Desperate Criminals COWED BY A GREAT DESERT.

TRAILING THE ESCAPED CONVICT.

THE famous old town of Yuma, on the western edge of Arizona Territory, close upon the east bank of the Colorado River, is unique in several respects. Years ago it was the most dreaded frontier garrison to which Uncle Sam assigned his soldiers. It is known the world over for its remarkably hot weather records, and every summer Yuma and the climate there are sources on which newspaper humorists and paragraphers, far and wide, draw with reckless extravagance.

Yuma has been the scene of many Indian fights in the two last centuries. Probably no other fort on the extreme Western frontier has ever held so many men, first and last, who later became famous military leaders, as Fort Yuma. Generals Custer, Phil Kearney, Beale, Albert Sidney Johnston, Longstreet and McDowell all served a year or two of their army apprenticeship there. John Phoenix (Lieutenant H. A. Derby), the first American humorist of the modern style, died there.

But it is the Territorial prison at Yuma that makes the historic old town best known all over the West in these days. There is not another penal institution like it in all America. When the mining excitement was at its height in Arizona in 1879 and 1880, when the Tombstone and Prescott mines were pouring out thousands of dollars in golden bricks every day, and men of every degree of villainy and lawlessness swarmed into the Territory from every State and Territory in the Union, the need of a strong penitentiary for the increasing population of criminals became immediately apparent. Ruffians, thieves, escaped convicts and cutthroats from all parts of the Union flocked to Arizona by wagon and train, and infested the mining towns, and when arrested and thrown into the rude jails of the easy, slow-going Mexican period they had no difficulty in escaping and resuming a lawless career. In 1879 a proposition was made to build a Territorial prison, and Yuma was selected as the site. It was not until 1882 that the prison was finished.

Arizona Territorial Penitentiary stands upon an eminence overlooking the Colorado and Gila rivers for miles. On one side is the Colorado River, and on the other three sides there stretches away for miles and miles as desolate and trackless and hopeless a desert as man ever looked upon. No one, not even the Indians, brought up on the skirts of that great area of sand and cactus, dare to go across it unattended and without provisions of food and drink. The most desperate criminals abandon all thought of gaining liberty by attempting to flee across that almost limitless burning waste.

A high wall, 285 by 305 feet, incloses the prison yard. The wall has a height of 16 feet, and it is 8 feet thick at the base and 5 feet thick at the top. Within it are the main prison buildings and the shops. The prison building is solidly constructed of rock laid on mortar, and in the center of all the walls is inserted a heavy iron grating. A similar grating is laid in the masonry above and below each cell, so that upon the completion of the whole prison building, of which only a portion has been finished, it will have an enormous skeleton of iron, which will serve as an effectual bar to a convict's escape even were he to dig through the massive stone wall. Adjoining and connected with the prison are a large, airy dining-room, a kitchen and a laundry. In spite of the terrific heat of the climate, these buildings are remarkable for their comparative coolness.

Everyone who goes to see the Territorial penitentiary is interested in the Gatling guns which are placed on the guard stands arranged at intervals along the top of the walls. The largest and principal gun is in charge of a young Mexican, who boasts of his Apache blood. He is rated as the best marksman with a Gatling gun in the United States. General McCook of the United States army says that his manipulation of the complicated weapon and his accuracy of aim are simply marvelous. The young Mexican has an excellent field for target practice over the Gila mud flats, just above the prison. A tin can six inches in diameter, placed at a distance of 700 yards, he will hit four times out of five with a Gatling gun. When it is remembered that he can fire 500 shots a minute, the possibility of a convict's escape is too small to calculate.

A recent test of the marksmanship of this young Apache gunner was made. From behind a stone wall 100 tin cans of the size of common fruit cans were thrown one at a time haphazard in the air, just as clay pigeons are automatically thrown at shooting matches. The Apache had his gun ready and had to aim as quick as a flash at each can at a distance of 250 yards. He pierced 37 out of the 100 before they fell behind the stone inclosure.

The average number of convicts in the prison is 130. Seventeen of the prisoners there are in for life. They are murderers, railroad wreckers and highwaymen. The comfort of a prisoner in Yuma depends much on the money he or his friends have. If he is poor and has no friends of means or influence, he has only the cheap but wholesome prison fare, and must occupy at night one of the stone cells within the buildings. For a few weeks in winter these cells are quite comfortable, but in the summer months or when a parching wind is blowing off the hot desert they are like Turkish bath rooms.

"Try to think how you would feel if you were night after night locked in a close, narrow cell, with only a small opening for fresh air and with the temperature ranging from 95 to 100 degrees," said a discouraged convict from Yuma prison, in telling of the way the moneyless prisoners live there. "I have known many nights in midsummer when the temperature in the cells was about 105 degrees, and with the natural dampness of the cells and not a breath of air stirring, you can imagine what the poor convicts suffer. The fellows lie on their bunks, stripped naked, and pant like lizards for enough air to breathe. Often the temperature at night keeps at about 95 degrees for several weeks at a time, and near the 105 degree mark for a week or ten days at a stretch.

"Think what suffering that must be to the poor convicts who work daily in summer in a temperature that ranges from 110 degrees to 122 degrees, followed at night by the terrific heat I have told you about. Everyone of the prisoners who have to stay in the cells at night comes out from his kennel like sleeping place in the morning reeking with perspiration and weak. Sleep is only had in brief doses. The doctors say that anyone who has any blood taint or the least susceptibility to consumption soon contracts the disease there. Deaths from consumption are common among the moneyless prisoners in Yuma Penitentiary. Every summer there are a few convicts who manage to commit suicide in their steaming, noisome cells rather than to endure the agony of life there. Two years ago a fellow who robbed the Wells-Fargo stage at Grants Pass committed suicide there by biting at his wrist and tearing open the arteries with his teeth."

But the convicts who have means or influential friends can have as varied and tempting food as they care to buy from the prison cook. Some prisoners pay for special cuts of hams, have fresh fish brought for them, and even pay the cooks for occasionally providing fowl for them at the regular meals. Then too, for a bonus, and with bonds that they will not escape from the prison they may have cots to sleep on in the yard of the penitentiary. For eleven months in the year there is no rain in Yuma, and one may sleep comfortably out under the starry vault of heaven about 350 nights in the year. A few prisoners sleep out of doors all the time.

Some of the most exciting and sanguinary scenes ever enacted in any penal institution have been inside the walls of the Yuma Prison. In one of these efforts to gain their freedom, in the winter of 1894 four leaders among the rebellious convicts were shot dead and four were maimed for life.

TRYING TO ESCAPE ACROSS THE DESERT...

FINDING THE MUMMY—TWO YEARS LATER.

But the most dare-devil and boldest contest for liberty that has probably ever taken place within the walls of any penal institution in this country was that of one morning in October, 1887. The old timers of Yuma who have lived for a generation and more on the frontier of civilization and have been eye witnesses of desperate conflicts and slaughters of human beings on the plains and in the mountains, have not yet ceased talking of that morning.

Thomas Gates, who died by his own hand a few months ago, was superintendent of the penitentiary at the time. As he came from his private quarters early one morning he passed in the rear of a brick building, where he was set upon by four prisoners, who were serving long sentences for stage robberies and murder. The attack was made within the range of the armed guards upon the wall. Superintendent Gates' heroism on that eventful occasion, when he received wounds that left him a physical wreck, is a matter of history.

At the peril of his own life he called upon the guards to shoot, and the order was obeyed. In a second more twenty other prisoners who had waited for the signal to make a united break for liberty ran from their workshops to the prison office, knocked the guards there into insensibility, and despoiled the place of its rifles and pistols. A dozen more prisoners attempted to run out of the laundry and kitchen to help their fellow convicts, but were kept back by the armed guards.

In a few seconds the guards upon the walls turned their Winchesters and Gatling guns upon the rebellious convicts, while the dozen guards in the prison yard and about the shops threw themselves into the breach to keep other prisoners from joining in the rebellion. An eye-witness of the affair, who has been through two Apache and Comanche Indian wars, says he never saw so many men instantly stand up and face death as did both the prison guards and the rebellious convicts that October morning.

Shots were exchanged at a range of less than twenty feet between the guards and the prisoners. A dozen of the latter who were near the gates darted outside the walls, and, rifles in hand, started for the town of Yuma. No Gatling gun was ever worked more rapidly and unerringly than that on the penitentiary walls at that time, and the Winchesters in the hands of another guard on the walls fired a ball every three seconds. Nine of the fleeing convicts dropped wounded in their tracks. Three more threw up their hands as a sign of surrender, and in this fashion walked back to the prison yard.

The attention of the guards was turned to the mutiny in the yard, but there the Gatling gun could not be used, because of the angle in which it had to be turned. Only the Winchester rifles could be used. For a few minutes there was a terrific exchange of shots, and few of them went astray from their mark. Five prisoners and three guards fell dead almost at one another's feet, while three prisoners were wounded for life. One guard was shot four times through the body, and, nevertheless, lived several years. The injured prisoners threw up their hands because they were out of cartridges, and were marched to their cells.

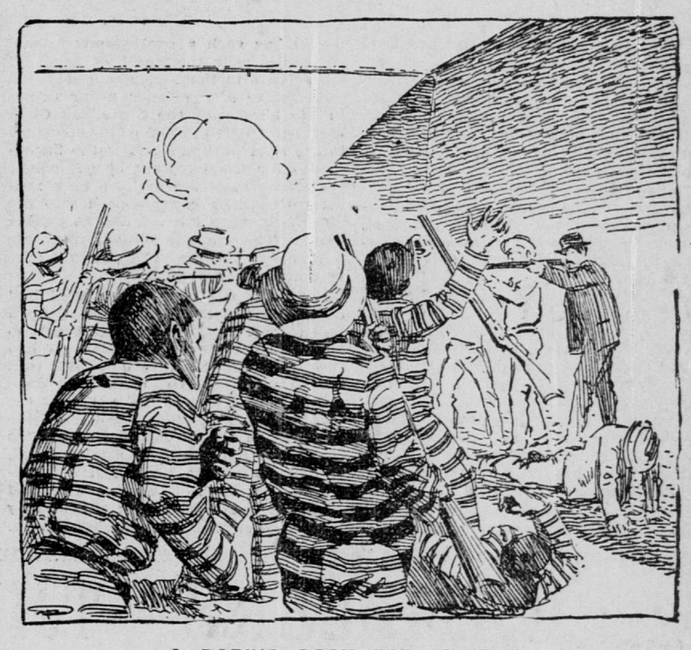
The wooden building in front of which the guards stood in their hand-to-hand fight is still shown in evidence of the ferocity of the fight. There are forty-seven bullet holes in it. Some of them were made by lead balls after they had passed through a man's body. The battle was all over in five minutes. Not a word was spoken by any of the participants. Guard Hartlee stood like a statue at his post, shooting whenever he could get a bead on one of the convicts. After the fight, when asked how he felt during it, he replied:

"I started in like I had a hard day's work to do and I wanted to get through quickly."

The woeful experience of these rebellious convicts during their five minutes' taste of liberty is so memorable that it has done much to discourage plans for a similar uprising.

In the history of the prison only one man has succeeded in crossing the trackless deserts that environ the Territorial penitentiary at Yuma, and reaching old Mexico. The man was a half-breed Mexican. His grandmother was an Apache squaw, and his Indian blood stood him in good stead in running across the desert and leaving no track behind, while he eluded the scent of bloodhounds and marksmanship of the prison sharpshooters. It was in 1883, before the prison was so well equipped with firearms and sharpshooters as it is to-day. The convict was a life prisoner, and was sent to Yuma for highway robbery and murder at the same time. From a confederate he obtained a gun after getting outside the prison, and with this he was able to kill a rabbit and a small bird on the first evening of his liberty. These he ate raw and they were his sole sustenance for about ten days. He was tracked more than 100 miles by Yuma Indian trailers, and they lost all trace of him in a long, rocky canyon.

A party of mining prospectors found the remains of a man, wearing the shreds of a Yuma convict's garb one day in the foothills over the border line between the United States and Mexico. The thin starved, mummified body answered the description of the Mexican who had risked the horrors of the most savage desert in all the world in the hope of liberty, and had suffered untold agonies in his vain endeavors to get to freedom.



A DARING DASH FOR LIBERTY.

Reformatory measures are not practiced at the Yuma prison, because nearly all the prisoners are Mexicans and half-breeds—Mexicans and Indians—and their villainous countenances show the hard life they have led. Most of them are in for horse stealing, highway robbery and murder. No regular work is demanded of them aside from such as is necessary to keep the prison in good condition.

The average length of human life in the sixteenth century was only eighteen to twenty years.

THE LAST AND LARGEST OF OUR WOODEN SHIPS.

The Roanoke, now in harbor here, is one of the two very largest American vessels afloat. The other one is her sister ship, the Shenandoah. Both are owned in Maine. Shipowners declare that the day of the crack American clipper ship is passed and that in the near future iron vessels will replace the wooden ones. The Roanoke and Shenandoah are regarded as the last of their types on the seas.

IF you take a walk down to the Steuart street dock you will find the wharf incumbered with a miscellaneous collection of California goods, stacked so closely that the driver of the cumbrous four-horse team has great difficulty in threading his way between the piles. There are barrels of sugar and flour, bundles of rags and great heaps of firewood, but chiefly the collection consists of native wines. There are rows upon rows of brand new, shiny casks full of claret or port, or white wine of many names and vintages. All these things are for New York, since, war or no war, the big ship Roanoke is going to start on her tedious voyage to the Atlantic, as soon as her hold shall have been filled with a suitable variety of merchandise.

She is a remarkable object on the water front, this Roanoke. Her tapering, graceful spars tower high above those of any other vessel in port, her huge hull rises far above the level of the wharf, so that a stiff climb up a rickety accommodation ladder is necessary before her deck can be reached. It is only from this altitude that her vast dimensions can be properly appreciated. From below you see nothing but a great expanse of side, painted a dull and uninteresting leaden color. But once you have gained the deck you find before you a vast expanse of pine planking, almost unincumbered with houses or other obstructions. There is of course a deckhouse forward for the crew, and the usual spacious cabin aft, but these things take up so little room as to be hardly noticeable. From stem to stern the ship measures 311 feet, while her beam is 49 feet. She claims the proud privilege of being the largest wooden ship in the world; and, indeed, there are only a few iron ships larger, chief among these being the France, a Glasgow built vessel owned in France, which measures nearly four thousand tons. The Roanoke is 3589 gross tonnage, so there is not a great deal of difference, after all.

The people of San Francisco have seen the Roanoke before; since she was built some six years ago she has paid a couple of visits to this port. Also the famous ship Shenandoah, which recently attained distinction through not being captured by the Spaniards. The two vessels are almost sister ships. They have the same breath and the same depth, but an extra length of some twenty feet gives the Roanoke an additional two hundred tons. They are rigged modern fashion, as four-masted barks, and from keelson to to truck the spars of the Roanoke tower to a height of 175 feet. With all sail set she spreads 17,000 yards of canvas, and can make, under the most favorable conditions, with a good breeze on her quarter, fourteen knots an hour. The lower yards, and there are three of them, are huge spars ninety-five feet in length, so that it is easy to understand the great propelling power of this mass of canvas.

A melancholy interest attaches to the Roanoke, because she is the last of her class. She is the largest, and one of the finest wooden sailing ships ever built, but no American shipbuilder is likely to repeat the order. Even the enterprising firm at Bath, Me., which built and own the Shenandoah and Roanoke, have abandoned the construction of wooden vessels, and are likely in the future to use only iron and steel in their work. Economic considerations have sounded the doom of the wooden ship, and for the matter of that the day of the sailing ships is not for long. The tramp steamer, with her smoothly running engines and light coal consumption, is rapidly driving her from the seas. Only a few long voyage trades, such as the trip from San Francisco to Europe or the Eastern States are left for the sailor, and soon the ubiquitous tramp steamer will swamp these routes.

With the passing of the sailing ship passes also the picturesque. There is no more beautiful sight on the seas than an American clipper ship under full sail. There is an airy grace and beatuy about her spars, a lightness of movement and a perfection of proportion which belong to the vessels of no other nationality. The English sailing vessels are strong and seaworthy, but they are too heavy in their hull and rigging for beauty. However, all alike, whether it be the substantial British four-master or the light American clipper, are doomed, and another generation will see no more of these winged messengers of the sea.

The present war has done more than anything else to bring home to the American people the decay of the mercantile marine. Time was when the American clippers flew the stars and stripes on every sea, carrying tea from China and wool from Australia, and lightening up the Western Ocean with their constantly crossing flags. Between the fifties and sixties the sailing ship reached its highest point of evolution, and of all ships the American were the most famed for their beauty and speed. Those were the good old days of ocean races from China to New York, when the ship that landed the first cargo of tea won, not only much honor, but a substantial profit for her owners. Speed was everything then, and cargo capacity but a subsidiary consideration. To-day we have reversed all this, the modern cargo carrier, an enormous lading in her hull, dawdles lazily over the ocean, and passages now are longer than they ever were.

Considerations of economy, more than anything else, have dictated this unfortunate change. Wherever speed is required there steam has stepped in and ousted the sailer. And even where there is work for the sailing vessels competition has reduced freights to the lowest possible margin and ships can only be made to pay by working them with the most rigid economy. Fancy a vessel carrying grain from here to any part of Europe for a freight of seven or eight

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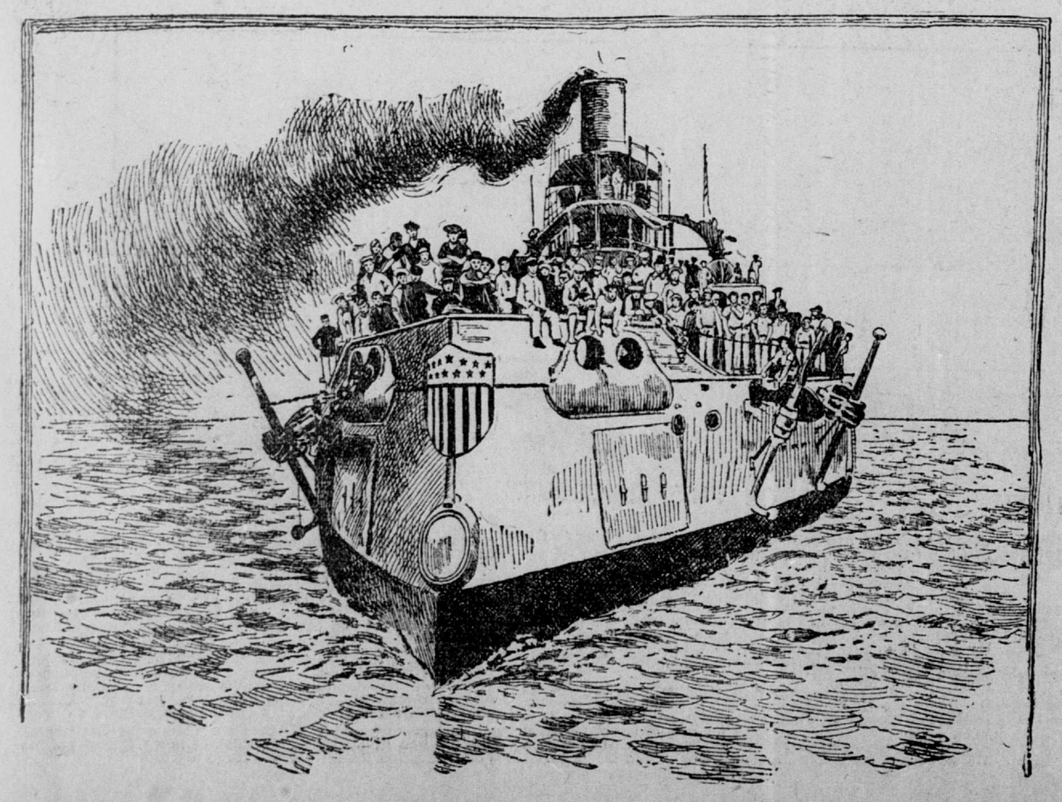
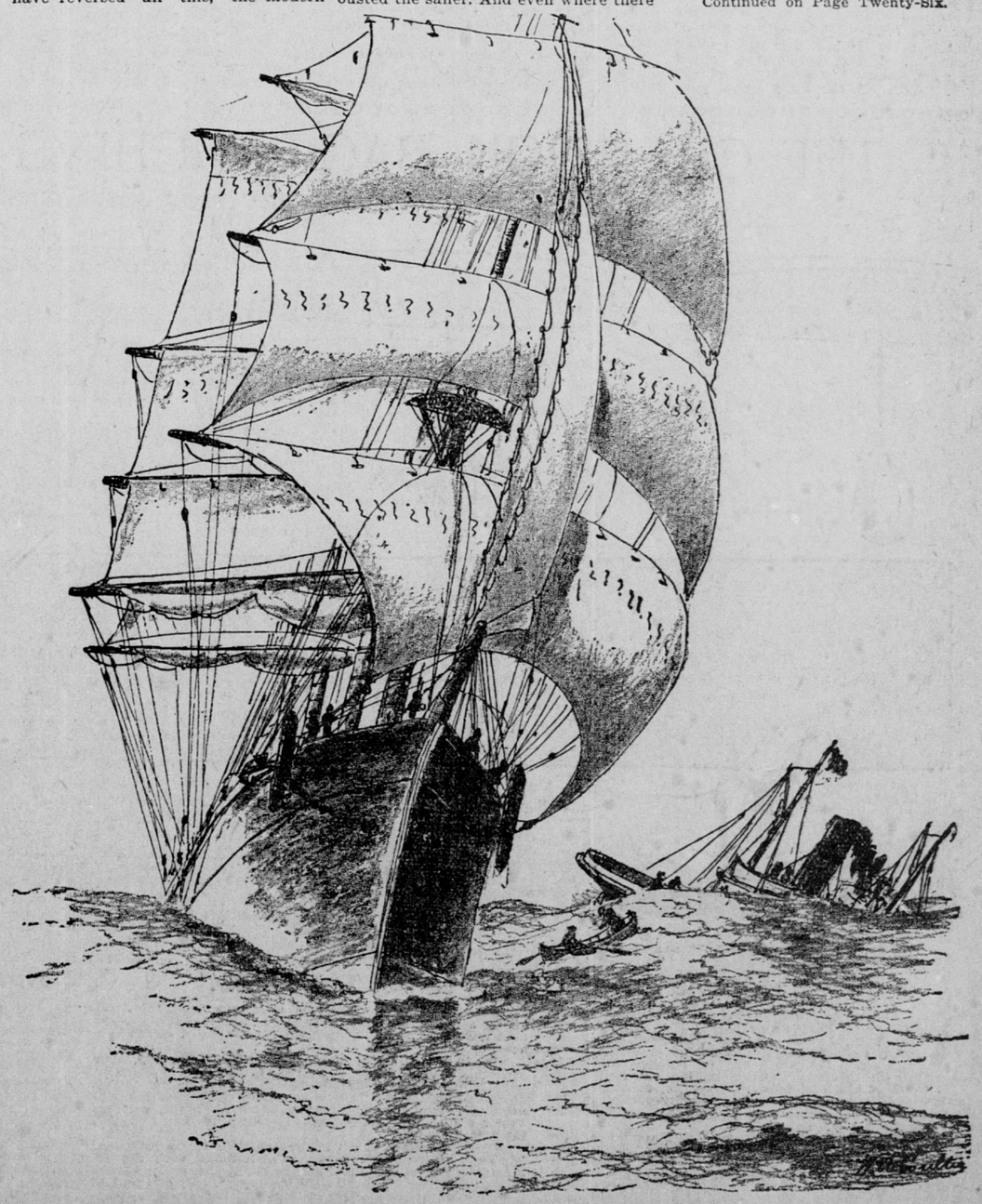
THE BATTLE-SHIP OREGON STRIPPED FOR ACTION.

Before going into battle nowadays a man-of-war is stripped of all paraphernalia that is in the least likely to create danger when struck by the missiles of the enemy. Woodwork in particular is ripped away and flung overboard. So are the small boats, railings, furniture and everything else that may furnish what the sailorman in action most dreads, "splinters." In the recent action at Manila some of the apprentices carried this practice to the extent of throwing overboard their sea chests and the stools and tables used at mess. When the battle was over they had to eat their meals sitting Turkish fashion about the messroom. About the only ornaments on a battle-ship in action are her big guns frowning from the turrets. Aside from them, the decks are swept as clear as possible of everything else. Heavy cable chains and sacks of coal or sand are sometimes placed about some spot that is deemed in need of protection. "Splinter nets" are sometimes spread also, as was done on the deck of the Olympia at Manila.





The Roanoke, Last of the Biggest Wooden Vessels Afloat, Coming Into San Francisco Bay.