

traveled with passports guaranteeing him safe passage to the frontier. Word comes that Spanish police attempted to capture a member of the legation and that afterwards an attack was made upon the train that carried the minister out of the country. The treacherous assault was frustrated.

While this little act was performed on Spanish soil, a United States cruiser captured a Spanish ship off Key West. The vessel had a cargo of lumber from Texas, which was confiscated. Actual hostilities have commenced. There is now war between the United States and Spain.

Broadly speaking, it is almost impossible to foresee the final outcome of the struggle thus commenced, but in all human probability it will be the final Hispania, at least as far as this hemisphere is concerned. To a successful naval warfare in our age—not only ships and guns and men of superior physical and intellectual qualities are needed, but also coal. Without this article the finest equipped battleship is but a helpless hulk at the mercy of the waves and the engines of destruction of the enemy.

The announcement of Great Britain that coal is to be considered contraband of war is of immense importance in this connection. It means that the British government will see to it that that indispensable commodity will not be sold to either of the belligerent parties, but as a matter of fact it is a blow to Spain which may prove disastrous to that country. The ships of the United States are in a position to replenish their supply along the coast, while Spain has not a single coaling station on this side of the Atlantic whenever Cuba or Porto Rico shall have been occupied by our forces. To establish a line of coaling steamers to carry the necessary fuel over 3,000 miles would be an enormous undertaking. The steamers would be liable to capture, rendering the fleet depending on them entirely helpless. The chances are all against Spain and it is to be hoped that the people of the peninsula may realize this fact before long and demand the cessation of a hopeless struggle.

#### CONTRABAND OF WAR.

It is a principle of international law that while two powers are at war no neutral power can furnish to either of the belligerents any merchandise, article or commodity that is in the nature of military supplies, or that can be used directly or indirectly, for the support or strengthening of the army of the combatant receiving it, or for prolonging hostilities. Such merchandise, article or commodity is contraband of war, and is liable to seizure and confiscation while in transit by the power that would be injured were the confiscated property to reach its destination.

The consequences of such violation of the international code are penalties collectible without a great deal of ceremony or delay. If the owner of the contraband articles is also owner of the vessel, he forfeits the craft as well as the goods and all other things that may be intermixed with them; this is also the case if the ship bearing the interdicted property has false papers or is in any manner seeking to conceal her destination, and her owner may lose her if it can be shown that he knew of or in any manner consented to the carriage of such property. Ignorance accompanied by good faith are not much more effectual in such cases than in the violations of law with which we are more familiar, for while the owner may save his own property by making out a decidedly clear case, the goods themselves are forfeited.

The liability for such carriage begins

from the time the ship leaves port and continues during the voyage. If, however, she manages to complete the trip and reaches her destination without being overhauled, no liability attaches thereafter, no matter what the character or degree of culpability. The penalties spoken of are not confined to cases in which the contraband goods are carried from a friendly port to one of the enemy's, but are enforceable in like manner for the carriage of such goods from one hostile point to another of like character; it is the transportation in the interest of an enemy, as well as taking prohibited articles to his country that constitutes the wrongdoing.

The list of things which may be held contraband of war is quite lengthy and may be variable, depending somewhat upon circumstances. It is, however, invariably the case that naval stores of all kinds (this including, by recent construction, coal), war munitions and implements, and in fact, anything that aids or strengthens the enemy are contraband of war. So also are provisions of all kinds if designed for his use or benefit. During our civil war General Butler invented the peculiar doctrine, and applied it, that the negroes of the South were contraband of war, because they were considered as property and used to further the cause of Confederacy. The name attached to them and they got to be called "contrabands" more than anything else.

The capture by the United States cruiser Nashville of a Spanish merchantman, reported in the telegraphic columns of today's "News," may or may not have been because of the latter, having contraband articles on board; at this writing there are no details at hand, but the presumption is that such is the case. Otherwise the act would belong in a different class, relating to war prizes, concerning which there is not room at this time to speak.

#### CARE FOR THE WOUNDED.

Civilization influenced by the principles of Christianity has done much towards reducing the horrors of war to a minimum. The armies in the field are accompanied by efficient nurses to take care of the wounded and mitigate the sufferings of the dying. Like angels of mercy, men and women trained for the work are hurrying to and fro on the battlefields with assistance to friend and foe alike.

The present war, however, promises to be to a large extent one at sea, and it has so far not been practicable to extend to the victims of naval warfare the same tender care as to those fighting on land. A modern battleship is, even in times of peace, but poorly provided with facilities to care for those on the sick list. In an engagement this condition becomes worse. The vessel is divided into numerous compartments, each separated from the others by water-tight partitions, rendering the carrying of wounded from one part of the ship to the other during the engagement impracticable. The effect on a ship's crew of a modern naval battle is not known except from the late war between Japan and China, but judging from the terrible execution of bursting shells during that war, the mutilation of men and fatalities in any naval battle between modern ships must be terrible. The question how to properly care for the wounded is therefore a grave one.

The present surgeon-general, Dr. Van Reypen, according to the Medical Record, has suggested that an ambulance ship should accompany every fleet on active service, and submitted

plans for such a vessel. They are as follows:

"The vessel as designed will be three thousand, five hundred and fifty tons displacement; two hundred and seventy-five feet on the load line and three hundred feet over all; with twin screws and a speed of fourteen knots; fifty feet beam, and drawing eighteen feet; a coal capacity of four hundred and fifty tons, giving eighteen days' steaming at ten knots. The water tanks will hold nine thousand gallons. The ship will carry four steam launches and four barges, each barge arranged with a flying floor between the thwarts so as conveniently to carry twelve cots on the floor. There will be beds for two hundred and seventy-four and hammock space for eighty-six, state rooms for eight disabled officers and cot space for twelve. The forward ward on the upper deck has been left with only one tier of berths for a ward of isolation or to accommodate more serious cases. The vessel can comfortably accommodate three hundred and thirty sick or wounded men, with sufficient berthing space for the crew of the vessel. There are quarters for four medical men, two apothecaries, and twelve nurses. . . . Near the center of the ship on the berth deck is the operating room, eighteen by twenty-one feet. It is well lighted by a large skylight and by air ports above the deck. . . . As soon as the action is over a launch should tow its barge alongside a vessel that has been in action, the wounded should be hoisted out and into the barge and should then steam away with all dispatch, to the ambulance ship, unload its human freight, and speed away again on its mission of humanity."

The naval authorities have acted on the suggestion and purchased a ship which now is being converted into a floating hospital. It is intended to accompany the North Atlantic squadron on an errand of mercy.

#### A JUST CAUSE.

The religious and secular press of the country is practically unanimous on the question of the justice of the war now on, and the same view of the matter is taken abroad by all who are not blinded by prejudice. In Spain strenuous efforts have been put forth to create the impression in Europe that the United States has entered upon a land-grabbing policy and that Spain is the first victim. But it is evident when all the circumstances are considered that before the enlightened public opinion of the world this country needs to offer no apology. On a large island almost within sight of our own shores conditions barbarous even for the middle ages have been maintained. From the ruins of thousands of homes in the ravaged provinces come the pitiful appeals for deliverance. We have a right to ask of Spain to terminate these conditions. The interests of humanity require it, and also self-interest, because as long as the flames of insurrection are illuminating the southern horizon, there is danger to our nation.

This is not a war for the purpose of annexing territory belonging to somebody else. Congress has given the pledge that the crusade is not undertaken with a view of exercising "sovereignty, jurisdiction or control of the island." Nor is it strictly speaking a war of retribution. It has been the policy of the United States government to carefully avoid all insinuations that the Maine disaster was a casus belli. Other countries might possibly have called Spain to account for placing the noble ship where the fatal mine could do its work, or for the criminal neglect, afterwards, in failing to trace the crime to its source, but our govern-