

Negritos of Northern Luzon.

By MORICE VANOVERBERGH, Belgian Missionary, C. I. C. M.

(Conclusion.)

Chapter III: Material Life.

1. Physical characteristics (Pl. III—IX).

Everybody knows that the Negritos are of short stature. The Spanish explorers recognized the fact in bestowing upon them their name, which, literally translated, means "little Negroes". However, their bodies are so perfectly formed and so well proportioned and are such perfect miniatures of normally sized human beings, that when living among them one easily loses sight of their dwarfed stature, which is so remarkable to strangers.

The fact, however, is soon brought to mind again, when one has to follow a Negrito guide along a path in the forest, or to pass through the door of one of their houses, the latter happening very rarely, however, as most of their houses have no walls. What tires one most in walking along these trails, is not the length of the journey, nor the unevenness of the ground on which one treads, nor the stones and roots one encounters at every step, nor even the brooks and marshes one has to cross, but the necessity of walking head downward and of stooping almost continually during the march, while the Negrito walks erect and enjoys the trip like a college boy on vacation. That is at least what I experienced myself, and what I found exceedingly tiring. They cut off the branches of the trees, and the different vines or spiny plants that grow in their way, but have no idea, of course, of going higher than their head; and so it happened that I had to walk for hours, nearly always stooping; it was a real pleasure and comfort to be able to lift my head now and then, for instance, when wading through a brook, or coming into a clearing in the forest. The paths they make through bamboo grass or other tall reeds, remind one of the low passage in a cave, the reeds meeting overhead and forming an arch high enough for the Negrito, but far from lofty for a man of ordinary stature. When you add to this the exceedingly sharp edges of the leaves of some of these plants, that cut you everywhere like a jagged razor, you will understand that, after all, one is continually reminded of the fact that the Negrito is a diminutive man (Pl. XI a).

I unfortunately had no instruments with me for taking exact measurements, an ordinary meter rule being the only implement in my possession; however, I tried to find out something definite, by choosing out of the group of Negritos who came to the prayer ceremony, the tallest and the shortest man and woman, and making them stand erect against one of the posts of the house, and then, again later on, by doing the same with Kuliana. The first four were adults and had reached their full height, while Kuliana was a girl of about 13 years of age, and probably not yet fully developed.

Here are the results I obtained:

1. Toma, the husband of Iya: Standing height (in bare feet, of course): 1.550 m; span of arms, from fingertip to fingertip: 1.585 m; length of ex-