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GOVERNMENT REPORT

By CORNELIO BALMACEDA
Secretary of Commerce and Industry

SEPTEMBER, 1950, marked the turning point in the post war foreign trade of the Philippines. From then on to the second quarter of the current year, the trade has maintained a favorable balance, and for the 12-month period from September, 1950, to August, 1951, the net export surplus amounted to ₱60,898,897, as our exports totaled ₱876,435,813 against imports of ₱815,536,916.

Thus after almost six years of mounting trade deficits which accumulated to the tune of nearly two billion pesos, we have finally regained our prewar trade position.

During the first half of 1951, the total overseas trade amounted to ₱897,098,164, of which ₱487,210,126 represents exports and ₱409,888,038 represents imports. A trade balance of ₱77,322,088 tipped heavily in our favor.

Export Trade

Philippine exports soared to record heights after the outbreak of the Korean war in June, 1950. For the 12-month period ending August, 1951, the export

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The cover. The Holy Family and the Three Kings is one of a number of mosaics in the famous Victorias church on Negros island. Color photo by E. Z. Izon, courtesy Philippines Free Press.

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WHAT ARE FILIPINOS LIKE?

NOTHING is so difficult as self-appraisal, and to answer the question in the title of this article I thought it best to start by asking it. With no particular pattern in mind, I asked a number of foreign friends to give me their impression of the Filipinos.

I was told that we were friendly, good-natured, loyal, idealistic, sentimental, socially gracious ("even the lower classes"), unwilling to accept responsibility, lacking in self-reliance, less hardworking than the Chinese, more intelligent than the Malays, imitative but less so than the Japanese, religious but not so mystical as the Indians, and, in general, the most adaptable of all the races in the Orient.

A Spaniard thought we were very like the Spanish; an American thought we were not American enough. A Frenchman remarked that we were the only people in Asia with a sense of humor, at least the only ones who could laugh at themselves, which, when one thinks of it, was probably the prettiest compliment of all.

By way of contrast, our fellow Asians had a uniform tendency to laugh at us. A Siamese said we were pretentious. An Indonesian, in much the same vein, deplored our tendency to accept western standards at their face value. A Chinese thought we were improvident. An Indian was shocked by the cheapness in which human life was held by a people that could kill for a few centavos, a political argument, or a girl's ruffled feelings.

The history of the Philippines might well be read in these national characteristics. There is, to start with, a relatively simple explanation for our notorious lack of self-reliance, which seems to be the main burden of complaint against us these days. For more than four centuries of colonial rule, we were not allowed to rely on ourselves. Colonialism also suggests the reason for a certain unwillingness to accept responsibility; for too long in our history, it was not accompanied by any real authority.

Of all foreign peoples, the Americans find it hardest to understand this, possibly because the thirteen colonies which grew into the United States of America were self-reliant from the start. The Protestant Anglo-Saxons who began the stupendous march across the American continent at the riverheads of the Atlantic seaboard, belonged to the same race as the people of the British metropolis. They were in fact the same people. There was consequently no "foreign" government in the Am-

by Leon Ma. Guerrero

A frank and refreshing appraisal of the native character, touching on many controversial points, by a writer well-known for his insight and candor

erican colonies; beneath the forms of royal authority, the settlers were ruled by a government they could truthfully regard as their own, and in which they had a "native-born" right to participate.

It is significant that "native-born" is still considered by numerous Americans as a complimentary adjective, suggesting a certain superiority over, say, immigrants from eastern or southern Europe. In the Philippines, on the other hand, the word "native" has an unfavorable connotation; it keeps a disagreeable flavor of inferiority, reminiscent of the Spanish "indio," or of early Americans who were ostracized for marrying Filipinas and "going native."

This minor difference indicates the greater one. During the four centuries of colonial rule in the Philippines, the government was "foreign," the exclusive prerogative of a superior class, the special privilege of an alien race. Obviously the Filipinos could not consider such a government their own; they could not identify themselves with it; it was a thing apart, and more than that, a thing to be regarded with suspicion, hostility, even hatred.

The "government" did everything; it was responsible for everything; but it was not responsible to the people. On the contrary, the people were responsible to it, for taxes, forced labor, conscription, and all the varied catalogue of colonial duties, with no right to expect anything in return. The hard lessons drawn from the experience of many generations must now be unlearned, if the Filipinos are to develop civic consciousness, a sense of participation in the government, and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the country.

The establishment of an independent Filipino government was the fundamental prerequisite for the growth of true self-reliance. Nationalism had to be the mother of democracy.

That the Filipino leaders of the campaign for independence were more perceptive than their American opponents, who made democracy or the demonstrated capacity to run a "stable government" the prerequisite for independence, is amply shown by the maturity so rapidly attained in the five short years since the 4th of July 1946.

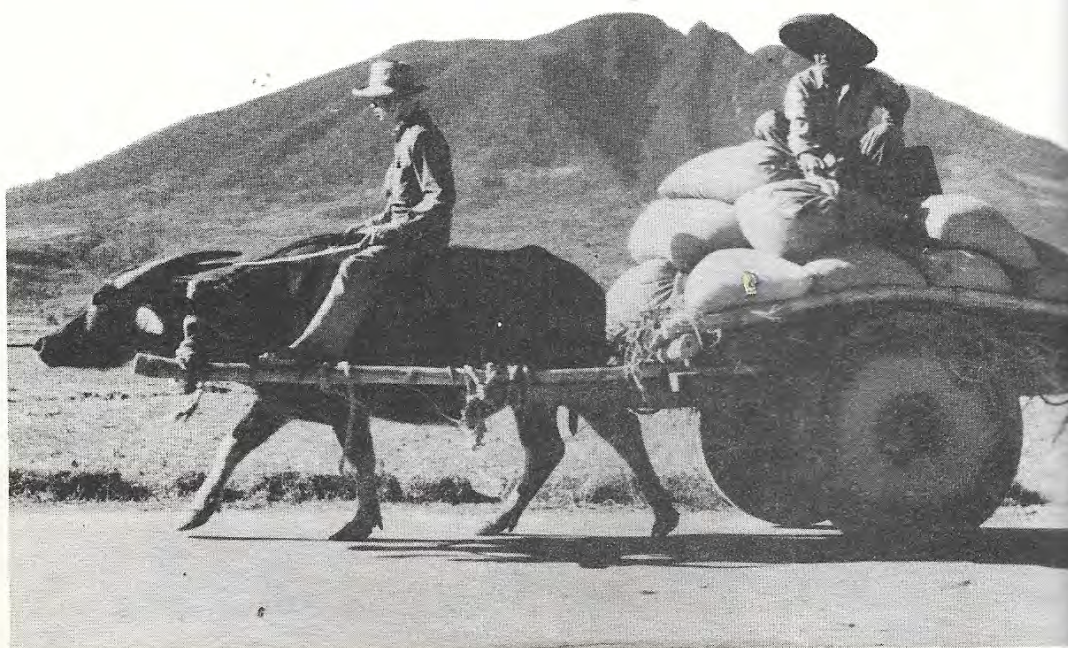
The successful use of the issue of graft and corruption by both parties, by the Liberals in 1946 and by the Nacionalistas in 1951, suggests a profound change in the climate of public opinion. No longer do the great majority of Filipinos tend to condone cheating the government, as something "foreign" and oppressive that deserves to be cheated. With independence, the feeling has grown that public funds are actually the money of the people, and stealing from the treasury is just as much stealing as picking pockets.

What makes this new attitude of moral disapproval particularly remarkable is that, immediately before independence, it had been patriotic to cheat the "government" of the Japanese occupation forces, all the way from the payment of streetcar fares to selling military supplies, stealing them back at night, and re-selling them all over again the next morning.

Indeed the brazen and brutal selfishness of the Japanese taught the Filipinos anew the old lessons about "foreign" government that a more subtle American domination had tended to obscure. Tariff inequalities and immigration restrictions were vague generalities compared with the ruthless confiscation of rice at highway checkpoints, or even the acquisitive soldier snatching at a wristwatch.

But if independence was the indispensable prerequisite for self-reliance, it is not the only factor to be considered. To hark back to the contrast with the American colonies, the pioneers who opened up the prairies

VALENZUELA—TB



were working for themselves. The early Filipinos were scarcely in the same position, and the easiest way to understand it is to remember that we were known to the Spaniards as *indios*.

It is to the credit of the *encomenderos*, to whom literally the bodies and souls of their subjects were entrusted, that, unlike the Americans, they did not kill off their "Indians," but worked them; many times to the point of death, it is true, but not quite. But if any profitable contrasts in self-reliance are to be made, they should be drawn surely between the Filipino "Indian" and the American "Indian," and not between us and the descendants of the American *conquistadores*.

On that basis, we Filipinos would come off rather well, whether the credit be given to some natural vitality in our race or to the moral scruples, military inefficiency, or economic shortsightedness of the Spanish.

But to chide us with the accomplishments of the hardy American pioneers, is scarcely fair. They had every economic incentive for self-improvement and self-reliance, especially after the British connection had been severed.

In the Philippines, the *encomendero* system, which laid the foundations for a feudal economy, was further abetted by a government monopoly of overseas trade, which reduced the isolated archipelago to complete dependence on the metropolis. The American imposition of "free trade," which was actually a tariff wall continuing the monopoly of the Philippine economy by a foreign metropolis, only confirmed the habits engendered by the Acapulco galleons.

Ironically enough, the Filipinos discovered that they could survive on their own resources only during the extremity of the Japanese occupation and the consequent American blockade. We then became self-reliant because we had to, and it is possible that the only

way we shall finally achieve economic independence is by being driven to it by stark necessity.

There is, however, another aspect of self-reliance which has nothing to do with colonialism and its remnants. When some Americans say that we lack it, they are thinking of our family system. They cannot understand why grown-up sons and daughters keep on living with their parents even after they have married and begotten children of their own, or why we should feel under an obligation to feed and house even the most distant "cousins" who find themselves in want.

This trait is not exclusively Filipino; it is common to most of Asia; and it is, I daresay, common to all rudimentary societies. Modern man looks to his government for security, but where the government, whether native or foreign, is still regarded as an alien, selfish force, the individual prefers to trust his blood-kin for what are in effect old-age pensions or unemployment insurance. The family is an indispensable institution in these circumstances, and one cannot be too sure that people are happier where it has been supplanted by the state as the center of society.

Our adaptability or imitativeness is, like our family system, largely self-protective. Colonial peoples quickly learn to adapt themselves to foreign ways. The penalty is, at the very least, a kick in the behind. The reward, on the other hand, is a little more rice on the plate. So in the colonial Philippines, the man who could speak Spanish or English, who knew enough not to eat with his hands, or who could affect a foreign-cut jacket, had a reasonably better chance to get a job or a promotion.

That the Filipinos showed a precocious ability to imitate, and imitate to perfection, is perhaps indicated by our national male costume, which is nothing else than a shirt worn with its tails out. This seems to have

GRAPHIC HOUSE



GRAPHIC HOUSE



been decreed by the Spaniards to make it possible to tell at first glance who was a Spaniard, with the right to wear his shirt-tails properly tucked in, and who was an inferior "indio," with the obligation of flaunting them even when he was in full formals, complete to cane and tophat. It is an odd turnabout, not without a certain irony, that this badge of inferiority has been transferred into a cherished national institution, and that the white man in the tropics has actually followed suit by wearing his tails out too in the fashionable sportshirt.

Our mimetism, however, had at least one more source other than pure self-preservation. Those Asians who complain that the Filipinos are excessively westernized, to the point of losing their Asian identity, forget that there was nothing else for us to be.

For religious reasons, the early Spanish missionaries did a thorough job of destroying all the repositories of native culture that they could lay their hands on. The rationalization of this vandalism was that, like all primitive culture, ours was essentially religious, and the ancient manuscripts were consigned to the flames as the work of Satan. Our native alphabet, so flexible and elaborate as to be a convincing proof of a high degree



TIMES MIRROR

of civilization, fell into disuse, to be rediscovered only after centuries as a scholarly curiosity. The native dialects survived in Roman script because the missionaries, with admirable assiduity and zeal not at all common to the white conquerors in Asia, learned the language of the people instead of compelling them to learn Spanish. But all the rest had to go.

It is difficult to determine now the strength, or even the exact nature, of our early culture. But it put up a stubborn fight. Priest-magicians, even more than the dispossessed kinglets, led a series of sanguinary rebellions to defend the ancient altars. When the last one fell, the "western islands" and the tribes that inhabited them were in a state of grace, but also practically in a state of nature.

It would have been impossible to eradicate native culture completely in such Asian centers of civilization as China, India, and Japan, with their multitude of gods, temples, palaces, and traditions. The Philippines, on the outer rim of Asia, were an easier cultural conquest.

We were also the Asian people that remained the longest under western rule. Magellan raised Homonhon on the horizon in 1521; by 1572 Legaspi had destroyed the Mohammedan power in Manila. Japan was not occupied until 1945, and then only briefly; China never lost her independence, and neither did Siam; India was not annexed until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Moreover, the other westerners that shared with the Spanish the loot of Asia came as traders; they were interested in silks and spices, silver and gold. The Spanish were also interested in souls, and while the Dutch, for example, were content to take their profits and leave the Indonesians to Allah, the Spanish felt obliged in conscience to justify their conquest with salvation.

Shorn of their native traditions, isolated from the rest of Asia and the world by a strict policy of exclusion, we Filipinos had no alternative to western civilization. The American occupation confirmed it with material advantages and political institutions that seemed unrivalled by anything Asia had to offer. Dollars, habeas corpus, and the ballot completed the work of the catechism. As it had been since time out of mind, westernization appeared to be the key to personal and national progress, and imitation the easiest method of westernization.

It is to be hoped that with independence we shall become a little more discriminating. But it is still justifiable to say that we "accept western standards at their face value." Democracy, for example, was for so long a mere theory, the idealised aspiration of a subjugated nation, that our approach to its actual operation is necessarily tinged with an academic impracticality, an act of faith without good works.

There is an odd feature of that faith that perhaps deserves a passing comment, and that is the time-lag which afflicts our understanding of the west. The clichés of the contemporary world are epigrams among us. We hail as original discoveries, theories in politics, economics, sociology, and art that are already discredited abroad. It is startling to find that *Lorna Doone* is the standard of literary excellence in many schools, and that a considerable number of people believe the "third force" policy is a local invention. University

professors do not tire of repeating the theories in vogue when they were college students in the United States; they have not bothered to keep up; and succeeding generations of teachers fall in their turn into the same rut.

Since we have grown accustomed to borrowing our ideas, we have lost much of our capacity for independence and originality of thought. We have also developed an extraordinary credulity, often mistaking form for substance, words for deeds, programs on paper for achievements.

A slogan is coined, a speech is made, a law is passed or an order given, and we imagine that the deed is done. We are told by higher authority that, say, a diplomatic victory has been won, and, in utter disregard of the facts, we believe it, just as readily as we would have believed the opposite.

What saves us is our ability to laugh at ourselves. A lively sense of the ridiculous has helped to keep alive our sense of proportion. We are indeed the only nationalists in Asia who do not take ourselves too seriously, which explains why we strike white men as being friendly and good-natured. We are "socially gracious" to them because we do not hate them. Only hatred can excuse bad manners.

Sometimes, of course, the irreverence we have for our rulers becomes a form of self-flagellation. What we do, or what our government does, is seldom as good as what other nations or other governments have done; there is a streak of masochism in our political opposition.

But in itself the laughter is a good thing. In the past it was perhaps the only way our people could get back at the foreign ruler. For the future it should insure us against submission to a messianic despot.

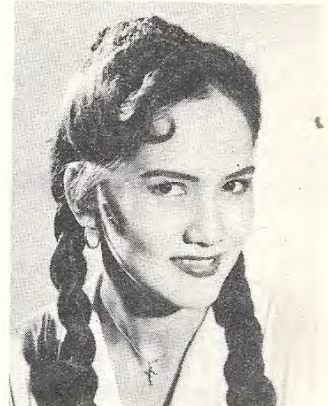
All in all, it would not be too far from the truth to say that we owe our faults to others, but our virtues are our own. Colonialism, through its various interpreters, made us irresponsible and imitative, improvident and even "indolent." It gave us false ideas of the indignity of manual labor and the security of a government job. It made us indifferent to our responsibilities to ourselves.

The wonder is that we retained our good humor, and the vitality to demand the only possible solution to our troubles.

We seem to inspire other nations with an irresistible urge to save us, civilize us, and liberate us. The Spaniards believed they were rescuing us from the Mohammedans and other agents of Satan. The Americans proclaimed their purpose to civilize us, Christianize us, and liberate us from the Spaniards and the "Tagalog Republic." The Japanese in their turn assumed, like excellent mimics, the classic posture of saviors, and announced that they were come to free us from the Americans in particular, and white men in general. No one bothered to consult us, and many Filipinos were killed by these favors. By an amazing stroke of luck, we have managed to survive all this solicitude, and to learn that in the end we must save ourselves.



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LANGUAGE AND FILIPINO EDUCATION

The use of the vernacular in schools
is meeting stiff opposition despite world trend in its favor

by Alfredo T. Morales

ANYONE who wishes to change the traditional English language policy of our schools in the Philippines, with the aim of utilizing the native languages more widely, must face the almost fanatical hostility of teachers of English. By sheer force of numbers these teachers command respect, as they are the largest group of educators in the country. Moreover, no other group multiplies faster each year, for "English majors" dominate the lists of education graduates.

So strong is the power of the English tradition among elementary school teachers that experimentation in language instruction is difficult to initiate among them. One superintendent found it impossible to try the Iloilo Experiment (the use of the vernacular in the lower grades) in his division. A true democrat, he bowed to his teachers' unanimous opposition and reached a compromise by narrowing down the Iloilo type of experiment with the local language to one subject instead of conducting it in all subjects in the first grade. The fact that the Iloilo Experiment has been proved successful for three years hardly affects the minds of public school teachers in the provinces, and in Manila, for that matter.

What the majority of Filipino writers in English think of the native language dissidents against the reign of English is expressed in such typical comments as those made by Maximo Ramos in "Must We Drop English?" and by Teodoro M. Locsin in his recent defense of the affirmative side of the proposition, "Should Filipinos Continue Writing in English?"

Mr. Ramos makes some inaccurate observations about the linguistic background of the United States, South America, and Ireland, but these are minor points. I think that the Filipino writer, or teacher, who has progressed the farthest in his mastery of English feels the greatest distress over the doubt which a native language movement casts on the value of his priceless knowledge of the world's greatest literature, including the non-

English world classics in translation. To love great literature is to treasure a jewel of which no one can be robbed, which holds its radiance undimmed beside other precious stones of the spirit. It should not grow dull even before the fiery glow of patriotism. Thus Mr. Ramos writes:

"I am but a teacher and I cannot see why nationalism has to enter into the question of language. Does a man love his country any less because he can read Shakespeare and Milton in the original and Dante, Homer, Dostoyevsky, Confucius, Tagore, Goethe, and Cervantes in translation? Does a man love the Philippines any less because he can, by being able to speak English, go to any part of the world and be understood?"

The inspiration a writer finds in the world's classics, and the amusement with which he contemplates the gulf between their greatness and the low state of vernacular literature, is expressed inimitably by Mr. Locsin:

"Someday someone, some pure, uncultivated soul, springing from the primordial stock, rising from the national subconscious—I'm talking nonsense—will write lyrics of such naive charm, stories of such untouched innocence, works of a simplicity so profound because so elemental that a renaissance in the national language may be started. There will be a flowering of Tagalog literature. Someone will sing in Tagalog something like this anonymous lyric from early English literature:

"Western Wind, when wilt thou blow,
The small rain down can rain;
Christ, if my love were in my arms,
And I in my bed again!"

"Pending that happy day, Filipinos will study English to read Shakespeare, Dickens and Donne in the original, and the translations of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoi and Dante, and they will find that they cannot write except in English. Until the great books have been translated into Tagalog, the great works of philosophy,

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LANGUAGE AND THE FILIPINO WRITER

The problem is to write well
in whatever medium the writer may choose to express himself

by N. V. M. Gonzalez

PERHAPS it is not altogether impossible, notwithstanding the brevity expected of a magazine article, to sketch some of the basic problems in language confronting the Filipino writer today. One does this sort of thing not for entertainment nor yet for instruction, but rather for the discipline inherent in the task of writing itself and for the afterthoughts which the occasion breeds and which find their way sooner or later in one's creative work.

One thinks of one's problems aloud, so to speak, as I am forced to do now and take language in a rather loose way, indeed merely in the sense that it is a form of expression, a tool among several in the box, a means that belongs to a score of means, all of them necessary in achieving the end; and the term writer, as the literary artist no less, he who must needs use the tool for constructing his own world, since the one around him hardly seems completely acceptable. I am forced into these conveniences of meaning and find the fog somewhat lifted, the bearings true, and the mountain peaks in the distance—Flaubert, Proust, Mann—relieving the vastness of the ocean.

But the figure does not keep; a foreboding? I think instead that for the Filipino, a writer's career can hardly be an improvisation, since there is the script to follow and, in some moments, the right stance to take, even with an air. With a tradition to work in, no artist can indeed think himself unlucky. And yet the problem for the Filipino is somehow different; such tradition as he can conveniently accept and make use of belongs to literature only by convention, for more accurately it is the politician's and the journalist's rather than the artist's; and the artist, if he is wise, has to discover in what way his talent can best be guided by assuming that in a free world, such as the one in which his kind of art can thrive, literature is the property of all, or ought to be.

I have just been reading about Ruben Dario and

Iqbal, two poets beloved of their people, the first a poet in Spanish and the other in Urdu, the first a poet who had to go to the French and even to the Greeks, so his biographer tells us, in order to emerge from the insularity of his voice in *Azul*; the other who by the grace of circumstances—for a poet can hardly decide when to be born—had merely to draw from the experience of his race and culture to write "Quami Tarana," later to be "learnt by heart by practically every Pakistani."

We have, it seems to me, a successful use of tradition in both, although in the case of Ruben Dario we have the searcher whereas in Iqbal we have the discoverer. It is true that there are those of us who believe that Truth, like perfume, is best appreciated if provided with a Paris label; but Ruben Dario survived his travels and enriched both the literature of his native country and that of all Spanish-speaking countries nevertheless.

I am not saying that Iqbal had less success, but I regret that those of us who read from the literature of the West only must bear up and wait. My source is silent on how soon the bulk of Iqbal's writings may be available in English but my appetite has been considerably whetted; and believing in people as I do, I am sure that in Iqbal there must certainly be the nobility they have to live by. If my information is correct, Iqbal obviously enjoys the reputation in his native country that Jose Rizal has in ours.

And Rizal's novels disturb me. The two books, with the possible exception of some of Villa's poems, are perhaps the most durable works which the Filipino imagination has constructed to date; but I regret that the two novels are more often than not regarded for their concern with justice, rather than for their insight into our social life; for their author's having used a borrowed language rather than for the language itself. We are losing a novelist, very much in the same way as we are being cold to the man who has said—

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history and the sciences, the great novels, poems, dramas, and biographies of the world, Filipinos will look for them, find them in the original or in translation in English—and write, except those who decide to dedicate their talents to Tagalog movies and *Klasik Komiks*, in English.

"The only way to stop the writing by Filipinos in English is to lower a cultural curtain between the Philippines and the rest of the world. Let no books in English come in. Let there be a kind of cultivated ignorance; perhaps, out of the darkness, may come, shining, the native soul.

"Well, maybe."

It is unnecessary to recite the complete list of benefits we have gained from the cultivation of English in the Philippines for the last 50 years. They are familiar to every educator, and their value is incalculable. In re-examining our English language policy, however, one must judge values and results on a broader basis than the experience of sweet exaltation to be enjoyed in literary art, even though this is one of the highest prizes to be won from language learning.

In discussing our language problem, we must remind ourselves that our English language policy is supposed to do a national educational job. How well has it done this job?

How many adults out of school cannot perform their duties of citizenship or participate effectively in self and community improvement because of illiteracy? What has our language policy done to bring the elite and the masses closer to each other? How can our language policy help improve our democracy?

Finally, let us be realistic and ask, What is the true level of our educational system as a whole? What are the limitations under which our schools have to operate? What are the broad educational problems of our country which affect language teaching?

Asked such questions, confronted with the facts from the present stage of our history, and determined to act for the good of the people, no one could remain selfishly pro-English. No one could backwardly continue colonial-minded, or reminisce over the age of benevolence of Taft's governorship. No one could support an educational tradition which has been proved over and over again by technical studies to be inefficient to a disastrous degree and has been abandoned by all the rest of the world.

Going back to the origin of the English language policy at the beginning of the American regime, one finds that the motives behind it were in keeping with the altruistic character of America's colonial record in the Philippines.

The choice of English was partly determined by the people's desire to share the language of their governing officials, a privilege the denial of which was one of the causes of the Filipino revolution against Spain. Moreover, for the practical purpose of establishing without delay a democratic public school system, in contrast to

the Spanish religious educational system, no other language was feasible.

The achievements of this altruistic policy has fallen far below its aim. On one hand, it has made English the language in which the present ruling class of Filipinos can address each other, no matter what their native language may be. On the other hand, it has failed after 50 years either to give literacy to the common people or to unite them among themselves and with their leaders. Only .8 per cent of our population, who have finished a junior college education and higher, may be considered the actual users of English. The literacy of 25 per cent in English given by the last census is obviously a vain report, as it amazingly exceeds the percentage alone of the population who completed the elementary grades. A complete elementary education is considered by the 1949 Joint Congressional Committee on Education the minimum preparation for functional literacy.

Regardless of the existence of several universities and numerous colleges in the Philippines, our educational system is in fact a primary school system only. The Joint Congressional Committee on Education estimated that out of every 200 who start in Grade I, but one reaches college and graduates. Out of every 100 who started in Grade I before 1939, only six reached first year high school. The remaining 94 were in the elementary school. Of these, 14 reached Grade VII, 18 reached VI, 26 reached V, 45 reached IV, 58 reached III, and 72 reached II.

To these figures one should add those which give the trend in school attendance during the last 25 years. The Monroe Commission in 1925 found that 82 per cent of the children enrolled in the public schools were in the first four grades. The corresponding figure in 1946 was 83.51 per cent.

The significance of these facts is that the problem of English versus the native languages today is one of language in elementary and fundamental education. It is not the kind of problem which Filipino writers and teachers of English have been discussing with condescension and comedy between the lines. It is not a question of what is good for the elite 1 per cent of our society.

It is rather a problem of giving a basic education to 94 out of every 100 children which will truly help them improve themselves, their homes, and their communities. It is a problem of leading out of the dangerous jungle of ignorance the out-of-school youth and adults, of whom more than 50 per cent are illiterate. It means restoring to them the full title of citizenship and giving them more hope in life. These are desirable national objectives and essential functions of any democratic and professionally sound educational system. Judged by these objectives and functions, our system is tragically wrong.

It is wrong in spite of the annually increasing enrolment in our schools and in spite of the annually in-

creasing per capita expenditure per pupil. Granting that other causes have contributed to the deterioration and unsoundness of Philippine education, the crucial mistake in our system is its outmoded policy of using English as the medium of instruction in the elementary grades.

This is the mistake singled out for its first recommendation by the 1949 UNESCO Educational Mission. Speaking understandably in diplomatic language, the Mission believed that the solution to this "most perplexing problem" lies in a vigorous research program. Every research program carried out in other countries



has arrived at the conclusion that the mother tongue must be used as the principal medium of instruction for children.

Dr. Prator, a Fulbright specialist in English teaching brought to the Philippines in 1949 by the U. S. Educational Foundation in the Philippines, points to a world-wide movement putting this conclusion into practice:

"Other countries faced with a linguistic problem similar to that of the Philippines have almost without exception decided that each child's education must be begun in his mother tongue, and that later a transition is to be made to the national or common language which is the principal medium of instruction. In fact, there has been in recent years what amounts to a world-wide movement in that direction. In Mexico a renaissance of the school system occurred under the leadership of Minister of Education Jaime Torres Bodet, now Secretary General of UNESCO.

"A prominent feature of the innovations was the increased use of various Indian dialects in the first few grades, and the preparation of an excellent series of bilingual primers for the schools. Peru and Bolivia are making plans to follow suit and are constructing materials in Aymara and Quechua for rural schools in the Lake Titicaca region. Upon the suggestion of a U. S. educational mission, Haiti recently abandoned French in Grades I and II and substituted the Creole vernacular.

"The American authorities in Puerto Rico, after unfortunate experiments, finally accepted as a fact that it was neither wise nor feasible to teach the primary grades there in English. Throughout the colonies and dominions of the British Empire school instruction is now begun in the language of the pupils' home. Soviet Russia has made great propaganda capital of the introduction of early vernacular instruction in the schools of linguistic minority groups, and of the revival of local cultures which is said to have ensued.

"The Philippine public school system now remains almost isolated in its exclusive use of a foreign language."

No wonder our delegates to the UNESCO conference in Paris, and Geneva last June and July felt, in the midst of other Southeast Asian delegates, Mexican, South American, European, and Irish representatives, that our English language policy is a freak in world education.

Local experimentation for three years under Supt. Jose Aguilar of Iloilo has yielded results which show, as tested by Dr. Tito Clemente, chief of the Research and Measurement Division in the Bureau of Public Schools, that the grade school pupils taught in their vernacular surpass the achievement of the control group taught in English. Since the beginning of the experiment in 1948, the former group has consistently excelled the latter to a statistically significant degree in arithmetic and especially in language and reading.

Moreover, education in the vernacular has helped develop a more dynamic personality in the pupils and enabled them to practice and spread at home and in their communities what they learned in school. Literacy in the vernacular became fixed at the end of Grade I, in contrast to the loss of English literacy even after Grade VI. Finally, no retardation was suffered by children from the experimental group when they began learning English in the third year of the experiment with regular Grade III English classes.

These findings constitute one of the first great revolutionary developments of postwar and post American education in the Philippines. English in its proper sphere still has—will always have—much good to offer to our people, but no vested interest in it should distort its proper role in a sound national and democratic educational system.

As with English, so with the national language in so far as the non-Tagalog provinces are concerned. Further experimentation should explore the use of other major native languages, the postponement of the introduction of national language to later grades, and the possible modification of the Iloilo Experiment to include English as one subject beginning with oral English in the first grade.

Then, before too much delay, let us have a better national policy of teaching English as a second language and teaching in the vernacular as the medium of instruction.

GONZALEZ . . . CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

am so very am and
 speak so very speak
 and look my every hand
 is for each all lovers' sake

and nowhere time
 can farther never go
 tomorrow can not climb
 over each least lover's brow

—for it is as if we care more for the myths of their genius and not the fact of it that we can hear in their very voices.

Lope K. Santos, a couple of generations back, wrote his *Banaag at Sikat*, a book that might well be read, but which isn't. One still hears glowing praises about it today; and I have been told, for example, and by a reader whose opinion on many literary matters I have learned to value highly, that the novel is indeed as "heavy" as Dostoyevsky. How does it happen that artists like Nick Joaquin and Francisco Arcellana discover Dostoyevsky first and not Santos? Surely, a good Tagalog novel can survive translation; we have had no less than two generations of serious writers who could have made no embarrassment of their effort to preserve Santos for us.

Why then the neglect? Is it for lack of the expected stimulation, the kind of enjoyment we find, say, in Gide? For indeed we go to contemporary American, British, and European writers for pleasure and profit, in a kind of intellectual pleasure and business tour that has become so much the standard procedure in commerce. Is it because what supports our cultural life is the reputation of its components? Or is it because on being presented with a book we are incapable of reading it? Somewhere just round the corner, we are led to suspect, is the arbiter of literary taste who can quote right off the dust jacket though not from what Faulkner calls the product of the blood and the sweat that is there before us in cold, cold type.

I go back to Jose Garcia Villa and find that already he has warned us:

. . . . If they call you buffoon,
 Fermin, I have violins to drown them out —

Nor has he forgotten to suggest the discipline:

Trace the tracelessness of the ant,
 Every ant has reached this perfection.
 As he comes, so he goes,
 Flowing as water flows,
 Essential but secret like a rose.

If Villa has spoken so wisely, it is because we have betrayed him. Ours is hardly the world for the artist. Reading — and writing — on the fringe as it were of a world where we can indulge in the arts, thank God, we nevertheless live in small little worlds. For him who works with words, it is the most isolated of worlds.

What alienates, of course, is the unresolved difficul-

ties with language, which is central to the making of a national literature. I refer not to the conventional but to the direct use of language, not to the commercial but to the artistic, not to the coarse but to the subtle. Our reader, his training notwithstanding, cannot be possibly dumb. There are harmonies which no ear, however primitive, can miss. There is such a thing as magic; it can hardly fail. It is in the best moments of Balagtas, it is in that modest little song "Leron Leron Sinta" which the children sing out of school. Magic belongs to the darkness within us, and it is precisely



AGONCILLO



DE CASTRO



GUE



PEDROCHE



TUVERA



E

there to bring light, as Arguilla does in "How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife" and Bienvenido N. Santos in "Scent of Apples."

I am not sure that our writers do not owe a great debt to Hemingway, who is a master of it. It will not be too much to say that in a decade or so, our debt will be about as great to Faulkner, who for the present seems deliberately hiding his magic in rhetoric; and it is not that he will change; for it is our perception that will improve, our naked selves that will succumb. The least that can be said about it is that some people bring it off, and some don't.

Owing to circumstances of history, the challenge to the Filipino imagination, since it is the writer's duty to exorcise the devil of disorder from reality, has become somewhat formidable. It is perhaps impossible to find a more-uncultivated imagination than ours that is being called upon to perform for this day and age; for the task of interpreting reality, that is, of rendering the Philippine story, has become quite pressing, what with cries all over the world that Man's day is just about over. Before this fear, the mind staggers; the artist

ceases to be. Instead of creating, he tinkers round the shop, listens to the gossip of the people across the street.

What, the neighbors ask, is your favorite kind of vehicle? Tagalog? English? Spanish? It is what people call a timely question. But it is the politician's rather than the artist's, the historian's rather than the poet's. It has been said before, and I hope that this would not be the last occasion for repeating the statement, that a writer hardly chooses the language he writes in. Closer to his problem as a writer, more pertinent to his civic duty as a citizen, is that he should write



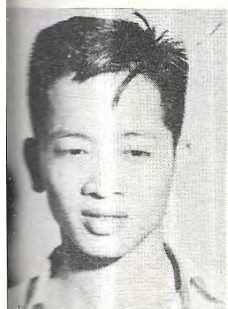
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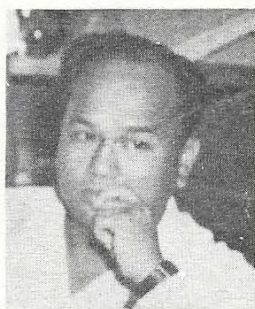
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GATBONTON



AUSTRIA



SANTOS

well. It is of course doubtful whether the ability demanded of a writer in a given language, say, Spanish or Tagalog, is the same kind demanded of him in English or Urdu. The magic we speak of as art itself is different in the matter of execution in each case; the effect the reader needs, or is made to feel that he needs, is different; and yet one wonders at the same time whether some method of working with thought and expression is essentially the same discipline for all.

Perhaps there are certain rules of thumb, known even long before Gutenberg, which have made possible the vast testimony now before us of Man's hopes and fears and dreams. I would put them all together as one contrivance that conceals itself afterward but remains invariably in control, becoming thus a force that seizes the issues of time and place and people, determines their relationships in terms of past and present and condemns them, if the mind be a realist, to the freedom of the future, or if the mind be a romantic, breathes into them the thrills of heaven and this life of which countless poets have already sung.

It is no simple matter for the literary artist to work

in this manner, be his tool the florid language like the Tagalog of our written literature in the National Language, or the cynical and often caustic Tagalog of everyday life, the idiom of the street, the idiom of the irony of being a Filipino. The difficulty is manifold, and the demands are exasperating because these are of the conscious craftsman and the artist possessed; and conscious because he must build consistently and elaborately, in the manner that cathedrals are built, and possessed because he must challenge and conquer, precisely as reality does challenge and often defeat him; and all this because he must lift us out of our petty, Coca-Cola drinking selves, relieve us of our dark complacency, and shove us into the eternal glare of daylight.

At the same time; there are the demands of modern life, in whose folklore are violent death and recalcitrant faith, hugeness of machines, and atrophy of will. I like to think that some one in a little room somewhere is not unpainstakingly working at some such task as this; on the other hand, I see his knit brow, and I share his moments of despair and loneliness.

For the loneliest of Filipino writers is the serious worker in the native language, because he has to assemble the tradition for himself and find the mile posts by which he may ascertain from time to time the distances covered. Less lonely, but with greater demands upon his energy, is the writer in English, for he must cut his own trail in a vast jungle of words and once upon the ridge, meet bolo in hand, as Wallace Stegner has put it, the combined firepower of the best writers in the English-speaking world. Fancy provides a figure for the writer in Spanish: that of a relative from the hacienda who has come to the city of letters in search of handsome cousins; a romantic role, I dare say; and a person to envy, since he can—for our milieu, at least—have the glamor of creativity without so much pressure from the here and now.

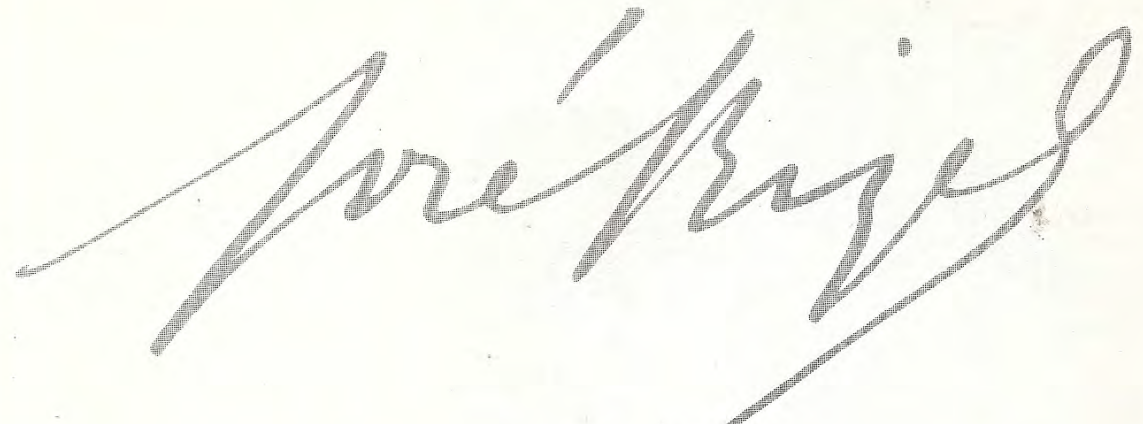
The responsibility consists in emerging into a Ruben Dario or an Iqbal, the inheritor of a tradition on the one hand, or the maker of one. It consists, to paraphrase a thought that T. S. Eliot has said more eloquently, in having Homer and everybody else that counted in each line that one writes, because for the writer the past has become part of the present; and the responsibility also consists in the daring and independence that is required of every mythmaker, of every philosopher and poet.

In a recent essay, Wallace Stegner has pointed out the difficulties of a possible Filipino Chaucer; for such a role, indeed, our society would be grateful if but some writer could play it. But could the country today produce the man? Already, as I write, the radio next door is playing

We are sailing along
On moonlight bay,
We can hear their voices ringing —

with the unmistakable sweetness of a popular culture that is so alien and yet has become our own.





ONE GREAT NAME appears in Philippine history which for intellectual force and inspiration has remained unparalleled. Jose Rizal, the national hero, saw his people through a most critical period of their history when the Philippines suffered under a government which denied rights to the individual, suppressed freedom of speech and press, and administered justice iniquitously.

The facts of Rizal's life are thus:

Born on June 19, 1861 in Calamba, Laguna, of middle class parents. After a brilliant career at the Ateneo de Manila, a school run by Jesuits, he enrolled at the University of Santo Tomas, where, as a medical student, the fact was brought home to him that *indios* (natives) had little status as human beings and could thus be abused and imposed upon, as a rule with impunity. Determined to correct these anomalies, Rizal sailed in 1882 for Spain, where under a liberal dispensation, he hoped the story of his country could be told and the abuses of the colonial government corrected. In 1887, aged 26, Rizal published his first novel, *Noli Me Tangere*, a half comic denunciation of Spanish rule. Between 1887 and 1891, when he wrote *El filibusterismo*, a sequel to the *Noli*, he studied all available books on early Philippine culture, determined to refute Spanish claims that before their coming the Philippines was a rude and barbaric country. At the same time, he wrote an increasing stream of political essays the effect of which was to inflame the awakening patriotism of his countrymen. So far as the Spanish colonial government was concerned, he was a marked man; his works were forbidden from circulation and his relatives were hounded and persecuted. Losing all hope of effecting practical reforms from Spain, however, Rizal decided to return to Manila. But he stopped at Hongkong, on the plea of his parents who feared for his safety if he returned to the Philippines. In that city, he set up the *Liga Filipina* and laid plans for the purchase of land in Borneo where tenants in his hometown, Calamba, who had been dispossessed by the friars, could be resettled. Then he returned to the Philippines. The authorities at first treated him with courtesy but later, fearing the effect of his presence on the already restive population, had him arrested and deported to Dapitan in the southern island of Mindanao. Here he spent four quiet years. In 1896, fretting under inactivity, Rizal offered to serve with the Spanish army in Cuba as a doctor. This offer was accepted after much delay but, while at Manila Bay, awaiting transshipment to Cuba, the *Katipunan*, a secret society later to lead the revolution, was discovered. Open revolt broke out while Rizal was at midsea and though it was public knowledge that he had counselled against revolution, orders for his arrest and return to Manila were issued. He was promptly charged with treason and just as promptly found guilty in a mock trial. On Dec. 30, 1896, on a fresh and sunny morning, Rizal was executed at Bagumbayan Field.

Rizal's career was a brief one but the power and influence of his ideas continue to this day. By his writings and teachings, he aroused the nationalism of the Filipinos and awakened in them a pride in their heritage.

THE NOVELS OF RIZAL: AN APPRECIATION by NICK JOAQUIN

RIZAL RE-READ today is Rizal "discovered"—as a novelist, a *modern novelist*. His two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El filibusterismo*, have suffered sadly from his reputation as a patriot. You don't go to a great national hero for a funny story; you go to admire, contemplate, worship, and gather pearls of wisdom. Rizal's books have been so beautified, so canonized, so enshrined, that they have almost ceased to belong to literature. What's worse, they've been called such names as "*The Bible of the Race*"—the sort of epithet a book finds hard to live down. It took the Bible many, many centuries to get itself read simply for pleasure—as all good books should be. Rizal will probably find the going even tougher. Nationalism—in our part of the world, anyway—is on the rise; and the Rizal novels are bound to get holier and holier instead of less so. The time may come, in fact, when a prospective reader will first have to wash his hands, incense his person, and genuflect, before reading a passage from the sacred text. Rizal's title for his first novel may be prophetic.

As it is now, who reads Rizal? Everybody. And everybody's always urging everybody else—especially the helpless young—to read him. It's becoming a sort of sacred duty among us Filipinos. And that's exactly how we read him: as a duty; a tribal duty; and to have our minds elevated, our patriotism intensified. And because we have to write a theme in school about him; or because we're tracking down a quotation; or because we're ghost-writing for some politician who'd like to mouth a few lofty utterances by the Pride of the Malay Race.

In short, nobody reads Rizal.

Nobody thinks of those two books as *novels*—like *Gone With the Wind* and *St. Elmo* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*—novels that are funny and sad and exciting and enjoyable. All novels are written to be enjoyed. But when we want to curl up with a good book, do we think of Rizal? Alas, no. We sit down to study Rizal. But we don't take his books to bed with us like we do Margaret Mitchell's.

The result is very sad. You should never deliberately sit down to read a book for some high and noble purpose. (That's what I call reading a book in cold blood.) If you do, you are bound to get bored—though you may refuse to admit it even to yourself. When you finally do admit it, you may blame the book for having bored you. You may accuse it of being dull, over-rated. But it may not be the book's fault at all. To approach a book with awe is fatal.

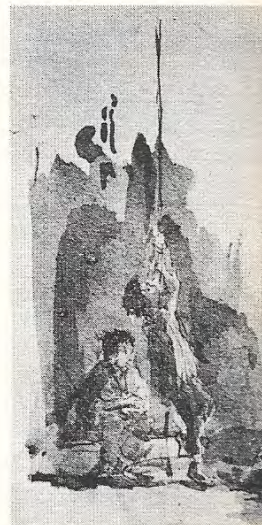
I'm not sure that something of the sort has not already begun to happen with Rizal. Already, some

critics have attacked his novels on literary grounds. They say that the plot is preposterous, and borrowed from Dumas; that the characters are caricatures; that the writing is pedestrian. Many young people, who were made to read Rizal in a state of stupefied awe practically indistinguishable from boredom, will suddenly realize that it *was* boredom, and will join, with eager cries for relief, in the ikon-smashing. All this may be for the best. When these books have been knocked down from the altar they may find their way back to the shelf and some curious ignorant boy may pick them up and start reading them with no thought for their message or purpose—simply for the pleasure of reading. And that boy is going to have one hell of a good time. For both these books—but the *Noli* especially—are first-rate comic novels—fast, funny and outrageous—novels, in fact, of the same kind as and almost in the same class with Dickens and the early Evelyn Waugh.

If Rizal did borrow from Dumas, it's amazing what he did with it. He took a creaky, lugubrious melodrama and turned it into a crisp, ironic social-problem novel. He picked up Edmond Dantes and transformed him into a Candide. His novels—or his novel, rather—the two books are really one story—is Dumas as Aldous Huxley or Evelyn Waugh might have written it: tongue in cheek. It has bite, it has fun, and—most important of all—it has audacity. Who among our modern literary social reformers would dare couch his message in the form of an outrageous cloak-and-dagger romance? Rizal did—and got away with it. He had little to learn about narrative. He was a born novelist—and might have been a great one if he had been less of a patriot.

See how he starts his books with a bang. It usually took Dickens a dozen chapters to unroll the plot and march out the characters. Rizal had just as varied a group of *dramatis personae*; but, in both his books, the scene is set, the characters are assembled, the antecedents emerge, and the plot's a-boiling, in the very first chapter. And with the very first chapter, he astounds, tickles, fascinates and dazzles with the brilliance and audacity of his invention.

In the *Noli*, for instance, there's the delicious hair-splitting little sermon by Fray Sybilla: "Debemos distinguir en las palabras de Fray Damaso las del hombre de las del sacerdote . . . En las del hombre hay que hacer una subdistinción: las que dice *ab irato*, las que dice *ex ore* pero no *in corde*, y las que dice *in corde*." Could mockery be sweeter? And Rizal closes the chapter with a gem of huge inspired silliness that, to my ear,





LEONOR RIVERA, AN EARLY SWEETHEART OF RIZAL, IS THOUGHT TO BE THE MODEL FOR HIS IMMORTAL CREATION, MARIA CLARA.

sounds like pure Waugh. Fray Sybilla has remarked that it was in the fourteenth century that a Franciscan invented gunpowder; whereupon Doña Victorina inquires with great interest: "En el siglo catorce? Antes ó después de Cristo?" How Rizal must have roared when he wrote that!

The ninth chapter of the *Noli* (*Cosas del Pueblo*) must be cited as proof of Rizal's mastery of the art of the novel—of his economy, his quick eye, and the richness of his novelistic imagination. The brief chapter begins with Fray Damaso arriving at Capitán Tiago's house; we are then taken into the Dominican convent to witness the enigmatic scene in the dying friar's cell; suddenly we are in Malacañan, listening to the jests of the captain-general; and finally we come back to Capitán Tiago's house to find him angrily blowing out the candles lighted for Ibarra's safety on the road. The crucial event in this chapter—the conversation between Fray Damaso and Capitán Tiago—we have not been allowed to witness at all; but the quick transitions, the counter-pointing, the snatches of casual dialogue, the expert, rapid piling-up of details—we hear even the clinking of coins in the convent—bespeak a novelist who knows exactly what he's doing.

This brief perfect chapter might be used as a model in classes for writing. I once re-read it a dozen times at one sitting, fascinated by its mechanics, always with the same astonished delight. But there are other chapters just as wonderful: the *junta*, for example, as the tribunal (Chap. XX); and the entire section dealing with the picnic, where Rizal did his most limpid writ-

ing; and the uproarious chapter on the battle between the *alferez* and his woman; as well as every single scene in which the incomparable Doña Victorina appears.

As far as I'm concerned, Doña Victorina is one of the great comic creations of all literature—on a par with Mrs. Malaprop, Mrs. Micawber, and the nurse Proust. She's now usually cited as the symbol of the Filipino's slavish, cringing attitude towards the Westerner—and I really don't know why. For Doña Victorina may ape the Westerner and wear preposterous costumes and false curls: but she's *not* slavish, she does not cringe—not before the genuine Europeans, nor before the friars, nor even before the captain-general. It's the poor devil of a Spanish husband who does the cringing—at her feet. She rules him with a terrible fist. And if she's typical of the "slavish" Filipino of those times, maybe we need more of her kind in *these* times. I wish Rizal had written an entire book about her. I'd willingly give up both the books he did write for that book he didn't write. It would have been a comic masterpiece.

Over the figure of Maria Clara—whom, after Doña Victorina, I consider Rizal's most successful creation—there has been a worse misunderstanding, a double one. The nineteen-twenties turned her into a sentimental stock-figure; in reaction, some critics of the succeeding generation have knocked her down from her pedestal, branding her a caricature, not a paragon, and an obsolete ideal. They allege that not being a "pure blood" Filipina, she should not be urged as a model for Filipino women—a line of reasoning that automatically excludes from our emulation, not only Rizal's fictitious heroine, but Rizal himself—as well as Burgos, Quezon, Arellano, and a host of our other national heroes. They are dismayed that Rizal should have made a mestizo his heroine; but seem quite undisturbed that his heroine should also be a mestizo. They assert that, being the friar's love-child, Maria Clara is, far from being an ideal, merely an object of disgust; and that Rizal (apparently without the slightest sense of chivalry or of justice; since he is willing to visit the sins of the father upon an innocent girl) was really holding her up to our scorn, not our sympathy—an assertion that makes me wonder if these critics have ever read the book. For anybody that reads the book cannot but feel that the author seems to have fallen in love with his heroine. The pen that's usually so sharp and acid suddenly turns tender and mellifluous whenever it deals with Maria Clara. Whenever Maria Clara appears on the scene, the prose, so hard and controlled elsewhere, trembles into poetry. How is her presence first felt in the book? Listen:

"... habría admirado una de esas fantásticas visiones de una de esas apariciones mágicas que á veces se ven en los grandes teatros de Europa, en que á las apagadas melodías de una orquesta se ve aparecer en medio de la lluvia de luz, de una cascada de diamantes y oro,

una decoración oriental, envuelta en vaporosa gasa, una deidad, una sílfide que avanza sin tocar el suelo, rodeada y acompañada de un luminoso nimbo: á su presencia brotan las flores, retoza la danza, se despiertan armonías, y coros de diablos ninfas, sátiros, genios, zagalas, angeles y pastores bailan, agitan panderetas, hacen evoluciones y depositan á los pies de la diosa cada cual un tributo."

And yet Maria Clara hasn't actually appeared on the scene yet; this isn't Ibarra beholding his beloved: it's purely and entirely the author, bidding forth his heroine. And after the bitter mocking brilliance of the opening chapters, what a difference! Music and a shower of light! Diamonds and gold! And a goddess at whose presence flowers sprang! And how does he describe her?

"... los ojos que casi siempre los tenía bajos, enseñaban un alma purísima cuando los levantaba, y cuando ella sonreía y descubría sus blancos y pequeños dientes, se diría que una rosa es sencillamente un vegetal, y el marfil, un colmillo de elefante."

Here's the author again spying on the first meeting of the lovers on the azotea:

"... que se contaron entre murmullos que os estremeçais, florecitas rojas del cabello-de-ángel? Contadlo vosotras que teneis aromas en vuestro aliento y colores en vuestros labios; tu, céfiro, que aprendiste raras armonías en el secreto de la noche oscura y en el misterio de nuestros vírgines bosques; contadlo, rayos del sol, manifestación brillante del Eterno en la

tierra... contadlo, vosotros, que yo sólo sé referir pro-saicas locuras!"

It's always thus when he writes about his heroine. All through the sad and shameful things that happen to her, he keeps her surrounded by light, flowers, music and mystery—until she disappears into the nunnery. And when, in the second part of the story, she dies at last, he bursts into a delirious prose-poem:

"Duerme en paz, hija infeliz de mi desventurada patria!... Vé, nosotros te recordaremos!... Te hemos de ver eternamente como te hemos soñado: bella, hermosa, sonriente como la esperanza, pura como la luz, y sin embargo, triste y melancólica contemplando nuestras miserias!"

And where, I ask you, is the "half-breed," the "caricature," the "obsolete ideal" in these lines? This is Rizal speaking straight to the reader—and how does he address his heroine? Daughter of my country! He is not bothered by the "impurity" of her blood as some of our modern critics are. In this, the nationalism of Rizal's age is considerably larger than ours.

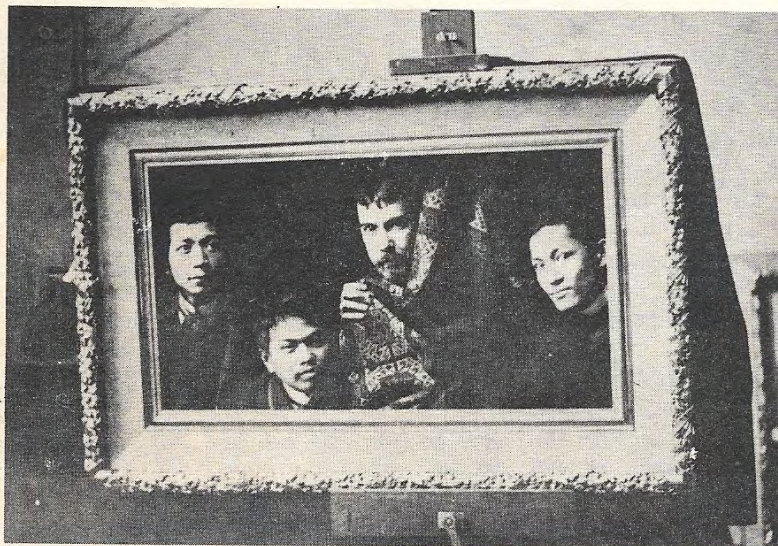
And yet, these critics are not really attacking Maria Clara, not the Maria Clara of Rizal anyway. Rizal nowhere announced that he was going to depict an "ideal woman" or an "ideal Filipino woman"—whatever that may be. Being a true novelist, he set out to create just one particular person, a single definite individual—and he succeeded so well that his heroine has become a folk-figure, the only one of all his characters who has attained this highest form of literary immortality. Between the first and second parts of "Don Quixote," the folk took over and recreated its hero; when Cervantes wrote the second part he was already dealing with another, larger hero, a folk-figure, only partly his creation. Similarly, the folk took over and recreated Maria Clara; unfortunately, there had been, in the meantime, a sudden shifting of cultures: Maria Clara was recreated as a Victorian—which she never was, nor any of her contemporaries for that matter.

The Philippines never actually experienced the Victorian Age. When Rizal said that the Philippines of his era was a hundred years behind in time, he was absolutely right. For Rizal, that was cause for lamentation; for us, from our happier vantage-point in time, it may be cause for relief—for the Philippines, by being "backward," escaped some of the ponderous horrors of Victorianism. We may be said to have leapt straight from the 18th to the 20th century, from the age of romanticism and the Revolution to the age of politics and anxiety. However, we did not—and it would have been impossible to—completely escape Victoria. Sometime during the last of the nineteen-hundreds and the first of the nineteen-twenties a generation that was being nourished on Mr. Longfellow, Mr. Bryant and Mr. Tennyson, that was being taught to appreciate such books as "Pollyanna," "Silas Marner," "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," and the Elsie Dinsmore series, suddenly developed Victorian tastes and attitudes. The se-



ñoritas became very genteel indeed; and the *señoritas* became addicted to blushing and fainting at the least provocation. The era of America's "Manifest Destiny" in the Philippines was a sort of Victorian twilight as the age of Spanish colonization was the last faint twilight of the Middle Ages.

It was during this mock-Victorian twilight that María Clara was turned into a mock-Victorian ideal—by a people that had gone all the way back to the ABC's of a new culture, that had forgotten or were ignorant of the great days of the Revolution, and that were naturally and consequently rather unsure of their standards and of their taste. Each refined *señorita* of the nineteen-twenties simpering in a María Clara costume helped to distort the image of the vital vigorous girl that Rizal created. There was nothing of the girly-girly, of the limp and languid in Rizal's María Clara. Compare her to her contemporaries in English or American literature: to the Little Nells and Doras and Agneses of Dickens or to the now incredible heroines of American novelists like Dean Howells, who blushed and averted their eyes at the most innocent mention of bedrooms. No wonder Howells raved over Rizal's novels! What a relief for that haunted Puritan to read a book in which there was no Puritanism, no Victorian coyness, and where the women were women, not stuffed skirts.



RIZAL WAS THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADER OF A TALENTED GROUP OF FILIPINOS IN MADRID DURING THE LAST TWO DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THE SPANISH CAPITAL PROVED TO BE MORE HOSPITABLE TO THEIR ARTISTIC AND LITERARY PURSUITS. IN PHOTO (FROM LEFT) ARE FELIX RESURRECCION HIDALGO AND JUAN LUNA, THE PAINTERS; FELIX PARDO DE TAVERA; AND RIZAL.

The María Clara of Rizal, a mere girl, is subjected to the most awful and brutal and staggering revelation imaginable—a revelation that could crush even a sturdy man. She staggers, but she isn't crushed; she stands up under the blow. Is that the "Spanish woman" she is now declared to be? Imagine her Victorian counterparts having to undergo such an ordeal. To save her lover and to save her mother's name, she agrees to marry, in cold blood, a man she does not even at the risk of inviting the contempt of those she's trying to save. This, remember, is the decision of a mere child of a girl. Is that an example of the vacuity and immaturity of the women of that time? When she learns that her lover is dead she defies her real father: she will marry no one, she will not enter a nunnery. You may question her decision, but you cannot question that she has a mind of her own and that she seems capable of bending the will of others to her own. Where, then, is the slave and chattel of this proud, passionate girl?

There is, in fact, nothing at all of the *María Clara* in María Clara—no, nor in any of the other women in Rizal. Where's the frailness and limpness in Victorina or in the *alferez*' woman or in Sinang, Victoria, Iday and Neneng? But we have lumped all the women of that time—who must surely have been as various and complex as the women of any other time—into our saccharine idealization of María Clara, a sentimentalizing, a vulgarization of, the heroine; and it is this stock-figure that the critics have been attacking with such relish. Rizal saw a woman who was firm, clean, honest, graceful, devout, self-sufficient, modest, tender and true; and if, as some of our generation must now consider such a woman "obsolete," then God help our generation!

The dismay expressed by some people over the fact that such a patriotic man as Rizal should have idealized his heroine strikes at the creative freedom of the writer; for it implies that a writer—or a Filipino writer anyway—should write to flatter the national ego, not to satisfy his own particular creative impulse. That he's not free to create the people he wants in any way he wants, and for reasons he need not explain, defend, or apologize for.

I have dealt at length on María Clara because she has been, I think, the most misunderstood figure in her time and because the namby-pamby figure she has become may be frightening some people away from reading him who might enjoy reading him if they could only discard their old misconceptions of his novels. To prospective readers I say: Forget all the solemn nonsense of school teachers and professional patriots who have said these books. Discover them for yourself. Don't read them because you think you ought to. Read them because you'd read a new book by Waugh or Thurber, knowing just what to expect but also knowing you would be surprised and delighted anew. Read them for fun, and, I assure you, you'll find them great fun.



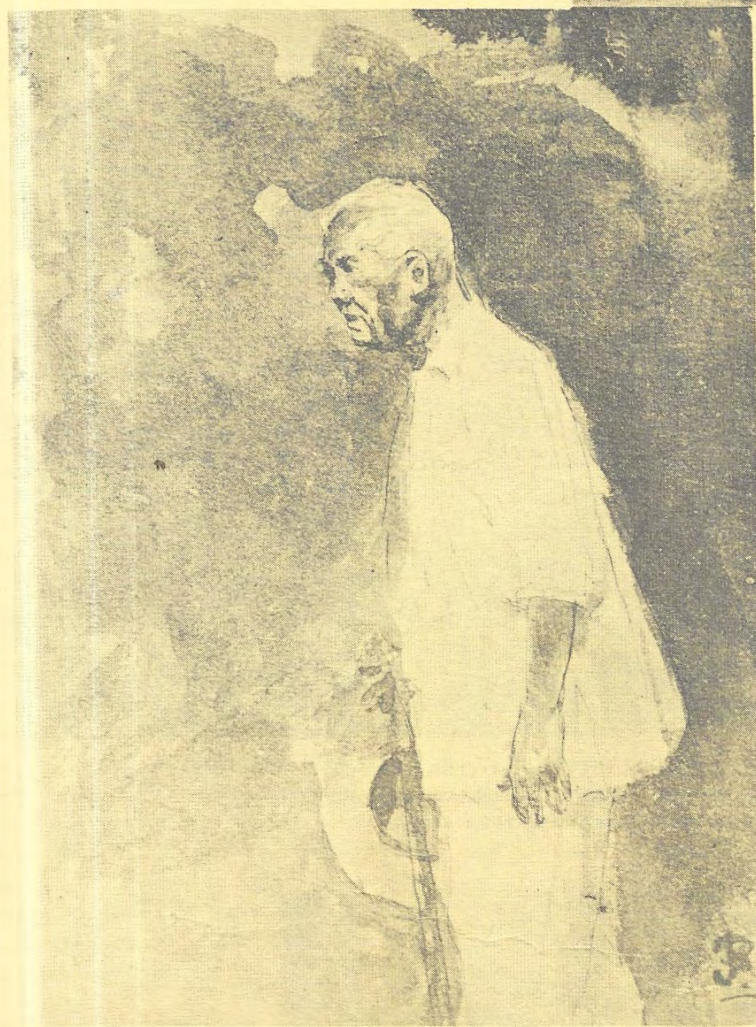
MARIA CLARA WIPING AWAY HER TEARS

LVNA. Juan Luna y Novicio (1857-99) is regarded by many as the best painter the Philippines has ever produced. In Spain, where he spent most of his mature years, Luna painted the large, bold and vigorous canvases for which he is best known. Not a few however, think these are inferior to the smaller work depicting scenes of daily life. Among the latter may be classed the series of water colors (signed JB, for Juan Buan) which the painter drew to illustrate the novels of Jose Rizal. They not only capture the spirit of Rizal's books but are also vivid impressions of Philippine life half a century ago. (Photographs in these pages, including the Rizal photos, are in the collection of Don Alfonso Ongpin.)



DOÑA VICTORINA (AND HUSBAND) IS
ONE OF RIZAL'S RICHEST COMIC CREATIONS.
BELOW IS THE AZOTEA WHERE THE LOVERS,
MARIA CLARA AND IBARRA, OFTEN MET.

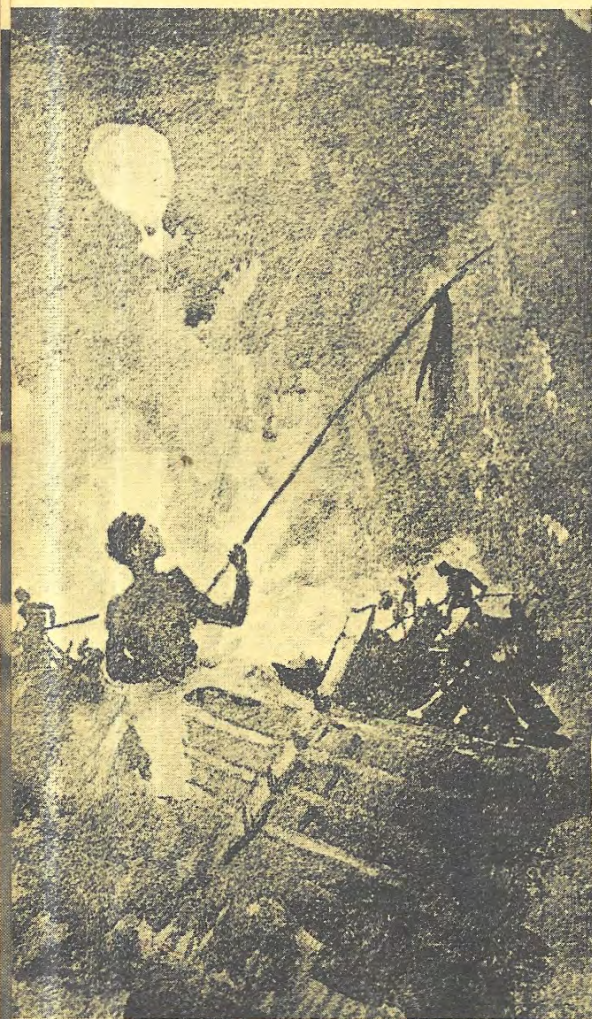




PILOSOPHO TASIO (LEFT) THE SAD
JESTER, HAS BECOME A FOLK FIGURE.
ABOVE, THE CRAZED SISA LOOKING
FOR HER LOST SON, CRISPIN



THE INVALID DOÑA CONSOIACION (RIGHT) IS ANOTHER
ONE OF RIZAL'S IMMORTAL FEMALE CHARACTERS. IN EL FILI-
BUSTERISMO, THE SEQUEL TO THE NOLI, RIZAL LOSES SOME OF HIS
TOUCH FOR CHARACTER CREATION, BUT GAINS IN POLITICAL INSIGHT.



SCENE DURING THE FIESTA
(ABOVE), AN INSTITUTION WHICH
RIZAL SATIRIZED WITH GLEE.



ELIAS, THE OUTLAW, IS CHALLENGED
BY ONE OF HIS OWN GUARDS. IN FINAL SCENES,
HE SAVES IBARRA, LOSES HIS LIFE.



RIZAL AND POLITICAL CRISIS by RICARDO R. PASCUAL

JOSE RIZAL, the patriot, lived most of his life in an atmosphere of political crisis. Deeply committed to the idea of freedom, his ripest observations concerned colonialism, and the relation between governors and governed. In his novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El filibusterismo*, in half a dozen essays, and in countless letters, Rizal analyzed 1) the shaky structure of the social order, and 2) the apathetic behavior of the people.

He never tired of pointing out that governments could be just as "imbecilic" as individuals. So that when this kind of government is in power, it does not hesitate to dictate laws that produce misery and long agony to thousands of otherwise happy subjects.

At the same time, the people, long injured to this unhappy condition, seem content to suffer the impositions. (*Fili*, p. 257.)

In such a situation, the lowest level to which human society can sink, Rizal advocated thus:

"It is necessary to renovate the race! Cowardly fathers only beget slave sons. The pain of destroying in order to be able to build anew with able materials does not mean anything! . . . It is important to destroy evil, to kill the dragon in order to bathe the new people in its blood and to make them robust and invulnerable." (*Fili*, pp. 256-7.)

Nothing could be expected of an anaemic people but slavery and servility. No respectable nation could be formed of a weak, degenerate people. Yes, regenerate society, purge it of the undesirables, the burden, the liabilities, so as to form a new nation.

But this is a most critical situation, the diagnosis of which leaves one with an uncertain prognosis with regard to the future. No one could be sure that from such depth and baseness, society could pull itself out. In the face of such a diagnosis, pessimism is not an unnatural attitude. This pessimistic attitude has been best expressed in the claim that there is a tempest agitating the work of social regeneration. The social system must be destroyed to regenerate the social structure, and in destroying it, reform will not suffice.

What is necessary, in the words of Simoun, the hero of *El filibusterismo*, is:

"To precipitate its [the government's] corruption, to drive it to the abyss toward which it runs madly, even when I have to employ drops [flood] of tears and blood . . . I have seen greed under the most accursed forms, sometimes hypocritical, sometimes immodest, cruel, preying upon a dead organism [inert society] like a vulture upon a corpse . . . why did not the poison, the ptomaine, the poison of the grave ferment to kill the loathsome bird? . . . I have incited greed, I have

avored it; the injustice and the abuses multiplied more; I have promoted crime, cruelties, in order that the people would be accustomed to the idea of death; I have raised mountains of wrong, in order that, fleeing from it, they [the people] would look for a solution; I have put ties on commerce in order to impoverish the people and reduce them to misery so that they could fear nothing; I have instigated ambition in order to impoverish the treasury . . . I have wounded the people in their most sensitive fiber, I have made the same vulture insult the same corpse that gave it life and corrupt it . . ." (*Fili*, p. 52.)

The precipitation of those intolerable inflictions will no doubt eliminate weak hearts and weak heads. These are times that test men's souls and they who are wanting shall be cast aside. Only the fit shall survive to bring up a new race, a new people with a new social order. Calamity is the test which shall determine who shall be fit to survive. The tempest must be welcomed for behind it is a glorious day, much brighter, much clearer, and more invigorating when the miasmatic stagnation of previous years has been driven away.

This stern warning, Rizal gave to the Spanish colonial government of his time; but, significantly, it is not less applicable to governments of our own time under similar circumstances.

If this picture appears too gloomy for some of us, for Rizal, however, it was only a prelude to the expression of faith in his people and in the brighter future that could emerge from this situation. In his own words:

"Yet if the country is truly valiant, the terror having passed, it would return with more ardor to the fight and would come to those fallen as is seen in the cauterizing of an ulcer; it seems that the burnt part is dead but the following day it replaces the scab with an element saner and newer. If the people are not so, if they are cowardly, a cacochemical, infected organism, near disorganization, it is precisely the fire that is most recommended. Fire awakes vitality, irritates the cells, circulates the fluid, etc. And it dies only if there really exists no vitality. For what have we consecrated, to work for the people without souls, without sentiments." (*Letter to Mariano Ponce*, 1882.)

Nevertheless, Rizal would not wish such a destructive situation to arise, for he was also aware that it was not necessarily inevitable. He was, after all, not as pessimistic as he might seem.

Rizal, with his experience abroad and familiarity with the advancement of countries contemporary to his own, was a bitter enemy of backwardness. Criticizing the ship of state in which the Spaniards were trying to embark the Philippines, he said that it was something like

AMONG RIZAL'S MANY TALENTS WERE THOSE OF ATHLETE AND MUSICIAN. ONE OF THE LUNA BROTHERS ONCE CHALLENGED HIM TO A DUEL, STILL FASHIONABLE IN THOSE DAYS. THE YOUNGER LUNA, ANTONIO, LATER BECAME ONE OF THE GREAT GENERALS OF THE 1896 REVOLUTION AGAINST SPAIN.



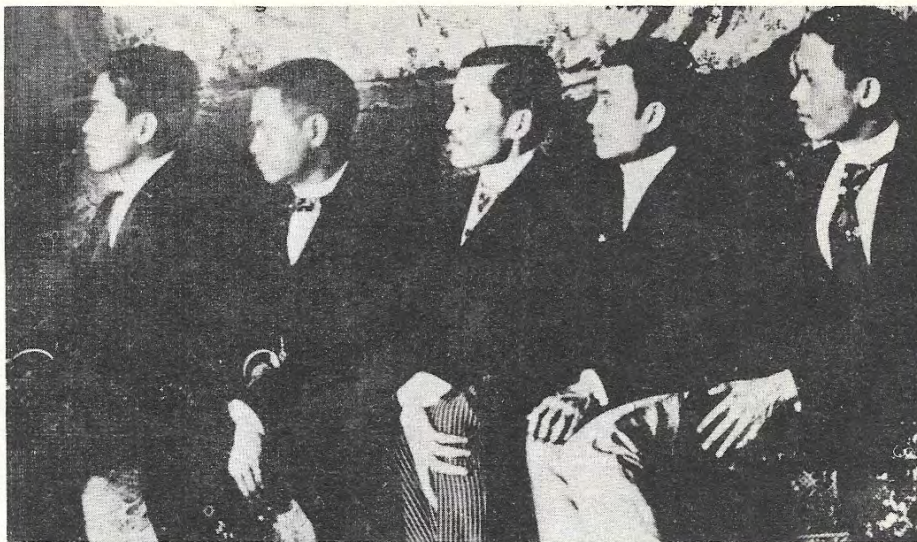
a triumph over progress, an immutable, an impregnable, though unblamable because despotic, organism. Its answer to the demand of contemporary progress was not to renovate its structure but simply to apply a coat of paint.

Such a ship of state could not sail the trouble toward a safer haven because it lacked the confidence of the people. Indeed, the peace of the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines depended upon the fear of the governed. (*Fili*, p. 7.) And it must be borne in mind that with fear goes suspicion and treachery, or what is more appropriate in the case of our analogy, mutiny. Against the wave of progress, such a backward and rotten ship cannot stay afloat. It will be torn to pieces or else it will crash against the rock of opposition or awakening.

The method of governing the colonies from Manila seemed to be too awkward and backward from the point of view of the masses. Why should a monarch be consulted on what is to be done with a people? For the masses, the people, not sufficient to determine for themselves what is to be done with them or what the future most? In the mind of philosopher Tasio (Tasio), such a political system hardly merited being called a government because of its incredible imperfection. (*Noli*, 185). The defect in the general structure of government was duplicated in the administration of the petty ruler. He had been sent to look after the welfare of higher classes, lay in the absence of mutual understanding between the ruler and the ruled. (*Noli*, p. 215.)

In the words of Rizal:

"The Spaniards shall never know well the people because they have many things to attend to, they do not mix with the people, they do not understand the language and they stay but a little there. Wh



RIZAL FOUND TIME TO HAVE FUN WITH FRIENDS
IN MADRID, WHERE THEY OFTEN MET IN THE PAINTER
HIDALGO'S SMOKY STUDIO.

can know would be what passes in the office and that is not the country." (*Letter to the Friends in Barcelona, 1889.*)

Under such a handicap, the government merely became the center of misunderstanding between the people and the rulers and no more. It was one thing to govern in Madrid and another to be in the Philippines. (*Noli*, p. 13.) The policy turned out to be not only foreign in its nature but destructive to the welfare of the indigenous people. Separated by oceans from the higher interests from where they derived power, the colonial governors consulted only their own whims.

The arbitrariness and the red tape in the machinery of the government have a tremendous adverse effect upon the populace. When the officials of the government require for their services not only the remuneration as provided for by law but also the courtship of the people, for whom they perform "services," then the government becomes a gigantic machinery of fraud and human exploitation.

"One must," Rizal observed, "count upon the good will of this one, on the influence of that one, on a good bribe to another in order that the application be not pigeonholed, on giving a present to the one further on, so that he may pass it on to his chief; one must pray God for someone to give him good humor and time to see and examine it, for another, talent to recognize its expediency, for one further on, sufficient stupidity not to smell behind the enterprise an insurrectionary purpose, and that they may not all spend the time taking baths, hunting or playing cards with the revered friars in the convents or country houses." (*Indolence of the Filipinos.*) Then, indeed, the government becomes the greatest obstruction to the progress of the people.

Instead of guiding the masses to real development and

freedom, that government would prove to be an obstacle to growth. Since governments are necessary and the people cannot do away with one, that government must be the model of fair deal and good will, fulfilling the real intention for which it is created. Service and not exploitation must be the guiding principle.

The government must learn to respect the people, to love itself as it were by not committing any blamable acts. A government which commands through chicanery will make the people obey only by cheating. (*Noli*, p. 280.) When that relation becomes a fact the government and the people will have no common interest except to cheat each other.

In the art of government, the governor's interest is not to be considered but only the interest of the country. (*Noli*, p. 214.) The attitude of any governmental authority must be one of public service to the people rather than one of greed—whether to appropriate the opportunity to enrich oneself, to exploit the masses, or to abuse his authority. (*Fili*, p. 245.)

Any government official, from the lowest to the highest, is a public servant, and, as such, he must consider his trust as one whose end is the public good. Francisco Baltazar, the Tagalog poet-laureate, was right when he said, "The king greedy for wealth is the greatest curse of heaven upon the people." (*Florante at Laura*, verse 339.) Yes, indeed, for a governor whose **only** concern is to amass wealth or build his fortune at the expense of the people will monopolize all means available to his position and destroy his competitors, instead of encouraging the people, stimulating them to overcome their natural indolence, and developing their love for work. He thinks that all the noble and higher functions of his position are but instruments of gain.

"It matters little to him whether the country is impoverished, without cultivation, without commerce, without industry, just so that the governor [himself] is quickly enriched." (*Indolence of the Filipinos.*)

The government must have for its stable foundation the confidence of the people and, in turn, must place confidence in the people. (*Fili*, p. 85.) The repository of the inherent rights is not the government but the people who have to grant and to cede their own to the government for the common good. As such, the people make restrictions upon the exercise of power granted to the government. The good of one man is many times sacrificed for the good of many. But at times, this principle is abused by the practice of getting the good of the many from the good of one, who is the governor. (*The Philippines a Century Hence.*) In this case, the governor identifies the good of the many with his own.

A government cannot do away with a free press by which it can feel the people's pulse. (*The Philippines a Century Hence.*) And to pretend to govern without first understanding the needs, the conditions, the sentiment of the people, is to govern wrongly. In a country like the Philippines where the people speak different languages, the need for a free press is great. In fact what is needed in this country is not only one press but many, so as to have enough media for expression in different languages. The end of governments is the

good of the people and in order to comply with the end, it must follow the suggestions of the inhabitants who know their own needs better than anyone else. (*Fili*, p. 118.)

Another cornerstone of the foundation of government is not prestige for the ruler or terrorism and oppression for the people but justice and reason. (*Fili*, p. 118.) The real seat of authority is the people, people who are possessed of rights higher than the authority of any constituted ruler. (*Noli*, pp. 230, 29) The foundation of government must be justice and reason because governments last only as long as the governed are willing to recognize them. The people shall recognize any government only when justice and reason are its foundation.

The recognition of the people as the source of authority places in their hands the remedial power against any abuse of the delegated authority. Since in a democracy the direct rule of all the people together is quite impossible because of the lack of sufficient space wherein to transact business and inadvisable because of unnecessary delay that shall result from mass rule, the authority of the people must somehow be delegated to a few. Now, the essence of a democracy is not destroyed where these constituted authorities are elected by the people. Through election, the people exercise their own authority.

In many cases, however, though not in all, the

A BACHELOR TILL ALMOST THE LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE, RIZAL DELIGHTED IN VISITING THE HOMES OF HIS HAPPILY MARRIED FRIENDS. HERE, THE HERO (CENTER, SEATED) POSES IN JUAN LUNA'S PARLOR



sult of popular election is the selection of mediocrities. Such an unhappy result could be avoided not by destroying democracy but by improving the mentality of the people. Systems must be evolved so that the people can prescribe remedies in case they erroneously delegate power to the wrong men.

It must also be recognized that responsibility is exacted where there is authority; and the responsibility is greatest where authority is unlimited. (*Indolence of the Filipinos*.) Unlimited power, however, must be conceded to the government only in time of grave public danger, such as war, or insurrection. But it is not well to give such power in normal times because the exercise of unlimited power might make the people believe themselves in opposition to, instead of in harmony with, the government. Care must be taken in selecting the men to whom this power is given. A great power in the hands of an ignorant man, full of passions, without moral education, without proved honor, is a weapon in the hands of a fool amidst the unarmed multitude. (*Noli*, p. 278.)

The relation between the government and the people must not be one of strangeness. Let us not mistake the meaning of this relation. For the enlightenment of people in delegating their power and of the officials in dealing with the people, let us quote Rizal:

"The people's needs must be heeded, if the government is to preserve their affection. The Filipinos can-

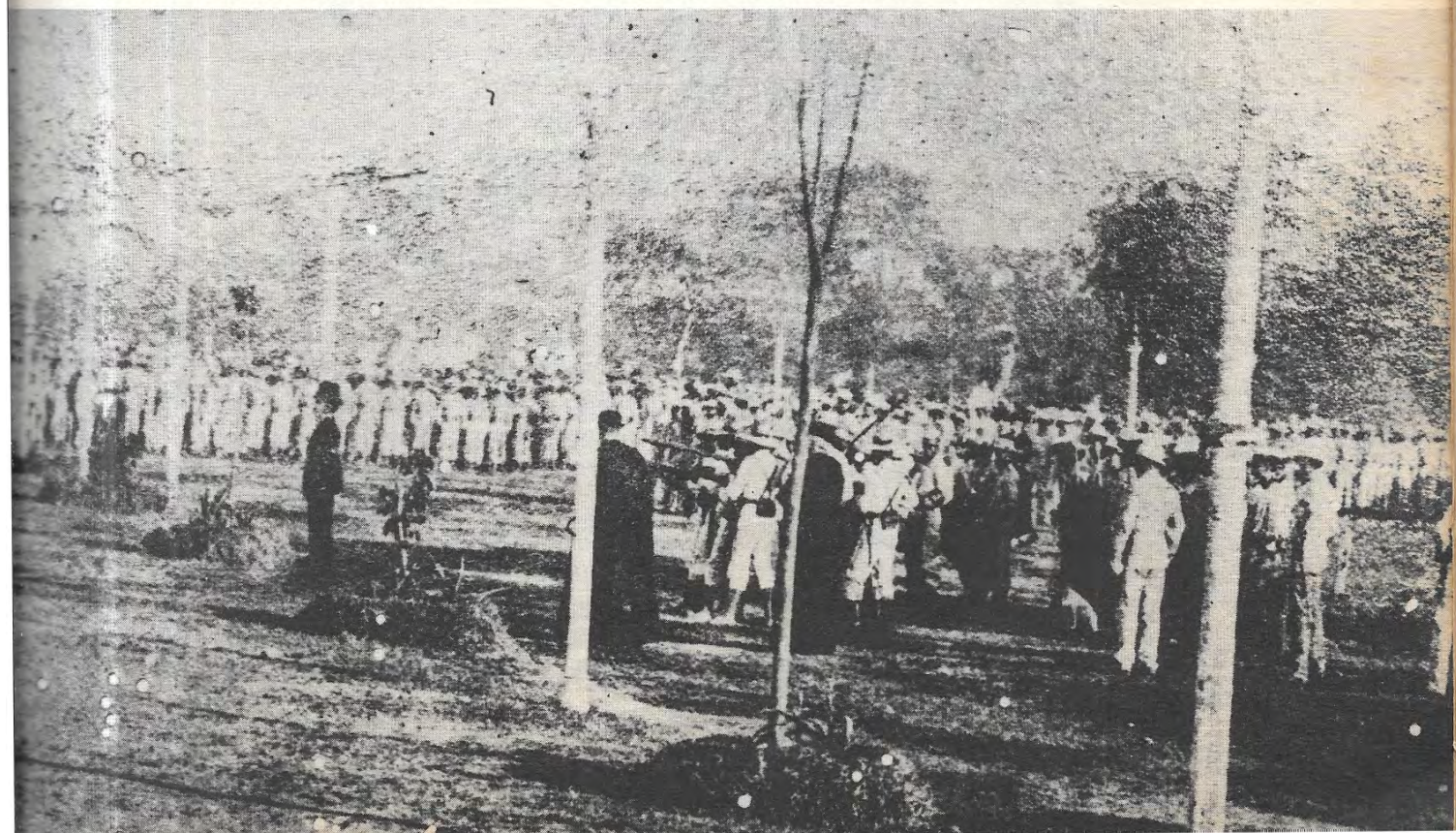
not be blinded or enslaved, so he should be given liberties and rights. History affords not a single example to show that a people have been made to retrograde along the line of enlightenment. Decadence comes only after the apogee, the cataract does not fall upward, the fruit does not revert to the flower stage. Give the people their liberties, treat them as they deserve." (*The Whole Truth*, quoted by Austin Craig.)

This was addressed to a foreign government in control of the Philippines but it hardly needs emphasizing that it is a timely address to any government. Liberties must be granted so that no one may have the right to conspire, so that complaints may be aired to avoid precipitating hatreds which may be the cause of future storms. Treat the people well, teach men the joys of peace, so that they may reverence and maintain it. (*The Whole Truth*.)

The days of narrow-absolutism, when it was believed that "the government can do no wrong," are over. The modern attitude towards government is to consider it a machinery for an ulterior end. This was very clearly expressed by Rizal:

"We desire that the policy be at once frank and consistent, that is, highly civilizing, without sordid reservation, without distrust, without fear or jealousy, wishing the good for the sake of the good, civilization for the sake of civilization, without ulterior thoughts of gratitude." (*Indolence of the Filipinos*.)

ON DEC. 30, 1896, RIZAL WAS EXECUTED AT BAGUMBAYAN FIELD, HASTENING THE PHILIPPINE REVOLUTION WHICH EVENTUALLY RESULTED IN SPANISH DEFEAT. MONUMENT NOW MARKS SPOT WHERE HERO FELL.



MALIGAYANG PASKO

NOTES ON THE NATIVE CHRISTMAS by JIM AUSTRIA

CHRISTMAS in the Philippines is a 22-day fiesta. The great celebration commences on the morning of December 16, at cock's crow, with the ringing of church bells in towns, villages and cities, when the folk awake to a world seemingly changed of a sudden and they say, "It is Christmas already." This is the start of the Christmas novena, and the signal for the hanging of Christmas lanterns in the windows and the display of the *belen* in the sala, and in the churches, of the life-size tableaux of Mary and Joseph with angels and shepherds around the crib of Jesus. The symbols of Christmas remain there until January 6 on the feast of Three Kings when the season ends and the holidays are over.

It is the longest Christmas in the world, and custom has had it so for 200 years more or less. The extension of the Pascuas to include Three Kings Day is a Spanish tradition, but the nine-day prelude to Christmas is exclusively Filipino. The Philippines is the only country in the world which prepares for the feast of the birth of Christ with a novena of masses given to obtain graces and divine favors of the Christ Child and Mary, for which reason the devout call it the *misa aguinaldo*. Each of the masses is said at 4 o'clock in the morning, and in some towns even earlier, at cock's crow, so that the folk prefer to call it by its commoner name, the *misa de gallo*.

It was a Spanish priest of a certain town who gave Filipinos their first *misa de gallo*, although he had no means of knowing it at the time. This happened way back in the early 1700's one harvest season after an extraordinarily rich and bountiful crop. The good priest, awed by the infallible sign of heavenly goodwill, drew all the pious farmers together and bade them give thanks to their sainted patron through a novena of masses for their good fortune, so that by this act they may obtain graces and repeated favors the coming year. Since it has been the practice, long before the advent of sainted patrons, to celebrate good harvests with pagan feasting, the priest probably thought it best to blend the native with the religious custom and accordingly resolved that the proposed novena be climaxed with a day of rejoicing and festival.

To make the plan practical, it was further resolved that the novena be started exactly nine days before Christmas Day, so that the end might coincide with Christmas Eve and the solid feed that went with the *noche buena*. This was done, and with such happy results that the act to obtain graces was repeated the following year, and the next year after that. Soon it spread to neighboring pueblos and then to the entire countryside.

From this crude beginning evolved the *misa de gallo* as it is known today, and although grandmothers look back to the *misas* of their day with deep nostalgia — remembering how a myriad candles had shed their light on the kneeling figures on the unpaved floor of the village church, and how women in their thick black veil and *chinelas*, and young girls in shawls, and children in their plain dresses

had flocked to the *belen* at the side altar while the Christmas star made of tinsel and transparent Japanese paper moved mysteriously overhead—still the tradition has been conserved and remains today an essential element of the Filipino Christmas.

It is the *misa*, with its blend of folk and religious magic which takes the native Christmas back to the middle ages. Much of the old-fashioned flavor has worn off, with the coming of the Christmas saint and the tinselled tree, but some facets of the custom still remain.

From the 16th of December to the 24th, the bells ring out at cock's crow to call the folk to the *misa*, while musicians or groups of young men and boys serenade the neighborhood with guitars and bandurrias and old familiar Christmas songs. Meanwhile, in the houses the women hustle the children out of bed and the household gets ready for church. At the last pealing of the bells from the church spires, the household is ready, and wrapped in shawls and sweaters, venture out into the December cold and walk through the streets past the lighted lanterns which hang from every window.

The gladdest songs of Christendom are sung at the *misa de gallo* to the accompaniment of the organ and castanets. A choir, with angels' voices, sings at the loft and the church is lighted from top to bottom and a great star hangs over the *belen*. But for all this, it is with difficulty that the small fry keep from dozing off after the *Gloria* (this, too, is part of the tradition), although this state does not last long, because of the thunderous drum which from time to time awakens them while sleeping at their heaviest.

AND as soon as the *misa* ends, the people file out of church, and some wind their way straight home, although the now fully-awakened children stop by the small tiendas in the patio, attracted by the faint but persistent fragrance of *latik* and the smell of *bibingka* cooking in the coals. There is the hiss of carbide from the lamps beside which are displayed baskets of *poto* and *suman* of many forms and flavors and the pots of hot tea which go with them. This is the children's festival of the *misa de gallo* and all the rigors of the holy sacrifice are endured for the sake of the *bibingka* breakfast after.

The *misa de gallo*, the first delightful premonition of Christmas here, is but one of many ways by which Filipinos seek to make the meaning of Christmas clearer. It starts a season humming with festival, during which the folk, returning to age-old pageants and ceremonies, illustrate with naive love and gaiety the various episodes of the Christ story.

There is a ceremony in many Tagalog towns, performed on Christmas Eve, recording the sad pilgrimage of Mary and Joseph through the streets of Bethlehem in search of the elusive innkeeper. An hour before midnight, the loveliest girl in town selected to play the Virgin, and the make-believe St. Joseph, likewise selected for his looks, dress up in the traditional robes and set off on the ghostly wandering that is to lead them to nowhere. The pair present themselves at the doors of the houses of the rich, begging a night's lodging, while the people follow behind, singing the familiar songs of Christmas. All the doors are shut in their faces, and the pair, in the last minutes before the stroke of midnight, finally turn their steps toward the church.

Meanwhile, the cast in the Christmas story has gathered in church: the angels, the



CHRISTMAS DRAWINGS

By Anita Magsaysay-Ho

The talented artist, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, captures in these five crayola drawings the authentic native look and flavor of Christmas in the Philippines where folk festival and religious ceremony are still one and the same thing. Symbolic of the Philippine Christmas is the image of the Madonna and Child, by tradition the center of all pageantry in homes and churches. In the streets, lanterns shine in the darkness, symbolizing the Christmas star.



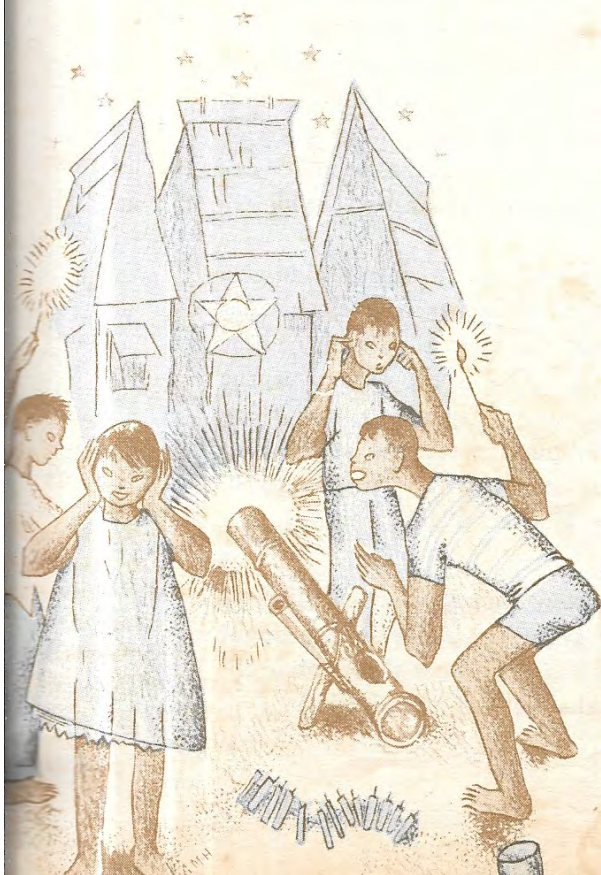
Filipinos greet the New Year with traditional noise and revelry, which means from firecrackers to whistles, church bells, the rattle of tin pans, toy bamboo cannons, actually spit fire and



In the towns, nine mornings before Christmas, the folk wake up at cock's crow, wrap themselves up in shawls and walk past lighted lanterns to church to attend the *misa de gallo*, the Philippine novena for Christmas where the gladdest songs of Christendom are sung.



Christmas *aguinaldos* are not laid under the tinselled tree, but are brought over to *ninang* on the morning of Christmas Day. In exchange for a deep and filial salute and a basket of fowl, the little visitor who calls on godmother yearly on the holiday of gift-giving receives a fistful of bright new coins. Thus is the spirit of Christmas made manifest.



shepherd, the Three Wise Men, even the lamb, the goat and donkey. They go up the altar, and hidden, gather about in the ready creche and at the stroke of midnight, the bells peal forth and ring, music rises from the choirloft, and unseen hands part the curtains revealing the *belen*, complete with Mary and Joseph and the Child Jesus.

Visayans have a more exotic custom. On Christmas Eve, immediately after the angelus, a great bonfire is built in the town plaza, accompanied by the deep and loud pealing of the bells. The whole town gathers about the bonfire, at the same time that the priest, alone with his church boys and acolytes and cantores, officiates at a strange ceremony. He takes a hallow plate with the engraved images of the serene Madonna and her Child, and washes it reverently with alcohol. The plate is then scented with eau de cologne, or any scented water from the Chinese tienda, then bundled up in sheer and flowing raiment and blessed in the presence of the sacritans and cantores. Just what facet of the Christmas story this ceremony is supposed to celebrate has not been made very clear.

Elsewhere in the Philippines, Christmas Eve finds the women of the house preparing confections of cakes, pastries and *turrones* traditional to Christmas. The squealing of pigs, cackling of chickens, and the clatter of silver in the kitchen prove that all thoughts at this time are on the midnight supper and the dinner tomorrow, while children rally round their elders, always underfoot, begging to run errands.

All are awake on *noche buena*, in obedience to that ancient custom, still clung to by families of the old order, which proclaimed that everybody, from the head of the house to the smallest toddler, should not sleep on Christmas Eve.

"Esta noche es noche buena
Y no es noche para dormir."

THUS, the Andalusian couplet, and the town provides such revelry, such sounds, sights and smells, as would keep even the babies well awake. Brass bands parade down the streets, outplaying the native *musikong bubó* from the barrio, as usual followed by running children. All doors are open, all houses are lighted, in the spirit of Christmas cheer and hospitality. At the church plaza, people waiting for the midnight mass mill around several booths displaying standard "exhibits" depicting scenes from the Christmas story.

The movement of the people and vehicles quickens as it nears midnight. Christmas shines in the eyes of the little girl who dresses up in her new clothes for the evening, and who troops out along with the rest of the town to church to hear the solemn beautiful midnight mass of Christmas Eve. This is the climax of the season, and people filling the church to overflowing say, "Magandang Pasko" to the neighbors. There is a beauty about it, the way Filipinos greet one another on Christmas Eve, under the bright glow of Christmas stars in the church patio, which is never approximated by the toasts of "Merry Christmas" over the English eggnog.

Soon the midnight mass is over, and the congregation queues up at the altar to kiss the feet of the image of Jesus which is lifted from the *belen* and brought around to the altar. Celebrated in all Roman Catholic churches throughout the world, the midnight mass is the real celebration of the feast of the Nativity.

Then from church, the people go home to their "noche buena" which has become synonymous with hams and chicken soups, roasted chestnuts, oranges and grapes where the tables are varied and richer, and, where the tastes are simpler, with native cake or *arroz caldo*. The midnight supper is virtually the end of the religious Christmas, and from here on to Christmas Monday it is a children's festival.

MANY Filipinos of an older generation will recall with what sentimental longing the Christmases of yesteryear, when the holidays marked the loving participation of all the family, the church and the school, when Christmas was no casual undertaking, finished with a trip to the bazaar and the trimming of a Christmas tree, but a properly long and loving work over the *belen* in the sala and the family recipes in the kitchen and the laborious preparations for the Christmas Day visits — all done according to classic admonitions sanctified by generations of use.

On the morning of Christmas Day, the Filipino boy does not look under the Christmas tree for presents, but goes solemnly to breakfast, dressed stiffly in his new clothes, ready to sweep off to church and then to his round of visits, accompanied by an aunt or an elder sister, to collect *aguinaldos* from grandmothers, uncles and godparents — the *ninong* and *ninang* who, having probably neglected their Christian duty the whole year, are now expected to play the role of Santa Claus to the hilt. The boy kisses the *ninong's* hand, all according to custom, mutters a shy "Maligayang Pasko," and hangs back belligerently, while the victim fishes in his pockets for the bright silver coins he has been saving for this day, or for the package of T-shirts he has kept ready for the occasion, piled among similar packages on his table for the hosts of other godchildren sure to greet him that day.

The spirit of English Christmas first came to the Philippines in the early 1900's, soon after the American occupation. It marked the first shipment here of made-in-Germany Christmas trees which became the craze on the Escolta, and the heyday of Clarke's, the big department store on the Escolta where traditional pop-corn strands were strung about during Christmas, and a barrel of red apples stood near the doorway, beside a crate of big California oranges. But sweetest sight of all to youthful eyes was the beautiful red-striped candy canes hanging from the chandeliers above the Christmas tree from Benguet.

In those days the block between Calle Rosario and the end of the Escolta was called the City of Gold, owing to the multicolored lights that blazed in that shopping center. But even if, today, the whole town still converges on the Escolta for the Christmas shopping, times have indeed changed. The candy canes are gone, and in their place, the spangles and tinsel and showers of metallic fibers in the showcases.

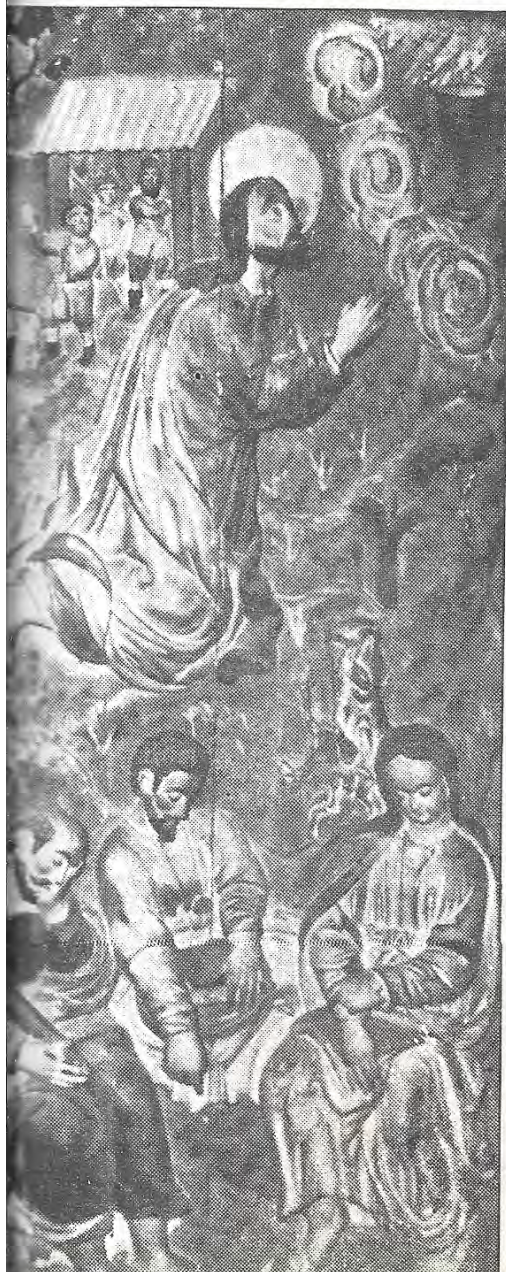
For all that, however, the Philippines is still the land of the long Christmases, and the lanterns lighted on the 16th of December are not taken down until the eve of the New year. Christmas cards keep coming, the Christmas shopping goes on. And to the religious who would not let go of a three-centuries tradition, the fiesta is prolonged beyond New Year's Day, to the feast of Three Kings when the folk hold their age-old pageant of the Three Wise Men, and the season of gift-giving reaches its climax.



Probably the most lasting legacy that Spain left the Philippines is Christianity, or more properly, Roman Catholicism. It has helped shape the character of the nation, along with the intricate social and political forces with which the Church was inextricably linked throughout the entire Spanish regime. It explains much of the Filipino's forbearance in the face of suffering and his sheer capacity to endure.

Above all, it explains his humility, devotion and faith. Some of the tangible evidences of these virtues are the numerous carved religious images and other representations of the ideal life of which, indeed, these are the symbols. Most, if not all, of these images were carved by Filipino artisans, who perhaps made up in faith what they lacked in skill. The best of these gathered from all over the islands, were collected by Dr. Jose P. Bantug before the war but were all unhappily destroyed during the liberation.

THE CRUCIFIXION (LEFT) IS ONE OF A NUMBER OF PANELS ILLUSTRATING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS, THE FAVORITE SUBJECT OF NATIVE ARTISANS. THE VIRGIN RANKED NEXT.



CHRIST BEFORE CAIPHAS (ABOVE) WAS FOUND IN BALANGA, BATAAN, BY DR. BANTUG. CHRIST IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE (LEFT) SHOWS SAME CRUDE, PAINSTAKING CRAFTSMANSHIP.



SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH HAS A STORIED PAST

The San Agustin church in the heart of Intramuros encompasses more history than almost any single structure in Manila. The first chapel of bamboo and nipa, erected by the Augustinians in 1571, was sacked by the Chinese pirate, Limahong. A second caught fire during the interment ceremonies for Gov. Gonzalo Ronquillo de Peñalosa. Between 1599 and 1945, it withstood five earthquakes, one or two fires and a violent war. In one of its chapels lie the remains of the first governor of the Philippines, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi. Here also, the Americans dictated the terms for the occupation of Manila in 1898.

But more significant than these facts, however, is the large role that the church played in the spiritual life of the nation. In its famous choir was trained the first reputable Filipino musician, Marcelo Adona. And many Augustinians composed church music still sung to this day.



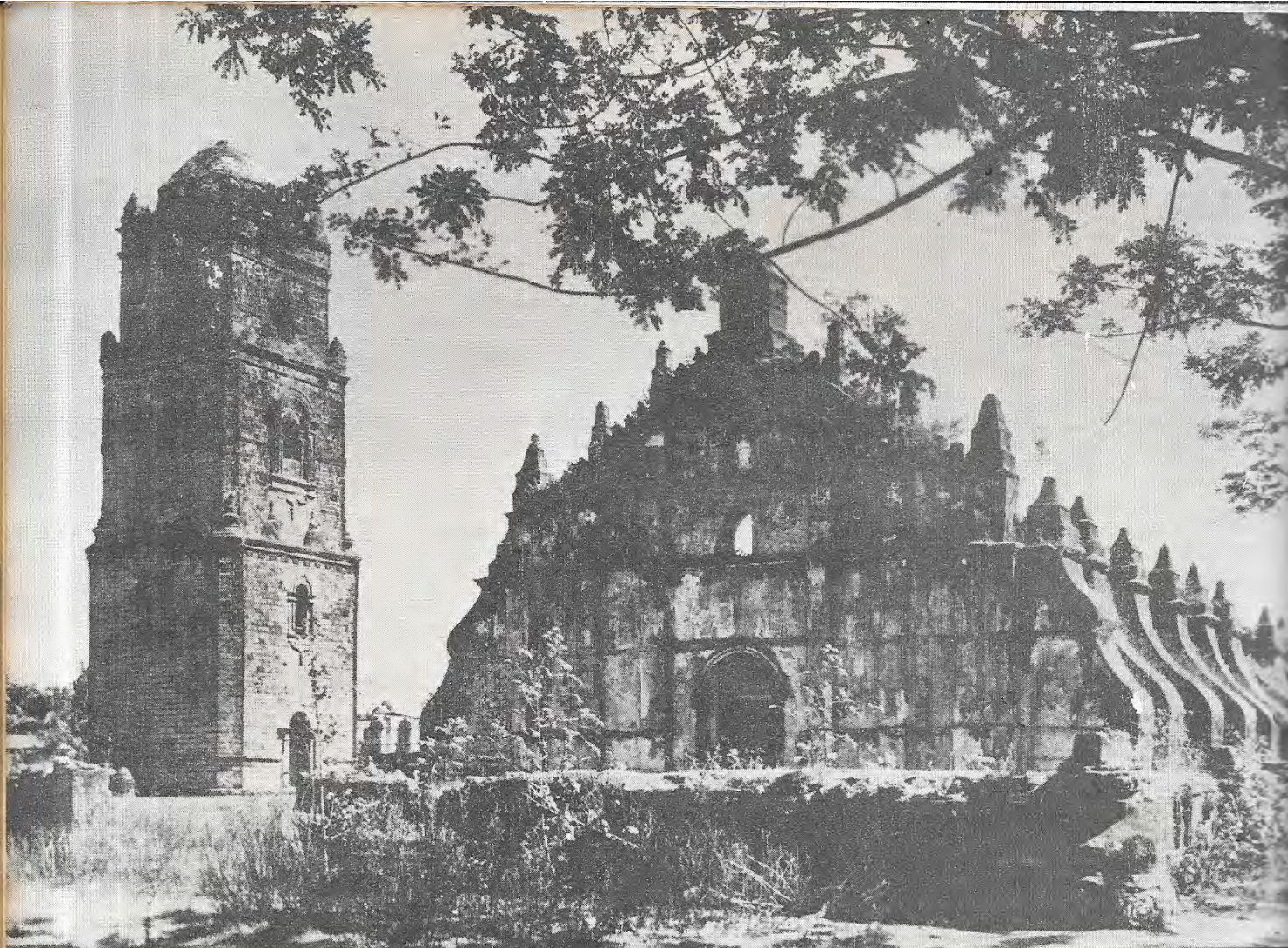
THE INTRICATELY CARVED DOOR OF SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH. LOWER RIGHT PORTION WAS DAMAGED IN LIBERATION BATTLES BUT HAS SINCE BEEN RESTORED. ON OPPOSITE PAGE ARE DELICATELY CARVED AND PAINTED REREDOS OR WALL PARTITIONS. CHURCH ALSO HAS 68 CARVED MOLAVE CHAIRS IN CHOIR.



DETAIL OF SAN AGUSTIN CHURCH DOOR.



STATUES AT UPPER LEFT AND UPPER RIGHT OF THIS PAGE ARE FROM MALABON CHURCH IN RIZAL. CHURCH ITSELF WAS DESIGNED BY FELIPE ROXAS, FIRST FILIPINO ARCHITECT.



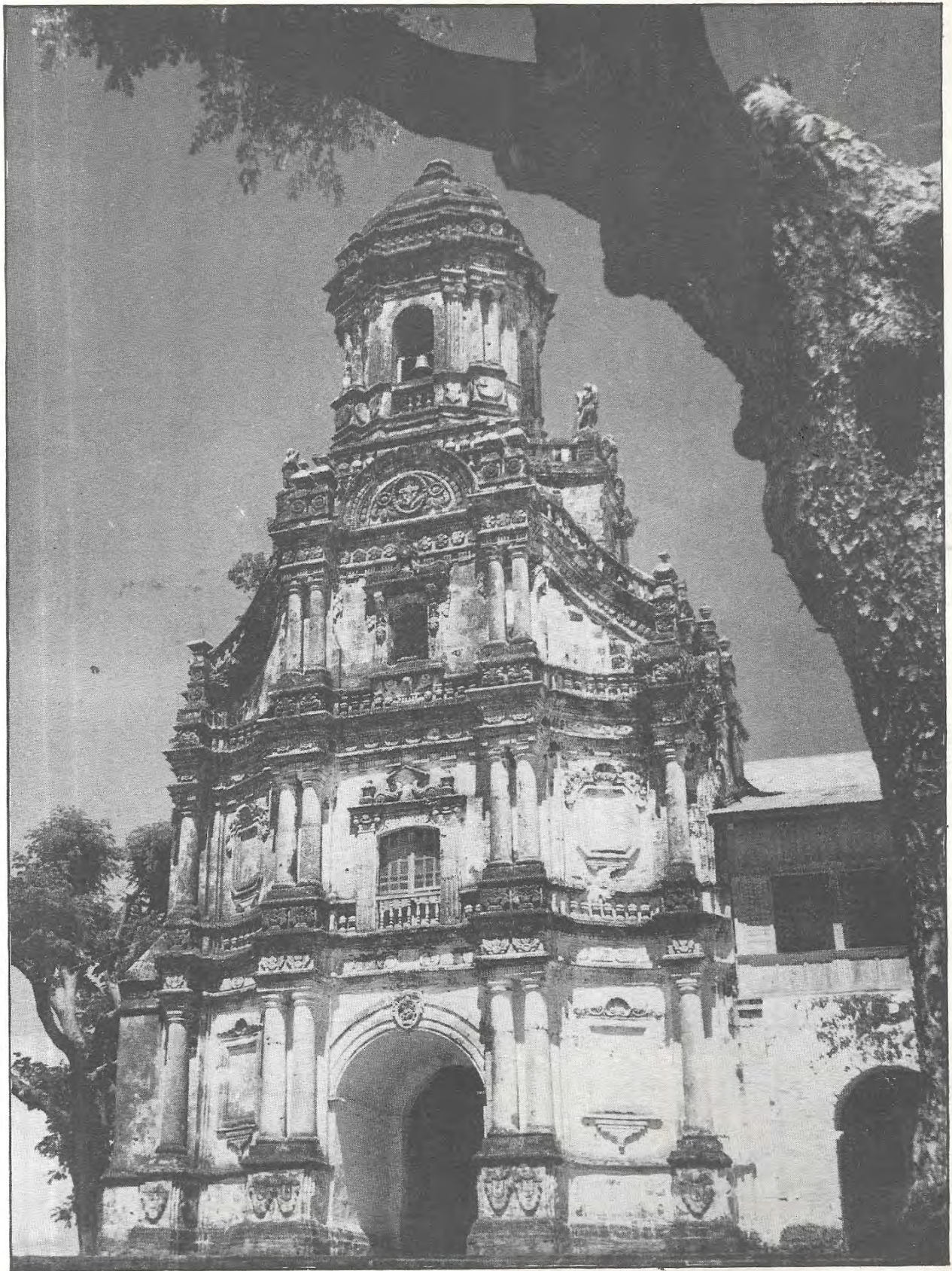
THE BEAUTIFUL PAOAY CHURCH IN ILOCOS NORTE. BUTRESSES ARE FOR PROTECTION AGAINST EARTHQUAKES.



COMMUNITY CENTERS

Churches were, and probably still are, the centers of Philippine community life. This is particularly true during Easter and Christmas and on fiestas. Built entirely of native material and by native labor, these churches became in the truest sense the property of the community. Most, however, were designed by Spanish priests, which accounts for the Gothic and Baroque touches discernible in even the humblest structures.

RUINS OF THE MANILA CATHEDRAL. ABOVE DOORWAYS ARE STATUES OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS. LONE FIGURE ATOP CENTRAL PORTAL IS THAT OF ST. PETER. SHELLS DESTROYED ST. PAUL'S IMAGE DURING THE WAR.



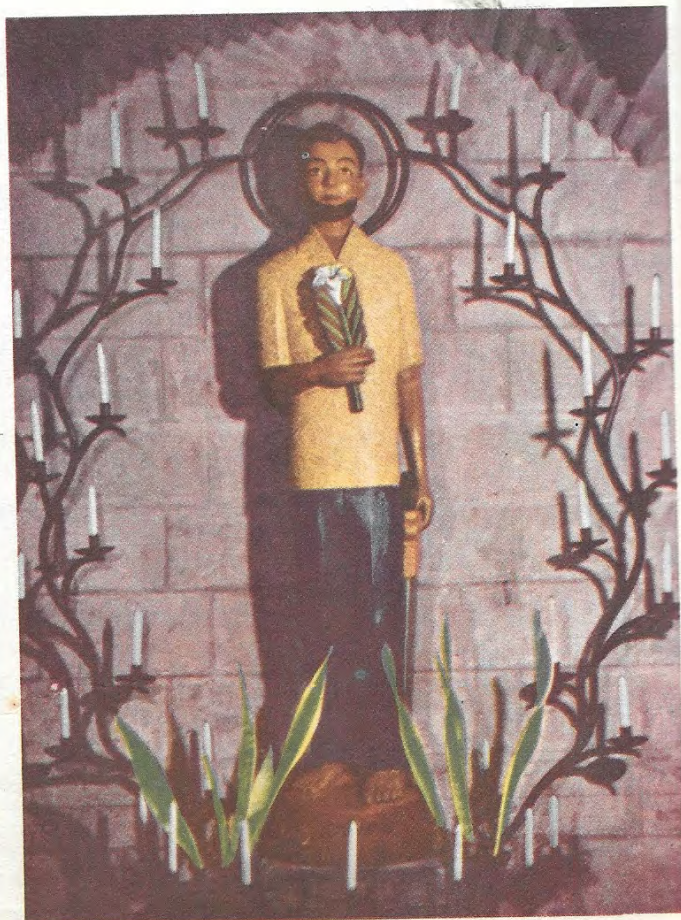
FACADE OF MORONG CHURCH IN RIZAL IS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE THE LOVELIEST IN ENTIRE COUNTRY.



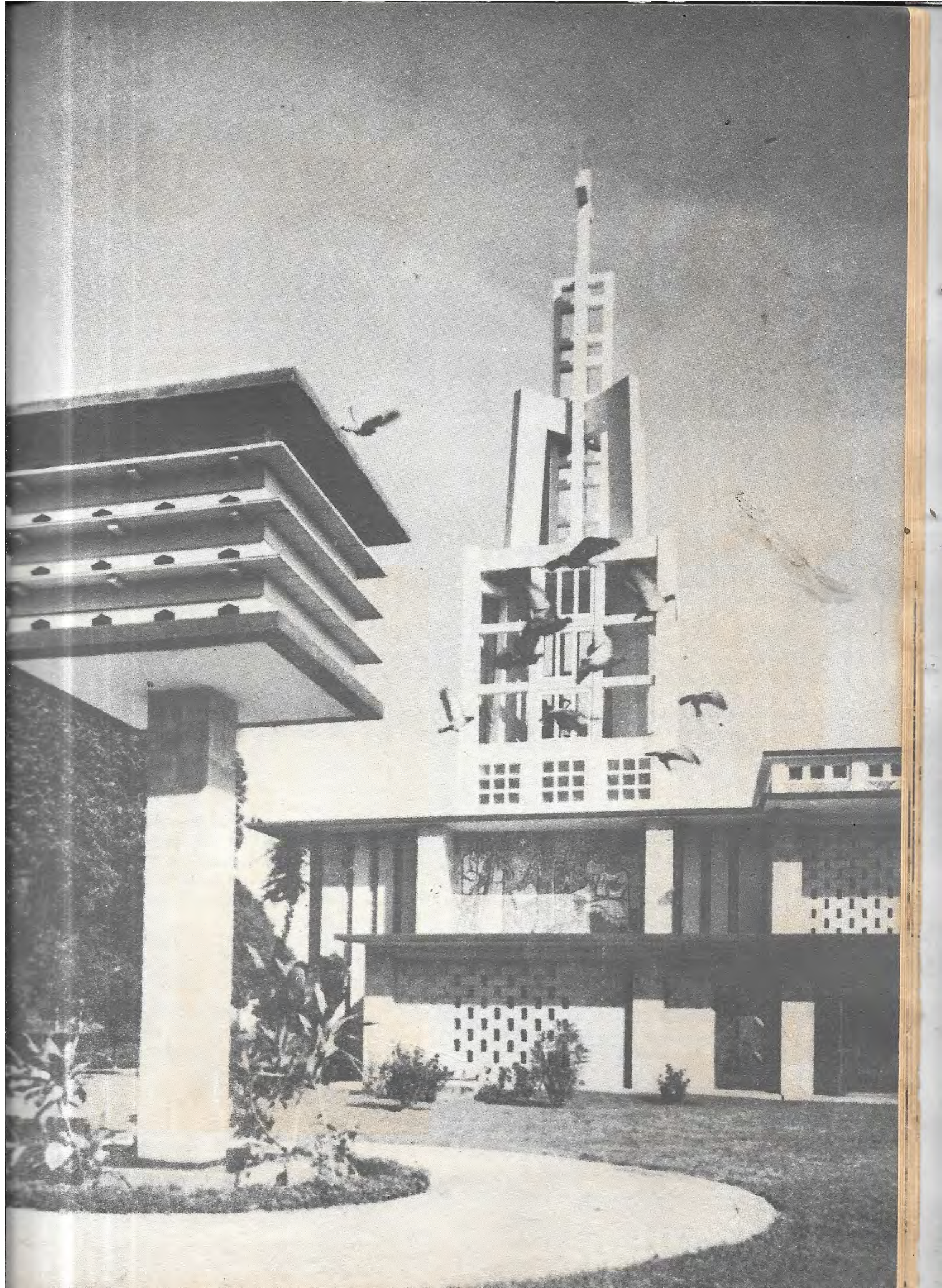
NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP

PHOTOS E. Z. IZON—PHILIPPINES FREE PRESS

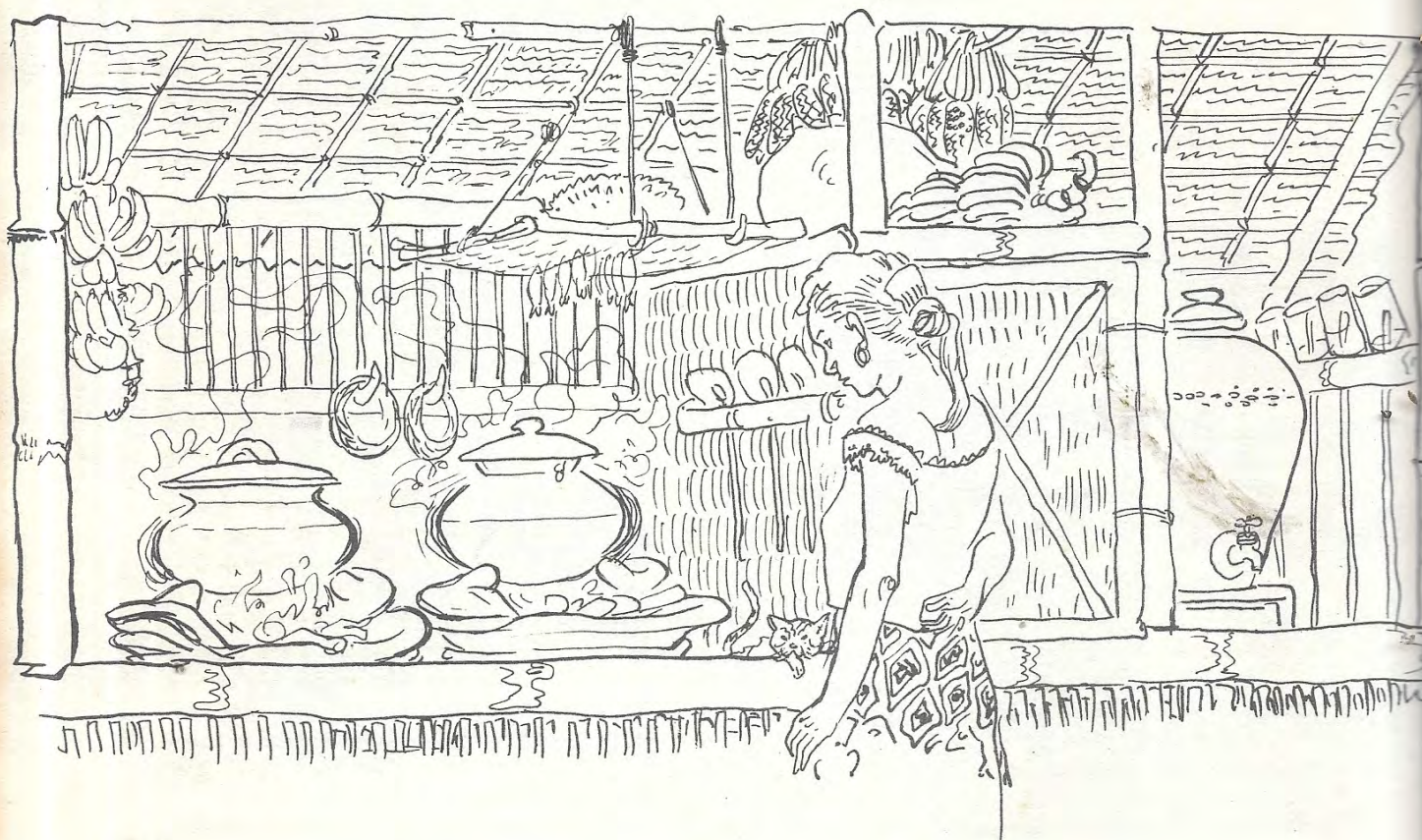
The most striking departure from the traditional design of Philippine churches is the Victorias church on Negros island. Designed by a New York team of architects, the material and labor are wholly Filipino. Even the carvings and mosaics (see cover) were executed entirely by Filipino artisans. The church is owned by the Ossorio family of Negros.



MADONNA AT LEFT AND ST. JOSEPH (ABOVE) ARE RECREATED AS NATIVE TYPES, ANOTHER DEPARTURE FROM LOCAL TRADITION. ON FACING PAGE IS REAR VIEW OF CHURCH.



THE FILIPINO KITCHEN



by Nati Alde

THE FILIPINO says of the neighbor who throws a party, "*Siya'y nagbuwal ng baka.*" Literally, the expression means, "He killed a cow." In point of fact, however, the fellow, if he were following native traditions of party-throwing, would have killed not just one cow, but several cows, many pigs, and probably a number of chickens.

It is an old Filipino custom. A man makes it known that he is sacrificing the family pet pig to celebrate the baptism of his latest child, and this announcement carries an implied invitation not just to his relatives and friends but also to his friends' friends and *their* friends. On the appointed day, the whole village comes trekking in to help dispose of the pig and what other fauna the host would thoughtfully have beheaded, dressed, and cooked, should he be well-versed in the proprieties of Filipino feasting.

For the Filipino loves feasts, and to him, they mean

not only good food but also plenty of it. It is a native love that has been sharpened and refined by two foreign influences, the Chinese and the Spanish whose fame as epicures is well-known.

From both the Chinese and the Spanish, the Filipino has picked up bits of culinary knowledge, enriching his own and adopting the borrowed cooking techniques to suit his own tastes and his native ingredients. Thus, he has the *pancit*, a plate made up of steamed rice noodles and sauted vegetables and seasoning, which, by the way, has been so Filipinized, there are some who forget its Chinese origin and think of it as 'nepa' (native). In fact, it is reported that Jose Rizal, the patriot, thinks the *pancit* is not a Chinese dish, and that it is not known in China.

Thus, also, the Filipino has his own version of the *puchero*, a close cousin to the Spanish *cocido*, which is a stew of beef, chicken, and vegetables. The Filipino has

learned to put into his pot of *puchero* camote instead of potatoes, and to do away with the *chorizo de Bilbao*, which is not always available. The Filipino also has his own *arroz a la valenciana*, and he has discovered that the *malagkit*, a glutinous type of rice, serves as well as rice from Valencia.

From the Spaniards, indeed, the Filipino got his love for parties, big local celebrations generally being tied up with Catholic holidays or rites, like the feast days of patron saints, baptisms, weddings and Christmas.

The typical Filipino kitchen becomes inadequate for the big preparations that come on the announcement of a fiesta, activities usually flowing over to the yard where big iron vats are set up on improvised stone stoves and fires are built in the open air. Ordinarily, however, the provincial kitchen is a cozy, homey, all-around room which serves not only as kitchen, but also as dining room for the family and informal parlor for entertaining the neighbor who drops in for a morning chat.

The *kalanan*, usually a recess in one wall equipped with chimney and shelf on which stand two or three open stoves made of clay, is its most important feature. On a shelf below the stoves, firewood is neatly piled on one side, and on the other, an array of *palayoks*, or baked clay pots, of various sizes, and maybe a *carajay*, the Filipino saucepan which is made of cast iron, and equipped with a handle.

As with all Orientals, rice is the staple course for Filipinos. It is boiled in just enough water to insure a fluffy, non-mashy product, in *palayoks* over wood fire. In the cities and larger towns, the advent of electricity and aluminum ware is slowly putting both *palayok* and wood fire out of commission, but old, reliable housewives still prefer grandma's utensils and look with disdain on the new-fangled contrivances. They claim the clay imparts a distinct flavor to the rice which one never gets from the sterile aluminum pot. For fiestas, the rice is cooked with either *pandan* or banana leaves for added flavor, the leaf being stuck into the rice just when the water begins to boil, or lined at the bottom of the pot before it is put on the fire to produce a thin brown crust which is relished by young and old alike.

As a rule, Filipinos love their meats and fish swimming in rich gravies, and the gravy is always redolent of mysterious flavors, an unfailing testimony to the Oriental's instinct for the real quality of spice. The Filipino kitchen, therefore, no matter how humble, is ever well-stocked with the staple condiments and spices which housewives depend on for dear life: onions, cloves, garlic, black pepper, paprika or *achute* seeds, *oregano*, and dried laurel leaves, as well as the nationally preferred seasonings for meat and fish: *toyo*, *patis* and vinegar and coarse kitchen salt. The more indulgent housewife usually keeps a bottle or two of red or white wine in the kitchen for her holiday recipes which call for the delicate flavor of *vinos*.

Most of these savory ingredients go into the making of *adobo*, the dish most associated with the native palate and the one most acutely yearned for by nostalgic Filipinos languishing abroad on American boiled dinners. *Adobo* is a highly-spiced pork and chicken concoction seasoned with vinegar and salt and touched up with quantities of garlic, black pepper and laurel. It is of two varieties: the standard one which is fried in its own fat to a crisp brown and the Pampango kind which is well awash with gravy. Should the uninitiate New Yorker at any time feel offended by the alien smell of burnt garlic floating from a neighboring apartment occupied by Filipinos, he can bet his shirt it is *adobo* that's cooking.

Adobo is properly a Sunday dish, common to all as it may be. Everyday fare in the Filipino household is quite simple; rice, fish, and vegetable stew, and on occasion, fried meat or meat sauted with potatoes, or sauted with shrimp and vegetables. Lard is an indispensable ingredient in the preparation of the Filipino meal which depends a good deal on fried foods. For dessert the average family turns to the banana, or native taffy, or fruit cooked in syrup with anise. For drink, plain water.

Breakfast is the most unvarying meal, as it is in most countries. In Manila, the morning staple generally is the store variety of American loaf, dry and tasteless, or a hard small bun called *pan de sal*, which is spread over with margarine or butter or guava jelly and dunked in coffee with milk. In the provinces where bread is harder to come by, left-over rice is fried in the *carajay* with some browned garlic and is served with dried fish, or when available, fried eggs. The whole breakfast goes very well with the very sweet thick black coffee preferred by most Filipinos.

This is, however, for everyday. But when the Filipino goes a-feasting! What a fiesta it is sure to be,

When natives throw a party they kill not just one cow but many cows, several pigs

a fiesta as makes a visiting American write to his calory-balancing folks back home: "A feast of many courses, one can hardly count them: roast suckling pig, roast kid, and brains served in the skull as entrees. And hams, sweetmeats, chickens and pork cutlets, prawns and crab and chicken liver pies. The feasting goes on all day, for even as we eat, retainers with hungry and watering eyes are waiting outside for the second table, and there is always a third and fourth table for the *pobres* later on."

The *lechon* is the national fiesta dish and no self-respecting Filipino host will think of risking his good

name by omitting this from his menu. It is pig, roasted whole on a bamboo spit over charcoal, and whether or not the original was purely Filipino, we will leave the reader to conjecture, the great Charles Lamb in a whimsical essay having jumped the gun on us by claiming its origin as China. The Filipino never cooked the *lechon* according to the Lamb recipe, however, i.e., by burning down a house on the sacrificial pig.

As far back as can be gathered, this is how the Filipino did it centuries ago and how he does it still: The pig is killed, shaved, cleaned, and allowed to stand an hour or two. Meanwhile a bed of live charcoal is prepared on the ground. The pig is then stuffed with either banana leaves, *sampaloc* leaves or boiled rice, and a bamboo pole is thrust through its posterior and clear through its mouth. The pole is placed on two specially prepared bamboo stands over the charcoal, making it possible for the pig to be slowly rotated while it gets roasted. The pig is basted with water while roasting. Above all, in making *lechon*, the Filipino cook remembers that patience does the trick. One never will get anywhere hurrying the *lechon* up, the expert will tell you, and if the roasting takes all of three hours or more, the toothsome succulence one produces will be all the more worth the wait.

But *lechon* is not *lechon* without its own particular sauce, a concoction of pig's liver, roasted dry, pounded fine, and cooked into a medium thick paste with crushed garlic, comminuted onions, pepper and stock. In some of the Visayan provinces, the *lechon* is served without sauce, and this is probably why the Visayans have never ranked with the Luzon regions in culinary honors.

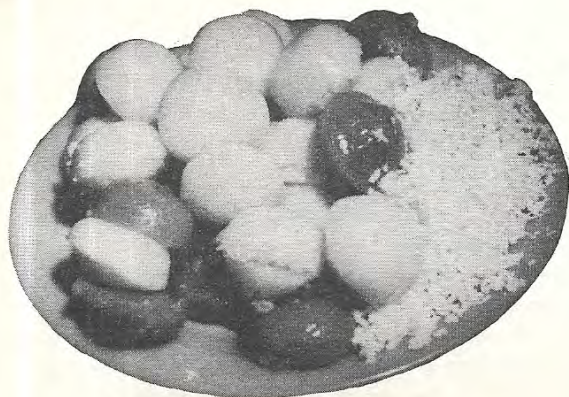
In this matter of killing a pig, the Filipino reveals a national bent for economy. Having killed the pig, he

is averse to wasting any part of it. He saves the pig's blood, cleans out the entrails and concocts from these the *dinuguan*, by boiling the blood previously smashed with banana leaves, the entrails cut up into bite sizes, vinegar, garlic, onion, tomatoes, peppercorn and green pepper.

Just as roasted pig almost always turns up at the Filipino banquet-table, so does the chicken. It is usual for the Filipino home to have a chicken or two fattening in the backyard ready to be cooked into *linaga* or *tinola* come next fiesta. *Linaga* is chicken boiled with cabbage, pechay, green onions, and flavored with ham bone, perhaps, if this is available. *Tinola* is chicken meat sauted in lard with garlic and onions and then boiled in water to which cubed green papaya or bottle gourd (*upo*) has been added, to make broth. The chicken courses provide the broth for the party. The meat is eaten with *patis*, a very thin salty sauce filtered from *bagoong*.

The *bagoong*, now, is another thing. It is either *alamang* (a variety of small shrimps) or *dilis* (fish that grows about as long as two inches at most), or any variety of thin, minute fishes that abound in Philippine waters, salted and pickled. Some call the *bagoong* the Filipino anchovy, as if this Philippine delicacy could not stand up on its own merits. Suffice it to say that, the Filipino traveler thinks with longing of the *bagoong*, and that, once back, he would ask for *bagoong* before anything else; and that some local merchants have made fortunes just exporting the *bagoong* for the consumption of Filipinos residing in foreign lands.

The goat is another favorite Filipino party fare. Up north, the Ilocanos and Pangasinenses swear by the *imbalittad* taken with liberal drafts of the native wine, *basi*. The *imbalittad* is tender goat's meat done very



PUTO, SOMETIMES USED AS DESSERT, IS MORE OFTEN EATEN ALONE, USUALLY WITH GRATED COCONUT MEAT. AT RIGHT IS THE FAMOUS LECHON, THE NATIONAL DISH. FILIPINOS SERVE IT WITH A DISTINCTIVE SAUCE.



rare by quickly singeing in twig fire, chopped fine and seasoned with pepper, sliced onions and vinegar.

The visitor unused to this exotic dish (the meat fairly oozes with blood) nevertheless gets over any squeamishness with the aid of *basi*, the indispensable accompanying drink to *imbalittad*. One drink and he forgets any gastronomic scruples; another round and raw goat's blood tastes fine; a third, and it is ambrosia. *Basi*, made from fermented sugar cane juice, found its way into history when, in 1687, the British pirate, William Dampier, recommended the alcoholic beverage which natives had offered him and his crew, comparing it favorably with his own native English stout. Dampier called it *Basbee*, and was apparently so taken with it that he named what is now the Batanes islands after it.

The natives of Vigan also have a story they proudly re-tell about a Catholic priest who, officiating at mass, and having run out of moscatel, made use of sweet *basi* to see him through communion. The church authorities heard about it and had the priest locked up in the town seminary. He was later pardoned by the Bishop, however.

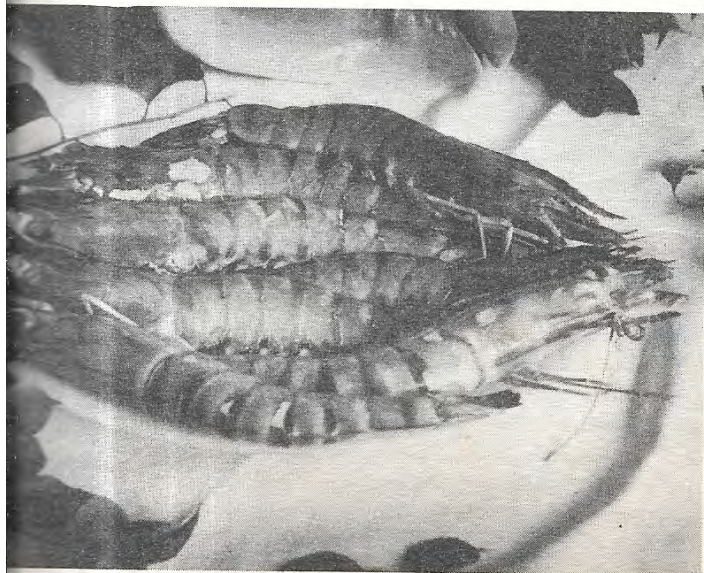
Despite the fame of such potent native drinks as *tuba*, *basi* and *lambanog*, Filipinos are not a nation of drinkers. The *New Yorker* Baedeker says, "The Christian Filipinos . . . act more or less like Americans, except that they are more sober and take more baths." At native feasts before the advent of the American GI, the wine list used to consist of only one entry: *tinto dulce* (sweet port) which has since been replaced by beer and Coca Cola. The drinking of *tuba* and *basi* is confined to rural folk (cosmopolitans quaff imported varieties), mostly to old men who have outlived their usefulness on the farm and who have therefore all the time in the world to drink at the corner *tienda*.

But Filipinos have been known to drink! There is a story, now practically legend, that just after the liberation of Leyte, a group of Filipinos was approached by American GIs inviting them to a whisky-drinking party. The Filipinos modestly refused, saying (as they honestly believed) that whisky was too strong for them and suggesting that all of them drink *lambanog* instead. The GIs agreed, thinking *lambanog* which is distilled from fermented rice, is a sissy's drink. So they drank by the tumblers and in no time at all, the GIs passed out, at the point where the Filipinos were just beginning to settle down to a long and convivial evening. To the credit of both teams in this manly joust, *lambanog* is probably one of the world's most powerful concoctions, being 98 per cent alcohol and said to be so potent that it can run a car.

Filipinos are naturally great fish eaters, since marine life abounds. The *bangus* (milkfish), a silver-scaled, herring-like fresh water fish, is the principal ingredient of *sinigang*, a dish, which, while not festive, is nationally liked and is a day-in, day-out favorite. The *sinigang* is prepared by boiling a combination of vegetables and the fish in rice water, flavored with some acidic or citrus fruit like the tamarind, *calamansi*, or *camias*. The *sitao*, *talong* (eggplant), *seguidillas*, tomatoes, *kangkong* (swamp cabbage) are usual. The *sinigang* is not only palatable but is also one of the most nutritious concoctions to come from the Filipino kitchen.

The *paksiw*, another fish dish, is the Filipino version of the pickled herring and the Swedish '*inlagt sill*'. *Paksiw* is fish cooked in vinegar to which ginger has been added.

A staple dish among the Ilocanos is the *pinakbet* which features the *talong* and *ampalaya* steamed in a closed vessel in a minimum amount of water together



PRAWN, ABUNDANT IN THE PHILIPPINES, IS AN EVERYDAY DISH. DINUGUAN (BELOW) IS A THICK, DARK, SOUPY CONCOCTION FROM PIG'S ENTRAILS. FILIPINOS EAT IT WITH A LIBERAL GARNISHING OF NATIVE PEPPER.



with one's choice of fish, flavored with ginger. The *talong* serves as a sort of cooking indicator; the *pinakbet* is done if the *talong* is shrunk just short of being mashy.

The *sugpo* (giant-shrimps) and the *alimaño* (big, thick-crusted river crabs) are favorites, and are, in fact, connoisseur's fare. They are usually done *a la halabos*, that is, boiled with salt, and served with the shells on. The succulent flesh of both *sugpo* and *alimaño* is eaten with a thin sauce of crushed garlic and vinegar in which tiny, red-hot pepper has previously been marinated. Served thus, the crustaceans become sure-fire social-ice-breakers, guests soon discarding the formal knife and fork and peeling off the skins of the *sugpo* with bare fingers, or pounding on the thick shell of the *alimaño* pinchers with the handle of a knife to get at the flesh.

The Filipino is not fond of salads (a comparatively new addition to his diet) which, while blessed for economy and vitamin value, are despised by males and are hardly touched by children. For relish, he has the *atchara* and the *dalok*. The *atchara* is pickled green

has the doughnut, Mexico, the tortilla, and the Philippines, the *kakanin*, the collective name for desserts and snacks which the Filipino housewife whips up in her kitchen from recipes handed down through the generations without, it is to be noted, undergoing any change in transit.

Galapong or rice dough serves as the base for most of the *kakanin*. This is prepared by soaking rice in water overnight and grinding the rice next day in a hand-driven native stone mill. The dough becomes sour from the overnight soaking and thus serves as its own leavening. When an extra rise in the dough is desired, as in those popular little rice cakes called *bibingkas*, a small amount of well-fermented *galapong* is mixed with the dough.

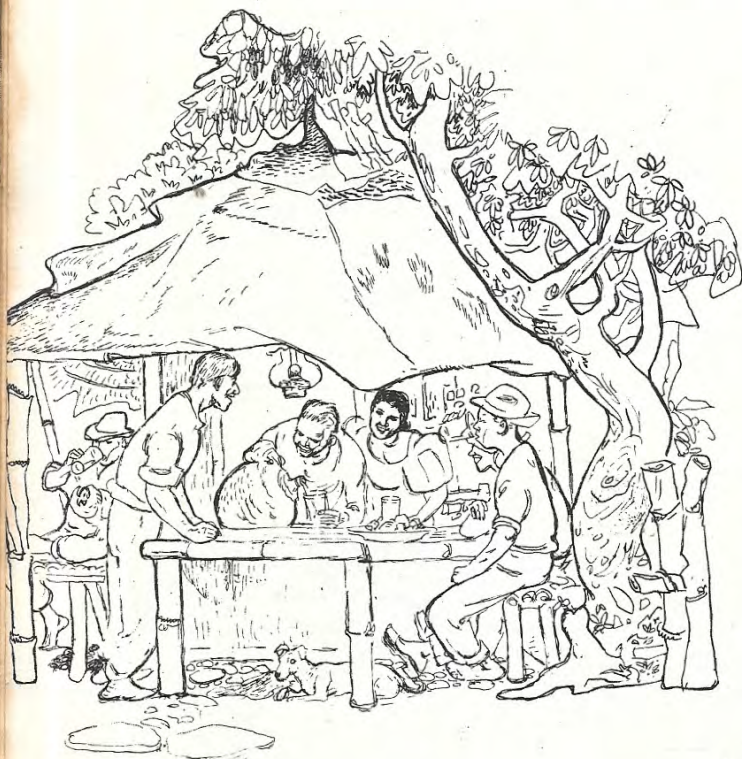
The ingredients that go into *bibingka* are as varied as the fancies of its makers. Some use granulated sugar for sweetening, but *panocha*, which is cane sugar in lump form, is a favorite substitute. Salted eggs, native cheese, grated coconut are added refinements. The interesting thing about this native cake is the way it is baked. The thin batter prepared from the *galapong* is placed in clay pans, covered, and, as the Tagalog nursery song goes —

*Ang bibingka kung lutuin
Kaiba sa labat
May apoy na sa ibabaw
May apoy pa sa ilalim*

meaning it is baked such that there is fire both above and below it.

But probably the most native Filipino delicacy is the *suman* in its familiar leaf wrapping, almost the first thing the housewife thinks of preparing on the approach of a fiesta. This is a simple mixture of *malagkit*, sugar and coconut milk, cooked till half done in a *carajay*. The partly cooked *malagkit* is then wrapped like thin candy bars in banana leaves and boiled. The subtle difference in taste comes from the flavor imparted by the banana leaves. A variant, the *suman sa ibos*, is eaten with ripe mangoes when this fruit is in season and makes an excellent between-meal snack.

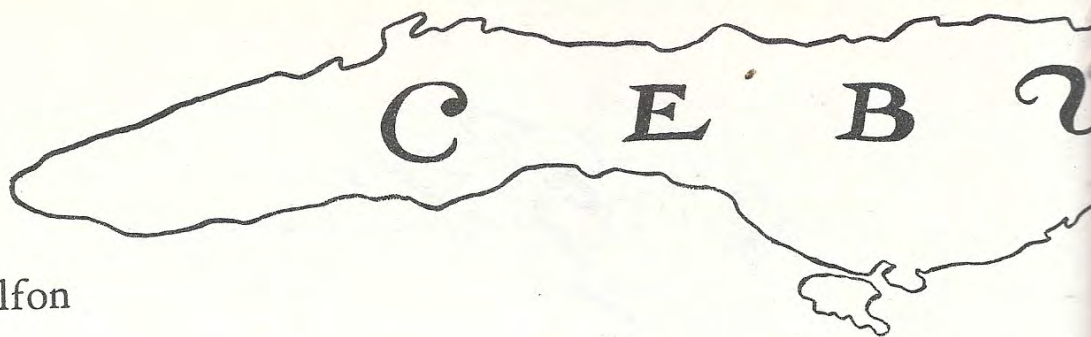
Filipinos will probably never gain a reputation as epicures, a distinction reserved for more sophisticated and worldly-wise civilizations. Among a nation of farmers, there is little time and little inclination for the stylized and careful experiments in the refinements of living. Indeed, from the Filipino point of view, the Chinese and the French, who between them have probably developed culinary art to its highest pitch, seem a little too discriminating, finical, and fancy. The Chinese, it is said, eat for texture, the French for flavor; but when the Filipino sits at the festive board, he does so out of plain and simple gusto. And that, after all, also comes under the department of enjoyment of living.



papaya, *ampalaya* (bitter melon), sweet pepper, native onions, garlic, and ginger, dressed in vinegar to which a little sugar has been added. The *dalok* is pickled green mango, marinated in salted water after pickling.

A nation's cuisine usually has some feature which distinguishes it from that of any other nation. America



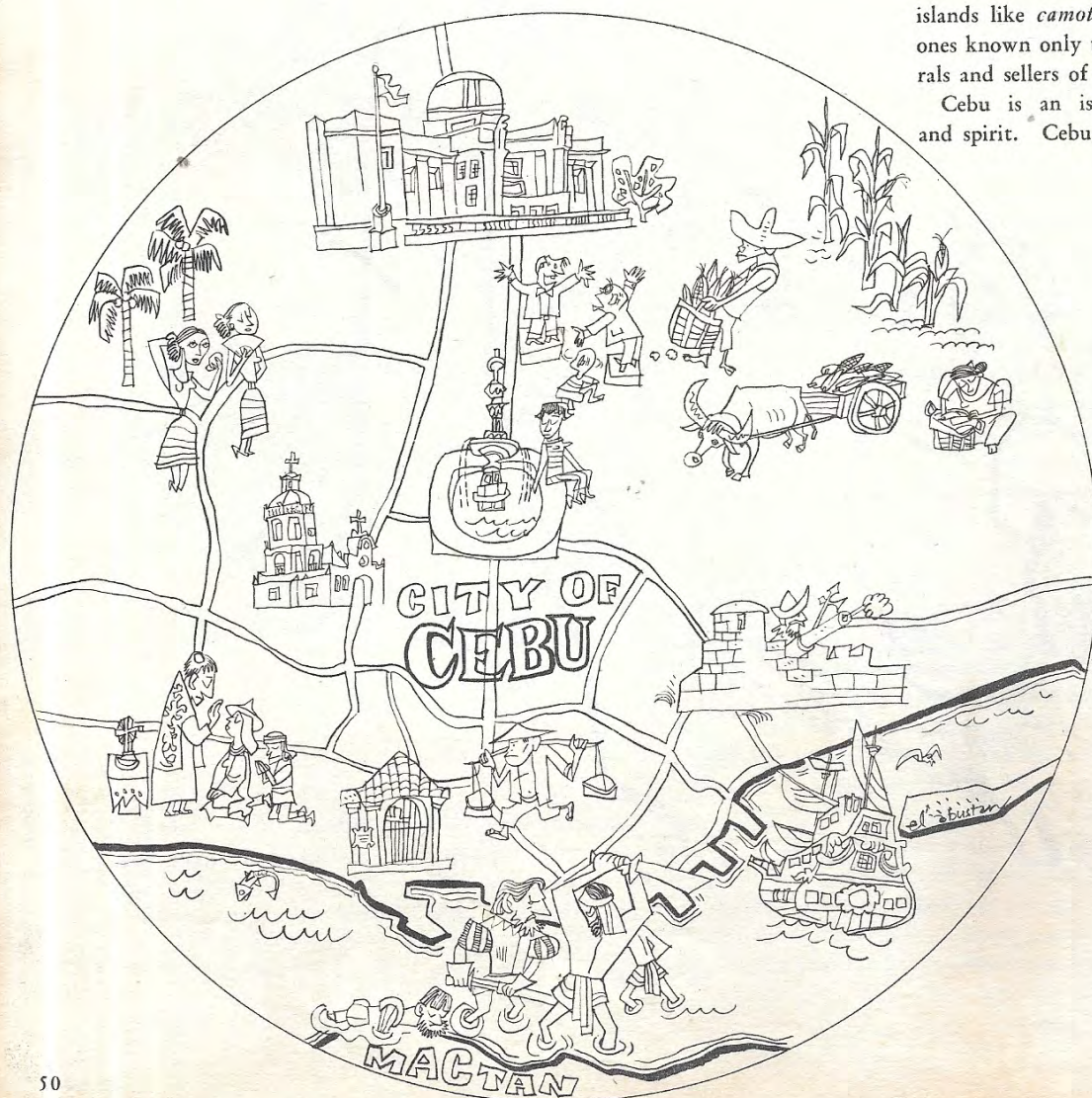


by H. T. Alfón

CEBU is an island; Cebu is a province. Also a City. Cebu is a red round dot; Cebu is a hill camote. Cebu is a square peg in a round hole; Cebu is peopled by Chinese and cows and women . . . Cebu is a blot on the face; Cebu is an itch in the palm; Cebu is an ache in the heart. Cebu . . . is Cebu, is anyplace, is That and This.

An island shaped like a *camote* from the lime hills of Camputhaw or Maaslom. Twisted painfully, tapering from the pregnant protuberance at the center to the stubborn wisps and droplets of islands like *camotes* and the un-named ones known only to tenders of fish-corals and sellers of dynamite.

Cebu is an island in body, mind and spirit. Cebu is insular even about





THE CITY OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF THE INFANT JESUS

being an island. Cebu is full of Cebuanos who think *only Cebu can be Cebu* because only Cebu is Cebu!

Also a City. A City such as is lifted from tortured Cathay. A city such as they say Shanghai or Canton or Amoy or any of the ingrown cities on the China coast looks like, feels like, smells like.

Cebu. The oldest city in the Philippines founded by the proud Capt. Miguel Lopez de Legaspi in the year 1565. A permanent settlement long before the Pilgrims saw Plymouth Rock. A medie-

val city with the oldest street in the islands, Calle Colon. And the oldest fort, Fort San Pedro, supposed to be the site of Magellan's fortifications. All these, a full half century before the discovery of Manila.

This is the City that Magellan named "La Ciudad del Santissimo Nombre del Santo Niño Jesus." The Portuguese navigator, the discoverer of the Philippines, is reputed to have left there (to be lost and later reclaimed by Legaspi) a Statue of the Holy Infant. The same Statue is now claimed to be that for

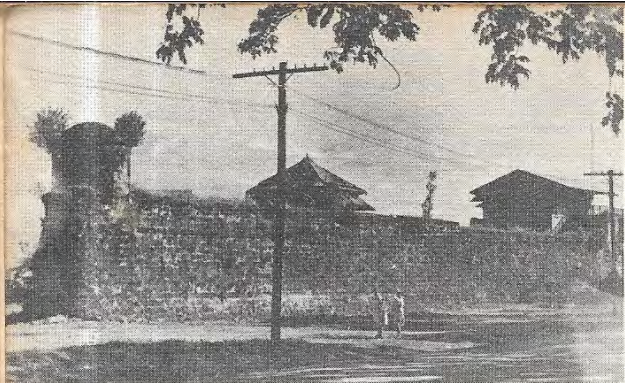
whom the biggest fiesta of the City is held.

The fire of 1627 destroyed the first churches of San Nicolas and of the Holy Child. But the statue was saved. And so the most ancient European image in the islands is preserved to this day.

On most days, a *sacristan* sweeps up the coins and the loose paper-bills thrown by devotees into the kiosk housing the allegedly original Cross planted by Magellan. The Cross is further alleged to be still growing.

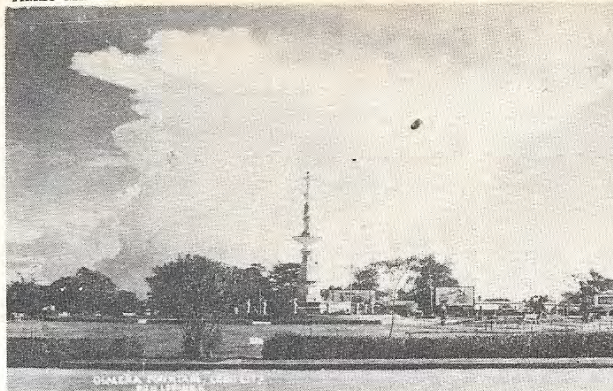
MANY PARTS OF CEBU CITY STILL RETAIN THEIR RURAL CHARACTER, DOWN TO PUDDLES AND HORSE-DRAWN RIGS.





FORT SAN PEDRO (ABOVE)
IS A RELIC OF SPANISH TIMES.
OSMEÑA FOUNTAIN IS NAMED
AFTER FORMER PRESIDENT.

TIMES MIRROR



Whether the story is apocryphal or merely humor-fertilized superstition, who will say?

The City of Cebu is all of three hundred and fifty miles from the Manila International Airport. A little farther by the cockleshells that ply the Visayan Seas. A sentimentalist could very well say that Cebu is only a wish away.

From the air, the City is a glandularly obese adolescent bursting out at the seams. The streets are choked into twisted ribbons; the houses encroach on the *kaingin*-scarred hills.

The airfield was made for pre-war airplanes. Extensions planned by Americans have been carried out — by the Japs, through forced labor. Planes from Manila bound for Davao; planes from Samar and Leyte on the way to Bacolod, Iloilo, land bouncingly on the ruts of what was, in living memory, a sugarcane field in Lahug.

To meet the planes and pick up what passengers there are, there will be taxis and privately licensed cars. The taxis are miracles of mechanical stubbornness and human ingenuity: steel and tin with a motor more or less, hanging on with the aid of a hair-pin and some surplus rubber-bands.

The private cars can be "persuaded" without too much arm-twisting to accept passengers for the six-odd-kilometer ride to a hotel in the City.

The roads are asphalted for the most part. Never mind the scenery. You'll be back more leisurely and then you'll have time for such scenery as might strike your fancy.

Or better yet. Come back with a guide.

Some guide as Jesus Larrobis. Thin, non-aging, perpetually-Jesus, who knows where to go and how to go there and how best to get there. Used

to be a schoolteacher, Jesus. Still dreams of going back to teaching when teaching starts to pay more than enough to keep his thin frame together and his wife and kins reasonably fed and sheltered.

Jesus will recommend a hotel. A good one, a better one, or one perfect for your needs. He knows them all. Knows too that there are all kinds of hotels just as there are all kinds of people in Cebu.

Right now . . .

Look at the streets of Cebu. Little by little, from the revenues of this richest City in the Visayas, richest next after Manila in the whole Philippines, the streets are being paved with asphalt. Curiously, Cebu, the province with the cement factory that is the largest in the Far East, cannot afford to have all streets paved with concrete as has been done with Magallanes Street, one of Cebu's principal thoroughfares.

By all means, have Jesus show you the Recoletos Church. Perhaps you may get a chance to talk to the parish priest and you can probably get him to tell you whether the Church still shelters the treasures of Hinyo-on. Or he may even tell you there was never ever such a girl as Hinyo-on.

Hinyo-on was a maid-servant in the home of a rich Spanish and half-Spanish family. While picking out the gray from her mistress' hair, Hinyo-on recounted how she had dreamed of holding the moon in her lap. Although her mistress then chided the *indio* maid who would even dream of surpassing her own mistress, she later had cause to recall Hinyo-on's dream when the maid grew up to marry a rich Spaniard who had then obligingly died after willing all his fortune to his childless widow. In Hinyo-on's turn, falling in love with

the golden "Doble Aguilas," she chose to become a snake after her death just so she could better guard the treasure she had come into and now was unwilling to give up, although it was patent that by no amount of dreaming, could she take it with her.

But the City is not all there is to Cebu anymore than Manila is all there is to the Philippines. If your guide knows his trade—and this fellow Jesus I'm telling you about, does—he will show you what there is of this City.

Jesus will tell you, too, of the Cebu that was. The Cebu with *Capitan* Andres Abellana whose declining years were more marked than his heyday as a Revolutionary officer. *Man Andes* compiled a list of henpecked husbands with ratings in stars. A three-starred Henpecko was lost to maledom. He could only redeem himself by so beating up his wife that she could just barely crawl to *Man Andes* and beg him to take her husband off the list!

Don't be surprised at the store-signs all along the Magallanes being in Chinese. Cebu is probably the most sino-fied of all Philippine cities. All the really big commercial deals are reckoned with the abacus. Such business firms as use the modern computing machines are the moribund American and English houses — the last stand of Western commercial pioneering. Such houses as Stanvac and Shell and the even older Smith Bell.

They belong with the Cebu that is well on its way out . . .

There are night-clubs, hotels, hospitals, cemeteries, movie houses and all such appurtenances as make a city in this modern day.

In Cebu, the night-clubs are in Lahug, at the foot of Busay and in Subangdaku. In Subangdaku, not so long



TIMES MIRROR



A VIEW OF THE WINDSWEEP BAY. CEBU HARBOR IS ONE OF THE LARGEST IN THE ISLANDS. CITY HALL (NEAR LEFT) IS A RECENT CONSTRUCTION. CITY'S MAYOR IS APPOINTIVE.

ago, the reference point for all trips to or past Cebu, was an establishment named after an individual called "Taquio."

These nightclubs are more or less tawdry affairs that just miss being dance halls. Although how they could have missed by so little without scoring a bull's eye is a very technical detail—the intricacies and word-nuances of which are extremely difficult to go into at this point without fear of libel.

There too is a government hospital. One of the best and one of the best thought-of — the Southern Islands General Hospital with the new ward built out of the posthumous generosity of one of Cebu's most controversial figures. A controversial prodigy, offspring of, and truly from, a most controversial family.

This Hospital has the prettiest nurses, the youngest doctors, and the least reputation of any in all the Philippines. Yet, it is more spacious than Manila's Philippine General, gives its patients better care than any provincial hospital and compares favorably with even the best anywhere.

Yes, anywhere. Even there.

The other appurtenances include a waterfront that is the envy and secret dream of what all good little Southern Philippine towns hope they'll grow up to be when they get to be cities. Sweeping in expanse, busy as a pretty young widow with indiscriminate taste, money to burn and nymphomania to sate. That is Cebu's waterfront.

Scowling like a toothless harridan trying to hide her gaping tooth-sockets is the squat, crumbling bulk of Fort San Pedro. Living in the past, trying to live down her degradation, ignoring her decay — the Fort was successively: Health Service offices and leprosarium

dispensary; *Kempetai* torture hall; and now just a bodega amid lichen walls.

Your guide will want you to breathe the fresh air that can only be had in the Fuente Osmeña Area. Near the Capitol.

Fountain named after one of the few men of whom Cebu—and the Philippines — can talk about with unreserved respect.

The Fountain is traditionally the place to go to on a Sunday. Even on weekdays, the little spread of greensward is crowded with chubby infants of all shades of color and with all shapes of eyes.

The Capitol Building near here was in effect inaugurated by the Japanese and their puppets. In fact the most gratifying point in the patriotic history of the Capitol has to do with how on an October, when the Puppet Republic was formally incubated and hatched in 1943, machine-gun bullets suddenly splattered down on the "invited" throng and their resplendant hosts. The machine-gun was emplaced in the hills of Babag. Fired blind just to remind the Japanese and their serfs that all of Cebu was not as completely theirs as the Capitol was.

But the City is not all of Cebu!

Let your guide show you the environs where Cebu is still mostly Cebu.

To the North is the town of Mandawe. Mandawe and *majareal*.

Mandawe of the winsome girls and the unique *majareal*—royal mold of milk and sugar and peanuts that tastes in all this world like nothing else except only like itself!

Before the War, before the Hell-divers came back to erase the old Mandawe Church, there were heroic-sized statues of the Apostles. All twelve of them, all featured with the very best

that Castille had to offer in the way of noses and beards and candle-sheen skins. All that is over now, excepting only the *majareal*.

To the South; beyond the fishponds and fish-corral of Tangke, beyond the coconut fronds, the pushing commercialism of Mambaling; even beyond the crossroads of Tabonoc and Pardo; there is Talisay.

Talisay of the crystal clear water lushly, wastefully gushing out of artesian wells—six-inch pipes sunk into the sand anywhere and out gushes such water as the City of Cebu, some say, would trade even for its soul. Such gloriously clear, sparkling water! Could almost make drowning in it a pleasure!

And if you have time, ask your guide to take another way. Explore a less nostalgic road on the way to Barili. Watch him stop with pride to point out how Mantayupan Falls seems to spew from out of the barren face of a cliff. Continue on to Barili past the waving coconuts and the lush rice of the lands of the Pañares and the descendants and heirs of Don Pedro Cui, the semi-legendary Filipino-Chinese who bought whole towns with a mere nod of the head and yet had to count over twice—four pesos and eighty centavos in small change with which to pay for a badly needed replacement of the ankle-high boots that had been repaired more number of times than even the shoemaker could remember.

Let your guide take you on the winding mountain road that leads past ravines, the steep sides of which have been planted to corn by a frugal, land-hungry people. Look down on row after row of corn growing in defiance of gravity and the minor alibis of lazy men.

It would seem as if no hill side is too high nor too steep. Evidence bears out the fact that no ravine is too precipitous for the hardy, meal-a-day farmer of Cebu.

It is the boast of this hardy folk that if the good Lord will only let them, they'll plow up the Golden Streets and plant them over to corn. Because no one can eat gold and corn does give a more satisfying food that weights the stomach and makes the need of food less frequent and so that much easier to fill.

As for that region down there . . . well, there can't be any region hotter than Cebu in the hot months of April and May when even the wind — when available—is hot enough to singe a beard.

Barili itself exists because of Bulocbuloc. Swimming pools up where the mountain-top is cool — in fact, chilly. Swimming pools fed with sulfur-heated springwater. Before Talisay came "awake," Barili's Bulocbuloc was The Place to go. That was in the days of the altitudinous touring cars and the square, hearse-like sedans—then called "berlinas"—that only the very rich could afford.

Ask your guide, ask that same Jesus, where the prettiest girls in all Cebu are to be found. He will say, "Si-bonga." Ask him to take you there.

It's only a few kilometers by well-asphalted road lined on both sides with lazily waving cocofuts. Go there for the *fiesta* in September—the patron saint is St. Michael, only here they call him San Miguel—and you'll be glad you did. Stand with the young men lining the grass-bordered walk up to the Church untouched by War and Time. Watch the olive-skinned girls giggle to each other. Notice how shyly they look through the family-heirloom veils.

So at last you are back in the City.

Across the strait, near enough for the lighthouse on the pier to be visible even to myopic eyes, is the island of Mactan. Not so long ago, there were hardy young men who used to swim across just for the fun of swimming back. Ask Jesus about Edrot del Mar,



PIGAFETTA'S MAP OF CEBU AND NEIGHBORS

swimming member of the brothers that made up practically the entire Bagumbayan basketball team.

Mactan is the place of which Filipinos may feel proud without a hint of self-consciousness. Here Filipino generalship and sheer fighting courage showed invaders the price to pay before they could report that the Island was truly theirs.

A stocky Mactan chieftain sacrificed his wife and his father, made them target for the one and only fusillade from Spanish firearms. Then, when the "new weapons" had been reduced to unwieldy clubs, Lapulapu closed in. Armed with the fire-hardened wooden pestle he had first tested against the bole of a coconut, in obedience to the chanted words of the *catalonan* or priestess, Lapulapu charged, killing Magellan and several more and driving away the rest.



MAGELLAN MONUMENT ON MACTAN ISLAND, MARKING SPOT WHERE HE WAS KILLED.

SUGBU

History is memory writers embroider. This is a chronicle in part of Cebu — the town that was known as Sugbu.

"Entering the port of Cibu on April 7, 1521" was a motley crew of as lusty cutthroats and religious zealots as ever sailed under the gaudy flag of Spain. Their leader was a Portuguese adventurer named Magalhaes. Their chronicler was a wordly wise scribbler named Pigafetta.

Pigafetta was trustworthy — or seemed to be. He describes the Cebuanas as "very beautiful and almost as white as our girls and as large." A very observant, very male friar.

He continues: "They are naked except for the tree cloth hanging from the waist and reaching the knee. Some were quite naked and always barefoot."

The chronicler goes on to give a bird's eye view of a town and a people that, outside of costume and custom, compared favorably with people of the then-known world in so far as trading, hospitality, avarice and superstition were concerned.

Pigafetta kept scribbling to the end of their stay in Cebu.

He told of the ill-advised, typically Castilian adventure where Magellan got his head bashed in and the stage set for the last act under the title of treachery.

And all this after the auspicious beginnings involving mass baptisms and solemn Masses.

The adventure ended, still from Pigafetta's account, with the anguished cries of the marooned Juan Serrano, abandoned by comrades unwilling to give back part of the treasure gathered from the island, as ransom.

A retelling of this atypical show of Spanish comradeship and courage bears the attention of all.

Thus . . .

"Juan Carvaio and the constable returned . . . they had left the place before they suspected some evil. Scarcely had they spoken these words when we heard loud cries and lamentations. We immediately weighed anchor and dis-

charging many mortars into the houses, drew nearer to the shore . . . we saw Johan Serrano in his shirt, bound and wounded, crying to us not to fire any more, for the natives would kill him. . . he begged us earnestly to redeem him with some of the merchandise, but Carvaio, his boon companion and others would not allow the boat to go ashore . . . but although Serrano, weeping, asked us not to sail so quickly for they would kill him, and said that he prayed God to ask his soul of Carvaio, his comrade, in the Day of Judgment, we immediately departed."

Excunt the loyal comrades; the end for Serrano!

Enter the wordly wise Miguel Lopez de Legaspi after a curtain fall meaning the lapse of time until April 27, 1565.

Enter a new chronicler — Medina who writes an "Historia."

Rajah Humabon has long been gathered unto the lap of *Bathala* and the statue of the Holy Infant has been hidden to await the coming of another bearded white man from across the seas.

Tupas now was Chief of Cebu.

Tupas was lean and hard with ways that tend to guile and subterfuge. Where Humabon had basked in the warmth of the white men's friendship, Tupas wanted none of these bearded ones with lordly airs who, Lapulapu of Mactan had demonstrated so capably, were as mortal as other men. Wanted none of them alive.

Hostilities commenced, but when the Spaniards discharged their artillery, natives abandoned resistance and fled. Legaspi's men landed without opposition and the Spaniards "set fire to some houses."



STRUCTURE SUPPOSEDLY HOUSES ORIGINAL CROSS PLANTED BY MAGELLAN IN CEBU, 1521.



THE CAPITOL BUILDING



FUENTE OSMEÑA PARK



HISTORIC CEBU CATHEDRAL

A pleasant point in all this trouble so distasteful to the gentle soul of the Augustinian friar, was the fact that the generous Legaspi had provided that "a site was given to our order, so large that, of a surety, the liberality of the Christian commander can only be praised . . ."

Further from Medina: "A fraternity of the Most Sacred Name of Jesus was then established, with the same rules as those of St. Augustine in the City of Majico. This was the beginning of that religious province . . ."

The wise Legaspi prevailed and Tupas, outfought, promised peace. When "the issue of tribute was being discussed, the Chief Tupas was announced. He was so humbled that everything was concluded according to the Governor's taste. Tupas made long excuses for his delay—excuses which were diplomatically accepted. He said that he was quite decided to make peace with the Castilian."

Legaspi treated his captives with such care that these were proselytized sufficiently to be missionaries among their own people.

Among these was a Cebuana whom the Spaniards baptized "Isabel" and whose husband turned out to be a datu. She persuaded him on her release, to use his good offices with Tupas to the end that a final end be made to the uneasy truce that prevailed in the area outside the walls of Fort San Pedro that Legaspi had built.

Tupas came in with a great following of slaves, friends and relatives. All "in sincerity and without pretense, offered themselves to the service of the Castilas."

When Legaspi left the Island, he left behind three priests: Martin de Rada, Diego de Herrera, and Pedro de Gamboa. With great assiduity and the zeal of the dedicated, these three began to study the language of the Cebuanos and propagate their faith in that language.

But the cautious Spaniards did not always have it their own way and the Cebuanos that they baptized one day, like as not, came back with long bolos to avenge some old injury.

Look back fondly on the island, on the people.

This, after all, is this world. No better and no worse.

No worse, in spite of the bile of fools.

Cebu is after all, only Cebu. No better.

Here is a place such as could only be here. Nowhere else. A mixture of the very mean and the very noble.

For there is more-than-a-thing noble about Cebu.

Here dwell a people more musical than any other tribe in the Philippines. Here are made the very finest of musical, stringed, instruments. Banjos, guitars, bandurrias, ukuleles.

These are the instruments that bear the mark of the greatness of the artists creating them. These are the instruments that go for fabulous prices farther North.

Yet here, they go for the mere asking. Practically.

For a people who sing must needs have instruments to accompany voices.

For the Cebuano does sing.

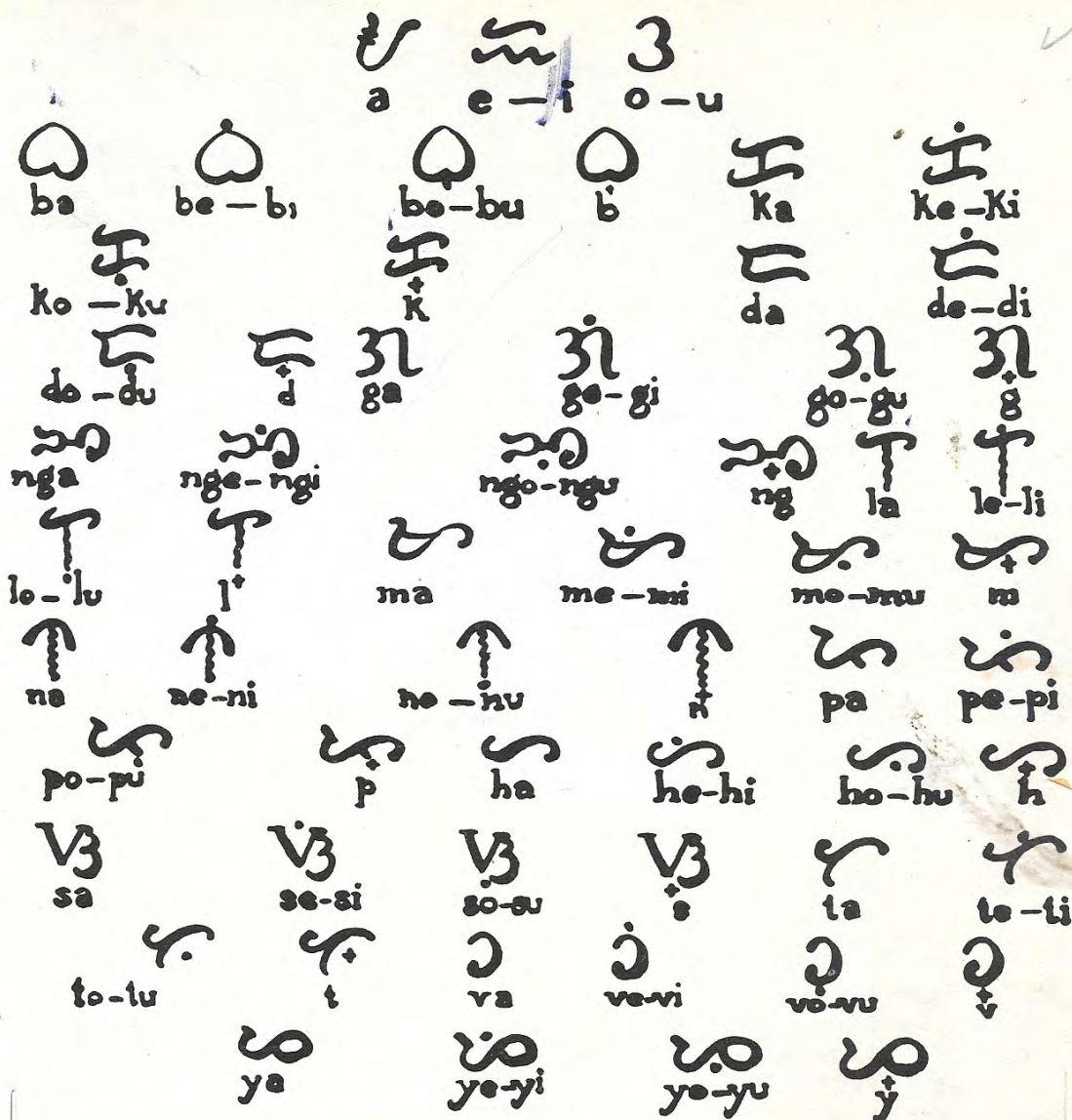
Of anything. Of honors won, of dishonor suffered; of women wooed, of women lost; of the ache in their hearts, of the gladness that make life bearable somehow.

They even sing wryly of themselves and what fools the Creator has made of them. Not in complaint. Just as God did what He did, not in meanness.

A song of things as they are in the light of things as they must be.

Ask your guide to hum a little of that song. Or have him take you where you can hear it all.

It might . . . it just, might . . . it could be . . . familiar.



SONGS, HYMNS, AND REVOLT

by J. Resurreccion Calip

THERE IS some question whether Filipinos possess a body of writings to which the term Philippine literature may be properly applied, except as a matter of convenience. This doubt rests on the difficulty of tracing a common thread in a collection so loosely related and so dissimilar in character.

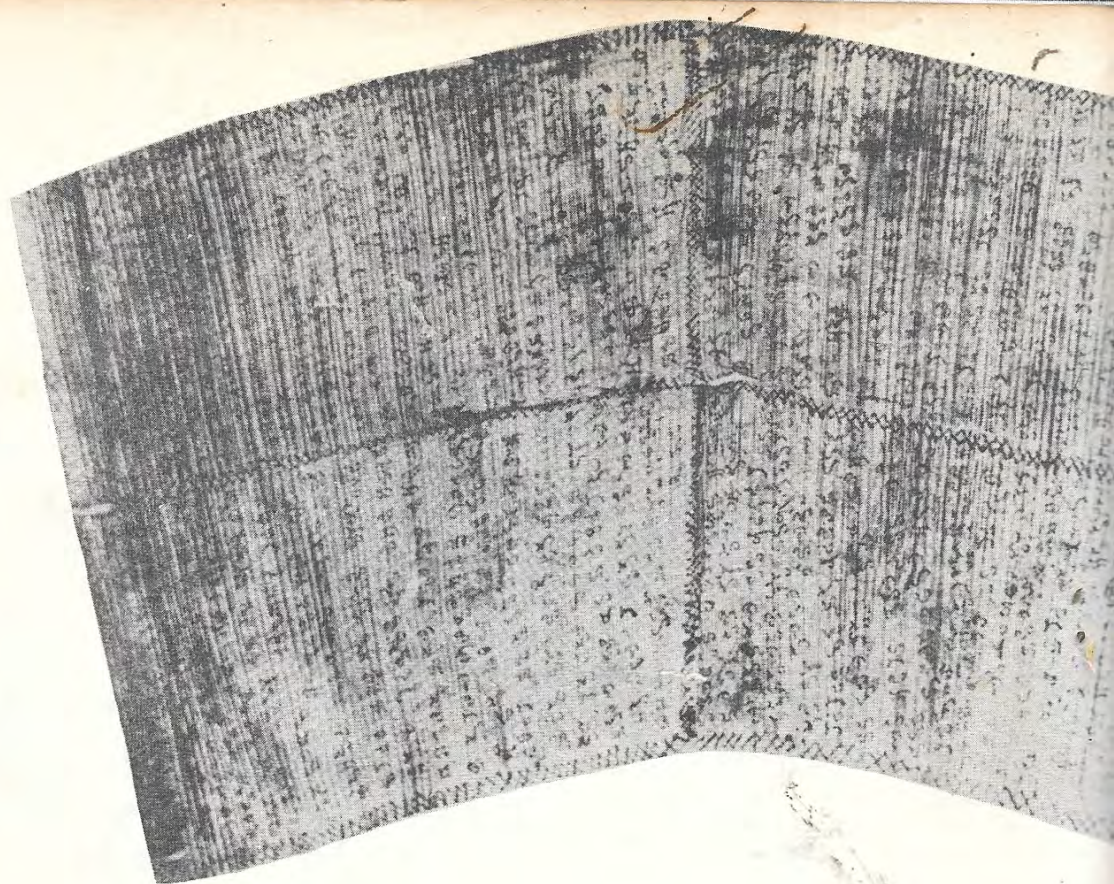
Historically, this literature is divided into four periods—pre-Spanish, early Spanish, late Spanish, and American; and these are set off from one another by clear and radical breaks. There is no discernible connection between the

pre-Spanish epics and the early Spanish religious hymns, for example; and there is none between the hymns and the literature of revolt in the twilight of the Spanish era.

Philippine literature, to use the phrase, had its faint beginnings in the society of the early waves of immigrants who came by frail *barangays* thousands of years ago. Many of the various ethnic groups of ancient Filipinos possessed alphabets and they preserved their songs, legends and codes of laws on bamboo-skin or palm-leaf manus-

cripts. At the same time, there were *dumadallots* (Ilokano) who, during the bardic days, sang the old generation into the new—their songs, hymns, and, often their epics. For with these simple people, the past was always a living force in the present.

The riddle was an early form of literary expression, providing the ancients with a pastime (at the same time exploiting their sense for analogy) in much the same fashion that European princesses of early times were said to have made it a sport. Proverbs, a more



advanced form of literature, reflected their folk philosophy. Proverbs, folk-songs, epics, legends and myths—these and other folk traditions formed the bulk of the so-called floating literatures.

These literary “fossils” abound with humor, wit, and wisdom. Consider these very interesting Tagalog and Iloko proverbs and riddles: *May tainga ang lupa, may pakpak ang balita*, and *Ti sangit ti agtawid katawa a nalimed*. Translated, they mean, respectively: “The earth has ears and rumor has wings”; “The tears of an heir are hidden smiles.”

This Tagalog riddle provokes thought: *Ang bubok ni Adan hindi mabilang-bilang* — “Adam’s hair can hardly be counted.” And this is Iloko: *Adda maysa a lakay, kalbo ngem nakawakray* — “There’s a bald man whose hair hangs around.” The first means rain; the second, *octopus*.

Philippine folk legends had their own varied functions; they were fluid social ingredients which grew from simple to complex as society changed. The legend of the monkey and the turtle is an illustration of this growth. From

its simple Indian origin, it had become complex in the story popularized by Jose Rizal in 1886, and even more so in Japanese folklore with the addition of incidents of military significance.

Bernardo Carpio, a famous Filipino corrido, also serves to illustrate the fact of literary accretion. It traces its roots in European legends current during the eighth century, though as a matter of fact, there are faint indications that the main outline of the story goes back to Homeric days in ancient Greece. Through the centuries, various incidents accumulated around the plot, becoming fixed in its familiar form during the days of Charlemagne. When Spain gained political control of the East, she introduced the legend to the Philippines where it gained a fresh lease of life, this time donning a native garb.

There were some changes in the Filipino version: the herculean hero was sent by the imaginative local story tellers as a prisoner in the *Bantay Agsipsipat* (Clapping Cliffs) somewhere in the San Mateo mountains of Rizal. Here, Bernardo Carpio was made to hold apart the Clapping Cliffs, which

had caused, so it was told, so many earthquakes in the country.

Like the floating literature of the Mediterranean world and certain sections of the European mainland, the Far East drew heavily from Indian folk story reservoirs. The Ifugao epic, *Alim*, for instance, a glorification of the lives of gods and goddesses, has an atmosphere strongly pervaded by the Indian epic, *Ramayana*. Strange as it may seem, the word *alim* appears to be of Arabic origin: *alim*, in Arabic, means “wisdom or knowledge; one learned in matters of religion and doctrine.” Hence, the Tagalog cognate, *alam*, which also means “knowledge.”

The *Hudhud* is another Ifugao epic. Like the *Alim*, it is a two-hour recitation.

Down south, the Mohammedan Maranaos of Mindanao have the *darangan*, which may be called, roughly, their *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Most representative of the *darangan* are the *bantugan*, *Sulayman* and *Indarapatra*, *Bidasari*, and *Daramoke-a-Babai*. Each may well indicate the leisure and culture of Moro society for each requires almost a week of continuous recitation.

Handwritten text in a Philippine script, likely a bark manuscript, with decorative flourishes at the bottom.



ANCIENT PHILIPPINE LITERATURE IS FAIRLY RICH IN FOLK TALES, EPICS AND SONGS, FORMS WHICH SURVIVE TO THIS DAY. AT LEFT IS A PART OF A BARK MANUSCRIPT, ONE OF THE FEW WHICH ESCAPED DESTRUCTION BY THE SPANIARDS. ABOVE AND RIGHT ARE TWO PAGES FROM THE DOCTRINA CRISTIANA, FIRST BOOK TO BE PRINTED IN THE COUNTRY.

Bantugan, the eponym of the Maranao epic, was a legendary warrior of noble exploits. *Sulayman and Indarapatra*, definitely of Indian influence, concerns a hero's adventure in a weird mythical land—now long sunken in the bottom of the sea—where once dwelt birds so enormous that they could carry off three buffaloes at a time. Indarapatra, "emperor of Mantapuli and ruler of the Sunset Lands," gave Sulayman, his brother, the magic signet and the ring of invincibility, together with the *jaru pakal*, an enchanted *kris*, so that he may fight the monsters of the sunken plains. Swiftly, from the clouds, the *balbal*, a fearful bird, descended and in its fury, the sky seemed torn to halves. Sulayman cut half its throat with the 'enchanted' *jaru pakal* and with another stroke severed one of its wings.

Sulayman, however, was killed, for "the severed wing buried him beneath its suffocating weight!" Indarapatra knew he was dead for the *bauno* sapling beneath the palace window drooped and died. God saw Indarapatra in grief and in compassion He brought Sulayman back to life.

Indarapatra then continued the battle against the ferocious *balbal*, which had its nest high among the stars. This bird menaced the plains of Lanao and "beneath the thunder of his awful wings," the earth trembled. Indarapatra clipped the monster's seven heads

"Until but one remained!" and the *balbal* turned

"And swiftly fled him to the skies,
Beyond the furthest hills . . .
Dying."

Dead was the great bird, or so Indarapatra believed, but

"The folks who lived about Gu-rayn,
Declare they hear the *balbal*'s raged cries;
And in the skies . . .
They see his shadow in the moon
At night."

Bidasari is the story of a beautiful princess by that name, a princess who was "fairer than the day" and whose thoughts were "pure as crystal." This poem is reputed to be the most "charming in Malayan literature."

It is important to note that stories of prince and princesses were absent in Iloko literature for that society had an entirely different structure. Indeed, no equivalents for *datos* and *sultans*, palaces, or terms for chariots and prince and princesses ever existed in their lexicon.

The *Lam-ang* of the Ilokanos, a pre-Spanish epic, is an interesting social document, having "grown" through the centuries up to and including the Spanish era. Fragments not yet incorporated with previously printed editions reveal further accretions during the American regime, one of which is that of an American who went a-courting in the yard of Ines Kannoyan, the heroine. He rode on a car that could leap over dikes and ditches and he had eyes as big as plates, and money in plenty. *Lam-ang* licked him in the courtship, for Ines Kannoyan had no respect for either the dollar or the car.

Largely preserved by oral traditions from century to century, these floating literatures, passing entertainment in the daily life of the people, served as a cohesive force, binding the clans together despite frequent fratricidal strifes.

Philippine society before the coming of the Spaniards was essentially a simple one, insulated against the intrusion of Western ways. As a result, its literature remained longer in the primitive state. Though bark manuscripts existed, oral literature was staple for the people; too soon, even the bark manuscripts, legacies from the wise men of the villages, disappeared. Today, much that we know of the recorded writing of ancient Filipinos, come from the manuscripts of neighboring countries.

Then came the Spanish colonialism. Rigidly feudalistic and inhumane in a great number of respects, it nevertheless introduced to the Philippines some of the economic and intellectual advances of modern Europe. Crucially important among these importations was the art of printing.

Consistent with the aims of colonialism, the Spaniards utilized literature as

a means of shaping the mind of the people. In this task, the printing press was availed of almost immediately. (The first book printed about the country, *De Moluccis Insulis*, by Maximilianus Transylvanus, came out in 1523, two years after Magellan's voyage of discovery. This was followed by Pigafetta's *Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo*, dated 1525.) It will be remembered that the first permanent Spanish settlement in the Philippines was made only in 1565. But by 1593, only 28 years later, the *Doctrina Cristiana*, one in Tagalog and another in Chinese, had already been published in Manila.

These *Doctrines* were the first products of the art of printing in this country. They represent the oldest of Philippine incunabula, the source of so much intrigue and adventure among bibliophiles, for soon all the copies were

apparently lost. Many doubted if they were ever printed at all.

Untiring bibliophiles followed faint trails through fires and convulsions, through war-ridden Europe and strife-infested Mexico. As the centuries passed, the hopes of ever finding them grew dimmer and dimmer. Then the unexpected happened after over 350 years: the Tagalog *Doctrina* was accidentally found in the war-disturbed city of Paris after the last global conflict and the Chinese *Doctrina* was discovered in a sagging shelf in Rome!

It is not surprising that the early priests, who were chiefly responsible for the importation of Europe's cultural products, should be concerned mainly with the propagation of the Catholic faith. To this end, they encouraged the distribution of medieval romances which combined entertainment with religious instruction. At the same time, they

THE MORO-MORO WAS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR FORMS OF ENTERTAINMENT DURING THE MIDDLE AND LATE SPANISH ERA.



went into an assiduous study of the vernacular languages, as a means of communicating church doctrines directly to the people:

Thus, the printing of the *Doctrinas* was followed by the first three philological books printed in the Philippines: Fray Francisco de San Jose's *Arte y Reglas de la Lengua Tagala*, Tomas Pinpin's *Librong Pagaaralan nang mangga Tagalog nang Wikang Castila*, both printed in 1610, and Fr. Pedro de San Buenaventura's *Vocabulario de Lengua Tagala*, 1613.

Prior to the publication of these philological books, however, various religious tracts for use by the clergy in the dissemination of the faith were printed in the Philippines. These were: *Libro de las excelencias del Rosario de nuestra Señora*, written by Francisco de San Jose, 1602; *Ordinaciones*, by Fr. Juan de Castro, 1604; and *Postrimerias*, by F. de San Jose, 1605. The first represents the first printed book in the Philippines by the movable type method.

This was apparently followed by a long hiatus in printing activities in the country, for the next known book, Francisco Lopez' *Libro a Nakaisuratan amin ti Bagas ti Doctrina Cristina*, printed in the Convento de San Pablo de Manila by Antohio Damba, did not appear till 1621. (European interest in the islands, meanwhile, was growing, as evidenced by the publication of Pedro Chirino's *Relacion*, printed in Rome in 1604, and Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos*, printed in Mexico in 1609.)

More significantly, a few samples of the early literatures were committed to printed form. Some pre-Spanish manuscripts like Chao-Ju-Kua's mention of the Philippines in the *Che Fan Shih* (1325-75 ca.); the *Maragtas*, a record of the heroic Malay settlement of the island of Panay; and the Pavon Manuscript, containing the famous Code of Kalantiao (1433), were printed either partially or in full.

One interesting ethnological document, however, which failed to see print was the Povedano Manuscript, written in 1578 and named after its author, one of the first Spanish *encomenderos* in the Philippines. It is an account of the customs, traditions, and daily life of

the Visayans. Lost for 373 years, it was recently found in Cebu by a young scholar, Rebecca P. Ignacio, who brought it to the attention of bibliophiles.

For the most part, the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries consisted of hymns, novenas and prayers. Popular entertainment was limited to *corridors*, *awits*, *zarzuelas*, *cenaculos*, and *moro-moros*. Needless to say, these proved to be a most subtle and most effective means of evangelizing.

Corridos and *awits* are versified stories, based as a rule on happenings in foreign lands. The three other forms, which may loosely be called dramas, attained great popularity with the masses, especially the *moro-moro* (battles between Mohammedans and Christians; the latter invariably won) which is said to be native in origin. *Cenaculos* are dramatic presentations of the passion of Christ.

But the most pervasive form of literature during those times was the *pasion*, verse re-tellings of the life of Christ in the vernacular languages. The reading of these *pasions* (there are numerous versions) began as an imposed chore on the native population but soon gained such a wide circulation that they became staple reading fare.

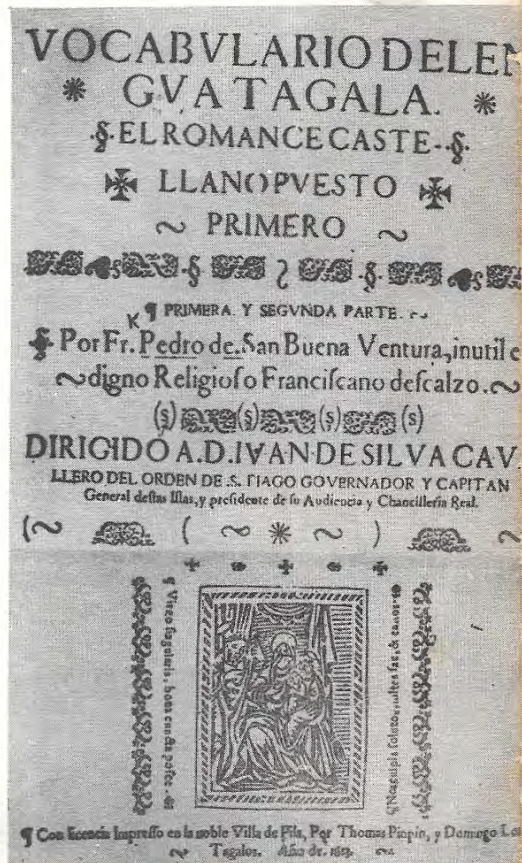
Actually, they were not read but sung in a stylized monotone. During Easter, it was the custom (as it still is in rural communities) to chant the entire *pasion* in church, the people taking turns until the book is completed. Then another shift takes over and the process is repeated.

It will be noted that the literary forms were limited and the subjects severely circumscribed. This points to the central fact of literary development during the Spanish era: censorship. Censorship was established as a principle of colonial rule from the very beginning and was later sanctioned by the Spanish throne in a decree of 1810.

There were strong reasons for censorship, one among them the fact that Spain wished to hide her defeat in the Napoleonic wars from her colonies, fearing that this might encourage dissidence. Another very significant fact



FRANCISCO BALTAZAR



A SAMPLE OF THE WORK OF TOMAS PINPIN, FIRST FILIPINO PRINTER

was the desire of the colonial administrators to stifle the spirit of nationalism, especially in the newly-risen middle class which was aware of the growing tide of European liberalism.

As a result, the only "free" vehicles of literary expression were the folk songs and folk poems, which escaped the attention of the censors chiefly because they were "academic," that is, they dealt not with religious or political matters but with the melancholy and romantic yearning of the common people.

Only one writer managed to outwit the censors and it is proof perhaps not only of his cleverness but also of his capacity as an artist that Francisco Baltazar, better known as Balagtas, should have been able to write and distribute his best-known work, *Florante at Laura*. (1838). This was, by all odds, the most explosive piece of literature written by a native since the Spaniards settled in the Philippines. Utilizing the antiquated machinery of the *corrido*, full of enchanted love, wild chase and impossible rescue, Balagtas wrote what was under the surface a glowing and bitter condemnation of corruption and tyranny. The censors, beguiled by its innocent plot (the setting is Albania in far-away Europe) fortunately overlooked the political overtones. To this day, *Florante* remains a high point in the development of Tagalog literature.

The nineteenth century, a great period of awakening for the Filipinos, was marked by the rise of an intelligentsia, a group of Spanish-speaking and Spanish-writing young men fired by the idea of nationalism. Probably no more selfless group (nor a more vocal one) had gathered together in the interests of national emancipation. They wrote poetry, a few abortive novels, but for the most part, they devoted their lively talents to journalism.

Shackled by strict censorship at home, they migrated to Spain, where encouraged by liberals, they founded *La Solidaridad* (1888), a fortnightly newspaper dedicated to the correction of abuses of the colonial government in the Philippines. In its pages, Marcelo H. del Pilar, Graciano Lopez-Jaena, Antonio Luna and Jose Rizal wrote acid satires on flatulent friars, cruel civil guards, and the entire pompous and ignorant crew of colonials who misruled the Philippines.

La Solidaridad was a tremendous success. Smuggled under the noses of the civil guards, copies were circulated hand to hand and pored over religiously. Part of the credit for arousing the civic consciousness which eventually resulted in the successful Revolution of 1896 must be given to this paper.

So far as literature was concerned, however, the culminating point of the

movement was the publication of Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* (Berlin, 1887). A comico-tragic novel, it satirized certain aspects of Filipino life, at the same time painting a cruelly exact picture of Spanish rule. The *Noli* was immediately barred from the Philippines by both civil and ecclesiastical authorities, but it circulated anyway, smuggled in by patriots and by students returning from Europe.

Four years later, in 1891, Rizal published a sequel, *El filibusterismo*. This was less successful, but Rizal's work was done. The *Noli* was a catalyst of revolution and in the minds of many, it was, and probably still is, the finest single effort of the Filipino creative imagination.

Rizal's execution in 1896 may be said to terminate an era in literary activity.

After the revolution, came the Americans. The writers, still working in the Spanish language and still under strict censorship, continued the intermittent strain of protest. But by the second decade of this century, Filipinos had begun to write in English, which gradually replaced all other languages as the principal vehicle of literary expression. This new phase of Philippine literature, now abundant and vigorous, is the subject of other chronicles.



trade accounted by 52 per cent of the overall total. For the first six months of 1951, our exports comprised 34.31 per cent of the total trade, against 42.6 per cent the previous similar period, or an increase of 11.71 per cent.

Shipments during the first six months of 1951 indicated an increase in the value of copra and coconut oil, first and fourth ranking exports, of more than P84 and P11 million, respectively, over the same period a year ago. Similarly, an increase of 128.6 and 8.4 thousand tons was noted in their volume correspondingly. The decrease of about P8 million in the export value of desiccated coconut has been largely influenced by the imposition of price control in the United States in January and the growing difficulty experienced by local manufacturers in procuring raw nuts at prices low enough to produce desiccated coconut at a profit.

Similarly, 495,612 metric tons of centrifugal sugar invoiced at P108.1 million were shipped abroad during the first half of 1951, which represent more than 46 per cent greater in volume and over 55 per cent higher in value than the level for the same period last year. The United States practically monopolized all our sugar exports because of the old policy of shipping all available export sugar to fill our duty-free quota in that market.

Fourth on the export list is abaca hemp, exports of which rose to 69,221 metric tons valued at P76,879,294 from January to June, against 43,672 metric tons worth P38,471,222 during the similar period last year. Exports of rope also trebled both in

volume and value during the period under review.

A spectacular jump in export volume and value was registered by logs and lumber, the fifth leading export in the first half of 1951, when 147,326,721 board feet valued at P19,069,351 were exported against only 37,069,933 worth P4,644,239 in the corresponding period a year ago. Japan absorbed almost two thirds of our shipment consisting of sawn logs and a small quantity of peelers for veneer and plywood manufacture.

Exports of base metals and concentrates, mostly iron and chromite ores, also rose to 506.6 thousand metric tons at P10.5 million during the first half this year from 340.8 thousand metric tons at P9.6 million during the same period last year. While iron ore went principally to Japan, almost 92 per cent of chrome ore exports was invoiced to the United States.

Another export product which registered a very substantial gain is molasses, production of which has been greatly accelerated in the sugar regions. Export of molasses from January to June this year almost trebled in volume to 76,383 metric tons from 28,981 metric tons for the same period last year. In point of value, molasses exports soared from only P342,758 to P3,183,383 to garner eleventh place on the export list, the last half-year. Our molasses went to Japan, Great Britain, Hongkong, and Siam, in the order named.

Other principal exports which showed volume increases over last year's figures for the same six-month period are copra meal or cake, from 28,688 metric tons to 32,737 metric tons; scrap metals,

from 8.2 to 19.9 thousand metric tons; and maguey, from 3,666 bales to 14,906 bales. Those which increased in value are: tobacco and manufactures, from P1,227,478 to P2,529,012; chemicals, from P563,199 to P1,883,283; rubber and manufactures, from P360,496 to P941,021; abaca manufactures (other than rope), from P481,959 to P926,927; and shells and manufactures, from P759,908 to P921,899.

As usual, the United States accounted for two-thirds of our total exports, followed far behind by Japan which took only 6.6 per cent. Other leading purchasers, named in the order of relative importance, are: Benelux countries (Netherlands and Belgium), Great Britain, Canada, Italy, Venezuela, France, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Switzerland, and Germany.

Import Trade

Merchandise imports cleared through Philippine customs ports from September, 1950 to August, 1951 totaled P815,536,916, which represents 48 per cent of the overall total. For the first half of 1951, imports only shared 45.69 per cent of the total trade against 57.4 per cent for the comparable period a year ago.

Due to the relaxation of controls on the importation of essential commodities which started as early as December, 1950, majority of the twenty leading imports of the country registered increases from January to June, 1951 compared to last year's. Import commodities which showed big increases are: cotton and manufactures, up P4 million plus; grains and preparations, gained almost P9 million; mineral oils (petroleum products), increased

by over P5 million; iron and steel products, also up by over P5 million; dairy products, increased by P7 million; automobiles and parts, up P3 million; fish and fish products, increased by P8 million which is equivalent to more than 50 per cent; cocoa, coffee and tea, up P5.7 million; jute and jute fibers, up by more than P3 million; and gums, resins, oils, and wax, increased by over P4 million.

On the other hand, decreases were registered by: paper and manufactures, down by P3 million; electrical machinery and apparatus, down by P6.1 million; tobacco and manufactures, down also by P6 million; fertilizers and fertilizing materials, down by P2.3 million; non-ferrous metals and manufactures decreased by P1.5 million; leather and manufactures, down by P1 million; and chemicals and drugs, etc., short by P951,000.00.

More than 68 per cent of our total imports were purchased from the United States while Japan shipped to us almost 8 per cent. Our other leading suppliers with one per cent or more are Indonesia, Canada, Thailand, Arabia, Great Britain, and Brazil.

The outbreak of the Korean war in June, 1950 brought about a chain of reactions in the business and economic fields, both domestic and foreign. On the local scene, it influenced agricultural and industrial production, the behavior of export and import prices and values and the fiscal policies.

As a result of the rearmament program launched by the free nations of the world, particularly the United States which immediately instituted export control on strategic



Sec. Balmaceda

war materials and mobilized its agencies to secure raw materials in short supply for stockpiling purposes, our agricultural and industrial production gained greater momentum. Production of almost all export products was accelerated and given much impetus. Mineral production considerably improved.

Preliminary estimates of production in metric tons for the crop year 1951 compared to 1950 crop year indicate the following percentage increase of Philippine agricultural products: 28 per cent in copra (11% in coconut oil but 17% decrease in desiccated coconut), 46% in centrifugal sugar, 58% in abaca, 21% in leaf tobacco, 1% in root crops, 34% in fish and fish products, 8% in meat and poultry, and 8% in the livestock population. Increases in mineral production range from 17 to 49 per cent. On the other hand decreases were estimated for the following: rice and shelled corn, 3% each; and beans and vegetables, 4%.

Price behavior also reacted sharply since the Korean crisis. The rise in prices of some Philippine exports from June, 1950 to March, 1951 had been spectacular. The f.o.b. unit price of copra, for instance, during the period rose by 58.8 per cent; of coconut oil, by 59.6 per cent; of abaca, by 58.3 per cent; of logs, by 25 per cent, and of desiccated coconut, by 17.6 per cent.

Since March, 1951, however, some of these prices

have declined precipitously so that by June all the gains of the previous months were almost completely wiped out. Sugar shared but slightly in the price increases up to March but its price improved from then on by 27.3 per cent. The price of lumber which also improved but slightly up to March, 1951, became bullish since then and by June had risen 16.7 per cent above the March level. Logs have risen consistently in price and gained since March by another 33.3 per cent.

From the standpoint of imports, government policy has relaxed and liberalized the control on the importation of essential articles since late December, 1950, resulting in the temporary increase of decontrolled items into our country to replenish dwindling stocks. Furthermore, there was a corresponding increase in the price of imported goods.

All these factors contributed largely to reverse, beginning May, 1951, the positive monthly trade balances enjoyed since September, 1950. The value of exports from May to August this year totaled only ₱267,879,936 against total imports of ₱370,392,127, or a negative trade balance of ₱102,512,191. During the month of August, 1951 alone, imports almost doubled exports when it was reported at ₱112,154,102 against exports of only ₱57,822,607.

While shipping tonnage of our exports continues to increase yet the sharp decline in price of our major exports, especially coconut products which constitute the great bulk of our export trade, far outdistanced the increase in volume so much so that our exports since May, 1951, could not keep pace with the rising imports to maintain a positive trade balance.

In view of this declining trend, remedial measures have to be instituted to stem the rising tide of imports.

Control Measures

It will be recalled that our import and exchange control measures were instituted as early as 1948 after Republic Act No. 330 was passed.

But, with the decontrol of certain items resulting in an upsurge of imports, we are again faced with the recurrence of the same problem of trade deficits, which have been with us since liberation. This threat began to assert itself since last May. Our export continued to slump in value from ₱80.4 million in May, to ₱70.8 million in June and ₱58.8 million in July. In August, it went down to ₱57.8 million. Preliminary customs reports for September show that it dropped still further to ₱55.3 million. On the other hand, imports from May to August, 1951, totalled ₱82.7, ₱91.8, ₱83.6, and ₱112.1 million, respectively.

Other measures which have some effects on our foreign trade are the 17 per cent foreign exchange tax and the export and import control laws, (Republic Acts Nos. 601, 613 and 660) which were passed by the last Congress. The tax of seventeen per cent on foreign exchange granted for importation of certain commodities has added to the value of our imports.

A new development, which threatens further our foreign trade, is the present move in the United States to convert the three-cents per pound excise tax on Philippine coconut oil into a customs duty. If such conversion will make this imposition a permanent levy against Philippine coconut oil, it will be highly detrimental to our coconut industry. Our government has been working for the com-

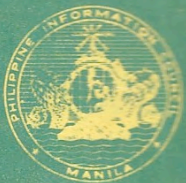
plete elimination of this excise tax, especially since our independence because it is repugnant to the spirit of trade reciprocity provided for in our Executive Trade Agreement with the United States. Before we became independent, this objection to the tax was partly overcome by the fact that the proceeds of the tax were all given to the Philippine government. These payments had to be stopped, however, after the grant of Philippine independence.

During my recent trip to the United States, I had occasion to discuss this matter with officials in Washington and also with big users of coconut oil. I tried to impress upon them the strong reasons why the three-cents excise on our oil should be completely abolished, pointing out not only the existing reciprocal trade between the two countries which is violated by this special tax but also the following reasons:

1. This tax was originally intended to protect U.S. edible oils from the competition of coconut oil. At present, however, practically all our coconut oil goes into industrial uses which no longer competes with U.S. edible oils.

2. The tax, therefore, no longer helps U.S. manufacturers of edible oil. Instead it only helps oil manufacturers in other countries which compete with Philippine coconut oil.

3. The elimination of the tax will be beneficial to the American consuming public which buys the soap manufactured out of coconut oil. The elimination of the tax will result in lower cost of the raw material used for soap manufacture. So the manufacturers will be in a position to sell soap cheaper to the American consuming public.



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