

Spirit of One Woman

● *White Cross School for Children*

The Salvador Aranetas have fulfilled one of the primary obligations of the rich. They have adorned Manila with a costly and beautiful home on the crest of the San Juan hills. In this the Aranetas are of course not alone, but in beginning to talk about them their home and its hospitality are more than worth mentioning. In homes such as the Araneta, Manila begins to find use for artists, who now despair in the Philippines for want of patrons. If artists could but be patronized, music herself would trip along more gayly and prosperously. In time the stage too might do a season, however short. All things esthetic are intimately related. Now—

*Great Fletcher never treads in
buskins here,
Nor greater Johnson dares in
socks appear.*

Alas, since the advent of the movies and the remarkable progress of these popular shadow shows in sound and even faithful color, not even a Daniel Frawley comes to town to play stock during a few weeks and give us reminiscences of recent favorite plays in London and New York. When Frawley did barnstorm Manila regularly, up to twenty years ago. Manila really had a stage, however humble and infrequently occupied. When Manila has a stage again, it will be the people's and its melodrama racy with their vernacular.

But the subject in hand is the Salvador Aranetas. Salvador is a partner with one of his brothers (there seem to be seven brothers and four sisters living) and Salvador Zaragoza in the law business of the Aranetas' father, the late Gregorio Araneta. How many other business connections Salvador Araneta has is beyond us, many at least. But Victoria Lopez de Araneta, the other side of the family, is stepping out for herself. Thirty years ago Salvador Araneta's type, the capable cosmopolitan, was not rare in the Philippines—his father's generation produced it, with the courage to take to the trenches for its rights. But Mrs. Araneta's type could not then be found. It did not exist.

Whatever else the Philippine schools for women taught thirty

years ago, having a personality and burnishing its brilliance was not included. All Philippine women were shrinking violets; worse, the matrons practiced a sort of living suttee; they did not quite immolate themselves on the funeral pyres of their spouses, but while these spouses lived as the lords of creation, these matrons put up their hair for the last time for their weddings, and thereafter sought their kitchens and complete social obscurity. The Philippines as a consequence were, aside from the women's forte as chatelaines, females sporting the household keys, a man's world entire.



MRS. SALVADOR ARANETA

Nowadays the schools in the Islands for girls have changed. Out of them, in the instance of herself, out of Assumption College, come, in the piquant bravura of our times, daughters of Maria Clara with personalities neither suppressed nor readily suppressible.

Manila's modern matrons are not stodgy chatelaines, nay, not even wall flowers. They are vivacity itself, and their young husbands are rightly proud of them. (Instance Miss Delgado, hardly more than a child herself, she has recently returned to town from taking the younger Delgado children round the world).

Yet it must always be kept in mind, as to Mrs. Araneta, that she is a

Lopez of the Bisayas. Probably no effort of will could get around that dynamic heritage. Born of that family, boys and girls are born to individual achievement. The Lopez energy is as tideful as the sea, rests but to surge again. It was hardly startling, therefore, for Mrs. Araneta to take her beautiful new home and begin doing good with it. She began by keeping school for children of the neighborhood not otherwise provided with schooling. At once it was a first rate primary school. Parents are no end grateful, and so the school must go on—as it does, regularly and delightfully even for the teacher.

Naturally, this school is free. Classes can be supplemented with chapel exercises, because there in the home itself is a private chapel classic in detail.

But Mrs. Araneta wants to go farther in helping children whose parents can not do for them properly. She has begun by getting Mrs. Carl Hess, Jr., Mrs. Jose McMicking, Jr., and others to assist in the organization of the White Cross. These women furrow their brows over plans to make the White Cross a permanent fixture in Manila's benevolences. If they can do half what they seem determined to do, should they request a portion of the Sweepstakes they should have it.

The plan is to provide on an ample site in Mandaluyong for possibly three hundred small children who ought to live apart from their parents because these parents have tuberculosis. Crowned with success, hope is that this White Cross Home at Manila's doorway will be duplicated at many other places in the Islands. The first purpose will be the children's health, the second their upbringing as useful and resourceful young men and women. *Dead End* is the fate to be got around. There are *Dead Ends* in Manila, then why not effort at their obliteration? The White Cross with Mrs. Araneta's driving force behind it is determined to try, which greatly lightens all misgivings that the plan will materialize.