

# Three Recent Incidents in History of Baler

**M**ANILA, P. I., June 12.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—Situating on the eastern shore of Luzon, half way around the island, on the shore of a mountain-hedged bay and nearly surrounded by the tropic forest is the town of Baler. It has for friends and neighbors the inhabitants of the woods—the big chattering monkeys on the limbs, the beautiful hued songsters in the treetops, the curly headed Negritos on the south and a tribe of straight-haired Hongotes on the north.

second lieutenant and the captain n. w. l. side by side in their long sleep beneath the floor.

## Give In to Hunger.

Finally the rations were nearly gone and a flag of truce was sent out to ask for terms. After some parleying the insurgents agreed to send what were living to the American lines in safety if the rifles were surrendered. Upon this agreement the weather-beaten and bullet-torn Spanish flag was hauled down from the church belfry and the party was soon guided on its difficult way over the mountain trails. It is well that we take notice of the fact that for thirteen months after peace with Spain the flag of that nation was floating over one lonely spot in the Philippines. This time would have been lessened if the decree of President Aguinaldo to the commander at Baler had been carried out promptly. In the communication to the insurgent commander Aguinaldo enjoined the Baler detachment of Spanish for their "valor, endurance and heroism," and then says: "The individuals composing the said force shall not be considered as prisoners, but, on the contrary as friends and in consequence such passes as shall be necessary for them to return to their country shall be furnished through headquarters."

"Made in Tarlac June 10, 1899.  
"El Presidente de la Republica,  
"EMILIO AGUINALDO."

The weak and ill-fated Spaniards made slow progress on their westward trip to San Jose, San Juan, Pantabangan and then to Cabanatuan, where a short rest was taken. This latter town is where Aguinaldo had his temporary capital when he called General Luna from the firing line at San Fernando and then ordered his assassination

as he was leaving the yard of the headquarters.

Moving on to San Isidro, the first American post, the Spaniards were turned over under a flag of truce.

Upon the arrival at Manila of these brave men who had demonstrated to the world what Spanish soldiers can patriotically endure, the members of the Spanish colony gave a reception and raised a respectable subscription for the benefit of the heroes. Medals of honor and promotion have followed, and most of these men were made



BALER CHURCH, WHERE THE SPANISH WERE BESIEGED.

A crew of about a dozen and having some were in the night and they will now expect the men aboard their vessel to be fired and moving the boat in an attempt to get away. This vessel at the present time is holed up in one end giving her orders to they appeared to be all the men near ship and were not able to touch their mark. It was rumored to be the vessel of the men, as it showed Filipino markings. They saw his vessel but what they did not.

Surrender was inevitable when, with a wild dash, the insurgents charged on the little party. As they were closing in on

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Historically Baler is of great interest. A pile of sardine cans and a barrel of pieces of a burned boat give the text of brave and heroic deeds of soldiers of two nations. The one tells of endurance almost to starvation, the other of attempted rescue at the risk of life. The third event to be historic is the secret of placing the foundation of Funston's star in this locality.

During Spanish rule Baler consisted of a few hundred inhabitants composing a quiet seashore town. The church and convent made of stone, wood and a nipa roof and the stone blockhouse near the shore commanding the entrance to Baler river were its most substantial. Age, however, the age of insurrection, has been gnawing at these and the blockhouse is in a dilapidated condition, the convent has been destroyed and the church alone remains. The nipa and wooden houses that were a part of Baler at the time of the insurgent siege were burned by the Spaniards, who managed energetic skirmish with guns and matches and then returned to the church in which they were practically penned.

Since American occupation bamboo and nipa quarters have been built and the old church is used as a storehouse in which seven months' rations are kept for the one company stationed there. About a dozen Filipino families (Tagalog) have built houses also and this makes up the town at present. The Tagalogs are very friendly and it is good policy, as the surrounding tribes are their enemies.

## Monument to Spanish Valor.

The mounds of thousands of sardine cans near the church tell us of the Spanish captain, Moneras, and his seventy men who were garrisoning the town and were attacked by 500 insurgents, but who withstood the assault until starved to surrender at the end of thirteen months. From the time of the surrender of Manila in August, 1898, until September, 1899, this plucky garrison of men fought desperately against heavy odds. The numbers were gradually lessened by sickness and bullets. The poor water from the well in the church corner and a diet of rice, sardines and a little flour was a poor stimulus. The ration was cut down to one-half, then to one-third and finally to one-fourth. The convent joining the church was used at first as a part of the barracks, but the insurgent sharpshooters in high trees made matters so unpleasantly dangerous that all lived in the church. Holes in the walls of the church made for loopholes are witnesses of how closely this little band was confined. Each side kept a vigilant watch and shots were exchanged daily.

After about seven and a half months Captain Moneras favored surrendering, and decided that was the best course to pursue. His two second lieutenants, a priest and the soldiers remaining, about forty, were opposed to this course of action, and after a secret court-martial condemned the captain to be shot. His grave is beneath the earthen floor, near one end.

As the Filipinos were in hopes of starving the garrison to an unconditional surrender they would not make any promise how they would treat them if they surrendered. Time wore on, and the number was worn down to thirty-four. Many privates, some non-commissioned officers, the priest, one



NEGritos VISITING BALER.

happy, some before and others after leaving for Spain. Medals were received in Manila after the return of these soldiers full of extended honors and the enthusiasm of the landing of the patriots at their mother country.

## Clamor's Attempt at Rescue.

The pieces of the burned boat gathered and kept for relics tell the story of the fatal outcome of Lieutenant James C. Clamor's attempt to rescue the Spanish party, the ambush, the fight and the capture.

The gallant Yorktown was sent to relieve the besieged Spaniards held in the Baler church. The day of the fight was April 12, 1899, just eight months after the 500 insurgents had closed around the church, making it a prison at will.

Before daylight two scouts were hoisted on the shore of Baler bay in the dark shadow of the trees. After this the party went a little south and entered Baler river. There were four in all, including Lieutenant Clamor and they slowly rowed along two yards upstream. The line of river trenches that may be seen today explains how the locality was a death trap to any boat party and an ideal place for an ambush.

A volley from the insurgents, who could see and not be seen, was the outcome. With the lieutenant and his men it was



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