

## The Falling Leaves

### Give Warning of Winter

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## A FILIBUSTER'S STORY.

(W. H. Hawley in the Globe-Democrat.)

"There were nine of us, I mean nine white men—Americans, the captain and crew of the ocean tug Rover," said an old sailor, who was talking of the Cuban war on the South street pier. "Of course, I mean—thirty of them all told, and we were filibusters."

"It was the first year of the Cuban revolution. The Rover had been running light for a month, picking up a tow here and there, and failing to make expenses. She was a strong boat and could do twelve knots an hour under pressure. Dan Breen was captain, pilot and part owner."

"One day the captain received an offer from the Cuban agents to take a cargo of guns and ammunition to the insurgents. There was big money in it for all hands provided we landed the stuff and got away safe. The offer was left the matter to Breen, and the captain called the crew into the cabin and asked them if they would go. There was double pay, and a share of the profits for every man of us, and we all answered in the affirmative."

"Next day the Rover called for a southern port to bring back a tow, and we got out beyond Sandy Hook without being followed by a revenue cutter. When night came we stood in toward the Long Island shore, and about midnight ran alongside a schooner anchored off one of the coves down there."

"The stuff we were to carry was on the schooner, and it took two hours, the Cubans helping, to get the cargo aboard the tug. Daylight found us steaming down the Jersey coast at ten knots an hour. We had taken on board thirty Cubans off the schooner, and whenever there was another vessel in sight we were careful to keep them below deck, where they chattered in Spanish all day and most of the night. The voyage down was without incident, because we had good weather all the way."

"According to the plans of the Cubans who hired the boat, we were to land our cargo and passengers at the head of a little bay, near the extreme end of the island, a few miles north of Cape Males. A company of insurgents was to be waiting for us, and assist in the unloading. We went down through the Bahama channel, keeping outside the three-mile limit, until we were within thirty miles of our destination. The captain had so timed the voyage that we were to make the last lap after dark. We had a Cuban on board who knew every foot of the coast down there, and was to act as pilot when we made the run for shore."

"The sun went down in a clear sky, with a light breeze blowing from the southeast. Every man on board had supper between sundown and dark and the captain warned them to eat plenty, because there would be work to do before morning."

"As soon as it was dark the Cuban pilot went up and took his position alongside Captain Breen at the wheel. The engineer and fireman had their orders, which were to get every bit of speed possible. The Cubans came up and lay about the deck, talking in whispers. Then the Rover was headed for the coast and went ahead at full speed. The full moon rose an hour after dark, which was in our favor, because it enabled the pilot to make out certain points of the coast."

"The scene, as we paced down the coast was grand to behold. On our right rose the dense Cuban forest, black as night, in the distance. To the left a smooth sea stretched away to the horizon, and under the clear moonlight it looked like a great lobe of solid silver. The Rover was thobbing like a thing of life, and we seemed to be flying through the smooth water. Lookouts were stationed fore and aft to keep a watch for Spanish gunboats, although the Cubans had assurances that this part of the coast was not patrolled, except at rare intervals."

"It was nearly 11 o'clock when we entered a narrow channel between the main land of Cuba and a low reef or key. For a few miles the vision of moonlight water was broken, and at times we were plowing along in the very shadow of the trees on shore, according to our charts and pilot we would pass a narrow inlet at the end of this channel, and five miles beyond would enter the bay where we were to land the expedition. The Cubans assured us that if we got out of the narrow and dangerous channel safely we would have nothing to fear."

"We were an hour making this inshore tack to avoid the greater distance around the reef and when we reached the open again the wind had freshened, and there was a long rolling swell coming toward the shore. To the right, beyond the inlet we had to cross, a range of low hills formed a dark and gruesome background to the picture around us. A shadow from these hills seemed to be reflected back across the water by the moonlight."

"When we were half way across the inlet I heard the Cuban pilot talking to the captain in a wildly excited manner. Before I could gather what it was about the captain called down to me from the pilot house."

"Jack, see that all the lights are put out and then come up here."

"We carried only one light on deck. I put that out and ran up to the pilot house."

"What is it? I asked."

"Look over to your right there, away up in the shaded part of the inlet, and see if you can make out anything," said the captain."

"I looked in the direction indicated and saw what appeared to be a dark object on the water fully a mile away, and moving in our direction."

"There seems to be something there, captain. What do you make it? I asked."

"Before he could reply there was a flash from the dark object, followed a moment later by the sharp report of a small rifled canon, and then we heard the splash of the ball as it struck the water, 300 yards short and 100 yards astern."

"A Spanish gunboat! We've got to run for it!" said the captain, and whistling down the tube he ordered the engineer to let out another notch."

"There was no use turning back, because the gunboat was now as near the narrow channel through which we had passed as the Rover. The Cuban pilot, who kept his head fairly well assured that if he kept straight ahead to the point of land then visible and rounded, that he would be in the entrance to the bay, where we were to land, and once in the shallow there could give the enemy the slip."

"Acting on the suggestion, we forged ahead, and the old tug went faster than she had ever gone before. By this time the stokers knew that a Spanish boat was after us, and they kept the boilers red hot. The gunboat fired a score of shots as we butted our way through the narrow channel, and it was soon evident that she was not more than ten-knot boat, and that we could outrun her."

"We rounded the point that marked the entrance to the bay, with the Spanish gunboat nearly three miles astern, and were beginning to breathe easy, when a series of yells from the Cubans on deck startled everybody. They were crossing themselves and pointing off the

## HOW SHELLS ARE EXPLODED.

When Senator Tillman, speaking on the senate resolution on Friday last, said: "My people are today with a fuse which exploded the mine under the Maine flared and sizzled," his remarks might have been regarded as rhetorical pyrotechnics or as voicing ignorance as to the manner in which modern military infernal machines are touched off. It is quite possible that the picture of a firecracker, spluttering and flaming under water, which Senator Tillman's words call up, could be entertained by many citizens with out any disturbing thoughts as to its accuracy. But the picture, nevertheless, is rather remote from the truth of the mines. Your modern submarine mine is exploded by electricity, which goes about its business without flaring and sizzling.

The facts about the explosion of other destroying enemies of warfare, which fly through the air, have a little better reason for not being known. It is more or less of a popular mystery as to how a shell seems to know just when to blow up and do the mischief for which it was intended. This accuracy of conduct has only been attained after years of experiments, and today a shell can be fired with pretty full confidence in good results if the gun has been well aimed.

The fuses now in use are called combination time and percussion fuses. Speaking generally a time fuse is one that ignites at a prearranged time after the projectile, either shell or shrapnel, leaves the gun, and a percussion fuse is one that ignites by the impact of the projectile. The combination time fuse has two side channels, one of which is generally used for shrapnel.

This fuse consists of a wooden stock, the fuse composition and an igniter, which is contained in the center of the stock, which has also two side channels filled with loose powder. On the outside of the fuse strips of paper are pasted over the side channels, one of which has full seconds up to eleven marked on it and the other half seconds.

The fuse composition is connected with the side channels by boring holes through the graduation, which marks the times for which the fuse is to be set. If the fuse has not been bored through to the side channel the flame will not enter the side channel until the end of the composition is reached, where there are permanent communications to the side channels. It is impossible for the flame to pass directly from the fuse composition to the bursting charge of the stock is solid except for the side communications to the channels.

The igniter is a little brass cylinder, which has a nipple on the inside of the lower part to receive a percussion cap. There is a brass plunger above this cap, held in its place by a wire. The process of ignition is set up by the shock of the discharge, which breaks the wire and drives the plunger on the cap. The explosion fires the fuse and the fuse flame passes down till it reaches the hole bored in through the side channel, where the flame dashes out into the channel and down the channel to the bursting charge of the projectile, which it explodes.

A typical percussion fuse is the Schenkli. This fuse is fitted into the nose of the projectile, and consists of a metal stock containing a steel cylinder plunger, and above the plunger a cap and below it a magazine for the fuse powder. The plunger fits loosely into the stock and is held in its upper part by a small brass screw, which is brittle, and breaks off at the shock of the discharge and releases the plunger. The screw cap of the fuse screws into the upper end of the magazine.

One end of this cap is plane or flat and the other hollowed out, and until the shell is to be used the hollow end is kept inside or over the plunger, so that if the plunger should get loose the percussion cap on top of it would fit into the hollow and not be exploded. The plunger itself is filled with quick-burning powder, on the forward or upper end of which is a nipple for a percussion cap. The fuse is made ready for use by unscrewing the screw or fuse cap, reversing it so that the flat end is inside, and screwing it on again.

When the gun is discharged, the plunger is freed by the breaking of the brittle screw and forced to the bottom of the stock. On impact the plunger is driven sharply forward and the percussion cap on it strikes the flat end of the screw cap and explodes, igniting the powder in the plunger, which sets off the powder in the magazine, which in turn explodes the bursting charge of the projectile.

There are also percussion base fuses, those which fit into the base of the projectile and explode the bursting charge through the nose of the fuse, or the nose fuse explodes the charge through its base. The fuse composition and action of the base fuses is similar to that of the nose fuses. They consist of a stock, a magazine plunger and firing cap. The plunger is held in place by wires, which are broken after the discharge, so that the plunger, which is filled with fuse, is forced on the impact, strikes a cap in the forward end of the fuse with its point, igniting the fuse and exploding the shell.

The Schenkli and other percussion fuses are now being supplanted in our service by the Hotchkiss nose and base fuses. The nose fuses are used for shells under four inches. The base fuses are used for all large caliber guns, those which are mounted chiefly on vessels or on the sea coast. The Hotchkiss nose fuse does not vary greatly from the types described, not substantially so, though an extended analysis here would be necessary.

The chief improvement which they introduce is a safety plug, or lead stopper, which holds in place wires that themselves hold in place the magazine plunger. The plunger forces the plug to the rear on the discharge of the gun, and on impact the plunger is driven forward, striking a stem point on the head of the fuse, which explodes a fulminated cap in the end of the plunger, firing the magazine and then the bursting charge.

The Hotchkiss base fuse has a solid plunger, the magazine of the fuse being contained in the detonating cap at the head of the stock.

One other percussion fuse, the Driggs, departs from the common fuse type in the method of freeing the plunger. This is held fixed by spring arms until the time of discharge, when the rotary motion imparted by the rifling to the shell wrenches the arm clear and leaves the plunger free to explode the caps.

The Boxer fuse for shrapnel is also being replaced by the point time fuse. The features of this fuse are similar to those of the time and percussion fuses. It consists of a metal stock, a plunger and wire, but the fuse is so arranged that the shock of discharge not only fires the plunger, but explodes a cap and ignites the fuse. This fuse is graduated up to fifteen seconds and is set by boring a hole through the central cavity at the proper graduation to a time train, which is ignited through the hole by flame from the electric cavity and explodes the bursting charge.


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