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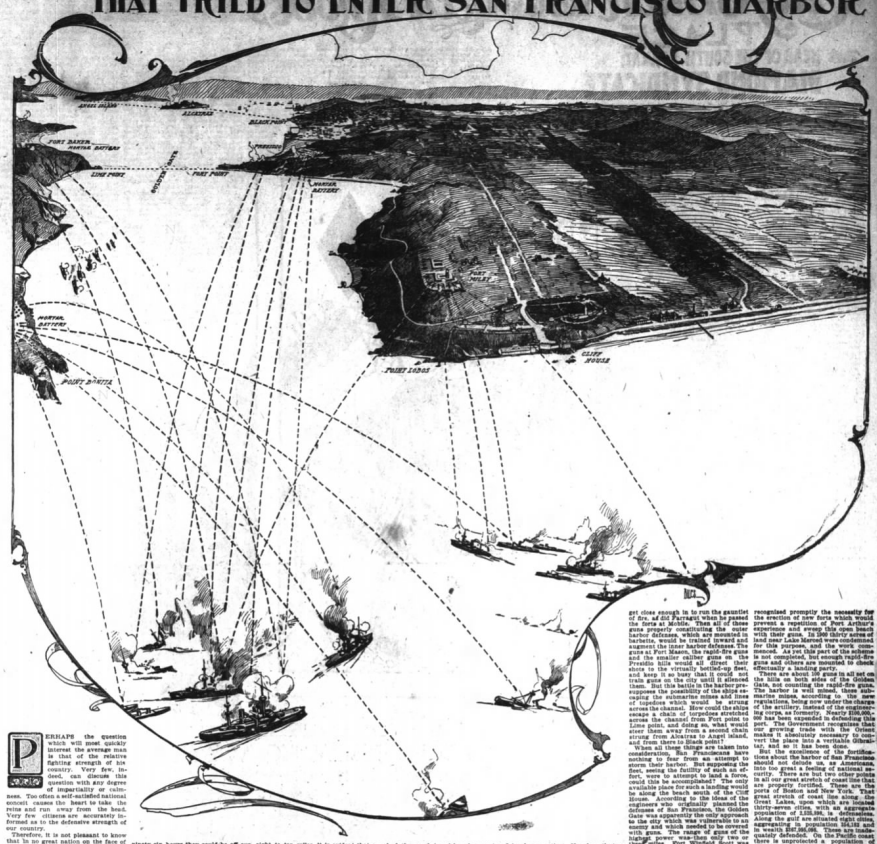
WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO A HOSTILE FLEET THAT TRIED TO ENTER SAN FRANCISCO HARBOR



PERHAPS the question which will most quickly interest the average man is that of the relative fighting strength of his country. Very few, indeed, can discuss this question with any degree of impartiality or calmness. Too often a self-satisfied national conceit causes the heart to take the reins and run away from the head. Very few citizens are accurately informed as to the defensive strength of our country.

Therefore, it is not pleasant to know that in no great nation on the face of the earth are the coast defenses as inadequate as they are in the United States. Yet the citizen of San Francisco may breathe easily, for no stretch of the 17,000 miles of coast line is so well protected against foreign invasion as that portion of the Pacific coast which forms the southwestern corner of the Pacific peninsula. Approximately it is about seven miles distant from the Chronicle building. Directly opposite it, and within the Golden Gate, are situated Point Lobos. Six miles stretch between it and the heart of the city. On Point Bonita are three great 10-inch rifles. These big guns are thirty-six feet in length, and when in action they weigh ninety-six tons. Companion to these is a battery of 6-inch guns. Placed also on this vantage point is a battery of large mortars, which are capable of throwing projectiles weighing 1000 pounds a distance of 8000 yards. The mortars are fitted at an angle and hurl the great projectiles over a huge arch, the summit of which is 2000 feet above the water. This contains 100 pounds of smokeless, high explosive, with 10 per cent the strength of cordite. The idea is to drop these on the decks of the attacking fleet. Directly opposite Bonita, on the northernmost point of the entrance to the harbor of San Francisco is situated Fort Winfield Scott. Here are placed three long range 12-inch guns. The immense gun power of these weapons is such that the harbor is but an inch-pointer to outlines these. Here, then, is an idea of the first two rings that the enemy's fleet would encounter. As their danger points would project out in the ocean from eight to ten miles. It is evident that a fleet would have great difficulty in getting within shooting distance of the forts. Even if it could do so, it would practically be in the danger zone anywhere within a radius of fourteen miles of it.

But let us suppose that the fleeman's fleet has successfully passed the outer line down the coast. Observations are made to the north and south simultaneously and telegraphed in to the batteries. As soon as the first sight of the vessels is had the data is communicated to the artillery officers in command of these two batteries, the great rifles are sighted. The men have been stationed in the work they are about to do in preliminary practice. Two submarine mines, placed by great guns on Point Lobos and Point Bonita rear and the first steel messengers of death are sent speeding toward the shape of the invaders. The guns are trained on the point where the fleet, on reaching Point Lobos, is within a direct line between it and the heart of the city. On Point Bonita are three great 10-inch rifles. These big guns are thirty-six feet in length, and when in action they weigh ninety-six tons. Companion to these is a battery of 6-inch guns. Placed also on this vantage point is a battery of large mortars, which are capable of throwing projectiles weighing 1000 pounds a distance of 8000 yards. The mortars are fitted at an angle and hurl the great projectiles over a huge arch, the summit of which is 2000 feet above the water. This contains 100 pounds of smokeless, high explosive, with 10 per cent the strength of cordite. The idea is to drop these on the decks of the attacking fleet. Directly opposite Bonita, on the northernmost point of the entrance to the harbor of San Francisco is situated Fort Winfield Scott. Here are placed three long range 12-inch guns. The immense gun power of these weapons is such that the harbor is but an inch-pointer to outlines these. Here, then, is an idea of the first two rings that the enemy's fleet would encounter. As their danger points would project out in the ocean from eight to ten miles. It is evident that a fleet would have great difficulty in getting within shooting distance of the forts. Even if it could do so, it would practically be in the danger zone anywhere within a radius of fourteen miles of it.

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