Pirates of the Philippines.

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MANY strange people will come under the protection of the stars and stripes if Uncle Sam's commissioners, now in Paris negotiating a treaty of peace with Spain, shall decide to retain possession of the Philippine islands. We can sell the United States have to take under its wing some of the most peculiar tribes that live, but some who have sailed under the black flag of the pirates whose depredations in that section of the world are only equaled by those of the freebooters who once infested the Spanish main. The inhabitants of these islands, which occupy a large space in the eastern seas, are composed of many different tribes and mixed races. While little is known of the history of the people found there by the Spanish conquerors it is believed that they were Soporos, small in stature, but very powerful. Now nearly every race or kind of people can be found there, from the civilized white man, to the savage whose traits and characteristics are peculiar to the aborigines. The islands, some three 1,200 in number, are situated near the mainland of China, Siam and the Malay peninsula, while to the south and east are the islands of Java, Sumatra, New Guinea and Borneo, from which flocked adventurers and the lowest class of criminals and desperadoes in search of riches that were supposed to be buried in abundance in the hills and mountains of the Philippines. These people not only plundered the native tribes on borders of their land, but sent out parties from their shores to prey upon the merchant marine of the surrounding country.

It may be said that there was little work other than piracy among the tribes people at that time, and from what can be learned of them they also preyed each other's vessels and destroyed each other's property. The islands have been the center of piracy ever since they were known, and records show that the deeds of desperate daring committed by some of the chiefs or kings were only equaled by the famous Black Flags of China some of whose members and descendants are supposed to have emigrated to the islands, the pirates of the Barbary states on the north coast of Africa and those of the Spanish main.

The Spaniards under Magellan discovered the islands in the early part of the sixteenth century. In 1565 they started to establish colonies and conquer the natives. Their struggle to get control is as well known that it would be useless to chronicle it here. For more than three centuries Spain has been fighting to get rid of the pirates and subdue the natives of that section of the world, and now that her control is at least over some of them it is to be hoped it may be truthfully stated that many of the tribes, especially those in Mindanao, Tawi Tawi and some of the smaller islands are as independent of Spanish rule today as they were when Magellan first set foot on Zebu, the first of the group to be discovered.

There are nine large and nine thousand islands. The large ones are Luzon, Panay, Zebu, Leyte, Samar, Negros, Palawan, Mindanao and Mindoro. There are nearly as many different tribes as there are islands. The Chinese and Malays sent to the native Tagals and Visayas predominate. Wild Malay tribes, from whom spring some of the early pirates, are found in large numbers in the islands of Luzon, Mindoro and Mindanao and in the neighborhood of Panay and Samar. The tribes in Sooloo, Sulu and Tawi Tawi are independent and control the trade of those islands with Spain, and recently, both the world.

In the early part of Spain's rule she was given most trouble by the Tagals, in the northern and the Visayas, in the middle islands. They not only defeated her every attempt to land, but fitted out craft to raid her ships, plunder them and send the crews captured into the strongholds of the pirates to be condemned to death or slavery. After many years of struggling Spain succeeded in nominally conquering these tribes. This, however, did not insure peace, for as soon as one tribe was brought into apparent subjection than the Moros, as the Spaniards called the tribes in the southern islands, began depredations. There were six tribes in their attacks. Several Chinese fleets attempted to take Manila. The most famous of the pirates were those that came from Sulu and Mindanao. They carried their deeds of destruction and plunder to the very doors of the Spanish strongholds, and they have never been conquered. Peace was concluded from the northern islands of the group, but it continued until killing other to those of the south, which were never heard from ever by a mistake.

The Chinese pirates also caused the Spanish considerable trouble. They occupied Sulu and continued to destroy all the commerce in the coast line, so it was found necessary to build with towers and forts to prevent the Mongolians from landing. The first Chinese pirate to attack the coast was Lichi-Hongo. In 1574, with a fleet of 62 warships of second junks, he started for the Philippines. He decked the islands along the coast and captured many Spanish ships before he met defeat in Manila bay. In 1662 Koxinga, a famous Chinese pirate king, threatened to invade Manila. The Spanish officials got wind of his coming and prepared to give him a warm reception. They also prevented him from taking any alive among the Chinese population by attacking and killing more than 40,000 of the latter.

The natives of Sulu have given Spain trouble from time to time, and it was not until the early station of the present century that the nation's power was broken. This is a great measure was done by Great Britain, who was in the run of a movement to clean out piracy in that section of the world, as had been done elsewhere. She was ably assisted by the other powers.

As early as 1805 the natives of Sulu became so those in the isle of the Spaniards. He held sway over a large part of northern Borneo, made up of Mindanao, the islands of Palawan, the Pangalusanan, Tawi Tawi and the Sulian group. His subjects in Sulu numbered about 20,000, while in his vessel lands there were more than 1,000 who obeyed his commands and paid him tribute. He served trouble on the Europeans as well as the natives and was a terror to commerce even on the China coast. His powerful fleet of fast vessels infested all the waters of the archipelago, and many foreign ships became his prey.

The vessels then used by the pirates were here described by those who saw them as of a peculiar type and well adapted for the purpose for which they are intended. They are long and narrow and sharp at both ends. They carry about 40 persons comfortably. They are called lanchas, and the natives handle them wonderfully well. The prows are larger vessels, with covered decks. The sides are constructed from small slat by a dwelling of a very hard wood that is found in the forests. They carry a transoms sail, which is mostly made of palm matting. The natives have a trick of handling their boats by which they can sail them backward or easily as forward. An outrigger about 40 long as the vessel is made fast to the side and prevents it from capsizing. The pirates to be considered