

hour of 5.30 had passed and the sun was pouring its beams brightly over the waters of the bay, when from the forward turret of the Olympia boomed a great gun, and an 8-inch shell rushed screaming in towards the Spanish fleet. Within ten minutes more all the ships were in action, and a steady stream of shells were pouring upon the Spanish ships.

The difference in effect was striking. The American gunners were trained to accurate aiming; the Spanish idea was simply to load and fire. In consequence few shells from the Spanish guns reached their mark, while few of those from American guns went astray. Soon the fair ships of Spain were frightfully torn and rent and many of their men stretched in death, while hardly a sign of damage was visible on an American hull.

Sweeping down parallel to the Spanish line, and pouring in its fire as it went from a distance of forty-five hundred yards, the American squadron swept round in a long ellipse and sailed back, now bringing its starboard batteries into play. Six times it passed over this course, the last two at the distance of two thousand yards. From the great cannon, and from the batteries of smaller rapid-fire guns, a steady stream of projectiles was hurled inward, frightfully rending the Spanish ships, until at the end of the evolutions three of them were burning fiercely, and the others were little more than wrecks.

Admiral Montojo's flag-ship, the Reina Cristina, made a sudden dash from the line in the middle of the combat, with the evident hope of ramming and sinking the Olympia. The attempt was a desper-