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Thirty-One Years After It Made History

*Oh, dewy was the morning, in the month of May,
And Dewey was the admiral at Manila bay;
And dewy were the Regent's eyes, those orbs of royal blue—
And do we feel discouraged? I do not think we do!*

Walt Mason, Kansan, speaking, in the *Emporia Gazette*, the jingle that all America was soon singing, thirty-one years ago this month, in celebration of a marine engagement which has a special significance in this city, off whose shores it was fought between Montojo and the Spanish fleet and Dewey and the American. Dewey was first a hero, then married and forfeited his popularity; and went down to Charon's ferry with the retired men and became an effigy on a pedestal and a chapter in world and national history. He was a prudent and courageous commander, a man always half at sea on land duty and in diplomacy, it would seem—with hardly any faculty for posing and getting along well with the press, which is not altogether, if at all, to his discredit.

He had asked for the Asiatic command, he had wanted to manage the business which he saw looming at Manila, and he was gallant and humane in carrying out what he undertook. His victory in the bay, May 1, 1898, led naturally to the blockade, which led to the military occupation, August 13, 1898, which culminated in the acquisition of the Philippines by America and the undertaking on her part of the political experiment she is still engaged in—in the typically uncertain and desultory fashion which characterizes her during periods when she is not stirred up nor provoked to summary measures.

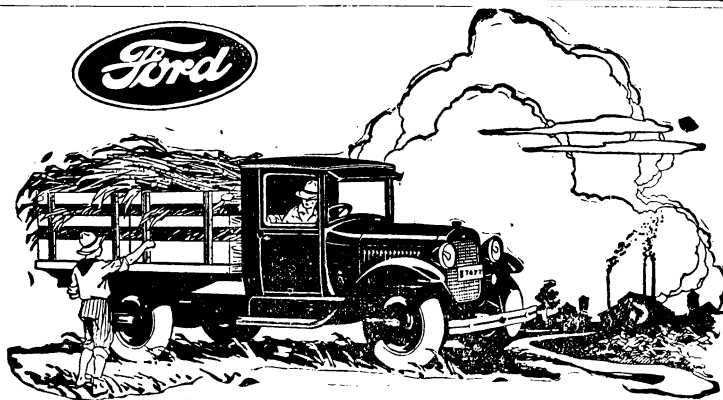
More may be said with historical accuracy of Dewey, when the venture is finally brought to conclusion. This much may be said now, Dewey's achievement revived overseas-mindedness in America: the idea still struggles against the immensity of the American hinterland, but it is at least rooted in the universities, perhaps even in the high schools, and it will probably survive and eventually annihilate national provincialism. Similarly the Philippines are affected: they are now quite conscious of America, they are commencing to be aware of the orient and of the world generally. Then it surely may be said that Dewey sounded the sunset gun of their oldtime isolation and medieval somnolence.

Americans justly esteem George Dewey, the Vermont youth who, plans for West Point miscarrying, chose Annapolis and a career on the sea.

Nor does Spain have cause to honor Montojo less—the man who, knowing his fleet outclassed, proffered what resistance he could. With this man, many Filipinos, true to the traditions of *Manila men*, shared heroism with Spaniards. Montojo's fleet was salvaged by the Americans in 1903, and when the ships were repaired and recommissioned they went into active service, notably in the Yangtze patrol, where they are just now being replaced. But Montojo sunk them, Dewey only damaging them, in the battle. Montojo did not await the final coup.

"Their ports and compartments opened to admit the green water of the bay of Manila," says a record contemporary with the raising of the vessels, "and carrying many of their crew with them, the Spanish fleet in Asiatic waters went to the bottom. . . . At a disadvantage impossible to overcome, the Spaniards did not wait for the inevitable defeat and capture but anticipated the Americans and destroyed their own vessels!"

"After five years of oblivion underneath the waters, the vessels have been raised to the surface through the genius of an American wrecking



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company, and the truth disclosed. The Spanish ships of war do not bear the mark of one American shell near or below their water lines. . . For several years after the American occupation no attempt was made to raise the sunken Spanish vessels, although they impeded the free navigation of Cavite bay. Finally, however, the government advertised for bids for raising the vessels. Four companies in all undertook the work and failed." One of these was a Chinese company, another a Hongkong company. Captain C. F. Garry, oldtimer in such work, and Captain Couden of the

navy are the men who succeeded. "According to the official reports of Admiral Montojo the vessels were set on fire by the shells of the American squadron, and were afterwards scuttled by his orders when resistance was impossible."

The company which raised the ships was the Philippine Salvage Association, John Macleod, president, Captain Garry, manager. Admiral Montojo's watch was found on his flagship, the *Maria Cristina*, salvaged to be converted into a collier.

Time to be Getting Philippine Paintings

The art which finds expression with brush and canvas underwent a long eclipse with the end of the old régime and the advent of the new in the

his subjects with that pleasant dreamy soul which is their heritage.

At leisure, look his work over. It is well worth having.

Fernando Amorsolo was graduated from the Philippine School of Fine Arts in 1914 and is now an instructor there. He first exhibited in 1908 and has been drudging away ever since, lately finding customers, chiefly Americans, for his product. He probably has not attained his utmost height in expression: he fancies the individualism of Chinese and Japanese pictorial art and thinks Philippine art may eventually acquire a racial distinction. His effort in conjunction with his better known colleagues in Manila to establish a society of artists failed for lack of funds and public interest. It was too early. But he is yet in his prime, hope lies

quires observation of people in everyday life; so you see the creative desire actually exists. Rivera was about to be pensioned to Europe when the Americans came, which ended the plan. His *Fisherman of Tondo* received second honors at St. Louis; he has enjoyed first honors in local exhibitions, including portrait painting in the Carnival competition of last year. He advocates pensioning only mature artists to go abroad, and thinks the youthful ones too much inclined to enjoyment and wasting opportunities. He believes artists could be advantageously employed in the beautifying of Manila. And pray why not the provinces, where youth might well receive other esthetic inspirations than unkempt plazas and glaring tin roofs?

Jorge Pineda does lithograph subjects to keep rice in the pot and fish in the *ulam*, but hankers for landscapes and plans some day to give all his time to them. They are nowhere more abundant and inviting than in these islands, he



Lighting Up Rivera y Mir



The Ferry

Fernando Amorsolo

Philippines: there is a vacuity, almost, of thirty years between Luna of the Spanish period and Amorsolo of the American. There is also, between the subjects these men choose, the natural contrast to be expected. But that is a theme apart, to be gone into a little more before comment is ventured. It is enough to say here that Fernando Amorsolo chooses typical Philippine subjects, those of the commonest observation of everyone: a peasant girl, a rural scene, a cocher. Admirers are commencing to acquire Amorsolos, and it is time they did so. He does more than depict the likeness, he imbues

ahead. He produces prodigiously.

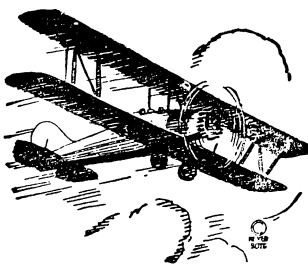
There are enough of these youngsters doing occasional really good pieces to support the Art Store on Rizal avenue, which is quite worth a visit any time.

Another ambitious artist is a connecting link between old times and new, Vicente Rivera y Mir, who plans introducing action study in the fine arts school next year, a course which re-

will find studies on every hand. Thus a number of artists are beginning, and no one may predict how far one and another of them will go, now that the government displays intermittent symptoms of interest and the painters who have proved worthwhile are commencing to have customers. The movement is timely. Something is taking hold on the people with a tonic effect, and it ought to be recorded.

CAPTAIN CALVO

Premier Filipino
aviator used—



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