
IN THE BUKIDNON COUNTRY.

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OCCUPYING a high plain in the interior of Mindanao is a country which some day will be as well known in the Philippines as our western states are known in America. In that western country, for years the ranchman pastured his herds of cattle, giving way at last to the first nesters who came in such numbers that the land where the cowboy once rode at will became a sea of ripened grain. The central Mindanao plain, known as Bukidnon, waits for the whoop of the vaquero and the odor of singed flesh as the branding iron marks the ownership of the calf. But will the cattleman ever spur his pony to the top of an eminence and count his cattle grazing over these plains that stretch to the very mountain slopes? The nester is there already and the Bukidnon country may see its fields of grain and coffee before the advent of the cattleman.

The trip into the country is made overland from Cagayan, Misamis, a north Mindanao port three days from Manila. Conveyances are secured and a drive of an hour over a first class road which winds through coconut groves, brings us to the barrio of Agusan, where saddle ponies are procured. The road ascends gradually to the open country which extends inland as a plateau a few hundred feet above the sea. A stop is made for a last view of the bay and of that strip of coast country so picturesquely flecked with coconut trees, through which is seen the glimmer of the metal roofs marking the sites of towns. A short distance beyond, a board nailed to a post states in two words that we are crossing into the non-Christian subprovince of Bukidnon.

Perhaps in a previous visit to the Moro province we have met the Moro in his tight trousers, bright sash, and turban, or among the mountains of North Luzon we have beheld the Igorot in his full regalia of fringed gee-string, and we are curious to see these non-Christians of the Bukidnon. As we ride along we meet carabaos loaded with hemp and coffee. The women and girls with such traveling parties are shy, and with downcast eyes they maneuver to get behind the loaded animals. A little farther along the trail we pass a large mango tree, the green leaves of which present a refreshing contrast to the burnt land. Sheltered by two large rocks, this tree has survived the annual fires and

now furnishes a pleasant shade and resting place for tired packers. The road passes between two low mountains and approaches Tankulan, the first Bukidnon settlement. A herd of ponies is grazing upon the hillside near a tract of plowed land with the disk plow still in the furrow. An inquiry brings out the information that this is the property of one of the two Barton brothers who were the first nesters in that country. The



Photo by the author.

The Falls of Alalum.

remnant of what was the first Barton ranch, three days farther inland, is the home of the man who is still reluctant to leave the wide grassy plains which seem so full of promise. We were fortunate enough to meet this tall, strong, darkhaired man, who is still in the prime of manhood. He is a plainsman, a pioneer such as formerly rode the plains from Montana to Arizona.

Soon we reach Tankulan and eat our lunch. Resuming our journey we cross a cañon by an excellent pony trail which winds down and up in a zigzag and finally brings us to Maluco, where we are to spend the night. The cool air drops from the mountain and we crawl into our blankets. Early the next morning, though somewhat stiff

from the previous day in the saddle, we are off, urging our pack animals ahead of us. The morning air feels crisp and refreshing. The picturesque trail either winds above small cañons or stretches into a grassy plain that widens out ahead. The noise of falling water is heard and a sudden turn brings us in full view of the falls of Alalum. Approaching, as we do, in the early morning, when the mists are

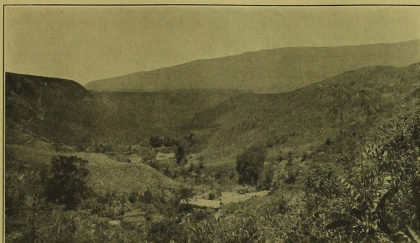


Photo by the author.

A cañon near the settlement of Impalutao.

beginning to clear away and the rays of the new sun are warming the black abyss into brown tints, we feel a thrill of pleasure and proclaim Alalum the most impressive waterfall in the Philippines. Reluctantly we ride on to Impalutao, the settlement on the Mindanao divide. The strong winds that blow steadily make the nights so disagreeably cold that this settlement is avoided by travelers. Beyond Impalutao the cañons are fewer.

In the onward journey, we pass settlement after settlement with their attractive plazas and clean streets. We spend the nights with teachers in their homes, or in the open town houses.



The school farm at the Mailag Industrial School.

Beyond the divide the pack trains going to the coast with hemp or coming back with the simple things which the Bukidnon needs become fewer. After passing Malaybalay, we ride into the Mailag country where is still seen what remains of that unfortunate project, the Barton ranch. Near this ranch is the Mailag Industrial School for the Bukidnon boys, and here we rest, in the heart of the vast plain that extends to the mountain slopes on both sides, reaching back to the north coast of Mindanao and on down the river into the Cotabato country.

The wide, grassy plain through which we have ridden for days is kept green by the annual burning of the cogon grass. Here and there, the country is dotted with a scattered growth of low scrub timber which has been able to resist the ravages of

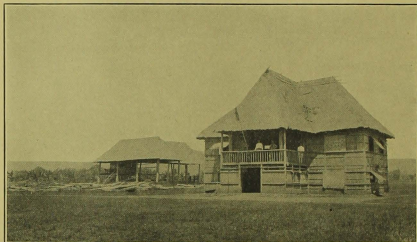


Photo by the author.

Building of the Mailag Industrial School.

the fires. At one time a tropical forest covered this vast area, and the Bukidnon farmer made his "caingin" by burning the trees from a small area. The newly cleared land was planted; but in two or three years the cogon grass crept in, and being unable to resist it the farmer made another clearing. Under this method the timber line has receded until the cleared land now creeps up the mountain slope, encroaching upon the fastnesses of the Manobo. Behind is left a wide grassy plain of untilled, fertile land, capable of supporting thousands of farmers. These wide acres of well watered grazing land are without animals and the long stretches of rich soil are producing no food for man. It is a country of prospects and possibilities. Some day it will be the range of herds of cattle and the home of many

prosperous farmers. Scattered over this grassy plain are a few thousand people.

The Bukidnons are quiet, peace loving, and content to live in their simple homes with few comforts and almost no household industries. The manner of life, while it fails to develop a keenness in barter, has left the present generation with a love for home and the family. The Bukidnon farmer is quiet and obedient to such an extent that he will endure abuse rather than resist authority. He may own a horse or carabao, but he knows as yet but little of its value for farming purposes. When the family needs become so urgent that a trip to the coast is a necessity, the animal is loaded with hemp or coffee and the trip is made. The proceeds are invested in cloth, salt and other simple commodities. Such a journey may take from eight to fourteen days. As we meet the Bukidnon on the trail, or in the settlements, he is always clothed. There is nothing in his general appearance to distinguish him from the people of the inland sections of other provinces. His life is simple and he is accustomed to live within his own family circle. The country is without stores or peddlers, or even small food tiendas. Money is seldom brought back from the coast; only to a very small extent is it a medium of exchange among the people. Although the Bukidnon has learned but little of the use of tools, he has a fair house and is fond of his home.

Over this vast plain, trails are being made and settlements started. In these centers the people are encouraged to build good houses and to live permanently. It is hoped to make each Bukidnon family a part of a community rather than lone individuals engaged in the hard conflict with cogon grass, the receding timber line, and the ravages of the Manobo warrior. The Bukidnon is to send his children to school. He is to learn simple industries, and the use of animals and tools in overcoming the cogon grass. He needs to know how to make the land give him a living. Settlements ranging in size from ten families to one hundred and fifty families were established in the old days by Spanish friars, and more recently by the present Government. The completion of first class trails connecting them and making the coast trip easier has caused all centers to prosper. The Bukidnon settlements, which are models for arrangement and cleanliness, begin with a small well kept plaza from which the streets extend. The houses are well built and set in neatly kept yards planted with bananas and coffee. Near the villages, the trails are bordered by small fields which have recently been taken up and planted. Nearly all of these villages have small

chapels and municipal buildings facing the plazas, and school buildings located nearby along the trails.

Schools, which are conceded to be the chief factor in holding the people together, are conducted in all large communities. A farm around which all school life centers has been established at these settlements. Equipped with bulls, plows and simple wood-working tools the farm offers the boy an opportunity not only to learn to care for and use the things which can overcome the cogon grass, but to become one of the communal workers of a piece of land where all the products are divided and each pupil takes his share. The land is well arranged in neat fields, and planted in corn, rice, camotes, cow peas, vegetables, bananas, pineapples, papayas, and coffee. The occa-

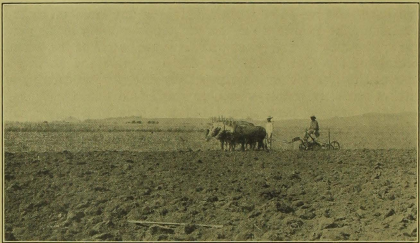


Photo by the author.

Plowing on a school farm.

sional share received by the pupil often constitutes the food of the entire family for several days. The many small farms which surround the settlements are so conspicuously like the school farms as to be directly credited to the influence of the school.

It is a real pleasure to come upon one of the sixteen Bukidnon school farms in the midst of the miles of fine agricultural land. One cannot but admire the teacher and his work. A group of boys at one of these schools was receiving rations of beans, corn, and camotes for a day's trip to another school to play baseball. School buildings consisting of schoolhouse and teachers' homes are located on the farms. The neat attractive cottages where the teachers keep open door to passing officials are an influence for the good of the country that will be felt

almost as much as the school work. Along the sides of the deep ravines are seen small fields of hemp, while about every house thrifty coffee plants are growing. Hemp and coffee of excellent grade now go down to the coast in some quantities.

As we ride across the land which formed the old Barton ranch, we cease to wonder why he settled there. It is a region of vast possibilities. As transportation into the country develops, this land will be rich in cattle and coffee, and in the happy homes of a people content to till the soil.

“Through industrial efforts in education and through other influences at work in the world to-day the time may come when intellect and manual labor will be united. We are always in these days endeavoring to separate intellect and manual labor; we want one man to be always thinking, and another to be always working, and we call one a gentleman and the other an operative; whereas the workman ought often to be thinking and the thinker often to be working, and both should be gentlemen in the best sense. As it is, we make both ungentle, the one envying, the other despising, his brother; and the mass of society is made up of morbid thinkers and miserable workers.”—JOHN RUSKIN.

“Making, or manual training, has done more for the human race than the exercise of any, if not all, of the other modes of expression. It is absolutely indispensable to normal physical development; it has had a mighty influence upon brain building; it has cultivated ethics as a basis of all moral growth.”—Colonel FRANCIS W. PARKER.

Technical instruction must be regarded in the first place as a means of character-training, and it must be supplemented by other forms of instruction with a view to making it as many-sided as possible. In the life of great economic groups and of nations there are moments, and there are the critical moments, in which neither knowledge nor skill, but character, decides the day—character that has learned to regard its own egoistic interests as of no account when their sacrifice is demanded by the welfare of the community to which we belong, the welfare of the service that we have chosen, the welfare of the subordinates intrusted to our care.—Dr. GEORG KERSCHENSTEINER, Director of Education, Munich, Germany.

In view of work being done in the General Office of the Bureau of Education in collecting and applying designs of native origin in the industrial work, it is interesting to note certain statements by the editor of "The Craftsman." "The Craftsman" is edited by Gustav Stickley in New York City and is to-day probably the foremost American magazine devoted to the arts and crafts. Mr. Stickley himself, as well as other members of the editorial staff, have made numerous visits to the different European countries for the purpose of studying the craft work there. The following notes are excerpts from a résumé of these trips.

"The best work to be found in England, France, Belgium, and Bavaria were the close replicas of the old peasant potteries and porcelains, fabrics and embroideries."

"Austria was producing a great many of her ornaments and household fittings from peasant models, the factories and the art societies vying with each other in copying antique designs which have been gathered and put into museums and held as precious curiosities. In Hungary, the crafts to-day seem the outgrowth of the crafts of yesterday, with the result that there is nothing more interesting on the continent than the handicraft work seen in Hungarian shops."

"Along the coast of France and the adjacent country the craft idea of the peasant has projected itself into the factory work; that is to say, the same models have been removed from the houses to the factory. In Belgium there is to-day a so-called modern factory as there is in the province of Flanders, and the beauty of these products is that they are the actual outgrowth of the old peasant arts."

"In illustrations given in these articles we have sought to make clear how definitely the best work to-day of the Continent is alive with forms and designs of peasant workmanship as it exists to-day or existed in the past. In many instances not only are the pottery and porcelain made from old models but the draperies, the tapestries, the carpets, the inlaid designs on furniture, the metal work used in these countries to-day are reproducing the old ideals of peasant handicrafts."

Mr. Stickley's entire article as published in the June number of *The Craftsman* for 1912 is well worth the study of those interested in good craftsmanship. His assurance that the good things in Europe come through an application of old models and designs from among the simple people is an encouraging report to those who are working to establish a place in the industrial work here for old designs of native origin.—S. C. J.