

THE CAPTURE OF THE ABBEY

An Incident of the Spanish-American War.

Written by Lieutenant W. E. Atlee
Who Fired the First Gun of That
Short but Sharp Conflict.

[From Monday's Daily.]

About five weeks after the fall of Manila, the Asiatic squadron under command of Rear Admiral George Dewey, was lying peacefully at anchor in the Bay of Manila, the Olympia, the flagship, and a portion of the squadron, were at anchor near Cavite, while the remainder of the squadron lay off the front of the city of Manila, near the mouth of the Pasig river. The McCulloch was anchored close under the breakwater engaged in taking tidal observations, with no thought of moving. The starboard watch had been granted liberty until the following morning, when at about 7:15 o'clock the signal man on watch reported to the officer of the deck that the flagship was "calling." This announcement excited interest in all on board. The McCulloch answered that the signal was understood. The flagship then signaled "Come within hail," and in 15 minutes the McCulloch was underway and steaming towards the flagship. A steam launch put out from her and steamed alongside us with orders for our commanding officer to report to the admiral. Ten minutes later our commanding officer returned on board bringing with him the following copy of a telegram: "The American steamer Abbey left Macao for Batangas on the 21st inst. with arms for Aguinaldo. (Signed) U. S. Consul, Hongkong," and also order to seize the Abbey and bring her to Manila. It is needless to state that the officers and crew were delighted at the prospect. We were all anxious for the capture and wondered what kind of a vessel the Abbey might be, and whether she would show fight. The night was a perfect one, such a night as is only seen in the tropics. Our course lay through the beautiful Verde Island passage, which is formed by the mainland of the Island of Luzon and the islands that lie off the shore. The water is as smooth as a mill pond and the scenery grand. The town of Batangas is situated at the head of the beautiful bay of that name and was at that time the principal stronghold of the insurgents. It was strongly fortified and well garrisoned, and about one hundred miles from Manila, to the southward and eastward.

We had calculated that our prize would in all probability reach the entrance to Batangas bay about daylight in the morning, and we regulated our speed so as to reach there before that time. It must be remembered that one-half the crew had been left behind at Manila, and we had to make the best of it in our shorthanded condition. This told on the poor firemen who had to perform double duty, no small matter when one considers that the temperature on deck (in the shade) was 92 degrees, and in the fireroom it must have been 120 degrees. However, everyone went about his double duty cheerfully. 'Twas the admiral's orders, and that in itself was enough to encourage the crew; for we had all learned to love him, and to think that he had selected the McCulloch for this important mission made us feel proud.

Day was now breaking, and we were off the entrance to Batangas bay. The outlook reported "smoke ahead." The word was passed along to those of us who were sleeping, and in an incredibly short space of time all hands were on deck and looking eagerly in the direction of the cloud of smoke that was drawing gradually closer to us. The question was, would there be a fight. We were ready for her, the battery had been cast loose, the guns' crew had been called to quarters, and there was nothing left undone. The vessel was standing off our way. She was soon made out to be a two-masted steamer, and her hull was painted black. On she came. A boat was got ready to lower, and an officer was detailed to board her when she came near enough. Finally she hoisted her ensign. It was the Stars and Stripes. We were confident that we had our prize now. She was quite near to us, but apparently paid not the slightest attention to us, and in order to bring her to we placed ourselves across her bows and lowered our boat, the officer in charge having been instructed to ascertain her character. Our prize was seen to slow down and finally to stop. All eyes were upon her, when our dream was suddenly dispelled by the officer of the deck, who, having his

glasses leveled at her, slowly read her name—"S-a-n-t-a-n-d-e-r." It was the coasting steamer, Santander. We all felt foolish, and indeed we looked it.

On the return of the boarding officer, the boat was hoisted, and it was decided to enter Batangas bay and follow the shore around, keeping a bright lookout. The town of Batangas came into view at the head of the bay, and as we drew nearer, a small steamer was seen to be lying at anchor, close to, and directly in front of the town, as we steered for her. She proved to be the Abbey. We stopped close to her and sent an officer with instructions to bring her master on board with the vessel's papers. Her master, who was a Filipino, returned with the boarding officer, but could give no satisfactory account of the Abbey nor how he came to be master of her; so our captain informed him that the Abbey had been seized, and would be taken at once to Manila. Strangely, her master seemed to be highly pleased, and asked permission to go on shore and get his wife and family to take them to Manila with him. This being granted, he was given two hours to get them. An officer, with a detail of men, was sent on board to take charge of her, and to ascertain her condition. Search resulted in finding a small number of rifles and swords, and 2000 rounds of ammunition, which were placed in one of the deck staterooms and an armed sentinel stationed at the door. The engineer reported the machinery in order and ready to get up steam. A large towing hawser was led from the McCulloch to the Abbey, and preparations made for towing her away. While this work was in progress a number of natives came on board. They were principally women and children, who claimed to be the families of the members of the crew of the Abbey, and wanted to go to Manila. They were allowed to come.

The two hours granted the master to enable him to bring his family off had now expired, and he was seen nearing the vessel. We got under way, having on board about 60 natives, and started out of the bay. We had not fairly started when a large war canoe, filled with armed natives, was seen approaching from the direction of Batangas. Two of the men were standing and urging the others to paddle faster. We slowed down in order to allow them to come up. As soon as they were close enough to hail us, the spokesman of the party announced that he was an American, serving as the private secretary to the governor of Batangas, who was in the canoe with him, and wanted to know what we meant by taking the Abbey away so unceremoniously. He was informed that Admiral Dewey had ordered us to bring the Abbey to Manila. The governor then requested us to wait until he could communicate with Aguinaldo, which request was not granted, and we proceeded on our way, while the governor started for the town as fast as he could go.

Just as we had fairly started an insurgent gunboat was seen entering the bay. We went to "general quarters" as a precautionary measure, in the event of any interference, and kept our guns trained on her until she had passed by on her way to Batangas. By this time we were out of the bay and steaming along at a ten-knot speed. The afternoon was very hot, the party of two officers and six men on board the Abbey was divided into two watches, and had every prospect of spending a comfortable night on board, the officers remaining on the bridge, where the steering could be watched, and the men stationed in the pilot house to do the steering. The native crew offered to do all the work, but we deemed it best not to trust them. Just before sunset, the distant rumbling of thunder was heard; black clouds were covering the sky, a gentle northeast breeze had sprung up, a blinding flash of lightning accompanied by a deafening clap of thunder and a sudden downpour of rain that drenched us to the skin, for we were clad in white duck suits and wore cork helmets. This storm lasted for two hours, when it passed away as suddenly as it had come; the most severe electrical storm that we had ever witnessed. The officers on the bridge of the Abbey had to pass the remainder of the long night in their wet clothes, and it was one of the most uncomfortable nights that I ever passed. The sky was clear and beautiful, but a moderate breeze made it uncomfortably cool for us. We reached the entrance to Manila bay just before midnight, and at 2:30 a. m. arrived off Cavite, signaled the flagship and anchored.

After breakfast the Abbey was delivered to an officer from the flagship, who brought with him a detachment of seamen, to guard her. The crew and passengers were permitted to land, and make their way to Manila. The admiral complimented our captain upon the seizure, and told him that shortly after we had left for Batangas, he learned, much to his surprise, that Batangas was the stronghold of the insurgents, and was strongly fortified with masked batteries. He ventured the opinion that, had the insurgent governor reached shore in time, we should have had a lively time of it, for it was more than likely that the batteries would have opened fire on us.

An officer was detailed from the McCulloch to go on shore and obtain any information regarding the Abbey expedition. It was learned from good authority that a party of American citizens had purchased the vessel from a Chinese merchant, named her Abbey, took out an American register, proceeded to Manila, loaded her with arms and ammunition, proceeded to Batangas, and sold her and her charge to Aguinaldo, and that she had been at Batangas two weeks when the McCulloch seized her.

Four hours after the McCulloch had arrived at Cavite, the same insurgent gunboat seen by us as we were leaving Batangas, steamed into Canacao bay and anchored near the Abbey. Later we learned that she had been sent after us, for the purpose of rescuing the Abbey. —Lieut. W. E. Atlee in Alaskan Magazine.

Skagway's Grievance.

Gen. O. L. Spaulding, first assistant secretary of the United States treasury, who has been to Skagway and other Lynn canal ports, on a trip of general observation, returned to Seattle on the revenue cutter Grant last night. He will leave this morning for Helena, Mont., where he will stop a few days and thence proceed to Washington City, reaching the capital about Aug. 17. While at Skagway Gen. Spaulding attended a meeting of the chamber of commerce and discussed with the merchants of that place their grievances against the bonding privileges now accorded British shippers. In speaking of the matter last night, he stated that any petition from the Skagway people regarding the matter would receive full consideration at the hands of the government, but that he himself would not make any special report regarding the situation.

"I went up to learn something about the country in general and not specially to make an investigation of the bonding privileges," he said last night. "Skagway, as far as the bonding matter is concerned, is receiving exactly the same treatment as every other port of the United States. If the merchants' present desire for the abolition of the support of Skagway were fulfilled, I believe they would not find the change to their liking. I do not believe such a change would be wise for Skagway, but if they do address any petition to the department, it will be fully considered."

"I do not see how we could make any change as regards the bonding privilege. We can hardly make an exception in the case of Skagway. The grievances of the Skagway merchants are largely aimed at the Canadian customs authorities and it is not for us to attempt to dictate to Canada regarding her own regulations. We would not take it very kindly were she to attempt to dictate to us."

"Part of the trouble up there seems to grow out of methods of administration which are inadequate for the great development of the country. A large business was suddenly inaugurated in Skagway without adequate means of administration. In the course of time these grievances will disappear."

"As far as the closing of the support at Skagway is concerned, as I stated before, I do not believe it would be a wise change. It would shut out all except American ships in domestic trade. I am willing to help the Skagway merchants to secure an adjustment of their trade matters, but believe this remedy would be too severe."

Gen. Spaulding, on his trip north visited Bennett City, Wrangel, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan and adjacent points of interest. He was much impressed with the country. —P.-I. Aug. 8.

An Indian's Crime.

Ottawa, Aug. 1.—Further details of an alleged murder which occurred three months ago, 100 miles north of Maniwack, brief mention of which was made a few days ago, have reached here. The murder is said to have occurred at Lake La Bardiere. The story goes that an Indian named Tete De Boule, it is alleged, killed all his relatives, his uncle, his wife and child. Two years ago the man is said to have killed his old uncle while in a rage. Ten months ago he and his wife and a baby girl went beaver hunting. The child, when it caught sight of a beaver, made an exclamation of joy, frightened the animal, whereupon the father is alleged to have torn the child from the mother, placed its head under water until life was extinct. A few months later it is alleged, the Indian killed his wife by cutting a hole in the ice and putting her head in the water, holding her in that position until life was extinct, and then hid the body for some time afterwards.

THE RISE OF EAGLE CITY

Which Promises to Become a Point of Importance.

What is Being Done Down There and What is Proposed for the Future—The Mines Good.

That Eagle City has a long start of its competitors on the American side in the race for first place as a mining and commercial center, there is now no room for doubt. Eagle was not, like some individual, created great, and if greatness has been, or now seems to be in process of being thrust upon her, it is because it is deserved, and is the slow but healthy outcome of long years of patient endeavor and honest labor, and not to any boom or process of booming. Just a healthy, honest growth which received its first impetus from sour dough miners, years ago when grub stakes were about all that ever came to gladden the heart of the Alaskan gold seeker.

Recognizing the coming importance of Eagle City by reason of the persistent favorable reports coming up the river, the Nugget sent a representative to verify or disprove the stories current, and the following account of the investigation is given as a result:

The mining industry is to Eagle City what it is and must continue to be to every town in Alaska not situated on the sea coast, the breath of life, and the mines of the district are in a healthy, prosperous condition, with every indication that with future development will come an increase in their production.

At present American creek is of principal importance because it has been more extensively prospected than any other creek in the district, although it would be an overstatement of the truth to say that even this creek had been thoroughly prospected. It enters Mission creek about one and a half miles above Eagle, and is many miles in length, throughout which, from time to time, have been made good finds both in nuggets and coarse gold. The most recent strike was made quite recently by the owner of No. 10 above discovery, Mr. John Jensen, who tapped a 30-foot pay streak which returns anywhere from \$65 to \$100 per day to the shovel. Eight or ten men are working there now, where the ground upon which the deadwork has previously been performed, is nearly worked out. As soon as this is done work preparatory to next summer's sluicing will be commenced.

Much work of the development order throughout the district, but especially on this creek and its tributaries is being done, and this has received a great stimulus through Jensen's discovery. Numerous claims are being worked both below and above No. 10, but none of them have yet been thoroughly prospected, and as a consequence of this do not yield such large returns.

The reasons for this are many and easy of comprehension. The fabulous richness of the best of the Klondike mines, have generally had a tendency to dissatisfy miners with ground that yielded less, and the Nome bubble also drew many away who might otherwise have done well where they were. Other stampedees nearer home have also helped to draw working owners from the Eagle district. Again, many of the claims were staked by Dawson miners who have contented themselves with doing merely the assessment work called for by law, leaving the true development work to any who would do it. Now, however, the miners have awakened to the fact that a pretty good thing seems to be in sight, at home, and the district is becoming very active in consequence, and from 6 below to 17 above on American creek, work is being pushed. Mr. H. G. Torrence, general manager of the Alaskan syndicate, which owns a total of about 75 claims in the district, is on the ground supervising the prospecting work of 48 miners.

Granite, or the middle fork of Forty-mile, which is about 75 miles distant from, though tributary to Eagle, is receiving some attention also, as two pack trains accompanied by a large party of prospectors went there from Eagle about 10 days since.

Barney creek has claims working this summer which yield \$45 per day to the man. Discovery Fork, the principal tributary of American creek, so far as prospected produces good pay also. Generally speaking, the whole district is looking well from a mining standpoint, and promises very soon to be second to none on the Yukon.

People coming up the river from Nome commonly remark the air of life and general activity of the town as compared with other places they have seen below, but of course this is not due to the mines wholly. Much work is being done by the military, which is busy building large barracks and otherwise improving and making the post ready for occupancy as the military headquarters of Alaska.

But there is yet another reason why Eagle must assume paramount importance between the boundary line and St. Michael, and that is by reason of the telegraph line now in course of construction between Valdez and Eagle.

In order to get reliable information on this subject, Lieutenant Rogers, the commanding officer of Fort Egbert, was called upon and interrogated upon the subject. He said: "Yes, your information is quite correct concerning the present governmental construction of a telegraph line from Valdez to this point. So far as my latest information goes, there are now complete 120 miles of the line. The entire distance is 450 miles, and I believe the obstacles in the way of construction are inconsiderable."

"When will be the line be completed?" was asked.

"That will depend so much on matters upon which I have such meagre information that I can give no opinion. There are, so I am informed, 60 men on their way here, with supplies, to commence operations at this end of the line, and of course this will greatly contribute to shortening the time of completion."

"Can you give the Nugget any information concerning the present condition of affairs with regard to the proposed railroad between this point and Valdez?"

"Nothing of a definite nature is yet known here concerning the matter, beyond the fact that there is a deadlock between the company desiring to build the road and the department. The trouble appears to be that the company demands certain concessions effecting mineral lands and military affairs which the departments governing these matters will not concede."

The road which the company desires to build will extend from Valdez which is situated on Portage bay, an inlet of Prince William sound, to Eagle City, its terminus, and will tap and render tributary to Eagle the districts of Tanana, Copper river, Forty-mile and Seventymile, and would be an all-American route.

As an incentive to build this road, the company, which is said to be composed of New York capitalists, has already some very valuable and extensive copper interests on the headwaters of the Copper river. There are at present in the town of Eagle about 400 people, which number is being augmented by every steamer coming up the river, which brings its load of sadder but more wise miners who have been to Nome.

Each of the larger companies of Dawson have a store at Eagle, managed by men who prove by their cordial reception of strangers the wisdom of the home officers in selecting the proper men to fill responsible positions, and anyone who goes to Eagle on business or pleasure may be sure in advance of a pleasant reception.

The recent establishment of a court there will also tend largely to increase the business of the town proper and add much to its growing importance.

These are some of the reasons why Eagle City is talked of so much of late as a coming town of much importance, and its prospects to an outsider seem bright indeed.

Citizens Committee.

The citizens' committee at their meeting Saturday evening decided to at once press the Yukon council to carry into effect the expressed wish of the governor general, the prime minister and parliament and have the election of two members of the Yukon council at once. Some exception was taken to the form of ballot which was described in the draft ordinance and a secret ballot was the only one acceptable to the representatives of the citizens.

It was pointed out that the citizens' in mass meeting had decided on two occasions that no incorporation ordinance should be even considered until the two people's representatives had been elected, and each member of the committee was urged to use his influence to have the wish of the people obeyed in this respect.

Great satisfaction was expressed at the appointment of Major Z. T. Wood to the council.

Heavy Gold Shipment.

New York, Aug. 15, via Skagway, Aug. 20.—Eight million dollars in gold were shipped to London today.

Special Power of Attorney forms for sale at the Nugget office.

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