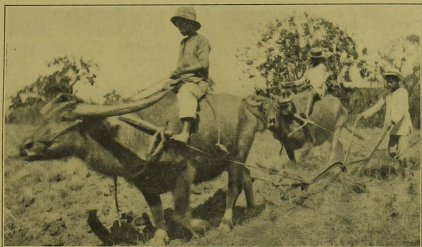

THE VILLAR SETTLEMENT FARM SCHOOL.

By W. J. CUSHMAN, Supervising Teacher.

ONE day in 1907, the provincial treasurer at Iba, Mr. J. W. Ferrier, remarked that he had ₱500 in the treasury that belonged to the Negritos in the mountains. The opening of a Negrito school was suggested. The provincial board agreed to the starting of the school, but favored the undertaking on an elaborate plan. It was agreed, however, to begin on a small scale and then expand as results justified and experience dictated. About ₱40 was spent on the first



Boys at work on the farm.

schoolhouse, which was destroyed a short time later by a baguio. The Director of Education was then asked for ₱150 with which to replace it. He allotted ₱300, which built the older of the two buildings now in use. The school was started with one teacher, a chart, and some slates and pencils. A small garden was begun with hoes as the only working tools. Later two more teachers were added, one to teach plowing to the men and the other to teach weaving to the women. The weaving was started with one loom, others being added as occasion demanded until there are now fourteen. The girls are taught to make the cloth which they weave into clothes for themselves, for the boys, and for

the smaller girls of the school. There are a number of girls who can, alone, put material into the loom, weave it out, cut and make it into clothes for either boys or girls, and wash, starch, and iron these clothes in a very creditable manner. This in itself is not unusual; but when it is taken into consideration that probably not one of these girls had ever seen a loom, a pair of scissors, or even a needle prior to the opening of this school, then the progress seems satisfactory.

The plowing, which was intended to replace the "caingin" plan with the men, was not so successful at first. After a year's trial it became apparent that the Negrito does not like to work and makes the women and, to some extent, the children do most of the work. The plan of teaching the men to plow had to



Making Zambales baskets.

be almost abandoned at that time, so farming was taken up with the boys in the school. This proved fairly satisfactory and at present there are about 6 acres under cultivation. Now, however, the men have noticed that their children have grown almost 100 cavans of palay a year for the past three or four years, and they are manifesting a desire to learn to plow. There were probably 4 acres sown to palay the past year by the men of the barrio. One cannot reason with these people. They have to be shown. They must see a thing done with their own eyes, and that more than once, before it has any effect. Since they have seen and have been convinced, they are beginning to plow and plant.

The Villar Settlement Farm School is located about 20 miles

from the municipality of Botolan, up in the Zambales Mountains on the edge of a Negrito reservation of about 4,000 people. This territory includes most of the mountainous or upland district from the municipality of Botolan to the military reservation of Olongapo in southern Zambales, and contains some excellent land for upland farming and stock raising and some suitable for lowland rice.

The conditions that lead to the establishing of this school were about as follows:

1. There was constantly accumulating in the provincial treasurer's office the pro rata of internal revenue due the Negritos which had to be spent for their benefit.

2. The Negritos in the highlands have been from time imme-



Negrito schoolgirls.

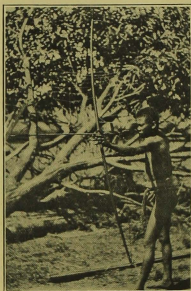
morial a constant menace and drawback to the people of the lowlands of the province. The school is proving to be a great civilizer of those near it.

3. There is a large section of very fine land for farming and stock raising inhabited by almost 4,000 Negritos. The Negritos made no use of the land themselves and no one else could use it. This was a disadvantage to the province. If the Negrito could be taught to cultivate this land in a practical manner it would not only be a blessing to him but also a source of revenue to the province.

The school was started as an experiment with these objects in view, and is yet an experiment. The Negrito is still an unknown quantity to the outer world in so far as education and civilization

are concerned. No one knows just what can be done with him along these lines, how it can be done, or the best way to do it. About the only changes that have been made in the original plan of the school were practically to abandon for a while the plan of getting the men to plow instead of following their "cañgin" plan and to increase the amount of industrial work in the school.

As the work is conducted now, we give the pupils about two hours each day, six days in the week, and fifty-two weeks in the year, of classroom work (reading, writing, drawing, arithmetic, spelling, etc.) and three or four hours industrial work, principally hand weaving, farming, and stock raising for the boys, and loom



The Negrito hunter.

weaving, mat weaving, sewing and general housekeeping for the girls. In addition to the regular hours of school work, academic and industrial, the boys attend to their stock, and the girls cook, wash, and iron for the school. All the pupils board at the school and the girls of the school do the cooking. The girls are divided into three groups with one or two of the larger girls at the head of each group. One week one group cooks and washes dishes, another group washes and irons the clothes for the entire school, and the third group cleans the rice and tends the pigs and chickens. The groups change work weekly, so as to give each

girl practice in all kinds of housework. The work is at all times under the supervision of the teachers of the school.

The ground is sown to early or highland palay, in May. In October this is harvested and the ground immediately planted with camotes and corn. These camotes are dug the following April and the ground sown to palay again. This gives two crops each year on the same ground with a minimum of work. One is a tuber and the other a grain crop. We are just harvesting a palay crop that will produce almost 100 cavans and are planting camotes as fast as the palay is removed. The pupils are clearing and cultivating a new field intended to be an orchard or fruit

farm. Here we are planting such fruits as bananas, papayas, etc. In addition to this we are also planting langca, casuy, mango, and kapok trees around the fences which are to serve the double purpose of fruit trees and fence posts.

The people of the barrio and its surrounding community have allied themselves with the people of the lowland and with the Government. They regard their barrio and themselves as a part of the municipality. They are prompt to inform the proper authorities if anything goes wrong in the interior of the Negrito reservation. They always speak of the Negritos of the interior as wild, and regard themselves as a part of, or at least to be classified with, the lowland people, and hence more cultured than their kinsmen of other localities.



Indoor baseball.

They now take their products to the lowland markets, whereas before the school was established, lowland people came after the products. This gives the Negritos a better understanding of the current prices of what they sell and what they buy, and makes them less likely to be imposed upon. Going to the pueblo and mixing with the lowland people is in itself a great civilizing force.

They take more pride in dress now than formerly. They almost always "dress up" when they go to town, when they are called in "junta," or when they have a distinguished visitor. A number of the women carry umbrellas when they go out.

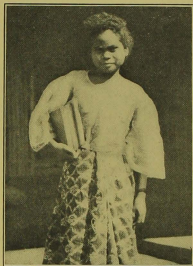
They are building better and larger houses than formerly. We allow them the use of the school carabaos for hauling the material and some of them are constructing very respectable dwellings.

They do less moving from place to place. This barrio has

come to be as stable as many barrios of the lowland people. They are planting trees about their houses and regard the land where these houses stand as their own individual property. Many of them have hogs and chickens.

They are beginning to farm near the barrio with the school carabaos, the thing we failed to get them to do at first. Several of them have little haciendas near their houses, which they plant to palay and camotes each year. Most of these increase the amount of land cultivated from year to year, and the number wanting to plow constantly becomes greater.

The school has had a marked effect on the working capacity of the pupils. The Negrito is a child in every sense of the



The assistant teacher of weaving.

term, especially in his ability to work. In the kind of work he is accustomed to do he can accomplish but a very small amount in a given time. When we began doing farm work with the pupils, the only one who made any pretense of working was the one whom the teacher was immediately urging. When the teacher left one pupil to go to another, that pupil immediately ceased working. If the teacher consumed much time in going from one pupil to another there was just that amount of time in which no work was being done at all. Now it is possible to get quite satisfactory

work out of the older pupils, at least ten to twelve times the amount accomplished at first. This is true of both boys and girls, but more especially of the boys. The same thing has been experienced, but to a much less degree, with the men whom we have employed to repair the schoolhouse.

The pupils are fed at the school and do their own cooking. The Government supplies what the school does not produce. When the Government is feeding the school it costs less than ₱0.04 per day per pupil, yet they show plainly how much better they are fed than those not in school. When the school was first opened, one might have been there a week and never have heard shouting or laughter from any of the children in the barrio.

Now, however, almost every evening one can hear them laughing and singing like the lowland children. The school has put new life into them.

The greatest difficulty with which we had to contend was keeping the children in the school regularly. The Negrito is but a child and changes his mind with every change of the moon, if not oftener, and that change of mind may mean a change of location or something else just as detrimental to the best interests of the school. This one question has given us more trouble than all others put together. It is for this reason we are trying to induce them to plow and plant something, that they may become fixed in their barrio and not move from place to place.



Hand and loom weaving.

Another difficulty is that the Negritos insist on their children marrying very young, and that generally takes them out of school before they have reached the stage of training desired.

There have been, at times, outbreaks of dysentery when almost the entire population desert the barrio, take their children with them and go back into the mountains, leaving the school for a time almost without pupils. One cannot reason with these people. He must simply observe their customs, and have the patience of Job and a will that is absolutely proof against discouragement.

As long as education works from the top downwards, it can never become the dominating force in life—it must be in line with the human interests, which are nine-tenths practical. (Musselman.)