

NEBRASKA CITY TO MANILA AND RETURN.

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On the Firing Line.

When I think of it now I don't suppose I sat there more than twenty minutes before the storm abated, but that night it seemed hours, until I heard a great shouting and splashing as if a wagon train were crossing a river. Jumping up I ran through the jungle, falling over dead banana stalks and fallen bamboo, while the wait-a-bit thorns tore my clothes in many places, as I hurried on. The shouting grew more distinct; then I crossed a rice field, and the grain must have been very tall for, as I cleared the furrows, the rice kept continually striking me in the face. On the other side I came to a broad creek and to my joy found the rear guard of the battalion I had been with. Wading over, I caught up with the advance which was broken up in small squads of a dozen men each. These were strung along the road for a mile or more. Hurrying on I had just reached the forward squad when "Halt! Who goes there?" came from the inky darkness. "Advance of the Second Battalion" promptly answered the sergeant. "Your quarters are on the left, first two houses," continued the invisible speaker. We soon found the places; the battalion came up and was dismissed, every man hunting for a good place to spend the night. The houses were low, one-story structures, standing on poles, and, to reach the doorway, we had to climb up several flights of stairs. Inside was some rice still cooking on the little clay stove, large water jugs and rattan furniture was scattered about, and in a big room, which, no doubt, had been used as a sleeping apartment, was a crucifix with the Savior in bronze and near by a great piece of black ebony representing some priest. Looking around I found two bolo knives and an arrow with a greenish substance upon the point. Hearing a commotion in the next room, I dropped the match and hurried in. One of the boys was holding a candle and stooping over a pile of matting. At his feet lay a tiny baby. It could not have been over two weeks old, its mother, no doubt, having deserted it when the village was taken. He died that night, but we did all we could for him. In my haversack I had a few pieces of hard bread and a can of salmon. It was the sweetest salmon I ever ate, and the hardtack almost dissolved in my mouth. I took off my shoes to find my feet in blisters; how they did ache. Then I stretched out on some matting; it is wonderful how one can sleep after eighteen hours of hard tramping.

Mandalang.

The morning dawned cold and grey; something strange for a tropical coun-

try. After several minutes painful work, I managed to get my shoes on, but then I could only hobble about. Going outside, I found that we were in the town of Mandalang which the regulars had taken the day before, with a loss of seventeen killed and wounded. In the centre of the town was a square plaza, surrounded by palms, against which stores had been piled for breastworks. A mile to the left loomed Mount Ariat, covered with dense green tropical growth. It was a place in which one might wish to live for a thousand years. The only word that flashed through my mind was "glorious," and then I did not blame the natives for defending such a fair land. On one of the trees I found a ripe cocconut; the milk was delicious. The assembly blew, and the boys marched out by the same road they had entered the night before. Along the road I saw a squad of infantry, with a gang of natives, burying soldiers killed the day before. One corpse I will never forget. The poor fellow's feet and head were sticking in the mud, and his back bowed up in a half circle. Scattered about were the red trousers and empty cartridge boxes of Aguinaldo's regulars who had thrown them away in their flight. All day we tramped, sometimes in water to our shoulders, and reached our first camp late in the evening.

I was so worn out that I stayed around camp for a week. No one dared to leave the picket line for fear of getting picked up by the Filipino outposts, and camp life was anything but agreeable.

A Night Attack.

One night about twelve p. m. a loud report rang from the hills to our left. There followed a low moan as the missile passed over; then another boom, and a shell exploded in some near-by cane brakes. Everything was in commotion but the men got together at last and waited. The wind shifted a little just then, and we all heard a voice, clear and distinct, on the midnight air, "Give these yankee devils hell." There was no foreign accent in that voice; it was in good English. I was to hear it again and meet the man who commanded it, face to face, thanks to a Dutchman.

There was only one fatality that night, but the incident was so peculiar I shall relate it.

One of the boys had received his discharge the day before and on the morrow was to start back to the states. Hearing the firing he got up to put his shoes on, when a bullet came through the flimsy house and pierced his heart.

A few days later a body of cavalry passed, then came several battalions of infantry and a battery of field artillery. It was announced they were going to take Tarlac, the Filipino capitol. I wanted to see this very much, and, in the afternoon when a German came by, saying he was going on to see the sights,

I cast my lot with him and together we started.

We soon came upon two natives cutting bamboo and letting them fall across the road. We fired our revolvers, whereupon they dropped their bolo knives and ran into the jungle. Going on we came to a place where there was a thick bunch of grass by the roadway. A sickening odor floated about. Pushing back the grass I saw a dead native. The vultures had picked out his eyes and torn the body almost to pieces, while his jet black hair had dropped in spots from his head. By his side lay a rusty machette and an old bamboo canteen, on which was cut "Vivi Aguinaldo."

Towards evening we crossed a river where we counted the wrecks of seven engines, which, no doubt, had been run from the bridge a few months previously. On the other side of the river were long deep rifle pits, with bits of rag, old cans, and empty cartridge boxes scattered about. Next we passed a long string of natives, in single file, carrying household furniture on their heads. As we passed they fell upon their knees and remained there until we had gone by. I wonder what they have not suffered during Spain's sovereignty of the islands. One of them, who could speak fair English, told me that several years previously he lived with his brother in the province of Columbia. At that time his brother had just married a beautiful half-caste girl. One day a party of Spanish cavalry passed through, and one of the soldiers became infatuated with the bride. Raising his carbine, he shot her husband dead, and then outraged the woman, while the other troopers looked on and shouted, "Bravo! bravo! Espanola;" and he told me this was only one of many such cases he had witnessed.

That night we stopped at Bam Bam, a small town occupied by a colored regiment. We slept in an old house, and the next morning when I shook my blanket, a large centipede fell out.

Capture of Tarlac.

Pushing on we reached Tarlac by noon. Here we were very much disappointed, for, upon the approach of our troops, the insurgents fled. I had the good luck to see Aguinaldo's headquarters and his wife, child and mother, who remained, but the dark chieftain made good his escape.

Another thing happened that day that I will never forget. It was the capture of Captain Lawrence, the man who said: "Give those Yankee devils hell." He was an Englishman, of about thirty-five, red haired and short of stature; a dare-devil expression seemed to accompany all his movements. He was taken with a small field piece, no doubt the one he shelled us with that night.

I felt very happy that evening seated upon a flat car going towards Manila. Upon the cars were a hundred or more