

WHY LIFE IS WORTH WHILE IN MANILA

BY STANLEY P. JOHNSON

THE Philippines is the lotus land, the mañana land, the land of a pleasant to-morrow. That for which other lands are striving abounds here—leisure, luxury, life. Travelers from the United States or foreign countries find here their forgotten days. They find a happy people not enmeshed in toil from dawn to dark, but mindful of the pleasure of living. They come from hardship to ease, from restraint to freedom. They come to a country where part of the business of life consists in having a good time. And there's no one to accuse them of loafing on the job, of lacking civic austerity, of sowing tares to

If we may, in this uncommercial report of things congenial, seem not to crow over the misfortunes of others so much as to state frankly our fortune to the world in the hope that others may profit thereby, and if in doing so we may bring one soul to share, our message will not have been in vain. But knowing as we do that people obsessed with responsibility for the on-going of things in general will read moral retrogression between these lines, to them we say that progress does not consist in running around but in welfare of the spirit and in leisure to live. Whatever the tropic balm may do to one's sense of



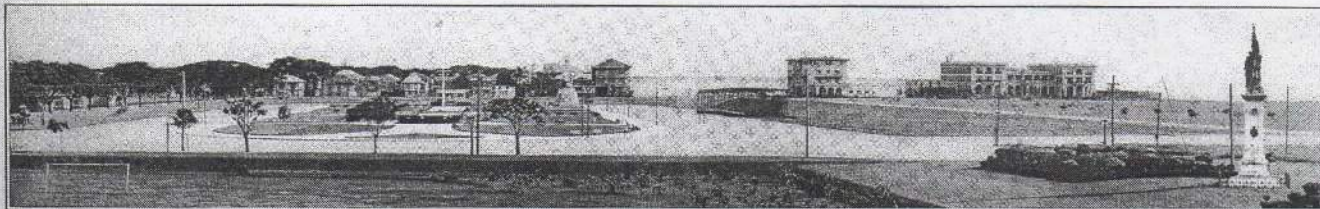
THE MANILA HOTEL.

reap sorrow in a miserable old age. Released from the oppressive hand of legislation and government interference with personal liberty, they find themselves luxuriously fitted out with a leisure in which there is no morbid consciousness of duty undone. They awake not to tyrannical headlines in the daily press demanding "your bit" here, "your bit" there, nor to dismal shoutings of a hunger-ridden proletariat, nor to the bleak dawn of coalless winter. But warm sunshine and summer haze convince that life is not all toil, nor the present merely a purgatory for future cleanliness of soul.

social duty, it more than makes up in that personal satisfaction which engenders humanity and good will toward all.

First it is necessary to remember that there are two Manilas, the one in which man works, and the other in which man plays, the former yielding material success undreamed in poorer countries, and the latter, those emoluments of pleasure sought for in vain east of Honolulu and west of Suez.

There is no better proof of the worthwhileness of life in Manila than that those who have lived in the Islands for two years always return. They have



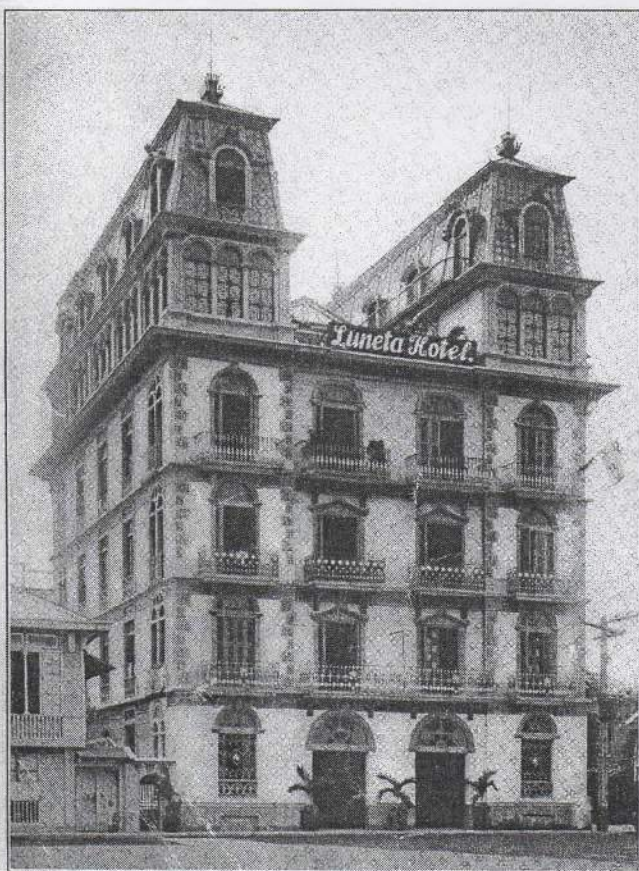
THE LUNETTA, SWEEPED BY THE COOLING BREEZES FROM THE BAY, IS MANILA'S FAVORITE RESORT FOR AN AIRING.

eaten of the lotus. All of them go through a certain stereotyped development to this end, each thinking as he goes that he is discovering new truths. The young man arrives from the United States. His first impressions are of the tourist sort, an intense interest in the dress and habits of the Filipino, of the Chinese, and of the promiscuous population of Manila. He feels the antiquity of Spanish ruins in the air. He has the tourist feeling of superiority and detachedness. The carabao, the carromata, the chinelas, all drag across his mind the fact that he is in a world other than his own. Then comes the time when he must mix with this life, when the sun falls upon his shoulders heavily, when his own people ignore him in the streets. Then he grows homesick and with inflamed imagination creates all sorts of wonders in his homeland which never did exist. He draws odious comparisons, and tells himself hourly that he has made a terrible mistake. This is at the end of his first year, when monotony

has appeared. But gradually he recovers, until in his second year, upon taking stock preparatory to shutting up shop and going home, he finds some startling truths.

In the first place he finds that he doesn't really care so much about going home as he thought he did. He is quite at home here. Why change? Probably he lived in the provinces outside of Manila for a while, and he was quite at home there. Then he spent two weeks at Baguio among the mountains, and he was quite at home there. Also on his little trip to China he was quite at home. All at once he has become cosmopolitan in the matter of geography, discovering that location on the globe isn't a material factor in life after all, that he is quite as happy, quite as well off, in one place as in another.

Also he lived with a Spanish family for a time, worked at the same desk with Filipinos, played golf with the British, traded with Indians, Chinese, and Japanese, met and talked with Australians, Java-



THE LUNETTA HOTEL.



TAFT AVENUE, MANILA.



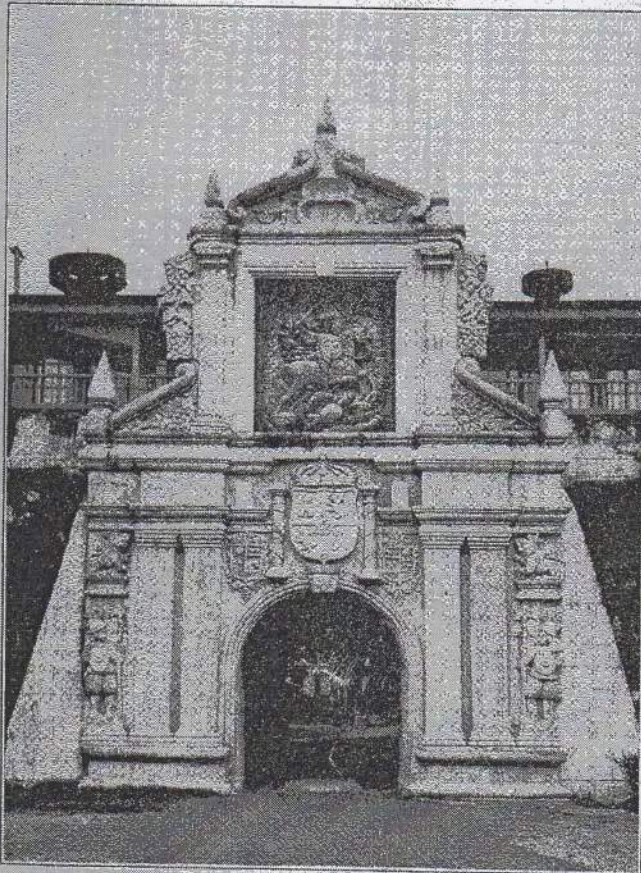
MANILA POLO CLUB GROUNDS, PASAY, RIZAL.

nese, Russians, Persians, and Portuguese, besides having daily contact with twelve other nationalities on the streets and at public gatherings. He not only saw these people, but he touched their minds and learned something of their ideals and lack of them. All shapes and colors and sizes of people tumbled into his experience and unsettled his convictions. No longer able to classify his acquaintances with the provincial measure of his home town, he was forced to take them as they came and judge them as individuals. And he found interesting people, great people, men with ideals and strength. So his inventory reveals to him that the accident of birth also does not matter.

Naturally he learned that some people believe one thing and some another and that all seem equally well off notwithstanding. Some people shaped their

garments one way and some another. Some ate rice and some camotes, some liked their forks with three prongs and some with only one. Some of the women wore short dresses and some long, some kimonos and some silk pajamas. Some drank spirituous beverages, and some didn't. There were different religions and games and everything. And the strangest discovery of all was that he couldn't see but that all of them were right. Thus his inventory reveals to him a mind broadened with experience and knowledge. This is one of the things that make life in Manila worth while—the personal gain from contact with the whole world.

In Manila is felt the pulse of the world's activity—the currents of political, commercial, and intellectual thought of the world—more keenly than in New York or London. And lest we seem to exaggerate,



SAINT JAMES GATE, FORT SANTIAGO, MANILA.
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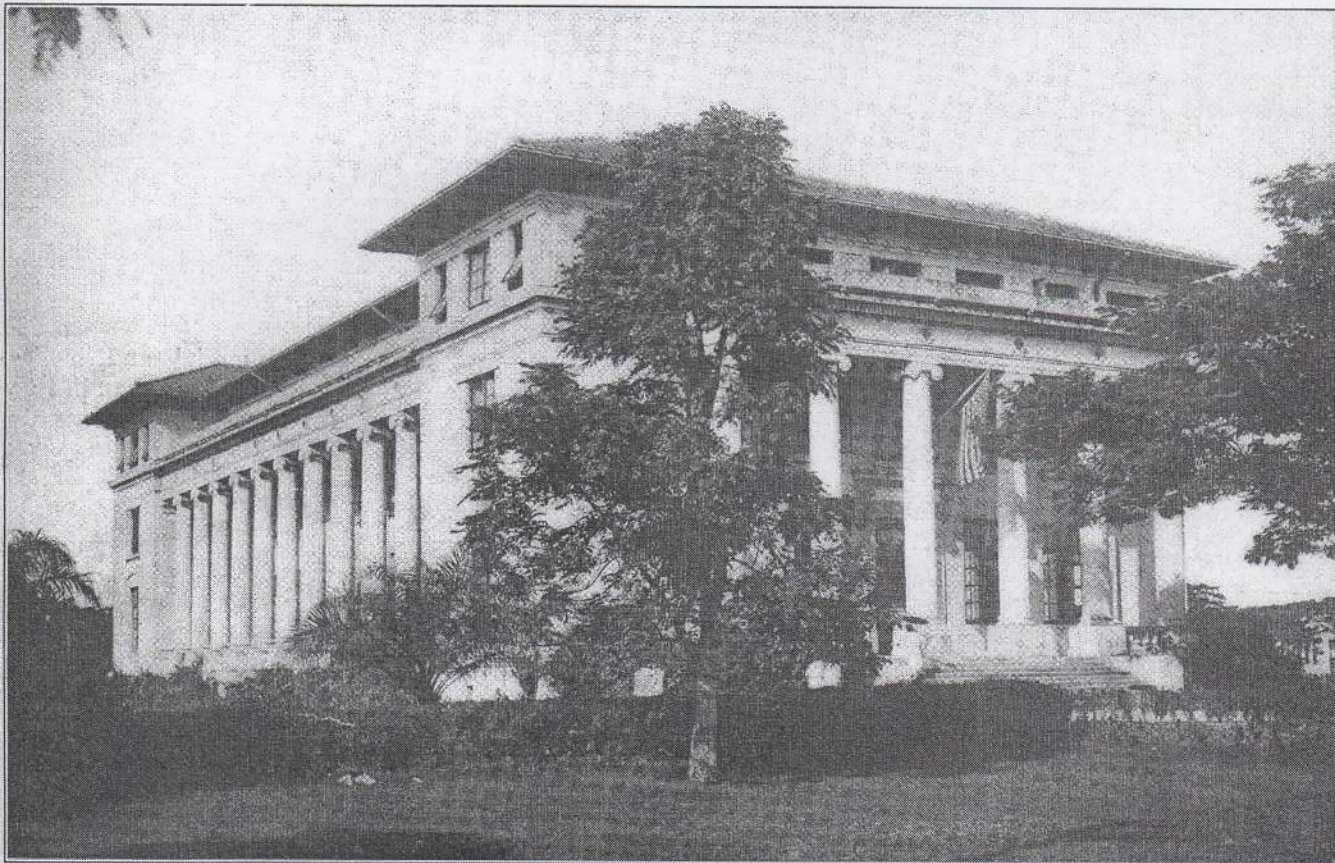


SAN SEBASTIAN CHURCH, MANILA.

there's a reason. Each man here is an individual machine; in the larger cities he is a cog. Not having within our borders the factors of economic independence, we are forced into direct contact with many nations, and the threads of intercourse can be held in one hand, so to speak, so that each of us understands the whole. In the press we are not overwhelmed with a mass of local news. The immensity of nonessential topics of small-town interest is spared us. Only the essential and all the essential touches us. Our horizon is not bounded by 42d Street nor by neighbor Peet's farm.

One of many reasons for the happier life in Manila than in other cities of the world, so far at least

Too much emphasis can hardly be placed on the advantages accruing to us through our insularity and isolation. The conventionalities and prescribed forms of daily living are void. There is no Madam Grundy to hector, there are no rules of the would-be Four Hundred. We come and go unquestioned. A society of men and women from the seven seas and the four winds grants each one the sovereignty of his own affairs. Detached from our home country we can see it impersonally, its strength, its weakness. We have no neighbors to tell us what to think or how to vote. Neither a Democrat nor a Republican is disgraced for being so. Reliance is placed on a man's experience, respect accorded his



UNIVERSITY HALL, MANILA.

as foreigners are concerned, is natural selection of the fit and strong, which is continually taking place. There are no crippled and weak, no poor nor invalid people in Manila. They do not come. Only those looking for adventure, those fitted to care for themselves, those ready and willing to take what comes seek this part of the world. The responsibility of large families and consequent worries for the children's future is noticeably lacking here. But it is a home city, too, and those that know say it is a splendid land for raising babies. Among the native population family life is highly developed and constitutes an important factor in contentment and orderly living.

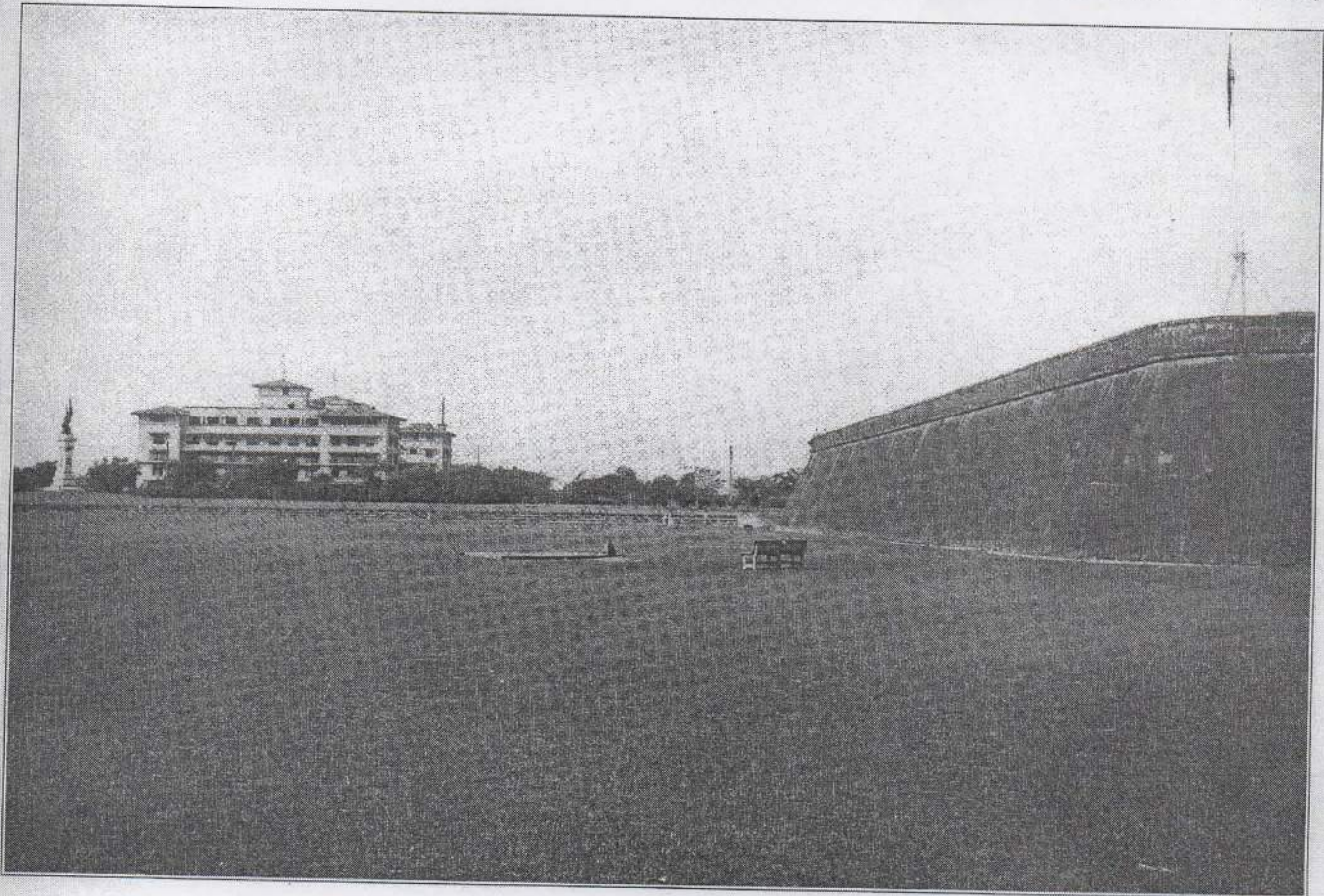
judgment. Distance effects clarity of thought. Not living in San Francisco we are not disturbed by its claims of superiority to Seattle or New York.

As a whole Oriental and tropical life exposes the bigger and more fundamental processes of life. There is less attention paid to inconsequential details and routine than in the complex centers of Europe and America. It is of less importance to know what Lady Jane wore at the ball than to know how she will run her embroidery establishment. More is considered of failure and success and struggles with new conditions than of a man's politics. The inter-relationship of races, the development of virgin countries, the feeding of millions, with their intri-

cate problems render men accustomed to thinking in the large. Close touch with men and full knowledge of their individual problems and experiences, all of whom have cast aside one life and assumed another, gives pause to trivial speech. Men talk little in the Tropics, but what they say has meaning. The small talk of social gatherings is not attempted here. It is as if through a common experience all had come to a knowledge of life and what is worth while in it that renders such things futile.

There is less violence in the Philippines than in any other land. Its people are gentle and courteous. In provincial towns in lonely districts an American woman can remain alone for days without fear of

and his father before him, for there is none such. One cannot follow the footsteps of others, for there is no trail. Men are demanded for new enterprises, men with ideas and initiative; they are not paid for what they do but for what they create. Older men retire and go home at an age when success is scarcely visible in the more-fixed mediums of older countries. Also opportunities are continually arising through the elimination of the unfit and the transient. Ambitious men, particularly if interested in the great field of foreign trade, can find nowhere greater opportunities than here. Salaries range from \$1,800 per year, for stenographers and office assistants, to \$5,000 for executives. Naturally



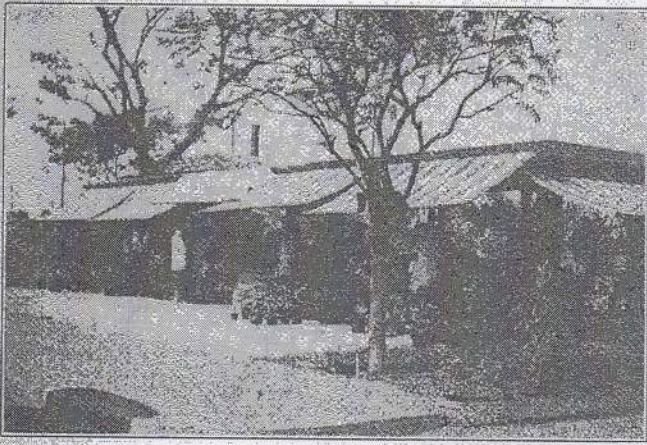
PART OF PUBLIC GOLF LINKS, NEAR THE OLD WALL, WITH MANILA HOTEL IN THE BACKGROUND.

molestation. One can take long trips through the wildest mountains in perfect safety. The thought of firearms for self defense is unknown.

And now having disposed in some degree of the mental aspects of Manila's worthwhileness, it may be well to turn to things more material for the sake of Missourians who travel.

Manila is essentially a young man's town. The Philippines is in its infancy, and everything is to be accomplished. Business is young. Success lies in the future. There are no forms to be fitted in. A man's job is what he makes it. There is no working up to the job formerly held by one's father

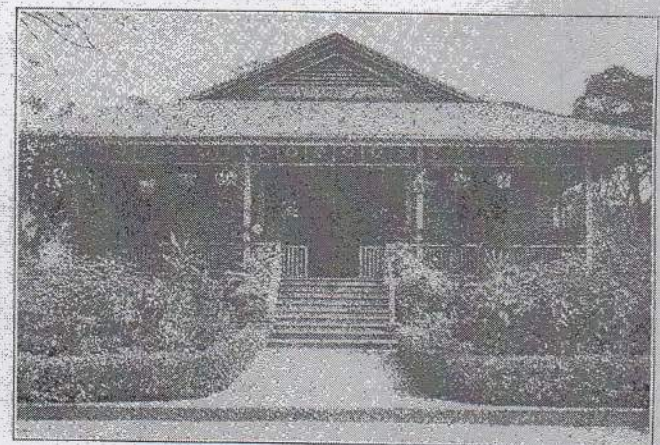
there are salaries much higher, but most men of this class are in business for themselves. Female stenographers are in demand, with salaries ranging from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year. Living expenses in Manila are perhaps lower than anywhere in the world at the present time. For a single person \$75 per month can meet board and room and laundry as a satisfactory minimum. The greatest saving, however, is in the matter of clothes, which are worn season in and out, with no necessity for new wardrobes every three months. The average man of twenty-five in the average position should be able to place in the savings bank



FLOWER MARKET, NEAR BRIDGE OF SPAIN, MANILA.

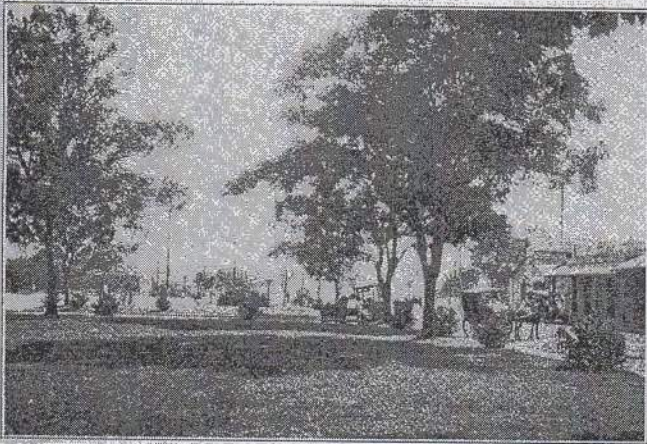
each year from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and live a comfortable, pleasurable life while doing so. And for men with capital, unspeculative returns as high as 25 per cent are frequently secured.

Competition being less severe, and efficiency se-



A RESIDENCE IN MALATE, MANILA.

bath, prepared by his muchacho. After a breakfast of fruits and the usual ham and eggs and newspaper he journeys down to his office at possibly 8 o'clock. This seems to be much the same as in the United States, but it isn't. There he *rushes* through



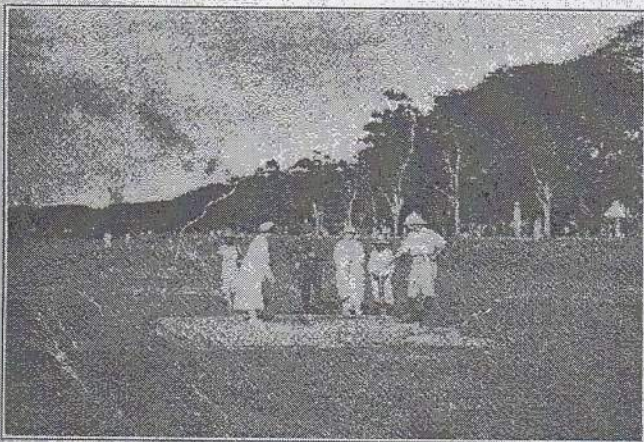
PLAZA LAWTON, MANILA.

curing quicker returns, a man attains his success in the Islands with greater ease. The routine of life is pleasant, and days pass quickly. The average man arises early, say 7 o'clock, to a bright sunlit morning, takes a leisurely shave and a cold



A STREET IN THE NIPA HOUSE DISTRICT, MANILA.

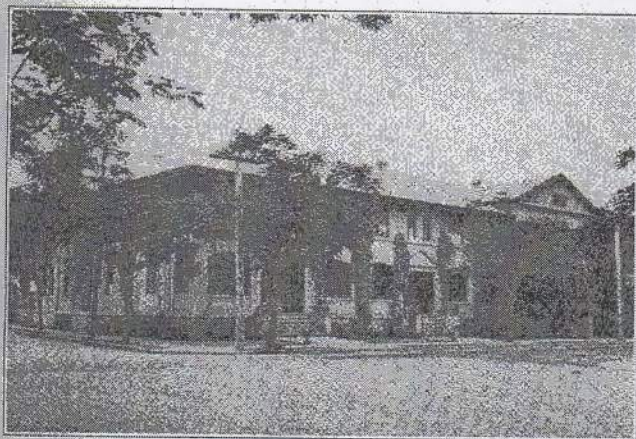
breakfast and *rushes* to his office. Also he *rushes* all the morning until 12 o'clock. Not so here. He dictates in a few minutes his day's correspondence which will probably leave port a week later, depending on the schedule of boats. Then he has new



A TEE ON THE PUBLIC GOLF LINKS, MANILA.

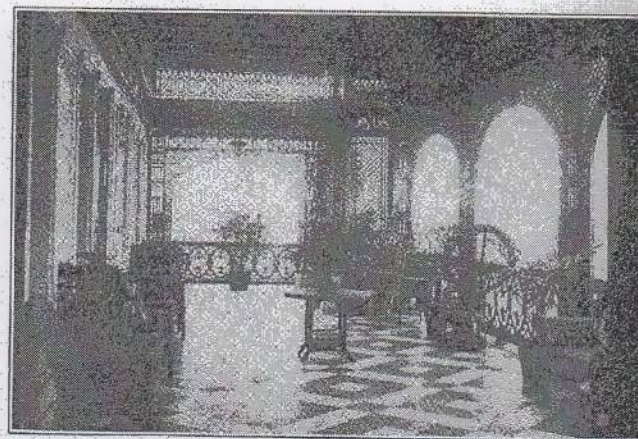


A TYPICAL PUBLIC MARKET, MANILA.



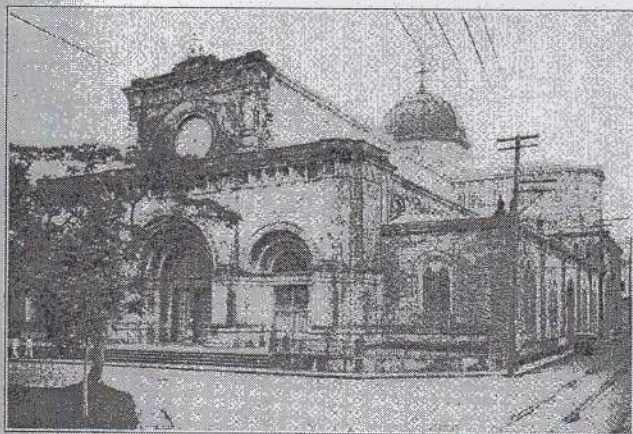
AN APARTMENT HOUSE, MANILA.

schemes to think over and conferences to hold with confreres. After this there is usually considerable time for ice cream and further conferences outside. He probably visits his bank and the cable office, and does some more thinking. If he is a salesman,



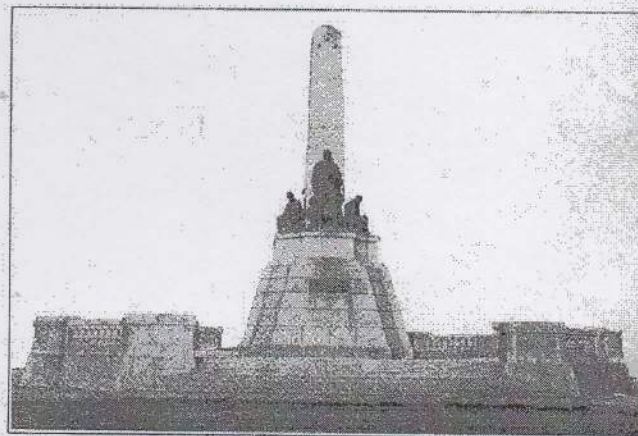
AN INTERIOR VIEW, MALACANANG PALACE, MANILA.

o'clock or thereabouts he goes back to his hotel for lunch. Afterwards he sleeps for two hours and drops back to his office. At 4 o'clock he goes out for tea, and at 5 o'clock, if the day has been a hard one, he knocks off for golf or tennis or a swim,



CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL, MANILA.

he has to talk with prospective customers. At all events he is a very busy man, with a dozen plans for expansion working in his brain; but there is time, aeons of time. There is so much to be done and so little danger that the field will be overworked before he gets to it that he fears nothing. At 12

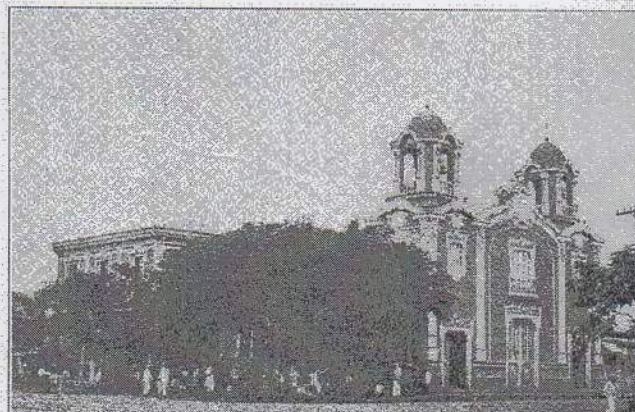


RIZAL MONUMENT, MANILA.

or goes back to his siesta chair for rest. After chow at 8 o'clock, if he is socially inclined, he organizes a party for a cabaret and spends a pleasant evening. Otherwise he plays cards or billiards at his club. The next day repeats, and so on. He is never hurried, never tired, never worried. He knows, too,



UNION CHURCH, MANILA.



AGLIPAYAN CHURCH, MANILA.

whether he is accomplishing results. He is satisfied with to-day for he knows it will lead to to-morrow as surely as he places his savings in the bank. He has a feeling of security that is unknown in keenly competitive communities. He knows, or should know, his own value. Of course the primrose path leads to ruin from Manila as surely as it does from New York, but that is neither here nor there. The fact remains that the man is valuable, that he is safe, that he has leisure, opportunity, ease.

Thus he can readily avail himself of the social opportunities which in this part of the world are greater than in less cosmopolitan communities. For the ordinary man away from home in cities in the

man here is worth while, as a traveler, as a man with experience and knowledge of the world.

Vacations too are an important part of life in Manila. There is an average of one fiesta or holiday per week on which there are processions and celebrations of diverse kinds. Of course in addition each man secures a regular vacation of two weeks or a month which he spends in China or in the mountains, outdoors at any rate, restoring vitality. And then every few years a six months' or a year's leave for a visit home. Everywhere there is smooth and gentle time careless of days.

And like an accompaniment to easy and pleasant living the ancient city of Manila breathes an air



NORMAL HALL, TAFT AVENUE, MANILA.

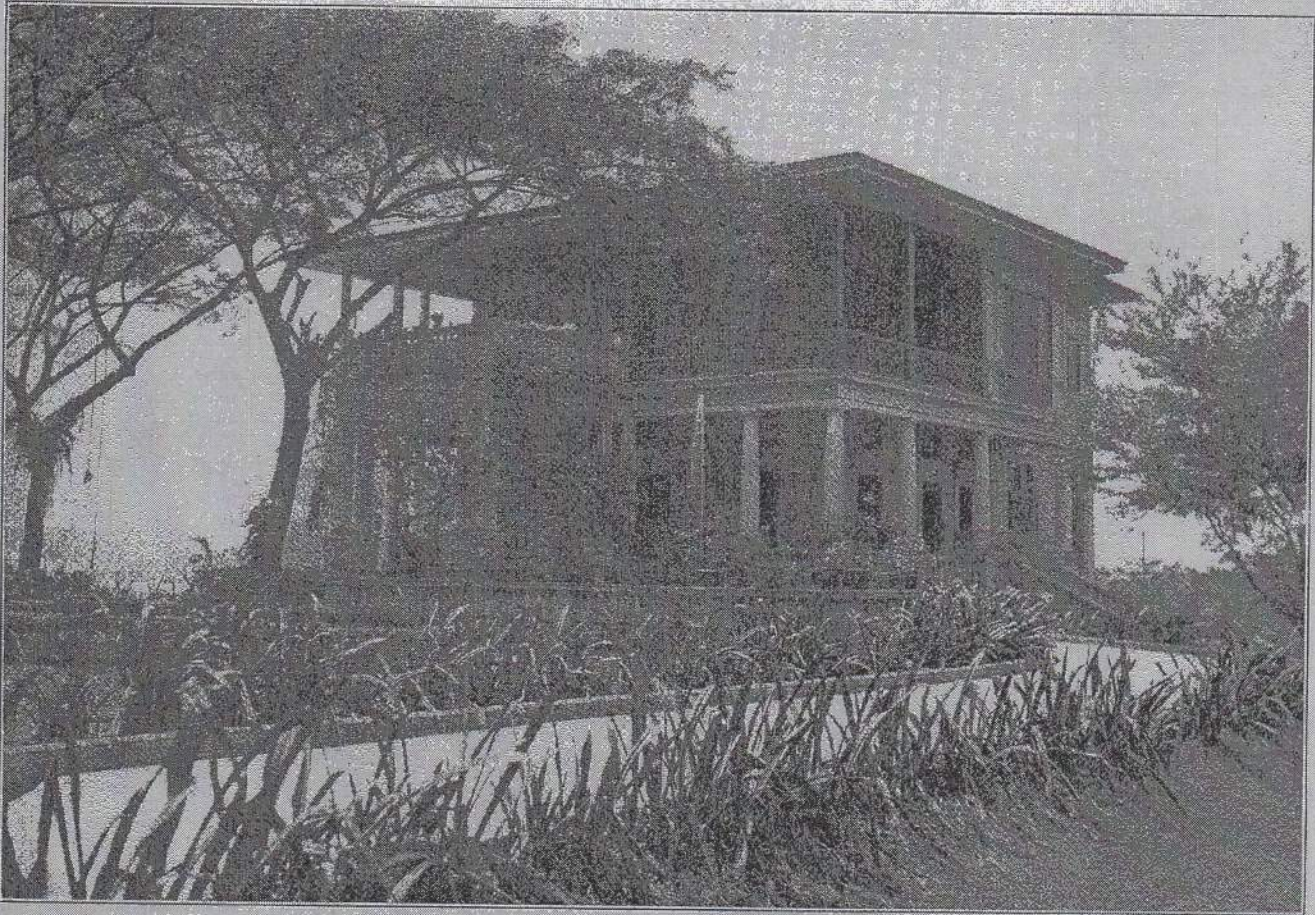
United States or Europe, there is little to do. He meets few people and becomes really acquainted with fewer. The average man in those places is lonesome. But in Manila he knows every one. He knows them by their first names. Hospitality has long been synonymous with Manila and the Filipino people; the stiffer peoples of colder climes yield to the genial influence. There are dances and social gatherings for every one every night, if he cares to attend. There are cabarets and operas at times, and the usual theatrical equipment of a town of 300,000 people in the Tropics. Exclusiveness is not. Cliques are not. Every man is welcome, for every

of romance from its ruins. The older section is surrounded with the rich atmosphere of the past, with mossy buildings and ancient walls inclosing. Outside the walls the new city has grown. An eternity of pleasant weather flows unceasingly across the bay and the city. At certain seasons the streets are abloom with fire trees. All things tend toward peace. Yet we are in the midst of the new with all the comforts of modernity, all the field for effort and creative work building toward success.

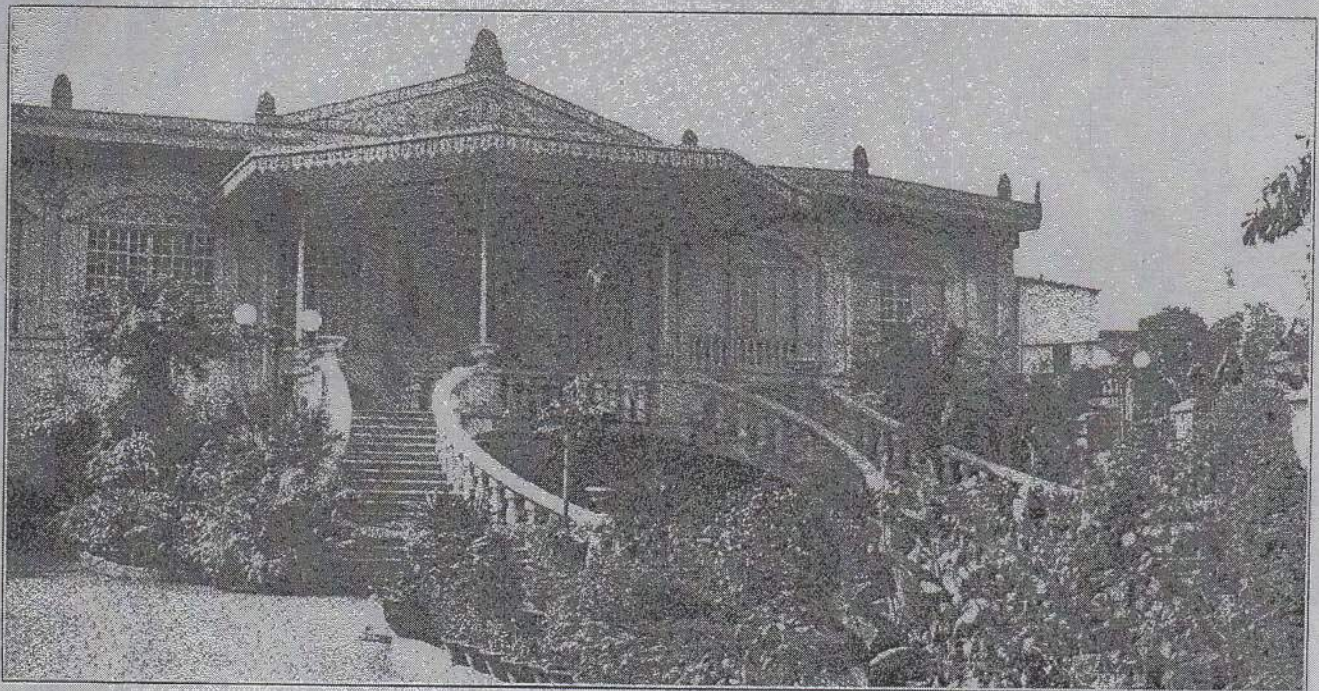
If men desire breadth of vision from contact with the peoples of the world; if they desire financial success and comfortable living, the luxury of riches

without riches; if they desire a field for their efforts that will repay in instant growth, then Manila is decidedly worth their while. If they care for the larger developments in international trade and poli-

tics, they can come no closer home to them than in Manila. If they seek in their younger years advantages of position and leisure, elsewhere coincident only with age, they can find them now.



A RESIDENCE IN SANTA MESA, MANILA.



A RESIDENCE IN SAN MIGUEL, MANILA.



PHILIPPINE NORMAL SCHOOL, MANILA.



A WATERFALL NEAR MALUCO, BUKIDNON, MINDANAO.



LEGAZPI AND ANDA MONUMENT, MANILA.