

THE COMMERCIAL

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The Commercial certainly enjoys a very much
larger circulation among the business community
of the vast region lying between Lake Superior
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facturing and financial houses of Eastern Canada.

WINNIPEG, APRIL 30, 1898,

THE WAR.

The black war cloud which has so long hung upon the horizon, has at last burst, and two Christian nations are now pouring out the vials of their wrath upon each other, and each is doing its best, or rather worst, to shed the blood of the subjects of the opposing power. This is the first war which has occurred between two Christian powers, save such petty strifes as the South American countries have indulged in, since the Franco-Prussian war. To all right thinking persons the civilized world over, this war must be a cause of serious concern. It is a most lamentable thing, from whatever way it is viewed. It is nothing less than a blow at civilization. The wheels of civilization and Christian progress have been turned backward—how far only the future will tell. Next to defeat in war, the greatest evil which a nation could be called upon to endure is victory. Possibly in some cases the greater evil may fall upon the victor. In this very case it is doubtful if the United States will not be the greater sufferer from the war, though there is hardly any room for doubt but that she will be victor.

But the war is on and there is little use of moralizing over the situation now. Wrath and hatred are having their full play. Neutrals can only express their sympathy for those who are bound to suffer. Canadians, and

the British people generally, will sympathize with the United States in this horrible affair. At the same time there is much that can be said to lead to sympathy with Spain. There is first that natural sympathy which is always felt with the weaker contestant, whether the combat be between a small boy and a large one, or between a powerful nation and a feeble state. In this case the disparity in power and resources is so great, that the struggle can hardly fail to evoke much sympathy for Spain. Another reason for sympathy with Spain is the fact that the United States is clearly the aggressor, notwithstanding that Spain made important concessions. A third point is, that the resources of diplomacy were not exhausted at the time the decision was arrived at at Washington that nothing short of the expulsion of Spain from Cuba would suffice. Indeed, it seems from an impartial study of the case, that this war is altogether unnecessary. Spain appeared to be willing to give up everything but the name, in this Cuban affair. She appeared to be willing to grant the Cubans practical independence, retaining only nominal sovereignty such as appertains in the relations of Canada to Great Britain. If the United States had accepted some such arrangement as this and had co-operated with Spain in endeavoring to carry it into effect, giving the Cuban insurgents to understand that they could expect no sympathy unless they accepted the situation, peace and order would no doubt have been soon restored. Under such an arrangement the United States would have been able to do humanitarian work to a thousand times better advantage than by declaring war. Autonomy would no doubt have been better for the Cubans themselves than independence, and at any rate it would have prepared them for complete independence later on. Cuban independence without some strong outside control, would simply mean anarchy and riot. The United States will be morally bound to maintain order in Cuba, after the Spaniards are driven out until the people become competent to govern themselves.

The course taken more recently by the United States in this trouble does not seem creditable to the justice, good sense and peace loving disposition of our neighbors. Latterly the people of the United States, or at least a large portion of them, seem to have abandoned reason. Nothing but blood would seem to appease them. This feeling, which has developed so rapidly since the Maine disaster, would lead to the conclusion that the war has really been brought about by this lamentable occurrence,

rather than on humanitarian grounds. A large section of the press and many politicians have used the Maine disaster continually to arouse hatred against Spain and force the nation into war. At the same time nothing could be more unjust than a war on this account. It is not at all clear yet what led to the explosion which destroyed the Maine. Spain's offer to have an investigation by foreign experts, and to settle the question of liability by arbitration, was all that any nation could do under like circumstances.

It is true the most important concessions offered by Spain came late, but that should not have prevented their acceptance. The people of the United States may deceive themselves in their talk of humanitarian motives, but the world will not be deceived thereby. The creation of a vastly greater evil for the suppression of a lesser one, is not the way to move on humanitarian lines. Certainly the most humanitarian and best element of the people were not the ones who were shouting for war. The noisy, demagogic element, who have succeeded in forcing the war, were probably influenced more by passion, and revenge at the supposed destruction of the Maine by Spanish design than by humanitarian views.

As for Spain, her record is bad. Her history is black with cruelty, bloodshed and treachery. There will be few to mourn her complete expulsion from the western world. The great cause for regret is that this expulsion has to be brought about by a demoralizing war, when it might have been attained in a peaceful and more honorable way. While we sympathize with our neighbors, we cannot overlook the fact that there is much that has been harsh and unreasonable in their conduct, and that instead of trying to bring about the passification of Cuba by peaceful methods, a large section of the press and people labored rather to force on the war in which they are now engaged.

PREMIER GREENWAY'S RAILWAYS.

The unseemly haste displayed in the adoption of Premier Greenway's railway policy, by the Manitoba legislature, cannot be considered otherwise than a matter for regret. A bill involving an enormous liability upon the province, in proportion to its resources, has been introduced and rushed through the house before even the people of Winnipeg have had time to think of the measure. As for the people of the province in general, the bill was passed before the majority of them would have heard of the proposals at all. It does seem unwise that such an important measure should have been so hastily disposed of.