

strongest men began to simmer down, and a few hours on deck under the burning sun gave us a complexion which would have done credit to an American Indian. For the first few days things seemed new and strange, and we had to learn everything, even a new vocabulary of sea-going terms. Few of us will ever forget our first experience at sleeping in a hammock, or "scrub and wash cloths," with the existing scarcity of fresh water.

From Key West we went to Santiago, arriving there June 1st. Early on the morning of the sixth we were routed out and given a slim breakfast, and the ship put in readiness for an engagement. At daybreak we heard the thrilling call of "Clear ship for action!" for the first time. The Oregon lost no time in getting her first blow at the Spaniard. We manouvered about before the Morro Castle at Santiago for two hours, keeping up a continual fire, and receiving a respectable reply from the Spanish batteries. Words cannot describe the sensations which came over us in our first experience under fire. Even the "old-timers" would shudder as a shell would go screeching over the ship. Personally I could not say that I was afraid, but it seemed that my heart must have been in a somewhat elevated position, and it thumped with unusual force. I waited breathlessly for the first thirteen-inch gun, which, from the many stories I had heard, was to be dreaded more than the Spaniards. After the other ships had withdrawn there remained one ship, the Dolphin, which, apparently unheeding the flagship's orders, hammered away at a water battery. This little duel furnished considerable amusement for a couple of hours, as the Dolphin took particular pains to return two for every one that she received.

The unceasing vigilance of the blockade caused the ships to burn immense quantities of coal. The Oregon alone burned nearly one hundred tons a day. This caused a frequent trip to Guntcencenio, a distance of forty miles from Santiago, for the purpose of coaling, which was an occupation as hard and disagreeable as it was dirty. On one of these trips we saw the landing of the marines at Guntcencenio, which was followed by such gallant fighting against great odds.

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