

Consuls in Manila: IV—Miguel Espinós y Bosch

By BETTY SIMPSON



MIGUEL ESPINÓS Y BOSCH
Spanish Consul General

Spain's role in the Philippines has been so all-pervading through the centuries of Spanish régime, you might think the Spanish Republic bemoaned the loss of the imperial islands. Not so.

"No regrets," says Consul General Espinós. "Spain sees with enthusiasm the spread of democracy in this country. She is happy to behold the rise of nations that were born under her wings."

Royal Spain did indeed further, even if negatively, the republicanism of the world, with her far-flung banner. From the ashes of colonial empire sprang the South American nations and Mexico—and among island autonomies today, Cuba, Santo Domingo, Filipinas. Spain today leads the vision of the world of peace, through her distinguished and unique Salvador de Madariaga. He, ambassador to the United States at the same time Señor Espinós was consul at New York City, is a prime factor in League of Nations deliberations. Though success may not yet have come to his efforts, still such amelioration as could be gained against terrific obstacles pays tribute to Madariaga's career. This Spanish gentleman and scholar tried his best to avoid war; Paraguay vs. Bolivia, Columbia vs. Peru, Italy vs. Abyssinia.

The English-speaking world has long read the poems of Wordsworth, and venerated the poet highly. In college days a bookworm with definite literary tastes, the writer rebelled at idolizing Wordsworth, claiming that England's others were being slighted. Led her delight in finding that a splendid scholar shared those entirely personal views; none other than Salvador de Madariaga, writer of note, lecturer,

and now Spanish delegate to the League of Nations. (Though it is whispered he started a small war by his stand on Wordsworth.)

When Madariaga and Manila's Espinós were diplomats together in America, the Spanish population was larger, larger than that of the Philippines. After six months in America's first city, Consul Espinós was transferred to Cuba, then in need of the most skilled diplomacy. After two years' there (together with previous residence of many years in connection with the embassy), he was appointed Consul General to the Philippines where he has graciously fulfilled his position for three years. In May he takes customary leave, but hopes to return.

He will find in Spain an interesting scene. The statesman Azafia triumphed in the recent elections. A modern program of progressive legislation is forecast, interpreting Spanish liberalism as promised in the republican constitution.

The Consul rejoins his family in Barcelona. There he was born, and at 23 threw in his lot with diplomacy. The family home is there. The eldest son remained in Barcelona to follow his own scientific profession—chemistry. A graduate of Barcelona's *Instituto Químico*, the brilliant lad is now taking advanced work under the famed Nobel prize-winner Dr. Sabatier, University of Toulouse, France. Of the four children, Antonio and Conchita were in the Philippines during the Consul's stay. In fact, Señora Espinós is Manila-born, her birthplace having been the present Vicente Madralgal home, and she the beautiful Conchita Perez.

Having returned recently from the Philippines to Spain with Antonio and Conchita, Señora Espinós writes to the Consul that Antonio celebrated his 16th birthday with a gain in weight of 16 kilos. And 13-year Conchita, to

the contrary, lost weight. But both those happenings were exactly what their parents planned and hoped from the joyous return to Barcelona.

The Spanish community—industrialists, planners, financiers, religious orders, so numerous that by beginning with the mention of one it would be needful to sum up the entire Philippines—keeps a close tie with home. The imports of Manila from Spain, in addition to strictly commercial articles, reveal this. Perfumes and powders for the ladies, Spanish wines for the men, *pinientos* and *azofran* to spice the true homelaud dishes for the delight of the children. Surely *arroz valenciano* is not the least of Spain's cultural contributions to the islands, always remembering Plato's definition of cookery as a branch of architecture and therefore one of the fine arts.

Spanish culinary art attracts many a European visitor to the Catalan provinces. *Alimentary tourists*, they are sometimes called, and inexpensively they wine and dine in Spain. No less in the Philippines are the delectables of Spain to be found.

Such imports add a bit to the islands' trade with Spain, totaling P497,393, in 1935. Exports to Spain were 11 times as great, P5,449,000, the same year. Under the present Spanish government, a steamship line to the Philippines will no doubt be instituted. Thus trade as well as travel will increase. And travel to Spain will always intrigue Americans. Franklin, the *torcedor* from Brooklyn, was well-liked by Spaniards. American envoys to Spain have often founded enduring friendships there. Devotees of literature, music and painting stay long in Spain for her Cervantes, Greco and Velasquez.

And visitors from the Philippines will discover in Barcelona, at least during the time of the Consul's leave, the charming Espinós y Bosch family as well. Many are the friends who will visit them there, just as all distinguished Spanish visitors were led by them here.

"Coming to Barcelona?" asks the hospitable Miguel Espinós y Bosch. "O. K."

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Junk

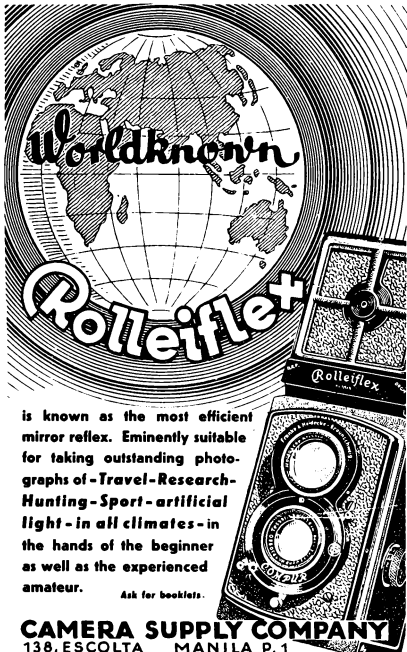
Do you like old things that served their purpose once, old things that figured afterward in auctions, industry's impromptu dramas? Of course, they played no stellar roles, yet at least were worthy supernumeraries; and in such tongues as they could speak, and with the lines they had, spoke well enough. One proclaimed it had been red starboard light on an old iron ship first bought in the Philippines—built in Glasgow yards and stored out east in the new Suez canal—that mounted guns and ran down Mohammedan fleets of praus, ending piracy along the Christian coasts.

Has such a lamp a bit of retained dignity? No doubt, yes. Its fellow, the green harbor light, is with it still. They burned coconut oil; you could have them from the junkman cheaply, and with your gardener's ingenuity could convert them into fixtures for electric lights. Everything in the quaint second-hand chandler's shops on calle Madrid and around the corner on calle Jaboneros—that is to say, soap-makers' street—in its old forms tells of man's old ways of yesterday.

But we don't know that you like junk shopping. Should you, here's a hint.

You would build a gate, perhaps a fence along the hedge; and what better for these details of your home in a great historic port city than some of the junkman's anchor chain. Do ships not serve you still? Old lamps at the portal, have you the taste to fix them there? Here's a caster, filigree bronze; all the cruetes are gone, but burnish the caster and you have a bonbon dish quite enviable. There's something stanch about it, but lightness too, and delicacy. If you can trace the caster to the craft center that made it, then surely you know bronzes; it could be moonish, yet it might have come to Manila on an early Estimolman, to grace a resident-merchant's table.

Yet again you say, you don't like junk; you are modern and like new things. Well, have new things. *De gustibus.*



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