

"FIGHTING BOB EVANS," ONCE OF UTAH.

I passed my entrance examination to the Naval Academy September 15, 1890, and reported, as an acting midshipman on board the frigate Constitution—"Old Ironsides"—on the twentieth of the same month. The examination, fortunately for many of us, was a very simple one; nothing like the elaborate and trying affair of today, otherwise many of us would not have followed the navy as a profession. The candidate had to be sound physically, and to have a fair foundation on which to build the education required of a sea officer, who was not in that day expected to be an engineer, a chemist, a scientist, an electrician, a lawyer, an artist, as he is today—only a seaman and a gunner, with the necessary knowledge of things that pertained to the service. The superintendent, Captain George S. Blake, was assisted by half a dozen officers, selected for their fitness, and as many civil professors. Among the officers were two brothers, C. R. P. and George Rodgers, lieutenants, both of whom made their mark in the service, and wrote their names high up in the history of the navy which they loved so well and did so much to honor. We had never heard of these two officers whose standards were higher or whose conduct reflected greater credit to the country than that of those two, C. R. P. Rodgers was commanding of midshipmen and George Rodgers was captain of the Constitution, and to them I owe everything in my professional life.

We had one hundred and twenty-seven men in the class when we settled down to work, an average lot, from all parts of the country, and representing the various classes of American life—North, South, East and West. I was the only one from Utah, and I believe the first one ever appointed from that Territory either in the navy or the army. Our life on board ship was pleasant and novel, and our education on the lines that would fit us for the duties we should in the future have to perform. English studies occupied a considerable part of our time, but practical seamanship and gunnery were the most important things, and they were hammered into us so hard by our honored captain that we had to learn them in spite of ourselves. Many showed wonderful cleverness, and after a few months the class standing in seamanship and gunnery was as follows: The Constitution was moored at the end of a long, narrow wharf, which was the only means of approach unless by boat, so that the class was completely isolated from the older classes. We never came in contact with them except when on shore for drill, or on Saturday, when we passed their quarters on our way to the town on liberty. All our recitations and most of our drill took place on board ship. Under such conditions the discipline of the navy, which later on gave the Naval Academy such a bad name, was impossible, even had the temper of the midshipmen been such as to tolerate it. At the time of which I am writing hazing was absolutely unknown, and I am sure that any attempt to practice it would have led to a duel between old Fort Severn. It was not until we reached Newport, and the senior classes had been ordered into service, that this brutal, and I must say cowardly, practice took root and grew until it was a disgrace to all those engaged in it. By some means the classes entering after 1892 got the idea from West Point, and in their zeal to emulate really went far beyond the practices of that excellent institution, where hazing of a certain kind was a tradition, and considered necessary to the discipline of the cadets among themselves. With us the proper class distinctions and respect were traditions which did not require hazing to enforce them. I remember very well one Saturday afternoon, two of us, both very small, were passing the quarters of the first class on our way to town on liberty, when two seniors thought it would be good fun to put us down on the grass and sit on us. They promptly carried out their plan, and sat on us five minutes or so and then let us go. We returned to the ship mad all over, and in a few minutes we swarmed back with most of our class, and there was a beautiful fight which resulted in many black eyes. This was about the nearest approach to hazing we ever had.

AFRAID HE WAS GOING TO BE HAZED.

The discipline was strict aboard ship from the start, and we were expected to observe the regulations as soon as they had been formed. I had formed a warm friendship for a young fellow from Mississippi named Baldwin, and he somehow became involved in a quarrel with a man twice his size; the quarrel soon led to a fight, and the larger man attempted to strike Baldwin with a camp stool, when I grabbed him from behind, preventing the blow, and thus myself became part of the row. The next morning I was sent for on the quarter-deck, and after having the Articles of War read to me and receiving a long lecture on the enormity of my offense, was locked up in a dark room in the wardroom. Some one had reported that Baldwin had a knife in his hand during the fight, and that I called out to him to use it and that I would help him. After being locked up I made up my mind that my time had come, in view of the many offenses mentioned in the Articles of War for which the punishment was "death or such other punishment as a court martial may inflict." I wrote a hurried note to my uncle in Washington to come at once if he wished to see me alive, as I was sure that I was being hanged at the yardarm. He answered that discipline was good for me, and that he would wait a few days, or until sentence was pronounced. After three days' confinement I was sent for by the commanding officer, and told him exactly how I became involved in the fight, when I was once sent to duty, and some one else took my room.

On board ship we had our hammocks to sleep in instead of bunks, and our messing was regulated just as it would have been on a cruising vessel. In fact, we lived under service conditions, and though it is now the fashion to decry such training in favor of barracks on shore, I have yet to be convinced that that will face them. Our first impressions of the service were received on board ship, and the discomforts of ship life were met and overcome in a way that made such discomforts, and even much greater ones, seem very trivial afterward. We grew into ship life gradually, and our knowledge of the ship and all her parts was complete; such knowledge can be acquired in no other way, and though many able officers hold that this is not a matter of importance, on this point I have also to be an expert of the soundness of their reasoning.

During the winter of 1890-'91 the anxious faces of our officers foretold the storm of war that broke so suddenly in April of the latter year. It was a time of great anxiety for all hands; a natural, a greatest strain came on those in authority, but the midshipmen had their loads to bear as well. Many of us came from the South, and as the States one after another either seceded or threatened to do so, we had to make up our minds what we were going to do. Conference were frequent and serious, but never in one of them was there a disloyal word uttered. Every man followed the example set by the Southern men among the officers. As long as we were inside the Academy limits, or until our resignations were accepted, we were officers of the navy and would behave as such. Lieutenant Hunter Davidson, afterward the torpedo expert of the Confederacy, was probably more responsible for this position than any other man, though both C. R. P. and George Rodgers were constantly giving us good advice.

During the month of April, 1861, our studies were practically suspended, and preparations were made to defend the Academy and the ship Constitution in case of attack. Drills were constant, and every precaution taken to give the enemy a warm reception in case he came. A Confederate cavalry company was organized on the north bank of the Severn river, and for several days they drilled in plain sight of the ship; but when a few boats were sent after them they disappeared, and the next soldiers we saw were blue uniforms. We had been told that the Confederates in Baltimore had organized an expedition and were coming down in steamers to capture us. A bright lookout was kept for them, and one dark night, about two o'clock in the morning, the lookout reported a large steamer coming in from the bay. General quarters were sounded, and in a few minutes we were ready and waiting for the word to fire. The cabin bulkheads had all been taken down, and four thirty-two pounders run out the cabin stern ports and loaded with grape and canister.

The steamer slowly came on until she could be plainly seen with the naked eye moving up directly astern of us, as if to avoid our broadside and carry us by boarding. Captain Rodgers' clear voice rang out: "Ship ahoy! What ship is that?" The gun captains had the guns trained on the mass of men

we could now see crowded about the decks and not more than three hundred yards away. Twice more the clear voice rang out: "Ship ahoy! Keep off, or I will sink you!" And then a voice we all recognized answered: "For God's sake, don't fire! We are friends!" It was the voice of our captain, who had been North on a short leave, and on his return found Colonel B. F. Butler and the Eighth Massachusetts regiment at Havre de Grace, Maryland, blocked in their effort to reach Washington.

BEN BUTLER IN A SERIOUS PREDICAMENT.

Colonel Butler had seized the ferry steamer Maryland, and embarking his regiment on board of her, sailed for Annapolis, fortunately bringing with him our chaplain—I say fortunately, because he seemed the only one on board who knew enough to answer the hail from the Constitution, and in a few seconds more we should have opened fire, and no one can doubt what the result would have been. The splendid record of this fine regiment would never have been written, and what one may fairly call the variegated career of General Benjamin F. Butler would have been very short and inglorious.

As soon as the character of the strange craft was satisfactorily established she was directed to haul up alongside of us, which she did, and remained there until daylight, when the midshipmen were landed under arms formed with those on shore and marched to the wall in the vicinity of the gate leading to the town of Annapolis, and there deployed in line of battle to cover the landing of the Eighth Massachusetts. We stood in this position until the last soldier was ashore and the regiment had formed line in rear of the midshipmen's quarters and stacked their arms, when sentences from our battalion were posted and the rest of us returned to our quarters. Not a shot had been fired by either side, though the excitement was intense, and there was a readiness on both sides to fight. Both parties hesitated to fire the first shot, and the Confederates contented themselves with pitching stones over the wall, which we caught and tossed back.

The newspapers gave graphic accounts of how Butler and his men had recaptured the Constitution, and the Naval Academy. They never fired a shot nor saw an enemy to shoot at. The magazines of the Constitution were mined, and she and her crew would have been blown to atoms before surrendering if the enemy had attacked her.

Everything was now made ready as soon as possible, and the ship hauled out into the bay and prepared to transport us to some Northern port. The

midshipmen on shore gave up their quarters to the officers of the Seventh New York Infantry and the First Rhode Island artillery under Colonel Burnside, these regiments having arrived immediately after the Eighth Massachusetts. Our routine was entirely broken up, and our time given to guard and picket duty, until all preparations had been made for our trip North, when orders were given to assemble ready for embarkation. Then followed a scene which those of us who participated in can never recall without a tendency to moist eyes. The good fellows from the South who had determined to go with their States said good-by to their classmates, and as the rest of us formed ranks to embark, Captain C. R. P. Rodgers stepped out to say a few words to us before leaving the dear old alma mater. After a strong effort he managed to say: "My boys, stand by the old flag!" and then broke down. We were all in tears, and braced up only when we heard the men of the Seventh New York cheering us, which we returned in a feeble sort of way—scrambled into the boats, and two hours later were once more on board "Old Ironsides." That was the last we saw of the Naval Academy at Annapolis until after the civil war had done its work. The army took possession, repaired the railroad and locomotives, and after a month or so of hard work reopened communication with Washington.

ASSIGNED TO A HOTEL FOR STUDY.

The Constitution was towed to New York, from there to Newport, Rhode Island, where she was anchored in Britain's Cove, off Fort Adams, and all the senior classes were ordered into active service. My class, now about seventy strong, was the only one left, and we were anxious, of course, to join the others; but we had not yet sufficiently advanced to make us of much value. Once more we settled down to routine and hard work. Fort Adams was unoccupied, so we were transferred there, where we could have roomy quarters and convenient recitation-rooms, and at the same time man the guns in case of need. It was all a lark to most of us, and the time given to study did not amount to much. The officers soon found that, if we were to do any serious work, proper quarters would have to be provided, and as the idea of a return to Annapolis was abandoned, the Atlantic Hotel, in the heart of Newport, was secured on long lease, duly fitted for our accommodation, and thither we were marched.

In the mean time steps were taken to quarter the new class, a very large one, which had been appointed. The Constitution and the Santee, which had been sent North for the purpose, had been moored at suitable docks built on

the inside of Goat Island in the inner harbor, and the sloops of war John Adams and Marion were anchored near them, to be used for practical seamanship and gunnery drills afloat. This made the most complete outfit in ships the Naval Academy had ever seen, and the most useful.

That master of his trade, Stephen B. Luce, had charge of drills afloat, and scarcely a day passed that we were not under his watchful eyes at some sort of practical seamanship. Every Saturday we went outside in one or other of both of the ships, and then the work was most thorough and complete, each midshipman in turn taking charge of the deck for different evolutions. Our way in, in the afternoon, we could generally tell when our work had been satisfactory; if it had not been, the ship was sure to fetch up hard and fast before we reached our anchorage. Then our way in, in the afternoon, we could generally tell when our work had been satisfactory; if it had not been, the ship was sure to fetch up hard and fast before we reached our anchorage. Then our way in, in the afternoon, we could generally tell when our work had been satisfactory; if it had not been, the ship was sure to fetch up hard and fast before we reached our anchorage.

The quartering of the senior class on shore and all the others on board ship had a very bad effect, and it was years before the academy recovered its normal condition. All the traditions of the school, the discipline among the classes themselves—which was, and always must be, dependent on traditions and customs—were lost sight of, and, as I have before said, hazing took root on board the Constitution and Santee. It took twenty years to break up this unhealthy custom, and all the others on board ship had a very bad effect, and it was years before the academy recovered its normal condition. All the traditions of the school, the discipline among the classes themselves—which was, and always must be, dependent on traditions and customs—were lost sight of, and, as I have before said, hazing took root on board the Constitution and Santee. 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