

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### President Roosevelt in the Battle of San Juan—Story of Brave Exploits—Narrow Escape—Ballad of "Teddy's Terrors."

THE part acted by President Roosevelt in our war with Spain gave him great prominence and showed the sterling characteristics of the man. General Wheeler's official account of the first battle at Santiago officially known as the battle of Siboney, or La Quasina, thus refers to the famous Rough Rider:

"Colonel Wood's regiment was on the extreme left of the line and too far distant for me to be a personal witness of the individual conduct of the officers and men; but the magnificent bravery shown by the regiment under the lead of Colonel Wood testifies to his courage and skill and the energy and determination of his officers, which have been marked from the moment he reported to me at Tampa, Fla., and I have abundant evidence of his brave and good conduct on the field, and I recommend him for the consideration of the Government. I must rely upon his report to do justice to his officers and men, but I desire personally to add that all I have said regarding Colonel Wood applies equally to Colonel Roosevelt.

"I was immediately with the troops of the First and Tenth Regular Cavalry, dismounted, and I personally noticed their brave and good conduct, which will be specially mentioned by General Young."

"There must have been nearly fifteen hundred Spaniards in front and to the sides of us," said Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt just after the fight. "They held the ridges with the rifle pits and machine guns, and hid a body of men in ambush in the thick jungle at the sides of the road over which we were advancing. Our advance guard struck the men in ambush and drove them out. But they lost Captain Capron, Lieutenant Thomas and about fifteen men killed or wounded.

"The Spanish firing was accurate, so accurate indeed that it surprised me, and their firing was fearfully heavy. I want to say a word for our own men," continued Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt. "Every officer and man did his duty up to the handle. Not a man flinched."

From another officer who took a prominent part in the fighting, more details were obtained. "When the firing began," said he, "Lieutenant-Colonel Roosevelt took the right wing with Troops G and K, under Captains Llewelyn and Jenkins, and moved to the support of Captain Capron, who was getting it hard. At the same time Colonel Wood and Major Brodie took the left wing and advanced in open order on the Spanish right wing. Major Brodie was wounded before the troops had advanced one hundred yards. Colonel Wood then took the right wing and shifted Colonel Roosevelt to the left.

#### "WITH A YELL, THE MEN SPRANG FORWARD."

"In the meantime the fire of the Spaniards had increased in volume, but, notwithstanding this, an order for a general charge was given, and with a yell the men sprang forward. Colonel Roosevelt, in front of his men, snatched a rifle and ammunition belt from a wounded soldier, and cheering and yelling with his men, led the advance. In a moment the bullets were singing like a swarm of bees all around them, and every instant some poor fellow went down. On the right wing Captain McClintock had his leg broken by a bullet from a machine gun, while four of his men went down. At the same time Captain Luna, of Troop F, lost nine of his men. Then the reserves, Troops K and E, were ordered up.

"There was no more hesitation. Colonel Wood, with the right wing, charged straight at a block-house eight hundred yards away, and Colonel Roosevelt on the left, charged at the same time. Up the men went, yelling like fiends and never stopping to return the fire of the Spaniards, but keeping on with a grim determination to capture the block-house.

"That charge was the end. When within five hundred yards



of the coveted point the Spaniards broke and ran, and for the first time we had the pleasure, which the Spaniards had been experiencing all through the engagement, of shooting with the enemy in sight."

Said an officer of high rank: "I cannot speak too highly of Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. He is every inch a fighter, and led a charge of dismounted cavalry against men in pits at San Juan successfully. It was a wonderful charge, and showed Roosevelt's grit. I was not there, but I have been told of it repeatedly by those who saw the Colonel on the hill.

Two reports made by Colonel Theodore Roosevelt to his superior officer in front of Santiago in July were given out by the War Department at Washington, December 22, 1898. Both reports describe the operations of the Rough Riders in the battle of San Juan, the second telling a much fuller story.

#### THE BRAVE TROOPERS.

In his first report, dated July 4th, he mentions by name many of the troopers who distinguished themselves by their bravery. This part of the report, which was made by Roosevelt, as lieutenant-colonel in charge of the regiment, to Colonel Wood, temporarily in charge of the brigade, was as follows:

"We went into the fight about four hundred and ninety strong. Eighty-six were killed or wounded and there are half a dozen missing. The great heat prostrated nearly forty men, some of them among the best in the regiment. Besides Captain O'Neill and Lieutenant Haskell, who were killed, Lieutenants Leahy, Devereaux and Case were wounded. All behaved with great gallantry. As for Captain O'Neill, his loss is one of the severest that could have befallen the regiment. He was a man of cool head, great executive ability and literally dauntless courage.

"To attempt to give a list of the men who showed signal valor would necessitate sending in an almost complete roster of the regiment. Many of the cases which I mention stand merely as examples of the rest, not as exceptions.

"Captain Jenkins acted as Major and showed such conspicuous gallantry and efficiency that I earnestly hope he may be promoted to major as soon as a vacancy occurs. Captains Lewellen, Muller and Luna led their troops throughout the charges, handling them admirably. At the end of the battle Lieutenants Kane, Greenwood and Goodrich were in charge of their troops immediately under my eye, and I wish particularly to commend their conduct throughout.

"But the most conspicuous gallantry was shown by Trooper Rowland. He was wounded in the side in our first fight, but kept in the firing line. He was sent to the hospital the next day, but left it and marched out to us, overtaking us, and fought all through this battle with such indifference to danger that I was forced again and again to restrain and threaten him for running needless risks.

#### CLIMBED A WIRE FENCE.

"Great gallantry was also shown by four troopers whom I cannot identify and by Trooper Winslow Clark, of Troop G. It was after we had taken the first hill. I had called out to rush the second, and having by that time lost my horse, climbed a wire fence and started toward it.

"After going a couple of hundred yards under a heavy fire, I found that no one else had come. As I discovered later, it was simply because in the confusion, with men shooting and being shot, they had not noticed me start. I told the five men to wait a moment, as it might be misunderstood if we all ran back, while I ran back and started the regiment, and as soon as I did so the regiment came with a rush.

"But meanwhile the five men coolly lay down in the open, returning the fire from the trenches. It is to be wondered at that only Clark was seriously wounded, and he called out, as we passed again, to lay his canteen where he could reach it, but to continue the charge and leave him where he was. All the wounded had to be left until after the fight, for we could spare no men from the firing line.

Very respectfully,

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT"



The second and more important report was addressed to Brigadier General Wood, and dated Camp Hamilton, near Santiago, July 20th. It was as follows:

"SIR—In obedience to your directions I herewith report on the operations of my regiment from the 1st to the 17th inst., inclusive

"As I have already made you two reports about the first day's operations, I shall pass over them rather briefly.

"On the morning of the first day my regiment was formed at the head of the second brigade, by the El Paso sugar mill. When the batteries opened the Spaniards replied to us with shrapnel, which killed and wounded several of the men of my regiment. We then marched towards the right, and my regiment crossed the ford before the balloon came down there and attracted the fire of the enemy, so at that point we lost no one. My orders had been to march forward until I joined General Lawton's right wing, but after going about three-quarters of a mile, I was halted and told to remain in reserve near the creek by a deep lane.

#### A SHOWER OF BULLETS.

"The bullets dropped thick among us for the next hour while we lay there, and many of my men were killed or wounded. Among the former was Captain O'Neill, whose loss was a very heavy blow to the regiment, for he was a singularly gallant and efficient officer. Acting Lieutenant Haskell was also shot at this time. He showed the utmost courage and had been of great use during the fighting and marching. It seems to me some action should be taken about him.

"You then sent me word to move forward in support of the regular cavalry, and I advanced the regiment in column of companies, each company deployed as skirmishers. We moved through several skirmish lines of the regiment ahead of us, as it seemed to me our only chance was in rushing the intrenchments in front instead of firing at them from a distance.

"Accordingly we charged the blockhouse and entrenchments on the hill to our right against a heavy fire. It was taken in

good style, the men of my regiment thus being the first to capture any fortified position and to break through the Spanish lines. The guidons of G and E troops were first at this point, but some of the men of A and B troops, who were with me personally, got in ahead of them. At the last wire fence up this hill I was obliged to abandon my horse, and after that we went on foot.

"After capturing this hill we first of all directed a heavy fire upon the San Juan hill to our left, which was at the time being assailed by the regular infantry and cavalry, supported by Captain Parker's Gatling guns. By the time San Juan was taken a large force had assembled on the hill we had previously captured, consisting not only of my own regiment, but of the Ninth and portions of other cavalry regiments.

#### CHARGE UNDER HOT FIRE.

"We then charged forward under a very heavy fire across the valley against the Spanish entrenchments on the hill in the rear of San Juan hill. This we also took, capturing several prisoners.

"We then formed in whatever order we could and moved forward, driving the Spanish before us to the crest of the hills in front, which were immediately opposite the city of Santiago itself. Here I received orders to halt and hold the line on the hill's crest. I had at the time fragments of the Sixth Cavalry Regiment and an occasional infantryman under me—three or four hundred men all told. As I was the highest there, I took command of all of them, and so continued till next morning.

"The Spaniards attempted a counter attack that afternoon, but were easily driven back, and then, until after dark, we remained under a heavy fire from their rifles and great guns, lying flat on our faces on a gentle slope just behind the crest.

"Captain Parker's Gatling battery was run up to the right of my regiment and did most excellent and gallant service. In order to charge the men had, of course, been obliged to throw away their packs, and we had nothing to sleep in and nothing to eat. We were lucky enough, however, to find in the last blockhouse captured, the Spanish dinners, still cooking, which we ate



with relish. They consisted chiefly of rice and peas, with a big pot containing a stew of fresh meat, probably for the officers.

"We also distributed the captured Spanish blankets as far as they would go among our men, and gathered a good deal of Mauser ammunition for use in the Colt rapid fire guns, which were being brought up. That night we dug entrenchments across the front.

"At three o'clock in the morning the Spaniards made another attack upon us, which was easily repelled, and at four they opened the day with a heavy rifle and shrapnel fire. All day long we remained under this, replying whenever we got the chance. In the evening, at about eight o'clock, the Spaniards fired three guns and then opened a very heavy rifle fire, their skirmishers coming well forward.

#### MEN IN THE TRENCHES.

"I got all my men down into the trenches, as did the other command near me, and we opened a heavy return fire. The Spanish advance was at once stopped, and after an hour their fire died away. This night we completed most of our trenches and began to build bomb proofs. The protection afforded our men was good, and the next morning I had but one man wounded from the rifle and shell fire until twelve o'clock, when the truce came.

"I do not mention the officers and men who particularly distinguished themselves as I have nothing to add in this respect to what was contained in my former letter.

"There were numerous Red Cross flags flying in the various parts of the city, two of them so arranged that they directly covered batteries in our front and for some time were the cause of our not firing at them. The Spanish guerrillas were very active, especially in our rear, where they seemed by preference to attack the wounded men who were being carried on litters, the doctors and medical attendants with Red Cross flags on their arms and the burial parties.

"I organized a detail of sharpshooters and sent them out after the guerrillas, of whom they killed thirteen. Two of the men thus killed were shot several hours after the truce had been

in operation, because, in spite of this fact, they kept firing upon our men as they went to draw water. They were stationed in the trees, as the guerrillas were generally, and, owing to the density of the foliage and to the use of smokeless powder rifles, it was an exceedingly difficult matter to locate them.

"For the next seven days, until the 10th, we lay in our line while the truce continued. We had continually to work at additional bombproofs and at the trenches, and as we had no proper supply of food and utterly inadequate medical facilities the men suffered a good deal. The officers chipped together, purchased beans, tomatoes and sugar for the men, so that they might have some relief from the bacon and hardtack. With a great deal of difficulty we got them coffee.

#### FOUGHT AFTER BEING WOUNDED.

"As for the sick and wounded, they suffered so in the hospitals when sent to the rear for lack of food and attention that we found it best to keep them at the front and give them such care as our own doctors could. As I mentioned in my previous letter, thirteen of our wounded men continued to fight through the battle in spite of their injuries. In spite of their wounds those sent to the rear, many both sick and wounded, came up to rejoin us as soon as their condition allowed them to walk.

"On the 10th the truce was at an end and the bombardment reopened. As far as our lines were concerned, it was on the Spanish part very feeble. We suffered no losses, and speedily got the fire from their trenches in our front completely under control. On the 11th we moved three-quarters of a mile to the right, the truce again being on.

"Nothing happened there, except we continued to watch and do our best to get the men, especially the sick, properly fed. Having no transportation, and being able to get hardly any through the regular channels, we used anything we could find—captured Spanish cavalry horses, abandoned mules, some of which had been injured, but which our men took and cured; diminutive, skinny ponies purchased from the Cubans, etc.



"By these means and by the exertions of the officers we were able, from time to time, to get supplies of beans, sugar, tomatoes and even oatmeal, while from the Red Cross people we got our invaluable load of rice, cornmeal, etc.

"All of this was of the utmost consequence, not only for the sick, but for those nominally well, as the lack of proper food was telling terribly on the men. It was utterly impossible to get them clothes and shoes. Those they had were, in many cases, literally dropping to pieces.

"On the seventeenth the city surrendered. On the eighteenth we shifted camp to here, the best camp we have had, but the march hither under the noonday sun told very heavily on our men, weakened by underfeeding and overwork, and the next morning 123 cases were reported to the doctor, and I now have but half of the 600 men, with which I landed four weeks ago, fit for duty, and these are not fit to do anything like the work they could do then.

#### A NIGHT OF HARDSHIPS.

"As we had but one wagon, the change necessitated leaving much of my stuff behind, with a night of discomfort, with scanty shelter and scanty food for the most of the officers and many of the men. Only the possession of the improvised pack train alluded to above, saved us from being worse.

"Yesterday I sent in a detail of six officers and men to see if they could not purchase or make arrangements for a supply of proper food and proper clothing for the men, even if we had to pay it out of our own pockets. Our suffering has been due, primarily, to lack of transportation and of proper food or sufficient clothing and of medical supplies.

"We should now have wagon sheets for tentage. Very respectfully,

*Theodore Roosevelt*

Among the United States regulars whose terms of enlistment expired during the Santiago campaign, and who quit the service upon returning to this country, was a man of the Ninth Infantry,

known to the members of the regiment as Johnson of Maryland. He was a tall, lanky Southerner, and the pride of the Ninth because of his marksmanship, which was so true that Johnson was head and shoulders over all the others in handling a Krag-Jorgensen.

He appeared to be the most contented man in Uncle Sam's service, and often spoke of re-enlisting, until an event occurred just after the first day's fighting at San Juan, which caused him to change his mind, and he vowed never to handle a gun again. He would never speak of it to his comrades, but they all knew why he quit; and although they argued and tried to persuade him to remain, Johnson only shook his head and said, "No, boys, I can't stay with you any longer. I'd like to, but don't ask me again. I can't do it. I must get out."

#### STORY OF A TROOPER.

One of the members of Johnson's company tells the story of what caused the Ninth to lose its crack shot.

"We had been engaged in the hottest kind of work for some hours, and after taking the first line of Spanish trenches we were fixing them up for our own use. The Spaniards had been driven back, but their sharpshooters were still at it, picking off our men here and there. The Mauser bullets were whizzing around us pretty lively, and I noticed that Johnson was getting more and more impatient every minute, and acting as if he was just aching to get at those Spanish sharpshooters, and finally he turned to me, and in his drawling tone, said: 'Say, its tough we can't get a chance at them.'

"He soon got his chance, however, for just as dusk began our captain ordered a dozen of us to advance a short distance ahead, and well beyond the trenches our forces had captured. When we arrived on the spot we were halted on the edge of a dense wood. Just ahead of us was an open space of clear ground, and on the other side of that a low, thick brush, which extended as far as I could see.

"Just before night came on we received our final orders,



which were to pay particular attention to the brush just ahead of us on the other side of the clearing, and to shoot at the first head we saw. We had settled down to our tiresome occupation of watching and waiting, but always prepared for anything, and Johnson and I were talking in low tones of the day's fighting we had just passed through, when we heard the sound of a dry twig breaking. We were alert in an instant, and all the men in our line were looking straight ahead with pieces half raised, ready for use. As I looked at Johnson I could see him smile, apparently with the hope of a chance to shoot. The sound repeated itself, this time a little nearer, but still quite indistinct.

"An instant later we again heard it, and it sounded directly ahead of Johnson and me, and was, beyond a doubt, a cautious tread, but too heavy for a man. While we waited in almost breathless silence for something to happen we again heard the cautious tread, now quite plain. It was the tread of a horse and was just ahead of us. Suddenly, as the head became plainer, a dark object appeared just above the top of the brush. Dozens of guns were raised, but Johnson whispered: 'I've got him.'

#### HORSE AND RIDER STEP OUT.

"He crawled a few paces forward and we saw him raise his gun, his fingers nervously working on the trigger. At that instant the brush parted and a horse and rider stepped out. We saw Johnson stretch out his piece and we expected to see a flash, but just then the rider turned in his saddle, and by the dim light from the dull red glow that still tinged the sky we saw a pair of eyeglasses flash. We all knew at once who it was, but not one of us spoke. We were probably too horrified, and before I could say a word Johnson turned to me, and with a look on his face I shall never forget, exclaimed in a hoarse voice:

"My God, Ben, Roosevelt! And I nearly plucked him!"

"With this he threw his gun from him and just sat there and stared at the place in the brush where Colonel Roosevelt and his horse had entered. The latter, when he heard the voices of our men, came straight up to us, and appeared surprised to find

us so far beyond the trench. When he heard of the orders about shooting at the first head we saw, he smiled and said:

"That is the first I've heard of the orders. They were probably issued while I was away on a little reconnoitering on my own hook."

"He spoke cheerfully to the men about and passed on, little thinking how near he was to death a few minutes before. The more we thought of it after he passed the more in the dumps we got, for every one of us loved the Colonel of the Rough Riders, particularly for his kindness to his men, and I tell you it was a gloomy crowd that sat there watching Johnson, who, with his head supported by his hand, was either praying or thinking hard.

#### NOT HAPPY AFTERWARD.

"We were relieved shortly afterward, and as we marched back in silence Johnson walked with bowed head and none of us spoke to him, for we imagined that he felt as if he would like to be alone. From that day Johnson showed a restlessness that was new to him, and I never saw him so happy as the day he stepped aboard the transport bound for home.

"I don't know whether any word of the affair ever reached Colonel Roosevelt's ears, but it was a mighty narrow escape, and I tell you that I would rather have twenty-five Spaniards with a bead on me at 100 yards than for Johnson to pick me out for a target at 300 yards. In the first case you would have a good chance of escaping injury, but with Johnson shooting it was a clear case of cashing in your chips."

#### THE BALLAD OF "TEDDY'S TERRORS."

AS RELATED BY ROUND-UP RUBE, OF RATTLESNAKE GULCH.

THERE WUS a lovely regiment whose men wus strong and stout,  
 Fer some, they had diplomas, and fer some wus warrants out,  
 And Wood, he was their colonel bold, an' Teddy was his mate,  
 And they called 'em "Teddy's Lambkin's," fer their gentleness wus great  
 Now a good ole man named Shafter says to Teddy and to Wood:—  
 "There's a joint called Santiago where we ain't well understood,—



So, take yer lamb-like regiment, and if you are polite  
I think yer gentle little ways 'll set the matter right."  
So when Teddy's boy's got movin' and the sun was on the fry,  
And the atmosphere was coaxing them to lay right down and die,  
Some gents from Santiago who wus mad 'cause they wus there  
Lay down behind some bushes to put bullets through their hair.

Now Teddy's happy Sunday School wus movin' on its way  
A-seekin' in its peaceful style some Dagos fer to slay;  
And the gents from Santiago, with aversion in their hearts,  
Wus hiding at the cross-roads fer to blow 'em all apart.  
There's a Spanish comic paper that has give us sundry digs—  
A-callin' of us cowards and dishonest Yankee pigs;  
And I guess these folks had read it, and had thought 'twould be immense  
Jest to paralyze them lambkins they wus runnin' up agains'.  
So when our boys had pretty near arrived where they wus at,  
And the time it was propitious fer to start that there combat,  
They let her fly a-thinkin' they would make a dreadful tear,  
An' then rubber-necked to see if any Yankees wus still there.  
Now you can well imagine wot a dreadful start they had  
To see 'em still a' standin' there and lookin' bold and bad,  
Fer when this gentle regiment had heard the bullets fly,  
They had a vi-lent hankerin' to make them Spaniards die.

So Teddy, he came runnin' with his glasses on his nose,  
And when the Spanish saw his teeth you may believe they froze;  
And Wood was there 'long with 'im, with his cheese-knife in his hand,  
While at their heels came yellin' all that peaceful, gentle band.  
They fought them bloody Spaniards at their own familiar game,  
And the gents from Santiago didn't like it quite the same—  
Fer you plug yer next door neighbor with a rifle ball or two  
And he don't feel so robustous as when he's a-pluggin' you.  
So when the shells wus hoppin', while the breech-blocks clicked and smoked,  
An' the powder wouldn't blow away until a fellow choked,  
That regiment of Yankee pigs wus gunnin' through the bush,  
An' raisin' merry hell with that there Santiago push.  
Then Teddy seen 'em runnin', and he gives a monstrous bawl,  
And grabbed a red-hot rifle where a guy had let it fall,  
And fixin' of his spectacles more firmly on his face,  
He started to assassinate them all around the place.

So through the scrubby underbrush from bay'n't plant to tree,  
Where the thorns would rip a feller's pants a shockin' sight to see,  
He led his boy's a-dancin' on, a shoutin' left and right,  
And not missin' many Spanish knobs that showed 'emselves in sight.  
And when them Santiago gents wus finished to their cost,  
Then Teddy's boys, they took a look, and found that they wus lost,  
And as their crewel enemies was freed from earthly pain,  
They all sat down to wait fer friends to lead 'em back again.  
That's the tale of Teddy's terrors, and the valiant deed they done,  
But all tales, they should have morals, so o' course this tale has one.  
So paste this idea in yer cage, wotever else you do,  
Fer perhaps you'll thank me fer it yet before yer game is through:—  
The soldier-boy that wears the blue is gentle-like and meek,  
But I doubt he'll mind the Bible if you soak him on the cheek;  
An' should you get him riled a bit, you want to have a care,  
Fer if he ever starts to fight he'll finish—Gawd knows where!

STEPHEN F. WHITMAN.

#### THE NOMINATION.

As the time for the nominating conventions in 1900 drew near,  
public attention was turned to Mr. Roosevelt as a candidate for  
Vice-President. The nomination was thrust upon him. In  
nominating Governor Roosevelt for Vice-President, Colonel  
Young of Iowa, spoke as follows:

"On the ship Yucatan was that famous regiment of Rough  
Riders of the far West and the Mississippi Valley (applause). In  
command of that regiment was that fearless young American,  
student, scholar, plainsman, reviewer, historian, statesman, sol-  
dier, of the middle West by adoption, of New York by birth.  
That fleet sailed around the point, coming to the place of landing,  
stood off the harbor, two years ago to-morrow, and the navy bom-  
barded that shore to make a place for landing, and no man who  
lives who was in that campaign as an officer, as a soldier, or as a  
camp follower, can fail to recall the spectacle; and, if he closes  
his eyes he sees the awful scenes in that campaign in June and  
July, 1898.