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Cruiser Sails With Vera Cruz Dead

Ships of Other Nations Join Fleet in Paying Honor to Heroes

Whether the boys who went home this afternoon, lying in state on the *Montana*, died while peacefully occupying a custom house or were killed in battle in the war with Mexico, does not greatly matter. Life and diplomacy did not concern them; and in the way in which they faced the greatest question of all they put diplomacy to shame.

Opposed by an enemy they could not see, in the streets of a strange city, where every housetop was an ambush and where every church tower was a fighting-top, with a smile in their eyes and slang on their lips, they tossed away their lives as carelessly as they would pump out an empty cartridge. So today as the great gray ship, with her drifting pall of smoke, carried them home, their comrades on fifteen battleships lined the sides, and the flag of their country, so often saluted by them, was lowered to half-mast.

Not only did their own people honor them, but on the foreign warships honor was done them too. The flags of Spain, Cuba, France and Great Britain were brought to the half-staff and the crews stood at attention.

At the wharf the launch of the British cruiser *Essex* was returning to the ship. Rear Admiral Cradock, in the captain's gig, was just coming ashore. The eyes of all those Americans on the wharf were turned toward the funeral ship, now a black blot against the sun. But the eye of the admiral caught the fluttering flag of his launch. He halted her sharply.

"Your flag!" he called out. "Half-mast your flag! The American dead are passing."

Already the *Essex* had paid her tribute. Already the *Montana* was well out to sea. But once more that flag upon which the sun never sets was bowed in honor of the dead sailors.

If you like, the incident was nothing. It was the act of any smart officer. But it was in keeping with the feelings of those who had no flag to lower and who could not signal. "Well done."

Federal Cavalry Discouraged.

The Federal cavalymen who yesterday had the impertinence to order the marines to surrender the pumping station, have made no further demonstration. The promptness with which the bluff was called undoubtedly discouraged them, but it was thought in might be that they were waiting for nightfall, when, aided by moonlight, they might rush the camp or snipe the sentries.

In expectation of this Major Smedley, with three companies, remained on outpost duty, but, except for mosquitoes, our sleep was undisturbed, and when I left camp an hour ago routing had been resumed.

The major of the Federal cavalry, although he claimed he was an officer of Huerta, was probably acting on his own initiative, and when he said he had five hundred men under

him he was laying From those who saw his outfit it was learned that he had not more than one hundred.

The story of Major Russell, as he told it to me, was that two Federals with flags of truce approached his outposts and said that their commander requested an interview with the officer commanding the pumping station for the purpose of placing his men in a manner least likely to bring about a conflict between the American and Mexican outposts. Approving of this precaution while mediation obtains, Major Russell walked out, accompanied by an interpreter carrying a white handkerchief as a flag of truce.

Mexican's Conduct Offensive

Major Russell found the Federal officer attired in the proper uniform of a major of the regular army. He was mounted, and, as the American officer approached, he did not dismount, but addressed him from the saddle. This breach of etiquette Major Russell ignored, thinking the man erred through ignorance, but the Mexican quickly showed he desired to be offensive. In a manner most insolent he said:

“I have come to take over your command and demand the surrender of your arms and your men. I am an officer of President Huerta, and my command numbers five hundred.”

Major Russell was as furious as he was amazed, but, desiring to gain time and place his men in positions for defence if the occasion demanded, he pretended to consider the proposition.

“This is a very serious demand,” he said. “How long do you give me to consider it? Two hours?”

“No. Ten minutes,” replied the Mexican officer; then he asked: “How will I know your decision?”

“Try to pass my outposts and you will find out,” replied Major Russell.

Without another word Major Russell turned from the Mexican. He fully expected to receive a volley in the back, but, not liking the looks of the peace parley Second Lieutenant Case had thrown his men across the trail and had the Mexican officer covered with their rifles.

Reinforcements Quickly Off

Meanwhile the lookout on the water tower had reported a large force of the enemy in sight, and Captain Taylor and Captain Sullivan had already taken up defensive positions against their approach. As the force which the Federal officer claimed greatly outnumbered the marines and as the city of Vera Cruz . . . would be helpless if the pumping station were lost, the “SOS” call was wirelessly to brigade headquarters and reinforcements of the 4th Infantry and marines under Colonel Le Jeune arrived promptly, but after firing a few shots, which the marines answered with one, the Federals disappeared as mysteriously as they came.

Later in the day some of the were seen by a squad of the medical corps and by Joseph Patterson, of “The Chicago Tribune.” The Federals were then four miles from the pumping station and were moving west. At the same time Captain Selby, of the 4th Infantry, and several correspondents, who had been sent down along the railroad track by the Intelligence Department, stumbled into a Federal outpost that had not been fed lately and seemed to be inclined to eat us. We mollified them by taking their photographs.

The moral of the pumping station incident is that this outpost duty is a cavalry proposition, and, undoubtedly, as soon as disembarked, the cavalry will be detailed to act as

scouts along our lines. Then these Mexican guerillas will be less audacious. A burglar cares little for the peg-post cop; the man he dislikes is the patrolman.

(Source: Chronicling America, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1914-05-04/ed-1/seq-2/>)