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GILBERT'S IDEA

Should Hold the Philippines.

OUR MANILA LETTER.

When the Natives Understand the Motives of the United States Trouble Will Cease.

The Oregonian on March 11, wrote to Rev. William S. Gilbert, chaplain of the Second regiment of Oregon volunteers, asking his opinion of the political situation in the Philippine islands, of the probable time necessary to restore order, and a few other questions of similar import. Chaplain Gilbert received The Oregonian's letter when the Oregon regiment was breaking camp at Malinta. His answer, which is dated Norzagañay, April 24, expresses the conviction that it would be a crime for the United States to abandon the Philippines. It follows:

"We are now in the midst of an extensive expedition to the north of Manila. This will be the last campaign of any importance possible before the rainy season. It will be a practical settlement of the war, at least a conclusion of formidable hostility; and for the Oregon regiment, the last campaign. We expect to be ordered home within a month. The expedition probably will last 10 or 12 days. We were ordered to take 10 days' supplies. Three brigades are in operation. One, under General Lawton, left Caloacan to the eastward and north Friday April 21. The second, under Colonel Summers, consisting of seven companies, A, B, F, G, I, K and L, of the Oregon regiment, eight companies of the Thirteenth Minnesota, one troop of cavalry, and one piece of artillery, left Bocaue to the east and north yesterday morning. The third, under General Wheaton, left Malolos this morning moving to the north—probably against Calumpit.

"I can speak only for the second brigade. The Oregon regiment considers it a great honor to have our colonel in command of the brigade. He is a pusher, and through his splendid and energetic leadership, the Oregon regiment is known throughout the Eighth army corps as the 'greyhounds.'

"We left Bocaue at 5:25 yesterday morning; marched till 10; rested till 2:45; and bivouacked at 7. It was a hard, hot day's work. At 4 the insurgents began firing upon our column. From this on we advanced in skirmish line formation. A brisk fire was kept up till dark. Our line advanced, steadily driving the insurgents into this town. There were no casualties on our side. A conservative estimate places the number of insurgent soldiers killed at 400. We advanced again at daybreak this morning. After a hot fire lasting an hour, we entered the town. Two Minnesotans and two cavalymen were wounded slightly. We found the town deserted. I judge there were about 400 inhabitants.

"We are waiting now for General Lawton's brigade, working its way on the right, to join us. We expect to move north tomorrow. It is the intention to thoroughly clean up this part of the country. One great difficulty is in the transportation of supplies. We have in our train 48 bull teams, and 23 carriages and carts. The whole outfit would be a curiosity in America. The heat is terrific in the middle of the day. Five bulls dropped dead from heat and exhaustion yesterday. Lieutenant Knapp quartermaster, has charge of the train. His efforts yesterday were worthy of special mention. Every one said the train would not overtake us last night, and we would have neither supper nor beds. Somehow the train pulled into sight at 7:20. Never before were grub and pillows so welcome. We are separated from all communication. All the companies are small. Sixteen per cent of the enlisted men and 20 per cent of the officers of our regiment are on sick report. The impure water and the paralyzing heat are the cause. Very few serious cases. Through the splendid work of Major Ellis and the hospital corps our death list has been phenomenally small.

"The men are brave fellows. With unwavering line for hours together they face unflinchingly a heavy fire. I am proud of the regiment. Their work at Pasig and at Malabon and in the lesser battles has been highly commended. The boys have done really splendid work. Every officer and man has reason to be proud of the record the regiment has made.

"We are in the middle of the island; half way between the seas. This interior country is indeed beautiful. We are at the foothills. Palms and bamboo and the majestic mango tree make every landscape a picture. Splendid roads are the rule, as far as we have seen. Rice fields are everywhere. The amount of work the people have done in leveling off the rice paddies is simply beyond belief. Every hillside is terraced, and each little patch or larger field is surrounded by a dike from one to four feet high,

making splendid protection for troops under fire.

"No crops have been put in this year. The country now looks desolate. The people are almost universally poverty stricken. Supplies, even of rice, are scarce. Hunger is already in the land, and absolute suffering will soon be general. The refugees that enter our lines, coming to their homes, or driven to us by hunger, are pitiful. It is useless to endeavor description.

"You ask me to describe the situation in these islands, as I view it. This is hard to do. The situation has so many phases. How long will the war last? Probably there will be some kind of hostility for six months or more; as long as the leaders can misinform the people. The rainy season will end our aggression. I don't believe there will be any great struggle after that. The better class of Filipinos are hoping already for the war to cease. But the average insurrectionist is and always has been a treacherous scrapper. I do not think the future exigencies call for a larger army than is now here. The people will soon come to understand America and will be glad to have her protection.

"It has been asked, 'Why not withdraw and give the people their liberty for which they contend?' It would be a crime for us to do so. We might escape an annoyance, but we would be forsaking a trust. A parent has no right to desert a child, even though the child cry to be left by the roadside.

"Aguinaldo has been called 'the Philippine George Washington.' He is not this in any sense whatever. Neither in himself, as his record shows (he was bought by Spain to leave the island and did not keep faith), nor in his ability or power. He has been marvelously over-estimated. Nor in the principles for which he contends. Why? Because he is fighting against the United States government, which promises his people the very best liberty; the very liberty they strive for, and which they could not foster and protect were our army and government to withdraw.

"Aguinaldo and his followers in power would mean chaos. They are ambitious, conceited, and not universally trusted even by their own countrymen. That the Filipino fought against Spain we honor him. As he fights against America, he seeks to drive from his shores that which alone will give him liberty, and he would have left only anarchy, factions and instability. He fights with us either because he has been lied to about us, or because he hopes for plunder, or because of a mistaken idea of what independent nationality would mean there.

"America will bless these islands, and not oppress them. She will protect the people, and not despoil them. The people are in ignorance, and are laboriously kept so. Church and state will be separate. They are absolutely and ruinously one at the present time. Property rights will be given and will be respected. The people will come to possess their own homes and crops. Taxation will be reasonable. Extortion will cease.

"The people are now capable of governing themselves. They are apt, and under our protection they would have part of the government entrusted to them and more and more as they become capable. In a short time, in five years, I believe, these islands would be not to be separated from, but to be annexed to, the United States. I believe our government to be the best on earth, and our nation in these islands will make these islands more and more as our nation.

"Commercially we shall lose nothing by protecting these islands. The North Pacific is ours. Manila for America, as Hong Kong for England, will be a gateway to the orient. The islands themselves have great resources. American enterprises will find here a good field of operation.

"The islands have cost us money and men. Whatever the commercial or strategic importance of the islands may be, it is nothing in value compared to the priceless lives that have here fallen. Were it not for the eternal duty resting on America, of giving light and liberty and happiness to the world, we would weep bitterly and lament the day our sovereignty here began. The islands have come into our case. Let us care for them. The bad in them may need chastisement; we ought to be as faithful in this duty as in any other.

"The people need, above all things else, the blessings of American liberty and enlightenment. America must in duty give to these people the rich gifts God has given to us.

"There is firing off to our right. Insurgents are going north across the river. Our troops are now firing upon them. These are interesting days.

"WILLIAM S. GILBERT,
"Chaplain, Second Oregon."

LETTER FROM MANILA.
Lee Harding Tells of the Inhuman Treatment of Our Boys by the Enemy.
MALINTA, P. I. April 17, 1899.
My Dear Folks.—As you see, we are still in the Philippines, the place where

we started for and reached about a year ago, and you will also notice that we are at Malinta as my last letter told you, but since that one went we have had much trouble, as the following will show:

As it happened to be my turn at guard I was enabled to see and hear much of that awful night of the 19th when companies M, A, E, and L were all attacked by the insurgents. At 2 o'clock a. m. just as I was about to post the new relief that was patrolling the track, I saw a bright red light suddenly flash up and burn for about a minute, in the direction of those four companies. It was followed by a green light which soon disappeared and all was quiet until about 2:45 a. m. when heavy volley firing was heard in that direction. Before going farther I will describe the positions held by our command. Malinta is about 10 miles from Manila, there being companies B, C, I, G, and K at that place; on up the road about three miles is company F guarding a bridge; further on, another three and one-half miles is company M at another bridge; while at another bridge three miles away are companies A, E, L. Each has one bridge to guard and one-half of the three miles between each is patrolled by the commands at each end.

The attack was made on company M and companies A, E, L, who were totally surprised by the enemy who surrounded both camps by crawling on their hands and knees past the outposts until they were almost in the camps when they opened a very heavy fire. Although our boys were in bed and asleep it was not long before they were out and giving the "niggers" what they needed. But company C was forced to retreat to an old building close at hand and leave their camp. The natives succeeded in taking the mess kit and oxen-carts away from the company's kitchen. Nothing was taken from the camp as our boys fired into their tents, thus saving their property.

Mean time a most blood-thirsty deed had been committed by villainous natives who are worse than our Apaches in their fiendish tricks. An outpost from company M who was making its way toward camp and had almost reached it, was met by a Colorado man, who was in charge of a section gang at that company's quarters, who told the six men (that composed the outpost) that their company was cut up and that they also would be murdered if they went any further. So they started back toward company F's camp. They had gone hardly a half mile when without a word, the cowardly insurgents fired into them from all sides and not ten feet away. Two men, Payne and Millard, dropped instantly. Payne with half of his head gone and Millard with a hole in his side. Berry soon was down, shot through the stomach. Hoffman, the last to fall, made a heroic effort for his and his comrades lives. As he could fire no more than one shot he swung his rifle with good success until he was brought down, dead, but not conquered. Pullen shot in the arm, and Bennett, uninjured, ran at the first fire and reached camp several hours later.

After these four men were down the demons stabbed, beat, kicked and abused them until they thought all were dead, then they stripped them of all clothing and began quarreling over the guns—three Springfields and one Krag-Jorgenson, and a gold watch taken from Berry. Then with a final kick they left. But think of it, two of the boys lived through it all, one to die after reaching camp at 8 o'clock next morning, the other being still alive, with a good chance for life. Berry and Millard, although nearly dead, feigned death, thus escaping. They lay as they were until daylight, when a party was sent out to find them. As I have said, Berry soon died, although conscious to the last. Millard was expected to die, but is doing nicely now. After he went down they shot him through the arm, then stabbed him near the same wound, then in the abdomen, but the knife did not go deep enough to kill. To see if he was dead they lit matches and put them to his face and feet until he was badly burned.

We heard the firing here. It lasted about an hour and a half, but no more men were injured on our side. The next day we went up to the place and under General Wheaton, our regiment with the Minnesota regiment camped for the night about two miles where the natives were known to be.

Early next morning we started to take a town about seven miles away. (Santa Maria.) The first town was taken with no trouble, but as we advanced on Santa Maria, we were met by heavy volleys from stone buildings and the big church. Under this heavy fire the whole regiment crossed a small river, then gave them volley after volley. We were supported by a 3-inch gun and a Hotchkiss rapid fire gun. The town was soon vacated by the fleeing insurgents after a half hour's firing. We marched in and found a very orderly place with good buildings, in fact a model native town. Five Chinamen surrendered to us, telling us that

(Continued on page six)