

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Philippine Islands (Span. Islas Filipinas), Philippines, an archipelago in the southeast of Asia. On the west and northwest it is separated by the China Sea from China and the Indo-Chinese peninsula; toward the east lies the Pacific; on the north a number of smaller islands stretch out toward Formosa; and on the south, while a double connection with Borneo is formed by the lines of the Palawan and Balabac and the Sulu Islands, the basin of the Celebes Sea, with a central depth of from 1,000 to 2,600 fathoms, extends for a distance of 300 miles, between its southernmost island (Mindanao) and Celebes. As the number of the Philippines is believed to exceed 1,400, and the larger islands are in several cases only beginning to be properly explored, it is impossible to give a definite statement of their aggregate land-area. A measurement on Dommann's map (1882) resulted in 114,356 square miles. Nor is it in regard to the area alone that our knowledge is defective. Though for three centuries the greater part of the territory has been nominally in Spanish possession, the interior of some of the larger islands has never been surveyed; several of the native tribes, especially in Mindanao, are altogether independent. The geology of Luzon, the best known of all the archipelago, is to a large extent matter of conjecture; and the visit of a passing botanist or naturalist is enough to add facts of primary importance to the register of flora and fauna. While none of the summits, with the exception, perhaps, of Apo in Mindanao, exceed 9,000 feet—the loftiest probably being Halcón in Mindoro (8,865 feet), Malindang in Mindanao (8,685 feet), Mayon in Luzon (8,275 feet), and Malaspina in Negros (8,190 feet)—all the islands may be described in general as mountainous and hilly. The principle ranges have a tendency to run north and south, with a certain amount of deflexion east or west, as the case may be, so that the orographic diagram of the archipelago as a whole would have a certain similarity to a fan with northern Luzon as its center of radiation.

Though hitherto little advantage has been taken of its existence, there appears to be in several of the islands a fair amount of mineral wealth. Two coal-fields are known to exist, one beginning in Caransan in the south of Luzon, and probably extending southward across the Strait of San Bernardino to Catbalogan in Samar, and another occupying the western slopes of Cebu and the eastern slopes of Negros, and thus probably passing under the Strait of Tanon. Iron-ore of excellent purity occurs in various parts of Luzon, in Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga, Camarines, Norte, and notably in the Camachin mountains between the Bulacan and the Garlan; but, with the exception of a few small foundries in Bulacan province, there are no iron-works in the country. In this department there was actually more activity a century ago. Copper-mines are worked at Mancayan, Suyuc, Bumucum, and Agbao in the province of Lepanto, by the Cantabro-Philippine Company, founded in 1862; and the heathen natives of that region (perhaps having learned the art from Chinese or Japanese strangers) appear to have long been accustomed to manufacture copper utensils for their own use and for sale in the Christian settlements.

Mangoes, plantains, mangosteen, jackfruit, medlars, and in general most of the Malayan fruits are to be met with; the lanzon occurs in the north, and the durian in the south, more especially in the Salu Islands. Rice is the staple food of the natives, but, though it is extensively cultivated, the supply is not always equal to the demand. Sweet potatoes (camote), a kind of yam (palawan), the ground-nut, and gourds are pretty generally grown, as well as occasionally peas, potatoes, and in the higher regions even wheat. The plants which are of primary commercial importance are tobacco, Manila hemp, sugar-cane, coffee, and cocoa.

Tobacco was made a government monopoly by Captain-General Jose Basco Vargas in 1781, and remained so till July 1, 1882. Though it was free to anyone to grow the plant to any extent he pleased, the government was the only purchaser, fixed its own price, and paying its debts according to its own convenience, was sometimes three or four years in arrear. Besides, certain districts were bound to furnish a certain quantity of the leaf, and the peasant was thus often forced under severe penalties to devote himself to the tobacco crop where he would have obtained better results from something else. The best tobacco comes from the provinces of Isabela and Cagayan, and it is there that the cultivation is most systematically carried on; but the plant is often grown in other provinces of Luzon (Union, Ilocos, Lepanto, etc.) as well as in the Visayas Islands. Abaca, or Manila Hemp (q. v.), is the best known in the southeast of Luzon, in Samar, Leyte and Bohol. Coffee was introduced, probably from Brazil, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, but the first plantation on a large scale was formed only in 1826. Sugar is extensively cultivated, and the export had increased from 1,399,434 piculs in 1871 to 3,382,664 in 1881.

Before the conquest there was considerable commercial intercourse between the Philippines and China and Japan, but this, which would have naturally developed enormously if the Spanish trade between Manila and America (Navidad and Acapulco) had been left free, was interrupted, and at times almost completely stopped, by a series of absurd restrictions, devised in the supposed interest of the trade between Spain and America. For a long time only a single galleon, under government supervision, was allowed to proceed yearly from Manila to Acapulco, the value of the cargo each way being bound not to exceed a certain sum. Direct trade with Europe via the Cape was commenced in 1764; but, as if the exclusion of all except Spanish ships was not sufficient, a practical monopoly of this field of enterprise was, in 1785, bestowed on the Royal Company of the Philippines. With the close of the eighteenth century a certain amount of liberty began to be conceded to foreign vessels; the first English commercial house was established at Manila in 1809; and in 1834 the monopoly of the Royal Company expired. Manila remained the only port for foreign trade till 1842, when Cebu was also opened; Zamboanga (Mindanao), Iloilo (Panay) Sual (Luzon) Legazpi or Albay (Luzon), and Tacloban (Leyte) are now in the same category, but only Manila, Iloilo, and Cebu have proved of real importance, as they are the only ports where foreign-bound vessels have hitherto loaded.

The Philippines are subject to a governor-

general with supreme powers, assisted by (1) a "junta of authorities" instituted in 1850, and consisting of the archbishop, the commander of the forces, the admiral, the president of the supreme court, etc.; (2) a central junta of agriculture, industry, and commerce (dating from 1866); and (3) a council of administration. In the provinces and districts the chief power is in the hands of alcaldes mayores and civico-military governors. The chief magistrate of a commune is known as gobernadorcillo or captain; the native who is responsible for the collection of the tribute of a certain group of families is the cabeza de barangay. Every Indian between the ages of sixteen and sixty subject to Spain has to pay tribute to the amount of \$1.17—descendants of the first Christians of Cebu, new converts, gobernadorcillos, etc., being exempted. Chinese are subject to special taxes; and by a law of 1883 Europeans and Spanish half-castes are required to pay a poll-tax of \$2.50.

There are no accurate statistics of the whole population of the Philippines, and even the number of the Spanish subjects was, up till 1877, only estimated according to the number of those who paid tribute. Diaz Arenas in 1833 stated the total at 3,153,290, the ecclesiastical census of 1876 at 6,173,632, and the civil census of 1877 at 5,561,232. Moyay Jimenez, founding on certain calculations by Del Pan, and admitting an annual increase of 2 per cent., brings the number up to 10,426,000 in 1882.

The Philippine or, as he called them, the St. Lazarus Islands were discovered by Magellan March 12, 1521, the first place at which he touched being Jomonjol, now Malhou, an islet in the Strait of Surigao, between Samar and Dinagat. By April 27th, he had lost his life on the island of Mactan off the coast of Cebu. The surrender of the Moluccas by Charles V., in 1529, tended to lessen the interest of the Spaniards in the Islas de Poniente, as they generally called their discovery, and the Portuguese were too busy in the new southern parts of the Indian Archipelago to trouble about the Islas de Oriente, as they preferred to call them. Villalobos, who had sailed from Navidad in Mexico with five ships and 370 men in February, 1543, accomplished little, (though it was he who suggested the present name of the archipelago by calling Samar Filipina); but in 1565 Legazpi founded the Spanish settlement San Miguel at the town of Cebu, which afterward became the Villa de Santissimo Nombre de Jesus, and in 1571 determined in large measure the future lines of conquest by fixing the capital at Manila. It is in a letter of Legazpi's in 1567 that the name Islas Filipinas appears for the first time. The subjugation of the islands, thanks to the exertions of the Roman Catholic missionaries and to the large powers which were placed in their hands by Philip, was effected, not, of course, without fighting and bloodshed, but without those appalling massacres and depopulations which characterized the conquest of South America. Contests with frontier rebellious tribes, attacks by pirates and reprisals on the part of the Spaniards, combine with volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tornadoes to break the comparative monotony of the subsequent history. Manila was captured by the English under Draper and Cornish in 1762, and ransomed for \$5,000,000; but it was restored in 1764.

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Did Not Mean Us.

BLAINE MAIN, APRIL 22 1898.

To the Editor of The Dispatch:

DEAR SIR,—My attention has been called to an article in your paper of April 20 under the heading of "Has it Bad." You refer to my article in the Bangor News of April 11 and quote what was written in regard to a few persons in Aroostook who would probably skip across the border and join that small colony over their of cward and dead beats in case of war between this nation and Spain.

Now, my dear sir, I have no apology to make, and can only say that you placed a wrong construction upon that sentence. I was not referring to your people but upon those who leave this county and make their escape for one cause or another, just as others and perhaps yourself speak of those who come over here under similar circumstances.

I am of the opinion that you are the one that "Has it Bad," and in justice to me should make the correction in as public a manner as you have seen fit to charge me with insinuations to you people that I never thought of. My childhood days were passed among your people, and I have the highest regard for them and the institutions. A large part of the people who reside in this vicinity are province people or formerly were, and my regard for them has always been and is now as warm as toward my own people. I regret that such a construction was placed upon my article. I can see that owing to an omission of a word that it might be construed in the manner that you seen fit to place it, but I can assure you that such was not my intention, and it might have escaped your notice if another had not called your attention to it.

Trusting that this explanation will be acceptable to your wounded feelings, and that you will not again dip your quill into the acid bottle unless you have a real guimac instead of an imaginary one, and that this may lead to our better acquaintance.

I am Very Truly,

JOHN M. RAMSEY.

[We publish with pleasure Mr. Ramsey's explanation, and are sure it will be read with satisfaction.—ED. DISPATCH.]

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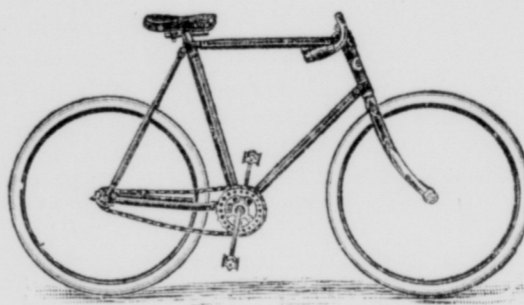
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