

An American Artist's Appreciation of the Philippines

Carl Werntz, of whose recent sketching visit to the Philippines this piece is written, is the founder of the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts, which is to have most favorable reports of these islands as a field for artists and artist-writers

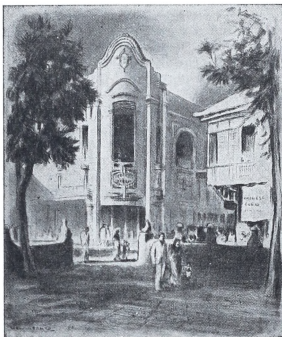
*Sunrise and Sunset in Manila** will, I hope, be on sale in every foreign branch of the American Express—or Thomas Cooks', since the Britishers, showing a keener book appreciation than we commercial minded Americans, usually carry a supply of small, informing travel books. Take a census of tourists just here in the *Empress of Britain* or the *Resolute* and, as invariably when world chatters chatter of beauty spots in the Far East, it will be *those sunsets!* that Manila is joyously remembered for, whether the chatterer be spinster, browser, booser, chattel wife, widow, tired business man, bored youth or skeptical artist.

It was sunsets, and memories of flower and fruit markets, and of strange little boats plying winding river and pretty women sinuously waying in native costumes, which are among the world's most picturesque, that beckoned our return to the Philippines. To the Philippines from Jamaica, from Ceylon, from the Solomon Islands, even from Egypt—each boastful of their renowned sunsets.

Of course, besides sunsets, there are zig-zag mountain roads that compare with those of the Alps and the Andes; there are rice terraces that cause jealousy in Japan, in Ceylon, in Sumatra and Bali; there are pink churches beneath blue mountains that are reminiscent of Italy; there are clusters of thatched roofs among green bamboo that might be Japan.

Moonlight on the roof of the University Club can be Manila or the coast of the Mediterranean, depending upon the heart's desire to be there or here. However, even Chioggia's bronze sails in the hot midday of Italy's sunny skies and upon the ever billowous Adriatic cannot rival Zamboanga's vistas, and where are fish markets so

*Descriptive pieces originally written for and published in the *Journal*, that now, in a little volume convenient for mailing, be uncoupled for 'In the *Journal's* office until writers and artists from abroad make demands for them. To these, the printer having been paid long ago, they are given free. M. M. W. has done us this honor to send them to the world's four corners.—Ed.



Carl Werntz '34

New and Old Features of Walled City Architecture, Manila: through Juan Arellano's influence, building subsequent to the fire of 2 years ago adheres to the older type.

supplied with jewels as in Jolo? Jeweled Rajputana women; gay kimonoed Japanese in summer attire; many skirted goose girls of Bavaria; the eighty odd *portraits* of Brittany bonnets and their exquisite frocks; high hatted, velvet shod Chola women; beautiful bodied Balinese; gracious little Javanese; sleek high coiffed Burmese females; coy Indochinese coquettes; the white daintiness of the Koreans; the grim coarseness of the Sumatrese—all vie in artistic intriguement with the peoples of the Philippines blessed with their inherited philosophy of the orient, graced with the dignity of the Spanish, the hustle of Americanism and the laughter of jazz kings. Yet, strangely enough, a Paris salon, a New York winter show, a Chicago international, a Venice biennial of international art rarely, if ever, shows a Philippine subject, scene or portrait.

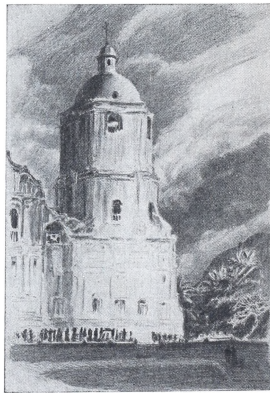
Atmosphere, light, people of character and individuality, architecture old and new, ruins, landscapes of glorious trees, mountains and seascapes, river scenery, artists search the world over to find. The Philippines supply these in abundance. Even canvases in the University art school exhibit show some entrancingly sunny, tropical compositions.

To attain results, artists must work happily. They require sympathy and an understanding cooperation for their eyes see that which the camera fails to click. "Art is life interpreted through a personality." Usually artists' personalities carefully choose some entrancing view of a church, a woman carrying her baby, an old man selling gawags as seen only from the most impossible of places, to pause—very often in the middle of street car tracks on a two-way street, where the garbage can is standing or at the exact spot where the sun is hottest. Chauffeurs must at moments be confident they are driving about completely crazy people—menaces to the populace! And then the double disappointments they must suffer when, believing they have gotten the idea of driving their cars slowly—"as slow as is possible and not be arrested"—so slow it is a disgrace to their skill, and with souls on fire, they cordially explain, "I can drive in—I can get the car to

the church door," and the artist's voice harshly commands, "Stop here—stop—here, here, here! Oh, you didn't do it. Now back up, six inches, no more!" By which time their skill has all but entirely left them and they are in a broiling conversation with the crowd of natives who have gathered around to see what the shouting is for. Then we settle down to quiet work. Sometimes the sketching takes place along a shore or in native villages where no motor car can pass. It is then that the innate cordiality of peasant peoples is most appreciable. A gracious invitation may be extended to mount their ladders and work from within native homes which, in the Philippines have, with their great choice of local woods, been found to be exceptionally beautiful as well as unusually clean. In certain districts, seemingly their own craftsmen's problems in palm leaf plaitings have provided them with an understanding of the difficulties and uncertainties under which all artists are forever working. Often, too, provincial peoples of any country are camera shy, but once they see a pencil or a brush putting down on paper before their eyes the doorway, the balcony or tree against which they, themselves, are standing, all reticence departs in face of curiosity. Or is it human vanity?

Out from Zamboanga in a Moro village an old world charm was found in their reception of an artist working in their midst. The people themselves were very chatty, very gay but very camera shy. When they saw a composition coming on paper of three of four boat builders at work, their boat builders, shyness so completely left them that when an unheralded entrance was made into one of the native stores and one of their pretty women was an inspiration for sketching, no objections were voiced to her portrait being done. Proudly she stood, head up, out in the open, while a bossy man-about-town swankily ordered everybody to keep their

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Carl Werntz

Lilio Church, Lilio, Laguna



Carl Werntz '34

Shrine of Our Lady of the Pillar, at the old fortress at Zamboanga.

An American Artist's...

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distance, and not only that, but complete silence while work was in operation. So *simpatico* and so early was everything that the artist forgot how very hard he was working. His model in one position when one of the village Valentinos, who spoke English, vouchsafed the information, "She say she get tired," and that was the end—no more could silence or pose be regained.

Contrary was the experience in Navotas, near Manila. There everyone not only talked continuously but gathered in mobs about the artist and kept up a ribaldry of jests, possibly due to the gay evening hour approaching, and the glory of a Philippine sunset; whereas in Zamboanga, work was carried on in the dignified midmorning's glow.

At Jolo, though the women swimmers chasing pennies in that port are veritable Gauguin south sea canvasses come to life, it was the men who caught the artist's eye. Amid another respectful silent crowd in the market, he enthusiastically did a sketch of a handsome youth richly costumed; and upon completion, in offering a fee in payment of the posing, he was informed that the young sitter was a datus! The self-possessed young man most graciously bowed us goodbye.

There is an old adage that implies artists are often hungry; usually from lack of funds, though modernly, it sometimes is from lack of cooks' artistry, for a connoisseur in beauty is frequently a connoisseur in foods as well. Wherever are found artists' groups, Greenwich Village, Soho, Montmartre, Montparnasse, the Balneario, there will be found good restaurants—amusing surroundings as well as artistic food are half the life of an artist—and will you believe it when world gossamers tell you that they eat joyously in the Philippines?

Were the Hotel Plaza of Zamboanga plumped down on the Mediterranean coast, it would be

famous for its menus. So too would the little hotel in Pagsanjan, whose fried chicken and salad are the creations of artists. In Manila, old world amusement that belongs in the life of an artist when eating is supplied by La Palma de Mallorca, the Oriente, Delmonicos, the Arcade, Sukiyaki, and the little afternoon coffee court that gathers in the Crystal Arcade: so many times this winter, that group might easily, in our thought, have been Montparnasse de Paris. Manila's Restaurant de Paris is veritable franchise. Dining there, one may choose their own world atmosphere and be in Fez, Morocco, in Saigon, in Noumea, New Caledonia; or, if dear to the heart, in Marseilles on Friday when *boulehnaisse* is served; or within the cordial portals of the famed Napoleon house of Hotel du Nord, in Arles.

As our old professors, encouraging our study of languages, used to say, "not until you speak another language do you appreciate your own," so, too, perhaps, it is in seeing artists' subjects.

Not until many artists' haunts have become known and their religious musings appreciated the beauties at hand. So the roadway from Taytay to Pagsanjan with its old churches and spots as lovely as Venice; and from Malahay and Lilio to Los Batos; old walled and battlemented Cavite, mangos and bananas in Manila markets, the pottery section of the Yanzco market, and Paço cemetery at twilight, with its delightful sexton who proclaims himself St. Peter, and slyly waxes a colossal jest: though it were a duels's sword—these are but a few of the sunset joys that the Philippines haven to artists: that they have proffered us in these few months, and that offer an intreguement for returning to the islands next winter.

And why shouldn't American artists return year after year to the Philippines, instead of shivering and doing again and again the subjects that for centuries have been done in southern Italy, Greece and Egypt, since all this oriental-occidental beauty lies peacefully encompassed in the world's most gorgeous sunsets, amid an understanding people?—M.M.W.

Our Humble Apologies

By one of those errors that forever remain inexplicable, something the mind seems sure of when it is merely taking night for day, we recently attributed *The Index* to a bank that does not publish it, instead of to the New York Trust Company, that does publish it, very competently, under the editorship of Dudley L. Parsons. In the correspondence thus provoked, Mr. Parsons has been very generous about the slip.

"I believe," he writes, "that the best answer to the charges made in your open letter would be contained in a brief statement of the policy followed in preparing articles for *The Index*. We attempt to prepare concise authoritative and unbiased presentation of a topic of current interest. The necessity of keeping articles at length suitable for reading by busy men makes it imperative that only the major features of a subject be treated in any detail. An attempt to single out any minor features could only result in disproportionate emphasis, and a lack of balance for the whole article. . . . To give adequate treatment of the Philippine market in an article devoted to a domestic situation in which the foreign aspects must be summed up in about 50 to 100 words would, at best, be inconsistent."

Editor Parsons says the *Journal* praise it will not be modest enough to withhold from its readers:

"Finally, we appreciate your generous praise of *The Index*, and hope, with an understanding of our position, that you will continue to find it of value. For our part, although we receive a great volume of regional economic journals, I can frankly state that very few achieve the high standards usually maintained by The American Chamber of Commerce Journal."

The italics are ours, and if our embarrassing slip has been the means of bringing us another occasional correspondent on matters of economics, we take it as providential after all.—W. R.

Del Mundo's Modernization...

(Continued from page 6)

(see illustrations); vases, decorative brick-work, and statuary. He has developed a glazed tile out of clay, which is very inexpensive—two tiles for one centavo—and could be very effectively used for walls or floors. Then he has worked out larger, white tiles, which are about six inches square, and which are decorated with Philippine scenes, hand-painted. These are beautiful things. Another young man, one of del Mundo's assistants, whose name is Leon A. Sanzang (a pupil of Amoroso), works on these tiles and has produced designs for table tops which, typically Philippine as they are, should find a ready market.

Perhaps del Mundo's most radical introduction here is the use of molds instead of the old potter's wheel. This eliminates the necessity for skilled labor, is much cheaper and faster. He uses 100% Philippine materials. Felspar is still scarce here, so his production of refined porcelain is limited. There is plenty of kaolin, and he gets flint in sufficient quantities from Pasukin, Ilocos Norte.

The ceramics industry is moving along. It would go faster and do more for the country with a bit of money to do with. We suggest that it would be an excellent thing for the government to set aside a little money—P1,000 would do nicely—to help the cause along. Del Mundo would make it pay dividends.

U. S. PENSIONS IN P. I.

On January 31, 1933, the annual payments to the United States was making in the Philippine account of pensions, service benefits, etc., summed P3,200,000 or 1,600,000. The number of beneficiaries was then 7,053. This included veterans, their widows and minor children and sundry other beneficiaries. Eight hundred American veterans were in this number, and 1,400 American veterans' widows and minor children or other dependents; Filipino veterans numbering 4,811 were included, of whom some 100 were in the Philippine division of troops organized for the World War and federalized after the armistice from November 20, 1918 to December 31, 1918. Other Filipino veterans of the 1911, are about equally divided between scouts of peacetime service and scouts of the insurrection period. The Economy Act of March 20, 1933, cut off 1,400 pensions that were being paid in the Philippines, including those of 400 Americans. It is believed that the pension legislation of March 28 this year, passed over President Roosevelt's veto, restores all these pensions less a 25% reduction, and that individual undeserving cases will be taken up one by one and eliminated on their merits. The new legislation makes November 11, 1918, the date of the closing of World War service and therefore eliminates pensioners of the federal period of the existence of the Philippine division, save such as establish presumptive disability. Many details are to be worked out, but this year's pension payments will far exceed last year's in the Philippines.

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