

**A DAY IN "THE VERY
NOBLE CITY,"
MANILA: A LECTURE**

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A Day in "the Very Noble City," Manila: A Lecture by Clay MacCauley

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CLAY MACCAULEY.

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A DAY IN
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Not long after a midnight early in the year, in an overheated, malodorous cabin, on one of the small steamers that labour through the sea between Hongkong and Manila, I awoke from a restless sleep. The tumultuous waters had become quiet. With the increasing smoothness of the vessel's motion I was soon aroused to complete wakefulness, and went upon deck. A warm, soft air was blowing. The sky was a-sparkle with stars, some of them strange to me. The ocean, in the far distance lost in blackness, lightened near by under a luminous sky and scintillated with phosphorescence where the steamer cleaved its path through it. But, not far away, off the starboard quarter, arose, dark within the horizon's gloom, a great mound from whose further edge flashed a brilliant light. That, I guessed, is the island of Corregidor. We

were on our way up the bay towards the city of Manila. To the north, but dimly seen, stood the mainland as a mountain mass. Forward, the ship seemed to be dashing onward through the open sea. Across that bay I knew there yet lay nearly thirty miles ere we should finish our voyage. Before long I went below; and there, with thoughts of a midnight seven months before, when a fleet of war-vessels glided dark in the darkness over the very path our steamer was then following, I fell asleep. When I again awoke the ship's engine had ceased its monotonous poundings. Once more on deck, I found a scene wholly different from that of the midnight. Our vessel was yet moving—gliding very slowly,—through the still water, but around it, visible in the night's lessening gloom, lay numerous craft small and great. Off the starboard bow, along a shore faintly marked, glittered many star-like lights, high over which in the paling sky flared the morning star. Far away to the southwest lay on the horizon a cluster of twinkling points, as though a constellation were about to sink from sight, and almost directly above them, erect in the heavens, shone in unclouded isolation the Southern Cross. The dawn came swiftly. The obscure

scene rapidly took on definite shapes. The star-like lights along the shore suddenly, wholly disappeared. Slowly the eastern sky brightened. An anchor was dropped from our ship. Then, the sun arose, following a gorgeous procession of colours, moving over sky, sea and land. At last, after three nights and two days of struggle through buffeting seas, our vessel had come to rest, moored near the long breakwater wall, past which the Pasig river gives itself to Manila Bay.

IN THE BAY OF MANILA.

With the sunrise the silent ships around broke forth into bustle and noise. A bugle's *reveille* discovered that several of the vessels there were for the purposes of war, not of commerce. Soon we saw their decks teeming with soldiers. But of commanding interest for the time, was the view of the land disclosed by the rising sun. Against the eastern horizon, stretched in sombre, irregular outline the roofs, towers and battlements of the famed capital of the Oriental tropics, named three hundred years ago "The Very Noble City." Three centuries ago it was already a capital, and more than three hundred years ago it had been honored as the city "always

loyal." King Philip III of Great Spain did but seek to crown the city by adding to the legend for years emblazoned on its Coat of Arms the eminent title—"The Very Noble." There, under the effulgence of the risen sun it appeared, bringing to mind, with picturesque outline drawn against the sky, the city of Dante and Giotto. I longed to pass within those low-stretched walls! But they were yet more than a mile distant across an expanse of water.

For quite a while after the sun-rise we were met with no greeting or inquiry from the shore. The early hour, however, was full of interest to us visitors from other lands. Cavite was pointed out, miles to the south, where we could just see the gathered American fleet at rest. From the masts and rigging of those grim guards and fighters had shone the constellation-like, twinkling points visible to us before the break of day. Almost in the line of view towards those ships of war, just beyond the breakwater, lay a pathetic reminder of that terrible morning in May a year ago,—a Spanish cruiser, just raised from the depths into which it had then been sunk by Admiral Dewey's guns. There it was at anchor, a broken, battered, barren hulk, saved from the ocean to be

made again, if possible, a machine of deadly power, but to serve henceforward the will of new masters. The troop-ships near by, so we learned, were filled with a regiment and a battery ordered to the support of the expedition that, a few days before, had left Manila to take possession of the mid-Philippine port, Iloilo.

UP THE PASIG RIVER.

By the kindness of an English merchant returning to his home, two of us of the ship's passengers, were enabled to make an early landing in the city. Permitted by the brown-clad American soldiers, who, in the interests of the Customs service, had taken possession of our vessel, the merchant made us welcome on the deck of his launch. Then, passing the troop-ships, whose soldiers by the score were taking their morning plunges into the bay and filling the air with boisterous shoutings over their play, our host's launch sped to the river's mouth and up the stream. The ride to our landing place was not far, not much more than two miles, but this evening's time would fail me were I to try tell of all the sights of novel interest there revealed. Memories of southern Florida were started as I saw on the