

well astern under orders, signaled for permission to engage, and received it, and soon was firing her guns at the forts on the west side of the bay.

The batteries fired explosive shells and most of them fell wide of the mark. One burst just beyond the stern of the New York and a shrapnel shell exploded above her.

It took the three ships just 18 minutes to silence the batteries.

The last shot that was fired by the Spanish came from Point Rubalcava. The Puritan replied with one of her 12-inch guns. The shell struck the battery with wonderful accuracy and blew up a portion of it.

After waiting in vain for the Spanish to renew the engagement the ships withdrew, leaving both batteries in ruins.

When Rear Admiral Sampson, on the flagship New York, left the cruising ground to pay a visit to Matanzas and Cardenas, he made up his mind that something had to be done with the very aggressive Spanish artillerymen who were manning the batteries out that way. They had twice fired on the torpedo boat Foote and were very busy erecting fortifications and placing guns in position.

At Matanzas the New York found the monitor Puritan and the cruiser Cincinnati, that have been blockading the port. Admiral Sampson decided to make a reconnaissance in force for the threefold purpose of locating the batteries, discovering the kind of guns they mounted and if possible stopping the work of fortification.

Matanzas lies at the head of a bay about four miles from the sea. This bay at its mouth is three miles wide. On the west side of the bay is Point Rubalcava and on the east side Point Maya.

The points have a very slight elevation above the sea, but the configuration of the harbor is such as to give the batteries on them a commanding position. Stretching back from these batteries are towering hills and it was believed the guns had been mounted somewhere there concealed by the shrubbery.

The New York led the way into the bay of Matanzas. The Puritan was a few hundred yards astern on the port side, and the Cincinnati remained behind a slightly greater distance astern on the starboard side. Lines drawn from ship to ship would have made an almost perfect triangle.

At a few minutes before 1 o'clock there was a puff of smoke from the east shore and an 8-inch shell whizzed toward the New York and fell short. Scarcely had the report died away than another puff of smoke floated upon the Point Maya side and easily blew away. This shell also fell short.

The range of the east battery was nearly 7,000 yards but the flagship promptly opened fire with one of her 8-inch guns.

The engagement in a few minutes became general and shore and bay were covered with the wind-blown smoke, while the hollow between the hills roared with the cannonading.

Continuing to cut loose with her guns starboard and port as well as fore and aft, the New York steamed quickly in and circled around to the westward toward Point Rubalcava, while the Puritan swung to the starboard to engage the Maya battery.

The Maya battery was a more formidable, and the fire from it was more frequent, but the shells fell short. The New York ignored this battery after a minute and proceeded to pay all her attention to the battery on Rubalcava, which was being pushed to completion. It was a beautiful sight to see the target practice of the New York. A big balloon of smoke would suddenly rise from her side. The eye, following the direction of the shot, would see an instant

later a great cloud of dust and fragments of concrete and mortar fly high in the air. Then would come the roar of the piece, sullen and heavy.

The New York had soon reduced the range from 7,000 to 3,000 yards, and soon was tossing shells into Rubalcava at the rate of about three a minute, with wonderful precision and apparently great destructiveness.

In the meantime the Puritan was taking care of Point Maya. It was a long shot to that battery. It was so well masked that the only target was the infrequent smoke from the battery. But when the Puritan got the range, her shells burst every time within the fortifications, and great was the explosion thereof.

High up into the air would go a cloud of dust—atoms of the Spanish fort—looking for all the world like the explosion of a magazine of brown prismatic powder.

The Puritan was doing fully as much harm on the east side of the bay as the New York was doing on the west side. All this time the Cincinnati had remained out of the action.

Captain Chester signaled for permission to engage, and it was granted by the flagship. The Cincinnati steamed up to within 2,000 yards, broadside on, and began to let fly with her guns.

The batteries and the New York were just giving the signal to retire when one defiant shot was fired from Rubalcava. It was the last shot that battery was ever to fire.

One of the big guns on the Puritan answered back. It was the best shot of the day. It struck the battery just where the gun was, tore its way into the earthworks and exploded, doing great destruction.

Captain R. Machugh, an artillery officer of the British army, who was a spectator of the engagement, said it was one of the best shots he had ever seen made.

Having practically demolished the Spanish batteries the ships stood out to sea. Not a shell had struck one of them, but there had been three narrow misses of the New York.

The Spanish fired scrapnel once which had burst above the ship, a shell had struck just fore of her and another struck just aft.

The fact that the Spaniards failed to strike such a large target as the New York, towering as she does like a house out of the water, was taken as evidence that they are not good marksmen. On the other hand, every shot that the New York fired after she got the range was pitched right into the batteries.

In point of time the engagement lasted just 18 minutes. It began at 57 minutes past 12 o'clock and ended at a quarter past one.

The Puritan and Cincinnati were left on guard at Matanzas and the New York returned to her old position.

All told, the United States ships fired 86 shots at the forts. The forts fired probably 25 shots.

But far more important than the destruction of the Matanzas batteries is the conclusion about the future which may be drawn from the bombardment. This conclusion is that Havana is absolutely at the mercy of the United States fleet whenever we choose to open fire.

Washington, April 28.—Secretary Long says this morning he has no reports yet of the bombardment of Matanzas. The strategy board believes that the only purpose of Admiral Sampson was to draw the fire of the Matanzas batteries, and learn their number and strength. If any batteries were building, Sampson would prevent work on them.

Washington, April 28.—Naval officers say they expect the first big war news from the Philippines, as Dewey either must capture a Philippine port as a base of operations or sail for San Francisco.

London, April 28.—It is reported in Madrid, says a special dispatch this afternoon from the Spanish capital, that a Spanish squadron of nine warships sailed from Manila on Monday last to take up positions off Subiglig Bay where they will await the passage of American merchant vessels for the purpose of capturing them.

Madrid, April 28, 10 a. m.—An official dispatch from Manila filed today says the Spanish squadron which has taken up a position several miles from Manila is still awaiting the arrival of the United States squadron under the command of Rear Admiral Dewey. The governor's proclamation appealing to the patriotism, honor and religious passions of the Spaniards and otherwise inciting them to animosity against the Americans, is said to have a great effect upon the people who are alleged to be volunteering in large numbers.

Paris, April 28.—There was an unconfirmed rumor on the bourse today that the United States fleet has received a check in the Philippine Islands.

New York, April 28.—A dispatch from London says:

News comes from Madrid that the Spanish fleet under Admiral Montjo which left Manila on Monday has put into Subiglig Bay, where it will await the coming of Admiral Dewey. The first naval battle will probably be fought at this point.

Subiglig Bay is north of Manila and offers natural advantages for the concealment of the hostile fleet.

Unless Admiral Dewey shall receive some information of Montjo's movement, the Americans are threatened with a sudden attack. Montjo is reckless and the report that he has fled from Dewey's fleet is probably a ruse to conceal his real purpose.

Washington, April 28.—The squadron is traveling at the prescribed speed which will bring the fleet off Port Manila early Saturday morning.

On board the Flagship Brooklyn, off Fort Monroe, Va., April 28.—For thirty-six hours the flying squadron has been unable to communicate with shore, the storm which still prevails making it unsafe to use the steam launch or cutters.

A tug brought out the mail this morning. The storm that struck the coast Sunday night came up Hampton Roads like a fury. It whistled at the rate of ninety miles an hour through the great superstructure of the flagship Brooklyn and whipped up the sea so that the white foam broke in huge masses over the decks of the Massachusetts and the Texas.

The heavy draft of the big war vessels made it impossible for them to get in smooth water and they had to stand the brunt of the storm. Toward morning it increased in violence, and as the tide turned the flood the look-out on the forward bridge of the flagship announced that the ship was dragging its anchor. The officer of the deck simultaneously reported that the Brooklyn was getting in dangerous proximity to the battleship Massachusetts. Captain Cook and Executive Officer Mason went to the bridge immediately and ordered the second anchor down. At this time the wind was blowing so fiercely that the men could hardly keep their feet on deck. The second anchor ran out about 20 fathoms of chain, and stuck and the big ship stopped for a short time breast to the wind and the tide. But in a few minutes she began to go back slowly, and it was evident that there was no hold for the anchors. The signal was immediately given to prepare to get under way, and in the meantime it was hoped that the anchors would catch hold.

Faster and faster she went back, her big broadsides swinging towards the dangerous ram on the prow of the Massachusetts. The latter was sig-