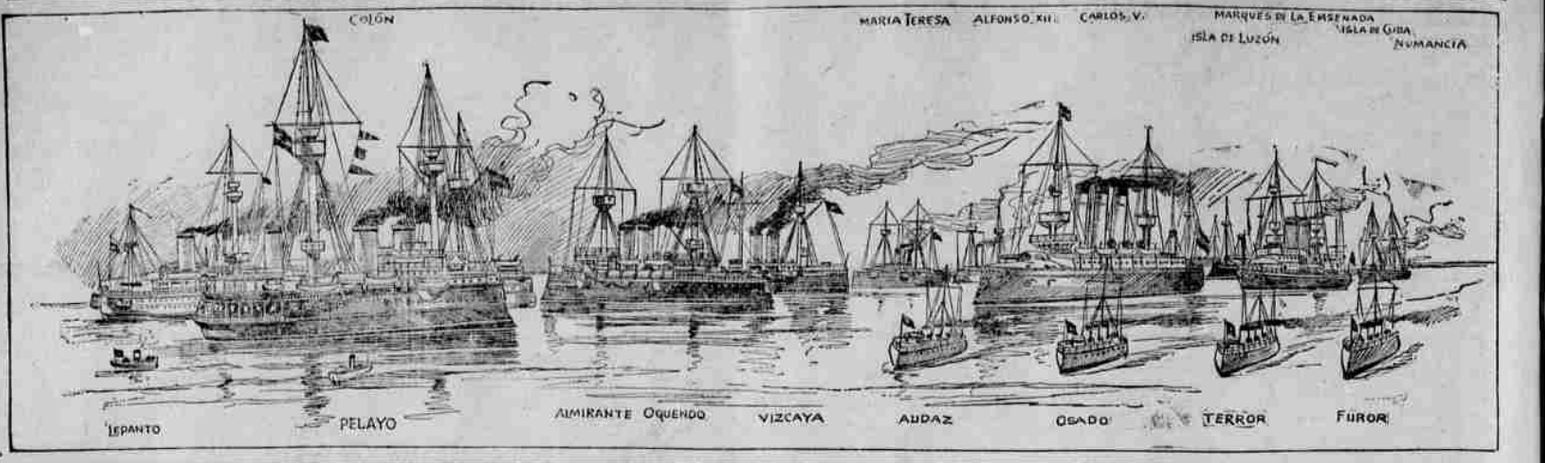

STRENGTH OF THE SPANISH NAVY.

The Fighting Ships of King Alfonso In Battle Array—Important Interview With General Daniel E. Sickles, Ex-United States Minister to Spain.

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General Daniel E. Sickles, who was United States minister to Spain during the last Cuban war, has been reported since the present trouble began as speaking in disparagement of the Spanish navy. To a press representative who asked him for a definite statement of his views the general said:

"Any rating of the Spanish navy as it stood at the opening of this war or even up to a year or so ago is out of date today. I am not an expert in naval matters and speak only from observation and experience among fighting men. The naval armament of Spain has improved even within the past year and taken as a whole is today quite the equal of our own in point of efficiency, ships and guns. Spain has been energetically at work the past year in anticipation of combat, and her activity has been successful to the extent of her means. All her resources have been devoted to that. She has not paid her army, but has spent the money on her navy. It is better than it has been for years. Her torpedo fleet should not be dangerous in actual combat except at night or during a fog. Long range guns could neutralize torpedo boats with a fair chance to sight them.

"As for battleships, we have three superior to any three Spain has and may soon have four. I mean the Indiana, Iowa and Massachusetts and the Oregon when ready. In ships of the second class, of which the Vizcaya is one, I do not think our superiority is so marked. In torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers Spain has the advantage at present.

"Frankly, then, making due allowance, the two navies are a close match so far as vessels go. But I look for a display of superiority in officers, in discipline, in appointments and equipments on the part of our navy; hence we may have the advantage in close fighting. A modern ship of war is an intricate and complicated engine, and for efficiency in action cool headed Anglo-Saxons are better than hot blooded, excitable Latins. England always shows superiority in this respect over warm blooded nations. Only Americans can fight England to advantage at sea. Americans have all the natural qualities of the English and are also good navigators. We should not underrate our foe. The Spaniards are brave and plucky, but hot blooded. In the confusion of battle they will not equal our seamen. The machinery of a modern ship is soon out of order in heated action. The turrets get fast, the wrong ammunition is brought forward, the steering apparatus gets disabled, and a high state of discipline, of coolness and self possession, is necessary to success. I have been informed from a European source that Spain has retained English and Scotch engineers to handle her ships of war.

"If the two fleets come together, I look for the destruction of half of each of them. They'll fight sure, and it will not be at five miles or three miles or one mile, but they will come to close action. A few shots from the heavy guns will destroy a vessel.

"Spain's one disadvantage on this side the ocean will be lack of docks to dry in for repairs and refitting. She has but the one in Havana at best, and if that is lost to her she can't refit without crossing the Atlantic. In the matter of construction some of the earlier ships of both navies will prove faulty. Men cannot fight in close, cramped quarters. This was shown during our war, especially in the cases of the Confederate ironclads Tennessee and Atlanta."

Naval engagements between the United States and Spain mean horrible, sanguinary encounters such as the world has never seen. The result of a sea battle will be annihilation for one and possibly the almost complete destruction of the other antagonist. It is quite possible that a fight at sea will end in the sinking of both warships.

A comparison of the fleets of this country and of Spain is of paramount importance to enable one to accurately forecast the result of a Spano-American conflict. As the two navies are constituted at present, without taking into consideration the vessels that comprise the reserve of both countries and the vessels that are not on the fighting strength of our navy, but which patriotism would speedily place there, the following is apparent. The new warships Spain is reported to have recently purchased and those we have bought are not included in the appended list, and neither does it include those which are now being built:

SPAIN.

	Displacement.	Tons.	Guns
Emperador Carlos V, turret ship	9,900		7
Pelayo, turret ship	9,900		7
Almirante Oquendo	7,000		30
Infanta Maria Teresa	7,000		30
Cristobal Colon	6,840		28
Princesa de Asturias	6,840		28
Vizcaya	7,000		30
Alfonso XIII	6,000		20
Lepanto	4,800		12
Marques de la Ensenada	1,050		12
Isla de Cuba	1,050		12
Isla de Luzon	1,050		12
Alvaro	3,242		12
Castilla	3,342		12
Conde de Venadito	1,130		12
Don Antonio de Ulloa	1,130		12
Don Juan de Austria	1,130		12
Infanta Isabel	1,130		12
El Cano	924		10
Filipinas	1,152		10
Galicia	1,152		10
Marques de Molins	1,152		10
Martin Alonso Pinzon	1,152		10
Numancia, conning tower, armor	950		8
Velos	950		10
Torpedo boat Audaz	87		2
Osado	87		2
Torpedo boat Osada	105		2
Torpedo boat Furor	87		2
Torpedo boat Furor	87		2
Halcon	108		2
Castor	29		2
Pollux	29		2

UNITED STATES.

Massachusetts	10,288		4[illegible]
Indiana	10,288		4[illegible]
Iowa	11,410		4[illegible]
Oregon	10,288		4[illegible]
Texas, two turrets	3,215		2[illegible]
Brooklyn	9,271		2[illegible]
New York	8,200		2[illegible]
Minneapolis, two turrets	2,300		1[illegible]
Terrey, two turrets	2,300		1[illegible]
Amphitrite, two turrets	2,300		1[illegible]
Puritan, two turrets	9,060		1[illegible]
Columbia	7,475		1[illegible]
Newark	4,098		2[illegible]
Raleigh	4,083		2[illegible]
Montgomery	2,063		1[illegible]
Marblehead	2,048		1[illegible]
Castine	1,177		1[illegible]
Kearsarge	1,250		1[illegible]
Cushing	140		3
Ericsson	120		3
Bilinia	24		—
Gloucester, ram	—		—

The United States navy further consists of the following battleships:

Kentucky, Alabama, Kearsarge, Illinois and Wisconsin, 15 single turret monitors, 21 unarmored steel vessels, 16 gunboats, 9 torpedo boats, one of them, the Plunger, being submarine. Eleven more of the latter class will be ready for service soon.

Spain has on hand, then, a fleet of 32 vessels, including torpedo boats. These ships represent a displacement of 67,587 tons, with 452 guns, torpedoes on every vessel of the fleet and an equipment that, pitting point against point, is superior to that of the United States.

But in reality we have the more formidable navy, for on our side are all the elements that, in the opinion of experts, will contribute superiority in naval battle. It is not the number of ships or the number of guns that "counts" so much as the thickness of the armor and the caliber of the gunpowder, as of old, the fighting spirit of the men. In all these particulars America has a decided advantage. Spain's actual fighting force consists of five thoroughly efficient, well equipped armored cruisers and one able-bodied battleship. This powerful fleet has a total of 71,600 tons displacement, with the caliber and number of guns as follows:

Caliber.	Number.
12 inch	2
11 inch	2
9.2 inch	4
8.2 inch	4
7.5 inch	4
6.2 inch	4
5.5 inch	4
4.7 inch	4
4.6 inch	4

The speed of the vessels averages 20 knots an hour. The hastily modelled American fleet consists of the cruisers Columbia, New York, Brooklyn and Minneapolis, forming the flying squadron, and behind them a fleet of 12 vessels, including the monitors. The total displacement of this naval body is 84,586 tons. Their speed is from 12 to 23 knots an hour, and they have mounted guns of the following number and caliber:

Caliber.	Number.
13 inch	4
12 inch	4
10 inch	4
8 inch	22
6 inch	22
5 inch	22
4 inch	22

The Castilian king has the following complete naval armada:

Armored or protected vessels	37
Unprotected	11
Gunboats	16
Torpedo boat destroyers	14
Torpedo boats	31
Transports	26

But many of these are vessels of obsolete type, others are not equipped, and the gunboats could not take part in a sea fight.

The backbone of a "real navy" is necessarily in its battleships and larger cruisers. The genuine fighting strength of the two countries is exhibited in this tabulated statement:

UNITED STATES.

	Number.	Tonnage.
Battleships of the first class	4	42,576
Battleships of the second class	1	6,300
Armored cruisers	3	17,400
Coast defense vessels	4	9,517
Unarmored cruisers over 3,000 tons	11	31,203
Unarmored cruisers 1,000 to 3,000 tons	8	13,981
Smaller cruisers and gunboats over 500 tons	3	3,269
Torpedo boats and destroyers	21	1,122

SPAIN.

Battleships of the first class	3	9,900
Battleships of the second class	1	6,840
Armored cruisers	4	7,000
Coast defense vessels	2	1,050
Unarmored cruisers over 3,000 tons	4	16,400
Unarmored cruisers 1,000 to 3,000 tons	9	9,884
Smaller cruisers and gunboats over 500 tons	6	3,420
Torpedo boats and destroyers	25	2,317

It will thus be seen that our tonnage is far greater. In unarmored cruisers we have a distinct advantage, and our ships generally are larger and more modern. Only in seagoing torpedo boats has Spain any marked superiority.

But many Spanish vessels have structural weaknesses. The artillery of the Pelayo can pierce the strongest armors, but its capacity for coal does not allow it to take on enough for a trip of over 3,000 miles. The cruisers Almirante Oquendo, Infanta Maria Teresa and Vizcaya are not entirely protected. The cruisers Alfonso XII and Reina Christina are unprotected, while the Alfonso XIII is absolutely unprotected. Its hull can be perforated by guns of small caliber, and it is consequently useless against battleships in a naval contest. These vessels cannot steam over 4,000 miles without recoaling.

The cruisers Conde de Venadito, Marques de la Ensenada, Isla de Luzon, Infanta Isabel, Don Juan de Austria and Don Antonio de Ulloa are wholly unprotected and make only from 13 to 14 miles an hour. None of them would be of service in a naval battle. They would be useful only in minor capacities, because they must keep away from the enemy's strong armored and modern warships, and on account of their slowness they cannot be employed as cruisers between better ships of a navy or from a navy to a Spanish port.

The torpedo boats are of 19 knots speed and have other good qualities, but they are available only when it is possible to surprise a battleship or cruiser. It is difficult to conjecture whether or not the Cartos V is of any particular value. She was constructed by the shipbuilding firm of Vega Murguia of Cadiz, which built the cruiser Filipinas, now officially declared to be worthless.

The torpedo gunboats Marques de la Vitoria, Doña Maria de Molino and Don Alvaro de Bazan were built by the house of Olistero of Ferrol, which also constructed the gunboats Perla, Ibeli and Diamante, now declared to be deficient, and likewise the Galicia, Nueva Espana, the Molino and the Pinzon, which, according to contract, were to show a speed of 20 knots, but have been unable to make more than 18.

On April 4 Italy sold to Spain the armored cruiser Giuseppe Garibaldi. She is a steel vessel of 6,840 tons and 12,000 indicated horsepower. Her length is 328 feet, beam, 59 feet 8 inches, with a draft of 24 feet. The cruiser has a belt of six inches of harveyized steel, six inches of the same metal over her gun positions, and her armored belt is 11½ inches thick. The armament of the Garibaldi consists of two 10 inch guns, ten 6 inch quick firing guns, six 4.97 inch guns, ten 2.04 inch guns, ten 1.04 inch guns and two maxim guns, in addition to four torpedo tubes. Her speed is estimated at 20 knots. She carries 1,000 tons of coal and has a crew of 450 men.

The Pelayo is the representative Spanish warship. The Indiana is our most formidable sea fighter. The former has a tonnage of 9,900 and the latter of 10,288. The number of guns respectively is 7 and 4. A struggle between these two would settle the question of naval supremacy. These few facts are the condensation of a volume.

ALBERT P. SOUTHWICK.

The David and Goliath of the Navy. How the Smallest Torpedo Boat Can Sink the Largest Battleship.

Uncle Sam's Naval Academy.

Annapolis, April 14.—There are 50 candidates here now preparing for admission to the Naval academy, and there is always a representative of this species present in the city of Queen Anne. As soon as the September examinations are again new aspirants for the next year's examination make their appearance. There have been many instances where, failing upon their first attempt, they secure a reappointment from their congressman and reside here permanently, continuing their studies until the following May examination.

This overflow that begins in small numbers gradually increases during the winter, and by spring as many as a hundred are in "the ancient city" to attend its capable and successful preparatory naval schools. The proprietary principals have such complete comprehension of what a candidate has to know and understand as well how to drill it into him that "woodjes" indeed is the youth who cannot be made to pass the first bridge of his naval career. So successful has Professor Robert L. Weems, one of these instructors, been that one-half the cadets who have entered the Naval academy in the last ten years were prepared by him. Professor Joseph R. Wilmer, another alumnus of the academy, is quite successful in his work, though his school has not the age of the former.

The present number of candidates is not as large as last season's, because the fourth or new class of 1902, which numbered over a hundred, was the largest that ever entered the academy. Uncle Sam has taken unusually good care of them, perhaps because the class was exceptionally bright and there was an exceedingly small percentage of them that stranded on their mid-year or semiannual examination. Vacancies in 1898 are therefore few and valuable, and the present candidates seem to appreciate highly the opportunity to enter the navy at such an auspicious period. There is an appointment for every United States representative (of whom there are 357), and the president is allowed to appoint annually ten "at large," so that 367 is the full complement of naval cadets in the four classes in the academy and the two graduated classes doing sea service.

The candidates, who come naturally from every part of the Union, are a homogeneous set. Their discipline begins as soon as they arrive and most the lot from Arkansas, the youth from Oregon or the fellow aspirant from Maine.

Visitors are they seemed to imagine that Annapolis was a rural town and were occasionally rude and boisterous, and there are traditions of fights and unseemly quarrels between them and the resentful young men of the city. But they are now placed in the immediate charge of some leading educator, and order and good conduct are requirements demanded of them, the penalty for violation of which is instant dismissal from the classes.

The academic course is six years, four of which are passed in Annapolis and succeeded by a two years' cruise at sea. It is at the end of the last that comes what is known as the "final graduation," and the naval cadets, who for these two years on shipboard have been technically termed "passed midshipmen," are then promoted to the rank of ensign and receive their first commission as officers in the United States navy. The United States government, however, reserves the right to "drop" them from the list if it so desires at the end of this six years' probation, granting the midshipmen an honorable discharge and an extra year's pay as a consolation.

The examinations for admission to the Naval academy this year begin on May 14. Those who may not be nominated in time or from some other cause are unable to present themselves at that date may be examined on Sept. 1.

Despite the critical times and the state of feverish excitement at the Naval Academy, the officers there have organized a baseball nine. Several of them had an excellent record as players years ago, when they were midshipmen here (for the term naval cadets was only authorized a few seasons since), and have faith in their prowess on the diamond. Among them are Lieutenants Bryan, Fullam, Koenig, Bine, Stone and Leiper, Professor Dashiell, Naval Constructor Hobson, Passed Assistant Engineer Laws and Mr. Armstrong.

The last named is coaching the academy boat crew for its race with the University of Pennsylvania, the only engagement thus far made. It is very doubtful if there will be any other athletic sports among the cadets this spring.

Lieutenant Sanequki Akiyama of the Japanese navy has been at the academy on a visit of inspection and also seeking for information, which was granted him, with marked distinction. Under the courteous guidance of Professor Marshall Oliver, U. S. N., he looked upon the big cannon from the Kearsarge, that sank the Alabama off the Normandie June 19, 1864; gazed upon the figurehead of the Constitution, surmounted by the bust of Jackson; looked at the items of the United States ship Delaware, bearing the bust of Tecumseh; saw many other relics and expressed himself as favorable to the method of instruction pursued at the academy, stating additionally his gratification at his cordial reception by the officers of the United States navy. He was sent by his government to study the system of instruction and discipline of the institution, with a view of its adoption in the naval school of Japan, so he said. One of his fellow countrymen, Cadet Hiroaki Tamura, on whom he called, a member of the second class, has made especially rapid progress in his athletic and physical studies. Japanese students—and there have been several in the past 25 years—are instructed at the academy as a favor to the Japanese government.

There are several varieties of fish that cannot swim. In such instance they are deep sea dwellers and crawl about the rocks, using their tails and fins as legs.

COLORED MEN IN OFFICE.

Under the treasury department an important office is held by Henry A. Rucker, who is the collector of internal revenue for the state of Georgia. Mr. Rucker receives an annual salary of $3,375. He has a force of 98 employes, whose salaries aggregate $78,132 a year. As custodian of the federal building in Atlanta he has a force of eight employes, whose salaries amount to $5,[illegible] a year.

Dr. H. W. Furniss of Indiana is a consul at Dakar, Brazil, receiving $2,000 as salary and fees aggregating $1,800 more.

William McKinley has bestowed more federal offices upon negroes than any president that has preceded him, and the status of the colored man as an officeholder seems to be more firmly and satisfactorily fixed than ever before.

The highest diplomatic place given to a colored man under this administration is that held by William F. Powell of New Jersey, who, as minister resident and consul general to the republic of Haiti and charge d'affaires to the republic of Santo Domingo, has already played an important part in the recent trouble between Haiti and the German government. This place pays $5,000 a year and has been held by E. D. Bassett, John Mercer Langston, John E. W. Thompson, John S. Durham and Frederick Douglass.

America's commercial interests in Cognac, the great brandy center of France, are to be cared for for the next four years by George H. Jackson, a young colored man from Connecticut, who will receive a salary of $1,500 per annum and fees amounting to about the same figure.

The next highest office, that of minister resident and consul general to the republic of Liberia, was recently filled by the appointment of Owen L. W. Smith of North Carolina at an annual salary of $4,000. Among those who have held this place are John Milton Turner, Henry Highland Garnett, one of the early leaders of his race; John H. Smythe, E. E. Smith and William H. Heard.

Mahlon Van Horn will represent the United States at St. Thomas at a compensation amounting to about $2,000 per annum.

James B. Sturgeon of Kentucky is the first colored citizen of that state to receive a presidential appointment, and he enjoys the distinction of being the only colored secretary of a legation, that of the legation of Monrovia, for which he receives a compensation of $1,500 annually.

John L. Williams of North Carolina will draw $1,100 a year at Sierra Leone. L. W. Livingston of Florida will get $1,500 at Cape Haitien, and J. N. Ruffan of Tennessee will receive $1,500 as consul to Asuncion, Paraguay.