

ACROSS THE PACIFIC ON A GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT.

IT was an occasion of great rejoicing to the recruits of the Second Oregon when they received their final orders to sail for Manila. During all the Summer of 1898 they had been held in San Francisco, awaiting the pleasure of the War Department, and they had almost given up hope of going, when word was received for them to join their comrades on the other side of the Pacific.

October 17 was the day set for their departure, and when they embarked at San Francisco on the transport Senator, in company with a part of the Twenty-third Regular Infantry, they felt that it was one of the most eventful moments of their lives.

Upon their arrival at the pier where the Senator was to sail a lunch was served the boys by the ladies of the Red Cross Society. After this was disposed of they were marched on board the vessel, and in a little while the moorings were cast off, the great propellers began to revolve and the steamer backed out into the bay. Then, as she turned her bow toward the Golden Gate and started on her long voyage, the soldiers set up wild cheers, while the crowd on shore waved their handkerchiefs in farewell.

The steam whistles in the factories and workshops of the city took a noisy part in the demonstration until the vessel was lost to view. It was with mixed feelings of pleasure and regret that the boys watched their old home at the Presidio disappear from sight, and then they turned their attention to getting located in their new quarters.

Getting Settled.

It took considerable time to get everyone assigned to his proper berth, and when at last this was accomplished it was getting dark and but a faint outline of the hilly coast was to be seen.

The passengers consisted of about 300 recruits of the Second Oregon Volunteers, one battery of California heavy artillery and one battalion of the Twenty-third Regular Infantry—about 800 men in all. With the exception of the officers and a few "non-coms," who were assigned to staterooms, the command was quartered in large apartments. The rows of berths were two and three tiers high, and were separated by narrow alleys, just wide enough for a person to walk through comfortably without coming in contact with the sides.

During the first night out the sea became rough, and the next morning the quarters of the troops looked more like a hospital than anything else. There was an epidemic of seasickness, and the few who escaped an attack seemed amused by the sight presented by their less fortunate comrades. It was several days before the majority of the men recovered their usual good health, and some did not entirely regain their normal condition during the voyage.

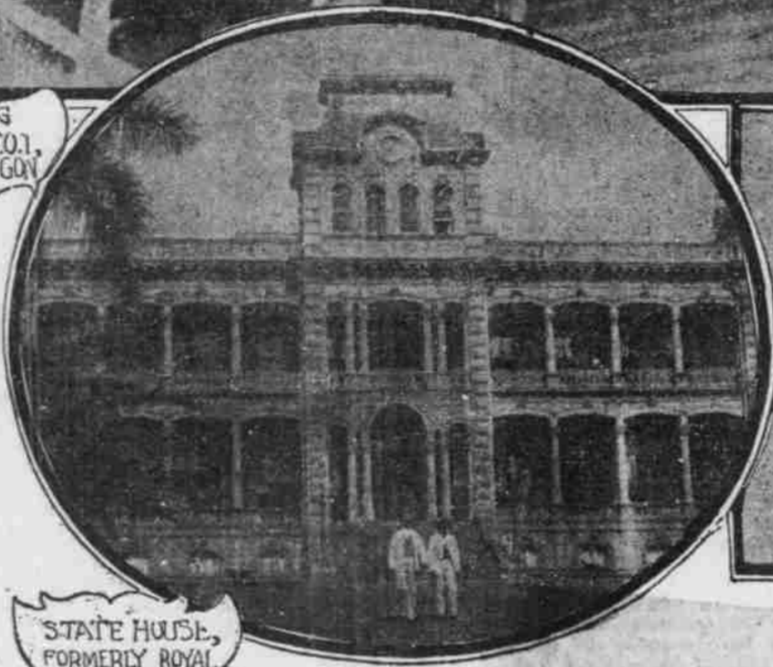
The otherwise good health of the soldiers was due to a close observance of sanitary rules. The military regulations required that the quarters should be constantly kept in a clean condition. To ascertain that this was done a daily inspection was held by the commanding officer, the officer of the day and a doctor. When the time arrived for the inspection the bugle gave the warning, and every soldier proceeded at once to his berth. When the inspecting officers entered the apartment he stood at attention and quietly received any criticisms that were made concerning his personal appearance and that of his bed and equipment.

In Tropic Seas.

Nearly seven days had passed after our departure from San Francisco when we crossed the Tropic of Cancer and sailed



THANKSGIVING DINNER, 1898, CO. 1, 2ND OREGON



STATE HOUSE, FORMERLY ROYAL PALACE, HONOLULU

under the blue skies of the torrid zone. As a protection against the rays of the sun large canvas awnings were stretched over the decks. Under their inviting shade the men would gather in little groups and pass the time in telling stories, playing cards or reading.

On the evening of the seventh day it was announced that the next morning would find us in sight of land, and, sure enough, with the break of day, the outlines of a mountain were visible off our port bow. The sailors said this was the island of Moloai, where the unfortunate Hawaiian lepers are sent to pass the remainder of their lives in pain and solitude.

Between 9 and 10 o'clock of the same morning the rugged top of a distant mountain appeared on our starboard quarter. This proved to be Diamond Head, an old crater on Oahu, and, on sailing around its headlands, we came in sight of the picturesque harbor and city of Honolulu. Space cannot be given here to a description of this "garden spot of the Pacific," but during our eight days' stay there we became much impressed with its romantic beauty, its tropical verdure and the hospitality of its people. It was with real regret that, on the first day of November, we resumed our voyage toward the "land of the setting sun."

At Honolulu we were joined by the transport Valencia, containing a part of the First Washington Volunteers. The Valencia was the flagship of our little fleet of two vessels, and communication was kept up between it and the Senator by means of the Signal Corps, after we had got to sea again.

Life on board the transport became very tiresome at times. The unchanging waste of waters in every direction, the heat and the lack of sufficient exercise all combined to make time hang heavily on our hands.

The first event out of the ordinary occurred when we were in midocean. It

was the death of a sailor who had drunk too much ice water when overheated. His funeral was pathetic.

With a bag of sand at his feet, his body was sewed in salicotti, and then, with the American flag spread over it, it lay in state for several hours. At 10 o'clock A. M. the Senator slowed down and finally came to a standstill. The body was placed on two boards, which rested at one end on the rail of the ship, and at the other on tall benches.

With bared heads, the soldiers and sailors crowded the upper decks, while the chaplain of the Twenty-third Infantry conducted the services. When the ceremony was completed one of the ship's officers stepped forward and removed the flag. Then, with a sharp knife, he cut holes in the canvas near the upper end of the body, that the water might easily enter.

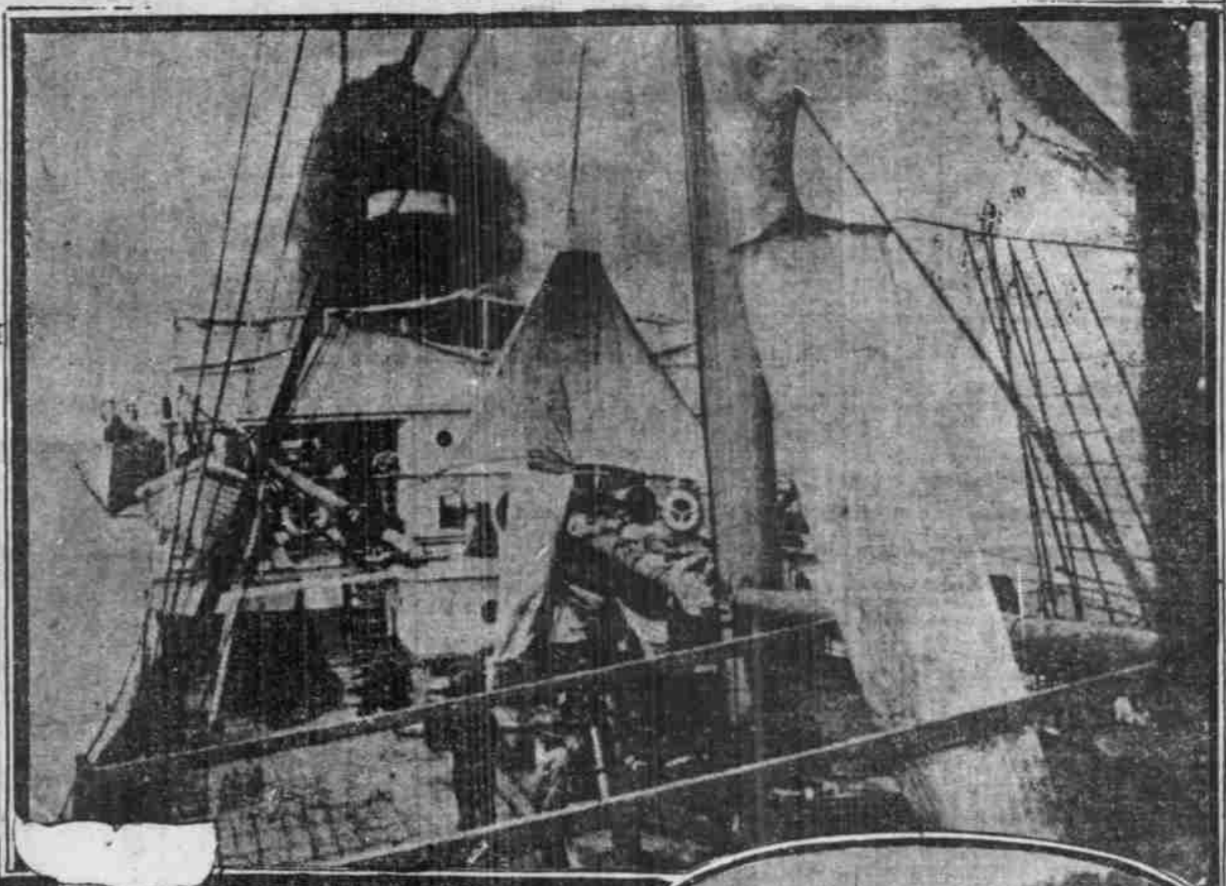
Two sailors now picked up the ends of the boards that lay on the benches, and the corpse suddenly slipped off the incline, fell foremost, into the green waters below. There was just a great splash,

as the water closed over the white object, which slowly disappeared far down in the clear depths of the ocean.

That was all; and as the propeller again sent the ship swiftly on her course it was with a feeling of sadness that we took a last look back at the spot where one human being had departed from the sight of his fellowmen forever. The moist eyes of some of the more reckless characters aboard showed that even they had been impressed by the solemnity of the occasion.

It was about this time that we crossed the 180th meridian and thereby lost a day from the calendar. Nearly every school-boy knows that it is at the 180th meridian that the new day starts and the old one ends. It was about noon when we crossed the line, and thus, properly speaking, our morning was of a Sunday, while our afternoon was Monday—that is, we jumped ahead 24 hours in our reckoning of time. On our return voyage we had two days of the same date—two July 3ds.

But the most interesting event of the



TRANSPORT SENATOR, OCEAN.

voyage was the sight of a volcano in action. It was on the most northern of the Ladrone Islands—an isolated mountain 3400 feet high.

It was about 4 o'clock in the morning, when everybody was awakened to get a sight of this wonderful phenomenon of nature. The volcano was then directly off our port beam, and, in the semi-darkness, its outlines could plainly be seen, a radiant light gleaming from its top and extending, seemingly, about 400 or 500 feet into the air. The light did not flicker or change in the least, but retained a steady glow that was reflected on the clouds beyond.

The imagination can scarcely picture the grandeur of the scene. The stately mountain peak, the tall column of light appearing in relief, against the clouds and darkness of the background, and, then, the immense volume of smoke rolling away with the breeze—all these combined to form a picture that a lover of nature could never forget. Long after the sun had risen, the volcano was still in view, and it was watched with interest until its smoking summit faded from sight on the distant horizon.

After this, the days passed with their usual monotony until the evening before we entered the China Sea, when we expe-

rienced a very severe storm. Previous to this, the weather had been good, but now we had come almost in contact with one of those dreaded typhoons so common in those waters.

A Rough Night.

As evening approached, the sky darkened and the wind steadily grew stronger until the strong iron vessel was trembling and creaking with the force of the gale. Then the rain began to fall in torrents. Occasionally some monster wave would sweep over the decks, and to prevent the water from going below, the hatches had to be fastened down. During the night, the soldiers, with but few exceptions, were seasick, but by morning the storm had abated somewhat, and they were generally able to be about.

When at last the storm cleared wholly away, all on board were delighted to see, on our port side, a beautiful island, clothed in tropic verdure and dotted here and there with the queer huts of its natives. We were told that this was Luzon, and then we knew that our long and irksome voyage was nearly at an end. All that day and the next we sailed on the China Sea along the western coast of that beautiful island, and just at evening, on the second day, we entered Ma-

nilla Bay. As we passed Corridor, the little island at the mouth of the bay, we observed the revolving lights of the lighthouse that adorns its highest point.

All was excitement now on board the Senator. The men crowded the upper decks and climbed the rigging to get a first sight of the lights of Manila. The officer of the day ordered them down, but, a little later, the order was revoked and again the rigging was crowded with men.

There was a great stir when a man who had climbed to a high point called out: "There she is! There she is!" His quick eye had been the first to see a twinkling light that appeared over the curvature of waters, directly in front of us.

Then another and another light appeared, until they seemed like a string of glittering diamonds. Our boys could restrain their emotions no longer, and cheer after cheer broke the stillness of the evening and went echoing over the placid bay.

At the Destination.

It was about 8 o'clock when the vessel came to a standstill just off the shore near Manila. Around us, on every hand, gleamed the lights of many vessels, and the searchlights of many of the warships were thrown on us, as if to question our identity.

A lovely spectacle greeted our eyes, when we arose the next morning. Before us lay Manila, with her ancient walls, tall churches and green suburban districts. On our left, on a projecting strip of land, lay Cavite, and between the two cities the bay was dotted with various ships at anchor, among them being the American men-of-war composing Dewey's famous fleet. Orders were given that every man should be vaccinated before leaving the ship, and for this reason we were detained on board the vessel for three days.

On Thanksgiving day we went ashore. We were marched directly to the Courtes de Espana, where the Second Oregon was then quartered, and in the pretty little courtyard that lies between the barracks houses, we were lined up, while Colonel Summers delivered a speech of welcome. The boys who had come over before us were as overjoyed at our arrival as we, and greeted us with cheers. They had prepared for the occasion a bountiful Thanksgiving dinner, and a scene of more real pleasure is seldom witnessed than was that reception at Manila of the recruits of the Second Oregon Volunteers. LIONEL A. JOHNSON.

ENGLAND'S BOER PRISONERS, in Far-off Ceylon.

NEW YORK, June 28.—On my way home from the scene of the Boer troubles in China, I stopped over in Ceylon, Diyalatalawa, in interior Ceylon, 160 miles from the great seaport city of Colombo. I found 400 Boer prisoners of war. Six hundred more arrived at Colombo while I was there and they were sent over the government railway to join the others. Among the prisoners were about 300 American citizens, principally from the West and South.

When one is so far away from home, it does the heart good to meet an American. You are not particular about what state he is from; it is enough that he is an American, and you immediately begin talking about the good things of the United States and comparing them with the unfavorable conditions you have found in other countries. But for Americans held as prisoners of war in an alien land, how must it seem to meet a fellow-citizen?

Those 300 Americans, British captives, in far-off Ceylon, half way around the world, were in a particularly favorable mood for talking of America, of home, of "God's country," when I conversed with them. But it was pathetic to hear them talk, although they were men of stout hearts. They had gone to the Transvaal to assist the people of that little republic in what they deemed a just cause, and some of them had left wives and children behind, scantily provided for.

The Americans.

I said to some of these American-Boer prisoners, at Diyalatalawa: "You are fortunate, in one sense, to be prisoners, for you are alive and have hope, at some time, of returning to home and country, but many of your comrades have found death on the African veldt."

One of two ventured to say that they were disappointed that the United States did not come to the assistance of the Boers.

"When will we ever get home?" impatiently asked another. The British citizens of Ceylon assert that these Americans joined the Boer army from a love of adventure, the same as they would go tiger-hunting, more than for anything else, and that their concern for the Boer cause was secondary.

The Boer prisoners are a vigorous, but untidy looking lot. The British require them to take frequent baths. They left South Africa with clothes that they had worn for months through the fierce cam-

paign, and their captors had a problem on their hands to fit them out with absolutely necessary clothing. The steamship voyage from South Africa to Ceylon occupies about 15 days, and the prisoners suffered greatly for clothing en route, which could not be provided until Ceylon was reached.

The Prison Camp.

The prison camp covers quite a large area in the mountains, and has good natural drainage. The location is about 3500 feet above sea level, and, being in the

tropical zone, affords, on account of its altitude, one of the most perfect climates in the world. The camp is inclosed by a series of high, barbed-wire fences, separated from each other by distances of several feet. The British garrison, of about 1000 soldiers, overlooks the entire camp.

Fed by Cable.

The food for the prisoners, is sent to them by a wire cable overhead. It is plain, but substantial. The prisoners receive far better treatment than they ex-

pected. They are supplied with ebony, saffron, rose, sapan, iron, jack and other beautiful woods indigenous to Ceylon, and which are very beautiful there, and out of which they are permitted to make fancy penholders and ornamental pieces of various kinds, which they sell to residents and travelers. The carving keeps the time and minds of the prisoners occupied, and thus makes discipline easier.

Tried to Escape.

While I was there, one prisoner tried to escape through the fences. He paid

no heed to the sentry's order to halt, given three times, and was shot. He died from the effects of the wound in a few days. The sentry was arrested and tried by court-martial, several witnesses among the prisoners being present. The verdict was that he had simply performed his duty.

The British officials are magnanimous and just with their prisoners. The Boer officers of higher rank are given their freedom and are not confined to the camp at all. Some of them live at the most expensive hotels. It is necessary for

them to report to the British officers twice a week.

There are three prominent Boer Generals held as prisoners in Ceylon, namely, Olivier, Plessis and Roux. The latter was one of the leading preachers of the Dutch Reformed church in the Transvaal, and is very religious. He is permitted to hold services, and he often preaches fervent sermons, in the Dutch language, to his fellow-prisoners at the camp. He speaks English very well, and has preached several times at other places.

I heard him make an address before the Y. M. C. A., at Colombo, on a Sunday afternoon. Announcements had been made in the local press, and the hall was crowded to overflowing. No doubt many of the English people expected he would make mention of the war, but he studiously avoided that subject. He exhorted his hearers to a better and higher life, and reminded them of the shortness of our stay on this earth. He also spoke of the selfishness of men and of nations. There was no bitterness in his words; it was an earnest appeal of a deeply religious man to his hearers.

Enjoys Himself.

General Plessis spends his time with his wife, bicycling about the most fascinating of all towns in the tropics—Kandy, the great resort and show place of Ceylon, nearly 100 miles nearer Colombo than the prison camp. Here is Buddha's tooth on exhibition, as well as the alleged footprints of Adam. Mount Adams, the highest peak of Ceylon, is in plain view. The British residents of Ceylon complain that the government is giving the Boer officers better treatment than they deserve. But the government is wise in giving these prisoners the best of treatment, at such a great distance from the seat of war. Great Britain is feeding nearly 5000 prisoners of war in Ceylon, and about as many more on the Island of St. Helena, in the South Atlantic Ocean, one-third of the way from South Africa to South America. But it has found it cheaper to feed and clothe them than to keep them. J. MARTIN MILLER.

CAMP OF BOER PRISONERS, ON THE ISLAND OF CEYLON, BRITISH EAST INDIES.



—From a photograph by J. Martin Miller.