

M'CALLA QUILTS ACTIVE SERVICE

PICTURESQUE NAVAL OFFICER ON
RETIRED LIST.

HIS CAREER IN THE NAVY

Has Been a Conspicuous Figure
in Many Stirring Events, and
Won Promotion on Several Oc-
casions for Brilliant Services—
His Achievements During the
Spanish-American War and in
the Boxer Uprising—Was Once
Suspended for Cruelty to a
Sailor and Reduced—Pardoned
by President McKinley.

[Special to The American.]

Washington, June 19.—The American Navy today loses one of its most picturesque figures in the retirement from active service of Rear Admiral Bowman H. McCalla, at present commandant of the navy yard at Mare Island, California, and since 1861, except for an interval in the early nineties, an important unit in the makeup of the personnel of the maritime fighting force of the United States. In Cuban waters during the war with Spain, in the Philippines during the insurrection and in China at the time of the Boxer troubles Admiral McCalla won distinction and was rewarded highly. A stricter disciplinarian, perhaps, never served in the Navy, but at the same time Admiral McCalla is a favorite with the enlisted men, and when there was fighting to be done McCalla could get it out of those whom he commanded.

Only one thing has ever marred McCalla's otherwise brilliant record. This was an incident which occurred in May, 1890, when Admiral McCalla was on the steam sloop Enterprise, in European waters. In a difficulty with an enlisted man who had been brought to the mast intoxicated, and who, upon being reprimanded, cursed Admiral McCalla, the latter struck the sailor with the flat of his sword. He was court-martialed and sentenced to be dismissed from the Navy, but later this punishment was mitigated to three years' suspension from the service and a loss of numbers during that period. By many the punishment was regarded as severe, and a fight was begun to have McCalla restored to his former place. In December, 1891, the unexpired portion of the suspension was remitted, and Admiral McCalla went back to active duty, having lost a year and a half.

But during the period of suspension he had fallen below many other officers in rank, and it was not until March, 1900, nearly 10 years later, that he recovered all that he had lost. Then it was that President McKinley granted him a full and unconditional pardon and restored him to the place on the list of officers held prior to his loss of numbers by his punishment. This action was taken for "meritorious services in Cuban waters." That was when McCalla was in command of the cruiser Marblehead, attached to the North Atlantic fleet.

An incident which occurred while the Marblehead was assisting in the capture of Guantanamo, goes further than anything else to illustrate Admiral McCalla's fighting spirit. Marines had been landed at Guantanamo, the Marblehead assisting in the movement. After a severe engagement the commanding officer of the marines on shore sent word out to Commander McCalla that the position of his men was untenable, and that he desired the Marblehead to come in and take him off. Commander McCalla sent back word that the Marblehead would come in to shore to carry off dead marines, and no others. The marines won the day.

Admiral McCalla gained more fame during the Boxer troubles than anywhere else. He was in command of the American detachment of the first expedition which advanced to the relief of the legations in Peking, and for his services there he was highly commended from all sides. Although ranked by other officers and not in command of the expedition, McCalla led to the front the bluejackets and marines, numbering only 112, all from the Newark, and was at the head of the column nearly all of the way. He was wounded three times during this terrible, unsuccessful march. It was not on account of any lack of determination or daring on the part of the leaders of the expedition that it failed, but it was because of the smallness of the force, which numbered only a few more than 2,000 officers and men. The allied force, which finally rescued the foreigners in Peking, numbered nearly 20,000.

Vice Admiral Seymour, of the British Navy, was in command of the expedition, and in a letter to the commanding officer of the American naval forces in Asia at that time, he said:

"I cannot conclude my letter without expressing to you, sir, the high admiration I have for Capt. B. H. McCalla, who accompanied us in command of your officers and men. Their post was usually in the advanced guard, where their seal and go were praised by all. I regret to state that Captain McCalla was wounded in three places, but considering the gallant way in which he exposed himself, I am only equally surprised and thankful that he is alive." For his services in China he was offered by the Emperor of Germany decorations of the "Red Eagle of the Second Class, with Swords."

This government rewarded Admiral McCalla for his Chinese services by advancing him three numbers in grade. This was the second promotion he had received for gallant and conspicuous conduct while under fire. The first was in August, 1898, when he was advanced six numbers for his services during the Spanish War. The advancement took him from the rank of commander to that of captain. His next promotion, to the grade of rear admiral, came in the regular course of events in October, 1903.

While strict with the enlisted man Admiral McCalla is admired and liked by them. His fearlessness is the main rea-

son for this. Many years ago, when Admiral McCalla was a midshipman, he had command of a division of seamen. One of the sailors was sharply reprimanded by Midshipman McCalla, and the man talked back, saying that McCalla would never have acted that way had he not been an officer in uniform. In a minute Midshipman McCalla had made arrangements to do a most unheard of thing—to engage in a fight with an enlisted man. They went quietly ashore, and there had it out with fists. McCalla, so the story goes, was whipped badly, it is said, but when he went back on the ship to resume his duties he had the respect and confidence of the men under him.

Admiral McCalla saw considerable active service in the Philippines, where he arrived from San Francisco on November 25, 1899. Being given command of a division of six cruisers and gunboats on the north and west coasts of Luzon he went on December 6, 1899, to the relief of the city of Vigan, four miles inland, which was held by a small force of the Thirty-third United States Volunteer Infantry. His own force consisted of 230 officers and men. Six days later, on December 12, 1899, off the mouth of the Cagayan River, in Northern Luzon, he received the surrender of all the military forces of the insurrection in the provinces of Isabella and Cagayan and in the Batan Islands. This was the most noteworthy part of his service in the Philippines, but before completing his cruise in Far Eastern waters Admiral McCalla, then a captain, saw service in China.

In 1901 he returned to the United States, and in July of that year was given command of the battleship Kearsarge, remaining on that duty until May, 1902. Since that time he has been stationed on the Pacific Coast, first as the commandant of the Naval Training Station in San Francisco harbor, and since 1903 as commandant of the Mare Island Navy Yard.

Admiral McCalla was born in Camden, N. J., on June 19, 1844, so he is 62 years of age today. This is the age limit of active service. He was appointed to the naval academy in 1861 and served there until 1864. His first cruise was on the steam sloop Susquehanna of the Brazil Squadron, and he subsequently served on various ships and stations until 1896, when he was promoted to the grade of master. His subsequent promotions were to the grade of lieutenant in 1868; lieutenant commander in 1869; commander in 1884, and to captain in 1898. He was married in 1875 to Miss Elizabeth H. Sargent, of Boston. Mrs. McCalla is a prominent member of the Colonial Dames, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Dames of the Loyal Legion and other patriotic societies.