

A POET OF THE PHILIPPINES

By BERT PAUL OSBON *

I SUPPOSE that in the Philippines, as in other countries, there are a few real poets and many with poetical aspirations. To the group of Filipinos who are able to express in English worth-while thoughts in a truly poetic manner belongs, I believe, the name of Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion.

Mr. Concepcion has had several volumes of poems published. One of these, a collection called *Azucena*, was accepted and published by the very conservative publishing house of Putnam. That is a signal honor, indeed. Any author whose work, especially a book of poems, is accepted and published by G. P. Putnam's Sons of New York is a writer of merit. Mr. Concepcion has the honor of being the first Filipino to have a book of poetry in English accepted by any American publisher.

Let us read one of the poems of this talented writer. I have chosen one which I think is beautiful. In it the author glorifies a humble native of the Philippine Mountain Province, the Ifugao mountaineer musician.

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THE IFUGAO MAN

By M. DE GRACIA CONCEPCION

He is a musician—
The Ifugao is.
He makes music
With the drum
With the *ganza*,
And with the bamboo flute.

He walks down the
trail
Erect and straight,
For he is a mountain
man
You see.
And he walks down
the hill
With a song
On his lips.
The Ifugao man is
A music-maker;
He's also a maker of
dances
With his *ganza*,
And with his bam-
boo flute,
As he makes his way
down the hill.



Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion

Perhaps the reader would be interested in knowing about this poet of the Philippines: Marcelo de Gracia Concepcion went to school at Santa Maria, Ilocos Sur, under early American auspices. He has, he writes, "affectionate regards for the American school-teacher who taught the children how to respect the rights of others," for from that simple teaching grew his understanding of the Golden Rule which

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WHEN I'M A LADY.

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When I'm a lady, a lady,
 A cook I'll be if I can—and I can!
 I'll make some cakes and candies sweet,
 I'll bake the bread and roast the meat;
 I'll give the children tasty food,
 So they'll be healthy as they should,
 When I'm a lady.

When I'm a lady, a lady,
 A teacher I'll be if I can—and I can!
 I'll teach the children "to do and say
 The kindest thing in the kindest way";
 I'll teach the boys who are noisy and bad,
 I'll make them good, I'll make them glad,
 When I'm a lady.

When I'm a lady, a lady,
 A doctor I'll be if I can—and I can!
 I'll cure the sick, I'll help the poor,
 I'll heal the beggar who comes to my
 door;
 I'll stop the fever, I'll stop the chill,
 I'll make the folks get well who are ill,
 When I'm a lady.

When each is a lady, a lady,
 We'll do these things if we can—and we
 can!
 We all will work in our little space,
 And make this world a better place;
 We'll always be cheerful, we'll always
 smile,
 We'll try to help others all the while;
 And patient and kind and loving we'll be,
 When each of us is a grown lady,
 When each is a lady.

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teaches "Do unto others as you would
 have others do unto you."

Out of that teaching grew his "interest
 in the things of Nature—the birds, in-
 sects, animals, plants, trees, and event-
 ually a love for everything about the lives
 of people," says Mr. Concepcion. This
 is shown in the following rather curious
 modernistic poem written in blank verse:

QUEENS OF THE BEANS

By M. DE GRACIA CONCEPCION

Maria Ana and
 Ana Maria
 Are growing their beans—
 Row

upon

row,

With which to build
 Their House of Dreams.

Maria Ana and
 Ana Maria
 Have only one desire:

To be

queens

of the beans,
 With which they built
 Their House of Dreams.

And it was a seller of peanuts
 Who wrote these fancy things
 While crossing the Bridge of
 Spain.

Mr. Concepcion spent some fifteen
 years in the United States. He served
 three years in the United States navy.

Later he went to Alaska and worked
 in the great salmon canneries. During

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MANILA AQUARIUM

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travels overland to other ponds. It is well known as a food fish in the Philippines.

Some very noticeable fish are the scalares which have long appendages on the upper and lower parts of their bodies. This fish is most attractive in appearance. It is sometimes called the "king" of fishes on account of its beauty and royal, dignified manner.

I was interested in looking at the climbing perch which also can live for a while out of water. This fish can crawl up trees for six or seven feet by using its fins. In the same way it can crawl on land.

A curious specimen on display is the archer fish (*cataba*). When it sees an insect on a leaf or a branch, it "shoots" from its mouth drops of water which bring the insect down. This fish is a very accurate marksman, I read on the placard of the tank.

I was interested in looking at a queer, rather pretty specimen known as the scorpion fish. It is striped and has many feather-like appendages or frills. It is dreaded by fishermen on account of its venomous spines.

In another of the tanks are several specimens of the

moray, a very long, slim fish which looks somewhat like a snake. It is a fierce, biting creature.

There is a pool of running water in one of the corners filled with a number of fine looking food fish. In another similar place there are some large turtles.

I saw several banded water snakes in one of the tanks. Although this snake is poisonous, it is caught in large numbers for its skin which is made into leather. This snake is found in all parts of the Philippines.

Other tanks contain specimens of dwarf gourami fish, surgeon fish, many mullets, some carp, many specimens of beautifully silvered tarpon, a leaf fish, so called because it is shaped like a leaf, and numerous other species.

Outside the Aquarium are some crocodiles and a monitor lizard (*bayawak*). This kind of lizard sometimes attains a length of two meters, and is thought to be semi-aquatic. It is found in swamps and along rivers.

I enjoyed my visit to the Aquarium very much, and advise every boy and girl who can possibly do so to go there if they have not already paid a visit to the place. It is well worth the time and effort.

VOLCANOES

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the air 20 miles by the violent explosion; some of the dust was carried by currents in the upper air completely around the earth.

The picture on the cover of this issue of *The Young Citizen* shows Mayon Volcano in eruption. A short history of Mayon Volcano will be found on page 144 of *The Young Citizen* for April, 1939.

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this experience, although it was brief, he took keen interest in the many and various peoples of the canneries. There he worked side by side with Greeks, Italians, Mexicans, Koreans, Kanakas, Puerto Ricans, Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Alaskan Indians, Panamanians, Canadians, and Filipinos.

The money saved from his earnings in the salmon canneries enabled him to enter college. First he attended the University of Washington, and later the University of California at Los Angeles.

During Mr. Concepcion's attendance at the University of California he began to develop his latent ability as a writer. He became associated with the

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