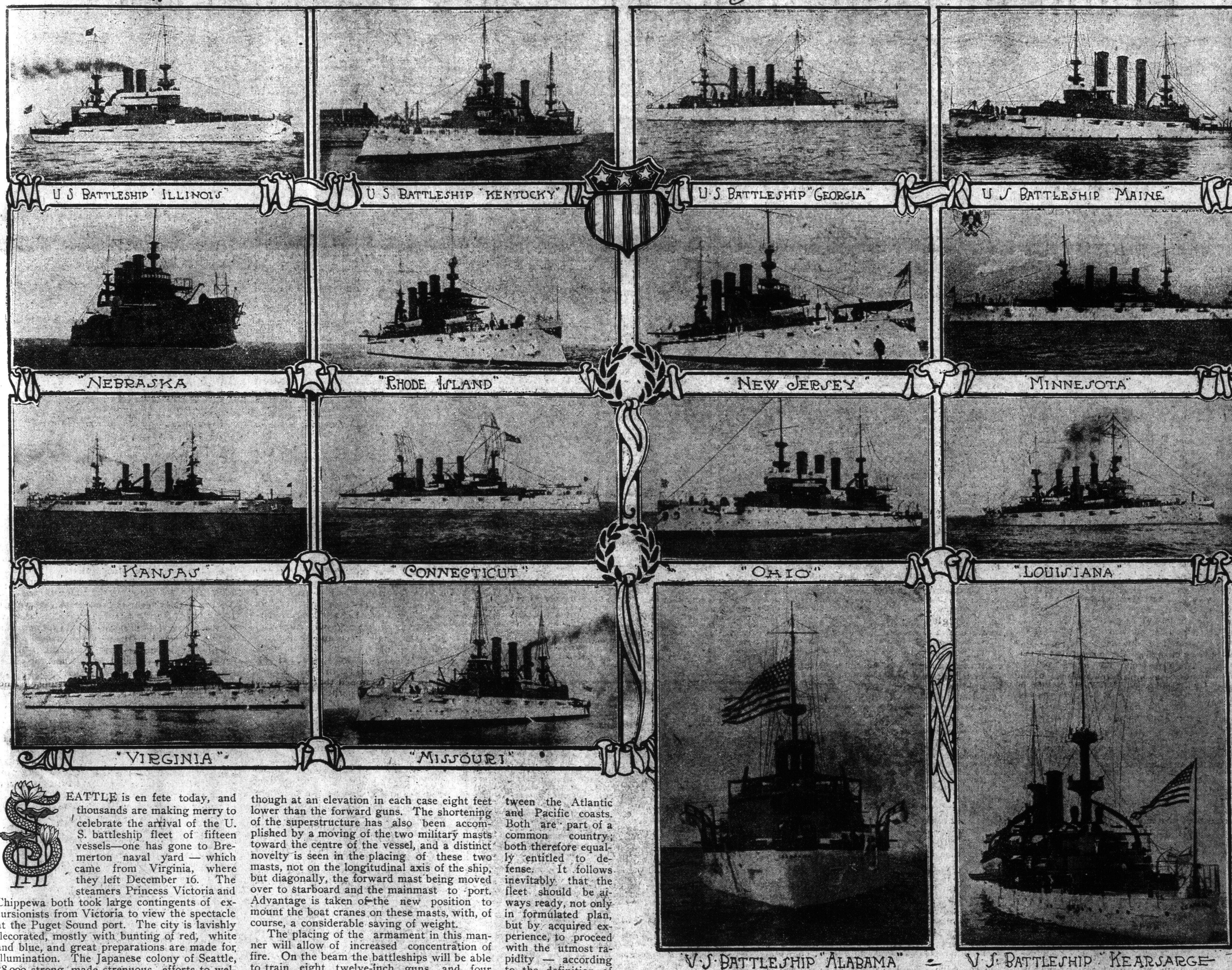


UNITED STATES FLEET FETED BY CITIZENS of NORTHWESTERN STATES



Colonist Engraving.

Flotilla of Battleships now in Elliott Bay, Seattle



CHIPPewa is en fete today, and thousands are making merry to celebrate the arrival of the U. S. battleship fleet of fifteen vessels—one has gone to Bremerton naval yard— which came from Virginia, where they left December 10. The steamer Princess Victoria and the Chippewa both took large contingents of excursionists from Victoria to view the spectacle at the Puget Sound port. The city is lavishly decorated, mostly with bunting of red, white and blue, and great preparations are made for illumination. The Japanese colony of Seattle, 18,000 strong, made strenuous efforts to welcome the fleet, and a big fireworks display was made by them.

The battleships, some of which had been visiting Bellingham, some Port Angeles and some Port Townsend, met yesterday at Port Townsend and proceeded to Seattle escorted by a great flotilla of excursion steamers thronged with passengers, and gay with flags. On Tuesday a big parade will be held.

The sixteen battleships now visiting Puget Sound are the best types of the navy of the United States. The Michigan and South Carolina, which are being completed, are later types, having some changes. The Connecticut and Louisiana are the best types of the squadron now on Puget Sound. The Michigan and South Carolina are the first vessels of a new type. The most noticeable feature is that they will carry four 12-inch turrets and their guns, mounted in pairs on the axial line of the ship, two forward and two aft of the superstructure. The doubling up in the number of turrets and placing them one ahead of the other has necessitated shortening the length of the superstructure and crowding the masts closer together, which will give the new vessels a much altered appearance from the Connecticut, Louisiana and others of her type in the fleet at Seattle. In order to save weight the freeboard of the new ships has been reduced by one deck, or about eight feet from aft of the superstructure to the stern, and while the new battleships will have the same freeboard forward as those now on the Sound they will have a lower freeboard by about eight feet throughout the after third of the vessel's length. The most forward pair of 12-inch guns is carried at about the same height as the guns of the Connecticut, or say about 24 feet above the water line. Immediately abaft of these is the second pair of forward 12-inch guns, which are so mounted as to fire clear across the roof of the forward turret, the barbette for these guns being increased in height by about eight feet in order to give the necessary elevation. The guns have the great command of 32 feet above the water line. The after pair of turrets with their four guns are mounted similarly, al-

though at an elevation in each case eight feet lower than the forward guns. The shortening of the superstructure has also been accomplished by a moving of the two military masts toward the centre of the vessel, and a distinct novelty is seen in the placing of these two masts, not on the longitudinal axis of the ship, but diagonally, the forward mast being moved over to starboard and the mainmast to port. Advantage is taken of the new position to mount the boat cranes on these masts, with, of course, a considerable saving of weight.

The placing of the armament in this manner will allow of increased concentration of fire. On the beam the battleships will be able to train eight twelve-inch guns, and four twelve-inch guns when the fighting is end-on, in pursuit or running from an enemy. Another design, giving an increased weight of metal, is also to be built.

Capt. A. T. Mahan, than whom there is no better critic of naval affairs, wrote in the Scientific American recently with regard to the "True Significance of the Pacific," in which he said:

"The movement of the United States battle fleet from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast is in the highest sense practical, because it is precisely the kind of movement which the fleet of any nation may, and usually will, be required to make in war. It is further practical, because the United States has a Pacific as well as an Atlantic coast, and has not a navy large enough to be divided safely between them. The question is at least debatable, whether for the near future the Pacific is not the greater center of world interest; as it certainly is, with regard to our own military necessities, one of greater exposure than the Atlantic."

No amount of careful prearrangement in an office takes the place of doing the thing itself. It is surely safe generalization, that no complicated scheme of action, no invention was ever started without giving rise to difficulties which anxious care had failed to foresee. If challenged to point out the most useful lesson the fleet may gain, it may be not unsafe to say: its surprises, the unexpected. If we can trust press reports, surprise has already begun in the home ports. The fleet apparently has not been able to get ready as soon as contemplated. If so, it will be no small gain to the government to know the several hitches; each small, but cumulative.

In my estimation, therefore, the matter stands thus: In the opinion of Sir Charles Dille—than whom I know no sounder authority, because while non-professional he has been for a generation a most accurate observer and appreciative student of military and naval matters—the United States navy now stands second in power only to that of Great Britain; but it is not strong enough to be divided be-

tween the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Both are part of a common country, both therefore equally entitled to defense. It follows inevitably that the fleet should be always ready, not only in formulated plan, but by acquired experience, to proceed with the utmost rapidity—according to the definition of mobility before suggested—from one coast to the other, as needed. That facility obtained, both coasts are defended in a military sense. By this I do not mean that an enemy may not do some flying injury—serious injury—but that no large operation against the coasts of the United States can prosper, unless the enemy command the sea; and that he can not do, to any effect, if within three months a superior United States force can appear.

Such mobility can be acquired only by a familiarity with the ground; and with the methods to be followed; such as Nelson by personal experience had of the Mediterranean; and of the West Indies; of the facilities they offered, and the obstacles they presented. Such knowledge is experimental, gained only by practice. It is demonstrable, therefore, that the proposed voyage is in the highest degree practical; not only advisable, but imperative. Nor should it be a single spasm of action, but a recurrent procedure; for admirals and captains go and come, and their individual experience with them. Why not annual? The Pacific is as good a drill ground as the Atlantic."

At the reception in Bellingham the mayor of that city delivered an address of welcome. His effort was as follows:

"Admiral: Bellingham, the most northwesterly county seat of your country, with its 40,000 people, on this beautiful May morning welcomes you. Our gates are flung wide open, the keys have been dropped in the bay, and as you enter it will not take you long to recognize that here nature's handwork is seen at its best. Modesty forbids us to enumerate the many points in which we are confident that we excel. Suffice it to say that within the last decade we have been transformed from a rural village to a metropolitan city; where there were uneven trails dignified by the name of streets are now paved avenues; lots thickly dotted with stumps are now adorned with modern three to six-story brick and stone structures, and tonight at low twelve you will find our business thoroughfare illuminated in a manner surpassed

only by the sun which shines for all at high twelve today.

"We can now recall only two places of martial interest here. Half a century ago Fort Bellingham, just westerly from the city limits, a protection to the sparse settlements from the warlike Indians, was commanded by Captain George E. Pickett, whose heroic daring at the battle of Gettysburg as the Confederate leader has been immortalized in verse by Will H. Thompson of our neighboring city, Seattle. Captain Pickett was transferred to San Juan Island, which you passed an hour ago. He held it against British odds, and after a long series of years it was in 1872 awarded by Emperor William of Germany to the United States. As the island was then within the bounds of our country the 'San Juan question,' which was for a long time a national one, was tinged with deep local color to the people of this vicinity.

"Being a coastwise city we well remember that other May morning ten years ago when the first shot from the Olympia was heard around the world. Ever since then our hearts have beat high and our patriotism has known no bounds at the mention of our navy—our defender if time of peril from foreign foe should ever come; and our highest emotions have been stirred within us as we have noticed from time to time the efforts of your commander-in-chief for its betterment; and we can but drop a silent prayer to the Supreme Ruler of all navies that he may soften that imperious will, and also cause the national convention of the dominant party to recognize that in wisdom there is strength, and insure us another quadrennium under that matchless leadership; then will our nation not only be a world power but the world power."

"And, now, Admiral, I again bid you welcome; thrice welcome to the homes and hearts of the people of this city."

It is expected that a large number of Vic-

torians will take advantage of the visit of the battleships to go to the Sound. The steamer Princess Victoria is making two trips a day until the fleet departs on Wednesday, and the steamer Chippewa is running daily excursions, the cut rates now prevailing, on the vessels being a great incentive to travel. The Princess Victoria on her way here yesterday morning sighted twelve of the war craft forming at Port Townsend for the trip to Seattle. The Chippewa, which left here with 350 excursionists, waited at Port Townsend until the line was formed and followed the fighting craft to Seattle. They were met by a great flotilla. In order to avoid disconcerting the navigators the regulation was made providing that no whistles be blown without reason to welcome the battleships. This rule was made at all the ports of the United States visited by the fleet, and when the warships were at San Francisco three of the navigators disregarded the order. They lost their licenses and as a result, a despatch from San Francisco says, eight hundred members of the two local organizations of masters, mates and pilots may tender their licenses to the government inspectors if the charges filed by Supervising Inspector John Birmingham against Captain Johnson, of the river steamer J. D. Peters; Captain Parker, of the Key Route ferry-boat Fernwood, and Captain Rideout, of the river steamer Modoc, result in the suspension of the licenses of these men. Captain Birmingham charges that the three masters named neglected to obey the navigation rules at the time of the arrival of the battleship fleet on May 6 and that they caused the whistles of their boats to blow unnecessarily loud.

Three pretty society girls of Baltimore, Md., carried buckets of water for an hour over the sloping roofs of a county residence, keeping back the flames till firemen arrived.