

THE WILD TRIBES OF THE PHILIPPINES.

BY PROF. J. B. STEERE.

The native inhabitants of the Philippines can be conveniently divided into four groups: the civilized Indians, the Mohammedans, the wild Indians and the Negritos or Attas. These same divisions existed at the coming of the Spanish in 1519, though their relative numbers, location and other conditions must have changed greatly since that time.

The wild and civilized Indians and the Mohammedans seem to be all of Malay origin and are closely related to each other and to the native tribes of Formosa on the north and Borneo and Celebes to the south.

The civilized Indians have increased rapidly since the Spanish occupation and are the real citizens and inhabitants of the Philippines. They occupy the coasts and the rich, level lands of the northern, central and eastern islands and have lately occupied new territory in Mindanao, Basilan, Palawan and Mindoro. They number, according to Spanish accounts, between six and seven millions.

The Mohammedans are decreasing in importance and probably in numbers also, but are still powerful in the south of the archipelago, where they occupy the Sulu Islands, a great part of Mindanao and Basilan, and have a foothold in Palawan. They number, according to Spanish statistics, about three hundred thousand. They appear to have been derived originally from native tribes of the same degree of civilization as the Christian Indians, but have fallen far behind them in progress, while the two religions have caused such separation and difference of customs and such mutual hatred as to make them really distinct peoples.

The Negritos or Attas are supposed to be of Papuan stock, and are, no doubt, the oldest living human inhabitants of the Philippines. They appear to have been driven by the flood of Malay invasion far inland into the mountains, where they have dwindled to a few thousand wandering, homeless savages. They are still found in certain portions of Luzon, Panay, Negros and according to some authorities, in Mindanao.

The uncivilized Indian tribes occupy much of the interior and mountainous parts of all the large islands of the group, except Cebu and Bohol, in which they have either been Christianized and merged with the civilized Indians or have been driven out. They still occupy nearly all the territory of the great islands of Mindoro and Palawan. They number, according to Spanish estimates, some three or four hundred thousand, belonging to over fifty different tribes.

They are shut off from the sea and means of communicating with one another and the outside world by the civilized Indians about them, and probably remain in much the same condition of savagery as when first observed by the Spanish.

It has been contrary to Spanish policy in the Philippines to subdue them by force, and, as they have usually remained at peace with their more powerful and better armed Christian neighbors, they still continue to exist beside them.

Missionary priests are still making some impression upon them in a few localities, and a few are baptized and become a part of the Christian communities; but this process is a slow one, for several reasons. One of these, no doubt, is the general apathy of the priests. But the Spanish treatment of the civilized Indians must have much to do in making these savages content with their present condition.

All persons of Indian blood who are Spanish subjects are compelled to pay an annual tribute of a few dollars, graduated according to age and sex. They are also compelled to live for a portion of the year at least in the incorporated towns, in which are churches, priests and government officials. These, with other forms of compulsory and unpaid service to the government and church, are claimed by the Spanish to be aids in civilization; the tribute making it necessary that the Indian, naturally indolent and improvident, earn or save something besides what he eats and wears, and the compulsory residence in the towns bringing him under the influence of the church and schools and other civilizing agencies.

These exactions of the Spanish government are enforced by the officials of the towns by flogging and imprisonment in the stocks.

The Indians find this system hard to bear, and their resentment is shown in the present and former rebellions. Their feeling toward the imposition of tribute is shown by their saying that the monkeys could talk if they would, but they keep silent, so as not to have to pay tribute.

Numbers of the civilized Indians, when in debt and unable or unwilling to pay tribute longer, escape to the mountains and forests, where they either join the savages directly or form little settlements of their own. The Spanish call these by the expressive term of *remontados*, men who have again mounted into the saddle of savagery. The aggregate of these *remontados* in the islands must be considerable. While at the town of Arevalo, in 1887, one of these men who had not entered his native town for three years, except as he had stolen in at night, paid his back tribute and other dues, from the money he earned as a hunter for our

party, and again became a citizen. A system which is driving many back to a savage life can have little attraction for the independent Indians, and while in many cases they allow their children to be baptized, they generally prefer their liberty to the advantages of a civilized life.

Like the civilized Indians, the savages are brown in color, with coarse, straight, black hair and little beard. They seem to be somewhat smaller and slighter of figure than their Christian neighbors.

Their languages show close kinship to those of the civilized tribes adjacent and also as close to those of the savages of Formosa. Few of the tribes possess lands fit for the cultivation of lowland rice, and fewer still have the necessary skill and implements and plow beasts (buffaloes) for cultivating such lands. Their recourse is the common one of savages nearly the world round—they cut off small portions of the forest during the dry season, and after burning this over, they plant, at the beginning of the rainy season, upland rice, maize, sweet potatoes, etc., among the blackened logs and stumps. The supply of food thus gained is usually insufficient, and after it is eaten up they lead a miserable existence, scouring the woods for game and wild fruit and going to the sea beach wherever they can reach it for shell fish and other food. Their method of cultivation compels continual change of place. Their little patches of cleared forest can only be cultivated in their rude way for one or two years, when they are abandoned and new pieces of forest chosen. In hunting I have repeatedly found heaps of shells and bones and bits of earthenware, proofs of former occupation, in the midst of apparently virgin forest.

Their houses are usually built after the plan of those of the civilized Indians—a basketlike structure of bamboo and palm leaves raised upon posts above the ground, but they are not so well built and are occupied but for a few years. They are not built into compact villages, but a few scattered houses are formed without streets, but near enough to be within call. Necessarily, what can be said of such a multitude of detached tribes in regard to their clothing, arms, religion, etc., must be of the most general character.

Their clothing usually consists solely of the *tapa-rabo*, or breech clout, all else generally being in the nature of ornament, and consisting of beads about the neck and head and arms, and anklets or leglets of boar's bristles, and frequently with bright colored pearl shells hanging upon the back or breast. The Spanish authorities do not allow the savages to enter the towns in their ordinary state of nakedness, which accounts for the unusual amount of clothing shown in the accompanying photographs. They frequently blacken the teeth, and in some cases file them to a point.

Some tribes wear a stiff, round hat similar to the *salacot* of the civilized Indians; other tribes wear a turban or go bareheaded. Tattooing is common among them, but varies with each tribe.

Their arms are a large knife or cutlass carried in a wooden scabbard, this serving for an ax and hoe as well as a weapon of war. In addition to this they carry a lance or spear, and some tribes are armed with bows and arrows. The more warlike tribes have shields of various forms.

Some of the wilder tribes of North Luzon are said still to hunt the heads of their enemies with which to ornament their dwellings, like the head-hunting savages of Formosa and the Dyaks of Borneo, but the tribes in contact with the Christian Indians content themselves with hanging the skulls of monkeys, deer, wild boars and buffaloes about their doors.

They all seem to have some idea of a great spirit who rules over the affairs of men. They also recognize spirits of lower orders, some good, some evil, the evil ones causing disease and death in men. Each village usually has one who serves as priest and doctor, who is supposed to be a special favorite of the great spirit. His chief duties seem to be to cure disease or to foretell its result. He is usually aided by certain old women who undertake to frighten away the evil spirit by cries and wild gestures. They do not appear to have idols, but some pay reverence to certain stones before which they place food and drink.

They have many forms of *tabu*, like the other island-dwelling people of the Pacific. At the death of a person a fence of bushes is built about the village, and for a certain period no one is allowed to enter or depart, food for those within being brought by friends to the fence, where it is received by those within.

They are usually monogamists, the wife being purchased from her parents. Divorce is common, the purchase price being returned with the divorced woman.

Their laws are proclaimed and enforced by the elders of the villages, rather than by chiefs or kings.

The Spanish, whenever they have come in contact with the wild tribes, have undertaken to gain influence among them by recognizing some head man of the village as chief, or *gobernadorcillo*, giving him as a symbol of his office a cane, and perhaps a few articles of cast-off military uniform.

My first visit to the Lagbanuas of Palawan was made in August of 1874. A small village of them existed near

the newly established Spanish town of Puerto Princesa. The patches of rice among which their houses were built were not yet ripe, but they were already rubbing out the soft kernels and roasting off the hulls and eating them. They appeared like walking skeletons, having not yet recovered from the long famine since the last harvest. I was taken to the house of the *gobernadorcillo*, whom I found sitting at his door, clothed like the rest in a breech clout. He had planted several posts before his house, which were ornamented with strips of bark and colored leaves. After shaking hands with me, he retreated within his dwelling, and after a moment came out with his cane and dressed in an old Spanish military coat, with big brass buttons, and a cocked hat with tarnished bands and tassels. He undertook to show me a nearer way to the river, and strutted along the path before me with his cane, his thin, bare, brown legs sticking out below his military coat.

While in the interior of Mindoro in 1888, we were visited at our camp by the Mangianes. Those seen were a little people. The men were naked, but for the breech clout, and armed with knives and bows and arrows. The women wore a curious petticoat, made of apparently thin strips of rattan, braided into a narrow ribbon of the width of the finger. Many yards of this ribbon were wound about the hips and held in place by a strip of bark cloth fastened to the girdle. They gathered up the bits of crocodile's flesh which we were cutting off in making a skeleton, and roasting them at our fire, ate them with great relish. On their second coming they brought us wild honey and wild fruit in bark baskets, for barter.

In the future of the Philippines the wild tribes will probably have but a small share. They must be gradually merged with the civilized tribes or be as gradually starved to death by being pushed back by the rapidly multiplying civilized Indians. The hundred thousand Chinese and the two hundred thousand Mohammedans of the southern islands will form more powerful factors in making future history, as they have already in making that of the past.

Carrier Pigeons in War.

It was expected that the war would develop the usefulness of the carrier pigeon service in communicating with ships at sea and the pigeon cotes at naval stations, but up to the present time they do not seem to have been made much use of, or, if so, the results obtained have not been satisfactory. Some of the best birds obtainable were purchased abroad and distributed among the principal stations along the coast. The most important of these points is Key West, where there are a large number of birds capable of keeping patrol vessels off Havana in prompt communication with the commander of the fleet; but up to the present time the fast yachts and torpedo boats appear to have been used exclusively in transmitting messages. It would be interesting to have a test made of this method of communication, as considerable sums are spent every year in America and abroad on perfecting and maintaining a system of carrier pigeons, and the present seems to be an excellent opportunity for testing their practical value. Three or four pigeons on each transport carrying the army to Santiago would have kept the military authorities in Washington fully informed of their progress.

Acetylene Exhibition at Berlin.

The acetylene exhibition at Berlin, which was originally planned for Cannstadt, near Stuttgart, took place at Berlin on the *Kurfürstendamm* from the 6th to the 20th of March, in connection with an acetylene conference. Acetylene generators were exhibited by thirty firms, but most of them were not shown in operation, owing to the strict regulations enforced by the police. The generators in action had each to be shown in a special compartment not accessible to the general public, behind a strong wall. This was not in itself calculated to inspire the citizens of Berlin with a very happy idea of the safety of the new illuminant. Progress could be recognized in the exhibits, but as yet there does not appear to be any special type which is the favorite. Acetylene purifiers proved to be necessary adjuncts. Among the impurities of acetylene less thought of in general is phosphureted hydrogen. In spite of purifying, the hall every evening was foggy with fine dust of the phosphoric acid. Next year the meeting will be held at Budapest.

The Czar Sends for the Builder of the "Oregon."

When the Russian naval authorities heard of the wonderful record made by the "Oregon" in proceeding from San Francisco to the coast of Florida in sixty-five days without an accident, they cabled Mr. Irving Scott, president of the Union Iron Works, of San Francisco, to come to St. Petersburg to arrange for building more vessels like the American battleship, which was the product of the Union Iron Works, of San Francisco. Mr. Scott has now sailed for Europe in answer to the invitation of the Imperial government.

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

[Entered at the Post Office of New York, N. Y., as Second Class Matter. Copyright, 1898, by Munn & Co.]

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF PRACTICAL INFORMATION, ART, SCIENCE, MECHANICS CHEMISTRY, AND MANUFACTURES.

Vol. LXXVIII.—No. 26.
ESTABLISHED 1845.

NEW YORK, JUNE 25, 1898.

[\$3.00 A YEAR.
WEEKLY.



VILLAGE STREET IN CAMIGUIN



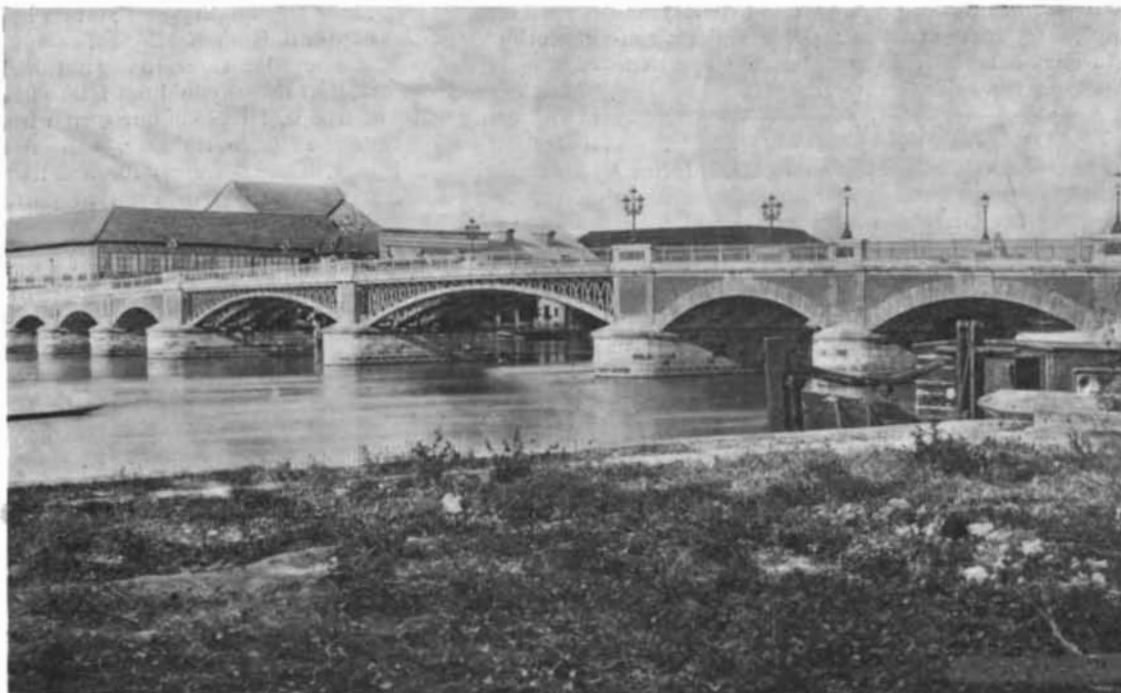
VILLAGE OF SAN PALOZ, ISLAND OF LUZON.



NATIVES FROM TINGUIANES.



NATIVES WITH ARMS IN THEIR HANDS.



PUENTE DE ESPAÑA, MANILA.



NATIVES HUNTING WITH BOWS.

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS AND THEIR INHABITANTS.—[See page 407.]