

# DONALD HARPER'S OFFER.

## READY TO TURN OVER OSSABAW ISLAND TO THE RED CROSS.

IF THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT NEED THE PROPERTY THE SOCIETY IS LIKELY TO SECURE IT AS A HOSPITAL STATION FOR CONTAGIOUS DISEASES.

The Red Cross, which a few weeks ago had expected to be able, through the generosity of David H. King, jr., of this city, to secure hospital facilities on Jekyll Island, near Brunswick, Ga., but which was disappointed in that expectation because of antagonism to the plan on the part of Mr. King's fellow club members owning places on the island, is not unlikely to have placed at its disposal in the near future another island in every way as well adapted to its purposes as is Jekyll Island.

About three weeks ago Donald Harper, a well-known international lawyer of this city and Paris, whose native State is Georgia, sent the following letter to President McKinley:

No. 22 Broad-st., New-York City,  
June 21, 1898.

To the President:

Sir: It affords me pleasure to offer for the service of our sick soldiers, who may contract contagious diseases during service, my property on Ossabaw Island, consisting of several thousand acres. This island is one of the largest on the Georgia coast, lying between Savannah and Brunswick, and is high, dry and healthy. It seems to me peculiarly adapted for hospital service for contagious diseases on account of its complete isolation.

If my offer can be of service will you kindly give directions? Very respectfully,

DONALD HARPER.

To this letter a prompt reply was sent by the President, through Secretary John Addison Porter, as follows:

Executive Mansion,  
Washington, June 24, 1898.

My Dear Sir: Your letter of the 21st inst., tendering to the United States Government your property on Ossabaw Island for hospital use, has been received, and by direction of the President brought to the personal attention of the Secretary of War. Permit me to assure you that the President thoroughly appreciates this generous and patriotic offer.

With best wishes, believe me, very truly yours,

JOHN ADDISON PORTER,

Secretary to the President.

Mr. Donald Harper, No. 22 Broad-st., New-York City.

A few days later Mr. Harper also received this letter, from Surgeon-General Sternberg, U. S. A.:

Dear Sir: Your letter to the President, offering your property for use as a hospital for contagious diseases, has been referred to me for reply. There is no immediate use for such a hospital, but I appreciate your generous offer, and shall put your letter upon file for future reference in case of need. Very truly yours,

GEORGE M. STERNBERG,

Surgeon-General, United States Army.

Mr. Harper deemed it proper to offer the island first to the Government, but it is understood that if the Government decides that it does not need the property, the owner will place it at the disposal of the Red Cross. Ossabaw Island is about twenty-five miles below Savannah, and fifty or sixty miles north of Jekyll Island. In case of an outbreak of contagious disease, like yellow fever or smallpox, among the troops in Cuba, there is no place on the mainland in the Southern States to which the sufferers could be transferred without opposition on the part of the residents; and to bring them North would involve a dangerous prolongation of the voyage from Cuba. But Ossabaw Island is only a comparatively short distance from Cuba, and, as it is eight or ten miles from the mainland of Georgia, the establishment there of a hospital for contagious diseases could not be regarded by the people of the State as in any sense a menace to the public health. The island is easily accessible to hospital ships, the water around it being so deep that large vessels can come near the shore, transferring the sick to the land in small boats with the minimum of inconvenience. There is at present on the island no building which could be at once used as a complete hospital, but the old Harper homestead and a number of small cottages are there, which would do as at least a temporary shelter. The land is elevated and dry, and there is an abundant supply of pure water.

The only persons living on the island are the plantation slaves of Mr. Harper's grandfather and their descendants, who have never left the property. Ossabaw Island has been in the family since the time of Sir Patrick Houston, the first colonial Governor of Georgia, who was Mr. Harper's ancestor. The Governor, over whose grave in Bonaventure Cemetery, Savannah, stands the oldest recorded tombstone in Georgia, laid out his sea island with beautiful avenues, several miles in length, bordered with live oaks, and these leafy avenues, with the Spanish moss dripping from the ancient trees, are still there in their picturesque loneliness.

Mr. Harper has used his island only as a hunting ground, but he is entirely willing to forego the pleasure, for he has offered the property to the President absolutely without charge and without condition of any sort, for as long a period of occupancy as may be necessary; and if a contagious diseases hospital should be placed there, it would probably be several years before the owner and his friends would desire to hunt over it again. There are thousands of deer on Ossabaw Island, wild hogs and catamounts in great quantity, alligators innumerable, and a great many quail and other game birds. The fishing also is excellent.

## PROPOSALS EXPECTED FROM SPAIN.

Washington, July 7.—All views on the Spanish-American war were strongly optimistic here today. Possibly the President's expressed hope for peace in his proclamation issued last night may have been the first basis for these rosy views, but there were confirmatory evidences, coming from sources that have so far proved to be unflinchingly accurate, that seem to afford foundation for the expectation that some overtures in the direction of peace may be expected shortly, though, of course, peace itself cannot be consummated immediately. The most significant advice was one from Spain to-day stating positively that within the week the country would sue for peace. It was also declared that Martinez Campos, Weyler's predecessor as Captain-General of Cuba and one of the best and most reasonable minds of Spain, is to be made Prime Minister of the new Spanish Cabinet, which is sure to be erected within a few days on the wreck of the Sagasta Cabinet. This information accords well with advices that have been coming in for the last week to show that some of the European Powers at least have bestirred themselves to bring pressure upon Spain to yield to the inevitable and ask for peace.

It can be stated authoritatively, however, that up to this time no overtures have been made to this Government looking to peace. This fact, however, does not in any sense offset or qualify the first statement, namely, that movements in that direction are afoot in Europe. It could not be expected that the United States Government would receive kindly a suggestion that it should make the initial movement toward peace, and therefore no overtures from the European Powers or from Spain directly could be expected until the Spanish Government had either directly or through some friendly Power made an advance in that direction. When that is done, and some such move is expected soon, this Government will be perfectly ready to respond if approached in the proper spirit.

## SECOND DAY OF THE WHITE TRIAL.

The court-martial of Civil Engineer U. S. G. White, U. S. N., was resumed at the Brooklyn Navy Yard yesterday forenoon. The minutes of yesterday's proceedings were read over by Judge-Advocate Lutchelmer, after which Benjamin R. Southworth, chief clerk in the Department of Yards and Docks, was called to the witness-stand. The second witness was Civil Engineer Charles M. Parks, and his direct examination was being held when the recess was announced. The afternoon session was devoted entirely to the reading of the record of the pile-driving done on the dock. This had not been ended when the court adjourned until this morning.