

GREAT NAVAL VICTORY.

"Fighting Bob" Evans Graphically Describes the Annihilation of Cervera's Proud Fleet.

The battleship Iowa was the first ship to see the Spanish fleet coming out of the harbor on the morning of July 3. Somebody on the bridge shouted: "What's that black thing coming out of the harbor?" A moment later the Iowa was at general quarters and the signal was hoisted that the enemy ships were coming out. A gun was fired to attract the attention of the fleet at 9:33 a. m. "Fighting Bob" Evans, the commander of the Iowa, was sitting in his cabin, talking to his son, a cadet on the Massachusetts, who, luckily, had been left behind in a picket launch when the Massachusetts went to Guantanamo to coal at dawn.

Capt. Evans' Story.

Capt. Evans' account of the battle as told in the cabin of the Iowa to a correspondent of the Associated Press, is intensely interesting. He said: "At the time 'general quarters' was sounded the engine bell rang full speed ahead, and I put the helm to starboard and the Iowa crossed the bows of the Infanta Maria Teresa, the first ship



"FIGHTING BOB" EVANS.

out. As the Spanish admiral swung to the westward the 12-inch shells from the forward turret of the Iowa seemed to strike him fair in the bow, and the fight was a spectacle. As the squadron came out in column, the ships beautifully spaced as to distance and gradually increasing their speed to thirteen knots, it was superb. The Iowa from this moment kept up a steady fire from her heavy guns, heading all the time to keep the Infanta Maria Teresa on her starboard bow and hoping to ram one of the leading ships. In the meantime the Oregon, Indiana, Brooklyn and Texas were doing excellent work with their heavy guns. In a very short space of time the enemy's ships were all clear of the harbor mouth, and it became evidently impossible for the Iowa to ram either the first or the second ship on account of their speed.

Fighting at 2,000 Yards.

"The range at this time was 2,000 yards from the leading ship. The Iowa's helm was immediately put hard to the starboard and the entire starboard broadside was poured into the Infanta Maria Teresa. The helm was then quickly shifted to port and the ship went across the stern of the Teresa in an effort to head off the Oquendo. All

the time the engines were driving at full speed ahead. A perfect torrent of shells from the enemy passed over the smokestacks and superstructure of the ship, but none struck her. The Cristobal Colon, being much faster than the rest of the Spanish ships, passed rapidly to the front in an effort to escape. In passing the Iowa the Colon placed two 6-inch shells fairly on our starboard bow. One passed through the cofferdam and dispensary, wrecking the latter and bursting on the berth deck, doing considerable damage. The other passed through the side at the water line within the cofferdam, where it still remains.

The Duel with the Oquendo.

"As it was now obviously impossible to ram any of the Spanish ships on account of their superior speed, the Iowa's helm was put to the starboard and she ran on a course parallel with the enemy. Being then abreast of the Almirante Oquendo, at a distance of 1,100 yards, the Iowa's entire battery, including the rapid-fire guns, was opened on Oquendo. The punishment was terrific. Many 12 and 8 inch shells were seen to explode inside of her and smoke came out through her hatches. Twelve-inch shells from the Iowa pierced the Almirante Oquendo at the same moment, one forward and the other aft. The Oquendo seemed to stop her engines for a moment and lost headway, but she immediately resumed her speed and gradually drew ahead of the Iowa and came under the terrific fire of the Oregon and Texas.

Torpedo Boats Sighted.

"At this moment the alarm of 'torpedo boats' was sounded, and two torpedo boat destroyers were discovered in the starboard quarter at a distance of 4,000 yards. Fire was at once opened on them with the after battery and a 12-inch shell cut the stern of one destroyer squarely off. As the shell struck a small torpedo boat fired back at the battleship, sending a shell within a few feet of my head. I said to Executive Officer Rogers: 'That little chap has got a lot of cheek.' Rogers shouted back: 'She shoots very well, all the same.'

Daring of the Gloucester.

"Well up among the advancing cruisers, spitting shots at one and then another, was the little Gloucester, shooting first at a cruiser and then at a torpedo boat, and hitting a head wherever she saw it. The marvel was that she was not destroyed by the rain of shells. In the meantime the Vizcaya was slowly drawing ahead of the Iowa, and for the space of fifteen minutes it was give and take between the two ships. The Vizcaya fired rapidly but wildly, not one shot taking effect on the Iowa, while the shells from the Iowa were tearing great rents in the sides of the Vizcaya. As the latter passed ahead of the Iowa she came under the murderous fire of the Oregon. At this time the Infanta Maria Teresa and the Almirante Oquendo, leading the enemy's column, were seen to be heading for the beach and in flames. The Texas, Oregon, and Iowa pounded them

unmercifully. They ceased to reply to the fire and in a few moments the Spanish cruisers were a mass of flames and on the rocks with their colors down, the Teresa flying a white flag at the fore.

Enemy's Crews Jump Overboard.

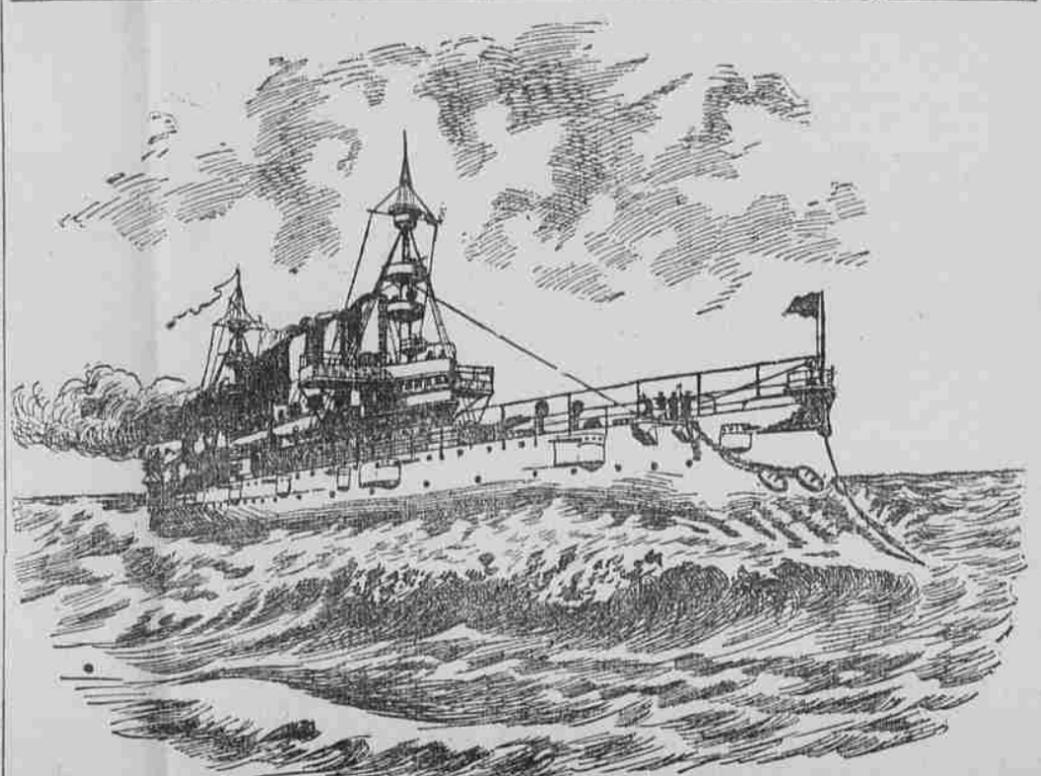
"The crews of the enemy's ships stripped themselves and began jumping overboard, and one of the smaller magazines began to explode. Meantime the Brooklyn and the Cristobal Colon were exchanging compliments in lively fashion at apparently long range, and the Oregon, with her locomotive speed, was hanging well on the Colon, also paying attention to the Vizcaya. The Teresa and the Oquendo were in flames on the beach just twenty minutes after the first shot was fired. Fifty minutes after the first shot was fired the Vizcaya put her helm to port with a great burst of flame from the afterpart of the ship, and headed slow-

many bodies by the sharks inside the reef. These creatures had become excited by the blood from the wounded mixing in the water. My boat's crew worked manfully and succeeded in saving many of the wounded from the burning ship. One man, who will be recommended for promotion, clambered up the side of the Vizcaya and saved three men from burning to death. The smaller magazines of the Vizcaya were exploding with magnificent cloud effects. The boats were coming alongside in a steady string and willing hands were helping the lacerated Spanish officers and sailors onto the Iowa's quarter-deck. All the Spaniards were absolutely without clothes. Some had their legs torn off by fragments of shells. Others were mutilated in every conceivable way.

Blood Deep in the Boats.

"The bottoms of the boats held two or three inches of blood. In many cas-

I found the Gloucester, with Admiral Cervera and a number of his officers aboard, and also a large number of wounded, some in a frightfully mangled condition. Many prisoners had been killed on shore by the fire of the Cubans. The Harvard came off and I requested Capt. Cotton to go in and take off the crews of the Infanta Maria Teresa and the Almirante Oquendo and by midnight the Harvard had 976 prisoners aboard, a great number of them wounded. For courage and dash there is no parallel in history to the action of the Spanish admiral. He came, as he knew, to absolute destruction. He knew, to absolute destruction. There was one single hope—that was that the Cristobal Colon would steam faster than the Brooklyn. The spectacle of two torpedo boat destroyers, paper shells at best, deliberately steaming out in broad daylight in the face of the fire of a battleship can be described in



THE BATTLESHIP IOWA.

ly for the rocks at Acceradores, where she found her last resting place. As it was apparent that the Iowa could not possibly catch the Cristobal Colon, and that the Oregon and Brooklyn undoubtedly would, and as the fast New York was also in her trail, I decided that the calls of humanity should be answered and attention given to the twelve or fifteen hundred Spanish officers and men who had struck their colors to the American squadron commanded by Admiral Sampson.

Saving the Beaten Spaniards.

"I therefore headed for the wreck of the Vizcaya, now burning furiously fore and aft. When I was in as far as the depth of water would admit I lowered all my boats and sent them at once to the assistance of the unfortunate men, who were being drowned by dozens or roasted on the decks. I soon discovered that the insurgent Cubans from the shore were shooting on men who were struggling in the water after having surrendered to us. I immediately put a stop to this, but I could not put a stop to the mutilation of

es dead men were lying in the blood. Five poor chaps died on the way to the ship. They were afterward buried with military honors from the Iowa. Some examples of heroism, or more properly devotion to discipline and duty, could never be surpassed. One man on the lost Vizcaya had his left arm almost shot off just below the shoulder. The fragments were hanging by a small piece of skin. But he climbed unassisted over the side and saluted as if on a visit of ceremony. Immediately after him came a strong-hearted sailor whose left leg had been shot off above the knee. He was hoisted on board the Iowa with a tackle, but never a whimper came from him. Gradually the mangled bodies and naked well men accumulated until it would have been almost difficult to recognize the Iowa as a United States battleship. Blood was all over her usually white quarter-deck, and 272 naked men were being supplied with water and food by those who a few minutes before had been using a rapid-fire battery on them.

Receiving Capt. Eulate.

"Finally came the boats with Capt. Eulate, commander of the Vizcaya, for whom a chair was lowered over the side, as he was evidently wounded. The captain's guard of marines was drawn up on the quarterdeck to salute him, and I stood waiting to welcome him. As the chair was placed on the deck the marines presented arms. Capt. Eulate slowly raised himself in the chair, saluted me with grave dignity, unbuckled his swordbelt and, holding the hilt of the sword before him, kissed it reverently, with tears in his eyes, and then surrendered it to me. Of course I declined to receive his sword, and as the crew of the Iowa saw this they cheered like wild men. As I started to take Capt. Eulate into the cabin to let the doctors examine his wounds the magazines on board the Vizcaya exploded with a tremendous burst of flame. Capt. Eulate, extending his hands, said: 'Adios, Vizcaya. There goes my beautiful ship, captain!' And so we passed on to the cabin, where the doctors dressed his three wounds. In the meantime thirty officers of the Vizcaya had been picked up, beside 272 of her crew. Our wardroom and stateroom officers gave up their staterooms and furnished food, clothing and tobacco to those naked officers from the Vizcaya. The paymaster issued uniforms to the naked sailors, and each was given all the corned beef, coffee and hardtack he could eat. The war had assumed another aspect.

Found Cervera on the Gloucester.

"As I knew the crews of the first two ships wrecked had not been visited by any of our vessels, I ran down to them,

one way—it was Spanish, and it was ordered by Blanco. The same must be said of the entire movement. In contrast to this Spanish fashion was the cool, deliberate Yankee work. The American squadron was without sentiment, apparently. The ships went at their Spanish opponents and literally tore them to pieces. But the moment the Spanish flag came down it must have been evident that the sentiment was among the Americans, not among the Spaniards.

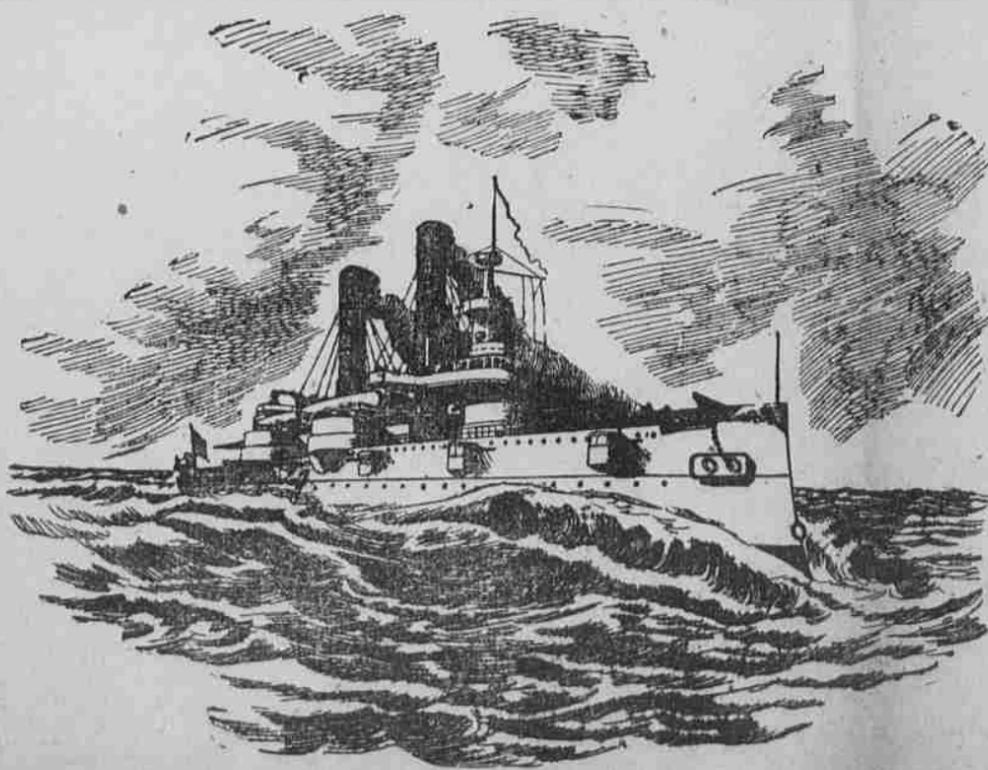
High Praise for Cervera.

"I took Admiral Cervera aboard the Iowa from the Gloucester, which had rescued him from the dead, and received him with a full admiral's guard. The crew of the Iowa crowded aft over the turrets, half-naked and black with powder, as Cervera stepped over the side bare-headed. Over his undershirt he wore a thin suit of flannel, borrowed from Lieutenant-Commander Wainwright of the Gloucester. The crew cheered vociferously. Cervera is every inch an admiral, even if he had not any hat. He submitted to the fortunes of war with a grace that proclaimed him a thoroughbred."

Capt. Evans is intensely proud of his ship and her men. The Iowa fired thirty-one 12-inch, forty-eight 8-inch, 270 4-inch, 1,060, 6-pound, and 126 1-pound shots.

Fearful Havoc on the Vizcaya.

The officers of the Vizcaya said they simply could not hold their crews at the guns on account of the rapid fire poured upon them. The decks were flooded with water from the fire hose and blood from the wounded made this a dark red. Fragments of bodies floated in this along the gun deck. Every instant the crack of exploding shells told of new havoc. One of the 12-inch shells from the Iowa exploded a torpedo in the Vizcaya's bow, blowing twenty-one men against the deck above and dropping them dead and mangled into the fire which at once started below. The torpedo boat Ericsson was sent by the flagship to the help of the Iowa in the rescue of the Vizcaya's crew. Her men saw a terrible sight. The flames leaping out from the huge shot holes in the Vizcaya's sides licked up the decks, sizzling the flesh of the wounded who were lying there striking for help. Between the frequent explosions there came awful cries and groans from the men pinned in below. This carnage was chiefly due to the rapidity of the American's fire. The Spaniards say that no torpedo boats ever came out to attack Admiral Sampson's fleet. The Pluton and Terror, they say, kept guard every night inside the harbor.



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