NATAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

Gen. Wood Formally Transfers the Island to Its People.

American Flag Lowered and the Cuban Colors Raised Amid the Cheers of the Populace—The Simple Ceremonies.

HAVANA, May 20.—The natal day of the Republic of Cuba found Havana arrayed like a Queen to await the coming of her lord. She seemed reinvested for the occasion with the dignity of the prosperous days of her power and wealth. The decorations were universal. In some cases men had worked all night, by the light of torches, to complete elaborate designs. There was not a residence, pretentious or humble, that did not bear upon its quaint façade some emblem in honor of the event. The many arches erected at the entrances of Plazas by political societies, fraternal clubs, residents of various civil divisions of the city, and business organizations, had an air of real grandeur. Bunting spread on Venetian masts canopied the deep, narrow streets from the rays of the sun. Beneath these canopies the Cuban colors and palms graced the open doorways, through which glimpses could be caught of luxuriant gardens in cool, inner courts. Nature seemed in harmony with the spirit of the festivities. The parks were literally aflame with tropical flowers, and the vaulted sky above might have been chiseled out of turquois. From every red-tiled roof rose a Cuban flag.

All the shipping in the harbor was dressed in gala attire. The United States armored cruiser Brooklyn, which was to take Gen. Wood away, and the steamer Morro Castle of the Ward Line, on which the troops were to embark, as well as the foreign warships which had been sent by their Governments to be present at the birth of the new republic, were dressed with streams of signal flags, fore and aft, man-of-war fashion. Outside, the sapphire waters of the gulf, sparkling beneath the tropical sun, washed the rocky feet of the sentinel fortresses which guarded the entrance of the harbor. The American colors, which were to be hauled down in a few hours, still floated above the grim walls.

The early morning was cool and delightful, and the entire population, reinforced by thousands of visitors, was abroad soon after daylight. All was animation and expectancy. Much curiosity was aroused by a statue of Freedom which had been raised during the night in Central Park, upon the pedestal where for centuries a statue of Queen Isabella had stood. During the morning a plentiful breakfast was given to several thousand poor children by Mr. Paine of Boston, who has passed the Winter in Havana for many years. As the day advanced the heat of the sun became intense, and the weather grew hotter every minute.

During the early morning many troops of school children marched into the Plaza de Armas, ranged themselves before the palace and sang an American anthem. At 10 o'clock a delegation from the Central Veterans' Club presented Gen. Wood with a handsome machete, having a beautifully engraved hilt. It has the Cuban coat of arms and a single gold star on one side, and the General's initials on the other in gold.

CEREMONIES IN THE PALACE.

The actual transfer of the control of the island was scheduled to be made at exactly noon, Havana time, which is 12:30 P. M. Washington time, but those invited to witness the ceremony were requested to be at the palace at 11:30 A. M. They included, besides the American officers and the members of President-elect Palma's Cabinet, the members of Congress, the Supreme Court Judges, the Governors of the Provinces, the officers of the visiting warships, the foreign Consuls, W. J. Bryan, and other visiting Americans, several of Señor Palma's Central Valley (N. Y.) neighbors; Horatio Rubens, counsel for the former Cuban Junta; Col. William Astor Chanler, and a few other specially invited guests.

The palace is an imposing yellow stone structure, the upper stories of its front being built over a stone colonnade, giving it a fine architectural effect. It fronts an exquisite park, the Plaza de Armas. Through the centre of the building an archway leads, as in all Spanish palaces, to the court, where a statue of Columbus rises from a mass of palms and flowering plants. On either side of the entrance marble stairways ascend to the Audience Room, which opens through balconied windows upon the Plaza. In this chamber the actual transfer occurred. The chamber is to-day exactly as it was when the Spaniards departed, except that the portraits of Balmaceda, the Weyler of the Ten Years' War, and those of the other Captains-General which hung upon its walls are gone. But coats of arms of Spain, with their royal quarterings, still hang above the windows. The decorations, white and gold, with the superb mirrors, have also been preserved. The chair with a gold crown above its back, which was reserved for the Spanish monarch himself, was visible in an adjoining apartment.

Owing to the limited space the people were to have no sight of the ceremony to be enacted here, but outside they were to witness a spectacle which would stir their pulses, for they were to see the beloved five-barred and single-starred flag which Cespedes first threw to the breeze in 1868, at the opening of the Ten Years' War, raised by the act of the United States above the palace. No wonder then that hours before the time set they began flocking here from all quarters of the city. A portion of the Plaza was kept clear by the police very early. The remainder was packed with people, so thick that the ground seemed alive. Soon all the side streets running into the Plaza were choked into a solid mass of humanity. Then crowds sought the roofs, overflowig every building that commanded a view of the flagstaff on the palace. Drawn up below in the open space of the Plaza were eight dismounted troops of the Seventh Cavalry, with sabres at their heels.

Shortly before 11:30 A. M. those who were to witness the ceremony began to arrive in carriages through a street kept clear by the police. All the naval officers were ar-

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rayed in full uniform, resplendent in gold braid and plumed chapeau. The Cubans generally wore black frock suits, white waistcoats, and silk hats. The ceremony itself was brief and simple. After formal greetings Gen. Wood read the documentary transfer prepared by the War Department, pledging the new Government to immediately proclaim the Constitution and the Platt amendment contained in the appendix, and to undertake all obligations assumed by the United States, with respect to Cuba, by the Treaty of Paris. The document read by Governor General Wood was as follows:

THE DOCUMENTARY TRANSFER.

"Headquarters Department of Cuba,
"Havana, May 20, 1902.

"To the President and Congress of the Republic of Cuba:

"Sirs: Under the direction of the President of the United States I now transfer to you as the duly elected representatives of the people of Cuba the government and control of the island, to be held and exercised by you, under the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Cuba, hereto-fore adopted by the Constitutional Convention and this day promulgated, and I hereby declare the occupation of Cuba by the United States and the military government of the island to be ended.

"This transfer of government and control is upon the express condition, and the Government of the United States will understand that by the acceptance thereof you do now, pursuant to the provisions of the said Constitution, assume and undertake, all and several, the obligations assumed by the United States with respect to Cuba, by the treaty between the United States of America and her Majesty the Queen Regent of Spain, signed at Paris on the 10th day of December, 1898.

"All money obligations of the military government down to this date have been paid as far as practicable. The public civil funds derived from the revenues of Cuba transferred to you this day are transferred subject to such claims and obligations properly payable out of the revenues of the island as may remain. The sum of $100,000 has been reserved from the transfer of funds to defray anticipated expenses of accounting, reporting, and winding up the affairs of the military government, after which any unexpended balance of said sum will be paid into the treasury of the island.

"The plans already devised for the sanitation of the cities of the island and to prevent a recurrence of epidemic and infectious diseases, to which the Government of the United States understands that the provision of the Constitution contained in the fifth article of the appendix applies, are as follows:

"1. A plan for the paving and sewering of the City of Havana, for which a contract has been awarded by the municipality of that city to McGivney, Rokeby & Co.

"2. A plan for a water works to supply the City of Santiago de Cuba, prepared by Capt. S. E. Reckenbach, in charge of the District of Santiago, and approved by the Military Governor, providing for taking water from the wells of San Juan Canyon, and pumping the same to reservoirs located on the heights to the east of the city.

"3. A plan for the sewering of the City of Santiago de Cuba, a contract for which was awarded to Michael J. Dady & Co., by the Military Governor of Cuba and now under construction.

"4. The rules and regulations established by the President of the United States on the 17th of January, 1809, for the maintenance of quarantine against epidemic diseases at the Ports of Havana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, and Santiago de Cuba, and thereafter at the other ports of the island, as extended and amended and made applicable to future conditions, by the order of the Military Governor.

"5. The sanitary rules and regulations in force in the City of Havana, (and in any other city having official rules, &c.)

"It is understood by the United States that the present Government of the Isle of Pines will continue as a de facto Government, pending the settlement of the title to said island by treaty pursuant to the Cuban Constitution and the act of Congress of the United States approved March 2, 1901.

"I am further charged by the President of the United States to deliver to you the letter which I now hand you.

"LEONARD WOOD,
"Military Governor."

"White House,
"Washington, May 10, 1902.

"To the President and Congress of the Republic of Cuba:

"Sirs: On the 20th of this month the Military Governor of Cuba will, by my direction, transfer to you the control and Government of the Island of Cuba, to be thenceforth exercised under the provisions of the Constitution adopted by your Constitutional Convention as on that day promulgated, and he will thereupon declare the occupation of Cuba by the United States to be at an end.

"At the same time I desire to express to you the sincere friendship and good wishes of the United States and our most earnest hopes for the stability and success of your Government, for the blessings of peace, justice, prosperity, and ordered freedom among your people, and for enduring friendship between the Republic of the United States and the Republic of Cuba.

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
"President of the United States."

PRESIDENT PALMA'S REPLY.

Señor Palma, as President of the Republic of Cuba, replied to Governor General Wood, saying in part:

"In accepting this transfer I declare that the Government of the Republic of Cuba assumes, in conformity with what is determined in the Constitution, each and all of the obligations that the Government of the United States took upon itself in regard to Cuba by virtue of the treaty signed on the 10th day of December, 1898, between the United States and her Majesty, the Queen Regent of Spain. I note that all financial responsibilities contracted by the military Government up to this date have been paid; that $100,000 have been set aside to attend, in so far as is necessary, to the liquidation and settlement of the obligations contracted by said Government, and that there have been transferred to the Government of the republic $830,101.02, which constitute the balance in cash to the credit of the nation.

"In all that Article V. of the Constitutional Appendix is applicable, the Government will take care to facilitate the execution of the work of sanitation planned by the military Government. The Cuban Government will also endeavor, as far as possible, and as far as depends on it, to comply with the necessity of sanitation and the observance of the system established by the military Government of Cuba.

"It is understood that the Isle of Pines continues de facto under the jurisdiction of the Government of the republic, pending that will be agreed upon between the United States and Cuba.

"I receive with great satisfaction the letter which President Roosevelt has addressed to the Congress of the republic and to me, on account of the sentiments of friendship therein expressed for the people of Cuba. I take advantage of this solemn occasion, when there is fulfilled the honest promise of the Government and of the people of the United States in regard to the Island of Cuba, and when the personality of our country is established as a sovereign nation, to express to you, as a worthy representative of that great Nation, the immense gratitude that the people of Cuba feel for the American Nation; for its illustrious President, Theodore Roosevelt, and to you, personally, for the efforts which you have made for the attainment of that cherished ideal."

THE CUBAN FLAG RAISED.

Señor Palma attached his signature to a document, as President of the Cuban Republic, after an exchange of congratulations. The veteran Gen. Gomez ascended to the roof of the palace, where he was accorded a hearty reception. Troopers of the Seventh United States Cavalry lowered the American colors, which were saluted with forty-five guns by Cabanas Fortress, and hoisted the Cuban flag.

As the flag flew free the streets below fairly waved with the cheer that arose. It was caught up by the people on the roofs, and rolled over the city. Again the cavalry below saluted, and again the guns of Cabanas spoke, this time with a national salute of twenty-one guns. The bands stationed on the plaza, at Cabanas, and at Malecon crashed out with pride of country, and the revenue cutters and battleships in the harbor thundered. The foreign warships hoisted the flag of Cuba at their mastheads, and bestowed upon it the honors due to nations. The ensigns of Great Britain and Italy had recognized the republic.

The demonstration was still in progress when the cavalry wheeled and marched to the wharf, where they immediately embarked on the Morro Castle.

Gen. Wood and his Adjutant General, Col. Scott, with two aides, after a last exchange of good wishes, were driven to the pier, where they entered a launch and were taken to the Brooklyn. Both ships got under way as soon as possible and steamed out of the harbor. A large flotilla of various water craft escorted the Brooklyn to sea. The man at the taffrail of the Brooklyn was kept busy dipping the flag in answer to the salutes of the thousands upon the waterfront who watched her departure. The demonstration was remarkable in many respects.

While this was taking place at Havana, a similar scene was being enacted at Santiago, where Gen. Whitside at noon turned over the authority to his Cuban successor and sailed away with two troops of the Eighth Cavalry.

Only eight batteries of American artillery remain on Cuban soil. A chapter of American history has ended, and the first chapter of the history of the Cuban Republic has begun. Before the Brooklyn was hull down on the horizon the Cubans resumed their festivities.

President Loubet of France has sent the following cablegram to President Palma:

"At the moment when your Excellency takes official possession of your high duties I send my sincere congratulations, and I pray for your personal happiness and the prosperity of Cuba."

President Palma has received also congratulations from the Presidents of Guatemala and Santo Domingo and from the Mexican House of Representatives. He also received several congratulatory messages from Spain and hundreds from the United States.

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