

metal structures of the sky-scrapers, little attention has been paid to electrolysis as affecting foundations. From the above it will be seen that engineers and architects have a serious problem to work out in protecting their buildings against this danger. Apparently the remedy is insulation, or the adoption of other than metal for the underground work where dampness is certain to be present and render iron subject to electrolysis.—Architecture and Building.

#### THE MOST MISERABLE PEASANTRY IN EUROPE.

Extracts from an article with the above title, by Edith Sellers, published in the March number of Good Words, London. Galicia is in Austrian Poland.

Galician villages, if viewed from a distance, are singularly picturesque in appearance. The cottages and huts are built in the most irregular fashion, in little groups around the church, against which they seem to nestle as if for protection. Many of them are covered with lichens and all kinds of creepers, and have gardens around them aglow with bright colors. Beyond the gardens are fruit orchards; while dotted about just here and there are great oak trees that must have stood for generations. Then quite close at hand, only a good stone's-throw away, is the manor house, always a delightful abode, with long, low verandas and beautiful gardens laid out in the French style—tiny fountains and quaint stiff flowerbeds. Some of these hamlets, indeed, are quite ideal in their beauty; there is such a restfulness and peace about them, too, that travelers who pass through them in haste are apt to envy those who dwell there, and to think that their lines are cast in quite unusually pleasant places. They speedily change their opinion though if tempted to make halt there, even though it be but for an hour. For then they discover that most of these charming lichen-bedecked cottages are little better than ruins, and that it is only by means of props and stakes that they are prevented from falling to the ground. A door that will open and shut is quite a rarity in a Galician hamlet, and so is a window with an unbroken pane of glass. On every side there is dust, dirt and rubbish; on every side, too, there are signs of misery and poverty.

Some 35 out of every 1,000 of these Galician peasants die in the course of a year; and the wonder is, one feels while wandering about among them, not that so many should die, but rather that so many should live. Their cottages are for the most part one-storyed and one-roomed; no matter how large

a family a peasant may have, they all—father, mother, sons and daughters, and daughters-in-law, with their children, too, sometimes—live, eat and sleep in the same apartment. Nor is it only human beings who dwell there; it must also serve as a shelter for the more delicate of the live stock—the calves, lambs and little pigs. The cocks and hens, too, and the geese are housed there, and the year's supply of potatoes and cabbages. The furniture consists of a table, a few rickety chairs or settees, and one bed, which is reserved for the head of the family, unless, indeed, there chance to be an invalid who claims it. The young people generally sleep on the ground, with a little straw, perhaps, under their heads, and in the clothes they wear in the day.

Although the Galicians have been living in poverty for generations, they are probably poorer now than ever before, incomparably poorer than in the days when they were serfs. As they have no money wherewith to buy manure, their land is becoming less fertile from year to year—already its productivity per acre is to the productivity per acre of England as 4:37; and, owing to the divisions and subdivisions entailed by the law of inheritance, their holdings are becoming smaller and smaller. At the present time the average size of a holding is under four jochs; and, on 80 per cent. of these holdings, the net annual profits do not amount to more than 20 gulden — £1 13s. 4d. And this, although every sheep, pig, and fowl that is raised there is sold, and every pound of butter or cheese. To think of working early and late for a whole year for the sake of 20 gulden!

The peasants, it is true, are often able to eke out their incomes by earning a trifle on the manor-farm, but it is only a trifle, some twopence in winter, and perhaps one shilling in summer. Some few of them are beginning, however, to make their way, when the winter comes round, to the factories that are now springing up. There they may earn two shillings a day if their labor be skilled, and from sixpence to ninepence if it be unskilled. And these they look upon as quite munificent wages. Even with these additions to their means, however, the chances are that they will be forced sooner or later to have recourse to the money lender, and then their fate is sealed. Before long they will either be driven forth from their holdings, or compelled to work them for him, practically as his serfs. Holdings have been seized and sold for a debt of five shillings.

The painful impression produced in Galicia by the poverty of the peasants is rendered more intense in some districts by the glaring contrast in which it stands to the wealth of the nobles. The great land owners there are as a rule most lavish in their expenditure; their houses are organized on the most luxurious scale, and their horses and carriages are quite magnificent. Their extravagance is indeed proverbial, and, debt beridden though many of them be, they scatter money abroad with both hands when their own pleasures are in question. The great majority of them, however, would as soon think of flying as of giving a helping hand to the men and women around them, even though they be dying of starvation at their very gates. In no country in all Europe is there so little sympathy between the land-owning class and the peasant as in Galicia, such a lack of any feeling of responsibility on the one side, or of loyalty on the other. It is the peasants who pay the pastor's stipend and keep his house in repair, but it is the lord of the manor who appoints him. It is they who build the schools, where there are schools, and defray all the cost of education; but it is he who chooses the teachers, who retains or dismisses them at will, and who decides what they shall teach and what leave untaught. It is they, too, who make the roads, although the only vehicles that pass over them are his. Soldiers are billeted for the month together in cottages, but they never cross the threshold of the manor house; and when they are in need of horses and forage, it is the land workers, not the land owners, who must supply them. The nobles may hunt and shoot the whole day long, if they choose, over the peasants' holdings; but woe betide a peasant who is found in his lord's forest without permission! He is straightway flogged as a poacher. Then a one-roomed hut pays almost as much house duty as a mansion, and small farms are far more heavily taxed per acre than great estates.

In Galicia the incidence of the land tax is indeed quite absurd in its unfairness, and that owing in part at least, to one of those blunders which occur so often in that part of the world. The officials appointed to assess the tax when it was first imposed underestimated the land held by the nobles to the amount of 3,000,000 gulden; and, when they discovered their error, in order to conceal it, they calmly added that sum to their valuation of the peasants' holdings. A commission is now sitting for the purpose of revising this valuation; but as it consists of 15 nobles and three peasants

it is not probable that it will do much towards relieving small holdings at the expense of great estates.

Some curious proofs of the way in which the Galician nobles abuse their power were afforded by the last land-tag elections. In some districts, where they knew the peasants were going to vote against the official candidates, they stationed troops before the voting booths to drive them away at the point of the sword, and prevent their voting at all. In others they allowed them to vote, but took care that their votes were burnt uncounted. In one village, when the peasants presented themselves at the parish room, although they were punctual to the minute, they found that the election had already been held, and with closed doors! In several places their chief men were quietly arrested while on their way to vote, and thrown into prison. Devices of all sorts were resorted to in fact to prevent these people from using the votes the Austrian government had given to them. The reichsrath elections last spring were conducted on much the same lines.

It seems almost incredible that men should submit, in this our day, to the sort of treatment that is dealt out to the Galician peasantry. But the ignorance of these people, it must be remembered, is surpassed only by their credulity and their superstition. They know no more than their sheep do of nineteenth-century ways or of nineteenth-century civilization. They are, too, by nature patient and long-suffering. English workmen would stand aghast could they hear them talk; for although they have been freemen now for nearly half a century they still talk as serfs, and what virtues and what vices they have are the virtues and vices of serfs. That their master should give them a flick with his whip as he passes is in their eyes the most natural thing in the world; nay, they will even turn and kiss the hand that strikes them. The majority of them are firmly convinced that there are on this earth two distinct orders of human beings, nobles and peasants; and that, for the time being, the very *raison d'être* of the latter is to serve the former. And serve him they must, therefore, whether they wish it or not, for such is the decree of the fates. All the good things of this life, too—beautiful houses, warm clothes, rich food—they look upon as the special property of the nobles; it is only upon the scraps and odds and ends that they advance any claims for themselves. Not that they approve of this arrangement; on the contrary, they regard it as being woefully unjust; for, although until quite recent days it has

rarely ever occurred to them to resist the tyranny or resent the insolence of their masters, they have never a doubt in their own minds but that these masters, who are Roman Catholics, are morally worse and less deserving than they themselves, who are many of them Anabaptists. It is by foul means, not by fair, they are sure, that their oppressors have obtained possession of the land, and with it of all that makes life worth living. Perhaps this is why, whenever they have risen up against them—as in 1846—they have smitten them hip and thigh, ruthlessly, with blind fury. It is an article of faith among them, indeed, that when the day of their deliverance comes—and prophets have now arisen who are preaching that it is near at hand—no quarter must be shown to the nobles, as they are in league with the devil.

#### THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.

Extracts from an article written for the Outlook by Mr. Ramon Reyes Sala, a native of Manila.

There are about 600 habitable islands in the Philippines. Of these the principal ones are Luzon, Mindanao, Samar, Panay, Negros, Palarian, Paragan, Mindoro, Leyte, Cebu, Masbate and Bojol. The total area has been estimated to be nearly 150,000 square miles. From my own travel and observation, however, I should put it somewhat less than 100,000 miles. All of the islands are of volcanic origin and are crossed by ranges of mountains from two to eight thousand feet high. Earthquakes occur frequently and sometimes do much damage. For this reason the American sky-scraper will never be transplanted to Manila.

In the interior are magnificent forests, trees two or three hundred feet high. The glorious flora, of a luxuriance unequalled, I believe, anywhere, makes it a paradise for the naturalist. The gigantic orchids are justly celebrated. Strange to say, there is no large game, although bear-hunting furnishes rare sport. Boa-constrictors, ranging from ten to twenty-five feet in length, are all too plentiful. Bears are to be found in the mountains. However, for the benefit of young Americans who are anxious for excitement and big game, I will say that the bays and rivers swarm with the proas of pirates; while in the mountains and forests lurk bands of brigands—the natural result of Spanish misrule and oppression.

There are nearly 10,000,000 natives, and these are divided into about 180 tribes, each possessing its own peculiar dialect and customs. All of these are of Malay extraction except the Negritos—the descendants of the aborigines—

a dwarfish, ugly, feeble, stupid race of African descent. They are, fortunately, fast disappearing.

The Malays in the interior of the islands are yet in a state of semi-savagery.

The main population is the so-called Tagala. These are all Catholics, though in Sulu are yet many Mohammedans, governed by a sultan under the protection of the governor-general. The mestizos or half-caste Spaniards are the most intelligent. Many of these possess considerable wealth and are highly cultivated, often having had the advantage of a European education. Until lately this element did not affiliate with the insurgents, which, perhaps, was the real reason of the failure of all previous insurrections. This was due to the fact that so many of the rebels were the half-castes known as mestizo-Chinos—a mixture of native and Chinese blood—and for this class, ugly and vicious, though often shrewd and intelligent, the better element has nothing but contempt.

There are also many Chinese in the islands, who may properly be designated the Jews of the Orient. Many of these are very rich, though they have to pay very dearly for each privilege.

The natives are docile and easily led. Their hospitality is proverbial. They are also very artistic and musical. The climate, though extremely hot, is very healthful.

There are about 15,000 Spaniards in the colony, counting the military. At the head of each of the 18 provinces is a governor.

There is but one railroad in the islands. It is from Manila to Dagupin—a distance of 123 miles. It is a single track, and English engines are used. Their speed is about 45 miles an hour. This road has paid more than ten per cent. to the shareholders. The trend of the trade seems now to be towards the United States, though Germany, England, Spain and France contribute most of the imports. American manufacturers will be able to compete with the English and the Germans only when the cost of production and transportation shall have been so reduced that they can offer their goods at much lower prices. American products are preferred, but they come too high.

Under new and favorable conditions I see a great future in the colony for American commerce. Sugar, hemp, tobacco, fruits, coffee, rice and indigo are the principal exports—amounting at present, I should judge, to about \$40,000,000 a year. The imports are about \$30,000,000. Native labor is very cheap, and the soil is wonderfully productive.