

Lilio: A Model Municipality

Nestled upon one of the spurs of legendary Mount Banahaw, the town of Lilio commands a magnificent view of the surrounding country. From the old church tower, crumbling with age, but that has stood the test of time, defying typhoons and earthquakes, one cannot help but exult with pride upon seeing in all directions the products of industry of the inhabitants of the region. Without any other crop to mar the view, one can see the magnificent coconut groves stretching from the shores of Laguna de Bay up the steep mountain sides. Only the tops of the houses, with their galvanized iron or *cabo-negro* roofs, break the green of the coconut fronds. Towards the northwest is the lake, from the heart of which rises Talim island, exhibiting as with pride its virgin pinnacle, the *Susong Dalaga*.

The town itself dates back to the very first year of the Spanish occupation of Luzon, having been visited by Juan de Salcedo in 1570.

At the beginning, the town was a *barrio* of Nagcarlan and it was not till 1604 that it was made an independent municipality. The town is reached by two principal routes: by way of Pila, or by way of San Pablo, with excellent macadamized and asphalt roads. The layout of the town will not suffer by comparison with a modern one, with its wide straight streets and curbs on either side. There is excellent drainage.

From an early beginning, a mountain stream was diverted in order to serve as an open sewer for the whole community, and lately a modern water system was installed, supplying the inhabitants with excellent potable water. At the street intersections, fire hydrants were placed. The streets are clean and what is more pleasing to the eyes of a sanitarian is the absence of the common scavengers, found in many other municipalities of the Islands: omnivorous, omnipresent, unkempt and underfed pigs. Pigs are raised,—pork being one of the principal meats consumed in the locality,—but they are raised where they ought to be, outside of the poblacion. A water-power electric plant furnishes excellent light.

The houses are well built, the great majority being of the strong-material type, with galvanized iron roofs, although some of the older ones are still thatched with *cabo-negro* mossy-grown from age.

Wealth appears to be evenly divided; outside of farm labor, no personal labor is hired. Lilio does not to this date know the servant problem. So self-sufficient do they feel themselves that not a single Chinese tienda is found within the town's limits, and yet its inhabitants are famed throughout the province for their hospitality. So solicitous are they of their visitors' comforts that during the first days of American occupation, when the roads were bad and vehicles of no avail, they constructed special palanquins for the comfort of the then Governor Taft and his wife.

The *presidencia* occupies the greater part of a block not far from the old church. It is of strong-material construction, with a cement base. The offices of the municipal treasurer, the postmaster, and the chief of police occupy the ground floor, while those of the municipal presi-

dent, the municipal secretary, the court of the justice of the peace and the council hall are on the top floor. The offices are neat, with plenty of light and ventilation. The building is provided with toilets of the modern type.

The public schools, where intermediate, primary, and domestic classes are held, occupy a

The Church at Taal

By GILBERT S. PEREZ

A calm between the June typhoon
And the steady drip, drip, drip
Of September rain,
And the glow of sunset reds
Seeking their evening rest
In the cobalt blue of balmy Balayan Bay.
Silently beckons the ancient pile
Of dull gray stone
As it rears aloft its craggy
Lichen-covered walls,
A massive man-made mound of stone
On a God-made hill of clay.
It stands a grim memorial
Of a sacerdotal dream,
Of tongues that were wet with hunger
And of lips that were parched with thirst,
Of the silent drip of women's tears
And of sweatdrops on mortar and stone.
On the footworn floor of checkered tile
Two roughly nailed death boxes
Silently await the incense wafted
Priestly benediction;
Two black robed groups
Of mourners, widows and orphans
Heartsick but tearless
Await the toll of the bell
In the massive limestone
Belfry,
And the bats
Flutter and flitter
Under the arches and over the burnished
Silver altars
And gather
On the dark and littered
Canvas ceiling.
A spatter of sacramental drops;
A funeral minor chant is heard;
Now the cortege slowly wends its way
To the town below, to the graveyard
By the sea,
As the brief southern twilight
Hastily merges into tropical night.
But at ten, the heavens
Send moonbeams and stardust
To the high-buttressed walls,
To the shadowland of fancy
In the angles and in the corners
Of the grim old church of Taal.

commanding position in a sloping portion of the town. Like other school buildings, they are ample, with adequate light and ventilation. The domestic science building, which is sufficiently large, was built almost entirely from private funds. The buildings are cleanly kept and at-

tractively painted. In common with many other municipalities of the present date, it is the school buildings that attract the attention of the visitors in contrast with the church and convent of Spanish days. This is but the reflection of the present-day attitude towards education, in contrast with the old, in which religious instruction and other pious activities were emphasized. Here, then, we have two distinct features of the two cultures—the Spanish and the American. It seems that a blending of the two cultures is the ideal goal to be pursued. Already, we are beginning to feel the sad consequences of the lack of a proper moral standard in many of the youths of the country; and, while the situation appears to be gloomy, it is still opportune to take the necessary steps to remedy the evil.

The school playground is large and well kept, with ornamental fountains and a monument of Rizal in a conspicuous place to serve as an example to the aspiring youth of the land. The churchyard which occupies parts of two entire blocks may also be used as a playground for the children of the town, although it is not so used at the present time, possibly because of its gruesome association. *Calachuches* centuries old, still tower proudly to the skies, but not far from them several men and women, suspected of being spies, were executed during the troublesome days of the Revolution.

The principal crop is the coconut and its by-products. At the present time, there is a copra drying plant within the confines of the municipality, where fresh copra is sent and better products are obtained. It will be remembered that there is no waste in a coconut palm. The leaves may be woven into mats and the midribs converted into brooms. Coconut husks find many uses. Rope may be made from them, although their chief use is for door mats. The shell itself may be made into cups, ladles, money boxes, and other articles of ornamental character. Fine scrapings from the shell are used as a healing powder for the umbilical cord and in circumcision wounds. The chief use of the shells during the World War was for charcoal powder for gas masks, which was found to be the most effective and the best agent for neutralizing the poisonous effects of War gas.

The *lanzon* is another important product of the municipality, and shares fame with the *lanzon* of Paete for its fine flavor. *Cacao* beans and bananas are minor products of no mean importance, although they are mostly grown in house lots, in association with flowering and other ornamental plants. Another minor product which has given fame to the region is arrowroot flour from which fine biscuits are made. The *cañabojo* attains here a diameter as large as 8 or more inches and is used in the same ways as ordinary bamboo in other places.

Lilio, in common with other towns hoary with age, may feel proud to have produced some personalities that not only made names for themselves but also served the town with patriotic endeavor. The Dimaguilas, the Misticas, and the Parfans are well known. The Misticas have been prominent in town affairs since the middle of the last century, and one of the Parfans, Don Máximo, served as executive of the town under

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