

lowing in the mire, and the woods swarmed with monkeys and numbers of birds, among them the horn-bills: these kept up a continued chatter, and made a variety of loud noises. The forests here are entirely different from any we had seen elsewhere; and the stories of their being the abode of large boas and poisonous snakes, make the effect still greater on those who visit them for the first time. Our parties, however, saw nothing of these reptiles, nor any thing to warrant a belief that such exist. Yet the officer at the fort related to me many snake stories that seemed to have some foundation; and by inquiries made elsewhere, I learned that they were at least warranted by some facts, though probably not to the extent that he represented.

Traces of deer and wild hogs were seen, and many birds were obtained, as well as land and sea shells. Among the latter was the *Mal-leus vulgaris*, which is used as food by the natives. The soil on this part of the island is a stiff clay, and the plants it produces are mostly woody; those of an herbaceous character were scarce, and only a few orchideous epiphytes and ferns were seen. Around the dwellings in the villages were a variety of vegetables and fruits, consisting of sugar-cane, sweet-potato, gourds, pumpkins, peppers, rice, water and musk melons, all fine and of large size.

The officer at the fort was a lieutenant of infantry; one of that rank is stationed here for a month, after which he, with the garrison, consisting of three soldiers, are relieved, from Samboangan, where the Spaniards have three companies.

Samboangan is a convict settlement, to which the native rogues, principally thieves, are sent. The Spanish criminals, as I have before stated in speaking of Manilla, are sent to Spain.

The inhabitants of the island of Mindanao who are under the subjection of Spain, are about ten thousand in number, of whom five or six thousand are at or in the neighbourhood of Samboangan. The original inhabitants, who dwell in the mountains and on the east coast, are said to be quite black, and are represented to be a very cruel and bad set; they have hitherto bid defiance to all attempts to subjugate them. When the Spaniards make excursions into the interior, which is seldom, they always go in large parties on account of the wild beasts, serpents, and hostile natives; nevertheless, the latter frequently attack and drive them back.

The little fort is considered as a sufficient protection for the fishermen and small vessels against the pirates, who inhabit the island of Basillan, which is in sight from Mindanao, and forms the southern side of the straits of the same name. It is said that about seven