

Old Deacon Prautch: A Eulogy

By WALTER ROBB

Old Prautch is dead, Old Deacon Prautch. The Union church, decked in May flowers for his memorial services, is neutral ground where for a solemn hour he and old friends meet: he there sleeping, one with yesterday's seven thousand years, and they immured in sentient prudent domesticity. When Prautch lived, Old Deacon Prautch that he was, there were invisible barriers to such cordial propinquity; and so the Union church, on May 19, is somewhat filled with downtown friends of Prautch's who in thirty-nine years had never once known precisely where he lived nor crossed his threshold.

Union Church of Manila, a little cottage church in between Ermita and Malate, is never more solemnly beautiful than at hours when, usually of an afternoon for the better accommodation of the business of the living, its altar and nave are banked with flowers for a tribute to one who will not be coming there again: white lilies, the lotus, and from backyard screens, *cadena de amor* or chains of white or pink love blossoms. So was the little church brightened that hour, and in the afternoon, for the Reverend S. W. Stagg to take the pulpit and utter the eulogy for Old Deacon Prautch.

To what spiritual exigencies brutal circumstances constrain us all. There is this matter of Prautch's downtown friends. So many, and I included, had I such a book to keep, could regularly have made entries of profit in their ledgers under the heading, *Aloofness from Old Prautch*. It is true, and the explanation is that Prautch was Jeremiah reincarnate whom you could never join closely without joining a crusade and letting what was practicable and attainable go hang.

Yet Prautch, himself, apart from the vain causes he espoused, whose dauntless banners he held bravely aloft as he walked the streets of Manila, stood lovably the closest personal association. He married in Manila the relict of a Spanish judge, and had reared tenderly, educated well, and launched in life successfully, six step daughters and step sons. All these men and women, now of mature age, were at Prautch's bedside as he died, weeping without shame, like children not to be consoled; and so was their mother, broken-hearted as they.

A sister survives in the United States, at the old family home in Oskosh, Wisconsin. Not long ago this sister paid her brother in Manila a long visit, making up a filial separation of more than forty years. The two were as children together, two grayheads, though by no means tottering, going about Manila hand in hand—finding sermons in stones and good in everything. The sister walked with Jeremiah: it was the spirit of that indomitable prophet that animated her brother's character. Always when you saw Prautch, you thought, why doesn't the man's heart break. As you talked with

him and tapped the wells of courage in his soul, you knew that heart never would break. And it never did; only one Sunday afternoon, pumping away while Prautch, seventy-one years old, fought pneumonia, it just gave out.

There is another who survives who will dampen a bit of cambric over this inevitability. She is Katherine Mayo, at Bedford Hills, New York, author of books of such dynamic foreground that many a reader feels no want of background or perspective: *Mother India . . . Isles of Fear*.

It was when Miss Mayo was in the Islands gathering the material for *Isles of Fear* that Prautch had his happiest innings. Miss Mayo wanted to know what, in insular sociology, was evil and wrong. Prautch knew these weaknesses intimately, had then devoted nearly thirty years to their correction or modification; never finding them pervious to attack, but seeking, seeking their vulnerability. Leonard Wood, then the Islands' governor general, knew the same facts, but lacking time to detail them, referred Miss Mayo to others, notably to Old Prautch. *Isles of Fear* is true, and dominantly, a narrative by Prautch, who knew the *cacique*

better than the man knows himself, and knew the *tao*, and articulated eloquently the man's hopeless plight.

It never would do to be bosom-close to Prautch, because he was an impractical man unable to compromise his conscience. He was of German heritage, and educated as a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church. During fifteen years of early manhood before coming to the Philippines, he was a Methodist missionary in India. Hindustani was one of his languages; this gave him reference to valuable East Indian parallels during the long years he devoted to rural reforms in the Philippines. He came to Manila in December 1898, before the arrival in Manila of a bishop of his church, and immediately began a spiritual siege of the established order; for what Prautch disapproved of, he fought—and he invariably fought in the open.

Before Methodism debarked a bishop in Manila, therefore, Prautch's humble chapels active in various parts of Manila were making a mighty, exotic appeal to the poor. Congregations overflowed these little places, centers of a militant gospel, but the movement was short-lived. William H. Taft found it annoying, when he became the Islands' civil governor; between the state and the bishop, the tone of Protestantism was soon so subdued that the people no longer heard it exaltingly; there has been no Wagnerian courage in it since; it exhibits a pattern of good work, perhaps, but has never caught the popular imagination comprehensively.

(Please turn to page 70)

PRESIDENT QUEZON'S TRIBUTE

When President Quezon was told of the tribute to the late A. W. Prautch herewith printed, he said: "You can quote me *ad lib.* about Prautch, a braver and better man never lived." President Quezon himself encounters, in his effort for social justice in the Philippines, the conditions that Prautch fought almost single-handed during more than thirty years of residence in Manila and work in behalf of the under-privileged throughout the Islands.

President Quezon recalls that Prautch was indefatigable in this work, that ran counter to the social order and visited ignominy on Prautch instead of high esteem and just reward. "He was hated all over the Islands," said President Quezon, "for the good that he did."

Old Deacon...

(Continued from page 6)

Prautch, of course, unable to tolerate the compromises involved in such a course, moved on to other effort and let his confreres lag at more ease behind him.

In Gregorio Aglipay, a peasant educated enough, and boldly imaginative enough, to have already proclaimed a Filipino National Church, Prautch discovered a colleague to his liking. These two merry gentlemen, whom nothing could dismay, had mutual fun in getting Aglipay's infant church on its feet and teaching it to stand erect against opposition. This was really a miniature Reformation, which keeps growing.

Prautch often told friends, his eyes twinkling with honest cunning, of Aglipay's perturbation over his excommunication. He was reheartened only when Prautch, deriving authority from the clouds, ordained and anointed him bishop of his own church. It was in Prautch's house; there were three persons present, Aglipay, Prautch, and Mrs. Prautch. It seemed indeed a small gathering for such portentous action, but Prautch recalled holy references that made the number blessedly sufficient. There was the one to baptize and exhort, there was the one to be the recipient of these services, there was the one to witness all. Because Prautch was known to be a reliable news tipster, though his news was often too hot for publication, the old Manila Times that day held front-page space open for this story.

Either then or not much later, Bishop Aglipay himself practiced the ban of excommunication. Wagnerian thunders rolled in chapel hymns.

In those early years, Prautch traveled a great deal in the provinces, aiding botanists at the Bureau of Science by turning up odd plant specimens now and then—some of them of commercial value. In these travels he came to know the people better than other men did; because he lived in the people's homes, paying his humble hosts for his keep, and listened with rising indignation to the annals of their benighted misery.

When it was desired by the government to launch an attack against the caciques' power that was planned to be a consistent one, it was logical that Old Deacon Prautch—Deacon because of his whilom missionary status in India—should be named commander of the forces of assault. He was made, then, head of the rural-credit administration in the Bureau of Agriculture, charged with the joyous responsibility of organizing and founding rural credit associations. He tried and tried... tried to find little groups of five reliable men each, in the villages and hamlets, to be the directors of the associations. He visited all these communities, and tried with all the force of a man invincible, to indoctrinate them with the simple conception of associations of peons and small holders for the common purpose of self-help. Another man would have been discouraged, he would have quit.

Failure and disappointment only made Prautch work the harder.

But it all came to so little. Philippine society was not far enough along for it, and like other societies, could not lift itself by its bootstraps. The associations themselves sprouted like mushrooms, that was easy. But instead of small short-time crop loans to members, the directors gen-

erally transferred all the capital into long-term loans to themselves: in this way procuring additional funds with which to practice the usury they had organized themselves to abate. Most of these loans are still uncollected, and probably much of the P4,000,000 involved is forever lost—the situation having intruded itself into politics.

If Prautch would make no compromises, wiser men would. We all did, as we one and all know we did, and we dipped pens in the old patriarch's blood to write up the entries of the tangible profits. But most of all, of course, the men directly responsible did: Filipinos who for personal gain continued betrayal of their inarticulate brother, because they had excuse to do so in this man's own shortcomings. Well, be all as it may, such were some of the experiences of the most incorrigible idealist among all the Americans who came to the Philippines to associate themselves with the vain founding of democracy here.

Though usury never ceased expanding, the Islands grew more prosperous; and when everything is going finely, what more raucously wearisome than the lamentations of an utterly quixotic moralist: in Troy until the Greeks did come, Apollo, disappointed of Cassandra's love, vengefully held the Trojans under the willful spell of never heeding her direful prophecies. So we all tired of Old Deacon Prautch at last. About four years ago we let it be that the government retire him on a pension, to spread over five years and then to stop. His pay had always been small, his least concern, and of course the pension was even smaller. But it sufficed, and it is seen that he died in time—there was something left for the expense a fellow leaves upon the surviving

(Please turn to page 72)

JUST AS SURELY
AS THE EARTH
IS ROUND

“THE MORE PEOPLE
YOU TELL—THE
MORE PEOPLE YOU
SELL”

MR. ADVERTISER:

The MANILA DAILY BULLETIN
Reaches Your Prospects—People
Who Have the Money to Pay for
the Goods You Have to Sell.

Old Deacon...

(Continued from page 70)

when he bids goodbye and goes away to another world.

Prautch had been for some years the president of the Pioneers' Club of Manila. This is the club founded about eight years ago by oldtimers, nearly all of them veteran volunteer soldiers of the Philippine campaigns—the Occupation, and the subsequent suppression of the Aguinaldo insurrection—who founded the club because they required a home of their own during their old age, and America maintains no soldiers' homes in the Islands.

The Pioneers' Club of Manila runs a little monthly magazine, a quite presentable one. In May, when in a few days he was to die, Prautch stuck Taps on the magazine's cover: "Day is done, gone the sun from the lake, from the hills, from the sky: all is well, safely rest, God is nigh." And so it proved to be. But because his spirit was unquenchable, burning as it ever did with a flame of unselfish righteousness, Prautch strode bravely through his latest years like Old Browning says man should. He was not a thoughtless optimist, far from it. But he was wittingly so. For him, therefore, the best was ever yet to come, "the last of life for which the first is made." Like Browning, too, he might have been more brutish as he went along, but it seems he had resolved with himself, if not with his Maker, never to sink in the scale.

He never did.

All this is no amend, of many affronts to his persistent admonitions to join him in assaulting windmills; but none the less, it is typed with a cutting sense of contrition. Prautch sleeps in the Pioneers

Plot in Cementerio del Norte. I do not say, in peace. I believe his soul rides another steed, in the martial habiliments of another Quixote, and that the horn of the hustings, blown by one fool and another, winds ceaselessly on the hills of eventual human justice. There will be no taking of the citadels of caciqueism in the Islands, except Prautch be there to receive the surrender gallantly and hand back the vanquished sword.

For though the man's heart was brave beyond describing, yet it was gentle and noble, kind, and caverned with pools of understanding and forgiveness. This pronounced attitude overflowed constantly, and washed away all malice. Though all of us knew him, carefully, only downtown, as we had to do unless we were to become his Sancho Panzas, yet there was a place at his board where he kept a welcome for us. No doubt he will still.

Minor Industries and the Export Taxes
These levies would fold up much business

Captain S. Davis Winship submitted the brief to the MacMurray committee for the Philippine embroidery industry the tops the minor Philippine industries affected by the prospect of the partial U. S. duties to be levied on Philippine products marketed in the United States during the 1941-1946 period, the full duties thereafter unless special trade terms are effected between the Islands and the United States. (The universal petition is that the trade terms now existing be continued), and the Commonwealth ten-year period be left unchanged).

Hand embroidery leading to the sale of large yearly quantities of American textiles chiefly cotton has found a place in Philip-

pine home industry on a basis of a very narrow margin of profit limited by the additional factor of the long distance from the American marketing centers, the outstanding one being New York. Large American garment houses have manufacturing branches in Manila, others are supplied by local companies. The embroidering is done in the homes of women in the provinces during hours given otherwise to no lucrative activity. Sewing and conditioning, laundering, packing, etc., is all done in Manila, where as many women are hired for it as for the embroidering. Thus half the employment is in Manila, half in the provinces.

American capital is employed, about \$4,000,000. From 100,000 to 150,000 Filipinos are employed according to the demands of orders in hand, and for the most part they are women.

Embroidery merely adds daily pittances to the cash income of poor families, where the opportunity to undertake it is a godsend. Remuneration is on the piece basis, the cost of materials is 50% of the total cost of the completed garments. Staples are the bulk of the business, distance precludes ventures in style goods; the garments benefited by Philippine embroidering ordinarily retail at from 50 cents to \$2 apiece, though "there is a small but certain demand for garments up to \$10 or more."

The business varies precisely with popular prosperity in the United States. In 1926 the customs invoices summed \$5,992,389; in 1933, \$1,899,315; in 1935, \$5,076,245; in 1929, highest of all, \$6,011,533. Labor's compensation is obtained by dividing by two. Captain Winship says it is improbable that embroidery can pay the partial U. S. duties during 1941-1946 and thereafter the full duties, and survive—prices can't be raised to absorb the taxes, levied on the value of the finished garments, not merely on the value added in the Philippines. He says that even now the margin of profit is very small. Our own information of the industry indicates that this is true; to ask the women to work at lower rates would be almost absurd, fully so were it not for the fact that no alternative employment of their idle time offers.

The embroidery factories number twenty, engaging the work of 50,000 or more women in Manila and a like number in Luzon provinces. Frustration of this industry would have telling effect of the most widespread character throughout Luzon, and notably in Manila. The only American competition is in the southwestern states, where price and workmanship are below Philippine standards, and machine embroideries partly deriving from Puerto Rico. Continental machine output averages about \$20,000,000 a year, Philippine hand production sometimes runs 25% as high; of American use of cotton embroideries hand and machine made, continental, insular, and foreign combined, Manila supplied about 12 1/2% in 1935.

AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE JOURNAL

P. O. Box 1638 — Manila — 180 David

RATES

Philippines	- - -	₱4.00 per year
United States	- - -	\$2.00 " "
Foreign Countries	- - -	\$3.00 " "

BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORY

P. O. Box 1394 Telephone 2-20-70

J. A. STIVER

Attorney-At-Law—Notary Public

Certified Public Accountant

Administration of Estates

Receiverships

Investments

Collections

Income Tax

121 Real, Intramuros

Manila, P. I.

Philippines Cold Stores

Wholesale and Retail

Dealers in

American and Australian

Refrigerated Produce

STORES AND OFFICES

Calle Echague

Manila, P. I.

a message from
A. GARCIA



行銀興中

CHINA BANKING CORPORATION

MANILA, P. I.

Domestic and Foreign Banking
of Every Description