

Letters From Manila.

Through the kindness of Mrs. W. A. Huntley we publish the following extracts from a letter written by Lieutenant Huntley: MANILA, P. I., Aug. 31st, Headquarters 2nd Ore. Vol. COURTEL DE ESPAÑA.—Now as to the happenings of the past few days, we reached Manila—our third Bat—about eight thirty a. m. and spent two hours unloading in the hot sun. I was, and am still, acting adjutant for the third Bat, and the major had ordered me to look after the unloading of the Casco, the lighter which carried our impediments. It soon became blistering hot as the sun began to mount, and when through with the job I was saturated with perspiration for I am still wearing the heavy, padded blue blouse and I dreaded the one-mile walk to the barracks. Imagine my delight when down the hot street came a galloping orderly with two led horses, one for the major and one for the adjutant. I mounted that little Chinese pony with a grateful heart and jogged along after the major with my feet nearly touching the ground. Pick made lots of fun of me. As we turned off the beach road to enter the walled city or intramuros, as the Spanish call it, the frowning guns on the high walls confronted us and as we passed through a narrow defile with walls higher than our heads and sufficiently wide for four men abreast I was very thankful that those guns were not shot. Immediately after the defile came a narrow stone bridge over a canal or moat and then of course a draw bridge. The old city is most admirably fortified, and the same enormous wall of masonry extends clear around it, pierced by seven gates. Outside the wall is the most full of sluggish water overgrown with small bushes. Except on the seaside there is a second or outer wall beyond the moat and the gates of this wall are also protected by drawbridges. Imagine storming a city protected by two twenty foot walls with an almost impassible moat between. Add to such a situation a construction of wall that permits a storming party to be flanked at nearly all approaches by cannon, to say nothing of the gun pointed directly at them, and you can imagine that five thousand good men might hold out forever except for provision and water. Our quarters are much better here than in Cavite and we are very comfortably fixed except in the matter of light clothing that is just now beginning to arrive. Everybody wears white from head to foot except on duty, and many regiments are now equipped with white duty uniforms. The churches here, and there are four or five in the walled city alone, are simply immense. They extend over whole, big blocks, are three stories high and in them are quartered the Spanish soldiers and much captured commissary stores over which we keep guard. The churches are indescribably filthy; they stank so that I became faint, and some of the sentries had to be relieved on account of sickness. The filth was almost knee deep and great clouds of flies—big carrion flies—were trying their best to clean it up but they stood no show. Well, the major soon inaugurated a change. Sinks were dug and the garbage was soon carried away, and now they are quite decent. While I am on this most unpleasant subject I want to say that the Spanish and Filipinos are the dirtiest and filthiest people I ever heard of in the matter of garbage of all kinds. The only reason that I can learn as to why they don't have a plague is because of the strong clarifying breeze each afternoon. It tempers the heat, clears the air and drives away the mosquitoes. There is not so much of interest to visit here as one would imagine in this two hundred-year-old city. The shopkeepers have doubled prices in most instances, for the Americans are certainly "fish." They pay fabulous prices for any old thing with never a question as to its real value. The bulky Mexican silver cannot be carried in a purse or pocket without making one lop-sided, so a belt with a big leather pocket is worn. On the same belt is also the leather watch pocket for these light muslin trousers are without even a watch pocket. The street cars are "punk." A weekly ly service—up one week and back the next. The mode of getting around is in carriages. About five p. m. the fashionable in their pretty victorias and the common trash in Caramatas or two wheeled carts appear on the Lunetta or popular drive along the beach. There is a continuous string of them 'till about eight o'clock 'till they drive home to dinner, the heavy meal being eaten between eight and 10 p. m. The ladies all ride without any head dress whatever. They look very charming with hair carefully dressed as they pass under the electric lights with their gauzy dresses. Even walking in the streets, though a lady never does that for more than a few doors in the city, they have no head cover. On the Lunetta they often get out of the carriages and walk long distances with the driver keeping pace with

week, and if you scratch it to break the skin it leaves a sore that won't heal for months. Some of the boys look lovely. Cavite is properly two towns. There is old Cavite, which is simply a large fort, for it contains but government buildings and one or two nice houses, surrounded by a high wall, and the native town, which lies just outside. There the natives swarm like rats. There must be half a million of them. All of their houses are built alike, of bamboo thatched with leaves. The floor is raised about four feet from the ground and there is a short ladder for them to go in and out. They won't sleep on the ground even on a pile of leaves, on account of the wet and vermin of different kinds, but we have to, at least three nights a week and on the bare ground at that. We got along pretty well at Cavite after awhile. We were on short rations at first, and there was trouble about the cooking, as there was no wood, but the boys rigged up a stove out of some square blocks of stone and we burned coal. There was plenty of that. There is no water there except rain water. All of the buildings are covered with galvanized roofs and the Spanish have built large tanks to collect the water that runs off. It rained nearly every day we were there, but we ran short of water once. 5000 men can use an astonishing amount of water. Cavite is on the island of Luzon the same as Manila, but it forms a peninsula and is to all intents and purposes, a separate island. It is where the Spanish prisoners are confined, except those which surrendered at the fall of Manila. Since I began writing this, four of them came in and surrendered to some of our troops. They escaped from the insurgents at Cavite; nine of them started but four of them stayed to death on the way, it took them so long to come 30 miles. The harbor is full of sunken Spanish warships. In the inner harbor there are seven and four outside. When we first got there the beach at low tide smelt horribly. It was lined with wreckage from the ships, dead men's clothes, papers, and all sorts of trash. All around the ships at night, the water shone like phosphorus, for there were over 1000 Spaniards drowned there in a place about half a mile square. At the end of the jetty or breakwater are planted two guns. On the day the ships were sunk, each gun had its crew of 12 men waiting for our ships to come in range. They stand on a wall about four feet above high water. The Baltimore fired a shell at the first gun and struck the wall just below the gun and scooped out about a wagon load of rock. It wiped out every man at the gun; killed two and wounded four. The crew of the other gun spiked both guns, picked up the wounded and ran away. I send you enclosed a piece of grass that I picked off from the spot. A stray shell struck close to the hospital, so the surgeons ran away and when Dewey's men came ashore they found 16 men lying on the floor dead to death. The blood was still there when we arrived. Well, if I don't get away from Cavite I will never get to where we are now. We stayed there about a month and after two attempts, we landed on the Manila side. The first day it was too rough to land and we had to go back, but on the second attempt we were successful, after swamping two boats. There were five boat loads of us, about 200 men in a boat, towed by a steam launch. The water was too shallow for the launch to go close in so she cast us off about a quarter of a mile from shore and then the fun began. The first boat drifted broadside on and filled with water directly and also the third boat. We struck bow on and had to wade ashore in water up to our armpits. We lost all the perishable provisions, some guns etc., but no lives. We were afraid the Spanish would attack us for we could see them watching us, but our ships were watching them so they thought it best to leave us alone. We went into camp at a place christened "Camp Dewey." It is in a very good place, in a peanut field, a mile long, good sandy soil but no wood except green bamboo, and no water other than surface water. There was the same old trouble about cooking. The natives claimed all of the bamboo wood around and would not let us cut any until we shot a few of them. Two men, with rifles had to go with every wood detail, but we chopped up the boats that were wrecked and managed some way. We did not stay there long or I don't know what we should have done. We did not get much rest there. We laid over one day and on the second morning were sent to man the advance trenches. There had been more or less fighting before we got there nearly every night, but for a week everything has been quiet. We did not know that there was a little surprise in store for us. On the way to the trenches we noticed marks of shot and shell; all about the bamboos were burned but the natives were moving about as unconcerned as ever, selling fruit and stuff. There is no telling how many of them have been killed, for their houses are just as thick as can be right where the fighting had been going on and a bullet will go through a row of them. We got to the trenches all right and everything was quiet all day until just after dark, when word was passed along the line that they were coming, and sure enough, in a few moments they

came. First, we heard a few rifle shots and then we saw a bright flash and in about two seconds something passed close over our heads, which one of the men said was a wheelbarrow. It bursted in a native house about 50 yards behind us. Directly after, two more came, at the same time one pitched in the mud just behind my squad and did not burst, while the other bursted in a house on our line. Well, they kept this up between one and two houses; one continual rattle of musketry. The horrible noise that the shells made I cannot describe. There were several different sizes of them and after awhile we could tell by the flash what size our next visitor would be. There were two guns in particular that fired 250-pound shells. They had a rapid fire gun that threw about 40 shells per minute, vicious little beasts about as big around as a hen's egg and about three times as long. They would have gone right through our breastworks but there was something the matter with them, for very few of them bursted and they mostly went over us. Pretty soon we began to get our work in. There were five companies of the 14th, A, O, D, E, and F, and four companies of the 23d on the fighting line besides a battery of four guns of the Utah artillery, but for some reason they did not fire a shot, although their guns were turned on the enemy's line. We poured volley after volley into them, and also independent firing, that is, every man fire as he thinks fit, until their fire began to slacken and then "cease firing" was sounded. The Spanish came within 40 yards of us at one time, but they could not stand the hail of lead that we poured into them, and we have heard since that they feared some trap was set for them as they knew our guns were there and could not understand the reason of their silence. Neither could we, and we can't yet. The 14th lost two killed and about 12 wounded, and the 23d lost one killed and five wounded. D Co., lost two badly wounded. The man killed was on my right, five men between us. As we stood in line a shell came through the breastworks and bursted, blowing him all to pieces and badly wounding two more. It knocked down and partly stunned a dozen. The dead man's brother among them. Their name is Howell and they live somewhere in the Willamette valley. Co. C lost a man the same way; a shell took his head off level with his mouth. The 23rd man was killed with a bullet. We killed 160 and wounded 340, rather more than there was on our side on the fighting line actually firing, for Co. C did not fire a shot. We did not know it at the time but we found out afterward that there were 8000 Spaniards and barely 500 of us. 16 to 1—silver price. They took every available man they had, leaving behind only enough to garrison the city. They intended driving us all into the sea, but they did not reckon about running up against the regulars. They had been told that the volunteers would run if closely attacked, and if any body of troops once took to running at night in these swamps, it would be all up with them. What saved us was, they shot too high; our breastworks would stop their bullets, but their shells would go through like going through paper. If they had aimed a little lower they would have wiped us out. A bullet hit my gun and several times the shells threw mud on me. I don't know that I was particularly scared, but must say I was glad when it was over. We went out again two nights after but there was no fighting that night as it rained too hard. To give you an idea how it can rain in this infernal country I will tell you of an incident. My tin cup which is about six inches high and holds 1 1/2 pints, was sitting by my side on the breastworks when it commenced to rain. About an hour afterward I happened to look at my cup and it was running over. No water could have gotten into it except by falling straight in. Now six inches of rain in a month in Oregon is considerably over the average and this fall in an hour and it kept it up at that rate all night. We did not have a thing to shelter us so you can imagine we got very damp. It was amusing to see some of the men trying to sleep on the ground. Of course it was warm and they could get no wetter anyway. Some would lay on their backs and cover their faces with their hats. That worked all right until the water came up to the level with their mouth and then they would jump up coughing and cursing a blue streak. After this we did not go out again until the attack on Manila, which took place on Saturday, August 13. It turned out much easier than we expected. The Spaniards were very much afraid of the fleet. Four ships lined up in front of the city to assist, but only two of them fired a shot. The first shot was fired about 10 a. m. and our troops were in the city before 4 p. m. I don't know to this day the exact number of men that were lost on either side. It was below 20 on our side, but the Spanish loss was considerable. The 14th Inf. did not go into the city at all, but we occupy quarters at a place called Malate, just outside of the walls. They are good quarters, built for the Spanish volunteers, but when we took possession of them they were filthy. There was a washroom nicely fitted up with imitation marble wash basins. They had been used for every purpose but washing, for we had cut off their water supply months ago. The quarter-

master hired a gang of natives and now the place is as clean as a new pin. If a man throws a piece of paper or cigarette stump on the ground he has to pick it up and put it in the ash barrel. Yesterday I saw a man spit through the railings on to the sidewalk; an officer happened to see him and marched him off to the guard house. The place is being swept continually. The health of the men has been very good until lately considering all things, but now they are beginning to sicken. There are 1500 on the sick report, 200 were sent home the other day on one of the returning transports. I don't know at all how long we are likely to stay here but am afraid we will have trouble with the insurgents. They keep us on the go all the time. We are liable to be called out any minute, night or day, but they are a little afraid of us, for if we catch any of them out on the roads with arms we take them away from them. It seems they wanted to take Manila and sack the town, but we won't allow one of them inside if we know it. I am writing this in the coolest place that I know of, under the building in a hammock, at the same time keeping a sharp lookout for tarantulas, etc. Now there is lots more I could tell, but will wait until the next time I write.

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O.R.&N.

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