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Elsie Ann Guthrie  
*Iowa State College*

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# The Philippine Housewife in America

By ELSIE ANN GUTHRIE

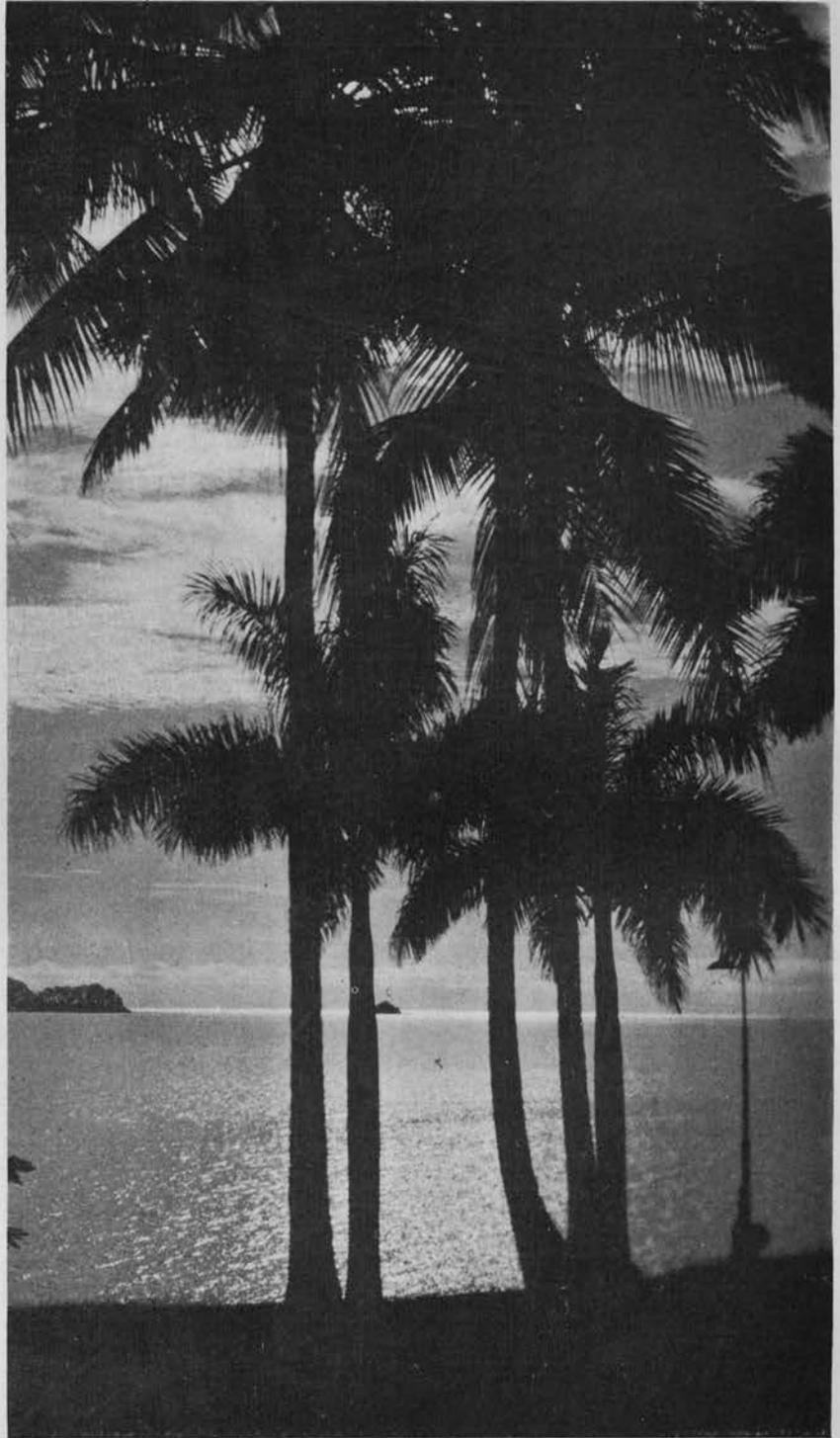
WHEN Jacob Rees said that one half the world does not know how the other half lives, he referred to the different situations and conditions within our own country. We may also apply this to people geographically, which may explain the reason for the interest shown in the customs and life of people in other lands. In the Lincoln Apartments located on Lincoln Way resides the Capistrano family consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Severo Capistrano with their two young sons Julio and Edmondo. These people came from Manila of the Philippine Islands, by way of Vancouver and through Canada, arriving at the opening of the college year. Mr. Capistrano is a graduate student in Agricultural Economics, while Julio and Edmondo are enrolled in the kindergarten at Welch school. Mrs. Capistrano would like also to attend college classes but so far her home-making does not permit her to do so.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Capistrano speak English quite well since it is widely used by "foreigners" in the islands. Spanish is spoken in the home so the little boys found it necessary to learn English when they started to school.

Of their home life Mrs. Capistrano says the laboring classes live in grass houses costing about 100 pesos or \$50 to build. Because they burn so readily a fire station is located in every residential district. The people of more wealth live in two story houses of wood or cement. Many good hard woods grow naturally on the islands. Plaster is not necessary because of the mild climate but the extensive rainy seasons make it necessary to paint the houses every two years with very good paint. Shell instead of glass is used for windows. It is not transparent but white and thin.

The dress of the Filipinos is becoming similar to that of American people, but for parties, especially dances they like the fuller skirts of their own country. Mrs. Capistrano does not understand why American hats are worn by the ladies there since there is no school of millinery. In Manila the hats are made and sold by a lady who wears the Filipino costume. At an American party in Manila the guests wore the "balindawah" a native costume consisting of two large squares of silk from one to one and a half yards across, one draped across the shoulders and the other about the waist and hips. These are still worn by maids in the provinces. In the city trails are worn, but are replaced by short skirts in the country. The men wear garments of "pina", a cloth made of pineapple fiber, which bends easily.

Housekeeping in the islands is much simpler than in America. Houses are furnished according to the wealth and



Manilla Bay at Sunset.

taste of the owner. They have good cooks and although they have adopted the Spanish style of food preparation, nevertheless the younger generation uses many American foods.

Mr. Capistrano was connected with the government experiment station at Manila where they try to acclimate foreign fruits, one of them the strawberry. The avocads or alligator pear

has also been grown successfully. The Bureau of Agriculture maintains a number of these experiment stations.

Mangoes grow in abundance and European mangoes are imported. There are many varieties of bananas which grow and ripen at all times of the year. There are also oranges, grapefruit, coconut, watermelon and muskmelon, the latter being cut fine, iced, and served with sugar.

Many people live on farms, some of the farms being secured from the government as homesteads. They have in addition to the usual domestic animals the Caribow which is black and has large horns. There are also wild buffalo. Fish is used quite extensively for food, and chickens are raised. They import chickens which are larger than the native stock.

If a province is small the school house is built of light material, often grass, but the city schools are large buildings of concrete, the normal school being three stories high. The teachers are Filipino graduates from the city schools and are natives for the most part, except the teachers of English who are American.

The prevailing religion is Catholic which was introduced by the Span-

iards. There are many churches which can be identified by the white cross on the spire and many schools and colleges where priests and the sisters teach; (Mrs. Capistrano says too many such schools.) Many of the priests came from foreign lands.

Some of the women work in offices as in America, getting their training in the business colleges there. Some women have occupations as teachers, while others earn money by embroidering.

The transportation is quite modern with automobiles, street cars and trains. The longest line of railroad is a day's journey. Officials ride in special trains. Mrs. Capistrano says there are too many traffic regulations. Cars are driven by hired chauffeurs who receive \$15 a month and lodging as salary.

Living in the islands is much cheaper than in America. Twenty pesos pays a house boy who cooks and does other work, thus leaving the housekeeper free for teaching of social life. These house boys attend the night schools of the Americans.

Most girls go to school, Mrs. Capistrano herself, being the only daugh-

ter in the family having attended several Spanish colleges.

While the climate generally is quite warm, some places in the mountains as Bagnio are comparatively cold. When the season becomes very hot the rich people go to Antipolo where they wear the "balindawah," wooden slippers without hose, and carry umbrellas.

Many of the Filipinos are of mixed Spanish descent, and are somewhat smaller physically than Americans. Julio who was considered normal at home, was rated as five pounds underweight here. Mrs. Capistrano came originally from the province of Visayan and Mr. Capistrano from Tagalo.

Mrs. Capistrano likes American women and also the gentlemen she has happened to meet, as she has found them very courteous. She spoke especially of their welcome to Ames by Mrs. Sparks and Mrs. Cottell "the grandmother of the Filipinos," and other foreign students, who gave them a reception when they arrived, and of Professor De Vries part in helping them to get adjusted.

The family expects to be here in Ames two and a half years, then travel about the states before returning to their island home.

## The American Housewife in the Philippines

By VIRGINIA ALEXANDER

"THE American viewpoint of a foreign country is probably far different from that of the American who spends his life among them," said Mrs. Jean Walser, Associate Professor in Mathematics at the University of the Philippines at Manila, who has just returned from the Philippines to the Iowa State College campus. "People living far across the water from a country of which they know little about the actual life there, wonder at the strangeness of the foreigners who find their way to our shores. Maybe the Americans who journey to the Philippines are just as much a source of curiosity to the natives with their strange dress, short hair, and peculiar American habits and customs."

Mrs. Walser is a graduate from Chicago University and has had a unique position on the faculty at the University of the Philippines for some time, in that she is the only American in the mathematics department and also the only woman.

"Home Economics has just begun to win a creditable place among the other courses taught there, and although the interest is not at its height still there is marked improvement every year. The Dean of Home Economics is an American and also Dean of Women at the University. The equipment is meager. There is one little cottage for Home Economics which is used for classes in the day and parties at night.

"The six thousand Americans in the

Philippines lead an unusually interesting life, at least unusual to the average American woman with her many rounds of tiresome household tasks. There are so many servants eager and willing to learn that the American-housewife finds herself with abundant time on her hands. It takes several servants to care for one small house, as each servant has a special task to perform. It takes one to cook, one to clean house, one to wash, another to iron and still another to care for the yard. Each does his task efficiently and quickly. An average salary in the Philippines can easily manage several servants, for the labor is cheap and plentiful.

"With so much time on their hands both the women and men play abundantly taking advantage of the lovely evenings to indulge in tennis, polo (swimming, horseback riding and many other sports.

Clothes are plentiful and inexpensive in the Philippines, yet up-to-the-minute in style. The Filipino women are unusually good seamstresses with an eye for color-combinations and line. They need no pattern, just a picture and the gown is soon finished. Few American women sew either for themselves or for their American neighbors, as the Filipino women do such beautiful work at a nominal price. The men wear heavy white duck suits starched very stiffly. These are carefully washed in shallow tubs about six feet high and three or four feet in diameter. The water is al-

lowed to run from faucets into the tubs. Cold water and soap are the two necessary articles for successful washing. The natives then pound the starch in and iron them with charcoal heated irons on boards laid on the ground. They need no correct table and ironing board heights, for this work is done in a squatting position.

"The shops are filled with smart imported styles, but the prices are rather exorbitant. There are also shops filled with beautiful hand embroidery, dainty underwear and infant's wear. The hand work is intricate and requires both speed and skill. The American women in the Philippines buy "second bests", as the price is low and there is very little difference between the two grades. There are no carpets in Manila except the Chinese Oriental rugs which are heavy and luxuriant.

"The houses have no glass in their windows, as there is no heat or smoke. Only shutters of Philippine shell which can be drawn easily form a protection against the rainy season in the Philippines. This peculiar season causes draperies and clothes, especially silks, to mildew rapidly.

"The foods eaten by the Americans in the Philippines is almost distinctly American with perhaps a few variations. Celery, oranges, apples, butter, canned vegetables and silk are shipped in from the States. Fresh milk is scarce, and only a doctor's prescription will procure it at a fair cost, for all the cows are Government cows and

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