

for much of the information that will be detailed in the following chapter.

A number of vessels were lying in the roads, among which were several Americans loading with hemp. There was also a large English East Indiaman, manned by Lascars, whose noise rendered her more like a floating Bedlam than any thing else to which I can liken it.

The view of the city and country around Manilla partakes both of a Spanish and an Oriental character. The sombre and heavy-looking churches, with their awkward towers; the long lines of batteries mounted with heavy cannon; the massive houses, with ranges of balconies; and the light and airy cottage, elevated on posts, situated in the luxuriant groves of tropical trees,—all excite a desire to become better acquainted with the country.

Manilla is situated on an extensive plain, gradually swelling into distant hills, beyond which, again, mountains rise in the background, to the height of several thousand feet. The latter are apparently clothed with vegetation to their summits. The city is in strong contrast to this luxuriant scenery, bearing evident marks of decay, particularly in the churches, whose steeples and tile roofs have a dilapidated look. The site of the city does not appear to have been well chosen, it having apparently been selected entirely for the convenience of commerce, and the communication that the outlet of the lake affords for the batteaux that transport the produce from the shores of the Laguna de Bay to the city.

There are many arms or branches to this stream, which have been converted into canals; and almost any part of Manilla may now be reached in a banca.

In the afternoon, in company with Captain Hudson, I paid my first visit to Manilla. The anchorage considered safest for large ships is nearly three miles from the shore, but smaller vessels may lie much nearer, and even enter the canal; a facility of which a number of these take advantage, to accomplish any repairs they may have occasion to make.

The canal, however, is generally filled with coasting vessels, batteaux from the lake, and lighters for the discharge of the vessels lying in the roads. The bay of Manilla is safe, excepting during the change of the monsoons, when it is subject to the typhoons of the China Seas, within whose range it lies. These blow at times with much force, and cause great damage. Foreign vessels have, however, kept this anchorage, and rode out these storms in safety; but native as well as Spanish vessels, seek at these times the port of Cavite, about three leagues to the southwest, at the entrance of the bay, which is perfectly secure.