

RECORD AND REVIEW

THE FIGHT AT GUANTANAMO

WITH the seizure of the Bay of Guantnamo by the ships of Admiral Sampson's squadron, and the landing of marines to maintain the occupation, the United States acquires for the first time during the war possession of a Cuban port. The bay is an extensive one, is within two hours' steaming of Santiago, near enough to afford an excellent shelter into which our ships may run from time to time for shelter and coaling without impairing the effectiveness of the blockade. Its possession will, moreover, afford a safe landing-place for troops and a naval base of supply, to which coal and munitions may be sent, some six hundred miles east of Key West, thus greatly facilitating operations both in Cuba and against Porto Rico. Indeed, the importance of its occupation from a military point of view is second only to the capture of Santiago, while as marking American possession of a Cuban seaport, it will mean to Spain the beginning of the end in her great dependency. The landing of marines to maintain the occupation, though premature, made in anticipation of an early arrival of troops, has not only accomplished that purpose, but has served to again illustrate the superiority of the American soldier in this war, and to bring about the looked-for junction of the insurgent and Federal forces. The small force of marines was after its landing subjected to incessant harrassment by the Spanish troops, in an effort to cut it off before the arrival of reinforcements, or to compel its retreat to the ships, defence against which cost several lives. Finding the continued strain unbearable, the marines, with the help of several hundred insurgents, assumed the aggressive with such effect that the Spaniards were driven out with a loss of forty killed and an unknown number wounded. In the fight the Spaniards had the advantage of familiarity with the country and the methods of guerilla warfare in the bush and jungle; but the victory for the Americans was as clear cut in its way as that at Manila, the loss on our side being only two Cubans killed and four wounded. There has been a good deal of boasting by the Spaniards that a land fight would disclose a superiority on their part not apparent in their work at sea, but the test at Guantnamo seems to show that they are no more a match for our troops than for our sailors. A good deal of interest has attached to the conduct of the insurgents, but all reports state that they fought desperately and rendered most excellent service, and that with their knowledge of the country and of bush fighting, they promise to prove a very valuable auxiliary force.