

The LURE of PERIL

Creelman's Courage on the Firing Line.

By Captain Fritz Duquesne.

THERE is no better known name in this country than that of James Creelman, and none more widely known in newspaper and literary circles east and west of the meridian of Greenwich, and north and south of the equator.

For what is he known? Ask, and no two men will give you the same answer. The New Yorker of the last generation knows James Creelman as the young newspaperman who was a terror to the grafters; the exposé of the great Broadway railroad fraud; the man whose articles caused the United States to reform its immigration laws; the man who stopped the garbage dumpers from polluting the New York Harbor; who practically became the public prosecutor in the columns of the paper he was writing for. Not only was the garbage dumping stopped, but the dumpers were punished.

The Westerner knows James Creelman as the man who followed the Sioux war. In Italy he is known as the first man to interview the Pope. In London they know him as the correspondent of half a dozen newspapers. In Paris, Monsieur James Creelman is known as the man who established a reputation for the European New York Herald. In Russia he is known as the friend of the great Tolstoy, with whom he once lived. In Mexico he is the personal friend and biographer of President Diaz. In Cuba he is known as the man who placed the responsibilities of the massacres of the natives right at Blucher Weyer's door. Americans remember that James Creelman led the charge of the soldiers at El Caney during the Spanish-American war. The State department knows him as a trusted servant of the republic. Most of the world's people remember him as the American war correspondent who, at the risk of his life, exposed the atrocities of the Japanese soldiers during their war against the Chinese. Everyone who was old enough to read remembers what a sensation the Creelman articles caused at the time, and what a cry of horrified protest rose in the civilized world against the cruelties of the Japanese who massacred, every man, woman and child in Port Arthur after the town had surrendered to them.

A few months ago James Creelman resigned the editorship of a leading magazine to become a Commissioner of Education of New York, and to get enough time to finish his biography of President Diaz of Mexico, which will also be a history of Mexico's development under the guiding brain of the great ruler.

James Creelman started his life without any education to speak of, but that handicap was no obstacle to him. It merely gave an outlet to his volcanic mental and physical energy. He educated himself, taught himself a couple of languages, and the most difficult profession known, that of writing for, running and editing a newspaper, and all before he was twenty-seven. He is not yet beyond middle age, and the above are only a few of the things he has accomplished, a selection of incidents from the busy life of America's most versatile journalist.

James Creelman, despite his vast attainments is very conservative in his friendships, and it is only a favored few that are on intimate terms enough with him to enter his home. Home it is, and more; it is a repository of one of the finest collections of antiques, art, and curiosities that have been gotten together in the United States. From the collar to the attic, in every corner and every inch of wall space are crowded highly valued treasures, every one of which has a history, and most of which came into the possession of their present owner through some strange happening or some weird adventure. Marbles and bronzes from Pompeii, jewels from the prehistoric graves of Mexico, treasure chests from the royal palace of Corea, uniforms and weapons from the battlefield of Ping Yang, swords, tapestries, masterpieces, ancient and modern armor, ancient bronze cannon, and photograph photographs from the world's great men, rugs from Persian treasure houses, carpets from European palaces, everything from everywhere, and each precious piece with its enchanting history. One can hardly imagine a man who has led such an active life, roaming the world with warring armies, editing newspapers, fighting for the country against unfair treaties, and writing

books, finding time to gather such a treasure.

Ask James Creelman to tell of some of his hair-breadth escapes. "Look here, now," he'll answer, "I've past that age; I am interested in the more serious things of life. I am interested in writing my life of President Diaz for D. Appleton & Co., and the problem of educating the mighty army of New York children."

One glance around the study, with its well-worn, almost worn out, volumes, from the Encyclopedia Britannica to the last masterpiece of Rostand, tells one it is a hopeless task to draw the

the fort. We also found that we were a mile in advance of our own lines, but we felt pretty sure that there was no danger of a sortie to capture us, because the enemy was not likely to leave the works to capture three men while waiting for a whole division.

Gradually the sound of infantry firing broke on the air in our rear and spread all over the country. Away to the left we could see the artillery of our center flashing, and part of a brigade fighting its way through the trees and bushes. Slowly the lines of Chaffee's brigade moved from ridge to ridge behind us, swinging further and further to the right, and keeping up a continuous fire as they approached the Spanish lines. In front of the fort, which bore the Spanish flag, there was a trench, from which the Spaniards kept up a steady fire, and some of the fire was directed toward us, so that we had to lie on our faces to make as small a target as possible. In front of the trench there was a barbed wire fence about five feet high, which extended at a distance of about thirty feet all round

great war correspondent out of his studious preoccupation to the dangers of the many bloody battlefields on which he has been the eye witness of civilization, if he has not taken an active part, as he did at El Caney, of which he was the hero.

What made Creelman face death times out of number? His duty to his paper did not call for that. True, the ambition of the correspondent is to get a beat, but he is hardly likely to get anything else but a bullet when leading an attack, as Creelman did at El Caney, armed with a formidable lead pencil. Was it duty that made him assume the responsibilities of a United States officer, and rush the Spanish fort, or was it the lure of peril?

Creelman refuses to talk adventure, so to get this story it was necessary to explore the pigeonholes of a London newspaper office, where this fragment of his adventurous life is stored: I chose to be with the right wing of our army before Santiago, because I was assured by General Shafter, the commanding general, that the center and left wings would not be seriously engaged until another day. The right wing, Lawton's division, containing Chaffee's brigade, was to occupy the extreme right of our whole line, and was to attack the foot of El Caney at daybreak. I had already been outside our lines scouting and examining the Spanish entrenchments. For days I never knew what it was to have dry clothes on, so great was my desire to understand clearly the nature of the action that was about to occur. I knew from the isolated locality of El Caney that the right wing would be practically independent of the rest of the army, and a very desperate engagement might be expected there. From a newspaper point of view, the scene at El Caney, with our infantry closing on the stone fort, entrenchments and blockhouses, was likely to be the supreme spectacle of the battle of Santiago.

I had no horse and had to go on foot. At three o'clock on the morning of the battle, before it was daylight, I left headquarters alone for the front.

they had been attacking. When Captain Walsh had placed his men on the hilltop, I lay down in the firing line with the men. I was the only non-combatant in the line and when our men were wounded I assisted in bandaging them. The heat of the sun was almost unbearable. The Spaniards fought like heroes. Both sides were using smokeless powder, and that made the game additionally dangerous and mysterious. Captain Walsh was finally convinced that he had silenced the trench and the fort, for he could see no movement in either, but still the "ping ping" of bullets continued. Captain Walsh told me that he feared that a part of another American brigade had moved up to the other side of the hill on which the fort stood, and that our men were being killed by American bullets. I tried to persuade the captain to make a charge up the hill and try to take the fort and the flag. Having twice crept down the hillside, I had got a close view of the slope ascending to the fort, and had seen a sort of wrinkle up which our troops might steal until they were close enough to make a short rush. The captain agreed with me that it was a very reasonable plan, but pointed to the half empty ammunition belts of his men and shook his head.

I moved off to the right, where the number of Spaniards alive on the hill. Then I suggested a charge and offered to show the troops, if he sent them, a safe way up the hill. The general sent infantry to investigate and in a few minutes Company F of the Twelfth was making a reconnaissance. I descended to a little mango grove at the foot of the hill from which the rush was to be made. Just as I got there Company F started up the wrong side of the hill—that is, the side towards the village, and not the side we had been firing upon. Almost immediately the soldiers came shrieking down the hill, some of them wounded. They had encountered the main fire of the enemy from the breastworks in front of Chaffee's position. I talked to Captain Clark who commanded the company, and told him of my plan, but he was not very enthusiastic about it. I sat down under a mango tree with the soldiers and jotted down some notes of my story. We were at that time in the very vortex of the cross fire. The bark was chipped from the trees by the storm of bullets. The sound was like the cry of wild animals in agony.

At this juncture Captain Haskell, acting adjutant of the battalion to which Company F belonged, came down to where I was—a fine old even-tempered, clear-eyed veteran. I told him that I thought the fort could

as nearly as I could, an estimate of the taken without the loss of a life by a charge on the wrinkled side of the hill. He promptly accepted my offer to lead the way and ordered Company F and part of another company to follow me. I stepped through the line of bushes, followed by Captain Haskell and the troops, and started up the hill. The troops came on slowly, and when I found myself actually out on the clear, escarped slope leading up to the trench, where even a mouse could not hide itself, I walked fast. I could see the lines of soldiers on all sides watching the ascent. Gradually I got away from our line, so that by the time I was within twenty feet of the barbed wire fence I was at least two hundred feet ahead of Captain Haskell and his men. I was absolutely alone. I stopped for a moment and examined the fort and trench, only a few feet from me, and whilst I stood there I could hear my heart beating like a hammer on an anvil.

For the first time I realized my danger, any instant might see my death. With a supreme effort I hung off my fear. I turned around and, making a scissors-like motion of my fingers, indicated to Captain Haskell that I wanted men with wire cutters. He hurried forward two gallant fellows who, without a word, obeyed my signals and cut the fence down. It took but a few seconds to do this, and I stepped through the fence and walked up to the trench, standing on the edge and looking into it. The trench was filled with dead and dying men. Those who were unhurt were crouching down waiting for the end. I made a signal to one of the privates who had cut the wire fence to advance and cover the men in the trench with his rifle, and when he had done it I ordered the Spaniards, who had not even looked at me, to stand up and surrender. They leaped up at once and dropped their rifles. I must say it took a little of the glory out of my work

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the fort, intended to arrest any charge.

The Spaniards began to fire from the loopholes of the fort and the breastworks to the right kept up a heavy rain of bullets from Mauser and Remington repeaters. Our men moved on closer and took up a fixed position, the Twelfth infantry regiment moving against the torts by separate companies, operating independently, under the personal direction of General Chaffee, lying on a ridge immediately in front of the main breastworks thrown up before the village.

After several hours of firing, I left the hill and found Company C of the Twelfth regiment in a roadway pouring a deadly fire against the trench in front of the fort. I induced Captain Walsh, who commanded, to bring his company up the hill where I had been standing which commanded the trench and the fort and its trench, and gave him,

and Seventeenth regiments. My purpose was to let him know what had been going on, and it possible to ascertain whether our troops had been under fire from their comrades on the other side of the hill. When I reached General Chaffee I found the two regiments lying on their faces, hard at work with their rifles, while the Spaniards were keeping up a terrific fire. Scores of wounded lay on the field, while here and there was one man. The only man standing was General Chaffee, who raged up and down behind his men, swearing and urging on the fight. I never saw a finer soldier, and never a more warlike face. His eyes seemed to flash fire as he stormed up and down the line. While I was talking to him a bullet clipped a button from his breast. He smiled in a half-startled, half-amused way. I was so exhausted by this time that I could hardly stand up, and when I sat down in the shadow of a tree General Chaffee joined me for a few moments. I told him how close I had been to the fort and its trench, and gave him,

the number of Spaniards alive on the hill. Then I suggested a charge and offered to show the troops, if he sent them, a safe way up the hill. The general sent infantry to investigate and in a few minutes Company F of the Twelfth was making a reconnaissance. I descended to a little mango grove at the foot of the hill from which the rush was to be made. Just as I got there Company F started up the wrong side of the hill—that is, the side towards the village, and not the side we had been firing upon. Almost immediately the soldiers came shrieking down the hill, some of them wounded. They had encountered the main fire of the enemy from the breastworks in front of Chaffee's position. I talked to Captain Clark who commanded the company, and told him of my plan, but he was not very enthusiastic about it. I sat down under a mango tree with the soldiers and jotted down some notes of my story. We were at that time in the very vortex of the cross fire. The bark was chipped from the trees by the storm of bullets. The sound was like the cry of wild animals in agony.

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Cutting the Barbed Entanglement at El Caney.