wholly submerged and only a part of her stern showing.

The explosion, which shook the city from one end to another, created the greatest excitement. All the electric lights were put out by the shock. Fire engines rushed madly from one direction to another, and no one knew for certain from which direction the explosion came.

Some of the crew who were able to support themselves by swimming were saved by the boats. The disaster is remarkable in that only two officers lost their lives and these were of junior grades. They were Lieutenant Fred W. Jenkins and Assistant Engineer Darwin R. Merritt.

Scene at Moment of Explosion.

The surviving crew and officers of the Maine state that the explosion sent the ship out of the water and then she went partly to pieces.

All but the surgeon were in the wardroom at the moment of the explosion. Then came the stupendous shock. All the officers below rushed forward to the middle superstructure deck. Only a very pitiable few of the 350 jackies ever got from below. The water rushed over them and many were stunned and drowned, but notangled.

The officers on deck narrowly escaped. In the junior officers' mess all fled to clamber out through water and wreckage waist deep. One ladder from the after torpedo compartment was jammed with men struggling for life. All agree that a double explosion occurred from natural result of an underwater explosion of the magazines.

Brass pipe, angle iron, etc., fell in a shower on the decks of the City of Washington, 300 yards away. Out of the dense smoke came anguished cries for help. Simultaneously with the cessation of falling fragments, searchlights were thrown on the wreck and its load of agony. Spanish boats from the shore joined those of the Washington alongside at once, but the regular ferryboats, passing soon after the explosion, did not stop to offer aid.

CAPTAIN SIGSBEE REPORTS.

Communicated With Navy Department and Asks for Help.

The secretary of the navy at Washington received the following telegram from Captain Sigsbee:

"Maine blown up in Havana harbor at 8:40 o'clock and destroyed. Many wounded and doubtless more killed and drowned. Send tenders from Key West for crew and pieces of equipment still above water. We had other clothes than those upon us."

"Public opinion should be suspended till further report. All officers believed to be dead. Jenkins and Merritt not yet accounted for. Many Spanish officers, including representatives of General Blanco, now with us and express sympathy." Sigsbee."

COAL POOL UNDER WAY.

In Illinois Preparing for a Big Combine.

A meeting at which representatives of nearly 125 local companies handling coal in St. Louis from the mines in southern, central and eastern Illinois, were present, was held in that city Tuesday for the purpose of forming a pool. These companies which control all the mines in the districts mentioned, are considering an agreement to organize in East St. Louis, under Illinois laws, the Standard Coal company, which will take the entire output of the mines.

CHIPLEY.

WASHINGON COUNTY, FLORIDA, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 1898.

MISS FRANCES WILLARD DEAD.

President of the W.C.T.U. Passes Away Suddenly in New York.

Miss Frances E. Willard, president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, died shortly after midnight Friday night at the Hotel Empire in New York city.

Miss Willard has been ill for about three weeks with profound anemia, which was the direct cause of her death.

Frances Elizabeth Willard was born in Churhillville, N. Y., September 28, 1839. She was graduated at Northwestern Female college, Evanston, Ill., in 1859, became professor of natural science there in 1862 and was principal of Genesee Wesleyan seminary in 1866-67. The following two years she spent in foreign travel, giving a part of the time to study in Paris and contributing to periodicals. In 1871-74 she was professor of esthetics in Northwestern university and dean of the women's college, where she developed her system of self-government, which had been adopted by other educators.

Miss Willard left her profession in 1874 to identify herself with the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, serving as corresponding secretary of the national organization until 1879, and since that date as president. As secretary she organized the home protection movement and sent an appeal from nearly 200,000 persons to the legislature of Illinois asking for the temperance ballot for women. At the death of her brother, Oliver A. Willard, she succeeded him as editor of the Chicago Evening Post.

In 1886 she accepted the leadership of the White Cross movement in her own unions which had been established through her influence in twelve states for the protection of women.

In 1888 she was made president of the American branch of the International Council of Women and of the World's Christian Temperance Union, she had founded five years before, and she was repeatedly re-elected. Besides many pamphlets and contributions to magazines and the press, Miss Willard has published several volumes relating to temperance and other reforms.

ANOTHER DISASTER AT SEA.

Fifty Passengers of a Tramp Steamer are Drowned.

A special from Juneau, Alaska, dated February 12th, confirms the news of the loss of the steamer Clara Nevada. The cause of the disaster was doubtless the explosion of her boilers.

Of the fifty people on board none are believed to have been saved. The wreck was discovered by Customs Inspector Marquam, at Juneau, who ordered the Rustler to the scene in Lynn canal, where a burning vessel had been seen. Wreckage bearing the name of the ill-fated vessel was found, but there was nothing to show the identity of any of the passengers.

The Clara Nevada was a tramp steamer, and as she was plying between United States ports she did not file passenger list with the customs house officers.

It was thought she carried about twenty passengers, of whom two or three were women. Several were bound for Juneau and the balance for Seattle.

BUTCHER WEYLER TALKS.

He Gives His Views in Regard to Maine Disaster.

Lieutenant General Weyler, who arrived at Barcelona, Spain, Thursday, expressed the opinion in the course of an interview that the disaster which had befallen the United States warship Maine in Havana harbor was "due to the indolence of her crew."

He announced his intention to ask the government's permission to go to Havana and stand as a candidate for the chamber of deputies for the Havana district.

HARBOR FULL OF TORPEDOES.

Significant Letter Written By a Gunner On the Maine.

The Maine Disaster Absorbed the Interest of Congressmen.

The debate on the bankruptcy bill opened in the house Wednesday, but attracted little attention, the interest of the members being entirely absorbed by the disaster to the Maine. A resolution was unanimously passed expressing regret of the explosion, condolence with the families of those who lost their lives and sympathy with the injured.

ILLINOIS STANDS READY.

Governor Sends Message to Legislature Which Was Applauded.

Governor Tanner, of Illinois, called on the legislature Thursday to authorize him to tender to the president of the United States the "moral and material support" of Illinois, to "prevent or punish any attempt at hostile invasion of our country." This he did in a message to the senate and house. In the senate the message came as a profound surprise. While it was being read by the governor's private secretary, there was the deepest silence in the senate, and at its conclusion there was a burst of applause from both sides.

SPANIARDS ARE DENOUNCED

SENATOR MASON DEMANDS AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION.

A SENSATIONAL DEBATE ENSUES.

Much Warm Talk Indulged In—Republicans Reply to Their Colleague From Illinois.

SPANISH CRUISER AT NEW YORK.

Extraordinary Precautions Taken By Officials For Her Protection.

The Spanish armored cruiser Viscaya is in New York waters on a "friendly visit." She dropped her big anchors five miles south of Sandy Hook lighthouse at 5:30 p. m., Friday, after a thirteen day voyage from the Canary islands.

When her officers and men learned the startling news of the disaster to the American battleship Maine in Havana harbor and of the downfall of former Minister DeLome, they broke into a wild uproar of talk.

For a time all discipline on the great ship seemed to vanish to the winds. Men rushed below to tell their comrades in the lower decks.

Rear Admiral Bunce has given final instructions to Lieutenant John A. Dougherty, who will have charge of the patrol tugs, six in number, to guard the Spanish cruiser during her stay in the vicinity.

Each boat is to have on board, while on watch, four marines, and one non-commissioned officer of marines, a roundsman and four policemen of the metropolitan force.

While on duty the boats will patrol the waters carefully in the vicinity of the visiting Spaniard, and no boat or person will be allowed to approach the Viscaya without the sanction of the commanding officer of that vessel.

Mr. Mason said that the policy of the government was delay, and nothing was stopping the murder of people in Cuba.

The DeLome letter had not stopped the murders. The Maine disaster had not stopped them. It was time for the senate to act. Mr. Mason said he did not want the facts regarding the Maine locked up in the executive departments.

Mr. Mason said we had waited while the diplomats had deceived us. They had sat at our table and misrepresented the situation. Mr. Mason said that while the diplomats delayed 250 of our brave seamen were lying in the harbor at Havana.

Mr. Mason said the American people were tired of investigating behind closed doors, that with 250 seamen lying at the bottom of Havana harbor the people of the United States wanted to know whether she was blown up by her enemies or from spontaneous combustion. Mr. Mason said that if it was found that the disaster was the result of an accident the people would be better satisfied if a committee of congress should find it so and no harm would be done.

Mr. Mason, referring to the DeLome letter, said he thought every one would commend the president for the manner in which he handled a matter which was in part so personal to himself.

Mr. Mason said that those who are so anxious to go slow in the matter of the matter of the Maine were defenders of DeLome and had praised his wise statesmanship.

Mr. Mason said the president said in his message that one reason why he had hesitated to interfere was because of the promise of autonomy, and yet, at the same time the Spaniards were denouncing the government. Mr. Mason said there should be American divers for the Maine so that the truth could be told. He would not act upon an investigation committee, he said, because he would not sit at a table with a Spaniard unless he had a stiletto in his pocket.

This caused a titter in the senate.

Senator Wolcott created a sensation in replying to Mr. Mason. Mr. Wolcott said the senator from Illinois had said the people were losing confidence in one of the great departments of the government, a statement that could not go unchallenged. Mr. Mason sought to interrupt Mr. Wolcott, but the latter peremptorily declined to be interrupted and insisted that the words be read.

SECRETARY LONG CENSURED.

Much Resentment Felt Toward Him Because of His Attitude.

A Washington special says: Resentment is now felt toward Secretary Long that he should, without substantial proof, insist upon giving out the theory that the disaster to the Maine was the result of an accident.

In the whole course of reasoning the assumption is that the Maine was blown up by a torpedo. Congressmen, naval officers and other men in the government do not hesitate to express this belief, while the administration, for fear of offending the Spanish, persists in giving out the contrary theory.

The administration asks for a suspension of judgement, while the secretary of the navy forestalls that suspension by posting his opinion.

TO DISMANTLE MAINE.

Governor Sends Message to Legislature Which Was Applauded.

The Merritt Wrecking Company Secures Contract for the Work.

The Merritt Wrecking company has been directed to send vessels to Havana for the purpose of performing the preliminary work of saving property pertaining to the Maine.

Several telegrams were received by Secretary Long from other wrecking companies desiring to contract for raising the sunken battleship. It is believed generally by the naval officers in Washington that the proposition to raise the Maine is quite feasible, unless the damage to her hull shall prove to be very extensive.

SIGSBEE WAS WARNED.

Mrs. Sigsbee Has an Anonymous Letter Which Creates Great Excitement.

A Washington special says: Mrs. Sigsbee has given out a circular sent to her by Captain Sigsbee over two weeks ago on which was written the words:

"Look out for your ship. We will blow your whole rotten navy to pieces if you send it here."

Then follows a vast amount of abuse against the yankees. Mrs. Sigsbee says she cannot give out the contents of the letter in which this circular was enclosed, but she has felt vague fears ever since Captain Sigsbee sent it to her.

IT LOOKS LIKE TREACHERY.

MANY BELIEVE THE MAINE EXPLOSION WAS NO "ACCIDENT."

NAVAL MEN EXPRESS OPINIONS.

Public Opinion Seems to Be Crystallizing in the Belief That Wrecking of the Warship Was by Design.

A Washington special of Wednesday says: It means a heavy indemnity or war with Spain, for there seems now no good reason to doubt that the terrible tragedy that has cast a gloom over the nation was caused by Spanish treachery.

Despite the strong efforts of those in authority to create a contrary impression, the opinion that the Maine was wrecked by a Spanish torpedo, at first advanced with reluctance, has grown until it has become a conviction.

The best thought in the navy department now indorses this idea, and the construction which experts in these affairs put upon Captain Sigsbee's cablegram seems to bear it out fully.

All of the official utterances have been to the contrary. It has been given out in a semi-official way that the president believes the wreck was due to accident, and the officials of the navy department have been kept busy trying to put up a plausible story on that line. At first the public was inclined to take that view of it. But since these first statements there have been others, from the men whose views are valued most at the navy department, which have thrown a different light on the situation; and in consequence of the belief that some Spaniard is responsible for the most terrible disaster that has ever overtaken this navy, or any other in time of peace, the feeling in Washington is running high.

Nobody believes that the act was committed by authority of the Spanish government. But almost everybody now believes that the Maine was sent to the bottom by some Spaniard in consequence of the bitter anti-American policy in Madrid and Havana, and that it was some man or men who had means of securing the deadly weapons which are made for harbor defense.

Elaborate explanations are being made as to the manner of the "accident" that happened to the battleship.

Some of these are plausible, and are adhered to by those whose every breath is for peace at any cost. But under the analysis of such men as Chief Navy Constructor Hichborn and other men high in knowledge of the affairs of our navy, these explanations vanish into thin air. It is the opinion of Commodore Hichborn that the "accident" that sent the Maine to the bottom was a torpedo, and that the investigation of the divers when they get to work will demonstrate his idea to be the correct one.

Torpedo Did the Work.

As to the theory of spontaneous combustion, Commodore Hichborn takes no stock in that. He says the character of the powder and other ammunition and the precautions taken to protect them all combine to render such an occurrence out of the question.

All he has said for the public is that he feels convinced the divers will find that the indentations will turn inward—which in reality tells the whole story of his views, as that would mean that a torpedo had done the work.

Out of deference to the opinion which Secretary Long expressed for publication, most of the officials of the departments have felt it incumbent upon them to give out nothing that did not seem to bear out the accident theory. Nevertheless, the secretary is quoted as having expressed to a close friend his opinion that a torpedo did the work, and the other officials are talking more freely.

Assistant Secretary Roosevelt is one of those who has all along adhered to the idea that there was no spontaneous combustion about it, but that a Spanish torpedo did the damage.

The correspondent of the Associated Press says he has conversed with several of the wounded sailors and understands from them that the explosion took place while they were asleep so that they can give no particulars as to the cause.

BIG FOREST FIRES

Doing Untold Damage to Property In North Carolina.

A special from Raleigh, N. C., says: Forest fires have done immense damage to pine timber all the way from Rockingham to Sanford, a distance of eighty miles. Entire forests are swept away and a number of farm buildings.

Men on horseback gave warning and no doubt saved many lives. The wind blew a gale for twelve hours.

The greatest destruction was along the line of the Seaboard Air Line. Its crossings were on fire at many places and a section house was burned at Hamlet. It is estimated that the timber loss is at least \$100,000.