

HOT FIGHTING IN THE PHILIPPINES.

The Americans Capture Line After Line of Trenches.

Four Days of Fighting, and What Became of It—Natives Always Retreat Before the Charge of the Volunteers.

WASHINGTON, March 29.—The fiercest fighting of the Philippine war has just taken place in an advance of the American troops, beginning at 6 o'clock on Saturday morning last and continuing up to the present. It was the design of Gen. Otis, the commander of the Americans, to drive his army, wedge-like, through the heart of the insurgent force, dividing it into two pieces and then massing his troops against one at a time; this was partially accomplished on Saturday after fierce fighting, and 5,000 of the enemy were cut off from the force near Polo, but during the night they drew off and the plan of the Americans was defeated. A series of pitched battles extending through three days finally resulted in the insurgents taking up a retreat, and at this hour the campaign is in the nature of a stern chase. The insurgents removed their capital to Malolos, but the American forces are almost in sight of it and the stronghold will be theirs within 24 hours. Seeing this, the rebels hastily quitted the capital and removed further into the interior.

THE FIRST BATTLE.

MANILA, March 25.—The American forces under Gens. Hale, Hall, Wheaton and MacArthur advanced along the whole line at 6 o'clock this morning. The line was six miles long and ran from San Juan del Monte to Calocan. The enemy had been warned by the American campfires and were in battle array. The country to be crossed by the Americans was rough and open, while the insurgents were well protected by lines of breastworks, some covered with sheet-iron and provided with port-holes. It was a day of the utmost gallantry. The Americans advanced at double quick, yelling fiercely, dropping to the grass occasionally and sending volley after volley at the enemy's entrenchments. The rebels reserved their fire until the Americans were within 1,000 yards; then they broke loose and their fire became galling. Bullets flew through the air like hail stones. The Americans never wavered, but pressed forward steadily, yelling like demons and carrying everything before them. When they had arrived within 200 yards of the enemy's lines, the latter broke and fled for the woods. At that short range the American fire mowed the rebels down like grass, so that when the lines were reached it was found that pursuit would be over the bodies of dead and disabled. But they pressed on through the woods to another thicket where were trenches in a growth so thick that the soldiers had to force their bodies through while volley after volley rained from hidden barricades. The enemy fled in disorder, breaking their guns as they were discarded. The piles of dead and wounded presented a ghastly sight.

As the American line swung northwest and came to the Tulahoan river, Wheaton's brigade moved out from Calocan and swept the trenches directly in front, killing hundreds of insurgents. On the other side of the river were solid ranks of insurgents in trenches. The bridge at Calocan had been destroyed but the enemy had to be dislodged. The third Kansas artillery was selected for the dangerous enterprise. The insurgent bullets tore up the dust and cut the limbs from trees as they flew in clouds, but the gallant Kansans boldly waded or swam across the river in it all and then, their garments dripping with water, charged the trenches. It was not in the nature of the Filipinos to stand such a charge and they broke and fled, leaving scores of their numbers dead and wounded upon the field.

While this was going on, the brigades of Otis and Hale swept the country clear to the water-works at the foothills and captured the railroad which hastened the climax of the day's triumph. MacArthur's right wing closed in on the town of Polo and 5,000 of the insurgents were closed off from the main army. Only the approach of nightfall prevented MacArthur from delivering the final blow.

The American loss was 25 dead and 150 wounded, while the insurgent lost not less than 500. The fields and woods are littered with their corpses, while 250 dead were found in the trenches.

The American forces engaged in the action are estimated at 10,000 and those of the insurgents at 12,000, with a reserve force of 18,000 men not far distant.

At this time the rebels are in full retreat up the Valley towards Malolos, where Aguinaldo has his capital and his strongest fighting forces.

Today's fighting furnished a specimen of the difficulties with which the Americans have to contend. The Filipinos never, except at Malalison, permitted their opponents to get within several hundred yards of them. They would fire a few volleys from their cover and then scuttle back to another cover, repeating these tactics for miles. Many of the trenches had gullies and connecting paths through the cane and brush, enabling them to retreat unseen.

THE SECOND DAY.

MANILA, March 26.—The American troops under Wheaton made an advance today and captured the town of Malinta, beyond the Tulahoan river. This was accomplished only after the railroad bridge had been repaired. Rising, clear ground stretched away from the river to the village, half a mile beyond. Strong intrenchments had been made before the village, and when the Americans were within 300 yards of these the Filipinos suddenly volleyed

heavily. The Americans suffered considerably, but pressed forward in a semi-circle and the insurgents finally retreated. During this encounter, Col. Henry C. Egbert was fatally wounded. The enemy had an immense advantage in point of position, though their numbers were less than the Americans.

Gen. MacArthur's command joined Gen. Wheaton here, and after luncheon advanced toward Polo along the railroad. A series of entrenchments manned with hidden rebels, barred the way, but many of them were taken possession of. The advance along this way will be continued. The American loss was 7 killed and 25 wounded.

MANILA, March 26.—The Americans have discovered the important town of Polo to be deserted and burning. Malalison has also been deserted, owing to a severe shelling by the gunboats. The evacuation was a picturesque sight, thousands of people, women and children loaded down with household goods, some with their dearest treasures—fighting cocks—under their arms, poured across the swamps in the early morning. The second Oregon regiment encountered a thousand Filipinos west of Malinta, who were retreating from Malalison. The enemy had taken up a position behind four rows of entrenchments, but was driven out after an hour's heavy firing. One Oregonian was killed and five were wounded.

The Third artillery, acting as infantry, with two guns of the Utah artillery and the Kansas, had a sharp fight east of Malinta. The Americans had but slight losses. The Filipinos were found dead and several were taken prisoners.

AMONG THE DEAD.

Among the dead are Capt. George H. Fortson, of Seattle, Wash., and Prince Ludwig Carl Lowenstein. Capt. Fortson was one of the most gallant of soldiers and had won, by his daring, the sobriquet of "Terror of the Pasig."

THE THIRD DAY.

MANILA, March 27.—The third day of the fighting north of this city was expected to be of the severest nature, and in that feature there was no disappointment. The action opened immediately upon the Americans beginning their advance, the insurgents opening a heavy fire upon Otis' advance guard. The artillery men responded so heartily that the enemy were driven helter-skelter across the river to Malalison. Here the rebels retired within their trenches and made a stand. It was a fatal last, for under repeated volleys from the Utah battery and automatic coils they were completely routed, leaving many dead and wounded on the field.

In the meantime the men of the First South Dakota had performed one of the most notable feats of the campaign. Charging justly they charged across an open field against the main line of the insurgent forces which were lying partly concealed in the thicket. It was a daring act, for across the plain the insurgents poured a perfect rain of bullets. Two of the gallant men were killed and eleven wounded, but they dispersed the enemy with a known loss of 88 captured and wounded many more. The survivors fled in disorder toward Malolos.

The pursuit will be maintained throughout the day and it is hoped MacArthur will bivouac tonight within sight of the insurgent capital. It is believed that Aguinaldo commanded his men in person this morning.

MANILA, March 27.—The advance of the American forces under Generals Otis and Hale was again temporarily stayed this afternoon at a little town surrounded by groves. The rebels were entrenched and the nature of their fire indicated that they were veterans, probably members of the native militia organized by the Spaniards. The American artillery soon put a dramatic end to the battle. The fire soon routed the rebels and most of them broke into flight. A body of one hundred raised a flag of truce over their entrenchments and also shouted "amigos" (friends). Col. Funston and twenty Kansas men swam the river and captured 50 prisoners, with all their arms. The Pennsylvania regiment captured forty prisoners.

7:30 p. m.—The Americans refrained from burning the town captured this afternoon and are resting here tonight.

Some disappointment is experienced by the Americans because the rebels wriggled from the trap set to split their forces; but it is confidently believed they cannot hold out long. They will be given no rest by Otis and must eventually be worn out. It is simply a slow, dogged retreat of the rebels toward Malolos, the capital, and a steady advance of the Americans.

THE FOURTH DAY.

MANILA, March 28.—The main portion of the American army made only a slight advance today owing to the necessity of building pontoons for the crossing of the river. MacArthur's advance guard reported yesterday afternoon that the town of Bulacan had been deserted and partially burned; it was feared, however, that the rebels were concealed in order to deceive the Americans and this belief was justified when the gunboats Laguna de Bay and Napitona proceeded up the Bulacan river, shelling the jungle on both sides. The enemy were dislodged in large numbers and sustained heavy losses. Three men on the Laguna de Bay were wounded by riflemen on shore. The clearing of the country by the gunboats will materially aid the advance of the army when it is renewed. The army only advanced two and a half miles this morning. Twenty insurgents with their throats cut were found. It is believed the men were slaughtered because of their refusal to continue the fight against the Americans.

MANILA, March 28.—The insurgent capital has been removed from Malolos to San Fernando. Aguinaldo is also sending his family there. This action is looked upon as very significant. It is known that the Filipinos are fast losing faith in their leader and many refuse to longer follow him.

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