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The Rough Riders at Guasimas

On the day the American troops landed on the coast of Cuba, the Cubans informed General Wheeler that the enemy were entrenched at Guasimas, blocking the way to Santiago. Guasimas is not a village, nor even a collection of houses; it is the meeting place of two trails which join at the apex of a V, three miles from the seaport town of Siboney, and continue merged in a single trail to Santiago. General Wheeler, guided by the Cubans, reconnoitred this trail on the 23rd of June, and with the position of the enemy fully explained to him, returned to Siboney and informed General Young and Colonel Wood that on the following morning he would attack the Spanish position at Guasimas. It has been stated that at Guasimas, the Rough Riders were trapped in an ambush, but, as the plan was discussed while I was present, I know that so far from any ones running into an ambush, every one of the officers concerned had a full knowledge of where he would find the enemy, and what he was to do when he found him.

That night no one slept, for until two o'clock in the morning, troops were still being disembarked in the surf, and two ships of war had their searchlights turned on the landing-place, and made Siboney as light as a ball-room. Back of the searchlights was an ocean white with moonlight, and on the shore red camp-fires, at which the half-drowned troops were drying their uniforms, and the Rough Riders, who had just marched in from Baiquiri, were cooking a late supper, or early breakfast of coffee and bacon. Below the former home of the Spanish *comandante*, which General Wheeler had made his headquarters, lay the camp of the Rough Riders, and through it Cuban officers were riding their half-starved ponies, and scattering the ashes of the camp-fires. Below them was the beach and the roaring surf, in which a thousand or so naked men were assisting and impeding the progress shoreward of their comrades, in pontoons and shore boats, which were being hurled at the beach like sleds down a water chute.

It was one of the most weird and remarkable scenes of the war, probably of any war. An army was being landed on an enemy's coast at the dead of night, but with the same cheers and shrieks and laughter that rise from the bathers at Coney Island on a hot Sunday. It was a pandemonium of noises. The men still to be landed from the "prison hulks," as they called the transports, were singing in chorus, the men already on shore were dancing naked around the camp-fires on the beach, or shouting with delight as they plunged into the first bath that had offered in seven days, and those in the launches as they were pitched head-first at the soil of Cuba, signalized their arrival by howls of triumph. On either side rose black overhanging ridges, in the lowland between were white tents and burning fires, and from the ocean came the blazing, dazzling eyes of the search-lights shaming the quiet moonlight.

After three hours' troubled sleep in this tumult the Rough Riders left camp at five in the morning. With the exception of half a dozen officers they were dismounted, and carried their blanket rolls, haversacks, ammunition, and carbines. General Young had already started toward Guasimas the First and Tenth dismounted Cavalry, and according to the agreement of the night

before had taken the eastern trail to our right, while the Rough Riders climbed the steep ridge above Siboney and started toward the rendezvous along the trail to the west, which was on high ground and a half mile to a mile distant from the trail along which General Young and his regulars were marching. There was a valley between us, and the bushes were so thick on both sides of our trail that it was not possible at any time, until we met at Guasimas, to distinguish the other column.

As soon as the Rough Riders had reached the top of the ridge, not twenty minutes after they had left camp, which was the first opportunity that presented itself, Colonel Wood ordered Captain Capron to proceed with his troop in front of the column as an advance guard, and to choose a "point" of five men skilled as scouts and trailers. Still in advance of these he placed two Cuban scouts. The column then continued along the trail in single file. The Cubans were at a distance of two hundred and fifty yards; the "point" of five picked men under Sergeant Byrne and duty-Sergeant Fish followed them at a distance of a hundred yards, and then came Capron's troop of sixty men strung out in single file. No flankers were placed for the reason that the dense undergrowth and the tangle of vines that stretched from the branches of the trees to the bushes below made it a physical impossibility for man or beast to move forward except along the single trail.

Colonel Wood rode at the head of the column, followed by two regular army officers who were members of General Wheeler's staff, a Cuban officer, and Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt. They rode slowly in consideration of the troopers on foot, who under a cruelly hot sun carried heavy burdens. To those who did not have to walk, it was not unlike a hunting excursion in our West; the scenery was beautiful and the view down the valley one of luxuriant peace. Roosevelt had never been in the tropics and Captain McCormick and I were talking back at him over our shoulders and at each other, pointing out unfamiliar trees and birds. Roosevelt thought it looked like a good deer country, as it once was; it reminded McCormick of Southern California; it looked to me like the trails in Central America. We advanced, talking in that fashion and in high spirits, and congratulating ourselves in being shut of the transport and on breathing fine mountain air again, and on the fact that we were on horseback. We agreed it was impossible to appreciate that we were really at war—that we were in the enemy's country. We had been riding in this pleasant fashion for an hour and a half with brief halts for rest, when Wood stopped the head of the column, and rode down the trail to meet Capron, who was coming back. Wood returned immediately, leading his horse, and said to Roosevelt:

"Pass the word back to keep silence in the ranks."

The place at which we had halted was where the trail narrowed, and proceeded sharply downward. There was on one side of it a stout barbed-wire fence of five strands. By some fortunate accident this fence had been cut just where the head of the column halted. On the left of the trail it shut off fields of high grass blocked at every fifty yards with great barricades of undergrowth and tangled trees and chaparral. On the other side of the trail there was not a foot of free ground; the bushes seemed absolutely impenetrable, as indeed they were later found to be.

When we halted, the men sat down beside the trail and chewed the long blades of grass, or fanned the air with their hats. They had no knowledge of the situation such as their leaders possessed, and their only emotion was one of satisfaction at the chance the halt gave them to rest and to shift their packs. Wood again walked down the trail with Capron and disappeared, and one of the officers informed us that the scouts had seen the outposts of the enemy. It did not seem reasonable that the Spaniards, who had failed to attack us when we landed at Baiquiri, would oppose us until they could do so in force, so, personally, I doubted that there were any Spaniards

nearer than Santiago. But we tied our horses to the wire fence, and Capron's troop knelt with carbines at the "Ready," peering into the bushes. We must have waited there, while Wood reconnoitered, for over ten minutes. Then he returned, and began deploying his troops out at either side of the trail. Capron he sent on down the trail itself. G Troop was ordered to beat into the bushes on the right, and K and A were sent over the ridge on which we stood down into the hollow to connect with General Young's column on the opposite side of the valley. F and E Troops were deployed in skirmish-line on the other side of the wire fence.

Wood had discovered the enemy a few hundred yards from where he expected to find him, and so far from being "surprised," he had time, as I have just described, to get five of his troops into position before a shot was fired. The firing, when it came, started suddenly on our right. It sounded so close that—still believing we were acting on a false alarm, and that there were no Spaniards ahead of us—I guessed it was Capron's men firing at random to disclose the enemy's position. I ran after G Troop under Captain Llewellyn, and found them breaking their way through the bushes in the direction from which the volleys came. It was like forcing the walls of a maze. If each trooper had not kept in touch with the man on either hand he would have been lost in the thicket. At one moment the underbrush seemed swarming with our men, and the next, except that you heard the twigs breaking, and heavy breathing or a crash as a vine pulled some one down, there was not a sign of a human being anywhere. In a few minutes we broke through into a little open place in front of a dark curtain of vines, and the men fell on one knee and began returning the fire that came from it.

The enemy's fire was exceedingly heavy, and his aim was excellent. We saw nothing of the Spaniards, except a few on the ridge across the valley. I happened to be the only one present with field glasses, and when I discovered this force on the ridge, and had made sure, by the cockades in their sombreros, that they were Spaniards and not Cubans, I showed them to Roosevelt. He calculated they were five hundred yards from us, and ordered the men to fire on them at that range. Through the two hours of fighting that followed, although men were falling all around us, the Spaniards on the ridge were the only ones that many of us saw. But the fire against us was not more than eighty yards away, and so hot that our men could only lie flat in the grass and return it in that position. It was at this moment that our men believed they were being attacked by Capron's troop, which they imagined must have swung to the right, and having lost its bearings and hearing them advancing through the underbrush, had mistaken them for the enemy. They accordingly ceased firing and began shouting in order to warn Capron that he was shooting at his friends. This is the foundation for the statement that the Rough Riders had fired on each other, which they did not do then or at any other time. Later we examined the relative position of the trail which Capron held, and the position of G Troop, and they were at right angles to one another.

Capron could not possibly have fired into us at any time, unless he had turned directly around in his tracks and aimed up the very trail he had just descended. Advancing, he could no more have hit us than he could have seen us out of the back of his head. When we found many hundred spent cartridges of the Spaniards a hundred yards in front of G Troop's position, the question as to who had fired on us was answered.

It was an exceedingly hot corner. The whole troop was gathered in the little open place blocked by the network of grape-vines and tangled bushes before it. They could not see twenty feet on three sides of them, but on the right hand lay the valley, and across it came the sound of Young's brigade, who were apparently heavily engaged. The enemy's fire was so close that the men could not hear the word of command, and Captain Llewellyn and Lieutenant Greenway,

unable to get their attention, ran among them, batting them with their sombreros to make them cease firing. Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt ran up just then, bringing with him Lieutenant Woodbury Kane and ten troopers from K Troop. Roosevelt lay down in the grass beside Llewellyn and consulted with him eagerly. Kane was smiling with the charming content of a perfectly happy man. When Captain Llewellyn told him his men were not needed, and to rejoin his troop, he led his detail over the edge of the hill on which we lay. As he disappeared below the crest he did not stoop to avoid the bullets, but walked erect, still smiling.

Roosevelt pointed out that it was impossible to advance farther on account of the network of wild grape-vines that masked the Spaniards from us, and that we must cross the trail and make to the left. The shouts the men had raised to warn Capron had established our position to the enemy, and the firing was now fearfully accurate. Sergeant Russell, who in his day had been a colonel on a governor's staff, was killed, and the other sergeant was shot through the wrist. In the space of three minutes nine men were lying on their backs helpless. Before we got away, every third man was killed, or wounded. We drew off slowly to the left, dragging the wounded with us. Owing to the low aim of the enemy, we were forced to move on our knees and crawl. Even then men were hit. One man near me was shot through the head. Returning later to locate the body and identify him, I found that the buzzards had torn off his lips and his eyes. This mutilation by these hideous birds was, without doubt, what Admiral Sampson mistook for the work of the Spaniards, when the bodies of the marines at Guantanamo were found disfigured.

K Troop meantime had deployed into the valley under the fire from the enemy on the ridge. It had been ordered to establish communication with General Young's column, and while advancing and firing on the ridge, Captain Jenkins sent the guidon bearer back to climb the hill and wave his red and white banner where Young's men could see it. The guidon bearer had once run for Congress on the gold ticket in Arizona, and, as some one said, was naturally the man who should have been selected for a forlorn hope. His flag brought him instantly under a heavy fire, but he continued waving it until the Tenth Cavalry on the other side of the valley answered, and the two columns were connected by a skirmish-line composed of K Troop and A, under Captain "Bucky" O'Neill.

G Troop meanwhile had hurried over to the left, and passing through the opening in the wire fence had spread out into open order. It followed down after Captain Luna's troop and D and E Troops, which were well already in advance. Roosevelt ran forward and took command of the extreme left of this line. Wood was walking up and down along it, leading his horse, which he thought might be of use in case he had to move quickly to alter his original formation. His plan, at present, was to spread out his men so that they would join Young on the right, and on the left swing around until they flanked the enemy. K and A Troops had already succeeded in joining hands with Young's column across the valley, and as they were capable of taking care of themselves, Wood was bending his efforts to keep his remaining four companies in a straight line and revolving them around the enemy's "end." It was in no way an easy thing to do. The men were at times wholly hidden from each other, and from him; probably at no one time did he see more than two of his troops together. It was only by the firing that he could tell where his men lay, and that they were always advancing.

The advances were made in quick, desperate rushes—sometimes the ground gained was no more than a man covers in sliding for a base. At other times half a troop would rise and race forward and then burrow deep in the hot grass and fire. On this side of the line there was an occasional glimpse of the enemy. But for a great part of the time the men shot at the places from where the enemy's fire seemed to come, aiming low and answering in steady volleys. The fire

discipline was excellent. The prophets of evil of the Tampa Bay Hotel had foretold that the cowboys would shoot as they chose, and, in the field, would act independently of their officers. As it turned out, the cowboys were the very men who waited most patiently for the officers to give the word of command. At all times the movement was without rest, breathless and fierce, like a cane-rush, or a street fight. After the first three minutes every man had stripped as though for a wrestling match, throwing off all his impedimenta but his cartridge-belt and canteen. Even then the sun handicapped their strength cruelly. The enemy was hidden in the shade of the jungle, while they, for every thicket they gained, had to fight in the open, crawling through grass which was as hot as a steam bath, and with their flesh and clothing torn by thorns and the sword-like blade of the Spanish "bayonet." The glare of the sun was full in their eyes and as fierce as a lime-light.

When G Troop passed on across the trail to the left I stopped at the place where the column had first halted—it had been converted into a dressing station and the wounded of G Troop were left there in the care of the hospital stewards. A tall, gaunt young man with a cross on his arm was just coming back up the trail. His head was bent, and by some surgeon's trick he was carrying a wounded man much heavier than himself across his shoulders. As I stepped out of the trail he raised his head, and smiled and nodded, and left me wondering where I had seen him before, smiling in the same cheery, confident way and moving in that same position. I knew it could not have been under the same conditions, and yet he was certainly associated with another time of excitement and rush and heat. Then I remembered him. As now he had been covered with blood and dirt and perspiration, but then he wore a canvas jacket and the man he carried on his shoulders was trying to hold him back from a white-washed line. And I recognized the young doctor, with the blood bathing his breeches, as "Bob" Church, of Princeton. That was only one of four badly wounded men he carried that day on his shoulders over a half-mile of trail that stretched from the firing-line back to the dressing station and under an unceasing fire. As the senior surgeon was absent he had chief responsibility that day for all the wounded, and that so few of them died is greatly due to this young man who went down into the firing-line and pulled them from it, and bore them out of danger.

The comic paragraphers who wrote of the members of the Knickerbocker Club and the college swells of the Rough Riders and of their imaginary valets and golf clubs, should, in decency, since the fight at Guasimas apologize. For the same spirit that once sent these men down a white-washed field against their opponents' rush line was the spirit that sent Church, Channing, Devereux, Ronalds, Wrenn, Cash, Bull, Lamed, Goodrich, Greenway, Dudley Dean, and a dozen others through the high hot grass at Guasimas, not shouting, as their friends the cowboys did, but each with his mouth tightly shut, with his eyes on the ball, and moving in obedience to the captain's signals.

Judging from the sound, our firing-line now seemed to be half a mile in advance of the place where the head of the column had first halted. This showed that the Spaniards had been driven back at least three hundred yards from their original position. It was impossible to see any of our men in the field, so I ran down the trail with the idea that it would lead me back to the troop I had left when I had stopped at the dressing station. The walk down that trail presented one of the most gruesome pictures of the war. It narrowed as it descended; it was for that reason the enemy had selected that part of it for the attack, and the vines and bushes interlaced so closely above it that the sun could not come through.

The rocks on either side were spattered with blood and the rank grass was matted with it. Blanket rolls, haversacks, carbines, and canteens had been abandoned all along its length. It

looked as though a retreating army had fled along it, rather than that one troop had fought its way through it to the front. Except for the clatter of the land-crabs, those hideous orchid-colored monsters that haunt the places of the dead, and the whistling of the bullets in the trees, the place was as silent as a grave. For the wounded lying along its length were as still as the dead beside them. The noise of the loose stones rolling under my feet brought a hospital steward out of the brush, and he called after me:

“Lieutenant Thomas is badly wounded in here, and we can’t move him. We want to carry him out of the sun some place, where there is shade and a breeze.” Thomas was the first lieutenant of Capron’s troop. He is a young man, large and powerfully built. He was shot through the leg just below the trunk, and I found him lying on a blanket half naked and covered with blood, and with his leg bound in tourniquets made of twigs and pocket-handkerchiefs. It gave one a thrill of awe and wonder to see how these cowboy surgeons, with a stick that one would use to light a pipe and with the gaudy ’kerchiefs they had taken from their necks, were holding death at bay. The young officer was in great pain and tossing and raving wildly. When we gathered up the corners of his blanket and lifted him, he tried to sit upright, and cried out, “You’re taking me to the front, aren’t you? You said you would. They’ve killed my captain—do you understand? They’ve killed Captain Capron. The --- Mexicans! They’ve killed my captain.”

The troopers assured him they were carrying him to the firing-line, but he was not satisfied. We stumbled over the stones and vines, bumping his wounded body against the ground and leaving a black streak in the grass behind us, but it seemed to hurt us more than it did him, for he sat up again clutching at us imploringly with his bloody hands.

“For God’s sake, take me to the front,” he begged. “Do you hear? I order you; damn you, I order—We must give them hell; do you hear? we must give them hell. They’ve killed Capron. They’ve killed my captain.”

The loss of blood at last mercifully silenced him, and when we had reached the trail he had fainted and I left them kneeling around him, their grave boyish faces filled with sympathy and concern.

Only fifty feet from him and farther down the trail I passed his captain, with his body propped against Church’s knee and with his head fallen on the surgeon’s shoulder. Capron was always a handsome, soldierly looking man—some said that he was the most soldierly looking of any of the young officers in the army—and as I saw him then death had given him a great dignity and nobleness. He was only twenty-eight years old, the age when life has just begun, but he rested his head on the surgeon’s shoulder like a man who knew he was already through with it and that, though they might peck and mend at the body, he had received his final orders. His breast and shoulders were bare, and as the surgeon cut the tunic from him the sight of his great chest and the skin, as white as a girl’s, and the black open wound against it made the yellow stripes and the brass insignia on the tunic, strangely mean and tawdry.

Fifty yards farther on, around a turn in the trail, behind a rock, a boy was lying with a bullet wound between his eyes. His chest was heaving with short, hoarse noises which I guessed were due to some muscular action entirely, and that he was virtually dead. I lifted him and gave him some water, but it would not pass through his fixed teeth. In the pocket of his blouse was a New Testament with the name Fielder Dawson, Mo., scribbled in it in pencil. While I was writing it down for identification, a boy as young as himself came from behind me down the trail.

“It is no use,” he said; “the surgeon has seen him; he says he is just the same as dead. He is my bunkie; we only met two weeks ago at San Antonio; but he and me had got to be such

good friends—But there's nothing I can do now." He threw himself down on the rock beside his bunkie, who was still breathing with that hoarse inhuman rattle, and I left them, the one who had been spared looking down helplessly with the tears creeping across his cheeks.

The firing was quite close now, and the trail was no longer filled with blanket rolls and haversacks, nor did pitiful, prostrate figures lie in wait behind each rock. I guessed this must mean that I now was well in advance of the farthest point to which Capron's troop had moved, and I was running forward feeling confident that I must be close on our men, when I saw the body of a sergeant blocking the trail and stretched at full length across it. Its position was a hundred yards in advance of that of any of the others—it was apparently the body of the first man killed. After death the bodies of some men seem to shrink almost instantly within themselves; they become limp and shapeless, and their uniforms hang upon them strangely. But this man, who was a giant in life, remained a giant in death—his very attitude was one of attack; his fists were clinched, his jaw set, and his eyes, which were still human, seemed fixed with resolve. He was dead, but he was not defeated.

And so Hamilton Fish died as he had lived—defiantly, running into the very face of the enemy, standing squarely upright on his legs instead of crouching, as the others called to him to do, until he fell like a column across the trail. "God gives," was the motto on the watch I took from his blouse, and God could not have given him a nobler end; to die, in the fore-front of the first fight of the war, quickly, painlessly, with a bullet through the heart, with his regiment behind him, and facing the enemies of his country.

The line at this time was divided by the trail into two wings. The right wing, composed of K and A Troops, was advancing through the valley, returning the fire from the ridge as it did so, and the left wing, which was much the longer of the two, was swinging around on the enemy's right flank, with its own right resting on the barbed-wire fence. I borrowed a carbine from a wounded man, and joined the remnant of L Troop which was close to the trail.

This troop was then commanded by Second Lieutenant Day, who on account of his conduct that morning and at the battle of San Juan later, when he was shot through the arm, was promoted to be captain of L Troop, or, as it was later officially designated, Capron's troop. He was walking up and down the line as unconcerned as though we were at target practice, and an Irish sergeant, Byrne, was assisting him by keeping up a continuous flow of comments and criticisms that showed the keenest enjoyment of the situation. Byrne was the only man I noticed who seemed to regard the fight as in any way humorous. For at Guasimas, no one had time to be flippant, or to exhibit any signs of braggadocio. It was for all of them, from the moment it started, through the hot, exhausting hour and a half that it lasted, a most serious proposition.

The conditions were exceptional. The men had made a night march the evening before, had been given but three hours' troubled sleep on the wet sand, and had then been marched in full equipment uphill and under a cruelly hot sun, directly into action. And eighty percent of them had never before been under fire. Nor had one man in the regiment ever fired a Krag-Jorgensen carbine until he fired it at a Spaniard, for their arms had been issued to them so soon before sailing that they had only drilled with them without using cartridges. To this handicap was also added the nature of the ground and the fact that our men could not see their opponents. Their own men fell or rolled over on every side, shot down by an invisible enemy, with no one upon whom they could retaliate, with no sign that the attack might not go on indefinitely. Yet they never once took a step backward, but advanced grimly, cleaning a bush or thicket of its occupants before charging it, and securing its cover for themselves, and answering each volley with one that sounded like an echo of the first.

The men were panting for breath; the sweat ran so readily into their eyes that they could not see the sights of their guns; their limbs unused to such exertion after seven days of cramped idleness on the troop-ship, trembled with weakness and the sun blinded and dazzled them; but time after time they rose and staggered forward through the high grass, or beat their way with their carbines against the tangle of vines and creepers. A mile and a half of territory was gained foot by foot in this fashion, the three Spanish positions carried in that distance being marked by the thousands of Mauser cartridges that lay shining and glittering in the grass and behind the barricades of bushes. But this distance had not been gained without many losses, for every one in the regiment was engaged. Even those who, on account of the heat, had dropped out along the trail, as soon as the sound of the fight reached them, came limping to the front—and plunged into the firing-line. It was the only place they could go—there was no other line. With the exception of Church's dressing station and its wounded there were no reserves.

Among the first to be wounded was the correspondent, Edward Marshall, of the *New York Journal*, who was on the firing-line to the left. He was shot through the body near the spine, and when I saw him he was suffering the most terrible agonies, and passing through a succession of convulsions. He nevertheless, in his brief moments of comparative peace, bore himself with the utmost calm, and was so much a soldier to duty that he continued writing his account of the fight until the fight itself was ended. His courage was the admiration of all the troopers, and he was highly commended by Colonel Wood in the official account of the engagement.

Nothing so well illustrated how desperately each man was needed, and how little was his desire to withdraw, as the fact that the wounded lay where they fell until the hospital stewards found them. Their comrades did not use them as an excuse to go to leave the firing-line. I have watched other fights, where the men engaged were quite willing to unselfishly bear the wounded from the zone of danger.

The fight had now lasted an hour, and the line had reached a more open country, with a slight incline upward toward a wood, on the edge of which was a ruined house. This house was a former distillery for *aguardiente*, and was now occupied in force by the enemy. Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt on the far left was moving up his men with the intention of taking this house on the flank; Wood, who was all over the line, had the same objective point in his mind. The troop commanders had a general idea that the distillery was the key to the enemy's position, and were all working in that direction. It was extremely difficult for Wood and Roosevelt to communicate with the captains, and after the first general orders had been given them they relied upon the latter's intelligence to pull them through. I do not suppose Wood, out of the five hundred engaged, saw more than thirty of his men at any one time. When he had passed one troop, except for the noise of its volley firing, it was immediately lost to him in the brush, and it was so with the next.

Still, so excellent was the intelligence of the officers, and so ready the spirit of the men, that they kept an almost perfect alignment, as was shown when the final order came to charge in the open fields. The advance upon the ruined building was made in stubborn, short rushes, sometimes in silence, and sometimes firing as we ran. The order to fire at will was seldom given, the men waiting patiently for the officers' signal, and then answering in volleys. Some of the men who were twice Day's age begged him to let them take the enemy's impromptu fort on the run, but he answered them tolerantly like spoiled children, and held them down until there was a lull in the enemy's fire, when he would lead them forward, always taking the advance himself. By the way they made these rushes, it was easy to tell which men were used to hunting big game

in the West and which were not. The Eastern men broke at the word, and ran for the cover they were directed to take like men trying to get out of the rain, and fell panting on their faces, while the Western trappers and hunters slipped and wriggled through the grass like Indians; dodging from tree trunk to tree trunk, and from one bush to another. They fell into line at the same time with the others, but while doing so they had not once exposed themselves.

Some of the escapes were little short of miraculous. The man on my right, Champneys Marshall, of Washington, had one bullet pass through his sleeve, and another pass through his shirt, where it was pulled close to his spine. The holes where the ball entered and went out again were clearly cut. Another man's skin was slightly burned by three bullets in three distinct lines, as though it had been touched for an instant by the lighted end of a cigar. Greenway was shot through this shirt across the breast, and Roosevelt was so close to one bullet, when it struck a tree, that it filled his eyes and ears with tiny splinters. Major Brodie and Lieutenant Thomas were both wounded within a few feet of Colonel Wood, and his color-sergeant, Wright, who followed close at his heels, was clipped three times in the head and neck, and four bullets passed through the folds of the flag he carried. One trooper, Rowland, of Deming, was shot through the lower ribs; he was ordered by Roosevelt to fall back to the dressing station, but there Church told him there was nothing he could do for him then, and directed him to sit down until he could be taken to the hospital at Siboney. Rowland sat still for a short time, and then remarked restlessly, "I don't seem to be doing much good here," and picking up his carbine, returned to the firing-line. There Roosevelt found him.

"I thought I ordered you to the rear," he demanded.

"Yes, sir, you did," Rowland said, "but there didn't seem to be much doing back there."

After the fight he was sent to Siboney with the rest of the wounded, but two days later he appeared in camp. He had marched from Siboney, a distance of six miles, and uphill all the way, carrying his carbine, canteen, and cartridge-belt.

"I thought you were in hospital," Wood said. "I was," Rowland answered sheepishly, "but I didn't seem to be doing any good there."

They gave him up as hopeless, and he continued his duties and went into the fight of the San Juan hills with the hole still through his ribs. Another cowboy named Heffner, when shot through the body, asked to be propped up against a tree with his canteen and cartridge-belt beside him, and the last his troop saw of him he was seated alone grimly firing over their heads in the direction of the enemy.

Early in the fight I came upon Church attending to a young cowboy, who was shot through the chest. The entrance to his wound was so small that Church could not insert enough of the gauze packing to stop the flow of blood.

"I'm afraid I'll have to make this hole larger," he said to the boy, "or you'll bleed to death."

"All right," the trooper answered, "I guess you know your business." The boy stretched out on his back and lay perfectly quiet while Church, with a pair of curved scissors, cut away the edges of the wound. His patient neither whimpered nor swore, but stared up at the sun in silence. The bullets were falling on every side, and the operation was a hasty one, but the trooper made no comment until Church said, "We'd better get out of this; can you stand being carried?"

"Do you think you can carry me?" the trooper asked.

"Yes."

"Well," exclaimed the boy admiringly, "you certainly know your business!"

Another of the Rough Riders was brought to the dressing station with a shattered ankle, and Church, after bandaging it, gave him his choice of riding down to Siboney on a mule, or of being carried, a day later, on a litter.

“If you think you can manage to ride the mule with that broken foot,” he said, “you can start at once, but if you wait until to-morrow, when I can spare the men, you can be carried all the way.”

The cowboy preferred to start at once, so six hospital stewards lifted him and dropped him on the mule, and into a huge Mexican saddle.

He stuck his wounded ankle into one stirrup, and his untouched one into the other, and gathered up the reins.

“Does it pain you? Can you stand it?” Church asked anxiously. The cowboy turned and smiled down upon him with amused disdain.

“Stand *this*?” he cried. “Why, this is just like getting money from home.”

Toward the last, the firing from the enemy sounded less near, and the bullets passed much higher. Roosevelt, who had picked up a carbine and was firing to give the direction to the others, determined upon a charge. Wood, at the other end of the line, decided at the same time upon the same maneuver. It was called “Wood’s bluff” afterward, for he had nothing to back it with; while to the enemy it looked as though his whole force was but the skirmish-line in advance of a regiment. The Spaniards naturally could not believe that this thin line which suddenly broke out of the bushes and from behind trees and came cheering out into the hot sunlight was the entire fighting force against it. They supposed the regiment was coming close on its heels, and as Spanish troops hate being rushed as a cat hates water, they fired a few parting volleys and broke and ran. The cheering had the same invigorating effect on our own side as a cold shower; it was what first told half the men where the other half were, and it made every individual man feel better. As we knew it was only a bluff, the first cheer was wavering, but the sound of our own voices was so comforting that the second cheer was a howl of triumph.

As it was, the Spaniards thought the Rough Riders had already disregarded all the rules of war.

“When we fired a volley,” one of the prisoners said later, “instead of falling back they came forward. That is not the way to fight, to come closer at every volley.” And so, when instead of retreating on each volley, the Rough Riders rushed at them, cheering and filling the hot air with wild cowboy yells, the dismayed enemy retreated upon Santiago, where he announced he had been attacked by the entire American army.

One of the residents of Santiago asked one of the soldiers if those Americans fought well.

“*Well!*” he replied, “they tried to catch us with their hands!”

I have not attempted to give any account of General Young’s fight on our right, which was equally desperate, and, owing to the courage of the colored troops of the Tenth in storming a ridge, equally worthy of praise. But it has seemed better not to try and tell of anything I did not see, but to limit myself to the work of the Rough Riders, to whom, after all, the victory was due, as it was owing to Colonel Wood’s charge, which took the Spaniards in flank, that General Wheeler and General Young were able to advance, their own stubborn attack in front having failed to dislodge the enemy from his rifle-pits.

According to the statement of the enemy, who had every reason not to exaggerate the size of his own force, 4,000 Spaniards were engaged in this action. The Rough Riders numbered 534, and General Young’s force numbered 464. The American troops accordingly attacked a force over four times their own number entrenched behind rifle-pits and bushes in a mountain pass. In

spite of the smokeless powder used by the Spaniards, which hid their position, the Rough Riders routed them out of it, and drove them back from three different barricades until they made their last stand in the ruined distillery, whence they finally drove them by assault. The eager spirit in which this was accomplished is best described in the Spanish soldier's answer to the inquiring civilian, "They tried to catch us with their hands." The Rough Riders should adopt it as their motto.