

REVIEWS.

ASIA.

THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS.*

THAT the acquisition by America of a group of islands so important, so rich, and, it may be added, so little known as the Philippines should be the signal for the appearance of several works upon the archipelago is no more than might be anticipated. Mr. Foreman's long acquaintance with Manila, and his knowledge of island politics, fully justified his volume; while that of Prof. Worcester was no less acceptable as the personal experience of a naturalist who has perhaps travelled as widely among the islands as any European now living. But neither of these authors presented us with what is felt to be a distinct want here not less than in America, namely, a trustworthy and complete book of reference upon the archipelago. Those personally acquainted with the country and the wonderful amount of work done in it by the Jesuits were not without hope that something of this nature might be looked for from them. This hope has, in one sense, been fulfilled in the volumes now before us.

The book, as we learn from the introduction, is a direct outcome of the war. Hostilities had not been long in progress before the greater part of the missionaries were compelled to take to flight, and it was during the long period of waiting in Manila, while return to their cures was impossible, that the plan was conceived of compiling the work and publishing it contemporaneously with the new atlas of the archipelago, which for some months previously had been in course of preparation in the Observatory of Manila, under the able direction of P. Jose Algué, S.J., the head of that institute. The fall of Spain seemed likely to postpone all chances of publication, but the Philippine Commission came to the rescue, and the title-page bears the name of the Washington press.

The work, which is in two most cumbersome volumes, the first of which alone weighs some 9½ lbs., aims at being both a presentment of what was previously known concerning the archipelago, and also the first-hand knowledge and observation of various members of the Society of Jesus. An unsatisfactory feature about it, however, is that it is by no means easy to discover in every case whether the information is to be ascribed to the former or the latter source, and the references given are both scanty and incomplete. A section on the general geography of the group opens the first volume, each island and district being taken in order and dealt with under the heads of population, inhabitants, villages, language, productions, means of communication, and so on, and a good deal of original information is doubtless included in these 150 pages, drawn from the actual knowledge or research of the Jesuit personally familiar with the district. Much, however, is undoubtedly due to the *Guía Oficial*, and even more, perhaps, to F. X. Baranera's *Geografía de Filipinas*. The population still remains very uncertain, but the authors seem to think, working by ecclesiastical data, which are probably less in error than the lay estimates, that the "census" of 1894—which was, of course, largely guesswork—is not far wrong for the present day. This puts it, roughly, at about 8,000,000, and though there have been eight years for increase since that time, war and disease

* 'El Archipiélago Filipino: Colección de Datos Geográficos . . . entresacados de anteriores Obras, ó obtenidos con la propia Observación y Estudio por Algunos Padres de la Misión de la Compañía de Jesús.' In two volumes, 4to, pp. 708 and 469 with Atlas fo. Washington: Imprenta del Gobierno. 1900.