

VALENCIA ARRIVES IN PORT

Captain's Statement of His Being Fired On by the Spanish Cruiser Reina Mercedes.

IT WAS OFF CUBA'S COAST

When the Flag Was Hoisted the War
ship Ceased Firing and Sheered
Off—Colors Had Been Previ-
ously Shown to the Fort.

The Ward Line steamship Valencia, which was fired upon off the Cuban port of Guantanamo May 29 by the Spanish cruiser Reina Mercedes, arrived here yesterday. Capt. John F. Skillings, her commander, made a report to the officials of the Ward Line, to which the Valencia is under charter, and to Boulton, Bliss & Dallett of the Red D Line, her owners.

The report embodied the Captain's protest before the United States Consul at Santiago de Cuba, Pulaski F. Hyatt. It was in substance as follows:

The Valencia left New York May 20, bound for Nassau and Cuban ports. She rounded Cape Maysi, the eastern part of Cuba, on the evening of May 26. Early Thursday morning, when twenty miles off the Port of Guantanamo, she passed a man-of-war, which Capt. Skillings believed to be the Reina Mercedes. The war ship threw her searchlight on the American vessel, scrutinizing her carefully, each vessel meanwhile keeping her course.

The Valencia arrived at Guantanamo at 6 A. M. Thursday, and discharged the passengers and cargo destined for that point. At 11:30 o'clock the same morning she cleared for Santiago de Cuba, and was emerging from the mouth of Guantanamo Bay when Capt. Skillings, with his marine glass espied the Reina Mercedes. She was about two miles to the eastward, and about two points abaft the beam on the port side, and had no ensign set. As the Valencia, within a mile of the coast, was swinging to her westerly course, she was in no sense passing the man-of-war, and therefore no attention was paid to her.

Presently a puff of smoke was seen to arise from the warship and then a report was heard. No missile was seen to strike the water, and it was not known whether a blank cartridge or a solid shot had been fired. The Valencia kept on her course. Two minutes later another shot was fired; this time a projectile struck the water about eighty yards astern of the Valencia. Seeing that the Spaniards' firing was meant for the Valencia, Capt. Skillings ordered that the American flag be displayed at the stern. This was done and she proceeded on her course without further molestation.

In conclusion, the Captain stated his belief that those in command of the warship knew his vessel, because (1) of her peculiar construction, because (2) the Reina Mercedes was in the port of Santiago de Cuba when the Valencia was there on the 7th and 8th days of May, and those in command of the man-of-war had then a good opportunity to see and know the Valencia, and (3) because those in command must have known that the Valencia, or one of the New York and Cuban Mail Steamship (American) Company's steamships was due at Guantanamo on or about the day the shots were fired, the number of steamships calling at Guantanamo being very limited.

It was learned yesterday that the Valencia had dipped her colors in salute to the forts at the entrance of Guantanamo harbor, and that only after making the open sea had she taken in the flag. Capt. Skillings said at the office of the company that the Spaniard must have seen the American colors, as it was only two minutes before the first shot that they had been used to salute the forts.

When the Spaniard fired the first shot the Captain thought it was a salute to some one. When the second was fired and the splash of shot was seen he said to First Officer Terrell: "That's meant for us," and then no time was lost displaying the flag. The man-of-war dipped her ensign and steamed away without explanation. She arrived subsequently at Santiago de Cuba, and First Officer Terrell was told that her officers had bragged that they knew the Valencia, but just wanted to make the Yankee show his colors. It was said at the office of the Ward Line that the company would take no steps in the matter. The Red D Line officials say that the matter will be placed in the hands of the proper officials at Washington.

DROWNED IN JAMAICA BAY.

Skiff Struck by a Squall and Joseph Otten Was Lost.

Joseph Otten, a printer, aged twenty, of Dean Street, near Troy Avenue, Brooklyn, went out in a skiff on Jamaica Bay last evening with three friends, W. F. Hayden, Charles Matthews, and Wallace Hultenwalk, also of Brooklyn. A squall struck them at 6 o'clock, and their boat capsized.

Thomas Hardcastle and Fred Hampton, two young Brooklyn men who were cruising about in a sloop, bore down upon them and rescued all but Otten, who sank a few seconds before he could be reached. His body has not yet been recovered.