

A TENDERFOOT IN THE TROPICS

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A tenderfoot in the tropics by Mack P. Cretcher

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MACK P. CRETCHER

**A TENDERFOOT
IN THE TROPICS**

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By
MACK P. GRETCHER.

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ILLUSTRATED

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FIRST EDITION
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FOREWORD

THIS unpretentious little volume is presented to the public with few excuses. No claims of particular literary effort are made for it. It contains mostly letters that were written to home papers, the *Newton Kansan* and the *Sedgwick Pantagraph*, and published from time to time during a period of more than three years which the writer spent in the Orient. An attempt has been made to arrange these letters in some measure of logical sequence. Otherwise they stand about as written while the author was gaining his limited experience in the Tropics.

There must be something subtle about life in the Tropics that inspires one to write. Nearly every foreign resident there has at times felt the desire to write a book about the Philippines. Often, possibly too often, the ambition has been realized. As a result, a great deal of historical, statistical and political information has been published about the Philippines. It is available for all who care to read it. This little volume has no particular bearing on any of these topics. It is largely the first-hand impressions of a tenderfoot from the great plains of Kansas, who tarried for a time in a new and exceedingly strange environment.

It is mostly a tale of personal experiences in the Philippine Islands, including also some fleeting glimpses obtained of China and Japan. The writer has attempted to tell his little story truthfully and as things appeared to him. There are "many men of many minds" among the American contingent in the Philippines. Especially is this true concerning political and social affairs. Of these topics many have had their say in books and writings seemingly without end.

(3)

If you are looking for that sort of material here you will surely be disappointed. This book is no defense of either the "New Era" or the mooted "Days of the Empire." As before stated, it is merely a disjointed story of personal experiences and observations jotted down and sent home for publication in local newspapers from time to time, and now compiled and offered the public in book form.

To those who have traveled the same road, the stories may recall similar experiences. To others who may not have traveled so far, these experiences may at least give some idea of how it feels to be a tenderfoot in tropic lands. If the book interests you, we shall both be pleased. If it does not—well, it wouldn't be the first experience of that kind which you have had with books, now would it?

Truly,

THE AUTHOR.

SEDGWICK, KANSAS, December 1, 1918.

CONTENTS.

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Page</i>
	FOREWORD.....	3
I.	THE START.....	7
II.	THE JOURNEY.....	9
III.	HONOLULU.....	13
IV.	JAPAN.....	17
V.	IN A TYPHOON.....	25
VI.	THE ARRIVAL.....	30
VII.	FIRST IMPRESSIONS.....	35
VIII.	IN THE PROVINCES.....	40
IX.	PAGSANJAN GORGE.....	52
X.	CHRISTMAS WEEK.....	57
XI.	THE SLOGAN CONTEST.....	64
XII.	AN EARTHQUAKE.....	70
XIII.	A YEAR OF AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION.....	75
XIV.	TYPHOONS, VOLCANOES, ETC.....	84
XV.	FILIPINOS.....	90
XVI.	BEAUTIFUL BAGUIO.....	99
XVII.	JOURNALISM IN THE ORIENT.....	105
XVIII.	MISCELLANEOUS IMPRESSIONS.....	110
XIX.	ON BOARD A BATTLESHIP.....	117
XX.	A COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS.....	123
XXI.	AN APPRECIATION OF VICE-GOVERNOR MARTIN.....	129
XXII.	INTER-ISLAND TRAVEL.....	140

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
XXIII. AGRICULTURE AND EDUCATION.....	146
XXIV. LUZON.....	156
XXV. THE VISAYAS.....	163
XXVI. MINDANAO AND SULU.....	170
XXVII. A PUBLIC WELFARE ADDRESS.....	176
XXVIII. LOG OF THE S. S. "WARREN".....	181
XXIX. A GLIMPSE OF CHINA.....	185
XXX. A PEEK AT PEKIN.....	194
XXXI. A CRUISE OF THE SOUTHERN ISLANDS.....	203
XXXII. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.....	222
XXXIII. HOME AGAIN.....	228

CHAPTER I.

THE START.

[*Newton Evening Kansan*, May 9, 1914.]

Mack P. Cretcher, of this city, has received an appointment to the United States Insular Service in the Philippines, and he and Mrs. Cretcher will leave tomorrow, May 10, on the California Limited for San Francisco, with the intention of sailing May 14 at noon on the steamship *Mongolia* for Manila.

This announcement will come with but little more surprise to their friends than it came to Mr. and Mrs. Cretcher themselves. A message was received yesterday at noon by Mr. Cretcher from the Bureau of Insular Affairs at Washington, stating that if acceptable the appointment would be made and that it would come about through the recommendation of Henderson Martin. Accustomed to acting with promptness and decision, Mr. Cretcher wired Washington immediately to send on the transportation with further instructions. The arrangements above outlined are the "further instructions," and the transportation is to be wired today.

The message stated that the work is to be the investigation and promotion of industries in the Philippine Islands, and in that capacity the administration would have trouble in finding a better man than Cretcher. In fact, he is most admirably equipped in experience, age, and mature judgment, to make valuable recommendations to his department in the work assigned to him. His numerous friends here and all over the state will congratulate Mack upon his ap-

pointment, which came unsolicited, and carries a comfortable salary.

As stated, the appointment came through Hon. Henderson Martin, of Marion, Vice-Governor of the Islands. Several months ago when writing to Mr. Martin, Mack rather jokingly stated that if there were any convenient jobs lying around in the Islands, that he wouldn't mind making the trip over. That was all the mention ever given the matter, and the message from Washington yesterday was the first intimation Mack has had that his statement had been remembered.

Forty-eight hours is rather a short time to accept a job, clean up a considerable amount of personal affairs, and get ready to make a journey half way round the earth; but that is the order, and the Cretchers will be ready to start on the long journey tomorrow at 2:55. The ocean trip will require about four weeks, and the boat will touch Honolulu and several ports in Japan.

[*Newton Evening Kansan*, May 11, 1914.]

Mr. and Mrs. Mack P. Cretcher left yesterday afternoon on No. 3, the California Limited, for San Francisco, from which port they will sail for Manila, Thursday at noon on the Pacific mail ship *Mongolia*. A large crowd of friends gathered at the station to bid Mr. and Mrs. Cretcher good bye and "bon voyage." We are sorry to have them go, but rather rejoice in the opportunity they have been given of broadening their knowledge of the world by first-hand experience. They have promised to write the *Kansan* frequently, and their greetings will be passed on to Newton and Harvey County friends.