



WHAT WOULD LINCOLN DO?

SLAVE TRADING UNDER THE STARS AND STRIPES

By Dean C. Worcester, Secretary of the Interior for the Philippines.



"FOURSCORE and seven years ago our fathers brought forth a new nation conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. . . It is for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us . . . that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain . . . and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."—From Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.



SLAVE TRADING exists and flourishes in the Philippines today just as it did when the first white man set foot on the islands in 1521. It is not strange that the practice of taking and keeping slaves should have prevailed four centuries ago in a country which was then inhabited by savages and barbarians, but it is an extraordinary fact that it should continue in a country the politicians of which are asseverating that their people have arrived at a stage of civilization comparable with that of the more advanced nations of the world, and are capable of establishing and maintaining a just and stable government.

The prevalence of slavery, and its twin brother peonage, are hardly compatible with this claim, and it is perhaps not altogether to be wondered at that the Filipino resident delegates to the Congress of the United States should deny the existence of the former, and remain silent as to the latter. Still it must require a high degree of courage to deny facts known to every reasonably well informed resident in the Islands and understood even by schoolboys in provinces like Pampanga.

The Spanish Penal Code does not prohibit or penalize slavery or the purchase or sale of human beings. It does contain provisions against forcible detention of minors, but in the Philippines at least they were more honored in the breach than in the observance during the Spanish regime.

The Moros, or fanatical Mohammedan inhabitants since then, continued to raid the towns of the peaceful of the Visayan Islands and fate has awaited the prisoners whom they took. Men have been frequently compelled to harvest for their captors the crops which they themselves had planted and were mercilessly butchered. Women, girls and boys have been carried away into slavery, the former to serve as household drudges or as concubines, and the latter to be brought up as slaves pure and simple. Some men have met a similar fate. The only reason that more have not been enslaved is that it was usually considered too much trouble to make full grown individuals work. Slaves have been held as chattels if it suited the convenience of their masters to retain them, and otherwise have been sold, bartered or given away. Zamboanga was at the outset largely populated by escaped Moro slaves who had sought protection of the Spanish garrison there. Coming originally from widely separated parts of the Archipelago these unfortunates had no common native dialect, hence there arose among them a Spanish patois now known as Zamboangueno.

So far as I am aware, the Spaniards never made any real effort to check slavery among the Moros. At all events when I visited Jolo to make natural history collections in 1891 General Arolas, the Governor, furnished me a guide who he assured me could be depended upon to be faithful as he had numerous wives and some forty slaves whom he was obliged to keep in the walled town, and under the circumstances could not afford to behave badly lest he lose them.

It is the custom of the Moros to assemble and hold *tiangis*, or markets, at certain fixed places and at these *tiangis* traffic in slaves has been carried on regularly.

When I visited Tawi Tawi I found that the Moros inhabiting the southern coast of that island were doing a thriving business capturing slaves and selling them to Dutch planters in Borneo. They assured me that the market was excellent, but prices were certainly low, for both my American companion and I myself were offered girls of marriageable age at from three to fifteen dollars, Mexican, each.

Conditions were formerly worse in the Moro country than elsewhere in the Islands but slavery and peonage have been nevertheless of comparatively common occurrence throughout many other portions of the Archipelago.

Consider conditions among the Negritos. At the time of their discovery a considerable part of the territory of the Philippines was occupied by a race of dark skinned, curly-headed dwarfs who were named Negritos (little blacks) by the Spaniards. There is good ground for believing them to be the aborigines of the Archipelago. They were then being gradually driven into remote mountain fastnesses by the descendants of the original Malay invaders. Their hand was against every man and every hand was against them—at least up to the time of the American occupation.

They are savages of low mentality, and most of them lead a nomadic or semi-nomadic life. They constantly get the worst of it in the struggle for existence and today are found only on the Islands of Mindanao, Palawan, Tablas, Negros, Panay, and Luzon, where for the most part they inhabit very remote and inaccessible mountain regions. Owing to their stupidity and their extreme timidity it is comparatively easy to hold them in slavery, and they are probably thus victimized more than are the people of any other tribe. They are constantly warring with each other in the more remote of the mountain regions which they inhabit. It would be going too far to say that their moral sense has been blunted. It is probably nearer the truth to say that they never had any. It is therefore a simple matter for Filipino slave dealers to arrange with Negritos for the purchase of their fellow-tribesmen. The latter then proceed to obtain captives by raiding some hostile group of their own people, killing ruthlessly if occasion arises.



Ilongot Mother and Child Sold Into Slavery



Many Ifugaos are Held in Slavery by Filipinos



A Negrito Family Group—Slave Trading Flourishes in This Tribe

They are more ready than are the people of any other Philippine tribe to sell their children or other dependent relatives, and do this not infrequently when pressed by hunger, a condition apt to arise because of their utter improvidence. Unfortunately, the matter does not end here. It is by no means unknown for Filipinos to join in their slave-hunting raids, or even to organize raids of their own, killing Negrito parents in order to get possession of their children.

Like many primitive peoples, the Negritos are inordinately fond of strong alcoholic drinks. It is strictly against the law to give or sell any of the white man's liquors to them, but this naturally does not restrain slave-hunters who frequently get adults deeply intoxicated and then trade with them for (Continued on Page 14)



The Author in the Field