

Other Workers and Work.

SPANISH RULE IN THE PHILIPPINES.

The Philippine Islands lie wholly within the Tropics, reaching at the south to within four and a half degrees of the equator. Big and little, they number some six hundred, varying in size from Luzon, with its 40,000 square miles, to tiny islets hardly worthy of the name. The islands are in most instances of volcanic origin, and several fine volcanic peaks may still be seen in Luzon, Negros, and Mindanao. Destructive eruptions have occurred within recent times, while earthquakes are frequent and often of great violence.

The climate is intensely hot and in many of the islands very unhealthy for Europeans. There are four months of rain, four of sun, with intense heat, and four months of variable weather at each change of the seasons. Revolving storms of great magnitude and frightful violence occur at certain seasons, and frequently cause enormous damage to property, attended with heavy loss of life.

The tropical scenery in the forests of this archipelago is of unsurpassed splendor, the heat and moisture combining to produce vegetation of magnificence which beggars description. Gigantic trees, towering to a height of two or three hundred feet, are festooned with graceful rattans, beautiful ferns, and exquisite orchids, while underneath splendid tree-ferns rear their lovely heads thirty or forty feet into air. So dense is the vegetation in some of these forests that the fierce tropical sun hardly penetrates to the ground beneath them, and the dense undergrowth perpetually drips with moisture.

The population of the islands is estimated at from eight to ten millions. The natives are divided into something like two hundred tribes, each with its peculiar dialect and customs. With the single exception of the Negritos, these tribes are of Malay extraction. The latter people are a race of dwarfish blacks, confined at present to a few of the loftiest mountain ranges. They are characterized not alone by their color, but by the possession of closely curling hair, which serves at once to distinguish them from the straight-haired Malay races. They are commonly believed to be the aborigines of the islands.

A more degraded race could hardly be conceived. They wander through the forests in a state bordering closely on absolute nudity, and live on whatever they can pick from the trees or dig out of the ground. They never practise agriculture, but sometimes hunt a little, and are said to eat much of their animal food raw. They build no houses during the dry season, sleeping wherever night overtakes them, and moving on

when the flies become troublesome. They are a puny, sickly race, and are rapidly becoming extinct.

Turning now to the tribes of Malay origin, we find them varying in their development from a state of absolute savagery to civilization. The interiors of several of the larger islands are populated by nearly naked tribes, many of whose members have never seen a white man. Having nothing to excite the cupidity of the Spanish, they are completely independent.

The Mangyams of Mindoro absolutely deny any belief in an existence after death, invariably replying, when questioned, that when a man is dead he is dead! As soon as one of their number falls seriously ill, he is deserted by his friends, who abandon all their belongings, and run away and hide themselves in the jungle, changing their names to insure better luck in future.

Extreme poverty is the rule among the civilized natives, and its cause is found in the heavy burden of taxation imposed upon them by their Spanish masters. Every person over eighteen years of age is required to procure annually a credula personal, or document of identification, the charge for which varies from \$1.50 to \$25, according to the means of the applicant.

The average native has little or no opportunity to work for hire, and if he does succeed in securing employment, his wages are often not more than five cents per day. He is usually unable to dispose of his farm products for cash, being compelled to exchange them for other commodities.

In addition to this personal tax there is a tax on coconut-trees, a tax on beasts of burden, a tax on killing animals for food, a tax for keeping a shop, a tax on mills and oil-presses, a tax on weights and measures, a tax on cock-fighting, and so on to the end of the chapter. At every turn the poor native finds himself face to face with the dire necessity of paying tribute; and he frequently spends his life in an ineffectual effort to meet the obligations thus imposed.

If the enormous sums thus raised were expended even in part in the improvement of the colony, there might be some justification for its collection. While the laws in regard to its disposition are not entirely bad, in actual practise it for the most part finds its way into the pockets of the Spanish officials, the annual surplus amounting to not more than eight or nine millions of dollars.

While the officials fatten the natives are left to die like cattle, if epidemic disease breaks out among them, or to starve if their crops fail. There are, as a rule, no roads worthy of the name. There is no justice, except for those able to pay liberally for it, and, worst of all, there is no opportunity for education, except in one or two of the largest cities, and even there the facilities offered are very poor.

The Spanish law provides for the teaching