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The Manila Obs. Rises Again
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The Manila Observatory Rises Again

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ON THE 10TH OF FEBRUARY 1945 the Manila Observatory died in terrible agony. After viewing its mangled corpse, Father Miguel Selga, S.J., its venerable Director, wrote the following touching epitaph:

When I was a boy, at times in our class of humanities, I used to recite with some emotion, the ode composed by Rodrigo Caro on the ruins of Italy:

Estos, Fabio, ¡ay dolor! que ves ahora
Campos de soledad, mustio collado,
Fueron un tiempo Itálica famosa. *

Similar sentiments, but wrung from the depths of my soul, struck at my heart on March 7, 1945, while I contemplated with eyes filled with tears, the ruins of the Manila Observatory, and tried to distinguish among the heaps of debris . . . piled high upon this center of learning—the meteorological tower, the star-transit pavilion, the astronomical dome, the room for time-signal transmission, the seismological vault, the scientific library, the rooms of men dedicated exclusively to the progress of international culture—paraphrasing Caro, these lines came to my mind:

Estos, alma, ¡ay dolor! que ves ahora
Campos de soledad, montón de escombros,
Fueron un tiempo cúpula famosa.

* "These fields, alas! of solitude you see, O Fabius, now, this hill of melancholy, were once upon a time famed Italy." Father Selga has paraphrased: "These fields of solitude, alas! my soul, you see, this mound of rubbish, once upon a time a famed observatory." *Editor's note.*