THE CANARIES AND CEUTA

Last of Spain's Important Atlantic Island Possessions and Her One Well Fortified Point.

Uncle Sam's Threat to Pay His Respects to Them Quickly Brought the Dons to Their Senses.

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From the day the keel for the first modern United States war vessel was placed on the stocks until the last of these monster fighting machines was completed and placed on the active list of the navy the government has been looking for stations throughout the world where the ships might be provisioned and coaled. Every nation but our own has posts or stations in different parts of the world where its ships can be supplied with needed fuel and provisions. Our fleets on foreign stations must go without or wait until a supply can be sent from home, and this in war time is dangerous.

During the last five years the United States navy has grown rapidly until at present it possesses some of the finest fighting ships afloat, as has been demonstrated by the recent victories of Admirals Dewey and Sampson and Commodore Schley. The old wooden ships, with their lofty spars, spreading thousands of yards of canvas, have been sent to the scrap heap, and in their place the modern vessels, built of steel and fitted with powerful machinery, carry the stars and stripes to the most remote parts of the globe.

As the navy increased in size and strength the possession of coaling stations became of more importance. Chairs were issued, and the most available places were scrutinized. A special commission was appointed to investigate and purchase suitable harbors and shore stations. The matter dragged and at the beginning of the war with Spain this nation found itself at the mercy of owners of coal and extremely crippled as a supply for ships on the foreign stations could in but very a sufficient quantities to take them to the nearest home station.

Exorbitant prices were paid for fuel. Ships were purchased to take coal from the home stations to the fleets. Unnecessary delay was caused and our vessels left to the mercy of an enemy whose supplies were at at least should have been close at hand.

Admiral Dewey was ordered to charter vessels to carry his coal supply when he left China and headed for the Philippine islands. He was far from one of the home stations and to be delayed for want of supplies would not only have meant loss of the most favorable available time, but actual danger to the fleet. There was no place where he could turn his vessels to find safety in escaping the western coast of our own land, and they was too far away. "I have taken a cargo of coal" appears in several of the messages sent to the navy department by him. There was more meaning in those messages than the hurrah will admit, for without a full supply his ships would have been helpless.

Spain, with her handful of warships scattered over the globe, had supply stations within easy reach, where she fleets could find protection in the land-locked harbors and behind powerful fortifications. Her possessions where protection could be offered and supplies of provisions and fuel stored for use in emergency that might arise and only dotted the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, but were found at our very doors.

The United States, with its vast extent of territory and naked coasts, had no place beyond its own gates in which stores and provisions could be kept for use when the armed and navy of the country should to enforce upon for active service.

There were the conditions that confronted the government and strategists of the country when the decisive step was taken and the guns of Admiral Dewey's fleet broke that unexpected silence in Manila's harbor that raised the foreign nations to open their eyes. It was then forcibly brought to bear on our government that supply stations were as necessary as the navy itself.

The government had been willing to purchase suitable stations, but for various reasons had failed. Unusual efforts had been made for the possession of some ports. They were refused. We were at peace with all nations and wished to remain so. The government was willing to wait, but not to be caught napping. The situation changed and pressed so hard that prudent means of obtaining these places over which the Spanish flag waves first.

Now the coast of Africa, in the line of navigation and given no aid from Spain, are a group of islands which will answer the purpose of the Government. These are the Canary islands, the last of Spain's prominent possessions in the Atlantic. It is to these that Commodore Watson will probably take his fleet and, when, if, the stars and stripes over the forts and fortified cities that the Spanish have governed for no more than four centuries. There are seven of the Canary islands, namely, Teneriffe, Gran Canaria, Palma, Lanzarote, Fuerteventura, Gomera and Ferro.

The combined area of the group is about 1,000 square miles, or a little more than double that of the state of Rhode Island. The population is about 400,000 and is composed of narrow, desolate-looking barren and a few Europeans, most of whom are English and German. What the islands lack in size they make up in history and a varied example, for, although being near the tropics, every variety of climate is to be found, from the burning blasts of the equator to the frigid zone of the northern north.

OUR GALLANT SOLDIERS IN THE TRENCHES.

Of the fifteen of the Canary islands the first and the latter, Historians of the time when the Canaries reigned and Rome was in its prime have written of these islands, which they called "Insulæ de Fortunatæ." Fortunate islands, which the ancients said were outside of the Pillars of Hercules, in the ocean stream. It was not until about 1405, however, that they came into any prominence, and from that time until the latter part of the last century they were the cause of many disputes and battles. Under command of Don Alonzo de Lugo, there was a strong Spanish fleeting away to conquer the islands. It lasted in 1477, but it was not until 9 years afterwards that Spain gained complete control.

Nearly all of the European nations at one time or other had force to subdue the natives and to subject the islands. The enthusiasm of the natives, although primitive, was well placed and repelled the attacks more the fortifications made by the invading forces. The natives, as well as the foreign element which invaded the islands, were given to plundering, and the Canaries soon became the home of buccaneers and pirates, whose deeds of desperate daring against the ships of the nations and inoffensive coast settlements caused considerable anxiety.

Many of the famous naval sea whose names have been embalmed in history have met with success and defeat off the coast of the Canaries. In 1797 Lord Nelson made an attack on Santa Cruz, where he had learned that a treasure ship from Manila had sought safety behind the high hills and fortifications. He had a powerful fleet, but his plans miscarried, and he met with a defeat which "Nelson's Blood," a little more than a teaspoonful of narrow, desolate-looking barren and a few Europeans, most of whom are English and German. What the islands lack in size they make up in history and a varied example, for, although being near the tropics, every variety of climate is to be found, from the burning blasts of the equator to the frigid zone of the northern north.

Three places over which the Spanish flag waves first.

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