

From Yauco to Las Marías

**A recent campaign in Puerto Rico
by the Independent Regular Brigade under
the command of Brig. General Schwan**

by Karl Stephen Herrman, ...

Published: 1900

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Table of Contents

Dedication

Introduction



Chapter I ...

The Independent Regular Brigade.

Place of meeting—Forces comprised by the command—Why we were not like the Volunteers—Characteristics of the professional soldier—Sketches of the more important officers—What we were ordered to do.

Chapter II ... The First Day's March.

Disposition of our column—The road to Sabana Grande—The infantrymen's burden—Wayside hospitality—Hard tack and repartee—Into camp and under blankets—Arrival of Macomb's troop—A smoke-talk.

Chapter III ... The People of Puerto Rico.

Their attitude toward the invading Americans—The proclamation of General Miles—Justice and the private soldier—Depravity of the native masses—Men and women of the better class—Local attributes of life—A hint to the weary.

Chapter IV ... The Second Day Begins.

We march to San German—Removal of the sick from the ambulances—An approaching Spanish force—Our scouts and their leader—Concerning Señor Fijardo—Visible effects of imminent battle—Something about the town of San German.

Chapter V ... The Engagement at Hormigueros.

Topography of the battlefield—Macomb's cavalry fired into by Spanish skirmishers—Our advance-guard comes into contact with the foe—General Schwan reaches the firing line—The main body arrives and joins in the fray—Subsequent manoeuvres of our column—The Spanish retreat—A computation of losses.

Chapter VI ... The Second Day Ends.

A personal résumé of the fight—Lack of melodramatic accompaniments—A lost chance of glory—Another neglected opportunity—A glimpse of the flag—Once more into camp.

Chapter VII ... The Occupation of Mayaguez.

We enter the city in triumph—An enthusiastic reception—A pretty girl and the star-spangled banner—Other memorable incidents—Our rags and tatters—A description of Mayaguez—We pitch our tents in a swamp—The First Kentucky Volunteers.

Chapter VIII ... The Engagement at Las Marias.

Difficulties encountered in locating the retreating enemy—Final determination upon pursuit—Lieutenant-Colonel Burke sets forth—Discovery of Spanish troops near Las Marias—A one-sided encounter—Unwelcome notification of truce—The rest of the brigade comes up—Feeding the prisoners—Our disappointment.

Chapter IX ... The Territory Won.

General Schwan returns to Mayaguez—Business and pleasure—A custom we abolished—Extent of the district captured by our brigade—Aguadilla—Facilities for transportation—Labor and the laborer—The cost of living—Rents and real estate—Skilled workmen—A word about investments.

Chapter X ... The End of the Campaign.

**Arrival of the mail-steamer—The soldier-boy and his letters—
The greater part of the brigade is quartered in Mayaguez—
Agriculture in Puerto Rico—Material result of our campaign—A
farewell order—General Schwan departs for the United States.**



A Brief Sketch of the Life of Brigadier-General Schwan.

Appendix I – IV

* * * * *

Illustrations

Frontispiece	Theodore Schwan, Brig-General U.S. Volunteers
I	Statue of Columbus, Mayaguez
I	American Cavalry entering Mayaguez
I	The Public Fountain in Aguadilla
II	Plaza Principal, Mayaguez. Town Hall in background
II	Spanish Prisoners who were brought from Las Marias to Mayaguez
II	Plaza Principal, Mayaguez
II	The Plaza of San German on Market-day
III	Lower Quarter of Mayaguez
III	Mid-section of the Calle Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez
III	Spanish positions in the skirmish at Hormigueros
III	Railroad from Mayaguez to Aguadilla
IV	The Theatre, Mayaguez
IV	Custom-house at Mayaguez occupied by General Schwan
IV	Road from Mayaguez to Añasco
IV	Lower End of the Calle de Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez
V	Guenar Bridge, Mayaguez
V	Upper End of the Calle Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez
V	The Town of Sabana Grande
V	Witch River, near Cabo Rojo
V	American Camp at Mayaguez
VI	Plaza Mercado, Mayaguez
VI	Mouth of the Mayaguez River
VI	A Bit of Yauco
VI	Wooden Dock at Mayaguez
VI	Eleventh of August Street
VII	The Officers of the Alphonso XIII Regiment of Cazadores
VII	The Military Hospital, Mayaguez
VII	Part of the Village of Maricao
VII	Infantry Barracks, Mayaguez
VIII	The Rosario River, near Hormigueros
VIII	A Street in San German
VIII	Tobacco Plantation, Mayaguez
VIII	The Plaza Principal in Mayaguez
IX	A Ruined Church along our Line of March
IX	A Puerto Rican Laundry
IX	On the Road to Lares

- IX The Best Outfit in our Wagon Train
- IX "Promenade of the Fleas" in Yauco
- IX When only One Man gets a Letter
- IX The Weary Travellers' Spring, near Añasco
- IX A Crude Sugar Mill near Las Marias
- X A very Popular Spot
- X Two Knights and a Pawn

[**Note:** *There were no pictures included.*]



TO ROBERT SMITH COBB
*MY BROTHER LORD IN CERTAIN ISLES OF FRIENDSHIP AND
 OWNER OF PRECIOUS CARGO IN MY SHIP OF DREAMS*

Introduction

I have ventured to set down in this place the following bald and brief items of our recent history, not because I doubt an already existing common knowledge of their substance, but simply because they serve to illuminate and give finish to the succeeding narrative.

Major-General Miles sailed from Guantanamo, Cuba, on the 21st of July, 1898; and landed at Guanica, Puerto Rico, on the 25th of the same month. The troops sailing with him numbered 3,554 officers and men, mainly composed of volunteers from Massachusetts, Illinois, and the District of Columbia, with a complement of regulars in five batteries of light artillery, thirty-four privates from the battalion of engineers, and detachments of recruits, signal, and hospital corps.

On August 1st he was re-enforced by General Schwan's brigade of the Fourth Army Corps and part of General Wilson's division of the First Corps, raising his numerical strength to 9,641 officers and men. The Spanish forces in Puerto Rico at that time numbered some 18,000, about evenly divided between regulars and volunteers, and scattered advantageously over 3,700 square miles of territory. By the end of August the American strength had nearly doubled.

In the brief campaign that followed, a large part of the island was captured by the United States forces, and the positions of all the Spanish garrisons, except that at San Juan, were made untenable. There were altogether six engagements,—at Guanica Road, Guayamo (2), Coamo, Hormigueros, Aibonito, and Las Marias—

with a total loss to the Spaniards of about 450 killed and wounded, while the American casualties of the same nature amounted to 43.

General Miles, in his scheme of operations, intended that three columns of our troops—each composed of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and their adjuncts—should march through the eastern, western, and central parts of the island, respectively, diverging at Ponce and coalescing before San Juan. The entire success of this plan was prevented only by the arrival of the order to suspend hostilities, on the 13th of August.

The column marching east—known as the First Division, First Army Corps—was commanded by Major-General James H. Wilson, and took part in three engagements. The column sent through the interior—known as the Provisional Division—was commanded by Brigadier-General Guy V. Henry, and met no opposition of moment.

The third column, called the Independent Regular Brigade, and directed to proceed through the western section of the island, was commanded by Brigadier-General Theodore Schwan, and had two engagements with the Alphonso XIII Regiment of Cazadores.

It is the story of General Schwan's campaign that I am about to relate.

Chapter I

The Independent Regular Brigade.

Yauco, the place selected by General Miles as a rendezvous for the troops of the Independent Regular Brigade, is a town of about 15,000 inhabitants, and some six miles distant from Guanica. It is connected both by rail and wagon-road with Ponce, the largest city on the island, and is noted for its Spanish proclivities, fine climate, excellent running water, and setting of mountains—luxuriantly green throughout the year.

Here were assembled on the evening of Aug. 8, 1898, all the forces assigned to General Schwan, with the exception of Troop "A," Fifth Cavalry, which did not appear until some thirty hours later. The command was composed of the Eleventh Infantry, Light Battery "D" of the Fifth Artillery, Light Battery "C" of the Third Artillery, and the troop of cavalry already mentioned—all regulars, and as resolute and picturesque a set of men as ever wore the uniform of war.

Because we had no Volunteers with us, we were not granted even one little word-spattering newspaper scribe, and so relinquished at the outset any fugitive hopes of glory that otherwise might have been entertained. We were out for business,—hard marching, hard living, hard fighting,—and the opening vista was fringed with gore. We were none of us the darlings of any particular State, nor the precious offspring of a peripatetic statesman with a practised pull. We were at no time decimated by disease through ignorant or insubordinate disregard of the

primary principles of hygiene. We didn't write long wailing letters home because we were obliged to sleep on the damp ground, and had neither hot rolls, chocolate, nor marmalade for breakfast. We were ragged, hungry, tough, and faithful. In other words, we were regular army men, and, most distinctly, not Volunteers.

Illustration:

Statue of Columbus, Mayaguez

There is a personality peculiar to the professional soldier, even though he be but a half-fledged recruit, that defies analysis and baffles description. He is of course built from the same clay as his brother of the Volunteers; but the latter is a tin god, and the former is a devil. Yet the difference does not spring from anything more fundamental than environment, and therein lies the solace of the other fellow. Putting aside all odious comparisons and limiting myself to a view of the regular army man as I know him, I can simply say that in the eight months during which I underwent in his company hard knocks and privations without number I could not have found a more truly satisfactory comrade and friend. He doesn't, on the average, know much about books; nor did he ever hear of the Etruscan Inscriptions or the Pyramidal Policy of the Ancient Egyptians. He takes a grim delight in smashing the English language into microscopic atoms at a single blow. He is more fond of women, horses, and prize-fighting than is good for him. He will steal when he is hungry, lie to save his skin, curse most terribly on trifling provocation, and spend, to his last sou markee, his hard-won wage on adulterated drink.

"He's a devil an' a ostrich an' a orphan-child in one."

But he will stand his ground in action while there is ground to stand on; he will throw his life away at a moment's notice for the flag, or a chosen comrade, or a worthless girl; he will march and starve and thirst world without end if he has a leader who holds his confidence; and he is, on the whole, a rather fine specimen of the true American—being usually Irish or German.

Illustration:

American Cavalry entering Mayaguez

Our brigade commander, General Theodore Schwan—silent, upright, tall, and spare—was regarded with affection and respect by every one who came into personal contact with him, officer and man alike. He was shrewd, clever, and distinguished, but never too busy or elevated to listen to the humblest soldier from the ranks, and from first to last a gentleman. Of his staff it is the highest praise to say that they were in every way worthy of their chief. Bluff Captain Davison, gruff Captain Hutcheson, studious Major Root, saturnine Major Egan, wounded Lieutenant Byron, patient Lieutenant Poore, dashing Captain Elkins, and courteous Lieutenant Summerlin, I salute you all in the most military manner of the soldier dismounted! You were my friends in need, you lent me money, you gave me fatherly counsel and passes of freedom to the shimmering tropic dawn—and I shall not forget.

At the head of the Eleventh Infantry was Colonel I.D. DeRussy, who, with his ministerial drawl and dry wit, was a sharp contrast to his blunt, impetuous, and fiery second in command, Lieutenant-Colonel Burke. But, so far as I am aware, perpetual harmony reigned between them; and both were beloved by their men. The battalion of artillery was commanded by Captain Frank Thorp of Light Battery "D," my own outfit. He was best known in the ranks as "Side-wheeler", from a peculiarity of gait, and, though well on in years, was at all times gallant, courageous, and capable. A stiff disciplinarian, he kept his guardhouse well filled from week to week; but he was as quick to reward as punish, when warranted by circumstances. It is worthy of note that although he took each day enough medicine to lay an ordinary man on his back, or in an early grave, yet he was well and fit from start to finish.

Captain Macomb of the Fifth Cavalry is not an easy man to describe in cold ink. Handsome, stalwart, and grave; black-haired, black-eyed, a scarf of yellow knotted at his throat—he was Custer without the vanity or Lancelot devoid a Guinevere.

Illustration:

The Public Fountain in Aguadilla

When he clattered through the many quaint little towns abutting on our line of march, he was followed by a billow of sighs from behind the half-closed lattices, though I dare say he knew nothing about it; for indeed he was no heart-breaker, but a true soldier. I recommend him to either Rudyard Kipling or Richard Harding Davis.

Said General Miles, in a letter of instruction to General Schwan under date of August 6, 1898:

"You will drive out or capture all Spanish troops in the western portion of Puerto Rico. You will take all necessary precautions and exercise great care against being surprised or ambushed by the enemy, and will make the movement as rapidly as possible, at the same time exercising your best judgment in the care of your command, to accomplish the object of your expedition."

And this programme we were now ready to carry out.

Chapter II

The First Day's March.

Illustration:

Plaza Principal, Mayaguez. Town Hall in background

The disposition and arrangement of our forces on the first day's march can best be shown by the following document:

HEADQUARTERS INDEPENDENT BRIGADE (REGULARS),
CAMP AT YAUCO, PUERTO RICO,
Aug. 8, 1898.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 13.

This command will move out on the road to Sabana Grande at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. It will observe the following rules and order of march:

1. Macomb's troop of cavalry will act as a screen, and will march about two miles in advance of the point of the advance-guard. The extent of the front to be covered by, and the disposition of the cavalry, will depend upon the nature of the country, and will be left to the judgment of the troop commander. He will communicate freely by means of orderlies with the commander of the advance-guard, who will at once transmit all messages to the commanding general. Three mounted orderlies to be furnished by the troop, will march with the advance-guard.

2. Two companies of infantry, one platoon of artillery, and two Gatling guns will constitute the advance-guard. A pioneer detachment, consisting of one non-commissioned officer and eight men, to be carefully selected from the advance-guard, will march with the reserve, and will be under the direction of the engineer officer of the brigade. The requisite tools will be carried on a cart. Upon arriving in camp, the advance-guard will immediately establish the outpost.

3. The main body will consist of nine companies of infantry, one battery and two platoons of artillery, and two Gatling guns.

4. The trains following the main body will be under the direction of the brigade quartermaster, and their order of march will be:

Hospital train.

Ammunition column.

Supply and baggage wagons.

The rear-guard will be composed of one company of infantry. A detachment from it will protect exposed flanks of the train. If horses can be procured for them, the commanders of the advance and rear guards will be mounted.

The above disposition for each day's march will be conformed to, unless otherwise ordered.

By command of Brigadier-General Schwan.

GROTE HUTCHESON, *Captain and Assistant Adjutant-General.*

Illustration:

Spanish Prisoners who were brought from Las Marias to

Mayaguez

As Captain Macomb's cavalry had not arrived at the hour appointed for our start, we set off without him. And in fact there was little need of his services on that day, our march being through a section of the island already cleared of Spanish troops, and exceedingly slow and wearisome, besides.

The route from Yauco to Sabana Grande lies for some two miles along the level and creditable road leading to Guanica, suddenly going off at right angles just beyond a picturesque sugar-mill into as uneven, crooked, and hilly a highway as can well be imagined.

I cannot tell you in adequate language just how the tropical sun punishes the unacclimated Northerner, especially if he be a foot-soldier tramping along in a blinding dust, parched of throat, empty of belly, and loaded down with a pack that would make a quartermaster's mule to fake the glanders. If you have been there, it needs no words of mine to galvanize your memory; and, if you have not, you cannot understand. This matter of the soldier's pack and what to do with it became a subject of serious consideration during the recent war, in both Cuba and Puerto Rico. On the march, in the charge or pursuit or retreat, it is a senseless, clogging, spirit-shackling incubus, a rank absurdity, and an utter impossibility. As a result, after three days of active campaign the infantryman is seen gayly stalking along with no burden save his rifle, ammunition-belt, and a wisp of gray blanket, which seems to me to be a fatuous and footless condition of affairs that might well be quickly remedied for the benefit of all concerned.

Illustration:

Plaza Principal, Mayaguez

As we passed the occasional little hacienda, set in its grove of cocoanut palms or orange-trees, dusky and wrinkled women came forth from the doors, bearing upon their heads huge jars, from which we filled our ever-parched canteens with cool, sweet water. They also brought us mangoes and other native fruits, and queer cigars of most abominable flavor. Because we were forbidden to eat of the fruit, we stuffed ourselves with it, and looked for more. From time to time a weary or sick soldier would lay himself down by the roadside, to be picked up later on by an ambulance; but, as the day wore on, the intervals of rest grew longer and more frequent. We had but one opportunity to water the sweating horses of the artillery, and then it was a painful matter of buckets. We munched hard-tack for our noonday meal, and made merry over it, talking of the day when we should go home and feast on beans and beefsteak and countless other things of which the heathen wot not. We were intensely voluble or silent by turns, and invented new nicknames for each other, which were so apt, spite of being touched with bitterness, that they stuck forevermore. And never, so far as I can remember, did any one mention the "Maine" or Cuba Libre.

At last, shortly after sunset, we descended a long, steep hillside, and went into camp in the valley of the Rio Grande, just without the gates of a small town, uninteresting in character, and Sabana Grande by name. We had marched only twelve miles, but were hungry, limp, and ugly. So, having crammed down a hasty supper of nothing in particular, we made short shift of absent tents, and, pulling

our blankets to our chins, lay face upward to the stars that made us homesick, and slept the sleep of tired little children.

I was wakened in the middle of the night by a distant jangle of sabres and rattle of hooves. Seeing our officer of the day, Lieutenant R.E. Callan, standing not far away and looming gigantic against the sky, I asked him the meaning of the noise; and he replied that it was Captain Maccomb's troop of cavalry just coming in. I lit my pipe and talked for a while with the lieutenant of other things than war—Maude Adams and John Drew, football, ambition, and books—till finally he went away to make his rounds. My pipe went out, and I dreamed of stranger happenings than my longest thoughts could fashion in the glare of day. And, when I woke again, reveille was soaring from post to post.

Illustration:

The Plaza of San German on Market-day

Chapter III

The People of Puerto Rico.

Before proceeding further with the story of our advance, it may interest you to know what manner of people we found the Puerto Ricans to be, and how they behaved toward us who came to them as dogs of war.

When we were first on the island, there is no doubt that the mass of the population regarded us with acute distrust, if not with dislike and fear. But the prompt measures taken by General Miles to disabuse their minds of any preconceived ideas of ensuing rape, robbery, or desecration, did much to soothe the more ignorant and childish of the natives, while the intelligent and educated class needed no further assurance than that contained in the proclamation issued by the commanding general from Ponce on the 28th of July, which was as follows:

TO THE INHABITANTS OF PUERTO RICO:

In the prosecution of the war against the kingdom of Spain by the people of the United States, in the cause of liberty, justice, and humanity, its military forces have come to occupy the island of Puerto Rico. They come bearing the banner of freedom, inspired by a noble purpose to seek the enemies of our country and yours, and to destroy or capture all who are in armed resistance. They bring you the fostering arm of a free people, whose greatest power is in its justice and humanity to all those living within its fold. Hence the first effect of this occupation will be the immediate release from your former relations, and it is hoped a cheerful acceptance of the government of the United States. The chief object of the American military forces will be to overthrow the armed authority of Spain, and to give the people of your beautiful island the largest measure

of liberty consistent with this occupation. We have not come to make war upon the people of a country that for centuries has been oppressed, but, on the contrary, to bring you protection, not only to yourselves, but to your property; to promote your prosperity, and bestow upon you the immunities and blessings of the liberal institutions of our government. It is not our purpose to interfere with any existing laws and customs that are wholesome and beneficial to your people so long as they conform to the rules of military administration of order and justice. This is not a war of devastation, but one to give all within the control of its military and naval forces the advantages and blessings of enlightened civilization.

NELSON A. MILES,

Major-General, *Commanding United States Army.*

Illustration:

Lower Quarter of Mayaguez

The promises set forth in this document were kept to the letter. Indeed, Justice sat up so straight for the people of Puerto Rico that she often toppled over backward and crushed the American soldier. To steal anything, from a kiss to a cow, was almost a capital offence; while houses and churches might have been lined with gold and jasper, or infected with the small-pox, so stringently were we kept out of them—at least during the hostile period.

This was all a mighty good thing for somebody, no doubt, but it detracted in large chunks from the glamour of war for the soldier-boy; and I fear that the majority of us felt hurt, if not sorely cheated. Nor is it at all certain that the average inhabitant of Puerto Rico is worth coddling, protection, prosperity, "and the immunities and blessings" accorded him by his new rulers. A thick, stout cudgel or a bright, sharp axe will be more effective than honeyed words in helping him cheerfully to assimilate new ideas; though no one will believe it here at home until the hurrah is all over and some of the truth gets into general circulation.

Illustration:

Mid-section of the Calle Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez

About one-sixth of the population in this island—the educated class, and chiefly of pure Spanish blood—can be set down as valuable acquisitions to our citizenship and the peer, if not the superior, of most Americans in chivalry, domesticity, fidelity, and culture. Of the rest, perhaps one-half can be moulded by a firm hand into something approaching decency; but the remainder are going to give us a great deal of trouble. They are ignorant, filthy, untruthful, lazy, treacherous, murderous, brutal, and black Spain has kept her hand at their throats for many weary years, and the only thing that has saved them from being throttled is the powerful influence in their discipline effected by the Roman Catholic Church. When our zealous missionaries have succeeded in leading them into the confines of other creeds, we shall have all the excitement we want in Puerto Rico, and the part of our army stationed there will have no lack of exercise.

Despite a common belief to the contrary, the color-line is drawn as rigidly in Puerto Rico as it is in Kentucky. The people having nothing but Castilian blood in their veins are as proud as Virtue; and, while politics and business see a certain mingling of skin-colors, the mixture ceases to exist across the threshold of home. No true Spaniard would permit himself to sing of his "coal-black lady" or his "cute little yallar gal"; and, if he did, he would be ostracized.

The women are all very pretty or extremely ugly, and never simply plain. The girls of the better class are brought up from babyhood under a constant surveillance that knows no laxity until after marriage, and does not altogether cease even then. The growing bud is taught to play the piano or guitar, to embroider, to sing a little, to dance a little less, to speak and read French, to powder her face with art, and to walk like a very queen. She is usually married before she is seventeen, especially if her father has money; and, until the day of her death, she never sees a modern newspaper, never goes slumming, and never soils her gentle hands with work of any degree. She is apt to love her husband devotedly, and does not think her career fitly rounded until she is a mother.

Illustration:

Spanish positions in the skirmish at Hormigueros

The men of the same social footing are not so interesting—to me; but, nevertheless, they possess many characteristics which claim attention and deserve applause. They are never drunkards or wife-beaters; they don't drag their business to the dinner-table and bed; they are not given to profane speech; and they show greater interest in a sonnet than in the price of pork.

Life for both sexes and all grades in Puerto Rico is a rose, a kiss, and a cigarette; song, laughter, and mañana. The island is, unequivocally, a Paradise; and, if I remember rightly, dwellers in Paradise are not expected to labor. These people amply fulfill the expectation.

If you are sick of the worry and fret and jar of contemporaneous life here at home, if you care for wide, sweet blue sky, eternal flowers, crystal fountains, and gypsy music, then there is no better place for you to go than to Puerto Rico. Take a bicycle and ride from Ponce around the island or straight across to San Juan. You will find the roads, when there are roads, superlatively excellent—particularly, if you do not mind an occasional hill or sharp and sudden shower of rain. The larger cities all have comfortable hotels; and, if you can afford to stay a month in Ponce, Mayaguez, and San Juan, you will bring back fragrant memories that will last you many years, or else you will send for your household gods and not come back at all. And, if you don't ride a bicycle, you will be able to get just as much pleasure from the toy railroad or wee horses when you travel about from place to place, while the expense in either case will be marvellously small.

Illustration:

Railroad from Mayaguez to Aguadilla

Chapter IV

The Second Day Begins.

At eight o'clock in the morning on the 10th of August General Schwan's brigade broke camp at Sabana Grande, and moved out on the road to San German. The order of march differed from that of the day before only in the presence of the troop of cavalry; and, the command being well rested, such progress was made that the advance-guard reached the western side of San German by noon—a good ten miles. The main body halted at the same hour just outside the eastern entrance to the town, preparing a makeshift meal; and at this point the sick, both on their own account and to make room in the already crowded ambulances, were transferred to a private hospital.

Before quitting San German, word was brought to the commanding general that the entire Mayaguez garrison—some 1,362 men, chiefly regulars—was marching in our direction, and would contest our advance. This information, which proved to be correct, was at once communicated to the cavalry and advance-guard, with orders to proceed with the greatest care, and to reduce somewhat the distances ordinarily separating the different parts of the column.

Our source of information at this and other important times was a small body of native scouts, numbering from 6 to 11 men and commanded by Lugo Vina, a swarthy, wizened little Puerto Rican, who looked like General Gomez and was taciturn as an Indian. He was considered by General Schwan to be a man of great character and force. These scouts were well mounted, and accompanied the brigade during its entire march, rendering most important and efficient service. Three of them were arrested as spies by Spanish officials between Las Marias and Mayaguez, and narrowly escaped being shot. Eventually, they suffered nothing worse than imprisonment for several months at San Juan; and, when the Evacuation Commission arranged for their release, the United States reimbursed them to the full extent of their wages for the period of their captivity.

Illustration:

The Theatre, Mayaguez

Someone thoroughly acquainted with the country and its people was wanted and the selection fell to a prosperous planter residing within the jurisdiction of Mayaguez—who had been—while not properly speaking, a scout—was yet of considerable service to General Schwan as an interpreter and guide up to the taking of Mayaguez. And because he had in addition been exceedingly useful to our government before the actual breaking out of the war, it was the wish of General Miles to confer upon him some suitable reward immediately hostilities were suspended. General Schwan was prepared to make this appointment, but so strong an opposition to the plan sprang spontaneously from the inhabitants of the municipality most interested that the appointment was held up.

After a careful consideration of all the remonstrances and the strenuous denial by the candidate of all and every allegation and his desire that the promised honor be conferred upon him at once and without delay, it was decided by General Schwan that in the face of so much opposition there was nothing to do but to leave the residents of Mayaguez to decide the question for themselves which they did in a most emphatic manner by refusing to endorse the planter as a possibility, and presenting the name of Señor Santiago Palmer as an acceptable party.

This latter gentleman subsequently received the appointment, which was satisfactory to all concerned.

The news that we were about to meet the Spanish forces face to face spread rapidly among the men in the ranks, and aroused more enthusiasm than terrapin and champagne could have done. Nobody any longer complained of the heat; and, when it began to shower by fits and starts, nobody complained of that, either. There were no more stragglers casting a windward eye to an empty ambulance, nor growls because we pressed forward so rapidly.

Illustration:

Custom-house at Mayaguez occupied by General Schwan

On that particular afternoon I was with the advance-guard; and, when we had learned what we might expect before sunset, I studied the men about me with a lively curiosity as to what effect the probability of immediate action would have upon their visible emotions.

Most of them, in our platoon of artillery at least, were boys, or little more than boys, and almost without exception recruits of less than six months' standing. It might have been expected that some degree of gravity would have crept over them in the nearness of such unpleasant possibilities; but never were they more gay and care-free, to all appearance. Old jests already worn to shreds before we left the transport at Guanica were once more revived, and capered with new life. Good-natured irony flew from lip to lip in fantastic speculation as to probable promotions in case all the officers should be killed at the first go-off. The horses were told, individually and with great tenderness, just what every man expected of them in the approaching crisis. And no comrade gave another any instructions regarding mother or the girl at home, if he were to bite the dust. For my own part, I found my mind so busy in going over the cadences of a waltz I had danced with Somebody months before that I could not bring myself to consider anything else but the beauty of its refrain—or was it Her eyes?—try as I might. And, besides, it is not profitable to shake hands with the devil until you are within reach of his claw.

Illustration:

Road from Mayaguez to Añasco

The wagon-road leading from San German, over which we were now marching, follows the valley of the Rio Grande, whose flats, varying in width from a few

hundred to a thousand yards, extend on each side to a chain of hills. On either hand, in the immediate distance, are fields of sugar-cane, bounded wherever they touch the road by wire fences.

San German, the city through which we had just passed, is a place of nearly 10,000 inhabitants, with a jurisdiction numbering 30,600. It has three very fine markets, a charity hospital, a seminary, good school buildings, theatre, and casino. There is a railroad in construction, a post-office and telegraph station. It is situated on a long, uneven hill, at the foot of which lies the beautiful valley of the Juanjibos and Boqueron Rivers, which is made a veritable garden of enchantment by the orange, lemon, and tamarind trees, together with various other plants, growing there in abundance. The town was founded in 1511 by Captain Miguel Toro, and has borne the title of city since 1877. The principal streets are called Luna and Comercio. Its chief plaza is of notable size, its church is quite regular in architecture, though of old construction, and the barracks of the infantry and civil guard merit mention. Finally, it may be said that its citizens have held a distinguished record for bravery and patriotism ever since their decisive victory over the English forces in 1743.

Illustration:

Lower End of the Calle de Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez

Chapter V

The Engagement at Hormigueros.

The ensuing account of our fight with the Alphonso XIII Regiment of Cazadores, on the 10th of August, is taken bodily from the official report made by General Schwan to Major-General Miles under date of August 21:

At a distance of about seven miles from Mayaguez the Rio Rosario, coming from the east, parallels the road for nearly a mile, and empties into the Rio Grande just south of Hormigueros. A sugar-mill stands just off the road to the left; and a wagon-road branches off to the right, lined with hedge and brush, and, crossing the Rosario on an iron bridge, leads to the hamlet of Hormigueros, which is located on a side hill 1,500 yards from the main road. The ground to the south of Hormigueros is covered with banana groves and cane fields. At about 600 yards from where the Hormigueros road leaves the main road the latter crosses the Rio Grande on a wooden bridge. Just beyond this bridge the road to Cabo Rojo branches off to the south. From this point, for nearly a mile, the main road passes through very low, flat ground, cut up with deep furrows, which extend to the hills on the left and the river on the right, and contain considerable water from recent rains.... To resume the narrative of the day's events, near a point on the main road where it is flanked by sugar-mills our cavalry was fired into, though without effect, by the enemy's scouts, who were concealed behind a hedge lining the Hormigueros

road. They were easily dispersed. The infantry and advance-guard having passed this point, the cavalry took the latter road, and, crossing the Rosario, turned westward, and advanced under cover of the railroad embankment until—taking every opportunity to damage the enemy by its fire action—it reached a position beyond the covered wooden bridge.

Illustration:
Guenar Bridge, Mayaguez

The brigade commander had left San German at the head of the main body. When he heard the firing in his front, he sent word to commanding officers to advance without further halt, and to keep their commands closed up. Similar orders were sent to the train. He was informed and approved of the route taken by the cavalry before reaching the bridge. He crossed the latter about half-past three o'clock, being at that time about 500 yards in advance of the main body.

Illustration:
Upper End of the Calle Mendez-Vigo, Mayaguez

A staff officer, who had been sent ahead to select camp, reported at this time the ground west of the Cabo Rojo road as suitable for this purpose; but owing to the suspected proximity of the enemy, whose position had not yet been determined, it was decided to push ahead and beyond the iron bridge. This, despite the fact that the men had now marched 13 miles and were very tired. Once in possession of the bridge and the high ground to the north of it, the command would occupy a strong position, which would make it hard to check its advance on Mayaguez. Accordingly, the advance-guard, under Captain Hoyt, moved forward, deploying its advance party as skirmishers and its supports into a line of squads. In this formation it continued until it had approached the bridge within about 400 yards. At this juncture the enemy opened fire, at first individual fire. The firing aimed at the advance-guard accelerated the march of the Eleventh Infantry, which ... reported to the brigade commander, whose staff had already commenced the demolition of the wire fences enclosing the road. About the time that the brigade commander caused the deployment of two companies to re-enforce the advance-guard—Major Gilbraith in command,—the enemy, from his position in the hills to the right front, fired volleys at the main body through the interval separating the infantry advance-guard from the cavalry, wounding a number of men, also an officer and several horses of the brigade staff. Meanwhile the artillery battalion, under the authority of the brigade commander, had taken up a position to the left of the road. As the powder used by the enemy was absolutely smokeless, and his position being, moreover, for the most part screened by the trees along the Rio Grande, the question of the exact direction to be given Major Gilbraith's detachment, and to the lines of battle about to be formed from the main column, became a most perplexing one. Luckily, this uncertainty did not last long, those of the enemy's bullets that struck the ground near us solving the problem. Some slight confusion was caused by a premature and hurried deployment of the remaining companies, which interfered somewhat with the brigade commander's

intention of forming two additional lines, one to support the fighting line and the other to act as a reserve, or as the changing conditions of the combat might render expedient. But under his supervision this defective formation was soon rectified, three companies being placed on the right and four companies on the left of the road, the former, under Lieutenant-Colonel Burke, moving forward in support of Major Gilbraith, and the latter being held back for a time. Major Gilbraith and Colonel Burke's troops, being unable to cross the creek, passed over the bridge that spans it by the left flank, the former's companies having previously occupied a sheltered place in a ditch parallel to and to the right of the main road. About this time the advance-guard, one of the companies of which (Penrose's) had previously held for a short time a knoll on the left of the road, moved forward and crossed the iron bridge, the advance sections of the companies being led by Lieutenants Alexander and Wells, respectively. After ... a time the entire advance-guard, including the two Gatling guns, was concentrated on the right of the railroad. It dislodged the enemy, and with the cavalry troop to the right—the troop had arrived about this time, after doing effective service in threatening the enemy's flank—and with the companies of Major Gilbraith pushed forward in the centre, took up a position on the northern line of hills. Here they were rejoined by the infantry and by two pieces of artillery under First Lieutenant Archibald Campbell, which the brigade commander had ordered forward, and which by their fire added to the discomfiture of the enemy. The two Gatling guns under Lieutenant Maginnis, with the advance, did good work, at first in a place near the creek where the gunners had a good view of the enemy, and later on at the various positions of the advance-guard. The two guns from the main body were also operated from the crest of the hill during the latter stage of the combat.

Illustration:

The Town of Sabana Grande

The affair ended about six o'clock; and the troops, including all the artillery, bivouacked on or near the position occupied by the enemy. The wagon train afterward went into park between the railroad and the Rio Grande, near enough to enable the men to get what was necessary for their comfort during the night. Before darkness set in, Captain Macomb with his troop was directed to make an effort to capture a railway train in plain sight from the hill occupied by the command; but the train got under way before he could reach it. It also escaped some shots that were fired at it by the artillery. Although it had now become quite dark, the captain picked up a few prisoners, including a wounded lieutenant.

The difficulty in locating the enemy, and hence in giving proper direction to the attack formations, has already been alluded to. Another cause of anxiety during the earlier stage of the fight were the reports that came to the brigade commander from different parts of the field, through officers, that the enemy was getting around our right (or left) flank, and endeavoring to capture our train. There may have been some foundation for these reports; but, if so, the flanking parties were probably small, and deterred from pursuing their design by our steady advance. It may be added that the train was well guarded.

Illustration:
Witch River, near Cabo Rojo

Our loss embraced 1 enlisted man killed and 1 officer and 15 men wounded. All the wounded, the surgeons say, will recover. The enemy's loss cannot be definitely ascertained, but it is estimated at 15 killed alone. It probably did not fall short of 50 in killed and wounded.

The command continued its march at an early hour the following morning, the advance-guard and the main body proceeding slowly and with great caution. This extra care was unnecessary. Those of the enemy's forces that were held in reserve (some of them not far from the city) had fled precipitately as soon as they realized the extent of their defeat.

In connection with the foregoing report I consider the subjoined document as being of interest:

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MILITARY EXPEDITION
IN CAMP AT MAYAGUEZ, PUERTO RICO,
Aug. 12, 1898.

GENERAL ORDERS No. 14.

The brigadier-general commanding desires to convey to the officers and soldiers of his command his thanks for their excellent conduct in the engagement they had on the 10th instant, near the town of Hormigueros, with the Spanish forces in that vicinity. Concealed in a strong position, they poured a murderous fire into our troops about to go into camp after a fatiguing march. Had the disposition of the cavalry screen and of the advance-guard—which latter included both infantry and artillery—been less perfect, or had the command been deficient in discipline or other soldierly qualities, such an attack might have proved disastrous. As it was, it was promptly and gallantly repulsed, the repulse resulting in the enemy's precipitate evacuation of the city of Mayaguez, though it had been placed in a state of defence.

Illustration:
American Camp at Mayaguez

The major-general commanding the army has been pleased to commend the troops for their gallant action on this occasion—a fact which it affords the brigade commander genuine satisfaction to announce.

By command of Brigadier-General Schwan.

GROTE HUTCHESON,

Captain and Assistant Adjutant-General.

Chapter VI

The Second Day Ends.

At the risk of being considered tautological, I cannot refrain from devoting another chapter to the Hormigueros fight: first, because it was my initial experience under fire; and, second, because there are more things in a soldier's memory than are set forth in the official report of his commanding general.

Illustration:

Plaza Mercado, Mayaguez

Our advance-guard, after leaving San German, marched rapidly along the level road leading to Mayaguez until about three o'clock in the afternoon. As the head of our column came into view, the country people living along the route gathered their most precious possessions into huge bundles, and hurried away across the fields—a sure sign that we were approaching the enemy's position. At the hour mentioned we were suddenly set upon by a blinding shower, and a halt was made for about fifteen minutes, when, the fury of the downpour having somewhat abated, we once more began to move ahead. The cavalry had gone off on a side road for some purpose not known to me, and the infantry was deployed in long lines to the right and left, while the artillery brought up the rear at an interval of about a hundred yards. At half-past three the skirmishers came to the Rio Rosario, but, being unable to ford it, were called back to the road and started across the iron bridge, already described by General Schwan. It was at this moment that the Spanish forces opened fire, concealed in a dense undergrowth about 500 yards in our front.

All jammed together as we were, it would seem that we might have been absolutely slaughtered by the leaden hail which was poured in upon us; and the only explanation of our marvellous immunity probably lies in the fact that the enemy were surprisingly bad shots. Bullets whistled by our heads, or kicked up the dirt at our feet; but, though the pop of rifles made up a continuous sound like the opening of a hundred thousand beer-bottles, not a vestige of smoke rose in the clear air, not a patch of hostile uniform was to be seen.

For some reason our infantry did not at once reply to the Spanish fusillade; and during this brief interval two men and two horses were wounded in the platoon of artillery which stood idly just behind the foot-soldiers—too close, in fact, to be of any service, and in the way of everybody. Then the two Gatling guns under Lieutenant Maginnis went off into the field at our right, where they began to speak for themselves; and Gatling guns in action have a mighty cheerful effect upon your nerves, if they happen to be on your side of the fracas. Next, an order from the general sent the artillery galloping to the rear for about an eighth of a mile, where, after a short detour to the left and a mad race across swampy, ditch-dug fields, it took up a temporary position on a convenient knoll. The main body of our command had meanwhile arrived, and got into the row without ceremony, the firing now being heavy on both sides. My memory serves me with no clear impression of the sequence of events after this period.

Illustration:
Mouth of the Mayaguez River

During the first hour of our fighting all the powder used by us was as smokeless as that of the foe, and again and again the remark was passed that this did not seem like the real business of war. In other respects as well there were few of the accompaniments that we conjure up in our stay-at-home imagination of battle scenes. There was a little galloping of hooves, not long sustained; an occasional sharp cry of command or sharper oath; an intermittent rumble and jar from the infrequently moved artillery, not yet in action; and perhaps a groan or two from the wounded. But, even when the field-rifles began to boom and shroud the landscape in drifting smoke, the make-believe aspect of the affair did not in any degree diminish. There were no clouds of dust, no heaps of slain, no cheers, no desperate charges, and not even a glimpse of the stars and stripes. Away to our right we could see crowds of spectators on the elevated platform surrounding the Sanctuary of Montserrat; and I remember thinking it was well no admission fee had been charged for the spectacle upon which they gazed, else they would have murmured themselves defrauded.

Illustration:
A Bit of Yauco

My own most thrilling moments came about in this way: The platoon of artillery to which I belonged had, as already related, decided that its position directly behind the hotly beset infantry was untenable, and consequently fell back at speed, for some distance. Standing at the head of the first piece, with all my faculties engrossed by the scene before me, I did not hear the order which should have sent me scampering to my seat on the limber-chest, and so suddenly found myself alone, with my comrades mounted and away in full career. A glance about me disclosed the fact that no other living thing was standing up within a radius of five hundred yards. I was a conspicuous mark for the eager slayers in the adjacent underbrush; and I ought, of course, to rejoin my section as quickly as possible. So I ran. It occurred to me that here was my chance to show what I was made of. I would stop running, fill and light my pipe, and stalk in a leisurely manner down the white road, thus winning, perhaps, comment and applause from high places. I say all this occurred to me; but I also happened to recollect the story told of the survivor of Bull Run, who replied to a sneering criticism anent the Federal retreat from that famous field by the sententious rejoinder that "all them as didn't run was there yet"—and I felt that I could fully appreciate the point. So I continued to sprint as fast as I could, leaving the bubble Reputation for other seekers, or for myself upon some other day and field. I was not afraid, and I was simply doing my duty; but I sometimes think that I may have neglected the flood-tide of opportunity, and I often wonder why, in melodramatic crises, a man's mind is not always able to control his legs.

I was not alone in the disregard of romantic possibilities. Later in the afternoon I saw a wounded private propped up against a fence, and bleeding copiously from a bullet-hole that extended through both cheeks. His eyes were closed, and he was

making queer noises in his throat. As I happened to be idle at the instant, I stepped to his side, and inquired compassionately if I could do anything for him. He opened his eyes with a jerk, spat forth a couple of teeth, and replied: "If you'll tell me how the beginning of *Sweet Marie* goes, I'll give you a piece of my face for a souvenir. I've been trying to get that blame tune straight for the last fifteen minutes, but keep getting off my trolley." And he laughed a ghastly laugh. I stared at him in amazement, and then, seeing that he was not delirious, strode moodily away. What that man ought to have said was, "How goes the fight?" or "A drop of water, for God's sake"; but it is the painful truth that he didn't.

Illustration:

Wooden Dock at Mayaguez

A striking feature of the engagement was the thoroughly matter-of-fact manner in which both officers and men went about their work. There was no strutting, no posing, no shirking, but an evident intention on the part of all concerned, from General Schwan down, to do whatever had to be done without unnecessary fuss and feathers, promptly and well. I have seen far more excitement displayed on an ordinary drill-ground at home, in the piping times of peace.

A sudden appearance of the flag just after the trumpets had sounded "cease firing" brought moisture to the eyes of many a toughened veteran; but even then, with victory still glowing in our grasp, there was not the ghost of a cheer. We were simply more tired and hungry than usual, and until matters had been straightened out for the night had no time for sentiment. And, when we finally went into camp on the very field where we had just ceased fighting, we found our chief interest centred in hot coffee, crisp hard-tack, and comfortable blankets. We had begun to realize that we might have lain stiffer and starker that night but for the whim of chance, and were silent with the clacking tongue.

Hormigueros, the village which gave its name to this engagement, is a place of about 3,000 inhabitants, whose houses cluster about the base of the mountain crowned by the Sanctuary of Montserrat. This church is visited by an endless stream of pilgrims, and many wild legends are told concerning it.

Illustration:

Eleventh of August Street

Chapter VII

The Occupation of Mayaguez.

As early as half-past eight on the following morning—August 11—our scouts entered the city of Mayaguez, some three or four miles distant from our

camp of the night before. About an hour later Captain Macomb marched his troop through the streets, accompanied by the brigade headquarters staff. Many prominent citizens greeted General Schwan at the Casa del Rey, and declared themselves subject to his orders.

At eleven o'clock the entire brigade entered Mayaguez, with the general riding at its head, colors flying, and band playing.

We had been through this triumphal entry business several times before; but I, for one, never grew tired of it. It was for all the world like being in the procession of a great circus. The sidewalks, balconies, windows, and roof-tops were packed with wide-eyed humanity, of all ages and conditions, hues, sizes, and degrees of beauty. At every street corner, and in every square, great crowds of the lower classes rent the air with vivas and bravos, regulating their enthusiasm by the size of the guns that swung past them. It is easy enough for some grades of mankind to cheer with frenzy the appearance of a victor, no matter who he be; and a Chinese host would have been received with just as much acclaim as we were, had they come as conquering heroes. The houses of the aristocrats sent us no demonstration of feeling one way or the other, with a single startling and highly dramatic exception. We had turned from the Calle Mirasol into the Calle Candalaria, and the head of the column had almost reached the Plaza Principal. The band had just crashed into *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Suddenly the crowd on an upper balcony of a stately house to the left was seen to sway violently; and a moment later a beautiful young girl, tears streaming from her eyes, leant far out over the rail, and waved a crudely made Old Glory over the ragged ranks below. For a breath we were struck dumb by this apparition. Then every hat came off; and for the first time that day we split the heavens with a cheer—lustily and long. The outbreak was infectious, and from every side the clamor swelled and burst till it seemed as if the universe had vaulted into mad tumult at the touch of a girl's hand. Her name was Catalina Palmer, and she has since married an American lieutenant. But that, as Kipling would say, is another story.

Illustration:

The Officers of the Alphonso XIII Regiment of Cazadores

At one corner a richly dressed old woman threw handful after handful of small silver coins among us. In several places we trod upon great quantities of flowers thrown in our path by peasant girls. The flags of England, Germany, France, and Italy, were everywhere to be seen. The quaintly uniformed corps of firemen turned out in splendor to do us honor, and we saluted with grave dignity the immense statue of Columbus standing in the centre of the town. By those who entered Mayaguez that day none of these things will ever be forgotten.

From a spectacular point of view I am inclined to believe that Kiralfy would have regarded us with scorn and derision, though Jack Falstaff might have been better pleased. We were gaunt, bronzed, and dishevelled, unshaven, dirty, and tattered. Toes protruded from shoes, our hats were full of holes, our trousers hardly deserved the name, and we limped disgracefully. It was the popular impression in Puerto Rico that every American soldier was a full-fledged millionaire, but even they expressed some disappointment at our evident disregard for the external

superfluities of elegance. But, when you stop to consider it, we did not go to the Antilles to make love to the pretty girls. We were quite sufficiently clothed and fed to march through tropical underbrush, take several cities, and put our more gaudily equipped enemies to ignominious flight. And that is what we were there for.

Illustration:

The Military Hospital, Mayaguez

In the early part of the afternoon we went into camp about a mile and a half outside the city lines, and the main body remained here until August 13. The camping-ground was a bad one, lying as it did in a bowl formed by a circle of low hills; and it was soaked and spongy to a degree approaching absolute swampiness. As we were not allowed to go into the city, we grudgingly sat still, and chanted our misery to the unresponsive wilderness, getting our feet wet and gathering the frolicsome malaria germ by way of interlude.

On the evening of our arrival a transport steamed into the bay, having on board the First Kentucky Volunteers, who for some weeks afterward were quartered in the town, doing provost duty and breaking hearts. Later on we came to know them well; and, when they marched away to Ponce, we missed them sadly. They had lots of money, and they spent it freely. We of the regular brigade had not been paid for three months.

Mayaguez is a darling little city on the western coast of Puerto Rico—a place of lattices, balconies, and walled-in gardens ablaze with blossoms. Behind it lies a semicircle of green hills, and before it is the laughing sea. Columbus touched here in one of his earlier voyages, and historical associations have been accumulating ever since.

It is the third largest town on the island, having a population of 25,000, the majority of whom are white. The harbor is next best to that at San Juan—102 miles distant—and is an open roadstead formed by two projecting capes. It is a seaport of considerable commerce, and exports sugar, coffee, oranges, pineapples, and cocoanuts in large quantities—principally, with the exception of coffee, to the United States. Of industry not much can be said, save that there are three manufactories of chocolate, solely for local consumption. The climate is excellent, the temperature never exceeding 90° F.

Illustration:

Part of the Village of Maricao

The city is connected by tramway with the neighboring town of Aguadilla, and by railroad with Lares on one side and Hormigueros on the other. It has a civil and military hospital, two asylums, a public library, three bridges, a handsome market—the best on the island, constructed entirely of iron and stone, at a cost of 70,000 pesos—a slaughter-house, a theatre, a casino, and a number of societies of

instruction, recreation, and commerce. It also has a post-office and telegraph station; was founded in 1760, and given the title of city in 1877.

A river called the Mayaguez divides the town into two parts, connected by two pretty iron bridges named Marina and Guenar, respectively. The sands of this river formerly yielded much gold; and there is gold still to be had from the same source, if one has energy enough to seek it. There are no less than 37 streets and 4 squares—the Principal, Mercado, Iglesia, and Teatro—all adorned by dainty fountains, and, in one instance—the Plaza del Teatro—a veritable ocean of flowers as well. The Calle Mendez-Vigo is one of the most picturesque and attractive streets in the world. It stretches from one end of the town to the other, wide and beautifully clean; and it is lined on either hand by the handsome houses of rich merchants. In the middle of its length lies the Plaza del Flores, between the theatre and the Hotel Paris. Moreover, it is in the Calle Mendez-Vigo that there lives the prettiest girl in Puerto Rico—a little maid of sixteen years, Esperanza Bages by name, and already famous for her charms.

The church was built in 1760. It is of masonry, with two towers and magnificent altars. The town hall, situated on the Plaza Principal, is a good stone building of two stories. Annexed to it is the Casa del Rey, built in 1832, and serving for offices of the military commandancy. The infantry barracks—Cuartel del Infanteria—is also a building of modern construction, dating from 1848; and, though of simple architecture, it is very capacious.

And now let us leave Mayaguez for a little while, and get on with the war.

Illustration:

Infantry Barracks, Mayaguez

Chapter VIII

The Engagement at Las Marias.

HEADQUARTERS INDEPENDENT BRIGADE (REGULARS),
MAYACUEZ, PUERTO RICO,
Aug. 22, 1898.

GENERAL J.C. GILMORE, Headquarters of the Army, Ponce, P.R.

Sir,—... Detachments from the cavalry troop went out (from Mayaguez) in the afternoon of the 11th on both roads leading to Lares; but the left hand or westerly of these roads was followed only a short distance, information, thought to be reliable, having been received to the effect that the bulk of the enemy's force had taken the more easterly road, on which the town of Maricao is situated. This part of the force was reported as making fair headway, having only a pack-train as transportation. Reports also came to brigade headquarters that Spanish troops in large numbers, coming from different places—including Aguadilla and Pepino—were

concentrating to attack my command. While not impressed with the accuracy of these reports, I had the outposts strengthened, and placed a field officer in charge of them. A party from the outposts, sent to reconnoitre the Las Marias road, brought word on the afternoon of the 12th that the rear-guard of the Spanish was still within five miles of Mayaguez, and proceeding slowly.

Illustration:

The Rosario River, near Hormigueros

I immediately determined to pursue and, if possible, to capture or destroy this force, and at first resolved to move out with the entire command. On reflection, however, I realized that there were objections to such a course. The city and surrounding country were in an unsettled and excited state, the latter swarming with guerillas, deserters, and bushwackers. I had no accurate knowledge of the spirit, strength, and location of the enemy's forces, supposed to be within easy reach of Mayaguez. Then, too, the rest of my command, already worn down by the exhausting marches and operations beginning on the 9th, had been seriously broken in upon by heavy outpost duty and drenching rains, which latter had made their camp a veritable mud-hole. Furthermore, the road to Lares, except for the first eight miles out, was said to be all but impassable for wheeled vehicles; and this reminded me that the major-general commanding had intimated that I might have to go to Lares by way of Aguadilla. I therefore concluded to despatch a reconnoissance in force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Burke, Eleventh Infantry, to harass the enemy and to retard its progress in every way. The detachment was made up of six companies of infantry and one platoon each of cavalry and artillery, and started at ten o'clock A.M. on August 12. It was given ample transportation for its three days' rations and the infantrymen's packs. It was therefore as mobile as it could be made without a pack-train. Hindered by excessive heat, followed by heavy showers, it marched only to a point where the two roads, above mentioned, are joined by a cross-road—or about nine miles. I did not hear from Colonel Burke during the night, as I had hoped to; and the remainder of my command had its wagons packed, and was preparing to pull out on the morning of the 13th, when a courier came to me from him with a report of the difficulties that had retarded his progress, and of the presence of a Spanish force near Las Marias, variously estimated at from 1,200 to 2,500. This force, the colonel said, had taken up a defensive position; and he was moving toward it...

Respectfully submitted,

THEODORE SCHWAN, *Brigadier-General Commanding.*

Illustration:

A Street in San German

MAYAGUEZ, PUERTO RICO, Aug. 16.

My dear Gilmore—Availing myself of the first breathing-spell I have had for some time, I wish in this informal way and in advance of my regular report to say a few words to the general and yourself regarding our last Saturday's work (August 13).

As soon as the result of the Hormigueros fight became known in Mayaguez—about nine o'clock on the 10th—Colonel Soto, the commander, "pulled up stakes". That the Spanish troops left in the greatest hurry the condition of their barracks abundantly evidenced. Our advance-guard found the city entirely clear of the Spanish, and I ordered my cavalry to keep in touch with them. The cavalry took the right-hand road of the two roads leading to Lares, over which some of the Spanish troops had actually gone; and in the evening the troop commander reported that they were between seven and ten miles off, and still retreating. My command was thoroughly tired. No one without witnessing it can conceive the distress an infantry soldier suffers while marching in this hot climate, in a deep column, weighted down as he is even without his pack; and some rest seemed actually imperative. But the next morning I found that the main body of the Spanish had taken the westerly (or left hand) road to Lares, and early on Friday—there being many other things to engage the attention of myself and troops—I started Burke out in pursuit, with about 700 men, all told. I overtook him Saturday morning about three and one-half miles north of Las Marias. His infantry had pulled his guns over roads that were almost perpendicular. His troops were exchanging shots at long range across a deep valley with the retreating Spaniards, most of whom had forded (losing a lot of men, who were drowned) a deep and rapid river known in that country as the Rio Prieto. Our fire had already demoralized the thoroughly disheartened and half-famished Spanish soldiers; and their rear-guard, at least, was also disorganized and hiding in the hills.

Illustration:

Tobacco Plantation, Mayaguez

A company of infantry I had sent out brought in, about ten o'clock in the evening, forty odd prisoners, a number of pack-animals, etc. Our men were thoroughly worn out by the day's work. Early the next morning I had four companies of infantry, the cavalry, and two guns ready to resume the pursuit. And there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that, had I had five more hours, I should have taken Lares; for that the flying Spaniards had prepared to abandon it at once I have the most reliable information. But at this particular juncture the notice that hostilities would be suspended came to me. No troops ever "suspended" with worse grace. We had given the Spanish no peace, and had taken all the starch out of them. The colonel and lieutenant-colonel had surrendered. Their troops were utterly demoralized and disintegrated. It seemed a pity to deprive us of the full fruits of a victory for which we had labored so hard; but of course we had to bow to the inevitable. Please let the general read this.

Faithfully your friend,
THEO. SCHWAN.

The part of our command left under Colonel DeRussy set out on the morning of the 13th to join the rest of the column, whose movements you have already followed in the preceding documents. The last detachment found it no less difficult to make headway than had the first; and on the morning of the 14th the entire brigade was so broken up and strung out that its head and tail were a good nine miles apart. So much trouble had been experienced in getting the artillery up the incredibly steep mountain-sides that no one had been able to give assistance or even thought to the hopelessly embarrassed wagon-train, and consequently we were practically without food for over twenty-four hours. When at last something to eat did come plodding along, we were obliged to put up with half-rations in order that our little collection of recently acquired prisoners might be fed. At a conservative estimate, those prisoners must have been the hungriest lot of men that ever laid down their arms. There were less than sixty of them, and they drew rations for about 1,200. However, they were fed; and we had the consolation of realizing that victory, like some other things of less familiar acquaintance, is its own reward. By noon on the 14th, everything was once more in order; and I have not yet ceased to wonder how those in authority managed to erase so quickly the chaos of the night before.

Illustration:

The Plaza Principal in Mayaguez

The engagement at Las Marias, while not particularly momentous in itself, was note-worthy as being the last between our forces and those of Spain during the recent war. I do not believe that the knowledge of this fact—even had we possessed it at the time—would have materially consoled us for the disappointment we felt in being obliged to stop shooting just when we had learned to do it so beautifully; but, still, it is something to have been in at the finish.

Chapter IX

The Territory Won.

On August 16, in obedience to orders from Army Headquarters, General Schwan left the bulk of his troops in the positions they had respectively occupied at the time of the receipt of the truce, and, accompanied by the artillery, returned to Mayaguez. The people of this city had not yet recovered from the ferment into which they had been thrown by our advent, and went about in a state of tremulous titillation, expecting I know not what. At any rate, it did not seem to arrive; and after a day or two had passed without any sign of fell intent upon our

part the merchants allowed themselves to be coaxed back into their places of business. The cafés were once more thronged. Semi-weekly concerts were given in the Plaza Principal by the band of the Eleventh Infantry and the Banda del Bomberos, in alternation. Balls, dinner-parties, and flirtations resumed their interrupted course, gathering new zest and brilliancy from the foreign element within the gates. All the Americans began to study Spanish, and all the Puerto Ricans to study English, without particularly gratifying results on either side. Cocking-mains, local games of chance, and more hectic immoralities were set forth for the delectation of the private soldiers; while I have personal knowledge of at least one quasi-clandestine bullfight, that may be best described as a furtive fizzle.

Strict measures were taken by the brigade commander to prevent anything resembling disorderly conduct among his men, and though these laurel-crowned heroes, under the influence of a wonderfully cheap rum, were seized at odd moments with an evident desire to start the war all over again, there was not much difficulty encountered in maintaining a degree of decorum that was highly satisfactory.

The sanitation of the municipality was rigorously inquired into, and regulated; but it is only justice to the residents of Mayaguez to say that little reform was necessary in this regard, as the current statistics of mortality and disease amply proved. Of the few changes made, however, one may be specifically mentioned.

Illustration:

A Ruined Church along our Line of March

Illustration:

A Puerto Rican Laundry

It was the custom whenever a peasant died to carry the corpse to the cemetery in a coffin hired at transient rates, and then, having dumped the deceased into a shallow grave, to return what is facetiously known as the "wooden overcoat" to its original owner, for further service. This was bad enough, considering the danger of infection thus engendered; but much worse remains behind. It seems that the plot of ground reserved for dead paupers was very circumscribed. So it had become necessary to bury four or five bodies in the same hole, the last one in being perhaps no more than six inches from the light of day. And, as if this state of affairs were not already sufficiently horrible, we found that the congestion was sometimes still further relieved by a wholesale emptying of graves, the bones thus removed being thrown into some adjacent corner above ground, where they lay undisturbed in the hot sunshine and smelt to heaven. This ghastly practice was summarily stopped.

If you will take a map of Puerto Rico and cut off the western section by drawing a line from Guanica through Lares to Camuy, you will see at once the extent of the territory brought under American control by General Schwan. The principal towns of this section, in addition to those already described, are Aguadilla, Maricao, Añasco, Cabo Rojo, Lares, and Las Marias; but none of these

places are important enough to call for detailed notice, with the possible exception of the first-named. This city, Aguadilla, while it has a population of only 5,500, is notable as being the most picturesque town on the entire island. It is the capital and port of the surrounding district; and, though the climate is hot, it is remarkably healthful. The site is a stretch of shore facing Mona Channel, between Cape Borinquen and the Rio Culebrinas. Directly behind rises the steep green-crested Jaicoa Mountain, its slopes covered with orange, lemon, and palm trees in bewildering profusion; while half-way to the summit there gushes forth a fairylike, crystal stream, which flows directly through the town before emptying into the bay. An antique church and a little fort of 11 guns, called Conception, add to the scenic beauty of the picture, when viewed from the sea. Tourists will probably spoil this lovely town before the end of another decade, but at present it is a quivering page of romance.

Illustration:

On the Road to Lares

Illustration:

The Best Outfit in our Wagon Train

Of the facilities for transportation in this part of Puerto Rico, it may be said that they are either extremely good or extremely bad. The former condition prevails generally in the valleys, and the latter among the hills toward the interior. There are several interrupted lines of railroad, and burros are used to a considerable extent by the inland planters; but far the greater part of communication and carriage is accomplished by way of the sea.

Labor here, as elsewhere in the tropics, is to be had very cheaply, but is uncertain, sluggish, and dishonest. A man for plantation work can be hired for almost nothing a day, but he will not earn even that unless he is driven at the point of a machete. The local peon desires to toil no longer than is necessary to obtain the bare wherewithal to fill his belly. Then he dreams away the remainder of the day, smoking the eternal cigarette; perhaps rousing himself sufficiently to pick the strings of a guitar in the cool of the evening—and this, at least, the beggar does well. He is not at all ambitious to improve his condition, and he will never be any better than he is to-day. Probably he will be much worse. He will cut throats and burn haciendas all the gay year round if he is not allowed to gang his ain gait. We are going to reform him, of course; but—the day will come when we shall be ashamed to look Spain in the face. In Cuba this man's brothers were known as "patriots"; which meant that they were soldiers when there was any work to be done, and laborers when fighting was on hand. In my opinion, they are vicious beasts.

The cost of living naturally hinges upon the price of labor; and so one may eat and drink in Puerto Rico for a trifle more than a song. Fruit and vegetables are cheap and plentiful, though flour is so costly as to be almost a luxury; while the meats are neither low in price nor good in quality. Excellent fowls are to be had for very little money. Milk is dear and dangerous; butter is only known as it appears in cans from Denmark; and all the other dairy products are of the meanest

description. Still, one can live with pleasure and comfort upon the many peculiarly native articles of subsistence in common use.

Illustration:

"Promenade of the Fleas" in Yauco

Illustration:

When only One Man gets a Letter

Rents are low, but satisfactory houses are seldom to be had when they are wanted.

There is always room in the hotels of the larger towns; and, until one can build for himself, a hotel offers a very pleasant substitute—at a slightly increased expense. Land, for building purposes, or in an unimproved state, can be leased for a sum that is almost nominal, except in a few highly favored localities. Purchasers of land are more than likely to find themselves immediately embroiled in a lawsuit over the title. If no flaw exists in your title, then it does exist in one that was drawn up a hundred years ago; and in either case the result is the same—you lose.

Skilled workmen in any branch of industry will not find a good field for their abilities in Puerto Rico, at least not for a few years to come. If there were any demand for their services—which there isn't—they would not be able to command anything approaching the standard of wages usual in the United States.

To the investor, dairy farms, ice-plants, transportation schemes, and bar-rooms offer tempting possibilities—I reserve agriculture for separate consideration—but it cannot be too forcibly emphasized that plenty of money, good-health, patience, and a smattering of the Spanish language are absolutely indispensable requisites to the foreigner trying to do business on this island.

Illustration:

The Weary Travellers' Spring, near Añasco

Illustration:

A Crude Sugar Mill near Las Marias

Chapter X

The End of the Campaign.

On the 19th of August a steamer came into the harbor, bringing us a mail, the first we had received since the beginning of July. If the people who wrote those letters could have seen the happiness they wrought upon their distant boys, I am sure they would have been surprised and touched. Again and again we read the simple news of home—the cat was dead, or little sister had the mumps, or

father had built a new fence around the back pasture—and wars and kings and presidents faded into forgetfulness before the heart to heart talks that had come from over-seas.

I don't suppose there is anybody that knows the value of a letter better than a soldier does. A few blotted lines from his mother or sister or sweetheart are meat and drink and fine raiment for his soul. He feels brave again and good again and—homesick again. He makes life a burden for the whole camp until he has borrowed or stolen a scrap of paper and a stubby pencil wherewith to make reply. He sits down in some convenient spot, with emotion fairly oozing from every pore, and for a solid hour he wrestles with his tools and vocabulary. The result probably does not altogether please him. He feels that he has said too much about his lack of socks, the toughness of his fare, the flatness of his purse. All the love and tenderness he meant to set down have somehow refused to leave him, even in description. But he knows he will be massacred if he goes howling for more paper; and so he sends off what he has written, counting the weary days until his answer comes. The man who first invented writing was, without doubt, the greatest man that ever lived.

Illustration:

A very Popular Spot

Illustration:

Two Knights and a Pawn

On August 25 it was decided to bring all but four companies of the brigade into quarters at Mayaguez, chiefly because a great deal of sickness had begun to spring up in the outlying camps. This was accordingly done.

Scientific agriculture and prosperity have long been regarded as almost synonymous terms in Puerto Rico.

The provincial government established and maintained an experimental station at Rio Piedras, for the purpose of promoting a technical knowledge of the native soil-products; and the results of this step have proved invaluable. The recent director of the station, Señor Fernando Lopez Tuero, wrote, while in office, several monographs on tropical agriculture; which I have been at some pains to translate in my search for absolutely reliable information relating to that subject. Señor Tuero is considered, to be a high and conservative authority by those of his compatriots who are best able to judge; and I feel confident that the following estimates are nearly, if not entirely, correct:

The chief agricultural products of the island are cotton, rice, cacao, corn, cocoanuts, pepper, bananas, tobacco, vegetable dyes, coffee, sugar, pineapples, and vanilla. Of all these I shall only pause to deal here with the last four.

Coffee and sugar are regarded by the Puerto Ricans as their most valuable crops. The first takes six years to come into full bearing, and during this time will cost an expense of about 162 pesos an acre, with a return in the last year of 86

pesos an acre,—a net deficit for the full period of 76 pesos. Afterward the expense should be about 66 pesos an acre, and the return 90 pesos. Sugar requires a heavy investment at the start. A plantation of 250 acres, together with the necessary buildings and machinery, will call for about 52,500 pesos. The total cost of a crop, from beginning to end, should be 152 pesos an acre, and the return about 170.

A pineapple plantation, for the investor of limited means, ought to prove profitable and encouraging. The first year of cultivation will produce a crop, at a final cost of 40 pesos an acre, including the land-rent. The return is put down at 200 pesos, leaving a gorgeous net profit of 160 pesos. It would seem perhaps that under such circumstances it is odd that there is not a more general raising of this fruit by the local planters; but the reason for an apparent neglect of a golden opportunity lies in the difficulties heretofore encountered in finding swift and adequate transportation from field to market. With this handicap removed there is little doubt that pineapple-growing will become a tempting industry.

The vanilla bean, however, is king-pin of the list in the claim of profit to be derived from its culture. It is said that the yearly cost of raising the crop will be 94 pesos an acre, chiefly for manure and irrigation. And the annual return for every acre is figured at 652 pesos,—a net profit that is fairly dazzling.

While all these details—which I have digressed so many times to give—do not properly form a part of the story of our campaign, yet it is by no means unusual for one who has put his hand into a grab-bag to look carefully and well at the prize withdrawn. And that is what I have been doing.

The material result of General Schwan's campaign may be briefly summarized thus: He marched his command ninety-two miles in eight days; fought two successful engagements; expelled the Spanish forces from the entire western part of Puerto Rico; captured and occupied nine towns; and took 362 prisoners, including Colonel Villeneuve, a lieutenant-colonel, and four other regular officers. In addition he seized 450 stands of arms, 145,000 rounds of ammunition, and ten thousand dollars in silver coin. His loss was 1 killed and 16 wounded against a total of 20 killed and 50 wounded on the side of the enemy.

On August 27 the general issued a farewell order to his brigade, from which I briefly quote:

"On relinquishing his command to return to the United States, the brigadier-general commanding desires to congratulate, and to return his heartfelt thanks to, the officers and soldiers of the regular brigade for their achievements and excellent conduct during the last eighteen days... Our troops have continued to hold their advanced positions and outposts until now, when, peace being assured, all but a small fraction have been brought to comparatively comfortable barracks near this city. The hardships endured on the march and at these outposts have been great... But these hardships have been cheerfully borne by officers and men. Not a murmur has been heard, despite the fact that nearly one-fourth of the strength of most organizations is on sick-report, their ailments being directly caused by the exposure incident to this campaign.

"Less than three weeks have been occupied by the campaign, yet a bond of sympathy between officers and soldiers has been established that years of peace could not have engendered."

On the following morning, accompanied by Lieutenant G.T. Summerlin, his aide-de-camp, General Schwan left Mayaguez for Ponce, where he boarded the transport CHESTER, and returned to the United States.

The campaign of the Independent Regular Brigade was thus brought to an official end.

A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF BRIGADIER-GENERAL SCHWAN.

Theodore Schwan was born in Germany, July 9, 1841. He received his earlier education in the preparatory schools of his native land, but came to the United States when he was about sixteen years old. He enlisted as a private in the Tenth Infantry on June 12, 1857; and served successfully as corporal, sergeant, first sergeant, and quartermaster-sergeant until October 31, 1863, when he received his commission. He was made a first lieutenant, Tenth Infantry, April 9, 1864; regimental quartermaster in December, 1864; a captain, March 14, 1866; a major, Eleventh Infantry, and assistant adjutant-general, July 6, 1886; a lieutenant-colonel and assistant adjutant-general, February 19, 1897; a colonel and assistant adjutant-general, May 18, 1898. Two weeks before his last promotion in the regular army he was appointed brigadier-general of volunteers, and in accordance with the Act of Congress, approved March 2, 1899, he will retain that rank until July 1, 1901. He was brevetted several times during the War of the Rebellion, and his whole military career, covering a period of forty-two years, is absolutely devoid of blemish.

Appendix

I

The following officers received distinguished mention in General Schwan's reports, for service rendered under fire during the campaign in western Puerto Rico:

Lieutenant-Colonel Burke, Eleventh Infantry.
Major Gilbreath, Eleventh Infantry.⁽¹⁾
Captain P.M.B. Travis, Eleventh Infantry.
Captain R.W. Hoyt, Eleventh Infantry.
Captain A.L. Myer, Eleventh Infantry.

Captain Penrose, Eleventh Infantry.
Captain Macomb, Fifth Cavalry.
Acting Assistant Surgeon Savage.
Lieutenant Odon Gurvoits, Eleventh Infantry.
Lieutenant T.F. Maginnis, Eleventh Infantry.
Lieutenant Alexander, Eleventh Infantry.
Lieutenant Wells, Eleventh Infantry.
Lieutenant W.S. Valentine, Fifth Cavalry.
Lieutenant Rogers F. Gardner, Third Artillery.

In addition to those named above, special and valuable efficiency was displayed by Major E.A. Root, engineer; Major H.H. Benham, ordnance; Major Egan, brigade-surgeon; Captain Buchanan, Collector-of-the-Port at Mayaguez; Captain Davison, brigade-quartermaster; Captain Hutcheson, assistant adjutant-general; and Captain Elkins,⁽²⁾ Lieutenant Byron, and Lieutenant Summerlin, aides-de-camp.

II

In connection with the present writer's expressed opinion regarding the relative practical value of regulars and volunteers in modern warfare, the following excerpt from the *Chicago Record* of November 3, 1898, is worth reading.

Captain Avid Wester, the Swedish officer who accompanied the American army in Cuba, in order to study the war, has just returned to Sweden. During his stay in Gothenburg he was interviewed, and he seems now to have a more sympathetic view of the Americans—the volunteers excepted—than former reports indicated. Captain Wester greatly praised the treatment he had received from all the American officers, and the bravery of the Americans in the regular army. "Of the 18,000 men under the command of General Shafter," he says, "only 4,000 were volunteers or militiamen; the rest consisted of regulars, which had had an average service of six years on the borders of the Indian territory. They were very good and well-disciplined soldiers, who went into battle with complete disregard of death. The militia regiments, however, could not be got within range of the Spanish bullets, and all the stories about the heroism of volunteers are untrue. The only volunteers who distinguished themselves were the *rough riders*, who, in spite of their name, fought on foot, but these men were not a militia regiment. The troop consisted of cowboys and adventurers, who cared neither for life nor death, but rushed blindly into battle. Brave fellows withal." After praising the bravery of the Spaniards and the accuracy of their fire, Captain Wester expresses the belief that with modern rifles in use it is of the greatest importance to have well-trained soldiers, who in the heat of battle retain their coolness and listen to their officers' directions and commands—in a word, soldiers who retain good firing discipline. This, he says, cannot be expected of men with short time of training, on whom the din of battle often has so paralyzing an effect that the soldier can neither hear nor see.

III

The question concerning the quality of the beef served as a ration to our troops during the recent war—in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and aboard the transports—has already been pretty thoroughly answered, one way or the other. Yet, though the topic is worn nearly threadbare and admittedly has nothing in particular to do with General Schwan's campaign, I venture to make, in this place, a personal contribution to the discussion in the form of an extract from a letter, written by me from Mayaguez on September 15, 1898.

Our rations [on the transport COMANCHE] consisted of hard tack, coffee, canned baked-beans, canned tomatoes, and canned "roast beef." Before we arrived at Key West the baked-beans had all been eaten and the water in the tanks had gone rotten—we carried no condenser—so that we were reduced to the rather monotonous diet of tomatoes for breakfast, tomatoes and canned roast beef for dinner, and tomatoes again for supper; with a full allowance of coffee and hard tack at all three meals.

Anybody will be able to understand that we were pretty hungry at the end of the second day. We were thirsty too—I paid as much as fifty cents for a glass of ice-water from the cabin—but I will skip the mass of details. We had seen the piles of neat cans, labelled "roast beef," stacked up on the dock at Port Tampa, and we were impatient for the first mess-call that made us acquainted with the contents of those cans. I regret that I cannot adequately describe to you the appearance of the stuff. I will simply say that it looked filthy, was covered with a sort of slime, and emitted a nauseous odor. It was very hard to even gaze at it and remain unmoved, but we did more than that—we tried to eat it. I managed to swallow three mouthfuls and immediately became wretchedly sick. The example seemed to be popular.

On the succeeding day we were each given an unopened can of the meat, which was supposed to last us for twenty-four hours. Most of the men threw their portions overboard at once; a few packed away the "corpse"—as we already called it—for purposes of trade with the unsophisticated Cubans; and I kept my can as a souvenir. I did not, however, keep it long; for, chancing to drop it upon the deck, the contents exploded with a distinct report, startling me not a little and covering my person with the débris. At the time I thought this experience was going to be altogether unique, but I discovered afterward that the same thing happened in a great many other instances.

Having abandoned the beef, we were forced to subsist on hard tack and tomatoes for the rest of the voyage, and hailed with joy our anchorage at Daiquiri. But we were too previous. During our ten days' stay in Cuba we found the "corpse" still waiting for us in the mess, and we carried the ghastly burden along when we finally steamed away for Puerto Rico.

We landed at Guanica on the 25th of July, which meant that we had been half-starved for twenty-two days. We had forgotten the MAINE and would have greeted Weyler himself with a glad sweet smile, had he come bearing in his hands food fit for a human being. Once more disembarked, we lost sight of the canned roast beef for good—save at extremely rare intervals while on the march. We found no

difficulty in eating the beef obtained from Puerto Rican steers, although it was tough and bloodless; and we received salt pork often enough to furnish variety.

After the cessation of hostilities we began to get American beef instead of the native article, and, while it was by no means so impossible a food as its canned cousin, it certainly could not be called delicious. It smelled badly before it was cooked, was rigid and stringy when served, and had a rank taste, like—well like nothing else on earth. Our sick-list doubled at this time.

IV

A list of the killed and wounded on the American side, at the battle near Hormigueros, Puerto Rico, on the 10th of August, 1898.

Killed.

Fred Fenneberg, private in Company "D," Eleventh Infantry.

Wounded.

Lieutenant J.C. Byron, Eighth United States Cavalry, R.D.C.

John Bruning, corporal in Light Battery "D," Fifth Artillery.

George Curtis, private in Light Battery "D," Fifth Artillery.

Samuel G. Frye, private in Light Battery "D," Fifth Artillery.

Willard H. Wheeler, sergeant in Company "A," Eleventh Infantry.

Joseph P. Ryan, corporal in Company "A," Eleventh Infantry.

Arthur Sparks, private in Company "C," Eleventh Infantry.

John L. Johnson, corporal in Company "D," Eleventh Infantry.

J.A. Sanders, private in Company "D," Eleventh Infantry.

Harry E. Arrick, private in Company "E," Eleventh Infantry.

Henry Gerrick, private in Company "E," Eleventh Infantry.

Paul F. Mitzkie, private in Company "E," Eleventh Infantry.

William Rossiter, private in Company "G," Eleventh Infantry.

Lemuel P. Cobb, private in Company "I," Eleventh Infantry.

D.J. Graves, private in Company "M," Eleventh Infantry.

Amos Wilkie, corporal in Company "M," Eleventh Infantry.

Injured.

Frank Muller, private in Company "E," Eleventh Infantry.

Augustus H. Ryan, private in Company "F," Eleventh Infantry.

(1) Died of apoplexy on August 22, 1898, while in camp near Las Marias.

(2) Wounded at battle of Hormigueros