

## FLETCHER GIVES DETAILS OF FIGHT.

Tell the Navy Department Just How the Port of Vera Cruz Was Captured.

Washington, June 6.—Read Admiral Fletcher's own story of the occupation of Vera Cruz is told in the first detailed report of the Navy's operations on the east coast of Mexico made public today by the Navy Department. The report tells of Admiral Fletcher's receipt of the historic cablegram early in the morning of April 21 ordering him to seize the Vera Cruz customs house; of the swift descent of marines and bluejackets from the American warships upon the port and the bloody fighting that occurred when they met with resistance from the Mexican Federal soldiers and irregulars.

The Admiral refers particularly to the work of the cruisers Prairie, Chester and San Francisco which moored inside the breakwater, covered successive landings of marines and the bluejackets.

Initiative and clear judgment was required on the part of the commanding officers," said the report, "and the results showed in a striking manner the efficiency of the ships under their commands." The three vessels were under charge of Commanders Moffett, Stickney and Harrison.

The report is full follows: "When the cablegram of 8 a. m. April 21, to seize the custom house was received, the following officers were in my cabin.

Captain W. R. Rush, U. S. Navy, commanding naval brigade.

Captain H. McL. P. Huse, U. S. Navy, chief of staff.

Commander H. O. Stickney, U. S. Navy, commanding Prairie.

Lieutenant Colonel W. C. Neville, U. S. M. C., commanding marine regiment.

They had been called on board to be informed of the situation and to assure me that the plans previously prepared for the employment of the naval forces against Vera Cruz were understood by them, and that they were prepared to carry them out. The method of procedure adopted was to land marines from the Prairie, Florida and Utah, and the seaman battalion from the Florida, seize the custom house, railway terminal and cable office. The seaman battalion of the Utah was held on board awaiting news of the "Ypiranga."

Commander Stickney and Lieutenant Colonel Neville returned to the Prairie and at 9 a. m. Commander Stickney went ashore and personally notified the American Consul that we would land in charge of the custom house, directed him to notify all foreign consuls, and send all foreigners aboard the War Line "Mexico" which was at Pier No. 4 and the "Esperanza" (the port) in the harbor. General Maas, the Mexican military commandant, was notified by telephone from the Consulate that we would land at once to take charge of the custom house and he was urged to offer no resistance but to withdraw in order to avoid useless loss of life and property of the people of Vera Cruz.

At 9:40 a. m. an officer from the Prairie boarded the foreign men-of-war in the harbor, Carlos V. (Spanish) and Essex (British) and notified them of our intended action.

An officer from the Prairie visited the Fort at San Juan d' Ulloa, informed the commander that we would seize the custom house and that any aggressive move on his part would be immediately followed by our opening fire with heavy guns on the fort. The commander of the fort said that he understood the situation but if we opened fire he would return it. He had 160 regular troops who had charge of the prisoners.

The War Line "Mexico" with foreigners on board pulled away from Pier No. 4 and anchored in the outer harbor. Commander Cone of the Utah, after anchoring his vessel at 9:40 a. m., came on board. Cone reported his landing force ready and waiting for any service and returned to his ship.

At 10:39 a. m. the Prairie reported "Am Ready" and I directed Captain Rush to land his brigade and carry out orders. The following sig-

nal was sent to the Prairie at 10:50 a. m., "Land and Take Pier No. 4 be prepared to cover landing by necessary gun-fire." At 11:45 the Prairie signalled, "Battalion has shoved off." The landing force of the Florida shoved off at the same time and were joined by the Panama contingent of Marines from the Utah. This made a total of 187 officers and men of whom 502 were marines, all under the command of Captain William R. Rush, U. S. Navy, captain of the Florida. At 11:50 a. m. the Prairie signalled, "Battalion has landed, no evidence of any resistance thus far." At 11:45 a. m. signal was received from the Consulate, "Cable Station O. K." and this meant that the cable station was in possession of our forces on shore and that communication with Washington was assured. At 11:50 a. m. signal was received from Captain Rush on shore that headquarters had been established at the Hotel Terminal and signal station set up there. At 11:55 a. m. Rush signalled, "Telegraph and postoffice occupied and doing business as ever." This was followed by "Firing in town; no casualties yet," and at 12:21 p. m. "Commenced firing on shore; Federals have commenced firing on U. S. Troops." Again at 12:30 p. m. Rush signalled "One thousand men with machine guns reported in this vicinity; desultory firing heavy at intervals; hurry Utah's troops." I signalled Utah: "Send your battalion ashore; urgent; you may steam in closer." At 12:41 p. m. Rush reported his first casualties.

Immediately on landing the marine regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Neville advanced up Calle de Montezinos, seizing cable office and detaching one company to seize the power plant north of the terminal station and to cover approaches from the westward along railroad tracks. The head of the marine column had advanced to Avenida Bravo when at 11:57 a. m. they were fired into from all directions. The marines Colt automatic guns went into action at Independencia, Cinco de Mayo, Cortes, Hidalgo and Bravo, and cleared these streets immediately. The men took positions in front of the warehouses, lining the north side of Montezinos and fired at the enemy who had occupied the houses, shops, windows and towers on the opposite side of the street. The marine regiment was then ordered not to advance but to hold original position.

In the meantime the Florida seaman battalion, under Lieutenant Wright had advanced and seized the custom house and custom warehouse, postoffice and railroad terminal. They were under steady fire from the enemy in houses on Benito Juarez and Morales streets, which was returned. The artillery section of the Florida went into action in front of the American consulate and shelled the enemy out of the old lighthouse tower on Benito Juarez street. When the first report of casualties was received, the Signal was ordered from Tampico to Vera Cruz by radio.

At 1 p. m. I repaired aboard the Prairie with Captain Huse and Lieutenant Courts of my staff and from this point directed joint operations ashore and afloat. The Prairie opened fire at 1:10 p. m. with three inch guns on the enemy's mounted troops in the sandhills beyond the city. Indirect fire was used with a church tower as a point of aim, range 2,500 to 3,000 yards. The second shot fell among the troops and drove them beyond the sandhills.

Sharpshooters in the Naval School Building and the New Market had been firing steadily on Pier No. 4 where all of our boats were landing. Chief Boatswain McCloy, in charge of three picket launches armed with one-pounder guns put out from Pier No. 4 and steamed full speed around the end of Fiscal Pier directly toward the Naval School Building. When within a few hundred yards, the launches opened fire simultaneously with one-pounders at the windows of the Naval Academy. They thus drew the fire of the Mexican forces along that section of the waterfront but located their positions on the Prairie who immediately opened fire with 2-inch battery over the heads of the launches, silencing the fire of the Mexicans in that section of the city. The picket launches in their gallant dash were hit many times with rifle

bullets and three times with one-pounder shell from the Naval Academy. Chief Boatswain McCloy was wounded in the leg and one was fatally wounded.

The brigade signal station on top of the Terminal Hotel was exposed to the fire of the Mexicans from all directions. The signal squad under Ensign McDonnell remained at their posts during the 24 hours fighting and though three of the seven signalmen were shot while wig-wagging messages, communication between brigade headquarters and the Prairie was never interrupted.

3 p. m.—I did not desire to force the fighting through the city and use the guns of the ships as long as there existed a reasonable chance to avoid this severe measure. Every effort was being made to get into communication with the Mexican authorities, both direct and through the American consul, and to represent to them the futility of further resistance on their part and the serious consequences that would ensue. My chief of staff, Captain Huse, in conjunction with the American consul, Mr. Canada, endeavored until 5 o'clock to get into communication with any authorities in control, but their efforts were unavailing. Any further advance at this time of the day would have brought the fighting into the most densely populated part of the city after nightfall. It was therefore decided to hold our present position and in case of unforeseen contingencies the heavy warehouses on Pier No. 4 could be securely held.

At 5 p. m. an officer was again sent to Fort San Juan d' Ulloa to inform the commanding officer that there must be no sort of military movement in the fort during the night and that no one would be allowed to leave the fort. The commanding officer agreed to this arrangement and promised to remain neutral.

A Mexican naval officer from the naval station in Ulloa came on board the Prairie about 9 p. m. He had served in the Spanish Navy and was on board the Don Juan de Austria at the Battle of Manila. He requested in the name of the commandant that about three hundred navy yard workmen and sailors be allowed to leave the station and join the forces under General Maas. The practical difficulty of allowing this was pointed out to him and he was told to inform the commandant that the matter would be taken up as soon as order was established in the city.

The Florida was ordered to sweep the entrance of the harbor inside the breakwater for mines with wires reported leading to Ulloa and before the dragging was completed the San Francisco and Chester entered the harbor during the night. Investigation and aeroplane observations subsequently proved that there were no mines in the harbor.

At 7 p. m. the following radio was sent to flag officer Arkansas:

"Will hold pier No. 4 for the night. Desultory street firing continues. You should be prepared to land infantry battalions and artillery immediately on arrival under cover of darkness. Captain Huse or myself will repair to board on your arrival to advise you of the situation."

"FLETCHER."

Depultery firing continued until midnight with occasional shots during the night. The dead and wounded were sent on board the Prairie and the medical officers of the Carlos V. and the Essex came aboard and offered their services which were gratefully accepted.

Reports were received that the enemy were preparing to attack with artillery during the night and the Utah and Florida anchored outside the breakwater were directed to be prepared to use turret guns and searchlights if ordered. The Prairie kept searchlights trained on points along shore from which sniping had occurred during the day.

At 6 p. m. the San Francisco entered the harbor and anchored 300 yards north of the Prairie. She immediately landed her battalion of two seaman companies which reported to Bridge Commander on shore. The Chester entered the harbor at 12:05 a. m. April 22, and anchored off Sanidad Pier. Her battalion of seaman and marines were landed immediately. At 1 a. m. censorship was es-

tablished over the cable station.

Rear Admiral Badger with five battleships of his fleet came to anchor in the outer harbor, and with Mr. Huse, Chief of Staff, I repaired on board the flagship at 2:45 a. m. After explaining the situation to the admiral, he decided to land his forces and the seaman and marine battalions of the Arkansas, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Michigan and New Jersey, landed at 4 a. m., under cover of darkness and promptly moved to their assigned positions joining the organization on shore.

## THE FINAL ADVANCE.

Early in the morning of the 22nd, efforts to get in communication with the authorities were renewed. By 8 o'clock it was definitely ascertained that the firing of the enemy was not under organized control or acting under the direction of competent authority and the following instructions were issued:

Brigade Commander,  
U. S. Naval Forces,  
Vera Cruz, Mexico.

Subject: Re-advancing and taking possession of the city of Vera Cruz.

1 All efforts to get in touch with responsible authorities on shore have failed and efforts have been fruitless to have the authorities stop firing.

2 I am well informed that the regular troops have withdrawn and the people now firing are irresponsible people under no control or authority.

3 You will advance in your discretion, and suppress this desultory firing, taking possession of the city and restore order respecting as much as possible the hotels and other places where foreigners are lodged.

4 You are cautioned against the possible use by the enemy of machine guns and artillery.

(Signed) F. F. Fletcher.

At 8:50 a. m. Rush signalled: "Advance begun. Please shell military positions."

(Signed) Rush.

The marine forces advanced through all streets to the north of Avenida Independencia where they were met with heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from houses, hotels, hospitals, church steeples and military barracks. They advanced slowly—clearing houses and roofs of the snipers and entering every house in every block as they advanced.

The seaman forces advanced to the south along the waterfront, clearing and protecting the left flank of the marines as they advanced south. The advance of the seamen was opposed by a continuous and concealed rifle fire difficult to locate. It came principally from Benito Juarez curiel Plaza Constitution, the Naval Academy, artillery barracks and from the roofs and windows of houses in this section of the city along the waterfront.

The second seaman regiment under Captain Anderson, U. S. Navy, was marched toward the waterfront and in front of the New Market, Naval School and artillery barracks. In crossing the open ground between the Naval School and the Benito Juarez lighthouse, about 550 yards in width, they were met by a heavy rifle one-pounder and machine gun fire from the Naval School building. This situation looked critical. The Chester, Prairie and San Francisco simultaneously opened fire with 3-in, 4-in and 5-in batteries against the second story of Naval School building. In a short time the upper story was riddled by 40 shots and the fire silenced.

Our forces advanced steadily through the city, enter houses from which they were being fired upon and disarming the occupants. The Chester from a favorable position commanding the southern part of the city, shelled the enemy out of houses along the waterfront, old Fort Santiago and from the vicinity of the military barracks. By 11 a. m. our forces were in complete possession of all parts of the city and fighting had practically ceased.

The following signal was sent to the cruisers, Chester, Prairie, San Francisco and to Brigade Headquarters on shore:

"The Division Commander desires

to express his appreciation and admiration for the splendid and efficient work of the naval brigade in the capture of the city of Vera Cruz and the efficient support given them by the cruisers in the harbor reflect a great credit on the accuracy of fire of their gunners.

(Signed) Fletcher.

The Atlantic fleet under command of Rear Admiral Badger approached the harbor of Vera Cruz on the night of the 21st at full speed all ready to land and came to anchor in the outer harbor several hours ahead of the expected time. I am not to commend my superior officer, but I think it only proper allowed to say in this report that Rear Admiral Badger during the naval operations on shore at Vera Cruz afforded me the most prompt and willing assistance, and my slightest request or recommendation or call for aid was in all cases met with immediate compliance, and it is a great pleasure for me to record the thoroughly fine and generous spirit that was shown by him and his staff in their hearty support of the work on

## WORK OF CRUISERS PRAIRIE CHESTER AND SAN FRANCISCO.

The Prairie remained moored in the inner harbor with steam up in a position to cover the landing of troops and control the waterfront in vicinity of the Consulate between Pier No. 4 and Sanitary Pier at the lighthouse. During the afternoon of the 21st the Prairie had occasion to silence the firing coming from the Naval Academy, the Market building nearby, from a barge alongside the custom house wharf, and from a small frame house near Sanitary Pier. This was done by a few well-aimed shots from the 3-inch guns and a Colt's automatic which riddled the frame structure.

At 3 p. m. the San Francisco was directed by radio to enter the inner harbor and was warned against rifle fire from the breakwater at the entrance and alongshore. She came in at 9 p. m. without pilot or the assistance of navigational lights, anchored near the Prairie and shifted berth to the moorings assigned, receiving a signal, "Well Done."

The Chester arrived from Tampico 12 midnight the 21st. She entered harbor with all lights screened and cleared for action, with marines stationed along the deck for rifle fire. She promptly took up moorings in assigned positions off Sanitary Pier and was signalled, "Well Done." Both commanding officers reported on board Prairie, received instructions as to disposition of our forces and general instructions relative to gun fire from their ships. It was not deemed to cause any more destruction of property than was necessary to protect our men ashore, and buildings were to be fired upon only when it was ascertained that they were being used by the Mexicans as defensive positions from which they directed fire upon our troops. This plan was most effectively and efficiently carried out by the commanding officers of all three ships and not a building was fired in unnecessarily.

The Chester was moored inshore nearest to the fighting and at day-break rifle firing was directed from small tugs and barges near No. 3 breakwater. This was returned with rifle fire, but had to be silenced by a 3-inch gun. Later firing from a number of points in this section of the city was located and both 3-inch and 5-inch guns of the Chester had to be used to silence it.

Soon after the final advance of the landing force into the city, which commenced about 8:30 a. m. on the 22nd, the Second Regiment consisting of the battalions of the New Hampshire, South Carolina, Vermont and New Jersey, marched across the open space between the lighthouse and the Naval Academy passing to the southward. When our men met with a heavy fire most of them dropped on the ground, or against lower walls of the Naval School and instantly the guns of the Chester, Prairie and San Francisco opened fire. The firing was very accurate, directly over the heads of our men, and in a short space of time the whole second of this building, about 500 feet front was a wreck, not a shot missing its mark. The work of these three

vessels, Chester, Commander Moffett, Prairie Commander Stickney, San Francisco Commander Harrison, in supporting our troops on shore was most effective and is deserving special praise. Initiative and clear judgment was required on the part of the commanding officers and the results showed in a striking manner the efficiency of the ships under their commands. The Chester being in the most forward position did most of the firing and received a greater number of hits. The San Francisco and Prairie were hit by rifle fire many times, over a hundred shots hit the Chester. Two men on the Chester and one on the Prairie were wounded.

The Esperanza, in charge of Lieutenant Fletcher, lying between the Chester and Prairie was struck 31 times and one man of the crew slightly wounded. All refugees were placed in a position safety and none were injured."

## Spanish Police Would Protect Theodore Roosevelt.

Madrid, June 8.—Theodore Roosevelt arrived at Madrid today to attend the wedding of his son, Kermit Roosevelt, and Miss Belle Wyatt Willard, daughter of the American Ambassador to Spain.

A small crowd gathered at the station. Police in plain clothes were distributed about the depot as a result of the publication of several newspaper articles antagonistic to Colonel Roosevelt. The chief of police had feared the possibility of unfriendly feeling being displayed but none was shown.

There was an affectionate greeting between Colonel Roosevelt, his son, Kermit and his daughter, Mrs. Nicholas Longworth. Colonel J. E. Willard, the American Ambassador, and members of the embassy staff, and Senor Mendez, the Spanish under-Secretary of State, also were at the Station to meet Colonel Roosevelt. He was driven to the American embassy.

King Alphonso traveled on the same train for some distance with Colonel Roosevelt, but as each was unaware of the presence of the other there was no meeting.

The King will not be present at the wedding ceremony, but it is said he will probably meet Colonel Roosevelt on Wednesday.

## Political Debate in the House Saturday.

Washington, June 6.—The House ran the gamut of political and governmental controversy today in the general debate on the sundry civil appropriation bill.

Representative Mondell, Republican, of Wyoming, charged the Democrats with extravagance, declaring an apparent reduction of some \$30,000,000 in the bill was due to arbitrary cutting off of appropriations needed in the latter half of the next fiscal year.

Representative Gillette, of Massachusetts, attacked "political appointments" of the administration.

In the course of the discussion Chairman Fitzgerald, of the Appropriation committee, read a letter from President Wilson relating to the Panama Commission. Republican leader Mann immediately called attention to the house rule requiring the President and departments heads to address all official communications to the speaker. "These secret and personal communications from the President and members of the cabinet to chairmen of the committees of this house are one of the grossest abuses of the present conduct of the government," said Mr. Mann.

Representative Rainey, of Illinois, spent more than an hour in an effort to show the House that importations of Argentine corn, on the free list in the Underwood tariff law, are not a menace to American corn producers.

The truth the wise men sought  
Was spoken by a child;  
The alabaster box was brought  
In trembling hands defiled.  
Not from my torch, the gleam,  
But from the stars above;  
Not from my heart life's crystal stream  
But from the depths of love.

—Henry Van Dyke.

The office shows the man.—Motto of Earl Lonsdale.

POOR