

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### THE WAVE OF PROSPERITY.

The impression that the United States once more has entered upon an era of prosperity is strengthened by the observation recently made by the London Statist. That financial journal, always noted for its conservative views and guarded utterances, is quoted as follows:

"We think America has entered upon a period of great prosperity, which will last for years, if no great folly is committed."

All the natural conditions seem to favor such a view of the matter. The war with Spain being over, the best energies of the country should be devoted to the development of our natural resources, and the strengthening of our commerce. There is no reason why this country should not excel in the pursuits of peace every other country, just as in this war has completely overshadowed her antagonist. And it should not be necessary to build around the country a Chinese wall, either.

The statement of our foreign commerce for the fiscal term ended with June last, furnishes a firm basis for the belief in coming prosperity. The total export of merchandise amounted to \$1,231,311,000, which beats the record by over \$180,000,000. And while the exports show this remarkable increase, the imports decreased, and the excess of exports over imports was \$615,259,000. The cause of this may be found in the scarcity of crops in many countries and the abundance here, but it is probably also true that this country is every year becoming less dependent upon foreign countries, while the latter are being forced to go to our markets for a supply. Prosperity is at the door; hope and confidence are its attendants.

### PORTO RICO.

General Miles is slow in moving on Porto Rico, but probably this part of the campaign is to be marked with the same deliberation as that which has characterized the movements of the navy and army so far, and as long as the results are equal to those already attained, there can be no reason for impatience at delays which, when the final accounts are balanced, may prove to be important factors in the desirable sum total.

The capital of Porto Rico has in its early history proved itself a veritable stronghold. The Chicago Record quotes a London chronicler who, writing in 1741, says:

"There is a very strong citadel built on the southwest side of the place, which commands and defends it; and besides, this is a very strong castle which protects the port. In 1595 Sir Francis Drake was here and burnt all the ships; but foreseeing that he should not be able to keep the place without abandoning all his other designs he left it. Three years afterward the earl of Cumberland reduced it, and had some thoughts of keeping it, but losing 400 men in the space of a month by a contagious disease he was glad to depart, carrying with him seventy pieces of cannon and an immense booty in plate. In 1615 the Dutch sent a strong fleet hither, but with no great success, for they only took and plundered the city, not being able to reduce the castle, which, with the other forts, are now in a better condition than ever, this harbor having been found of vast use since the Spaniards have thought it to their interest to disturb our commerce."

Since that time the art of warfare has undergone complete revolutions and many places formerly impregnable are now about defenseless, but there are natural positions which even modern engines of war will find difficult to carry. At all events San Juan and the entire island will soon become the property of the United States. It will probably be held as a security perhaps until the war indemnity is paid, which may be equivalent to forever.

Porto Rico has a population of about a million inhabitants. Sugar and coffee are the principal products of the island. The soil is said to be fertile and the climate is described as salubrious. If Cuba is the pearl of the Antilles, Porto Rico may be called its diamond. If glowing descriptions come somewhere near the truth.

Concerning the inhabitants a contributor to the Chicago Times-Herald says:

"As a class its people are far superior to the Cubans. They are good-looking, happy and prosperous. They have had the time, and have taken the pains to obtain some education. The negroes are an inconsiderable part of the population, being heavily in the minority. Mixed bloods are less common than in other Spanish-American lands. There are many Spaniards, but their assertion has been that they belong to Porto Rico and not to Spain, just as many of the immigrant Englishmen fought for the American colony in the revolution. Porto Rico is the only West Indian island of which this is true, and this fact speaks loudly not only for the virtues of the land and climate but for the character of the natives, who seem to have absorbed the Spaniards and made good westerners of them. The dominant population is the Creole, by which is meant, of course, white persons of Spanish or French blood. They are clean, healthy, intelligent, honorable and brave, utterly different from the hungry horde of 'allies' which ate the American army out of bacon and hardtack before Santiago. They then rolled corn-shuck cigarettes, lay down in the shade and refused to assist in building roads. The women are the handsomest of all West Indians, and do not 'break,' or grow old, so early as their sisters of the other islands, their lasting qualities being due in part to unmixt blood, but more largely to an equable and invigorating climate. The deadliest foe to physical strength and beauty in the tropics is intemperance in the use of alcohol, and the Porto Ricans, male and female, are notably sober."

As a strategic point Porto Rico would be of the greatest advantage to the United States in case of further trouble with any European power, and this consideration will not be overlooked when the question of the final disposition of the island arises.

### A GREAT COUNTRY THIS.

This war has developed many peculiar things, some of them so decidedly unique that they partake somewhat of the ludicrous. That incident at the Ladrone islands, when the governor general apologized for not having powder so he could respond to host's shots which he mistook for a salute, was absolutely funny, and other things have been just as singular and rested at that. But the climax must have been reached when Uncle Sam's connivance bidding scheme for transportation to Spain of the Spanish prisoners in Santiago was won and accorded

to a Spanish firm in New York! It is known as the Spanish Transatlantic company and is operated by Ceballos & Co.

The matter stands thus: The United States engages in a war with a foreign country, during which all diplomatic relations are suspended and all commerce is stopped; in the course of events our forces capture a big slice of Spanish territory and a large army along with it, one of the terms of capture being that the soldiers taken shall all be returned home at our expense; we then call for bids having that object in view, and some of the prisoners' countrymen make an offer among many others, and succeeded in capturing the prize. The United States thus pays Spaniards for transportation of other Spaniards whom it was not obliged to do anything more for than take care of as prisoners of war.

It is well understood that no other nation under the sun would have done as this one has in respect to the captured enemy, and in many other respects, but then it is also understood that it is unlike any other nation in every important particular. We have some distinguished prisoners as a result of the strained relations between Spain and ourselves, among them being an admiral, several captains, lieutenants and so on, and at least one governor general of a province. These are prisoners in a manner so altogether nominal that the word implying restraint seems to have no application at all. Within reasonable limits, which are by no means narrow or at all defined, the men spoken of can come and go as they see fit, their personal comfort is carefully provided for, their former station in life is theirs, their rank is always a matter of consideration, and they live, on the whole, much better than they would at some of the hotels which claim to be first class. In contemplation of these things the wonder is that any of them care to return to Spain at all; and if the actual state of affairs were known to the remainder of the Spanish forces, it is a question if we would not soon have the last one of them to look after. It might not be a bad thing to continue to get the information from them as President Brigham Young used to say of the Indians, it may be cheaper to feed than fight them.

A great country is this. Its greatness is not really understood by even its own citizens. Foreign countries are just beginning to find out that it is entitled to rank somewhere near their own rating.

### COLONEL PAGE APPOINTED.

The "News" extends its congratulations to former Colonel but now Major Henry Page of the volunteer service, upon his appointment as indicated. The position is in the quartermaster's department and is well merited. A great many of Major Page's friends hereabout—and their name is legion—would have been better pleased if a place in which his qualities as a soldier could have wider play had been secured, he being one of the very few officers of the volunteer forces who have seen actual service at the front; but all are gratified that he has been recognized and that through such recognition our State wears another distinction as a mark of the general government's favor.

Our congressional delegation worked zealously and untiringly to have the President comprehend and act upon the matter; that he seems to have been somewhat slow is easily accounted for. A man who works fifteen hours a day