

On Board a Man of War during a Time of Action June 30th—July 4th



ON THE evening of the 30th of June, a most uneventful day, a number of us were seated on the top of the forward thirteen-inch turret of the "Oregon," discussing the prospects, and, like real sailor men, we knew just what was going to happen, of course, when suddenly our arguments were interrupted by the flash of four red lights from the New York, which was at that time the general call signal for the fleet. Instantly the other ships of the fleet answered the call, and as the flagship sent the dispatch we watched intently and spelled out the following signal from the alternating red and white flashes:

"Prepare to attack the batteries at daybreak, from the same position as occupied on June 16th. Army will begin general attack at same time."

This seemed glorious news, and it was not long before every man on ship-board had been apprised of what was to happen on the morrow. It was a more cheerful crew which went to sleep that night, in anticipation of some fun the next day, than I had seen for some time, and it was evident from the manner in which the men treated the matter that they had been spoiling for a fight.

Shortly before 4:30 the next morning the general call to quarters was sounded, and in a few moments we prepared to form in line and take our places in the squadron as we had done on the sixteenth of June.

Our position in the line was third, the flagship taking the lead, followed by the Iowa, and then we came, followed by the Texas and the rest of the fleet.

Each ship was to fire as it passed the forts, and as the firing signal was hoisted on the flagship the fleet started and began the firing, which let loose a stream of shell which was kept up continuously as each ship passed the batteries.

The army had taken up its work and had advanced along the coast to the big iron bridge by the time the fleet had ceased its work, and as we came out on the decks we could see, by means of glasses, just how they were working. They had captured a train and were slowly moving along the coast, and far inland we could see, against the background of the huge hills, the captive war balloon shining in the sunlight.

What had been accomplished was a matter of guesswork, but from reports which we gathered from the orders sent from the admiral that night, the army had