

THE FARMERSVILLE REPORTER.

Manilla in 1842.
 BY BURT NOTIRE, FARMERSVILLE.

The city of Manilla, capital of the Spanish possessions in the Pacific, is situated on the island of Luzon (or Lewconia), one of the group called the Phillipines, at the head of a large bay, or, more properly speaking, an inland sea. The city proper is fortified, being surrounded by a wide wall and bastions, on which are mounted artillery and are paced day and night by sentinels. Admission is gained through four gates, three large enough for vehicles and one on the river side of the city only large enough for foot passengers. In peaceable times ingress and egress is free for all from 6 a. m. till 9 p. m., but after that hour can only be had by possession of the password for the night. One evening, having inadvertently stayed in the city till the gates were shut, I was unable to return to my boarding house, and not caring to return to my friend's house, I had to take up quarters in the guard-room for the night. Having a slight acquaintance with one of the officers on duty, I spent quite a pleasant hour or two with them, smoking "Manillas" and giving and receiving alternate lessons in Spanish and English. The Spanish officers, when once acquainted, are the best fellows going and cannot do enough for a visitor, especially a foreigner, when once introduced. The climate is warm, but not oppressively so. Fires for warmth are unknown, and the coolest night I passed there during a stay of some seven months, I never needed more than a sheet to keep off mosquitoes. The population consists of several classes, each very exclusive as regards the others, but all very hospitable and entertaining to visitors. There are the Spaniards proper nearly all of whom are the Government officials and political offenders from Old Spain and the higher ecclesiastics. These are all very aristocratic. Then there are the natives born of Spanish parents, mostly descendants of the political offenders and refugees, which, from a country like Old Spain, are not a few, and these, with their numbers increased on the arrival of every boat from the old country, form a very numerous class and retain all their native peculiarities. The young men are mostly officers in the native regiments, and some, but very few, are engaged in mercantile pursuits. Another distinct class are the "Mestizos," descendants of Spanish fathers and native mothers, a very numerous body. The males are a very fine body of men and show more of the Spaniard than their sisters, who combine the beauties of the Spaniard and Malay, with a preponderance of the latter. After these come the "Tagal," or natives proper of the group, and though last, not altogether least. The Chinese, looked down upon by all and spit upon and spurned by Spaniard, Mestizo and Tagal, they are there as elsewhere the men of all work, however mean or low, and there are, at the same time, among them some of the largest and heaviest merchants in the place—men whose word would pass current in any mercantile establishment for thousands of doubloons, but socially ostracised by all,

except the foreign merchants. The Spaniards spurn them as idolaters and the Tagal follows suit. Nearly all the shops in the suburbs are owned and conducted by them. The suburbs of the city are of very wide extent, the population exceeding 100,000, and that of the city proper, including military, cannot exceed 5,000. In the centre is the plaza, or public square. On one side stands the cathedral, an immense building, not remarkable for architectural beauty, either inside or outside, but the riches of the interior are immense. The high altar is plated beautifully with silver over an inch thick and the tracery is splendid. The railing around is about two feet high and all silver. When illuminated on high occasions, with the priests in their places and the acolytes swinging their gold and silver censers of incense, accompanied with the chanting of the nuns behind their latticed galleries, and the eunuchs and musicians and singers of the choir, and the solemn peals of the grand old organ, I think it is one of the grandest sights almost ever seen. The altar itself is a fine thing, but the accompaniments make it sublime. I saw it at the close of the lenten season and the commencement of the Easter festivities, when the services were conducted by the Arch-Bishop, two Bishops and priests not a few, in the presence of the Governor-General and all the official dignitaries, and it was a sight once seen never to be forgotten. On another side of the plaza stands the residence of the Governor-General and the public offices, and the other two sides are occupied by a convent of Benedictines and a few private residences. Sunday and Thursday nights the military bands, some six or eight in number, play in front of the palace, and the square is filled with promenaders, the senoras and senoritas with their caballeros, all in full evening dress. In front of the city, between the city walls and the waters of the bay, is a wide space of some three or four hundred yards, and here every afternoon, from 4 till 6, may be seen all the beauty and gallantry of the place, in carriages or promenading, and exchanging compliments, forming a very pretty and lively scene. But a deep, solemn peal rings from a huge bell in the old cathedral tower, and the stranger starts as he is astounded at the sudden change. Every carriage is brought to a halt, every equestrian checks his animal, every pedestrian stands like a monument, and every head is uncovered as the pealing notes remind all that the hour calls for a minute's reverential adoration, or the "Ave Maria." The minute is passed, and again the promenade is resumed for a few minutes, and then nothing is heard but the wash of the waves on the deserted beach.

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