

## The Ayuntamiento

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ther duties, being, it seems, an engineer officer of the Spanish military forces, and the governor general commissioned the ports and highways engineer, Eduardo Lopez Navarro, to draw new plans. These are the ones followed in the building as it now stands, which cost ₱152,241. Merritt's headquarters were here when he commanded the American forces of occupation, August 13, 1898, and assumed the duties of military governor. Otis, and then MacArthur, succeeding Merritt, had their offices in the Ayuntamiento; and governors Taft, Wright, Ide, Smith, Forbes, and Harrison had their offices

here. The first American laws for the Philippines were enacted here, the *general orders* of the military governors, and the *acts* of the Philippine Commission. Osmeña long had his office here, both as speaker of the Philippine Assembly, which held its sessions here, in the Marble Hall, and as speaker of the house of representatives when the full legislature began functioning in 1916. At present the cabinet offices are here. Mention of these few things only hints at the rich historical associations of the Ayuntamiento, which, stone below and only the best of hardwoods above, should stand for centuries to come.

## The New Mentality

By PRESIDENT RAFAEL PALMA

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✓ Educating youth today demands a change in principle and methods in the same way that science and industry have sought new by-paths in their development. We cannot educate the youth of today under the tenets and doctrines bequeathed to us by our ancestors. They represented an epoch and a world entirely different from ours. The world of our forefathers is no longer the world of today. To feed our youth with the aggregate of the theories and beliefs which have already lost their usefulness with the march of ages, would be to commit a gross mistake. We cannot give to an adult only the amount of food we give an infant, without imperiling his health. Neither can we expect to educate the youth of our day with the body of truths and knowledge possessed by our elders under social conditions which were not only different from, but diametrically opposed to those that obtain at present.

✓ I do not mean that we should discard old truths simply because they are such. I mean that we should determine which of them should be retained and which should not, in order to hasten our development along the road of human progress and wisdom. We cannot afford to tarry in our journey, while the world is "up and doing," unless we are content to lag behind. The wheel of progress, like inscrutable time, will not stop just because we stand in its way. We must move with it or be crushed by its relentless motion.

Some educators would make us believe our salvation lies in the dogmas of the past. They look upon present conditions as anomalous and dangerous deviations from the time-honored rules and norms of conduct which made our infancy carefree and happy, and our parents infinitely more so with our conduct. But happiness in its true sense has yet to be defined, because its conception has varied with time and place. In that twilight of civilization, known as the Stone Age, man lived in caves. He was happy and contented with the fruits he could gather and with the raw meat he could get by fishing and hunting with stones and splints. Later on, not satisfied with the tools he had, he hit upon flint to generate fire, the bow and

the arrow to kill animals from afar, and pottery, not only to cook the game he had bagged, but also to store water at home and thus avoid going out to the spring every time he needed to quench his thirst. After long centuries, he settled down and tilled the soil, and domesticated, to help him in his labor, the animals he previously hunted. In this way he assured himself a steady and permanent food supply; he no longer depended, as he had been wont to do, only upon what he could get from hunting and fishing. Having ample time to accumulate property and advance his well-being, he became an architect, beautified his dwelling, and in company with other men, founded towns, constructed temples, and built forts to protect himself from his enemies. As time went on, planting and cultivating ceased to be his principal occupations. He transformed the products of the soil, and through his resourcefulness and ingenuity, invented machines for weaving and for locomotion both on land and on the sea, utilized electricity to speed up communication, and still dissatisfied with the resistance of the earth, traversed the space above and made distance no longer a hindrance to good will among nations. His happiness increased as fast as he was able to invent, and to utilize the varied forces of Nature for his own good.

Modern man is insatiable in his ambitions, and the conception that he has of happiness has gained in weight and measure. It would be tyrannical to impose upon him the measure of happiness that satisfied his grandparents, because they knew little of Nature and enjoyed fewer comforts and conveniences in life. It would not only be tyrannical, but humanly impossible, to cause the youth of today to renounce enjoyment of the benefits brought about by our civilization and to dress in bark or leaves and branches of trees as our ancestors of antiquity did, or to travel not by rail but in carts drawn by carabaos, or to read by the glow of a candle instead of in the brightness of an electric light. Whether we wish it or not, youth will always endeavor to avail itself of the privileges of this age of machinery and social revolt, regardless of the consequences. ✓ It were better that educators and priests should not oppose this natural

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tendency of man in his upward flight, because if religion and education are to maintain their influence over youth, they should go with life and not against it. To me, the greatest error of the Church, as well as of the pedagogy of old, was that both endeavored to mould life in accordance with a preconceived notion, and to maintain this notion in spite of the revolts and derangements which it occasioned and was unable to check.

✓ There are people who still cling to the belief that life can be encompassed in the hollow of one's palm, when, as a matter of fact, the fountains of life are many and stream through innumerable channels. If religion, in collaboration with the school, was able, at one time, to build a barricade which it thought sufficiently strong to withstand the onrushing tides of life, the natural sciences, politics, economics, commerce and law, as well as many other agencies of civilization, undertook to demolish the dam so that life could once more run normally. ✓ The mission of the school should be, to my mind, carefully to watch the course of life, to keep its flow constantly supplied at its source by checking errors and superstitions and by adding new information to the stock of human knowledge; to set up before the vision of man sound principles and high ideals to be striven for and attained, that man may always maintain contact with his spiritual destiny and thus discover for himself the true rewards of earthly existence.

God and Humanity are not antagonistic terms. He who would see a conflict of principles between God and man, wherein man could not live surrounded by comforts and conveniences without displeasing God, insults the Almighty who, in His infinite wisdom, kindled in the heart of man the desire for his own personal advancement. Man should strive to better himself, elevate the conditions that environ him, and beautify the planet in which he lives. God did not put him in this world to do nothing, to evade the struggles or to escape from temptations and live in the seclusion of the desert. It is his duty to discover the laws of God by reading the book of Nature. Man is a combination of matter and spirit, of body and soul. It is his duty to unfold equally the forces of matter and of spirit. Never should it be considered that because man is composed of two elements, there exists a principle of contradiction within himself. He must seek the perfect equilibrium between the two. The old maxim "mens sana in corpore sano" summarizes the erudition of the ages. ✓ The Middle Ages endeavored to perfect the spirit at the expense of the body. It was a mistake which produced a weak and feeble civilization, full of impossible visions and ideas which brought about more wars and conflicts between men and men and between nations and nations than any other period in history. The present age tends to elevate the body at the expense of the spirit. It is another mistake. We must seek no conflict. Man cannot be brutally materialistic nor inhumanly spiritualistic.

It is beyond my humble powers to understand why a certain school of thought should insist that we cannot please God if we continue adding day by day new moral and religious and scientific truths to the stock of human wisdom. Nor can I consider that we have exhausted the sources of knowledge in matters of religion and morality, and that religious and moral precepts of our ancestors are unalterable and not amen-

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able to any modification or betterment, consistent with the experience of the times. Why should it be insisted that our children be tied to the parental authority, as was the practice in patriarchal times, and that they be subjected to the perennial control of their parents, even long after they have become mature beings? Why, I ask, ought we not educate our children with the greatest possible amount of freedom in order to develop in them, from their tender years, the inner moral restraints that they need for overcoming evil impulses, without at the same time lessening the respect and obedience that they owe to their elders—who should, in turn, treat them with the love and consideration fitting rational beings, and not as chattels and beasts of burden? Some people still entertain the basically wrong notion that our children are, by nature, incorrigible beings, so strongly inclined to evil that they cannot be permitted to do anything without the previous permission and consent of their parents, thus converting them into automatons doomed to a life of eternal irresponsibility and incapable of helping themselves from the moment they are deprived of parental protection and help.

It is precisely to stimulate the good instincts and suppress the evil that children should be encouraged to assert themselves. Harassing them with all kinds of restrictions and prohibitions, even in trifles, would be to stifle their spirit. Of course, parents should at all times be on guard to advise their children and sound the alarm on prohibited matters, but if in spite of this counsel a serious blunder is committed, parents should administer the corresponding punishment (in order that the children may realize fully the consequences of their bad action), and not be too indulgent and condescending with their children when they misuse their freedom.

It is a poor educational policy to keep on repeating old precepts and formulas and not encourage youth to add, by its own efforts, a new stone to the edifice of posterity. To judge things of the present by the measure of ideas and viewpoints of the past is a sign of narrow-mindedness. The greatest deterrent to progress consists in the belief that the past is "always a little better," something immutable and perfect. If education is at all worthwhile in life, it is because it opens new avenues and unfolds new vistas, repairs the worn-out and corrects the inconsistent. It is just a waste of time to look at the present with tearful eyes, crying in a loud voice over changes and departures from old habits, without recalling that many of the evils and deficiencies of the present are but the results and echoes of the education of the past. We should once and for all admit that the role of education is to introduce innovations, blaze new trails, proclaim new doctrines and try new experiences, for if our aim is simply to perpetuate acquired habits, old customs and primitive ways, the force of heredity is more than sufficient to do that.

Our generation, determined as it is to seek membership in the sisterhood of nations, cannot commit a greater blunder than to repel the influx of new ideas, processes and methods which have caused other nations of the world to rise to heights of power and supremacy. It is the height of folly and a sign of intellectual near-sightedness, nay, a suicidal intent, to believe that we can prevent this invasion by mere lip-protestations and denunciations against the practices of the day. Isolation is a thing of the past. There are now innumerable contacts between different sections of the globe. No country can prevent the coming of foreign commerce and trade, much less that of ideas and doctrines of the age, which, by their nature, are more subtle and penetrating than air and light.

There is a sophism in believing that we of the Philippines are a separate group, that we can with impunity preserve the ideas and habits which constituted our old mentality, and at the same time attain progress along with other nations—in the light of that mentality long withdrawn from the rest of the world. Unless we consider ourselves as a race superior to the rest of the world, which is not only presumptuous but also impractical, we cannot govern ourselves in a manner out of step with the progress of the age. The

fact of the matter is that we are shamefully behind the times, not only in the realm of economic development but also in intellectual, moral and spiritual endeavors, precisely because of our narrow and conservative attitude of mind. One has only to go beyond our borders to be convinced of our backwardness and inferiority, not necessarily in comparison with Occidental nations, but as compared with our neighbors, the Oriental countries. I do not mean to say that we occupy the last rung of the ladder of nations, but we shall soon find ourselves there, unless we make all possible efforts to follow the manners and usages of the modern world and to work in accordance with its experience and wisdom.

Instead of confining our knowledge to local conditions, we should open our windows and see the world without. The fundamental value of education lies in furnishing universal knowledge. We should study not only our present and past, but also the present and past of the world. Our experiences are quite too limited to be self-sufficient—so we should drink deep of the wisdom of the world. We are but an integral part of a single process. The world will go on, with or without us, and the longer we delay our participation in its progress, the later shall we reap the benefits. We can preserve our point of view as a nation, we can govern ourselves the way we please, even in disagreement with the standards generally admitted; but if we are prudent, if we have common sense, if we do not wish to renounce our right to survive, we should familiarize ourselves with, and adopt, the constructive forces by which the more advanced nations have made themselves great, and profit by what they did and how they did it.

Above all, we need to alter our attitude of mind, shaped as it is in the mould of the past epoch, and to enrich it with the ideas of the present. I consider this problem one of the most far-reaching in the Philippines today. I see that there are still many of us who are in love with the preconceived notions and ideas of the past, and they are so out of tune with the thought processes of our age that it can be said of them that they are living in a world distinctly their own. While I believe the past has bequeathed to us many beliefs and practices which are good and useful even in our times, nevertheless, it has also left us certain errors and superstitions in which we can no longer acquiesce—since they have fallen into the discard. To condemn, in the name of the past, our system of coeducation, equal privileges between man and woman, separation of the Church and the State,

woman suffrage, eight-hour days in shops and factories, the dignity of all work and professions, which severally constitute some of the most outstanding principles of the modern world, is tantamount to denying the conquest realized by humanity in solving many perplexing problems which brought about great suffering and miseries in olden days.

I am interested in this University's becoming the source of a new light which shall radiate new teachings more in accord, in flesh and blood, with the realities of life. Filipinos should not live in a world of abstractions, but in the atmosphere of this age in which destiny has placed them. This is the only way to achieve lasting and beneficial progress and prosperity for our country.

MANILA TEXAN VISITS TEXAS

John Wheat has been back to the homeland. He is back in Manila now. In America he visited eleven states. One of them was Texas, his native state. John is just an average fellow, of the type inured to life east of Suez. Of course he is a veteran of '98. Before he went on his American visit he was the gentleman behind the Silver Dollar bar. Years ago, when a series of Sunday afternoon lectures was arranged at the Chamber of Commerce, John bought the first season ticket sold; and he attended regularly. His ethics are plain, but somewhat catholic in scope: honesty counts a great deal with him, and appearances little. When John was visiting Texas, one Sunday morning after breakfast he was sauntering down a business street and enjoying a cigar.

"My," he thought, "it's right nice to be back in old Texas again."

This pleasant soliloquy had hardly begun when a committee of two female *vigilantes* bore down upon him. Two menacing index fingers pointed to his cigar. Why was he smoking, and openly on the street, on the Sabbath? He was depraved, said the vigilantes; he was. . . . It seems he was a great deal that is no longer tolerated in Texas.

"This is my native state," said John, "and this my favorite cigar—a *Manila*. I always have one after breakfast. I never thought smoking was any harm. I learned to smoke in Texas."

This weak defense was wholly insufficient, John only let himself in for further reproaches. The scene on a main street of Dallas was distasteful to him.

"Ladies," he said, bowing, and with a gallant inflexion of the word, "if you will just give me time to pack my grip, I think you will not be bothered by my smoking again."

John took the next train out of Dallas to Mexico, where things went well with him until Calles burned down the town; then, of course, he had to move on once more. He began working back toward the sunset. He crossed Texas to do this, and bade his native state goodbye.

"I don't understand Texas folks anymore," he explains. "I guess I'm dated."

John was a cowboy in Texas in his youth; he has won his saddle in roping contests at old Fort Worth; he is one of those hard-riding chivalrous characters Texas children get excited about in the movies.

Hitting the trail westward from Texas, John stopped at Los Angeles.

"The breadline was just two blocks long there."

At San Francisco he was more at ease, but he went on north. Portland didn't have anything he wanted, Seattle made no appeal. But the newspapers announced the proximate sailing of an *Empress* ship out of Vancouver for Manila; so John left Seattle for Vancouver and caught the *Empress*. He still had the diner card of the train that bore him to seaboard on the Pacific, when he arrived back in Manila. It heralds the all-day lunch service—*individual hot meat pie 25 cents*. John admired this efficiency, for he isn't rich. But the card bears a more ominous line—*No cigarettes sold in Nevada or Utah*.

"America's changed a lot in the last thirty years," is John's verdict. "It's all right, I guess—for them that like it that way. But there certainly has been a change—specially in the cow country."



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