# BELEAGUERED CUBA

## The Defenses of Her Numerous Seacoast Towns.

### Santiago de Cuba the Most Strongly Fortified City in the War Stricken Island.

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It is surprising how little is known in this country of the many ports on the northern shore of Cuba which either have already been besieged by the warships of our navy or will in a short time form the targets for some of our heaviest marine guns.

Of Havana, or Habana, as the Spaniards spell it, so much has been written that any further details are seemingly superfluous. Its Morro Castle, at the left of the entrance leading to the semicircular harbor, is far famed. Directly opposite is the Bateria de la Punta, on a projecting tongue of land called La Punta. On the same side as Morro is the grim, forbidding exterior of the castle La Cabanas, used for years as a prison house. The fortification is located upon abrupt hills. Still farther inward is the Casa Blanca, commanding the city, and beyond, in regular succession around the bay, are seen the forts Numero Cuatro, Principe, San Lazaro and Pastora, the tower of Chorrera and the fortress of Santo Domingo. Between the forts Numero Cuatro and Casa Blanca stands the small town of Regla, with its vast warehouses built of stone and corrugated iron, its handsome and substantial as any in the world, and in which each year has been stored the greater part of the island's sugar preparatory to exportation.

Bahia Honda, meaning "deep bay," is 37 miles west southwest of Havana and the most direct natural objective point for the landing of United States troops from Tampa or the western peninsular coast of Florida, as a glance at the map instantly reveals. There are numerous large harbors, more than a "hundred harbored Maine," on the northern shore of Cuba, but the best of all is that of Bahia Honda, which is safe, deep and easily entered. Some of the bays are as large as that of the capital city, and there are many existing in solitude that are amply large for the floating of a fleet. All the important ones are mined, and it will be necessary to remove the torpedoes which the Spaniards have seen broadcast in the harbor beds.

It is a peculiar fact that nearly every estuary on the north coast of Cuba is marked by some distinguishing feature of the landscape by which pilots familiar with the island can enter any of them even at night. This is true of the little adjacent to Bahia Honda, one of which is crowned with a castillo two or two stories in height, are of stone, plastered over and painted in various brilliant shades, which, combined with the absence of shade trees, causes a glare in the bright sunlight especially trying during the heat of the day.

On the plaza are the Casa de Ayuntamiento—the residence of the governor—the cafes and the clubs. There are two of the latter next door to each other—the Casino, patronized by the Spanish, and the Liceo, whose membership is principally Cuban. In the northern suburbs of Versailles are the military barracks, the hospital and the castle of San Severino, an ancient fort now used as a military prison, which is at the end of a long, dusty road called the Alameda, lined with a double row of stunted trees.

The ground rises rapidly, culminating about two miles back in the hill of Mesarrat, upon which is the church of Our Lady of Monserrat, which overlooks the city, the plains in the direction of Cardenas to the eastward and the valley of the Tinaurl to the westward. The latter is a celebrated spot in Cuban scenery.

Under the low hills, just beyond the limits of New City, the southern suburb, are the famous caves of Bellamar, which, though not of great extent, contain some fine specimens of stalactites and stalagmites.

Cardenas, 102 miles east of Havana, with a population of 14,000, is recorded as the first town that virtually came into the possession of the United States forces. It is in one of the finest sugar producing sections in the West Indies. While it is the headquarters of the military district, its fortifications are from the modern standpoint insignificant. Its main protection lies in its shallow waters and a long neck of land stretching northwest from the city. It is connected by rail with Matanzas and Havana and with Yucarro to the east. A large proportion of its normal mercantile community are Americans, to whom the place has mainly owed its importance, prosperity and growth, and for that reason it has been commonly called "the American city." A notable adornment of the place is a bronze statue of Columbus, which stands in the large public square.

To the eastward another 100 miles is Sagua la Grande, with a population of 11,000. It is situated at the head of navigation in the river from which it takes its name. It is a railway terminus, but is of minor importance commercially. The harbor is open only to light draft vessels, and the services of a good pilot are necessary to enter it.

Stretching along several hundred miles easterly from Sagua is a coast so wild that it has always been the chosen resort of the buccaneer and the filibuster, who came hither now to enter the numerous small bays. The largest settlement in that region is Nuevitas, generally called Las Nuevitas del Principe, which is the port of entry for the important interior town of Puerto Principe, 52 miles southwest. It is virtually unfortified and lies at the head of a bay 15 miles in length by half as much in width, the entrance being only three-quarters of a mile in width. It has been particularly noted as the landing place of filibustering expeditions and American sympathizers and Cuban revolutionists who have gone to join the insurgents. The population is less than 2,000.

East of Nuevitas, in the province of Santiago, are the northern harbors of Nuevas Grandes, Manati and Matanzas, lying behind sheltering coral reefs. One of the best in that section is Gibara, with its three hills, known as the Table, the Sugar Loaf and the Saddle. The great range of Crystal hills, far in the interior, and the Pan de Sama serve to identify by their varying profiles the entrances to more than a dozen harbors, all excellent ports, but all surrounded by the wilderness. Some of them are Vita, Jururo, Barlar, Naranjo, Sama, Banes and Nipe, the last named being large enough to float a navy, beyond the coast is clean, and behind the reefs are some magnificent shelters—as, for example, Nevas, which is shaped like a horseshoe, has an average depth of nine fathoms and is 600 feet wide at the entrance.

At last, about 25 miles from the eastern extremity of Cuba, there is the fine harbor of Guacanayabo, discovered by Columbus on his first voyage in 1492. Above Guacanayabo rises the cuchillo mesa, or table mountain, called the Yumuri, visible 40 miles sea and which has been a landmark for centuries. Ordinarily millions of bananas and cocoanuts are shipped from this place.

The bay is secure, but deep and well sheltered. It is the outlet of a vast and fertile region and is one of the ports which have been uninterruptedly in direct commercial relation with the insurgents since the outbreak of the Cuban rebellion. The locality is beautiful, and the climate is healthful.

On the southeastern coast of the island is Santiago de Cuba, or St. Jago, as its inhabitants generally call it, formerly the capital and the second city of the Pearl of the Antilles in size and population. It is built principally on a hillside 100 feet above the bay and is perhaps the most strongly fortified town in the entire island. Hemmed in by mountains and with no sanitary regulations, it has aptly been called the pesthole of the western hemisphere, for yellow fever is bred here constantly. Like Havana, it has all the other modern accessories of civilized life. Founded in 1514 by Diego Velasquez, it is, after Baracoa, the oldest town in Cuba.

The principal buildings are the cathedral, several churches, a college, a hospital and numerous convents and schools. Two railways lead from it to the north and west. The harbor, said to be the most beautiful in the world, is four miles long, well sheltered and deep enough for ships of the greatest draft. The bay entrance is narrow, with low land on the left and a towering hill of rock on the right, upon which a Moro Castle is built. The rock itself is a part of the castle, and everywhere are cut galleries, in which soldiers may move about. These terraces in the rock, surmounted by the walls of masonry above, give the castle the appearance of being built in many stories. The color effect is a light yellow, almost cream, except that down by the sea level, where the water has worn caverns in the rock, the color is a dark green.

On a low point opposite is a small fort, and there are other minor fortifications on every available elevation. They are many in number, picturesquely antiquated and can scarcely each other in an engagement, but lack the efficiency of modern guns and up to date equipment.

The bay, well mined with torpedoes, widens to a considerable size as the city is approached, and the water is deep except at the wharfs.

There may be seen the rise of an old ship sticking out of the mud, all that is left of the St. Paul, one of the great ships of the Spanish armada of 1588. But 50 years ago she was almost intact after an existence of 284 centuries.

Following the dispersal of the armada by storm and shot, the St. Paul was used as a merchantman and visited various American ports, but principally Port Royal, Jamaica, which was then the greatest seaport in the western hemisphere. Caught in a hurricane in the West Indies, she put in at St. Jago for repairs, but was so badly injured that she never left the harbor. For some years she was used as a magazine ship and then finally went to pieces. Visitors from time to time have rowed out to the old hulk and broken off pieces of wood from the ancient ship as mementos.

The city, with its population of 45,000, is a curious mixture of decay and grandeur. The antiquity is generally on the outside and therefore most apparent. On one of the principal streets is an old stone building, with former handsome pillars and arches that are now shipped and crumbling and a white cornice that has been an object of grandeur, but is now grossy and in a filthy condition, and yet it is the leading clubhouse, and inside it is of sparkling beauty and brilliancy. The floors and walls are of colored marble, a large fountain in the center cools the air with showering jets of water, shimmering chandeliers covered with glass pendants hang from the ceiling, and artistic tables of bronze and marble stand in the elegant dining room.

Many residences with shabby exteriors are lined with expensive marbles within and are handsomely furnished. A majority of the houses have heavy timbers set deep in the ground to render them as safe as possible in case of earthquake, for the city has had an occasional trouble in the unsteady appearance of some of the buildings indicates. Immense sugar plantations are but a few miles from the city.

It was at Santiago de Cuba in November, 1873, that Captain Fry and several of the crew and passengers of the Virginius were shot to death by order of the authorities. She had been captured by the Spanish steamer Tornado, and the claim was made that she was carrying men, supplies and ammunition to the then fighting Cubans in rebellion.

To the northwest of Santiago de Cuba, 85 miles away, is Manzanillo, with a good harbor and a large trade, but no especial means of defense. The population is about 6,000. Trinidad is another minor seaport on the south shore of the province of Santa Clara. Cienfuegos, also in the same province, is a city from which freight is shipped toward the center of the island and thence on to Havana. It is located on the bay of Jagua and possesses a fine harbor, which is capacious and safe and is defended by the fort of Los Angeles. The city is the most beautiful on the island. The streets are wide and straight, and many of the houses are surrounded by beautiful gardens. Railways connect it with Sancti Spiritus and Sagua la Grande. The city, founded in 1819, was named in honor of the captain general of Cuba. It has a large local and export trade. The isle of Pines is utterly unfortified.

There are several large interior fortified towns, like Santa Clara, Puerto Principe and San Cristobal, but those know when they are getting within long range of the port by the natural hills near it called from their shape "Tetas de Managua," or the "Maiden's Breasts." If the night on Morro Castle is burning, it can be seen 20 miles away, as the tower, though only 70 feet high, stands on a hill as much higher, on which the historic fortress is built. It was extinguished at the first approach of the hated Yankees, but the Spaniards have never been noted for their liberality to seamen, and the wonder is that they have maintained any lights at all on the coast.

The small harbor of San Antonio is at the extreme western end of the island, near the cape of the same name. There is a lighthouse 107 feet high above it and a spring of fresh water, furnishing an adequate supply for a large fleet. The interior country there is a part of the celebrated Pinar del Rio province, so long held and so bravely defended by Maceo.

Guanabacoa, just to the right of Havana, offers some facilities for landing, but the first city of importance is Matanzas, 41 miles eastward, and that put in the first appearance of American ships when the guns of Point Rubalcava and Point Maya were silenced and those of the Morro castles, San Severino and Punta Atlac, just inside the spacious shell shaped harbor, were rendered mute by the guns of Sampson's warships. The city lies at the apex of the bay, the frontal bone of the interior canal. Its two limitis this port by its table topped hill called the "Pan" or "Loaf" of Matanzas.

The "City of the Two Rivers," as it is designated, is a strongly fortified seaport on the San Juan and Yumuri rivers, these streams dividing it into three suburbs, Matanzas and New City. It has a castle, the barracks, a hospital, theater and the inevitable cock pit. Among the schools which are proportionately more numerous than anywhere else in Cuba, is the Empresa academy, one of the best educational establishments in the West Indies. It has long been a favorite residence for Americans.

The city contains two objects of interest. The streets are narrow, but fairly well paved. The houses, generally one story and the most then go into dry-dock.

The oldest iron vessel is the Michigan, built in 1844.

There are six rear admirals in active service. The office of vice admiral and admiral are unfilled, as there is no head of the navy excepting Secretary Long.

The biggest guns in the navy are 43 feet long and big enough for a man to crawl into.

Great Britain has 204 torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers. Uncle Sam has only eight.

The guns of a battleship can carry from 8 to 12 miles, hurling a shot weighing half a ton.

It costs $500 every time one of the very big guns on board a ship is fired.

We have four armored battleships—the Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts and Texas.

In a battle all the woodwork and all articles of wood are either stowed below or thrown overboard, lest the men be injured by splinters.

All of the cruisers are named in honor of cities and the battleships, except the Kearsarge, in honor of states.

The boilers of the Iowa have a heating surface of eight acres and hold 30 tons of water.

The grog ration was abolished in 1862, and since then the crew has been forbidden to drink while on duty.

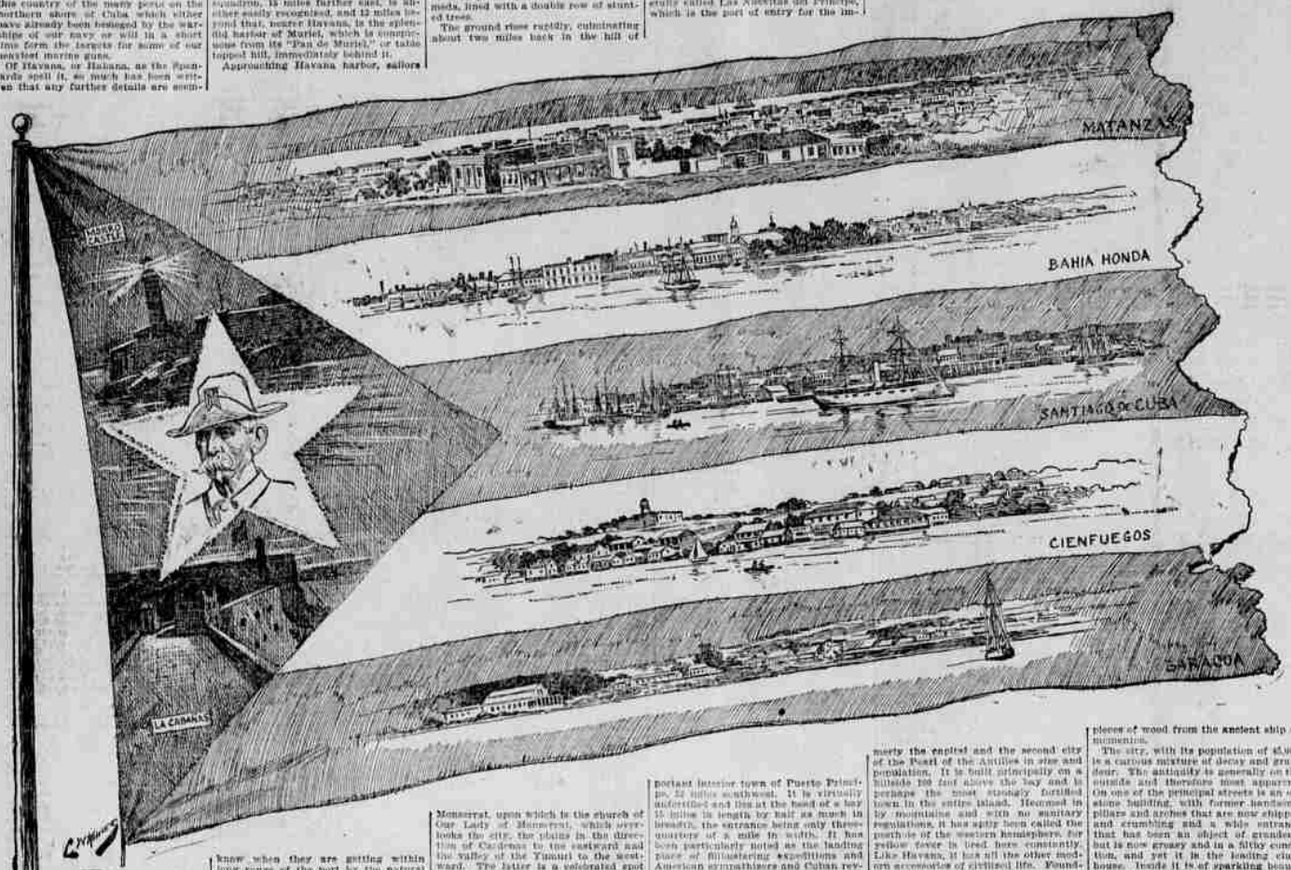
Battleships are covered with armor of nickel steel from five inches in thickness upward.

An act of congress in 1872 abolished flogging in the navy.

Our battleships have a speed of from 15 to 17 knots an hour. Cruisers make 19 to 24 knots, while the monitors are less than half as fast.

The fastest vessels in our navy are the torpedo boats Porter and Dupont, each of which can travel 27.5 knots an hour.

Marines are the police on board ship. Originally they were employed to prevent mutiny among the sailors.



A NEW STAR IN THE GALAXY OF AMERICAN NAVAL HEROES.

## ABOUT OUR NAVY.

Behind the heavy armor there is a packing of either corn pith or cocoa husks.

Barnacles form on the hull of a ship, impeding its speed. A six months cruise will decrease the speed of a ship 15 per

## Marines and Bluejackets.

There has been a good deal of misleading matter published with reference to the alleged cat and dog life led by marines and sailors on board American men-of-war. As a simple matter of fact the sea soldiers and bluejackets of Uncle Sam get on together exceedingly well. There is not one-tenth as much bickering between marines and bluejackets as there is among the sailors themselves.

A marine recruit just assigned to a ship occasionally develops symptoms of the disease known as "duty sickness," which is sympathetic with homesickness, and thereby facilitates laying the foundation of years of unpopularity for himself by taking advantage of his authority to make it as warm as possible for the bluejackets. Such a recruit, however, is quickly called down by the older men of the marine guard ashore. As a rule, the marines and bluejackets are on the most friendly terms. There are few liberty parties of bluejackets bound for a good time ashore that are not accompanied by a favorite sea widow or two, invited along to keep the sailormen get rid of their money, for out of his $13 a month the underpaid marine does not have a large amount for shore hilarity.

The accusation has occasionally been made against American masters of unnecessary severity in dealing with bluejacket prisoners in the "brig" over whom they have shore guard. Careful investigation has almost invariably proved that the severity was necessary. Some officers of the line of the navy have frequently advocated the abolition of the marine guard and having the necessary guard duty aboard men-of-war, such as the watching of prisoners, placed in the hands of carefully selected bluejackets. But it has often been found, in the absence of marine guards on landing party duty, where the bluejacket put on guard with a rifle over another bluejacket is much more severe in his treatment of the prisoner than a marine ever is. The sum of this having been ascertained is that there have been several cases in which the guarding bluejacket has kill the fractious prisoner's head open with his cutlass.

### Naval Flags.

In the navy there are seven flags designating rank aside from the special ones pertaining to the secretary of the navy. Next to his is the assistant secretary's, an exact counterpart of the former except that the colors are reversed.

All the remaining flags have a blue field and white stars, the order being: For admirals, four stars; for vice admirals, three stars; for rear admirals, two stars; for commodores, one star in center of blue pennant. The captain's pennant is a strip of tanting 15 feet long, with 13 stars in a blue field and red and white stripes. Last of all is a small triangular pennant with a dark blue field, denoting the senior officer's presence in the absence of the captain of a ship.

There are seven sizes of flags used in the navy, running down from 36 feet to 3 feet in length. The first five sizes are designated officially as "ship" flags, the remaining two are "boat" flags. Sizes Nos. 1 and 2 are now almost obsolete. They were intended for the old wooden frigates, whose sides and hull were so high that it would be entirely unsuitable for the low lying freeboard of our cruisers and battleships.

A vessel in commission always carries the national colors at the stern until sundown every night. The flag of the commanding officer remains up 24 months day and night. The national flag and from sunset to sunrise a small boats carries the flag of the senior officer at the time when the officer is below the grade of captain; otherwise the officer's and colors are used.

### One Day's Fighting In Thirty.

With an army in the field hardly one day in 30 is given to fighting. The other 29 days of waiting must be lived through in order that everything may be in readiness for the one day of action. It is not the one day of fighting which turns the hair of an officer gray, but the 29 days of anxiety for his men, the supply of their food and clothing and the maintenance of health and good order among them. Men in good spirits will fight on empty stomachs, and yet the ordinary soldier rarely takes care of the provisions which are issued to him for forced marches. He eats them all at once or throws them away on account of their weight, and at the end of a long day's march he is hungry, with nothing to appease his hunger. Then comes the trouble. He does not reason. He grumbles and expects to be supplied with more.

### Bean Fever.

Bean fever has been added to the list of epidemics like hay fever and rose fever by a German doctor, who has christened his discovery "Vicianism." His cure for the disease is to keep away from beanfields.