

The "Oregon" at that time was almost directly opposite the harbor, being close in, while the rest of the fleet was scattered about in all directions. The "New York" and the "Massachusetts" were not in sight, having both left that morning. The "New York" had gone to Siboney, where Admiral Sampson had arranged to meet General Shafter, while the "Massachusetts" had gone to Guantanamo to take on coal. With the "Massachusetts" had gone the torpedo boats, which were used mainly at night, for duty as scout ships. The "Iowa" and the "Texas" were out beyond the blockade line, and the "Gloucester" was east of the Morro.

The Spanish ships were under full speed when they came out, and had the advantage over the Americans, who had but one ship, the "Oregon," with full steam and all engines on. There were also fires under every boiler, so they were fitted for an emergency.

It was not long before firing began, and the firing from the Oregon naturally attracted the attention of the other ships, which had not noticed the excitement. To the men below in the magazines, the action above deck was all a mystery. The rooms where the shells and ammunition are kept are far below the surface of the water, and it is not an easy place to which information can be sent, unless it be by speaking tube, but since there were incessant calls for "shells" and "more powder" during the two hours which I worked in my magazine, enough information was not sent to us at any one time to give us any definite idea of the fighting. Only twice was the condensed news shouted to us, and that was the report of the destruction of the "Admirante Oquendo" and the two Spanish torpedo boats. Such cheers as were heard from time to time as the news came to us, are hard to imagine, and when finally a relief came to our magazine I seized upon the opportunity to get up on deck just in time to witness the destruction of the Spanish flagship "Vizcaya." The "Brooklyn," which was ahead of the "Oregon" at that time, seemed to be a literal sheet of flame, and the noise of the firing, which came from all directions, was deafening. The roar after roar, as the larger guns were discharged, was terrible. The smoke from the guns made it almost impossible for the gunners to continue their work, and the use of smokeless powder was painfully shown to be a necessity, since not a bit of smoke hovered around the Spaniards, except where they were on fire. Far ahead of us, and going at a furious rate of speed, was the "Colon." Straining in every joint from the effects of the forced draught, and smoking worse than a Chicago chimney, it seemed to be running the race of its life.

The firing on all sides seemed to cease as the "Vizcaya" gave up the fight, but without stopping to see what was happening in the rear, the "Brooklyn" and the "Oregon" suddenly veered in their courses and began the famous chase for the "Colon," the last of the Spaniards, which resulted in the capture of that vessel and its crew. The excitement of the chase was intense, and while several shots were