

What the Archives Say of Mehan Gardens

The following is translated from the Spanish certified to by Manuel M. Miranda, chief of archives of the Philippine government:

"*Jardín Botánico* (now Mehan Gardens).—Decree of the Superior Government of September 13, 1858. As of this date I have decreed the following:

"Taking into consideration the proposal of the town council of this city in the conference of July 16 ultimo, concerning the convenience and utility that would come of establishing a botanical garden in the extensive field of Arroceros, which would at the same time be a school of practical agriculture and the acclimatization of exotic fruits; . . .

"Noting the opinion of the subinspector of engineers of August 8, that also of the committee of commerce and the director of the economic society of September 6;

"Noting the endorsement of the superior directorate of finance of August 25, ordering the compliance of this body with the decree of September 4;

"Believing that from the viewpoint of hygiene and ornamentation of the city devotion of the field of Arroceros to plants and making it a park and place of recreation for the public, and that evident advantages will derive from the planting and cultivation of plants with the object of acclimatizing those which are not now being grown here and teaching the better utilization of others, so that a certain number of Filipinos of the provinces, supported in Manila by general funds, may be returned periodically to their respective provinces to put into practice the knowledge they have acquired;

"Having heard and being in conformity with the ruling of the senior general assessor, I hereby decree:

"Art. 1.—There is hereby created a School of Botany and Agriculture in Manila under the patronage of the superior government and the immediate supervision of a board to be created for this purpose to include an officer of engineers and other persons from the different corporations administering or having to do with the funds from which this new establishment will be supported.

"Art. 2.—Within the boundaries to be indicated by the aforementioned subinspector of engineers, the field of Arroceros is hereby set aside for the practical work of said school, as a botanical and acclimatization garden and demonstration plot, it being understood that the property pertains to the town council under the limitations which govern within the polemical one of a fortified plaza.

"Art. 3.—The permanent personnel of the school shall include: one professor of botany with a salary of ₱1,500 a year; two teachers of horticulture with a salary of ₱500 a year each; ten students selected among the young farmers of the provinces, who shall be changed every three years and be aided during their term of study with ₱100 a year each; and the necessary number of prisoners, chosen among short-term men who are industrious laborers, to whom a gratuity of ₱500 shall be yearly distributed.

"Art. 4.—For the acquisition of plants and tools, there is hereby set aside the sum of ₱1,500 a year, reimbursable when the planting and seeding is complete.

"Art. 5.—The products of the botanical garden and school of agriculture shall go, as far as they will, toward covering the foregoing appropriations, but in case they are insufficient the sums shall be made up from special funds in the following form and according to the degree of interest which for its inauguration must be taken in this important improvement: the town council, ₱1,000; consular funds, ₱1,000; *Amigos del País* (a corporation for the fomentation of Philippine agriculture), ₱500; Filipinos' community fund, ₱3,000; total, ₱5,500.

"Art. 6.—Until the personnel necessary for the undertaking of the artistic work upon a scientific basis is organized, the sum of ₱2,500 yearly shall be employed in proportion to the sums set forth in the preceding article for the preparatory work and the planting of rows of trees which border

the streets and pathways for the use of the public.

"Art. 7.—If it becomes necessary to build cottages, sheds, and railings for the purposes of the school, and sentry boxes, porters' lodges and other structures conducing to the better administration of the botanical garden, due permission of the captain general must be requested, on the understanding that all construction must be of light material and subject to the general conditions obtaining in the polemical zone.

"Art. 8.—The board of inspectors of the botanical and agricultural school shall agree upon and submit to me such other measures as conduce to the fullest realization of this project; and the rules for instruction and work of the personnel provided in Art. 3, subject to the approval of the professor of botany; but meantime and as a preliminary step, the board shall propose to me



This girl that "Mac" drew in *Judge* is telling "Junior" she's That Way about him and "Mac" because they always make the cocktails with

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it's always best!

Cop (to loiterer at the *Rialto* after the last run of "Broadway"): Say, what's the big idea in hanging around here? The show's over.

Loiterer: 'S all right, Chief. I'm waitin' for that girl in the chorus, Billie Moore, that's all!

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the most useful and advantageous employment of the fund set aside in Art. 6, for the initial preparatory work.

"Notify all concerned and return to the executive secretary the instructions submitted for the approval of the finance department August 25, in order that the department may have proper authority for the disbursement from the community fund in accordance with Art. 6 of this decree, which shall also be published in the *Official Gazette*."

Thus was the *Jardín Botánico*, Manila's spacious central park, created by Lieutenant General Fernando de Norzagaray, a Spanish governor and captain general of the Philippines, 71 years ago. Sebastian Vidal y Soler, a naturalist, from Barcelona, became the director of the park, where his statue, donated by his admirers in Barcelona, now stands. "Sr. Vidal y Soler, a native of Catalonia, was married to an American lady, of Philadelphia, very beautiful and beyond dispute the most elegant lady of her time in Manila. Her name was Ella." Vidal died July 28, 1889, and his statue was erected in May 1892. When the Americans came to Manila six years later, the park was in a very repulsive and insanitary condition; it soon became the work of John Mehan to improve this and all other public grounds of Manila, notably including the *Cementerio del Norte*.

The park's name was changed from *Jardín Botánico* to *Mehan Gardens*, but remains popularly called the botanical garden. The original purpose of establishing it has never been carried out, the plant life there shares the neglect to which the zoological specimens are subjected, and—no monument to Mehan is found in all the park. This is one of the circumstances of which visitors to Manila ask *why*? Someone must know the answer. There is a calle Norzagaray in Manila, also two calles Soler.

The Ayuntamiento

The word *Ayuntamiento* means town council and in Manila applies to the public building on the northeast side of Plaza de McKinley in the walled city, a building two stories high and nearly, if not quite square, extending over an area of some 6,000 square yards (6,240 *varas cuadradas* being the exact area). Our data are kindly furnished us by Manuel Miranda, keeper of the Ayuntamiento archives—documentary records dating back to 1561 and beginning with Legaspi's commission from Philip II of Spain, to occupy and govern lands he might discover in this region of the world.

The Ayuntamiento was built in 1735, Marshal Fernando Valdéz y Tamón, then governor and captain general of the Philippines, laying the corner stone January 31 of that year. When built it was the finest public building in the islands; it remains one of the best and is excellently suited to be converted into a museum of art and history. It is of stone, and of the European type of architecture; the old clock tower that formerly topped the façade was thrown down in the earthquake of June 3, 1863, at which time the building suffered such general damage that the town council and other bodies using it for a meeting place had to abandon it for a time and hold their meetings in what is now, and has been for a score of years, the *Corregidor Bar*. During Spanish times the Ayuntamiento was generally known as the *Cabildo* (the capitol), from which fact calle Cabildo takes name. The town council, aside from holding meetings there, assembled there to view from the upper balconies the fiestas celebrated on the occasion of the arrival in Manila of a new governor general, or a new archbishop; and in the halls the great receptions and balls of the period took place, as many do today.

The original structure being damaged beyond use and eight years having elapsed, on May 30, 1871, Sr. Botella, the municipal architect, submitted plans for a new building, but the town council rejected them because the space allotted and its distribution were inadequate to the city's requirements. Botella became occupied with

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The Ayuntamiento

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ther duties, being, it seems, an engineer officer of the Spanish military forces, and the governor general commissioned the ports and highways engineer, Eduardo Lopez Navarro, to draw new plans. These are the ones followed in the building as it now stands, which cost ₱152,241. Merritt's headquarters were here when he commanded the American forces of occupation, August 13, 1898, and assumed the duties of military governor. Otis, and then MacArthur, succeeding Merritt, had their offices in the Ayuntamiento; and governors Taft, Wright, Ide, Smith, Forbes, and Harrison had their offices

here. The first American laws for the Philippines were enacted here, the *general orders* of the military governors, and the *acts* of the Philippine Commission. Osmeña long had his office here, both as speaker of the Philippine Assembly, which held its sessions here, in the Marble Hall, and as speaker of the house of representatives when the full legislature began functioning in 1916. At present the cabinet offices are here. Mention of these few things only hints at the rich historical associations of the Ayuntamiento, which, stone below and only the best of hardwoods above, should stand for centuries to come.

The New Mentality

By PRESIDENT RAFAEL PALMA

University of the Philippines

✓ Educating youth today demands a change in principle and methods in the same way that science and industry have sought new by-paths in their development. We cannot educate the youth of today under the tenets and doctrines bequeathed to us by our ancestors. They represented an epoch and a world entirely different from ours. The world of our forefathers is no longer the world of today. To feed our youth with the aggregate of the theories and beliefs which have already lost their usefulness with the march of ages, would be to commit a gross mistake. We cannot give to an adult only the amount of food we give an infant, without imperiling his health. Neither can we expect to educate the youth of our day with the body of truths and knowledge possessed by our elders under social conditions which were not only different from, but diametrically opposed to those that obtain at present.

✓ I do not mean that we should discard old truths simply because they are such. I mean that we should determine which of them should be retained and which should not, in order to hasten our development along the road of human progress and wisdom. We cannot afford to tarry in our journey, while the world is "up and doing," unless we are content to lag behind. The wheel of progress, like inscrutable time, will not stop just because we stand in its way. We must move with it or be crushed by its relentless motion.

Some educators would make us believe our salvation lies in the dogmas of the past. They look upon present conditions as anomalous and dangerous deviations from the time-honored rules and norms of conduct which made our infancy carefree and happy, and our parents infinitely more so with our conduct. But happiness in its true sense has yet to be defined, because its conception has varied with time and place. In that twilight of civilization, known as the Stone Age, man lived in caves. He was happy and contented with the fruits he could gather and with the raw meat he could get by fishing and hunting with stones and splints. Later on, not satisfied with the tools he had, he hit upon flint to generate fire, the bow and

the arrow to kill animals from afar, and pottery, not only to cook the game he had bagged, but also to store water at home and thus avoid going out to the spring every time he needed to quench his thirst. After long centuries, he settled down and tilled the soil, and domesticated, to help him in his labor, the animals he previously hunted. In this way he assured himself a steady and permanent food supply; he no longer depended, as he had been wont to do, only upon what he could get from hunting and fishing. Having ample time to accumulate property and advance his well-being, he became an architect, beautified his dwelling, and in company with other men, founded towns, constructed temples, and built forts to protect himself from his enemies. As time went on, planting and cultivating ceased to be his principal occupations. He transformed the products of the soil, and through his resourcefulness and ingenuity, invented machines for weaving and for locomotion both on land and on the sea, utilized electricity to speed up communication, and still dissatisfied with the resistance of the earth, traversed the space above and made distance no longer a hindrance to good will among nations. His happiness increased as fast as he was able to invent, and to utilize the varied forces of Nature for his own good.

Modern man is insatiable in his ambitions, and the conception that he has of happiness has gained in weight and measure. It would be tyrannical to impose upon him the measure of happiness that satisfied his grandparents, because they knew little of Nature and enjoyed fewer comforts and conveniences in life. It would not only be tyrannical, but humanly impossible, to cause the youth of today to renounce enjoyment of the benefits brought about by our civilization and to dress in bark or leaves and branches of trees as our ancestors of antiquity did, or to travel not by rail but in carts drawn by carabaos, or to read by the glow of a candle instead of in the brightness of an electric light. Whether we wish it or not, youth will always endeavor to avail itself of the privileges of this age of machinery and social revolt, regardless of the consequences. ✓ It were better that educators and priests should not oppose this natural

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tendency of man in his upward flight, because if religion and education are to maintain their influence over youth, they should go with life and not against it. To me, the greatest error of the Church, as well as of the pedagogy of old, was that both endeavored to mould life in accordance with a preconceived notion, and to maintain this notion in spite of the revolts and derangements which it occasioned and was unable to check.

✓ There are people who still cling to the belief that life can be encompassed in the hollow of one's palm, when, as a matter of fact, the fountains of life are many and stream through innumerable channels. If religion, in collaboration with the school, was able, at one time, to build a barricade which it thought sufficiently strong to withstand the onrushing tides of life, the natural sciences, politics, economics, commerce and law, as well as many other agencies of civilization, undertook to demolish the dam so that life could once more run normally. ✓ The mission of the school should be, to my mind, carefully to watch the course of life, to keep its flow constantly supplied at its source by checking errors and superstitions and by adding new information to the stock of human knowledge; to set up before the vision of man sound principles and high ideals to be striven for and attained, that man may always maintain contact with his spiritual destiny and thus discover for himself the true rewards of earthly existence.

God and Humanity are not antagonistic terms. He who would see a conflict of principles between God and man, wherein man could not live surrounded by comforts and conveniences without displeasing God, insults the Almighty who, in His infinite wisdom, kindled in the heart of man the desire for his own personal advancement. Man should strive to better himself, elevate the conditions that environ him, and beautify the planet in which he lives. God did not put him in this world to do nothing, to evade the struggles or to escape from temptations and live in the seclusion of the desert. It is his duty to discover the laws of God by reading the book of Nature. Man is a combination of matter and spirit, of body and soul. It is his duty to unfold equally the forces of matter and of spirit. Never should it be considered that because man is composed of two elements, there exists a principle of contradiction within himself. He must seek the perfect equilibrium between the two. The old maxim "mens sana in corpore sano" summarizes the erudition of the ages. ✓ The Middle Ages endeavored to perfect the spirit at the expense of the body. It was a mistake which produced a weak and feeble civilization, full of impossible visions and ideas which brought about more wars and conflicts between men and men and between nations and nations than any other period in history. The present age tends to elevate the body at the expense of the spirit. It is another mistake. We must seek no conflict. Man cannot be brutally materialistic nor inhumanly spiritualistic.

It is beyond my humble powers to understand why a certain school of thought should insist that we cannot please God if we continue adding day by day new moral and religious and scientific truths to the stock of human wisdom. Nor can I consider that we have exhausted the sources of knowledge in matters of religion and morality, and that religious and moral precepts of our ancestors are unalterable and not amen-

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