

where there are few guns, would have been taken in the rear and could have been carried easily after the fleet had silenced them. From this height, these officers say, the batteries on the west side of the harbor could easily have been cleared of Spaniards. The mines in the harbor entrance raised, the fleet allowed to enter, and the campaign, whose one object is the destruction of the Spanish sea power in the West Indies, would have been ended. Everyone knows what has actually been done and what it has cost. I have heard our own and foreign officers estimate the probable loss in the capture of the Morro according to the original plan, as at most, 300.

The yellow fever has broken out on shore,—thirty cases among the Michigan regiments we brought down, and General Duffield is one. The flames are destroying the houses of Siboney, but the harm has been done.

#### A CONFERENCE ON THE YALE.

Three hours after we left Guantánamo, we came alongside the New York at Santiago. Admiral Sampson and half a dozen officers came aboard, and he and Miles had a conference in the ladies' parlor, now the Captain's office. Miles is a fine looking, well kept, portly man. Sampson is very thin, slightly bent with a fine, scholarly face, very sharp eyes, protruding eyebrows, white hair and pointed beard. He looks worn, although in the navy he is said to be a man of iron nerves, or no nerves. Williams tells an anecdote of a gun trial in which the piece exploded. Everyone else ran away. Sampson never budged. He has the universal respect of the navy as the fairest, calmest, steadiest, best equipped and most capable of officers. \* \* \*

I see all the fleet orders issued by the Admiral and they show with how great care he had provided against any possibility of the Spaniard's escape. The strain must have been tremendous on him and on the individual captains. \* \* \*

It is a strange thing that Cervera came out when he did. Such a night as last night would seem almost to have insured his escape. The rain poured and squalls drove the mist in one's eyes, and a ship without a light could never have been seen one or two hundred yards away. Had he headed to the east, his fleet could have run right into and through the transports off Siboney, and in the blackness the confusion, the mistaking of friend and foe, escape would seem to have been almost sure.

The decks were running water like rivers, so the troops were allowed in the mess rooms, and passages. When I got up at twelve and again when I went to bed at four, I had to climb over them. They were piled on top of one another, every one asleep with his mouth open.

As we came along the coast this morning, we could see the puffs of smoke from the guns of the fleet bombarding Santiago, but before we arrived the truce had begun again. I suppose, on the part of the Spaniards it is a ruse to gain time. We hear that a retreat of part of our troops had been ordered before the Spaniards agreed to the armistice.

July 13th.—When we reached here, there were thirty cases of yellow fever ashore, now there are one hundred and thirty-five. As yet, none have died. The troops are still on board, but General Miles goes ashore every day.

I shall have to be more careful in my comments in letters home. I have just been looking over the navy regulations and find that I could be court-martialed for nearly every sentence. Merely to couple the name of an officer with a verb is enough to warrant court-martial.

A rigid quarantine has been established on board against every one ashore. This morning a brigadier-general was refused admission to the deck, and, one of the aides de camp of General Shafter, who managed to get on board without the officer of the deck knowing it, in hope that we would take him back to New York, was sent on shore when discovered.

#### READY TO LAND.

Yesterday I was awakened at seven and ordered to put on old clothes (suitable for swimming) and be ready to take command of a boat to land the

troops. The other junior watch officers and I were to take them into a beach two miles west of the entrance to Santiago, and effect a landing through the surf.

The life-boats are most of them made of iron, so that a shot through the bottom would soon have left the occupants in the water. On the heights above the beach are the Spanish batteries, which were expected to make a vigorous resistance to the landing. Indeed, Captain Paget, R. A. has pronounced the attempt very dangerous. The fleet was assembled, the New York, Brooklyn, Massachusetts, Texas, Oregon, Gloucester, and others, and were ready to fire over our heads. During the morning, we all lay of Aguadores to the east of Morro, but ready to move to the west as soon as the order came from General Shafter. About 3 p. m., however, a man at the Signal Station ashore wig-wagged the news "The Spaniards have capitulated." That was all. It is maddening to be right here at the seat of operations and know less of what is going on ashore than anyone within reach of a paper at home.

#### AT THE CAMP OF THE MARINES.

Guantánamo Harbor, July 13th.—We came up here from Siboney two days ago and anchored in this magnificent harbor. Around us are all the battleships and many of the cruisers of the navy. On the hill, half a mile away, is a camp of marines, where the first foot of Cuba Libre was seized. This afternoon a party of us went over. All the marines are in perfect health. The camp is scrupulously clean and is swept continually by a delightful breeze. Indeed, Cuba is a surprise as to temperature. It is not so warm as New Haven often is. I met all the marine officers and saw where Dr. Gibbs was shot and buried.

The chapparal about the camp from which the Spaniards fired is an almost impenetrable jungle of bushes, interlacing vines and prickly pear, ten feet deep. We were told of the terrible strain of those hundred hours without sleep. The way the Spaniards were finally beaten off was by filling up their well, three miles back. This left the only water supply ten miles away through the chapparal. This camp of 800 magnificent looking fellows get all their drinking water from the distilling apparatus of the ship. We saw several fine machetes, but were unable to buy one. They are the essential of travel through the Cuban jungle, and as it is easy to get to close quarters in the thicket they are far more effective, as the Spaniards know, than a rifle. The marines seem to think that the Lee rifle gets out of order too easily and, in this respect, does not compare well with the Spanish Mauser.

#### GOSSIP OF THE FLEET.

During the evening, several of us went over and made calls upon the officers of the battleships. We were treated to champagne, as usual, and, seated on the quarter deck, heard the accounts of the fight and the gossip of the fleet. The Oregon really played the leading part in the battle. She had a whack at every one of the Spanish ships and captured the Colon almost alone. The Christobal Colon was practically uninjured, they say, when a thirteen-inch shell scared her captain into hauling down his flag. His action, in scuttling his ship, after surrender, was contrary to all the rules of war. Indeed, the officers of the Oregon regret they were prevented from boarding the Colon for nearly three hours after her surrender. If they had only boarded sooner they think they could have closed the sea-valves and have saved the ship.

July 21st.—We are still waiting here for the expedition to Porto Rico to begin. The fleet is quietly re-fitting, painting, coaling and preparing for the trip to Spain. General Miles goes ashore every day to be near the cable station, which is a tent on the beach. I went ashore yesterday afternoon in the whaleboat to bring him out. While I was gone, some of my crew started in swimming. If General Miles had gotten down to the boat before I did, he would not have thought much of us. Still General Miles and his staff put in a good part of their time, while ashore, in swimming. I suppose they

shout telegraph messages from the cool waves directly to the telegraph operator.

#### VERDICT ON RESERVES.

I have managed to learn a good deal since I have been on board, and shall take a navy examination when I get back, but the more I learn of seamanship, the more I am convinced of the impossibility of learning it from books. A man should go to sea as a sailor and serve in all the different grades aboard a sailing ship, as the naval cadets do. Ready-made sailors are no good and it is more honest to admit it. I am convinced that the only effective Naval Reserve must be composed, or rather is composed, of the officers and seaman of the merchant marine.

#### TIRED OF VISITORS.

Our visitors have eaten us out of house and home, beef, ice, beer and fresh water. We drink distilled water but the refrigerating plant does not work well here, where the sea water, used for condensing, is from 82° to 86°. Every morning at nine, the soldiers form in full marching order, but barefoot. This leaves the decks clear for a thorough scrub. Then they drill and in squads are trotted around the deck. A fire hose is kept going on fore-castle and nearly any time in the day thirty or forty men are to be seen stripped and washing themselves and their clothes. At 5 p. m., the gangways and Jacob's ladders are lowered to the water, and crew and soldiers go in for a swim. Many of the soldiers are of magnificent physique and are fine swimmers. They jump and dive from the davits, forty feet above the water. Over on the Oregon, the sailors are also swimming and diving. Close by us is anchored the pretty little Spanish gunboat and the four steamers surrendered in the fall of Santiago. Captain Wise has sent in a list of the Yale's crew for our share of prize money.

There is no yellow fever here, but since the troops have been on board they have developed eighty cases of what their doctors say is the typhoid fever so common at Camp Alger. Its symptoms are very like those of typhus. There are now 500 cases of yellow fever at Siboney.

#### UNDER WAY TO PORTO RICO.

July 22d.—Late yesterday afternoon, the expedition to Porto Rico started. The Massachusetts leads the way, then come the Yale and Columbia on her port and starboard quarters, then the transports in two long lines behind them and the Yosemite in the rear. The distance between the ships is about a quarter of a mile.

On General Miles's staff is Major Rowan of South Carolina. He made a trip across Cuba early in the war, to

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