

**THROUGH LUZON
ON HIGHWAYS
AND BYWAYS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649141913

Through Luzon on highways and byways by Willis Bliss Wilcox

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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WILLIS BLISS WILCOX

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By

WILLIS BLISS WILCOX

Paymaster U. S. N.

FRANKLIN BOOK COMPANY

Philadelphia

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WILLIS BLISS WILCOX

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To My Faithful Friend
H. P.
This Book is Dedicated.

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PREFACE.

IT may seem strange to the average mind, that the island of Luzon, although having been in Spanish hands for so many years, is as yet not one-fourth discovered.

The most attractive portions of the island, the foothills and mountains of the interior, are unpenetrated.

The legends of the wild tribes, the fierce Igorotes and Negritos, have been doubtless the bugbear that has kept inquiring minds away from the most desirable and at the same time inaccessible places.

It cannot be long before the venturesome American will go into the provinces of Abra, Lepato, Bontoc and Benguet on the West, and Cagayan and Nueva Viscaya on the East, and find there in the fastnesses of the cannibalistic Igorotes, the verification of the tales of reputed wealth in mines of gold and copper. He will learn at least that the climate is salubrious, and amid the forests of pine, and towering, stately tropical trees, realize

that the splendor of Luzon is hidden in the ranges of the Cordilleras.

In due time the country will become reconciled to a higher civilization, but the process of regeneration will be slow. To alter their nature and make them forget their former selves, will require time and patience. The native will remain with a Malay tinge for generations, and I quite believe it will be as difficult to change the Tagalo as a Hindoo. For this reason it is not probable that the Filipinos will at once get over what they have learned in their bondage for more than three centuries and a half. They know no other means of governing their people than that which has been taught them. They must have new laws—not the Spanish code—and examples of faithfulness and loyalty to the country, in the interest of a general welfare for all. The strictly native I consider superior to any I have seen in Spanish American countries, certainly more so than those of Mexico, the Argentine, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Frequent intercourse will eventually lead to the adoption of one homogeneous language, where at present each district has its own peculiar dialect.

The building of a railroad through the interior from Manila to Aparri by government aid, if possible, will open a vast area of wonderfully productive

land. The establishment of post offices, where mails are frequent, will develop an interest in affairs of each province and the central government in particular.

Free public schools in every town and village, such as reach beyond the confines of mere ecclesiastical instruction, is of first and greatest importance.

A strong protecting hand will make this vast island a garden spot so far as productiveness is concerned, and unlock its storehouses of wealth. This will especially be true when taxation is fair and equitable and when the inhabitants can be sure that the fruits of their industry and their homes and families will be secure from molestation, and the many ingenious methods heretofore in vogue will not again be put in operation to filch from them their honest gains.

The question of titles to landed property is a serious one, and doubtless will be a stumbling block most difficult to overcome. This is well understood by those who have made inquiries with a view of obtaining possession of tracts of land for cultivation.

Any information that is added to the general store of knowledge of Luzon cannot but be welcomed. No doubt in Madrid there exists many

volumes concerning the island, and especially those written by the friars who have been so long and so intimately associated with all classes of the inhabitants. This valuable collection may be translated at no distant day.

While confining my description to the ground that I have personally been over, I have tried to make it typical of the whole, so that the book, though it does not describe the whole of Luzon, may yet present an intelligible picture of the country.

I am under great obligations to Gen. McArthur, Gen. Whittier and Major Bement, of the army, for a part of my equipment, horses, saddles, etc., and especially to Admiral Dewey for permitting me to make the journey.

W. B. W.

Pensacola, Florida, March, 1901.