

AN INCIDENT OF THE BATTLE.

One incident, which I have already mentioned briefly in my dispatches, is worthy of more extended repetition, as illustrating the feelings of the enlisted men for the commander-in-chief. Commodore Dewey, while walking back and forth on the starboard side of the upper deck, noticed that one of the petty officers—a man whose duties did not call for his presence there—was making a pretense of finding something to do on the port side, but was also keeping a careful lookout on the commodore. This man's record of nearly forty years of service in the navy and army of the United States has caused him to be regarded with special interest by the officers of the Olympia, and he was, to a certain extent, a privileged character. So the commodore, being familiar with the manners of seamen, and seeing that the old man had something on his mind, said to him:

"Well, Purdy, what is it?"

"I hope, sir," replied Purdy, straightening up and saluting, "ye don't intend to fight on the 3d of May."

"And why not?"

"Well, ye see, sir," said Purdy, with the most serious air possible, "the last time I fought on the 3d of May I got licked." And then he went on to tell of the ill-fated day of Chancellorsville, when he had carried a gun in the army, and had gone to defeat under "Fighting Joe" Hooker.

"All right, Purdy," said the commodore, "we won't fight on the 3d of May this time; but when we do fight, Purdy, he continued, with an air of friendly confidence, "you'll have a different kind of a May anniversary to think about. Remember that; Purdy."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied Purdy, as he saluted and scuffed off. And a little while later I heard him telling a group of the other Bluejackets that "wad lick hell' out o' the Spaniards if there was ten times as many of them!" And probably to this day Purdy believes that it was due to his timely hint that Dewey went into Manila bay at once, so as to avoid the "hoodoo" that was hanging over May 3.—From "With Dewey at Manila," by Joseph L. Stickney in Harper's Magazine for February.

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