

MONTGOMERY'S WHITE HOUSE WAR ROOM

The War News Centre of the World—How the President Keeps Himself Posted in These Modern Times.

The war room at the White house is just now the news center of the United States. The president is the most quickly and the most thoroughly informed man in the world concerning the events of the western hemisphere. All of this information comes direct to the war room, which is specially equipped as the receiving center. In addition to all the official information, including cipher dispatches to the president and to the heads of the departments, there come to this room by the courtesy of the Associated Press and all news associations, all the dispatches received by any of these sources.

The long and narrow room, for many years occupied by private secretaries of presidents, is now the executive mansion office, and is occupied by him and his confidential working staff. It is altogether exclusive, as exclusive, indeed, as the president's private office. It is connected with his office when the cabinet room, both of which, together with the war room, are carefully guarded against the inquisitive public.

This war room is in the southeast corner of executive mansion. A south window overlooks the White House, and in the distance the quiet Potomac and the suggestive and magnificent Washington monument. The east

series of private telephones. Underneath the desk of every employe in the building. Besides, there are drawers, pigeon holes, letter files and what not of regulation office desk conveniences. When Mr. Montgomery goes away—which is not for many hours in the day—he can close down the roller top and shut in all this mechanism from the view. His assistants are T. H. Netherland, E. W. Switters and a corps of expert telegraph operators. This force works in relays, and the work is kept up twenty-four hours in the day.

In this room there are twenty-five telegraph wires, fifteen special telephone wires, and wires of the railway exchange, and the long distance telephone system connected with New York, Chicago and every other place having a long distance telephone. Exclusive direct wires connect with the senate and with all the cabinet offices. The automatic telephone exchange is used, and there is no "hello" girl or switchboard. The wires are direct. They have no side connections. The president can carry on over these telephones a confidential conversation with the vice president or any senator at the other end of the avenue, or with the head of any of the departments. The secret is as perfectly preserved as if they were locked in the cabinet chamber.

"Most of this information must be worked out from data obtained from firing tests, and must be thoroughly assimilated by the expert artificer. Then by taking observations at the time of firing, data is obtained from which the most important part of the operation is of course, to locate the target. The invention which has enabled us to do this is something wholly American—a development of our regular army, which in certain localities it is such the fashion these days to run down.

QUICK WORK, THIS.

"This invention is the range finder. It looks like a simple affair. A tall modern tower, with a substantial foundation, built on a commanding height, and connected with the guns—perhaps half a mile distant—by telephone. At the top is a large telescope, adjusted on a polished steel circular table, and gives at any instant the direct reading in azimuth. Another dial is so arranged that elevation or depression of the telescope gives its indicator a corresponding movement. This is like the ordinary transit fitted to read vertical angles. But in this case, instead of reading angles of depression, distances are indicated in yards to the point where the sight pierces the water. An adjustment corrects for height of tide.

"It is only necessary, then, to point our telescope at the water line of the ship and read directly azimuth and distance. These are rapidly transmitted by telephone to the guns, and a piece of drawing paper, three of these observations, twenty seconds apart, are plotted, and the gun has to be fired eighty seconds after the last observation is taken, or at the end of

SKETCH OF PORTO RICO.

Porto Rico was discovered by Christopher Columbus in November, 1493. The island was the "Borinquen" of the aborigines.

At the time of its discovery it is estimated that there were 600,000 native inhabitants on the island.

The first invasion by Spain was in 1610.

In that year Ponce de Leon led an army of invasion from Hayti and founded the town of Caparra.

Caparra was soon afterward abandoned and is now the city Puerto Viejo.

In 1611, with more success, Ponce de Leon founded the city of San Juan Bautista, the present capital.

By the end of 1618 Ponce de Leon had subdued and practically exterminated the native population.

In 1625 San Juan was sacked by Drake.

Three years later, 1628, the duke of Cumberland attacked the capital and laid it waste after three days' fighting.

In 1615, Baldwin Heinrich attacked the Castle del Mono, but failed to take it, and lost his life in the engagement.

In 1678 the English made an equally unsuccessful attempt to capture the forts protecting the capital.

Abercrombie, in 1737, was compelled to retire after a three days' siege.

The first movement toward a declaration of independence on the part of the Porto Ricans was made in 1820.

This first struggle was stubborn, but Spanish supremacy was completely re-established in 1823.

As in all of her colonies, Spain's tyranny, barbarity and misrule had become unbearable.

Cuba and Porto Rico has since been striving for the same result.

An uprising occurred in Lares in 1869, but was crushed in a day.

Several sympathetic attempts to throw off the yoke of Spanish oppression have been made since the beginning of the Cuban struggle, notably one in April, 1897, when insurgents fired the guns of Yauco and operated near Adjuntas.

The leaders of the rebel band were captured and tried in secret.

The Cuban revolutionary party is pledged not to accept independence from Spain until Porto Rico is recognized as the same time.

On account of his inability to reconcile the Porto Ricans to autonomy, General Marin, bitterly hated for his oppression, was compelled to resign as governor general of the island in December, 1897, and was replaced by the revolutionary government.

The island forms one province of Spain, with laws resembling in general those of the mother country.

It is under the command of the governor general, who is also captain general of the army, and is assisted by a cabinet.

There is the usual provincial assembly, court of claims, a chief engineer of public works, a chief engineer of mines and minor functionaries.

The island elects three senators and fifteen deputies to the Spanish cortes, and twenty-seven provincial deputies.

The island was declared a province of Spain in 1870.

The population has grown from 319,000 in 1830 to about 1,000,000, making it at present one of the most thickly-settled portions of the globe in proportion to its size.

Porto Rico was a Spanish penal colony for three centuries.

Slavery on the island was abolished by the Spanish cortes in March, 1833.

ITS LOSS WOULD BE FATAL TO SPAIN.

Admiral Fleedemann, the best tactician in the German marine, recently said in commenting upon the Hispano-American war: "I should say by all means seize Porto Rico. That is the most effective and best possible base of operations."

The Monroe doctrine effectually holds off any European power from seizing Porto Rico, but by that same pronouncement there is nothing under the present status of affairs to prevent the United States from ousting any European power from that spot.

It is only 1,640 miles from New York to Porto Rico, and the distance from Key West is 200 miles less.

It is so potent as to preclude even discussion that no European power should be permitted to sit so close to our doors as that. As a coaling station it would be vastly important to England, Germany, France or any first-class naval power.

Our need for such a depot was evident as long ago as 1750, when the proposition to obtain a coaling station in the West Indies was first put forward. Five million dollars was the sum proposed to offer to Denmark for the island of St. Thomas, but the senate quashed the plan, although Denmark and the people of the island were ready enough to have the transaction.

Porto Rico is infinitely more valuable than St. Thomas.

Again, if Porto Rico is taken, Spain is absolutely without a coaling station or a base of supplies within 2,500 miles of Cuba. Thus the whole flotilla of Spanish torpedo boats, torpedo destroyers, cruisers and battleships would be placed hors de combat within two weeks after leaving Cadix or Ferrol.

With a shore line as long as ours on the Atlantic coast it would never do to have a foreign foe calmly preparing to take advantage of our weakness and to utilize San Juan as a base of operations.

No matter how peaceful our aims and intentions are, it is incompatible with the broad and rational interpretation of the Monroe doctrine to have any other power in possession of such disputed territory as the Spanish West Indies have become.

Our seizure of Manila necessitate the holding of Porto Rico if consistency is to be maintained. If one act was not fully defensible on rational and diplomatic grounds the other would scarcely be.

Without forfeiting our position as a non-aggrandizing power we must take the outpost that opportunity presents or face territorial aggressions by other powers which will menace the United States for all time to come. It is now or never with Uncle Sam and Porto Rico.

THE RESOURCES OF PORTO RICO.

Porto Rico is an island oblong in shape, 108 miles long, thirty-seven miles broad, embracing 3,400 square miles. Its surface is quite regular, except for a mountain chain running through the center from east to west.

Forty of the 1,300 rivers and streams are navigable for commercial purposes. So good is the water of the brooks and lakes that there is quite an industry in its shipment for sale in other West India islands.

The climate is agreeable and healthy. The average summer temperature being 30 degrees centigrade. The highest temperature during the year is 84 degrees Fahrenheit, the lowest 50 degrees.

There are two seasons—rainy and dry. The former is the only one dangerous to careless foreigners.

The resources of the island are not developed to one-third of their capacity. It is owing to lack of capital and other causes. A little American capital and free trade with the United States would make the island a perfect Klondike for investors.

The crops consist of tobacco, sugar, coconuts, coffee, cotton, rice, maize, yams, all of which can be raised to four times the amount required for home consumption. The island is twice as fertile as its English neighbor, Jamaica.

Gold, iron, copper, zinc and coal mines are known to exist, but have not been developed.

Extensive sponge fields are scarcely touched for want of capital, and the same is true of valuable quarries of white-stone, granite and marble.

The inhabitants number over 800,000, of which San Juan, the capital, contains 250,000.

More than half the population is white.

The foreigners on the island number less than 6,000, and while the blacks are actually Spanish subjects, only 25,000 of these are Spanish by birth.

Like Chinamen, the lower classes live almost exclusively on rice.

The peasant knows of no such thing as "tipping" for attention shown to visitors. He greets the traveler with a hearty hand and familiar air as if he were a near relative.

Nearly all business is suspended for three hours in the middle of the day.

City houses have low wide piazzas running around the four sides and are surrounded with large lawns.

Country houses are perched ten feet in the air by means of piles, in order that the air beneath the houses may keep the rooms cool.

Porto Ricans seldom leave their island and visit the country people, except for their lives on the plantations, except for their big city celebrations every year at Christmas, carnival day and St. John's day.

The social lines are strictly drawn, the aristocracy being composed exclusively of captain general, government officials, military officers and clergy, all of which are European Spaniards.

The wealthy planters are never allowed to enter this set, and even the common soldiers of the army—who are always sent out from the mother country—look upon native Porto Ricans as inferior beings.

The owners of small plantations are called "Giboros," and are of different degrees of mixture of Indian and Spaniard.

There are no common schools in Porto Rico. About 700,000 of the people can neither read nor write their own names.

Of the 100,000 people who are classed as "educated" fully 20,000 can only read.

The Spanish officials have their children educated in Spain, while the children of Porto Ricans send their daughters to be educated at convents on the island.

The sons of the well-to-do Porto Ricans are even worse "educated" than the daughters. Much of what education they receive is from their own parents.

EVERY APPOINTMENT IS MADE FROM MANILA.

Large herds of cattle are raised on the lowlands.

Large quantities of fresh meat are regularly shipped to St. Thomas.

Mines of gold, copper, zinc, iron, coal and salt are found in abundance, but of these salt are the only mines worked.

White stone, marble and granite are taken in large quantities from the quarries.

AS A NAVAL BASE.

The island of Porto Rico will always be of great value as a strategic point to nations on either side of the Atlantic. With Porto Rico in the possession of the United States the western continent is almost isolated from Europe, and could successfully repel the attacks of European powers.

The position of Porto Rico, just east of Cuba, makes it an ideal location for a coaling station for European fleets. It is especially valuable to Spain.

These islands are especially important in event of an attack upon Cuba. From this point of vantage the movement of hostile fleets could be watched closely, and a strong force would tend to cut off such a fleet from its base of supplies.

The island is mountainous and could be made almost impregnable. It would be impossible for an enemy to take the island if properly garrisoned. A large part of the coast is surrounded by reefs of sharp rocks, which make it impossible for vessels to land there.

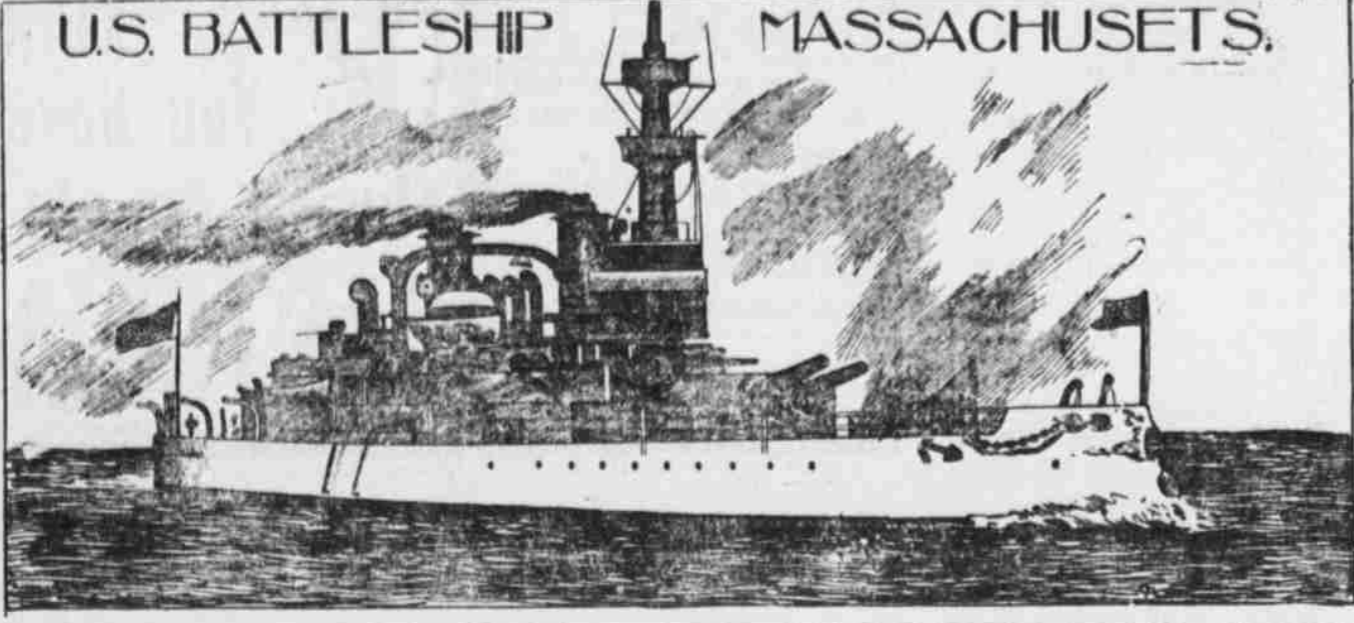
Under the direction of the United States, three fortresses would be erected which could be held against the most determined attack. It could be made the Gibraltar of the west.

Rivers and streams to the number of 1,300 are on the island. A great many of the brooks have clear drinkable water.

The harbor of San Juan is one of the best in the West Indies. The entrance is defended by Morro Castle.

The coast line is 270 miles long.

Sugar is about the only thing manufactured, but that is produced on a large scale. There are three railroads, the others smaller, connecting the mountains and the city, and the city with its suburbs. The roads are generally good and the bicycle is as popular there as here, so you see we are not so much out of the world.



HOW BIG GUNS ARE AIMED.

"You think you could manage one of these guns off-hand, do you?" inquired an officer of the regular army as he patrolled one of the modern monster guns in place at Fort Hamilton.

"Well, if your ordinary enlisted man, I think I could with a few days' training, of course," replied the civilian who had been favored with a view of the new ordnance.

"That is one of the most modest speeches I've heard," was the ironical rejoinder. "I've spent four years at West Point, two at the artillery school at Fort Monroe, and I was just congratulating myself on my being finally well prepared for this emergency. And yet my nervous system hasn't been tried and I may jumble my logarithms when I'm under fire."

The civilian stared. "What are you talking about?"

"Firing these guns. Did you suppose we sighted along the top of the way Long Tom used to do in Cooper's story and, pulling the lanyard, landed our shot ten miles away just on the point where we wanted it to go? That was the old way, but today more science is required and we can tell to an inch where the projectile we fire will strike."

"But it's no child's play, you may be sure, and not only one gunner must be steady, but every man who has anything to do with the transmission or computation of information connected with the 'laying' (or sighting) of that

two minutes total time. We have the location of the target at three different times. It is now necessary to compute where it will be at the end of eighty seconds.

"A vessel running twelve knots an hour will pass over 1,600 feet in one minute or 1,600 feet in eighty seconds, so that if we fired at the point where she was at the last observation we might miss her 1,600 feet or some fraction of that, depending on the direction of sailing with reference to the target point blank—i. e., aiming right at her—we would miss as much as she would pass over in the time of the flight of the projectile. This, for a ten-thousand-yard range, might be twenty seconds."

"We have now the position of the target at a given future instant, but it is referred to the position of the range tower. We must now correct our data to refer to the gun's position. Then we are ready to make corrections for drift due to rifling, effect of wind, condition of atmosphere and abnormal powder and projectile. The gun is laid with the sighting data by means of degrees and minutes marked on the traverse circle of the gun platform and elevation arc on the side of the carriage, and we are ready to fire. It is necessary to allow time—called 'time of flight'—for the projectile to reach the target at the end of the eighty seconds, so the guns must be fired that long ahead of time."

"When you consider that all of this work must be done in eighty seconds,

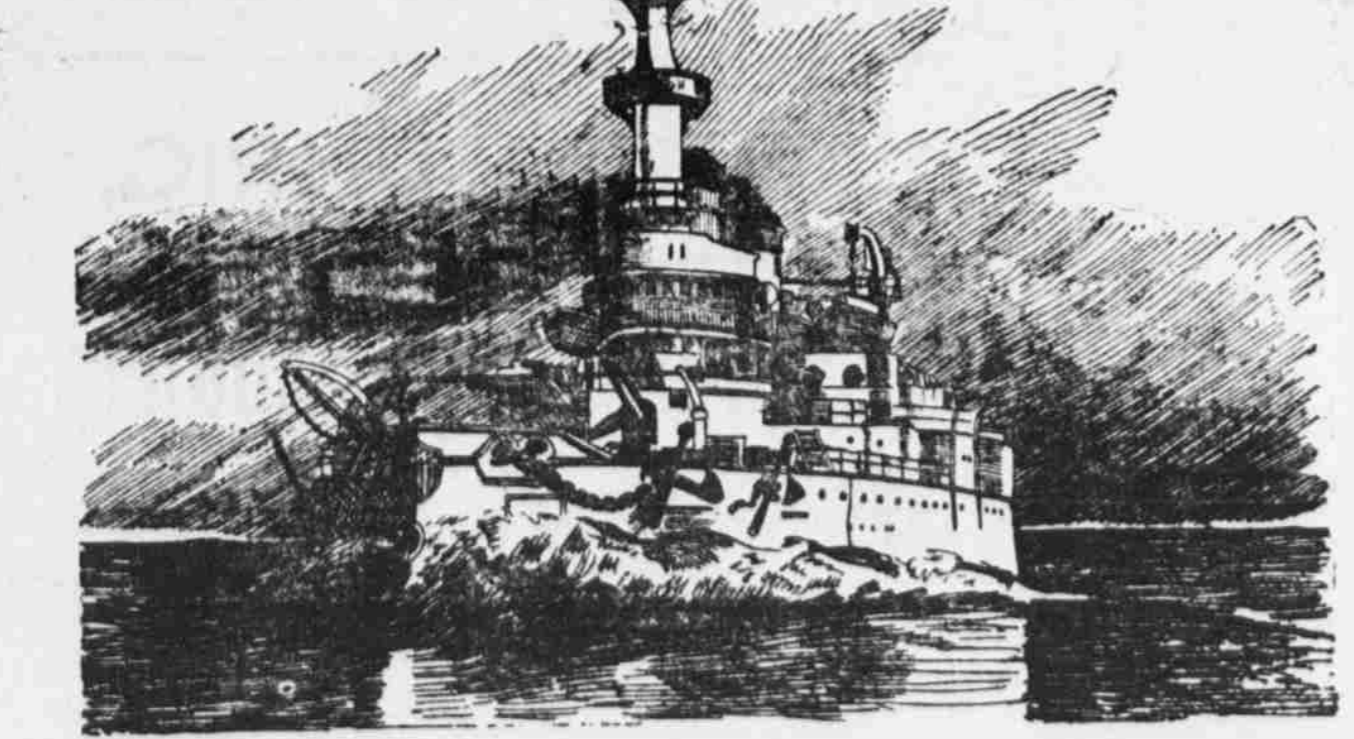
hooks and rubbers, the pens and inks and stationery, are all carefully arranged, each in its proper place. And, curious to relate, there lies upon this secretary's desk, as if it were of as much interest as the latest dispatch from Dewey, the last 'Sermon Delivered by the Rev. David Gregg, LL. D.'

The wonderful piece of furniture of the room is in the opposite corner, between the east and south windows, and is the operating desk of the chief executive clerk, Benjamin F. Montgomery.

Mr. Montgomery's war room desk appeared as complicated to me as the table of logarithms does to a new school boy. On one side of it there is a movable board of telegraphic instruments, including keys, relays, sounders and switch. This board is subject to immediate connection with telegraphic instruments around the world. Just in front of it there is a typewriter all ready to catch the messages that come from the keys. On the left side of the desk is a long distance telephone ready to connect with every other long distance telephone in the United States. In the center is a graphophone into which Mr. Montgomery talks messages when there is convenient no operator to take them and no stenographer to whom they can be dictated.

Adjoining the desk on the left is a

OREGON, THE QUEEN OF AMERICAN BATTLESHIPS.



you see that one has to count his time by fractions of seconds to work like an automaton. No longer time can be allowed for computations, etc., as uncertainties increase as about the fifth power of the time. This is where the discipline of the soldier comes in, and it can be acquired only by years of training.

"The aiming of the gun is all science now and needs experts. The firing and loading are the only work which the untrained mind can find work at. And even in these things, you understand, there is need of coolness and experience for these big fellows are delicate machines after all and are worked by levers, have electrical appliances and are in other ways too precious to trust to untrained hands."

"This may not sound so dreadful here in the calm of a peaceful spring afternoon. But imagine looking up, sines and cosines, plotting accurate curves from mathematical data, under a hail of projectiles, with shells and bombs bursting all around you! Fancy placidly sighting your ship on the range and then, when the shells are shot out away from beneath you! And your hand must not tremble, your mind must not be distracted!"

The civilian seemed rather impressed.

Great things may be expected of Commodore Schley's fleet if fortune allows the flying squadron to take a real fighting part in the war. It has never been stated in print that Commodore Schley is the most democratic man in the navy of the United States. And democratic is the commodore in the real sense of the term.

It is a fact that in both the army and navy the lines of caste are drawn as severely as they are among the people of India. It is seldom that a first lieutenant, for instance, will be seen in the social company of a major, while the captain of a cruiser never had a word to say to his engineer or marine except on matters of strict business.

With Commodore Schley not one of even the lowest men on his ship suffers an injury without his knowing it. No man, be he ever so humble, is debarred from addressing the chief officer on any matter he chooses, let it be of official business or private concern. The commodore keeps himself posted as to the birthday of his most obscure marine and makes it his pleasure to shake his hand and wish him congratulations when the round of a cruiser never had the marine were the captain of the vessel.

This has the effect of making Commodore Schley the most beloved of all naval officers, whose men would lay down their lives for his glory. It also has another decided beneficial effect, for every man does his duty with an earnestness that requires no task-master. The men feel their labor are appreciated, so that when the Commodore makes the round of his ships—which he does personally at frequent intervals—there is never a gun, a rifle or a bucket missing from the spot it should fill.

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ADMIRAL DEWEY'S PRAISES.

An Old Classmate and Chum Talks About Dewey and His Victory.

Of all the people delighted with the famous victory of Admiral Dewey at Manila, there is no one who rejoices more sincerely than Rear Admiral Bunce of the Brooklyn navy yard.

"Friends," said he, "yes, indeed, from the days when we were at the naval academy. We entered the same year and not only were classmates but chums. He was a splendid fellow then, and always has been."

"Were you surprised when you read of his victory?" I asked.

"Not in the least. All that Dewey wanted was the opportunity; when it came he embraced it."

"How did he stand in his class?"

"He was not what you may call a student, but he was one of the bright fellows. He stood neither at the head nor at the foot, but about in the middle, but we all know that he had the ability to stand anywhere he wanted to."

Admiral Bunce went on to say that there were few more popular men than Commodore Dewey. "He never sought popularity. It came to him. In the first place he is a fine-looking man, and he has most attractive manners. People seek him out, and whenever he is on shore he is kept busy with his social engagements. At the same time he is no carpet knight. He is a fighter and a disciplinarian—just the sort of man to engage in a big battle and win it."

"What do you think of his victory?" I asked.

"Nelson can't approach it. I have studied Nelson's battles very closely and he won no victory to compare with this. Nelson fought against ships, but Dewey fought against ships and batteries as well. The only thing to compare in his history to Manila was at Copenhagen; but I do not agree with Nelson's biographers about that. They try to explain and apologize, but the facts remain. It was not a great victory."

"There are those who would belittle Dewey's achievement by saying that the Spanish had only wooden ships, and that he had armored cruisers," I suggested.

"Armored cruisers!" exclaimed Admiral Bunce, "who could say such a thing? You may go no further than the navy register. See here," and he took a copy from his desk, "there is not an armored cruiser in all Dewey's fleet."

"So far as ships go the Spaniards were nearly our match. The trouble was not with their ships. They had good enough ships, but they didn't know how to handle them. They were not marksmen. If Dewey had let them get near him they might have hit something, but he knew too much for that. He could hit them and get his distance."

Schley's Fighting Strength.

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TRADE AND COMMERCE.

The value of the imports for the year 1890 was a little over \$18,000,000.

Exports for the same period amounted to about \$10,000,000.

The budget for expenses of that year was as follows:

Annual expenses	\$4,374,573.67
Revenue	4,710,000.00

Among the items of exports are coffee, sugar, tobacco, cotton and tropical fruits.

Porto Rico horses bring a high price in whatever market offered.

Of the total revenue collected in a year over \$3,000,000 for Spain, her army and her employees.

The ingress of the budget is raised from a series of obnoxious taxations, aside from the duties on exported and imported merchandise, postage, etc.

Taxes are levied upon paper, which receives the government stamp; upon freight and passenger railroad receipts, and even upon the consumption of food.

The yearly average per capita taxation throughout the island is about \$5.

This amount is all the more appalling when it is considered that so little is paid back to the inhabitants in the way of improvements.

The sum of \$75,000 is about the yearly allowance made for the payment of salaries of the employes of the clergy, pensionaries and the tribunal of justice.

Every dollar of this is paid to native-born Spaniards.