

LITTLE INCIDENTS OF A SIMMERING WAR.

[Written for The Conservative by Lewis C. Burnett, Jr.]

I pushed the high grass back, and saw a little brown, half naked body lying there before me. The skin had commenced to slip from the fast decomposing flesh. Big green bugs, with yellow stripes across their beetle like wings, crawled slowly around, as if warming themselves for the feast. The face looked frightfully distorted in the pale light of the coming day. A rusty bolo knife lay near, beside which rested a long bamboo canteen. Viva Aguinaldo, was roughly cut in the hard wood.

Viva Aguinaldo! Long live our leader!

The morning sun burst over the distant mountain top. The rice fields waved gently in the freshening breeze, beyond which loomed the cocoa palms like ghostly sentinels, dim in the light of the new morn.

A dirty rag lay upon the ground. I placed it over the still, bloated face and then went on down the narrow road between the tall bamboos. He died for the cause he thought was right.

I am going to tell you a short, broken story of a few things I saw around Tarlac, then the headquarters of the Filipino insurrection: how I first saw Aguinaldo and his body guard. Just little, but most peculiar, happenings, that one does not read in the cable dispatches of a war. I was not a soldier, nor did I have cause to take part in any way. I merely tell you these as seen with the eyes of a civilian.

Jumped High in the Air and Fell Dead.

I heard a short chopping noise one morning, as if a cross-cut saw had struck a knot. The rattle continued, and I recognized the voices of the 30-calibres, barking from a distant rice field. I hurried over the furrowed ground, waded a little creek, pushed my way through a young bamboo thicket, and came upon the firing line of the 17th U. S. Infantry.

Through a wet cane patch many small bodies were dodging, their red trousers making fine targets for the men in kakai brown. The way these brave running soldiers crawled out of their showy uniforms was a most comical sight. They left a red trail behind them, of cotton, not of blood.

A man of the 4th Cavalry was lying on his back. There was an ugly hole in his forehead, where a Remington copper-covered ball had torn its way through. I thought he was dead, and stood looking down at him. Suddenly he opened his eyes and said:

"Say, Bill, I have been in a good many fights, and the niggers have

knocked the mud up in my face more than once, but I guess they have got me this time."

I looked away to where a detachment of infantry was gathering up the dead and wounded natives. The man was dead. An ambulance came up and I saw the poor fellow, his feet sticking out from the cot, as the wagon rolled away.

A Filipino soldier had crawled under a wire fence to die. A Krag bullet had struck him in the left side, leaving a little blue hole where it entered. His head and feet were sticking in the mud, while his back was bowed up in a half circle. His face was of a light green color; fright and pain were written there.

The troops marched [into the captured town. In the middle of the plaza was a Catholic church. One of Aguinaldo's regulars ran in at the west door and presently came out of the other side of the building. Four shots rang out. He dropped his gun, ran to the road, jumped high in the air and fell dead.

He Said a Coward from Missouri.

It was a hot, sultry day; pulling up my pants, I waded across the creek. An advance guard of infantry was in front.

Bang, bang, bang-bang.

The mud flew up in their faces, while broken twigs from the limbs overhead rattled on the ground. A nice little ambush, but the Filipino soldiers had been true to their principles, in hitting everything but what they shot at. No one was hurt, the rear guard came running up, and the entire force was ordered to drive the enemy from its entrenchments.

One of the boys, a big fellow from Missouri, would not move. He lay in a buffalo wallow hugging the muddy ground. A lieutenant took him by the shoulder and pulled him on his feet. The big soldier was so completely unnerved that he could hardly stand, while his knees kept beating a wild tattoo.

The fight went on, the enemy was easily routed. A man lay dead upon the breastworks, a dark red spot was slowly spreading on his blouse. I went up to him—it was the fellow from Missouri, and the only man that had been hit. Was he a coward? the lieutenant said so, or was it fright, brought on by a premonition of what was to come? Strange things happen in this world of ours!

The Aftermath.

I was standing on the edge of a bamboo thicket; to my left, resting on four short poles, was the floor of a native house, the upper portion had been torn away. A wounded islander lay upon the bamboo slats. A bullet had gone through both knees, and an-

other had opened up his right lung. I made him as comfortable as I could, but he would not talk. Once he said, "agua," and I went down to the creek and filled my hat with water. He would have nothing else, and plainly told me to "vamos." I passed that way two days later. It was a glorious evening, the sun was just going down where the everlasting green of the hills around seemed to break off into the heavens.

I climbed over the tangled bamboos, the natives had dropped across the road to hinder the progress of the American troops. At last I reached the half ruined house. There lay the man that I had tried to help but a few hours ago. The green flies were gathering upon his bloated lips.

Such is war. Raw facts they are, but true as truth itself.

A Mauser twanged near by, a splinter from the pole against which I was leaning went humming through the air. A Filipino soldier ran from the thicket and jumped across the creek. He was not more than thirty paces from me, and I could easily have shot him with my revolver, but then, I was not a soldier. I went away, leaving him alone with his empty rifle and his dead.

The Dead Prince of Bavaria.

"That's all I have got by which to remember the Prince of Bavaria," said a white haired Englishman, as he showed me two broken matches. "Last spring when he was accidentally killed on the firing line, I was with a company of the Oregon boys, and I saw him fall back into the doorway of a house. I helped one of the surgeons carry him into the old monastery that had been turned into a hospital. A 45-70 ball had passed through his body, ranging from the shoulder downward, and killing him almost instantly. I was told to sign a paper as a witness to his death, and then I felt in his pockets for something to remember him by. These two broken matches were all that I could find, but you can rest assured that I will hang onto them. The surgeon major told me that, at some future time, I might be called to Germany as a witness to the death of the prince. I hope they send for me! Won't that be a great trip?"

I turned to my aged companion and asked for a description of His Highness.

"Well," said the Englishman, "he was not very good looking, had a long, sallow face and a heavy jaw. I should judge he was about thirty years of age."

"Goodbye," said my new friend a half hour later, as he turned off at a cross road. "Hope I see you again. I know how it is to wish to look upon the scenes of war. I ran away from