

AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN CAMP AND BATTLE

Poultney Bigelow Compares Our Regulars and Volunteers With Those of the Other Crack Nations of the World.

This Article is Covered by General Copyright.

THE American regular is different from anything I have yet encountered in the armies of Europe. The Russian has abundance of courage; the German is unequalled for discipline; the Frenchman is a lusty antagonist when all goes well, and of them all, the Hungarian has the most dash and pluck combined. I have out Tommy Atkins, for he is our first cousin. The American soldier is of a different composition from any of these. To get an idea of the American regular the European would have to make a composite picture containing something of the Boer of South Africa and something of the English officer who has seen rough work in India.

The ground element of the European soldier is the peasant. In America

cause the English officer represents the spirit of the enterprise, courage and high breeding. The Boer, on the other hand, typifies the element of silent, dogged, unpolished, clear-eyed homespun who does not care much for ruling others, and cares less still for being governed against his will. The American soldier is worried by very few rules and these few are such as he can thoroughly understand. I was so fortunate as to accompany the first American expedition which had fighting with Spaniards on Cuban soil. The transport used carried two companies of the First Regular Infantry, and we were gone about six days. The men during that time had apparently as much liberty as though on a picnic. Guard was mounted at night, for reasons that all could understand, but during the day officers and men were at liberty to seek rest and recreation much as they chose. The harshest rule

of artillery that would open upon our crazy transport so soon as we should have got the bulk of our landing party under way for the shore.

Every private who went on this trip knew the situation as well as his officers. There was an ominous silence on shore, and no unnecessary talk on board.

We had no bluejackets on board and therefore to make use of the civilian crew of the transport, four men, with a cockswain named John Donovan. This same John Donovan knew well that if he were caught ashore he would be treated as a deserter. The pirate along with the rest of the crew of ununiformed filibusters. But John Donovan never bothered his head about international law more than to remember that he was a thoroughbred Irishman, with a coating of citizenship, and a profound contempt for the "dago" and all others not of his own skin and kidney.

John Donovan was a splendid picture of manhood as he stood up in the stern of the whaleboat, steering with his long sweep, and guiding his crew to where he thought the surf the least dangerous. That was not saying much, for the transport was anchored off a coral reef, extending as far as the eye could reach in each direction. The waves broke high on this reef, and the men had to spring out of the boats and drag them for a distance of perhaps a hundred yards. Some of the boats capsized outright, and in each case there were many casualties when the different crews were up to their necks in the breakers, holding aloft their rifles and wondering why the Spaniards did not seize this opportunity of shooting them to pieces.

As there were not enough deck-hands on the transport to row more than one small boat at a time, the commander called for volunteers. There was no

abstract but carries a sixshooter in case of accident.

This forlorn hope of fifty men was attacked from an ambush by a force estimated at several hundred. It might have been several thousand for aught these men cared. They had a splendid opportunity for running away in a panic. They were in a thick forest, where they could see but little of the enemy and still less of their fellows. They had reason to think they might be out off from their boats, and they knew that if they reach the beach alive the boats on land were not enough to hold them all. They were not fighting elbow to elbow, and the rattle of the enemy's bullets was painfully sharp and continuous.

If I heard it once I heard it a dozen times among the regulars in and about Tampa, "What is this war about, anyway?" The idea of liberating Cubans or negroes did not to them seem to be a very good one.

There was not, so far as I could discover, any particular enthusiasm for the cause in which they were nominally enlisted. But it was grand sport that they would have exhibited if ordered to exterminate Apaches or grizzly bears. And he lies the essential difference between the professional and the volunteer in this war. The regular is inevitably brave from sheer force of habit. He is incapable of panic, as he is incapable of vulgar passions. He kills his Spaniards as his surgeon amputates a leg, but he does not necessarily hate the man he kills. He loves the Spaniard who shoots straight. On the contrary he despises only the enemy who gives him an easy job. He fights for the sheer love of fighting.

The regular West Point officer is at the bottom of this holy joy of warfare. He is a man who soldiers adore. They

events of business life. So while thousands crowded the sea wall and the docks to cheer the third expedition on its way to Manila, but few noticed an innocent little steam schooner, which lay, as if to escape observation, at the furthest end of the Vallejo-street wharf.

She is not a pretty boat, this Alice Blanchard; her round heavy stern sits low in the water, her white painted spar deck gives her a top-heavy appearance, her battered sides and chafed planking show that she has been nothing but a marine drudge, a humble unobtrusive cargo boat. But probably she is good enough to make Clipperton Island and load guano, as that is all she is required for. There are many signs of her mission to be seen about. The upper deck is being fitted with bunks, exactly after the not too luxurious fashion of a United States transport. The wharf is crowded with miscellaneous stores, boxes and barrels of all kinds are scattered about, and two huge flat-bottomed surf boats, heavily planked and built to stand hammering on a coral reef, have just been delivered by a local builder. But most prominent of all is a couple of huge iron mooring buoys, looking exactly like the boilers of a large steamer, there are enormous rings round the buoys, carrying heavy shackles to which a vessel may make fast, and the mooring cable stretched alongside is of the heaviest make and best quality.

All these things mean the expenditure of much money, but the enterprise has been taken in hand by men of millions, accustomed to dealing in large sums. Clipperton Island, in the next few years, will have more money spent

NEWSPAPER LIFE AT THE SEAT OF WAR

Lively Experiences of the Correspondents With the Spaniards, the Rations and That Terrible Creature, the Press Censor.

From The Call Special War Correspondence.

CERTAINLY as far as numbers go, our war correspondents attached to the headquarters of the American army for the invasion of Cuba are an uncommonly strong lot. There are over seventy of us here already, and it is said that passes have been issued by the War Department to as many more who are still to come. Even all of us do not go to Cuba—and as things look now it is possible that some decay may find our ranks somewhat before the expedition finally sails—still there may survive a hundred or a hundred war correspondents ought to be enough to achieve all that any general can reasonably desire in the way of glowing celebration of his exploits.

glow of soldierly enthusiasm which he wore a week ago has disappeared, and he pathetically murmurs that this is magnificently a war correspondent.

I do not know whether to be sorry most for the censor or for the transport officer. Every one of the authorized correspondents is entitled to transport for himself, his baggage and his horse, and with regard to baggage every one of us is a complete little military expedition in himself. There are only about a dozen transport vessels waiting down at the port. After we have been accommodated, a really cannot imagine how the army is going to manage. We should not have been so heavily equipped if it had not been for the time we have had in which to think of things we could not possibly do without.

You see, we have just been sitting here day after day for three weeks among the palm trees with nothing in the world to do except to wait for meal times and to-morrow's naval engagement which never comes off. In fact, we have been leading ladies' lives, and naturally enough we have sought the feminine solace of shopping.

It is a pity that some great philosopher has not been here to observe us. We should have supplied him with materials for a convincing chapter on the enervating influences of idleness.

When we first came here, all in dusty eagerness, from the North, we vied with one another in doing Spartan simplicity. The O'Shaughnessy, from Chicago, took us up to his room and proudly exhibited his kit—another pair of socks, another shirt, two handkerchiefs, a cake of soap and a blanket, all wrapped up in a water-proof sheet tied with ropes; that, in addition to what he stood up in and what he carried in his pocket, constituted his outfit.

The water-proof sheet, he explained, not only served as a wrapping for his kit, but in combination with a heap of brushwood which he would cut with his jackknife would constitute his bed and his canopy when the rainy season in Cuba should set in. He rather apologized for the soap; it would be handy, he explained, for washing his clothes, in case such a proceeding should become desirable; moreover, he confessed shamefacedly that on the day upon which we made our triumphant entry into Havana he had a dandified notion right with us on this point when some one tauntingly said:

"Anyway, what's the good of soap unless you carry a towel along?"

"Towels!" said the O'Shaughnessy, contemptuously—"towels! Did you ever see one hear of a man needing a towel when he'd got another shirt?"

I was secretly conscious of the possession of a kitbag with all sorts of wildly absurd things in it, such as a comb and brush, and a patent safety razor, and I admit that a folding shaving mirror; so next morning I severely edited my outfit and packed a big parcel back to New York.

But Sparta was not the starting point of the Gulf Stream, and I doubt whether the Spaniards had their headquarters in a pleasure resort hotel, with table d'hote three times a day and nothing to do for long, languorous weeks. One morning Rathbone stretched out on a folding chair, wearing his fanning himself with his hat, jumped up suddenly and said, with determination:

"Say, boys, I can't stand this any longer. I'm going out somewhere to do something."

He strode out fiercely, and in an hour or two came back looking very hot and dusty, and said, "I've been for a ride."

"On the trolley car?" we asked jeeringly.

"Trolley car be hanged," he said. "I've bought a horse."

A horse. We pecked up our ears. Rathbone had bought a horse. That was an incident—an adventure, if you like. And, after all, a horse was a very suitable thing for a war correspondent to possess. The cavalry had horses, and many of the officers were anxious to keep pace with the officers or to properly observe the conduct of a cavalry charge a horse was desirable, and in fact necessary.

Some of us thought a well acclimated Cuban mule would be more reliable, especially for mountain fighting, but the balance of opinion was that the horse was the nobler animal and much more useful when it became a question of getting to the coast with the first news of a victory.

So we rose with resolution and went out buying horses.

That afternoon there was a grand collection of horses standing in charge of long-faced horsecoopers under the shade of the grove of palm trees in front of the hotel and market prices went up with a bound. It was not long before the horse dealers began to be ashamed of their earlier moderation. They grew very independent, and the appearance of some of the horses they brought along was such a sight as insolent as the first so long as the local stock held out the favorite description of a horse was that he was "acclimated."

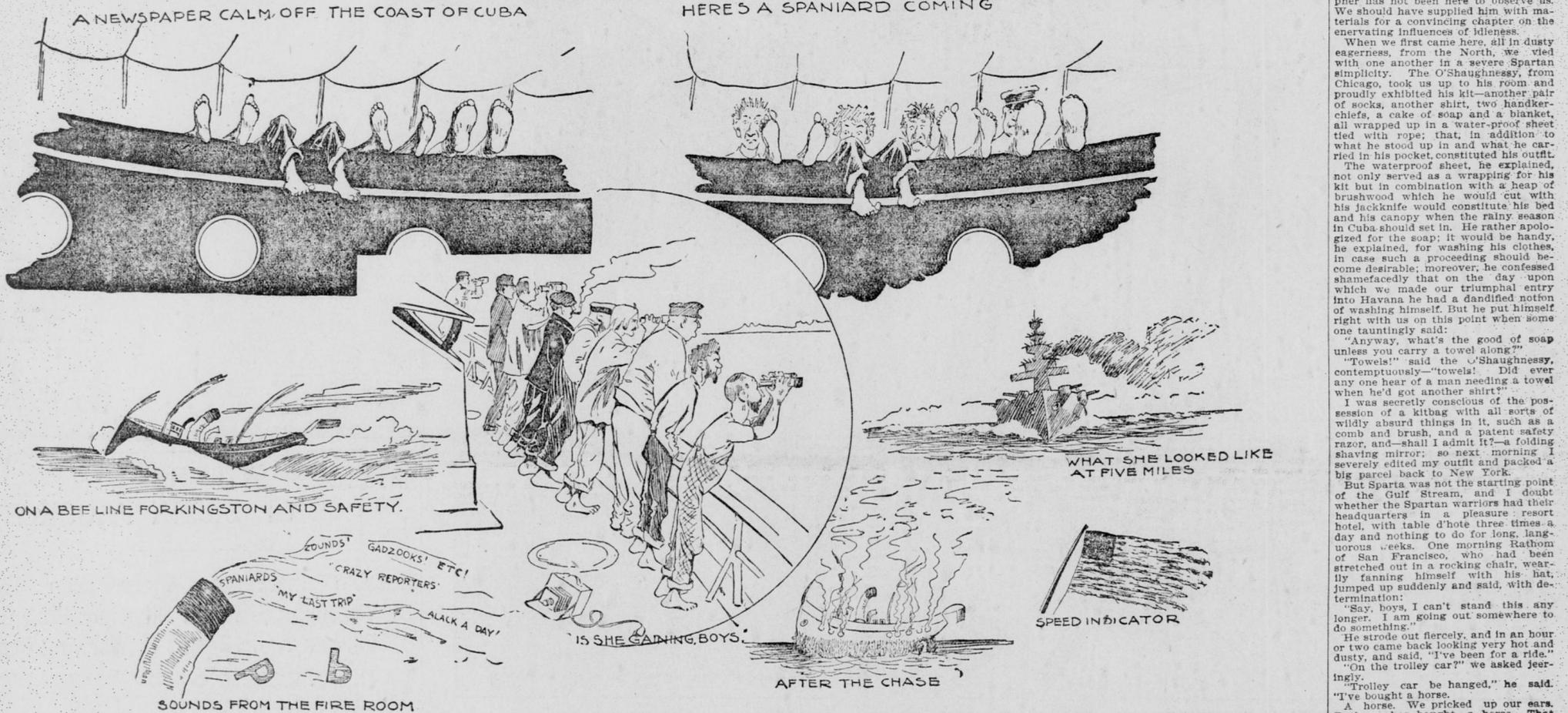
"Say, mistuh," said the dealers, with their rugged Southern drawl, "yo den want er hawse as is suah ter pull himself ter pieces in er week; yo want er hawse er is acclimated. Heahs one raiser, right Beah suah, and es good as he waws Cuby haws, er?"

The word "acclimated" captured us all, and we led our prizes to the livery stable, where rates jumped up fifty per cent in two hours.

After the surplus supply had been exhausted they began to fetch horses out of milk carts—gentle, contemplative chargers, which, when you were riding them, would stop from force of habit when ever they came to a horse. Then they began to import horses from gradually ascending Northern latitudes, first from Middle Georgia, then from Middle Tennessee, and finally from Kentucky—the blue grass country, mistuh," they explained, "where de racehawses is raised."

HUMORS OF THE NEWSPAPER BLOCKADE AROUND CUBA.

FROM SKETCHES MADE BY A CALL-HERALD ARTIST WITH ADMIRAL SAMPSON'S FLEET.



there are not nor ever have been peasants, and consequently our enlisted men have wholly lacked the element of docile servility which makes discipline in Continental armies comparatively easy.

The American regular gets a minimum pay of \$13 a month—small enough, to be sure, considering the average rate of wages in civil life. Yet not only is it sufficient to attract good men to the service, but it holds them practically for life.

The quality which impressed me most in the regulars at Tampa was the average intelligence and good sense. Of course I do not compare them here with picked volunteers but with the troops of European armies. In America there are no guard or elite troops in the European sense, and one regiment of regulars is presumably just as good as any other, at least from the commanding general's point of view. I have never heard a regular officer curse a man or even use offensive language to him, on the contrary, I have been struck by the wholesome reaction between officers and men. I cannot say as much for certain volunteer regiments at Camp Alger.

It is frequently imagined that men accustomed to much liberty and a high standard of personal comfort are therefore more difficult to control than troops like those of Russia, who are accustomed at home to be treated much like cattle.

My experience does not tally with this view. I could give several illustrations from the little that has happened to the United States in this war. For instance, I doubt if any troops of Europe were ever for so long a time compelled to live in discomfort so extreme and so unnecessary as the bulk of the regiments about Tampa. I have already detailed much of what I saw while living in camp, and do not propose to reopen that painful chapter.

It is frequently, however, I did not hear of anything that happened to present itself. Our expedition had been coasting along the Cuban shore from Havana all the way to Cabanas, some thirty odd miles westward. To measure the courage of the men who went ashore we must understand just how much danger there was in the undertaking from their own point of view.

Frequently the Spanish garrisons from Havana all the way to Cabanas knew of our presence. If they did not it was their fault, for we coasted near to shore the whole day on a very conspicuous paddle steamer painted red.

We anchored within half a mile of shore and disembarked a dozen regulars on a beach of which we knew nothing excepting that it was about a mile from Cabanas, in which, according to our Cuban guides, there was or had been a garrison of 2000 Spaniards.

According to all the probabilities, a Spanish force would be on hand to dispute our landing. Those first few men who landed through the surf went as coolly as though by special invitation of friends on shore. There was no parade of fine sentiment, no handshaking, no address from the commanding officer, nor serving out of stimulating drink, which sometimes makes men careless of danger.

Thick tropical bushes lined the beach, and behind these we felt confident that Spanish sharpshooters must be lying in ambush, with possibly a small piece

lack of them from the privates. One was my German friend, Buerger, who had served in the Franco-German war, had then served in the United States navy, had then been transferred to the army and had already served Uncle Sam eighteen years. I had many a chat with him during the trip and found him one of the few happy men I have ever met. He loved the service, had no idea of being anything but a regular soldier, spoke English with a strong native accent, was proud of the German Emperor, but thought Germany was going to the devil from too much government.

Buerger stepped into his seat, picked up his sweep and pulled for the Cuban shore with mechanical ease and amphibiousness. There were 106 soldiers altogether on board and about half of them went ashore, while the other half lined the bulwarks of the transport—their rifles ready.

It was hard to say what was the most dangerous, to remain on the transport or go ashore. Both were bad enough as picnic grounds. One shot from shore could send the rotten old paddleboat to the bottom in five fathoms of water, with no means of saving life except by swimming amid sharks and break.

There was a moment when about a dozen regulars stood alone upon the Cuban beach while the small boats were struggling through the surf to take off more men. But never was there among these or any of those who followed the slightest hesitation to follow the orders given by the officers. The woods had not been reconnoitered previously to landing. They had not even been fired into by way of precaution. Nevertheless, this handful of soldiers at once commenced skirmishing into the unknown, and soon enough the bullets commenced to sing about our ears.

These were not picked men. They were taken as they happened to come. The commander of the regulars, and I, for one, could not have blamed them very seriously. We are doing a very dangerous thing in tampering for political purposes with the organization of the regular army. We are forgetting that the efficiency of troops is based upon the respect of men for their officers and the corresponding confidence of officers in their men. Once weaken this bond and you produce a state of things that can be compared only with a ship whose crew has lost confidence in the men on the bridge.

POULTNEY BIGELOW.

know that he knows lots of mysterious things about theodolites, transit machinery, sextants and cube roots. He looks like a dandy when he arrives fresh from the "Point," but for all that he cannot be humbugged. The same men who shirk their work under old political colonels suddenly straighten up when they have to do with a young West Point lieutenant. That landing near Cabanas could not have been made had the leaders been other than West Pointers. This does not mean that other men may not have exhibited equal courage under other conditions. Here, however, panic and massacre were averted solely because each soldier knew that his officer was to be trusted, and each officer knew that he had complete moral ascendancy over the men under him.

Now, West Point does not graduate either cowards or fools, and soldiers have consequently conceived a great respect for officers from that school. It is a very unpopular school with professional politicians, for there is no room there for the exercise of political favoritism. We notice that there is just now a disposition to weaken the regular regiments by drawing away from them the younger officers to serve on the staff of volunteer organizations. This is a cruel injustice to the regular army, and it is done in order to weaken it and to make it appear as though the volunteers could accomplish just as much as the old seasoned regulars.

The regular army needs all its West Pointers in this hour of national trial. For the courage of the regular private is the confidence he feels in the officer who leads him in battle. Take the same man who behaved so nobly in the fight I have just referred to and place them under political captains and lieutenants and I doubt if they would have stood their ground. They might have shot their officers in the back, and I, for one, could not have blamed them very seriously. We are doing a very dangerous thing in tampering for political purposes with the organization of the regular army. We are forgetting that the efficiency of troops is based upon the respect of men for their officers and the corresponding confidence of officers in their men. Once weaken this bond and you produce a state of things that can be compared only with a ship whose crew has lost confidence in the men on the bridge.

POULTNEY BIGELOW.

upon it than during the whole of its barren existence. Its fortune has turned, the rock hitherto deemed valueless is to be a busy place, and will doubtless put much gold into the pockets of its English owners.

During the past year a good many people have heard of Clipperton, because of the curious dispute as to the island's ownership. In fact, the matter is still shrouded in the mists of doubt though as far as the guano seekers are concerned, nationality is a subject of indifference. The island was discovered by an Englishman, Captain Clipperton, therefore some say it should be English.

It is believed that the United States Government does not intend to contest the Mexican claim, at any rate all the negotiations for the present enterprise have been carried on with Mexico. The Pacific Islands Company, which has acquired the right to strip Clipperton of its rich guano deposits, is a titled English London corporation. The men are on the board of directors, as well as members of some of the wealthiest shipping firms in the city. Its affairs here have been managed by a well known traveler of the South Seas, Mr. J. T. Arundel, who has spent the last few months going to and fro on the Pacific, looking after the vast interests which his company holds in all parts of the ocean. Naturally, the Clipperton enterprise concerns San Francisco chiefly, as the nearest commercial center, though some of the guano may be shipped to Honolulu, and some even sent to Europe in sailing vessels.

The water front, which is always curious in matters of this kind, has seen nothing of the men who are to do the hard work of this expedition. Eighty Japanese laborers were imported from Honolulu. They came up in the Peru, and as soon as the steamer arrived, were hurried off to quarantine at Angel Island. It is risky work bringing these men here, because under the United States law their contracts are worthless. The company, even though it paid the passages, had no legal claim on the men if they were imported from Honolulu. They had been landed in San Francisco, but one could have prevented their walking away at their own sweet will.

Fortunately the action of the medical officers in placing the Japs in quarantine relieved the company from this difficulty, and when the Alice Blanchard moved out into the stream the laborers were quietly put on board without even having set their foot in San Francisco. Only three or four white men accompany the expedition.

Captain Freeth, who is in command, is an experienced guano seeker. With him goes a young Englishman, Mr. Burell, who has yet to learn how monotonous life can be on a desolate coral rock. For the task before these men is not a pleasant one to contemplate. Clipperton is merely a desert rock, an annular coral isle, without even a fringing reef to protect its shores from the undersea Pacific breakers. There is no fit anchorage for ships, hence the huge mooring buoys, which are to be put down outside the reef to enable vessels to hang on while the guano is being sent out in small boats.

There can be no doubt that there will be quite enough of us for the work. The only fear is that when the fighting begins it will be impossible to see the battle for the war correspondents. As to our many great talents, they remain to be proved, but it has already been clearly established that nothing in the way of facts will pass unrecorded. We shall clear the battle ground of facts as clearly as a patent carpet sweeper.

Here, while we are waiting to begin, nothing—not the smallest incident—escapes us, however secret it may be. The other day one of the series of little expeditions for the carriage of stores and ammunition to the Cuban insurgents was despatched. The first essential to its success was that its going should be known only to those on board and to the insurgents who were to meet it. But, close secret as it was, it did not escape us.

Sixty odd war correspondents scooped it up, and on the morning of the day upon which the Gussie sailed every newspaper in America contained a double column headline account of it, describing the purpose of the undertaking, the time at which it would probably start, the spot on the Cuban coast at which the stores were to be landed, with complete particulars as to the armament of the ship and the strength of the force she carried.

The Spaniards may not be able to shoot very well, but some of them can read. And when the Gussie reached the Cuban coast and prepared to land her cargo she was surprised to find that a considerable force of Spanish soldiers had been posted there to wait for her. She had a very narrow escape from a very tight place.

It is quite clear that whatever may be our competence in dealing with the facts will not escape us. When after the crestfallen return of the expedition we were reproached with having caused the failure of the Gussie with great dignity, since the leader of the expedition had been guilty of the unwarrantable favoritism of giving permission to two only of our number to accompany him it was the manifest duty of the rest of us to knock the stuffing out of that bluff. When in reply to that it was urged that this did not justify our disclosing secret movements of the army to the enemy we contemptuously inquired whether any one thought that we were out here for our health.

The outcome of this was the establishment of a censorship. All news dispatches have now to be approved and initialed before they will be accepted at the telegraph office. The censor has my sincere sympathy. There is only one of him. With sixty odd ravenous news-writers on the spot five censors would have been no more than a fair allowance. But only one has been appointed. He is Lieutenant Mylie, a smart and courteous young officer, who acts as one of General Shafter's aids. Since he began to carefully read line by line sixty odd dispatches a day a look of gloomy despondency has been settling on his countenance, the bright

THE DEFENSE OF HONGKONG.

Lord Charles Beresford, speaking at York at the beginning of last month, very appropriately drew attention to the unsatisfactory condition of Hongkong from a military point of view. There is no subject on which her Majesty's Ministers, to whichever party they belong, speak more freely than on the defense of our coaling stations, and year after year large sums have been voted for the improvement of our military works at Hongkong. Year after year the same statement is made, too, that owing to some unexpected intervention the works have not been completed as intended, but the Government had them in hand, etc. Still, little or nothing has come of this and Hongkong is practically dependent on the fleet for its defense. This is becoming a more serious matter than ever, now that Russia has been put in possession of Port Arthur, and is there in her own interest taking similar precautions

WILL STARTLE THE BIRDS ON LONELY CLIPPERTON ISLAND.

LIVING as we do in the midst of daily din of battles, both by war's alarms many things nowadays get overlooked which at a more peaceful time would excite great public interest. The land and sea, leaves the newspapers little room to chronicle the minor