

## INTERESTING PLACES

## THE RUINS OF GUADALUPE

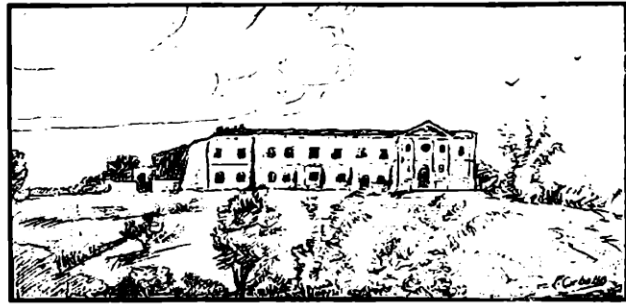
By Francisco Carballo

With Illustrations by the Author

ON the south bank of the Pasig River is the picturesque village of Guadalupe, a barrio of Makati in Rizal province. It lies along the provincial road leading to Pasig, Montalban, Antipolo, and other lake towns. The hamlet has been named in honor of its patron saint, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, whose image was brought to the Islands by the Spaniards during the height of the galleon trade.

The chief point of interest in the village is the ruined pile of its church and convent which stand on a small plateau overlooking the river, the barrio, and the nearby towns. Due to its elevated position and viewed from a distance, the pile reminds one of a small Grecian Acropolis. From its plaza a magnificent vista of the surrounding country may be had.

The church and convent were built under the direction of Fray Antonio Herrera, a member of the Augustinian order. He was the nephew of the famed Herrera who built the Escorial and other palaces for the kings of Spain. A writer claims that Herrera's joining the Augustinian order was the result of a duel. Antonio was the favorite of the king who, by royal decree, had prohibited dueling in his kingdom. Herrera, having violated the decree, was made to choose between execution or forced seclusion in a monastery outside of the country. He chose the latter punishment and came to the Philippines as a member of the said order. On his arrival he found the Augustinian church and convent wrecked as a result of the earthquake and fires that had devastated the city. He immediately began plans for the construction of a permanent stone building. The architect Juan Macias had already prepared plans for the building and they were at loggerheads as to whose plans were to be followed. The wiser heads of the Order satisfactorily settled the dispute. Macias was allowed to continue the construction of the Augustinian building and Herrera was assigned to plan and erect the Guadalupe church and convent. Work was begun in 1601 and the edifice was completed in seven years. The stones used were quarried in the immediate neighborhood. Filipino



and Chinese masons and artisans aided in the construction of the pile.

The earthquake of 1880 destroyed the stone ceiling of the church and under the direction of Padre José Corruagedo, a tile roof was constructed to replace the wrecked stone vaulting.

From the church patio two stairways leading to the village below were dug in solid stone. On the same patio big *caballero* trees grew and their gorgeous flowers give the place a festive look during the month of May.

Every year two fiestas were held in the village, that of the Virgin of Guadalupe celebrated in December, and that of San Nicolas, the patron saint of the Chinese, who, according to an old legend of the Pasig, saved a Chinaman from the jaws of a crocodile which was later turned into stone by the good saint. During his fiesta in September all classes of Chinese society from the City and nearby provinces attended the celebration which was held with much pomp and merry-making by both the pilgrims and the villagers.

On the day preceding the fiesta, gaily-decorated pagodas set up on barges were towed up the Pasig by launches to the Guadalupe landing. Thousands of Chinese pilgrims from the city and elsewhere came on these barges. In one of the pagodas, before a small imaged replica of Saint Nicholas, Chinese singers kept vigils and took turns singing religious hymns dedicated to the saint.

At night the people enjoyed free shows consisting of the *titires* or puppet plays and *castillos* or fireworks display. The streets and the church façade were aglow with thousands of lanterns lighted with coconut oil and *timsim* wicks. The procession in which the image of San Nicolas was carried in a gorgeous Chinese palanquin borne on the shoulders of devout pilgrims was unique in its oriental splendor. Thousands of lighted red candles carried by those attending the procession, gay paper lanterns all along the way, the sound of gongs and cymbals, the shrill voices of Chinese singers, and the babble of praying pilgrims presented a fascinating scene. As the pro-

(Please turn to page 26)

## RUINS OF GUADALUPE

(Continued from page 14)

cession wended its way back to the church, the bearers saw to it that the image of Saint Nicolas faced outward instead of toward the altar, for in this way, they said, all the Chinese in Manila, in the provinces, and *Songsong* or China, without fail, would receive the blessings of the good saint.

In the church, at all hours of the day, throngs of devout Chinese came to do homage to the image of Saint Nicolas. The sick and the maimed pray for health, and merchants begged for favors in their business ventures. With their handkerchiefs the pilgrims wipe the face, hands, and feet of the image which was said to sweat at times. They claim that the handkerchiefs thus blessed were effective cures for all sorts of illness. The pilgrims were most liberal in their donations to San Nicolas, and the big platter placed before the altar was often brimming with all kinds of copper, silver and gold *oncita* coins. At the close of the day the *sacristan* took the coin-filled platter to the sacristy where a *padre* counted the day's donations for safe keeping. Old villagers claim that the accumulated donations by the Chinese to San Nicolas during the fiestas and at other times netted the friars a substantial income. This, together with monetary and land donations to the *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, they said, did much to fill the coffers and increase the land wealth of the Augustinian order.

(To be continued)