

to our horror, in looking over the stern of our ship, one of those little monsters of the ocean was discovered fastened to our rudder. It had slipped upon us like a thief in the night, and was, at a moment's notice, ready to blow us into eternity. How, or when it got there was a mystery. What was to be done, nobody knew; we were in a "Dickens" or some other author of a fix. When, out of the darkness, from an unseen source, close at hand, came the questions from Starboard and Port, "What ship is that?" God of heaven be praised, it was in good American-English, and the response, in a rather weak and tremolo voice, "Hospital Ship *Solace*," was met by a repetition of the demand, to which we replied with a little more confidence. Then, out of the darkness, the form of a vessel began to be visible, and the commander of the *Detroit* ordered us to "Lay too." The cruiser lost its form, and upon looking over our stern, nothing but blue water was visible. The little devil of a torpedo-boat had disappeared, when? where? and we were apparently alone once more on the bosom of the briny deep, but consciously surrounded by friends and countrymen—what a relief.

There is one incident that I wish to relate in this connection. While the excitement was at its height, one of our party was seen to jump out of his bunk and leave his state-room with all the haste at his command, not even stopping for any clothing, but down the protected gangway he ran with the speed of a deer and disappeared down one of the coal holes to the bunkers below. I wish you could have seen him upon his next appearance—a living picture in black and white. Of course, he had excuses in plenty for his actions, and we had our surmises. I will not say if he is one of our present party or not.

The next morning, one of the first vessels to approach us was an ocean tug, the one that towed the torpedo-boat *Winslow* from under the guns of the forts at Cardenas. The captain informed us that they had been to San Juan, Porto Rico, looking for the Spanish Admiral; but as he had given them the slip, they concluded to give the Spaniards in the town and forts "something for breakfast, so we fed them on good American shells." As you well know, there were some casualties on our side during this bombardment. Here our mission as nurses first began. The few sick and wounded were brought to us in small boats, hoisted on board, and placed in their bunks, after having their wounds dressed and otherwise attended to.

We distributed oranges, lemons, delicacies of different kinds, books, medical stores, pyjamas, slippers, and many other little comforts of life

to the different vessels, with which our ship had been laden by good and true American women.

Then we returned to Key West, leaving our sick and wounded in the Naval hospital there, and proceeded along the coast of Cuba, picking up the sick or wounded from the different vessels on blockade, and distributing the good things as before.

We at last anchored in Guantanamo Bay, where we lay for some time, coaling ship and making other necessary preparations for a homeward voyage. Marines who were wounded while skirmishing with the Spaniards on shore around Camp McCalla, were brought on board every day for treatment. We could see most of the fighting, through glasses from the rigging of the ship, where we would occasionally hear the singing of a stray bullet. During one of the battles, about six miles inland, some thirty Spaniards had been captured, a company of Cubans were detailed to conduct them to Camp McCalla as prisoners of war; but all the Cubans had, when they arrived at the Camp, was the accoutrements and some of the clothing of their captives. When asked what they had done with their prisoners, they pointed to the woods.

Before leaving the bay, we saw the *Oregon* and *Texas* bombard the fort at Camanera, four miles distant. Suffice it to say, the fort was totally demolished. When we got ready to leave, many of the sick and wounded who had been treated on the *Solace* were ready for duty again. There were many hearty hand-shakes, wet eyes, and a "God bless you" on board the boat that day, as we bid good-bye to the gallant boys in blue.

I remember one instance in which an elderly Cuban carried a wounded young man on his back eight miles through the mountains to bring him to the "Ice-cream ship," as they called the *Solace*.

On our way back to the States, we stopped at Key West and took all the sick and wounded from the hospitals, carrying them North.

We made five such trips between the States, Cuba, and Porto-Rico, carrying both Army and Navy patients, leaving them at Norfolk, New York, and Boston. After the patients were all transferred, the ship was thoroughly cleaned and the operating-room fumigated. During our trips to the front we prepared all our own dressings, bandages, wipes, splints, etc., etc., necessary for the next load of patients. Although the *Solace* was strictly a Naval vessel, she transported the Army sick and wounded as well. In this connection I wish to say that the United States had a number of Army hospital ships, with a corps of both male and female nurses on board. The Navy had but one, the *Solace*, with a corps of male nurses only, and we are proud of the fact

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