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Just Little Things

● If you don't know where Philippine church bells are cast, it is on calle Jaboneros, soapmakers' street, in San Nicolas, Manila—a craft founded there by Chinese who by Philip II's decree worked with two Filipino apprentices to every skilled craftsman in order to introduce the building trades into the Islands. Largest of the foundries on Jaboneros is that of the Sunicos, Tomas, married and wealthy, and Sebastian, an old bachelor who has charge of the business and personally okays the pours. Their father, Hilario, whose father was a Chinese, established the foundry about seventy years ago; no doubt his father taught him his trade. Bells in most of Manila's many church towers bear the Sunico mark, and of course a great many in the provinces. The price is by the kilogram, at present ₱1.50. The material is bronze, Sebastian's personal pride. Each bell leaves the shop mounted with a counterpoise of molave, so that, no matter how large the bell, a child can turn it and make the clapper clang for dear life.

● Apparatus for bells weighing 1,000 kilograms has been scrapped, nobody asks for such sizes nowadays, they usually stop at 200 to 300 kilograms. Churches and chapels throughout the Islands are always getting new bells, or old bells recast. Business in bells boomed during Harrison's administration, old bells that had yielded their bronze to the revolution and the Aguinaldo insurrection were then, it seems, being replaced. Business remained good up to 1930, but has been moderate since. When orders are few, the Sunicos stagger the work rather than lay men off or cut wages, one crew puts in

three days a week, another crew the other three days—obedience to the mandate that you must not destroy a man's rice bowl. Skilled foundrymen get up to ₱3 a day, and we noticed when visiting the foundry that boys were there putting in licks as apprentices. Foreman Sanchez, twenty-four years with the Sunicos, showed us around. Nowhere have Rome and old China met more intimately than in this business of bells for Philippine churches and their broods of humble chapels. Jaboneros no longer makes soap, so far as we observed; you get more of that on calle Tetuan and calle Echague, the Chinese style. Nowadays it takes the capacity of big factories for the popular demand.

● Neither in area nor in population are the Philippines a small country; they are small only when contrasted with their gigantic neighbors and the Americas, but their population rivals some populations in the Americas. We will keep saying the Philippines have seventeen million inhabitants until accurate census figures correct us. More conservative comments concede Luzon nearly seven million inhabitants, approximately Sweden's population, far exceeding Norway's. Any almanac will reveal many countries more prominent in the world's attention whose areas, populations, and resources are dwarfed by those of the Philippines. But a greater contrast is that some of these countries are quite packed, their resources are strained to support their inhabitants, whose wits are sharpened by the necessity to make the most of what little they have. Denmark is such a country.

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fact that emphasizes his press conferences as far and away superior, from the news viewpoint and that of ingratiating hospitality, to any that Malacañan formerly knew. The conferences are crowded, no one even from the morning papers misses these scintillating hours. The presidential monologues, often opened by the lightest inquiry, are the acme of drama. They titillate all the foreign-news correspondents, as well as the reporters, because their confidences are momentarily broken with blunt releases.

"Here! You can use this, by G.—! I don't care who knows it! I want the whole world to know it! Because I mean it!"

That is a typical Quezon release, starting every pencil in the room to scratching furiously, and all the correspondents to their message blanks. But what has gone before and what will immediately follow may not be used and serves only as reliable background.

As October's harvest moon waned, and drought affected northern Nueva Ecija where the marginal lands may be short of a good rice crop, the lighter presidential reflections and all but casual ruminations turned more philosophical. A season was passing, a mood was maturing even as the ears of rice and the sap of tall cane. The president was least happy in his discussions of higher education, to which a paper is given in this issue of the *Journal*. Someone said afterward he thought President Quezon would have done better if his vocabulary had been adequate to what he wished to say. This correspondent denies that President Quezon lacks words in English for any use whatever; the man's phrase-coining is remarkable, whenever he is certain of his ground; no man can proffer him words more pat than his own; he fumbled higher education simply because every man must fumble that subject, that admits least of all of dogmatization. The question is moot, can be nothing less. That is why, and not for want of words to hand, President Quezon groped about with it.

Because President Quezon in putting discussion on the record puts it on squarely and gives reporters all but *carte blanche* to quote him directly, news sometimes gives as ripe convictions what are hardly more than reflections. The president is taken as having arrived at decisions while yet on his way through preliminary paths approaching these decisions. His feeling is often reported as conviction. The result is a semblance of more ambition in his program than is really there. What he sometimes idealizes as desirable is put down as imminent in his policy, when in fact it is to be effected later and is a detail in a broader scope of executive policy.

A consequence is an adumbration of policy, news runs considerably ahead of the day's actual work.

But discount as you will, he is altogether a new President Quezon who so recently returned to the Islands and found such inspiration in October's gracious weather. His long trip abroad during six months seems to have been the most arresting he ever made. The man, in our opinion, ripened by a close and analytical scrutiny during twenty years, has somehow been reborn. We have checked carefully with other observers, hard-boiled skeptics too, and they confirm us. Social justice is no pose, the man means it all, to the innermost fiber of his being.

He is not peripatetic, but poised. And he is practical, even to the point of breaking with his class—he has but to point to them to bring them down in defeat.

Never to be forgotten is the intangible power of the man's magnetism, and his very tangible constitutional

powers. It will therefore come to pass that he reign in the Philippines as long as he lives, and that the Islands' destiny is shaped by his pragmatic hand. So it is hardly necessary to cite his stand on sumptuary laws and the judges, or on national defense, or on wider networks of highways, or on abolition of the cedula tax which is a poll tax, or on Mindanao and the Mohammedans vs. Christians, or on the justices of the peace and their civic responsibility.

President Quezon has summed it all up himself, in half a dozen words. "Before I leave Malacañan, there will be no *tao* and no *sacup* in the Philippines. I am going to liberate these fellows." And he concludes, "I can do it, I know how to do it." That's Vitamin D in capitals, that's Philippine sunlight at high noon.


—W. R.

Just Little Things

(Continued from page 5)

In the Philippines, when Luzon supports forty million inhabitants, the soil is so fertile and responsive that getting the means of living will be easier for those forty million than it now is for fewer than seven million; but it will be more challenging.

● President Quezon of the Philippines Commonwealth is one of the most experienced of statesmen, time shows. Powerful since 1907, since 1916 his word in public affairs has been final. That is twenty-one years. Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover and Roosevelt in the White House parallel the period, and at No. 10 Downing Street, Lloyd George, Bonar Law, Baldwin (three times), MacDonald, and Neville Chamberlain. Often the most obvious facts in the Philippines are not appreciated, it would lend dignity to everyone's position here if they were.



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