

Little Biographies of Men of the Crowd

Speaker Roxas, commendably leading his people to reflect upon the economies of their present situation, said something to the effect that the masses in the Philippines now are no better off than they were when the American period began, and the half-truth of this constitutes a challenge. The whole philosophic truth is that the masses everywhere and at all times have only a livelihood for their toil, but that the American plan permits a great many individuals to lift themselves out of the masses and better their economic lot. To illustrate the way in which Filipinos of today, who never become widely known, are throwing off the bonds of oldtime feudal aristocracy and succeeding in bettering their material condition, the JOURNAL begins a series of true narratives under the heading, *Little Biographies of Men of the Crowd*. It will pay for authenticated such when the stories written from the data are printed, and it would appreciate such cooperation.—Ed.

I: The Barber Who Buys A Farm

Valerio Bulanan, a barber in the new shop next door to the Savoy theater, is just one of the crowd; barbers who are very much of a success financially are not numerous in any country, and conditions that enable a barber here and there among the crowd to lift himself into the propertied class are surely not below par. So let us learn a little of the life history of Valerio. He is, of course, a first rate barber.

He is 33 years old; he attended the public schools of San Isidro, Nueva Ecija, his native town, until, when in his third year of high school, in 1914, he began teaching country school at P18 a month. He taught school five years, reached a salary of P28 a month, and came to Manila in 1919 to try to better his fortune. His father, a worthy peasant, is poor, having six children living and only three hectares of land; Valerio has had to make his own way, and it was his father's inability to help him that caused him to quit studying and commence earning money.

Arrived in Manila 10 years ago, he found a low-pay job at the customhouse. He worked at this job during the short government hours; he made his home with a relative in Tondo, who is a barber and has a little shop, and this relative taught him barbering. Valerio

soon quit his job as a workman and took up his trade as a barber. He was determined to get ahead; his oldtime classmates were going on, some in one profession, some in another, and natural pride impelled him to ambition. He left the shop in Tondo and came downtown to one on calle Carriedo owned at that time by Eugenio Sevilla, another San Isidro man. Custom here was more lucrative, many sailors and soldiers patronized the shop, and Valerio, pleasing them and being rewarded with liberal tips for good service, made as much as P300 a month. He married and began rearing a family.

He was also a little gay of evenings; he squandered a good deal of his money—as he looks back ruefully now—but he also saved a good deal of it. One thing he did was to hire a lawyer and go into court in a vain effort to establish his mother's rights in a rich rice farm of 50 hectares. The title had got into the hands of a cousin, and the land had been finally registered in the cousin's name, the deal beginning at the time of the insurrection. Valerio failed of establishing his mother's rights, so she never received the inheritance to which she believed herself entitled. The experience was expensive all round, but the law suit contributed to Valerio's wisdom; he knows what registered title means!

The money he saved he, of course, put into rice lands in San Isidro; he bought three hectares for about P1,000, another four hectares for about P1,500; so he is now the owner of seven hectares, and a low price for his holdings would be P600 a hectare. What the three hectares brought him helped to buy the land. Immigration into Nueva Ecija has been such from the Ilokan provinces that good rice lands have materially increased in value during the past five years, for they are scarce.

Valerio can raise corn, yams and tobacco on some of his land, as well as rice. He raises all he can, and finds ready transportation for it to market. It is truck service over the new roads; for a few pesetas a peasant rides anywhere he may wish to go; formerly, carromatas charged P3 for taking one from the railway station in San Isidro to Cabanatuan, and now a truck will pick you up at your door in San Isidro and drop you anywhere in Cabanatuan for P0.40, while the railway fare has been lowered to P0.65, or about 30%. The new transportation has much to do with the increasing value of the land.

While he has done comparatively well, Valerio is still ambitious. He has his own shop in Paco, employing eight barbers, and himself when he is not busy downtown; he has also formed a partnership with a master tailor recently and opened a tailor shop which is paying a satisfactory profit. He has the idea of saving more money, selling his San Isidro land and buying farther up the valley where prices are lower; he has a chance to participate in the ownership of a 200-hectare tract in Tarlak, or a 120-hectare tract in northern Nueva Ecija. In a word, he is following the route of the extending transportation lines and buying land for a rise of values that will make him well-to-do. There are special reasons, with which he has familiarized himself, why lands are cheaper at some other points than they are in San Isidro; and yet the cheaper lands will produce just as good crops.

One reason, it seems, is that the Ilokan settler is often willing to abandon his horacio (Please turn to page 17)

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as casually as he homesteaded it; the land not having come to him in the customary way, he does not look upon his patent from the government as a genuine one, and he has a motive of remuneration for his labor in getting the land under cultivation he will pass title and move off. He likes to be among his people, and an infiltration of Tagalogs from the south—a process which never ceases—disgusts him and inclines him to move away.

Valerio is a Tagalog. What of his brothers and sisters?

There are four boys living, and two girls. One of the girls is still in school, the other is married to a man of her own class, a tenant farmer. But this tenant has saved money and bought himself a farm of four hectares; a new crop is coming on, too, and if Valerio sells his land his brother-in-law will buy it. Valerio's three brothers are tenant farmers of San Isidro; one of them works Valerio's land, and another helps their father, now too old for all the work of a three-hectare farm. The married sister has six children, with good prospects of being able to cut all of them through school. As for the old father, the boon of rapid transportation into Manila benefits such old men as he, and the young as well. It has become a very profitable and easy avocation to grow mangoes; twenty years ago this fruit brought almost nothing in San Isidro, but last year Valerio's sister sold one from one tree for P150 without the trouble of leaving her house to do so. The crop of a single tree has sold for P200; the buyers motor up from Manila, and bid for the crop, which they gather themselves, when the fruit is well set; and the new immigrants from Baliuag have taught the San Isidro growers how to smoke the trees to stimulate early bearing, while a method of fertilization sometimes induces two crops a year.

Valerio's wife has borne him two children. In reality, however, he has three; for one of his brothers has, according to ancient customary law, given him a boy now thirteen years old and in grade VI. Valerio's own boy being under nine and in grade III. The elder boy, as much

Valerio's as if born to him, was a dreamy herdboy when his father and uncle discovered that he had a mind good enough to deserve schooling; so he was given to his uncle and put to school in Manila. He sketches with skill, Valerio hopes he may become a painter; he will be given a chance in the fine-arts school.

"I live in Manila in order to have the advantage of the best schools," says Valerio. "It is hard to find money here, but I am doing my best. We don't own our own home now; we did have a house on leased land, rent P8 a month, but we sold it when we could make P250 clear. Now we wish we had it; the new owners get P40 a month from rooms rented to students, and live there besides. We may buy in one of the additions, but not until after I do something about the new land; we are saving every thing for that and the tailor shop because they will make me money. We have cut our expenses 50%."

Remember, Valerio is a barber.

The Ikugan

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of the Agusan. Everyone rejoiced as the flotilla sailed out of the harbor.

"The king's marriage to the lovely maiden was celebrated for several days amid great feasting; after which the king, his bride and the Ikugans passed on over the mountain and were never seen again. The old woman remained in the upper Agusan teaching the new tribes the art of dyeing and weaving.

"Some say that the lovely maiden was Tagabayo, the Goddess of Love, who assumed a human form to aid her brother, Busao, in overcoming the war-gods of the Ikugans, who were greatly weakened after her marriage to the Ikugan king.

"However that may be, thus it was that all the tribes in the upper and lower Agusan, after being nearly exterminated, once again populated this fertile valley."

The voice of the dancer died away and the slow, explosive boom of the agong commenced once again, gradually growing faster and faster. In like manner, the dancer at first moved solemnly and with slow deliberation to the rhythm of the music, then as it accelerated, he stiffened his body and whirled and leapt with ever-quickenng movements until at last he fell exhausted.

Softly the tribe crept from the dying fire to their tree houses. Sleepy-eyed boys stamned along beside their parents. Another day would find these youths fighting the battles of the Manobos.



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Zamboanga Building Villa Tourist Place

A committee designated by the provincial governor has been busy during the past week studying the proposition to build a hotel or inn at Pasosana and develop the park as a pleasure resort in cooperation with the Philippine Tourist Association and the Manila Hotel Company.

A prospectus has been prepared and will be submitted at a meeting of the officials and businessmen of Zamboanga to be held in the Zamboanga Club next Wednesday afternoon at 5 o'clock, and all interested in the progress and welfare of their city are urged to be present.

As outlined in the *Herald* last week, the Manila Hotel Company proposes to supply half the capital necessary for the erection and operation of the inn and the Dollar Steamship Lines propose to bring the tourists to Zamboanga.

Realizing, however, that such an enterprise could hardly pay dividends for some time to come if entirely dependent upon the tourist trade, it is intended to make Pasosana park and inn so attractive that local patronage will pay all running expenses and leave a safe margin of profit. The tourist business will be "velvet." The bungalow arrangement, with numerous small cottages adjoining or in the immediate vicinity of the main building, will appeal espe-

cially to the local people, many of whom will make their homes there; and the golf course, tennis courts, auditorium, swimming pools and other attractions will make the park the recreation center of the community, all to the financial benefit of the company operating the inn.

The prospectus prepared by the committee provides for the organization of a corporation to be called "The Zamboanga Inn and Resort Co." (or any other name that may be chosen). The corporation to have an authorized capital stock of P200,000, divided into 4,000 shares of P50 each. At the present time it is proposed to sell not more than P50,000 of this stock to local people. The Manila Hotel Company will take P50,000. This will give the company P100,000 with which to construct and furnish the inn, with an ample surplus for operation and new development.

As a cold business proposition the plan should look good to investors, and in providing an ideal place for the local people to live, healthful recreation and entertainment, it cannot be surpassed anywhere in the Orient. The support and cooperation of all elements in Zamboanga is assured. —*Manitara Herald.*